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# Virginity: An Elusive Bridge Between the Antithetical Civilizations of the Old and New Worlds

Chezyrome David

During the sixteenth century, the thirst for riches and for political esteem was the trademark force driving the conquest of the Americas. This thirst, however, was exacerbated by explosive clashes of cultures, such as between the Inca and Spanish civilizations. The Inca in particular held stark contrasts in their societal structure, which resulted in heated friction during their assimilation into Spanish culture. This friction is exemplified in how both societies defined gender and what roles a specific gender should carry out and exhibit. In the case of Andean societies and Spanish conquistadors, it was the Inca concept of gender complementarity versus a patriarchal system implicitly shaped by Spanish Catholic doctrines that rubbed both sides the wrong way. An intriguing facet of either society's interpretation of gender, however, is that both had concepts of virginity. The fact that this institution existed in profoundly different cultures was an indication of virginity's peculiar prevalence across dissimilar societies. Whether a non-Abrahamic or Abrahamic religion, such as Inca polytheism and Christian monotheism, virginity tenaciously remained pervasive. It was also a notion applied to genders disproportionately; sexual purity was emphasized and heavily associated with women more than men. This observation illustrates a curiously universal understanding of virginity throughout all epochs and civilizations in human history, despite how a society operationalizes gender in the context of their culture. The very definition of gender, however, is a social concept derived from a culture's interpretation of distinct physical characteristics such as genitalia and reproductive capacities (Strasser 2016). Virginity, likewise, is another social concept that deeply intersects gender (Strasser 2016). But with the formation of social institutions, we cannot ignore its embedded existence within political institutions (Strasser 2016). We are now faced with a question: where and how does virginity play a role in a political context? I propose that the institution of virginity was not only a social construct, but one that also innately formed the shape of a political vehicle. This vehicle was used to ascend a political hierarchy correspondingly meant for men — regardless of how gender is defined within a specific culture. Furthermore, virginity's definition, application, and consequences bore heavier burdens on females than males, suggesting its purpose in facilitating and reinforcing a patriarchal society. This patriarchal society is ultimately characterized by men gaining political advantages due to the imbalanced application of virginity to the gender dichotomy. Thus, comparing discordant civilizations such as the Inca and sixteenth century Spanish serve as appropriate illustrations of the pressing presence of virginity in contrasting cultures.

In this realm of gender roles, it is generally agreed by scholars, such as Karen Vieira Powers, that the Inca "did not place a high value on female virginity" (Powers 2000). This viewpoint is a characteristic of what Powers calls gender parallelism and gender complementarity, a notion that delineates the two separate but equivalent spheres in which men and women respectively hold their own autonomy. The male sphere complemented and coexisted with the female sphere; this gender parallelism is indicated in the interdependent gender-specific roles they fulfilled. For example, within *ayllus* (clans), both members of the sexes "labored collectively and reciprocally" in fieldwork (Mckay et al., 2015). This system is representative of the necessity of men and women alike, as their contributions acted as the "fundamental social unit of Andean society" (Mckay et al., 2015). Thus, both genders were equally necessary to running a village. It appears, then, that women held the same privileges and respect as men. Powers' argument repudiates the concept of virginity as unequally implemented between the Inca gender binary. However, although Powers is correct in that the Inca placed less of an importance on virginity, this does not mean that the institution of virginity did not exist at all. Further, gender parallelism and complementarity does not imply gender equality — in other words, virginity continued to act as an underlying mechanism in disrupting the balance between genders. Surely enough, there are indeed striking similarities between the Inca and Catholic interpretations of virginity: it is equated to purity, and specifically the purity of a woman.

Before delving into these similarities, it is important to understand the very definition of virginity and from what grounds the conceptions of virginity came from. Christianity — being that it was the prevailing religion of the Old World and also that it broadly shares fundamental doctrines with the other two widespread Abrahamic religions — acts as pertinent historical background for defining virginity. This is due to its fixed patriarchal characteristics, such as its deity being "a singularly male god" and "ideologies and practices that were especially repressive of female sexuality" (Powers 2000). Such ideologies are exemplified by the Holy Trinity, which consists of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Additionally, a Catholic belief known as the Immaculate Conception states that all three of these male entities materialized in the absence of sexual intercourse (Powers 2000). God had no mother nor wife, and his Son remained unmarried and was born of a virgin who conceived him without any form of sexual activity (Powers 2000). This "Christian patriarchy"

was sustained by both the absence of women and the absence of female sexuality (Powers 2000). The link between virginity, purity, and females now becomes clear: while Mother Mary did play an imperative part in conceiving Jesus, her virginity is incongruously emphasized so as to accentuate the immaculacy of the all-male Holy Trinity. Virginity consequently became intrinsically linked with women rather than men because it was Mary, a female, who gave birth to Christ. Mary's importance as the lone eminent female figure in Christianity, in turn, created a standard and expectation that Christian women were held to. The ideal Christian woman must be sexually pure, for Mary was sexually pure. It is important that we understand, however, that although Christianity acts as a thorough representation of what virginity means and implies for Christian women, chastity is not exclusive to this religion, nor to Old World civilizations. Virginity is an institution that imbues the social and political hierarchy from any culture, no matter where and when a civilization exists. The fact that the interpretation of virginity in Christianity was the same as it was in Inca society, in spite of any social or political-specific niceties, represents the institution's universality throughout human history.

The Inca, as follows, are not exempt from this definition and application of virginity in a political context. Inca men climbed their political hierarchy by capitalizing on virginity to build a repertoire of prestigious titles and recognition. Politics meant power, and one cannot climb the political hierarchy in a society without garnering perceived superiority from others (Strasser 2016). In order to garner this perceived superiority, one must gain social status. For example, marital alliances and polygamy were long used political procedures practiced by Inca rulers to amplify their noble status, along with consolidating power over newly conquered territories (Powers 2000). This idea came from the Inca belief that men were sons of the Sun, women were daughters of the Moon, and the Sun and the Moon were siblings. In the earthly world, this cosmological arrangement was mirrored in the tradition of the Inca ruler marrying his sister (Powers 2000). Therefore, by declaring that all the women he conquered were his sisters, an emperor essentially turned them into potential wives that could be used to legitimize his power (Powers 2000). The utilization of chaste women as a means to bolster political prowess is accordingly elucidated by the government-enforced search for the most physically attractive virgin females to become *acllas* — wives of the Inca ruler delegated to either marital alliances or his concubine (Powers 2000). These *acllas* could also be assigned to an *acllawasi*, which were enclosures where their sexuality was guarded (Powers 2000). Evidently, there was a link between chastity, the female gender, and beauty, with beauty being a physical characteristic epitomized by chastity. It therefore goes without saying that this notion did not apply to men. If an Inca emperor wanted to use the established cosmo-

logical beliefs regarding the Sun and Moon as mentioned before, he needed to marry virgin women to corroborate his power, and not virgin men. This illustrates the invisible omnipresence of virginity not only in religion but also in politics.

Virginity as a political vehicle was also not exclusive to the royal court, demonstrating its dissemination up and down sociopolitical hierarchies. Village leaders of conquered lands willingly offered their most beautiful virgin daughters or other female relatives as human tribute to the Inca ruler, often in exchange for the acquirement of privileges such as the ability to marry upper-class women as a means to increase both social and political status (Strasser 2016). Being that it was an honor to send still chaste daughters and other relatives to be the emperor's personal concubines, there then existed a cemented bond of loyalty and obligation between the subjugated and the subjugator (Strasser 2016). It is not only political prowess and social recognition that males gained through virginity, however; they could even attain bureaucratic positions. Perhaps the most illustrative example of this is another form of human tribute: human sacrifice. The *qhapaq huchas*, or sacrificial victims, typically consisted of beautiful young boys and girls, although those who were sacrificed were overwhelmingly female ("Qhapaq Hucha Sacrifice" 2009). Moreover, the level of physical beauty of *qhapaq huchas* had to be at the apex of perfection — they could not have any blemishes, freckles, or spots on their bodies ("Qhapaq Hucha Sacrifice" 2009). Besides physical perfection, a paramount prerequisite for a human sacrifice was virginity ("Qhapaq Hucha Sacrifice" 2009). This was such a searched for characteristic in females that parents were often relieved to find their daughter sexually active at an early age ("Qhapaq Hucha Sacrifice" 2009). The standards for the rejection of a female *qhapaq hucha* being based on both physical and sexual impurity, again, displayed a deep-seated connection between virginity, femininity, the beauty of a woman's purity, and likewise, the purity of her physical beauty. Yet, there still endures a political incentive and advantage in human sacrifice, despite parents' hopes for not losing their child as a human tribute. Such is the case with Tanta Carhua, a ten year old girl offered as a virgin *qhapaq hucha* (Strasser 2016). Usually, sacrifices were performed in the Inca capital city, but in order to show respect for Tanta's family, the Inca emperor at this time allowed her to be sacrificed in her own *ayllu* ("Qhapaq Hucha Sacrifice" 2009). In addition to the ruler's personal recognition of the Carhua family, the offering of Tanta for the sacrificial ceremony increased her family's status in their community while simultaneously increasing their prestige outside their *ayllu* ("Qhapaq Hucha Sacrifice" 2009). Carhua's sacrifice consequently opened governmental positions and opportunities for her father and his descendants; many became governors or priests, with their fame enhanced by their relation to

Carhua and the fact that her own death deified her into being the goddess of her *ayllu* (Strasser 2016). The ability of village leaders and its male inhabitants to achieve political positions, as illustrated by Tanta Carhua's case, is evidence that the virginal aspects of women were advantageous to men. Given the benefit of their gender, men had the upper hand in exploiting the institution of virginity, due to its more feminine connotations than masculine, and used it to advance their political agendas.

These patriarchal characteristics evident in the Inca's implicit use of virginity as a gateway to political stature was compellingly mirrored in even the most antithetical societies — take sixteenth century Spain, one of the leading countries in the age of exploration. Let us revisit the *acllas* in the Inca society. These women were, in essence, the Andean version of Catholic nuns. While *acllas* differed from nuns, as they were chosen for their beauty, a shared trait of both was maintaining abstinence for the entirety of their lives (Classen 1990). This is where another one of the several striking similarities exist between the Inca and Catholic enforcement of virginity: not only were *acllas* cloistered, like nuns, they were also told by *acllawasi* authorities that "if they lost their virginity their bodies would rot" and any involvement in sexual relations was punishable by death (Classen 1990). This punishment negates Powers' argument that Andean societies' lack of a word for virgin illustrates that they must not have placed much importance on it. Further, the severity of this punishment is comparable to Spanish Catholic beliefs concerning the loss of virginity. Bernardino de Sahagún, a prominent Franciscan friar during the evangelization of New Spain, once gave a sermon to a group of indigenous women, criticizing them for giving their "girlhood [virginity]" to the Devil (Powers 2000). Similar to how *acllas* were told their bodies would rot for participating in sexual relations, these indigenous women were told by a representative of Catholicism that they were "like a chamber pot" and "equal to filth" for discarding their chastity (Powers 2000). For both of these seemingly polarized societies, virginity was explicitly paralleled to the sexual purity of a woman. Spain, too, practiced the "seclusion of women ... in order to guard their sexuality," since the church assigned husbands the role of maintaining the "physical and spiritual well-being" of all female members within their households (Powers 2000). Additionally, no matter their social or economic status, Spanish women were "barred from positions of authority" such as in the bureaucracy or any sort of participation within "the decision-making processes of church and state"; the reason for this was women "were thought to lack the innate ability to reason and hence were considered to be minors ... just as children were" (Powers 2000). Considering that the husband must guard the physical, spiritual, and sexual well-being of all women in the household, there once more endures a lurking link

between political control and virginity, remarkably similar to the Inca practice of virginal *qhapaq huchas* and female enclosure in *acllawasis*. The correlation of virginity to the purity of a woman and this correlation being used as a tool for men to access higher political status was maintained in even the most contrasting societies; the Inca and Spanish are only one of the many examples of how the definition and political implications of virginity was the same no matter how different the societies in question were.

It is evident that virginity was maintained across even the most disparate societies. This is especially illustrated by comparing the Inca and Spanish, although the prevalence of virginity applies to other very opposite societies as well. For example, instead of comparing the Inca and Spanish, we may discuss the interpretation of virginity in another non-Abrahamic religion, such as Hinduism, to another Abrahamic religion, such as Islam, and find that the meaning of virginity is more or less the same in a sociopolitical context — this is a topic for another paper, however. The interrelations between social notions such as female chastity and political hierarchies show how it is crucial to understand that virginity does not exist as a lone institution. The concept of intersectionality states that institutions such as gender, class, and politics "are not distinct realms of experience, existing in splendid isolation from each other," nor could they be put together into one single entity (Indianizing Film: Decolonization 111). Instead, these institutions, such as virginity and politics, "come into existence *in and through* relation to each other" (Indianizing Film: Decolonization 111). Finally, it cannot be denied that virginity's prevalence was and is a key mechanism that drives patriarchal characteristics within societies. The feminist movements in the U.S. during the mid-twentieth century serve as an example of women voicing and acknowledging how virginity in particular worked against their sexual freedom, but did not for men (Carpenter 2002). The trend of virginity's comparatively lighter emphasis on men continues in modern times, as men today typically view this institution as a "rite of passage ... to manhood"; women, on the other hand, generally see virginity as unpleasurable physically and emotionally, indicating virginity loss' heavier weight on females than males (Carpenter 2002). Further, the disproportionate amount of women in politics today, who account for only seventeen percent of parliamentarians worldwide, is reminiscent of the aforementioned banishment of women from bureaucracies in sixteenth century Catholic Spain ("The State of the World's Children" 2006). Although only one institution in the grand scheme of intersectionality, virginity unquestionably plays an immense role in reducing the sexual and political freedom of women in modern civilizations. To scrutinize virginity and place it under a critical analysis serves not only to further scholarly debate but also builds the foundation of plans to dismantle this social construct in order to provide

women not only sociopolitical opportunities but also the freedom of choice in regards to sexual sovereignty. In other words, it must be an individual's choice to define the status of their sexuality, without facing sociopolitical biases based on gender alone.

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archy and how men use virginity as a political vehicle to extend their dominance in society. For example, if a woman was a virgin and was younger and more beautiful than most, they were more likely to be sacrificed. This sacrifice allowed the victims' families to lead a better life.

Talking about MMW as a history class, Chezy thinks that this sequence of courses gives us a broad sense of human history and that these classes of the past can be very useful when we think about what to do in the present or for the future. Although covering the whole course of human history in five quarters means that many details can't be touched upon, it is still a good way to cultivate interest. In MMW 14, students were only allowed to use first-hand sources, so she got to take a close look at 18th and 19th Century newspapers and advertisements. This first-hand experience was really cool and eye-opening for her.

When Chezy shared her experience and thoughts about the unique MMW program, she emphasized that although the courses challenged her, she actually enjoyed the experience a lot. The professors and TAs were very helpful on giving one-on-one advice and made her first time of doing in-depth academic research an easier and more fun process. She really hopes that students will appreciate this course more because even for a STEM major, writing is always an inevitable part of life and it is essential for college students to learn and approach academic writing step-by-step.

Chezyrome David



## A Talk With Chezy David

By Yuchen Wu

Chezyrome (Chezy) David is a second year literature major. She wrote this paper about the universal understanding of virginity for her MMW 13 class. In this paper, she uses Andeans and sixteenth century Catholic Spain to show how this institution of virginity existed in two contrasting cultures. She got the idea of this paper from a fun note that a TA shared in class; it was about the fact that Inca didn't have a word for virgin at all but they still had the concept and this concept had a heavier weight on females more so than males. The understanding and social emphasis are basically the same as how "virginity" is used in other cultures, which is a proof of how widespread this concept is.

As her professor chose to focus on the topic of gender, Chezy kept the research focused on the patri-

# Comparison of Imperial Strategies and Outcomes in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia

By Thomas Finn

The six widely recognized pristine states, those which arose without influence from any others elsewhere in the world, grant us the unique opportunity to analyze how empires expand, consolidate, and evolve without rival from foreign civilizations or precedent from past ones. We can observe not only many chilling similarities in the manner by which imperial elites on opposite sides of the planet, with no contact or cultural diffusion, chose to exert control, extract tribute, and avoid resistance, but also several divergences that may account for the varied viability and longevity of their systems. In acknowledging the similarities but choosing to focus on the differences, we can explore the effects of certain strategies on pristine empire characteristics. Mesopotamia and Egypt serve as worthy examples because most archaeologists currently consider them the oldest known civilizations, each with a wide body of evidence that can paint a picture of its imperial strategies, and yet despite their proximity, they vary in several key ways that yield what some consider opposite styles of empire, namely Mesopotamia's decentralized hegemony versus Egypt's more centralized bureaucracy.

Both of these empires began their expansion with war and conquest outward from urban centers. Excavations of Hierakonpolis in Egypt show recurring themes of warfare depicted in tomb murals from the Naqada II period, coinciding with the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt and the rise of the king as an exalted religious figure. Likewise, excavations of Uruk show aggressive expansion outward and subsequent adoption of material culture by surrounding sites identical to Uruk's (Spencer 2010). In this sense, coercive expansion to assimilate surrounding polities marks the transition from state to empire in both Egypt and Mesopotamia. However, this should not imply that the resulting empires necessarily resembled each other. Egyptologist John Baines and Assyriologist Norman Yoffee point out that degree of control and integration serve as central differences between Egypt and Mesopotamia; while Egypt's polity was equivalent to its civilization, ancient Mesopotamia never attained a single unified state empire over its civilization (Baines and Yoffee 1998). Egypt seems to have consistently centralized the region around a king, whose seat of power marked the clear source of civilization, whereas Mesopotamia persisted through more decentralized hegemony and fluctuating dominance of city-states which were led by their own ambitious kings.

Thus, we should turn our attention to heads of state in these two civilizations and explore how these figures acquired and maintained power. For 2,350 years in Egypt, the title of king came with undisputed religious, political, and economic authority to the extent that he

could make or break elites on a whim and did not need a standing army for almost a thousand years; in contrast, Mesopotamia had no single well-defined title bestowed on kings, and instead rulers came to power when elites achieved special economic or military successes that elevated themselves over others (Baines and Yoffee 1998). A key difference here seems to hinge on the elite or noble class, since in Egypt ideology of the ascribed "king" status grants enough material power to effectively control who becomes and stays elite, whereas in Mesopotamia the elite vie amongst themselves for authority, and many of those ascribed to nobility can eventually achieve kingship. One can see this illustrated in the reforms of Urugagina of Lagash who tried to prevent further coups and end this cycle, keeping Sumer unified under his rule, but was unable to prevent the region from reverting to its Balkanizing pattern (Baines and Yoffee 1998). Egyptian kings' absolute ascribed power allowed them to control the nobility and stay in power, while Mesopotamian kings lacked this pre-formed legitimacy because they often achieved their power from a noble stature, but as a result could not consistently prevent others from doing the same.

The way kings handled imperial administration also contrasts between Egypt and Mesopotamia in a manner consistent with the theme of centralized bureaucracy versus decentralized hegemony. Mesopotamia had many powerful urban centers throughout its history, with kings like Sargon of Akkade who would privilege their own city after successful conquest by changing capitals and dismantling the existing bureaucracy to legitimize the current regime (Baines and Yoffee 1998). This clearly would also undermine any continuous presence of centralized bureaucracy in Mesopotamia, given the frequency with which elite city administrators outside the capital managed to rise in power, challenge the incumbent regime, and rewrite the empire's structure yet again. In this way, the hegemony cycled its center of power and tended to break back into rival city-states. Egyptian kings, on the other hand, assigned rural estates to elite administrators, land attached to the title rather than the person (Baines and Yoffee 1998). This kept elites from gaining too much power in urban centers and reinforced the idea that power is ascribed to those whom the king deems worthy of the title, not achieved by those who deem themselves worthy.

Despite Mesopotamia's lack of imperial continuity comparable to Egypt's, its civilization persevered by other means. According to archaeologist Gil Stein, the architectural divisions in "Ubaid cities like Eridu, Ur, and Uqair suggest two-tiered chiefdom hierarchies, but complexity grew over time into the first Mesopotamian states by the Uruk period" (Stein 1994). Based on identical

ceramics, civil planning, cultural practices, and trade Diasporas present after this time between distant cities like Uruk and Hacinebi, it appears that powerful city-states established colonies on the peripheries of their domain (Stein 1998). Despite the cycles of Balkanization prevalent in Mesopotamia, this practice of cities spreading their idea of what Mesopotamian culture should look like to far-flung regions of their empires may have served to repeatedly re-homogenize culture in the region, reinforcing a decentralized cultural hegemony that outlived centralized imperial states. In this way, Mesopotamian civilization recognizably did not need the continuous monopolized centrality of Egypt in order to persist.

In contrast, Egypt's consolidation strategies involved spreading out its population more evenly throughout its domain, right up to the frontiers. Excavation of Old Kingdom Memphis and its provincial settlements like Hierakonpolis, Buhén, Dakhla, and Elephantine reveal that Egypt urbanized far less than the other pristine states (Wenke 1989). This served to prevent power from conglomerating in any one city where the administrative elite might eventually come to rival the king in the capital, as so often happened in Mesopotamia's myriad powerful urban centers. The Egyptian king, possessing power over whoever fills elite positions throughout his domain, could allocate administrators and settlers as he pleased. Evidently, this ability served to keep Egypt's frontiers fortified, the countryside well-stocked with loyalists who could not conveniently seize power over others, and the empire's territorial claims legitimate.

Ultimately, many theorists explain the disparate imperial strategies utilized in Mesopotamia and Egypt as enabled by ecological variables in the environments from which the regions' states first arose. It remains important to consider this dynamic because it can shed light on why certain strategies served empires better in some contexts than in others. For example, archaeologist Robert Wenke notes that "the Nile's long, narrow floodplain would have had geometric limits not encountered in Mesopotamia," (Wenke 1988). This meant more concentrated urban development would not yield the same benefits enjoyed by densely populated cities elsewhere, and instead favored the more moderated, spread out style of Egyptian provincial settlement. In the Fertile Crescent, however, the wider and more expansive arable land seemed more conducive to a different scheme where lords purchased adjacent plots for subordinates to farm on rotating years, eventually adding up to an accumulated workforce servicing all surrounding land, and gradual "enclavization" into an urban center (Baines and Yoffee 1998). This system of extracting wealth facilitated the rise of elites on an economic, achieved basis in individual cities, consistent with the competitive nature of city-state kings seen throughout Mesopotamia's history. We see through these examples that an empire's viability depends not simply on what strategies it uses to

expand, consolidate, and administrate, but also on what strategies the surrounding environmental conditions enable.

Looking at these systems from a contemporary standpoint, one might characterize Egypt as a planned economy, while the Mesopotamian dynamics might seem more free market-oriented, again repeating the centralized-decentralized dichotomy we have seen as a recurring motif in this analysis. Documents from Old Babylonia and Old Assyria show that elite households accrued power as corporate entities in the private sector and used their economic clout to involve themselves in other spheres of city life, like the religious temples (Baines and Yoffee 1998). Again, this sounds consistent with the idea that many kings in Mesopotamia achieved their political power by raising themselves out of the upper class and into royal stature. Records in Egypt, though scarcer than Mesopotamia's, show central economic planning by the state throughout Egypt's Old Kingdom, whereby regions could specialize their production, the king could oust ineffective administrators, specialists could interpret the amounts of available resources and units of labor at imperial disposal, and monumental architectural undertakings could serve to unify the Egyptian people (Baines and Yoffee 1998). The Egyptian king's absolute control over his state's upper class allowed him to give rise to elites as he wished by essentially appointing or debarring aristocracy. In a sense, this is in contrast to the situation in Mesopotamia where the upper class gave rise to kings, who sprang from its ranks.

Of course, the dichotomy painted by the evidence of Mesopotamia as a decentralized hegemony and Egypt as a centralized bureaucracy, does have notable exceptions in the millennia these empires existed. Several conquerors did quite nearly manage to stably unify Mesopotamia, like Sargon of Akkad, and Egypt did begin its long descent into decentralization toward the end of the Old Kingdom as administrators and their local capitals rose in power, not to see centrality like the kind it once knew until Greco-Roman times (Baines and Yoffee 1998). Despite this, the focus must remain on the consequences of these civilization's initial overarching imperial strategies. The aforementioned lapses from established patterns in either civilization demonstrate the effects of these differing styles not just on imperial longevity, but on the general zeitgeist of each culture. Early Mesopotamia's decentralized style of hegemonic dominance maintained its distinct culture through the rise and fall of many kings whose empires could only nearly unify the entire region before Balkanizing back into competing city-states. Egypt's origins in centralized territorialism set precedent for the iconic role the region would play as part of the comparably centralized Roman Empire, and also set the stage for great works like the Pyramids of Giza, which still survive and represent Egyptian culture today. Mesopotamia's decentralized hegemonic domination and Egypt's centralized territorial bureaucracy

may have initially stemmed from varying environmental conditions, but the divergent styles drastically affected the courses these civilizations would take for millennia to come.

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# A Conversation with Thomas Finn

By Jiayu Fu

Thomas Finn is double majoring in psychology and biological anthropology with a minor in literatures of the world. Finn was a research assistant at the UCSD Autism Center of Excellence last year. They are currently assisting with a project on the social cognition of dolphins. After graduation, they are hoping to find work at a lab in San Diego studying either animal cognition or marginalized groups, and apply to graduate schools in the fall.

**Q: Why did you write this article? What's the purpose of comparison?**

A: I originally wrote this in my ANTH 101 class, Foundations of Social Complexity. Comparing ancient pristine states can shed light on their life cycles, or the possible courses of empires and hegemonic cultures given certain practices, strategies, and resources. Since pristine states arise from a context of no recorded cultural precedent, they are especially interesting to examine how their particular political structure survives, changes, and yields the historical trends it does.

**Q: Mesopotamia is usually considered as a region under the power of an empire. Is a region comparable to a country like Egypt?**

A: Both were state societies at the time, two of the first in the world, in fact, so the comparison serves to shed light on how and why they may have become or remained so different over time, given both their differing locations, imperial strategies, and features of their ruling classes. Mesopotamia and Egypt were both sites of empires

lasting millennia, yet we tend to remember Egypt always under the rule of an Egyptian Empire, while Mesopotamia was ruled intermittently by various more specific empires, rather than some imagined "Mesopotamian Empire." This shows a difference in how centralized the empires were, among other key traits, influencing how history remembers them.

**Q: The strategies Mesopotamia used were very similar with the enfeoffment system used by Zhou dynasty (1046 BC-771 BC) in Chinese history: the emperors gave their relatives land and all properties including people on the land, and the relatives were responsible for protecting and supporting the emperors' power. However, the system had a very big problem resulting in the split of power and endless warfare. What do you think about the strategies Mesopotamia used? Do you think it is a good political strategy for governance?**

A: It's important to consider the material conditions of the society at the time, and also not only ask which worked better, but for whom it worked better, because ultimately the imperial systems benefited different people. The characterization of Mesopotamia as a Fertile Crescent, versus Egypt where life depended mainly on farming along the Nile, meant that the resources of Mesopotamia were more conducive to forming a number of powerful city-states that competed with one another, while Egypt could become and remain unified more reliably. Also, we should remember that both styles were pretty great for the people in power, but pretty terrible for the people on the lower end of the hierarchies. On the flipside of all the awesome monumental architecture of Egypt, for example, there were countless slaves who lost their lives or were forced to suffer in toil. I personally always tend to prefer less hierarchical societies, where the power does not concentrate in the hands of those at the top, but is more distributed, and more easily seized by those without it. It's hard for me to choose between them because neither empire was very egalitarian, and though decentralization allowed more distribution of power and opportunities for overthrowing tyrannous regimes, having a centralized and constantly-checked bureaucracy meant more stability for the people; Egypt even lacked a standing army for quite some time. Ideally, though, since I tend to root against empires and want to see them dissolve, I think decentralized structures offer more opportunities for this to happen. However, my answer primarily depends which way of life is better for the slaves, serfs, peasants, or other disenfranchised laborers exploited to build the empire, and therefore varies over time and region in either empire.

**Q: Do you consider either of their imperial strategies more successful than the other?**

A: Both empires were successful in the sense that they became sprawling civilizations with cultures that influenced the world for millennia, but the primary winners in any empire are those with all the power, accumulated by exploiting the masses. If the standard for success is better continuity for state institutions, then centralism

seems to offer more longevity, but if you're not part of the royal family, a more decentralized empire gives you more chance of seizing or challenging those in power, rising through the ranks yourself. This "mobility" can either benefit or harm the common people depending on the nature of the unrest and the politics of the usurpers. As an anarcho-communist, I don't necessarily think the amazing monuments and hegemonic cultural institutions are worth the human cost and the suffering inherent to highly hierarchical forms of governance, so my idea of success, most truthfully, depends on which empire is more conducive to revolutions that benefit the common people and hopefully replace slavery with serfdom, peasantry, or some other mode that improves their lives, and I tend to think this is more the case in decentralized empires; however, there's plenty of variation depending on context.

**Q: For Chinese history, we say that the most two fierce conflicts of governance is: first, the conflict between the central and the local governments; second, the conflict between the emperor/king and the prime minister. Did these conflicts also happen in Egypt or in Mesopotamia?**

**A:** In Egypt, since the king maintained more absolute cultural, political, and economic authority all in one, the conflicts between central/local or king/administrators were dealt with more easily from a central source. The kings carefully managed the infrastructure to keep nobles in any one location from accumulating too much power or influence, and used royal power to strike down overly ambitious would-be-rivals. In Mesopotamia, we see these conflicts play out more often and clearly, because it tended to divide into city-states, each with its own king who rose through the ranks due to preexisting or achieved power in some other sphere of influence. This meant more fluctuation and mobility, in some sense of the word, with aristocrats always playing the "game of thrones" so-to-speak, vying for influence that wasn't as preordained and entrenched as in Egypt.

Thomas Finn



# Hippocampal Volume and PTSD

By Sophia Lilliana Holmqvist

in military members returning from combat, and it can hinder their everyday lives. There is much speculation regarding whether there are specific vulnerabilities to developing PTSD, leading to the following question: why do certain veterans develop PTSD, while others who also witnessed violence do not? There have been several studies linking small hippocampal volume and a diagnosis of combat related PTSD in the veteran population. This paper will explore small hippocampal volume as a risk factor for the development of combat-related PTSD among veterans.

In one study by Gilberston, four groups were analyzed: combat-exposed twin with PTSD, noncombat-exposed twin with PTSD, combat exposed without PTSD, and non-combat with PTSD (Gilberston et al., 2002). Using MRI, they measured hippocampal volume in these subgroups. By analyzing hippocampal volume, they found that twins who had one brother with PTSD had significantly smaller hippocampal volume than twins who included a brother who did not go on to develop PTSD. Even if this non-combat exposed twin was PTSD free, he still had smaller hippocampal volume if his twin brother happened to have PTSD. This suggests a relationship between smaller hippocampal volume and a susceptibility to developing PTSD when exposed to trauma.

Another study also used twins as a reference to attempt to distinguish if smaller hippocampal volume is predisposing or is a result from development of PTSD. Gurvits used neurologic soft signs or NSSs in assessing hippocampal volume (Gurvits et al., 2002). NSSs indicate neurological dysfunction in which the average score is the primary outcome measure. They found that combat veterans with PTSD had significantly higher scores than combat veteran without PTSD. Similar to the first study, the unexposed twins of combat veterans with PTSD also had significantly higher NSS scores. Gurvits found that "subtle neurologic dysfunction in PTSD is not acquired along with the trauma or PTSD but rather represents an antecedent familial vulnerability factor for developing chronic PTSD on exposure to a traumatic event" (Gurvits et al., 2002). This shows a distinct way of measuring hippocampal volume that does not require the use of MRI but rather a neurological examination. In both studies, hippocampal volume was measured relative to total brain volume.

Van Rooji found similar results involving hippocampal volume and development of PTSD (Van Rooji et al., 2015). This study used three subgroups: veterans with PTSD, veterans without PTSD, and healthy controls. It was found that hippocampal volume did not fluctuate throughout the study, potentially showing that this is

constant before PTSD and after PTSD onset. Also, even with therapy, hippocampus values did not fluctuate. Van Rooji concluded that, "Hippocampal volumes did not differ between trauma-exposed controls and healthy controls, suggesting that reduced hippocampal volume is not the consequence of stress or trauma exposure during deployment" (Van Rooji et al., 2015). This study supports the hypothesis that small hippocampal volume is a vulnerability for developing PTSD.

Childress conducted a lit review on PTSD and potential brain dysfunction. They summarized findings stating that the hippocampus was the most common brain dysfunction found in those with PTSD (Childress et al., 2013). From a longitudinal study, Childress found that, "it is possible that smaller hippocampal volumes pre-dated the traumatic event, in which case reduced hippocampal volume could, in fact, be a risk for PTSD" (Childress et al., 2013). Results from the study also indicated that the small hippocampal volume in PTSD patients could help explain why there are high rates of dementia among those with PTSD because of the hippocampus' relationship with memory functioning.

These studies support the hypothesis that small hippocampal volume may be a predictor for developing PTSD when exposed to trauma rather than a result from developing PTSD which will be assessed in this study.

### Participants

1023 participants (76% male, 24% female) (51% Caucasian, 33% African American, 12 % Latino, 4 % Other) from 21-45 years of age were recruited from VA's nationwide who were to be deployed into the front lines for the first time within 3 months and would return within 2 years through flyering at various VA's including San Diego VA, New York VA, Illinois VA. All were volunteers who would be reimbursed with \$100 for completing two follow ups after deployment. Participants were also excluded if they met criteria for non- combat related PTSD and combat related PTSD in the initial visit. The MRI and interviews were all completed at the participant's respective VA.

### Design and Procedure

The research design of this study was correlational, non-experimental, and longitudinal as the relationship of hippocampal volume and eventual development of PTSD or lack thereof was observed pre and post deployment. The variables were hippocampal volume relative to brain volume and a diagnosis of PTSD from the CAPS 5. Hippocampal volume was measured with MRI relative to total brain volume of each participant before deployment in the initial visit. MRI was measured using "a 1.5-t esla General Electric Signa System (GE Medical Systems, Milwaukee, Wisconsin). Whole-brain volume was calculated with automated multistep algorithms described in detail elsewhere" (Gilberston et al., 2002). After measuring relative brain volumes, participants were interviewed by a clinician using the Clin-

cian-Administered PTSD Scale for DSM-5 (CAPS-5) which accounts for a lifetime or current diagnosis of combat- related PTSD. During the initial pre deployment visit, participants were excluded if they had already met criteria for combat related PTSD, non-combat related PTSD. Clinicians administering the CAPS 5 were blind to whether or not the participants had small or large hippocampal volume measured in the MRI. All clinicians were of the doctoral level. The CAPS 5 is comprehensive as it combines all PTSD symptoms from the DSM-5 and accounts for onset, the impact of symptoms, severity, and subtypes. The test takes 5-10 minutes to finish. When scoring, a clinician must determine if the participant had one symptom from each criterion from the DSM. The severity rating ranges from 0 or absent to 4 or extreme. A higher score indicates higher severity of symptoms. A sample question item is, "In the past month, have you had any unwanted memories of (EVENT) while you were awake, so not counting dreams?" (Weathers 2015). A diagnosis was made at the clinician's discretion in assessing symptoms according to the CAPS-5 and therefore DSM criteria. Schnurr stated that the "CAPS-5, a clinician-administered interview that has excellent reliability and validity and is the gold standard for PTSD treatment research" (Schnurr et al., 2014). The trauma was required to have been originated during the most recent deployment to meet diagnosis for PTSD in this study.

After deployment, MRI was taken again to measure hippocampal volume relative to brain volume with the apparatus described above. An interview was done around the CAPS-5 scale to assess PTSD symptom levels during this same visit. A 6 and 12-month follow-up was conducted after returning from deployment. At 6 and 12 months, MRIs were taken to measure hippocampal volume, relative total brain volume, and the CAPS 5 was administered to assess change in PTSD symptoms. MRI was taken using the same measures described above. Also, clinicians were blind to the fact which certain participants had smaller hippocampal volumes to avoid bias.

### Limitations

This study may have limitations because it is a correlational study. This may be an issue because we cannot establish causality that hippocampal volume directly means that one will have a diagnosis of PTSD if exposed to combat related trauma. There are many other factors that may contribute to a diagnosis of PTSD although the longitudinal aspect of this study does counter reverse causality. Other potential limitations to this study include an unusually high death rate for those entering deployment. If this would occur, the sample size could be cut in half with certain ethnicities or gender being over or under represented which would affect the external validity or generalizability of the findings. Another issue could be clinicians not adhering to the strict DSM criteria when diagnosing those with combat- related PTSD. Also, if several participants happened to not meet

criteria for combat-related PTSD, there would be no findings in the study, which could potentially occur although it is likely from such a large sample, some will go on to develop PTSD from their combat experience being on the front lines of war. Threats to internal validity could be various other factors contributing to PTSD or participant reaction bias, perhaps trying to get a PTSD diagnosis for disability reasons or trying to confirm the hypothesis if they happened to have small hippocampal volume although the results from the MRI would not be disclosed to the veterans to counter this. A threat to external validity could be the use of convenience sampling if more males than females enroll in the study which is very likely from the military, making the findings not generalizable to female veterans.

### Future Directions

It would be beneficial for future studies to obtain a very large sample to account for a high death rate in deployment or study veterans who are on longer deployments than a year. More studies would need to be replicated to determine if small hippocampal volume is a risk factor or a result from PTSD with large samples that are representative of the population. More longitudinal studies need to be conducted in order to evaluate hippocampal volume as a risk factor for PTSD. This could have a huge implication on veteran's treatment pre and post deployment to minimize combat related PTSD. More studies also need to be conducted using current veterans from Iraq to accurately treat PTSD for recent younger veterans.

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## A Q&A with Sophia

By Eric Lee

Why are you interested in the study of the development of PTSD?

One really important thing to note about this study is that it was a hypothetical research proposal for my Psych 70 class. This study was never carried out or approved by the IRB. This is an example of a study I would like to carry out in the future. This is why there is no results section.

I am interested in the development of PTSD because there are so many factors that contribute to it so it is helpful to conduct research in which tries to separate these factors and assess their predictive value, like hippocampal volume.

What is your biggest gain from this study?

The biggest gain would be potentially screening at risk people early to determine their susceptibility to PTSD and therefore identifying those who need treatment more accurately if this study was actually carried out.

Although your paper is mainly focused on the relationship between the smaller hippocampus and susceptible development of PTSD, what other causes of factors do you think can aggravate or develop PTSD?

It's important to recognize that PTSD is not caused directly by one factor. It is caused by an interaction between several causes and risk factors such as low social support, genetics, temperament, regulation of hormones, amount and severity of trauma, a history of anxiety and depression in the family.

Do you think there is any cure or liable solution for PTSD or preventing it?

I'd say there is no absolute cure for PTSD because it cannot be pinned to one specific cause as it is an interaction between several factors as I stated before. I think prevention is extremely important as getting counseling at the time of the traumatic event and engaging in therapy early can prevent more debilitating symptoms from developing. I am not a clinical psychologist so I can't speak to exact treatment recommendations.

What other ways are there to link the development of PTSD?

There has been studies done on brain imaging attempting to link different brain abnormalities, but also what I find most interesting is insecure attachment to the mother growing up has been found to increase the risk of PTSD in the infant.

### **What are your goal for academic or career future?**

My goal in my future is to attain a PhD in clinical psychology and be involved in research, perhaps teaching, and specifically neuropsychology and trauma.

### **What kind of work would you like to do in the future?**

I would like to be a neuropsychologist who studies the effects of trauma in at risk youth as that is what I currently study in one of my labs with Dr. Amy Lansing. I really want to have an impact on society by either incorporating some change into the juvenile justice system or schools where trauma is so common in adolescents.

### **What other studies interest you?**

A lot of other studies interest me. I enjoy reading about trauma specific articles, but also about alcohol abuse, and even ones on learning and memory. I am fascinated by a lot of different aspects of psychology.

### **Since you are a social science major, what makes this major stand out to you?**

Being a psychology major to me is a perfect mix of a scientific research emphasis and helping the greater good directly clinically or seeing research directly implemented to help people.

### **How can this major help improve our world today and how can you contribute to it?**

I think seeing so many studies on new treatments and finding out about predictors of disorders can help prevent and treat mental illness so much better. There is still so much stigma surrounding mental illness still so I would like to contribute to fighting against this. Hopefully by the time I'm older and practicing, mental illness will be viewed more similarly to physical illness. Being involved with organizations that directly attempt to remove the stigma of mental illness I think is extremely important because by educating the public more, this stigma will begin to wane.

Sophia Holmqvist



# **Ignorance is Bliss (Said No One Ever): The Rise of Women's Education in Enlightenment-Period Korea**

By Joshua Laroya

The topic of women's rights is a well-known issue — with media coverage spanning the Western world and Western developments — but it is not at the forefront of any recent, popular campaigns in Asia. This paper will discuss how women's education became a norm in pre-colonial Korea, particularly the period of late nineteenth century Korea. That is, while Korean women were learning how to read and write, social stigma worked against such learning. However, near the end of the nineteenth century, the education of women was a less-debated topic, and more women started going to school. The question here asks how this increase in women's enrollment in schools came to be. Coincidentally, around the same time, Enlightenment ideals arrived in Korea as the country started opening up to the outside world. As Enlightenment thought included in its tenets equal rights for everyone, the basic answer to the paper's proposed question is that the principal force in pushing for women's education was by ethnic Korean Enlightenment supporters, comprised of both women *and* men. Even so, different effects of the Enlightenment period are credited for being the main reason women's education became such a widely-discussed topic. This paper argues that Enlightenment thought pushed both Korea's male and female population to actively advocate for education for women for the political benefit of the country as a strong and independent nation.

### **Independent Women: Women's Activities in a Pre-Enlightenment Context**

It is well established that women had minimal privileges — or at least minimal representation — in terms of obtaining an education and involvement in public affairs before the entrance of Enlightenment thought into Korea. Women's education started with literacy. All official writings were initially done using Chinese characters — Korea obtained its first writing system from ties with China — until the creation of the native Korean writing system called *Hangeul* or "vernacular Korean," which is the writing system that is in use to this day (Haboush 2009). Notwithstanding this new and innovative system and its uniqueness to the region, as *Hangeul* was not considered as formal as Chinese character-writing was, it had little use among the literati and instead found more use by women and the common Korean public (Lee 2008). Over time *Hangeul* became the *de facto* official writing system to be used for and by women; for example, the typical, literate woman would use it for all of her writings — even a man writing a letter to a woman would end up learning how to use it as well — and eventually many books originally written in literary

Chinese were eventually translated into Hangeul for women to read (Lee 2008). With this new, widespread skill of literacy, women were able to start applying themselves into new, more academic areas of life previously only accessible to men.

An example showing women applying their literacy can be found in the Korean petition system. Korean citizens starting in the year 1401 AD were able to submit both oral and written petitions that would allow the government to hear both positive and negative commentary from the people; records from the time period show that a substantial number of participants in the petition system were women, with "commoner women [being] the third largest group of petitioners, and ... women of the nobility [being] the seventh largest group" (Haboush 2009). Written petitions were initially only accepted if they were written in literary Chinese, and women writing petitions in Hangeul were looked down upon; in spite of this initial reaction, "as the number of petitions written by women increased ... by the seventeenth century the practice of writing petitions in the Korean alphabet [Hangeul] was widely accepted" (Haboush 2009). Thanks to this acceptance, women were able to effectively and successfully communicate with the government. For example, one commoner woman wrote a petition asking that another, higher-class family stop extorting money from her family; the petition was accepted and received by the king, who then addressed the case by launching a whole investigation into the matter to help the commoner woman (Haboush 2009). The effect that women had on the government seen here plainly shows the capability of women to be literate and active in politics, but it would not be until much later that the concept of women being educated in this way would be popularized or considered anywhere near normal.

#### Move Over, Buddha:

#### Enlightenment Influence from the West

With the arrival of Enlightenment thought into Korea came a refreshing increase in support for women's education among the Korean populace. In the distant past, Korean women were in fact encouraged to be educated; this was changed with the later arrival of Confucianism that Koreans would adopt and make their own (Ch'oe et al., 2000). While women had already been able to read and write using Hangeul, these so-called traditional Korean views and opinions (i.e. the adopted traditional Confucian doctrine) enforced that women take up the single role of stay-at-home mothers without any further education, as an education was now considered "improper and contrary to the way women as a mother and wife should behave" (Cho 1990). Rather, the supposed ideal woman that such Confucian thought described was "... passive, obeying, chaste and subordinate to men [with any educational goals being] instrumental and far from being ideals of personal development" (Cho 1990). A quick summary of this change is stated as such:

As their [women's] roles changed in accordance with the restructuring of the Korean family according to the Confucian patrilineal descent group, the stress shifted from being a wife to being a member of a multigenerational family unit, a daughter-in-law, wife, mother, and mistress of a large household. The image of the ideal wife also changed from that of an adviser and helpmate to that of submissive spouse and caregiver. (Ch'oe et al., 2000)

It was only during the Enlightenment period in Korea that advocating for women's education became a popular idea.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Enlightenment ideas came to Korea from the Western world. With much coercion from neighboring country Japan in attempts at modernizing Korea, Korea became less isolated and opened up to the outside world (Lim 1985). Now with open travel in and out of the country, points of connection where cultural and intellectual exchanges could happen were established. These points of connection were typically port cities where Koreans or foreigners would come across each other; studying abroad, working in international trade or as missionaries, and even simply traveling through such port regions exposed many Koreans to new ideas that had never been heard of before, all due to this change out of the nation's previous isolated ways (Cho 1990). One of the concepts of Enlightenment thought was gender equality since women made up roughly half of Korea's population. While the government put many reforms in place that liberated women in different aspects — for example, widows were now allowed to remarry, an act that was previously prohibited — nothing was done in terms of educational reform (Cho 1990). As such, the topic of academic equality among the sexes arose in public discussion.

#### We're All in This Together:

#### Men Advocating for Women's Education

Aside from Korean women who were advocating for their own education, Korean men also promoted Enlightenment thoughts of equality among the sexes as well. Girls during the late 19th century were still mainly being trained in the art of homemaking and kept out of schools — this practice continuing even well into the early 20th century as well as seen from a personal account from one woman — with boys being the main part of Korea's population going off to school (Kang 2001). This special treatment for boys would result in them growing up into men that would be more exposed to and more likely to become proponents of Enlightenment thought; as such, men can also be seen as another reason for the spread of such ideas of equality among the general populace, and thus greater enabled women to more openly advocate for their own education.

With Enlightenment thought now more accessible to and more well-known by Korean women at the

time, these women started getting together to create their own newspaper articles arguing for such educational advancements for the benefit of Korea becoming a politically stronger nation that could rival other nations (Haboush 161). Alongside these advocate women doing their work were men were doing even more promoting of the same kind. Evidence shows men were advocating the exact same concept of support for education for women with the exact same reasoning. For example, one article titled "On Women's Education" was written by a man and outlined the political benefits Korea would receive as a result of women being not only "wise mothers and good wives" but educated citizens as well; this education of women (i.e. the other half of Korea's population) would then subsequently lead to more "advancement of the nation" (Haboush 2009). Due to this support from men, the argument for women's education continued to develop and spread through the many minds in the population.

### A Religion by Any Other Name Would Be as Irrelevant: A Counterargument Against Religion

There are also other views on how the push for women's education got its start. A more common argument cites the influence of religious dogmas as playing a significantly large part in spreading such ideas of gender equality in Korea's academic realm. Specifically, the religions in question were Christianity and the native Korean religion *Tonghak*.

Christianity was a big deal among Koreans who had some experience with Western ideas. The big players in this idea of ideological spread by religion were missionaries and their Korean converts (Ch'oe et al., 2000). These missionaries would later go to Korea and go against tradition by starting schools that would accept female students when such an idea was still unheard of (Lim 18). Even Korea's first school that opened exclusively for women was established as a Christian school, the goal being "to provide a thorough Christian education, and to make better Korean women [and] to liberate women through education" (Cho 1990). There, women were taught "that all human beings were equal before God" (Cho 1990). Furthermore, with the establishment of this school, many other Christians followed suit and established more and more girls' schools (Cho 1990).

The other, native Korean religion of *Tonghak* — translating roughly to "Eastern Learning" — was derived by pulling together bits and pieces of other religions, such as "Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, and Shamanism" (Ch'oe et al., 2000). Of this combination of ideas and beliefs' main points of doctrine, gender equality was a significant one; as such, followers of *Tonghak* were also light proponents of women's education (Cho 1990). One scholar states such that, "*Tonghak* (Eastern Learning) urging respect for women [was] an important ideological mainstay ... expediting the propagation of education for women" (Lim 1985).

Despite all this support, the historical context does not allow for the concept of religion being a catalyst for the spread of women's education. There are many reasons for this, all centered on how religion was a sensitive topic at this time period of the late 19th century. For example, there exists the old Korean tradition of shunning Christianity: for as long as Korea had known of Christianity up until the turn of the 20th century, Koreans continually dismissed the religion. One scholar said that Christianity was dangerous in that it was, "seductive enough to lead some Neo-Confucians astray" (Ch'oe et al., 2000). Years later, the persecution of Catholics started with the executions of converts with the charge being "conduct contrary to Confucian moral and ritual obligations" (Ch'oe et al., 2000). Although during the time of the Enlightenment these punishments turned more into shame and insults, the negative feelings definitely remained. One article even notes, "Since Korea's first educational institution for girls was started by a foreigner and since its educational motto was ultimately to train evangelists, the institutions like this were not seen, in a strict sense, as genuinely meant for Korean women" (Lim 1985). Another reason to explain the lack of religion's power in this context is in how *Tonghak* as a religion was not very well respected because of its reputation as being a religion of radicals. On multiple occasions, *Tonghak* practitioners led uprisings against the government for different reasons, which would become a common, generalized view of the entirety of the religion (Ch'oe et al., 2000). After the first of such uprisings, the religion's founder was executed, charged with "inciting a peasant rebellion," thereby tarnishing the image of the religion (Ch'oe et al., 2000). A more prominent reason is the contradictions in its own doctrine, as stated by one scholar: "Other religious groups such as *Tonghak* also called for equality between the sexes. Although this was their principle, there remained many inequalities between the sexes in their religious practices" (Cho 1990). It's even stated in one text that after the founder was executed, his successor began to exhibit a change in the religion's viewpoint by starting to "reinforce the traditional subordination of women" (Ch'oe et al., 2000). Given this historically negative connotation of religion among Koreans during this time period, we can safely discard such hypotheses of religion having any particularly significant effect on the advancement of education for women.

### Who (Now Has a Better Chance to) Run the World?

As women made up half the population of Korea at the time of the entry of Enlightenment ideas into the country, Korean nationalists and Enlightenment supporters, both men and women alike, found it in their collective best interest to push education for women as to strengthen the country by advocating more knowledge for more people and even simply supporting the participation of women's activity in the public sphere. Through this, the country's population would theoretically become more intelligent, and with more intelligent people running the peninsula the nation would thus

become a stronger world power. While religion had a notable effect on the movement as well, the reputation of religion as being traditionally negative negates the hypothesis that religion was strong enough to be a defining force in advocating Korean women's educational privileges. With this change of view on women during the Enlightenment period in Korea, we can see not only Korea's development of itself, but also the effect of outside influence coming into play. While some contemporary views of Korea taking in foreign influences are more negative, as these views see Korea during this time period as being unoriginal or weak, this development of women's education becoming commonplace instead shows how Korea was able to use outside knowledge to its own advantage. So we can thus conclude, among all that had been said and done in the fight for women's education in Enlightenment-period Korea, that ignorance is indeed *not* bliss.

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## Interview with Joshua

By Jacob Dawson

The countries of North and South Korea have storied, rich pasts, pasts which many scholars have only begun to delve into with studies on Korea's complex and often violent 20th century timeline, centered around the Korean War. However, stories and narratives also lie beyond the 1900s, history that has yet to be fully uncovered and analyzed, and it is this time period that intrigues Joshua Laroya. A fourth-year student at UCSD, Joshua has taken the opportunity presented by his Making of the Modern World course to take a closer look into a small portion of happenings in Korea prior to the 20th century, and analyze its ramifications today, not only in Korea but around the world. Specifically, Joshua is concerned with

the beginnings of women's education and equality in Korea and the progress of this movement throughout the late nineteenth century into today. In his paper, Joshua cites the rise of *hanegul*, or native Korean writing, as a key factor in the beginning of the Korean woman's foray into academia. Other factors, such as the diminishing influence of traditional Confucianism and a paradigm shift in the minds of young Korean men, also played roles in their journey towards equality.

Joshua's interest in Korean culture and history began well before his college years. With a taste for linguistics, Joshua's interest in various cultures and languages naturally led him to studying the country of Korea, an interest which persisted well into his time at UCSD. Drawing upon his recent time spent studying abroad in Korea, he is confident that the country has made much strides towards equality. "Women are educated, and they hold different positions of power," he states. Despite these clear signs of progress, Joshua knows that there is still much work that has to be done:

"They still have women's universities and it's still blatantly part of the name. The guys will wait outside the women's university and try to woo them. I guess it's not as prominent now, but you can see how it's ingrained in the history, through both seeing those universities, and also when I was researching, I could see the divide."

The issue of women's colleges in Korea lies not in its concept, but in its persistence. The stigma that these schools carry, that of an inherent inferiority to "men's" colleges, is the result of generations of female underrepresentation in this country, and this idea continues to undermine centuries of progress towards equality, even in subtle, overlooked ways such as this. Although significant progress has been made, now is not the time to be complacent about said progress. Continuing to move forward is the only option if true equality is to be achieved.

Joshua Laroya



# Claire Oto

By Lynsey Atkinson

I met Claire Oto while we were first years living in Africa Hall. Although we were on different floors we saw a lot of each other. I remember one quarter when Claire and another one of our friends had Introduction to Photography and they would wonder around our floors asking people to help them and pose for their photo projects. Four years later, with her camera still in hand, Claire is ready to graduate with a degree in Political Science and a minor in Photography. This fall, she will be moving to Washington D.C. to pursue her Master's in Public Policy.

Since Claire was 7-years-old she has been taking photos along side her professional photographer father. She credits him for teaching her everything she knows, but she has also looked up to the likes of Street Photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paul Strand, the late New York Times Fashion Photographer Bill Cunningham, and former White House Photographer Pete Souza. In her studies of photography, she also spent some time in high school learning how to use film and continues to use today; she comments that while film photography does not allow for the ability to instantly access and assess your photographs, she does like the texture that film can produce.

Now in college, she has been taking photographs in San Diego. While studying for her Photography minor, Claire shared that her degree has introduced her to a group of people and an environment on campus that she was never able to experience before, or anywhere else since; the small class sizes, the 8-hour critique sessions, and the bonds that she made with other photographers on campus has been like nothing else; she has been able to make friends with completely different tracts for their lives.

Throughout Claire's career as a photographer, she has been able to try different things and focus on different projects. Claire particularly enjoys photographing people. For her final for Intro to Photography her freshman year of college, she took "unconventional portraits" of our friends around





our building; she took photos of them and something that was important to them or something that defined them. With these photos, not only could she capture a bit of their story, but now Claire can look back on the photos four years later and reflect on how the definition of ourselves have changed. From friends at school, to strangers at the beach, such as Fred Loase and his wife, she enjoys the weird and expressive nature of portraits and enjoys the stories that she can learn about and try to capture with her camera. Her experience with Fred and his wife was particularly enjoyable because they ended up taking a photo of her since she looked so much like their granddaughter. With experiences like these, portraits allow people to expose so much of themselves.

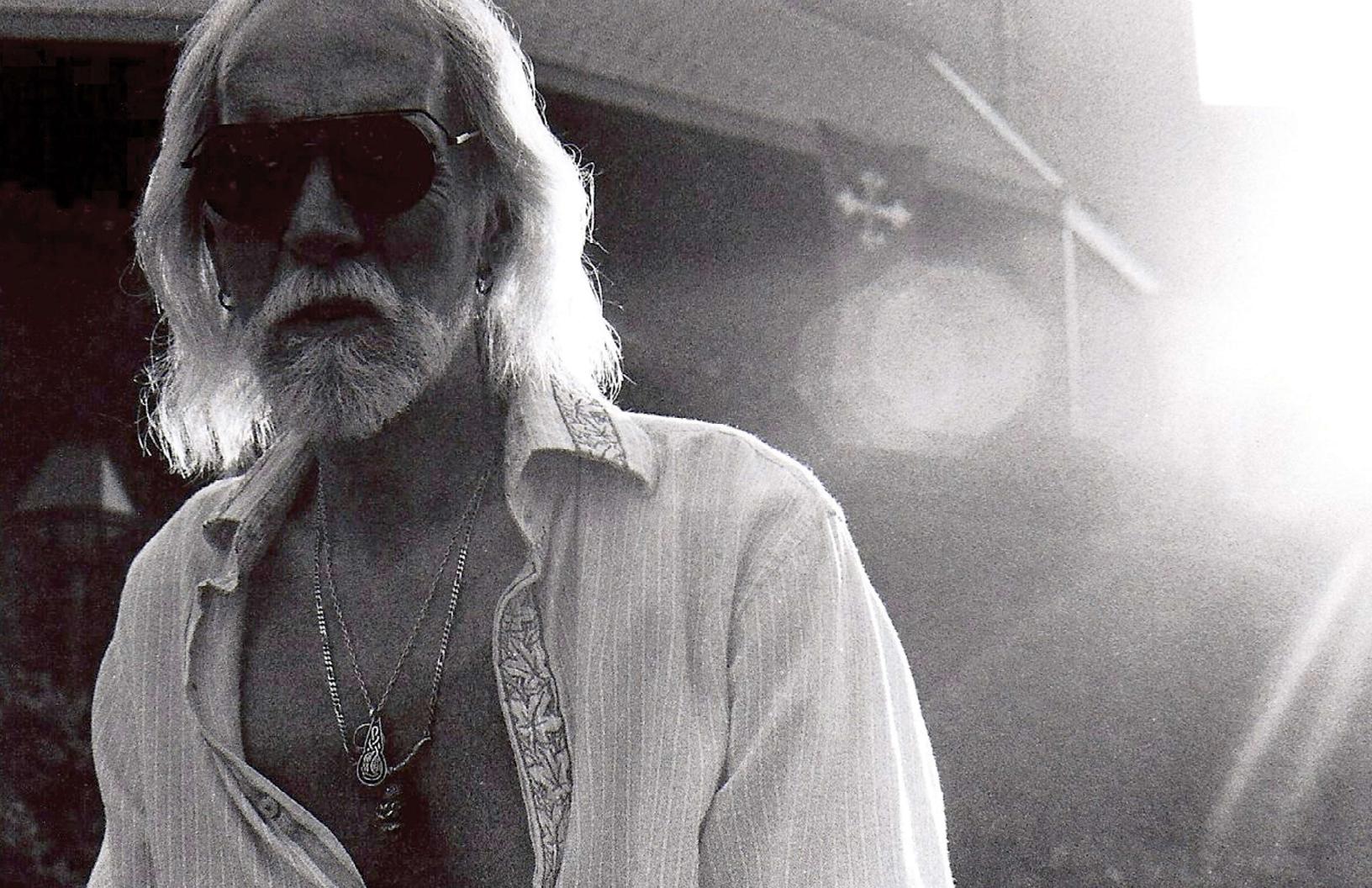
While she enjoys portraits, Claire also really enjoys street photography. She believes that street photography allows for so many interesting images and stories to be captured, but it is so accessible that you can shoot almost anywhere. While in Edinburgh on study abroad she was hoping to capture the beauty and history in every inch of the city. More recently, she was able to photograph the San Diego Women's Day March this past February. She has reflected on this March as her first protest or demonstration that she has ever been a part of, and with that, it was very inspiring to see so many people willing to show that they were not okay with the results of the election and they were ready to stand together in such a difficult time. In photographing the March, she felt that it was a very important event to document as it contributes to a larger collection of photographs that remind people that there is a broad support for women's rights and a network of people ready to speak out and protect each other. But also, it reminds people that they need to get out and speak on injustices themselves, that human rights are not personal issues.

While Claire is not planning to pursue photography professionally, she still finds that being handy with a camera is very useful, particularly when your boss wants a new profile picture. However, she does have some advice for aspiring photographers:

"You're pretty much going to hate your first 100 photographs, at least. Just keep practicing, eventually you'll see something great."









# Disability in Literature

By Chezyrome David

Dating as far back as the fifth century BC, the subject of disability has been a figurative tool that imbues all kinds of literature—perhaps the most prominent and well known being Sophocles *Oedipus Rex*. In this play, a blind prophet tells a man, Oedipus, that he murdered his own father in the past (though he does not remember), and that he sleeps with his mother. By the end of this masterpiece, he discovers that the prophet was telling the truth, and in a fit of horror, he gouges his eyes out. Oedipus himself ironically becomes disabled, just as the prophet was.

What exactly is disability in literature and as a disciplinary study? Michael Davidson is a retired UCSD literature professor who explores this intriguing trend in his latest published work: *Disability Poetics* (2012). He surveys representations of disabled people in American poetry; one of the poets he mentions is Anne Bradstreet, an eminent early seventeenth century English writer. She imagines the form of her poetry as “limping,” and develops a trope in her poems as being frail, weak, and feminine. It then becomes interesting to point out that in order to characterize her womanhood, she akinselfs herself to a disabled person. The pattern of disability goes beyond metaphorical language, however—it is also reflected in the physical structure of the poem. For example, a poem may have inverted rhythms, places where rhymes do not work, or anything that does not conform to stringency of iambic pentameter. Poets often see this as a “disabling of language: a disabling of poetic form,” according to Professor Davidson.

Thus, the conspicuousness of disability in literature becomes compelling, and presents poignant questions about disability issues today. It is first important to understand, though, why perhaps it is such a persistent literary device. Professor Davidson believes that, at least in the modernist period, people were taught to “repudiate the body in favor of the mind,” a philosophical teaching reminiscent of Descartes. This mindset, then, indirectly points to a notion that if we become disabled, whether through physical or mental illness, we are not the model of what we *should* be, as Professor Davidson explains:

Everything in society is telling us to be healthy: get cured, get out of the hospital, get back to normal, climb a mountain. And if you can't do that, you're not considered normal. You're not considered aver-

age. That can be quite traumatizing, especially for someone who becomes deaf, as I did later in life... What happens with disability is you become aware of your body as something more than just the thing you carry around. It's actually part of your consciousness—it's part of what forms you.

Indeed, there is some sort of “madness” with the way we strive to “normalize” the human body, and disability studies aims to scrutinize what is wrong with this tendency—it also just so happens that Professor Davidson’s field of literature is a goldmine of examples representing how we have defined normalcy throughout history.

A large question in regards to disability is how to define “normal.” When statistics emerged as a discipline during the late eighteenth century, it became a convenient way to categorize populations according to a set norm. It therefore comes as no surprise that during this time of eugenics and pseudoscience, there came about a way of thinking that stated there is a norm, but that some norms were better than others. This lead to the idealization of particular racial and bodily types that everyone must aspire to be (i.e. white, male, heterosexual, etc.). The truth of the matter is, however, no one person can entirely and snugly fit themselves into a rigid category: a concept known as intersectionality. In other words, we cannot discuss disability without discussing race, gender, sexuality, and other facets that define ourselves as humans, as well.

Professor Michael Davidson



# Graduating Circuit Staff Members

## Christie Marquez

By Jiayu Fu

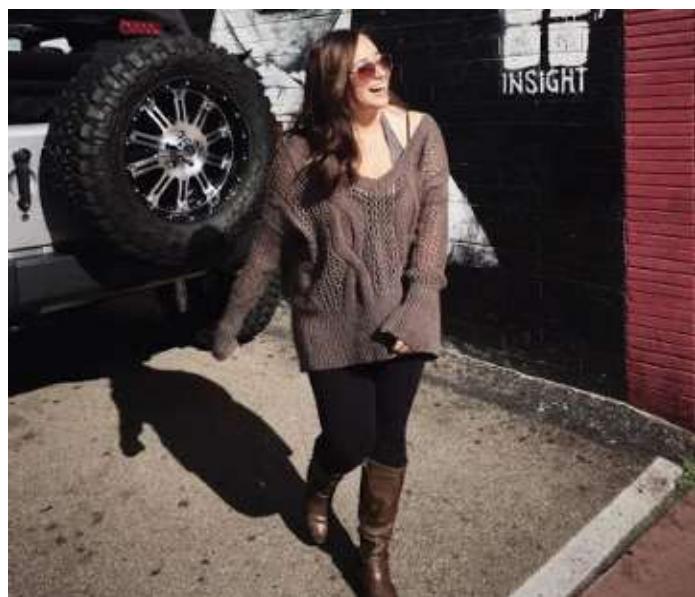
Christie Marquez is a political science - international relations major and a business minor. She chose her major to learn how to manipulate and analyze data to look into the attitudes, behaviors, and preferences of individuals to formulate evidence-based solutions to global issues, such as global health and cross-border challenges. She chose her minor to learn how to draft strategic business plans that respond to scenarios involving the social and political forces and to develop project management and organizational leadership skills.

She is currently pursuing a career in research, more specifically data/policy analysis for consulting firms or government. She has decided to continue working as a research assistant at Calit2 and the Political Science department at UCSD and will possibly apply to graduate school in the future. These decisions have been made because of her 3 internship experiences in labs during her senior year: being a research assistant at the (1) Atkinson behavioral lab at the Rady school of management, analyzing how people respond to incentives and make decisions under risk and uncertainty, (2) Center for Wireless and Population Health Systems at the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2) where she utilizes spatial data to better understand how environments impact health behaviors, and (3) Center for Peace and Security Studies at the department of political science where she contributes to inductive analysis of crises and conflict. From these experiences, not only has Christie have learned the ability to do research but also the significance of academia. The biggest gain from these experiences is that she realized her interest in research and decided to get more involved in this field.

Besides the academic performance in core courses for the major, Christie emphasizes the importance of taking GE classes. She considers GE a good opportunity exploring different interests and a good complement offering different perspectives which are not included in the core courses. Her favorite GE class is POLI 150 with Professor Wong for the diversity and equity and inclusion requirement. Prof. Wong gave her her first research position where she help to conduct a

feasibility assessment for a policy proposal to increase refugee housing in San Diego. This valuable opportunity shows Christie a new path guiding her to the research field and confirms her interest in this field.

Christine is the designer for Circuit. As she was putting the design documents together, she read all of them and enjoyed seeing everyone's hard work that showed so many different interesting things. She enjoyed designing a journal to showcase students research and also expects Circuit to continue being a platform for showcasing research from and for students.



Head Designer Christie Marquez

## Amber Knight

By Eric Lee

What is your most memorable moment of college and why?

My most memorable moment of college was during the quarter that I studied abroad in Italy when I toured the Roman Forum early in the morning before many tourists had arrived on a field trip with my Ancient History class. My class was the first group to enter the Forum that day, and our professor gave us an amazing, in-depth tour of the ruins until the late afternoon. This was such a special moment to me because I was finally able to visualize and connect to a historic place that I had only read about in textbooks. Being able to fulfill requirements for my major while spending time in the historic capital of Italy was an incredible expe-

rience, and during that field trip at the Forum I felt overwhelmingly grateful for this opportunity.

### What are you majoring in and what are your future plans?

I am majoring in both History and Classical Studies to explore my interest in the studying the ancient world, and both majors have provided me with a solid foundation in researching and writing on various topics. However, my future plans are not directly related to my major, since I am planning to pursue a career in education with a focus on teaching writing. After graduation, I plan to become TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certified and to apply for master's programs in Writing and Rhetoric, with an emphasis on teaching. After completing an M.A., I hope to find a career as a teacher or writing instructor so that I can continue helping students develop strategies to express themselves in writing.

### If there is one thing you could tell the world to make it a better place, what would it be and why?

If I could tell the world one thing to make it a better place, I might suggest that everyone frequently try to find small ways to help one another. Even seemingly small actions like opening a door for a stranger, letting someone merge into traffic, or offering assistance to someone who needs help can brighten other people's days and make life better for everyone. Helping others not only makes the world seem more friendly and welcoming, but it also might inspire others to do the same. When we help one another, we can spread kindness and make the world seem less stressful, even if it's only for a moment.

### What do you think is the most important quality for a person/student to have and why?

I think that both curiosity and a willingness to seek help are two of the most important qualities for a person or a student to have. Curiosity is important because this trait inspires us to ask questions, find connections between different ideas, and critically think about topics by challenging our own beliefs. Much like curiosity, possessing a willingness to seek help can lead us to learn from others and ask the questions we need to understand difficult ideas. If a student possesses both of these traits, the learning process will be less frustrating and more engaging, which makes the time that students spend studying more enjoyable and productive overall.

### How have you contributed to this school?

For the last four years at UCSD, I have worked as a peer writing mentor for a variety of programs, including MMW, Triton Edge, the Analytical Writing department, and the Writing Hub. During this time, I have read countless students' essays and provided guidance, feedback, and support to these students as they face the challenges of the writing process. I have also helped many UCSD students revise their resumes, personal statements, and applications for various study abroad and graduate school programs so that they can pursue their personal goals. So, I think that I have contributed to this school by assisting UCSD students with individualized support, helping them reach their goals in college, and teaching them writing strategies that they will continue to use as a student and during their future careers.

### What makes you unique and how does that reflect your time at college?

One thing that certainly makes me unique is the fact that I can translate classical Latin and Greek, and also that I am the only graduating senior at UCSD with a Classical Studies major. I decided to add a double major in Classical Studies during my second year in college because I fell in love with translating ancient languages and learning about the Roman and Greek world. Even though classical studies is not immediately practical in the modern world and many people consider Latin and ancient Greek to be "dead languages," I made the decision to study these topics simply because I was passionate about the field. I have always considered my time at college to be an opportunity to study the subjects that interest me the most. By majoring in Classical Studies I was able to learn an incredible amount of fascinating information and enjoy the time that I spent studying for my classes, which definitely made this decision worthwhile, despite the peculiarity of choosing this major.

Copy Editor Amber Knight



# Ritu Patel

By Yuchen Wu

**Q: What's your major/minor?**

A: I'm a biochem/ cell bio major with a minor in literatures of the world!

**Q: What was one of the classes that you enjoyed the most and would like to recommend to other students?**

A: Two of the classes I enjoyed the most were probably BICD 100: Genetics with Dr. Reuther and LTWL 172: Heroes and Villains with Adriana De Marchi.

**Q: What activities/organizations/events have you been involved in?**

A: My first two years at UCSD I was involved in Associated Students, as a part of First Year Council and then as the Special Projects Intern. I was also a founding member of Alpha Phi here at UCSD my junior year. In Alpha Phi, I got to meet extraordinary women who inspired me with their passion and their independence. As a new chapter, we established and hosted our first philanthropic events and made connections with various foundations in the San Diego area for support in future philanthropy endeavors.

Both of these involvements helped me meet such incredible individuals and I'm beyond grateful for that. In addition, I am one of the editors in Circuit and a participant of Alternative Weekends!

**Q: How do you like ERC?**

A: ERC has shown me what it means to be a global citizen -- as a student, it is important to not only remain cognizant of current happenings but also to take action and speak up.

I have always loved reading and one of my high school teachers, Ryan Miller, encouraged me to continue studying literature. I took a biochemistry class for my previous major and found it to be extremely enjoyable, so I changed my major to Biochemistry/Cell Bio. I remember applying to UCSD and not fully understanding the differences between each college, but I ranked ERC the highest because I had honestly always held Eleanor Roosevelt in high esteem. It worked out because the MMW series was an eye opening adventure which got me interested in societal development with colonialism, feminism, and the roots of religion.



Copy Editor Ritu Patel

**Q: What was the most memorable moment/thing during college?**

A: My favorite moments in college were when my best friends from other UC's would come down and visit!

**Q: What is your plan after graduation?**

A: My plan for after graduation is to travel with my parents and then attend graduate school! My dream job would honestly be publishing science textbooks. It appeals to me because it combines my love of writing, research, teaching, and science. Also, I am traveling to London! I went to France and Kenya over winter break and I'm excited to further explore Europe.

**Q: Do you have any advice for students?**

A: My advice to students is to remain humble and realize that you will never know everything. Keep an open mind and always be willing to make new friends!!

# Lauren Ermacoff

By Jacob Dawson

A former music major at Seattle University, Lauren Ermacoff is currently a graduate student at UCSD, studying Middle Eastern history. Through a prestigious internship and multiple opportunities taken in studying abroad, it has certainly been an interesting graduate experience for Lauren.

Lauren's initial passion before coming to UCSD was music, and it was in music that she indulged herself during her undergraduate education in Seattle. Upon transferring to UCSD in her last year, she had already been entertaining the idea of change, and by the end of the year she had comfortably settled into her new major. Comfort

was not the only thing that this new major brought; before long, she had secured an internship at none other than the White House. Her major also contained overlap with the field of political science, so applying for the Oval Office was a natural aspiration.

Her experience in Washington, D.C. was one to remember. Her first day working on the White House grounds was defined by a sense of disbelief. "I had to remember that all the 'important' people I saw were just doing their jobs," she recalls. She had her own jobs to do, as well; her duties as an intern included scheduling meetings and organizing small group discussions. These seemingly mundane tasks were interspersed with frequent moments of disbelief, such as her witnessing of the Marine One landing or organizing the state visit of David Cameron, former British Prime Minister. "It's like a play, organizing these things," she says of the state visit. "There's a lot of things that go on behind the scenes so that it runs smoothly."

Lauren also took away a number of personal lessons from her time in the nation's capital. For her, time spent away from home at college was merely a test for the "real world," and her trip to D.C. was her first experience in this real world. "I had a greatly increased sense of self-reliance in D.C.," she says. "I was lucky to be surrounded by such a strong community, because I was really forced to adapt and grow."

Along with her time spent in D.C., Lauren also spent a semester abroad, studying political science and history in Cambridge. While her time spent in D.C. was an eye-opening experience, traveling to a different country was even more intimidating at first. To Lauren, experiencing nerves at the thought of spending time in a distant country, hundreds or even thousands of miles from home is almost inevitable. Still, she is confident that the risk is well worth the reward. "There are many reasons why you should do it," she says of the daunting idea of studying abroad, "but they can be the same reasons that it's so intimidating." For Lauren, who took the risk, it isn't difficult to see how it has paid off for her. At Cambridge, her classes focused on covert studies, in which she learned about the "underbelly" of modern politics and history, taught by a high ranking English CIA official.

Lauren is also a long-standing research assistant on the topic of Iroquois history. Since 2013, she has worked with Dr. Rodriguez, who has been active in Native American events for years. A recent study that they have published focused on Iroquois rites of passage, which is a method of preserving ancient Iroquois traditions in a rapidly changing global landscape. This topic entails the inclusion of various information about Iroquois history and culture. The process of researching and gathering this information included visiting Iroquois reservations and requesting information from the Smithsonian's exhibit on the Iroquois. However, one of the most helpful sources of information came from an Iroquois mother, who co-authored the paper. Speaking towards the active nature of her research, Lauren simply says, "It's good to get out of the classroom sometimes."

Lauren's work is far from done, however; her internships and time spent abroad only marked the beginning of her ambitions. After finishing her degree at UCSD, Lauren plans to return to Cambridge to further her education. On the subject of her diversity and activeness in different areas and causes, she says: "You can't win a fight you're not in." The first step is to take the opportunities presented, and if that is not an option, actively seek those opportunities out.

Copy Editor Lauren Ermacoff



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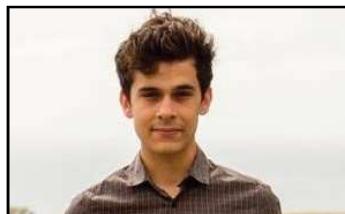
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