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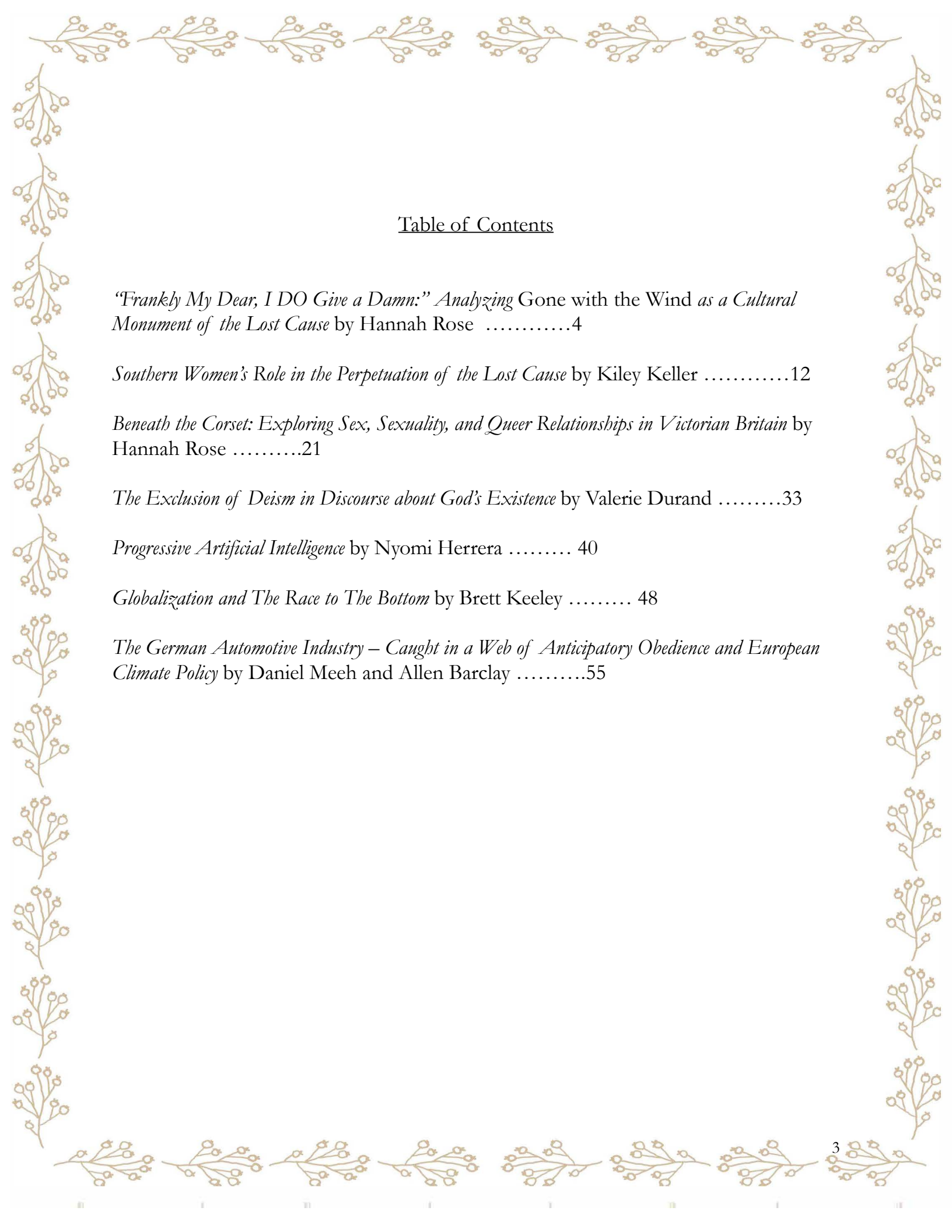
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“FRANKLY MY DEAR, I DO GIVE A DAMN”: ANALYZING *GONE WITH THE WIND* AS A CULTURAL
MONUMENT OF THE LOST CAUSE

Hannah Rose

Popular culture has framed historically-based dramas as reality and truth for the American population. One may view the history of the Civil War and southern history as fact, based on movies such as D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, and Walt Disney's *Song of the South* that have historical context based in the myth of the Lost Cause. Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* does this best, as it is a book and film devoted to the Lost Cause and the false truths of the Confederacy. Written in 1936, *Gone with the Wind* became a cultural phenomenon around the globe and a booming success, selling one million copies in its first six months.¹ Author Margaret Mitchell sold the film rights to David Selznick a month after publication, and the film was produced and released in 1939. *Gone with the Wind* became the best-selling film in history and an instant American classic. Though this movie is beloved by millions of Americans, it is a blatant example of the Lost Cause as it exemplifies various tenants such as the loyal happy slave narrative, brave white southerners, the sinister Yankees, and the vindicated Ku Klux Klan. Lost Cause ideals and beliefs are perpetuated in *Gone with the Wind* both as a book and film, though most popularized with the film. Confederate monuments have been erected since the end of the Civil War and have been condemned in modern politics. Confederate monuments are one of the tenants of the Lost Cause to perpetuate the beliefs in American society, as the glorification of Confederate generals and soldiers are presented in bronze and marble. *Gone with the Wind* acts as part of the glorification of Confederate culture, however it is seen on a screen instead of stone and written on a page and not on a pedestal. The Lost Cause has been researched by scholars extensively, as every aspect has been analyzed including films. Utilizing the Lost Cause scholarships, one may uncover the remnants of the Confederacy as *Gone with the Wind* can be viewed as a historical Confederate monument set in racism, sexism, and white supremacy that can be questioned if it should fall alongside the statues.

Throughout *Gone with the Wind* there are many racist confederate symbols. The film takes place in Atlanta, Georgia and is set throughout the entirety of the Civil War as well as showing life before and after the war. Scarlett O'Hara, played by Vivien Leigh, is the lead character who lives at Tara which is a personification of the idyllic southern plantation. Throughout the film, Scarlett is the representation of the beautiful southern belle who is too blinded by her own selfish agenda to understand the importance of those around her. Throughout the film, Scarlett relates everything back to Tara as she tries to go back home during General Sherman's march to the sea and the raid on Atlanta. Scarlett consistently believes that Tara will be the key to all of her problems as well as the men in her life, as she is married three times in the film.

¹ Nina Silber, "'Gone with the Wind' Is Also a Confederate Monument, but on Film Instead of Stone," *The Washington Post*, June 12, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/12/gone-with-wind-is-also-confederate-monument-film-instead-stone/>.

Tara is home to many enslaved people owned by the O'Hara family, who embody the happy loyal slave tenant of the Lost Cause. The primary enslaved characters are the representation of the Lost Cause as they had the ability to escape during the Union raids of Tara and decided to stay with the O'Hara's as they were loyal to the Confederate cause and the family who had enslaved them. The role of Mammy, played by Hattie McDaniel, is the most referenced slave and whose racist characterization is prominently displayed throughout the film. She is an enslaved woman whose job is to cater to the needs and wants of the O'Hara daughters, although her relationship with Scarlett is focused on the most. Mammy is a house slave who only works in the home and goes with Scarlett almost everywhere. Throughout the film, she consistently looks down on other slaves, mostly those who work in the fields of Tara, refers to the Yankees and carpetbaggers as "white trash" as well as calling freed Blacks "trash."² The role of Mammy is one that gets referred to throughout pop culture, as in many movies since the release of *Gone with the Wind*, there had been Black female leads who are referred to as the Mammy-character. These characters are seen in Walt Disney's *Song of the South* with Aunt Tempy, who is also played by Hattie McDaniel. In *Song of the South*, the African Americans are also portrayed as the tenants of the Lost Cause as they are depicted as the loyal servants on the plantation. *Song of the South* is based off the stories of Uncle Remus and Br'er Rabbit, written and published by Joel Chandler Harris in 1881.³ The movie is set on a plantation in Georgia where a young white boy named Johnny comes with his family to vacation at his grandmother's plantation. Johnny befriends an older Black man named Uncle Remus who becomes a father figure to Johnny and helps him deal with his parents' marital problems with the stories of Br'er Rabbit. While the time period in which the film is set is unknown to the viewer, historians set it during Reconstruction as the plantation workers are not slaves but sharecroppers. This film glorifies the hierarchical relationship between master and slave and forms it as an idyllic southern history which is false and problematic and is a direct result of the spread of the Lost Cause. This dynamic is also seen throughout *Gone with the Wind* with Mammy and the other noted loyal slaves. In *Robert E. Lee and Me: A Southerner's Reckoning with the Myth of the Lost Cause*, Ty Seidule criticizes *Song of the South* as being "a racist trope. White people with important white people issues solve their problems with the help of a kindly old Black man dressed in rags."⁴ Seidule notes that the movie is a work of "American plantation fiction, the moonlight and magnolias school, that makes the plantation a remnant of the better, simpler life compared with the modern, impersonal age of technology."⁵ This review of *Song of the South* is a depiction pertaining to the Lost Cause, as it shows the fallacies of the historical context of the film.

Prissy is another loyal slave who is seen throughout the film as being uneducated, ignorant, and a liar, thus the racist point of view given to her. She is also another house slave who is purposely oblivious in order to represent the belief that slaves were ignorant people who benefitted from their

² *Gone with the Wind* (Selznick International Pictures and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939), https://www.amazon.com/Gone-Wind-Clark-Gable/dp/B002W7DSLW/ref=cm_cr_ar_p_d_pb_opt?ie=UTF8, 2:20:13.

³ Ty Seidule, *Robert E. Lee and Me: A Southerner's Reckoning with the Myth of the Lost Cause* (New York: St. Martin's Publishing Group, 2021), 24.

⁴ Seidule, *Robert E. Lee and Me*, 26.

⁵ Seidule, 26.

benevolent masters for personal gain. This is one of the Lost Cause pillars that is seen frequently with the character of Prissy. In one scene in the film during the Yankee raid of Atlanta, Melanie Wilkes is in labor, and Scarlett sends Prissy out to get a doctor after Prissy lies and says that she had helped birth hundreds of babies. Scarlett threatens Prissy that if she does not return with a doctor, Scarlett will “send you South I will, I swear I will!”⁶ This threat implies that the more south one goes into the Confederacy, the worse life gets for African Americans. Upon her return, Prissy carefreely sings to herself and dances around, she also speaks in a higher childlike voice to emphasize the Lost Cause belief that slaves were incompetent and immature.

As Karen Cox writes in *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South was Created in American Popular Culture*, “*Gone with the Wind*’s achievement in reinforcing the Lost Cause myth in American culture was matched only by its financial success.”⁷ The sheer success of *Gone with the Wind* should not be undermined as it is the highest-grossing film ever made, even accounting for inflation.⁸ *Gone with the Wind* was so popular and consumed by the American public, it still has modern releases today and remains one of the most beloved films even in modern contexts. As Seidule writes, “for many Americans, *Gone with the Wind*, then and now, is the Civil War.”⁹ Most Americans do not have a true depiction of the Civil War, as movies such as *Gone with the Wind* have become so popular and engrained in American culture that many render it as a true history, though it is a complete work of racist fiction. *Gone with the Wind* is noted to be a work of its time, as it was written in the middle of the 1930’s, during Jim Crow segregation. The book itself uses racist derogatory terms to describe Black people: Ty Seidule counted them in *Robert E. Lee and Me*, Mitchell uses a total of two hundred thirty-six racist terms in the entire book.¹⁰ It is a large work dedicated to the ethos of the Lost Cause, which remains a part of American vernacular and historical beliefs. Karen Cox demonstrates the historical inaccuracies of the film. The representation of the Old South as depicted in the first half of *Gone with the Wind* was the view of southern history that most Americans in the 1930s understood.¹¹ The New South was more of an unknown concept as the Old South had been portrayed more often in American pop culture.

Gone with the Wind is not the only form of the Lost Cause that has perpetuated itself into American culture. D. W. Griffith’s masterpiece *The Birth of a Nation*, released in 1915, is regarded as being the first major film that was twelve reels long, which for the time was a major feat in technological advancement and Hollywood. The first major blockbuster had made its way into the minds of the American public as it was regarded as being a historical drama with true depictions of the Civil War and Reconstruction. *The Birth of a Nation* is considered the most racist movie ever produced, as the majority of the African American characters are played by white actors in

⁶*Gone with the Wind*, 1:13:28.

⁷ Karen Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South Was Created in American Popular Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 94.

⁸ Seidule, *Robert E. Lee and Me*, 27

⁹ Seidule, 28

¹⁰ Seidule, 29.

¹¹ Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie*, 95.

blackface. The film depicts racist stereotypes of African Americans that are imbedded in the Lost Cause narrative as they act as some of the pillars of the Lost Cause. Female virtue is one of the most frequented themes of the Lost Cause that is presented in *Birth of a Nation*, as seen throughout the second half of the film as it depicts Reconstruction. Black men pursuing innocent white women is one of the pillars of the Lost Cause as depicted in both *Birth of a Nation* and *Gone with the Wind*. In *Birth of a Nation*, there are many instances where Black men are trying to seduce white women and are purposely portrayed as being relentless in their pursuit for the female virtue. In one instance, Silas Lynch, a bi-racial politician continuously tries to seduce Elise Stoneman. In the pursuit of her asking Lynch for help, Lynch proposes marriage to Stoneman stating “see! My people fill the streets. With them I will build a Black Empire and you as a queen shall sit by my side.”¹² Elise is only able to escape Lynch when the ‘knights’ of the Ku Klux Klan come to her aid, and “managed to subdue the aggressive Southern blacks, and white supremacy was restored.”¹³

The film depicts African Americans as the evil race who want to rape white women, destroy politics for their own greedy gains, and commit violence in order to subjugate white people. The only people who can restore order to the white supremacist society are the Ku Klux Klan, who are depicted at the most gallant, Christian, gentlemen there are, the protectors of white society. In 1916, resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan was formed in response to *The Birth of a Nation* and began the second wave of the Klan in the United States. *Birth of a Nation* was the first major film to include the KKK, and as some refer to it as the better Klan movie, *Gone with the Wind* as the book itself is filled with KKK references, though the movie was censored in this area.¹⁴ During the creation of the film, Selznick wanted to keep the integrity of the book, including all racial slurs and references, though was implored by other editors that they should eliminate references to the n-word, instead using the word “darkie” and remove the Ku Klux Klan entirely as well as any references to them. The book itself is a vindication for the KKK as Ashley Wilkes forms it with the help of Rhett Butler when Scarlett is attacked by a Black man and a white accomplice; in the film, Selznick switches the roles of Scarlett’s attackers. Selznick makes these changes to the film not to eliminate the white supremacist values of the book, but to censor the film enough where any audience would accept it as historical fact.¹⁵

As it is noted that the popularity of the book and film is blatantly expressed in every scholarly article and book about it, one cannot underestimate the sheer love there is for *Gone with the Wind*, and one may wonder why there is such a popularity around something that is so racist, sexist, and a glorification of white supremacy. Danielle Barklay, in “No Happy Loves: Desire, Nostalgia, and Failure in Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind*,” states that nostalgia is the answer. The American public love nostalgia which is placed throughout *Gone with the Wind* as it depicts the

¹² *The Birth of a Nation* (DW Griffith Corporation, 1915), <https://www.kanopy.com/en/flagler/watch/video/114595>, 2:59:55.

¹³ Melvyn Stokes, *The Birth of a Nation: a History of “the Most Controversial Motion Picture of All Time* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 6.

¹⁴ Taulby Edmondson, “Protesting ‘a Bigger and Better Birth of a Nation’: Lost Causism and Black Resistance to David O. Selznick’s *Gone with the Wind*, 1936–1940,” *Journal of African American History* 105, no. 2 (2020): 245..

¹⁵ Silber, “‘Gone with the Wind’ Is Also a Confederate Monument, but on Film Instead of Stone”

Confederate cause as literally gone and swept away with the wind.¹⁶ The Confederacy lost the Civil War and yet people still think of the Old South as the good-ole-days, with false beliefs that the enslaved were happy to be enslaved under benevolent masters, mint juleps trended in the South, and the Confederates were patriots who fought for their homeland in the face of evil-minded Yankees coming to take away their home and economy, though that economy was founded on the basis of the bondage of people. All of the beliefs that are perceived in the film are foundational pillars of the Lost Cause that the public perceives as truth and still remember back to those days when they believed life was better. The question remains: better for who? Nostalgia is a problematic viewpoint when one remembers a time where slavery and Jim Crow were main systems in American society and views it as a better time in American history. The hold that *Gone with the Wind* had and still does on the American public is not just set in nostalgia, most argue that they love the movie for the romance, between Scarlett and Rhett, Scarlett and Ashley, and Ashley and Melanie. As Barklay writes, many works of historical fiction are set in the nostalgic frame but also one that offers a theme of romance with romantic and sexual desires that draw the reader or viewer in, such as the romantic desires between Scarlett and Rhett.¹⁷

Throughout the film, Scarlett feels as though she is in love with Ashley Wilkes, a childhood friend and neighbor, for that large timeframe of the film, she gets married three times to men she does not love with the hope that Ashley will realize he loves her too and run away with her. Scarlett, played by actress Vivien Leigh, is a very beautiful woman who has many men vie for her attention, though she only returns that attention to Ashley and Rhett Butler, her third husband and father to her daughter, Bonnie Blue. Rhett Butler confesses his love for Scarlett throughout the film and hopes that one day she will truly return that love to him and not just his bank account. Though it is not until the final scenes of the film when Scarlet realizes that for years, she actually never loved Ashley and realizes that Rhett is her true love. At the final scene of the film, readers and viewers hope that her confession of love for Rhett will repair their marriage and there will be a hopeful happily-ever-after ending. Rhett mutters the infamous quote, “frankly my dear, I don’t give a damn,” leaves Scarlett, and after understanding their marriage was a sham and that Scarlett is actually a horrible person who lied their entire marriage.¹⁸ The romance of *Gone with the Wind* is set on the lies that Scarlett tells each lover of hers, though primarily marrying the first two men to gain the attention and jealousy of Ashley, and marrying Rhett for his money to fix Tara. There is no romantic happily-ever-after ending in *Gone with the Wind*. Scarlett and Rhett’s young daughter dies at the end of the film, then Rhett leaves her; there is no hopeful ending that can truly grasp the attention from a reader or viewer, they are left with nothing but the remnants of three failed marriages. Scarlett realizes that she should go back home to Tara as she believes that it will fix all of her problems, which is a continuing theme throughout the book and film. As Scarlett lays on the steps in the final minute of the film, her internal thoughts are projected from previous quotes used earlier in the film about Tara, “Tara! Tara! Tara is where you get your strength, it is the only thing that matters, it is the

¹⁶ Danielle Barklay, “No Happy Loves: Desire, Nostalgia, and Failure in Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind*,” *Southern Literary Journal* 47, no. 1 (2014): 55.

¹⁷ Barklay, “No Happy Loves,” 56.

¹⁸ *Gone with the Wind*, 3:46:55.

only thing that lasts!”¹⁹ Tara is a representation for the Old South as throughout the film, it is the lasting goal for Scarlett, to go home to Tara, back to a life before the Civil War in the Old South. Tara is a representation of the Old South as used as a way to reckon with the new ways of the New South, one set in Reconstruction where African Americans are freed and have more equal opportunities than they had before the War. The nostalgia one would have for Tara is set in the beliefs of the Lost Cause as it is the Old South depicted in a single plantation home.

The resurgence of Confederate culture and iconography is set within *Gone with the Wind*, as the film itself can be viewed as a Confederate monument. It is a book and film set as a celebration to the Lost Cause ideology and the Confederacy that uses racism, sexism, and white supremacy to perpetuate the pillars of the Lost Cause in American society. As of modern events and social movements in America, Confederate monuments have been the topic of polarizing debates on whether or not they are appropriate to preserve in American culture. Confederate monuments have a very extensive origins, are products of their, often with long lifespans, originating at the end of the Civil War until the 1950s. Most of the Confederate monuments have been created by women’s organizations such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Ladies’ Memorial Organizations, which serve as remnants of the Lost Cause and make it their mission to perpetuate the Confederacy ideology. In *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture*, Karen Cox studies the UDC and other women’s organizations to study the monuments themselves, why and when they were built and under what historical context should they remain standing. The main purpose of the UDC is to “honor and vindicate their Confederate ancestors. Significantly, they also sought to instill in white children, a reverence for the political, social, and cultural traditions of the former Confederacy.”²⁰ In their perseverance to honor dead Confederates, the UDC erected hundreds of Confederate monuments, statues glorifying the figures of the Confederacy, mostly Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and Stonewall Jackson. In *Dixie’s Daughters*, Cox refers to the Confederate monuments as “permanent symbols of devotion to patriotic principles as southerners understood them,” symbols that represented the Lost Cause narrative that the Confederate were noble southerners who were protecting their economy, homeland, and the Tenth Amendment, state’s rights.²¹ The most striking portrayal of Confederate iconography and culture are monuments, permanent example of the Lost Cause that may not be forever set in stone.

In Karen Cox’s *No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice*, she writes on the history of Confederate monuments as well as the modern debates over the removal of them in public settings. Confederate monuments do not only represent the figures carved, they also are remnants of the era to which they were built, in a time of Jim Crow segregation and racial inequality. Confederate monuments serve as an active form of oppression towards Black Americans as they are constant reminders of slavery and oppressive systems of segregation. As Cox notes in *No Common Ground*, when Confederate monuments were erected by the

¹⁹ *Gone with the Wind*, 3:48:11.

²⁰ Karen Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (University Press of Florida, 2003), 2.

²¹ Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*, 67.

UDC, they were as a continuation to “maintain a tight hold on southern politics, southern history, and the southern landscape where they still stand.”²² Films act as monuments when they are so greatly engrained and coded in the message of the film. *Gone with the Wind* is a complete false romanticization of slavery and the Old South and repeatedly perpetuates that romanticization. Symbols of the Confederacy are seen carved in stone and bronze, set on high permanent pedestals, though the same types of monuments are viewed through a film perspective. *Gone with the Wind* is a Confederate monument set on pages and a screen rather than on a pedestal, demonstrating the Lost Cause for all to see. *Gone with the Wind* still modernly captures the hearts of Americans more than any other film ever produced and it continuously perpetuates the original UDC belief that Confederate culture be passed down to new generations, which is seen with the popularity today.

Gone with the Wind is an American classic that has engrained itself into American society as historical fact. It is seen as a romantic movie depicting a true history of the South, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. The Lost Cause is seen frequently throughout *Gone with the Wind*. The film has situated itself in American society as a beloved film that is riddled with Lost Cause references and acts as a glorification of the Confederacy. Scarlett O’Hara and her beloved Tara plantation act as representations of the Old South and values of the Lost Cause seen within the Old South plantation setting. The idea of *Gone with the Wind* as a Confederate monument is one that perpetuates the Lost Cause and engrains itself into modern American society. The modern debates on Confederate monuments can be regularly viewed as just the statues, however, various films that embody Confederate culture such as *Gone with the Wind* and *The Birth of a Nation* can also be viewed in this context. While Confederate monuments are being torn and melted down, one may view that it is time for cinematic monuments to fall as well as they are tenants of the Lost Cause and still perpetuate false narratives of slavery and the Old South.

²² Karen Cox, *No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice*, (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2021), 2.

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SOUTHERN WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE PERPETUATION OF THE LOST CAUSE

Kiley Keller

One of the United States' defining historical events is the Civil War, in which the Confederacy's loss led to the formation of the Lost Cause ideology, which encompassed a collection of myths that became a civil religion as the South dealt with its loss in the war. As the myths existed long before the Civil War ended, they compassed concepts like the romanticization of the Old South and the idea that slavery was not the cause of the war. This ideology was not unique to the South, and in the years following it spread nationwide. The gradual spread and acceptance of this ideology can be attributed to many factors, and scholars have identified one of its primary perpetrators as women. Post-Civil War, several women's memorial groups were formed to protect the Confederate culture and values, with one of the most notable groups becoming the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Women have played an essential role in the Lost Cause since the end of the war and continue to do so in the modern day. For instance, women were deeply involved in teaching the youth, the construction of monuments, pop culture, and the rewriting of history books, among others. These women of the UDC and other women's memorial groups continue to play an essential role in the Lost Cause becoming what it persists as today. The Lost Cause mythology has been thoroughly written on by scholars, debunking these myths, yet the ideology persists in the face of fact. Scholars have broken the Lost Cause down into several manifestations of these beliefs and the mediums in which these myths are perpetuated. In the case of Southern women's involvement, they ultimately upheld the Lost Cause. As a result of the South's sense of superiority over the North, the Lost Cause began before the Civil War. The South fought to protect its ideals during the war, and the Lost Cause escalated into a civil religion only after the South faced its losses. This ideology has morphed over the years, both adapting to eras and in response to events, such as the Civil Rights Movement. Yet what has remained consistent is the undeniable role that women have played in this, even before the UDC's formation, and outside of the UDC. Women's role as head of the household- in caring for the home and children- becomes a position of power utilized to grow the Lost Cause.

Well-established scholar Gaines M. Foster published the foundational work, *Ghosts of the Confederacy* in 1987, building the scholarship on the years following the Civil War. Foster's timeline looks at what he asserts is the emergence of the New South from 1865 to 1913. Foster argues that the South did come to terms with defeat, and entered a period of celebration, which led to the emergence of the New South. In his argument, Foster argues that the Lost Cause was not a civil religion, which is an assertion challenged by later works on this period. While Foster does not argue for the Lost Cause as a civil religion, he does show the importance of women to both the Old and the 'New South.' In the immediate aftermath of the war, it was observed according to Foster that, "Women hated the invaders who had killed their relatives and despoiled their land. But the women seemed to display a more vehement hatred than men who had suffered similar losses", as they had

experienced a great loss, including their lands, slaves, sons, and husbands.²³ In the years following this loss, women took up efforts to memorialize these men and to keep the Confederate culture or Southern way of life alive. This role was delegated to them by the men, as “Southern males believed that memorial projects belonged to the realm of sentiment in which women had innate abilities and over which they had primary responsibility”.²⁴ The delegation of the memorial projects to women leads to the formation of Memorial Associations. This role Foster recognizes is built on by other scholars discussing this period, as the essential role of women can not be omitted from the discussion of the Lost Cause.

In Ted Ownby’s work, *Subduing Satan* published in 1990, he delves into the role of Southern women as an aspect of his argument. *Subduing Satan* looks at the direct end of the war in 1865, through Reconstruction, to 1920. Ownby analyzes the role of men in the public sphere and the role of women in the private sphere, arguing that the formation of the male-dominated public sphere became their way of coping with Evangelical expectations and the war. Women in the private sphere were charged with the children and the church. The home was a space dominated by women and Evangelical culture- while men had recreation outside of the home, this took place in the home sector for women. As Ownby argues, “the great majority of women showed their faith in the virtues of their roles as wives and mothers”.²⁵ Women’s role in the family was the most important, and in order to uphold this, women kept their home spaces away from the male sector. Religion was important to keeping the home peaceful, meaning women were also deeply involved in the church. Discussing the church, Ownby asserts that “More women than men were church members and more attended church”.²⁶ With this came responsibilities like Sunday school teaching, which was “Sunday school teaching was almost entirely a female enterprise”.²⁷ Southern women were considered the head of the private sector, which gave them power there, and men endorsed it as it was considered women's work. With this power, women were able to teach the youth- whether it be their own children in the home or children in Sunday school- their values. As the Civil War progressed and the Confederate culture, or Old South, was believed to be under threat, they utilized this position to try and keep this culture alive in the youth.

This role of the Southern woman is further developed in Charles Reagan Wilson’s 2009 book *Baptized in Blood*. Wilson looks at the same time period as Ownby and Foster in this work, from the end of the Civil War in 1865 to 1920. Wilson expands on the role of women in Confederate culture, and the Lost Cause as a civil religion. Wilson argues that to maintain the Confederate Culture after the loss of the Civil War, Southerners blended Christian religious beliefs with the Confederate cause and, in doing so formed the civil religion of the Lost Cause. Wilson showcases

²³ Gaines M Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, History, and the Culture of the New South* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1987), 31.

²⁴ Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 38.

²⁵ Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 103.

²⁶ Ownby, *Subduing Satan*, 129.

²⁷ Ownby, 129.

women's role as the head of the church and the home as Ownby did, but further delves into what this position of power meant to the Lost Cause. Ownby never mentions Women's Memorial Associations or the Daughters', but Wilson explored the role of women in the Lost Cause further in his work through this. The relationship with the church made these Southern women virtuous and leaders in the South, according to Wilson. Not only after the war but during the war, "The courage of Southern women in the Civil War showed a "moral heroism" that was even greater than that of the Confederate soldier".²⁸ The symbol of women as these virtuous leaders, as asserted by Foster, Ownby, and Wilson, did not begin with the UDC, but during the war times. Women rose to the position of power by holding the South together while the men were at war, and through their sacrifice of their husbands and sons to the cause. The image of the ideal Southern woman is built on ideas of virtue, loyalty, and courage that began as an expectation of women before the Lost Cause. Wilson leads into the role of these women's groups building on this, "The Ladies' Memorial Associations of the South began enshrining the Lost Cause at the community level right after the war and had firmly established the Confederate tradition as hegemonic in the region well before the Daughters' work began in the 1890s".²⁹ The UDC, while most notable, was not the sole manifestation of women's key role in the perpetuation of the Lost Cause ideology. The role of the Southern woman began with women as a symbol of virtue, leading to respect and leadership in the home and church; with this position of power in the years following the war, women began the campaign to promote the Lost Cause ideology.

Southern women's role in the perpetuation of the Lost Cause is an aspect of the arguments in Foster, Ownby, and Wilson's works, but it is not the sole focus. The background on the role of women in Southern culture before and during the war, and in the emergence of the New South, becomes essential to understanding the role women continue to play. The United Daughters of the Confederacy was founded in 1894 and quickly became the primary women's memorial organization. In *Subduing Satan*, Ownby asserts that the public sphere was male-dominated, that that is where the men held power. This is in line with Foster's prior argument, yet Foster asserts that this changed. When referencing the UDC, Foster stated, "since women traditionally have served as preservers of cultural values, the Daughters' role was possibly a normal development. But at the height of the Confederate celebration in the nineties, males had directed its activities, and in early twentieth-century America men still dominated public life".³⁰ The male-dominated public sector as a coping mechanism was the central argument of *Subduing Satan*, yet with the emergence of the Daughters' Foster recognized a flip. Foster argues this was due to the men no longer finding Confederate tradition important in society so they delegated it to the women. Yet women had long before been the leaders in preserving Southern culture, the UDC was birthed out of the existing role of Southern women. It can be argued that, "when the UDC was formed, a new generation of southern

²⁸ Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 46.

²⁹ Wilson, *Subduing Satan*, 40.

³⁰ Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 179.

women became leaders of the Lost Cause”.³¹ Wilson, unlike Foster, does argue that the Lost Cause became a civil religion, Wilson shows the combination of Christianity with Confederate culture in forming that civil religion. Looking at all three works, it is undeniable that women played a central role in the church, more so than the Southern men. With this fact, women are a pillar of the Lost Cause’s formation into a civil religion, and with the formation of UDC, they move into the public sphere.

The use of this position of power only develops further with the formation of women's groups, the most notable being the UDC. Foster and Wilson touch on Women's Memorial Associations and the UDC, but women’s organizations are not the central focus of their arguments. Initially, there were Ladies Memorial Associations that co-existed with the UDC for a time, but the UDC ended up superseding them. Karen Cox authors the first book-length study on the United Daughters of the Confederacy, *Dixie’s Daughters* published in 2003. Being the first, this work is foundational in Lost Cause scholarship. The UDC played and continues to play a vital role in the perpetuation of the Lost Cause, as it relies on the traditional position of power of women in Southern culture. In this work, Cox’s analysis looks at the 1890s with the formation of the UDC in ninety-four, to World War One. Cox argues that women have always been the leaders in memorializing Confederate culture, through monuments, educating the youth, and caring for the elderly, with the goal of vindication and perpetuation of the Lost Cause myths. Cox states, “These women, I argue, are primarily responsible for the impact that the Lost Cause had on the South in the twentieth century”.³² The Daughters assumed responsibility for the continuation of Confederate tradition and became more involved than their male counterpart, the Sons of Confederate Veterans or SCV. These women thought it their job to spread the Lost Cause, mimicking the Evangelical mission to spread the word of God, disseminating their civil religion.

Cox argues that one of the main mediums in which the UDC spread this word was in teaching the youth- when it comes to keeping Confederate culture alive, the key is involving the youth. The UDC laid out their objectives very clearly; for instance, Cox quotes a UDC ritual that stated “To do homage unto the memory of our gallant Confederate soldiers, and to perpetuate the fame of their noble deeds unto the third and fourth generation”.³³ With this, she also quotes an address to the Daughters from Virginia Clay Clopton, in which she said “for, are not women the mothers and molders of men, from the cradle to the coffin?”.³⁴ Utilizing their position as mothers and heads of the house, they take on the role of Confederate motherhood. Not only did they teach their own children these Lost Cause ideas and false history, but they took on teaching the youth of the nation. One of the biggest campaigns of the UDC was the eradication of what they called unsuitable textbooks, and the implementation of books teaching what they deemed correct. This gave the Lost Cause mythology the guise of fact, as it was taught as such. For instance, as they took over the schools, “UDC members placed Confederate flags and portraits of Confederate heroes in

³¹ Karen L Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville, FL, University Press of Florida, 2019), 119.

³² Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*, 5.

³³ Cox, 118.

³⁴ Cox, 118.

southern classrooms and worked with teachers to plan history lessons. They planned Confederate commemorative activities for students, often at the invitation of principals and school superintendents, and they sponsored essay contests”.³⁵ The infiltration of schools and teachings in the home sector led to the expansion and continuation of the Lost Cause, and Cox asserts the UDC is responsible for the Lost Cause bridging generations.

Another primary piece of Cox’s breakdown of the UDC’s role in the perpetuation of the Lost Cause is monuments. The Daughters again used the position of power they were delegated by the men, as memorialization was deemed women’s work to produce hundreds of monuments. There is a clear distinction between memorials and monuments, distinguished by the intent they are erected to serve. The Daughters began to use the power they gained in the public sphere to move what were memorials in graveyards or battlegrounds to public spaces like town squares, making them monuments. Cox argues that “Beginning in the mid-1880s and continuing through World War I, the meaning and purpose of Confederate memorialization changed”.³⁶ These monuments were intentionally placed in public areas as a reminder of the Confederacy and as physical symbols of white supremacy. Cox establishes that “For nearly twenty years, the Daughters successfully campaigned to build monuments in almost every city, town, and state of the former Confederacy”.³⁷ The physical symbols of white supremacy had spread and would continue to. The Daughters claimed monument building as one of their responsibilities to their Confederate ancestors, to keep the cause alive. The UDC fundraised and petitioned for these monuments, and the sheer number of monuments would not have been possible without their efforts. Cox points out, “The Daughters never failed in raising money for monuments once they accepted responsibility, partly because they insisted that men contribute to the cause. Frequently, their tactic was to shame men into contributing to a monument fund”.³⁸ The monuments were considered the women’s job, but they had sway with the men, and the UDC became so powerful it had real power in the national government. In a time in which women did not have the right to vote, these women had undeniable influence in government, and on men. The shaming of the men that they were not doing enough for the Confederate culture, mirrors the same arguments made by women that men were not Evangelical enough that Ownby discusses in *Subduing Satan*. The erection of these monuments meant the Lost Cause would be permanent, carved in marble, and even a mountain forever, or so they thought.

Karen Cox continues her discussion of monuments in a book solely discussing the Confederate monuments the UDC is responsible for. Cox’s work *No Common Ground*, published in 2021, details the context of these Confederate monuments, and why it matters in modern-day debates. Cox argues in this work that Confederate Monuments have become a battleground for systematic racism and that the debates over these monuments are nothing new, but that they have been the point of clashing since their erection. Since the UDC began its mission to erect these monuments there has been resistance. The monuments became a medium of resistance as well, with

³⁵ Cox, 121.

³⁶ Cox, 66.

³⁷ Cox, 49.

³⁸ Cox, 59.

more being erected in response to Reconstruction or the Civil Rights movement. In Cox's prior work, she asserts there was a change from memorialization to monumentalizing in the mid-1880s. In continuing her scholarship on this topic, she states again the importance of the purpose of these monuments. She asserts, "They were placed there by white southerners whose intentions were not to preserve history but to glorify a heritage that did not resemble historical facts. By erecting these statues, white southerners have, over time, upheld a past in which the ideals of Confederate nationalism rest on metaphorical pedestals of heroism and sacrifice, while at the same time they negate the legacy of slavery".³⁹ The UDC, who is primarily responsible for the campaigning and production of these Confederate Monuments, did so with the intent of romanticizing the Confederacy, allowing them to remain public symbols of the Lost Cause mythology in the modern day, making them still standing in the modern-day, public symbols of the Lost Cause mythology. Cox also argues for the importance of the historical context of these monuments, "They continued to "speak" to both white and black southerners decades later".⁴⁰ The monuments represented what many white Southerners claimed was heritage, but to Black people they represented hate. Looking at the history of them, the monuments do stand as pillars of white supremacy, many even blatantly stating this. For example, The Liberty Place monument had the words white supremacy written on it. The debates over these monuments have always existed, but Cox argues that in recent years events like the Dylann Roof murders or George Floyd's murder have brought these monuments into question like never before. Even today, the UDC remains a defender of these monuments, and their headquarters has even been targeted in protests, showing they are to blame for the existence of these marble symbols being fought against. The work of the UDC remains, continuing to perpetuate falsehoods, and Cox emphasizes in both *Dixie's Daughters* and *No Common Ground* just how impactful their work was in continuing the Lost Cause.

Monuments are not the only symbol of the Lost Cause endorsed and used by the UDC that has come into question in recent years. The Confederate Battle flag, like the monuments, has become questioned, as these symbols of white supremacy stand in public spaces. Cox touches on the Battle flag as another symbol that, along with the monuments, has not only been recently debated due to recent racial violence but that progress has actually been made to remove these symbols from the public sphere. *The Confederate Battle Flag: America's Most Embattled Emblem*, authored by John M. Coski focuses on the role of the Confederate battle flag. The flag has become contested, and like the Confederate monuments is something near and dear to the UDC. When the flag is insulted and contested, "The reaction to this change was almost immediate, and it came first from the organization that had been in the forefront of promoting reverence for the flag: the United Daughters of the Confederacy".⁴¹ The flag was used not only to perpetuate the very cause the UDC existed for, but they also used the flag in their own rituals. The UDC took up protecting the battle flag and even issued rules against its misuse. The flag itself Coski points out, "fulfilled one of the

³⁹ Karen L Cox, *No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 13.

⁴⁰ Cox, *No Common Ground*, 87.

⁴¹ John M Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag: America's Most Embattled Emblem* (Cambridge, MA: Belnap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 161.

UDC's educational objectives: "the southern boys glory in telling their Yankee buddies what our flag means".⁴² The Confederate Battle flag had become a symbol of not only the South but in ways the nation as a whole, the continued use of it by groups like the UDC or SCV, and the passing of the Lost Cause generationally instilled the flag as a national symbol.

One of the more well-known UDC members, for her famed work *Gone With the Wind*, Margaret Mitchell, is responsible for perpetuating the Lost Cause with pop culture. Karen Cox's book *Dreaming of Dixie* delves into the perpetuation of the Lost Cause, and the romanticization of the South through popular media. Published in 2011, this work analyses the Lost Cause through the lens of pop culture. From books to movies to radio, the South became a beacon for successful popular culture. *Gone with the Wind* is just one example of the South in popular culture becoming a booming success, which only further perpetuated the Lost Cause ideology. Cox addresses this work saying, "Of course, *Gone with the Wind*, Margaret Mitchell's best-selling novel about the Civil War, was credited with starting the cycle. By the time of this December editorial, the book had sold more than 1 million copies - less than seven months after its publication. To capitalize on the book's success, there were several films about the Old South in production".⁴³ Mitchell's book turned infamous movie became one of the leading works in romanticizing the South. One that inspired others, noted by Cox as arguably one of the most influential. Written by a Southern woman who was a member of the UDC, this work showcases the Southern woman's influence yet again.

While the Lost Cause was a collection of countless myths guise as fact by groups like the UDC, one of the most notable myths over the years became the myth of Black Confederates. In his 2019 book titled *Searching for Black Confederates: The Civil War's Most Persistent Myth*, Kevin M. Levin addresses the common Lost Cause trope. Levin challenges this claim that Black Confederate soldiers fought for the South, and argues that the myth was perpetuated by false interpretations of history. The UDC along with other Confederate memorial groups played a role in this as they did in the perpetuation of all the Lost Cause mythology. Levin cites several incidents in which the UDC intentionally spun facts to make these fictitious claims of Black men fighting for the Confederacy. Levin asserts there were Black men in these Confederate camps, but they were not soldiers there by choice, but rather camp slaves. A prime example of their role in this Levin brings up is, "On September 17, 1994, the General William Barksdale Camp 1220, Sons of Confederate Veterans, and John M. Stone Chapter 380, United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), placed a Southern Cross of Honor on the grave of Silas Chandler in Greenwood Cemetery in West Point, Mississippi. By honoring him, the SCV transformed an unknown story about an obscure slave into a full-blown legend".⁴⁴ Silas Chandler was a camp slave, not a Confederate soldier, the UDC along with the SCV placed a Cross of Honor on his grave which was intended to use Silas to perpetuate the myth. The Cross of Honor was, "intended for Confederate soldiers who performed acts of valor on the

⁴² Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag*, 116.

⁴³ Karen L Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South Was Created in American Popular Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 81.

⁴⁴ Kevin M Levin, *Searching for Black Confederates: The Civil Wars Most Persistent Myth* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2022), 123.

battlefield”.⁴⁵ It was very evident Silas was a camp slave, there is very clear proof of this but it was an opportunity for the Daughters to further this myth. They repeat this, “In a ceremony that took place in 2009, members of the UDC dressed in mourning attire to decorate the graves of two former slaves who they claimed were “Confederate soldiers.””.⁴⁶ Again, these Confederate Memorial Associations led by the UDC use dead camp slaves, re-writing history, and erasing their experience as enslaved individuals to make their cause appear inclusive. The UDC even held ceremonies for these grave marker unveilings, “a ceremony that almost always failed to acknowledge the legal status of the grave’s occupant”.⁴⁷ These ceremonies intentionally omitted the proven historical fact that these men were enslaved, and therefore forced to be on these Confederate camps. The myth that Black Confederates existed was perpetuated to make the argument that slavery was not the cause of the Civil War. The UDC and other Confederate Memorial groups use these myths in an attempt to guise the racism they all perpetuate through the Lost Cause.

When studying the Lost Cause, Southern women stand out as one of the pillars of the civil religion. Southern women are responsible for the formation of the Lost Cause as a civil religion through their commitment to Evangelicalism and the Confederate culture, in which combined to form what can be considered a civil religion. Women traditionally were seen as heads of the household and the private sphere, which put them in a position of power with the youth and church. Southern women became those charged with the continuation of Confederate culture and are responsible for the persistence of the Lost Cause multigenerationally. These women formed several Ladies Memorial Associations or LMA’s, that culminated into the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The UDC became nationally powerful and led the charge for monument construction, and the education of the youth. The UDC utilized pop culture through literature, movies, and the media to instill their cause outside of the South. The Lost Cause’s spread nationwide and continuation into the modern day can be attributed to several factors but none more than the role Southern women played.

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⁴⁵ Levin, *Searching for Black Confederates*, 123.

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BENEATH THE CORSET: EXPLORING SEX, SEXUALITY, AND QUEER RELATIONSHIPS IN VICTORIAN BRITAIN

Hannah Elizabeth Rose

Sexuality is a form of self-expression that can be traced back to every time and era. The Victorian period, though, has often been regarded as particularly prudish and chaste. Despite longstanding preconceptions, Victorians were open with their sexuality, expressing their erotic desires in everyday life and expressing their sexuality through the lens of being queer. The modern understanding of queer differs from the Victorian understanding, as a queer person was only viewed as a homosexual man or woman, and other sexualities and genders were not recognized. Author Violet Fenn describes the Victorian era as “just *so* sexy. The very buttoned-up-ness of it makes one think of doomed love affairs, heaving bosoms and tragic endings; everything I’ve always loved in a story. Artists were pushing the boundaries of sexual depictions in polite society; upstanding gentlemen were writing secret diaries about their innermost desires; even the lowliest of the populace gave thought to illicit desires and sexual pleasure.”⁴⁸ By exploring and analyzing erotic and queer desires in Victorian Britain, historians can discover various sexual attitudes that the Victorians possessed and use these attitudes to study sexuality of the era, how it was expressed, and how that expression can be found within various famous works.

Throughout the Victorian period, sexuality was defined and redefined by various famous figures who defied the standards of the day. They can be analyzed through their sexual expressiveness, including having public and private sexual parties with both sexes, publishing erotic magazines, purchasing phallic objects for sexual pleasure, and wearing scandalous outfits (or cross-dressing) out in public to defy the norm of the time. These are just some of the ways the Victorians were openly explicit about their sexual desires and attempted to defy conventional standards. However, many were not as open as others, as it was still a time where public indecency charges were at an all-time high and people of higher classes viewed sex—outside of marriage and for pleasure—as a sin, even taking people to court over the matter. This is how sexual stereotypes of the Victorians became so prevalent in history. By examining the traditional notion of the prudish Victorian, there are several characters of the era who challenged these stereotypes. Figures such as Lord Byron, Oscar Wilde, and Queen Victoria rebelled against conventional notions of sexuality during the time through three different lenses: radical sexual expression, societal nonconformist, and outspoken sexual desire. Rebellion against conventional views on sexuality is also found within broader aspects of English Victorian society, encompassing themes like prostitution, women's roles, and secretive queer desires.

The Victorian era, named after the period’s monarch, Queen Victoria, was a time of significant change within social culture, gender roles, technological advancements, and fashion.⁴⁹ Through these changes, the culture and society of Victorian Britain was rapidly transformed. While

⁴⁸ Violet Fenn, *Sex and Sexuality in Victorian Britain* (Yorkshire, UK: Pen and Sword Books, 2020), viii.

⁴⁹ Ruth Goodman, *How to be a Victorian: A Dawn-to-Dusk Guide to Victorian Life*, (London, UK: W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., 2013), 2.

these themes evolved in society, so did the moral values of the Victorians. Victorian culture surrounded the heteronormative context, though with homoerotic undertones and expressive sexuality. The Victorians show within memoirs, journal entries, erotic photographs, and published magazines that they were highly sexual, not truly expressing it in public, though personally most had very erotic and homoerotic desires. These desires can be studied through various pieces of literature as well, through different memoirs and published classics. Gender and sexuality can be found with Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, which explores femininity in a patriarchal Victorian society.⁵⁰ While these books delve into gender roles and femininity, they also have an essence of homoerotic themes and undertones, which can be studied throughout the Victorian era as defying the narrative of the heteronormative society. Homoerotic and queer themes can be found within aspects of the mundane Victorian. Through exploring different themes shown within Victorian society, sexuality can be found at the core of all human cultures.

Evidence of the sexual lives of average Victorians can be found within memoirs and diaries, most written in private as they were so scandalous for the day. Within the case of an anonymously written memoir of a man who is only named Walter, he discusses sex explicitly, as he discovers his sexual preferences as a young adult. Throughout the memoir, he is faced with many instances where he objectifies and sexualizes women, explicitly details his sexual encounters with women, explores sex with men as a teenager, and has private sexual parties with young men, delving into great details of those encounters. In *My Secret Life*, Walter explains that these sexual parties included competitive masturbation between him and five of his male schoolfellows.⁵¹ Walter goes into specific and explicit details of the affair; it seems as though they had started out their competition by talking about women's autonomy, though finished with staring at each other as they are self-gratified. Throughout his memoir, Walter does not directly state his desire to be with a man sexually, though he hints at it, stating he regularly thought about his friends' competitions, using that memory to pleasure himself regularly as well.⁵² While Walter does not speak for all Victorians, he speaks to the fact that while they all said they were thinking about women while they pleased themselves, they also looked up and watched each other until they were finished. These queer undertones and sexual desires within *My Secret Life* can be analyzed within many other memoirs and diaries across both sexes.

Through the context of sexuality in Victorian society, to understand why people felt they had to censor their sexuality and homoerotic desires, historians must analyze Victorian culture and people. To fully grasp the heteronormative society of Victorian Britain, historians can investigate the culture itself by analyzing fashion, gender roles, and popular culture. Within various gender roles of the time, a noble woman's main job was to marry well and have children, particularly a male heir as the first-born. There is not much of a difference for women of lower classes, as they were expected to marry and have many children as soon as possible, since child mortality rates were high during

⁵⁰ Christopher Craft, "Kiss Me with Those Red Lips: Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," (University of California Press, 1984), *Representations*, no. 8, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2928560>, accessed November 29, 2023.

⁵¹ Anonymous, *My Secret Life*, ([August Brancart], Amsterdam, 1888), 90.

⁵² Anonymous, *My Secret Life*, 90.

this era.⁵³ For the working-class family, the mortality rates for children were even higher than the noble class, with one in two children dying before the age of five.⁵⁴ For working-class women, they were expected to also have a first-born male heir, since only males would inherit titles and land.

While the inheritance and childbirth aspect of gender roles were the most prevalent in Victorian society, there were more patriarchal views stemming from various works of blatant misogyny. can be found within the Victorian gothic novel, *Dracula*, by Bram Stoker. *Dracula* is filled with erotica and desire that captures the reader as soon as the first chapter, as it details various accounts with the women of Dracula's castle.⁵⁵ Throughout *Dracula*, women are seen as seductress rebels that ignore conventional views of sexuality, as all the women express their sexuality explicitly. The character Lucy, for example, who is an outwardly sexual character, expresses a desire to have multiple lovers.⁵⁶ As Lucy expresses a want for multiple lovers, she is asserting her sexuality, in a Victorian oppressive society. Throughout the novel, as the female vampires are gaining strength, they are then viewed as threats to be destroyed, to be returned to a pure state before they became vampires. While Lucy is viewed throughout the novel as being sultry and seductive, there is an erotic animalistic feature of her that is presented: "The fair girl went on her knees...there was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck, she licked her lips like an animal."⁵⁷ This erotic animalistic imagery of Lucy is presented to show Stoker's portrayal of the seductress—how women can rise in an oppressive society as sex symbols and thus admit them to the context of Victorian female sexual desire. Throughout *Dracula*, there is a clear separation between femininity and masculinity, as the descriptions of both genders differ in the context of erotica. Dracula himself is described as having "eyes flamed red with devilish passion; the great nostrils of the white aquiline nose opened wide and quivered at the edges; and the white sharp teeth, behind the full lips of the blood-dripping mouth, champed together like those of a wild beast."⁵⁸ Here, Dracula is described as a very handsome man with sultry and animalistic type features; these alluring features also portray him as the ultimate seductor and vampire; the context for female erotica presented is very feminine and lighter than Dracula.

As *Dracula* portrays the roles of erotica and femininity, it also delves into the homoerotic with the relationship between Count Dracula and Jonathon Harker. The two men never blatantly address their attraction for one another nor to any man, though their attraction can be found within the details of various scenes that occur between the two. This desire is evoked in certain scenes where blood is involved, such as when Harker cuts himself shaving and Dracula lunges himself at Harker's throat, recoiling at the last minute.⁵⁹ This scene shows Dracula as a sexual threat and shows

⁵³ Joan Perkin, *Victorian Women* (United Kingdom: John Murray Publishers Ltd., 1993), 8.

⁵⁴ Perkin, *Victorian Women*, 8.

⁵⁵ Christopher Craft, "Kiss Me with Those Red Lips," 108.

⁵⁶ Stoker, *Dracula*, 72.

⁵⁷ Stoker, 45.

⁵⁸ Stoker, 336.

⁵⁹ Stoker, *Dracula*, 30.

homoeroticism within the heterosexual context surrounding the setting. Within the setting, Christopher Craft states in “Kiss Me with Those Red Lips: Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*”, “an implicitly homoerotic desire achieves representation as a monstrous heterosexuality, as a demonic inversion of normal gender relations.”⁶⁰ As Craft draws on the idea of homoerotic desire in a heteronormative setting, he views the relationship between Dracula and Harker as crossing the boundaries of gender and relationships, which is almost crossed in *Dracula*.

As gender roles for women remained the norm, an area rose in popularity: masturbation. The diagnosis of hysterics was mainly pushed towards women, and doctors of the day believed it was their husbands, fathers, or brothers who were affected with stress, as they were living and looking out for their female counterpart. To ease men’s anxieties and frustrations, the first electro-mechanical nerve massager was invented. The ‘percuteur’, as it became known, invented by British physician, Joseph Mortimer Granville, in the 1880s. Though first designed for men to place on their temples to ease nerves, it soon became a household device, enjoyed by their female counterparts for sexual pleasure. Granville refused to design the tool for women, stating, “I have avoided, and shall continue to avoid, the treatment of women by percussion, simply because I do not want to be hoodwinked, and help to mislead others by the vagaries of the hysterical state or the characteristic phenomena of mimetic disease.”⁶¹ By the early 1900s, it was placed in popular magazines, targeted towards female homemakers. This tool would allow women, usually of middle- to upper-class status, the opportunity to take back their own sexuality, as they had not been able to claim their sexual nature before. In Victorian society, a fine lady was to never speak of sex because it was deemed inappropriate and crude.⁶² If a woman used the percuteur for sexual gratification, they were rebelling against the stereotype of the prudish Victorian and the conventional norms of the day, allowing themselves to have sexual gratification within a conventional society.

Victorian Britain had very patriarchal perspectives on fashion, specifically women’s fashion, which was even viewed as costumes. Women’s dresses could be very extravagant and quite heavy with many layers, while men could wear suits with fewer layers. While there is an uneven balance between gendered fashions, the patriarchal components of it are derived from the purity culture found within Victorian society. Victorians would also have an exact dress or suit for every occasion, which goes to show their need in culture to always have large and extravagant costumes. From how a woman dressed, she could have been viewed respectfully or quite whorish, with pornography deriving from fashion, as the Victorian period was one of the first to have published pornography for the general public, as evidenced by the pornographic magazine, *The Pearl*.⁶³ The Victorians views of pornography differ much from the modern view, as they “varied from giving charmingly naïve glimpses of a woman’s ankles, via titillating shots of a seductress resplendent in corsets and drawers,

⁶⁰ Craft, “Kiss Me with Those Red Lips,” 110.

⁶¹ Joseph Mortimer Granville, *Nerve-vibration and Excitation as Agents in the Treatment of Functional Disorder and Organic Disease* (London, UK: J. & A. Churchill, 1883), accessed November 29, 2023, <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/hr2tckgh>, 57.

⁶² Fenn, *Sex and Sexuality*, xi.

⁶³ *The Pearl: A Journal of Facetiae and Voluptuous Reading*, No.1-6 (July 1879-December 1879), accessed November 1, 2023, https://archive.org/details/pearl_1-6/mode/2up.

to some very graphic compositions in which the models were most definitely not wearing drawers at all.”⁶⁴ Pornography in the Victorian era was formed through books that included various fables, poems, stories, and diary entries. A famous pornographic cautionary fable of the day was “The Monkey and the Dildoe.” The moral of the fable is set directly in the story as it reads, “a pet monkey who had watched his mistress fill her dildoe with cream, waited a chance when she had ceased using it, being called away for a few minutes. ‘Now,’ said he, ‘I will have my fill of cream,’ so he sucked away, but unfortunately the lady had contracted syphilis, and the monkey died in convulsions. The moral of this fable is, that you should never suck dildoes.”⁶⁵

The first item of clothing put on in the morning would have been standard undergarments for women, a notion to purity culture which stems from the Victorian period. Garments during this time were made with an opening under them to make it easier for women to relieve themselves because their dresses were so heavy. Because of this, many men would take advantage of women. In *My Secret Life*, the author Walter speaks of many instances where he essentially grabs women in their genitals, because they would have been exposed, in order for them to seemingly enjoy it enough to have sex with him. This is a dishonorable trait he seems to uphold throughout his youth and talks extensively of in his memoir. Throughout the memoir, he is faced with many women who reject his offer for sex, even some instances where he received a slap on the face for it,⁶⁶ which drives him to find many sex-workers from the streets and alleys of London. This is where Walter explores his sexuality more and eventually experiences a sexually transmitted disease for the first time; he is infected with gonorrhea, then named ‘the clap’, which he had received from one of his frequented sex-workers.⁶⁷ Though Walter gets treated for his infection, the treatment at the time consisted of a mercury-filled syringe that would have been injected right into the penis.⁶⁸ While this would have been a very unpleasant experience, Walter continues to see other sex-workers in London and continues to get various sexually transmitted infections and diseases, though he remains a frequent client to many brothels and alleyways.

There were parts of the United Kingdom that were known specifically for brothels and where sex-workers could frequently be found. Liverpool, London, Colchester, and Shrewsbury were hubs for prostitution. While there are many parts of England that are known for prostitution, one in particular that is still named for its historical solicitation is Grope Lane, which can be found in Shrewsbury, UK, outside of London; this street was once best known for prostitutes of all ages and sexes. Prostitution is one of the oldest trades in the world, once considered a ‘social evil’ in Victorian society, though it was one of the most extensive forms of work for women and men during this time.⁶⁹ Some estimate that, within the 1860s, there could have been up to one million

⁶⁴ Goodman, *How to be a Victorian*, 59.

⁶⁵ Fenn, *Sex and Sexuality*, 41.

⁶⁶ Anonymous. *My Secret Life*, 37.

⁶⁷ Anonymous. *My Secret Life*, 130.

⁶⁸ Fenn, *Sex and Sexuality*, 62.

⁶⁹ Paula Bartley, *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860-1914* (London, UK: Routledge, 2000), accessed October 25, 2023, 1.

sex-workers on the streets of England, though from police statistics from this time, only thirty thousand police reports, of which 7119 were women, were tried on the offense of prostitution.⁷⁰ The sex-workers of Victorian England, in a way, formed their own society with a social hierarchy which has been extensively debated. Within this hierarchal system, there could have been up to six sections: thieves' women, park women, soldiers' and sailors' women, low lodging house women, demi-mondains, and kept mistresses.⁷¹ Because women were at the center of prostitution, this hierarchal system does not include men, though they did make up a large majority of sex-workers during the Victorian era. Prostitutes frequented so many pubs and brothels that they became inspiration for books, drawings, and, most notably, songs. Made famous by the Beatles, the traditional English folk song, "Maggie Mae", is about a prostitute in Liverpool and mentions the street she worked on, recognizing Maggie Mae as an embodiment of all English female prostitutes: "and the judge found her of robbin' a homeward bounder, / she'll never walk down Lime Street anymore. / Oh Maggie Maggie Mae, they have taken her away / and she'll never walk down Lime Street anymore. / Well that judge he guilty found her, for robbin' a homeward-bounder, / you dirty robbin"⁷²

While prostitution was one of the largest forms of income for lower class women during the Victorian period, there were many dangers that sex-workers faced. As sexually transmitted diseases were one of the more rapidly spreading dangers, there were many violent crimes committed towards sex-workers of all sexes and ages. These violent dangers can be shown through the perspectives of various Victorian sex-workers whose lives were lost by sexually influenced violence. One of the most infamous serial killers in Britain's history prowled the streets of Victorian England, preying off sex-workers. He would be known as Jack the Ripper, though his crimes remain anonymous, as he was never caught. He murdered and maimed five women, all sex-workers in the East End of London, in the predominant Whitechapel area where violence had become quite pervasive.⁷³ This area of London was notable for sex work; "the social evils of London as a whole, and the country beyond, came to be embodied by the poor, the destitute and unemployed of the East End."⁷⁴ Even though there were sex-workers being brutally murdered in the London streets, not just by the Ripper, prostitution never stopped during this year-long reign of terror throughout London.

Another danger was police brutality of the day. Prostitution became such a frequent form of income and soldiers were frequenting sex-works quite often, they were actual laws put in place against it. Venereal diseases were spreading so rapidly in Victorian Britain, particularly among the military, that the Contagious Disease Acts were passed in 1864 as a direct result of STD rates.⁷⁵ Under the acts, the police had the ability to detain and arrest any woman who was under the

⁷⁰ Bartley, *Prostitution*, 2.

⁷¹ Bartley, 3.

⁷² Fenn, *Sex and Sexuality*, 73.

⁷³ Fenn, 77.

⁷⁴ Paul Begg, *Jack the Ripper: the Definitive History* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2005), 3, <https://eds.p.ebscohost.com/eds>, accessed November 15, 2023.

⁷⁵ Fenn, *Sex and Sexuality*, 73.

suspicion of being a sex-worker. If they refused, then the police would be able to use excessive force to detain them, later subjugating them. Suspected sex-workers would sometimes be forced to have humiliating and invasive medical examinations done by doctors once detained; if they resisted, they could have been arrested immediately. Women of lower classes were most affected by this; a fine elite nobleman never would have been under suspicion for such a salacious crime.

Within the context of homoerotic desires in Victorian Britain, there are many instances where both gay men and lesbian women can be shown through the average narrative: in same-sex friendships, femininity in men and masculinity in women, and representations of lesbians. Using these narratives, Victorian England can be viewed as a queer society, though not publicly open. There are many cases of men and women being arrested on gross indecency charges which, in the Victorian times, meant you were found to be gay or cross-dressing. In Victorian society, not only was it illegal, but it was also very embarrassing to be queer as it was such a taboo topic. People had to keep their queer desires secret from the public, as people could not have been openly sexual and were not able to love whomever freely. In the case of Irish author, Oscar Wilde, who was arrested in April 1895 for homosexuality, he pleaded innocent, stating, "It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural about it. The world mocks it and sometimes puts one in the pillory for it."⁷⁶ Wilde was sentenced to two years of hard labor, the maximum sentence, where he would become broke and destitute from lawyer fees; Wilde died alone and broke in Paris in 1900. Being a homosexual man in a heteronormative judgmental society, Wilde was subject to much by society, which became a large factor within his trial later on. Wilde wrote in the style of Aestheticism, which was criticized for being against Victorian norms and immoral within society. Within various criticisms of Wilde, many journalists noted his "flamboyant dress, artificial conversational style which has been met with great hostility, since they disapproved of what they perceived as Wilde's effeminacy."⁷⁷ As were most queer men during that period, Wilde felt as though he had to put a layer of masculinity on to conform to the norm of the day. While he wanted to ensure that he was viewed as a heterosexual man with a high masculine persona, Wilde was said to be a very entertaining dinner guest and was close friends with many females, which was frowned upon for a well-known male, and he "dazzled London society with his conversation."⁷⁸

It certainly can be noted that examining Wilde's sexual preferences and hidden queer life, he was always appalled by women, though he married Constance Lloyd in 1884. He showed his disgust of her body during her pregnancies, stating that when they first married, she was beautiful and happy while specifying her weight and how she was slim, and when she got pregnant, "she became heavy, shapeless, deformed. She dragged herself about the house in uncouth misery.... I tried to be kind to her; forced myself to touch and kiss her but...oh! I cannot recall it; it is all loathsome."⁷⁹ It is noted that his repugnance for his wife, as well as his first encounter with Robert Ross, his first male lover, is the beginning of his homoerotic desires. From this point in Wilde's life, he frequented various male prostitution establishments, delving into the homosexual culture of London. Wilde was

⁷⁶ Fenn. *Sex and Sexuality*, 99.

⁷⁷ Ruth Robbins, *Oscar Wilde* (London, UK: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 10.

⁷⁸ Robbins. *Oscar Wilde*, 12.

⁷⁹ Robbins, 11.

known to meet his frequent male sex-workers, some of whom consisted of soldiers and clerks, all within the same age range as Wilde. His most infamous affair was with Lord Alfred Douglas, which led to his persecution and trial on the grounds of gross indecency. While Wilde took experiences from his life and exemplified it in his work, he mostly shows sexuality through the context of society and social norms of Victorian Britain. Oscar Wilde's exploration of sexuality is shown through gender-bending characters and a nonconformist society which displays Wilde's rejection of societal Victorian norms. These fluid personas can be found in his great classics, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. These works also have homoerotic themes and undertones to them, exemplified by the various characters and specific scenes.

In Wilde's only published book, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the main character, Dorian Gray, though seemingly obsessed with looking young forever and seemingly quite favorable with women, also seems to show homoerotic desires in the subtext of the story between the male side characters and Dorian Gray.⁸⁰ While Wilde is not the only author to put various sexual and queer desires in his work, he is one of the most infamous ones whose work can be examined for these desires, which became best sellers of their day. It certainly can be noted that although Oscar Wilde was a brilliant writer of his time, he also rebelled against conventional norms of the day by being the nonconformist he was, accepting that he was attracted to men even after he was sentenced for it. Until his death, Wilde stood up against society for who he was and whom he loved.

While there were many authors and playwrights of the Victorian period who wrote very sexually, one of the most infamous ones was Lord Byron. He also gained fame from hosting large and lively parties, even erotic parties of both sexes as he was known to be bisexual, embracing his sexuality through his writings such as his best seller, *Don Juan*. His reputation was built off being an aristocrat and a recognized poet and author, as well as "shaping the stereotype soon recognized throughout Europe, the passionate, rebellious Romantic Poet."⁸¹ Byron's life can be studied as like one of a bachelor's, having many affairs and lovers, even through his two marriages. While he is often regarded as part of the Regency era rather than Victorian, one can argue that aspects of Victorian society and culture are inspired by Lord Byron's life and his works. Byron is often regarded as a very eccentric character, especially in the context of romance, being attracted to both men and women. Byron's first queer connection was with a schoolfellow named John Edleston, whom he met at Trinity College in 1805, later describing the relationship as "a violent, though pure, love and passion."⁸² Byron embarked on many adventures around Europe, meeting and venturing with sex-workers, male and female, as well as hosting the occasional party, though the nature of them has been debated if they were innately sexual or not. Byron went on to have two marriages, described as very passionate marriages, though ended them briefly when having many extra-marital affairs with both men and women. He even stated later in his autobiography that he had a brief intimate affair with his half-sister Augusta in 1813.⁸³ Byron was questioned about his sexuality, so to avoid public

⁸⁰ Ed Cohen, *Writing Gone Wilde: Homoerotic Desire in the Closet of Representation* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), *PMLA*, vol. 102, no. 5, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/462309>, accessed November 15, 2023, 805.

⁸¹ Clara Tuite, *Lord Byron and the Scandalous Celebrity* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 15.

⁸² Tuite, *Lord Byron*, 157.

⁸³ Tuite, 126.

scrutiny and ridicule, he fled England, never to return. In his adventures abroad, Byron published many poems and books about his travels that later inspired him to write his most famous poem, *Don Juan*. *Don Juan* is an epic poem that tells the story of a young and handsome nobleman who is faced with much strife by women, whom he avidly seduces. *Don Juan* reflects the life of Lord Byron through its sexual nature and various queer undertones and can be explored as a work of male fantasy.

Throughout Byron's fictional works, the queer undertones are mixed with a male sexual fantasy provided. In *Don Juan*, this fantasy can be found within various daydreams, the harem, and Don Juan's seduction. Readers are led through the poem by a narrator who is suspected to be a gay man, though the character Don Juan himself is an avid seducer of women, having many affairs throughout the story. The character of Don Juan is thought to be based off of Lord Byron himself, as some scholars have compared the adventurous and romantic life of Don Juan to Lord Byron, with various similarities. Throughout *Don Juan*, the homoerotic is found as an undertone in the setting, such as the feminization of the character himself. The hypersexualization of the women in the epic, as well as the homosexual narrator, help one to understand Britain's views of sexuality as it then is offered from the different perspectives. Caitlin Stanfield offers a unique insight into *Don Juan* and Byron's writing, stating, "Byron's continued usage of coded language and double-entendres provide far more than mere titillating wordplay; through his language, readers receive a rare glimpse into England's homosexual subculture as well as the methods used by queer persons to circumvent pressures to conform to their assigned sex and gender—even by going so far as to masquerade as the other sex."⁸⁴

Just as Lord Byron gives the perspective of a bisexual poet, Renée Vivien and her works offers a perspective through the lesbian lens, as she was one of the first poets to write as an open lesbian. Originally from Victorian England, Vivien's family moved to Paris when she was a young girl, being brought up in the elite scene of Paris. Vivien was a known lesbian, having her first female relationship when she was just a child. Her most notable lover was Natalie Clifford Barney, who showed her the homoerotic underbelly of Paris, which was not as different from Victorian London.⁸⁵ Vivien would live a short life of only thirty-three years old but was able to publish few books, most notably her autobiography, *A Woman Appeared to Me*, which tells the tormented relationship between Vivien and Barney.⁸⁶ In *A Woman Appeared to Me*, Vivien goes into explicit details of her affair with Barney, as well as the relationship as it progressed, until its initial ending. This is the first account of an open lesbian relationship between two women that can be examined

⁸⁴ Caitlin Stanfield, *Byron and Don Juan: A Case Study and Queer reading of the Closeted Libertine* (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, 2020), 40, accessed November 29, 2023, <https://scholar.utc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1273&context=honors-theses>.

⁸⁵ Per Faxneld, *Satanic Feminism: Lucifer as the Liberator of Women in Nineteenth-Century Culture*, (Oxford University Press, 2017), 355, accessed November 29, 2023, <https://eds.s.ebscohost.com/eds>.

⁸⁶ Renee Vivien, *A Woman Appeared to Me* (Paris, FA: Alphonse Lemerre, Paris, 1904), Jeannette Foster, (Naiad Press, Tallahassee, 1982), <https://archive.org/details/womanappearedtom00rene/page/n5/mode/2up>, accessed November 29, 2023.

through its cultural aspects during the Victorian era, as it gave great insight into an elite lesbian relationship of the time.

As various perspectives can be given for the male point of view, the female heterosexual perspective can also be examined through the relationship between Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Queen Victoria was the monarch of Great Britain and India from 1837 to 1901, leading the country through various technological and social advancements. While a notable monarch before Victoria would have been the embodiment of their country, in this case the prudish embodiment, Victoria was unlike other monarchs as she was more open with her sexuality than others before her. Becoming queen at eighteen years old in 1838, Victoria was thrown into the monarchy unwed and with so many expectations of her, specifically to find a suitable husband.⁸⁷ After marrying Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in 1840, Victoria became quite the romantic with her personal journal entries published today, and scholars can study the marriage between Victoria and Albert as one of great passion and love. After first meeting Albert, Victoria described him, writing, “Albert really is quite charming, and so excessively handsome...a beautiful figure, broad in the shoulders and a fine waist; my heart is quite going.”⁸⁸ She delves into quite vagarious and sultry details of their marriage, sometimes almost describing the explicit. From writing in this way and having the journals published modernly, Victoria was able to take back her own sexuality from those around her who tried to defy it themselves. Victoria, as the monarch, would have had to be completely closed off sexually, as English society would have deemed it inappropriate. In the face of conventional notions of sexuality, Victoria is able to express herself and her sexuality, rebelling against that society.

While Victoria rebels through her relationship with Albert, she also does it through various paintings commissioned by her. One painting in particular is “Queen Victoria” by Franz Xaver Winterhalter, done in 1843. Victoria had this painting commissioned for Prince Albert’s birthday as a present, exemplifying her admiration for her husband. In the painting, Victoria is portrayed as a beautiful young woman who is angled slightly, directing the viewer’s focus to her chest and neck. This painting is very sultry and seductive; Victoria wears her hair down and it flows down one side of her chest, revealing the other side. This painting was one done for her lover, Albert; therefore, she would have had direct feedback on it, possibly wanting herself to look as seductive yet subtle as possible. This painting can be studied through the lens of Victorian sexuality, as it shows a new, young monarch, vying for the attention of a man and displaying her sexuality in a time where it would have been deemed inappropriate to do so, especially for royalty.

The traditional notion of the prudish Victorian stereotype has been challenged by various celebrities of the day such as Oscar Wilde, Lord Byron, and Queen Victoria through their rebellious nature and display of nonconformity to societal expectations in the context of sexuality. Through studying various sexual and homoerotic desires, as well as prostitution, gender roles, and published classics, Victorian Britain can be viewed as a sexually awakened society. Sex and sexuality can be found throughout Victorian society, hidden in the pages of published classics such as *Dracula* and

⁸⁷ Christopher Hibbert, *Queen Victoria: A Personal History* (Cambridge, UK: First Da Capo Press, 2001), 70, <https://eds.s.ebscohost.com/eds>, accessed November 20, 2023.

⁸⁸ Queen Victoria, Lord Esher. *Queen Victoria’s Journals*, October 11, 1839, Lord Esher’s Typescripts, Windsor Castle, Royal Archives, vol. 12: 275-278.

The Picture of Dorian Gray, as well as found within various pieces of art such as “Queen Victoria.” Though the majority of Victorian society can be viewed as prudish, there are those who defied societal norms. Being viewed as a nonconformist, having radical sexual expression, and being open with one’s sexuality were key themes that challenged stereotypes and our modern perspective of the Victorians today.

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THE EXCLUSION OF DEISM IN DISCOURSE ABOUT GOD'S EXISTENCE

Valerie Durand

Deism is a philosophical view that ascertains the existence of a deity that is completely detached from the world (Vergote 222). This amoral God would not interact with the world; in addition, this view posits that there are no supernatural forces on earth. It shares some commonalities with both atheism and theism, neither of which require introduction but must be defined regardless. Atheism, an ascertained disbelief in any deity, rejects the theist God for reasons also seen in deist philosophy. However, like theists, deists do proclaim that God exists. Theism, however, asserts the existence of a God who is omnipotent, morally perfect, and all loving; deism does not share this view. Deism seems to be a marriage of atheism and theism, but it is often left unconsidered in discourse. Despite this, theism and atheism are not the only two observed options in the debate for God's existence. Axiarchism, the notion that the universe exists because it is good for it to exist, and ananthropocentric purposivism, the notion that a morally perfect God or force who is not benevolent towards humans exists, have both become recent topics of discussion. However, not a single aspect of these arguments addresses the stance that deism poses—an amoral God can exist. Because of the prerequisite of perfection assumed in debates about God's existence, deism is unreasonably neglected, despite its compatibility with arguments for and against God's existence. This will be shown through the dissection of the fine tuning and problem of evil arguments. Furthermore, the newer inclusion of axiarchism and ananthropocentric purposivism in these debates begs the question of why deism continues to be neglected. A further analysis of deism and its resistance to axiarchism and ananthropocentric purposivism will explain why the exclusion of deism in discourse is further unjustified.

Deism and theism share a strength in the support of the scientific argument that a finely tuned universe can serve as evidence of a creator. The work of physicists and astronomers have shown us that the universe is a statistical near impossibility—if it is random. From the exactness of the gravitational pull between protons and neutrons, to the rate of expansion of the big bang, precision was essential for fine-tuning the universe, let alone sustain life (Collins 4). These events, which have nearly vanishingly low probabilities of occurring independently, are inconceivably unlikely to occur together by chance. This begs the question of how the universe came to exist—a vanishingly unlikely phenomenon must be the result of something greater. The fine-tuning argument posits that the universe must have been designed. With the vast wealth of improbabilities that the universe requires to exist, it becomes challenging to conceive that these necessary events occurred fortuitously. With everything considered, to suggest otherwise would require a thorough deconstruction of the original argument, one that does not yet exist. The counterarguments to the fine-tuning argument will be examined through a deist lens. Some of aforementioned counterarguments attack the theistic implications of the fine-tuning argument, but the original argument remains robust. Above all, the deist standpoint resists these counterarguments due to its premise of an amoral God.

To begin, the fine-tuning argument must be examined in detail. The paper that posits this is called “The Fine-Tuning Design Argument” by Robin Collins, which is contained in *Reason for the Hope Within* (1999) by Michael J. Murray. Collins explains that while the fine-tuning argument is

not concrete evidence to disprove atheism altogether, it certainly makes its many disadvantages very clear. The examples of fine tuning given earlier are some of the reasons given for why the universe is finely tuned; Collins's paper explains this in more depth. Using the statistics calculated using the Standard Model of elementary particle physics and the theory of general relativity, one could see how impossibly small the chances of this finely tuned universe occurring atheistically are. The natural conclusion is that a designer is necessary for the universe's existence. There are two objections investigated in the paper: the single universe atheist argument and the multiple universe atheism argument. The single universe atheist believes in the very unlikely event that the universe really did occur by chance. This argument is rudimentary, and it is simple to refute—the plausibility of the universe randomly occurring, again, is nearly impossible. The multiple universe atheist, herein referred to as the multiverse atheist, has a more compelling argument. The multiverse atheist suggests that this universe is one of many. To be precise, they argue that there may be infinitely many universes. The chances of a finely tuned universe among many other universes are higher, and if there are infinitely many universes, then a finely tuned universe is guaranteed to occur at least once. However, this argument proves faulty when imagining an infinite universe generator. One universe existing, finely tuned or not, is already unlikely on its own. The big bang theory is quite the phenomenon, given that there was nothing—no space or time—before it. Even if one subscribes to the idea that the universe is infinitely old, this does not make it a likely event—imagining multiple becomes difficult. The odds of a fortuitous universe remain inconceivably small. Another pitfall of this argument is that the existence of a universe generator, like the one imagined in the atheistic multiverse argument, also implies a designer. One universe is decidedly more likely than multiple if the sheer unlikelihood of one alone existing is considered. Proposing that multiple finely tuned universes exist is notably less probable than only one existing. The main flaw with this argument is that there are zero non-theoretical scientific arguments for a multiverse. The Scientific American published an article about the multiverse, revealing that we lack any empirical evidence for the existence of a multiverse (Goff). However, this article poses something else of great importance—there is a major logical fallacy in the multiverse argument.

To understand how unsound the multiverse atheist argument is, consider the gambler's fallacy: A gambler in a casino who has only rolled terrible numbers might think that they must roll well on their next roll, since it is unlikely they would roll terribly all night. This thinking is fallacious because dice rolls are independent events. The probability of rolling two sixes is the same as the probability of rolling a two and a five—one in thirty-six. Inversely, if one walks in on this gambler finally rolling two sixes, it would be erroneous to think that they have finally rolled well after previous instances of losing. There is no luck in any particular roll—they are all equally likely to occur. It does not matter how long they have been rolling. The odds of rolling double sixes are the same as the odds as rolling a one and a four, as are the odds of rolling a two and a five, and so on and so forth. Multiverse atheists fall into this reverse fallacy as well. Saying, "There must certainly be more universes than this one alone, since infinite universes guarantee the finely tuned nature of the one we exist in" follows the same logic as saying that "The gambler must have rolled many times before rolling two sixes." If we assume the existence of many universes to be independent events, the fact that this universe exists is not evidence that other universes do. One cannot be certain that there are multiple universes at all, atheistic or otherwise. All that is

undoubtedly known is that this one does exist.

Lee Smolin, a physicist, calculated the odds of a finely tuned universe: one in 10 raised to the power of 229 (Goff). To be clear, this number is 1 followed by 229 zeros. As stated previously, the probability of two events co-occurring are smaller than one of those events occurring. If there is even one other finely tuned universe, the likelihood of it occurring by chance is even more microscopic—one in 1 raised to the power of 458. If one considers the improbability of the single universe atheist argument and the fallacy of the multiverse atheist argument, theism is a strong line of reasoning—if the universe requires a creator, and the universe exists, then God must exist. This is a line of reasoning shared by deism. However, there are many valid objections to theism that deism is resistant against.

Deism is a belief in a creator through means of logic as opposed to faith. It is certain; it is not agnosticism or atheism. Deism is distinct from theism in that the deist does not believe in supernatural interaction with the earth or in divine intervention. Deists tend to believe that God is a distant creator and an observer—if that. The fine-tuning argument for the existence of God is a strong argument against atheism. However, theist arguments often fall short because they assume that God must be a perfect being who is all-loving and all-powerful. The problem of evil forces a contradiction: If an all-powerful and all-loving God exists, evil cannot coexist. The deist answer to this dilemma is simple and concise: God must not be all-powerful or all-loving. The goodness of God has been the center of theistic and atheistic arguments since the idea of a God existing was first conceptualized. Many atheistic arguments, such as the Problem of Evil, center around the idea that no evils—necessary or sufficient—would exist in the world if God was real. Despite this, theist arguments insist that some evils are necessary; therefore, evil could still exist in the presence of a perfect God. Because these arguments depend on the notion that God is an all loving and all powerful being, they tend to fall to the various Problems of Evil. However, God does not necessarily have to be good to exist.

God's goodness is still contested by atheists and theists alike. An example of this is the discourse around free will, the idea that humans have free agency and can act without the control of an external force. Some theists argue that free will is evidence of God, since free agency is regarded as good. However, even free will lacks moral immunity. The existence of free will is exactly what enables the countless ruthless, meaningless evils that are undeniably extant by every metric. Certainly, a good God would not allow this. Others posit that free agency is good despite the existence of evils caused by humanity, and that God is not required to guarantee the best possible scenario for humans to be morally perfect. All of these arguments, however, are only responses to the notion that God is ontologically good—an amoral God has not yet been considered. After all, the existence of God and the Problem of Evil are not mutually exclusive. If it is true that a good God would not permit evil, this atheistic argument could overcome the proposal of the perfect God pertaining to theism, but it still has not adequately addressed the deist position of an amoral and detached God. The majority of arguments for atheism fail to address this notion of God.

To engage in this discourse, God's lack of goodness must be explained. In truth, the problem of evil is compelling. It is often argued that certain goods require certain evils. For example, compassion requires suffering to occur. If suffering is required for this goodness, then it can be permitted to exist in a good world. However, many evils are not prerequisites for goodness—to be more precise, many evils are worthless. Sexual assault does not need to occur to incite

goodness. Following the arguments against theism, these evils are unnecessary; therefore, in a good world, these evils would not exist. This world is not purely good because unnecessary evils are regular occurrences—evidence for this is not difficult to observe. However, a response to this by theists argues that evils exist because of free will, which is the very force that allows for unnecessary evils. Free will, however, is considered a net good. Theists argue that free will is a required property of creation made by an all-loving and all-powerful creator. However, free will is not necessary, and it is possible to conceptualize the existence of humans without free will. It would not be out of the realm of possibility for an all-powerful God to create humans without free will, or humans with free will who, at the very least, were simply not able to be malicious. An all-powerful God could create a world with no natural disasters. An all-powerful God could create a world with no evil. This world could be considered good. The existence of free will, which allows for humans to act with incomprehensible malice, seems to imply the opposite—God certainly would not be good if they enabled free will.

These responses and objections to theistic arguments and the Problem of Evil seem logically valid; the issue arises when this line of reasoning is solely attached to atheism. The Problem of Evil provides logical evidence that a perfect God could not exist; however, it cannot negate the existence of a God detached from morality. Deism is the asserted belief in God without the requirement that they must be perfect. The only topic about the existence of God that seems to address deism is that of divine hiddenness: God is not indubitably known to exist. If the premise that God is not good is accepted, only two conclusions remain—either this amoral God exists or they do not. To fully reject deism, a belief that lacks moral assertions about God, the argument against their existence must also lack moral assertions. Discourse about divine hiddenness does not meet this requirement—the argument is intrinsically attached to morality as well. However, upon first glance, the argument against divine hiddenness seems to be removed from moral arguments. The atheist perspective on divine hiddenness is simple: If God existed, he would want to make his presence indubitably known. However, God's existence is not indubitably known, so there is no God. The theist response is as follows: A perfectly good God may have unknown reasons for staying hidden. The reasons why this discourse fails to adequately challenge the deistic belief in an amoral God will be scrutinized in depth.

Contrarily, the atheist perspective on divine hiddenness reasons that because there is no universally indubitable evidence for God's existence, there must be no God, because God would want to let his existence be known. The first notable objection to this argument is that a perfectly moral and omnipotent being may have unknown reasons for remaining hidden. However, this is still based on theistic notions of perfection. Because of this, a subjective question arises: would making one's existence indubitably known be morally sound? Atheists and theists attempt to answer this question from a moral framework, thus making it impossible to remove from morality. However, the better question is this: Is indubitable existence logically possible? Human nature involves subjective experience, and because of that, absolutely nothing is universally agreed upon. A limitation of any creator involves the inability to transcend logic—for example, God cannot create a square circle. Realizing that universal indubitable existence is logically impossible attacks the divine hiddenness argument from an amoral angle. If universal indisputable existence is truly impossible, discourse around its ethical implications becomes moot. Naturally, then, because the question of divine hiddenness is a moral one, this argument too becomes moot.

Upon reading this discussion, one might ask why indubitable existence is a necessary condition. If God cannot universally prove his existence, that does not mean he cannot give humanity some evidence of his existence. One objection asks why God has not given humanity more concrete evidence for his existence. However, any evidence introduced that is not indubitable would cause chaos—it already has, given the many wars, genocides, and other evils committed in the name of religion. The theist perspective asserts that a good God would not provide chaos. One may be tempted to think that this response to this issue of Divine Hiddenness is logically sound. Regardless, this is still an argument based on ethical thought. From every angle, the topic of Divine Hiddenness and the discourse around it is still based in morality. Deism is resistant to all of these arguments because the deist God lacks moral agency by nature—the reasons for which are based in biology.

This reason for which deists insist on the nature of God being amoral lies within moral non-naturalism—the belief that morality and ethics are not a product of the natural laws of the universe. The basis for this argument regarding moral non-naturalism lies within biology. Something that is ontologically true for all living beings that have existed, currently exist, and will ever exist is biological vulnerability—every single thing that has ever been extant is subject to forces outside of themselves. This is true for humanity, and for the tiniest unicellular prokaryotic organism—something so small, it lacks even a nucleus. The ways in which organisms are affected is a part of what makes an organism; it affects the biological state of life or death. Microorganisms do not have the capacity for reason and philosophy in the same way that humans do, but it is true that all organisms are affected by external stimuli. This very nature of vulnerability is what morality rises from. Humans are social creatures who have organized themselves with moral hierarchies for all of time. This is because humans need social structure to survive as a species. This is also true for other animals, but it especially is for humans in particular, due to their neurological makeup. Morality is the means by which humans socially structure their survival. The implication of this is that without biology, morality would not exist. This is why deists resist the idea that God is a moral being. God is presumed to be non-biological. Therefore, God is detached from morality in the same way that a rock is. A rock is not alive, so it is not affected in the same way that even a microorganism is. They are not carbon-based beings, so they are not biologically vulnerable—subscribing to this philosophy makes it impossible to accept the claim that God is a moral being, and since theist and atheist arguments are inherently structured around morality, it leaves Deism unconsidered, and unreasonably so, even in the face of more modern arguments.

Axiarchism and ananthropocentric purposivism have both garnered attention as of late, and both arguments are far from simple (Mulgan 1-9). Axiarchism posits that the universe exists because it is *good* for it to exist. Axiarchism could both work with or without theism—in that case, there are selectors. These selectors are requirements necessary for possible worlds to become actualized. “Goodness” in this context is composed of these selectors, which are unknown. Where the atheist believes the universe is random, the axiarchist believes the world is a result of the ethical laws of the universe. If this is the best possible world, then it *must* exist. This argument, however, requires the equivalency of existence and ethical goodness. Deists fail to accept this notion, simply because they believe morality is strictly an ontological feature of living organisms. The idea that morality exists beyond the biological functions that necessitate it is

unfounded because it would imply the existence of anthropocentric ethical transcendence—for which evidence simply does not exist. This issue does not go completely unaddressed, as a new perspective has recently come to light: ananthropocentric purposivism.

The introduction of Ananthropocentric Purposivism (herein called AP) almost solves the aforementioned problem. AP is the belief that the universe is a product of creation by a perfectly moral God (or force) that completely disregards the need for benevolence to humans. AP also presupposes that this universe was created for a purpose greater than ourselves, which cannot reasonably be objected to, but the concept of an anthropocentric moral god is paradoxical—if morals arise from biology, and God is non-biological, an ananthropocentric God is a logical impossibility. A system of ethics that is ananthropocentric is as illogical as a square circle. A perfectly moral being lacking benevolence hardly seems perfect by most standards of morality as well. To accept AP, or any of these arguments, would require that one accepts moral perfection as a necessary condition for a God. The belief to the contrary is the defining quality of deism. However, the lack of literature about an argument that negates the need for morality to be naturalistic entirely is abysmal. The exclusion of Deism speaks to the exclusion of moral non naturalism in debates about God's existence, and to do so imposes an unnecessary limit on discussions about the topic.

Deism is a robust philosophy. It withstands arguments for and against theism and atheism, and it lacks the weaknesses that a morally perfect God introduces into these arguments. Its continued exclusion is a dishonest practice of rationality. This conversation goes beyond theism, atheism, axiarchism, and ananthropocentric purposivism. The failure to realize this does an injustice to the academic philosophy of religion discipline.

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PROGRESSIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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In the futuristic dystopian novel *Feed* by M.T. Anderson, the feeds artificial intelligence software pushes an agenda made by corporations that replicate a shallow, conforming human brain. Consequently, this causes the characters in the novel to lack cognitive functions that correlate to intellectual intelligence. However, in modern-day society, artificial intelligence is produced by a multitude of accredited scientists who work to emulate an intelligent human brain, possessing functions including organization, efficiency, knowledge, problem-solving, critical thinking, reasoning, empathy, and perception. AI technology that is currently being researched and is in the preliminary stages of development intends to benefit and help people down the line, and they do not want to change them or make them conform to a specific narrative as the feed does. Before establishing technological software, the producer must establish set intentions they wish to achieve with their work. Some of the goals of Artificial Intelligence in the twenty-first century include advancing healthcare and cybersecurity and general security systems. On the other hand, the feed has one goal which is to gain monetary benefits by pushing a specific agenda that manipulates the characters in the novel. The next component, arguably the most vital, is how the technology is programmed and how the software is synthesized while keeping the producer's intentions in mind. The structure of AI today works to emulate a real human brain, mimicking neural networks and pathways to make the most authentic and accurate technology.

In contrast, the feed represents a very oversimplified version of the human brain as it does not easily allow characters to stimulate or use their own brain which keeps them from reaching their intellectual potential. Such intricate and impactful technology is bound to have impacts on the user in one way or another whether it is apparent or not. The characters in *Feed* are affected by the power the feed has on them as it is embedded in their limbic system, and it is therefore part of them. They “become” the feed due to its profound power and impermeable control it has over most of the characters. While Artificial Intelligence is subject to misuse in the twenty-first century, it has the potential to become an aid to improve people's lives.

To begin, the goals of artificial intelligence technology originate from its producers and those who continue to manage and oversee it. The feed is run by corporations, and these corporations want to sell as many products as they can to optimize their fiscal profits. It is evident to the reader and select characters that the feed is run by large corporations that manipulate consumers through belligerent advertisements that convince individuals in the novel to make meaningless purchases. Violet is one of the only characters in the novel that uses her true intellect; by doing so, it allows her to make astute observations about the implications the feed has on her and those around her. Violet provides insight to Titus by stating, “They try to figure out who you are and to make you conform to one of their types for easy marketing. It is like a spiral: They keep making everything more basic so it will appeal to everyone. And gradually, everyone gets used to everything being basic, so we get less and less varied as people, more simple” (Anderson 97). Violet is the most disconnected from the feed since she got it at the age of seven which was unusual in the context of the novel. She can see through the propaganda and the shallow motives of the corporations that counterparts her age fails to recognize or consider. She is especially aware of their inauthentic values

and intentions, and as a result, she challenges them by making a new consumer profile that is difficult to read to confuse the feed.

She tells Titus about her attempt to resist the feed: “What I’ve been doing over the feed for the last two days, is trying to create a customer profile that’s so screwed, no one can market to it” (Anderson 98). Violet’s knowledge prompts her to remain disconnected from the corporation’s goals to avoid jeopardizing her individuality. She challenges and resists the feed by proving that it only wants to make sales and does not care about human welfare. Subsequently, Violet and Titus were experiencing similar nightmares, alluding to being hacked again. Violet reached out to FeedTech to gain assistance due to her concern about her health and well-being, but she was directed to an automated AI assistant named Nina. Violet asked the FeedTech customer service:

“Can you please connect me with a live operator?”

Violet, I think I can help you come up with products that really say, ‘you.’ They’ll shout ‘You!’ ‘You!’ ‘You!’...

All right, chatted Violet. No thanks. Thanks, I’m done. Sometimes choices are hard to make. Fuck off” (Anderson 155).

Violet was under duress since she was conscious of the potential hack, and she turned to FeedTech which is supposed to be readily available to help her. The feed affects people on a physiological and psychological level. Therefore, it is a health concern if there is a breach of confidentiality. When confiding in FeedTech, an AI assistant encouraged her to buy items that could be of interest to her when she was apprehensive. The feed’s true motives prevailed in times of need and assistance. The intentions of the feed are invariable between each character, and it is effective in governing these powerless individuals. The book *Feed* is set in the far future which provides insight into what may prevail if proper regulations are not enacted. However, some intended uses of AI in the twenty-first century aim to improve the welfare of individuals by being integrated into large industries. AI inventions in the works, intend to make life easier and safer for everyday people; furthermore, it could also save large sectors valuable time, resources, and money. While there are many mainstream inventions using AI that are harmful and misused, there are uses in the medical field for example that could improve patients’ quality of life. Currently, goal-driven research is incessantly being done regarding ways to innovate and progress industries including health care. In the field of psychology for example, “... the TDANN provides a new lens to study how the visual cortex develops and operates, potentially transforming treatments for neurological disorders” (Ramachandran). The most established and credible synthesizers of major AI software are using research to find ways to benefit the greater good of the people with the development of technology. Using AI as a catalyst to improve psychological and physiological disorders would undeniably help a massive amount of people.

Using time, resources, and money on artificial intelligence research and inventions that are morally sound and could help suffering individuals is advantageous. One may argue that poorly researched, unregulated, and newer AI companies do have evidence implying they have similar goals to the feed: monetary gain through manipulation. However, the AI companies that do have these intentions should not account for the tech companies that may promote misuse of the technology, thus contributing to the controversial nature of AI. As depicted in the article “Artificial Intelligence: A powerful paradigm for scientific research” the author, Yongjun Xu states, “The goal of AI is to develop a machine that can think like humans and mimic human behaviors, including perceiving,

reasoning, learning, planning, predicting, and so on. Intelligence is one of the main characteristics that distinguishes human beings from animals” (Xu). The human-like characteristics it possesses can positively alter the future. Since AI is using human intelligence as a blueprint, the technology is bright enough to accomplish the goals set out by researchers and scholars. Scientists are working to figure out ways to save lives with this technology and protect individuals from potential danger.

Numerous AI companies intend to and are using their intelligent technology to improve people's access to healthcare, further develop cybersecurity, and progress security features to make sure it is of the highest quality. The feed and AI technology in 2024 have vastly different goals. As a result, they must possess different integral networks and software that inevitably influence those using them. The development of artificial intelligence is still new, with the programming used in the technology, inspired by an intelligent human brain, is already making massive changes. In *Feed*, the technology is inspired by humans, yes, but it isolates certain aspects that benefit the corporations, always selfishly keeping themselves in mind. For example, the feed implements manipulation tactics, derived from human behavior, as a part of its main software system to gain leverage to predict what consumers may take interest in. On page 48 in *Feed*, Violet relays that "It knows everything you want and hope for, sometimes before you even know what those things are" (Anderson 48). This technology needs to be smart to exploit individuals while keeping them distracting them with materialistic items. The characters on the receiving end of the feed have gotten increasingly accepting of the narratives it pushes.

Part of the reason the feed is effective is its ability to continuously persuade and manipulate individuals. The software is fabricated in a way to be convincing, and it achieves this by staying consistent and confining the characters to a category. Titus relays his frustration when trying to simply physically interact with his friend: "I was trying to talk to Link, but I couldn't because I was getting bannered so hard" (Anderson 8). Having a technology immersed in one's brain makes it difficult to perform basic human tasks as it is entirely dominating its users without them knowing. Violet tells Titus that "The feed is tied into everything. Your body control, your emotions, your memory"(Anderson 170). The feed is a part of one's brain which makes the physical format of the technology enhance the novel's futuristic and dystopian themes. The feed is effective in taking control and achieving its goals due to how it is inside someone's brain. However, the loss of personal autonomy from technology is currently universally agreed to be unethical, unsafe, and unsustainable. AI in 2024 is far less invasive and controlling. Given that it is still relatively new, it is still utilizing software that amplifies the most optimal components of the human brain as opposed to capitalizing on the negative behavioral components. According to the University of Oxford, "Scientists know how powerful and efficient our brains are, and if artificial intelligence is to match or even approach human intelligence, then it makes sense to be inspired by nature. Most current AI is built to learn by using artificial neural networks, which emulate many structural aspects of how neurons are organized in the brain "(Artificial Neurons). It would take a long time until AI could reach a point to outsmart and manipulate people as depicted in *Feed*. People are cumulatively getting smarter, proved by the Flynn Effect which found that IQ scores tend to increase by 3 points each decade on average. It is possible that "all-consuming" technology would be rejected by those with proper and sound intellect. Many people are cognizant of the harmful effects of progressive technology, but they make the decision to implement it in their lives. As of now, artificial intelligence is in the hands of scientists who can make technology widespread in everyday use.

Scientists depict ways AI emulates a human brain: “They note that we have created atomically abrupt semiconductor junctions through the design of our heterostructure stack. The stack, specifically delivers a heterojunction that acts as the neuronal membrane, while the graphene electrodes that contact the heterojunction serve as the neuronal soma. This way the neuronal state is represented in the soma, but modified by the changes in the membrane, just like in actual neurons” (Artificial Neurons). By deriving authentic neural networks from the human brain, artificial intelligence is using neuroscience to make AI as like a human brain as possible. In other words, scientists are using human brains as the blueprint for the technology while the feed is using dehumanizing technology to confine them to a simplified marketable version of an individual. Overall, the profound difference in how the software AI in feed, and in 2024 has adverse effects on the individuals using the technology.

In the novel *Feed*, the characters undergo impermeable effects that impact their behavior, emotions, desires, and physical health. Having the feed makes it so these characters must do nothing when it comes to using their own brain, including thinking, learning, and articulating on their own. The feed is embedded in their limbic system which affects their amygdala, thalamus, and hypothalamus. Therefore, their emotion, ability to consolidate memories, and learn on their own is threatened due to the location of the technology. Their lack of thinking is clearly depicted when Violet states, “When you have the feed all your life, you’re brought up not to think about things” (Anderson 113). The feed tends to make the characters immensely ignorant by distracting them from themselves and the real world. They have little to no knowledge about pressing issues in the society or environment around them leaving them apathetic and uneducated.

The media these characters consume indubitably simplifies their personality and intellect as it enforces a lack of thinking by not allowing them to stimulate their brain. It makes them less intelligent since the feed manifests shallow human behavior. For example, the feed encourages them to shop when negative emotions arise in response to real-life issues, causing them to deflect and avoid true connections and emotions. The effects of the feed impact all characters, even those relatively detached, and individuals on the highest end of the societal hierarchy. The president, someone who should be a role model in leading the country states, “It is our duty as Americans, and as a nation dedicated to freedom and free commerce, to stand behind our fellow Americans and not cast... things at them. Stones, for example. The first stone... The people of the United States know, as I know, that that is just plain hoey” (Anderson 85). The feed makes even the top, most “qualified” people in power below standard means of intelligence. In the society depicted in *Feed*, the ways feed changes them all intellectually is normalized, and no one bothers to suggest tangible change to revolt against the dominating nature of technology. Comparing the diction the president uses in modern-day society versus in *Feed*, is eye-opening to the deep-rooted negligence the feed causes to the characters. Since AI in 2024 is new and the effects are not extensively researched, it is hard to predict the potential adverse effects it may have on one's brain. However, if AI is misused it can be undeniably damaging, especially to young vulnerable brains.

Larger esteemed AI companies that are utilizing this time to research intend to include more accessible and progressed healthcare technology, therapy, education, safety, transportation, and security intend positive effects. If these AI companies are correctly regulated, to ensure that they have the best interest in the people and instilled in companies as an aid to make healthcare and other industries grow, its effects on humans will be productive. More access to healthcare and the added

safety benefits that AI can offer will be able to potentially save lives. AI can particularly help ICU patients in critical condition, author Mousa Kadaei explains, “By constantly analyzing patient data, AI is a vigilant “watchdog,” anticipating potential complications like sepsis, infections, or cardiac arrest before they strike. This early warning system empowers medical staff to intervene sooner, potentially saving lives” (Kadaei). In the medical industry, the effects on humans are most profound and pivotal. AI can be used to detect diseases earlier and helps more people on a massive scale. Hospitals will become safer, and even therapy can be more accessible to people who may feel limited due to the stigma surrounding seeking psychological help. Another specific example is within the field of cardiovascular health: “Recent advancements in AI have the potential to revolutionize how cardiovascular care is delivered, AI will detect disease earlier, improve access to care, and help develop personalized therapeutic plans that might prevent, control, or even cure cardiovascular disease for the millions of people who battle heart disease each year”(Can Artificial). Having technology that can save lives undeniably needs to be implemented into healthcare systems if regulated appropriately. The integrity of hospitals and doctors would be on the line, and they have their patients' best interests in mind. If there was a series of safety tests to ensure the accuracy of AI medical devices, patients in need may be willing to take the chance. Security also can be revolutionized by artificial intelligence. Facial recognition, alarm systems, and smarter cybersecurity can keep more people safe and protected in the real world and online. According to the American Military University, “AI can also provide predictive analytics, using historical data and statistical methods to forecast future events. These analytics can help mitigate crime and increase public safety”(Artificial Intelligence). Microsoft and Google have already implemented AI into their cybersecurity system to reduce hacks and threats. These companies use threat detection to see who the perpetrator of the threat is and then remove the threat, all with AI. It can minimize false alarms, utilize behavior analytics to report unusual behavior, detect unusual crowd dynamics, and manage perimeter security. It is important to consider that many people fear the potential dangers of powerful technology; therefore, data breaches, job displacement, manipulation, and misinformation are all real concerns. While these are all very real concerns, as previously stated, keeping artificial intelligence transparent to society is vital as well as making sure qualified personnel are the ones synthesizing and operating this technology for the larger companies that approve of it. The technology that is used to help people and improve their lives in aspects such as healthcare and security would not become all controlling or manipulative. The feed is a perfect example of emulating the fears many people have regarding technology. The future of AI is difficult to predict, but humans do have proliferating intelligence that enables them to be cognizant of whether they are being controlled and manipulated. Individuals should employ boundaries with technology use (including artificial intelligence to prevent the possible outcomes depicted in *Feed*).

Artificial intelligence is arguably one of the more controversial subjects to date. With the new development of such intelligent technology, many people are concerned about how it may employ some of the controlling and manipulative components exhibited in the novel *Feed*. In recent years, AI brought excitement about the realm of new possibilities it has to offer, but the rapid adjustment to using it consistently displayed issues with the technology. Social media, something that is already addictive and harmful, quickly introduced AI bots on platforms including X, Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok. One issue that consistently arises in the debate regarding AI is whether it can be trusted and if it is credible. For example, in April of 2024, Elon Musk's chatbot on X named

Grok, generated a headline explaining, “In a bizarre turn of events, NBA star Klay Thompson has been accused of vandalizing multiple houses with bricks in Sacramento. Authorities are investigating the claims after several individuals reported their houses being damaged, with windows shattered by bricks” (Curtis). The AI bot took a sarcastic tweet Thompson posted and generated a false news post. Lack of research is at fault for spreading false information and can contribute to defaming someone's character. It is undeniable that many of the AI enterprises have real consequences for deliberately using them and using sites that may employ AI without users knowing. Other mainstream sites such as YouTube promote smaller AI companies through advertisements, and it is apparent that they want to capitalize from people's desire to put forth less effort. Like *Feed*, the apps or sites that are being advertised promote individuals to think less and do not prompt them to stimulate their brain. An example target audience for these businesses includes students who do not want to take the time to retain information, pay attention in class, or do their assignments. These sites do homework for the students and take notes for them. Examples include, University Chat Bot, HotBot, and Otter.ai which are all popular with students. Access to artificial intelligence can permit students to disregard the education they currently have and take the easy way out. A recent incident occurred with iTutor in August of 2023, “According to the EEOC’s lawsuit, iTutorGroup programmed their tutor application software to automatically reject female applicants aged 55 or older and male applicants aged 60 or older. iTutorGroup rejected more than 200 qualified applicants based in the United States because of their age” (iTutor). In this situation, the software revealed the company's prejudice which contributes to the controversial nature of AI. Many of the issues with these corporations is that they have faulty software that leads to major ethical issues. Lack of funding and research are the reasons as to why many issues are arising and why the controversy continues. However, many of the adverse effects on people are avoidable. If a student uses artificial intelligence to cheat their way through school, that is their decision. Using social media is a choice, and the technology itself is not forcing them to do so. Society deliberately makes decisions at their own free will. There is a plethora of arguments for and against AI, but making note of the most impactful points is important. The artificial intelligence that does show promising results is still being researched or in the early stages of development.

AI in the media and promoted in the media does unequivocally have detrimental effects. On the other hand, the AI that is being implemented to truly help people is still in the works and should not be a reason for fear. Artificial intelligence is too new to be implemented just yet, meaning the companies that are rampant on the internet already do not have morally sound goals or intentions. When the software is researched and applied with the intent to revolutionize major industries to save and improve lives, then it is a positive advancement.

In the novel *Feed* by M.T. Anderson, the feed represents what it wants its users to represent, controllable and vulnerable. It successfully reaches that goal due to the type of software it uses which manipulates and fully controls the characters. In 2024, Artificial intelligence is still new but the future goals set out by certain AI companies are more morally sound. Research and evidence suggest that healthcare, security, and the revolutions in the workplace will and are being implemented by saving and making lives easier. This is because AI is being coded to mimic a human brain and derive the aspects that make a brain intelligent. There are undeniable risks to such powerful technology in modern-day society such as job displacement, misinformation, and software malfunctions. *Feed* depicts the very real possibility of what may come if the technology falls into the hands of the

wrong people. Unfortunately, some of the negative aspects of AI being implemented more are inevitable, but there are positive effects to recognize as well. Since more research is coming about progressive technology, all critiques can be used to further advance it. If it is correctly regulated, potentially by the government down the line, assuming with optimism that corruption would be under control, it can help an immense amount of people. The fact that dystopian futuristic novels such as *Feed* offer a very real perspective that prompts deep analysis from its readers, should give hope to those doubtful about the future effects on such technology. The production of AI is proof that humans are progressively getting smarter as a collective whole. That said, society should be able to notice the ways technology can be harmful and stand against being profited from and taken advantage of as seen in *Feed*. Since people experience fear when reading dystopian novels, this implies there is hope that a collective moral compass will ensure the power resides in us, the people.

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GLOBALIZATION AND THE RACE TO THE BOTTOM

Brett Keeley

Globalization has allowed for countries and cultures around the world to become increasingly interconnected. Due to increases in technology, communication, and the development of more modern trade industries allow for a more unified world. Globalization attempts to raise the living standards of people around the world by creating a global community. In many cases, globalization is favored by western nations that are able to benefit from this idea of a global community. It seems that at the same time, globalization has created a competitive global market in which nations are willing to sacrifice the well-being of workers in order to produce goods and services at increasingly low rates, which is referred to as ‘the race to the bottom’ (Chan, 2003). Instead of developing an internationalized placed the race to the bottom as a core value, which leads to the exploitation of workers, the exploitation of natural resources, and the infiltration of western ideology and global capitalism which seem to continuously separate the developed and developing worlds. In order to resolve some of the damages caused by globalization, it is important to understand just how divisive globalization can be and what the global impacts are as a result of living in a divided world.

One of the concerns in the developing world comes from the exploitation of labor. Often, as technology and the skills of workers in developed countries advance, there is no need for jobs considered to be ‘low skill’ and they are outsourced to countries around the world. Typically, outsourced jobs can be found in developing nations across Latin America, Africa, and parts of Asia. One country that has seen a significant increase in outsourced jobs is Bangladesh. According to Vicki Crinis with The University of Wollongong in Bangladesh, there are nearly 4,500 factories that produce clothing, which is one of the largest exports from this region of the world (Crinis, 2019). These areas employ more than four million workers—the majority being women and children (Crinis, 2019). The working conditions in these factories are unimaginable. While there is pay, the pay is low and the hours are long, the amount that these workers receive is hardly enough to maintain a high quality of life. On average, Bengali workers are paid roughly \$70 USD per month, including their overtime hours (Crinis, 2019). Often, this is simply not enough for a Bengali family, where rent for a home for three is nearly \$40 USD and costs for basic food can be up to \$50 USD per month (Crinis, 2019). Considering that cost of living in Bangladesh, these salaries are considerably lower than needed. This simply is not enough for Bengali families to support themselves and maintain the higher quality of life that globalization promises. The benefits are poor, there is little to no opportunity to increase salary, and there are not any protections for workers. It clearly demonstrates the role of the race to the bottom in society as Bangladesh is willing to risk the health, safety, and wellbeing of workers to compete on a global stage that benefits the developed world (Crinis, 2019). The violations that occur in Bangladesh are severe, though it seems that this is not simply an issue in one region. There have been documented workers’ rights violations across the developing world, from Southeast Asia to Africa and Latin America and the problems do not seem to show signs of slowing.

One of the key areas that this type of labor can be found in is within the clothing production factories. Often, the clothing that is being produced in these factories are name-brand

items that will be exported and sold in developed nations at the expense of exploited workers. Many United States based corporations such as Wal-Mart and GAP participate in the outsourcing of jobs to places like Bangladesh, often with no regard to workers' rights violations or exploitation (Crinis, 2019). One of the key reasons that developed countries such as the United States will turn to countries such as Bangladesh is due to the limited regulations when it comes to workers. In Bangladesh, workers are able to work for longer periods of time and there are less safety regulations (Crinis, 2019). It allows for more products to be produced in less time and these major western world powers are able to avoid strict regulations in their own countries. In addition, they are able to pay workers less in countries like Bangladesh which allows for more goods to be produced at a lower rate. This demonstrates a key aspect of globalization, in which it prioritizes the developed world and poses significant threats to developing nations. This is clearly demonstrated in the collapse of the Rana Plaza in 2013 in which thousands of workers were killed or injured (Crinis, 2019). The western response to this tragedy was atrocious as the efforts to create a worker's alliance with between western corporations and Bengali workers became more of a performative initiative that did very little for the Bengali workers and made microscopic improvements to quality of life (Crinis, 2019).

Another example of this appeared in the termination of the quota system, which had been a key aspect of global production for nearly forty years (Rosen, 2005). The quota system was a governing force in the trade and production of textiles. The need for the quota system appeared to ensure that developing countries across much of the global south had access to the powerful world markets, dominated by the United States and the European Union (Rosen, 2005). The quota system was essential for the government and job security for citizens in nations like Bangladesh, Indonesia, or the Philippines. In 2005, the World Trade Organization decided to eliminate the quota system (Rosen, 2005). This was an immense benefit to large corporations based in developed nations, for example Wal-Mart based in the United States (Rosen, 2005). The United States was able to enjoy the termination of the quota system, as they would no longer source their labor in nations such as Bangladesh, The Philippines, Cambodia, and Mexico instead. They would source labor in countries where labor was cheaper, such as China (Rosen, 2005). This was beneficial to large corporations; they could produce the same products in China that they had been producing in Cambodia or Bangladesh for lower rates (Rosen, 2005). While this benefits Wal-Mart and the United States to some extent, the damage on the developing world is extensive, it leaves thousands without jobs as the demand for labor leaves certain regions of the world. It also poses a question concerning the wellbeing of the workers in nations where labor is cheap, such as China (Rosen, 2005). The conditions that people are working in are often hazardous and they often earn extremely low wages. This demonstrates the reality of globalization and the race to the bottom, the developed world is benefitting from more production at lower costs, while those in the developing world have lost their jobs to nations where working conditions are worse and labor is cheap (Rosen, 2005). While it attempts to create a better global society for all, it creates a division between the developed and the developing world, only considering the benefits for developed nations (Crinis, 2019). The rest of the world is left to continue attempting to 'win' the race to the bottom, which truly only creates more division than it does unity.

Another way in which globalization contributes to the divide between the developed and developing world is in the exploitation of the environment. One of the major contributors to this exploitation is a significant export from the tropics, palm oil. The increase for palm oil is substantial

as it is included in nearly all products used daily (Oosterveer, 2015). It can be found in soaps, shampoos, personal care items, and is included in nearly all the foods that are sold in developed nations. In the year 2012 alone, nearly 55 million tons of palm oil were produced and nearly 75% of that oil was traded internationally (Oosterveer, 2015). This crop also accounts for nearly 30% of the world's production in vegetable oils and is becoming just as essential as soybean and maize on the global market (Oosterveer, 2015). Southeast Asia is frequently the region of the world that produces the majority of the oil producing palm trees, though this has expanded into regions of West Africa and Latin America as well. In Southeast Asia, Indonesia and Malaysia seem to produce the most of the world's supply (Oosterveer, 2015). With such high increases in demand for this product on the global stage, smallholder farms were forced to locate more land in which they could grow more trees to produce the desired oil.

Much of Indonesia's accessible forest had already been cleared for agriculture before the year 2000 (Guillaume, 2016). Land that had previously been used to grow the crops had also been exhausted of resources and nutrition, causing significant degradation to the land and soil in those areas. As a result, farmers across Indonesia had to clear more land in the rainforest covered regions of the nation in order to expand farms and increase the number of trees grown in the new agricultural areas (Guillaume, 2016). Deforestation and land degradation are now serious concerns for tropical nations across the planet, though they seem to pose significant challenges to Southeast Asia in particular. In developed nations, the increase in palm oil is an enormous advantage as it allows to produce more foods and everyday items (Guillaume, 2016). It is often a cheap and reliable resource, which has captured the attention of developed nations due to these advantages. In the developed world, it raises the quality of life. People use and consume palm oil without thinking about where it comes from or how to produce it. In the developing world on the other hand, the impacts are often catastrophic and with no signs of slowing, it is evident that globalization has not only contributed to the exploitation of the workers, but also the exploitation of the land itself.

The tremendous grasp that the palm oil industry has on contemporary society is one that shows no signs of weakening. The race to the bottom has once again caused less developed nations to sacrifice their natural resources in order to compete in a globalized world. The land exploitation continues to harm the natural world—there is now less biodiversity, more frequent natural disasters, and little to no rainforest left in some regions of Indonesia (Guillaume, 2016). Unfortunately, these events are not limited to Southeast Asia as the demand for palm oil has shifted to The Ivory Coast, Benin, Nigeria, Colombia, Honduras and western companies continue to outsource in these regions of the world, diminishing the tropics of their vital resources one region at a time (Guillaume, 2016). The division here is clear, the lives of these farmers are not being raised by the attempt to make the world more globalized; instead, they suffer from the impacts of being exploited while the quality of life for people in developed nations increases, at their expense.

Another factor that has had a significant impact on globalization is the dominance of western ideology that has spread around the world. It seems that the United States and much of Western Europe are the contemporary image of modern on the global stage. According to Andrew Gamble of Cambridge University, at its core, western ideology holds true to the concepts of freedom, equality, and prosperity (Gamble, 2015). Western nations have long preached ideas that supported democracy and equality to nations around the world, claiming that they would raise the quality of life and lead to a more interconnected world (Gamble, 2015). Establishing these concepts

in nations around the world came at the cost of eliminating other ideology, culture, and norms (What is, 2018). Western ideology claimed a sense of superiority in a way, leading to the dismantling of traditional ideologies around the world and replacing those ideas with concepts and beliefs of the western world.

The idea of superiority has contributed to the divide with the development of concepts such as ethnocentrism, racism, and imperialism which have created drastic changes in the way the world functions. These aspects of globalization have contributed to the separation of the developed world and the developing world rather than bringing them together. This superiority has led to significant conflict, as Samuel Huntington references in the text *The Clash of Civilizations* when he concludes that the western world will need to adopt an understanding of non-western ideology. In addition, the non-western world will need to balance traditional ideology while adapting to include the thoughts and beliefs of western ideology (Huntington, 1993). Considering Huntington's work is interesting as it seems that despite how westernized developing nations become, unless those nations hold western ideology at the center of their values, they are not truly seen as westernized by the developed world (Huntington, 1993). This is true in the conflict that Huntington suggests between the western and Islamic worlds. Despite the subtle westernization in Islamic nations, which was largely fueled by the colonization of North Africa and the Middle East. The western presence in Islamic nations caused a shift away from traditional beliefs and ideas and replaced them with western beliefs (Razzaq and Sultana, 2021). This has led to Islamic nations attempting to modernize, though they modernize along with the rest of the western world, leaving the traditions and culture behind (Razzaq and Sultana, 2021). It clearly demonstrates how western ideology attempts to become the core of global ideology, eliminating aspects of culture and civilization.

It has caused turbulent relationships between the western and non-western world, though with the global power that the western world holds, it has also fueled globalization. The non-western world continues to be exploited by western countries, while simultaneously being stripped of traditional culture and belief (Gamble, 2015). Globalization and the promotion of western ideology has led to global homogenization in which nations around the world are forced to adapt to western belief. Often, this also benefits the western nations as well as the rest of the world becomes more accessible and welcoming taking on the ideology as a cultural norm (Gamble, 2015). Examples of this can be seen around the world, for example more nations leaning towards implementing freedom as a core value, Western European languages becoming Lingua Franca or commonly used, as well as the spread of Christianity and western religion at the core of society (Gamble, 2015). The non-western world, which encompasses much of the developing world was willing to risk losing traditional values and beliefs and replacing them with western ideology all in the name of competing in the race to the bottom fueled by globalization, which, in the end only favors western nations and works to create further division between the developed and developing worlds.

The dominance of western ideology has also created a globalized capitalist society, which stems from Wallerstein's concept of the world systems theory (Braff and Nelson n.d) . This concept sorts nations into one of three categories, the core, semi-periphery and the periphery. The global north is often considered to be the core, and the global south is considered to be the periphery (Braff and Nelson, n.d). A nation's placement into one of these categories is largely dependent on their economy. This concept has been a leading contributor to the persistent divide between the global north and the global south or the developed and developing world. Capitalism, on a global

stage, also functions in a way that allows for developed nations to benefit and developing nations are negatively impacted. According to Karl Marx, capitalism creates a separation between the bourgeoisie and workers (Braff and Nelson, n.d). In this sense, the bourgeoisie controls the means of production, and the workers are left to produce goods in order to earn a wage (Braff and Nelson). In global terms, the corporations that are largely operated out of developed nations in the global north while the workers are people in the global south that are working to produce goods.

This concept has become attractive in the global south as it provides some sort of wage, though often workers are still significantly underpaid and exploited by major corporations. The concept of globalized capitalism thrives alongside the race to the bottom as the two are interconnected. This allows for developed nations to produce more products in record time, mostly at the expense of the developing nations. This continues to create division between the developed and the developing world as the concept of capitalism increases around the world. This idea poses significant dangers for developing nations as they continue to be exploited by the developed world. It is likely that there will be higher levels of political instability, and they will likely be economically dependent on the developed world (Braff and Nelson, n.d). Global capitalism also disrupts culture as it tends to reflect ideals and values of developed nations in the developing world. These developing nations are then forced to model their nations to reflect developed nations. Many non-western nations are at risk of losing key aspects of their cultures due to the dominance and acceptance of western ideas such as capitalism on a global scale.

When considering the arguments for globalization, it is essential that the opposing arguments are also considered. While it is true that globalization has made tremendous advances towards making the world more unified, it has also created significant divides that come in a variety of forms across the world. The violation of worker's rights and human rights, limited access to education and valuable resources, environmental exploitation and the promotion of western ideologies are all very real and negative outcomes of living in a globalized world. Creating a better understanding of the risks that come with becoming more globalized can help to ensure that the developing world is considered when attempting to advance the world on a global stage. Becoming interconnected and raising the quality of life around the world means ensuring that all areas are included. Globalization cannot claim to make advances in the quality of life of citizens around the world if it is also directly contributing to global divide, especially when it comes to dividing the developed world and the developing world.

Ultimately, when it comes to globalization it seems that there is a near constant divide. It seems unable to promote the interconnectedness that it strives to do as it completely excludes the developing world. There are in fact global advancements to the western world, though the advancements come at the expense of workers around the world that receive little to no pay and risk their lives for the chance of competing in such a globalized world. It also comes at the expense of the environment—the natural resources of developing nations are exploited and destroyed at the expense of people and workers in the developing world that are only working to make the developed world even more developed. There is little to no consideration for the impacts that globalization has on those that do not benefit from it. This leads to significant global divides as nations are pulled into the harsh reality of the race to the bottom, which contributes to the further division of the nations around the world. This division is increasingly dangerous as it results in some nations that have strong, stable economies and others that are unstable and reliant on other nations. This highlights

just how significant the divide between developed and developing nations truly is. The aspirations of globalization need reconsideration to ensure that global change benefits both the developed world and the developing world. To create an interconnected and globalized society, it is essential to ensure that there is limited exploitation and equal rights for all nations and citizens around the world.

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THE GERMAN AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY - CAUGHT IN A WEB OF ANTICIPATORY OBEDIENCE AND
EUROPEAN CLIMATE POLICY

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Abstract

In recent years, China has been designated a role-model in connection with the transformation to climate-friendly electromobility (e-cars). The European Union (EU) Commission has feared a flooding of the EU market with e-cars. At the same time, the economic situation in the automotive industry has an overall impact on the economic situation of Germany. This paper intends to address the consequences of the current decisions of top management within the automotive industry and politicians in connection with e-cars. *

Because of the foreseeable ban on combustion vehicles (as early as 2035) by the EU, China has initiated the construction of gigantic production capacities in the field of e-cars as part of their *Made in China 2025* strategic plan. Billions of dollars in subsidies were used to promote the securing of complete value chains. It is a publicly declared goal of the Chinese government to expand e-cars outside of China into global markets. Accordingly, the production volumes of e-cars (including hybrid vehicles) increased from tens of thousands of units in 2017 to 9.122 million in 2023. A production volume of at least 13 million e-cars is expected in 2024. Currently, about 30 million vehicles are sold in China every year. However, with production capacities in China at or above 50 million vehicles annually, the EU should have identified earlier that China was building up overcapacities which will also be used for international market entries.

Surprisingly, automobile executives in Germany have decided to not wait until 2035 (as planned by the EU) but are looking at changing to e-cars in as early as 2026. However, German automobile manufacturers now realize that they have no in-house expertise on batteries in e-cars, let alone have unrestricted access to the necessary raw materials needed to build these batteries. In addition, when consumers buy e-cars, there are issues like battery range, charging infrastructure, and purchase price that are the important factors. Add to this, what used to be important, powerful engines, driving pleasure, reliability, and image are not always transferable to e-cars. This also means that the high-price policy can only be maintained to a limited extent.

E-cars are cross subsidized by profits from the sales of combustion vehicles. Therefore, the switch to only e-cars will lead to negative results. Setting up a lose-lose situation for Germany's automobile manufacturers. The authors of this paper intend to discuss the impact of avoidance of information on the part of politicians and automobile executives and the actual benefits of e-cars and the negative consequences on the EU economy with no real gain from the emission savings.

Keywords: Automobile Industry, Electric Cars, European Economy

Preliminary Remarks

Automotive manufacturers in Germany account for a significant proportion of employees in the industrial sector. In 2023, there was an average of around 8.13 million employees in the manufacturing sector as a whole; of these, car manufacturers including suppliers accounted for 1.35 million employees, i.e., one in six employees in the manufacturing sector (1.74 million in 2019).¹ In addition, German car manufacturers are represented on all continents with factories, research facilities and sales offices. In 2023, the industry will generate a turnover of a good 564 billion euros. This sector also accounts for more than 50% of all private sector R&D expenditure.²

However, Germany has been losing importance as a location for vehicle production for some time. While 5.4 million vehicles were still produced in Germany in 2013, this figure had fallen to just 4.1 million by 2023. Across all German car manufacturers, vehicle production in Germany has fallen by 36%. In the same period, foreign production by German manufacturers rose from 8.6 million to over 10 million vehicles.³ The reasons for relocating production are manifold and range from the demonization of cars by NGO-funded movements, additional market opportunities in growth markets, high energy prices, high taxes and levies, rampant national and EU bureaucracy, insufficient digitalization, and a questionable energy policy.⁴ Irrespective of this, the automotive industry remains at the heart of German industry and the German export model and is therefore synonymous with Made in Germany, among other things. In view of the increasingly successful market entries of Chinese car manufacturers in the EU/Germany on the one hand and the drastic slump in sales of German vehicle models on the other, the industry is currently in a difficult economic situation.

Problem Definition

In the course of the increasingly emotional discussions about climate change, especially in the last 10-15 years, the automotive industry in Germany has come under considerable political pressure. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emitted by combustion engines is considered to be one of the main causes of climate change. The EU's main focus is on passenger cars, which are said to be responsible for 60% of total CO₂ emissions from EU road traffic.⁵

In this respect, the reduction of this gas is the focus of political and regulatory measures by the EU Commission, but also at national level. While the corresponding EU regulations of the last two decades initially aimed to gradually reduce emissions, the regulation issued by the EU in 2019 means that cars with conventional combustion engines will no longer be allowed to

¹ Thomas Puls, Manuel Fritsch, Die Bedeutung der Autoindustrie für Deutschland, Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln, 2020, see page 12 ff

² <https://www.vda.de/de/themen/automobilindustrie>

³ <https://www.automobil-produktion.de/news/automotive-mittelstand-verlagert-investitionen-ins-ausland-700.html>

⁴ https://www.focus.de/finanzen/news/gastbeitrag-von-matthias-weik-in-10-jahren-gibt-es-keinen-europaeischen-automobilmassenhersteller-mehr_id_259722208.html

⁵ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/de/article/20190313STO31218/co2-emissionen-von-pkw-zahlen-und-fakten-infografik>

be registered from 2035 at the latest.⁶ The de facto ban on combustion vehicles is part of the European Commission's Green Deal. This regulation was presented by EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on December 11, 2021: "Today is the start of a journey. But it is Europe's 'man on the moon' moment. We have the ambition to mobilize 100 billion euros. We want to be pioneers in climate-friendly industries, in clean technologies, in green finance."⁷

Setting net-zero CO₂ emissions for cars from 2035 is tantamount to a politically imposed ban on the German car manufacturers' business models, which have been successful worldwide to date.

E-Mobility - The Top Issue For Top Management

In 2018, the top managers of German car manufacturers were still predicting the failure of the EU's e-mobility plans. According to an international study conducted by KPMG, the greatest skepticism was found among company bosses and supervisory board chairmen in the industry. A whopping 72% of the 229 car bosses surveyed worldwide predicted the end of battery-powered vehicles. Even agreed with this statement, 83% of the heads of companies with a turnover of more than ten billion dollars. The following is astonishing: CEOs and supervisory board chairmen of German car manufacturers were 100% convinced that electric cars will fail.⁸

The results of the investigation can be summarized as follows: After initial resistance to the EU plans, those responsible in the industry not only resigned themselves to their fate from 2019, but also proactively announced an earlier end to combustion models than planned by the EU in the spirit of anticipatory obedience. The VW Group, for example, from 2026 and Mercedes from 2028.

Accordingly, almost no day has gone by in the last 4 to 5 years without the CEOs (Mercedes, VW, Audi, Porsche) literally propagating or staging the so-called transition to electromobility. Basically, there was a competition in this regard at congresses, trade fairs, in press releases, interviews in the mass media or on websites, etc.⁹

The Future is Electric - Management by Flexibility

The slogan - "The future is electric" - became a national task and was ultimately compliantly adapted by most of those responsible. As a result, the slogan became the corridor within which arguments could be made. Accordingly, the flood of concepts for new electrified vehicle models and their market launch dates grew on a daily basis. For quite a few managers, the end of the combustion engine could not come quickly enough. Only the CEO of BMW AG, Oliver Zipse, and the CEO of Toyota, Akio Toyoda, publicly questioned the ban on

⁶ [https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/schwerpunkte/europa/verbrennermotoren-2058450#:~:text=Ab%202035%20sollen%20Fahrzeuge%20mit,KraftstoXen%20\(eFuels\)%20operate%20&text=From%202035%20new%20registered%20vehicles%20can%20fall%20to%20zero%20](https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/schwerpunkte/europa/verbrennermotoren-2058450#:~:text=Ab%202035%20sollen%20Fahrzeuge%20mit,KraftstoXen%20(eFuels)%20operate%20&text=From%202035%20new%20registered%20vehicles%20can%20fall%20to%20zero%20)

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_19_6749

⁸ KPMG, 19th consec Global Automotive Executive, Survey 2018 page 14ff

⁹ <https://www.spiegel.de/auto/ploetzlich-elektrisiert-a-7d060a70-0002-0001-0000-000180276332>

combustion engines¹⁰ and emphasized that their companies will offer both combustion and electric models and will be open to all technologies.¹¹

In contrast, Mercedes CEO Ola Källenius announced in an interview in September 2021 that Mercedes would only offer all-electric model series from 2028.¹² In April 2023, he added that Mercedes would no longer stick to combustion engines (not even with e-fuels) in the future.¹³ To this end, the product portfolio was divided into three product categories: Top-End Luxury, Core Luxury and Entry Luxury.¹⁴ The luxury strategy for e-mobility was born. This luxury strategy was declared to be Mercedes' central project for the future. It was to form the basis for the electrification of Mercedes vehicle models. However, the "market" did not reward this plan. On the contrary: demand was low and losses piled up. "Claim and reality are far apart at Mercedes-Benz."¹⁵

Around a year later (in May 2024), Källenius had to pull the emergency brake and discontinue the so-called MB.EA-Large electric platform. "Mercedes rejects original plan for electric offensive"¹⁶

In an interview, Mercedes boss Ola Källenius summarized the move away from the announced e-car offensive simply as follows: "Perhaps there was a little too much optimism in the entire industry, now there is more realism."¹⁷ In June 2024, Källenius concretized his change of heart: "We are investing more money in combustion engines again,"¹⁸ to concretize his plan in July 2024: "We will invest 14 billion in combustion engines."¹⁹ Such a change of opinion by the CEO of Mercedes within a few months is astonishing and reveals his previous ignorance of his own customers. Over 80% of them do not want e-cars.²⁰

¹⁰ Quoted in: Lyon, Peter, Total EV Adoption Is Not The Way Forward, Says Toyota Chairman;
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/peterlyon/>

¹¹ Note: BMW also recently announced that it has developed and filed a patent application for a new type of combustion engine. This enables gasoline engines to achieve higher efficiency and a significant reduction in emissions through optimized combustion. BMW is also cooperating with Toyota in connection with the production of hydrogen-powered vehicles by 2028. "Hydrogen pioneers: BMW Group and Toyota Motor Corporation take cooperation to the next level to offer fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEV) for passenger cars."
<https://www.press.bmwgroup.com/global/article/detail/T0444790EN/hydrogen-pioneers-bmw-group-and-toyota-motor-corporation-take-collaboration-to-the-next-level-to-offer-fuel-cell-electric-vehicle-fcev-options-for-passenger-cars?language=en>

¹² <https://www.autobild.de/videos/ola-kaellenius-im-interview-2021-mercedes-benz-elektro-zukunft-iaa-info-20532921.html>

¹³ <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/auto-verkehr/mercedes-chef-e-auto-wechsel-kommt-schneller-als-erwartet-18803833.html>

¹⁴ <https://media.mercedes-benz.be/de/mercedes-benz-praesentiert-langfrist-ziele-als-wertvollste-luxus-automobilmarke-der-welt/>

¹⁵ <https://www.handelsblatt.com/unternehmen/industrie/mercedes-aktie-investoren-zweifeln-an-der-luxusstrategie-von-mercedes/100002326.html>

¹⁶ <https://www.handelsblatt.com/unternehmen/industrie/mercedes-autobauer-stoppt-entwicklung-seiner-grossen-elektroauto-plattform-01/100037022.html>

¹⁷ <https://www.zeit.de/2024/07/ola-kaellenius-mercedes-chef-elektroautos-energieversorgung/seite-2>

¹⁸ <https://www.wiwo.de/my/unternehmen/auto/mercedes-wir-investieren-wieder-mehr-geld-in-verbrenner/29868456.html>

¹⁹ <https://www.wiwo.de/my/unternehmen/auto/mercedes-benz-der-gewagte-spagat-zwischen-verbrenner-und-e-auto/29911774.html>

²⁰ https://www.focus.de/auto/ratgeber/elektroautos/vorstandsvorsitzender-ola-kaellenius-mercedes-chef-gibt-kunden-ein-verbrenner-versprechen-auch-nach-2030_id_259658217.html

Even Porsche boss Oliver Blume, who had set himself the goal of delivering more than 80 percent of Porsches fully electrically by 2030, now declares (in 2024) in view of collapsing sales figures and profits that the 80 percent mark will not be met. Instead, the production of e-cars is now dependent on customer demand.²¹

In his dual role as Chairman of the Board of Management of Volkswagen AG, Oliver Blume has maintained the decision to discontinue combustion models at VW until the beginning of 2024.

It is therefore not surprising that the VW boss did not classify Chinese car manufacturers as a threat as recently as September 2023: "We have the vehicle expertise, we have the quality level. And we have a brand heritage. The newcomers don't have that. That's why we believe we are well positioned."²² So far, according to Oliver Blume, there are also no signs that Chinese manufacturers from China are pushing into the German and European markets with low prices, even though they produce more cheaply in China. "However, the Chinese will not be able to offer the cost level they do in China in Europe. On the market, we see that the Chinese are offering their vehicles here at twice the price as in China."²³ However, the half-life of opinions and assessments in the German automotive industry is getting shorter and shorter in view of the negative economic development. Less than a year later (August 2024), the same CEO describes the following dramatic situation at VW: "A situation like never before. Fewer and fewer vehicles are being bought in Europe. At the same time, new competitors from Asia are entering the market.

The pie has gotten smaller, and we have more guests at the table."²⁴ The VW Group CFO adds: "We still have a year, maybe two years, to turn things around."²⁵

Accordingly, the Board of Management of the VW Group has announced drastic restructuring measures, which include plant closures as well as redundancies; a first in the history of the VW Group.²⁶

Audi management also proactively announced (in 2021) the end of combustion engines from 2026.²⁷ The current economic reality of Audi is: "VW premium subsidiary with slump in sales - profit halved. The VW subsidiary's turnover is falling even more sharply than sales. The VW subsidiary lacks new models."²⁸

The need must be great: in July 2024, Audi launched a joint vehicle with the Chinese state-owned company SAIC; without the logo with the four rings.²⁹ Some organizations die by

²¹ Quoted in: <https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/plus252659448/Porsche-Diese-vier-Gruende-fuehrten-zur-Gewinnwarnung.html>

²² Quoted in: <https://www.automobil-industrie.vogel.de/vw-chef-blume-konkurrenz-china-a-9e6289fd036783dfb8f453194948bf7f/>

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ <https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/vw-chef-blume-in-bild-eine-lage-wie-es-sie-zuvor-noch-nie-gegeben-hat-66dc172f7ec3b15c6e1f48f2>

²⁵ <https://de.marketscreener.com/boersen-barone/ARNO-ANTLITZ-15629/news/VW-Finanzchef-Haben-noch-maximal-2-Jahre-um-Ruder-herumzurei-en-47799772/>

²⁶ <https://www.tagesschau.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/vw-krise-100.html>

²⁷ <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/news-nachrichten-audi-rigaer-strasse-intensivbetten-1.5325775>

²⁸ <https://www.handelsblatt.com/unternehmen/industrie/audi-vw-premiumtochter-mit-umsatzeinbruch-gewinn-halbiert/100036772.html>

²⁹ <https://www.handelsblatt.com/unternehmen/industrie/kooperation-audi-bringt-oXenbar-autos-mit-saic-ohne-vier-ringe-logo-auf-den-markt/100056898.html>

suicide, you could say.

Meanwhile, Audi has lowered the yield for 2024 to 6-8%.³⁰ In 2022 it was still 12.2% and in 2023 9%. Significantly, the result improved slightly in the second quarter of 2024 due to the sale of the A6 and A8 combustion vehicles.

In the wake of the general euphoria, the German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA) proudly announced in April 2023 that manufacturers and suppliers in the German automotive industry will invest more than 250 billion euros in R&D worldwide between 2023 and 2027. The focus of R&D investments will be on transformation, particularly electromobility - including battery technology, autonomous driving, and digitalization.³¹ “The huge investments made by the German automotive industry show the determination of our sector to make the transformation an international success story... We are driving the transformation”³² Just 9 months later, the head of the VDA declared: “Sales of e-cars will collapse.”³³ So, it came to pass. Sales figures and profits collapsed (-69% (!) Sep. 2024) after the expiry of state subsidies for e-cars in December 2023. VW is now classified as potentially at risk; but Audi, BMW, Mercedes and Porsche have also issued one profit warning after another in recent months (July/Sept. 2024).³⁴

The propagated age of e-mobility, which has been described for several years, is crumbling - massively. The scenarios for exiting the combustion engine business that have been widely announced in this regard are now being questioned by management and some politicians. Plant closures and redundancies among car manufacturers, exploding insolvencies among suppliers and fears of a flood of Chinese e-cars have been the dominant themes ever since.³⁵ Calls for government support are increasing³⁶, as are calls for a general change of course. “Audi employees want more combustion cars”.³⁷

The drastic changes of opinion by the CEOs of the VW Group and Mercedes at such short intervals stimulate the need for an attempt at an explanation. What are the causes? From a purely economic point of view, one cause can be seen in China, the most important sales market for German manufacturers, there has been a strong shift in demand away from foreign and towards domestic Chinese cars, also against the backdrop of aggressive competition. In Europe/Germany, the fundamental dilemma of e-cars will become apparent after the end of state subsidies (in December 2023). E-cars were produced because of regulatory requirements from politicians and not because customers wanted them. Sales have collapsed accordingly.

³⁰ <https://www.audi.com/de/company/investor-relations/key-figures.html>

³¹ https://www.vda.de/de/presse/Pressemeldungen/2023/23-403_PM_Deutsche-Autoindustrie-investiert-bis-2027-weltweit--ber-250-Milliarden-Euro-in-Forschung-und-Entwicklung

³² Ibid

³³ <https://www.ardaudiothek.de/episode/wirtschaft/vda-chefin-mueller-e-auto-verkaufe-werden-einbrechen/rbb24-inforadio/13114113/>

³⁴ Romanus Otte, An explosive note from Deutsche Bank shows: 130,000 jobs are at risk in the German car industry; <https://www.businessinsider.de/wirtschaft/analyse-in-der-deutschen-autoindustrie-sind-rund-130-000-jobs-bedroht/>

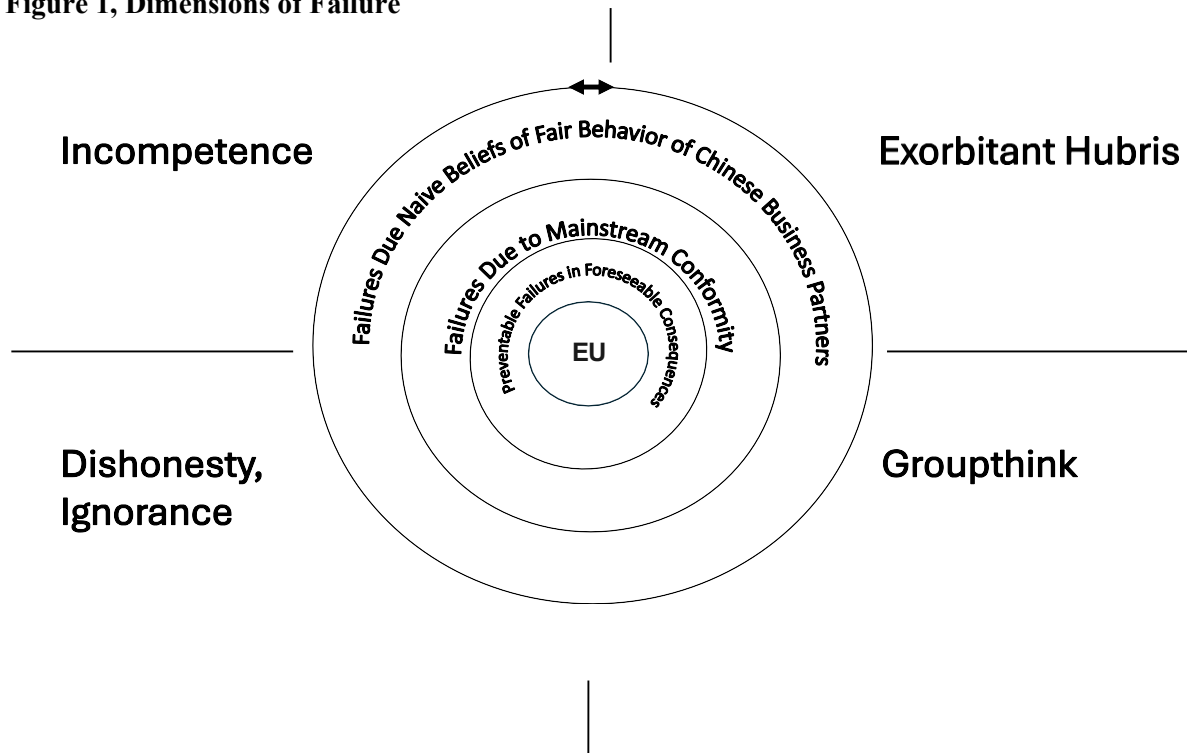
³⁵ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/peterlyon/>

³⁶ <https://www.merkur.de/wirtschaft/habeck-vw-und-co-streben-beim-autogipfel-rettung-der-industrie-an-zr-93316131.html>

³⁷ <https://www.handelsblatt.com/unternehmen/industrie/autoindustrie-audi-arbeitnehmer-wollen-mehr-verbrenner/100044538.html>

But that is only half the truth, so to speak. Car manufacturers are socio-technical systems that are both integrated into the political framework of EU climate policy and dependent on it. The diagram below shows a dimensional view of possible causes, contextual conditions and management failures that are both interdependent and have mutual cause and effect relationships.

Figure 1, Dimensions of Failure



Transformation to E-mobility – Consequences

German car manufacturers must undergo a transformation in connection with e-cars. Pure e-car manufacturers will have to adapt their entire organizational structure and production facilities to the requirements of e-car production. Traditional manufacturers such as Ford or Mercedes have to completely rebuild parts of their existing factories in order to be able to produce e-cars. Such measures are associated with high investments. If you also consider the fact that individual vehicle models are not only manufactured in one production facility, but in several, which are also located in different locations, the problems become clear. Some manufacturers have probably ignorantly overestimated their ability to implement such measures without friction. This also includes the fact that every changeover causes downtime costs. In addition, due to the predominantly non-profitable nature of e-cars, every sale of an e-car at the expense of a combustion vehicle increases losses or reduces profits. On this side, it remains a mystery how the VW Group, for example, wanted to manage a shift in annual production of around 10 million e-cars in the self-imposed time frame in this way. Two examples of how billions have already been burned in connection with the conversion of production facilities. First

example - the Audi plant in Brussels. After conversion, this site was certified as the world's first CO₂-neutral high-volume production facility for premium segments in 2018. The plant covers its energy requirements primarily with environmentally friendly biogas.

The site uses its own battery production facility for the production of the Audi Q8 e-tron.³⁸ Around 3000 employees work there, and the plant is now facing closure.³⁹ The provisions for the planned closure alone amount to €2.6 billion.

Or the VW plant in Zwickau, Germany: in 2020, the plant was converted specifically for the production of e-cars at a cost of 1.2 billion euros and the workforce was massively increased. In June 2020, after more than six million cars with combustion engines had been produced, the last vehicle rolled off the production line. In January 2021, it was announced: "VW Zwickau: conversion to e-factory completed".⁴⁰ Since the end of 2023, however, the assembly lines have been largely idle due to a lack of capacity utilization.⁴¹

E-Mobility - What Are The Core Competencies of The German Automotive Industry?

On the one hand, there is the engine technology in combustion vehicles. This was and still is one of the decisive competitive advantages, core competencies and success factors for the decades-long global market success of German automobiles in the broadest sense - these success factors no longer exist with e-cars.

However, the consequences of this trivial observation only seem to have really come to the attention of management in recent months.

There is no other explanation for the increase in reporting on which car manufacturers are planning or have entered into strategic cooperations with which partners for the production of batteries or which car manufacturers are building their own battery factories, especially since Spring 2024.⁴²

Up to now, German companies in the automotive industry have mainly bought in the batteries for their e-cars. Enormous financial resources are now being invested in the production of batteries.⁴³ Especially as the batteries, depending on the size of the vehicle, account for up to 40% of the total manufacturing costs of an e-car.⁴⁴ As in previous years, press releases and reports on car manufacturers' websites euphorically report on the medium to long-term future of their own battery production.

In addition, the German government and the EU grant substantial financial support to foreign companies for the construction of battery factories by distributing subsidies regardless

³⁸ <https://www.audi.com/de/company/strategy/locations/belgium.html>

³⁹ <https://www.vdi-nachrichten.com/technik/automobil/audis-werk-in-bruessel-vor-dem-aus/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.autoland-sachsen.com/vw-zwickau-transformation-zur-e-fabrik-abgeschlossen/>

⁴¹ <https://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/sachsen/chemnitz/zwickau/autohersteller-vw-volkswagen-produktion-beschaeftigte-102.html>; <https://www.merkur.de/wirtschaft/volkswagen-vw-werke-osten-zwickau-dresden-stellenabbau-kuendigung-elektroauto-e-autos-zr-92543777.html>

⁴² <https://www.tuev-nord.de/explore/de/innovation/batteriezellen-in-deutschland-wer-baut-wo/>

⁴³ <https://www.autobild.de/artikel/batterieproduktion-in-deutschland-und-international-tesla-daimler-e-autos-20484899.html>

⁴⁴ <https://www.automobil-produktion.de/produktion/so-hoch-sind-die-produktionskosten-von-elektroautos-745.html>

of the need.⁴⁵

Without battery cells, however, there is no battery.⁴⁶ The Chinese companies CATL (market share of 34%) and BYD (market share of 16%) alone have a global market share of 50% in battery cell production.

Of particular importance, however, is the fact that China has direct access to all the raw materials required to manufacture a battery, whether in the form of its own resources or through foreign investment.⁴⁷

In this respect, the billions invested in battery factories will only solve the problem of the lack of access to the raw materials that are essential for the production of battery cells to a limited extent. This is why German car manufacturers are still doing backward and forward integration. Besides building battery factories, investments are now also being made in mining companies⁴⁸ and in joint ventures for electric vehicle charging infrastructures.⁴⁹ Imagine, for example, the reactions of the business press or economists if automotive groups had decided 8-10 years ago to invest in mining companies, steel companies or petrol station chains. The reactions would be unanimously negative.

Irrespective of this, the question of which technical solutions for batteries will prevail in the future in terms of raw material types, functionality, charging time, range, weight, etc. is still open.⁵⁰

Even if, for example, BMW in cooperation with the US company Solid Power⁵¹ or Mercedes in the development cooperation with the Taiwanese company Prologium⁵² succeed in equipping their vehicles with solid-state batteries, this does not lead to a core competence or even a unique selling point. Especially as the relevant know-how is neither exclusive to German companies nor does it offer any opportunities for differentiation. Other providers will also be able to offer shorter charging times, greater ranges, etc.

The question is who will have access to the most economical and technically best battery concepts in the future is also still open. To put it colloquially: Everything is still in flux, only the direction of flow is unclear.

In this respect, even Annemie Turtelboom, Member of the European Court of Auditors (ECA), expressed her concern in April 2024: "The EU does not have many trump cards when it comes

⁴⁵ <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/unternehmen/eu-genehmigt-902-millionen-euro-fuer-northvolt-batteriefabrik-in-heide-19433734.html>; <https://www.eca.europa.eu/de/publications?ref=sr-2023-15>

⁴⁶ <https://www.automobil-produktion.de/technologie/woher-die-autohersteller-ihre-batteriezellen-beziehen-335.html>; <https://www.auto-motor-und-sport.de/tech-zukunft/alternative-antriebe/batteriezellen-fertigung-deutschland-wo-elektroauto-akkus-entstehen/>

⁴⁷ <https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/ee01701d-1d5c-4ba8-9df6-abeeac9de99a/GlobalCriticalMineralsOutlook2024.pdf>

⁴⁸ <https://www.manager-magazin.de/unternehmen/autoindustrie/volkswagen-beteiligt-sich-mit-100-millionen-dollar-an-brasilianischen-rohstoff-minen-a-9c0225c3-52e4-4c40-9e16-0115fcXfb35>; <https://www.handelsblatt.com/unternehmen/elektromobilitaet-powerco-vw-will-sich-an-rohstoff-minen-in-kanada-beteiligen/28618440.html>

⁴⁹ <https://group.mercedes-benz.com/innovation/case/electric/ionity.html>

⁵⁰ <https://www.autozeitung.de/neue-elektroauto-batterie-197383.html>

⁵¹ <https://www.press.bmwgroup.com/deutschland/article/detail/T0407744DE/bmw-group-und-solid-power-vertiefen-entwicklungspartnerschaft?language=de>

⁵² <https://www.handelsblatt.com/mobilitaet/elektromobilitaet/elektromobilitaet-daimler-steigt-bei-entwickler-von-feststoffbatterien-ein/28013290.html>

to the electrification of its vehicle fleet: access to raw materials, the costs to be borne by industry and citizens and the lack of infrastructure could lead to it gambling away its commitment."⁵³ Especially as Chinese manufacturers already have competitive e-cars, considerable economies of scale and complete supply and value chains, including battery production. This also includes direct access to all relevant raw materials for battery cells.

However, it is not only the lost core competence of engine technology that is responsible for the difficult situation of German manufacturers. The second cardinal problem for German car manufacturers is “software”. Software plays a paramount role in the electric car. “Software” in the broadest sense was and is also not a core competence of German car manufacturers.

For Tesla and Chinese e-car manufacturers, the software in a car is an integral part of the vehicle and not just an add-on. Companies like BYD or Nio build their vehicles around the software - and not the other way around”.⁵⁴

The idea of simply buying in the missing know-how from suppliers or cooperation partners does not work.

Accordingly, VW, for example, is burning billions of dollars with the software company Cariad⁵⁵ and is now hoping to solve its software problems by investing a further 5 billion dollars in the US company Rivian. "What does VW want with a 'bankrupt company'?"⁵⁶

Thirdly, e-cars are largely de-emotionalized products. The dimensional success factors, e.g., powerful engines, driving pleasure, reliability, image, status, etc. are not transferable to e-cars, or only to a very limited extent. Ranges (in hot/cold weather), charging infrastructures and purchase prices are at the forefront when buying e-cars.

This also means that the German manufacturers' high-price policy cannot be maintained - profitability is already falling sharply.

Closely linked to this is the obvious misconception that the images/myths of AMG models or a Mercedes S-Class, BMW M models or a Porsche 911, but also a Golf GTI⁵⁷ can be transferred 1:1 to corresponding e-cars. E-cars are not designed for sporty driving, but for smooth driving.

How the Porsche, for example, could believe that 80% of their models will be electrified in the future for this reason alone remains a mystery. Anyone can build an e-car; this well-known saying should have been known. In other words, the design can be copied, and hundreds/thousands of suppliers are available to procure the other exterior and interior parts. For example, the Xiaomi Group, previously only known as a manufacturer of smartphones, launched the Ultra 7 electric car on the Chinese market in 2024; visually, the vehicle is more than similar to the Porsche Taycan, or as one newspaper put it: “Find the difference”.⁵⁸

⁵³ Annemie Turtelboom, Member of the European Court of Auditors (ECA), in: https://www.eca.europa.eu/EN/publications/SR21_05

⁵⁴ <https://www.businessinsider.de/gruenderszene/automotive-mobility/das-software-chaos-bei-vw-zeigt-die-probleme-der-autoindustrie-nov-23/>

⁵⁵ <https://www.vdi-nachrichten.com/wirtschaft/unternehmen/vw-meldet-zahlen-fuer-2023-softwarepartecariad-weitet-verluste-aus/>

⁵⁶ <https://www.bild.de/geld/wirtschaft/milliarden-deal-was-will-vw-mit-pleite-firma-rivian-667bcd3d5eeac4688981403>

⁵⁷ <https://www.auto-motor-und-sport.de/neuheiten/hyperscreen-mercedes-eqs-display-breite-mbox/>;
<https://www.auto-motor-und-sport.de/tech-zukunft/porsche-patent-lautsprecher-elektroauto-titan-auspuX/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.zeit.de/2024/19/xiaomi-smartphone-e-auto-porsche-china>

The demand in China is very high. In contrast, sales of the Taycan in China are declining accordingly, and the German plant is cutting back Taycan production,⁵⁹ while Xiaomi customers have to wait up to 7 months for delivery of the vehicle.⁶⁰

Well, you don't have to share the opinion of car enthusiasts that e-cars have no soul.⁶¹ So, it is more than just real satire when the sports car feeling can be ordered as an optional extra with artificial engine sound for electrified Porsche models. There are even patents for this. "A new Porsche patent shows how electric cars can be upgraded with a powerful sound."⁶² In this context, the question arises as to whether Porsche management is aware that this patent documents the no longer existing fascination Porsche, driven by dreams itself?

Xiaomi's competitor Huawei is now also offering e-cars. In collaboration with the Chinese company BAIC, pre-sales of the Stelato S9 model are currently starting. The all-electric luxury saloon is aimed directly at buyers of the Audi A8 and the Mercedes S-Class.⁶³ At the same time, Audi is planning to close its plant in Brussels, Belgium, which employs more than 3,000 people, due to lower demand and underutilization.⁶⁴

Erosion of parts of the value and supply chains

A further sensitization of the management of car manufacturers, which is likely to have occurred in the meantime, can be seen in the fact that the announced discontinuation of combustion models, in addition to the direct consequences for their own organization (e.g., capacity utilization of plants, specialist departments, employee structure, etc.), also has an impact on the (previous) supplier industry.

In other words, the decision to phase out combustion models means for the affected suppliers (of gearboxes, engine parts, cooling systems, exhaust systems, etc.) either the foreseeable end of their business model, or at least a significant drop in turnover in the future. The consequence of this was and is that supplier insolvencies are currently exploding,⁶⁵ which will more than complicate the supply chain problem.

According to a study by the consulting firm Wymann, two thirds of supplier companies consider their financing situation to be critical.⁶⁶ Large, internationally active suppliers such as Continental, Bosch and Zahnradfabrik AG are also making massive job cuts in Germany.

⁵⁹ <https://www.auto-motor-und-sport.de/elektroauto/nachfrage-porsche-taycan-werk-zuXenhausen/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.tagessanzeiger.ch/xiaomi-speed-ultra-7-porsche-kopie-ist-ein-verkaufshit-190782280735#>

⁶¹ <https://taz.de/Ulf-Poschardt-zur-Mobilitaetswende/!5779417/>

⁶² <https://www.auto-motor-und-sport.de/tech-zukunft/porsche-patent-lautsprecher-elektroauto-titan- auspuX/>;
[https://www.auto-motor-und-sport.de/neuheiten/hyperscreen-mercedes-eqs-display-\"width- mbux/](https://www.auto-motor-und-sport.de/neuheiten/hyperscreen-mercedes-eqs-display-\)

⁶³ <https://www.electrive.net/2024/06/04/neue-china-limousine-von-huawei-baut-audi-bald-in-bruessel-bmw-i4-wird-teurer/tt>

⁶⁴ [https://www.automobilwoche.de/autohersteller/audi-werk-brussel-produktion-ruht-vier-wochen#:~:text=Die%20belgischen%20Gewerkschaften%20befürchten%20bereits,wenn%20keine%20L](https://www.automobilwoche.de/autohersteller/audi-werk-brussel-produktion-ruht-vier-wochen#:~:text=Die%20belgischen%20Gewerkschaften%20befürchten%20bereits,wenn%20keine%20Lösung%20gefunden%20wird.)
[ösung%20gefunden%20wird.](https://www.automobilwoche.de/autohersteller/audi-werk-brussel-produktion-ruht-vier-wochen#:~:text=Die%20belgischen%20Gewerkschaften%20befürchten%20bereits,wenn%20keine%20Lösung%20gefunden%20wird.)

⁶⁵ <https://www.bild.de/geld/wirtschaft/deutschland-zahl-der-firmenpleiten-explodiert-41-prozent-rauf-668cfb991f76b814c1ce0ea7>

⁶⁶ [https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article250480146/Insolvenz-Gefahr-Selten-waren-die-Finanz-Sorgen-derAutozulieferergrosser.html#:~:text=\"It%20threatens%20an%20increase%20of%205%20percent\"%2C%20so%20Wyman.](https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article250480146/Insolvenz-Gefahr-Selten-waren-die-Finanz-Sorgen-derAutozulieferergrosser.html#:~:text=\)

Overall, just under 60% of suppliers are planning to cut jobs in Germany.⁶⁷ It will be particularly critical for German car manufacturers if suppliers such as Bosch, Continental or Zahnradfabrik, which have played a key role in many of the car manufacturers' innovations in the past, now see their salvation in the introduction of new technologies in China.⁶⁸

Political framework conditions and the normative power of the factual

Chinese President Xi Jinping wants China to become the world's leading economic and military power by 2049. Hundreds of billions of euros are being invested to achieve this goal. As part of the Made in China 2025 program, Chinese companies are to become global players. They are receiving financial support to achieve this.

It is no coincidence that the Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology set a minimum share of 30% for the production and sale of electric cars at the end of 2017. At that time, the last negotiations on a ban on combustion vehicles were taking place in the EU. That was the starting signal. Accordingly, the production volume of e-cars rose from a few tens of thousands of units in 2017 to 1.18 million in 2020, 3.359 million in 2021, 6.716 million in 2022 and 9.122 million in 2023. A production volume of at least 13 million e-cars is expected for 2024.⁶⁹ This can be summarized as follows: In the slipstream of CO2 reduction regulations, Chinese car manufacturers are successfully establishing themselves on the international markets.

A ban on combustion engines in Europe would primarily benefit the Chinese electric car industry. It is just waiting to outcompete the European car industry with its cheaper models. Ursula von der Leyen and the EU Commission she leads have never understood this geostrategic aspect of the parliamentary decision. By banning combustion engines in 2035, they would become useful idiots for the Chinese.⁷⁰

Chinese suppliers are focusing in particular on the e-car market as a first step. Whichever way you look at it, the EU was and still is the initiator and driver of the Chinese e-mobility offensive, supported by the German federal governments.

Chinese car manufacturers have a production capacity of around 50 million vehicles per year. As only a maximum of 30 million vehicles are sold in China, China has an overcapacity of at least 20 million vehicles per year that can be exported.

It is also no coincidence, but part of the master plan "Roadmap for the Development of the Automotive Industry until 2060", that China, unlike the Western industrialized countries, will continue to produce vehicles with combustion engines until at least 2060. Compared to the EU/Germany, China is open to new technologies and will remain so. Hydrogen, ammonia, liquid biofuels and renewable synthetic fuels are explicitly listed as fuels in the above-mentioned

⁶⁷ <https://www.businessinsider.de/wirtschaft/autoindustrie-jedes-zweite-unternehmen-plant-stellenabbau/>

⁶⁸ <https://www.handelsblatt.com/unternehmen/industrie/autoindustrie-warum-bosch-continental-und-zf-zunehmend-in-china-planen/29269062.html>

⁶⁹ <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/506513/umfrage/anzahl-der-abgesetzten-elektrofahrzeuge-in-china/>

⁷⁰ Steingart, Gabor, Die Idiotie mit dem Verbrennerverbot - 5 Gründe, warum wir es bald wieder los sind; https://www.focus.de/auto/gastbeitrag-von-gabor-steingart-verbrennerverbot-5-gruende-warum-wir-es-bald-wieder-los-sind_id_259900748.html

roadmap.⁷¹ However, China will continue to build cars with combustion engines.⁷²

So, while Germany is planning the last generation of vehicles with combustion engines, the German automotive industry will be hit by Chinese manufacturers in this impasse in the future.⁷³

What Chinese carmakers have not come close to achieving with combustion vehicles for decades, or what Chinese carmakers in Europe have not even attempted, they will now be able to achieve in a few years via the detour of e-mobility.

In Europe, one in four electric cars already comes from China.⁷⁴ In Germany, Chinese suppliers now have a market share of 10%, and the trend is rising. The share of Chinese electric cars in total imports of purely electric cars to Germany rose to 40.9% in 2024. In 2023, this share was still 29%. In 2020, it was still at 12%. In principle, these figures already show a gradual displacement of German or European e-cars by Chinese ones.

The year 2024 could be a turning point in the truest sense of the word. According to a study by PwC, the German automotive industry's decades-long export surplus in China could be history as early as this year.⁷⁵ Here, world export champion Germany becomes an importer. Accordingly, 440,000 vehicles of Chinese origin will be imported to Europe, while Europe will only sell 325,000 cars to China, 295,000 of which will come from the German automotive industry. In 2023, the ratio was still reversed: Europe delivered 350,000 vehicles to China and China 280,000 to Europe. Of these, 320,000 were German made.⁷⁶

At the same time, the sales figures of German manufacturers in China are declining, in some cases significantly. For example, while the VW Group's share of newly sold cars was just under 20% in 2020, it was 14.5% in 2023.⁷⁷ There is not a single German model among the ten best-selling e-cars in China.⁷⁸

Why the EU of all countries has now imposed tariffs on Chinese e-cars remains a mystery in the context that China has been described in recent years as a role model in connection with the switch to climate-friendly electromobility, especially as we know, that even if these were to be maintained, Chinese companies would simply circumvent them by setting up branches in the EU/Germany or buying companies. Such activities by Chinese companies are already taking place on a large scale in Europe. For example, the two largest individual shareholders of Mercedes AG are from China: Li Shufu, owner of Geely (9.69%) and the Beijing Automotive Group (BAIC) with 9.98%. Geely also holds 50% of the shares in Smart and produces the electric Smart models, among other things.

Zero Emissions For Electric Cars?

⁷¹ https://www.jscautomotive.com/news/20240116_PI_Fahrzeugmarkt_China.pdf

⁷² <https://www.automobilwoche.de/bc-online/china-will-langfristig-der-verbrennertechnologie-festhalten-und-sie-auf-synthetische>

⁷³ <https://www.autozeitung.de/chery-marktstart-europa-204905.html#>

⁷⁴ <https://www.autohaus.de/nachrichten/autohandel/pkw-produktion-jedes-vierte-e-auto-kommt-aus-china-3498264>

⁷⁵ <https://www.strategyand.pwc.com/de/de/presse/evsr-q1-24.html>

⁷⁶ <https://www.strategyand.pwc.com/de/de/presse/evsr-q1-24.html>

⁷⁷ <https://deutsche-wirtschafts-nachrichten.de/708443/vw-befindet-sich-im-preiskrieg-und-will-um-marktanteile-in-china-kaempfen>

⁷⁸ <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1084191/umfrage/absatz-deutscher-premium-modelle-in-china/B>

In a comprehensive study (2023), the Association of German Engineers (VDI) examined the entire life cycle assessment - from production to 200,000 km - of e-cars, plug-in hybrids and conventionally powered cars (diesel and petrol in each case) in the compact class (VW ID.3, Ford Focus, Toyota Corolla Hybrid, VW Golf) with the average electricity mix available in Germany and came to the following conclusion: "E-cars become more climate-friendly the longer they run. From a mileage of around 90,000 kilometers (!), e-cars in Germany are more climate-friendly than combustion engines. Assuming a mileage of 200,000 km, an electric car causes: 24.2 t CO₂, a plug-in hybrid: 24.8 t CO₂, a diesel: 33 t CO₂ and a petrol car: 37 t CO₂."⁷⁹

The most important finding of the study is that more than half of the CO₂ emissions from electric cars are generated during the production of the drivetrain.

The production of an e-car with a battery capacity of 82 kWh generates 10.12 tons of CO₂. In comparison, a combustion engine with gasoline produces only 1.21 tons of CO₂. The main cause of CO₂ emissions from electric cars is the production of the battery, which accounts for 83% (8.37 tons of CO₂).⁸⁰

The average annual mileage of a passenger car in Germany in 2022 was 12,545 kilometers.⁸¹ In the USA around 13,500 miles per year.⁸²

The break-even point for the carbon footprint of e-cars in Germany would therefore be a holding period of 7.1 years! This leads to the conclusion that a complete switch from combustion vehicles to electric cars will initially lead to an above-average increase in CO₂ emissions for years/decades!

E-cars cannot be described as emission-free! Compared to combustion vehicles, e-cars can only become more "climate-friendly" over the course of their service life. E-cars cause many times more CO₂ emissions during production than combustion vehicles. The following applies to current battery concepts: the larger the battery/range, the higher the CO₂ emissions.⁸³

For the sake of order, it should also be mentioned that the VDI study did not take into account the costs of disposing of a battery from an environmental and CO₂ perspective. In a way, this is a taboo subject for politicians. Yet it is foreseeable that this will be a major "environmental disaster with an announcement."⁸⁴

Summary

For decades, German companies have voluntarily and involuntarily contributed to the development of a modern automotive industry in China through joint ventures.

Despite decades of know-how transfer through joint ventures with German, American

⁷⁹ <https://www.vdi.de/themen/mobilitaet/vdi-oekobilanz-fuer-pkw-antriebe>

⁸⁰ Ibidem

⁸¹ <https://www.dat.de/news/jahresfahrleistung/#:~:text=Für%20die%20Gesamtfahrleistung%20dieser%20beiden,km%20zurück%2C%20Kleinstädter%2013.210%20km.>

⁸² <https://www.caranddriver.com/auto-loans/a32880477/average-mileage-per-year/>

⁸³ <https://www.auto-motor-und-sport.de/tech-zukunft/elektroauto-batterieproduktion-co2-rucksack-emissionen-akku-produktion-nachhaltigkeit/>

⁸⁴ <https://www.merkur.de/wirtschaft/e-autos-batterie-recycling-akku-umweltdesaster-mit-ansage-elektroauto-92226583.html>

and Japanese car manufacturers, theft of intellectual property⁸⁵ and blatant copying of engines, gearboxes and even entire vehicles,⁸⁶ Chinese car manufacturers have achieved nothing in the field of combustion vehicles - in the field of e-cars, they already dominate worldwide.

Without the ban policy for combustion engines in Western countries, there would be neither a market entry nor a "flooding of the world markets with Chinese cars, and certainly not in Germany. In this respect, the policy was and still is both the cause and the door opener for the foreseeable success of Chinese vehicles.

Chinese manufacturers today have competitive e-cars, considerable economies of scale and complete supply and value chains, i.e., with direct access to all relevant raw materials. In contrast, German companies are currently in the process of building something similar with investments running into the billions.

The large number of current projects (construction of battery factories, investments in the raw materials industry, investments in software/networks, etc.) that are currently being initiated and implemented in parallel by the German automotive industry are associated with high investments and their amortization is uncertain; if they flop, it will be tight, to put it colloquially. In other words, German manufacturers are building up enormous additional blocks of fixed costs through their ongoing activities. However, a degression of fixed costs requires corresponding additional unit volumes that generate positive surpluses from the operating business. Until then, however, most German car manufacturers are miles away from utilizing their existing capacities or achieving positive economic results. On the contrary: production capacities are being reduced.

At the same time, German car manufacturers have maneuvered themselves into a great economic dependency on China. On average, they generate around 30% of their turnover in China. The majority of the turnover generated by German car manufacturers in China is based on the sale of vehicles with combustion engines.

This is precisely where they find themselves in a dilemma. Even in the premium segment, German combustion vehicles are increasingly being displaced by Chinese e-cars. The market for e-cars is characterized by fierce price competition, which is set to continue. In addition, more than 80% of e-cars sold in China are domestically produced.⁸⁷ This trend is set to continue.

BYD has replaced VW and Tesla as market leader. Hyundai and Mitsubishi are closing their production facilities in China.⁸⁸

* This study is based on the evaluation of publicly available data on the automotive industry and its suppliers. This includes reports in the national (German) and international business press, results of scientific papers from universities/relevant research institutions and studies by large consulting firms; interviews with managing directors, press releases and homepages

⁸⁵ <https://www.dw.com/de/china-und-der-diebstahl-geistigen-eigentums/a-43102526>

⁸⁶ <https://www.dw.com/de/china-und-der-diebstahl-geistigen-eigentums/a-43102526>

⁸⁷ <https://www.springerprofessional.de/elektromobilitaet/automobilwirtschaft/chinesische-oberklasse-e-autos-ueberholen-deutsche-premiummarken/25829322>

⁸⁸ <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/verdraengungskampf-im-automarkt-internationale-hersteller-verlassen-china-und-wenden-sich-neuen-laendern-zu-819307075781>

of companies from the automotive industry, statements from international organizations and governments on the automotive industry as well as data from national statistics authorities. In this respect, the paper is a reflection of the factors influencing the current economic situation in the German automotive industry. The data analysis and evaluation took place between July 2024 and November 2024.