

Culture Vultures:
Degenerates, Looters, and War Profiteers in the *New York Times*, 1933-1948

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT..... III

I. A WAR FOR CULTURE: THE POLITICIZATION OF ART IN GERMANY, AMERICA AND THE *NEW YORK TIMES* 1

II. GAWKERS AND THEIR DEGENERATES: *NEW YORK TIMES* COVERAGE OF ‘NON-GERMAN’ ART PURGES, ‘DEGENERATE ART’ EXHIBITIONS AND THE PROFITEERS OF WORLD WAR II 31

III. NAZIS AND THEIR LOOT: *NEW YORK TIMES*’ PORTRAYALS OF NATIONAL SOCIALIST POLICIES ON THE ACQUIREMENT OF ART FOR GERMANY 76

IV. ART THIEVES AND THEIR COMEUPPANCE: A *NEW YORK TIMES* DISCUSSION OF ART RECOVERY, EXHIBITIONS OF LOOT, ETHICS, AND THE SURVIVAL OF EUROPEAN CULTURE 101

V. CONCLUSION: *TIMES* REPORTS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE *NEW YORK TIMES*’ PORTRAYAL OF THE WAR FOR CULTURE..... 133

BIBLIOGRAPHY 140

ABSTRACT

As a piece that necessitates interaction, art created a dynamic in which the official power could convey its ideology to the public; specifically for the 1930s and 1940s, art as a vehicle of power allowed Adolf Hitler to connect the National Socialist ‘generation’ with a ‘German’ past, creating a new national memory, culture and identity. However, the Nazi regime was not alone in its efforts to use art as a conduit for its new nationalism; the United States also politicized art to legitimize American democracy and the United States’ place as a world power, this according to the *New York Times*’ coverage of 1930s and 1940s art events. In response to Nazi purges and exhibitions of ‘non-German’ or ‘degenerate’ art and Hitler’s attempts to loot Europe of its culture treasures, America led the efforts to salvage European culture and art from the clutches of the Nazi dictatorship. Historians have primarily discussed the war for culture only as individual aspects, i.e. analyzing the motivations for Nazi purges of ‘degenerate’ art only within a discourse of totalitarianism or antisemitism, or placing the German and American art worlds of the 1930s and 1940s as unconnected.

However, in considering the *Times*’ coverage of ‘degenerate’ exhibitions, purges, Nazi looting and the responding Allied art recovery efforts, Germany and America were both participants in an autonomous conflict over the physical and symbolic control of art: a war for culture. The *Times* characterized the war for culture ultimately as an example of Nazi totalitarianism, opportunism and barbarism, for the most part neglecting to contextualize the war for culture with Nazi antisemitism and the Holocaust. In this discourse, the newspaper vilified the Nazis for their dictatorship and idealized America as the savior of art and freedom. Art then, according to the *New York Times*, legitimized

democracy in the battle against the Nazi dictatorship, a significant affirmation in the years immediately following World War II as tensions rose between America and Communist Soviet Union, culminating in the Cold War.

CHAPTER I

A WAR FOR CULTURE: THE POLITICIZATION OF ART IN GERMANY, AMERICA AND THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

During their occupation of Europe, Hitler and the Nazis pulled off the 'greatest theft in history,' seizing and transporting more than five million cultural objects to the Third Reich. The Western Allied efforts, spearheaded by the Monuments Men, thus became the 'greatest treasure hunt in history,' with all the unimaginable and bizarre stories that only war can produce.¹

Art provides visual representations of a culture's traditions, values, history and identity. Throughout history, the nation or organization within a nation that controlled art gained the ability to dictate the dominant cultural and national identity. Within Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, Adolf Hitler attempted to redefine German cultural identity to reflect Nazi ideology by creating 'pro-Aryan' art and purging 'non-German', an art reformation meant to legitimize Nazi rule within the German past and identity. This war for culture however extended beyond the boundaries of Germany and even Europe. In the late 1930s and into the 1940s, the Nazis influenced by opportunism, nationalism, totalitarianism and/or antisemitism looted the cultural treasures of newly German occupied Europe. Many American museums showcased 'degenerate'/Nazi purged art, and in the late 1930s and 1940s the war for culture transitioned into a primarily physical struggle, specifically between Nazi looters and Allied art recovery military units.

The *New York Times*' coverage from 1933 to 1948 is the primary filter through which the war for culture is identified here, specifically because in this source are reports

¹ Robert M. Edsel, *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History* (New York: Center Street Machete Book Group, 2009), xiv.

that describe both the Nazi art reforms and the Allied, primarily America, responses.²

Predominately focused on the looting of Western Europe, the *Times* described American efforts to salvage Europe’s art, characterizing the United States as a savior of art and culture.³ As the victor in the war for culture, according to the *Times*, the United States was legitimized as a new world power.

However, Nazi denigrations of Jewish art, culture and artists were only one significant element of the Nazi purges and looting of European culture and so the full significance of Nazi art ideology (the purges, exhibitions and looting of art) can only be understood in examining the art reforms as a war in and of itself. In understanding Nazi art purges and looting as its own distinctive discourse occurring apart from the Second World War and Holocaust discussions, it is necessary to also consider American reactions to and active participation in the war for culture.⁴

² Top row reflects the Year of *New York Times*’ coverage; the bottom row shows the number of *Times* articles printed in that year. Between the years 1933-1948, 312 articles specifically addressing the war for culture (Nazi art policies and the American responses) were printed in the *Times*.

Year	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948
<i>Times</i>	27	14	16	7	15	15	19	10	22	13	16	37	28	28	26	19

³ For all three entities, Germany, America and the *Times*, the control of art was politicized as a source of legitimation; art was not just an indicator of a military conflict, or of the Nazi war for ‘race and space’, but of a war within its own right: a war for culture. In *Rape of Europa*, Lynn Nicholas argues that nations moving towards a military war tend to be highly restrictive in letting valued artworks leave the country. As a result, intelligence professionals call this restrictive policy an ‘indicator’ of war, specifically of a probable military engagement.

Lynn H. Nicholas, *Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe’s Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 29.

⁴ In discussing the German policies towards creating German art and purging non-German artwork and artists, this paper will focus on the fine arts, that is, paintings, photographs, prints, drawings, and sculptures. As the context of the *New York Times*’ coverage expands to include German and American looting and the vast destruction of Europe from wartime military efforts, ‘art’ will expand to include antiques, coins, jewelry and gems in addition to the fine arts.

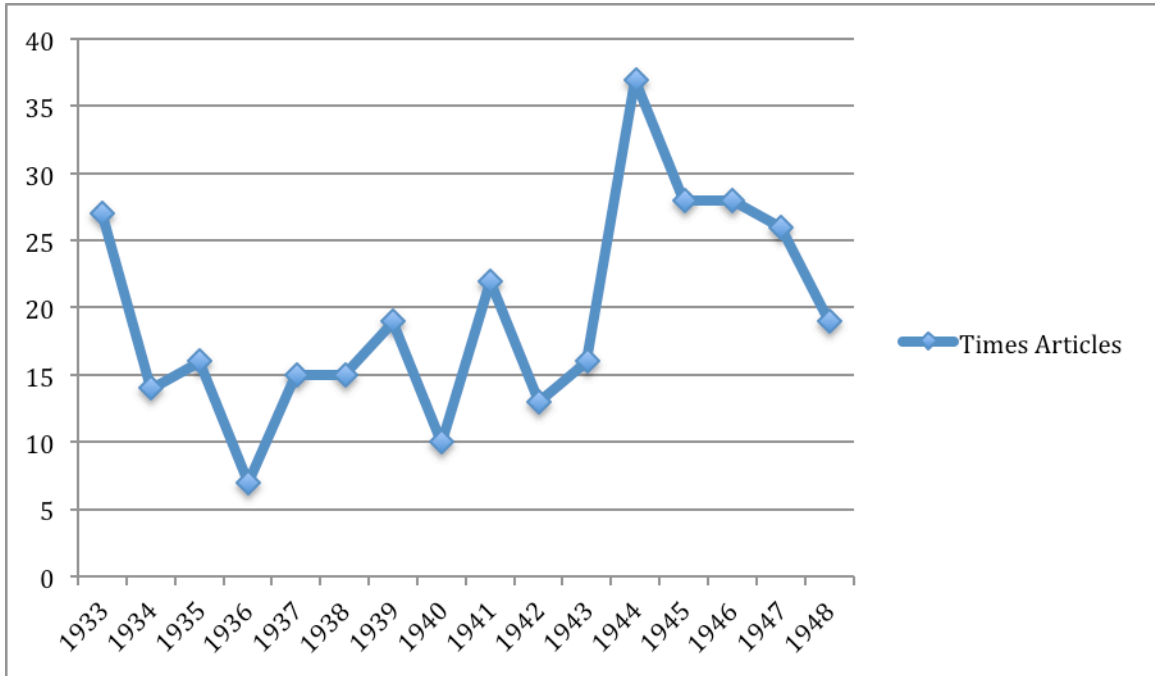


Figure 1. *Times* war for culture articles printed 1933-1948.

Quickly addressing Figure 1, the low number of articles in 1936 could very much be a result of the Nazi propaganda conveyed during the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The Nazi regime was attuned to the international eyes on Germany during the sporting event and so efforts were made to hide the extremity of Nazi antisemitism as it pertained to both Jewish individuals and Jewish art. In contrast, 1944 represented the high point of the war for culture coverage; according to the western/American perspective, the Allied invasion on D-day changed the tide of war towards victory for the Allies. As a result, the *Times* increased its coverage of the struggle over art as a significant example of American superiority.

To understand the extensiveness to which the *Times* portrayed the war for culture, it is necessary to provide a base knowledge of Nazi art ideology and how it connected to Nazi antisemitism, as well as American isolationism and antisemitism in the 1930s. Also

important to note are the international influence of the *Times*, modern historians' analysis of the *New York Times* as a source during World War II and the Holocaust, and how the context of the presented information can be used to analyze the *Times'* coverage of the war for culture from 1933 to 1948.

Art in Germany, 1920s-1940s

Precedents for artistic censorship and National Socialist art ideology, particularly anti-modernism, can be found during the Weimar Republic, even before Adolf Hitler's rise to power in 1933 and 1934. The German population of the 1920s and 1930s resented Germany's defeat in World War I and the subsequent Treaty of Versailles clauses that handicapped Germany. Coupled with the preexisting fears that Germany's culture was in danger from modernity, socialism, capitalism and, of course, the scapegoat 'Jew', the Weimar society continued to grow more polarized.⁵ In 1929, Alfred Rosenberg, an early Nazi ideologue, founded *Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur*, an anti-modern, racist combat league for German culture that appealed to the German population to fight against their culture's decline.⁶ The economic crash in 1929 exacerbated the tensions of the Weimar period, sparking progressively more aggressive actions against modernism and Jewish culture throughout 1930s and 1940s Germany. A similar movement of anti-modernism in art and less extreme forms of antisemitism was also developing in America at that same time.

Heightened anti-modernism in Germany led to the removal of several modern artists from the museum in January of 1930, under the direction of Wilhelm Frick,

⁵ Ian Kershaw, "Hitler and the Uniqueness of Nazism," *Journal of Contemporary History* 39 (2004): 247-248.

⁶ Peter Chametzky, *Objects As History in Twentieth-Century German Art: Beckmann to Beuys*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 113.

Minister of Education in Thuringia during the Weimar Republic, (later the National Socialist Minister of the Interior and Minister of Popular Education in the Province of Thuringia under the Nazis).⁷ Frick also appointed Paul Schultz-Naumburg, author of the racist *Kunst und Rasse* (Art and Race), as Director of the Weimar School of Applied Art, the successor of the purged Bauhaus, an art school built on the idea that functionality and aesthetics should be combined.⁸ Schultz-Naumburg, as Director of the Art School, also attacked modern art, destroying the modernist Oskar Schlemmer's murals in the Weimar Bauhaus building.⁹ These attacks on modern art during the Weimar Period showed a willingness to purge art or artistic groups not demonstrative of the government's ideology even before Hitler's rise to power and also the.

The elections of 1930 saw anxiety-ridden Germany give unprecedented support to extremist parties, such as the National Socialists, who offered solutions to Germany's perceived internal and external threats.¹⁰ Under rising pressures from the German population's dissatisfaction with the Weimar Republic and inclinations for extremist parties, President von Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler Chancellor of Germany on January 20, 1933. By August of 1934, Hitler was Führer and the dictatorship of Germany officially began.¹¹ Throughout Hitler's years in power, Nazi art ideology became clearer, more systemized, and more aggressive, much like the rest of Nazi dogma.

Nazi Motivations for the Reformation of German Culture and Art

⁷ The works of Ernst Barlach, Paul Klee and Lionel Feininger were removed from a collection in the Schloss Museum in Weimar. Additionally, Oskar Schlemmer's murals and reliefs in the Bauhaus were destroyed.

Mary-Margaret Goggin, "'Decent' vs. 'Degenerate' Art: The National Socialist Case," *Art Journal* 50 (1991): 84-92. 84.

⁸ Chametzky, *Objects As History*, 113.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Jason Philip Coy, *A Brief History of Germany* (New York: Facts On File, 2011), 176.

¹¹ Adolf Hitler became Führer on August 19, 1934.

Adolf Hitler blamed the socialists and Jews for Germany's loss in World War I and argued that for Germany to take its place at the top of the world order, the Third Reich would need to be purified of those inferiors.¹² Blood was central to Hitler's ideals of German purity; Jews, Sinti and Roma, and Poles were amongst those labeled as inferior races to the Aryans and as such would need to be removed. The pro-Aryan/antisemitic ideologies of the National Socialist Party equated to a war for race and space that included ethnic cleansing and genocide.¹³ Also unwelcome in Hitler's 'greater Germany,' were Communists, homosexuals, intellectuals, the mentally and physically disabled and Catholics, to name a few. As early as 1933, antisemitic policies were enacted by the Nazi regime and by 1935, the Nuremberg Law officially defining the Jews as a separate race excluded Jews from German citizenship.¹⁴

In order to carry out his purification of Germany and legitimize National Socialism's role in the history of Germany, Hitler needed to create a new 'German' past that idealized and reflected Nazi/Aryan ideology. George Mosse in *The Nationalization of the Masses* argues that German nationalism is best described as a secular religion, one in which the new politics of the time tried to formalize the worship of the nation and the German people.¹⁵ In *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*, Edward Casey contends that the identity of the members of a community result from participation in that community, an activity that binds the participants at the most profound levels.¹⁶ The German public participated in multiple Nazi attempts to "draw the people into active

¹² Coy, *A Brief History of Germany*, 180.

¹³ The phrase 'war for race and space' represents the Nazi push for more living space for racially pure, Aryan Germans.

¹⁴ Coy, *A Brief History of Germany*, 182-183.

¹⁵ Ibid, 2.

¹⁶ Edward Casey, "Remembering: A Phenomenological Study," in *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick, Verde Winitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 185.

participation in the national mystique through rites and festivals, myths and symbols which gave a concrete expression to the general will,” one specific example of which were the Nuremberg Rallies.¹⁷ For Hitler the connection between total control of the State and art were concrete.¹⁸ Hitler argued:

The artist does not create for the artist: he creates for the people and we will see to it that henceforth the people will be called in to judge its art... an art which cannot count on the readiest and most intimate agreement of the great mass of the people, an art which must rely upon the support of small cliques is intolerable. Such an art does but endeavor to confuse, instead of gladly reinforcing, the sure and healthy instinct of a people. The artist cannot stand aloof from his people.¹⁹

The state even made provisions to educate the German public on art through both the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (German Labor Front) and *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength Through Joy).²⁰ Under Nazism, art was centralized by the state meaning that in order to participate in anything connected to art (creating, buying or selling), the person had to belong to the *Reichskulturkammer*, the Reich Chamber of Culture.²¹ The *Reichskulturkammer*, created in September of 1933 and supervised by Joseph Goebbels, served until 1945 and included several hundred thousand professionals. Subsequently, any aspect of art that reflected something defined as wholly non-German, or ‘degenerate’, was purged so as not to disrupt the official ‘past’.²²

¹⁷ George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 2.

¹⁸ Mosse, *Nationalization of the Masses*, 8.

¹⁹ Igor Golomstock, *Totalitarian Art in the Soviet Union, the Third Reich, Fascist Italy, and the People's Republic of China*. (London: Icon, 1990), 83.

²⁰ Goggin, “‘Decent’ vs. ‘Degenerate’,” 84.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Memory is a subjective experience that sustains a particular relationship of power, according to Alon Confino's *Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method* and John Bodner's *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*. Confino argues that “Simply stated, it is who wants whom to remember what, and why.” John Bodner in “Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century” contends that public memory is

As a piece that necessitates interaction, art created a dynamic in which the official power could convey its art ideology to the public and the ‘German’ population could participate in the creation of a the new ‘German’ national past, culture and identity. Art itself became a space for memory, that is, created a template for which the Nazis could manipulate perceptions of what it meant to be ‘German’. Art then, as a vehicle of power, allowed Hitler to connect the National Socialist ‘generation’ with a ‘German’ past, creating a new national memory. The politicization of art is an integral part of the nationalization process for any new nation or regime trying to legitimize their contemporary innovations, however the extensiveness of the Nazi attempt to control art is defined here as a war for culture.

Nazi Art Ideology

The new ‘German’ art needed to be positive and supportive of the changes in Nazi German society. More specifically, ‘German’ art reflected an idealized Aryan community, conveyed through National Socialism rule. In the end, German art needed to represent the good, the beautiful and the healthy of Germany, but more importantly, German art must “develop from the collective soul of the people and express its identity.” Mary-Margaret Goggin in “‘Decent’ vs. ‘Degenerate’ Art” argues that Nazi ideas of art were based on abstracts theories, built upon catchwords, like ‘soul,’ ‘genius,’ ‘tragedy,’

an intersection of the vernacular and official. The official cultural expression advance their ideals by reducing competing interests and ideals, thereby allowing the official, or dominate power, to stimulate ‘social unity and civic loyalty’.

Alon Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method,” in *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick, Verde Winitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 198.

John Bodner, “Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century,” in *The Collective Memory Reader*. ed. Jeffrey K. Olick, Verde Winitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 265.

‘race.’²³ Goggin also notes that Hitler wanted German art to be eternal and not just a ‘passing fad.’

The required authentication for art is often found in classicism, which offers validity through its universally accepted ancient cultures, like the Roman or Greek.²⁴ In defining German art by its connection to classicism, the Nazis were thereby characterizing non-German art by its place in modernity. Hitler saw the nineteenth century as a time of ‘nervousness’ and for the Nazis, nervousness was a sign of ‘degeneration,’ a term referencing Max Nordau’s *Entartung (Degeneration, 1892)*.²⁵ To National Socialists, modern art was a symbol of corruption and degeneracy, and combined with the perceived threats from Jews, modern and Jewish art and culture became the ultimate threats to German morality.²⁶

The Nazis deplored what they perceived as a flooding of German culture with Jews and foreigners and those ‘non-Germans’ were scaring audiences from participating in German culture through galleries, concerts, or theaters.²⁷ The Nazi *Weltanschauung* argued that the Jews had intentionally schemed for the German cultural community to embrace modern aesthetic styles. In this characterization, anti-modernism was clearly tied to antisemitism, and so modern and Jewish art became identified as non-German, or ‘degenerate’.²⁸

²³ Goggin, “‘Decent’ vs. ‘Degenerate’,” 84-85.

²⁴ Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, *Art Under A Dictatorship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), xix.

²⁵ Mosse, *Nationalization of the Masses*, 195.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ In the midst of the economic depression, these ‘alien’ influences amounted to a threat of cultural modernism and Jewish conspiracies.

Alan E. Steinweis, “The Control of Cultural Life,” in *The Nazi Revolution*, ed. Allan Mitchell (Boston: Wadsworth, 1997), 134.

²⁸ Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 52.

Nazi ‘degenerate’ art was multi-dimensionally defined; included was any art, no matter the style, created by Jews or art with Jewish themes, even if painted by non-Jews. Also ‘degenerate’ was art advocating pacifism or showing war as ugly, for Hitler wanted a complete break from the defeatist Weimar years.²⁹ Art portraying ugly or deformed people was ‘degenerate’ since the disabled could not contribute to a pure Aryan race. Marxist or socialist themes and all abstract art, even if Nordic and racist in concept, were ultimately ‘degenerate.’³⁰ (Abstract included Expressionism, Cubism, Futurist and Constructivist.) Hitler described ‘degenerate’ artists as “cliques of babblers, dilettantes and art crooks [and]... prehistoric stone-age culture-vultures and art stammerers.”³¹ Defining ‘degenerate’ artists in such inferior and threatening terms allowed Hitler to wage a war on ‘degenerate’ art and artists.

The Nazi Art Program

The Nazis’ radical art policies and programs served two purposes: One, the achievement of their ideological goals of purifying Reich culture and art and Two, the pursuit towards the leaders personal gain.³² Opportunism most definitely had its place within ideologically motivated Nazi looting; opportunism may in fact have been the primary motivation for confiscations and purges, but looting as a common aspect in war and the ideological motives of Hitler to glorify the Third Reich cannot be disregarded as primary examples of both the race and space war and the culture war.

²⁹ Nicholas, *Rape of Europa*, 11.

³⁰ Matila Simon, *Battle for the Louvre: The Struggle to Save French Art in World War II* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1971), 12.

³¹ Goggin, “Decent vs. Degenerate Art’,” 88.

³² Petropoulos, *Art as Politics*, 75.

The Nazi art program can be clearly divided into three stages.³³ The first stage corresponded with Adolf Hitler's rise to power and ends in January of 1933, with his election into the Chancellory. The period is mainly composed of a unification of purpose and crystallization of doctrine; mainly, ideologies are consolidated into a single direction. The second stage ranges from Hitler's election in 1933 to the summer of 1937. These first years of the National Socialist regime are incredibly industrious for the Nazi art doctrine; during these four years, the laws dictating the direction of German art were written and the organizational machinery of the regime was formed and tested. January 1933 to the summer of 1937 represents the initial phase in which all of the creative power is absorbed for the purposes of the state. To better inoculate the German population with Nazi art propaganda, exhibitions of both 'German' and 'non-German' art in Germany, were made available to a wide range of the population. The 'German' people were then, interacting together, participating in legitimizing the dominant or official identity of Germany, through art. Subsequently, the *Times*' coverage of German art policies, specifically beginning with the exhibitions, allowed Americans to directly interact with European art, creating a very complex filter in which the *Times* reported Nazi art policies and the reactions from the German population, the American population, the American military and the perceived larger art world.

The commitment of the Nazis to their art policies, as vital to the overall development of a thousand year Third Reich resulted in the heightened regulation and intensity of the art policies in the third stage of the Nazi art program. This final stage of the Nazi art program begins in the summer of 1937 and carries through the years of

³³ Lehmann-Haupt, *Art Under A Dictatorship*, 3.

World War II. The state wanted to achieve as much as possible before the beginning of the conventional war, to “effect compact and total consolidation.”³⁴ Until 1937, German collectors and museums were still lending artworks to exhibitions outside of Germany. By 1938, organizers outside of Germany noticed Germany’s reluctance to allow Old Masters and other valued art to leave Germany.³⁵ This restrictive art policy is called an ‘indicator’ of war by intelligence professionals.³⁶

Nineteen thirty-eight also saw a clear break towards more violent and lawless art policies. Outside its cultural realm, “state terror increased, foreign policy became more aggressive, and the government and military experienced the reorganization of personnel. In brief, 1938 marked a break in the constitutional development of the Hitler State.”³⁷ Mosse contends that the artistic and political had fused as part of the nationalistic effort within Nazi Germany.³⁸ The totalitarian and nationalistic theories both envision Nazi art reforms as a conduit in which the German population’s faith was placed, very devoutly, in the government in the larger idea of a German nation. Therefore, a divorce of cultural policy from National Socialism plans and ideals was impossible.

The Nazi’s war for race and space was characterized not only by genocide, but also a need, as described by Hitler, for more land for the pure German population. The push for *Lebensraum*, or living space, resulted in the German occupation of the Rhineland (March 1936), the Sudetenland (September 1938) and Czechoslovakia (March 1939). From 1933 to 1939, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime waged both the race and

³⁴ Lehmann-Haupt, *Art Under A Dictatorship*, 63.

³⁵ Nicholas, *Rape of Europa*, 28.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 29.

³⁷ Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich*, 51.

³⁸ Mosse, *Nationalization of the Masses*, 190.

culture wars, but Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939 forced the Allied Powers of France, Britain and eventually American (with Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor) to declare the start of the conventional war, i.e. World War II. Throughout World War II, Nazi attacks on modern, Jewish and communist art became more systematic, continuous and arguably more successful, as did the Nazi war on race.³⁹

Quickly following the *Anschluss* in March of 1938, antisemitic violence increased in Germany. November 9, 1938, *Kristallnacht* witnessed the destruction of Jewish property and violence against Jews and those posing perceived political threats to Hitler's Germany.⁴⁰ Parallel to this violence were more aggressive antisemitic art policies. These antisemitic laws allowed the legal seizure of Jewish property without explanation or compensation. Jews fleeing Germany were compelled to leave their collections behind, or have them 'Aryanized', i.e. the forced sale to a Gentile.⁴¹ In France, Austria and Holland, Jewish collections were the primary victims of looting and confiscation. As the Jews were removed en masse to concentration camps, their property was collected for the Third Reich.⁴² Modern art labeled as 'degenerate' was confiscated for exchanges or sale to acquire artworks sought after by Hitler. By 1943, when deportations of Jews to extermination camps were virtually complete, the profits from confiscations, by direct order from Himmler, were to be used to finance the Final Solution. "The Jews would pay for their own murders."⁴³

³⁹ The attacks on art could be labeled as successful in the context of the various National Socialist aims. Goggin, "'Decent' vs. 'Degenerate'," 84.

⁴⁰ Nicholas, *Rape of Europa*, 43.

⁴¹ Peter Harclerode, *The Lost Masters: World War II and the Looting of Europe's Treasure Houses* (New York: Welcome Rain Publishers), xi-xii.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Chesnoff, *Pack of Thieves*, 22.

Germany and the War For Culture

Historians have to this point only discussed the war for culture as disjointed parts, not an autonomous struggle for the control of art requiring its own discourse. National Socialist purges of ‘degenerate’ art and the theft of Jewish property have been discussed as aspects of the Nazi war for race and space, that is, the ethnic cleansing and/or genocide of Jews, or as symptoms of a totalitarian regime working towards total control of society. The looting committed by the Nazis has also been lumped into the discourse of war crimes or naturally occurring consequences of military conflict. However, the war for culture is an amalgamation of all these influences and environments, an identification made through analyzing the *New York Times*’ coverage in comparison to the various focuses of historians.

The looting of art during military conflict has traditionally been discussed as an aspect of war, or in the more specific case of the Nazi plundering of Europe, as an event motivated by Nazi race ideology, nationalism or opportunism. Hugh McLeave in his work *Rogues in the Gallery: The Modern Plague of Art Thefts*, noted that the Nazi plunder of Europe is similar to Napoleon’s penchant for appropriating everything valuable, including art, from conquered areas; unlike Napoleon, McLeave argues, Hitler’s plans for his looted art, namely Linz, took plundering to a different level.⁴⁴ In *Loot!: The Heritage of Plunder*, E. R. Chamberlin attributes Hitler’s theft of European treasures to the Führer’s desire to build a city that would glorify the Third Reich and Germany.⁴⁵ However, Chamberlin identifies an additional motivation, apart from nationalism or a

⁴⁴ McLeave, *Rogues in the Gallery*, 5.

⁴⁵ Napoleon also sought to legalize the plundering of his occupations by operating under treaties. E. R. Chamberlin, *Loot!: The Heritage of Plunder* (New York: Facts on File, 1983), 154.

symptom of war; Chamberlin argues that simple opportunism played a key role in the Nazi thefts, especially for Nazi elites. “Hitler, like Napoleon, looted for his country: Goering looted for Hermann Goering.”⁴⁶ However, the war for culture should not be glossed over as simply a symptom of a larger conflict.

Igor Golomstock in his work that compares art in the Soviet Union, China, Italy and Germany, argues that the attempt for absolute control of art is present in all modern totalitarian regimes. Subsequently Golomstock outlines the systematic reorganization of art under a totalitarian regime: to begin, the state declares art to be an “ideological weapon”. The state then acquires a monopoly over all aspects of the nation’s artistic life. An all-encompassing apparatus is created to control the direction of art and subsequently the most conservative art movement is declared the official movement of the state and is used to delineate the state’s aims and ideology. Finally, the state declares war against all other art movements, affirming them to be “reactionary and hostile to class, race, people, party or state, to humanity, to social or artistic progress, etc.”⁴⁷

Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt in *Art Under a Dictatorship* contends that the level at which the National Socialist program absorbed art into the state structure is without precedent. “Such complete monopolization of the entire creative potential of a people, of every aesthetic instinct, such subjugation of every current of its productivity and its capacity for artistic experience to the purposes of the leaders of collective society does not exist before the present century.” The Nazi art doctrine however, while supported by the totalitarian aspect of National Socialism, grew out of the single most important

⁴⁶ Chamberlin, *Loot!*, 163.

⁴⁷ Golomstock. *Totalitarian Art*, xiii.

concept of the Nazi regime- racism, according to Lehmann-Haupt.⁴⁸ Alan Steinweis defines Nazi art purges as ‘cultural eugenics,’ emphasizing the connection of Nazi race ideology (ethnic cleansing/negative eugenics) and the cultural cleansing undertaken by the Nazi regime.⁴⁹ Andrew Bell-Fialkoff defines ethnic cleansing as “the expulsion of an ‘undesirable’ population from a given territory due to religious or ethnic discrimination, political, strategic or ideological considerations, or combination of these.”⁵⁰ Steinweis’ contribution is especially valid considering the Third Reich’s characterization of purged art as racially and aesthetically inferior to ‘Nazi art’, and the Nazi looting of Europe as a form of positive cultural eugenics, acquiring art that elevates Nazi Germany. However, the ‘cultural eugenics’ of Germany must also be understood in a self-contained context of a nationalizing movement through the control of art; Adolf Hitler was politicizing the meaning of art to legitimize Nazi Germany; the elimination of individuals, art, and culture that did not match with Nazi ideology was only one aspect of the Nazi quest for control.

The looting and purges of art perpetrated in the war for culture cannot be segmented, but must be understood as an inclusive event driven by ideology (antisemitism), nationalism, totalitarianism, *and* opportunism. The war for culture is a conflict built upon the complexities of the value of art, therefore the conflict cannot be compartmentalized by motivations.⁵¹ The war for culture also cannot be discussed as only

⁴⁸ Lehmann-Haupt, *Art Under A Dictatorship*, 3, 37.

⁴⁹ Steinweis, “The Control of Cultural Life,” 134.

⁵⁰ Andrew Bell-Fialkoff “A Brief History of Ethnic Cleansing.” *Foreign Affairs* 72.3 (1993) 110-121. 110.

⁵¹ Art is not intrinsically valuable. Instead, the value of art is socially constructed by the art world network that includes artists, collectors, museums, dealers, schools, auctions houses, as well as those practicing in the black market of the art world, i.e. art and antique smugglers, thieves and professional fences. The provenance, or origins of an art piece also gives value; if a recognized art connoisseur or famous figure can

a German event; according to the *New York Times*, the United States was both a reactionary and active participant in the struggle for physical and symbolic control over art.

America in the 1930s and 1940s

As Hitler was building up his war machine in the 1930s, the majority of Americans were themselves suffering from the Great Depression and the horrific impressions from World War I. Consequently most Americans argued for a policy of isolationism from the progression towards war in Europe. As a result of the high unemployment, antisemitism and nativistic restrictionism of American society in the 1930s, many Americans saw refugees as “usurpers of jobs rightfully belonging to Americans” and so the American government functioned under a limited immigration policy.⁵²

In 1938, a year in which Nazi policies of antisemitic persecution grew decidedly more aggressive, 71 to 85 percent of Americans opposed increasing the quotas for all refugees.⁵³ Sixty-seven percent wanted to keep out refugees completely. Surveys from the following year showed that 66 percent objected to even a onetime exception allowing

be connected to the work, the piece becomes more coveted. Provenance and value play much different roles when dealing with looted art. With works of questionable origins, the provenance is often not mentioned. John E. Conklin, *Art Crime* (Westport; Connecticut; London: Praeger, 1994), 7.

⁵² American unemployment skyrocketed in the 1930s Great Depression. The xenophobic feelings of the 1920s only grew during the economic depression of the 1930s.

David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 6.

⁵³ Results from four separate polls.

Wyman, *Abandonment of the Jews*, 8.

10,000 refugee children to enter outside the quota. As a result of the limited immigration quotas, only 120,000 Jews entered the United States from 1933 to 1941.⁵⁴

Antisemitism was prevalent in America throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s, peaking in 1944, a year in which the *Times*' war for culture coverage was also at its highest. Antisemitism permeated all levels of wartime America. Throughout the 1930s, more than one hundred antisemitic organization disseminated antisemitic propaganda throughout American society.⁵⁵ "Jews were considered physically and morally degenerate, too weak to serve in the army, and, even in America, a clear menace to the national gene pool."⁵⁶ While physical manifestations, such as vandalism, were most prevalent in the urban Northwest, the worst outbreaks were in Boston and New York City, millions of Americans practiced subtler social and economic antisemitism and millions more were passively antisemitic, according to David Wyman.⁵⁷ This passive antisemitism beget a "large body of decent and normally considerate people... predisposed not to care about European Jews nor to care whether the government did anything to help save them."⁵⁸

The Great Depression also destroyed the existing American art market. New Deal art projects tried to replace the wealthy as patrons of the arts with a rhetoric of the 'people's art'. This artistic patronage of projects by the government sought to create a 'cultural democracy,' according to David Eldridge.⁵⁹ In an effort to make the public

⁵⁴ Michael C C Adams, *Best War Ever: America and World War II* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 147.

⁵⁵ Wyman, *Abandonment of the Jews*, 9.

⁵⁶ Matthew Baigell, *Jewish Art in America: An Introduction* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), Xv.

⁵⁷ Wyman, *Abandonment of the Jews*, 8-10.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 12.

⁵⁹ David Eldridge, *American Culture in the 1930s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University press, 2008), 126.

connect to the 'People's art', the works were displayed in a variety of public spaces, including hospitals, post offices, schools and department stores.⁶⁰ In a time period habitually defined as the buildup to the military struggle between totalitarianism and democracy, these New Deal efforts and art reforms reflected American participation in the war for culture during the 1930s as both the Americans and Nazis were politicizing art for nationalistic purposes.

The issue of nationalism in America acquired a deeper meaning according to Matthew Baigell in *Jewish Art in America*, after Hitler was named Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and began implementing his antisemitic programs. Many Americans feared a fledgling fascist movement was developing in America.⁶¹ The Depression intensified nationalism in the American art world; European art, equated to modern art, was despised because 'real' Americans who depicted 'real' America should create 'American' art.⁶² Regionalist and American Scene painters of the 1930s denounced the influence of New York art critics and patrons, instead calling for art that did not conform to New York or European standards, but art that reflected American life, that is, rural and small-town America. Amidst a devastated economy and ravaged society, the playfulness that characterized modern art was abandoned; the elites of the art world (gallerists, curators and critics) encouraged the creation of art that reflected an awareness of the plight ordinary Americans were suffering, rather than creating in an art world dislocated from reality. As a result, the abstract was abjured for more representational styles.⁶³

⁶⁰ Eldridge, *American Culture in the 1930s*, 126.

⁶¹ Baigell, *Jewish Art in America*, 45.

⁶² *Ibid*, 43.

⁶³ *Ibid*.

American Art Recovery Efforts

In opposition to isolationists, interventionists saw American involvement in the Second World War as the only stalwart to German world domination, not to mention the other threats from Imperial Japan and the Communist Soviet Union. After the December 8, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, America ended its neutrality and declared war on the Axis Powers.⁶⁴ By late 1943, the Allies, particularly Americans, had begun preparations for the recovery of looted art after Germany's defeat.⁶⁵ With the landing on Normandy in June of 1944, the Allied drive towards Berlin commenced and according to the American perspective, the tide of the war changed in favor of the Allies.

World War II saw the greatest upheaval of cultural pieces in history and so the efforts to reconstruct Europe in post-war years was extremely complicated and required an international participation.⁶⁶ The recovery of looted material was seen as politically important by the Allies, according to E. R. Chamberlin, but additionally, as portrayed by the *New York Times*' coverage, America was wholly invested in the control of art as early as 1937, years before the recovery of Nazi looted art was called for.⁶⁷ In each of the Allied armies, officers (many of whom were art scholars, curator or artists) were specifically charged with detecting and uncovering plundered art and providing for its protection.⁶⁸ The Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section of the Allied army

⁶⁴ Outside of the attack on Pearl Harbor context, Alton Frye in his book *Nazi Germany* contends that Hitler's plans for Third Reich expansion in South America equaled a very real threat to the United States. Alton Frye, *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere, 1933-1941* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 170-174.

⁶⁵ Harclerode, *The Lost Masters*, xii.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Chamberlin, *Loot!*, 175.

⁶⁸ Hugh McLeave, *Rogues in the Gallery: The Modern Plague of Art Thefts* (Boston: D.R. Godine, 1981), 225.

(MFAA) consisted of 350 men and women from thirteen nations.⁶⁹ The recovery of looted art was immensely difficult; southern Germany had at least 200 official caches, while there existed an untold number of unofficial caches and black-market dealings existed around the world.⁷⁰ The American “Art Looting Investigation of the US Office of Strategic Studies” took the lead in art recovery among the Allies, as Bavaria and Austria, areas where much of the Nazi loot was hidden, fell in the American zone.⁷¹

The original duties of the MFAA entailed mitigating combat damage, primarily structural damage to churches, museums or other important monuments. As the war and Allied line progressed, the focus of the Monuments Men shifted towards uncovering works of art and other cultural items stolen or missing.⁷² The Allies located over 1,000 repositories containing millions of artworks and other cultural pieces including municipal records, stained glass, church bells, books, gold, wine and diamonds. The MFAA was responsible for packing, transporting, archiving and returning the Nazi plunder to the variety of countries of origin.⁷³ Robert Edsel, in his work devoted to the art recovery efforts of the Monuments Men, argues that this creation of an art recovery section of the military was a remarkable experiment, for it was the first attempt to curb cultural damage while fighting a war.

The war for culture was a complex struggle within Germany between Nazi art ideology (anti-modernism, anticommunism, and antisemitism) and Nazi indoctrination of Germany society; a war between Germany and the Allies, primarily America, over the

⁶⁹ The Monuments Men served in official capacity from 1943 to 1951.

⁷⁰ Chamberlin, *Loot!*, 177.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 175.

⁷² The MFAA had developed a comprehensive account of stolen art whereabouts and vague plans for restitutions by September of 1945.

Edsel, *Monuments Men*, xiv.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 400.

physical control of European art and culture; and finally a conflict over the control of the meaning of art and the legitimacy that control could bring to the victorious nation.

The United States was an active participant in the war for culture, primarily seen through the several historians' works on the Allied art recovery efforts. However, the *New York Times* shows another aspect of American participation in the art conflict, specifically interaction with Nazi purged art in the 1930s, a connection between the American and German art worlds previously overlooked by historians. Also unique to the *Times*' coverage are reports on American exhibitions of recovered Nazi loot, reflective of the United States' victory in the war for culture and the conventional military conflict; in comparing the post-WWII loot exhibitions with the 1937 shows of 'degenerate' art within both Germany and America, the war on culture is shown demonstratively to be a conflict between nationalizing countries, that is, two states developing their own distinctive national identity through art. The *Times*' coverage, under various influences, idealized the United States as a 'custodian' and 'refuge' of art, and as a victor in a war characterized by the newspaper as a struggle between the civilized (America) and the totalitarian barbarian (Nazi Germany), thereby legitimizing America as a new world power.

War Propaganda

Operating under official neutrality until its entrance into World War II in December 1941, America had unofficially supported the Allied cause throughout the 1930s, supplying the Allies through the Lend-Lease Act and other agreements. Even more discreet and subtle, was American build up of wartime propaganda against the Axis during the 1930s, specifically attempts by President Roosevelt to win over isolationist Americans who rebuffed the idea of American involvement in another European war.

World War I and the propaganda techniques and coverage of that era had altered much of the American population's perspective of world wars and the propaganda that supports them. As a consequence, the 1920s and 1930s represented a time of fear, not only of war, but of propaganda, both of enemy propaganda and subversion of propaganda from home.⁷⁴

Robin Anderson's *A Century of Media, A Century of War* suggests that because World War II needed to be seen as the 'legitimate war' for American, propaganda had to create a frame of reference, meaning censorship and omission of facts were prevalent in reports of the war. The result was a "type of blanket censorship" created by reporters who were committed to vanquishing the German enemy.⁷⁵ Susan Brewer also suggests that government leaders "translate war aims into propaganda" to explain why Americans fight, but Brewer furthers this argument by suggesting that it is the job of the propaganda campaign to disguise "a paradoxical message: war is not a time for citizens to have an informed debate and make up their own minds even as they fight in the name of freedom to do just that."⁷⁶ In contrast, Laurel Leff, in her work analyzing the *New York Times'* coverage of the Holocaust, contends that the American government, while influential in American journalism, did not dictate press coverage of the Holocaust.⁷⁷ According to Brewer, during World War II, propagandists attempted to fully distract from the realities of the war by appealing to American confidence in the "national mission" while at the

⁷⁴ Frye, *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere*, 3-4.

⁷⁵ Robin Anderson, *A Century of Media, A Century of War* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 22.

⁷⁶ Susan A. Brewer, *Why America Fights: Patriotism and War Propaganda from the Philippines to Iraq* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 7.

⁷⁷ Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 7.

same time, shielding civilians from the full picture of “the immense struggle they face to defeat Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan.”⁷⁸

Brewer also addresses the debates between the interventionists and the isolationists suggesting that to win the war and keep the peace afterwards, the American population had to be convinced that global neutrality was both impossible and undesirable. Their biggest problem was the isolationist argument that America would best be able to maintain its “moral superiority by avoiding contamination with foreign trouble.”⁷⁹ Brewer therefore argues that one of the key propaganda ideas used to win favor among the isolationists was to rework the ideal of ‘civilized vs. barbarians’ to ‘democracy vs. dictatorship.’⁸⁰ In the *Times*’ war for culture coverage, both concepts are applied to America and Germany: the United States is idealized as both civilized and democratic and Nazi Germany is vilified for its barbarism and totalitarianism.

Culture War Propaganda and the New York Times

The war for culture played out on the pages of the *New York Times*, a filter that reflected anti-Nazi and pro-American coverage of the war for culture. Edward Boehm admits to the difficulties of defining a term that most agree can be described as ‘relative’, however Boehm defines propaganda as any idea intentionally propagated to achieve a specific goal, mainly through promoting their ideas in pictures, graphs, parades, songs or other similar devices.⁸¹ Propaganda can be an obvious or concealed appeal, emotional or logical, or a combination of the two. For the purposes of this paper, it will be understood

⁷⁸ Brewer, *Why America Fights*, 5.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 92.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 17.

⁸¹ Edward Boehm, *Behind Enemy Lines: WWII Allied/Axis Propaganda* (New Jersey: Wellfleet Press, 1989), 27-28.

that the goal of propaganda was to create a fightable enemy, meaning not only vilifying the opposing nation, ethnicity or other type of group, but also creating a sense of patriotism and superiority within ones own country.

One of the key tools used by propagandists to idealize and promote their organization or nation, is the element of *prestige*, which uses relations of dominance to exemplify certain ideals; images of strength, size, knowledge or power are emphasized to show one side as superior to another. During wartime, this element is often focused on military prestige: the size, skill level and loyalty of a country's army used to create its prestige image. In the *Times*' coverage, the prestige element paraded American appreciation for art, modernism and freedom as examples of the United States' cultural, intellectual and moral superiority.

The use of labels, slogans, keywords and symbols are also extremely important in creating the desired perspective from the propaganda. Labels use specific key words or phrases to create feelings of 'for' or against' towards the propagandized topic; the tools shorten and emotionalize the propaganda ideas so that they are more easily remembered and accepted. Symbols can include words, songs and images and create a "concrete representation of an idea, action, or thing" and act as "a kind of cement that holds together a social group."⁸² Examples of this include describing something as 'un-American' or using the words 'justice' or 'freedom'. Within the *Times*, 'refuge' and 'custodian' are extensively used to connect the propagandist images of American interactions with art.

⁸² Boehm, *Behind Enemy Lines*, 22.

Times reports of the culture war were highly propagandized versions of the news, and while the manipulated images are used to easily disseminate key patriotic ideas to the *Times*' readers, that is, Nazis are bad and America is good, the war propaganda found in the articles addressed in this thesis is distinctive from conventional war propaganda in the various ways the *New York Times* idealized America and vilified the enemy. While the *Times* does publish articles reflecting war propaganda that imagines America as the military superior to Germany, 'culture war' propaganda emphasizes American superiority as more civilized and/or culturally sophisticated to the German barbarian. These images are most aggressively portrayed in *Times* coverage emphasizing Nazi totalitarianism as the primary motivation for Germany's purge of masterworks, rather than Nazi antisemitism; this discourse of propaganda is mostly used to place America as the free, high culture center that acts as the refuge to the purged European culture and art.

The New York Times

The *Times* was arguably one of the most influential news sources in the 1930s and 1940s, not just within America, but also on a wider world stage. The *Times* was unique among American newspapers in the comprehensiveness of its coverage and its extensive influence on American policy makers, according to Leff in her quintessential work *Buried By The Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper*. For Leff, the *Times* was especially distinguishable because of the extensiveness of its foreign correspondent staff, an aspect Leff labels as the best in America, possibly in the World. Half of the *Times*' 805,000 Sunday readers came from outside New York City and the *Times* syndicate sent *Times* articles to 525 American newspapers. Policy makers and

other national journalists considered the *Times* the newspaper of record; even foreign governments read the *Times*.

The *Times* was as close to a national newspaper as could be labeled in the United States, according to a 1944 edition of the *Saturday Event Post*. The *Times*' extensive access to international news, its commitment to international affairs and its substantial Jewish readership placed the *Times* as the leading mainstream newspaper in its ability to obtain and publish news on the Jews. Jewish ownership of the *Times* would seemingly make the newspaper more sensitive to and shape coverage of their publications on the plight of European Jews, however the ownership of the *Times* influenced its Holocaust coverage negatively, according to Leff. While the *Times* was attuned to reports on Jews, American antisemitism caused Jews in the United States to feel insecure in their position in American society, including the Jewish owners of the *Times*. This insecurity translated into the owner's concerns of how Jews were portrayed in their newspaper, according to Leff, and the subsequent monitoring and manipulation of what news was printed had wide ramifications because of the *Times*' influence.⁸³

In identifying bystanders to the Holocaust, Leff notes that the general apathy and inaction of the bystander stems from their lack of understanding of the situation, a problem stemming largely from the press's failure to explain the significance of the events in Europe.⁸⁴ David Wyman points to a larger failure of mass media, not just the *Times*, in failing to inform the public about the Nazi atrocities, reporting the Holocaust sporadically and mostly without emphasis.⁸⁵ According to Leff, the "*Times*' judgment

⁸³ Leff, *Buried by the Times*, 5; 10-11.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 10-15.

⁸⁵ Wyman, *Abandonment of the Jews*, 28.

that the murder of millions of Jews was a relatively unimportant story reverberated among other journalists trying to assess the news, among Jewish groups trying to arouse public opinion, and among government leaders trying to decide on an American response.”⁸⁶ While Leff’s contentions are a significant contribution to both genocide research and American history, the primary influence of *Buried by the Times* on this thesis is the framework through which Leff analyzed the *New York Times* for its coverage. Every historical source has its own distinct points of subjectivity; for the *New York Times*, these biases were shown in the perspectives taken when characterizing Nazi art purges, looting and the Allied recovery efforts. The choices made by both reporter and newspaper are the focus of this work.⁸⁷

The Significance of New York Times Coverage of the War For Culture

The full significance of the Nazi art reformation and the responding American exhibitions and recovery efforts can only be understood as a war in and of itself. Both America and Germany were undergoing a nationalizing process through a war for culture, a significant event not addressed as of yet by historians. Therefore, it is necessary to create a new discourse in which to discuss the *New York Times*’ portrayal of the ideological and physical struggle for control of art. The Nazi art reformation included both the creation of new ‘Nazi-German’ artworks and also the elimination of ‘non-German’ or ‘degenerate’ art. The *New York Times*, in its coverage of Nazi art reforms during the 1930s, primarily focused on the Nazi purges of ‘degenerate’ art. Only in the

⁸⁶ Leff, *Buried by the Times*, 5; 10-11.

⁸⁷ As a base, this work assumes that all articles printed in the *Times* reflect an Allied perspective, most probably American, meaning one written by an American or contributed by a reporter not affiliated with the Nazis. All author’s specified within articles are noted here. If no author is provided, the article was published in the *Times* as written from the Associated Press, or no author at all.

reports of Nazi looting did the *Times* address Nazi efforts to procure or build up German art and culture. The war for culture included not only Germany and America as the spearheads of the conflict, but also the multiple nations all across Europe looted by the Nazis, and the other Allies who participated in the efforts to recover Nazi looted art. Within the context of German looting, however, the *Times* discussed the struggle for physical control of art in a limited discourse, as one between the Nazis and United States, centered in Western Europe, an ultimate example of Nazi totalitarianism and barbarism and the opposing refuge American superiority as a democratic refuge to art and culture.

While the *Times* published a limited, infrequent number of articles during the early years of the Nazi regime (1933-1936) pointing to the antisemitic motivations of certain Nazi art reforms, the majority of *New York Times* reports, and the newspaper's coverage of the war for culture as a whole, ultimately portrayed Nazi art ideology and the Holocaust as unconnected. Throughout its' coverage of the war for culture, *New York Times* reports endorsed an idealized image of America that was rivaled by simplified images of a totalitarian Nazi enemy. Furthermore, while the *Times* specifically addresses the various aspects of the 'war for culture' throughout its 300 articles published between 1933 and 1948, the 'war for culture' was predominately only identified by the *Times* in the postwar period (1945-1948), under the context of American victory in both the military and culture wars.

Chapter Two addresses the three phases of the *New York Times*' 'degenerate' art coverage, specifically the extent to which the *Times* portrayed the realities of Nazi defined 'degeneracy' while operating under culture war propaganda. *Times*' 'degenerate' art reports include discussions of Nazi art purges and exhibitions of 'degenerate' art,

American exhibitions and purchases of ‘degenerate’ art, and Nazi looting of Jewish property. Excepting a few articles within phase one (coverage years 1933-1935), the *Times* did not define ‘degenerate’ as it was used by the Nazis, thereby eliminating Nazi race ideology from the *Times*’ readers’ understanding of the war for culture in the subsequent two phases of coverage (1936-1940; 1942-1943).

Chapter Three concentrates on the *Times*’ reports of Nazi looting as a whole (1941-1945), coverage that ultimately neglected to address the Nazi attacks as a part of war for culture, or even as connected to the war for race and space. A majority of the articles simply focus on the Nazi elite, mainly defining Adolf Hitler and Hermann Göring by their opportunism. Chapter Three also includes the very brief address by the *Times* of the American efforts to protect art within the boundary of the United States.

Finally, Chapter Four discusses the context in which the *Times* identifies the war for culture; primarily the reports emphasize America efforts to recover Nazi looted art, and the subsequent consequences of those efforts. The post-World War II coverage of the war for culture also reflects a transition of portraying American enemies, as the United States becomes engaged in the Cold War.

CHAPTER II

GAWKERS AND THEIR DEGENERATES: *NEW YORK TIMES* COVERAGE OF ‘NON-GERMAN’ ART PURGES, ‘DEGENERATE ART’ EXHIBITIONS AND THE PROFITEERS OF WORLD WAR II

The Nazi systematic purge of ‘degenerate’ art built upon a rising tide of persecution of Jews living in Germany after Hitler’s election to the Chancellery in 1933, and in the occupied countries during Germany military expansion from 1939-1945. The Nazis defined ‘degenerate’ by many characteristics, including modernist, communist and Jewish, however the denigration of both Jewish individuals and Jewish art connected the Nazi war for race and space to the war for culture. The Nazis considered *Blut und Boden* (blood and soil) the basis of all Germanic art, and so to embody these true spiritual values of the Aryan race; German art needed purification of all Bolshevist and Semitic influences.¹ In addition to eliminating art created by Jews or reflective of Jewish culture, looting Jewish owners of their art collections was also a vital step in the Nazi effort to Aryanize Europe.

In its coverage of the Nazi art reformation, that is, Nazi adaptations of ‘German’ art and the subsequent purges of ‘non-German’ or ‘degenerate’ art, the *New York Times* portrayed a manipulated image of the Nazi war for culture that largely neglected to portray all characteristics of Nazi art ideology.² Alternatively, the *Times* primarily

¹ Mary-Margaret Goggin, “‘Decent’ vs. ‘Degenerate’ Art: The National Socialist Case”, *Art Journal* 50.4 (1991) 84-92. 86.

² David Wyman argues in *Abandonment of the Jews*, that antisemitism was highly prevalent in 1930s and 1940s American society; high unemployment and nativistic restrictionism were important influences in the prevalence of that American antisemitism. The majority of Americans were themselves suffering from the Great Depression of the 1930s and the devastations from World War I; consequently most Americans argued for a policy of isolationism from the progressions towards war in Europe. As a result of the high unemployment, antisemitism and nativistic restrictionism of American society in the 1930s, many Americans saw refugees as “usurpers of jobs rightfully belonging to Americans” and so the American

reported the Nazi purges and exhibitions of ‘degenerate’ art as characteristic of the Third Reich’s totalitarian regime, thereby defining Nazi efforts to control the meaning of art as only an element of the larger Nazi efforts to control all aspects of German society. In simplifying Nazi definitions of ‘degenerate’, the *Times* severed the connection between Nazi art ideology and Nazi antisemitism/ethnic cleansing for its readers and also neglected to cover the war for culture authentically; however, the newspaper’s emphasis on Nazi totalitarianism set a standard for the *Times*’ reports in which the war for culture coverage defined the United States and Germany within simplified propagandist terms: America was democratic and a refuge for civilization while the Nazi dictatorship was destroying European art and culture.³ The *Times* during its coverage of ‘degenerate’ art did not identify the Nazi art reforms or the American interactions with the ‘non-German’ art as a part of a larger struggle for control of art. America, subsequently, was not defined as a participant in the war for culture, despite American exhibitions and purchases of ‘degenerate’ art.

government functioned under a limited immigration policy. Millions of Americans were passively antisemitic, according to Wyman. This passive antisemitism beget a “large body of decent and normally considerate people... predisposed not to care about European Jews nor to care whether the government did anything to help save them.” As a result of the limited immigration quotas, only 120,000 Jews entered the United States from 1933 to 1941.

David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 6.

Laurel Leff argues that Jewish ownership of the *New York Times* influenced its Holocaust coverage negatively; while the *Times* was attuned to reports on Jews, American antisemitism caused Jews in the United States to feel insecure in their position in American society, including the Jewish owners of the *Times*. This insecurity translated into the owner’s concerns of how Jews were portrayed in their newspaper, and the subsequent monitoring and manipulation of what news was printed had wide ramifications because of the *Times*’ influence.

Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America’s Most Important Newspaper* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 5; 10-11

³ Nazis deplored what they perceived as a flooding of German culture with Jews and foreigners. The efforts to eliminate these threats of cultural modernism and Jewish influences were described as ‘cultural eugenics’ by Alan E. Steinweis in *Nazi Revolution*.

To understand the extent to which the *New York Times*' did not define the term 'degenerate' by Nazi standards, it is necessary to briefly discuss Nazi art ideology and its connection to Nazi race dogma. Subsequently, the *Times*' coverage of Nazi art reforms, exhibitions and American responses will be addressed as three distinctive phases. Within the first phase of 'degenerate' art coverage of the war for culture (1933-1935), the *Times* briefly connects Nazi definitions of 'degenerate' art to the larger Nazi race war.⁴ In the second phase of reports (1936-1940), the *Times* mostly concentrated its coverage on Nazi exhibitions of 'degenerate' art, American shows of 'degenerate' art and American museum acquisitions of 'degenerate' pieces. Within these articles, the *Times* ultimately limited its definition of 'degenerate' to anti-modernism.⁵ The false portrayal of the Nazis' use of 'degeneracy' had important ramifications, as seen in the final phase of coverage (1942-1943) which addresses the limited number of *Times* articles reporting specific targeting of Jews for Nazi looting.⁶

Nazi Definitions of 'Degenerate' Art

As Chancellor of Germany, Adolf Hitler immediately instated in 1933 what would become the Nazi cultural policies on both 'German' and 'non-German' art. Throughout the initial years of the regime, the Nazis were restructuring German culture by segregating and purging 'degenerate' art and artists in favor of 'German' art representative of National Socialist ideals. As the Third Reich moved closer to war in the late 1930s and throughout the war years (1939-1945), the Nazi regime transitioned their

⁴ Of the 57 articles published 1933-1935 covering the war for culture, nine are specifically addressed in this chapter; these nine articles are reflective of the major themes found in first phase of coverage.

⁵ In the second phase (1936-1940), 16 of the 66 published are addressed in the second phase section.

⁶ In the third phase (1942-1943), 4 of the 29 are specifically discussed here.

art policies towards primarily looting artworks from institutions and private collectors, many of whom were Jews, made vulnerable by Nazi race laws.

The German population of the 1920s and 1930s resented Germany's defeat in World War I and the War Guilt Clause forced onto them by the Treaty of Versailles. The Great Depression of the 1930s, along with the resentment and anger, caused many in Germany society to look for extremist parties for solutions to Germany's demise. The National Socialist party rose to power under the banner of blaming Jews, communists and intellectuals for Germany's decline; Nazi propaganda argued that the elimination of these scapegoats would allow the superior, good German workers to thrive once again.

Three developments in the nineteenth century, specifically the creation of the term 'antisemitism', the eugenics movement and the idea of 'degeneracy' in both society and art influenced Nazi ideology and the execution of its vision. Wilhelm Marr, a German journalist, coined the term 'antisemitism' in 1879 to characterize hatred of the Jews. Unlike anti-Judaism which had existed for centuries, Marr defined Jews by their blood, allowing an individual to be fundamentally a Jew and therefore unable to convert out of Judaism.⁷ Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin, conceived of a movement to improve humanity through selective breeding (Social Darwinism); the resulting eugenics movement lasted roughly from 1880 to 1945.⁸ For Germany, interest in eugenics resulted in multiple organizations and laws promoting the unions of pure blood with other pure Aryans. In the United States, Fitter Family competitions awarded American families for health and beauty. In both Germany and America, the eugenics movement also resulted

⁷ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

⁸ Francis Galton coined 'eugenics' in 1883.

in forced sterilizations of those deemed unhealthy or degenerative to the progression of the human race, with the German eugenics movement ultimately ending in genocide.⁹

The origins of the term 'degenerate' can be found long before the National Socialists appropriation of its meaning. 'Degenerate' was formalized and popularized in the nineteenth century by B.A. Morel and Max Nordau, a Hungarian Jew with close ties to Germany. Morel, a French medical anthropologist who labeled differences among groups as pathological, viewed the differences among races as simply, the distinction of: 'We are healthy; they are sick'.¹⁰ Nordau used his medical and scientific training to attack modern art and culture in his 1892 work *Degeneration*, or *Entartung*, Nordau linked the 'pathological' with the artistic category of 'degenerate' and projected all of the perceived ailments, or degeneracies, of art and society onto Eastern European Jews.¹¹ For Nordau, Jews were stereotypically urbanite, intellectuals who were highly unproductive workers. According to George Mosse, Jews were considered especially susceptible to nervous and neurological disorders and so Nordau's theories simply built upon preexisting stereotypes of society's outsiders, that is, Jews, criminals, the handicapped and insane, all of whom were seen as nervous, devious individuals who had turned their back on nature.¹² In *Degeneration*, Nordau writes:

The 'freedom' and 'modernity,' the 'progress' and 'truth' of these fellows are not ours... we have nothing in common with them [degenerates]. They want debauchery, we want work. They want to drown consciousness in the unconscious, we want to strengthen and enrich consciousness. They want streams of thought and giddiness, we want attention, observation, and

⁹ Daniel Wikler, "Can We Learn from Eugenics?" *Journal of Medical Ethics* 25.2 (1999) 183-194. 184.

¹⁰ Sander Gilman "The Mad Man as Artist: Medicine, History and Degenerate Art," *Journal of Contemporary History* 20.4 (1985) 575-597. 589

¹¹ *Ibid*, 593.

¹² George L. Mosse, "Nordau, Liberalism and the New Jew" *Journal of Contemporary History* 27.4 (1992) 565-581. 567.

knowledge. Everyone can recognize true moderns and clearly distinguish them from the swindlers who call themselves modern in this way: whoever preaches lack of discipline is an enemy of progress and whoever worships his ego is an enemy of society.¹³

Clearly showing the dangers of the unproductive, the nervous and the insane modernists, Nordau believed all modern art declaring itself a reflection of the future, was in actuality, anachronistic. In a time of dysfunction, high unemployment and political ineffectiveness, the anti-modern aspect of ‘degeneracy’ found favor among those who wished to blame the ‘nervous’ for the problems in Germany.

The limitations on ‘non-German’ art led many artists to flee Germany. Lynn Nicholas’ *Rape of Europa*, provides a study of Nazi art perpetrations, research highly regarded among historians for Nicholas’ balanced attention to both Nazi plundering and Allied efforts to protect and recover Europe’s culture. Nicholas asserts:

The thorough fiendishness of the Nazi rules for artists who did not please the Chamber of Culture is still hard to believe, even after all we know of the National Socialist madness. It was not enough to destroy and ridicule their work and forbid its sale or exhibition. They were not allowed to work at all. ‘Degenerate’ painters were even forbidden to buy art supplies. To enforce this, Gestapo agents made unexpected visits to their houses and studios. The smell of turpentine in the air or a container of wet brushes was grounds for arrest.¹⁴

The aggressive attacks on ‘degenerate’ art and artists should be understood as a part of multiple movements within Germany to find scapegoats for Germany’s failings in the 1920s and 1930s. Amidst the movements to define Jews by blood, and to purify Germany through breeding or forced sterilizations, ‘degeneracy’ came to represent all the vilified aspects of German society, modern and Jewish culture especially. Therefore, the German

¹³ Max Nordau, *Entartung* 505-506 from P.M. Baldwin, “Liberalism, Nationalism, and Degeneration: The Case of Max Nordau,” *Central European History* 13.2 (1980), 105.

¹⁴ Lynn H. Nicholas, *Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe’s Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 13.

war for culture and Nazi race ideology in identifying the inferior in art and culture, were completely intertwined. The Nazi definition of ‘degenerate’ evolved from its origins in the nineteenth century to include any art, no matter the style, created by Jews or art with Jewish themes, even if painted by non-Jews. Additionally, abstract art, art portraying pacifism, communism, anti-war or defeatist art and art depicting the physically deformed were also ‘degenerate.’

New York Times’ Definitions of ‘Degenerate’ Art

The *New York Times*, as an internationally read newspaper followed the Nazi art reforms closely, but its coverage did not give *Times* readers a complete understanding of the realities and implications of the Nazi war for culture.¹⁵ The *Times’* coverage of ‘non-German’ art can be divided into three phases; the first phase reflects reports published in the *Times* from 1933 to 1935, the second phase from 1936 to 1940, and the third phase includes reports from 1942-1943. The distinguishing characteristic between the phases of coverage is the extent to which totalitarian, nationalistic and antisemitic themes were discussed within the reports of ‘degenerate’, modern and Jewish art. The fiendishness of the Nazi regime, as noted by Nicholas, was primarily reflected in the totalitarian characteristics of the Nazi ‘degenerate’ art purges, shows and looting. A focus on totalitarianism allowed the *Times* to vilify the Nazis, not for antisemitic ideals of which many Americans share, but instead for a dictatorship that lied antithetical to a democratic

¹⁵ Leff, *Buried by the Times*, 5, 10-11. For Leff, the *Times* was especially distinguishable because of the extensiveness of its foreign correspondent staff, an aspect Leff labels as the best in America, possibly in the World. Half of the *Times’* 805,000 Sunday readers came from outside New York City and the *Times* syndicate sent *Times* articles to 525 American newspapers. Policy makers and other national journalists considered the *Times* the newspaper of record; even foreign governments read the *Times*.

American public. Particularly in the later phases, the little attention given to Nazi antisemitism as it concerned art was neglected in favor of coverage that promoted America as the savior of culture and art under threat from the Nazis.

First Phase of New York Times Coverage of ‘Degenerate’ Art

The first phase, reflected in articles published 1933-1935, contained the most extensive discussion of German art policies in terms of reporting the attacks on ‘non-German’ art as inclusively totalitarian, nationalistic and antisemitic-ly motivated; The 1933-1935 articles, however, did not address the ‘non-German’ art by Nazi terminology, that is, ‘degenerate.’ Instead, the first phase coverage portrayed the multiple characteristics of Nazi art reforms as fundamental totalitarian attack on various types of art and artists.

The *Times* began its coverage of the war for culture within two months of Hitler’s rise to power as Chancellor of Germany. Two significant events in the Nazi war for culture were the Reichstag Fire Decree of February 1933 and the Enabling Act of March 1933, both of which represented Nazi consolidation of power, and therefore the political support with which to exact their Nazi art reforms. The newspaper reported on March 26, 1933 that a “Nazi Cloud” had descended over German universities, reflective of the larger push to control all German society.¹⁶ The article described an event in which fifteen “young Nazis” seized four professors from the State Art School in Berlin, during an exam. The Professors were charged with holding Marxist-Communist views, the Nazi flag was hoisted over the school and the Professors’ studios were boarded closed. However, the report also distinguished between the dictatorship’s expanding control over

¹⁶ Thomas S. Baker, “Nazi Clouds over German Universities,” *New York Times*, March 26, 1933.

society and German scholars who are concerned with National Socialist's popularity among the university students. According to the report, the scholars described the new University environment as an intense form of nationalism, thereby reflecting concerns within Germany's own art intellectual community.

The next *Times* report within the discourse of the Nazi war for culture was published on April 9, 1933, a month after the first article; within the article the *Times* simply argued: "Nazis to Control All Cultural Life". Both reports introducing the war for culture to the *Times* readers emphasized the Nazi struggle for control as fundamentally an aspect of the Hitler dictatorship. Also presented in both reports were aspects of the Nazi definition of 'degenerate,' although not discussed as such. The March report noted the specific attacks on artists and intellectuals with Marxist-Communist views and the April article describing the attempt of the Nazis to completely control all German cultural life, noted that Jews would be wholly barred from all executive positions in the theater and opera.¹⁷

In an effort to show the extensiveness of Nazi totalitarian control over German culture, the *Times* emphasized the Nazi regime's demand for art propagandizing Nazi art ideology, a key example of which is one May 10, 1933 article. The article argued that Germany's new art theory reflected the belief that art should no longer be created for art's sake, but art for propaganda's sake.¹⁸ The same day the article was published, the

¹⁷ "Nazis to Control All Cultural Life," *New York Times*, April 9, 1933.

¹⁸ Frederick T. Birchall, "Propagandist Art is Nazis' Demand," *New York Times*, May 10, 1933.

Nazi art ideology is defined by both efforts to create 'German' art that would legitimize Nazi ideology through its connection to Germany's history and cultural identity, and attempts to eliminate art and culture the Nazis perceived as inferior, or 'degenerate'. The new 'German' art needed to be positive and supportive of the changes in Nazi German society, that is, the good, the beautiful and the healthy of Nazi Germany. Nazi 'degeneracy' includes any art, no matter the style, created by Jews or art with Jewish themes, even if

Nazis orchestrated a large book burning in Germany of subversive books including works written by Jews, communists or other politically dangerous perspectives according to the Nazis. The variety of books in the bonfire reflected all attributes of ‘degeneracy’, therefore the notation by the *Times* of the book burning, not specifically identify the war for culture as such, or the implications of attacks on ‘degenerates,’ was a relatively realistic portrayal of the Nazi war for culture. The *Times*’ articles in those and the following months of coverage did not convey to its readers the significance of the attacks on Jews, communists and intellectuals. The oversight was made more dangerous with the opening of the Dachau concentration camp on March 21, 1933, a move that reflected the aggressive course of actions the Nazis would take to eliminate threats to their regime and threats to the Nazi defined ‘German’ culture.¹⁹

According to one of the two articles written by Frederick T. Birchall on the war for culture, Goebbels, argued that in a time when political influence are affecting every aspect of society, the artist was not only included in the political revolution, but, that the artist must take the lead in the reformations.²⁰ The May 10, 1933 report quoted Goebbels:

On behalf of German artists I want to protest against the contention that the artist alone has the privilege of being unpolitical. When political influences are shaking everything, reversing everything, rebuilding everything, when nothing is being spared, the artist may not merely trail

painted by non-Jews. Additionally, abstract art, art portraying pacifism, communism, anti-war or defeatist art and art depicting the physically deformed were also ‘degenerate.’

Propaganda is defined by Edward Boehm as any idea intentionally propagated to achieve a specific goal. Propagandists can promote their ideas through pictures, graphs, parades, songs or other similar devices; propaganda can be an obvious or concealed appeal, emotional or logical, or a combination of the two. Edward Boehm, *Behind Enemy Lines: WWII Allied/Axis Propaganda* (New Jersey: Wellfleet Press, 1989), 27-28.

¹⁹ Dachau was originally a reeducation center for multiple types of ‘deviants’: communists, criminals and other political enemies. Jews were also sent to Dachau as a part of the political enemy/deviant of society category; only after November 9, 1938 were Jews forced into the camp for being Jews.

²⁰ Birchall, “Propagandist Art”.

behind but must seize the flag and March at the head. That has always been the privilege and task of the artist.²¹

This quote of Goebbels by Birchall was extremely similar to the argument put forth by Adolf Hitler noted in the introductory chapter of this thesis.²² Birchall's inclusion of this Goebbels' argument, then, showed the accuracy to which the *Times* was pointing to the politicization of art in Germany, the foundation on which the war for culture is based, at least in phase one of 'degenerate' art coverage. Birchall, one of the *Times*' foreign correspondent in Europe, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1934 for his coverage of Germany and correspondence from Europe. In terms of the war for culture reports, Birchall's articles most holistically reported Nazi art ideology.

While as of 1933, the war for culture was not yet identified by the *Times*, the newspaper, or at least Birchall, had noted the characteristics of the nationalizing process of the Nazi regime, namely the efforts to control all aspects of German art and culture. Birchall did not address Goebbels' argument for art control within the discourse of 'art as a legitimizer', that is, as a practice used by other nations to legitimize their place in history; instead, Birchall, in his quote of Goebbels, defined Nazi Germany by its totalitarianism, as a regime so consumed with power, it must control even art.²³ Within this context, the *Times*, via Goebbels, addressed the "Jewish question."²⁴

²¹ Birchall, "Propagandist Art."

²² "The artist does not create for the artist: he creates for the people and we will see to it that henceforth the people will be called in to judge its art... an art which cannot count on the readiest and most intimate agreement of the great mass of the people, an art which must rely upon the support of small cliques is intolerable. Such an art does but endeavor to confuse, instead of gladly reinforcing, the sure and healthy instinct of a people. The artist cannot stand aloof from his people." Adolf Hitler. Noted in Igor Golomstock, *Totalitarian Art in the Soviet Union, the Third Reich, Fascist Italy, and the People's Republic of China*. (London: Icon, 1990), 83.

²³ Hitler describes himself as an artist in an April 1933 *Times* article. "In a certain sense, indeed, I am an artist; the architect of a nation. I mean always to have artists near me, for they have lifeblood in them. I need them in my fight on philistinism."⁵⁹ The nationalistic efforts are quite obvious in this article, both in

In this culture politicization, Goebbels, according to the *Times*, argued that it was not necessary for the State to eliminate Jews from the arts because the German population itself would gradually eliminate the Jews. Birchall was clearly skeptical of Nazi contentions: “Dr. Goebbels’ belief that the Jews will not have to be eliminated from German art through legislative action is probably merely academic, since legislative action already has been taken and is in effect.”²⁵ Birchall absolutely connected the attacks on Jews already underway in Germany to the potential removal of Jews from the German art world, thereby connecting Nazi race ideology to Nazi art policy.

Birchall continued his aggressively accurate reporting of Nazi art reforms in a front page *New York Times* article printed September 2, 1933 that clearly established German totalitarianism as an evil, especially concerning Jewish artists. Birchall noted that Hitler had declared to the League of German Culture that it was the Nazis’ express intent to keep all aspects of culture to a “strictly Nordic basis.”²⁶ In this same speech, according to the *Times* report, Hitler also made clear his intentions towards non-German artists, Birchall arguing that Hitler unmistakably intimated “Non-Aryans... might expect no opportunity to express themselves in any of these fields in Germany, and he asserted that the Jews had no artistic creative power of their own.”²⁷ Birchall insisted that Hitler’s declarations were very straightforward and well-defined, meaning that the antisemitic intentions of the Nazis, at least in terms of art, should have been very obvious. The

the image of Hitler as the ‘architect’ of the nation and in the need for Hitler to eliminate philistines from his nation; for both images, art is clearly significant.

“Hitler Describes Himself As Artist,” *New York Times*, April 16, 1933.

²⁴ Birchall, “Propagandist Art,” *Times*.

²⁵ Birchall also covered the Nazi burning of ‘degenerate’ books.

Ibid.

²⁶ Frederick T. Birchall, “Nazis Pledge Jobs; Hitler Places Art on a ‘Nordic’ Basis,” *New York Times*, September 2, 1933.

²⁷ Ibid.

September 1933 article quoted Hitler as arguing that race determined a person's world outlook and "all the higher manifestations of the mind", both of which were threatened with "racial intermingling." According to the *Times*, Hitler believed National Socialism, was above all a cultural movement pledged to protecting the dominance of the "heroic strain in Germany." Hitler's final argument declared that each race has its own form of artistic expression, exempting Jews, who he argued had no creative power.²⁸ Through these two Birchall articles, the *Times* readership could clearly see that Jews and culture were both under threat. The accuracy with which the *Times* portrayed the war for culture in all of its aspects deteriorated after these articles; subsequent reports neglected to connect Nazi efforts to control art to Nazi race ideology, thereby segmenting the war for culture from the Nazi war for race and space.

The *Times* in its subsequent reports of the war for culture, limited its portrayal of the war for culture as connected to Nazi antisemitism, emphasizing instead the image of Nazi totalitarianism running rampant. In describing the Nazi dictatorship as extending to all art, a November 16, 1933 *Times* article noted the speed at which Hitler was moving towards total control of the nation and its culture, even before acquiring the title of Führer; the devotion to Hitler and the total control of the culture by the Nazis were both emphasized by the article.²⁹ Mirroring George Mosse's theory of a secular religion in Germany, the article described the totalitarian regime as a "Hitlerite spiritual dictatorship."³⁰ While this article addressed the extensiveness of the war for culture more successfully than previous reports, the *Times* did not place the culture war within the

²⁸ Birchall, "Nazis Pledge Jobs," *Times*.

²⁹ Adolf Hitler was made Chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933. Hitler was named Führer in August of 1934.

³⁰ "Nazis' Dictatorship Extended to All Art," *New York Times*, November 16, 1933.

context of Nazi antisemitism. In extending government control over German culture, Hitler according to the report, argued that the ‘real’ and ‘eternal’ in art needed to be cleansed from the dilettantism.³¹ Dilettantism, seemingly takes the place of the term ‘degenerate,’ however ‘dilettantism’ reflected Nazi anti-modernism, not the connotations of antisemitism. The *Times* has not to this point used the term ‘degenerate’; in its use of ‘dilettantism’ the *Times* begins its thematic trend of defining Nazi purges and attacks as outside the realm of the Nazi war for race and space.

Hitler’s year as German Chancellor concluded with the Nazi control of “every branch of life” and the outlaw of democracy, according to a *Times* report printed December 24, 1933. A larger portion of the article centered on the various efforts to purge German society of Jews, but this final article of 1993 coverage of ‘degenerates’ placed Hitler’s antisemitism second within the larger evil of totalitarianism. “No sooner had the Nazis come to power than they began eliminating the Jews from all positions of honor or profit in national, State and municipal government, and in the schools and universities.”³² The article listed several sections that were affected, including doctors, dentists, universities, judges etc.

Interestingly though, the emphasis of the article was the few Jews who saw a small hope for their future in the Reich. “After the first wave of enthusiasm and brutality had in part spent itself” a few concessions were made by the Nazis to allow limited numbers of Jews to continue to participate in their various fields.³³ The allowances given though, were based on measuring Jewish blood, percentage of Jews in a person’s

³¹ “Nazi Dictatorship Extended.” *Times*.

³² “Year of Hitler Nears End with Small Hope for Jews” *New York Times*, December 24, 1933.

³³ *Ibid*.

ancestry, or allowing a menial percent of Jews to continue attending some universities. The article concluded by noting that the Jewish exodus from Germany was continuing as more and more sufferers from Nazi persecution fled (without their money or possessions). “Only a few still believe in the possibility of better times to come.”³⁴ An Associated Press article printed in the *Times* on August 7, 1935 discussed the Nazi policy of allowing international Jewish films and filmmakers to show at German festivals. Foreign, that is non-German, Jewish artists were allowed to show their films as long as the films were not harmful to the German population, suggesting a somewhat tolerant cultural policy.³⁵ In this same article, though, the *Times* noted Nazis efforts to eliminate the Jewish influences from Germany’s national cultural life. While these eliminations are defended by the Nazis as an internal affair Jewish art and artists were eliminated over the next few years because the Nazis saw them as threats to the German culture and nation. Neither article noted efforts to help the Jews, nor explain the implications of Jewish property being abandoned in Germany within the discourse of the war for culture. In these examples the *Times*’ coverage of the war for culture is shown to be un-contextualized with the growing violence against Jews and other ‘degenerates’ in German society.³⁶

³⁴ “Year of Hitler Nears End,” *Times*.

³⁵ “Jewish Films Not Barred: Reich to Accept Pictures if Not ‘Harmful’ to Germany,” *New York Times*, August 7, 1935.

³⁶ After the mostly authentic portrayal of the Nazi war for culture within Germany throughout 1933 *Times* coverage, 1934 newspaper articles neglected to provide any significant reports of the struggle for culture control or how that struggle connected to Nazi attacks on Jews.

The first report that addressed the war for culture with any concerted effort was published on September 12, 1935, which quoted Hitler's nationalistic efforts as it pertained to art:

Art isn't something that can be summoned and called off again at will... In a time of distress especially art must be a spiritual support. The Pyramids of Egypt and the proud structures of Babylon also were created when there was poverty.... If you want to make a people proud you must give it something to be proud of. History finds no nation really worthwhile except when it builds its own monuments.³⁷

In this speech noted by the *Times*, Hitler openly discussed his nationalistic efforts, defining art as essential; art was spiritual to the nation. In this same nationalistic speech, Hitler scorned Dadaists, futurists, cubists and impressionists as cheats, fools or 'Jewish Bolshevists'.³⁸ The point, in which the ultimate scorn was to label the art or artists as Jewish, reaffirmed the connection between Hitler's antisemitism and Hitler's art policies. "Jews, [Hitler] said, never have produced art. Even their temple at Jerusalem was built by non-Jews."³⁹ While the term 'degenerate' was not used, the various aspects of modernism, antisemitism and anticommunist were prevalent within Hitler's art ideology and so the importance given to art by the Nazi regime and their clear abhorrence for certain members of German society should have been clear indications of an important art revolution, especially considering past attacks on 'non-German' art and artists. However despite this article's notation of Nazi contentions that the 'Jewish race' lacked artistic talent, the reporter of this September 1935 article did not put the discussion into context with the Nuremberg Laws in which the Nazis defined Jews by blood. With these laws, Jews became a separate race from the Aryans, but ironically, the connection

³⁷ "Hitler Upholds Art, Scores Jews." *New York Times*, September 12, 1935.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

between race, Jews, and art within the *Times* coverage was less clear to the reader at the time of the Nuremberg laws, than in the 1933 reports.

The first phase of war for culture coverage began with a successful portrayal of Nazi art ideology, mainly the perception that Jewish, communist and modern art were inferior to the Nazis'. The 1934 and 1935 reports less succinctly addressed the implications of the Nazi war for race and space and how it inflected the war for culture. The *Times*' portrayal of the war for culture, as a result, only reflected American condemnation of Nazi totalitarianism and neglected to connect the war for culture to Nazi race ideology.

Second Phase of Times Coverage of 'Degenerate' Art

Nazi attacks on 'degenerates' and their art become more aggressive after 1936, particularly in 1938. However, the *Times*' second phase of reporting continued to move away from contextualizing Nazi art reforms with any event outside of Nazi totalitarianism; this neglect was especially dangerous during this period when antisemitic violence was also increasing. The second phase also included the first direct use of the term 'degenerate' by the *Times*, although, significantly the newspaper did not portray the term with its full Nazi ideological meaning, that is, the *Times* defined 'degenerate' only within the context of the Nazi attacks on modernism, not addressing the complete definition of 'degeneracy' as also antisemitic.⁴⁰ Within the *Times*' coverage from 1936 to 1940, the United States' participation in the war for culture became more apparent as the *Times* reported American responses to Nazi exhibitions of 'degenerate' art and the

⁴⁰ In May of 1936, the Nazis enacted a new law authorizing the confiscation of all 'degenerate' art in German museums. Matila Simon, *Battle for the Louvre: The Struggle to Save French Art in World War II* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1971),14.

subsequent American shows of ‘degenerates.’ Subsequently, propagandist images of the United States and Germany were more pronounced during this second phase.

International Perceptions of Art in Germany

International ‘ignorance’ of the war for culture was encourage during the 1936 Berlin Olympics, where the National Socialist art policies were briefly altered to reflect less aggressive ideologies. The increased international attention to Nazi society and large number of foreign visitors to Germany encouraged the Nazi regime to promote the more positive aspects of their cultural programs. The endorsed exhibitions were highly nationalistic and glorified the German *Volk* and their leaders. Explicitly negative productions were limited to a few exceptions such as the *Antikominternausstellung* (Anti-Comintern Exhibition) in Munich in March 1936, and a small *Schandausstellung* that was organized in Dortmund and traveled to various cities in 1936, both of which were overshadowed by the pro-German exhibits. Foreign visitors, therefore, experienced a more tolerant and less explicitly antisemitic atmosphere, rather than the reality of the cultural reforms that existed before and after the Olympics.⁴¹

Even Alfred Barr, the director of the American Museum of Modern Art, although upset by the National Socialist ideas, planned to publish his exposes anonymously to avoid alienating any German museum officials and possibly losing potential artwork loans.⁴² Art professionals outside of Germany saw the bizarre policies of the Nazi art establishment as a passing phenomenon, one that would require only some minor adjustments for international dealings; the schedule of exhibitions and exchanges for the

⁴¹Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 52.

⁴²Nicholas, *Rape of Europa*, 27.

European museums seemingly went on as usual.⁴³ However, by 1938, museum organizers outside of Germany began to notice the reluctance of German Museums to loan old masterpieces, a restrictive policy of containing valued artworks within the country, noted as an ‘indicator’ of war by modern intelligence officials.⁴⁴ The few artworks allowed or even urged to leave Germany during the build up to war were the unvalued ‘degenerate’ pieces.

Times’ Portrayals of Art in Germany After 1936

However much modern perspectives can identify Nazi intentions for both the Third Reich and German art, the *Times* did not contextualize the Nazi art reforms after 1936 with the larger events or ideologies of the time. Instead, the newspaper portrayed the various ceremonies, exhibitions and purges as only relevant in the discourse of Nazi totalitarianism or barbarism. While a major contention of this thesis is the autonomy of the war for culture, in neglecting to provide context for the art reforms, the *Times* drastically missed the complete meaning and significance of the struggle over art and culture.

The *Times* described a festival of German Art as elaborate, consistent with the fanfare seen at other Nazi ceremonies, specifically emphasizing the propagandist qualities of such services.⁴⁵ The festival included a litany of speeches, Hitler’s, of course, was the main event of the spectacle, according to a July 17, 1937 article. As Hitler declared Munich the “City of German Art,” Adolf Wagner, a high-ranking Nazi official and Minister of the Interior and of cultural affairs in Bavaria, defined Hitler as the creator

⁴³ Nicholas, *Rape of Europa*, 27.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 28.

⁴⁵ “Hitler Glorified At Nazi Art Show,” *New York Times*, July 17, 1937.

of a new German unity. The *Times* described Wagner as “eulogizing Hitler” in Wagner’s proclamations that Hitler rescued the German people from decline and made Germany an immortal nation.⁴⁶ Wagner proclaimed: “But transcending all else in greatness and security as witnessed in this exhibition is the certainty that today and in all other ages there does not and did not exist a civilization without Deutsch Kultur. What a glorious privilege it is to belong to a people of which this can be said without presumption!”⁴⁷ The grandiose manner in which the Nazis organized and initiated their ideals into the population was an aspect of the nationalizing process according to the *Times* report. The spectacle was part of the propaganda, allowing the characteristics of a religious experience to be transferred to a secular regime, i.e. the Nazi government and Adolf Hitler.

Göring’s first appearance in the *Times*’ coverage of the war for culture came in an August 4, 1937 article, in which the *Times* noted the launch of a ‘Nazi art purge’ by Göring, that is, a ‘broad clean-up of all public exhibits to get rid of ‘un-German’ works’. The *Times* argued that Göring’s purge of art was enacted “without regard to legal forms or the property rights involved,’ pointing to the dangers of a totalitarian system that no longer cared about legality. According to the *Times* report, the primary targets for the Nazi art reform were modernists, as the *Times* described ‘un-German’ as art that “carries suspicion of Bolshevism, or at least oppositional sentiment”.⁴⁸

Otto D. Tolischus correctly placed the Nazi attacks on art as a part of the larger effort by Hitler to legitimize National Socialism’s connection with Germany’s history in

⁴⁶ “Hitler Glorified At Nazi Art Show,” *Times*.

⁴⁷ “Ibid.

⁴⁸ “Goering Launches The Nazi Art Purge: Orders Broad Clean-Up of All Public Exhibits,” *New York Times*, August 3, 1937.

an article printed on August 22, 1937, the author.⁴⁹ Tolischus argued in “Nine Muses Regimented to Serve Nazi Kultur,” that National Socialists were upset by accusations that their government was throwing Germany back into “tribal barbarism” for three reasons: first, the Nazis defined Germany as a “nation of poets and philosophers”, thereby making *Kultur* sacred. Secondly, Kultur was a powerful weapon of national consolidation. Lastly, the goal of the National Socialist regime was to replace the ‘Christian epoch’ with the Nazi epoch so as to create a new ‘mystical Reich’ that can conquer, both militarily and culturally. The Nazis hoped this new Reich would combine Sparta’s discipline and Athens’ glory in dominating the modern world.⁵⁰ However the *Times* noted these methods only reflected a dictatorship.

The *Times* report seemingly understood the importance the Nazi regime placed on the control of art and Tolischus also relatively successfully connected the war for culture to Nazi art ideology; the Nazis’ believed Jewish art could not be expected to glorify the Third Reich, according to the report, and so “all Jews, and those with Jewish relations, have been barred from membership in the Kultur chambers and so from all artistic work, and the few who have survived will be eliminated now.”⁵¹ The word choice for this quote was eerily foreshadowing of the coming genocide of the Jews, although Tolischus did not emphasize the implications of attacks on both ‘degenerate’ art and Jews. Instead, the article concentrated its report of Nazi art reforms as an issue of nationalism; Hitler wanted the Third Reich to contend with other great nations of history, according to the

⁴⁹ In 1940 Otto D. Tolischus won the Pulitzer for his wartime coverage from Berlin, specifically his explanations of the economic and ideological background of war-engaged Germany. Otto D. Tolischus. “Nine Muses Regimented to Serve Nazi Kultur,” *New York Times*, August 22, 1937.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

report, and so the ‘barbaric’ descriptor was unacceptable for Hitler and his new ‘German’ culture. In efforts to combat this image, Hitler continued to ask Germany and the muses, according to this article, for “geniuses great enough to express the greatness of the Third Reich.”⁵² Despite these efforts, the article contended that the cultural and artistic life of the Third Reich was “bare and sterile,” a conviction which reflected both the *Times*’ abhorrence for Nazi totalitarianism and its disparagement for Nazi failures to enact its desires successfully, both of which are themes found throughout the *Times*’ coverage of the war for culture.⁵³ The objective of the article seemingly was to explain the deficiencies of the Germany government, in connection to its redefinition and creation of ‘German’ art, as opposed to explain the threats the Nazis still pose to art and Jews.

The characterization of Nazi art reforms changed however in 1938 as the generalized attacks on culture became seizures of ‘degenerate art’ as noted by a short, three-paragraph article on June 4, 1938. The *Times* only noted that the ‘degenerate’ pieces would be confiscated without compensation from all museums and private collections.⁵⁴ The article did not define ‘degenerate’ nor place it into context. If the report had successfully defined ‘degenerate’ as reflective of Nazi antisemitism, the *Times* reader would better understand the significance of the Nazis not only confiscating art for their own aims, but also for the implications of Nazis taking art from Jews. Nineteen thirty-eight reflected an important year for the progression of Nazi attacks on Jews, and so it would seem, on the Nazi struggle for control of art. Therefore, in neglecting to address

⁵² Tolischus, “Nine Muses Regimented to Serve Nazi Kultur,” *Times*.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ “Hitler Decrees Seizure of ‘Degenerate Art’ Work,” *New York Times*, June 4, 1938.

the confiscations of ‘degenerate’ art within the correct discourse, the *Times* did not report the war for culture wholly, and all of its dangers.

Four days later, a *Times* report successfully equated ‘degenerate’ to ‘Jewish’, however the piece was buried on page 145 of the newspaper and so the potential awareness the piece could bring to the *Times*’ readers on the connection of Nazi antisemitism to Nazi art ideology was highly limited, similarly noted by Leff and her contention that the *Times* buried news on the Holocaust.⁵⁵ While the report made the connection of Nazi racism and art policy, the *Times* did not understand and/or explain the significance to the *Times* reader. Despite the article’s placement in the newspaper and the report’s failure to address the significance of the Nazis’ art policies, the most harmful contribution this *Times* author provided to the *Times*’ coverage was the argument that the “farcial procedure” of Nazi art policies did not need to be taken seriously by any “thoughtful person” within Germany, or in the wider international community. The article noted simply that the confiscations of ‘degenerate’ pieces were “merely” in line with the burning of Jewish books, something historians will record only as the “well-nigh incredible barbarisms of the dark age of the early twentieth century.”⁵⁶ The author believed the Nazi policies to be so nonsensical that no intelligent person could take them seriously. This article was therefore not just simple negligence, but a *Times* report that emphatically suggested to its *Times*’ readers to ignore the Nazi war for culture. As such, the mistreatment of the *Times* as a discourse moved beyond just war propaganda that belittled the enemy as idiotic or ‘barbaric’, into a realm that will have to be developed in a later work with a broader base of genocide and ethnic cleansing research.

⁵⁵ Olin Downes, “Era of Decadence,” *New York Times*, June 12, 1938.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

The war for culture, while its own struggle for power through art, was inextricably linked to the Nazis' war for race and space. The *Times*' coverage of the general Nazi attacks on art throughout the second half of the 1930s did not address the significance of Nazi attempts to control art and the parallel attacks on Jews and their property. In the coverage of 'degenerate' art shows and auctions, the discussion of the 'degenerate' art and the immediacy of the dangers to Jews in relation to this art was subdued and finally ignored.

Nazi Exhibitions of 'Degenerate' Art

In order to effectively control Germany, the Nazi leadership needed to persuade the German population of the legitimacy of the National Socialist regime. Subsequently, in 1937, both the House of German Art and 'Degenerate Art Show' were opened in Munich. The German Art Show was used to pay homage to 'ancient Germany', an effort to legitimize Nazi rule by connecting it to a 'German' past.⁵⁷ In his 1937 speech at the grand opening of the House of German Art in Munich, Adolf Hitler proclaimed that the function of art was to intensify racial consciousness. To achieve this awareness, Hitler argued, art must be created under specific rules, meaning Nazi ideology, and must be restricted from all foreign influence. The German Art Exhibition reflected attempts to relate current 'German' artworks with the glory of ancient Germany, creating a tenable national art. The exhibition included Viking ships, Germanic gods and other Germanic myths.⁵⁸ Hitler encouraged the creation of Germanic art that would synthesize ancient German ideals and Nazi ideology.

⁵⁷ Simon, *Battle for the Louvre*, 14.

⁵⁸ Simon, *Battle for the Louvre*, 14.

The ‘Degenerate Art Show’ exhibited a variety of condemned modern, Jewish and communist art.⁵⁹ The paintings and sculptures of the 1937 Degenerate Art Show exemplified everything Adolf Hitler detested in the German Art world. The German population of course had to be swayed to the side of the Nazis, for this, the ‘Degenerate Art’ Exhibition was the ultimate propagandist show.⁶⁰ The ‘Degenerate’ exhibition, ordered by Hitler, was arranged by Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister, and Adolf Ziegler, the President of the *Reichskammer der bildenden Künste* (Reich Chamber of Visual Arts). Opened at Munich’s Archaeological Museum on July 19, 1937, every aspect of the German ‘Degenerate Art’ show was used to enhance the idea that all the ‘Degenerate’ art of the exhibition was useless, offensive, or just bad.⁶¹ Over 730 artworks were crammed them into side rooms in the Archaeological Institute. Every effort was made to emphasize the inferiority of the ‘Degenerate’ pieces; the paintings were hung as badly as possible, usually without frames. Some paintings were simply placed on the floor, leaning against a wall.⁶² Visitors of the exhibition were repeatedly reminded by the Nazis how much public money, added up in inflated Deutschmarks, had been paid for this ‘degenerate’ art.⁶³ The depression of the 1930s was a key factor in the rise of the National Socialist Party, and Hitler, to power; German citizens were looking for answers for Germany’s loss in World War II, the Treaty of Versailles and the high unemployment plaguing Germany. The attack on ‘degenerate’ art, specifically in how much money was wasted in its creation, reflected the larger scapegoating of Jews and communists for the

⁵⁹ Downes, “Era of Decadence,” *Times*.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Goggin, “‘Decent’ vs. ‘Degenerate’”, 89.

problems in Germany. In attacking and purging Jews and their art, the Nazis were fighting to regain their country from the individuals who brought it to its knees, or at least that is image purported by the propaganda.

In spite of Nazi expectations of the German population's condemnation of 'degenerate' art, the 'Degenerate Art Exhibition' was very successful; Germans waited for hours to see masterworks previously inaccessible to the average person.⁶⁴ The 'Degenerate Art Show' was the most highly attended art exhibition in the history of Germany; over two million people saw the exhibition, at an average of 20,000 people per day at the Munich exhibit alone.⁶⁵ Infuriated with the failure of the public to believe Nazi propaganda espousing the dangers and ineptitudes of the degenerate artists, the Nazi government closed the doors of the exhibit long before the scheduled date.⁶⁶

The thirty-two-page catalog for the exhibition written by Goebbels, especially reiterated that all twentieth-century art was an obnoxiously decadent product of Jews and Bolsheviks.⁶⁷ The works were divided into themes: those without Nazi ideas of sound, healthy craftsmanship; pieces with religious themes, which were labeled a "brazen mockery of the religious experience", 'Bolshevist' paintings depicting starvation, exploitation, or social misery of any kind; art attacking militarism, any art deriving from the arts of Africa and Oceania; art showing prostitutes and 'personifications of vice', and of course any style of art created by Jews.⁶⁸ The creations of lunatics were also included,

⁶⁴ Simon, *Battle for the Louvre*, 15-16.

⁶⁵ Petropoulos, *Art as Politics*, 57.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Goggin, "'Decent' vs. 'Degenerate,'" 89.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

in an attempt to show the similarities between their work and that of Expressionists.⁶⁹

The exhibition clearly demonstrated the connection between ‘degenerate’, insanity, modernism and race in Nazi ideology, reflecting the influences of Nordau and Marr and the ideas outlined in the Nuremberg Laws. The *Times* however neglected to place the ‘degenerate’ art show within a proper context of a larger ethnic cleansing of Germany.

Times’ Coverage of ‘Degenerate’ Art Exhibitions

The *New York Times* did not understand ‘degenerate’ as it was used by the Munich ‘Degenerate Art’ Show. Instead the *Times* portrayed a simplified version of the term that erased any antisemitic associations; the resulting ‘degenerate’ only represented modern art like expressionism or cubism. In redefining ‘degenerate’, the *New York Times* was characterizing the ‘degenerate’ exhibitions under propagandist ideals. The contextualization of Nazi or American antisemitism within the discussion would have muddied the coverage to a point that the simplified images of America as the democratic, civilized refuge of art and the Nazis characterized as barbarians led by a dictator who urged the purge and destruction of ‘masterpieces,’ would have been lost on the reader.

A *Times* subheading of a July 20, 1937 article covering the opening of the Exhibition read “His [Hitler’s] Excoriation of Works Not Immediately Understood Is Called Historical”⁷⁰ This one heading very accurately described the whole of the *New York Times* coverage of the ‘Degenerate Art’ shows and auctions, that is, mainly a misunderstanding of the implications and connections of Nazi attacks on a race and art. Quoted in the same article is a German Professor, Adolf Ziegler as he addressed the opening day crowd of the exhibition: “This is only a little of what we have been suffering

⁶⁹ Goggin, “‘Decent’ vs. ‘Degenerate,’” 89.

⁷⁰ “Degenerate Art Displayed in Reich,” *New York Times*, July 20, 1937.

through Jewish-Marxist dealers and critics. They have had their years of glory. They will disappear from our art institutions forever.”⁷¹ Despite this declaration, the article, as well as the majority of reports on the exhibition, defined ‘degenerate art’ simply as ‘modern art’.⁷² Another *Times* article printed in August of the same year noted that the German press often sidestepped the issue of the success of the ‘Degenerate Art’ show by arguing that “thousands of German men and women now are learning from the horrible examples of past mistakes to remove the last uncertainties in their healthy national sentiments and even foreigners have dropped their theoretical reservations in the face of the atrocities displayed.”⁷³ While the point of the August 1937 article was to report on the German presses failure to account for the high figures of attendance, the *New York Times*’ own miscarriage of the Nazi’s use of the term ‘atrocities’ in relation to art, when at this time the Nazi regime has enacted several of its Antisemitic policies, pointed to a very big blind-spot to the race war even when discussing a symptom of the war.

Six days later, the *Times* printed an article discussing the concern over the fate of the works in the ‘Degenerate Art’ exhibit because as the article reports, the “Nazis favor an Auto-da-fe of ‘Degenerate’ paintings”.⁷⁴ An auto-da-fe broadly means the burning of a heretic.⁷⁵ According to the article, while the zealous Nazis preferred public destruction of the degenerate art, Germany would also accept a removal of the works abroad.⁷⁶ The *Times* ignored the significance of Nazi use of ‘auto-da-fe’ during a period when Nazi ideology that the Jews, as individuals with inferior and therefore dangerous blood, must

⁷¹ “Degenerate Art Displayed in Reich,” *New York Times*, August 6, 1937.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ “Would Burn Modern Art,” *New York Times*, August 12, 1937.

⁷⁵ Webster Dictionary.

⁷⁶ “Would Burn Modern Art,” *Times*.

be removed from Germany was becoming more and more implicitly violent. While the National Socialist government would accept the removal of art to other art communities, the overall desire of Germany to completely eliminate ‘degenerate’, and what should be understood as ‘Jewish’, art should be raising red flags for *Times* readers, however the *Times* neglected to explain the ultimate meaning of an auto-de-fa to its audience and therefore one of the more important consequences of the war for culture went unexamined.

The last article to make any connection between ‘degenerate’ and ‘Jew’ covered a July 1938 ‘degenerate’ exhibition in London.⁷⁷ The *New York Times* reporter, Robert P. Post actually editorialized the exhibition as quite enjoyable. But more importantly, Post’s definition of ‘degenerate’ was more aware or more willing to briefly focus on the racial aspects of the ‘degenerate’ stigma. “Every artist represented today is under some sort of ban by Adolf Hitler’s Germany, either because he is a ‘non-Aryan’ or because his work is not representative of the ideals of the Hitler regime.”⁷⁸ Post’s use of the term ‘degenerate’ not simply as modern art was significant especially as a rarity among the other articles used for this thesis. Post noted the inclusion of works by Max Liebermann, a German-Jewish painter, in the ‘Degenerate’ show. For Post, Liebermann was neither a cubist nor a futurist; instead Liebermann’s label of ‘Degenerate’ stemmed from his Jewishness.⁷⁹ While not expansive, Post’s inclusion of the racial aspect of ‘degeneracy’ was important, even if it is quickly lost in Post’s discussion of the inadequacies of modern art.

⁷⁷ Robert Post, “Art Germany Bans Shown in London,” *New York Times*, July 7, 1938.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

However the value of modern art was apparently not lost on America's Museum of Modern Art, which hosted an exhibition of some of the 'degenerate' art, but only as examples of purged modern art, mainly the German School, Bauhaus, according to a December 4, 1938 article.⁸⁰ According to the report, the influences of the Bauhaus were too important to the museum for its pieces to be forgotten or destroyed just because the school came into official disfavor under Hitler.⁸¹

The Museum of Modern Art eventually participated in the auction of 'Degenerate Art' in Lucerne, Switzerland, an event highly anticipated by art connoisseurs, according to a June 1939 article. The 125 paintings included works of some "modern masters" such as Gauguin, Van Gogh, Matisse and Picasso, as well as sculptures by Otto Dix and Wilhelm Lehmbruck.⁸² The article's focuses were the modern aspects of the label 'degenerate' and the excitement that term could now bring in the context of an auction; the negative provenance of the Nazi 'degenerate' art, that is examples of Nazi plundering and attacks on German individuals, was used only as a selling point, one which would draw large crowds in America. The racial aspect of 'degenerate' was ignored, as a result, *Times* readership did not understand 'degenerate' as the Nazis defined the term; separating 'degenerate' from antisemitism allowed America to profit from German art policy and purges as seen in the following reports, without taking responsibility for the escalating war against the Jews,.

⁸⁰ "Nazi-Banned Art Is Exhibited Here," *New York Times*, December 4, 1938.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² "Await 'Degenerate' Art," *New York Times*, June 29, 1939.

Auctions of 'Degenerate' Art Within the Second Phase of Coverage

The Museum of Modern Art ultimately took advantage of the Nazi art purge at the Lucerne auction and acquired five works to be displayed under an exhibition “Art in Our Time.” Through these acquisitions, multiple *Times* articles placed the Museum of Modern Art, and America, into the role of the savior of art. For the savior image to be successful, several key steps had to be taken in the *Times*’ discussion of the acquisitions of ‘degenerate’ art. Most importantly, the artworks had to be de-racialized, meaning that the label of ‘degenerate’ needed to be redefined to eliminate any implications of antisemitism. The escalation of Nazi antisemitic attacks made this redefinition by the *Times* especially difficult; November 9, 1938, the Nazis orchestrated a massive attack on Jews, Jewish businesses and cultural centers. Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass, resulted in the looting of seven thousand Jewish businesses and homes, the destruction of multiple synagogues, the murder of one hundred Jews and the arrest of 30,000 Jews who were sent to concentration camps. This period also marks the beginning of policies of sending Jews to camps for no other reason than their ‘blood’.

Admittedly, in terms of protecting ‘degenerate’ art from certain destruction, if the museum had not purchased the works, the pieces would probably have been shipped back to Germany to be destroyed in the mass fire that consumed thousands of books and art-pieces.⁸³ However, America did not stop attacks on Jewish art and individuals within Germany, and moreover, American museums and audiences benefitted from Nazi art

⁸³ ‘Degenerate’ art auctions continued until 1942 and earned the Reich over one million RM. Four thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine pieces of ‘degenerate’ art, 1,004 paintings and 3,825 drawings, were destroyed in a bonfire on March 20, 1939. The art burning was staged in the courtyard of Berlin’s main firehouse, but unlike the publicized 1933 book burnings, the destruction of art was carried out under a veil of secrecy. Those ‘degenerate’ pieces that survived the auctions or fire were taken to storage until the end of the war. Petropoulos, *Art as Politics*, 80.

purges of ‘degenerate’ art. Instead of admitting to these failings, the *Times* manufactured the image of America as the savior of art and culture, most probably as part of subtle propaganda in the years leading into World War II.

In a June 1939 *Times* report of the acquisitions, Alfred Barr, the Museum of Modern Art director argued that the opposition to the ‘degenerate art works’ stemmed from “Hitler’s personal taste rather than from any racial or political factors.”⁸⁴ Barr in this article thereby quickly reframed the discussion of ‘degenerate’ away from an attack on a specific race and culture, to an issue of modern art. While ‘degenerate’ does carry connotations of anti-modernism or disapproval of the avante-garde, redefining the artworks to no longer reflect any connections or images of victimized Jews allowed the *Times* to place the museum, and America, as saviors of art without having to discuss the failure of America to help the Jews, of which there were three key examples: the *Anschluss*, the Evian conference and the Wagner-Rogers Bill at the time of this article.⁸⁵

Following a policy of appeasement, America and the other ‘Allied’ countries of Europe did not protest Germany’s invasion of Austria in March of 1938, known as the *Anschluss*, despite Germany’s violation of the Treaty of Versailles. One quarter of German Jews had fled Germany by 1938, but with the *Anschluss*, Germany now controlled an additional 185,000 Jews. As the number of refugees of the Nazi regime continued to climb, American immigration policies continued to be highly restrictive, as were most of the European countries outside of Germany. Rising political pressure to address the large number of refugee Jews forced American President Franklin D.

⁸⁴ “Exiled Reich Art Put on View Here,” *New York Times*, August 8, 1939.

⁸⁵ Britain also refused to increase its immigration quota, moreover restricting Jewish immigration to Palestine to only 75,000 for the next five years. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Roosevelt to call an international conference. Thirty-two countries attended the Conference held in Evian, France from July 6-15, 1938; most of the countries, including the United States, refused to raise immigration quotas to allow additional refugees. Refugee children were no exception to the limited immigration policy, as the Wagner-Rogers Bill, a piece of legislation calling for the admission of 20,000 German refugee children to enter the United States over a two year period, was defeated in Congress in February of 1939.

Despite American failings to help German refugees, the *Times* vilified the Nazis for their purging of ‘refugee artists’, and congratulated the United States for its relationship with the purged art and artists. An August 15, 1940 report contextualized the refugees as a part of a struggle between freedom and tyranny and an August 27, 1939 article, written only five days before German invasion of Poland, described the exiled artists as fugitives from National Socialism.⁸⁶ Pointing to German totalitarianism, the *Times* created a distinction between the Nazis who would purge important artworks and the magnanimous Americans who would save it. A *Times* report in April of 1940 noted happily that the “modern ‘degenerate’ art” that was driven out of Germany by the Nazis is slowly finding permanent homes in America.⁸⁷ Cementing the image of America as the savior of art, the article reported “the only good thing about the exile of such fine works of art from one country is the consequent enrichment of other lands where cultural

⁸⁶ “Group Acts to Save Leaders in Exile” *New York Times*, August 15, 1940; “Refugee Artists in Great Britain.” *New York Times*, August 27, 1939.

“Art of Refugees is Placed on view” *New York Times*, November 14, 1939 also discusses refugee artists in the context of a savior America.

⁸⁷ “Modern Art Work of Germans Shown,” *New York Times*, April 5, 1940.

freedom still exists.”⁸⁸ This declaration by the reporter was significant because it included an acknowledgment of the profiteering from the purges, but only in the context of providing cultural freedom, thereby removing any negative associations and solidifying the image of the savior. The article did not discuss the significance of this transfer of culture nor the implications of removing the racial element from ‘degenerate’ art.

The image of America saving art, rather than profiteering from the racial purges, was exemplified in a June 1942 article titled only as “Free Art”, the only center spread piece that covers the ‘degenerate’ exhibitions and acquisitions.

Among the Freedoms which the Nazis have destroyed, none has been more cynically perverted, more brutally stamped upon, than the Freedom of Art. For not only must the artist of Nazi Germany bow to political tyranny; he must also conform to the personal taste of that great art connoisseur, Adolf Hitler- the feeble and conventional taste of mediocre Viennese art student of thirty years ago... But in free countries they can still be seen, can still bear witness to the survival of a free German culture... These men and their works are welcome here... the museum is proud to acquire and show their work... Carrying forward our own national crusade for freedom, we may indeed take pride in the acknowledgment that these German artists and their work are welcome here.⁸⁹

The dominant image within the reform was of the United States as the glorious refuge for art. It should be noted that in the year previous to the publication of this *Times* article, new rules cut the number of refugee immigrants allowed to enter the US to about twenty-five percent. One day after the “Free Art” article, a press conference in London was held in which the World Jewish Congress estimated that the number of Jews murdered by the Nazis had reached one million. *Times* coverage of ‘degenerate’ art and German cultural policies were therefore demonstrably inaccurate, manipulated in a way that portrayed

⁸⁸ “Modern Artwork of Germans Shown,” *Times*.

⁸⁹ “Free Art: Work Nazis Reject Shown at Museum,” *Times*, June 28, 1942.

America as a savior, during a time when the United States had on multiple occasions refused to help Jewish refugees. Jews and their art and culture were absolute victims of the Nazi regime, but also of *Times* coverage of Germany's race and cultural policies and purges.

Coverage of the 'degenerate' art shows only seemed to solidify what many Americans already thought: Nazis were bad and America was good. Throughout the coverage in the *New York Times*, propaganda presented America as a savior of 'degenerate' art, and therefore a protector of freedom. The focus of this chapter was not the many other articles written during the war that discussed Germany, the war or the Holocaust, in general; however the image of just these few articles on the war for culture gives credence to the argument put forth by Laurel Leff, that the genocide of the Jews was largely buried by the *Times*, and also, subsequently, the war for culture.⁹⁰ In the articles discussed here, concern of modernity in the forms of expressionism and cubism outweighed the concerns of a racial purge. What's more, America was idealized by the *Times* for picking off the corpse of German art for its own gain. Looting, disguised as protecting, became acceptable as long as Americans could make distinctions between the acquirement of art by the Nazis and the acquisition of art. Understanding art as an indicator of war, *Times*' coverage of the Nazi war on race and culture was significantly underestimated and under-reported.

Third Phase of New York Times Coverage

According to Richard Chesnoff in *Pack of Thieves*, his work on Nazi looting, plundering the Jews was a "totally normal stage in what they (Nazis) perceived as a

⁹⁰ Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2.

totally reasonable ‘Final Solution.’”⁹¹ However, predators of the Jewish victims and their collections were not limited to the Nazis, Chesnoff argues: “In every nation of Europe where the genocidal Nazi machine dragged Jews away to their death, there was upstanding local citizens waiting to loot what was left behind... all barely able to contain themselves at the prospect of picking at the bones of their Jewish neighbors.”⁹² In conjunction with the purging of Jews through their removal to concentration camps, the Nazis along with individuals throughout the occupied zones were profiting from the genocide by thieving the victim’s art.

The plundering of Jews committed by Germany must be understood as motivated by a variety of factors, key amongst them- antisemitism. The Nazi looting of Jewish art must also be considered as an integral part of the Third Reich’s struggle for control of art in the war for culture, an inclusive conflict of ‘degenerate’ art purges, exhibitions, looting of Jews and other non-specified targets, and the art recovery efforts of America. Additionally, the *New York Times* coverage of Nazi looting was not limited to the relatively minimal number of articles connecting the war for culture and the war for race and space addressed in this section; the following discussion must also be considered in comparison to the larger coverage of more generalized Nazi looting, portrayed as significantly unconnected to the Holocaust, noted in Chapter Two.⁹³ Both groups of articles, this final phase of ‘degenerate’ art coverage and the ‘non-Jewish’ looting noted in Chapter Two, reflected the complexities of the war for culture as it was portrayed in

⁹¹ Richard Z. Chesnoff, *Pack of Thieves: How Hitler and Europe Plundered the Jews and Committed the Greatest Theft in History* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 1-2.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Four articles are unfortunately the majority of articles printed in the *Times* covering the specific looting of Jews by the Nazis. This is in comparison to the whole of Chapter Two, which addresses general Nazi looting as unrelated to the attacks on Jews.

the *Times*, as a conflict both reflective of Nazi art ideology, and as the simple opportunism of war, set within a context of a large military conflict creating victims ripe for the picking.

The first few years of the war were barren of *Times* reports on the German looting of Jewish property. The single report which addressed the early looting of Jewish property to any significant degree is found in a November 18, 1938 article in which the *Times* noted that the Reich Chamber of Culture, accompanied by secret police, visited the homes of former wealthy Jews, removing any works of art.⁹⁴ The art was taken to the National Museum in Munich, according to the report. The *Times* argued that the ‘tour’ was foreshadowed by a speech made by Interior Minister Adolf Wagner, in which Wagner said works of art would have to be preserved for the Reich.⁹⁵ The author also noted that the looting was made easier because Jews were required by an April decree to declare their antiques, paintings and other valuables. This short article concluded with this note: “Forty to fifty Jews were released from Dachau today and were allowed to return to their homes.”⁹⁶ The connection between the camps and the confiscations of Jewish art seemed to be an accepted one of the author, as the note on the camps was included in a discussion of art, but the significance of the connection between ethnic cleansing and the war for culture (looting) was not conveyed to the *Times* readership, as also seen by subsequent articles in this section.

When finally the *Times* gave attention to the looting of Jews during the war, it was five months after the Wannsee Conference of January 1942 in which the Nazis

⁹⁴ “Munich Jews’ Art Taken,” *New York Times*, November 18, 1938.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

outlined the ‘Final Solution’ to the ‘Jewish question’. A July 27, 1942 article reported the ‘pilfering of art treasures’ by Germany in occupied countries.⁹⁷ The looting was described as slow and methodical, placed in contrast by the *Times*, to the speed of the invasions of the occupied nations, referencing Blitzkrieg. While the efficiency of the Nazis was emphasized, the author also focused on the deceptiveness of the Nazis in their looting of the Netherlands, Belgium and France. According to the report, the Germans attempted to show the looting as acquisitions “dropping like ripe plums into the Nazi basket of their own accord... So far they [the Germans] have not attempted to rifle state collections, the system now being to buy from private owners who have no choice or at public auctions that are rigged in favor of the occupying authorities.”⁹⁸ The majority of the ‘private owner’s’ mentioned in this article were most likely Jewish, forced to sell their property in order to flee or lost because of race laws. The author did not mention the context of the victims as specifically ‘Jewish’, a significant mistreatment mainly because it prevented *Times* readers from understanding the connection of Nazi antisemitism and their art policies and therefore the dangers the war for culture represented.

This inattention by the *Times* to the connection between Nazi art and race ideologies was testified to in a August 7, 1942 Letter to the Editor of the *Times*, written days after the publishing of the “Germans Are Still Pilfering” article; the letter was a direct response to one aspect of the July article in which the *Times* noted that “many dealers serving the enemy made great fortunes in this traffic.... Many treasures taken from Poland’s museums were marketed in New York and other American art center

⁹⁷ “Germans Are Still Pilfering Art From Netherlands, Belgium, France,” *New York Times*, July 27, 1942.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

before the United States entered the war.”⁹⁹ In the Letter to the Editor, George C. Ault of Woodstock NY pointed to this participation of the Americans as a point of shame. “Are we a nation of receivers of stolen goods? Stolen from one of the most unfortunate of our allies! And will not the former owners of this pilfered art take legal action to force the present ‘owners’ to disgorge when the United Nations have finally attained victory.”¹⁰⁰

This obvious condemnation of American participation in the war for culture is a significant anomaly among the *Times*’ constant war propaganda, both within its coverage of ‘degenerate’ art, and the larger culture conflict. However, while the concern of Ault in the inconsistencies between the American image and the actual American activities is admirable, Ault seems completely unaware of the Jewish connection to the artworks, thereby emphasizing the ineffectiveness of the *Times* to report the war for culture in its entirety, specifically to convey to its readers the absolute connection between the Nazi war for race and space and the war for culture.

Both the July article and August letter were written in 1942, the same time frame in which the Nazis were developing their ‘Final Solution’ to the ‘Jewish Question’: genocide. While the authors were probably unaware of the death camps, reports of the concentration camps were printed in the *Times*, as well as articles on the race laws. These reports though, as argued by Leff, were not printed in a way Ault or other *Times* readers would be keenly aware of the connection between Nazi antisemitic policies and Nazi art policies. Ault’s concerns over the restitution issues following Allied victory were therefore largely unnecessary, for many of the previous owners were eliminated by

⁹⁹ “Germans Are Still Pilfering Art,” *Times*.

¹⁰⁰ George C. Ault. “Art ‘Collecting’ Condemned” in Letters to the *Times*. *New York Times*, August 7, 1942.

Holocaust. The unfortunate irony was that, at the same time the Nazis were systemizing the ‘Final Solution’, the *Times* was both burying the genocide, according to Leff, and idealizing American participation in the war for culture as seen in this chapter; the *Times* readers like Ault, then, continued in their ignorance of the extent of the Nazi genocide of Jews and how it coincided with *Times* reports of art and culture.

Francis Taylor and the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Francis Henry Taylor, the Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, authored one of the few center spread *Times* articles covering the war for culture, pre-America victory; it should be remembered that Taylor was antisemitic, and had argued that Jews were trying to control the art world and further modernism. “Europe’s Looted Art: Can It Be Recovered?” was published by the *Times* on September 19, 1943.¹⁰¹ The article, enhanced with multiple pictures of masterpieces like ‘The Milkmaid’ by Vermeer, ‘The Anatomy Lesson’ by Rembrandt, the ‘Venus de Milo, and the ‘Victory of Samothrace’ from the Louvre, attempted to demonize the Nazis for their art thefts, while idealizing American abilities to counteract Nazi art perpetrations.

The article opens with an argument from Taylor that “every American who reads the daily newspaper” was aware of the “Nazi program of destruction of the decencies of human life and liberty.” But, Americans did not see, according to Taylor, the “hatred and despair” driving Germany to annihilate “culture and beauty wherever it may exist. We have not always been sufficiently aware that the enemy’s insenate vandalism and looting of Europe springs from no spontaneous love of art, but from a greed fed upon the

¹⁰¹ L. A. Schutze, a popular art critic in the 1930s held that “Jews replaced any sense of optical beauty with an abstract one because they based aesthetic problems on algebraic methods.” Francis Henry Taylor, the Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art argued that Jews initiated intellectually modern art. Baigell, xvii.

consciousness that, since he is incapable of producing what other men cherish, he must either appropriate it or destroy it.”¹⁰² Taylor, here, largely sidesteps any allusions made to the genocide, instead focusing on the crimes against ‘European culture and civilization’, thereby emphasizing the Nazi war for culture at the expense of its connections to the Nazi war for race and space. While these contentions were only a few examples of the *Times*’ inconsistencies in portraying the war for culture, the arguments found in Taylor’s article are all the more dangerous because of the consideration that must have been given to the report because of Taylor’s standing in the art world and for the space given to his thoughts by the *Times*.

Taylor referred to arguments found in several other articles in this thesis, focused mainly on the failure of Germany to achieve any semblance of a legitimate, popular ‘German’ culture. While noting Nazi policies of ‘destruction of the decencies of human life and liberty’, Taylor did not specifically mention Jews until the third section of his 1943 article, a part of the coverage the *Times* reader would have to continue through two page jumps to reach; a year after the ‘Final Solution’ was systemized, Taylor’s direct address of Nazi antisemitic policies as they pertain to art were noted in only an aside from the central article, printed on page 42 of the *Times*. Taylor described Nazi confiscation methods as characteristically wicked, bordering on the naive, the article noting that the Nazis seldom need to resort to outright confiscations, as laws limiting Jewish property ownership made the important art collections of Europe, many owned by Jews, easy victims for the Nazis. Jews were required to register their possessions and Jewish cash and securities were exposed to taxes, which equated to outright confiscation,

¹⁰² Francis Henry Taylor. “Europe’s Looted Art: Can It Be Recovered?” *New York Times*, September 19, 1943.

according to Taylor. To pay the subsequent court costs, Jews were often forced to sell their art at auctions where German officials could either directly or indirectly obtain the pieces; the worthless paper money received at auction were then taxed 100 per cent and therefore ended up in the Nazi treasury.¹⁰³ The only perpetrators mentioned by Taylor were the Germans. Because the majority of the article focused on the new American commission created to fight and counteract Nazi cultural crimes, America would still be the savior, despite failures to stop antisemitic crimes. The atrocities then that Taylor was referring most passionately throughout his report were the attacks on European culture and not any specific victims of the Nazi genocide. ‘Culture and beauty’ are the ultimate victims to Nazi greed and inability to successfully create their own ‘German’ art and culture, according to Taylor, and the vast majority of *New York Times* articles covering the war for culture.

Fortunately, after the dangers of Nazi world domination have subsided through American victory in the military conflict, Taylor contended that the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments would help salvage Nazi loot and return it to its original owners. Despite the necessary bombing of key military targets, America would be the front lines in the battle for Europe’s art, for the United States Army holds a deep sense of responsibility in the protection of the “cultural heritage” of Europe. The American military would suppress all looting and vandalism in their zones, even closing museums and other galleries so as to complete safeguards for the collections, according to the Taylor.

¹⁰³ Taylor, “Europe’s Looted Art,” *Times*.

Taylor also argued that the *Times* was very aware of the extensiveness of Nazi thievery, as the Germans have looted virtually all movable works under the guise of a “fictitious legality;” this awareness, though according to Taylor, would lead happily to America’s opportunity to have the “ironic and sweet revenge of throwing back in the Nazi teeth as prima facie evidence of ownership and location of the objects of art listed prior to 1937.”¹⁰⁴ Taylor neglected to mention any connections between the art nationalistic efforts in both America and Germany, a smart move in terms of propaganda, since America was now leading the charge among the Allies in protecting that same art. In the pre-war period of coverage, the provenance of Nazi purged ‘degenerate’ art was not a problem for America participation in ‘degenerate’ exhibits and auctions, because Americans were portrayed as saving art, not stealing it. As the discussion of art shifted in the war years to a physical struggle over the control of art (Nazi looting versus American recovery), any American connection to its days of profiting from Nazi art purges needed to be hidden so as to allow America to continue to play its roles as idealized protector. Therefore, after the articles covering the ‘degenerate’ art exhibitions in both Germany and America, the *Times* transitioned its reporting of the war for culture to simpler images of Nazi plundering Europe and American efforts to stop the thefts and destruction. Germans, then, were the only ‘enemy’, the only ‘looter,’ and America became the only hope in the discussion to preserve the ‘cultural tradition’ as portrayed by the *Times*. But honestly, saving a few modern pieces for the prestige of being the savior of art while denying thousands of refugees’ entry does not exactly fit the image of a ‘refuge’.

¹⁰⁴ Taylor, “Europe’s Looted Art,” *Times*.

Taylor closed his discussion of German art atrocities with stereotypical war propaganda, noting that American museums had a “deep interest in preserving the integrity of the free art market” for it was through this free market that future growth of American art collections depended. The vast looting of the “artistic patrimony of Europe” perpetrated by the Nazis, made only a small portion of the property recoverable, even with the “greatest diligence and efficiency imaginable,” according to the report. Taylor conclusively argued that what had been taken amounted to more than just property, as many of the looted art pieces were symbolic of the various nations’ struggles for sovereignty and strong cultural heritage. These losses then, required efforts made from every member of American society in the struggle to recover the loot, to set into motion, what Taylor calls a “renascence of the mind and of the human spirit from the ashes of the European Holocaust.”¹⁰⁵ In this conclusion, Taylor emphasized the propagandist ideals of American superiority, and Civilization’s immortality, despite direct confrontation from the Nazis; as a result, Taylor’s article legitimized American involvement in the efforts to halt Hitler’s European conquest and recover Nazi looted art.

Conclusions

Both the Nazis and the *New York Times* were politicizing art. The Nazis used art to legitimize the National Socialist State and create a ‘German’ nation; the *Times* placed the Nazis’ nationalistic rhetoric into the context of a totalitarian regime so as to contrast Nazi art perpetrations against American democracy and ‘freedom of art’. The *Times* used ‘degenerate’ as a catch phrase to represent German censorship characterized by a dictatorship, or the antisemitisms of a devoutly ‘German’ culture, and opposed to

¹⁰⁵ Taylor, “Europe’s Looted Art,” *Times*.

American efforts to act as asylum to the purged ‘degenerates’ of Europe. Through this rhetoric of propagandized culture war coverage, the *Times* created an idealized identity for America, thereby legitimizing American museums and the American public’s interaction with the ‘degenerate’ art.

In the *Times*’ refusal to define ‘German’ and ‘non-German’ in the terms laid out by the Nazis: i.e. by blood, and therefore race, the *Times* affectively missed or ignored the Nazi race war. In redefining Nazi intentions, and the subsequent American interaction with Nazi art purges, the *Times* allowed Americans to identify themselves safely in the idealized image of a refuge for freedom and art. In accepting that art is an indicator of war, the *Times* did not cover the German war for culture as both connected to the Nazi war for race and space and as a conflict that included its own significant consequences.

CHAPTER III

NAZIS AND THEIR LOOT: *NEW YORK TIMES*' PORTRAYALS OF NATIONAL SOCIALIST POLICIES ON THE ACQUIREMENT OF ART FOR GERMANY

The *Times*' portrayals of the war for culture during World War II emphasized aspects other than Nazi antisemitism in their struggle for the control of power. Nazi looting, then as it was reflected in the *Times*' reports of the war for culture, was characterized by nationalistic, destructive, and opportunistic impulses, and as a result, the *Times*' post war coverage of the war for culture was framed as a conflict between a brutish Nazi Germany versus the militarily and culturally superior America. With the exception of one article in 1937 noting Göring's role as protector of art in Germany, the *New York Times*' coverage of general Nazi looting within the war for culture occurs between 1941 and 1945.¹ The *Times* for the most part concentrated its reports on the perpetrations of Nazi elite, particularly the amassing of large art collections by Adolf Hitler and Hermann Göring.

Nazi Looting for the Third Reich

At the Nuremberg Trials of 1946, Alfred Rosenberg argued that between October 1940 and July 1944, the Nazi Party, specifically the ERR, executed "the greatest art operation in history."² Headed by Alfred Rosenberg, the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* (ERR) was the main institution organized to obtain artworks for the Third

¹ While 116 articles covering the war for culture are published during this period (1941-1945), the majority of the 1944 and 1945 articles are focused on the efforts of the Allies to protect and recover Nazi looted art, subjects addressed more in depth in Chapter Three. The majority of articles that do specifically report Nazi looting are directly addressed in this chapter.

² Alfred Rosenberg, head of the ERR, at the Nuremberg Trials, 1946. Eric Russell Chamberlin, *Loot!: The Heritage of Plunder* (London: Thames and Hudson) 149.

Reich; the ERR's main objective was simple: to loot Europe of its art.³ As the international community watched, desired works were either 'confiscated' from Germany's (i.e. the Nazi regime's) internal enemies or 'safeguarded' from external enemies; instances in which these methods were unfeasible, desired pieces were bought by the Nazis, for the most part with Reichsmarks worth only one-fourth their face value.

The ERR approached its European operation in the East and West differently, primarily confiscating desired pieces, with or without justification, in Eastern Europe. Comparatively, the Nazis were far more concerned with maintaining an image of legality in the Western system of dealings, high ranking Nazis going to great lengths to 'purchase' their acquisitions in the art world.⁴ In many cases, Jewish race laws forced many Jewish owners to sell their collection. "Nazi Germany's antisemitic laws allowed the seizure of Jewish property without apology or explanation. Those able to flee Europe to havens such as the United States were compelled either to abandon their collections or to have them 'Aryanized', the term coined for forced sale to a Gentile."⁵ Those who helped Jews, listened to forbidden radio broadcasts, or participated any other 'illegal' activities could be punished by 'legal' confiscations of their items.⁶ According to Lynn H. Nicholas in *Rape of Europa*, a complex groups of bureaucracies carried out the confiscations and art dealings of the Nazi regime, all of which used a variety of rationales, including 'legality,' to defend the exploitations.

The mad grandeur of the whole thing, which envisaged nothing less than a complete redistribution and reorganization of Europe's peoples and their

³ The ERR had its headquarters in a small museum in Paris, the Jeu de Paume. Chamberlin, *Loot!*, 156.

⁴ Ibid, 159-161.

⁵ Harclerode, *The Lost Masters*, xi-xii.

⁶ Chamberlin, *Loot!*, 154.

patrimonies, is impressive. In the purified New Order all would be perfect and homogeneous. Undesirable thoughts, sounds, images, and beings would be eliminated. Then everything would be magnificently organized, efficient, and clean, classified and arranged in the gleaming new cities, to the Glory of Germanism.⁷

Whether motivated by Nazi antisemitic ideology, nationalistic impulses for Germany's new place in the art world order, or simply opportunism in war, most of Nazi elite, particularly Hitler, Himmler, Göring, Frank and Ribbentrop, obtained valuable private art collections through the confiscations and forced sales of Jewish property.⁸

New York Times Coverage of German Looting

The *Times* only fully understood the extent to which the Nazis had looted Europe after 1943, evident from the vast increase of reports on looting in the later parts of the war. The *Times* did not report the significance of Nazi plunder, specifically its connection to the victimization of Jews and larger struggle to obtain and therefore control art; the reports seemed to be only a vehicle to, yes convey wartime events, but also to vilify the Nazis into an enemy worth defeating.

The articles presented here are the majority of reports during the war years specifically addressing Nazi looting, reflecting the very limited attention given to the subject by the *Times*. Despite the parallel progressions of Nazi art reform and Nazi race ideology, the *Times* did not explain the connection of Nazi looting and the Nazi genocide to the *Times* audience, only defining German looting by its savageness and effectiveness. However, the *Times'* portrayal of Nazi looting within the context of war mongering and

⁷ Lynn H. Nicholas, *Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe's Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 97.

⁸ Hamlin, "Collections and the War", 158.

opportunism was essential to the *Times*' war propaganda both vilifying the Nazis and idealizing the United States.

Artworks, while constituting only a small portion of materials looted by the Nazi war machine, were noted objects appropriated by the Germany mentioned in a Board of Economic Warfare quote in a April 28, 1943 *Times* report.⁹ The Board, an organization established in 1941 to develop measures meant to strengthen American international economic relations, declared in the article that "for magnitude and ruthlessness the German looting of occupied Europe surpasses all previous conquests in history."¹⁰ German spoils of war were divided into three categories, according to the Board of Economic Warfare, the first: the 'windfall gains from plunder and confiscations,' the second were described as 'occupation charges' placed upon the occupied nations by the Nazis to be used in maintaining the German army. The third included unpaid balances for goods delivered by Germans.¹¹ All three categories characterized looting as a kind of expected consequence of war, exploited by the Germans to sustain their conquest. The article neglected to connect any aspect of the looting to the attacks on Jews, despite general awareness of attacks on Jews, thereby defining the war for culture as only Nazi looting as a World War II measure.¹² By the time of this article's publication, the Final Solution was already systematically in place in Europe: The Wannsee Conference on January 20, 1942 outlined the 'Final Solution' to the 'Jewish Question', resulting in the creation of death camps for Jews. By June of 1942, the World Jewish Congress estimated that the Nazis had killed one million Jews. On June 21, 1942, 20,000 people gathered in

⁹ "Nazi Looting Held Biggest in History," *New York Times*, April 28, 1943.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Also in April of 1943 is the start of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

New York's Madison Square Garden to protest the Nazi attacks and by December of 1942, news of the Holocaust, the extremity of the genocide of the Jews, had reached the international public. The number of Jews murdered by the Nazis had reached four million by August of 1943, according to Jewish leaders.

Focused, however, only on the looting as it related to the military conflict, the *Times* charged Germany with possessing \$120,000,000 worth of Italian gold reserves, according to a February 20, 1944 article, bringing the conservative estimated total amount of metal seized by Germany from occupied countries to more than one billion dollars. Exact figures were not available for the article, according to the author, because statistics on foreign-owned gold were regarded as military secrets. The report, though, did its best to outline money seized by Germany from the various occupied nations: Czechoslovakia: \$61,000,000; Greece: \$28,000,000; Norway: \$84,000,000; Denmark: \$44,000,000; Yugoslavia: \$83,000,000.¹³ The author noted that some of the occupied countries were able to evacuate portions of their gold stock to England and the United States, before Germany's invasion. America, and one of her other Allies, England, were placed in direct opposition to the greedy invading force, Germany; but the article noted that Germany had grown significantly richer through occupation.¹⁴ In providing the large estimates of looted money and gold from the victims of the Nazis, the *Times* defined Germany by its spoils of war and America by the occupied nations' trust in America's ability to protect at least some of the European wealth. Both images are important for the success of *Times* propaganda: the *Times* portrayed the Nazis only as war profiteers, efficient but barbaric looters who did not appreciate art outside of its financial value;

¹³ "German Loot of Gold in Europe Estimated at \$1,000,000,000," *New York Times*, February 20, 1944.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

America was contrasted, by the *Times*, to this image of Nazi art/war booty as the savior of art, an important perception in *Times* coverage, especially in the post-war coverage, addressed in Chapter Three.

This vilification of the Nazis was easier under the conventional war context in which multiple nations were under occupation by German military. The *Times* incorporated those other resentments in a report on May 25, 1944, in which Princess Juliana of the Netherlands, in a speech given at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, denounced the ‘shameless rapacity’ of the Nazis who had looted museums and libraries of the occupied countries. The recovery of these stolen treasures, Princess Juliana said according to the article, “constitutes one of the problems of the peace, in which the scientific aid of American art authorities will be so solicited.”¹⁵ The *Times* did not use Juliana’s condemnation to point to the larger implications of war looting, instead only portraying the thefts as atrocities of the military war. Ironically, the Metropolitan, a museum that had directly profited from Nazi art purges, was the stage for this condemnation of Germany.

The *Times* on August 9, 1944 argued that “no tourists of any nation ever made the rounds of Europe’s art galleries and historical monuments with as much thoroughness as the Germans.”¹⁶ Hitler had, according to the *Times*, convinced the German people that “the better way to acquire culture was to go abroad as wolves, not as sheep, and to butcher those who possessed it.”¹⁷ Hitler was alluding to both the Weimar years as an era in which Germany faded from its glory, moving as sheep among a world of wolves in the

¹⁵ “Juliana Condemns Nazi Art Looting.” *New York Times*, May 25, 1944.

¹⁶ “Florence and the Nazis,” *New York Times*, August 9, 1944.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

aftermath of the Versailles Treaty, and the current Nazi conquest of Europe in which Germany acts as predator to the sheepish occupied nations. While the author was very tongue-and-cheek about the topic, the allusion to Nazi efficiency and the article's inattention to the implications of that Nazi effectiveness in acquiring European art are aspects presented in multiple articles. Instead, the article emphasized Nazi looting as equivalent to Germany's militarism, that is, its predatory nature. The necessity to 'butcher those who possess' the desired culture, then, paralleled the policies that removed Jews and other 'non-Germans' from the Third Reich and subsequently allowed the Nazi regime to lay claim to the possessions left behind; however the *Times* neglected to connect that ideology for its reader, therefore disregarding the complexities of the war for culture, specifically, the correlation of the attempt by the Nazis to predatorily control European art and culture, and their efforts to eliminate a whole 'race' of peoples. The *Times* report, published two months after the Allied invasion of Normandy, briefly touched on the significance of almost losing mass amounts of art pieces to the Nazi war machine, but only within the context of the propagandized American victory of World War II:¹⁸

In victory the Nazi leaders stole works of art and carried them off to their cluttered rococo palaces. In defeat their attitude seems to be that if they cannot have them, then no one shall. They tried to destroy civilization and failed. But they may leave behind them in ruins some of civilization's noblest relics and monuments. Ruins, indeed, will be their only relic and their only monument.¹⁹

Despite all of the Hitler's best efforts to create an eternal German culture, the *Times* argued that the Third Reich's only legacy would be destruction... and a juvenile attitude

¹⁸ D-day was June 6, 1944. It should be remembered that under the American perspective, D-day was a turning point in the war. However, this perception differs among European and Asian historians.

¹⁹ Ibid.

of ‘well if I can’t have it, no one can’.²⁰ Fortunately, according to the *Times*, the changing tide of war brought by D-day would stop the Nazi destruction of European civilization, and so the *Times* began to reference the United States as a potential victor in both the conventional military war and war for culture, an argument found only briefly in the *Times*’ wartime coverage of Nazi looting; the *Times* did not specifically address the war for culture until after Germany’s surrender in May of 1945, under the discourse of American custodianship of European art.

As of yet, the looting by Germany was not portrayed as a means to exact their ideology over occupied zones. Instead, the plundering of the Nazis was shown as aspects of military conflict that allowed Germany to sustain the war effort. The impending loss of Germany at the end of 1944 had caused mass resentment among the German military, according to an August 2, 1944 article, and as a result, the retreating soldiers had resorted to vandalism, destroying multiple Italian cultural treasures.²¹ The article even noted that the German army had reached such an extreme level of indiscriminate destruction, that their superiors were forced to issue warnings of severe punishment. The Nazis, as depicted by the *Times*, were unable to appreciate the value of the culture if they could not own it, reflecting the infantile attributes of the Germans reported in other *Times* articles. This characterization brought a new image, one in which German soldiers were actively participating in the looting and destruction, outside of ideological reasons, stemming mainly from opportunism and the ability to destroy. The Germans, according to the article, also ‘molested’ the irreplaceable artworks, monuments and libraries.²² In using

²⁰ “Florence and the Nazis,” *Times*. .

²¹ “New Looting Laid to Nazis in Italy,” *New York Times*, August 2, 1944.

²² *Ibid*.

‘molest’, the *Times* took on a term with significant connotations, one that conveyed the image of an aggressive occupying force aimed to destroy femininely defined cultural areas. The propagandist, gendered image would hopefully, for the *Times*, trigger desires to protect the cultural treasures, as representatives of a mother Europe, from the masculine, German Fatherland.

By March of 1945, the German army was well on its way to defeat, an element emphasized in a March 13, 1945 article. According to the journalist reporting within the United States Third Army in German, the fiendishness of Nazi looting of Europe was upsetting even to its own German military. The *Times*’ report propagandized the Nazi government as so heinous, that even the German military had turned against the Nazis, in favor of the liberating Americans, thereby idealizing the American military as superior, even from the perspective of the German soldiers. The author addressed several letters written by German soldiers captured by the Twelfth Corps. One German soldier “who saw for himself the reaction of his own people to the plundering of German towns by the *Wehrmacht*, wrote in disgust to his wife that the mercenaries of old never had behaved worse. ‘So low,’ he wrote, as if ashamed of his own people, ‘can a people sink.’”²³ The Nazis were then defined as thieves who take from their own.²⁴ More than condemning their government’s actions, other German soldiers idealized America as gentlemanly occupying force that offered no threat of looting, the United States, then, easily imagined as the savior of art. The German soldier even proclaimed that those Germans, who have experienced American goodwill, would ‘rejoice’ when the Americans returned.

²³ Gene Currivan, “German Looting Vexes the Reich,” *New York Times*, March 13, 1945.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Other letters chosen by the author to discuss focused on the deterioration of the German army: mainly the difficulties in getting soldiers to the front lines. The article's purpose was straightforwardly a propaganda piece: even the German population idealized the Americans, and the German soldiers were emotionally defeated. This article had a more obvious filter than other *Times* reports: the author chose to include only letters that pointed to American superiority. Assumedly, the multitude of German soldiers wrote letters on topics other than the idealism or hero worship of America. Even if the German soldiers were disillusioned of the heavy propaganda disseminated by the Nazis throughout the 1930s and 1940s, as was very possible with the downturn of the war for Germany, the four or five pro-American letters included in the article could not be the whole sum of pre-capture correspondence from the German soldiers. Currivan's article, then, while not a made-up work of fiction, was manipulated by the choice of letters addressed and so reflected the larger propaganda coverage by the *Times*.

Adolf Hitler and Special Operation Linz

Hitler dreamed and sketched his desires for the building of Linz, a cultural city that would exhibit all the glory of Germany and the Third Reich that would glorify the Third Reich, even in the early days of the Nazi Party, but plans for the art gallery only seemed to formalize in 1938.²⁵ A short two months before the outbreak of World War II, Hitler commissioned Dr. Hans Posse, former director of the Dresden Gallery, to acquire desirable works for Linz.²⁶ The first appropriation for Linz, in 1939, was RM 10 million;

²⁵ Albert Speer found one of Hitler's sketch maps of Linz, dated 1925. Chamberlin, *Loot!*, 154.

²⁶ Posse, under Hitler's supervision, would lead the charge in acquiring works for the Third Reich.

by December 1944, the number had risen to 70 million by.²⁷ All party and state officials were ordered to assist in this Special Operation Linz, *Sonderauftrag Linz*.²⁸

Hitler wanted Linz to outshine every other cultural center or museum; Linz would be the world's greatest art gallery and with a mausoleum for Hitler at the center, the heart of the Third Reich.²⁹ German artists, would of course, predominate the collection, with supplements from the 'racially related Netherlands.'³⁰ Hitler, of course, had no need for racially, artistically, or politically inferior artworks and so excitedly spent the war collecting art for the glory of Germanism, to reference Nicholas.³¹ All major artworks were photographed and organized in bound volumes for Hitler to peruse; the volumes were later used as evidence of Nazi crimes at the Nuremberg Trials.

While the majority of articles focusing on Nazi looting were published in the latter years of the war, a time when news of the genocide had reached the public, the *Time* neglected to connect that as Jews were shipped off to the camps, the Nazis were taking possession of the forfeited property, including art. However, the newspaper was aware as early as 1941, that high ranking Nazi officials were taking advantage of the war to build up valuable personal art collections, the *Times* noting especially that Hitler and

²⁷ Nicholas, *Rape of Europa*, 44.

²⁸ Chamberlin, *Loot!*, 154.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 153.

³⁰ "Jan Vermeer's *The Painter in His Studio* for which Andrew Mellon, the Germans boast, once offered a million dollars, was 'acquired' from the Czernin Collection in Vienna; Rembrandt's portrait of Hendrikje Stoffels came from the collection of the Mendelssohn banking family in Berlin; *The Harvesters* by Pieter Brueghel was formerly in the Roudnice Collection in Czecho-Slovakia while Watteau's *The Dance* was taken from the walls of the Hohenzollern Palace in Potsdam. Other 'acquisitions' include works by Van Dyck, Rubens, Cranach, Jan Steen, Ostade and Tintoretto." Gladys E. Hamlin, "European Art Collections and the War," *College Art Journal* 1946, 159.

³¹ The main collecting point for Linz was in Munich, pieces safely stored underground in Fuehrerbau. As the war progressed and dominated more of Hitler's time, the Führer was unable to make as frequent visits to his national collection of art, but Hitler was kept informed of Linz's progress up until his death in April, 1945. Chamberlin, *Loot!*, 157.

Göring had confiscated artworks from occupied areas.³² Within the discourse of looting as a feature of war, multiple historians who have written on World War II looting have made connections between Nazi looting and Napoleon's plundering. Napoleon used his conquest advantageously by appropriating everything artistic from the occupied, or conquered nations. A key difference between the looting by Napoleon and that by Hitler, though, is that Napoleon's officials legalized their thefts through treaties and Hitler used the ideas of 'confiscating' and 'safeguarding' artworks to acquire them.³³

In covering the looting perpetrated by the Nazi elite, the *Times* emphasized both the efficiency and ruthlessness of Germany's thieving of Europe, portraying Hitler and Göring's plunder as typical opportunism of war. The *Times*' coverage of specific loot taken for Hitler was reported relatively sparingly in comparison to the number of articles given to report Hermann Göring's opportunism. The *Times* also placed Hitler's looting within the discourse of nationalistic efforts to glorify the Third Reich.

Adolf Hitler's opportunism was first addressed in a May 11, 1941 article that argued that Vermeer of Delft's *A Painter's Studio* had been taken from the Czernin collection in Vienna under the orders of the Führer; the Vermeer reportedly exhibited in Hitler's collection at Berchtesgaden.³⁴ The theft of the Vermeer painting from the museum was not placed within the context of taking pieces for display at Linz, and so was not portrayed by the *Times* as an aspect of Hitler's nationalistic efforts. The piece, according to the *Times*, was only taken because Hitler desired the piece and the context of war allowed him the opportunity.

³² Hamlin, "Collections and the War", 158.

³³ Chamberlin, *Loot!*, 154.

³⁴ "Hitler 'Collects' \$1,250,000 Vermeer," *New York Times*, May 11, 1941.

Hans Posse, the official placed in charge of acquiring art for Germany, had acquired, through various means, some 1,200 paintings for the Linz art collection, according to a February 20, 1943 front-page *Times* article.³⁵ The *Times* argued that most of the German works in the collection were unimportant, obtained only because they reflected Nazi ideology or Hitler's bad tastes; but also acquired, according to the article, were some old masters from the Netherlands, including Cranachs, Van Dycks, Rubens, Rembrandts and Vermeers. The masterworks originated from what the Reich called, 'the racially related Netherlands' and so the pieces are acceptable supplements to the German art works, argued the *Times*.³⁶ This report skated around the connection between Hitler's looting and the ideological motivations of the Nazi official in looting only noting Hitler's nationalist Linz project as the significant characteristic of Hitler's looting.

The *Times* still noted, though, the dangers of the Nazi elites to the art collections of Europe; the purposeful listing by the *Times* of notable painters, artists valued internationally, gave credence to the nefariousness of the Germans. The *Times* simply promoted simplified propagandist images: while Hitler 'Collects', America protects; but while Hitler at least was reported as stealing for the Glory of the Third Reich, coverage of Hermann Göring reflected only pompousness and opportunism.

Göring the Collector

The *New York Times*' coverage of the Reichsmarschall reflected Göring's greed for art, as well as his penchant for costumes and eccentricities. The vast majority of the articles reporting the actions of Göring, in the context of art, were all placed in farcical language, despite the malefic characterizations of the Nazis presented in other *Times*

³⁵ "Dutch Art is Seized For Hitler Gallery," *New York Times*, February 20, 1943.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

reports. Leading the charge in reorganizing the Prussian Academy of Arts, Colonel General Hermann Göring, according to a July 16, 1937 report, ordered the academy harmonized with Nazi ideology, declaring himself ‘protector’ of the arts.³⁷ The short *Times* article ends on that ironic note.

Göring’s penchant for expensive, ostentatious things, was apparently widely accepted by *Times* readers and so the purchase of art treasures and jewels in Italy, to the tune of one million dollars, was no surprise to the author of one May 21, 1942 *Times* report. The *Times* argued that the value of jewels and high-priced art were found, not just in their innate characteristics, but also in their transportability; in a time of war, immunity from foreign or domestic upheaval was an important factor in purchasing property.³⁸ Göring was very clearly defined by the *Times* as an opportunist, looking to the future when owning a large collection of jewels and artworks would come in handy.

Hermann Göring used the ERR as his personal collecting agency for artworks. Between the autumn of 1940 and July 1944, with its dissolution, the ERR acquired 21,000 artworks. From France alone, Göring had 237 paintings, 28 statues, 15 stained glass windows and 51 pieces of furniture.³⁹ The author of this article quipped: “What a pleasure it must be to find the argument for security going hand in hand with a fine esthetic sense.”⁴⁰ This characterization of greed and self-preservation was something found in every article discussing Göring and looting, and interestingly enough, most of those same articles use humor to shine light on Göring’s exploits.

³⁷ “Goering Now ‘Protector’ of Reorganized Art Body,” *New York Times*, July 16, 1937.

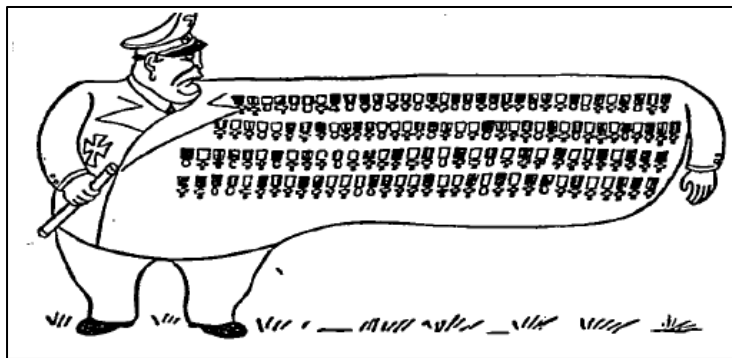
³⁸ “Topics of the *Times*: Goering Looks Ahead,” *New York Times*, May 21, 1942.

³⁹ Chamberlin, *Loot!*, 161.

⁴⁰ “Topics of the *Times*: Goering Looks Ahead,” *Times*.

Both Göring and Goebbels, the Reich's Propaganda Minister, made 'investments' in masterworks, buying large numbers of paintings in Paris and shipping the pieces to the Switzerland for "safekeeping," according to a December 22, 1943 article.⁴¹ The report again addressed moves by the Nazi elites to legalize their purchases; of course attempts by the Nazis to 'buy' property often equated to participating in auctions of 'legally' confiscations, forced sales because of race or political factors, or simply use of the large caches of worthless Germany money. The article laughingly noted that Göring, a leading German official who was supposed to espouse every Nazi ideology, including anti-modernism, reportedly paid top dollar for several Picasso paintings. The Nazis of course decried Picasso, the founder of cubism, as a 'degenerate'.⁴² Apparently, for Göring, greed and opportunism outweighed Nazi idealisms. Göring's greed reportedly had led him slightly astray several times, particularly when he purchased a fake Picasso.⁴³

The *Times* also took jibes at Göring's penchant for wearing eccentric costumes. Including a cartoon depicting Göring wearing a hundred medals, a November 5, 1944 article, titled "Goering: Lord of the Manor," defines Göring simply as a 'collector'.⁴⁴



⁴¹ "Goebbels, Goering Buying French Art," *New York Times*, December 22, 1943.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Curt Riess. "Goering: Lord of the Manor," *New York Times*, November 5, 1944.

The article continued on only to describe the lavishness and vastness of four of Göring's estates, one of which, according to the *Times*, was a favorite 'haunt' of Göring's, and although Mrs. Göring seldom visited, Göring's attractive female secretary often joined Göring there.⁴⁵ This use of humor while discussing a very serious subject, war profiteering, was a very interesting habit of the *Times*, and unique in their discussion of Hermann Göring.

As the war drew to a close, Göring attempted to remove his vast art collections from his estates to safety. Göring's Bavarian castle, Veldenstein, was emptied of its "priceless art" collection and loaded into armored, air-conditioned railroad cars, two weeks before American troops took over the castle. The trains were fitted with thermostat controls to preserve the paintings, according to the May 1945 article.⁴⁶ The report, like many previous to it, pointed to Göring's limited time in possessing the collection, an obvious war propagandist sentiment at the eventuality of Nazi defeat and Allied victory. Parts of the "Prussian State collection" were left behind, probably, according to the author, for "clemency bait."⁴⁷

Göring's quirkiness continued in the discourse of art, as a May 22, 1945 article noted that the Nazi official gave a Vermeer painting worth one million dollars to a nurse.⁴⁸ The painting, *Christ and the Adulteress*, was given to Choista Gormans, the nurse of Göring's wife. A fine arts expert, Captain Harry Anderson, in the United States 101st Airborne Division who was brought the painting in a four-foot stovepipe wrapped in a blanket, discovered the painting. The article noted that Captain Anderson questioned

⁴⁵ Gene Currivan, "Goering Hoarding Art For Life's Sake," *New York Times*, May 2, 1945.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ "Goering Gave Nurse A \$1,000,000 Vermeer," *New York Times*, May 22, 1945.

Göring's wife, but she denied any knowledge of the masterpiece. The article quipped that Captain Anderson still managed to recover six small paintings from Mrs. Göring.⁴⁹ The deceit by Göring's wife and the randomness of the gift to a nurse, who hid the million dollar piece in a stovepipe, all add to an image of a very eccentric man, one who found himself in the right place at the right time: Nazi occupied countries surrounded by priceless art. The Vermeer was placed in the 101st Division's 'Göring Art Exhibit,' a show discussed later in Chapter Three.⁵⁰

The coverage of Hitler and Göring varied drastically; the nefariousness of Hitler seemed to be an accepted truth, one not needing much expansion, even in reporting looting. Hitler, as the leader of the Nazis, was America's enemy number one. Göring, however, seemed to be more of a personality than an enemy official in the *Times* coverage. Hitler's opportunistic motives were outshined by his attempts to create a nationalistic museum. While Göring also donated many works for a public Hermann Göring Museum, the *Times* focused only on his opportunism and eccentricities. The *Times* definitely reflected an idea espoused by Russell Chamberlain in *Loot!*, "Hitler, like Napoleon, looted for his country: Goering looted for Hermann Goering."⁵¹

Looting the Adoration of the Lamb: Hitler and Göring

The fiendishness of both Hitler and Göring were most reflected in the *Times*' coverage of the theft of the *Adoration of the Lamb*, a highly valued Belgian altarpiece. Removed to safety in the French countryside, the Germans ordered the artwork removed from its French vault in August of 1943; because the necessary French and Belgian

⁴⁹ Göring Gave Nurse a Vermeer," *Times*.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Chamberlain, *Loot!*, 163.

officials did not sign the order, the French authorities disregarded the orders. Six hours later, another order appeared, signed by Abel Bonard, Minister of Fine Arts at Vichy, stating that the Germans were allowed to take the paintings. For some reason, an underling at the museum honored the order and the *Adoration of the Lamb* officially fell into the hands of the Nazis.

The first news following this transfer of the Ghent work came in *Das Reich*, a weekly publication run by Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels. *Das Reich* stated that the *Adoration* would be more at home at the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin, for the Museum could display the piece's 'jewel-like beauty' in all of its glory.⁵² By January of 1943, Göring had received the *Adoration*, and its glory, for his fiftieth birthday.⁵³ March of 1944, a leading European authority on loot said that the Ghent altarpiece had been moved to Hitler's Berchtesgaden.⁵⁴ The *Times* attempted to follow the placement of the *Adoration of the Lamb* as it moved within the Nazi elite, specifically between Hermann Göring and Adolf Hitler; the coverage continued the characterizations of the Nazi leaders found in previous articles, namely Göring as an opportunist collector.

The Petain government presented Göring with the *Adoration of the Lamb* according to a February 26, 1943 *Times* article, and while the article did not note a specific reason for this gifting, it is safe to assume it was for the sake of collaboration.⁵⁵ The following day, a *Times* report, defining Göring as a great collector similar to previous articles, again used humor to confirm the collaborative motivations of the gifting of the *Adoration*, noting that the Ghent altarpiece was given to the

⁵² Hamlin, "Collection and the War", 160-161.

⁵³ Hermann Göring's birthday was January 12.

⁵⁴ Hamlin, "Collection and the War", 160-161.

⁵⁵ "A Petain Minister Gives Goering Belgian Painting," *New York Times*, February 26, 1943.

Reichsmarschall by the Vichy government. The author argued that theft of the *Adoration* was only a small example of the vast looting performed by the Germans in conquered areas.⁵⁶

This article is unique among other articles discussing Göring and his loot because it addressed the genocidal atrocities committed under Göring amidst the context of his looting. In discussing the specific acquisition of the *Adoration of the Lamb*, the author argued:

The irony of this portrayal of sacrifice and worship in the hands of one of the chief Nazi robbers and murders is too obvious to dwell upon. These holy personages, apostles, saints, martyrs were persecuted, but the worst of their persecutors were philanthropists compared with the men who have made Europe one vast butcher shop. One might have supposed Goering would have preferred some more sympathetic work, such as Delacroix's 'Massacre of Chios.' The painter felt for the massacred; the Marshal would feel for the massacres. Doubtless it is for the charm of contrast that he chooses the religious picture before any scene of the guillotine... The colors and the precious stones will attract the marshal's eye and lead him to forgive for the moment personages non-Aryan. But his chief joy for the new acquisition must be that is spoil taken from the enemy. Guns are better than butter and larceny or burglary is cheaper than buying, particularly in the case of things that can't be bought, like this canvas of the Van Eycks.⁵⁷

'Guns and Butter' referred to a speech made by Hermann Göring, urging the German population to sacrifice butter and other everyday pleasures for the war effort: 'guns will make us powerful; butter will only make us fat.' In referencing this speech, the *Times* criticized Göring's appeal to the German people to sacrifice many things that go beyond butter for the betterment of the Third Reich, while at the same time the Reichsmarschall was looting priceless pieces of art for his own greed.

⁵⁶ "In the Goering Gallery," *New York Times*, February 27, 1943.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

While this article is significant because it is one of the few articles to connect the Nazi looting with the larger genocide, its rarity points to the *Times*' mistreatment of the war on culture. The article's use of sarcasm to make its point of the opportunism, greed and cruelty of Hermann Göring, was a good break in the monotony that characterized the majority of *Times* reports that discussed Nazi looting in a tone devoid of passion or caring.

The article also noted the provenance of the *Adoration* was probably an attractive aspect of the artwork for Göring. However, like many previous to it, the article, pointed to Göring's mortality in power: "Stealings are not necessarily keepings. In time, the 'Lamb' will come back to Ghent."⁵⁸ The *Times*' emphasis on defining Hitler and Göring's plundering and time in power as impermanent, reflected the larger propaganda push within the *Times* to boost American moral and promote the idea of the inevitability of Allied victory over the Nazis.

The transfer of ownership of the *Adoration* from Hermann Göring to Hitler was first reported in a May 15, 1944 report. The article defined the *Adoration* as a van Eyck masterpiece and one of the greatest art treasures in Europe, also noting an Allied committee member who described the piece as "worth a museum."⁵⁹ Other than safely establishing the value of the artwork, the report neglected to give any specific information on why the masterpiece was given to Hitler, only ominously stating that most of the paintings had been removed by the Allies from the Louvre for safety, but that the Germans "know where they are."⁶⁰ Amid a short discussion in a May 28, 1944 'About'

⁵⁸ "In the Goering Gallery," *Times*.

⁵⁹ "Van Eyck Masterpiece Now Owned by Hitler," *New York Times*, May 15, 1944.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

section on dairy milk, employer's rights, news on counterfeiting, Japanese sympathy and the WAC, the *Times* reported Hitler's new ownership of the "van Eyck masterpiece".⁶¹ The *Times*, like previous articles, noted the failed efforts to keep the piece safe and the involvement of Göring in his ownership. The unique contribution of this article, though, came in the inclusion of a poem that begins the report:

When the Nazi isn't raising thunder,
And Striking fear in every neighbor's hear,
He loves to rest from massacre and plunder,
And to do a bit of reveling in Art.
When tortures and assassinations bore him,
When slaughter gives him weariness of soul,
A fine old sacred picture can restore him,
A lovely stolen statue makes him whole.⁶²

The poem was not attributed to an author, but its use of humor to draw attention to the connection between Nazi crimes in art and their crimes against humanity was an important rarity. This article rounds out a catalogue of *Times* reports on the *Adoration* that reflect both the creativity and humor of the *Times* reporters, and also emphasizes the larger ineffectiveness of the majority of *Times* articles to address the dangers and connections of art and genocide successfully to the *Times* readership. The New York newspaper was more preoccupied with quipping over Göring and Hitler's penchant for nice things, seemingly placing Nazi looting within a discourse of materialism rather than ideology.

Times Coverage of American Efforts to Protect American Art Treasures

Amidst the *Times'* coverage of Nazi looting, the newspaper briefly addressed concerns of the American government and the artistic community over the survival art on

⁶¹ "About: 'An Art Lover'," *New York Times*, May 28, 1944.

⁶² *Ibid.*

American soil. Fifteen thousand “precious works of art” were returned to their museums, according to a front page April 23, 1944 report, after the pieces were evacuated shortly after the United States declared war on Japan and Germany.⁶³ An April 25, 1944 article placed the Met’s evacuation into the context of the larger fears of the American population in the first years of American entry into the war. The removal of art reflected the “ominous days” when every home was prepared for bombings and when patriotism and excitement in being a part of the war effort was more common, according to the *Times*. The article did specifically emphasize the heinous looting of European art and culture by the Nazis. Fortunately, the *Times* argued, once again, that the Nazis would not be in power much longer, an expectation found in multiple other articles about the anticipated Allied victory.⁶⁴

The removal of art, then, was just another war measure for the *Times*, not foolish or unnecessary when placed into the discourse of the potential dangers to the home front from the enemy Nazi. The article legitimized the Met’s actions in removing the art by placing it into context with the larger fears of a Nazi invasion in America.⁶⁵ The preparations for the evacuation of these key works began quickly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, although the transportation of the works proved to be complicated, according to the article. The various truckloads of art were limited to an approximated value of one million dollars per truck, for reasons not specifically addressed by the article. While the

⁶³ Thomas C. Linn. “15,000 of Its Works in Hiding Returned to Museum of Art,” *New York Times*, April 23, 1944.

⁶⁴ “The Met’s Unburied Treasure,” *New York Times*, April 25, 1944.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

museum declined to discuss the total value given to the removed artworks, ninety truckloads were transported.⁶⁶

Described as one of the largest and most difficult “war emergency tasks” undertaken by American museums by the article, over fifteen thousand of the most valuable and fragile pieces of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s collection were removed to the “haven” 100 miles outside of New York. For two years, the masterpieces were set under constant surveillance, the guardians standing in constant armed vigil of the collection, according to the article.⁶⁷ The value placed on these works was reflected in the terminology used to address their protection; even in secluded safety, these works demanded a certain amount of awe and respect in their protection: a vigil for treasure. Since the imminent dangers of bombings on American soil had abated by the time of the April 1944 article, the artworks could be returned to the Metropolitan, a decision reached by the Museum trustees, and military consultants prompted by ever-increasing attendance to the museum. According to the announcement, the large numbers of visitors proved the public and large numbers of service individuals desired the return of the ‘great collection’. Referencing the destruction of monuments in Europe, the Metropolitan’s trustees felt it important “for the public to be aware of the vast resources of the museum and to realize that these form an integral part of the civilization for which this war is being fought.”⁶⁸ The trustees hoped the restoration of the art-pieces would reassure the public, not as a sign that the war effort was declining, but to use the collection as a ‘stimulus’ towards victory and ‘enduring peace.’

⁶⁶ Thomas C. Linn. “15,000 of Its Works in Hiding Returned to Museum of Art.” April 23, 1944.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

For war propaganda, the strength of America must be reflected in every aspect of the nation, even in the museums. A discussion of American art centers therefore must also reflect America's ability to protect their culture. At a time when most of their Allies were haunted by destruction and vandalism, the lack of massive structural and cultural losses on the American home front of the war for culture and conventional military conflict created an image of American might and superiority. Culture and civilization were again pointed to as the base of freedom, something cherish-able and worthy of protection. In the return of the art to the museum, the art was once again politicized, used to show the strength of America and the conviction of their aims for victory and 'peace'.

Conclusions

The *Times* was ineffective in conveying the significance of Nazi looting as a part of a complex struggle for control of art that encompassed Nazi antisemitism; however the *Times* reported the nationalistic and opportunistic elements of the culture conflict fairly successfully. Despite the danger perceived in the efficiency of German looting, the *Times* contended Nazi efforts to legitimize their German culture had failed. Even within the brief discussions by the *Times* of American fears of German invasion or bombing of United States territories, America was idealized by the *Times* as the antithesis of the vilified Nazi; Nazis were shown as opportunists who took advantage of the war to plunder and America was glorified as a potential savior of art, despite American interaction with German art purges in the years prior to World War II. The resulting portrayal of the war for culture as it pertained to Nazi looting was essential to the *Times'* approach of American victory of World War II and the war for culture.

CHAPTER IV

ART THIEVES AND THEIR COMEUPPANCE: A *NEW YORK TIMES* DISCUSSION OF ART RECOVERY, EXHIBITIONS OF LOOT, ETHICS, AND THE SURVIVAL OF EUROPEAN CULTURE

With the Allied progression towards victory in Europe, American concern for the survival of Europe's cultural heritage could be made a higher priority. Within the advancing Allied military structure, the United States took the leading role in the Art Recovery Efforts in Europe. In this capacity, America became the victor in both the conventional military war and the war for culture. As a result, after the summer of 1944, *New York Times* coverage of the war for culture almost doubled and subsequently the *Times* identified the struggle for control of art as an autonomous war.¹

From 1944 to 1948, the *Times* continued to cover the war for culture within a discourse of war propaganda, idealizing America as it reported Allied efforts to secure and recover art in Europe, the subsequent victory of America over the Nazis in both the conventional military war and war for culture, the return of looted art to its owners and the American exhibitions of recovered Nazi loot.² In these last four years of *Times* war for culture coverage, the United States was portrayed as an active and willing participant in the struggle for control of art and culture.

¹ The numbers of articles published each year from 1944 to 1947 are almost twice the number published in the 1930s and early war years. The majority of *Times* articles reporting the war for culture were published in these last years (1944-1948). Of the 312 articles specifically reporting an aspect of the war for culture, 138 were published 1944-1948; forty-one articles reflecting the major themes of those 138 articles are specifically addressed in this chapter.

² However, by 1948, wartime Allied efforts to recover looted artworks still missing had effectively ended, according to Peter Harclerode's work on Nazi loot, *Lost Masters*. Nineteen forty-eight, then, acts as an end-cap to the war for culture. Peter Harclerode, *Lost Masters*, (London: Orion Publishing, 1999), xiii.

The *Times*' continuing war propaganda places America, once again, in the prestige role of 'savior' of looted art. As the 'custodian' of European art, according to the *Times* articles, it was America's prerogative to enjoy the fruits of their labors, that is specifically the right to exhibit recovered Nazi loot in America. This perspective, from an outsider's perspective looks an awful lot like enjoying the spoils of war, a condemnable thing when discussing Nazi art perpetrations; however within *Times* culture war propaganda, American exhibits were an entitlement due to the United States for its efforts and victory in the conventional war and war for culture.

It is important to note that the *Times* specifically identified the war for culture as a distinctive struggle, apart from the military conflict and Nazi war for race and space, only when America has achieved victory. Aside from this point, though, the *Times* in these last years of coverage, also significantly connected Nazi art ideology (looting) to Nazi race ideology (genocide). The willingness to address this connect in its publication reflected a transition in *Times*' war propaganda, that is, under the context of the Nuremberg Trials and publicly acknowledged Nazi genocide, the *Times*' articles could now address the connection between antisemitism and Nazi art reforms. The end of World War II was also influential in *Times*' portrayal of the American war for culture enemies. In the quick transition from the military conflict of WWII into the Cold War, the Soviets became the primary American adversary, both ideologically and economically. As a result, the coverage from 1945 to 1948 reflected an evolution period in which the *Times* moved away from vilifying the Nazis, to condemning the Soviets, all within a non-military war discourse.

New York Times' Pro-American Propaganda and the War For Culture

Multiple *Times* reports noted war time efforts by the Allies to preserve cultural treasures in Europe; most idealistically emphasized by the *Times* was the instances in which Allied bombers were given two types of maps when flying missions over Italy or France. One map showed targets for destruction and the other showed areas that need to be avoided so as to protect the historical and cultural monuments that remained there according to a January 23, 1944 article. The *Times* congratulated the American military efforts, declaring that the maps saved European 'art treasures'.³

Just one month before the Normandy Invasion, a May 5, 1944 front page article highlighted the Allied efforts to prevent "unnecessary destruction of the cultural, art and religious treasures of Europe," addressing the American public's concern for the security of European cultural artifacts.⁴ The article even argued that preservation plans were being laid alongside plans to invade mainland Europe.⁵ The *Times* was emphasizing the importance the American government and military have placed on art, an emphasis ironically described in 1930s Nazi art reform articles as totalitarian in nature. While both the Americans and Nazis were politicizing art as a part of the war for culture, these 1944 reports obviously portrayed Americans as the epitome of civilization and democracy, sacrificing for the good of art and culture, reflecting the strong war propaganda within *Times* reports. The preparations for this valiant crusade were made in New York and Washington, under the hope, according to the *Times*, that the efforts would "silence criticisms that enough efforts have not yet been made to save for posterity works whose

³ "Art Treasures Saved by Maps in Bombers," January 23, 1944, *New York Times*.

⁴ Herbert L. Matthews. "Allies to Spare Treasures in Europe During Invasion," May 5, 1944, *New York Times*.

⁵ *Ibid.*

value far transcends any question of nationality or religion.”⁶ Apparently, the American public was also placing a high priority on the security of art and culture, reflecting, to some extent, support for the war for culture from the larger American society.

Under the context of American efforts to protect European art, a September 20, 1945 report argued that the United States Third Army had meticulously cared for and catalogued the recovered loot, in order to ensure the restoration of the art without loss or damage.⁷ While the article did address the deceptive methodology through which the Nazis acquired the loot, specifically that pieces were taken under the guise of auctions, the article neglected to address the previous owners of these collections, an acknowledgement that would have connected the war for culture to Nazi antisemitism. The *Times* became more willing to address the ideology that led to specific targeting of Jewish property for theft in later years, as noted by articles discussed in later sections of this chapter; however for this article, the *Times* instead sacrificed a discussion of war looting as a part of a genocide for a far more simpler propagandist report on the victory of American meticulousness over German deceptiveness.

Pointing to Allied victory in the conventional military conflict, and the war for culture, the *Times* argued that “France again belongs to the French,” as did the artworks within those territories, pieces labeled as the pinnacle of the “soaring human spirit” by the October 3, 1944 article.⁸ The Allied Supreme Headquarters disclosed that of the twenty-five famous cathedrals and other historic monuments declared by the French Government as part of their ‘cultural heritage’, twenty-two are within the liberated areas

⁶ Herbert L. Matthews. “Allies to Spare Treasures in Europe During Invasion.” *New York Times*, May 5, 1944.

⁷ “Stolen French Art on Way to Owners,” *New York Times*, September 20, 1945.

⁸ “Art Treasures of France,” *New York Times*, October 3, 1944.

at the time of the March 21, 1945 article, pointing to one aspect of American leadership in art recovery efforts.⁹ The survival of the cultural monuments was attributed largely to efforts of SHAEF and the French government, by the article; the French authorities forwarded lists of their most important cultural pieces to SHAEF, which then supplied the information to the air force as lists of ‘protected monuments.’¹⁰ After multiple descriptions by the *Times* of American successes in securing and recovering art treasures throughout Europe, while also successfully waging a conventional military war, the *Times* in 1946 specifically addressed the war for culture, as it pertained to American victory.

Pointing to the War For Culture

The *Times* specifically identifies the war for culture, a separate conflict distinctive from the conventional war that devastated Europe from 1939 to 1945, in a January 20, 1946 article in which the *Times* argued that the Venus Fixers, Monuments Recovery Troops, have “Won Their War, Too.”¹¹ The Allies achieved victory, not only as combatants, but also as protectors of the arts in a worldwide battle for European culture, according to the *Times*. The recovery of looted treasures was complicated by the intermingling of artworks evacuated from German museums, archives and libraries to escape the bombings of German cities; according to the article, six hundred art deposits were uncovered in the American zone and the ‘Venus Fixers’ had to sort and check the rightful owners and countries of each and every piece of the vast collections. The *Times* noted the victory of the ‘Venus Fixers’ over the almost insurmountable odds, arguing that

⁹ “Most Monuments of France Spared,” *New York Times*, March 21, 1945.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ “‘Venus Fixers’ Won Their War, Too,” *New York Times*, January 20, 1946.

at least ninety percent of the art objects looted by the Germans were recovered. In completing the image of the idealized savior of art, the *Times* article noted that most of the recovered loot, labeled as irreplaceable masterpieces by the article, were being returned to their rightful owners for the enjoyment of future generations.¹²

American art recovery agents, or members of the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Division of the American Military, were commended for their efforts in 1947, when eight men of the Division were awarded the French Legion of Honor, addressed by a February 26, 1947 report.¹³ The event was once again covered two days later in a February 28 *Times* article which noted a speech given at the ceremony arguing that the recovery of artworks was the result of cooperation between the American military and French authorities. The French Embassy's Cultural Center, which hosted the award ceremony, would subsequently continue with the cultural collaboration because of the successes of past efforts, according to the report.¹⁴

The awards could only be described as good press for the American military, and so the *Times* published two reports for the one event. While not diminishing the very admirable successes of the Monuments Men, the decision of the *Times* to print the two articles reporting the same event idealizing the American military, when for much of the war for culture coverage the *Times* reported American profiteering from Nazi art purges as American acting as a refuge for 'degenerate' art, only supports the contention of an extreme amount of manipulation within *Times* coverage.

¹² "'Venus Fixers' Won Their War, Too," *Times*.

¹³ "8 to Get French Awards," *New York Times*, February 26, 1947.

¹⁴ "Legion of Honor Won By Ex-3D Army Men," *New York Times*, February 28, 1947.

America as Custodian of Art and Culture

The *Times*' coverage after the United States' victory in the war for culture continued to idealize America, a fete made relatively easier within the context of American recovery of looted art works. With the Allied victory over Germany in the conventional military conflict, America took the leadership role in art recovery efforts. According to a September 28, 1945 *Times* report, the American government also took on the role of custodian to German artworks readily identifiable as loot by the end of the war.¹⁵ The White House, according to the article, argued that the United States offered many of the unidentifiable loot protection and care, not available in the American zones of Europe; the *Times* noted also that the White House assured that the property would be kept in trust only as long as was necessary to ensure their safety and return them to their rightful owners. The *Times* also included in the report that many identifiable looted art objects had already been returned from the liberated areas of the American zone, the *Times* securing in its portrayal of art recovery efforts, America's role as a legitimate protector of European art.¹⁶ If the war for culture was nothing else, it was both an understanding that art is a legitimizer of nations and a responding struggle for the control of art. Within *Times* coverage, epitomized in this article and several of the others addressed in this chapter, America, as the custodian of art, was validated.

In addressing the efforts to return looted art to its rightful owners, the *Times* emphasized the American precautions taken to ensure the safety of the pieces. According to a December 7, 1945 article, a secret Army transport carried \$80,000,000 worth of art

¹⁵ "Reich Art Objects to be Shipped Here," *New York Times*, September 28, 1945.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

from Europe to New York.¹⁷ The *Times* argued that the secrecy of the transport was only one of the precautions taken to protect the cargo, assumed by the article to be paintings recovered from Nazi stores of loot taken from occupied nations.¹⁸

As the successful ‘guardian of art’, the *Times* argued that America had the right to dispense with recover art as it saw fit, including an auction of artworks to aid victims of Nazi persecutions. According to the June 13, 1948 article, a small portion of the property looted by the Nazis, to include almost ten percent of the jewelry, glassware, silver, porcelains and other merchandise, would be sold to help rehabilitate victims in Europe.¹⁹ The article did not clearly address the original owners of the pieces, an omission that raises several questions when considering the large numbers of Jewish victims of Nazi looting. The article also did not address the specific types of victims who would be aided by the auction; again, raising questions about Holocaust survivors. The article did, however, include a list of pieces on exhibition before the auction:

wrist watches, locket, bracelets and brooches in platinum and diamonds; gem-studded rings in platinum and gold; forty-two lots of unset diamonds, weighing from one to more than nine carats; quantities of gold cigarette boxes and cases; lots of unset emeralds and sapphires; flexible gold bracelets; numerous sets of silver flatware; pairs of silver candlesticks; a large group of salvers and platters; sauce boats, bowls and dishes and cigarette boxes.²⁰

The description resembles the visual imagery found later in the concentration and death camp memorial sites, specifically the piles of victims’ shoes and hair used to demonstrate the magnitude of the genocide. The auction’s pieces were also personal objects, but the

¹⁷ The article was printed two days after the arrival of the transport. “\$80,000,000 Paintings Arrive From Europe on Army Transport.” December 7, 1945. p1

¹⁸ “\$80,000,000 Paintings Arrive From Europe on Army Transport,” *New York Times*, December 7, 1945.

¹⁹ “Sale of Nazi Loot to Begin Here June 21 To Help Rehabilitate Persecution Victims,” *New York Times*, June 13, 1948.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

article's tone did not reflect the travesty that a connection between the war for culture and the Nazi genocide would require; the *Times* only objectively listed the auction pieces as a piece of news, again ignoring a seemingly clear connection between loot and genocide.

An article written almost two weeks later noted that the auction was set up to aid 200,000 non-repatriable victims of the Nazis, therefore also neglecting to address Jews as specific victims of Nazi atrocities; the report only noted that the auctioned pieces were objects unable to be restored to owners, or were assets of victims who left no heirs.²¹ The *Times* reported that the auction raised \$188,435, and so the newspaper successfully placed America as a savior of Europe and a morally conscious custodian of art, without having to possibly acknowledge American failure to intervene in the Holocaust.

The Ethics of American Control of Art

The ethicality of American control over European culture, even within the discourse of American custodianship, was a controversial idea addressed in several 1946 articles. One February 7, 1946 article reported that distinguished figures in the American art community had protested the transfer of 200 art masterpieces from pre-war collections in German to Museums to the National Gallery of Art's temporary custody.²² The protesters argued the removal set a dangerous precedent, bringing the integrity of the United States' policy into questions; the art figures even argued the removal has put the America almost into the "same light as Nazi art looters now on trial."²³ The criticisms

²¹ "Auction Here of Nazi Loot Nets \$188,435 To Help Rehabilitate Displaced Persons," *New York Times*, June 28, 1948.

²² "Transfer of German Art to U.S. Stirs Controversy Over Ethics," *New York Times*, February 7, 1946.

²³ *Ibid.*

and concerns were published just two weeks after the first meeting of the United Nations, an event that more formally brought the United States into the global power struggle.²⁴

Defenders of American custodianship, and therefore American control of culture, included Francis Henry Taylor, the Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. According to Taylor, by way of the *Times*, America, as a reward for American efforts to recover art looted by the Nazis, should have the right to control where the rescued art is held, for how long, and even attribute rightful ownership. Taylor argued that the White House had pledged to return the paintings to Germany as quickly as possible, notations addressed in previous articles. Taylor, according to the *Times*, also pointed to the authority of officials charged with the transfer, noting that the Chief Justice of the United States as the Chairman, following the orders of the President. Within this argument, Taylor is using the legitimacy of American victory in the war for culture and military war to defend American control of art, thereby giving credence to art as a legitimizer of nations.

A June 10, 1946 article noted correspondence from the White House and State Department that defended the transfer of the 200 German masterpieces to America for safekeeping against critics within the art community. Led by Dr. Frederick M. Clapp, Director of the Frick Collection and Juliana Force, Director of the Whitney Museum, ninety-five prominent members of the art world sent President Truman a signed resolution protesting the removal of the artworks to America.²⁵ The *Times* included sections of Clapp and Force's letter:

²⁴ The United Nations was founded on October 24, 1945.

²⁵ "Removal of German Art to the U.S. Renews Controversy Over Ethics," *New York Times*, June 10, 1946.

We, and our ninety-five colleagues in museums and universities who have had long experience with old paintings and are interested in the history and preservation of works of art, would also be glad to know when the pictures referred to are returned to Germany since we are as yet uninformed whether the conditions which are held not to warrant their return are of a practical or a political nature... This question obviously cannot but be uppermost in our minds in view of the fact that present conditions in Germany are apparently such as to warrant leaving there thousands of German-owned works of art of great moment which belong not only to the Kaiser Friedrich Museum but to the museums of other cities in the American zone, including the great collection of the Alte Pinakothek in Munich, where under satisfactory conditions and auspices an exhibition of early German art, including masterpieces by Durer, Grunewald and others, is now being held... It is in fact one of our perplexities that we have never been told why our officials discriminated against important pictures and art objects (many times the number of those urgently transported to this country for safekeeping) which were also formerly in the Kaiser Friedrich and other museums, not forgetting those which were in South German churches. Were they just left to their fate?²⁶

The letter began with a kind of explanation of the authors' standing in the art community, so the questions put to the President would be given merit. The first point of concern addressed was whether America was in actuality holding the pieces for security reasons, or if the government was profiting from its role of conservatorship. The letter defended its accusations by noting the assumed relative safety of other masterpieces left in American-occupied Europe, thereby questioning the reasoning behind removing certain artworks to America for 'safety'. This was the only point within the *Times*' coverage of the war for culture in which the legitimacy of the image of America as a refuge of art was called into question.

The article concluded with the President's Secretary's promise, given in a responding letter, that the American government would honor its pledge to return the

²⁶ "Removal of German Art to the U.S. Renews Controversy Over Ethics," *Times*.

works, as soon as “conditions warrant”.²⁷ While this *Times* report did portray some dissension within American society over American use of recovered art and despite the fact that no plans were set for the pieces return and no further shipments of art pieces were scheduled, according to the *Times* report, the *Times* ultimately emphasized the right of America to control art as its custodian.

American Exhibitions of Recovered Nazi Loot

The 1937 ‘Degenerate’ Art Exhibitions in Germany were organized to promote ideological propaganda, specifically Nazi ideals of the superiority of National Socialist art over that of modern and Jewish art. America arranged its own ‘Degenerate’ Art Exhibitions throughout 1938 and 1939, with its own propagandist intent to show the barbarism of Germany. The Exhibitions of ‘Nazi loot’ arranged in the three years after the end of World War II reflected similar motivations to the ‘Degenerate’ art exhibitions in 1937. The various shows of art looted by the Nazis and recovered by the Allied art recovery units, had a singular purpose: to reflect the superiority of the Allies over the defeated Germany. The *Times*’ coverage of these shows characterized America as the custodian of art once again, and emphasized American right to exhibit the results of their art recovery effort. Like the ‘Degenerate’ Art shows in both Germany and America, the exhibitions of loot, as portrayed by the *Times*, also reflected the general American population’s desire to see masterpieces normally out of their reach. Both the American ‘Degenerate’ art exhibitions and ‘Nazi looted art’ exhibitions, as reported by the *Times*, idealized the America’s intervention in the war for culture. The exhibitions of loot would in other discourses be discussed as spoils of war, won by the Americans in their victory

²⁷ “Removal of German Art to the U.S. Renews Controversy Over Ethics,” *Times*.

over the Nazis, earned by their leadership role in art recovery efforts. Although the *Times* does emphasize America rights to control of European art, the newspaper's coverage does not define Nazi looted art as 'spoils of war', most probably because the first decade of war for culture coverage that vilified the Nazis for their own war profiteering. Instead, the *Times* placed the exhibitions of recovered loot as points of magnanimousness of the Americans who would share 'European culture' with the world.

According to one October 3, 1944 *Times* article, art treasures created or assembled by one civilization "belong to the world as well."²⁸ This sense of entitlement portrayed in the *Times* was reminiscent of the National Socialist push for a national art; while the politicization of art by both Germany and America was clear in looking at the war for culture coverage as a whole, the *Times* refused to place the American nationalizing process within the same context of Nazi Germany.²⁹ Therefore, the exhibitions of looted art, although absolutely propagandist shows used to legitimize and idealize America, were portrayed by the *Times* only as exhibitions meant to share cultural treasures with the world.³⁰

²⁸ Art is definably a representative piece that encourages participation and survives on public connections to the pieces. Therefore, the *Times*' argument that art is owned by the world, not just the culture that created or collected it, is a notable contention. Part of this argument of ownership of art could stem from the Allies' successes at this point in recovering and protecting art, an influence that becomes stronger as the war for culture progresses and the Allies win their war for culture.

"Art Treasures of France," *New York Times*, October 3, 1944.

²⁹ Memory is a subjective experience that sustains a particular relationship of power. Public memory is an intersection of the vernacular and official.

Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method." *The Collective Memory Reader*. Eds Jeffrey K. Olick, Verde Winitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 198.

John Bodner, "Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century." *The Collective Memory Reader*. Eds Jeffrey K. Olick, Verde Winitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 265.

³⁰ The photographic exhibition prepared by Life Magazine, "Fine Arts Under Fire- From Cassino to Colognes," is another propagandist show meant to reflect the devastation of historical artworks and

Göring's Collection

Under the discourse of the United States as the custodians of art, it is understandable that the military units who actually participated in recovery of Nazi loot would also exhibit their successes. The United States 101st Airborne Division presented an art show titled "Goering's Art Collection," according to a May 21, 1945 front page article. The show was comprised of the recovered loot formerly "owned" by Goering, estimated by the *Times* to be worth 200 million dollars.

Within the article, the 101st described Göring as "either one of the wealthiest men in the world or one of the most discriminating thieves in history."³¹ The collection, while not catalogued, included ten Van Dykes, fifteen Bouchers, nine Rembrandts, twenty Hubert Robert's, and multiple Watteaus, Fragonards and Goyas. The parts of the collection on display were found a few days before the article's publication in a bricked-up air raid shelter and in Göring's train found near by. The article notes that the recovered artworks were part of Göring's private collection, not meant for inclusion in German museums under Göring's name, thereby once again defining Göring by his opportunism, similar to the articles addressed in Chapter Two.³²

A second article on June 10, 1945 noted that the exhibit was available only for GI's and described the 'Göring Exhibit' as 'one of the strangest art exhibitions in history.'³³ Contradicting the previous report which argued that Göring planned to keep his collection to himself, the second article reports that Göring planned to give the

monuments in Europe, and the efforts made by the fine arts branch of the army to repair them, according to the June 14, 1946 report.

"War Ruins of Art Shown in Display," *New York Times*, June 14, 1946.

³¹ Richard J.H. Johnston. "Goering's Private Art Collection, Put at \$200,000,000, Is on Show," *New York Times*, May 21, 1945.

³² Ibid.

³³ "'Liberate' Nazi Loot," *New York Times*, June 10, 1945.

collection, valued conservatively at \$200,000,000, to the German people for his sixtieth birthday. This second June *Times* report argued that Göring had wanted his gifted art collection to be one of the “great and cultural things” he wanted to bring to Germany, defining Göring’s looting motivations as nationalistic, in contrast to the previous report, and reports addressed in Chapter Three that define Göring only by his opportunism. The contradictions between the articles did not pose a significant obstacle- both reports vilify the Nazis, through Göring’s looting, and idealize America, through the efforts of the military recovery efforts, and so *Times* culture war propaganda thrives.³⁴

Loans From Grateful Nations

The right of Americans to exhibit art recovered by the United States military was somewhat legitimized by the art loans to America from formerly occupied nations, as rewards for American art recover successes. The success of the art recovery efforts in general was given largely to the American army, according to a Dr. Alphonsus Vorenkamp who proclaimed in an August 29, 1946 article that “thanks to the work of the American Army of Occupation”, eighty percent of the loot taken by the Nazis from the private collections in the Netherlands has been recovered and returned.³⁵ Vorenkamp argued, according to the *Times*, that it was only through the preparation and effectiveness of the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Branch of the United States Army, that Dutch

³⁴ The second *Times* report also suggests Göring acquired the collection through requisitions and forced sales from private homes and art museums throughout Europe, via Task Force Rosenberg. The article does not explain the antisemitic ideology of the looting organization, nor the characteristics of the groups of victims. Instead, the article only describes the American military as ‘liberators’ of Nazi loot, reflecting descriptors used in covering the liberation of the concentration camps and European contention from the Nazi regime. The *Times* is covering both the conventional war and the war for culture, but had neglected to connect those wars to the race war waged against Jews. In the discourse of exhibits organized by Americans of loot, the *Times* did not make connections of looting and genocide.

“‘Liberate’ Nazi Loot.” *Times*.

³⁵ “Dutch Recover Art With U.S. Army Aid,” *New York Times*, August 29, 1946.

art could be returned to Holland. The *Times* placed the American military's efficiency in direct opposition to German adeptness, thereby showing American superiority over an enemy habitually defined in its culture war coverage as a highly efficient looting machine.

Out of gratitude for the return of artworks to Holland, the Netherlands had assembled an exhibition for the United States that would include some of the "choicer items" among the recovered loot, according to the December 8, 1946 *Times* report.³⁶ The loan comprised a collection of forty-six Dutch paintings looted by the Nazis for an exhibition at the National Gallery of Art.³⁷ The report noted simply that the pieces were originally looted for either Göring's personal collection, or for Adolf Hitler and his museum at Linz.

The exhibition of Netherlands' loans progressed around the art world, finally showing at the Metropolitan Museum, noted in a June 22, 1947 article. The Netherlands' collection, prior to its stop at the Met, were loaned to thirteen institutions across America whose staff are members of the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives section of the US army, in appreciation for their roles in recovery of the pieces.³⁸ Slightly more specific than the previous article covering the exhibition, this June article noted that all but two of the pieces exhibited were formerly apart of Hitler's Linz collection. (The other two were Göring's). On June 30, another *Times* report simply noted that the exhibition of "paintings looted from the Netherlands by the Nazis and safely returned, through the

³⁶ "Dutch Recover Art With U.S. Army Aid," *New York Times*, August 29, 1946.

³⁷ "Art Loot of Nazis on View in Capital," *New York Times*, December 8, 1946.

³⁸ "Dutch Art Treasures Nazis Stole in War To Be Shown at Metropolitan Museum," *New York Times*, June 22, 1947.

instrumentality of the Monuments... Commission, is now at the Metropolitan Museum.³⁹

Despite American desires to share their spoils of war with the world, the collection of the Dutch Paintings could not travel to every place that would host it because the numerous years in exile and the additional extended tour in America caused the owners of the treasures to long for a reunion, according to the *Times* on July 1, 1947. Therefore, the choice of exhibition hosts were decided based on the connections of the museums to personnel who served in the Art Recovery Units.⁴⁰

The exhibition's tour ended a year later, according to a May 8, 1948 article, which noted that the \$250,000 worth of Dutch paintings were shipped onto a Holland-American Liner for the return of the pieces to the Netherlands. The article also reported that the collection had previously circulated America and Canada since December of 1946, but that upon arrival in Holland, the works would be returned to their owners, including museums and private individuals.⁴¹ Four months later, the *Times* finally reported the 'homeward journey' of the pieces.⁴²

The multitude of articles in the *Times* covering the traveling exhibition pointed to both the esteem given to the art recovery efforts of the American military, and to the interest garnered from the catchphrase 'Nazi loot.' Much like 'Degenerate Art' exhibitions discussed in Chapter One, 'Nazi Loot' shows were attractions to the American public as rare opportunities to see masterworks, and as a physical manifestation of the American victory over the Nazis in both the conventional and culture

³⁹ "Museum to Show Dutch Art Work," *New York Times*, June 30, 1947.

⁴⁰ Edward Alden Jewell. "Art Booty of War Shown at Museum," *New York Times*, July 1, 1947.

⁴¹ "Dutch Art Shipped Home," *New York Times*, May 8, 1948.

⁴² "Shipping New and Notes: Transport Sultan Sails With Art Work Found After War in German Cave," *New York Times*, September 18, 1948.

wars. The brief concerns addressed by the newspaper over the ethicality of holding and displaying recovered loot seems largely influential in the *Times*' coverage of the war for culture; the United States is wholly legitimized through its control of art.

Kaiser Friedrich Museum Exhibition

Reflecting strongly the similarities between the shows of 'Degenerate' art and 'Nazi Loot' was the American exhibit of 202 paintings from the Berlin Kaiser Friedrich Museum, described by a March 14, 1948 article as the "most important single group of old masters ever seen in America."⁴³ The article argued that the collection offered Americans the unique opportunity to see a concentration of "richness of great art", while the collection was being kept in America under 'protective custody' for the two years after the war, until the pieces could safely be returned to the rightful owners.⁴⁴ This article, like the many previous, characterized the American exhibit as an event meant to share the treasure that is 'European culture' with the average population. The article also noted within this American-savior discourse that most of the works looted by the Nazis had been recovered by this time; unidentifiable art remained in the Allied occupied zones and works purchased through legitimate means by the Nazi leaders would be given to the German people, according to the report.⁴⁵

The reluctance to return many of the recovered loot to Europe was based on concerns for the safety of the pieces, a subject also addressed in many previous articles, pointing to the importance given to art within America, and the *Times*. Noting both the efficiency and destructiveness of the Nazis and the potential threat of the Russians for art

⁴³ "Reich Art to be Shown and Returned," *New York Times*, March 14, 1948.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

in Europe, the publishing house Common Cause, Inc. had urged that the 202 Kaiser Freiderich masterpieces scheduled for return to Germany, should instead be kept in America, according to the April 6, 1948 article.⁴⁶ The *Times* also reported that the transfer of the collection to America had originally drawn criticism from American groups arguing that Berlin, Germany, was safe enough for the collection and that in removing the collection, the American Government was “depriving Germans of their cultural rights.”⁴⁷ The *Times* did not give the criticisms any credence, quickly pointing to the potential threats the Soviets posed in Europe. While only a small part of the overall article, the *Times*’ notation of the Soviets as an enemy, reflects the transition within the *Times*’ coverage of the war for culture enemies; in the context of the Cold War, the former ally, the Soviets, must now be addressed as a potential threat, not only to democracy, but also to American control of art and culture.

The collection, while under the guardianship of America, was held in the National Gallery in Washington, where, according to an April 6, 1948 article, attendance records were broken when the pieces were put on display. The article also reported that the War Department had declared the collection safe to ship back to Germany, despite both previous articles pointing to the dangers of Europe and the desire of several art institutions to exhibit the display, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art. According to the article, the Metropolitan had argued for the postponement of the collection’s return to Germany, but a decision had not been reached by the War Department at the time of the article’s publication.⁴⁸ The return of the German-owned paintings from the National

⁴⁶ “Group Would Hold German Paintings,” *New York Times*, April 6, 1948.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Gallery, was still unsettled at the time of an April 25, 1948 article.⁴⁹ The Senate Armed Services Committee was ‘sympathetic’ to six more American exhibitions, according to the article, but the House, along with the Department of the Army and State, were opposed to the suggestion, insistent that the immediate return of the art pieces to Germany was a ‘diplomatic necessity.’ The *Times* article does not reference other articles that address the ethicality of keeping the works in America, or examples of other ‘Nazi loot’ exhibitions; the article simply noted that the exhibition of the collection had ‘dramatically proved’ that Americans have a great interest in art; in emphasizing that over 880,000 individuals had visited the show in just four weeks, the *Times* was again pointing to the legitimacy of America sharing European art with the world.⁵⁰ America, revered by the *Times* as a cultivated and civilized nation, was therefore “justified,” according to the article, in seeing and exhibition European owned art for as long as it wanted, despite the ‘diplomatic’ concerns addressed in the article. The *Times* to this point of its coverage had clearly defined art and culture as a ‘right’, not just a privilege of the upper class. According to the *Times*: “We do not want to loot or to buy such art treasures of other nations, but we would like to see them. To ask such *beaux gestes* as loan exhibitions from Marshall Plan countries are surely not presumptuous.”⁵¹

The Metropolitan won its turn to exhibit the Friederich Collection and according to the *Times* on May 23, 1948, the extended tour became more successful as an American exhibition with its transfer to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. To the *Times*, the Metropolitan offered more space, clearer lighting, affective labeling of works

⁴⁹ “The German Pictures: Future Shows?,” *New York Times*, April 25, 1948.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

(individually and by school), and a generally more impressive showing than the more crowded exhibition of the National Gallery in Washington.⁵² The *Times* does note that the Met's exhibition was not complete, as parts of the collection had been selected for 'early' return to the American zone in Germany; fortunately, according to the *Times*, the wonderful exhibition at the Metropolitan made up for the absence of the returned pieces. The article also notes that the exhibition at the Metropolitan represented the end of the efforts of both the press and the public to retain the artworks in the United States for a national showing, before their return to Germany.⁵³ Within this notation, the *Times* defined American perceived authority over art as supported throughout the American press and larger American society, thereby describing the whole of America as invested in the continuation of the war for culture, for the struggle between the exhibitions of loot in America and the return of collections to Europe marks the final aspect of the war for culture.⁵⁴

The coverage of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum collection closed with a June 8, 1948 'Letter to the Editor':

I wish to thank the *New York Times* for its part in bringing the exhibitions of German paintings to New York. Seeing them was a most satisfying experience- with one exception. It seems to me singularly unfitting to return to Germany the paintings of Rembrandt, especially that of a rabbi and of 'Moses Breaking the Tablets of the Law.' To a lesser extent this applies also to his paintings on other themes from the Old Testament. Considering what Germany did to the country and people of the painter,

⁵² "Reich Art Treasures," *New York Times*, May 23, 1948.

⁵³ "German Art Here For Show Monday," *New York Times*, May 14, 1948.

⁵⁴ By June 14, 1948, the *Times* noted that fifty-four paintings of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum Collection have been returned to Germany from the United States and were now on exhibition in Munich. The article noted that 146 other works would be returned soon. A 'Postscript on German Art' on September 19, 1948 notes simply that the exhibition of returned works has been drawing large crowds, ranging from two thousand to three thousand daily.

"Art Back in Germany," *New York Times*, June 14, 1948.

"Postscript on German Art," *New York Times*, September 19, 1948.

and to the people that inspired his art, I would like to see these paintings given either to the Netherlands or to Israel as a part of their just claims for reparation. -From Israel Korai, Brooklyn.⁵⁵

Within the letter, America is definitively characterized as a successful savior and custodian to art because of its willingness to share European art with the larger population. (The *Times* was also glorified for its part in winning the war for culture). The letter should be understood as a highly subjective source. While the letters to the editor could usually be taken as representative of the larger American perspective, under the discourse of *Times* coverage that is highly propagandized, the inclusion of a letter idealizing American control of art, should be considered to a certain extent as another form of propaganda presented to the *Times* reader. The multitude of articles in the *Times* covering the traveling exhibition, in proportion to the articles demonizing the Nazis for both looting and murdering, points to the propaganda within *Times* reports. Much like the ‘Degenerate Art’ exhibitions discussed in Chapter Two, ‘Nazi Loot’ Shows were attractions to the American public as rare opportunities to see masterworks, and tangible evidence of America’s victory over the Nazis in both the conventional and culture wars. The *Times*’ coverage of the propagandist exhibitions should also be understood as extensively manipulated to idealize American participation in the war for culture.

Connection of Genocide and Looting/German Art Policies

Following almost three hundred articles covering the war for culture, the majority of which have been addressed in this thesis, the *Times*’ discussion of the war for culture was briefly connected to the larger race war. According to a February 1, 1945 article written only weeks after the Soviet liberation of Auschwitz, store windows in Paris and

⁵⁵ “Letters to the *Times*: Transfer of Rembrandt Proposed,” *New York Times*, June 8, 1948.

multiple provincial cities throughout France were being occupied with yellow stickers ascribed with black swastikas and red lettering. Almost identical to those displayed by the Nazis during the occupation as notices for Jewish owned businesses, the authorities quickly removed the signs. While similar in appearance, though, the *Times* argued that the yellow signs of 1945 are protests against the French government's delay in returning property looted by the Vichy government and the Germans to its original owners, both Jewish and 'Aryan'. The signs simply reads: "This establishment has been stolen by a profiteer under the German occupation," but the use of an accepted antisemitic image to protest delays in property return is a significant occurrence, even if only addressed in one *Times* article.⁵⁶ Despite the fact that news of the Nazi atrocities, to a relative extent, had reached the international public, this article did not connect the use of the swastika within the war for culture to the Nazi use of the swastika in their war for race and space. The *Times* simply addressed the former meaning of the swastika in comparison to its use in the protests, but does not even hint at the implications of either meaning.

The article went on to report the Ministry of Justice's defense in the delays of restorations; the Ministry pointed to attempts to cover every possible case in a way designed to avoid innumerable lawsuits as the primary reason for delay. The article noted, however, that many of the victims of the looting and confiscations were chafing under the delay as they were unable to recover their former homes and other property.⁵⁷ The *Times* argued that, in general, restitution of property was difficult because of the wayward path many of the objects went in after they were removed from their owner. Under occupation, the Vichy courts for deportation for political reasons sentenced Jews

⁵⁶ G.H. Archambault. "French Protest Restitution Delay," *New York Times*, February 1, 1945.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

and many others and their possessions were subsequently put up for acquirement, according to the article, and Jewish property was turned over to the provincial administrators.⁵⁸ The provenance of the pieces also caused troubles because of the environment in which many looted properties were sold. Many times, the organization ordered the collections sold at auction, and because one piece can be bought and sold multiple times, the article contends, it is generally understood that only the first buyer would know of the illegitimate origins of the pieces. Therefore, the first purchaser could lose their new property because of the illegal provenance of the piece, but subsequent owners could argue ignorance to the provenance of the piece and remain the owner of the works, because as the author argues, possession is nine tenths of the law.⁵⁹ In pointing to the difficulties of returning artworks, the article lightly addressed the difficulties in finding original owners, especially considering former Jewish owners. The article clearly connected the antisemitic laws of the Nazi regime to German looting, but the *Times* neglected to explain the significance of that aspect of the war for culture, that is, if the Nazis are going to murder the original owners of a great majority of their loot, of course it is going to be difficult for recovery agents to return art pieces to their former owners. It is with this mistreatment of the *Times* that the characteristically idealized image of America as the savior of art within the *Times*' coverage becomes so blatantly identifiable as propaganda.

Within the context of a connected 'war for culture' and 'war for race and space', the *Times* continued to define the Nazis by their efficiency. As both a killing and looting machine, the Nazi regime was described by the *Times* as systematic and effective in its

⁵⁸ Archambault. "French Protest Restitution Delay," *Times*.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*,

efforts. A December 19, 1945 *Times* article, covering a trial of German war criminals, argued that the German efficiency in looting went hand-in-hand with their efficacy at the mass murder of millions of Jews.⁶⁰ And so, while only briefly discussed, the *Times* did address the genocide and looting of the Nazi regime in tandem. The article focused on the targeting of the Jewish possessions for seizure for the Reich and in the context of the war crimes trial, the *Times*, seemingly defined Nazi looting as a war crime, particularly for the atrocities attached to the thefts, that is genocide. (This article also notes that many of the looted treasures became part of the collections of the Nazi elites, specifically Hitler and Göring.) It is not until the time of the Nuremberg Trials that the *Times* sufficiently connected Nazi art reforms (looting) to Nazi race ideology, a fact that reflects a decade of neglect in covering the war for culture.

One of the final *Times* articles to discuss Jews as specific victims of plunder was published in March 10, 1946 to address the return of ‘cultural treasures’ looted by the Nazis from the Jews. A ‘Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries’ was compiled of 5,000 prints and manuscripts and 500,000 books taken from 430 Jewish art collections, archives, and libraries.⁶¹ The list of Looted Jewish Treasures was the product of ten months of work by scholars and experts working under the Commission of European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, according to the article; the catalogue covered twenty European nations and included 273 of the most important collections of Jewish art and books in non-Jewish institutions. The article was preoccupied more with establishing the art recovery agencies as an idealized champion,

⁶⁰ Tania Long, “German Key Plan Details Art Thefts: ‘Task Force Rosenberg’ Worked With Gestapo,” *New York Times*, December 19, 1945.

⁶¹ “Cultural Treasures in Nazi Loot Listed,” *New York Times*, March 10, 1946.

rather than addressing the significance of Nazi attacks on Jewish property during the Holocaust. Rather than emphasizing the face, the article only briefly noted that identification of the owners was made difficult in that many of the ‘cases’ were no longer alive, as “whole communities have been annihilated.”⁶² In order to locate the objects and their owners, the commission hoped to send a delegation of bibliographers, librarians, and cultural experts to Europe; the delegates would report the locations of art pieces and recommend the best ways to restore the works. In the event the cultural objects were lost or destroyed, the delegation would make suggestions on restitutions by the German government, according to the *Times* report.⁶³ As one of the final images of Nazi race ideology and how it fits within the war for culture, this *Times* article was disappointingly dry; the article simply related the most up to date efforts to return art to former owners without addressing the implications of the original looting.

Articles in the 1930s and early war years did not make any connection between Jewishness and art looted or purged by the Nazis and Jewishness. The slight change in reporting the connection of race ideology to art ideology in the *Times* post war coverage was too brief and unhelpful; the *Times* has already neglected to connect looting to the larger genocide for its readers, and the Holocaust had already killed millions of Jews.

Times’ Propaganda of American Enemies after 1945

The Allies achieved victory in Europe with Germany’s surrender on May 7, 1945, but the *New York Times’* coverage portraying Nazis as the ultimate enemy to America did not end in May of 1945. Instead, a transition occurred within the *Times’* coverage of continued vilification of the Nazi war machine for its effectiveness in looting Europe,

⁶² “Cultural Treasures in Nazi Loot Listed,” *New York Times*, March 10, 1946.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

towards identifying the Soviets as the primary threat to America, both within the Cold War, and the last years of the war for culture.

According to a November 10, 1947 *Times* article, the Germans were such effective looters of Europe because of their penchant for deception, methodology noted in war time articles addressed in previous *Times* reports. Key examples of Nazi lies, according to the *Times*, were documents presented to the Italian Government by the United States Ambassador, James C. Dunn, which showed the Nazis looting paintings from multiple galleries in Italy (including oils by Rubens, Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian) under the guise of protecting the works.⁶⁴ The documents were part of the opening of an exhibition of Italian masterpieces returned to Italy by the American authorities in Germany, a return that garnered great applause at the ceremony, according to the article.⁶⁵ Here, the *Times* had both condemned the Nazis for their deceptions and venerated America for its art recovery efforts. The documents disclosed the leadership role Hitler played in the looting of Europe, specifically noting that the German art specialists to help facilitate the plundering of museums, private galleries and other institutions gave Hitler.⁶⁶ The *Times* was reporting the documents more than two years after the death of Adolf Hitler, and yet the process of characterizing German looting by Hitler's totalitarian regime was still apparently of interest to the *Times*.⁶⁷ Within the discourse of wartime propaganda, the necessity to point to Nazi totalitarianism reflected a continued need to emphasize American democracy as the antithesis to its enemy's

⁶⁴ Camille M. Cianfarra. "Germans' Art Loot From Italy Traced by List Found in Rome," *New York Times*, November 10, 1947.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1945 in his Berlin Bunker.

dictatorship. This propaganda is especially significant in the context of the build up of the Cold War, a struggle between democracy and the communist/totalitarian regime in the Soviet Union. Therefore, the *Times*' continued vilification of Nazi Germany reflected not only residual war propaganda from World War II, but also a transition into Cold War propaganda, which similar to articles published 1933-1945, necessitated the idealization of America by the *Times*. The article also described the Nazi looters as performing their duties with "unusual exactitude," as they planned cultural subjugation and possibly cultural extinction of the Eastern Europeans, such as the Poles. In the end, the Nazi leaders were the ultimate looters, with their 'avaricious tastes'; for the *Times*, attributing Nazi effectiveness as looters and purgers of 'Eastern Europeans' was the ultimate anti-German propaganda.⁶⁸ The efficiency with which the Nazis systemized the murder of millions of Jews was notably absent within the report.

The systematic and opportunistic characterizations found in wartime articles of the German leaders continued in the three years after the military war's end. For the *Times*, changing the discourse of propagandized coverage of high German looters was unnecessary, the Nazis were the clear villains of World War II, as even the *Times* reports outside the context of genocide showed and so the in the last years of propagandized coverage of the war for culture, the *Times* persisted in its successful discourse of Nazi coverage. In an article published three years after Germany's surrender, the *Times* reported once again the efficiency of the Nazi looting machine, noting that while some of Germany's own art has been returned to the nation, the vastness of unprocessed claims for art objects would require two steel filing cabinets, seven feet in width and eight feet

⁶⁸ "'Venus Fixers' Won Their War, Too," *New York Times*, January 20, 1946.

high according to the September 1, 1948 article; the French government, alone, has submitted seven large volumes that list only looted furniture.⁶⁹ The persistence address of Nazi culture war crimes by the *Times* reflected more the continued war propaganda idealizing America, by way of vilifying the Nazis, rather than just demonizing the enemy.

The Cold War and a New Enemy in the War For Culture

From the victory of World War II over the Axis Powers, came another global conflict: the Cold War. America, and the *Times* as an internationally read paper, needed to evolve to reflect the changing perceptions of ‘American enemies’ in the new global conflict. During World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union were allied against Germany, but with the victory of the Allies, America and the Soviets emerged as the leading and competing global powers. The result was the Cold War, a conflict between Soviet communism and American democracy/capitalism. The Cold War played out over the next several decades in multiple ways; with America’s use of atomic bombs in Japan the Cold War became a struggle to develop atomic and hydrogen bombs, resulting in the policy of mutually assured destruction (if the Soviets attacks the United States with nuclear force, or vice versa, the attacked country would reciprocate in kind, thereby pretty much killing millions in both nations). The Cold War, theoretically was a non-military conflict, although American attempts to contain communism with Soviet borders led to the Korean War and Vietnam War. Generally, though, the Cold War was a conflict between ideologies, and so the *Times*’ coverage of the successes or failures of democratic America and communist Soviet Union, within the war for culture context, were very important in terms of Cold War propaganda.

⁶⁹ “Bavarians Regain Treasure Custody,” *New York Times*, September 1, 1948.

In terms of European looted art, the Russians zones of Europe were characterized by the *Times* as similarly dangerous to the occupation of Europe by the Nazis. One March 14, 1948 article compared the dangers for art in the Russian zones to the “Walrus in ‘Alice in Wonderland,’ who held his handkerchief before his streaming eyes while sorting out oysters of the largest size.”⁷⁰ The Russians, the article contended, were catering to the German population with an “active exhibition program” that reflected policies used under the Nazi regime, that is, the Russians were playing on the successes of German nationalism, heightened under Hitler, by exhibiting German old masters, according to the *Times*. The exhibited art pieces apparently, as noted by the *Times*, conformed to official Soviet art policies, as well as the former Nazi ideologies of morally uplifting art. Within Chapter One, numerous articles were addressed which reported the efforts of the Nazis to reform German art and ultimately control the whole of German (and European) culture through totalitarianism; in these reports, the *Times* emphasized the dangers of the Nazi dictatorship because of the desire to control all aspects of German society, an image portrayed as antithetical to American democracy, by the *Times*. The report of this 1948 article reflect images of Russia, similar to those found throughout 1930s and World War II period articles discussing the dangers of Nazism. Therefore, it would seem, the *Times* simply transposed its World War II style of culture war propaganda onto its portrayals of the Soviets, reflected in this article published almost exactly a year after the Congress passed the Truman Doctrine allowing millions of dollars to be spent battling Communist influence throughout the world.

⁷⁰ “Reich Art to be Shown and Returned,” *New York Times*, March 14, 1948.

The 1948 article also argued that art treasures were disappearing from the Russian Zone, noting that the Soviet Union refused to sign the Hague Convention and therefore never agreed to the policy that classified art as private property, rather than war booty. According to the *Times* report, Russia considered art a “legitimate reparations weapon,” a condemnable offense within *Times* propaganda of its enemies, although worthy of reverence when discussing American control of art.⁷¹ Continuing its propaganda program of culture war coverage, the *Times* argued:

However honest and forthright, our removal of the 202 paintings (significantly, those found with the gold) can be understood only against the background of the Russian attitude... The reason for their [artworks] return may lie instead in the report that America is beginning to learn how a cultural program could function as a handmaiden to an economic and military one in courting German good-will. We have acted with scrupulous decency and honesty throughout. Now there are intimations that we will try to ‘seem as good as we are.’ We, too, will implement, initiate and encourage exhibitions, give guidance and aid to German artists. In a full-fledged, organized cultural program art will play a part, and the return of the pictures at this moment may well be the opening step of such a program.⁷²

This article reflects the transition in perceptions of the enemy (the Russians are the new dangers and the Germans are the victims worthy of aid) as well as the irony of *Times* condemnation of the Soviets and idealization of the United States. The *Times* vilifies the Soviets for taking art as reward for their victory over the Nazis, (do not forget that the Soviets and Americans were Allies for most of World War II), despite the many articles addressed in this chapter that reported American utility of war booty, namely the exhibitions of recovered Nazi loot. The *Times*’ was absolutely manipulating its coverage to reflect propagandized images of the Soviets and the United States: evil Soviet looters

⁷¹ The Truman Doctrine was passed on March 15, 1947; “Reich Art to be Shown and Returned.” March 14, 1948. P x8

⁷² “Reich Art to be Shown and Returned.” March 14, 1948. P x8

and America the refuge; never acknowledging the similarities between the two, much like the *Times*' coverage of the exhibitions and purges of 'degenerate' art.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: *TIMES* REPORTS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE *NEW YORK TIMES*' PORTRAYAL OF THE WAR FOR CULTURE

Art created a dynamic in which the official powers (the Nazi regime, American government, and/or *New York Times*) conveyed their ideology to the public. This thesis has attempted to create a new discourse that combines the perspectives and focuses of many respected historians with the coverage of the *New York Times* into a new context that connects Nazi attacks on 'degenerate' art, Nazi looting, and also the responses of the United States to both. The culture conflict, or the 'war for culture,' was a struggle waged independently, and yet ultimately influenced by the Nazi war for race and space, the totalitarian need for control, opportunism, and the needs of a nationalistic movement.

Adolf Hitler throughout the 1930s attempted to create art that supported Nazi changes to German society and identity, while at the same time purging art that contradicted Nazi ideology, that is, 'degenerate' art. However, the Nazi regime was not alone in its efforts to use art as a conduit for its new nationalism; the United States also politicized art to legitimize democracy and America's place as a world power. In its coverage of the Nazi art reformation, the *New York Times* not only reported the various efforts within Germany to vilify and purge 'degenerate' art and American efforts to denigrate the Nazis, the newspaper also described a more globalized conflict over the physical struggle for control between the Nazis and the Allies, specifically the United States.

During Germany's conquest of Europe from 1939 to 1945, the Nazi regime, particularly the elites according to the *Times*, plundered its occupied territories. In

response, the Allies, the United States in particular, attempted to recover the art and cultural treasures that had been looted. According to the *Times*, America was victorious in its efforts to reclaim the treasures of Europe and so became the victor of the war for culture; additionally the United States held multiple exhibitions of recovered loot, shows meant to demonstrate American superiority as a custodian of art. Although the loot exhibitions were similar to Nazi shows of ‘degenerate’ art as propagandist, nationalistic events, the *Times* characterized both the ‘degenerate’ and ‘Nazi loot’ exhibitions to reflect idealized images of the United States. In this portrayal, and many other examples addressed in this thesis, are evident manipulations of the news that, whether intentional or unconsciously done, promoted simplified ideals of America and Germany: America was the democratic refuge of art and civilization while the Nazis were totalitarian barbarians destroying art and culture.

The *Times* characterized the war for culture ultimately as an example of Nazi totalitarianism, opportunism and barbarism, for the most part neglecting to contextualize the war for culture with the Nazi Holocaust or American antisemitism and anti-modernism. In this discourse, the newspaper vilified the Nazis by their dictatorship and idealized America as the savior of art and freedom. Art then, according to the *New York Times*, legitimized democracy in the battle against the Nazi dictatorship, a significant affirmation in the years immediately following World War II as tensions rose between America and Communist Soviet Union, culminating in the Cold War.

Chapter Two addressed the *New York Times*’ discussion of ‘degenerate’ art, coverage that was divided into three phases: (1933-1935), (1936-1940), and (1942-1943). Within Germany, Adolf Hitler was redefining ‘German’ and ‘non-German’ art. While the

German art reformation included both the positive and negative cultural eugenics, to draw from Steinweis, the *Times* predominately focused its coverage on Nazi purges of ‘non-German’ art, only noting that the Nazi attempts to create good ‘German’ art had failed.

The meaning of ‘degenerate’ or ‘non-German’ art reflected the larger Nazi ideology; ‘degenerate’ included anything by or about Jews, modernists and communists. Primarily in the early and middle 1930s, ‘degenerate’ art was purged from Germany, an event that most closely connected the war for culture and the war for race and space; both the Holocaust and purges of ‘degenerate’ artworks were influenced by Wilhelm Marr’s ‘antisemitism,’ Francis Galton’s eugenics movement, and Max Nordau’s *Degeneration*.

In the first phase of coverage, the *Times* briefly portrayed Nazi ideas of ‘non-German’ art holistically, that is, connecting Nazi antisemitism with their purges of ‘degenerate’ art, although the newspaper, as of yet, did not understand the attacks as a part of a larger war for culture. However, Nazi totalitarianism was also heavily emphasized in those early years of coverage, as well as throughout the *Times*’ reports from 1933 to 1948.

As the *Times* continued its coverage, it tended to focus more on Hitler’s dictatorship and the characteristic of a totalitarian regime as the primary motivator for Nazi attacks on art, slowly neglecting to connect the attacks on Jewish culture to the ethnic cleansing and genocide. Particularly in the *Times*’ second phase coverage of ‘Degenerate’ Art Exhibitions, both in Germany and America, the articles mostly characterized ‘non-German’ art in terms of modernism, rather than the full definition of ‘degenerate’, that is, modern/abstract, Jewish, and communist. In reports of American

acquisitions and exhibitions of ‘degenerate’ art, the *Times* defined ‘degenerate’ only as modern, and America only as a refuge for art.

The final phase of ‘degenerate’ coverage focused on Nazi looting of Jewish property; the quantity of articles directly connecting the war for culture and the war for race and space was small in comparison to the majority of reports emphasizing Nazi totalitarianism and opportunism as the defining motivators for looting seen in Chapter Three. However, the newspaper does through its multiple phases of ‘degenerate’ coverage describe the various facets of the Nazi idea of ‘degeneracy’, even if the effectiveness to which the *Times* conveyed those ideas successfully to its readers is under debate.

Published between 1941 and 1945, the reports that primarily defined Nazi looting as motivated by opportunism and the destructive impulses of a totalitarian regime, rather than characterized within the context of Nazi race laws or the Holocaust, were addressed in Chapter Three. The *Times* only fully understood the extent of Nazi looting after 1943; nevertheless, throughout its wartime coverage of looting, the newspaper aggressively vilified the Nazis within the context of extreme wartime plunder.

Adolf Hitler and Hermann Göring were defined predominately as opportunist, however the *Times* characterized Göring’s greed as simply another example of the Reichsmarschall’s penchant for collections and eccentricities. As a whole, the coverage of looting emphasized the need to stop Nazi war crimes against the art and cultural treasures of Europe, primarily Western Europe as the *Times* only addressed one Eastern European museum, and explicit ability of the Americans to recover the loot.

In the defeat of the Axis Powers in 1945, the United States became one of the victors of World War II. This victory in the conventional military conflict also helped Allied efforts to recover art and American efforts to become a major world power, if not the leading power. In the pages of the *New York Times*, the United States' victory over totalitarianism in both the military struggle and the struggle over the control of art legitimized both America as a savior and also validated democracy. This victory was the subject of Chapter Four, which presented *Times* reports of the Allied, primarily portrayed as the United States' efforts to salvage the stolen artworks and the subsequent American exhibitions of recovered loot.

The American savior of art image was seen throughout the newspaper's coverage of Nazi art reforms, but the articles published in the last years of the war and into 1948 reflected a more prominent idealization of America and subsequently a stronger defense for the United States' use and exhibitions of Europe's art treasures. For the *Times*, America had earned the right to control and 'safeguard' the recovered Nazi loot as the custodian of art and culture.

The *Times* followed several of the traveling exhibitions of loot, characterizing most of them as loans from grateful nations and exhibitions meant to provide average Americans with the opportunity to see European art treasures. While the Nazis were vilified for their spoils of war, the United States was idealized for theirs by the *Times*, another clear example of war propaganda within the newspaper. In the last years of war for culture reports, the *Times* transitioned into vilifying the Soviet Union as the main threat to European art and culture, a symptom or example of the coming Cold War.

The Future of War for Culture Research

The *Times* focused throughout its coverage almost entirely on the looting of Western Europe, emphasizing the areas in which America primarily participated in military conquests and art recovery efforts. Eastern Europe was neglected for any possible number of reasons: information on Western Europe was more accessible to the *Times* than reports on the East; the *Times* editors, journalists etc. perceived Western European masterworks and museums as more note worthy pieces; the predominance of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe offered little opportunity for descriptions of America in the savior of art and culture role. With the additions of both American and international sources, the motivations for the *Times*' perspective of the war for culture could be a more accessible discussion.

. The war for culture was not limited to a struggle just between the Nazis and America, despite the simplified portrayal by the *Times*. While the United States took the lead in art recovery efforts and is portrayed in the internationally read newspaper, the *New York Times*, as the refuge and custodian of art, war for culture research would benefit from an expanded view of the participation of the other Allies, particularly that of the Soviets. Also helpful in expanding 'war for culture' research would be a more extensive background of the *New York Times* business, a comparison to more localized American papers and to other Allied newspapers reporting Nazi art purges and looting, and also the inclusion of art reforms and thefts during World War II.

One emphasis of the *Times*' post World War II coverage was the transitional vilification of the Soviet Union as the new American enemy in the Cold War. Therefore, an interesting point of analysis would be to address whether the Soviets were invested in

the politicization of art during the 1930s and 1940s, and if so, whether its national or local newspapers covered the struggle as an autonomous war. Correspondingly, the coverage of localized American newspapers would be a beneficial point of analysis, particularly in comparing the effectiveness of the *Times* in presenting a national perspective of the war for culture. However, to identify or expand on all of these possible influences would have been impossible under the space limitations of this thesis; therefore it must be left to future research to expand the discourse of the war for culture.

The expansion of war for culture research would be a significant addition to multiple discussions, among which are genocide/ethnic cleansing, war crimes, war looting, and the place of art in nationalist movements to name a few. However, as its own discourse, the war for culture furthers several key themes of studies in modern history, most significantly: the tools with which national and global power are achieved, the role of media as a witness to revolutions and genocides, and the place of art and culture within wars, nation building, and a globalized world.

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