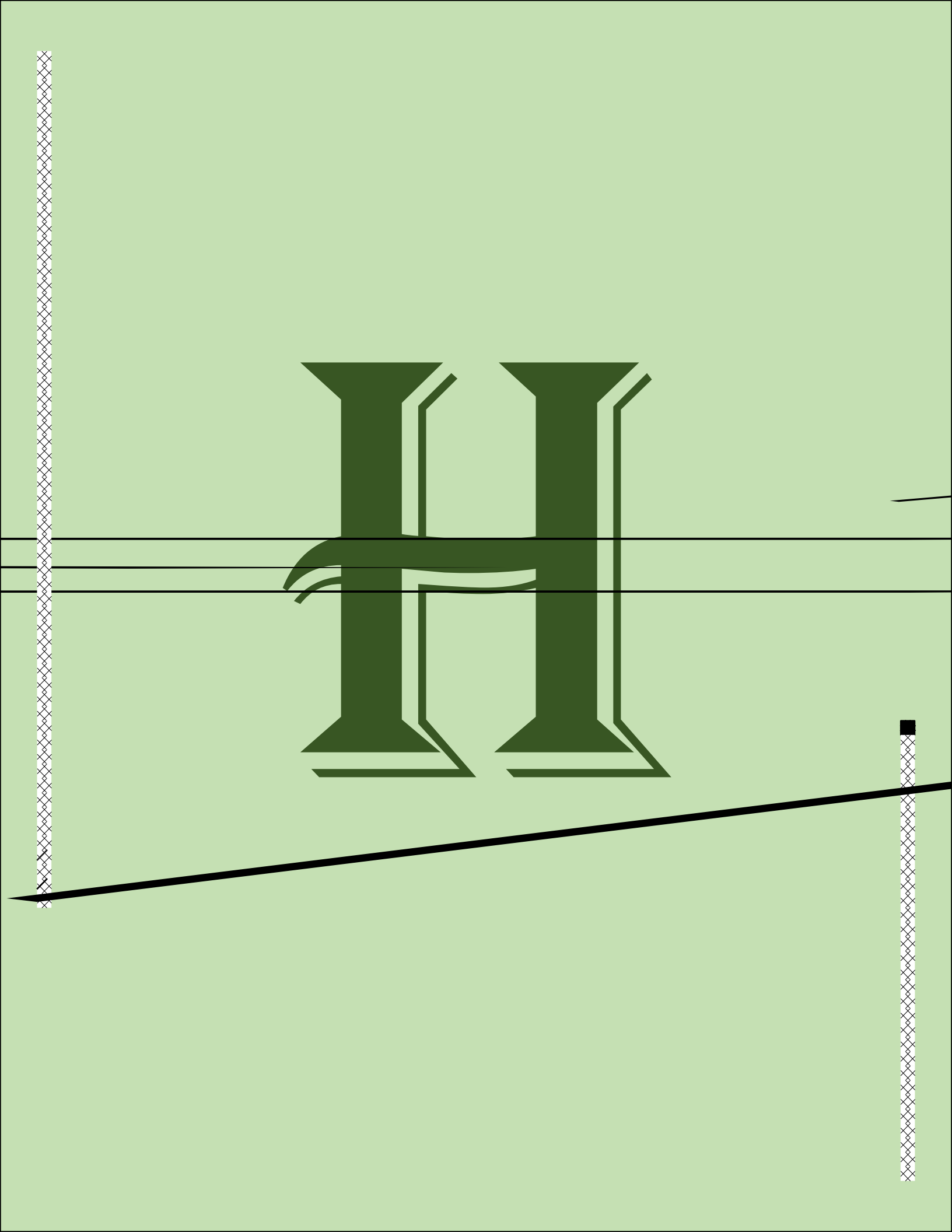

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Jeanne de Clisson, Jenna Brugger, pages 3-13

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What can be said about this story? Clearly, having her husband and the father of five out of her seven children executed, whether he was guilty or not, would have been cause for fury. As Jeanne had married Olivier in 1330 and he died in 1343, the five children would have still been adolescents when their father was killed. This in mind, there are reports of Jeanne having taken K H U V R Q V W R V H H W K H L U I D W K H U ¶ V [11] G H D W K ,Q W K H L U \ R X W K R I W K H V H Z D V R boys, these seem to be less the actions of a mother and more the actions of a woman fixated on the H Y H Q W Z K L F K V K H Z D V G U D Z L Q J K H U E R \ V ¶ D W W H Q W L R Q W W K H L U H Y H Q W X D O ¶ I D W H V [12] W K H L U H Y H Q W X D O ¶ I D W H V [13] deaths of her children. The gruesome methods of the Black Fleet must also be considered; it was said that Jeanne slaughtered all but a few of the crewmembers and personally beheaded any French noblemen she found aboard the ship, looting the ship of its goods before burning it.[14] These violent actions seem indicative of rage, a desire for vengeance so strong that it drove a noblewoman and mother of seven to go to sea for the purpose of killing.

The problem with this common retelling is that it is left unexplained. Jeanne de Clisson was a noblewoman and a mother. Why throw her lot in with crime and violence, even if revenge was what she desired? She had seven children to look after, five of which were thirteen or younger,

was still brewing[16]. If revenge was her sole motivation, why stop before she succeeded when she was never caught?

To begin, the political side of this narrative should be delved into with greater scrutiny especially regarding treason in medieval France. Olivier de Clisson supposedly confessed to crime of treason, having apparently turned against his friend and liege Charles de Blois to support his rival Jean de Montfort and stand with Edward III of England while he was being held in captivity[17]. Several treasons and other crimes were perpetrated by him against the king and the crown of France, and for alliances he made with the enemy[18]. Some sources say that de Blois reported Olivier to the king after Olivier was returned from capture for too small a ransom[19]. This was not a very good reason to kill off a loyal supporter and friend, so it could be speculated that de Blois fell into a state of paranoia throughout the conflict. Or another reason being that there was some secret vendetta that between the two friends which is left unknown. Other sources say that the English Earl of Salisbury reported Olivier to Fronch King Philip VI, a supposed act of high treason against the king's wife by Edward III[20]; in this case, it would mean that the words of an embittered Englishman were taken over the words of a Frenchman, and execution was the result. Paranoia and personal vendettas may have stuck on both sides, or that the conviction was just a story told to maintain the verdict which shocked the public. As all of this was occurring, Jeanne may not have been an innocent bystander. Following the death of her husband in the summer of 1343, Jeanne created an army of hundred men to attack French forces on

[16] 'XQFRPSEHUDWPHQ
[17] 6 + &XWKHOHUZ RI 7UHDVRQ DQG 7UHDVRQ 7&UDLPEULGJH/DZ8QLWHG.LQJGRP &DPEULGJH 8QLYHUVLW\ 3UHVV
[18])URL&UDQQLT,X,HVS L[Q
[19] 'XQFRPSEHUDWH :RPHQ
[20] &XWWOHHDVRQ

land before ultimately moving to the sea to become the famed pirate.[21] One must wonder how this could have happened so fast. As it turns out, in March of 1343 before Olivier was slain, Jeanne and some of the men she already had under her command as a noble were summoned to Parliament for rebellious acts. After five defaults, they were all convicted of treason in December of 1343 P R Q W K V D I W H U .[22] Jeanne had already been in infamy at this point, but the fact remains that Jeanne had been noticed by the Parliament as a source of rebellion before her K X V E D Q G ¶ V H [H F X W L R Q D Q G H Y H Q V X P P R Q H G I R U K H U G H H D a traitor, but she was not just an innocent wife and mother before the execution. Clearly she

> many scholars claim that after the Black Death of the fourteenth century, the status of medieval women briefly went up due to the dearth of people left alive. Surviving women could receive better wages due to better paying jobs being available and thus delay marriage, increasing their chances of survival[27]

However, none of the common options offered power befitting a noblewoman and commander of men. One occupation which did offer the chance of elevation was the joining of a religious order;

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Lady Bernice in March of that year,[38] but the concept of property in the tale of Jeanne de Clisson complicates matters. Some scholars claim that Jeanne did everything she could to raise money for her Black Fleet and thirteen-year revenge streak, including selling off what was left of her property D I W H U 2 O L Y[39] L H Hu w e v e r, W s p i t e D v e R Q o t e c t i v e p r o v i s i o n s o f Q u i s q u i s, t h e r e a r e U H F R U G V R I - H D Q Q H † t h e H a n d o f L o v e B e l l e v i l l e, h e r f i r s t h u s b a n d being taken as the de Clisson land was taken.[40] Confiscated land was given away by the king to enrichen his relatives; the land shared by Olivier and Jeanne was given to Louis de Poitiers, the count of Valentinois and Diois, and he utilized it through means such as rents while the de Belleville land was given to Jean, duke of Normandy, who also used the land for profit.[41]

offer any aid even if they were capable of providing it. Still, in light of this, it is important to harken back to how sources differ on Jeanne de Clisson's story. Some claim that she had already been an innocent bystander driven to rage while Others claim that she had already turned against the king, so perhaps the confiscation of her land was legal.[46] It is important to note that Jeanne was not declared a traitor until December of 1343,[47] so a confiscation of her lands before then would have been wrongful. Regardless of whether or not the seizing of her lands was legal, it was with her husband dead and five children to care for that Jeanne was.

Does the idea of confiscated land lead to Jeanne de Clisson's actions? Jeanne took her sons to Nantes to see the[48] [illegible] remains to inspire revenge in them for what she felt was an unjust death, or was there more to it: a graphic, physical depiction of how their future wealth and place in society had been stripped away? Jeanne only targeted French ships in the English Channel, killing all crew except for one or two passengers to serve as messengers and beheading any nobleman she encountered.[49] She destroyed ships after claiming the cargo.[50] Perhaps this was a message to set the entire system of nobles and royalty; she would take their property, their livelihood, 22 0.337 <59 (t)4 (l q 0 0 l3 ( )-490.137 rg /2B /

Brittany been sourced by a wrongful land seizure by the crown, resulting in an escalation of pre existing rebellious behavior in a violent retaliation? Jeanne retired and married the English Sir Walter Bentley, who held lands in England and Brittany before her revenge was complete.[52] This context could indicate an ulterior motive for the marriage, marking it as a strategic move Jeanne made for herself and her children. Did the Lioness of Brittany end her three-year run, having never been caught, because she found a way to reclaim what her family had lost? It was not as if Jeanne had never remarried before, and whether vengeful or not, she was clearly a strategist.

Jeanne de Clisson may very well have been out for retribution, but oversimplifying the tale into a tale of vengeance for lost love when the political, social, and economic climate of the time was so important to the analysis of the actions she took is a gross injustice. Historical figures well-known and lesser-known, famous and infamous, are oftentimes much more complex than their best-known interpretation and it is the duty of a historian to go beyond the simple explanation and uncover clues within the context. Jeanne could have been a grieving widow driven by fury, but she was also a

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Graduating Spring 2023, Major in History & Minor in International Relations

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Upon taking the oath of office in 1961, President John F. Kennedy inherited the duty to OHDG WKH QDWLRQ¶V EXUJHRQLQJ VSDFH H[SORUDWLRQ HI idealism, his inclination toward peace, military pressures, and the established rhetoric of space as the newest front of the Cold War. As Kennedy sought to assert the strength of his leadership against the threat of the Cold War, he emphasized the notion that space exploration was a competition with the Soviets requiring an American victory.[53] While his predecessor Dwight D. Eisenhower

> @ VSDFH SURJUDP ZKLFK SURPLVHV GUDPDWLF UHVXO[60]

memorandum reveals that Soviet space achievements, not humanitarian idealism, primarily motivateG .HQQHG\¶V ‡GHVLUH WR DFFHOHUDWH WKH VSDFH SU[61]

$FFRUGLQJ WR .HQQHG\¶V VSDFH UDFH UKHWRULF WKH scientific and military capabilities; it was a competition of ideological superiority. In an address given May 25, 1961, Kennedy discussed the progress of the American space program, declaring,

‡7KLV QDWLRQ ZLOO PRYH IRUZDUG ZLWK WKH IXOO VSH[62]

DO HWPVSDFH He also described the &ROG :DU DV D VWUXJJOH EHWZ PRY ì=°E@H

address at Rice University in 1962, Kennedy drew a moral distinction between American space

not only to the scientists and astronauts themselves, but to the entire nation.[72]

vLFWRU\ ‡LQ SDUW E\ LPSUHVVLQJ YRWHUV ZLWK KLV FODL
UHJDLQ WKH KDUGLQHVV[78] He advanced the notion that Americans should direct ·
WKHLU H[SORUDWRU\ LPSXOVH WR RZDUG WKH VWDUV[79] rather than to the earth
concept of the frontier is already fraught, given the long, bloody history of white supremacist violence against native peoples in the name of national expansion. Kennedy did not intend to evoke negative associations, though for most Americans more than a half century later, it is impossible WR WKLQN RI µWKH IURQWLHU¶ ZLWKRXW DOVR FRQMXULQ
imperialism.

.HQQHG\¶V DGGUHVV DW 5LFH 8QLYHUVLW\ LQ +RXVWRQ FRQTXHVW 2QFH DJDLQ KH GHVFULEHG VSDFH H[SORUDWL IURQWLHU · D SKUDVH UHPLQLVFHQW RI FDOOV IURP WKH S West.[80] In fact, Kennedy directly referenced the settlement of the West to establish the rhetorical FRQQHFWLRQ HYHQ PRUH ILUPO\ VD\LQJ ‡7KLV FRXQWU\ † DQG VR >WRR@ DV LRQLF FRQWUDGLFWLRQ[81] Kennedy used the language of conquest to characteriz+H $PHULFDQ H[SORUDWLRQ RI VSDFH PRPHQWV DSDU >VSDFH@ JRYHUQHG E\ D KRVWLOH IODJ RI FRQTXHVW EXW

P X V W ‡ E H W K H O H D G A[83]merican exceptionalism, Kennedy's view benefited not only the United States but the whole world.[84] Space exploration specifically provided an opportunity I R U W K H 8 Q L W H G 6 W D W H V W R ‡ V R O Y H > P \ V W H U L H V @ I R U V space was necessary to GHWHUPLQH ZKHWKHU RXWHU VSDFH ‡ZLOO EH W K H D W H U[85] of American exceptionalism. Kennedy intertwined with the second rhetorical theme that Kennedy introduced: the notion that space exploration provided opportunities for international cooperation but only as long as the United States remained the global hegemon.[86] This theme aligned with American foreign policy goals in the decades following World War II; the nation emerged from the war as the dominant global superpower, shaping the postwar order via its overwhelming influence in the creation of instruments of peace like the United Nations.

Despite the presence of American exceptionalism in this rhetorical theme, and despite frequently expressing that a primary motive for space exploration was competition with the Soviets, Kennedy demonstrated a genuine commitment to the concept of space exploration as an

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While cost-hesitancy was widespread, opposition to the space program was highest among %ODFN $PHULFDQV ZKR XQGHUVWRRG WKH [94] In 1966, the GLPHQV federal budget allotted four times more funding for space exploration than for economic opportunity programs.[95] Prominent civil rights leader Martin Luther King pointed out the disparity, VD\LQJ ‡µ:LWKRXW GHQ\LQJ WKH YDOXH RI VFLHQWLILF H committing billions to reach the moon where no people live, and from which none to present EHQHILW ZKLOH WKH GHQVHO\ SRSXODWHG [96] Even the DUH DO success of the moon landing did not sway the opinions of many Black Americans. Voicing the same criticism that King had expressed, activist and future Washington, D.C. mayor Marion Berry DVNHG ‡:K\ VKRXOG EODFNV UHMRLFH ZKHQ WZR ZKLWH $ $PHULFD¶V PRQH\ DQG WHFKQRORJ\ KDY[97] Reporters covering HYHQ U public reactions to the moon landing were met with indifference and even anger when they canvassed Harlem, where the mention of the event at a soul concert drew booing and jeers from a crowd of 50,000.[98] One Black bar patron expressed an additional criticism widely held by Black $PHULFDQV 1RW RQO\ GRHV ‡µ7KH ZKROH WKLQJ >XVHV@ F ‡µ7KHUH DLQ¶W QR EUR[99] Kennedy had promoted the Selective Service draft pil-

in the space program further alienated white Americans, whose criticisms justifiably suggested that the space endeavor was far from democratic in its representation of America.[101]

Black newspapers across the nation published opinion articles and political cartoons lambasting the space program, but the most acute and poignant criticism came in the form of a spoken-word poem by Gil Scott-Heron.[102] , Q ‡ : K L W H \ ¶ V R Q W K H 0 R R Q · + H U R Q M of real-life struggles of Black Americans†

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Z U H W F K H G S R R U D Q G [107] Student Peace Union activists, already disillusioned by government expenditures on war making rather than on social issues, were particularly strident in voicing this critique.[108]

This perspective was not limited to radical underground newspapers; it appeared in mainstream liberal media as well.[109] In July 1969, for example, the Washington Post published a cartoon by Herb Block depicting a satirical image of an American perched on the moon with his face glued to a television set, utterly transfixed. He is ignorant to the Earth below; the planet is polluted by clouds of war, poverty, and prejudice.[110] The cartoon appears critical of space

but for civil rights and antiwar activists, this rhetoric had the opposite effect.[146]

of the moon landing and of the Vietnam War, activists concluded that the United States had no right to claim that its political system was superior and that its motives for space exploration were QRW DV PRUDOO\ SXUH DV W1K4H&QQHDDWLORQ¶V MQQHDG\HVVKLSWFRO $PHULFDQ VXSHULRULW\ ZHUH XQGHUPLQHG EDFWLY LVWV and fundamentally imperialist.

Ironically, the space race rhetoric of the Soviet Union bore remarkable similarities to that of the United States. The Soviet government naturally emphasized the nature of the space race as a competition, but it also

tangible proofs of the technological and [129] In describing the success of Sputnik, Pravda F O D L P H G W K D W ‡ R X U F R Q W H P S R U D U L H V Z L conscientious labor of the people of the new socialist society makes the most daring dreams of mankind a rea[130] Soviet propaganda posters echoed this idea, glorifying the(s)39 (id 0.1-(0hA83 71

-XVW DV $PHULFDQV FULWLFL]HG WKHLU QDWLRQ¶V VS

Their criticisms echoed those of their American counterparts. To many Soviet citizens, the space race was simply not as important as the immediate struggles in their daily lives.[136] This was

RU IDLOHG.[140] By the late 1960s, when it was clear that the Soviet advantage in space was ORVW DQG XQUHFRYHUDEOH WKH 6RYLHW SHRSOH KDG E deceit.[141] 7KH\ ‡QRZ JUHHWHG RIILFLDO UHSRUWV RI h6RYLHW VNHSWLFLVP EX W The Soviet Union had once been a matter of national pride, hailed as a sign that the Soviet Union might eclipse the United States in power and prestige, had become D OD XJKLQJVWRFN DQG D KDQGV.[142] [143] DUN RI WKH 6RYLHW 8QLRQ

Likewise, the rhetoric of the space race reveals both the strengths and flaws of American democracy. Even aside from the objective significance of the moon landing, a comparison of how Americans versus Soviet citizens aired their grievances about the space program suggests the tangible importance of the American right to free speech. In the Soviet Union, public criticism of WKH JRYHUQPHQW¶V DFWLRQV LQFOXGLQJ DFWLRQV UHOD &ULWLFLVP RI WKH VSDFH SURJUDP SXEOLF GLVFXVVHG RQO\ RFF OHWWHUV RU SULYDWH FRQYHUVDWLRQV.[144] The Soviet press rarely discussed discontent in the United States, where Black newspapers, mainstream media like the Washington Post, and underground activist newspapers all criticized the space program with relative freedom. Additionally, the conduct of the two Cold War nations with respect to government openness reveals another strength of American democracy. Americans felt that the Soviet space program GLVSOD\HG ‡VHFUHWLYHQHVV RYHUW SROLWLFDO QDWXUH highlight the differences between the Soviet and American system by making the American space

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[140] *HURYLWFK ‡6SDFH +LVWRU\ 0\WKV ·
[141] *HURYLWFK ‡6SDFH +LVWRU\ 0\WKV ·
[142] *HURYLWFK ‡6SDFH +LVWRU\ 0\WKV ·
[143] *HURYLWFK ‡6SDFH +LVWRU\ 0\WKV ·
[144] *HURYLWFK 6SDFH +LVWRU\ 0\WKV

conquest. These themes, coupled with a comparison of between American and Soviet rhetoric from both the government and the world, provide insights into the strengths and weaknesses of American democracy. Today, the United States is experiencing political division on a scale not seen since the 1960s. Then, even the effort to put a man on the moon proved divisive rather than unitive on a national scale. With the increasing

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‡ V W X G L H Vthe lVXbyF K. Dakashima in 1994, have shownthat exposure led to increases in

V P D O O K H D G V L] H D Q G P H Q W D O G L V D E L O L W Why doesthis O O D V L

P D W W H U " % H F D X V H W K D Q N I X - related exKess of disease has been Qen u G L D

the children of survivors W K H I H D U R I U D G L D W L R Q S R L D Q R L Q L, L V V W L

an instructor at the Harvard Extension School, states in his article for Aeon Magazine:

> Radiation = Danger = Fear. Period.
> The truth, however, is that the health risk posed by ionising radiation is nowhere near as great as commonly assumed. Instead, our excessive fear of radiation – radiophobia – does more harm to public health than ionising radiation itself.
> In 2006, UNSCEAR [the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic 5 D G L D W L R Q @ U H S R U W H G µ7 K H P H Q W D O K H D O W K L P S D S U R E O H P F D X V H G E \ W K H D F F L G H Q W W R G U D W H « 5 D W H stress disorder was widespread, anxiety and alcoholism and suicidal thinking increased dramatically. People in the affected areas report negative assessments of their health and Z H O O E H L Q J F R X S O H G Z L W K « E H O L H I L Q D V K R U W H U

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by Yale University, only 47% of Americans claimed they EHOLHYHG WKDW ‡JOREDO ZD
PH SHUVRQDOO\ · GHVSLWH QHDUO\ EHOLHYLQJ WKDW L
that needs solving.[157]

Part of the persistence of fear is due to the secrecy and circumstance the military and governmen W KDYH DIIRUGHG WKH WRSLF 7KH\ ZDQW WKH ERPE
HIIHFWLYH ,I $PHULFD LWV DOOLHV DQG LWV HQHPLHV G
force it is currently being used as. The concept of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) hinges on this. Fear of the bomb has maintained its longevity, despite 77 years having passed, largely because of its fantastic PR team. Countless movies, books, documentaries, and think pieces have been produced, some even under the time of military officials, the Pentagon, and even presidents. They all have one thing in common, whether it is for the use of nuclear energy or against it: in the wrong hands, nuclear power could be apocalyptic. Even though the film itself is presented as V D W L U H 6 W DQ. Strangelove Lor: How I Learned to Love the Bomb is a prime example of this. Though Kubrick seems to be critiquing MAD, his film is just one of many that make the bomb out to be this annihilating force that is not secure and is constantly in threat of use. Its use, of course, is in the hands of mostly male officials who can safely hide away in their bunker while the average citizen gets maybe 30 minutes to panic before dying a brutal, fiery death.[158]

Violence and military might under pressure is a cornerstone of the American experience.

F H Q W X U \ : H V W H Q (X U R S H

What could be more violent than the ability to wipe out an entire city in less than an hour? There is always talk about how the massive loss of lives in every conflict is regrettable and, at the time, condemnable. Yet something that should be repeated. Except, when the next conflict comes along, the potential for lost lives suddenly seems like a necessary evil. The

U H D V R Q Q X F O H D U Z H D S R Q V K D Y H Q ¶ W E H H Q L Q D Q \ K X U U \ V

contU R O K D V E H H Q V R G L I I L F X O W 7 D O N D E R X W E H L Q J µ F K D U D

L V W K H 6 H F R Q G $ P H Q G P H Q W R I R X U & R Q V W L W X W L R Q % X W I

gun reform. In a study done by analyst Katherine Schaeffer of Pew R<0044>n w 03>]TJ ET 4rc haT7 (rin03

cars powered by tiny nuclear reactors, it may have just as many life-giving qualities as it does life-ending qualities.

Living in a post-nuclear, post-9/11 world that is simultaneously dealing with a rapidly

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OLIH ZLWK WKH +HDYHQO\ )DWKHU DQG -HVXV &KULVW EXW
UDFLVP DQG KRPRSKRELD

7KH)XQGDPHQWDO &KXUFK'R\ 6EOLQJV&KRUVWKRV)/DWWKH
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7KHUH DUH HYHQ GLVWLQJXLVKHG 0RUPRQ &KXUFK VXSSRUV
QR PDWWHU ZKDW DQG WKDW ‡,I SD\LQJ WLWKLQJ PHDQV
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PHDQV WKDW \RX GRQ¶W KDYH HQRXJK PRQH\ WR IHHG \R
DEDQGR[188] :RXOG D ORYLQJ DQG EHQHYROHQW *RG DOORZ
NHHSLQJ D URRI RYHU WKHLU KHDG DQG
8QIRUWXQDWHO\ LQ WKH 0RUPRQ &KXUFK RQH LV IRUFHG
VWDWHV ‡)RU , ZDV KXQJU\ DQG \RX IHG PH , ZDV WKLUV
DQG \RX LQYLWHG PH
FDUHG IRU PH , ZDV LQ SULVRQ DQG \RX YLVLWHG PH · +R
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