Cover Photo

Painting of Louis Armstrong by Leonid Afremov

Cover Photo

Painting of Louis Armstrong by Leonid Afremov

Volume XVII of Historical Perspectives is the twenty-second journal published by Santa Clara University’s Lambda Upsilon chapter of Phi Alpha Theta. This edition continues the tradition of providing its readers with articles that reflect the caliber of student scholarship at Santa Clara.
Volume XVII of *Historical Perspectives* is the twenty-second journal published by Santa Clara University’s Lambda Upsilon chapter of Phi Alpha Theta. This edition continues the tradition of providing its readers with articles that reflect the caliber of student scholarship at Santa Clara.
Introduction

The Lambda Upsilon chapter of Phi Alpha Theta annually publishes Historical Perspectives, an undergraduate research journal. For twenty-one years, students have submitted their best scholarship to be reviewed by the Historical Perspectives editing committee, a team of students and faculty. This year, we were fortunate to have an exceptional selection of papers to evaluate, reflecting the high level of achievement of Santa Clara University’s history students. We would like to thank all students who submitted essays. The variety of research topics, theoretical approaches, and writing styles illustrate the innovativeness and uniqueness of these pieces.

While the following selection consists of papers that are distinct and cover a variety of geographic regions and eras, the overarching theme of identity unifies them. “We should think of academic freedom,” wrote Edward Said, “as an invitation to give up our obsession with our own identity in the hope of understanding, and perhaps even assuming, more than one.” These eight papers, organized chronologically, each contribute to our understanding of identity’s importance in the study of history. In Christina Forst’s paper dealing with infanticide cases in Victorian England, she discusses the pathologization of mothers who committed infanticide, and how their transgression affected how they were perceived by society. Maxine DeVincenzi also studies the Victorian era, specifically its death culture, and how burial practices helped define the period’s social identity. In her paper “Wicked California,” Michelle Khoury explores how Gold Rush California’s structureless society provided miners the freedom to engage in activities that were widely unaccepted elsewhere, allowing them to form their own identities through leisure. Maggie Woods’ work on World War I propaganda examines the romanticized, false identity of American soldiers in propaganda, which was used as a recruitment tool. In “Tough on Black Asses,”
Introduction

The Lambda Upsilon chapter of Phi Alpha Theta annually publishes *Historical Perspectives*, an undergraduate research journal. For twenty-one years, students have submitted their best scholarship to be reviewed by the *Historical Perspectives* editing committee, a team of students and faculty. This year, we were fortunate to have an exceptional selection of papers to evaluate, reflecting the high level of achievement of Santa Clara University’s history students. We would like to thank all students who submitted essays. The variety of research topics, theoretical approaches, and writing styles illustrate the innovativeness and uniqueness of these pieces.

While the following selection consists of papers that are distinct and cover a variety of geographic regions and eras, the overarching theme of identity unifies them. “We should think of academic freedom,” wrote Edward Said, “as an invitation to give up our obsession with our own identity in the hope of understanding, and perhaps even assuming, more than one.” These eight papers, organized chronologically, each contribute to our understanding of identity’s importance in the study of history. In Christina Forst’s paper dealing with infanticide cases in Victorian England, she discusses the pathologization of mothers who committed infanticide, and how their transgression affected how they were perceived by society. Maxine DeVincenzi also studies the Victorian era, specifically its death culture, and how burial practices helped define the period’s social identity. In her paper “Wicked California,” Michelle Khoury explores how Gold Rush California’s structureless society provided miners the freedom to engage in activities that were widely unaccepted elsewhere, allowing them to form their own identities through leisure. Maggie Woods’ work on World War I propaganda examines the romanticized, false identity of American soldiers in propaganda, which was used as a recruitment tool. In “Tough on Black Asses,”
Laurel Bettis demonstrates how migrating north allowed African-American jazz musicians to embrace their own identities as respected artists, as they were more removed from the racial stereotypes that had defined them in the south. Andrea Dlugos’ paper “Virile, Yet Feminine” analyzes the effect that women’s participation in sports had on the formation of identity by examining gender roles in Fascist Italy. In “Japan Disarmed,” Ian Ghows discusses the transformation of identity of the Japanese soldier before and after World War II, specifically looking at Japanese social media. Finally, Elizabeth Marsden’s historical analysis of women in the United States military touches upon their struggle to form their own identities, for they face being labeled as either “whores or dikes.”

We would like to acknowledge the faculty, staff, and students who make this undergraduate journal possible. Specifically, we thank professor Fabio Lopez-Lazaro and Father Paul Mariani, faculty advisors of this year’s edition, as well as history Department Office Manager Mrs. Judy Gillette. Congratulations to those students whose papers were selected for publication. We are grateful to belong to a department that provides an opportunity to showcase student talent, research, and intellectual achievement.

Andrea Dlugos
Michelle Khoury
Student Editors
Laurel Bettis demonstrates how migrating north allowed African-American jazz musicians to embrace their own identities as respected artists, as they were more removed from the racial stereotypes that had defined them in the south. Andrea Dlugos’ paper “Virile, Yet Feminine” analyzes the effect that women’s participation in sports had on the formation of identity by examining gender roles in Fascist Italy. In “Japan Disarmed,” Ian Ghows discusses the transformation of identity of the Japanese soldier before and after World War II, specifically looking at Japanese social media. Finally, Elizabeth Marsden’s historical analysis of women in the United States military touches upon their struggle to form their own identities, for they face being labeled as either “whores or dikes.”

We would like to acknowledge the faculty, staff, and students who make this undergraduate journal possible. Specifically, we thank professor Fabio Lopez-Lazaro and Father Paul Mariani, faculty advisors of this year’s edition, as well as history Department Office Manager Mrs. Judy Gillette. Congratulations to those students whose papers were selected for publication. We are grateful to belong to a department that provides an opportunity to showcase student talent, research, and intellectual achievement.

Andrea Dlugos
Michelle Khoury
Student Editors
Acknowledgments

We would like to thank

Historical Perspectives Faculty Advisors
  Fabio López Lázaro
  Paul Mariani, S.J.

Phi Alpha Theta Advisor
  Fabio López Lázaro

History Department Office Manager
  Judy Gillette

And all of those faculty whose advice and mentoring contributed to the papers published herein.

  Andrea Dlugos
  Michelle Khoury
  Student Editors
Acknowledgments

We would like to thank

Historical Perspectives Faculty Advisors
  Fabio López Lázaro
  Paul Mariani, S.J.

Phi Alpha Theta Advisor
  Fabio López Lázaro

History Department Office Manager
  Judy Gillette

And all of those faculty whose advice and mentoring contributed to the papers published herein.

Andrea Dlugos
Michelle Khoury
Student Editors
Creators, Destroyers, and a Judge: Infanticide and Puerperal Insanity in Victorian English Courts

Christina Forst

Responsibility in criminal courts has always raised multiple legal issues. Culpability is a clear point of contention, as the intent behind crimes can often render a more lenient sentence. Asking a judge or jury to believe that there is no guilt often requires establishing some sort of caveat to the accused individual’s mental condition. However, this also leads to the question of how to reasonably punish an individual who it is deemed successfully presents this case. British society had certain legal norms in such situations during the 18th and 19th centuries. As with any type of lessened culpability defense, popular notions of medicine were central to the verdicts.

There was a general understanding of the medical risks to women. Childbed diseases often developed, and puerperal fever was one of those diseases. As it is currently defined today, puerperal fever is a systemic bacterial infection often as a result of unsterile birthing procedures, degenerating into sepsis if not treated immediately. Although the medical profession did not yet know about bacteria, there seemed to be a clear link between unclean doctors and the disease, as

1See http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/puerperal+fever?s=t

Christine Hallett notes in her article. The disease was greatly feared among patients and their doctors, as treatment was often ambiguous. It was this anxiety toward the medical condition that created the anxious nature from which puerperal mania was conceptualized.

In the current body of work, the connection between puerperal insanity, infanticide and medico-legal verdicts is weak. At times, there are strong links between two out of the three, but the clear cause-and-effect connection is not established. This paper will examine the perception of mother’s mental health through infanticide verdicts. As cases from 1829 – 1913 show, the link between madness and culpability troubled the courts as they struggled to balance punishment with mercy. As a whole, the English judicial system was much more lenient towards women at this time compared to other country’s judicial systems. However, this was not due to a general compassion or understanding of women’s situations. Instead, these verdicts were determined by a social medico-legal understanding. The verdicts that make up this eighty-four year period case survey represent the influence of a social conception of female
Responsibility in criminal courts has always raised multiple legal issues. Culpability is a clear point of contention, as the intent behind crimes can often render a more lenient sentence. Asking a judge or jury to believe that there is no guilt often requires establishing some sort of caveat to the accused individual’s mental condition. However, this also leads to the question of how to reasonably punish an individual who it is deemed successfully presents this case. British society had certain legal norms in such situations during the 18th and 19th centuries. As with any type of lessened culpability defense, popular notions of medicine were central to the verdicts.

There was a general understanding of the medical risks to women. Childbed diseases often developed, and puerperal fever was one of those diseases. As it is currently defined today, puerperal fever is a systemic bacterial infection often as a result of unsterile birthing procedures, degenerating into sepsis if not treated immediately.\(^1\) Although the medical profession did not yet know about bacteria, there seemed to be a clear link between unclean doctors and the disease, as

\(^1\)See http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/puerperal+fever?s=t

Christine Hallett notes in her article.\(^2\) The disease was greatly feared among patients and their doctors, as treatment was often ambiguous.\(^3\) It was this anxiety toward the medical condition that created the anxious nature from which puerperal mania was conceptualized.\(^4\)

In the current body of work, the connection between puerperal insanity, infanticide and medico-legal verdicts is weak. At times, there are strong links between two out of the three, but the clear cause-and-effect connection is not established. This paper will examine the perception of mother’s mental health through infanticide verdicts. As cases from 1829 – 1913 show, the link between madness and culpability troubled the courts as they struggled to balance punishment with mercy. As a whole, the English judicial system was much more lenient towards women at this time compared to other country’s judicial systems. However, this was not due to a general compassion or understanding of women’s situations. Instead, these verdicts were determined by a social medico-legal understanding. The verdicts that make up this eighty-four year period case survey represent the influence of a social conception of female


\(^4\) In this paper, I will follow the primary source material in which puerperal “insanity”, “madness”, and “mania” are used interchangeably.
madness, especially that related to childbed derangement.

I. Medical Background of Puerperal Insanity

In order to understand the legal verdicts, the medical background of the influencing condition must be examined. Giving birth in the Victorian Era was by no means an easy task. The medical profession was essentially based on trauma (surgery) and the level of care for delivering mothers was nowhere near what is expected of doctors today. Doctors were often minimally trained and more excited about emerging “technology” than the health of mother or infant. Midwives were present at most births but were colloquially trained at best. Given the medical profession’s state, it was no surprise that bearing a child posed an elevated risk of disease. Women were at risk before, during, and after childbirth. They were at the mercy of the medical field’s limited medical knowledge. Without scientific backing, many assumptions were made by Victorian medicine. Frequently, these observations amounted to half-truths, where Victorians were able to deduce practical generalizations, even if the reasoning used to get there has since been shown to be faulty.

Puerperal insanity would prove to be one of Victorian medicine’s faulty assumptions. Before explaining the reasoning behind such “insanity”, its medical background must be understood. Puerperal madness was often traced to puerperal fever. Puerperal fever first received its name in the early eighteenth century, but the general awareness of susceptibility of women to infections during childbirth was well known prior to the illness being categorized and receiving a title. Within three days of delivery, the sick woman suffered from abdominal pain, fever and debility, but women could also have headaches, “cold fits”, and extreme thirst. The wide array of symptoms made puerperal fever complex and very difficult for medical doctors to diagnose. The disease became so prevalent that it would be classified as an epidemic by current medical standards.

The leap in logic that Victorian society made was to link puerperal fever as a causative element in puerperal madness. The fever was a discernible physical ailment known to the medical profession; there were potentially traceable origins. Puerperal madness was more ambiguous, as it was a psychological condition defined in a period with little understanding of mental processes. It was divided into two main categories: mania and melancholia. Mania was the more sensational of the two and was therefore recorded more often. This outright defiance of Victorian gender norms exhibited in the women’s behavior would have shocked any witnesses. The women were said to have displayed behavior such as schizophrenia with random outbursts, usually of indecent nature. Melancholia

---

6 Ibid, 2.
I. Medical Background of Puerperal Insanity

In order to understand the legal verdicts, the medical background of the influencing condition must be examined. Giving birth in the Victorian Era was by no means an easy task. The medical profession was essentially based on trauma (surgery) and the level of care for delivering mothers was nowhere near what is expected of doctors today. Doctors were often minimally trained and more excited about emerging “technology” than the health of mother or infant. Midwives were present at most births but were colloquially trained at best. Given the medical profession’s state, it was no surprise that bearing a child posed an elevated risk of disease. Women were at risk before, during, and after childbirth. They were at the mercy of the medical field’s limited medical knowledge. Without scientific backing, many assumptions were made by Victorian medicine. Frequently, these observations amounted to half-truths, where Victorians were able to deduce practical generalizations, even if the reasoning used to get there has since been shown to be faulty.

Puerperal insanity would prove to be one of Victorian medicine’s faulty assumptions. Before explaining the reasoning behind such “insanity”, its medical background must be understood. Puerperal madness was often traced to puerperal fever. Puerperal fever first received its name in the early eighteenth century, but the general awareness of susceptibility of women to infections during childbirth was well known prior to the illness being categorized and receiving a title. Within three days of delivery, the sick woman suffered from abdominal pain, fever and debility, but women could also have headaches, “cold fits”, and extreme thirst. The wide array of symptoms made puerperal fever complex and very difficult for medical doctors to diagnose. The disease became so prevalent that it would be classified as an epidemic by current medical standards.

The leap in logic that Victorian society made was to link puerperal fever as a causative element in puerperal madness. The fever was a discernible physical ailment known to the medical profession; there were potentially traceable origins. Puerperal madness was more ambiguous, as it was a psychological condition defined in a period with little understanding of mental processes. It was divided into two main categories: mania and melancholia. Mania was the more sensational of the two and was therefore recorded more often. This outright defiance of Victorian gender norms exhibited in the women’s behavior would have shocked any witnesses. The women were said to have displayed behavior such as schizophrenia with random outbursts, usually of indecent nature. Melancholia

6 Ibid, 2.
manifested itself in more introverted episodes. Melancholic women suffered in silence, sunk into depression or extreme isolationism, making the melancholia category harder to diagnose. Treatment for both manifestations remained uncertain, with most doctors simply recommending rest and quiet. Whatever category the mother fell into, mania or melancholia, the pressure put upon her could be displaced to her newborn child.

II. Social History of Puerperal Insanity

For all intents and purposes, puerperal madness was a societal construct. There was no medical backing; any pattern of predicting how a woman could “catch” this mania could not be determined. Many causes for puerperal insanity were posited; all rooted in contemporary gender stereotypes. The leading theory was that the trauma associated with childbirth left the women debilitated, propelling them towards this frenzied mania. But underlying this reasoning were perceptions that women were either not in possession of a strong will, thus falling prey to the disease. Given the current understanding of the psychological stress put on Victorian women relegated to their sphere of domesticity, there is overwhelming evidence that new mothers at this time were physiologically stressed prior to giving birth.

Women were often to blame for their own illness, with English culture stating that they had somehow fallen from grace. They had become much too malleable, exposed to this devil waiting in the wings. Females were already shown to be the weaker sex, compromised by indecision, and made passive by their weak wills. It should be noted that women’s frailty was in relation to men, who could not understand birth. Pregnancy only made this weakness worse. The hormonal balance was upset and a woman was literally expelling the visible proof of the sexual encounter. “Pregnant women were considered to be subject to wild and depraved whims, quite unlinked to their ‘normal’ state.”

During labor, women were thought to become unhinged, and if the chaotic experience was sufficiently intense or prolonged, they were likely to develop acute and even prolonged mental disease.

Among more recent work, historians place a strong emphasis on the sphere of domesticity – the concept that women needed to remain in the home or at least have those tendencies. Women were under pressure to conform to unrealistic ideals and labor undoubtedly raised expectations. With women relegated to their domestic sphere, they were living, sleeping and eating in a large prison cell. If they could not afford to be relegated to the domestic sphere, women faced even more anxieties about poverty, societal pressure and impropriety of working. Women needed to preserve themselves so that their husbands would be certain of the paternity of their children. Sexuality had to be

---

8 Ibid, 3.
manifested itself in more introverted episodes. Melancholic women suffered in silence, sunk into depression or extreme isolationism, making the melancholia category harder to diagnose.\(^8\) Treatment for both manifestations remained uncertain, with most doctors simply recommending rest and quiet. Whatever category the mother fell into, mania or melancholia, the pressure put upon her could be displaced to her newborn child.

**II. Social History of Puerperal Insanity**

For all intents and purposes, puerperal madness was a societal construct. There was no medical backing; any pattern of predicting how a woman could “catch” this mania could not be determined. Many causes for puerperal insanity were posited; all rooted in contemporary gender stereotypes. The leading theory was that the trauma associated with childbirth left the women debilitated, propelling them towards this frenzied mania.\(^9\) But underlying this reasoning were perceptions that women were either not in possession of a strong will, thus falling prey to the disease. Given the current understanding of the psychological stress put on Victorian women relegated to their sphere of domesticity, there is overwhelming evidence that new mothers at this time were physiologically stressed prior to giving birth.

Women were often to blame for their own illness, with English culture stating that they had somehow fallen from grace. They had become much too malleable, exposed to this devil waiting in the wings. Females were already shown to be the weaker sex, compromised by indecision, and made passive by their weak wills.\(^10\) It should be noted that women’s frailty was in relation to men, who could not understand birth. Pregnancy only made this weakness worse. The hormonal balance was upset and a woman was literally expelling the visible proof of the sexual encounter. “Pregnant women were considered to be subject to wild and depraved whims, quite unlinked to their ‘normal’ state.”\(^11\)

During labor, women were thought to become unhinged, and if the chaotic experience was sufficiently intense or prolonged, they were likely to develop acute and even prolonged mental disease. Among more recent work, historians place a strong emphasis on the sphere of domesticity – the concept that women needed to remain in the home or at least have those tendencies. Women were under pressure to conform to unrealistic ideals and labor undoubtedly raised expectations. With women relegated to their domestic sphere, they were living, sleeping and eating in a large prison cell. If they could not afford to be relegated to the domestic sphere, women faced even more anxieties about poverty, societal pressure and impropriety of working. Women needed to preserve themselves so that their husbands would be certain of the paternity of their children. Sexuality had to be

---

\(^8\) Ibid, 3.
heavily repressed, abhorred even; women were supposed to be uninterested and essentially repulsed by any sexual advances. Once becoming a woman by entering puberty, women were confined to a world in which their sexual needs and general cognizance of their womanhood could not be acknowledged for fear of the creation of shame. Motherhood itself was incredibly complex. Producing a child was the culmination of the sexual act itself but was also necessary, as it was believed to be the purpose of a woman. The wife-mother’s purity was the key to domesticity. Making women too sexually empowered would disrupt the entire structure. They would not accept family life, not serve as an outlet for the husband’s sexual needs and produce bastard children. This asexual female was also an outward representation of the family’s success – the husband could prove his prowess and wealth and the children were raised as contributing members of society. Motherhood was understood in relation to every member of society except the mother herself. Weak-willed, incorrectly diagnosed, psychologically distressed – women were at a higher society risk for puerperal mania than they were for any other medical disease.

The consequences of the labeling of puerperal mania would prove to be quite extreme. Puerperal insanity tended to manifest itself in the form of behaviors that proper society would have considered incredibly vulgar: women who developed this mental condition were indifferent to the ideas of politeness, decorum, dress, and behavior. In a society obsessed with keeping up appearances, anything less than refined would have been egregious. Other symptoms ranged from simply eccentricity to infanticide. It was this infanticide that was deeply disturbing to any observer, although not exclusively out of concern for the infant. The practice of infanticide was a moral panic, arising out of concern for the moral stability of motherhood.

III. Turning Towards Infanticide

Committing infanticide was surprisingly easy in Victorian England. Women were often attended by untrained midwives. Having a doctor present for childbirth was a luxury only the rich could afford. Midwives were usually inept, sometimes drunk and usually untrained. In order to make a little extra money, these midwives would sometimes encourage their patients (usually of a lower class) to sell their babies, either into slavery, servitude, or death.

17 Baby farmers would dispose of the child for a fee. At time, midwives would blackmail their patients into handing their children over to these individuals. These women were often suspected of abortion, infanticide and various fake adoptions.
heavily repressed, abhorred even; women were supposed to be uninterested and essentially repulsed by any sexual advances. Once becoming a woman by entering puberty, women were confined to a world in which their sexual needs and general cognizance of their womanhood could not be acknowledged for fear of the creation of shame. Motherhood itself was incredibly complex. Producing a child was the culmination of the sexual act itself but was also necessary, as it was believed to be the purpose of a woman. The wife-mother’s purity was the key to domesticity. Making women too sexually empowered would disrupt the entire structure. They would not accept family life, not serve as an outlet for the husband’s sexual needs and produce bastard children. This asexual female was also an outward representation of the family's success – the husband could prove his prowess and wealth and the children were raised as contributing members of society. Motherhood was understood in relation to every member of society except the mother herself. Weak-willed, incorrectly diagnosed, psychologically distressed – women were at a higher society risk for puerperal mania than they were for any other medical disease.

The consequences of the labeling of puerperal mania would prove to be quite extreme. Puerperal insanity tended to manifest itself in the form of behaviors that proper society would have considered incredibly vulgar: women who developed this mental condition were indifferent to the ideas of politeness, decorum, dress, and behavior. In a society obsessed with keeping up appearances, anything less than refined would have been egregious. Other symptoms ranged from simply eccentricity to infanticide. It was this infanticide that was deeply disturbing to any observer, although not exclusively out of concern for the infant. The practice of infanticide was a moral panic, arising out of concern for the moral stability of motherhood.

III. Turning Towards Infanticide

Committing infanticide was surprisingly easy in Victorian England. Women were often attended by untrained midwives. Having a doctor present for childbirth was a luxury only the rich could afford. Midwives were usually inept, sometimes drunk and usually untrained. In order to make a little extra money, these midwives would sometimes encourage their patients (usually of a lower class) to sell their babies, either into slavery, servitude, or death.

17 Baby farmers would dispose of the child for a fee. At time, midwives would blackmail their patients into handing their children over to these individuals. These women were often suspected of abortion, infanticide and various fake adoptions.
Underlying these popular concerns was the problem of illegitimacy. The idea of a mother, married or not, selling her child (the product of her femininity) created a moral panic among Victorians. The very future of society was hanging in the balance and Victorians felt their intense morality dying along with the child. Thus infanticide was well published, creating a perceived epidemic and increasing the awareness of infanticide, disproportionate to its actual occurrence.

The problem of infanticide created two different class based problems. It threatened the notion of the angelic homemaker. Women were seen as intended to be relegated to, and competent in, their domestic sphere, as previously stated. Infanticide contradicted the idea of that doting mother. The notion of womanhood held dependency and compassion as central ideas. This was not true for the sake of the feminine sex, but to show the relative health of Victorian society. A woman who violated the ideal of motherhood, effectively behaving the exact opposite way to their supposed nature, suggested that society was failing. This would undoubtedly make Victorians, especially men, very anxious. Women were already the weaker sex, and puerperal insanity signified that weakness while also commenting on the social well-being of the woman who contracted the disease. Becoming a murderess meant that women were deciding their fate. This had the potential to upset the gender norms, but it simply served to show how the woman had fallen prey to another decision maker – her neurosis.

This idea of violating the previous established sexual and gender norms applied to those that could afford to be defined by those gender norms.

Being poor in Victorian society meant living in shame. It was the individual’s fault for their economic hardship, an almost social Darwinism frame of thinking. With the addition of the New Poor Law into British jurisprudence in 1834, there was a sense that the poor should be held responsible for their economic situation, an attitude permeated the law. Social welfare was highly discouraged, ensuring that being poor felt like a punishment, so as to discourage dependency. Women were especially cheated out of benefits in the New Poor Law, which placed limitations on their rights to seek help from the father of an illegitimate infant.

A woman with illegitimate children was often in the helping profession, making very little money and completely dependent on her employer for food and shelter. Much like other social concerns, Victorians felt that these illegitimate children were threatening the very social order. It was believed that reproducing was a right held within society, one only made available to married women. Lower class reproduction threatened the wealth and security of the country.

This distress of an entire society was put on unwed mother, already in a personally stressful situation. Modern psychology

19 Ibid, 220.
Underlying these popular concerns was the problem of illegitimacy. The idea of a mother, married or not, selling her child (the product of her femininity) created a moral panic among Victorians. The very future of society was hanging in the balance and Victorians felt their intense morality dying along with the child. Thus infanticide was well published, creating a perceived epidemic and increasing the awareness of infanticide, disproportionate to its actual occurrence.

The problem of infanticide created two different class based problems. It threatened the notion of the angelic homemaker. Women were seen as intended to be relegated to, and competent in, their domestic sphere, as previously stated. Infanticide contradicted the idea of that doting mother. The notion of womanhood held dependency and compassion as central ideas. This was not true for the sake of the feminine sex, but to show the relative health of Victorian society. A woman who violated the ideal of motherhood, effectively behaving the exact opposite way to their supposed nature, suggested that society was failing. This would undoubtedly make Victorians, especially men, very anxious. Women were already the weaker sex, and puerperal insanity signified that weakness while also commenting on the social well-being of the woman who contracted the disease. Becoming a murderess meant that women were deciding their fate. This had the potential to upset the gender norms, but it simply served to show how the woman had fallen prey to another decision maker – her neurosis. This idea of violating the previous established sexual and gender norms applied to those that could afford to be defined by those gender norms.

Being poor in Victorian society meant living in shame. It was the individual’s fault for their economic hardship, an almost social Darwinism frame of thinking. With the addition of the New Poor Law into British jurisprudence in 1834, there was a sense that the poor should be held responsible for their economic situation, an attitude permeated the law. Social welfare was highly discouraged, ensuring that being poor felt like a punishment, so as to discourage dependency. Women were especially cheated out of benefits in the New Poor Law, which placed limitations on their rights to seek help from the father of an illegitimate infant. A woman with illegitimate children was often in the helping profession, making very little money and completely dependent on her employer for food and shelter. Much like other social concerns, Victorians felt that these illegitimate children were threatening the very social order. It was believed that reproducing was a right held within society, one only made available to married women. Lower class reproduction threatened the wealth and security of the country.

This distress of an entire society was put on unwed mother, already in a personally stressful situation. Modern psychology


19 Ibid, 220.


understands this not as a woman not succumbing to pressure, but as due to some psychological stress or manic episode. A woman was punished for her sexuality and economic situation; this double jeopardy left many women with no choice but to physically remove the source of their social displeasure by killing their own child. It was not uncommon to suffer such a break more violently than other women, as the infanticide rate among illegitimate infants was twice as high as infanticides among legitimate children.\footnote{Ann R. Higginbotham, “Sins of the Age’: Infanticide and Illegitimacy in Victorian London,” Indiana University Press 32, no. 3 (Spring, 1989): 321.} This was the ultimate fallen woman, with a manifestation of her sin, or lack of virtue. She would have to keep a permanent reminder, literal baggage. She had to choose between two sins, killing her child or living in sin with it.\footnote{Ibid, 322.}

VI. Case Survey of Infanticide

Many sources reference babies floating in the rivers, clogging drains and tossed in back allies. In order to establish a more realistic and less sensational picture of the occurrence of infanticide, a case survey was conducted. In order to complete said survey, samples of each type of infanticide case have been described in detail below: the study includes both married and unmarried women who were exonerated by virtue of insanity, found guilty with the caveat of insanity, or found guilty without mention of insanity. Verdicts from 1829 - 1913 are studied, as examining these decisions over the aforementioned eighty-four years allows a clear pattern to emerge. For the sake of length, example cases from the three verdict outcomes will be analyzed. Elizabeth Hodges and Adelaide Freedman were exonerated, Eleanor Martha Browning was guilty but insane, and Rebecca Smith was found guilty. The table below shows the total sample case size with the ultimate outcome of each woman’s sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Allen</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ann Beveridge</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Berley</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ann Brough</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleanor Martha Browning</td>
<td>Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Chitty</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Clarke</td>
<td>Guilty; Sentence Commuted</td>
<td>1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Coulton</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliza Ditz (attempted infanticide)</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harriet Farrell</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Concealing the Birth</td>
<td>1829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Flew</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide Freedman</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ann Hamilton</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Ann Harris</td>
<td>Guilty; Sentence Commuted</td>
<td>1862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Hodges</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther Lack</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law, [female]</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma Lewis</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary McNeil</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha Prior</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Savell</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Smith</td>
<td>Guilty; Killed by Hanging</td>
<td>1849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Cornish Vyne</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Wilson</td>
<td>Not Guilty; Insane</td>
<td>1861</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled using the “List of Cases” index in Roger Smith’s book Trial by Medicine and the Oil Bailey Proceeding Online database, found at oldbaileyonline.org.

Elizabeth Hodges was the wife of a butcher. The family was at least minimally well off, as there was a surgeon present for Mrs. Hodges’ births. It seems Mrs. Hodges delivered her first child with no complications. However, she would murder her second child in
understands this not as a woman not succumbing to pressure, but as due to some psychological stress or manic episode. A woman was punished for her sexuality and economic situation; this double jeopardy left many women with no choice but to physically remove the source of their social displeasure by killing their own child. It was not uncommon to suffer such a break more violently than other women, as the infanticide rate among illegitimate infants was twice as high as infanticides among legitimate children.\textsuperscript{22} This was the ultimate fallen woman, with a manifestation of her sin, or lack of virtue. She would have to keep a permanent reminder, literal baggage. She had to choose between two sins, killing her child or living in sin with it.\textsuperscript{23}

\section*{VI. Case Survey of Infanticide}

Many sources reference babies floating in the rivers, clogging drains and tossed in back allies. In order to establish a more realistic and less sensational picture of the occurrence of infanticide, a case survey was conducted. In order to complete said survey, samples of each type of infanticide case have been described in detail below: the study includes both married and unmarried women who were exonerated by virtue of insanity, found guilty with the caveat of insanity, or found guilty without mention of insanity. Verdicts from 1829 - 1913 are studied, as examining these decisions over the aforementioned eighty-four years allows a clear pattern to emerge. For the sake of length, example cases from the three verdict outcomes will be analyzed. Elizabeth Hodges and Adelaide Freedman were exonerated, Eleanor Martha Browning was guilty but insane, and Rebecca Smith was found guilty. The table below shows the total sample case size with the ultimate outcome of each woman’s sentence.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|}
\hline
Name & Verdict & Year \\
\hline
Sarah Allen & Not Guilty; Insane & 1856 \\
Mary Ann Beveridge & Not Guilty; Insane & 1849 \\
Maria Berley & Not Guilty; Insane & 1854 \\
Mary Ann Brough & Not Guilty; Insane & 1854 \\
Eleanor Martha Browning & Guilty; Insane & 1913 \\
Maria Chitty & Not Guilty; Insane & 1852 \\
Marie Clarke & Guilty; Sentence Commuted & 1881 \\
Ann Coultass & Not Guilty; Insane & 1858 \\
Eliza Dart (attempted infanticide) & Not Guilty; Insane & 1878 \\
Harriet Farrell & Not Guilty; Concealing the Birth & 1829 \\
Elizabeth Frew & Not Guilty; Insane & 1850 \\
Adelaide Freedman & Not Guilty; Insane & 1869 \\
Mary Ann Hamilton & Not Guilty; Insane & 1862 \\
Elizabeth Ann Harris & Guilty; Sentence Commuted & 1862 \\
Elizabeth Hodges & Not Guilty; Insane & 1838 \\
Esther Lack & Not Guilty; Insane & 1865 \\
Law. [female] & Not Guilty; Insane & 1862 \\
Emma Lewis & Not Guilty; Insane & 1852 \\
Mary McNeil & Not Guilty; Insane & 1856 \\
Martha Prior & Not Guilty; Insane & 1848 \\
Catherine Savell & Not Guilty; Insane & 1854 \\
Rebecca Smith & Guilty; Killed by Hanging & 1849 \\
Anne Cornish Vyse & Not Guilty; Insane & 1862 \\
Ann Wilson & Not Guilty; Insane & 1861 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Case Survey of Infanticide}
\end{table}


\textsuperscript{23} Ibid, 322.

Elizabeth Hodges was the wife of a butcher. The family was at least minimally well off, as there was a surgeon present for Mrs. Hodges’ births. It seems Mrs. Hodges delivered her first child with no complications. However, she would murder her second child in
1838. She was subsequently indicted for the willful murder of her child, Sarah. Mary Ann Harvey, who attended Mrs. Hodges, gave testimony in the case. She said she was asked to come into the bedroom by Mr. Hodges and subsequently asked where the child was. When Mrs. Hodges replied that it was dead and in the copper, Mrs. Harvey found the child submerged in water in the copper. Mrs. Hodges would later confess to her surgeon that she had smothered the child by placing a pillow over its face. Prior to this act of infanticide, Mrs. Harvey testified that Mrs. Hodges had contemplated suicide – Mrs. Harvey once found an open razor in the bedroom. Multiple witnesses testified to Mrs. Hodges stating that she was taken over by the devil, who possessed her to kill herself or her child. Her neighbor considered her to be in a bad state as there was a “visible change in her for the last six months, in the total neglect of her person, and never wishing to go out on any occasion, nor wishing to see any company at all.” After she committed the murder, those that questioned her motives found Mrs. Hodges to be distant and uncooperative. Many witnesses blamed this type of behavior on Mrs. Hodges’s milk deficiency problems. James Hayes, the surgeon who attended both births and the second child’s death, believed Mrs. Hodges to be competent at the time of her trial. He stated that it was not uncommon for women during childbirth and shortly after to be “affected with a mania peculiar to that state – it is called puerperal mania – deficiency of milk, and the milk flowing upwards, would very probably cause such consequences.” He further testified that he has seen this problem frequently. Mrs. Hodges was ultimately found not guilty of the murder by reason of insanity.

Adelaide Freedman was also tried under similar circumstances. At the birth of her second child, her husband was away, traveling in Peru. After giving birth to a girl in 1869, Mrs. Freedman went to the local chemist, and asked for a powder that would help remove ink stains. This was not an uncommon request and the chemist observed nothing strange about his customer. Mrs. Freedman then gave poison to her infant daughter and herself, informing the woman she was staying with that she wanted to die. The baby died; Mrs. Freedman was admitted to the hospital and was later found with a handkerchief around her neck - in an apparent suicide attempt. The attending nurse testified that this behavior led her to question Mrs. Freedman’s sanity, stating that Mrs. Freedman had the look of puerperal mania, “which is a well-recognised form of insanity with women about the period of their confinement…this form of puerperal mania

25 In this situation, a copper either means a pot for boiling water or a pot used as a latrine.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
She was subsequently indicted for the willful murder of her child, Sarah. Mary Ann Harvey, who attended Mrs. Hodges, gave testimony in the case. She said she was asked to come into the bedroom by Mr. Hodges and subsequently asked where the child was. When Mrs. Hodges replied that it was dead and in the copper, Mrs. Harvey found the child submerged in water in the copper. Mrs. Hodges would later confess to her surgeon that she had smothered the child by placing a pillow over its face. Prior to this act of infanticide, Mrs. Harvey testified that Mrs. Hodges had contemplated suicide – Mrs. Harvey once found an open razor in the bedroom. Multiple witnesses testified to Mrs. Hodges stating that she was taken over by the devil, who possessed her to kill herself or her child. Her neighbor considered her to be in a bad state as there was a “visible change in her for the last six months, in the total neglect of her person, and never wishing to go out on any occasion, nor wishing to see any company at all.” After she committed the murder, those that questioned her motives found Mrs. Hodges to be distant and uncooperative. Many witnesses blamed this type of behavior on Mrs. Hodges’s

milk deficiency problems. James Hayes, the surgeon who attended both births and the second child’s death, believed Mrs. Hodges to be competent at the time of her trial. He stated that it was not uncommon for women during childbirth and shortly after to be “affected with a mania peculiar to that state – it is called puerperal mania – deficiency of milk, and the milk flowing upwards, would very probably cause such consequences.” He further testified that he has seen this problem frequently. Mrs. Hodges was ultimately found not guilty of the murder by reason of insanity.

Adelaide Freedman was also tried under similar circumstances. At the birth of her second child, her husband was away, traveling in Peru. After giving birth to a girl in 1869, Mrs. Freedman went to the local chemist, and asked for a powder that would help remove ink stains. This was not an uncommon request and the chemist observed nothing strange about his customer. Mrs. Freedman then gave poison to her infant daughter and herself, informing the woman she was staying with that she wanted to die. The baby died; Mrs. Freedman was admitted to the hospital and was later found with a handkerchief around her neck - in an apparent suicide attempt. The attending nurse testified that this behavior led her to question Mrs. Freedman’s sanity, stating that Mrs. Freedman had the look of puerperal mania, “which is a well-recognised form of insanity with women about the period of their confinement...this form of puerperal mania

25 In this situation, a copper either means a pot for boiling water or a pot used as a latrine.
27 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
develops itself sometimes by acts of violence to the nearest and dearest, and to the offspring of the woman – there is no fixed period at which it arrived at intensity." Mr. Serjeant Sleigh further testified that women afflicted by this mania have been known to kill other people as a way of assuring their own death. He drew the important distinction between puerperal mania and homicidal mania, testifying that there were no outward symptoms of Mrs. Freedman’s condition prior to the murder of her infant. Both Dr. Henry Letheby and Mr. Serjeant Sleigh believed that Mrs. Freedman suffered from an uncontrollable impulse when she poisoned her child. This type of mania would thereby have allowed Mrs. Freedman to go to the chemist’s shop, have a reasonable conversation with no outward signals of her condition, and buy the poison that would later kill her infant daughter. Adelaide Freedman was declared not guilty by reason of insanity.

In both Mrs. Hodges’ and Mrs. Freedman’s cases, they were married with another living child. Mrs. Hodges’ defense centered on the sudden shift in her behaviors. She contended that her naming of the child and attentive care up to the time of the murder demonstrated an intention to keep the child. The suddenness of the change of attitude was evidence of the fever. She had a surgeon testify on behalf of her puerperal mania, as well as other witnesses who testified to her change in demeanor shortly before the murder. Mrs. Freedman’s ability to be completely reasonable while buying poison and then use that reasonably obtained poison in a murder-suicide plot was also seen as evidence of an abrupt alteration of mood attributable to the fever. These factors in both women’s cases made their insanity plea strong. The mental condition of other women could not be as easily established. These women were more than likely single mothers, giving birth to the dreaded “bastard child.”

Single mothers often could not produce witnesses that were able to testify to their mental state. Many had been in hiding for most of their pregnancies, concealing any evidence of the fact that they were with child. To bear an illegitimate child in Victorian England was indeed shameful. Despite the absence of these witnesses, most of these women did not receive a harsh sentence.

Harriet Farrell (1829) was believed to be single when she came into the service of Mr. and Mrs. Cook. Mr. Cook discovered Miss Farrell in a chair in the kitchen after she had been “so bad inside her all night.” After discovering blood on a kitchen table and chair, Mr. Cook found the body of the child inside the privy. Mr. Cook did not remove the body but instead called the police and told his wife what he had discovered. When Mrs. Cook questioned Miss Farrell about her birth, and supposed miscarriage, she denied it, and then fell silent. It was only when the child was brought up from the privy, washed and examined by the doctor that Miss Farrell confessed she had deliv-

---

33 Ibid.
34 Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 6.0, 04 March 2012), February 1829, trial of HARRIET FARRELL (t18290219-62).
35 Ibid.
develops itself sometimes by acts of violence to the nearest and dearest, and to the offspring of the woman – there is no fixed period at which it arrived at intensity." Mr. Serjeant Sleigh further testified that women afflicted by this mania have been known to kill other people as a way of assuring their own death. He drew the important distinction between puerperal mania and homicidal mania, testifying that there were no outward symptoms of Mrs. Freedman's condition prior to the murder of her infant. Both Dr. Henry Letheby and Mr. Serjeant Sleigh believed that Mrs. Freedman suffered from an uncontrollable impulse when she poisoned her child. This type of mania would thereby have allowed Mrs. Freedman to go to the chemist's shop, have a reasonable conversation with no outward signals of her condition, and buy the poison that would later kill her infant daughter. Adelaide Freedman was declared not guilty by reason of insanity.

In both Mrs. Hodges' and Mrs. Freedman's cases, they were married with another living child. Mrs. Hodges' defense centered on the sudden shift in her behaviors. She contended that her naming of the child and attentive care up to the time of the murder demonstrated an intention to keep the child. The suddenness of the change of attitude was evidence of the fever. She had a surgeon testify on behalf of her puerperal mania, as well as other witnesses who testified to her change in demeanor shortly before the murder. Mrs. Freedman's ability to be completely reasonable while buying poison and then use that reasonably obtained poison in a murder-suicide plot was also seen as evidence of an abrupt alteration of mood attributable to the fever. These factors in both women's cases made their insanity plea strong. The mental condition of other women could not be as easily established. These women were more than likely single mothers, giving birth to the dreaded "bastard child."

Single mothers often could not produce witnesses that were able to testify to their mental state. Many had been in hiding for most of their pregnancies, concealing any evidence of the fact that they were with child. To bear an illegitimate child in Victorian England was indeed shameful. Despite the absence of these witnesses, most of these women did not receive a harsh sentence.

Harriet Farrell (1829) was believed to be single when she came into the service of Mr. and Mrs. Cook. Mr. Cook discovered Miss Farrell in a chair in the kitchen after she had been "so bad inside her all night." After discovering blood on a kitchen table and chair, Mr. Cook found the body of the child inside the privy. Mr. Cook did not remove the body but instead called the police and told his wife what he had discovered. When Mrs. Cook questioned Miss Farrell about her birth, and supposed miscarriage, she denied it, and then fell silent. It was only when the child was brought up from the privy, washed and examined by the doctor that Miss Farrell confessed she had deliv-

---

33 Ibid.
34 Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 6.0, 04 March 2012), February 1829, trial of HARRIET FARRELL (t18290219-62).
35 Ibid.
ered a child. The previous mental state of Miss Farrell is unknown, as she came to stay with the witnesses when she was already pregnant. The couple had previously suspected Miss Farrell of being pregnant and had questioned her multiple times; Miss Farrell claimed that she had caught a cold.\textsuperscript{36} Ms. Farrell was charged with the "willful murder of her bastard child" but she was found not guilty of murder but guilty of concealing the birth.\textsuperscript{37}

The case of Mrs. Eleanor Martha Browning presents one of the few unusual verdict pairings among these sample cases. She was indicted for the willful murder of her infant female child in 1913. She was discovered on the landing of her rented home by her landlord, who saw blood on Mrs. Browning’s hands. When the landlord questioned her husband, Mr. Browning led him to the scene of the murder. The baby was lying on the floor, next to a knife.\textsuperscript{38} The doctor who was called would later testify that the child’s throat had been cut. Mrs. Browning was found not responsible for her actions, guilty but insane at the time of the murder.\textsuperscript{39} Subsequently, Mrs. Browning also had another child with her husband and was observed to be a fond mother.

The women found guilty of the crime of infanticide should be considered a distinct group, as there were not very many cases. Maria Clarke was convicted of killing her infant child in 1851. She buried her son alive and confessed to a relative who relayed the information to the police. The boy was later found under the turf.\textsuperscript{40} Elizabeth Ann Harris (1862) was tried for the murder of her two illegitimate children, one child an infant and the other less than five years old.\textsuperscript{41} The reason these two women received commuted sentence of confinement for life have nothing to do with their circumstances and more with the society in which they committed their crimes. They benefited from a system that exhibited hesitation when it came to executing women. Although they were no doubt guilty of their crime, the explanation of puerperal insanity allowed a judge to lessen their sentences.

Perhaps the most noteworthy case in this sample group is the trial of Rebecca Smith, who was found guilty of infanticide and executed in 1849, as it represents the clear anomaly in this study. She was the only woman to be executed of those studied. Maria Clarke and Elizabeth Ann Harris both had their sentences commuted to confinement for life having committed similar crimes. However, the anomaly is quickly explained in this case when Mrs. Smith’s circumstances are examined. She was much older than the other women and as a result had delivered eleven children. At the time of her hanging, the eldest daughter was the only living offspring – “all the rest, with the exception of two, the unhappy woman ac-

\textsuperscript{36} Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 6.0, 04 March 2012), February 1829, trial of HARRIET FARRELL (t18290219-62).

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{38} Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 6.0, 05 March 2012), January 1913, trial of BROWNING, Eleanor Martha (29) (t19130107-26).

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{40} Charles Dickens, “The Household Narrative of Current Events (for the Year 1851),” A Monthly Supplement to Household Words (1851): 87.

er a child. The previous mental state of Miss Farrell is unknown, as she came to stay with the witnesses when she was already pregnant. The couple had previously suspected Miss Farrell of being pregnant and had questioned her multiple times; Miss Farrell claimed that she had caught a cold. Ms. Farrell was charged with the “willful murder of her bastard child” but she was found not guilty of murder but guilty of concealing the birth.

The case of Mrs. Eleanor Martha Browning presents one of the few unusual verdict pairings among these sample cases. She was indicted for the willful murder of her infant female child in 1913. She was discovered on the landing of her rented home by her landlord, who saw blood on Mrs. Browning’s hands. When the landlord questioned her husband, Mr. Browning led him to the scene of the murder. The baby was lying on the floor, next to a knife. The doctor who was called would later testify that the child’s throat had been cut. Mrs. Browning was found not responsible for her actions, guilty but insane at the time of the murder. Subsequently, Mrs. Browning also had another child with her husband and was observed to be a fond mother.

The women found guilty of the crime of infanticide should be considered a distinct group, as there were not very many cases. Maria Clarke was convicted of killing her infant child in 1851. She buried her son alive and confessed to a relative who relayed the information to the police. The boy was later found under the turf. Elizabeth Ann Harris (1862) was tried for the murder of her two illegitimate children, one child an infant and the other less than five years old. The reason these two women received commuted sentence of confinement for life have nothing to do with their circumstances and more with the society in which they committed their crimes. They benefited from a system that exhibited hesitation when it came to executing women. Although they were no doubt guilty of their crime, the explanation of puerperal insanity allowed a judge to lessen their sentences.

Perhaps the most noteworthy case in this sample group is the trial of Rebecca Smith, who was found guilty of infanticide and executed in 1849, as it represents the clear anomaly in this study. She was the only woman to be executed of those studied. Maria Clarke and Elizabeth Ann Harris both had their sentences commuted to confinement for life having committed similar crimes. However, the anomaly is quickly explained in this case when Mrs. Smith’s circumstances are examined. She was much older than the other women and as a result had delivered eleven children. At the time of her hanging, the eldest daughter was the only living offspring — “all the rest, with the exception of two, the unhappy woman ac-

37 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
Creators, Destroyers, and a Judge

knowledged that she poisoned a day or two after their birth. The individual crime of infanticide by poison was not uncommon, as seen in the case of Adelaide Freedman. The ten individual acts of poisoning in Mrs. Smith’s case did not sway the judge in this case. Also unique to this case was the fact that Mrs. Smith was forced to work in the fields, on account of her husband’s drunkenness. She would work in the field by day and do her household chores by night all the while with apparent child-murder on her mind; so as to spare her unborn children from the suffering such a life would create. Therefore, Mrs. Smith’s case did not work within the framework of puerperal insanity; the framework of a limited leave of sense did not apply when Mrs. Smith’s sense had taken leave ten times. Even with the extreme desire to avoid executing women, Rebecca Smith represented a case that could not be explained away.

Most women in these studies received a verdict of not guilty by reason of insanity. The idea of puerperal insanity is mentioned in the witness testimony of the majority of these cases; it is not, however, used in the ultimate sentencing language of these women. Puerperal insanity was an idea that had permeated the vernacular of not only the legal profession but also ordinary people. Therefore the insanity mentioned in these verdicts would have been understood to be the “lay definition” of insanity; that is one not influenced by the medical / psychological profession. There was no involvement by any insanity specialists in these trials. The meaning of this type of insanity was therefore established essentially by popular cultural norms. This social influence on the definition of puerperal madness would have an effect on the social stigma of infanticide. Such a conception would bring a humanitarian narrative to the judicial verdicts, one that took into account social action on behalf of women, including their will and intent for the social authority around them. The emerging narrative is best exemplified by the multitude of not guilty verdicts.

The sentences of these women are the result of both social and judicial factors. Women were often found not guilty by reason of insanity, a standard legal basis for acquittal, as in the case of Mrs. Freedman and Mrs. Hodges (married women who gave birth to legitimate children). The judges’ legal findings were based on perceived societal beliefs about the nature of puerperal insanity: its sudden and overwhelming onset and its speedy passing. Miss Farrell and others like her who killed their illegitimate children were limited by social opinion; the courts were constrained by society’s construction of this sense of motherhood. However, the feminine frailty won out over the illegitimacy concern as they were found guilty of a lesser sentence that carried the same punishment as those

---

43 Ibid, 115.
known that she poisoned a day or two after their birth. The individual crime of infanticide by poison was not uncommon, as seen in the case of Adelaide Freedman. The ten individual acts of poisoning in Mrs. Smith’s case did not sway the judge in this case. Also unique to this case was the fact that Mrs. Smith was forced to work in the fields, on account of her husband’s drunkenness. She would work in the field by day and do her household chores by night all the while with apparent child-murder on her mind; so as to spare her unborn children from the suffering such a life would create. Therefore, Mrs. Smith’s case did not work within the framework of puerperal insanity; the framework of a limited leave of sense did not apply when Mrs. Smith’s sense had taken leave ten times. Even with the extreme desire to avoid executing women, Rebecca Smith represented a case that could not be explained away.

Most women in these studies received a verdict of not guilty by reason of insanity. The idea of puerperal insanity is mentioned in the witness testimony of the majority of these cases; it is not, however, used in the ultimate sentencing language of these women. Puerperal insanity was an idea that had permeated the vernacular of not only the legal profession but also ordinary people. Therefore the insanity mentioned in these verdicts would have been understood to be the “lay definition” of insanity; that is one not influenced by the medical / psychological profession. There was no involvement by any insanity specialists in these trials. The meaning of this type of insanity was therefore established essentially by popular cultural norms. This social influence on the definition of puerperal madness would have an effect on the social stigma of infanticide. Such a conception would bring a humanitarian narrative to the judicial verdicts, one that took into account social action on behalf of women, including their will and intent for the social authority around them. The emerging narrative is best exemplified by the multitude of not guilty verdicts.

The sentences of these women are the result of both social and judicial factors. Women were often found not guilty by reason of insanity, a standard legal basis for acquittal, as in the case of Mrs. Freedman and Mrs. Hodges (married women who gave birth to legitimate children). The judges’ legal findings were based on perceived societal beliefs about the nature of puerperal insanity: its sudden and overwhelming onset and its speedy passing. Miss Farrell and others like her who killed their illegitimate children were limited by social opinion; the courts were constrained by society’s construction of this sense of motherhood. However, the feminine frailty won out over the illegitimacy concern as they were found guilty of a lesser sentence that carried the same punishment as those

43 Ibid, 115.
found not guilty. Only Mrs. Smith was sentenced to hanging. Her case did not properly fit the Victorian understanding of puerperal insanity, apparently because of the egregious circumstances.

Throughout England during this time, there was a general movement away from capital punishment. Many felt that the list of crimes punishable by death was too long, resulting in an overly broad application.\(^47\) Among English courts, with judges and juries alike, there was a strong desire to keep women away from the gallows, especially mothers. The evidence suggests that the leniency described earlier was not out of sympathy for their women’s mental state; instead, it involved much deeper social concerns regarding proper womanhood and, more importantly, motherhood. Using the verdict of insanity to acquit ultimately placed the fault for the crime with the woman herself; less as an individual but more as a member of a flawed sex. Society believed that the horrific crimes must reflect upon the state of childbirth, the frailty of females, and its expression in puerperal mania. Thus the adjudication of infanticide simultaneously blamed and excused womanhood for these acts. Women who committed infanticide existed in a purgatory – they had violated the ideal of motherhood, but also confirmed the idea of the delicate “creature” that society must protect.

There was a converging society’s need to excuse these women with the contemporary perception of disease that provided a plausible excuse for their disturbing behavior. Puerperal insanity was not lasting, and it had a relatively definite expiration date. It was also thought to be “contracted” during a woman’s transitional state. A nature already considered weak was thought to be at its most vulnerable during childbirth.\(^48\) The witness testimony often given in these cases employs phrases such as “not quite right in the head,” “wild state,” “confusion,” and “not capable” to describe the women in witness testimony.\(^49\) Such testimony would often serve as a narrative of the progress into insanity. The detailed explanation given by the nurse in Mrs. Freedman’s case about the “well-recognized form of insanity” illustrates that one did not need to be a high ranking member of society to express the idea of puerperal mania. Thus there was no medical clarification needed, no medical tests, as there were with other conditions.\(^50\) The colloquial understanding of the reasoning behind puerperal insanity, couched within the context of the female nature, almost always helped the woman’s case for acquittal.


\(^{49}\) Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 6.0, 05 March 2012), January 1913, trial of BROWNING, Eleanor Martha (29) (t19130107-26), Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 6.0, 04 March 2012), November 1869, trial of ADELAIDE FREEDMAN (30) (t18691122-36), etc.

\(^{50}\) For example, in order to determine if an infant was stillborn or alive at the time of birth, medical doctors would remove a lung sample and put it in water. If the sample floated, it meant that the lungs had filled with air and the infant had, at one point, been breathing. The reasoning behind this would often have to be described in detail to a jury.
found not guilty. Only Mrs. Smith was sentenced to hanging. Her case did not properly fit the Victorian understanding of puerperal insanity, apparently because of the egregious circumstances.

Throughout England during this time, there was a general movement away from capital punishment. Many felt that the list of crimes punishable by death was too long, resulting in an overly broad application. Among English courts, with judges and juries alike, there was a strong desire to keep women away from the gallows, especially mothers. The evidence suggests that the leniency described earlier was not out of sympathy for their women’s mental state; instead, it involved much deeper social concerns regarding proper womanhood and, more importantly, motherhood. Using the verdict of insanity to acquit ultimately placed the fault for the crime with the woman herself; less as an individual but more as a member of a flawed sex. Society believed that the horrific crimes must reflect upon the state of childbirth, the frailty of females, and its expression in puerperal mania. Thus the adjudication of infanticide simultaneously blamed and excused womanhood for these acts. Women who committed infanticide existed in a purgatory – they had violated the ideal of motherhood, but also confirmed the idea of the delicate “creature” that society must protect.

There was a converging society’s need to excuse these women with the contemporary perception of disease that provided a plausible excuse for their

---


50 For example, in order to determine if an infant was stillborn or alive at the time of birth, medical doctors would remove a lung sample and put it in water. If the sample floated, it meant that the lungs had filled with air and the infant had, at one point, been breathing. The reasoning behind this would often have to be described in detail to a jury.
by reason of insanity.

This line of reasoning led many to believe that the insane conduct connected with puerperal insanity was a temporary seizing of the senses, something that was entirely circumscribed. Thus, many judges considered it immoral to condemn a woman to death for her actions when in this condition. The often violent reversal of the role of motherhood convinced them that the culprit must be insane, to abandon her Victorian ideals so suddenly. They could not imagine a true mother would commit such an act. This Victorian society successfully blended a legitimate legal defense and a socio-medical popular notion, making this excuse available to women. This made the deed, and not the individual, insane, thereby reducing culpability and rendering an insanity verdict for most women.

Christina Forst graduated from Santa Clara University in the Spring of 2012 with her History B.A. This paper was presented at the Northern California Phi Alpha Theta Conference. Christina has previously had papers published in Historical Perspectives, as well as presented at other regional and national conferences. She plans to pursue a career in the legal field.

Stoker, creator of Dracula (1897), provides his audiences with an opportunity to better understand the fears that permeated the minds of Victorians. Stoker presents two characters that are perfect examples of the evolution of Georgian and Victorian obsessions and fears regarding death.

With some difficulty- for it was very dark, and the whole place seemed so strange to us-we found the Westera tomb. The Professor took the key, opened the creaky door, and standing back politely, but quite unconsciously, motioned me to precede him....The tomb in the day-time, and when wreathed with fresh flowers, had looked grim and gruesome enough; but now some days afterwards, when the flowers hung lank and dead, their whites turning to rust and their greens to browns; when the spider and beetle had resumed their accustomed dominance; when time-discolored stone, and dust-encrusted mortar, and rusty, dark iron, and tarnished brass, and clouded silver plating gave back the feeble glimmer of a candle, the effect was more miserable and sordid than could have been imagined. It conveyed irresistibly the idea that life- animal life- was
by reason of insanity.
This line of reasoning led many to believe that the insane conduct connected with puerperal insanity was a temporary seizing of the senses, something that was entirely circumscribed. Thus, many judges considered it immoral to condemn a woman to death for her actions when in this condition. The often violent reversal of the role of motherhood convinced them that the culprit must be insane, to abandon her Victorian ideals so suddenly. They could not imagine a true mother would commit such an act. This Victorian society successfully blended a legitimate legal defense and a socio-medical popular notion, making this excuse available to women. This made the deed, and not the individual, insane, thereby reducing culpability and rendering an insanity verdict for most women.

Christina Forst graduated from Santa Clara University in the Spring of 2012 with her History B.A. This paper was presented at the Northern California Phi Alpha Theta Conference. Christina has previously had papers published in Historical Perspectives, as well as presented at other regional and national conferences. She plans to pursue a career in the legal field.

———


Protecting the Dead or Protecting the Living? Above Ground Interment in Georgian (1714-1830) and Victorian Britain (1837-1901)

Maxine DeVincenzi

Stoker, creator of Dracula (1897), provides his audiences with an opportunity to better understand the fears that permeated the minds of Victorians. Stoker presents two characters that are perfect examples of the evolution of Georgian and Victorian obsessions and fears regarding death.

With some difficulty– for it was very dark, and the whole place seemed so strange to us–we found the Westerna tomb. The Professor took the key, opened the creaky door, and standing back politely, but quite unconsciously, motioned me to precede him….The tomb in the day-time, and when wreathed with fresh flowers, had looked grim and gruesome enough; but now some days afterwards, when the flowers hung lank and dead, their whites turning to rust and their greens to browns; when the spider and beetle had resumed their accustomed dominance; when time-discolored stone, and dust-encrusted mortar, and rusty, dark iron, and tarnished brass, and clouded silver plating gave back the feeble glimmer of a candle, the effect was more miserable and sordid than could have been imagined. It conveyed irresistibly the idea that life– animal life– was
not the only thing which could pass away.... 'To open the coffin.' 'You shall yet to be convinced.' Straightaway he began taking out the screws, and finally lifted off the lid, showing the casing of lead beneath.... Striking the turn screw through the lead with a swift downward stab, which made me admit the point of the saw. I had expected a rush of gas from the week-old corpse.... The coffin was empty.... 'Perhaps a body-snatcher.'

At this moment of discovery the two tomb explorers, professor and student, display two societal fears related to corpses that characterized the Georgian and Victorian periods. John, the student, suggests body snatching as a possible explanation for the missing corpse.

Body snatching was a deeply held fear that increased in the Georgian period, and continued during Victoria's reign. In addition, John “expected a rush of gas from the week-old corpse” hinting at Victorian fears surrounding miasma and the decomposition of corpses. The intended objective of this paper is to further explore the societal use of mausoleums, tombs, vaults, and other above ground burial technology and architecture employed in the Georgian and Victorian era. The protection of the corpse from the living and the protection the living from the decomposing corpse were two main aims of Georgian and Victorian burial reform respectively. Why did the continued use of above ground burial technology come under attack during the Victorian period?

The second half of the 18th century was the golden age of the mausoleum. Aristocratic landowners began building mausoleums within their estates to create a more attractive landscape and as a place to commemorate themselves in death. Lynn F. Pearson’s Mausoleums provides an excellent historical background to the development and use of mausoleums in many cultures, including Great Britain. She defines a mausoleum, as “a magnificent or monumental tomb,” and continues “more intuitive description including elements of entrance, enclosure, mass and separation leads to the definition of a mausoleums as a substantial, discrete funerary structure containing a tomb or tombs, and which can be entered.” Pearson argues that mausoleums had multiple functions: “Not only did the building act as an eye-catcher, but it provided the family with a safe haven for family remains, unsullied by contact with social inferiors.”

Mausoleums continued to instill the idea of social boundaries in death. Mausoleums became the “it” form of burial, and just as coffin makers had a business boom, mausoleum architects did as well. As the Victorian period came to a close, the Edwardian era saw the rise in the number of cremations and the grandiose funerary statements of wealth became less fashionable.

Aristocratic social standards as well as the “ideal of undisturbed repose in the grave” were key elements in the Georgian era (1714-1837) funeral. Ruth Richard-

---

1 Bram Stoker, Dracula (1897), (NY: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003), 211-213.


3 Ibid, 6.

4 Ibid, 8.
Protecting the Dead or Protecting the Living? Not the only thing which could pass away.... 'To open the coffin.' 'You shall yet to be convinced.' Straightway he began taking out the screws, and finally lifted off the lid, showing the casing of lead beneath.... Striking the turn screw through the lead with a swift downward stab, which made me admit the point of the saw. I had expected a rush of gas from the week-old corpse.... The coffin was empty.... 'Perhaps a body-snatcher.'

At this moment of discovery the two tomb explorers, professor and student, display two societal fears related to corpses that characterized the Georgian and Victorian periods. John, the student, suggests body snatching as a possible explanation for the missing corpse. Body snatching was a deeply held fear that increased in the Georgian period, and continued during Victoria's reign. In addition, John "expected a rush of gas from the week-old corpse" hinting at Victorian fears surrounding miasma and the decomposition of corpses. The intended objective of this paper is to further explore the societal use of mausoleums, tombs, vaults, and other above ground burial technology and architecture employed in the Georgian and Victorian era. The protection of the corpse from the living and the protection the living from the decomposing corpse were two main aims of Georgian and Victorian burial reform respectively. Why did the continued use of above ground burial technology come under attack during the Victorian period?

The second half of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century was the golden age of the mausoleum. Aristocratic landowners began building mausoleums within their estates to create a more attractive landscape and as a place to commemorate themselves in death. Lynn F. Pearson's \textit{Mausoleums} provides an excellent historical background to the development and use of mausoleums in many cultures, including Great Britain. She defines a mausoleum, as "a magnificent or monumental tomb," and continues "more intuitive description including elements of entrance, enclosure, mass and separation leads to the definition of a mausoleums as a substantial, discrete funerary structure containing a tomb or tombs, and which can be entered."\textsuperscript{2} Pearson argues that mausoleums had multiple functions: "Not only did the building act as an eye-catcher, but it provided the family with a safe haven for family remains, unsullied by contact with social inferiors."\textsuperscript{3} Mausoleums continued to instill the idea of social boundaries in death. Mausoleums became the "it" form of burial, and just as coffin makers had a business boom, mausoleum architects did as well. As the Victorian period came to a close, the Edwardian era saw the rise in the number of cremations and the grandiose funerary statements of wealth became less fashionable.\textsuperscript{4}

Aristocratic social standards as well as the "ideal of undisturbed repose in the grave" were key elements in the Georgian era (1714-1837) funeral. Ruth Richard-

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} Bram Stoker, \textit{Dracula (1897)}, (NY: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003), 211-213.
  \item \textsuperscript{3} Ibid, 6.
  \item \textsuperscript{4} Ibid, 8.
\end{itemize}
son, in Death, Dissection and the Destitute, situates her historical discussion of the corpse before the 1832 Anatomy Act. During this period anatomy schools were on the rise and the use of dissection became a popular educational tool. However, dissection was considered an unacceptable and inhumane practice. Hanged murderers were considered an acceptable sector of society to be used for this inhumane practice, so dissection was seen as a unique punishment for the worst crimes. However, this supply of bodies was not enough to satisfy the increase in anatomy schools therefore, body snatching notoriously filled the demand for cadavers. The passing of the 1832 Anatomy Act allowed for the corpses of the poor and homeless to be used for practice by surgeons, rendering dissection punishment for a dying pauper.

Social class was easily identifiable by the characteristics of a burial. Pauper funerals involved no pomp and circumstance. There was no marking for the burial; and the coffin was of lower quality wood. All of these realities allowed for body snatchers to come in the night and snatch the corpses from the graves with little to no evidence. As Henry Morely recalled: “The practice was to remove carefully the soil at the head of the grave and expose one end of the coffin, open that, and with an instrument contrived for the purpose, draw out the body by the head. The coffin was then closed again, and the grave also closed again, so neatly that no sign of its desecration could be easily perceived.” To counteract fears of body snatching and to maintain the repose of the corpse in death, the aristocracy invested a considerable amount of money in the funeral and burial of loved ones. Richardson acknowledges the use of the triple coffins, “a considerable part of the cost in such funerals often covered transport out of the metropolis to (safer) vaults near country seats. The financially comfortable- like the Right Honorable Lady Elizabeth Colville in 1839- often also had double or triple coffins, but were less secure in a church or chapel, or even less so if the vault was in a churchyard.” Richardson states: “Those who could afford to do so purchased double or triple coffins- one of which would often be lead, which was metal known as a corpse-preserver... The Georgian undertaker provided his more fortunate clients with the prospect of rotting safely in secure coffins, sealed tight against the soil and dust of less eminent corpses: and above all, safe from body snatchers.”

Richardson further introduces another technological advance of the time, underground structures that could be used to further protect the deceased: “Deep graves, secure vaults and the many other expedients available to the financially fortunate were purchased in the hope of acquiring what Lord Radnor admitted in Parliament that he himself desired for his own body a tomb more secure than his own home.”

Triple layered coffins and the burying of the deceased in vaults could not completely protect the dead from being taken by body snatchers, but it provided a

---

5 Henry Morely, “The Use and Abuse of the Dead,” in Household Words 17, April 3, 1858, 361.
8 Ibid.
son, in *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*, situates her historical discussion of the corpse before the 1832 Anatomy Act. During this period anatomy schools were on the rise and the use of dissection became a popular educational tool. However, dissection was considered an unacceptable and inhumane practice. Hanged murderers were considered an acceptable sector of society to be used for this inhumane practice, so dissection was seen as a unique punishment for the worst crimes. However, this supply of bodies was not enough to satisfy the increase in anatomy schools therefore, body snatching notoriously filled the demand for cadavers. The passing of the 1832 Anatomy Act allowed for the corpses of the poor and homeless to be used for practice by surgeons, rendering dissection punishment for a dying pauper.

Social class was easily identifiable by the characteristics of a burial. Pauper funerals involved no pomp and circumstance. There was no marking for the burial; and the coffin was of lower quality wood. All of these realities allowed for body snatchers to come in the night and snatch the corpses from the graves with little to no evidence. As Henry Morely recalled: “The practice was to remove carefully the soil at the head of the grave and expose one end of the coffin, open that, and with an instrument contrived for the purpose, draw out the body by the head. The coffin was then closed again, and the grave also closed again, so neatly that no sign of its desecration could be easily perceived.” To counteract fears of body snatching and to maintain the repose of the corpse in death, the aristocracy invested a considerable amount of money in the funeral and burial of loved ones. Richardson acknowledges the use of the triple coffins, “a considerable part of the cost in such funerals often covered transport out of the metropolis to (safer) vaults near country seats. The financially comfortable—like the Right Honorable Lady Elizabeth Colville in 1839—often also had double or triple coffins, but were less secure in a church or chapel, or even less so if the vault was in a churchyard.” Richardson states: “Those who could afford to do so purchased double or triple coffins—one of which would often be lead, which was metal known as a corpse-preserver... The Georgian undertaker provided his more fortunate clients with the prospect of rotting safely in secure coffins, sealed tight against the soil and dust of less eminent corpses: and above all, safe from body snatchers.” Richardson further introduces another technological advance of the time, underground structures that could be used to further protect the deceased: “Deep graves, secure vaults and the many other expedients available to the financially fortunate were purchased in the hope of acquiring what Lord Radnor admitted in Parliament that he himself desired for his own body a tomb more secure than his own home.”

Triple layered coffins and the burying of the deceased in vaults could not completely protect the dead from being taken by body snatchers, but it provided a

---

5 Henry Morely, “The Use and Abuse of the Dead,” in *Household Words* 17, April 3, 1858, 361.


8 Ibid.
Protecting the Dead or Protecting the Living? 29

greater level of security and peace of mind to Georgian patricians. Desires to further protect the corpse resulted in an increase of new patents and “high-tech” coffin innovations. Metal coffins were patented as early as 1781, but they became more widely used in 1818. Edward Bridgman designed a coffin that was to be cast out of wrought iron and concealed with spring catches “on the inner side of the lid to prevent levering, and joined in such a way as to thwart any attempt to force the sides of the coffin apart.” In addition, this coffin was designed to have the head and footstones connected by “secure iron bars,” accompanied by a cast iron vault-tomb that extended a considerable distance below the ground and was “to serve as a resurrectionist proof receptacle for more than one wooden coffin.”9

Protecting the corpse from the body snatchers was the major concern of the Georgian period. It seems as if mausoleums and vault like structures, whether below or above ground, provided some sort of reassurance that the corpse was better protected than simple under ground burial. But all of this cost a considerable amount of money, yet another way of defining social class in death amidst the fear of body snatching.

Georgian patricians were buried or entombed in vaults, shafts or mausolea. The rich were entombed in magnificent coffins in their family vaults usually under churches or in a mausoleum in parklands or near a church.10 James Stevens Curl, author of Georgian Architecture, states: “While it was doubtless useful to have a mausoleum as an eye-catcher to ornament the park or terminate the vista, the entombment of fami-

lies in mausolea reflected a new sensibility. If the individual mausoleum could not be had, the entombment in a chapel or within a church was the next best thing.”11 Curl emphasizes the pervading Georgian fear of bodysnatching; “Burial in a church or vault was preferred to interment in the churchyard because of the universal fear of body snatchers who disinterred freshly buried bodies for sale to the anatomists.”12 While safety and protection were among the main aims in the selection of a specific burial technology, what the technology said about the deceased, in regards to their social standing, was also of importance.

Georgians, as well as Victorians, were not regarded as equals in death. Highgate Cemetery (1839) was initially built to alleviate the nineteenth century crisis of inadequate burial space for the dead, but soon became known for its picturesque landscapes and accommodation of the wealthy. “Monumentality can be clearly witnessed as one ascends Highgate Hill, where tombs become increasingly monumental, until, at the summit, the dead remain forever visible.”13 The rich could afford grandiose monuments, “the Highgate cemetery ethos preached prosperity and status,” and immortality was guaranteed if buried in the monuments of Highgate.14 Even more than for the Georgians, death provided the Victorians with the definitive opportunity to make public statements about social

9 Ibid, 81.
10 Ibid, 195.
11 Ibid, 198.
12 Ibid.
14 Ibid, 116-117.
greater level of security and peace of mind to Georgian patricians. Desires to further protect the corpse resulted in an increase of new patents and “high-tech” coffin innovations. Metal coffins were patented as early as 1781, but they became more widely used in 1818. Edward Bridgman designed a coffin that was to be cast out of wrought iron and concealed with spring catches “on the inner side of the lid to prevent levering, and joined in such a way as to thwart any attempt to force the sides of the coffin apart.” In addition, this coffin was designed to have the head and footstones connected by “secure iron bars,” accompanied by a cast iron vault-tomb that extended a considerable distance below the ground and was “to serve as a resurrectionist proof receptacle for more than one wooden coffin.” Protecting the corpse from the body snatchers was the major concern of the Georgian period. It seems as if mausoleums and vault like structures, whether below or above ground, provided some sort of reassurance that the corpse was better protected than simple underground burial. But all of this cost a considerable amount of money, yet another way of defining social class in death amidst the fear of body snatching.

Georgian patricians were buried or entombed in vaults, shafts or mausolea. The rich were entombed in magnificent coffins in their family vaults usually under churches or in a mausoleum in parklands or near a church. James Stevens Curl, author of *Georgian Architecture*, states: “While it was doubtless useful to have a mausoleum as an eye-catcher to ornament the park or terminate the vista, the entombment of families in mausolea reflected a new sensibility. If the individual mausoleum could not be had, the entombment in a chapel or within a church was the next best thing.” Curl emphasizes the pervading Georgian fear of bodysnatching; “Burial in a church or vault was preferred to interment in the churchyard because of the universal fear of body snatchers who disinterred freshly buried bodies for sale to the anatomists.” While safety and protection were among the main aims in the selection of a specific burial technology, what the technology said about the deceased, in regards to their social standing, was also of importance.

Georgians, as well as Victorians, were not regarded as equals in death. Highgate Cemetery (1839) was initially built to alleviate the nineteenth century crisis of inadequate burial space for the dead, but soon became known for its picturesque landscapes and accommodation of the wealthy. “Monumentality can be clearly witnessed as one ascends Highgate Hill, where tombs become increasingly monumental, until, at the summit, the dead remain forever visible.” The rich could afford grandiose monuments, “the Highgate cemetery ethos preached prosperity and status,” and immortality was guaranteed if buried in the monuments of Highgate. Even more than for the Georgians, death provided the Victorians with the definitive opportunity to make public statements about social class.

---

9 Ibid, 81.
10 Ibid, 195.
11 Ibid, 198.
12 Ibid.
14 Ibid, 116-117.
status and monetary value. Richardson shares Thomas Laqueur’s belief that death provided the perfect opportunity to display social standing. Richardson states: “The Victorian era was one with an obsessive interest in the gradations of social placing; and death served as a prime means of expressing, and of defining, social place.” While many of these practices were well in place before Victoria took the throne, the societal anxieties they reflect became fully identifiable as “Victorian.” In the Victorian period sanitary questions and anxieties replaced the Georgian fear surrounding body snatching. Did these concerns allow for the continuation of older protective burial technologies, with a different intended purpose? Did these technologies, consciously or subconsciously, also protect the living from the dead? As Richardson notes: “Almost all death customs appear to have been capable of operating on more than one level- to serve more than one need.”

The Victorian era (1837 to 1901) was characterized by the advancement of science and technology. The topic of death was a given serious contemplation and exploration. Richardson acknowledges the physicality of the human corpse; “it is a carcass, with a predisposition to decay, to become noisome, obnoxious to the senses and harrowing to the emotions. Disposal of such perishable remains is imperative.” Understanding when death officially occurs, preventing premature decomposition, and treating corpses correctly were all topics that were seriously debated; this included considering the appropriate burial grounds, coffin technology, cremation, bodysnatching, dissection, and the overall mechanics of death. Health officials and the government instituted regulations and reforms, but the core of Victorian societal fears continued to persist.

In his work, The Victorian Celebration of Death, Curl focuses on anxieties surrounding the prevalence of corpses in burial grounds, “the churchyards became scenes of the most appalling horror, where bones would be heaped on bones, and partially rotted bodies would be disinterred to make way for a multitude of corpses...something had to be done in order that death could be celebrated in a hygienic and dignified manner in surroundings more fitting than the loathsome corruption of the churchyards...” A crowded burial ground with decomposing bodies was increasingly seen as inappropriate in the Victorian period.

Not only an unpleasant sight, crowded graveyards also epitomized the Victorian fear of miasma. The concept of miasma was not developed during this time period, but miasma theory was used to explore the outbreaks of cholera in the 1830’s and 1850’s. Putrefaction or decomposition occurs immediately when a person passes for the body immediately begins to emit gases. The miasma theorists believed that it was possible to contract an illness or serious disease from the vapors and gases arising from decomposing

15 Ruth Richardson, “Why was death so big in Victorian Britain?,” 106.
16 Ibid.
18 Ibid, 8.
19 Ruth Richardson, Death, Dissection and the Destitute, 15.
Protecting the Dead or Protecting the Living?

status and monetary value. Richardson shares Thomas Laqueur’s belief that death provided the perfect opportunity to display social standing. Richardson states: “The Victorian era was one with an obsessive interest in the gradations of social placing; and death served as a prime means of expressing, and of defining, social place.” While many of these practices were well in place before Victoria took the throne, the societal anxieties they reflect became fully identifiable as “Victorian.” In the Victorian period sanitary questions and anxieties replaced the Georgian fear surrounding body snatching. Did these concerns allow for the continuation of older protective burial technologies, with a different intended purpose? Did these technologies, consciously or subconsciously, also protect the living from the dead? As Richardson notes: “Almost all death customs appear to have been capable of operating on more than one level- to serve more than one need.”

The Victorian era (1837 to 1901) was characterized by the advancement of science and technology. The topic of death was a given serious contemplation and exploration. Richardson acknowledges the physicality of the human corpse; “it is a carcass, with a predisposition to decay, to become noisome, obnoxious to the senses and harrowing to the emotions. Disposal of such perishable remains is imperative.” Understanding when death officially occurs, preventing premature decomposition, and treating corpses correctly were all topics that were seriously debated; this included considering the appropriate burial grounds, coffin technology, cremation, bodysnatching, dissection, and the overall mechanics of death. Health officials and the government instituted regulations and reforms, but the core of Victorian societal fears continued to persist.

In his work, The Victorian Celebration of Death, Curl focuses on anxieties surrounding the prevalence of corpses in burial grounds, “the churchyards became scenes of the most appalling horror, where bones would be heaped on bones, and partially rotted bodies would be disinterred to make way for a multitude of corpses...something had to be done in order that death could be celebrated in a hygienic and dignified manner in surroundings more fitting than the loathsome corruption of the churchyards...” A crowded burial ground with decomposing bodies was increasingly seen as inappropriate in the Victorian period.

Not only an unpleasant sight, crowded graveyards also epitomized the Victorian fear of miasma. The concept of miasma was not developed during this time period, but miasma theory was used to explore the outbreaks of cholera in the 1830’s and 1850’s. Putrefaction or decomposition occurs immediately when a person passes for the body immediately begins to emit gases. The miasma theorists believed that it was possible to contract an illness or serious disease from the vapors and gases arising from decomposing remains.

---

15 Ruth Richardson, “Why was death so big in Victorian Britain?,” 106.
16 Ibid.
18 Ibid, 8.
19 Ruth Richardson, Death, Dissection and the Destitute, 15.
Protecting the Dead or Protecting the Living?  33

matter, especially fleshy matter or excrement.\textsuperscript{21} Miasma was identifiable by a foul smell. “London Burials,” published in 1851, mentions the “dreadful beyond all smells- to which that of a cesspool, it seems, is as rosewater in comparison, and which leaves in the mouth a coppery taste if you had been ‘chewing a penny-piece’…”\textsuperscript{22} Given the state of Victorian burial grounds, some sort of smell would have undeniably existed. Scientists and medical men of the day believed that those who lived in close proximity to decomposing material were at greater risk for infection.\textsuperscript{23}

Miasma theory and the conditions of graveyards and churchyards are the two major reasons cited in the movement to eliminate interment within towns.\textsuperscript{24} Edwin Chadwick, in 1843, disregarded miasma as an immediate “appreciable evil” in burial grounds. Chadwick’s extensive reports as a Poor Law Commissioner concluded that the deadliest miasma emanates from the body within the first two days after death.\textsuperscript{25} Chadwick advised that cemeteries maintain separate graves at least six feet deep and, as Hotz states, provide “adequate space between them and a safe and protected distance from local habitations, morally uplifting visual arrangements, and careful attention to the cultivation of breathing spaces to disarm the effects of miasma.”\textsuperscript{26} John Claudius Loudon shared Chadwick’s opinion about the placement of graves and urban graveyards. Loudon focused on the organization of space in London during the Victorian period and participated in a discussion concerning how cemeteries should be organized. Contrary to other figures of the day, Loudon recommended burials in airtight sealed coffins in vaults or catacombs. Loudon believed that managing a family grave was difficult because it was nearly impossible to allow the appropriate amount of earth between coffins. Six feet was the standard. If these standards were not respected they would prove harmful to the living, affecting their health and their feelings surrounding death. According to Curl, “Loudon defined the uses of a cemetery to include the disposal of the remains of the dead in such a manner as that their decomposition, and return to the earth from which they sprang, should not prove injurious to the living either by affecting their health, or ‘shocking their feelings, opinions or prejudices.’”\textsuperscript{27} Curl continues by summarizing how Loudon’s beliefs were based on perceived real threats: “he recalled the several unpleasant incidents when coffins in the vaults of the new London cemeteries had exploded, and undertakers were sent for in order to re-solder the lead coffins to contain the corruption.” Loudon’s reference to this

\begin{footnotes}
\item[23] For more information on miasma and the Victorian fixation of clean air see: James Cantlie’s “Degeneration Amongst Londoners” and Lynda Nead’s Victorian Babylon, Chapter 1 “Maps and Sewers.”
\item[26] Ibid, 29.
\item[27] Curl, The Victorian Celebration of Death, 82.
\end{footnotes}
Protecting the Dead or Protecting the Living? 33

matter, especially fleshy matter or excrement.21 Miasma was identifiable by a foul smell. “London Burials,” published in 1851, mentions the “dreadful beyond all smells— to which that of a cesspool, it seems, is as rosewater in comparison, and which leaves in the mouth a coppery taste if you had been ‘chewing a penny-piece’...”22 Given the state of Victorian burial grounds, some sort of smell would have undeniably existed. Scientists and medical men of the day believed that those who lived in close proximity to decomposing material were at greater risk for infection.23

Miasma theory and the conditions of graveyards and churchyards are the two major reasons cited in the movement to eliminate interment within towns.24 Edwin Chadwick, in 1843, disregarded miasma as an immediate “appreciable evil” in burial grounds. Chadwick’s extensive reports as a Poor Law Commissioner concluded that the deadliest miasma emanates from the body within the first two days after death.25 Chadwick advised that cemeteries maintain separate graves at least six feet deep and, as Hotz states, provide “adequate space between them and a safe and protected distance from local habitations, morally uplifting visual arrangements, and careful attention to the cultivation of breathing spaces to disarm the effects of miasma.”26 John Claudius Loudon shared Chadwick’s opinion about the placement of graves and urban graveyards. Loudon focused on the organization of space in London during the Victorian period and participated in a discussion concerning how cemeteries should be organized. Contrary to other figures of the day, Loudon recommended burials in airtight sealed coffins in vaults or catacombs. Loudon believed that managing a family grave was difficult because it was nearly impossible to allow the appropriate amount of earth between coffins. Six feet was the standard. If these standards were not respected they would prove harmful to the living, affecting their health and their feelings surrounding death. According to Curl, “Loudon defined the uses of a cemetery to include the disposal of the remains of the dead in such a manner as that their decomposition, and return to the earth from which they sprang, should not prove injurious to the living either by affecting their health, or ‘shocking their feelings, opinions or prejudices.’”27 Curl continues by summarizing how Loudon’s beliefs were based on perceived real threats: “he recalled the several unpleasant incidents when coffins in the vaults of the new London cemeteries had exploded, and undertakers were sent for in order to re-solder the lead coffins to contain the corruption.” Loudon’s reference to this

23 For more information on miasma and the Victorian fixation of clean air see: James Cantlie’s “Degeneration Amongst Londoners” and Lynda Nead’s Victorian Babylon, Chapter 1 “Maps and Sewers.”
26 Ibid, 29.
27 Curl, The Victorian Celebration of Death, 82.
type of corruption was clearly a description of the gases that are released during decomposition. Scientists and medical men of the Victorian era believed that these gases, if not handled correctly, could make a coffin explode and spread disease.  

Chadwick’s Sanitary Report (1843) and the Supplementary Report on Interments in Town highlighted the societal fears surrounding “an exposed putrid body,” that is decomposition and its potential ill effects. R.A. Lewis’s expresses the anxiety: “London’s two hundred graveyards gave off incessantly the exhalations of decay, and the morbific matter, whose deadliness was shown if it got into the slightest cut, might be breathed into the lungs when it was diffused into the atmosphere.” Chadwick enthusiastically believed that bodies should be buried outside the boundaries of towns: “all interments in towns, without exception must be prohibited. The joint stock cemeteries and the private grounds must be bought out. The churchyards must be closed, their sites being kept as open spaces for public use.” The condition of urban graveyards was no secret, those living close proximity to churchyards understood the severity of the problem. Lewis quotes a congregational minister, “More crowded even than the churchyards were the private cemeteries, usually the property of an undertaker, where…the soil was ‘saturated and blackened with human remains and fragments of the dead’ and ‘the splash of water is heard from the graves, as the coffins descend, producing a shudder in every mourner.’” Reformers focused on sanitation, arguing for lightweight, perishable coffins. Strong, leaden coffins did not allow the earth access to the body. Reformers believed that if the body was placed directly in the ground decomposition would occur more rapidly with little to none pollution or spread of disease. The rector of Mixbury in 1852, Revd William Jocelyn Palmer, upon his death requested that “my body may be buried in the Church Yard at Mixbury, in the plainest, commonest, and least expensive way, in a single coffin, made of elm board, and in a common grave, as near as may be to my dear son Thomas; without brick and mortar, except so much as shall be sufficient to give stability to a common head and foot stone.” Pat Jalland’s research reveals countless examples of Victorians who preferred to move away from the heavy lead coffins. Simple graves were increasingly preferred over vaulted or brick graves, lead coffins were seen as too heavy, and new perishable coffin technologies were developed. Miasma was a constant fear; an earth burial would allow for decomposition to occur quickly.

Sanitary concerns became the driving force in the death culture of health-minded middle-class Victorians. The middle to late 19th century saw significant changes in the way that corpses were dealt with after death, as well as in funeral and burial arrangements. Reformers were particularly concerned with the rate at

---

28 Ibid.
30 Ibid, 73.
31 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
type of corruption was clearly a description of the gases that are released during decomposition. Scientists and medical men of the Victorian era believed that these gases, if not handled correctly, could make a coffin explode and spread disease.\textsuperscript{28}

Chadwick’s \textit{Sanitary Report} (1843) and the \textit{Supplementary Report on Interments in Town} highlighted the societal fears surrounding “an exposed putrid body,” that is decomposition and its potential ill effects. R.A. Lewis’s expresses the anxiety: “London’s two hundred graveyards gave off incessantly the exhalations of decay, and the morbific matter, whose deadliness was shown if it got into the slightest cut, might be breathed into the lungs when it was diffused into the atmosphere.”\textsuperscript{29} Chadwick enthusiastically believed that bodies should be buried outside the boundaries of towns: “all interments in towns, without exception must be prohibited. The joint stock cemeteries and the private grounds must be bought out. The churchyards must be closed, their sites being kept as open spaces for public use.”\textsuperscript{30} The condition of urban graveyards was no secret, those living close proximity to churchyards understood the severity of the problem. Lewis quotes a congregational minister, “More crowded even than the churchyards were the private cemeteries, usually the property of an undertaker, where…the soil was ‘saturated and blackened with human remains and fragments of the dead’ and ‘the splash of water is heard from the graves, as the coffins descend, producing a shudder in every mourner.”\textsuperscript{31}

Reformers focused on sanitation, arguing for lightweight, perishable coffins. Strong, leaden coffins did not allow the earth access to the body. Reformers believed that if the body was placed directly in the ground decomposition would occur more rapidly with little to none pollution or spread of disease.\textsuperscript{32} The rector of Mixbury in 1852, Revd William Jocelyn Palmer, upon his death requested that “my body may be buried in the Church Yard at Mixbury, in the plainest, commonest, and least expensive way, in a single coffin, made of elm board, and in a common grave, as near as may be to my dear son Thomas; without brick and mortar, except so much as shall be sufficient to give stability to a common head and foot stone.”\textsuperscript{33} Pat Jalland’s research reveals countless examples of Victorians who preferred to move away from the heavy lead coffins. Simple graves were increasingly preferred over vaulted or brick graves, lead coffins were seen as too heavy, and new perishable coffin technologies were developed.\textsuperscript{34} Miasma was a constant fear; an earth burial would allow for decomposition to occur quickly.

Sanitary concerns became the driving force in the death culture of health- minded middle-class Victorians. The middle to late 19\textsuperscript{th} century saw significant changes in the way that corpses were dealt with after death, as well as in funeral and burial arrangements. Reformers were particularly concerned with the rate at

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid, 73.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
Protecting the Dead or Protecting the Living? 37

which bodies decompose and the protection of the public. Consequently, urban graveyards and churchyards and aristocratic burial technology and architecture (mausoleums and tombs) fell under suspicion.

George Alfred Walker, in an 1842 article, comments on the “entire absence of every precaution” when placing corpses beneath churches and burying corpses in densely populated burial grounds. Walker focused on the reality of burials in common burial places: “bodies are placed one above another, and side by side, to the depth of twenty-five or thirty feet, the topmost coffins being but a few inches from the surface.”

Walker shared Chadwick’s belief that bodies should be placed six feet below the ground for proper and safe decomposition to occur. Walker also disregarded the popular belief that lead provided an extra layer of protection for the health of the public. Walker warned that when decomposition was slowed “under a medium temperature, as in vaults, the expansive force of the gas is such, that the lids of coffins frequently become convex, and sometimes are rent asunder, and the gases thus and otherwise disengaged become diffused and mixed with the atmosphere, and enter the lungs in every inspiration.”

As mentioned above, Chadwick’s Supplementary Report on the Results of a Special Inquiry into the Practice of Interment in Towns (1843) reveals his enthusiastic belief that corpses should not be interred within the boundaries of cities. Chadwick participated in multiple interviews with undertakers and those involved in the process of interring or entombing a corpse to further investigate and provide evidence for his beliefs. Chadwick comments on gases seeping out of coffins, from vaults or underground, and the existence of miasma in graveyards: “The occurrence of cases of instant death to grave diggers, from accidentally inhaling the concentrated miasma which escapes from coffins, is undeniable. Slower deaths from exposure to such miasma are designated as ‘low fevers’…[so] that the exposure to that influence is apt to produce grievous and fatal injuries amongst the public.”

The possibility of a leaden coffin bursting in the vaults of cemeteries and churchyards was of major concern, “The inquiry brought forward instances of the bursting of some leaden coffins and the escape of mephitic vapor in the catacombs…of two laborers having been injured, apparently by digging amidst some impure water which drained from some graves.”

Victorians feared that miasma could potentially poison the air they breathed, and as Chadwick reveals, they feared the possibility of miasma contaminating the water sources of the cities:

The regulation of the depth of the graves has been found to be a subject requiring great


36 Ibid.


38 Ibid, 27.
Protecting the Dead or Protecting the Living? 37

which bodies decompose and the protection of the public. Consequently, urban graveyards and churchyards and aristocratic burial technology and architecture (mausoleums and tombs) fell under suspicion.

George Alfred Walker, in an 1842 article, comments on the “entire absence of every precaution” when placing corpses beneath churches and burying corpses in densely populated burial grounds. Walker focused on the reality of burials in common burial places: “bodies are placed one above another, and side by side, to the depth of twenty-five or thirty feet, the topmost coffins being but a few inches from the surface.” 35 Walker shared Chadwick’s belief that bodies should be placed six feet below the ground for proper and safe decomposition to occur. Walker also disregarded the popular belief that lead provided an extra layer of protection for the health of the public. Walker warned that when decomposition was slowed “under a medium temperature, as in vaults, the expansive force of the gas is such, that the lids of coffins frequently become convex, and sometimes are rent asunder, and the gases thus and otherwise disengaged become diffused and mixed with the atmosphere, and enter the lungs in every inspiration.” 36

As mentioned above, Chadwick’s Supplementary Report on the Results of a Special Inquiry into the Practice of Interment in Towns (1843) reveals his enthusiastic belief that corpses should not be interred within the boundaries of cities. Chadwick participated in multiple interviews with undertakers and those involved in the process of interring or entombing a corpse to further investigate and provide evidence for his beliefs. Chadwick comments on gases seeping out of coffins, from vaults or underground, and the existence of miasma in graveyards: “The occurrence of cases of instant death to grave diggers, from accidentally inhaling the concentrated miasma which escapes from coffins, is undeniable. Slower deaths from exposure to such miasma are designated as ‘low fevers’…[so] that the exposure to that influence is apt to produce grievous and fatal injuries amongst the public.” 37

The possibility of a leaden coffin bursting in the vaults of cemeteries and churchyards was of major concern, “The inquiry brought forward instances of the bursting of some leaden coffins and the escape of mephitic vapor in the catacombs…of two laborers having been injured, apparently by digging amidst some impure water which drained from some graves.” 38 Victorians feared that miasma could potentially poison the air they breathed, and as Chadwick reveals, they feared the possibility of miasma contaminating the water sources of the cities:

The regulation of the depth of the graves has been found to be a subject requiring great

36 Ibid.
38 Ibid, 27.
Protecting the Dead or Protecting the Living? 39

attention, to avoid occasioning too rapid an evolution of miasma from the remains, and at the same time to avoid its retention and corruption, to avoid the pollution of distant springs, and also to avoid rendering increased space for burial requisite by the delay of decomposition usually produced by deep burial for the ground usually becomes hard in proportion to the depth, and delays the decomposition.\(^{39}\)

Chadwick fervently believed that cemeteries should be moved outside the limits of the city and a considerable distance from people, but if bodies were to remain within the limits of the city then a depth regulation needed to be put in place.

That inasmuch as there appear to be no cases in which the emanations from human remains in an advanced stage of decomposition are not of a deleterious nature, so there is no case in which the liability to danger should be incurred either by interment (or by entombment in vaults, which is most dangerous) amidst the dwellings of the living, it being established as a general conclusion in respect to the physical circumstances of interment, from which no adequate grounds of exception have been established. That all interments in towns where bodies decompose, contribute to the mass of atmospheric impurity which is injurious to the public health.\(^{40}\)

Chadwick alludes to the belief that entombment in vaults is most dangerous. In the early pages of his report, Chadwick discusses the prevalence of miasma and effluvia in churchyards and whether it was detectable. Chadwick states: “Another surgeon who had lived for many years near a churchyard in the metropolis, and had never observed any effluvia from it, neither did he perceive any effects of such emanations at church or anywhere else; yet he admitted that his wife perceived the openings of vaults when she went to the church to which the graveyard belonged, and after respiring the air there, would say, ‘they have opened a vault,’ and on inquiry, the fact proved to be so.”\(^{41}\)

Vaults and tombs were believed to be the most dangerous form of burial because they did not allow for the effluvia, miasma, and decomposition gases to dissipate.

Chadwick also discusses the question of leaden coffins. He states: “The retention of bodies in leaden coffins in vaults is objected to, as increasing the noxiousness of the gases, which sooner or later escape, and when in vaults beneath churches, create a miasma which is apt to escape through the floor, whenever the church is warmed...”\(^{42}\) Chadwick continues, “burial in lead, as well as in other expensive coffins, appears to be generally promoted by the undertakers, to whom they are the most profitable,” insinuating that Victorian fears were encouraged in order to profit undertakers.\(^{43}\) Removing corpses from the city provided Victorians with a possible solution to

---

\(^{39}\) Ibid, 128.  
\(^{40}\) Ibid, 31.  
\(^{42}\) Ibid, 135.  
\(^{43}\) Ibid, 136.
attention, to avoid occasioning too rapid an evolution of miasma from the remains, and at the same time to avoid its retention and corruption, to avoid the pollution of distant springs, and also to avoid rendering increased space for burial requisite by the delay of decomposition usually produced by deep burial for the ground usually becomes hard in proportion to the depth, and delays the decomposition.\(^{39}\)

Chadwick fervently believed that cemeteries should be moved outside the limits of the city and a considerable distance from people, but if bodies were to remain within the limits of the city then a depth regulation needed to be put in place.

That inasmuch as there appear to be no cases in which the emanations from human remains in an advanced stage of decomposition are not of a deleterious nature, so there is no case in which the liability to danger should be incurred either by interment (or by entombment in vaults, which is most dangerous) amidst the dwellings of the living, it being established as a general conclusion in respect to the physical circumstances of interment, from which no adequate grounds of exception have been established. That all interments in towns where bodies decompose, contribute to the mass of atmospheric impurity which is injurious to the public health.\(^{40}\)

Chadwick alludes to the belief that entombment in vaults is most dangerous. In the early pages of his report, Chadwick discusses the prevalence of miasma and effluvia in churchyards and whether it was detectable. Chadwick states: “Another surgeon who had lived for many years near a churchyard in the metropolis, and had never observed any effluvia from it, neither did he perceive any effects of such emanations at church or anywhere else; yet he admitted that his wife perceived the openings of vaults when she went to the church to which the graveyard belonged, and after respiring the air there, would say, ‘they have opened a vault,’ and on inquiry, the fact proved to be so.”\(^{41}\)

Vaults and tombs were believed to be the most dangerous form of burial because they did not allow for the effluvia, miasma, and decomposition gases to dissipate.

Chadwick also discusses the question of leaden coffins. He states: “The retention of bodies in leaden coffins in vaults is objected to, as increasing the noxiousness of the gases, which sooner or later escape, and when in vaults beneath churches, create a miasma which is apt to escape through the floor, whenever the church is warmed...”\(^{42}\) Chadwick continues, “burial in lead, as well as in other expensive coffins, appears to be generally promoted by the undertakers, to whom they are the most profitable,” insinuating that Victorian fears were encouraged in order to profit undertakers.\(^{43}\) Removing corpses from the city provided Victorians with a possible solution to

\(^{39}\) Ibid, 128.
\(^{40}\) Ibid, 31.
\(^{42}\) Ibid, 135.
\(^{43}\) Ibid, 136.
Protecting the Dead or Protecting the Living?  

the injurious effects of miasma and the decomposition of corpses. Chadwick’s wish was granted; in March of 1842 “a Select Committee” was established to consider the development of legislation to “remedy the evils arising from the interment of bodies within the precincts of large towns, or of places densely populated.”

The “Lectures on Public Hygiene and Medical Police,” delivered by James Black at the Manchester Royal School of Medicine and Surgery in the summer of 1844 summarizes Victorian fears of the decomposing corpse. Similar to Chadwick, Black calls into question the existence of miasma in burial grounds: “It is difficult in every case to determine the exact amount, if any, of the injurious effects on health that result from living near or in the immediate vicinity of burial grounds...but where there are any exhalations ascertained to arise from such places, we may infer upon sound theory, that they must have a positively noxious effect.” Black emphasizes that burial grounds should be placed outside of towns and “at a distance from springs and rivers that are subject to overflow.” Additionally, the depth of the grave needs to be taken into consideration, “If they are deeper, the decomposition is retarded from the total exclusion of the air and heat; and if at a less depth, they would allow the exhalations from the corpses to permeate the earth easily, and thus infect the atmosphere.”

Similar to Walker and Chadwick, the article published in The Lancet, “Progressive Closure of Graveyards,” in 1849, stresses urgency that “a proper outlet for our enormous mortality ought instantly to be found.” Churches were perceived as both a positive and negative location for the burial of a corpse, the positive being the church is a place of worship, and the negative being the church as a place “of pollution by festering bodies of the dead in the vaults beneath.” The church was likened to a hospital during the ongoing cholera epidemic, the “death dust” from the tombs arising from beneath the church and affecting the worshipers. The Lancet provides a clear articulation of the belief that burials above ground were harmful to society: “During the present frightful mortality [cholera] some mode and place of interment must be found, not more expensive or onerous to the poor than the present method of burial. Otherwise, the most fearful results may be expected. We shall have dead bodies accumulating intra muros above ground, instead of beneath it, and we need not say which is more baleful alternative.” This suggests that earthen burial and above ground burial were both feared, but that “intra muros” (above ground) burial might be the more feared method of the two.

Waller Lewis inspected vaults in 1849 and 1850 throughout London; his main objective was to further

---


46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.


49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.
the injurious effects of miasma and the decomposition of corpses. Chadwick’s wish was granted; in March of 1842 “a Select Committee” was established to consider the development of legislation to “remedy the evils arising from the interment of bodies within the precincts of large towns, or of places densely populated.”

The “Lectures on Public Hygiene and Medical Police,” delivered by James Black at the Manchester Royal School of Medicine and Surgery in the summer of 1844 summarizes Victorian fears of the decomposing corpse. Similar to Chadwick, Black calls into question the existence of miasma in burial grounds: “It is difficult in every case to determine the exact amount, if any, of the injurious effects on health that result from living near or in the immediate vicinity of burial grounds...but where there are any exhalations ascertained to arise from such places, we may infer upon sound theory, that they must have a positively noxious effect.” Black emphasizes that burial grounds should be placed outside of towns and “at a distance from springs and rivers that are subject to overflow.” Additionally, the depth of the grave needs to be taken into consideration, “If they are deeper, the decomposition is retarded from the total exclusion of the air and heat; and if at a less depth, they would allow the exhalations from the corpses to permeate the earth easily, and thus infect the atmosphere.”

Similar to Walker and Chadwick, the article published in The Lancet, “Progressive Closure of Graveyards,” in 1849, stresses urgency that “a proper outlet for our enormous mortality ought instantly to be found.” Churches were perceived as both a positive and negative location for the burial of a corpse, the positive being the church is a place of worship, and the negative being the church as a place “of pollution by festering bodies of the dead in the vaults beneath.” The church was likened to a hospital during the ongoing cholera epidemic, the “death dust” from the tombs arising from beneath the church and affecting the worshipers. The Lancet provides a clear articulation of the belief that burials above ground were harmful to society: “During the present frightful mortality [cholera] some mode and place of interment must be found, not more expensive or onerous to the poor than the present method of burial. Otherwise, the most fearful results may be expected. We shall have dead bodies accumulating intra muros above ground, instead of beneath it, and we need not say which is more baleful alternative.” This suggests that earthen burial and above ground burial were both feared, but that “intra muros” (above ground) burial might be the more feared method of the two.

Waller Lewis inspected vaults in 1849 and 1850 throughout London; his main objective was to further

---


46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.


49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.
understand how a body decomposed within an above ground burial receptacle. In 1849, with the cholera epidemic in full swing, the General Board of Health prohibited burials within a vault or mausoleum unless in an “air-tight leaden coffin.”51 An objective of the General Board of Health was to understand the ways in which a decomposing body’s gases distribute, “To observe how the dead man strives, after his fashion, to escape from his subterranean imprisonment with greater force than ever in life he could have exerted to tear asunder galling manacles, or burst through dungeon walls.”52 It was believed that the gases released during decomposition were strong enough to burst through cement and brick. Like Chadwick and Walker, Lewis hoped for “the practice of entombment in receptacles” to be prohibited and vaults to be closed forever.53

The General Board of Health’s findings on extramural interments provided Lewis a context to begin his inspections of the churchyard vaults throughout London and the possibly ill effects of confining a body undergoing decomposition.

Do the members of the Board of Health know what sort of substances they seek to confine, when they put a corpse weighing some eight or ten stone, into a box of sheet-lead closely soldered down? Are they acquainted with the seventeen or eighteen chemical elements of which the human body is built up, and with the influences of confinement on the putrefactive combinations of these elements? Have they considered how, and by what process that decomposition takes place, which leaves at the end of ten years only, a few brittle bones in the else vacant shroud? And are they aware of the terrible retribution with which nature will punish the violation of her law, if they persist in obstructing with leaden barriers the corporeal absorption of the dead?54

Lewis suggested that the Board of Health was not fully enlightened of the affects of decomposition and what can happen if the noxious gases are confined. The absence of air does not stop the process of decomposition, and by withholding air from the decomposing corpse the chemicals released will create a gaseous poison so intense that “their mere contact with mucus surface of the body may occasion sudden death.”55 Earthen burial is the solution. Lewis argued it provided a safe decomposition if the corpse is buried at the appropriate depth.

Lewis’s investigations yielded no evidence that the air around vaults was contaminated with harmful gases. However, the gases released within coffins were unpredictable enough that the practice of interment in vaults should be eliminated. Additionally, coffins do not consistently bulge by the expansion of elastic fluids within. However, leaden coffins did slow the decomposition of a corpse: “In my opinion, the fact

52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
understand how a body decomposed within an above ground burial receptacle. In 1849, with the cholera epidemic in full swing, the General Board of Health prohibited burials within a vault or mausoleum unless in an “air-tight leaden coffin.”

An objective of the General Board of Health was to understand the ways in which a decomposing body’s gases distribute, “To observe how the dead man strives, after his fashion, to escape from his subterranean imprisonment with greater force than ever in life he could have exerted to tear asunder galling manacles, or burst through dungeon walls.” It was believed that the gases released during decomposition were strong enough to burst through cement and brick. Like Chadwick and Walker, Lewis hoped for “the practice of entombment in receptacles” to be prohibited and vaults to be closed forever.

The General Board of Health’s findings on extramural interments provided Lewis a context to begin his inspections of the churchyard vaults throughout London and the possibly ill effects of confining a body undergoing decomposition.

Do the members of the Board of Health know what sort of substances they seek to confine, when they put a corpse weighing some eight or ten stone, into a box of sheet-lead closely soldered down? Are they acquainted with the seventeen or eighteen chemical elements of which the human body is built up, and with the influences of confinement on the putrefactive combinations of these elements? Have they considered how, and by what process that decomposition takes place, which leaves at the end of ten years only, a few brittle bones in the else vacant shroud? And are they aware of the terrible retribution with which nature will punish the violation of her law, if they persist in obstructing with leaden barriers the corporeal absorption of the dead?

Lewis suggested that the Board of Health was not fully enlightened of the affects of decomposition and what can happen if the noxious gases are confined. The absence of air does not stop the process of decomposition, and by withholding air from the decomposing corpse the chemicals released will create a gaseous poison so intense that “their mere contact with mucus surface of the body may occasion sudden death.” Earthen burial is the solution. Lewis argued it provided a safe decomposition if the corpse is buried at the appropriate depth.

Lewis’s investigations yielded no evidence that the air around vaults was contaminated with harmful gases. However, the gases released within coffins were unpredictable enough that the practice of interment in vaults should be eliminated. Additionally, coffins do not consistently bulge by the expansion of elastic fluids within. However, leaden coffins did slow the decomposition of a corpse: “In my opinion, the fact


52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.
Protecting the Dead or Protecting the Living? 45

that coffins so rarely become bulged is to be ascribed to the great porosity of the metal employed, when slightly bulged, the lead, from being thinner before, becomes more pervious to the contained air.”

Lewis’ conclusions were as follows: 1) Internment in vaults should no longer be permitted. “No good object is gained by this practice. The corpse so treated are by this means converted into so many active volcanoes, constantly emitting poisonous effluvia into the atmosphere, for an indefinite period.” 2) No one should have access to “these receptacles” after a certain amount of time for “after a certain interval, during which friends or relatives should have the power of removing any coffins from the vaults to the public cemeteries, all these receptacles should be hermetically closed and future access thereto forbidden.” 3) Lead coffins should be banned, not for their purpose, but for their cost; “they only add to the exorbitant charges of undertakers. Until a very late period they were constantly stolen from the vaults, emptied of their contents and sold as old lead.” 4) Bodies should be able to decompose in peace, “[I]f the object of interment is to allow the human body, after it has served a purpose here, to return speedily as possibly to its elements, and to become perfectly inert, it should be placed in a light wooden coffin, from 5 to 8 feet deep, in suitable pervious soil.”

In the spring of 1856 The British Medical journal published a question and answer section in which the following subject was discussed, the discontinuation of vaults beneath Westminster. However, one exception still remained for privileged parties: “that the bodies buried be embedded in a layer of powdered charcoal, six inches at least in thickness.” Why charcoal? Charcoal, as with lead, was believed to absorb the deleterious gases arising from the decaying body,” but little substantial evidence supported this belief the editor states. In 1864 The Lancet published “The Interment of the Dead” a letter to the editor, discussing the use of lead in burials; “Burials in lead, in vaults, and in catacombs are another cause of annoyance and injury to the public. The lead coffins burst, or are perforated. In both cases they continue, for a long time, to be vomitories of stench, contagion, and disease.” The correspondence was signed, “your obedient servant, a sufferer from the evil complained of.” The writer claimed that he had suffered from the decomposition of dead bodies and general death customs of the time.

For the majority of British history it was commonplace for some corpses to be buried beneath the church and in the surrounding churchyard. During the Victorian period this traditional practice came under fire. In 1882 The British Medical Journal published “Unsanitary Burials in Churches,” which stated: “The churchwardens, or, at any rate, those who carried out the work, ought to have known that gases readily pass through most kinds of bricks, and, if

---

56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.

60 Peter C. Jupp and Clare Gittings, Death In England: An Illustrated History, (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1999), 193.
that coffins so rarely become bulged is to be ascribed to the great porosity of the metal employed, when slightly bulged, the lead, from being thinner before, becomes more pervious to the contained air.”

Lewis’ conclusions were as follows: 1) Internment in vaults should no longer be permitted. “No good object is gained by this practice. The corpse so treated are by this means converted into so many active volcanoes, constantly emitting poisonous effluvia into the atmosphere, for an indefinite period.” 2) No one should have access to “these receptacles” after a certain amount of time for “after a certain interval, during which friends or relatives should have the power of removing any coffins from the vaults to the public cemeteries, all these receptacles should be hermetically closed and future access thereto forbidden.” 3) Lead coffins should be banned, not for their purpose, but for their cost; “they only add to the exorbitant charges of undertakers. Until a very late period they were constantly stolen from the vaults, emptied of their contents and sold as old lead.” 4) Bodies should be able to decompose in peace, “[I]f the object of interment is to allow the human body, after it has served a purpose here, to return speedily as possibly to its elements, and to become perfectly inert, it should be placed in a light wooden coffin, from 5 to 8 feet deep, in suitable pervious soil.”

In the spring of 1856 The British Medical journal published a question and answer section in which the following subject was discussed, the discontinuation of vaults beneath Westminster. However, one exception still remained for privileged parties: “that the bodies buried be embedded in a layer of powdered charcoal, six inches at least in thickness.” Why charcoal? Charcoal, as with lead, was believed to absorb the “deleterious gases arising from the decaying body,” but little substantial evidence supported this belief the editor states. In 1864 The Lancet published “The Interment of the Dead” a letter to the editor, discussing the use of lead in burials; “Burials in lead, in vaults, and in catacombs are another cause of annoyance and injury to the public. The lead coffins burst, or are perforated. In both cases they continue, for a long time, to be vomitories of stench, contagion, and disease.” The correspondence was signed, “your obedient servant, a sufferer from the evil complained of.” The writer claimed that he had suffered from the decomposition of dead bodies and general death customs of the time.

For the majority of British history it was commonplace for some corpses to be buried beneath the church and in the surrounding churchyard. During the Victorian period this traditional practice came under fire. In 1882 The British Medical Journal published “Unsanitary Burials in Churches,” which stated: “The churchwardens, or, at any rate, those who carried out the work, ought to have known that gases readily pass through most kinds of bricks, and, if

56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
under pressure (as in the case of a decomposing body in a wooden coffin), will also find their way through a thin layer of concrete.”


As in the Georgian period, above ground burial technology was used in the Victorian period to denote social standing and perpetuate societal class boundaries. The intended use of mausoleums, tombs and church vaults was also to further protect the corpse from the living (body snatchers, anatomists, etc.). From the primary sources I have provided, I have not found substantial evidence to suggest that these technologies were ever used to protect the living from the dead. But rather, with Victorian sanitary obsessions, these technologies began to cause more fear for the living. However, certain coffin technologies (lead linings) were developed throughout the Georgian and Victorian periods in the hope of protecting the living from the dead. The middle to late Victorian period saw the rise in new beliefs surrounding fleshy decomposition. Reformers and health officials, as well as the public, began to focus on rapid decomposition, having the corpse return to the earth as quickly as possible. The use of triple layer coffins, lead, and airtight coffins would not allow for a rapid decomposition. Light wooden coffins and more natural forms of burial began to appear, for the coffin disintegrated rapidly the corpse would do the same.

In the early Victorian period Chadwick and other prominent health reformers of the time believed that corpses should be moved outside the boundaries of the city. But if that was not possible, all corpses should be buried in strong, leaden, airtight coffins. Throughout the Victorian era continued, evidence mounted against aristocratic forms of burial; in tombs, church vaults, and other above ground burial technologies, they were believed to further harm the population due to their explosive nature. Rapid and more natural forms of burial began to be favored in the middle to late Victorian period. For example lightweight, perishable coffins placed directly in the earth would guarantee a quick disposal of the dead. As mentioned above, Chadwick states: “The retention of bodies in leaden coffins in vaults is objected to, as increasing the noxiousness of the gases, which sooner or later escape, and when in vaults beneath churches, create a miasma which is apt to escape through the floor, whenever the church is warmed...”

63 For the majority of the Victorian period, the movement of graveyards outside the boundaries of the city was seen as the foolproof solution to the sanitary and spatial concerns.

As the Victorian period was coming to a close, cremation gained popularity as an additional solution to harmful decomposing corpses that might infect the population. Sir Henry Thompson, Queen Victoria’s surgeon, and his medical colleagues, developed the Cremation Society of Great Britain in 1874 the hope of

under pressure (as in the case of a decomposing body in a wooden coffin), will also find their way through a thin layer of concrete.\textsuperscript{61} If burials beneath churches were dangerous to the churchgoers (which was believed before the publishing of this article in 1882,) where were the dying practitioners to be buried? Those who were well off left the churchyard and buried loved ones in brick-lined shafts, mausolea, and vaults on their own property or in the national cemeteries.\textsuperscript{62}

As in the Georgian period, above ground burial technology was used in the Victorian period to denote social standing and perpetuate societal class boundaries. The intended use of mausoleums, tombs and church vaults was also to further protect the corpse from the living (body snatchers, anatomists, etc.). From the primary sources I have provided, I have not found substantial evidence to suggest that these technologies were ever used to protect the living from the dead. But rather, with Victorian sanitary obsessions, these technologies began to cause more fear for the living. However, certain coffin technologies (lead linings) were developed throughout the Georgian and Victorian periods in the hope of protecting the living from the dead. The middle to late Victorian period saw the rise in new beliefs surrounding fleshy decomposition. Reformers and health officials, as well as the public, began to focus on rapid decomposition, having the corpse return to the earth as quickly as possible. The use of triple layer coffins, lead, and airtight coffins would not allow for a rapid decomposition. Light wooden coffins and more natural forms of burial began to appear, for the coffin disintegrated rapidly the corpse would do the same.

In the early Victorian period Chadwick and other prominent health reformers of the time believed that corpses should be moved outside the boundaries of the city. But if that was not possible, all corpses should be buried in strong, leaden, airtight coffins. Throughout the Victorian era continued, evidence mounted against aristocratic forms of burial; in tombs, church vaults, and other above ground burial technologies, they were believed to further harm the population due to their explosive nature. Rapid and more natural forms of burial began to be favored in the middle to late Victorian period. For example lightweight, perishable coffins placed directly in the earth would guarantee a quick disposal of the dead. As mentioned above, Chadwick states: “The retention of bodies in leaden coffins in vaults is objected to, as increasing the noxiousness of the gases, which sooner or later escape, and when in vaults beneath churches, create a miasma which is apt to escape through the floor, whenever the church is warmed...”\textsuperscript{63} For the majority of the Victorian period, the movement of graveyards outside the boundaries of the city was seen as the foolproof solution to the sanitary and spatial concerns.

As the Victorian period was coming to a close, cremation gained popularity as an additional solution to harmful decomposing corpses that might infect the population. Sir Henry Thompson, Queen Victoria’s surgeon, and his medical colleagues, developed the Cremation Society of Great Britain in 1874 the hope of

\textsuperscript{63} Chadwick, “Report on Sanitary Conditions,” 135.
Throughout this paper I have seen significant transitions that took place during this period: from tombs and mausoleums and airtight leaden coffins, to the perception that these technologies actually could harm the public more than a corpse buried in the earth, to the resurgence of natural burial and the development of cremation, all these transitions signified the evolving Victorian perception of death and how the body and corpse could be treated. Understanding the way that a society approaches the treatment of a life event such as death allows us to understand other aspects of that society. The evolution of the treatment of the corpse exemplifies Victorian society struggling for a proper, scientific form of disposal of the dead, while still accommodating the display of social class.

Maxine DeVincenzi transferred to Santa Clara University as a History and Anthropology major in 2009. SCU’s History and Anthropology departments provided her with many opportunities to explore her true interests within both disciplines. Maxine’s senior capstone, “Protecting the Dead or Protecting the Living? Above Ground Interment in Georgian (1714-1830) and Victorian Britain (1837-1901),” is the result of her research and exploration in the way in which people of the past approached and dealt with death.

---


persuading the public that cremation was the best solution for a speedy decomposition and disposal of corpses. In terms of burial sites, cremation eliminated the monumentality that was popular during the Georgian and Victorian periods. “The Progress of Cremation,” published in 1889 by The British Medical Journal, alluded to the “disadvantages” of interment in burial grounds. If directly pointed to the possible sanitary and health predicaments; “Accept the practice (cremation) as one of great advantage to the community...by requiring that their ashes shall be cremated, instead of their bodies being disposed of by interment, of which the disadvantages have repeatedly been pointed out by eminent authorities.” Cremating a corpse eliminated the process of decomposition and solved the problem of having too many corpses and not enough burial land.

Stoker uses Dracula to comment on the Victorian funeral practices. The story alludes to the transitions Victorian society was experiencing. Hotz states that Stoker “collapses the boundaries between the living and the dead in order to problematize England’s sense of itself as a civilized, rational, and progressive nation; and he insists, paradoxically, that despite enormous efforts to contain and confine the corpse, it remains, ultimately, restless in Victorian culture to remind society of its essential and educative role in modernity.”


66 Hotz, Literary Remains, 153.
Wicked California: Leisure and Morality during the Gold Rush, 1848-1860s

Michelle Khoury

Play is serious. Although a paradox, it holds truth. How people behave in their spare time reflects a great deal about the society in which they live. “In our leisure,” wrote the famous poet Ovid, “we reveal what kind of people we are.” In 1938, Dutch Historian and cultural theorist Johan Huizinga wrote about the play element of society in *Homo Ludens*, or “Man the Player.” In this classic, he argues that civilization arises in play, integrating the notion of play into the concept of culture. Huizinga attempts to define “leisure” by detailing its essential characteristics. Play’s first quality is freedom. It is always voluntary. Second, it is outside the realm of “ordinary” or “real” life. When one plays, he or she enters a “temporary sphere of activity.” Third, play is always limited by locality and duration. It is engaged in a “playground,” such as an arena, stage, or card table, and it “plays itself to an end.” Fourth, play creates order. It involves certain rules, and one who breaks the rules typically spoils the game.1

Unfortunately, many scholars quickly dismiss leisure’s importance in history. To demonstrate its significance, I examined miners’ recreational activities during the California Gold Rush. Many young, unmarried men fled to California in the mid-1800s to start a new life, a life of prosperity and fortune. Being away from family and other forces which impose traditional values, these miners often broke away from accepted behavior. They socialized at saloons, gambling houses, and sporting arenas. My historical question concerns the effects of these recreational activities on the character of California. Religious institutions, especially from the Northeast, sent clergymen to respond to the miners’ profane behavior. I investigated the interplay between these two entities and their values: between East and West, self-discipline and freedom, and the Protestant work ethic and California’s motto of “getting rich quick.”

Having considered many primary sources—diaries, letters, and memoirs—I can conclude confidently that play is serious. Miners’ pastimes challenged convention, driving a clash of values. Leisure is an indispensable element in understanding what scholars have dubbed California’s “marketplace of morals.”2

That California had a unique moral landscape during the Gold Rush era is clear. It is often described as without structure and lacking societal constraints. One observer, Hinton Helper, remarked:

I have seen purer liquors, better segars [sic], finer tobacco, truer guns and pistols, larger dirks and bowie knives, and prettier courtezans [sic] here, than in any other place I have ever visited; and it is my unbiased opinion that California can and does furnish the best bad

---


Wicked California: Leisure and Morality during the Gold Rush, 1848-1860s

Michelle Khoury

Play is serious. Although a paradox, it holds truth. How people behave in their spare time reflects a great deal about the society in which they live. “In our leisure,” wrote the famous poet Ovid, “we reveal what kind of people we are.” In 1938, Dutch Historian and cultural theorist Johan Huizinga wrote about the play element of society in *Homo Ludens*, or “Man the Player.” In this classic, he argues that civilization arises in play, integrating the notion of play into the concept of culture. Huizinga attempts to define “leisure” by detailing its essential characteristics. Play’s first quality is freedom. It is always voluntary. Second, it is outside the realm of “ordinary” or “real” life. When one plays, he or she enters a “temporary sphere of activity.” Third, play is always limited by locality and duration. It is engaged in a “playground,” such as an arena, stage, or card table, and it “plays itself to an end.” Fourth, play creates order. It involves certain rules, and one who breaks the rules typically spoils the game.¹

Unfortunately, many scholars quickly dismiss leisure’s importance in history. To demonstrate its significance, I examined miners’ recreational activities during the California Gold Rush. Many young, unmarried men fled to California in the mid-1800s to start a new life, a life of prosperity and fortune. Being away from family and other forces which impose traditional values, these miners often broke away from accepted behavior. They socialized at saloons, gambling houses, and sporting arenas. My historical question concerns the effects of these recreational activities on the character of California. Religious institutions, especially from the Northeast, sent clergymen to respond to the miners’ profane behavior. I investigated the interplay between these two entities and their values: between East and West, self-discipline and freedom, and the Protestant work ethic and California’s motto of “getting rich quick.”

Having considered many primary sources—diaries, letters, and memoirs—I can conclude confidently that play is serious. Miners’ pastimes challenged convention, driving a clash of values. Leisure is an indispensable element in understanding what scholars have dubbed California’s “marketplace of morals.”²

That California had a unique moral landscape during the Gold Rush era is clear. It is often described as without structure and lacking societal constraints. One observer, Hinton Helper, remarked:

> I have seen purer liquors, better segars [sic], finer tobacco, truer guns and pistols, larger dirks and bowie knives, and prettier courtezans [sic] here, than in any other place I have ever visited; and it is my unbiased opinion that California can and does furnish the best bad

---


things that are obtainable in America.³

The moral laxity described by Helper was something unfamiliar and shocking to many who arrived in California. As demonstrated by this quote, leisure helped to create such looseness. Historian Susan Lee Johnson explains that “people in every Gold Rush community, immigrant and Indian, sought diversion from the business of producing material life—they sang and prayed, they told stories and wrote letters, they gambled and got drunk, they danced to one another’s drumming or fiddle playing and cheered at bull-and-bear fights.”⁴ Due to the volatile and unstable nature of the gold mining industry, miners engaged in a variety of pastimes. Free from familial, cultural, and religious constraints, many broke from convention by participating in activities which would be deemed as utterly sinful in the Northeast. Johnson adds, “Leisure, defined loosely to include both diversion and sacred practices, was often a contested terrain upon which gold seekers drew boundaries that separated them into opposing camps...by different notions of what constituted appropriate behavior.”⁵

A controversial type of amusement was gambling, fitting and reflective of Gold Rush society. The risk, uncertainty, and high stakes of card games characterized the journey to the frontier and gold mining itself. As one historian explained, “Gambling took on a special significance in a setting like California, where

⁴ Johnson, 143.
⁵ Johnson, 143.

it shared with the primary economic activity, placer mining, elements of unpredictability and irrationality.”⁶ Thus, games of chance were very popular: “Gambling was far and away the chief entertainment in the diggings.”⁷ Some favorite card games were faro, poker, euchre, whist, and nine-pins. However, monte seems to be the most referenced in Gold Rush diaries. In an image entitled Gambling in the Mines, Forty-Niners are depicted playing this Mexican game of chance (See Image 1). The players at the table look pensive, as do their observers. Surrounding them is a large crowd of miners, indicating that this amusement attracted impressive numbers of men. Many miners played card games in hopes of making quick money when their efforts in the diggings were fruitless. Others played simply for recreational purposes, to divert their attention from the struggles of miner life.

Travel author Bayard Taylor described what he witnessed at a card house in the San Francisco area:

Along the end of the room is a spacious bar, supplied with all kinds of bad liquors, and in a sort of gallery...a female violinist takes her talent and strength of muscle to minister to the excitement of the day...The atmosphere of these places is rank with tobacco- smoke, and filled with a feverish, stifling heat, which communicates an unhealthy glow to the faces of the players...The dealer throws out his cards with a cool, nonchalant air; indeed, the gradual increase of the hollow square of dollars at his left

⁶ Ibid., 177.
⁷ Ibid., 176.
things that are obtainable in America.³

The moral laxity described by Helper was something unfamiliar and shocking to many who arrived in California. As demonstrated by this quote, leisure helped to create such looseness. Historian Susan Lee Johnson explains that “people in every Gold Rush community, immigrant and Indian, sought diversion from the business of producing material life—they sang and prayed, they told stories and wrote letters, they gambled and got drunk, they danced to one another’s drumming or fiddle playing and cheered at bull-and-bear fights.”⁴ Due to the volatile and unstable nature of the gold mining industry, miners engaged in a variety of pastimes. Free from familial, cultural, and religious constraints, many broke from convention by participating in activities which would be deemed as utterly sinful in the Northeast. Johnson adds, “Leisure, defined loosely to include both diversion and sacred practices, was often a contested terrain upon which gold seekers drew boundaries that separated them into opposing camps...by different notions of what constituted appropriate behavior.”⁵

A controversial type of amusement was gambling, fitting and reflective of Gold Rush society. The risk, uncertainty, and high stakes of card games characterized the journey to the frontier and gold mining itself. As one historian explained, “Gambling took on a special significance in a setting like California, where

⁴ Johnson, 143.
⁵ Ibid., 143.

it shared with the primary economic activity, placer mining, elements of unpredictability and irrationality.”⁶ Thus, games of chance were very popular: “Gambling was far and away the chief entertainment in the diggings.”⁷ Some favorite card games were faro, poker, euchre, whist, and nine-pins. However, monte seems to be the most referenced in Gold Rush diaries. In an image entitled Gambling in the Mines, Forty-Niners are depicted playing this Mexican game of chance (See Image 1). The players at the table look pensive, as do their observers. Surrounding them is a large crowd of miners, indicating that this amusement attracted impressive numbers of men. Many miners played card games in hopes of making quick money when their efforts in the diggings were fruitless. Others played simply for recreational purposes, to divert their attention from the struggles of miner life.

Travel author Bayard Taylor described what he witnessed at a card house in the San Francisco area:

Along the end of the room is a spacious bar, supplied with all kinds of bad liquors, and in a sort of gallery...a female violinist takes her talent and strength of muscle to minister to the excitement of the day...The atmosphere of these places is rank with tobacco- smoke, and filled with a feverish, stifling heat, which communicates an unhealthy glow to the faces of the players...The dealer throws out his cards with a cool, nonchalant air; indeed, the gradual increase of the hollow square of dollars at his left

⁶ Ibid., 177.
⁷ Ibid., 176.
hand is not calculated to disturb his equanimity.

The vivid descriptions of the alcohol, violinist, tobacco smoke, and suave dealer illustrate the enticing nature of gambling halls. Card houses were a place of sensuality, community, and female company. Reverend John Steele remarked, “It must be confessed that there was such a witchery in the music, instrumental and vocal, that the masses were attracted and entranced, and in passing I found it difficult to resist the temptation to go in and listen.” Bayard Taylor again remarked on the lure of the gaming houses, stating that American miners “have no power to resist the fascination of the game. Now counting their winnings by thousands, now dependent on the kindness of a friend for a few dollars to commence anew, they pass hour after hour in these hot, unwholesome dens.” References to gambling halls can be found in nearly all miner diaries or letters. While in the city of Sonora, Horace Snow corresponded regularly with his friend Charlie about his adventures in California. He described one card house, called the “Long Tom,” where a French woman ran the tables. She employed five men and had already earned over forty thousand dollars from managing the “Long Tom.” The building was “fifty feet wide and two hundred feet long and all occupied as a gambling house.” Horace Snow recorded that he was not able to have a conversation with his friend there because “the din and noise arising from the changing of money made it almost impossible. Such a sight in New England would shock the sensibilities of the whole land.” These remarks illustrate how lucrative this business was. French women were closely associated with running gambling halls. They were often despised by the men because of the large sum of money they acquired from miners’ earnings; the woman from Horace Snow’s story certainly made enormous profits. This excerpt also reveals how rowdy and crowded the card houses were, so much so that they would “shock the sensibilities” of non-Californians.

Cards were always accompanied by liquor, and many saloons doubled as gambling halls. Both drinking and card playing were considered vices by most mid-nineteenth century Americans. An observer originally from the East Coast, Frank Soulé, commented on the saloons:

No place in the world contains any thing like the number of mere drinking-houses in proportion to the population, as San Francisco. This, perhaps, is the worst feature of the city. The quantity of ardent spirits daily consumed is almost frightful. It is peddled out in every gambling-room, on the wharves, at almost every corner, and, in some streets, in almost every house. Many of the taverns are of the lowest possible description—filthy dens of vice and crime, disease and wretchedness. Drunken men

---

9 John Steele in Maffly-Kipp, 123.
10 Bayard Taylor in H.W. Brands, 253.
The vivid descriptions of the alcohol, violinist, tobacco smoke, and suave dealer illustrate the enticing nature of gambling halls. Card houses were a place of sensuality, community, and female company. Reverend John Steele remarked, “It must be confessed that there was such a witchery in the music, instrumental and vocal, that the masses were attracted and entranced, and in passing I found it difficult to resist the temptation to go in and listen.” Bayard Taylor again remarked on the lure of the gaming houses, stating that American miners “have no power to resist the fascination of the game. Now counting their winnings by thousands, now dependent on the kindness of a friend for a few dollars to commence anew, they pass hour after hour in these hot, unwholesome dens.” References to gambling halls can be found in nearly all miner diaries or letters. While in the city of Sonora, Horace Snow corresponded regularly with his friend Charlie about his adventures in California. He described one card house, called the “Long Tom,” where a French woman ran the tables. She employed five men and had already earned over forty thousand dollars from managing the “Long Tom.” The building was “fifty feet wide and two hundred feet long and all occupied as a gambling house.” Horace Snow recorded that he was not able to have a conversation with his friend there because “the din and noise arising from the changing of money made it almost impossible. Such a sight in New England would shock the sensibilities of the whole land.” These remarks illustrate how lucrative this business was. French women were closely associated with running gambling halls. They were often despised by the men because of the large sum of money they acquired from miners’ earnings; the woman from Horace Snow’s story certainly made enormous profits. This excerpt also reveals how rowdy and crowded the card houses were, so much so that they would “shock the sensibilities” of non-Californians.

Cards were always accompanied by liquor, and many saloons doubled as gambling halls. Both drinking and card playing were considered vices by most mid-nineteenth century Americans. An observer originally from the East Coast, Frank Soulé, commented on the saloons:

No place in the world contains any thing like the number of mere drinking-houses in proportion to the population, as San Francisco. This, perhaps, is the worst feature of the city. The quantity of ardent spirits daily consumed is almost frightful. It is peddled out in every gambling-room, on the wharves, at almost every corner, and, in some streets, in almost every house. Many of the taverns are of the lowest possible description—filthy dens of vice and crime, disease and wretchedness. Drunken men

---

9 John Steele in Maffly-Kipp, 123.
10 Bayard Taylor in H.W. Brands, 253.
and women, with bloated bodies and soiled garments, crowd them at night, making the hours hideous with their bacchanalian revels. Americans and Europeans, Mexicans and South-Americans, Chinese and even negroes, mingle and dissipate together, furnishing a large amount of business for the police department and the recorder’s court.  

This passage reveals important information. For one, it illustrates the overwhelming presence of alcohol in Gold Rush California. Drinking seems to have been deeply embedded in the culture. Additionally, the passage shows that saloons were a place of commonality between people of different races. Recreational activity—particularly drinking and card playing—brought miners of all backgrounds together. As evidenced by Soulé’s disapproving tone, such fraternization was unconventional at the time. Therefore, leisure had the force to produce revolutionary social conditions. Lastly, by stating that miners furnished business for the police department, Soulé seems to suggest that miners in saloons often created trouble. This comment shows that while leisure had the power to unite diverse people, it also had the power to cause violence and destruction, an issue that will be explored later more fully.

Bloody spectator sports, most famously the bull-and-bear fights, were another common amusement for miners. Johnson explains that “bull-and-bear fighting was a Mexican cultural practice, one particularly well-suited to the Sierra Nevada foothills, home to both grizzly and black bears and within distance of low-country ranchos.” This sport was enjoyed by more than just Mexican miners. Most large mining camps had circular arenas to hold these bloody events, where spectators gasped, cheered, and shouted. Johnson adds, “Bulls were the real crowd-pleasers, enjoying as they did a special relationship to notions of manhood among Spanish-speaking peoples.” That this was a popular amusement is not surprising. Gold Rush California consisted of an overwhelmingly male population, many of them adventurous and thrill-seeking.

In an image entitled Sport in California- A Bull and Bear Fight, a large crowd of spectators is depicted cheering at such a contest (See Image 2). One man even seems to be seated on another’s shoulders to improve his view. The bull is illustrated romantically: his muscles are defined and his face is fearless. Historian John Boessenecker explains, “The beasts came to symbolize those traits so important to young, single men: physical strength, courage, determination, fighting skill, and above all, stubborn refusal to back down from a foe.” Furthermore, this sport, originating in Mexican culture, was exotic and new for American Northeasterners, who had probably never seen such an attraction.

The unpredictable endings of these matches made for great gambling. Miners would place large bets on which animal they predicted would be the contender.

—

12 Frank Soulé in H.W. Brands, 252.
13 Johnson, 180.
14 Ibid., 181.
and women, with bloated bodies and soiled garments, crowd them at night, making the hours hideous with their bacchanalian revels. Americans and Europeans, Mexicans and South-Americans, Chinese and even negroes, mingle and dissipate together, furnishing a large amount of business for the police department and the recorder’s court.12

This passage reveals important information. For one, it illustrates the overwhelming presence of alcohol in Gold Rush California. Drinking seems to have been deeply embedded in the culture. Additionally, the passage shows that saloons were a place of commonality between people of different races. Recreational activity—particularly drinking and card playing—brought miners of all backgrounds together. As evidenced by Soulé’s disapproving tone, such fraternization was unconventional at the time. Therefore, leisure had the force to produce revolutionary social conditions. Lastly, by stating that miners furnished business for the police department, Soulé seems to suggest that miners in saloons often created trouble. This comment shows that while leisure had the power to unite diverse people, it also had the power to cause violence and destruction, an issue that will be explored later more fully.

Bloody spectator sports, most famously the bull-and-bear fights, were another common amusement for miners. Johnson explains that “bull-and-bear fighting was a Mexican cultural practice, one particularly well-suited to the Sierra Nevada foothills, home to both grizzly and black bears and within distance of low-country ranchos.”13 This sport was enjoyed by more than just Mexican miners. Most large mining camps had circular arenas to hold these bloody events, where spectators gasped, cheered, and shouted. Johnson adds, “Bulls were the real crowd-pleasers, enjoying as they did a special relationship to notions of manhood among Spanish-speaking peoples.”14 That this was a popular amusement is not surprising. Gold Rush California consisted of an overwhelmingly male population, many of them adventurous and thrill-seeking. In an image entitled Sport in California - A Bull and Bear Fight, a large crowd of spectators is depicted cheering at such a contest (See Image 2). One man even seems to be seated on another’s shoulders to improve his view. The bull is illustrated romantically: his muscles are defined and his face is fearless. Historian John Boessenecker explains, “The beasts came to symbolize those traits so important to young, single men: physical strength, courage, determination, fighting skill, and above all, stubborn refusal to back down from a foe.”15 Furthermore, this sport, originating in Mexican culture, was exotic and new for American Northeasterners, who had probably never seen such an attraction.

The unpredictable endings of these matches made for great gambling. Miners would place large bets on which animal they predicted would be the contender.

12 Frank Soulé in H.W. Brands, 252.
13 Johnson, 180.
14 Ibid., 181.
The stakes and anticipation were high at these events, where thousands of spectators sat in the crowded arenas. One is reported to have seated 6,000 observers. The brutality of the sport attracted Forty-Niner William Perkins, who described one of the most thrilling bull-and-bear fights in Sonora. He wrote that the “magnificent” bear weighed about fourteen hundred pounds. Then, the “splendid” black bull entered the arena:

His whole frame appeared to be quivering with rage; his tail was extended straight out in a line with the vertebrae, and his eyes, one could almost fancy, were flashing fire. He sprung with a single bound into the middle of the ring, and looked round profoundly and fearlessly on the crowd; then commenced a low bellowing, and tossing the dirt up with his hoofs. In a few seconds he had caught sight of his antagonist, and immediately, without the slightest hesitation, made a rush at him.

This vivid description illustrates miners’ fascination with the excitement and brutality of this Mexican contest. They clearly admired the beasts for their strength and willingness to fight to the death. Boessenecker explains this admiration by suggesting that the bull-bear matches emulated the combat ethic of miners. “To die a glorious death in battle, whether in war or personal combat, was something honorable and even desirable. No fate was more romantic to the single, young American male than to die ‘with his boots on.’” Thus, this bloody spectator sport appealed to the miners’ values of personal honor and bravery.

Similarly, Forty-Niners were attracted to bare-knuckle prizefights. Well-respected boxers, as well as the sport’s many fans, brought this tradition with them to San Francisco when they came in search of gold. Some of the most famous champions of the East Coast fought in California: Yankee Sullivan, Chris Lilly, John Morrissey, and Woolly Kearney. Prizefighting was so bloody that it was actually outlawed in most of America, but these laws were not strictly enforced in mining towns. It “went hand in hand with the three great indulgences of the Forty-Niners: drinking, gambling, and fighting. Sectional and cultural strife were played out in the ring: American against foreigner, Englishman against Irishman, Protestant against Catholic, North against South.”

For the same reasons that miners were attracted to the violence of the bull-bear contests, they were attracted to pugilism. It embodied many Gold Rush sentiments: competition, risk, violence, and honor.

Alliances with women constituted another important form of leisure in Gold Rush California. Women, especially Anglo-American women, were rare. So miners sought any form of interaction with females. One activity through which men were able to seek female companionship was dancing. Johnson explains that dance halls “were so common that men rarely

———

16 Ibid., 161.
17 William Perkins in Boessenecker, 162-63.
18 Boessenecker, 167.
19 Ibid., 177.
20 Ibid., 178.
The stakes and anticipation were high at these events, where thousands of spectators sat in the crowded arenas. One is reported to have seated 6,000 observers. The brutality of the sport attracted Forty-Niner William Perkins, who described one of the most thrilling bull-and-bear fights in Sonora. He wrote that the “magnificent” bear weighed about fourteen hundred pounds. Then, the “splendid” black bull entered the arena:

His whole frame appeared to be quivering with rage; his tail was extended straight out in a line with the vertebrae, and his eyes, one could almost fancy, were flashing fire. He sprung with a single bound into the middle of the ring, and looked round profoundly and fearlessly on the crowd; then commenced a low bellowing, and tossing the dirt up with his hoofs. In a few seconds he had caught sight of his antagonist, and immediately, without the slightest hesitation, made a rush at him.

This vivid description illustrates miners’ fascination with the excitement and brutality of this Mexican contest. They clearly admired the beasts for their strength and willingness to fight to the death. Boessenecker explains this admiration by suggesting that the bull-bear matches emulated the combat ethic of miners. “To die a glorious death in battle, whether in war or personal combat, was something honorable and even desirable. No fate was more romantic to the single, young American male than to die ‘with his boots on.’” Thus, this bloody spectator sport appealed to the miners’ values of personal honor and bravery.

Similarly, Forty-Niners were attracted to bare-knuckle prizefights. Well-respected boxers, as well as the sport’s many fans, brought this tradition with them to San Francisco when they came in search of gold. Some of the most famous champions of the East Coast fought in California: Yankee Sullivan, Chris Lilly, John Morrissey, and Woolly Kearney. Prizefighting was so bloody that it was actually outlawed in most of America, but these laws were not strictly enforced in mining towns. It “went hand in hand with the three great indulgences of the Forty-Niners: drinking, gambling, and fighting. Sectional and cultural strife were played out in the ring: American against foreigner, Englishman against Irishman, Protestant against Catholic, North against South.”

For the same reasons that miners were attracted to the violence of the bull-bear contests, they were attracted to pugilism. It embodied many Gold Rush sentiments: competition, risk, violence, and honor.

Alliances with women constituted another important form of leisure in Gold Rush California. Women, especially Anglo-American women, were rare. So miners sought any form of interaction with females. One activity through which men were able to seek female companionship was dancing. Johnson explains that dance halls were so common that men rarely

---

16 Ibid., 161.
17 William Perkins in Boessenecker, 162-63.
18 Boessenecker, 167.
19 Ibid., 177.
20 Ibid., 178.
bothered to describe them."\(^{21}\) Men and women danced to fiddle and flute. A favorite dance was the lancers quadrille, imported to America from English and Parisian ballrooms, in which four couples danced in square formation. This dance consisted of five sets of square dances, each one of the sets in a different meter. It depended on cooperative execution of floor patterns or figures, such as the *tour de deux mains* “two-hand turn,” in which the couple turned while holding hands or the *chaîne des dames* “ladies’ chain.”\(^{22}\) The polka also was well-liked in the camps, and as with the lancers, it was accompanied by upbeat and joyous music. Edwin Bryant, Alcalde of San Francisco, recorded his experience at a Fandango in his book, *What I Saw in California*:

I attended one evening a *fandango* given by Mr. Ridley, an English gentleman, whose wife is a Californian lady. Several of the señoritas and señoritas from the ranchos of the vicinity were present. The Californian ladies dance with much ease and grace. The waltz appears to be a favorite with them. Smoking is not prohibited in these assemblies, nor is it confined to the gentlemen. The *cigarita* is freely used by the señoritas and señoritas, and they puff it with much gusto while threading the mazes of the cotillon or swinging in the waltz.\(^{23}\)

This description suggests that evenings at the dance halls were lively, vivacious, and memorable. Painter Charles Nahl, known as California’s first significant artist, captured this spirit in his piece, *The Fandango* (See Image 3). At the forefront, the men and women dance joyously, looking carefree. Behind them there seems to be a brawl, perhaps a result of drunkenness or jealousy over the women. For miners, the most attractive feature of this form of amusement was the opportunity it provided for female companionship.

Miners’ relations with prostitutes constitute another diversion from hard work in the diggings. Often described euphemistically as “escorts,” “companions,” or “mistresses,” they were strongly desired. This is certainly due to the scarcity of women: “In the Mother Lode in 1860 there were 2,378 men and 147 women. Prostitution was not only present, it was thriving...Prostitution was an accepted fact of California life.”\(^{24}\) Due to the demographics of the region, it was primarily non-white women who satisfied this demand. Below is a description of an encounter between miner Alfred Doten and a Miwok Indian woman. It is not entirely clear whether she was actually a prostitute, but Doten mentioned that he provided her with “presents”:

This forenoon two squaws came over from the Rancheria and paid me quite a visit? One of

\(^{21}\) Johnson, 164.
bothered to describe them.”

Men and women danced to fiddle and flute. A favorite dance was the lancers quadrille, imported to America from English and Parisian ballrooms, in which four couples danced in square formation. This dance consisted of five sets of square dances, each one of the sets in a different meter. It depended on cooperative execution of floor patterns or figures, such as the tour de deux mains “two-hand turn,” in which the couple turned while holding hands or the chaîne des dames “ladies’ chain.”

The polka also was well-liked in the camps, and as with the lancers, it was accompanied by upbeat and joyous music. Edwin Bryant, Alcalde of San Francisco, recorded his experience at a Fandango in his book, What I Saw in California:

I attended one evening a fandango given by Mr. Ridley, an English gentleman, whose wife is a Californian lady. Several of the señoras and señoritas from the ranchos of the vicinity were present. The Californian ladies dance with much ease and grace. The waltz appears to be a favorite with them. Smoking is not prohibited in these assemblies, nor is it confined to the gentlemen. The cigarita is freely used by the señoras and señoritas, and they puff it with much gusto while threading the mazes of the cotillon or swinging in the waltz.

This description suggests that evenings at the dance halls were lively, vivacious, and memorable. Painter Charles Nahl, known as California’s first significant artist, captured this spirit in his piece, The Fandango (See Image 3). At the forefront, the men and women dance joyously, looking carefree. Behind them there seems to be a brawl, perhaps a result of drunkenness or jealousy over the women. For miners, the most attractive feature of this form of amusement was the opportunity it provided for female companionship.

Miners’ relations with prostitutes constitute another diversion from hard work in the diggings. Often described euphemistically as “escorts,” “companions,” or “mistresses,” they were strongly desired. This is certainly due to the scarcity of women: “In the Mother Lode in 1860 there were 2,378 men and 147 women. Prostitution was not only present, it was thriving...Prostitution was an accepted fact of California life.”

Due to the demographics of the region, it was primarily non-white women who satisfied this demand. Below is a description of an encounter between miner Alfred Doten and a Miwok Indian woman. It is not entirely clear whether she was actually a prostitute, but Doten mentioned that he provided her with “presents”:

This forenoon two squaws came over from the Rancheria and paid me quite a visit? One of

---

21 Johnson, 164.

them was Pacheco’s wife? she had her child done up after their fashion and toted him round her back with a string over her head? As is as usual she was accompanied by an old hag of a squaw? I gave her several presents and made myself pretty thick with her and after a while I got her [erasure] and took her into my tent and [erasure] was about to lay her altogether but the damned old bitch of a squaw came in as mad as a hatter and gave the young gal a devil of a blowing up? Nevertheless I still left my hand in her bosom and kissed her again right before the old woman. She didn’t get cross at all but gave me a slap in the face and ran away laughing. .
. . I told the little gal in Spanish to come up alone sometime and as she understood Spanish she said she would if she could ever get a chance.25

The racial dimension of this encounter is impossible to ignore. Clearly, the social norms for Miwok Indians contrasted starkly with those of Anglo-Americans, who would have been horrified at the thought of a married woman—with a child—having relations with another man.

Although leisurely activities were intended to be entertaining and fun, they often led to violence. Regarding gambling—jealousies over large winnings, fear of cheating, and alcohol consumption while playing—frequently fostered ill will. Historian Johnson claims that, “Indeed, no other activity in the diggings, aside from mining itself, provoked as much rancor as gambling.”26 Describing his experience at a San Francisco gaming house, Bayard Taylor observed: “There is no appearance of arms, but let one of the players, impatient with his losses and maddened by the poisonous fluids he drank, threaten one of the profession, and there will be no scarcity of knives and revolvers.”27 Tales of Gold Rush violence are countless, and—significantly—many of these brawls started within the context of leisure.

Leisure’s dialectical relationship with morality is apparent in examining Sabbath day observance. Miners commonly broke the day of rest by attending bull-and-bear fights, visiting game houses, and dancing at fandango halls. Sunday, proclaimed miner and journalist Alfred Doten, “has ever been the grand holiday throughout California.”28 He described the typical miner’s holy day: he washed his boots and clothes and went to town to purchase various necessities. He may have decided to visit a saloon while in town, and “might be seen having a most unhappy time lugging his provisions home over the rocks and across the ravines” while intoxicated.29 Perhaps, if he enjoyed cards, he visited a card house. Hinton Helper’s experience in the Golden State led him to conclude that “the Sabbath in California is kept, when kept at all, as a day of hilarity and bacchanalian sports rather than as a season of holy meditation or religious devotion.”30 Attending various spectator sports, watching

26 Johnson, 177.
27 Bayard Taylor in H.W. Brands, 253-4.
28 Doten, 326.
29 Ibid., 326.
30 Helper, 86.
them was Pacheco’s wife? she had her child done up after their fashion and toted him round her back with a string over her head? As is as usual she was accompanied by an old hag of a squaw? I gave her several presents and made myself pretty thick with her and after a while I got her [erasure] and took her into my tent and [erasure] was about to lay her altogether but the damned old bitch of a squaw came in as mad as a hatter and gave the young gal a devil of a blowing up? Nevertheless I still left my hand in her bosom and kissed her again right before the old woman. She didn’t get cross at all but gave me a slap in the face and ran away laughing. . . I told the little gal in Spanish to come up alone sometime and as she understood Spanish she said she would if she could ever get a chance.25

The racial dimension of this encounter is impossible to ignore. Clearly, the social norms for Miwok Indians contrasted starkly with those of Anglo-Americans, who would have been horrified at the thought of a married woman—with a child—having relations with another man.

Although leisurely activities were intended to be entertaining and fun, they often led to violence. Regarding gambling—jealousies over large winnings, fear of cheating, and alcohol consumption while playing—frequently fostered ill will. Historian Johnson claims that, “Indeed, no other activity in the diggings, aside from mining itself, provoked as much rancor as gambling.”26 Describing his experience at a San Francisco gaming house, Bayard Taylor observed: “There is no appearance of arms, but let one of the players, impatient with his losses and maddened by the poisonous fluids he drank, threaten one of the profession, and there will be no scarcity of knives and revolvers.”27 Tales of Gold Rush violence are countless, and—significantly—many of these brawls started within the context of leisure.

Leisure’s dialectical relationship with morality is apparent in examining Sabbath day observance. Miners commonly broke the day of rest by attending bull-and-bear fights, visiting game houses, and dancing at fandango halls. Sunday, proclaimed miner and journalist Alfred Doten, “has ever been the grand holiday throughout California.”28 He described the typical miner’s holy day: he washed his boots and clothes and went to town to purchase various necessities. He may have decided to visit a saloon while in town, and “might be seen having a most unhappy time lugging his provisions home over the rocks and across the ravines” while intoxicated.29 Perhaps, if he enjoyed cards, he visited a card house. Hinton Helper’s experience in the Golden State led him to conclude that “the Sabbath in California is kept, when kept at all, as a day of hilarity and bacchanalian sports rather than as a season of holy meditation or religious devotion.”30 Attending various spectator sports, watching


26 Johnson, 177.
27 Bayard Taylor in H.W. Brands, 253-4.
28 Doten, 326.
29 Ibid., 326.
30 Helper, 86.
theatrical performances, dancing, and gambling seemed to be the most popular Sunday pastimes. On Pacific Street in San Francisco, the most “notoriously profligate” street in the city, there were a shocking fifteen dance houses. Although this “terpsichorean art” was practiced every evening, it was Sundays when attendees danced with the most “zest” and “animation.” Helper described a San Francisco billiard-saloon on Washington and Montgomery streets, noting its magnificence in size and décor. He claimed that it was furnished at an astounding cost of twenty-five thousand dollars: “To this place hundreds of infatuated men betake themselves every Sunday and it is an unusual thing, at any time, to find one of the tables unoccupied.” Miner Horace Snow, in a letter to a companion, distinguished Sabbath day observance between the Northern and Southern people, in which he accused Southerners of making “but little difference” on Sundays. Being from Bridgewater, Massachusetts, and strictly upholding his Christian roots, he disapproved of the nonconventional lifestyle of his fellow miners, remarking that there was “more intoxication, more fighting and more disturbance on the Sabbath than any other day in the week.” These Gold Rush observers all suggest that the holy day did not merely go unobserved, but rather, it was a day of sin and wickedness. In short, conscious transgression of Eastern custom characterized California social life.

Louise Clappe, under the name of Dame Shirley, made similar observations about leisure’s negative impact on the holy day. The wife of Dr. Fayette Clappe, Dame Shirley lived with her husband in mining camps for fifteen months. In a September 1851 letter to her sister, she described how one amusement was especially popular on the day of rest: “The rolling on the bowling alley never leaves off for ten consecutive minutes at any time during the entire twenty-four hours...the only difference that Sunday makes is that then it never leaves off for one minute.” Not only were sporting events, drinking, and dancing present on the day of rest, but so was violence—which was often provoked by such pastimes. Dame Shirley wrote, sarcastically:

We have had innumerable drunken fights during the summer, with the usual amount of broken heads, collar bones, stabs, etc. Indeed, the Sabbaths are almost always enlivened by some such merry event. Were it not for these affairs, I might sometimes forget that the sweet day of rest was shining down upon us.

This comment reflects how commonplace violence and disorder were on Sundays—Dame Shirley and her contemporaries even expected such “merry events.”

To fully understand why these Sunday amusements were so unique to California, it is necessary to contrast them to how the holy day was spent in the rest of America, especially in New England.

---

31 Ibid., 88.
32 Ibid., 87-88.
33 Snow, 13.
theatrical performances, dancing, and gambling seemed to be the most popular Sunday pastimes. On Pacific Street in San Francisco, the most “notoriously profligate” street in the city, there were a shocking fifteen dance houses. Although this “terpsichorean art” was practiced every evening, it was Sundays when attendees danced with the most “zest” and “animation.”

Helper described a San Francisco billiard-saloon on Washington and Montgomery streets, noting its magnificence in size and décor. He claimed that it was furnished at an astounding cost of twenty-five thousand dollars: “To this place hundreds of infatuated men betake themselves every Sunday and it is an unusual thing, at any time, to find one of the tables unoccupied.”

Miner Horace Snow, in a letter to a companion, distinguished Sabbath day observance between the Northern and Southern people, in which he accused Southerners of making “but little difference” on Sundays. Being from Bridgewater, Massachusetts, and strictly upholding his Christian roots, he disapproved of the nonconventional lifestyle of his fellow miners, remarking that there was “more intoxication, more fighting and more disturbance on the Sabbath than any other day in the week.” These Gold Rush observers all suggest that the holy day did not merely go unobserved, but rather, it was a day of sin and wickedness. In short, conscious transgression of Eastern custom characterized California social life.

Louise Clappe, under the name of Dame Shirley, made similar observations about leisure’s negative impact on the holy day. The wife of Dr. Fayette Clappe, Dame Shirley lived with her husband in mining camps for fifteen months. In a September 1851 letter to her sister, she described how one amusement was especially popular on the day of rest: “The rolling on the bowling alley never leaves off for ten consecutive minutes at any time during the entire twenty-four hours...the only difference that Sunday makes is that then it never leaves off for one minute.”

Not only were sporting events, drinking, and dancing present on the day of rest, but so was violence—which was often provoked by such pastimes. Dame Shirley wrote, sarcastically:

We have had innumerable drunken fights during the summer, with the usual amount of broken heads, collar bones, stabs, etc. Indeed, the Sabbaths are almost always enlivened by some such merry event. Were it not for these affairs, I might sometimes forget that the sweet day of rest was shining down upon us.

This comment reflects how commonplace violence and disorder were on Sundays—Dame Shirley and her contemporaries even expected such “merry events.”

To fully understand why these Sunday amusements were so unique to California, it is necessary to contrast them to how the holy day was spent in the rest of America, especially in New England.

31 Ibid., 88.
32 Ibid., 87-88.
33 Snow, 13.
were devoutly observed. Businesses were closed and recreation was forbidden. Very few travelled. Rather, they stayed at home or with nearby friends and relatives after services. The pious spent the day in prayer, rest, and reflection on the sermon. Sabbath observance was so important in the rest of the country that all the states east of the Mississippi had Sunday observance laws which prohibited businesses from being open on the day of rest.\textsuperscript{36} These policies were strictly enforced in the 1850s, except in the most metropolitan of towns. Historian Sandra Frankiel explains that Sunday laws were, from the Anglo-Protestant perspective, “essential not only to religion but to civilization itself. Without it, men would...make their day of rest a day for...wild behavior.”\textsuperscript{37}

Puritan customs were completely foreign to California. The state’s Christian history was rooted in Catholicism. Roman Catholic missionaries certainly conducted Sunday mass, but they did not forbid the territory’s Spanish and Mexican traditions of dancing and feasting after liturgy. Following the discovery of gold, this leniency—as the Protestants would describe it—became even more prevalent. Mining camps lacked stability, family, women, and many societal structures. Without such restraints, Sunday activities encompassed more than the traditional Mexican celebrations, they grew to include amusements of the most sinful nature. “From almost the moment they arrived, minis-

\begin{itemize}
\item Ibid., 47.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{36} In 1855, state lawmakers passed, after much debate, a prohibition on noisy and disturbing activities on Sunday. Three years later, another statute was passed which forbade businesses from operating on the Sabbath. However, businessmen, miners, non-Christians, and Seventh-Day Adventists immediately challenged these provisions. The church could not effectively impose New England ideals in wicked California.\textsuperscript{39}

Church efforts were numerous, the most significant of which was the Protestant church’s American Home Mission Society (AHMS), which sponsored missionaries to travel west. The general objective was to reverse the state’s moral laxity by imposing order and stability. To achieve this goal, the organization built churches, encouraged Sunday attendance at services, converted the dissolute, and founded societies that would perpetuate their message. Religious historian Laurie Maffly-Kipp explains that nearly all Presbyterian and Congregationalist ministers in California were commissioned by the home mission agency. Other religious representatives though, such as the Methodists and Baptists, came to California independently.\textsuperscript{40}

Another way in which religious institutions responded to the California problem was by founding schools— which were intended to stabilize society, return to tradition, and spread the Christian message. Many schools, from elementary to college level, were
were devoutly observed. Businesses were closed and recreation was forbidden. Very few travelled. Rather, they stayed at home or with nearby friends and relatives after services. The pious spent the day in prayer, rest, and reflection on the sermon. Sabbath observance was so important in the rest of the country that all the states east of the Mississippi had Sunday observance laws which prohibited businesses from being open on the day of rest.\textsuperscript{36} These policies were strictly enforced in the 1850s, except in the most metropolitan of towns. Historian Sandra Frankiel explains that Sunday laws were, from the Anglo-Protestant perspective, “essential not only to religion but to civilization itself. Without it, men would...make their day of rest a day for...wild behavior.”\textsuperscript{37}

Puritan customs were completely foreign to California. The state’s Christian history was rooted in Catholicism. Roman Catholic missionaries certainly conducted Sunday mass, but they did not forbid the territory’s Spanish and Mexican traditions of dancing and feasting after liturgy. Following the discovery of gold, this leniency—as the Protestants would describe it—became even more prevalent. Mining camps lacked stability, family, women, and many societal structures. Without such restraints, Sunday activities encompassed more than the traditional Mexican celebrations, they grew to include amusements of the most sinful nature. “From almost the moment they arrived, minis-


\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 47.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 48.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 48.

\textsuperscript{40} Maffly-Kipp, 71.
established in the 1850’s and 1860’s. For example, the College of California, now the University of California at Berkeley, was founded by Congregationalists. In 1851, two Italian Jesuits, Fathers Nobili and Acolti, founded the first institution of higher education: Santa Clara University. What is now St. Mary’s College of Moraga was another Catholic school, originally in Oakland. Methodist Reverend and Mrs. Edward Bannister founded the College of the Pacific, later the University of the Pacific, which was originally in San Jose. These schools’ rigid guidelines demonstrate the impact caused by the perceived threat of Gold Rush leisure. For example, University of the Pacific prohibited “profane language, use of ardent spirits, gambling or card playing, frequenting drinking saloons...Dancing was not to be thought of.”

That these activities were forbidden according to university policy demonstrates the unmistakable prevalence and seriousness of Gold Rush leisure.

On a smaller scale, Christian women attempted to improve California’s character by forming their own small classrooms. Sarah Royce is a prime example. She instructed the neighbors’ children, as well as her own, in her humble mining camp home. Passionate and active in civic and religious duty, she taught her students math, geography, literature, and the Christian tenets. Her efforts to uplift society went beyond the classroom. In a memoir written for her son, her deep religious convictions and unfailing effort to bring civilization to an unruly society are apparent in other ways. She joined religious groups and women’s clubs. An excerpt from her account details an experience at a San Francisco Benevolent Society event:

There entered the room a man, prominent for wealth and business-power, bearing upon his arm a splendidly dressed woman, well known in the city as the disreputable companion of her wealthy escort... in a few minutes he was waited upon by a committee of gentlemen, who called him aside, and told him they were sent, by the lady-managers to say that they declined to receive as an associate, or to have introduced to their daughters, one who stood in the relation occupied by his companion, and they respectfully requested him to invite her to withdraw with him.  

This anecdote exemplifies an effort by the religious community, specifically Christian women, to counter the sinful pastimes of miners. They did so by organizing events which barred profane and distasteful behavior. Sarah Royce and her contemporaries, who were members of these kinds of religious organizations, provided alternate, regulated amusements.

Although religious institutions responded to leisure and the moral crisis it perpetuated, their efforts fell short of their high expectations. The goal was essentially to plant the Puritan faith in the frontier, yet California proved to be an environment incapable of such a substantial transformation. Religious historian Frankiel explains that Anglo-Protestant theology

41 Hogue, 133.

established in the 1850’s and 1860’s. For example, the College of California, now the University of California at Berkeley, was founded by Congregationalists. In 1851, two Italian Jesuits, Fathers Nobili and Acolti, founded the first institution of higher education: Santa Clara University. What is now St. Mary’s College of Moraga was another Catholic school, originally in Oakland. Methodist Reverend and Mrs. Edward Bannister founded the College of the Pacific, later the University of the Pacific, which was originally in San Jose. These schools’ rigid guidelines demonstrate the impact caused by the perceived threat of Gold Rush leisure. For example, University of the Pacific prohibited “profane language, use of ardent spirits, gambling or card playing, frequenting drinking saloons…Dancing was not to be thought of.” That these activities were forbidden according to university policy demonstrates the unmistakable prevalence and seriousness of Gold Rush leisure.

On a smaller scale, Christian women attempted to improve California’s character by forming their own small classrooms. Sarah Royce is a prime example. She instructed the neighbors’ children, as well as her own, in her humble mining camp home. Passionate and active in civic and religious duty, she taught her students math, geography, literature, and the Christian tenets. Her efforts to uplift society went beyond the classroom. In a memoir written for her son, her deep religious convictions and unfailing effort to bring civilization to an unruly society are apparent in other ways. She joined religious groups and women’s clubs. An excerpt from her account details an experience at a San Francisco Benevolent Society event:

There entered the room a man, prominent for wealth and business-power, bearing upon his arm a splendidly dressed woman, well known in the city as the disreputable companion of her wealthy escort... in a few minutes he was waited upon by a committee of gentlemen, who called him aside, and told him they were sent, by the lady-managers to say that they declined to receive as an associate, or to have introduced to their daughters, one who stood in the relation occupied by his companion, and they respectfully requested him to invite her to withdraw with him.42

This anecdote exemplifies an effort by the religious community, specifically Christian women, to counter the sinful pastimes of miners. They did so by organizing events which barred profane and distasteful behavior. Sarah Royce and her contemporaries, who were members of these kinds of religious organizations, provided alternate, regulated amusements.

Although religious institutions responded to leisure and the moral crisis it perpetuated, their efforts fell short of their high expectations. The goal was essentially to plant the Puritan faith in the frontier, yet California proved to be an environment incapable of such a substantial transformation. Religious historian Frankiel explains that Anglo-Protestant theology

41 Hogue, 133.

presumed social elements which did not exist in the Golden State: “If a minister was conservative, he preached a strongly orthodox doctrine of sin and guilt...this theology was based on a legal model—a sinner was guilty like a criminal...But Californians had no commonly accepted obligations.”

There were no enforced and fixed laws; the state was newly acquired by the United States, and so it was not yet regulated under federal law. Also, moral obligations that were universally held in the East were in no way universal on the frontier, where preexisting Catholic norms provided few recognizable controls to self-indulgence for Protestants. Frankiel adds, “On the other hand, a more liberal minister might de-emphasize guilt and damnation, preaching instead the love of God in Christ. [Ministers] would liken Jesus to an intimate friend or loving parent.” This theological approach, like the conservative one, was not suitable to California’s social atmosphere. The liberal model presumed the social element of the ideal family, but the state consisted of thousands of independent and single men.

The endeavor to replicate the moral environment of the Northeast in California was unsuccessful, and several religious representatives revealed their disappointment. Methodist preacher William Taylor remarked that the Golden State was “the hardest country in the world in which to get sinners converted to God.” Baptist minister O.C. Wheeler complained about the difficulty to “get a man to look through a lump of gold into eternity.” Churchmen often felt ineffective. Although they reported impressive Sunday mass attendance, they were disappointed with the lack of religious fervor and involvement in church activities. The competition with secular entertainment inhibited a spirit of religious devotion.

It was simply too difficult to escape sin in California. Even where churches, ministers, and sources of tradition did exist, they were never far from Californian indulgences. The close proximity between virtue and vice is documented by numerous Gold Rush contemporaries. Horace Snow, for example, recorded that he attended a church gathering in a bar room due to the scarcity of places of worship: “Verily,” he wrote, “this seemed like bearding the lion in his den.”

Historian Maffly-Kipp explains that due to a lack of resources, the first missionaries had to hold services in the streets or in rented rooms above gambling houses, dance halls, and even brothels. She explains that—even after the Protestants were able to build churches—their efforts to replicate the moral atmosphere of the east were unsuccessful. “California churches, albeit edifices hewn from New England pine, designed by eastern architects, and constructed by evangelical hands, were distinctive by virtue of their placement alongside western gambling parlors and dance halls and their occupation by young male miners.” The sacred could not avoid the profane.

There were many other contradictions in the state’s

---

43 Frankiel, 9.
44 Ibid., 9-10.
45 William Taylor in Frankiel, 8.
46 O.C. Wheeler in Frankiel, 7.
47 Maffly-Kipp, 88-90.
48 Snow, 13.
49 Maffly-Kipp, 84.
presumed social elements which did not exist in the Golden State: “If a minister was conservative, he preached a strongly orthodox doctrine of sin and guilt...this theology was based on a legal model—a sinner was guilty like a criminal...But Californians had no commonly accepted obligations.”

There were no enforced and fixed laws; the state was newly acquired by the United States, and so it was not yet regulated under federal law. Also, moral obligations that were universally held in the East were in no way universal on the frontier, where preexisting Catholic norms provided few recognizable controls to self-indulgence for Protestants. Frankiel adds, “On the other hand, a more liberal minister might de-emphasize guilt and damnation, preaching instead the love of God in Christ. [Ministers] would liken Jesus to an intimate friend or loving parent.”

This theological approach, like the conservative one, was not suitable to California’s social atmosphere. The liberal model presumed the social element of the ideal family, but the state consisted of thousands of independent and single men.

The endeavor to replicate the moral environment of the Northeast in California was unsuccessful, and several religious representatives revealed their disappointment. Methodist preacher William Taylor remarked that the Golden State was “the hardest country in the world in which to get sinners converted to God.”

Baptist minister O.C. Wheeler complained about the difficulty to “get a man to look through a lump of gold into eternity.” Churchmen often felt ineffective. Although they reported impressive Sunday mass attendance, they were disappointed with the lack of religious fervor and involvement in church activities. The competition with secular entertainment inhibited a spirit of religious devotion.

It was simply too difficult to escape sin in California. Even where churches, ministers, and sources of tradition did exist, they were never far from Californian indulgences. The close proximity between virtue and vice is documented by numerous Gold Rush contemporaries. Horace Snow, for example, recorded that he attended a church gathering in a bar room due to the scarcity of places of worship: “Verily,” he wrote, “this seemed like bearding the lion in his den.”

Historian Maffly-Kipp explains that due to a lack of resources, the first missionaries had to hold services in the streets or in rented rooms above gambling houses, dance halls, and even brothels. She explains that—even after the Protestants were able to build churches—their efforts to replicate the moral atmosphere of the East were unsuccessful. “California churches, albeit edifices hewn from New England pine, designed by eastern architects, and constructed by evangelical hands, were distinctive by virtue of their placement alongside western gambling parlors and dance halls and their occupation by young male miners.”

The sacred could not avoid the profane. There were many other contradictions in the state’s social and religious life.

\[43\] Frankiel, 9.
\[44\] Ibid., 9-10.
\[45\] William Taylor in Frankiel, 8.
\[46\] O.C. Wheeler in Frankiel, 7.
\[47\] Maffly-Kipp, 88-90.
\[48\] Snow, 13.
\[49\] Maffly-Kipp, 84.
moral atmosphere: a Catholic priest who used liquor bottles to hold altar candles, a Protestant minister who substituted a brandy cask for a pulpit, or a fandango dancer who would attend church after a rousing evening.⁵⁰

These inconsistencies reflect a unique and ambivalent Californian moral character. Hinton Helper documented experiences which truly puzzled him. On a Sunday afternoon, he attended a contest where the bull, “Hercules,” would meet his match with a bear, “Trojan,” in a San Francisco arena. Helper was tempted to witness the drama, but was conflicted about witnessing such a violent amusement on the Sabbath. To compromise, he decided to hear a sermon first and attend the event afterwards. Below is an excerpt from his records, which reveals a remarkable paradox of that Sunday:

Of men, [in the crowds] there were all sizes, colors and classes, such as California and California alone can bring together. There was one, however, who attracted my particular attention on this occasion. He sat a few feet from me on my left and the expression of his countenance was neither intellectual nor amiable. His acquirements and attainments were doubtless limited for he demeaned himself rudely and exhibited but little dignity of manner. It was a strange metamorphosis he had undergone since the morning. Only four hours had elapsed since I saw him officiating at the altar and feasting upon a substance which he believed to be the actual flesh and blood of Jesus Christ.⁵¹

Recognizing the man from Sunday mass at the bull-bear fight just hours later, Helper seemed confused and revolted. He continued the passage by describing how holy the man seemed that morning, dressed in vestments and assuming sacred duties. Later that same day, he “sanctioned merciless diversions,” carried himself in the most rude and disagreeable manner, and “mingled on terms of equality with gamblers and desperados.”⁵² For Helper and many of his contemporaries, California was a society that seemed indifferent to religion. This sentiment was illustrated not just by rowdy and reckless miners, but also by religious representatives. Of course, this minister’s contradictory actions do not accurately reflect the behaviors of Gold Rush clergymen in general. In fact, the church’s stance on these bloody spectator sports was unambiguous; it rallied against them and pushed for legislation to have such brutality banned. Nonetheless, Helper’s encounter with this minister solidified his opinion of the Golden State: morally depraved, chaotic, unstable, and—as demonstrated by the title of his work—dreadful.

The same day at the bull-bear match, Helper noted another irony. This story, however, reveals sarcasm rather than genuine repugnance. When Jesús Alvarez—one of the managers of the afternoon’s entertainment—was before the crowd of spectators,

⁵⁰ Johnson, 151-154.
⁵¹ Helper, 97.
⁵² Ibid., 99.
moral atmosphere: a Catholic priest who used liquor bottles to hold altar candles, a Protestant minister who substituted a brandy cask for a pulpit, or a fandango dancer who would attend church after a rousing evening. These inconsistencies reflect a unique and ambivalent Californian moral character. Hinton Helper documented experiences which truly puzzled him. On a Sunday afternoon, he attended a contest where the bull, “Hercules,” would meet his match with a bear, “Trojan,” in a San Francisco arena. Helper was tempted to witness the drama, but was conflicted about witnessing such a violent amusement on the Sabbath. To compromise, he decided to hear a sermon first and attend the event afterwards. Below is an excerpt from his records, which reveals a remarkable paradox of that Sunday:

Of men, [in the crowds] there were all sizes, colors and classes, such as California and California alone can bring together. There was one, however, who attracted my particular attention on this occasion. He sat a few feet from me on my left and the expression of his countenance was neither intellectual nor amiable. His acquirements and attainments were doubtless limited for he demeaned himself rudely and exhibited but little dignity of manner. It was a strange metamorphosis he had undergone since the morning. Only four hours had elapsed since I saw him officiating at the altar and feasting upon a substance which he believed to be the actual flesh and blood of Jesus Christ.51

Recognizing the man from Sunday mass at the bull-bear fight just hours later, Helper seemed confused and revolted. He continued the passage by describing how holy the man seemed that morning, dressed in vestments and assuming sacred duties. Later that same day, he “sanctioned merciless diversions,” carried himself in the most rude and disagreeable manner, and “mingled on terms of equality with gamblers and desperados.”52 For Helper and many of his contemporaries, California was a society that seemed indifferent to religion. This sentiment was illustrated not just by rowdy and reckless miners, but also by religious representatives. Of course, this minister’s contradictory actions do not accurately reflect the behaviors of Gold Rush clergymen in general. In fact, the church’s stance on these bloody spectator sports was unambiguous; it rallied against them and pushed for legislation to have such brutality banned. Nonetheless, Helper’s encounter with this minister solidified his opinion of the Golden State: morally depraved, chaotic, unstable, and—as demonstrated by the title of his work—dreadful.

The same day at the bull-bear match, Helper noted another irony. This story, however, reveals sarcasm rather than genuine repugnance. When Jesús Alvarez—one of the managers of the afternoon’s entertainment—was before the crowd of spectators,

50 Johnson, 151-154.
51 Helper, 97.
52 Ibid., 99.
Helper experienced the following reaction to the manager’s name: “The...name sounded strangely in my ears. It occurred to me that it was peculiarly out of place in its present connection. What! Jesus at a bullfight on Sunday, and not only at it, but one of the prime movers and abettors in it!” Although facetious, Helper’s remarks reflect his overall sentiments about the Californian religious and cultural character. His comments, along with those of other Gold Rush participants and historians who I discussed above, demonstrate the incongruities of the state’s moral landscape.

Secular entertainment undoubtedly posed challenges to the religious community and its efforts. Gold Rush leisure was serious. It challenged codes of normalcy and shaped a peculiar moral character. In California, freedom and fun prevailed over self-control, pursuit of wealth triumphed over frugality, and violence outweighed peace. Californian values collided with those of the rest of the nation, and it was popular pastimes which helped drive this clash.

In discussing the moral atmosphere of Gold Rush California, there are certainly other components which deserve mention. Gender and race are social elements which undoubtedly helped to shape notions of morality in the Golden State. With respect to gender, the scarcity of women facilitated miners’ departure from conventional behavior. The absence of women and the family unit—civilizing social forces no doubt—helped to make California a volatile society. Without mothers and wives monitoring and regulating male activity, masculine impulses were uninhibited. The youth of the majority of these miners further explains their behavior. No longer restrained by the Protestant Northeast’s conventions, these men tasted freedom for the first time in a fascinating land where there were no rules.

Race and ethnicity, undoubtedly, also complicated the character of California. Immigrant New Englanders worked and played alongside other immigrants of even wider backgrounds: Chinese, Mexican, Chilean, French, and Australian. They also interacted with California’s indigenous population. Miners brought with them the customs of their own particular cultures, producing a confused definition of acceptable behavior.

Furthermore, California—admitted to the United States in 1850—was not effectively regulated by the Federal Government. Since it was a new addition and because it was located so far away from the country’s capital, violent and often illegal activity went unnoticed. The absence of governmentally-regulated law and order during the state’s infancy can be explained also by historical context. The Gold Rush years coincided with a heated national debate about slavery. California’s chaotic situation was not on the Federal Government’s agenda during the critical years leading up to the Civil War.

The gender and racial makeup, along with the nation’s preoccupation during the antebellum era, are noteworthy factors which I was unable to thoroughly explore in this paper. These elements, along with miners’ leisurely activities, created California’s unique moral laxity during the mid-nineteenth century.

Michelle Khoury is a United States history major.
Wicked California

Helper experienced the following reaction to the manager’s name: “The...name sounded strangely in my ears. It occurred to me that it was peculiarly out of place in its present connection. What! Jesus at a bullfight on Sunday, and not only at it, but one of the prime movers and abettors in it!” Although facetious, Helper’s remarks reflect his overall sentiments about the Californian religious and cultural character. His comments, along with those of other Gold Rush participants and historians who I discussed above, demonstrate the incongruities of the state’s moral landscape.

Secular entertainment undoubtedly posed challenges to the religious community and its efforts. Gold Rush leisure was serious. It challenged codes of normalcy and shaped a peculiar moral character. In California, freedom and fun prevailed over self-control, pursuit of wealth triumphed over frugality, and violence outweighed peace. Californian values collided with those of the rest of the nation, and it was popular pastimes which helped drive this clash.

In discussing the moral atmosphere of Gold Rush California, there are certainly other components which deserve mention. Gender and race are social elements which undoubtedly helped to shape notions of morality in the Golden State. With respect to gender, the scarcity of women facilitated miners’ departure from conventional behavior. The absence of women and the family unit—civilizing social forces no doubt—helped to make California a volatile society. Without mothers and wives monitoring and regulating male activity, masculine impulses were uninhibited. The youth of the majority of these miners further explains their behavior. No longer restrained by the Protestant Northeast’s conventions, these men tasted freedom for the first time in a fascinating land where there were no rules.

Race and ethnicity, undoubtedly, also complicated the character of California. Immigrant New Englanders worked and played alongside other immigrants of even wider backgrounds: Chinese, Mexican, Chilean, French, and Australian. They also interacted with California’s indigenous population. Miners brought with them the customs of their own particular cultures, producing a confused definition of acceptable behavior.

Furthermore, California—admitted to the United States in 1850—was not effectively regulated by the Federal Government. Since it was a new addition and because it was located so far away from the country’s capital, violent and often illegal activity went unnoticed. The absence of governmentally-regulated law and order during the state’s infancy can be explained also by historical context. The Gold Rush years coincided with a heated national debate about slavery. California’s chaotic situation was not on the Federal Government’s agenda during the critical years leading up to the Civil War.

The gender and racial makeup, along with the nation’s preoccupation during the antebellum era, are noteworthy factors which I was unable to thoroughly explore in this paper. These elements, along with miners’ leisurely activities, created California’s unique moral laxity during the mid-nineteenth century.

Michelle Khoury is a United States history major

---

53 Ibid., 102.
with a minor in philosophy. She is a member of Phi Alpha Theta, and she enjoys studying the history of California, women, and Native Americans. Michelle is graduating in June 2012 and will begin her legal education next fall at UC Davis School of Law.
with a minor in philosophy. She is a member of Phi Alpha Theta, and she enjoys studying the history of California, women, and Native Americans. Michelle is graduating in June 2012 and will begin her legal education next fall at UC Davis School of Law.

http://www.lyonsltd.com/index.cfm/FuseAction/Main.PrintView/printID/13 93.cfm?printReturnTo=Main.SubjectView%26SubjectID%3D24

Image 2


Image 3

The Development, Impact, and Long-term Significance of Wartime Propaganda on the Doughboys in World War I: Personal Appeal vs Moral Imperative

Maggie Woods

“Army Strong” is now entering its sixth year as the official recruiting slogan of the U.S. Army. It promises that soldiers will possess strength in everything: purpose, body, character, obedience, authority, and success. Explicit ideals like patriotism and humanitarianism and national goals like vanquishing a particular enemy have been absent since the unpopular Vietnam War, suppressed in favor of an emphasis on personal benefit. A recruitment ad from 2011 emphasizes the Army’s role in individual soldiers’ lives, showing poignant footage of soldiers with their families, at the funerals of their peers, and in training alongside fellow recruits. With many Americans feeling tricked into fighting an unnecessary war in Iraq, the video avoids identifying a specific enemy or political cause. The song “American Soldier” plays in the background, its lyrics stating proudly a more nationalistic message: “when liberty’s in jeopardy, I will always do what’s right” and “I don’t do it for the money…I don’t do it for the glory, I just do it anyway.”

The 2011 version represents the blending of personal and national appeals that the American government used to encourage enlistment and draft registration in 1917. A study of the evolution of World War I enlistment propaganda places that blend in historical context, demonstrating that propaganda provides an accurate representation not of war but of popular opinion toward war.

Many works have examined the propaganda of World War I. Robert A. Wells’s “Mobilizing Support for War: An Analysis of American Propaganda during World War I” (2002) reveals the pivotal role of anti-German propaganda in shifting public opinion toward war. Jennifer D. Keene’s chapter “Morals and Morale” in World War I: The American Soldier Experience (2011) reveals American efforts to indoctrinate soldiers and uplift their morale. Neither, however, addresses in depth the soldiers’ relationship with the propaganda, what messages they found most appealing, how they reconciled those messages with their experiences at the front, and how propaganda evolved in response.

Propaganda’s Task

By 11 November 1918, the United States had mobilized approximately four million men to serve in the Army, a staggering accomplishment considering that the nation began the war with not even one-twentieth of that force. Despite the record of battles whose Allied death tolls measured in the hundreds of thousands, young American men eagerly enlisted within the first week of declaration. Many did not know even where the war was being fought and often did not care. As enlistee William Langer admitted, “I can hardly remember a single instance of serious discussion of American policy or of larger war issues.
The Development, Impact, and Long-term Significance of Wartime Propaganda on the Doughboys in World War I: Personal Appeal vs Moral Imperative

Maggie Woods

“Army Strong” is now entering its sixth year as the official recruiting slogan of the U.S. Army. It promises that soldiers will possess strength in everything: purpose, body, character, obedience, authority, and success. Explicit ideals like patriotism and humanitarianism and national goals like vanquishing a particular enemy have been absent since the unpopular Vietnam War, suppressed in favor of an emphasis on personal benefit. A recruitment ad from 2011 emphasizes the Army’s role in individual soldiers’ lives, showing poignant footage of soldiers with their families, at the funerals of their peers, and in training alongside fellow recruits. With many Americans feeling tricked into fighting an unnecessary war in Iraq, the video avoids identifying a specific enemy or political cause. The song “American Soldier” plays in the background, its lyrics stating proudly a more nationalistic message: “when liberty’s in jeopardy, I will always do what’s right” and “I don’t do it for the money...I don’t do it for the glory, I just do it anyway.”

The 2011 version represents the blending of personal and national appeals that the American government used to encourage enlistment and draft registration in 1917. A study of the evolution of World War I enlistment propaganda places that blend in historical context, demonstrating that propaganda provides an accurate representation not of war but of popular opinion toward war.

Many works have examined the propaganda of World War I. Robert A. Wells’s “Mobilizing Support for War: An Analysis of American Propaganda during World War I” (2002) reveals the pivotal role of anti-German propaganda in shifting public opinion toward war. Jennifer D. Keene’s chapter “Morals and Morale” in World War I: The American Soldier Experience (2011) reveals American efforts to indoctrinate soldiers and uplift their morale. Neither, however, addresses in depth the soldiers’ relationship with the propaganda, what messages they found most appealing, how they reconciled those messages with their experiences at the front, and how propaganda evolved in response.

Propaganda’s Task

By 11 November 1918, the United States had mobilized approximately four million men to serve in the Army, a staggering accomplishment considering that the nation began the war with not even one-twentieth of that force. Despite the record of battles whose Allied death tolls measured in the hundreds of thousands, young American men eagerly enlisted within the first week of declaration. Many did not know even where the war was being fought and often did not care. As enlistee William Langer admitted, “I can hardly remember a single instance of serious discussion of American policy or of larger war issues.

We men, most of us young, were simply fascinated by the prospect of adventure and heroism.\textsuperscript{2}

Recruitment propaganda had to appeal to this typical man, who did not necessarily understand the war, was probably uneducated or even illiterate, and was often motivated more by personal than national interest. The resultant propaganda played to personal ambition, emphasizing material enticements over moral ideals. Once in the trenches and faced with the reality of war and of their own unpreparedness, soldiers realized the falsity of this materialistic propaganda. The official campaigns of the Committee on Public Information (CPI) had presented the glories of war, not the realities: body lice, equipment and food shortages, and seemingly endless barrages around their heads. The resolve of the recruits, however, was fortified rather than undermined by the emotional propaganda that persisted alongside the materialistic propaganda. Many remained heartened by their underlying belief in the morality of their mission, inspired by German atrocity stories, posters, and films presenting Germans as beasts that had to be vanquished for the sake of humanity.

The British Emotional Precedent

Even when the U.S. was still nominally neutral, the British government primed American public opinion through an effective anti-German propaganda campaign that set the sensationalized tone for later propaganda produced by the CPI. The British government based its domestic campaign on Germany’s “Rape of Belgium,” an event hyperbolized to dehumanize the Germans. The initial intellectual justification, that Germany had violated international law by invading neutral Belgium, was quickly replaced with a more successful emotional version of the event, in which German soldiers became medieval barbarians who raped and pillaged defenseless Belgians.\textsuperscript{3} The Germans’ trespass of international law became a transgression against human decency. Cultivating this savage image abroad, Britain released the “Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages” (Bryce Report) in the U.S, a detailed list of every crime German soldiers committed in Belgium since 4 August 1914. Scholar Nicoletta Gullace asserts that the Committee and its report were especially crafted to appeal to Americans: the head of the Committee, James Bryce, had served as British ambassador to the U.S., and the report was released barely a week after German U-boats torpedoed the \textit{Lusitania}, killing American civilians.\textsuperscript{4}

This British “Rape of Belgium” justification for war reverberated throughout American films, posters, and spoken word as the most cogent and memorable reason for American involvement. The \textit{Lusitania} became an irrefutable symbol of German aggression. An enlistee was told in 1917 that the “sinking of the \textit{Lusitania} was the last straw that led us into the war,”


\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., 29.
We men, most of us young, were simply fascinated by the prospect of adventure and heroism.\(^2\)

Recruitment propaganda had to appeal to this typical man, who did not necessarily understand the war, was probably uneducated or even illiterate, and was often motivated more by personal than national interest. The resultant propaganda played to personal ambition, emphasizing material enticements over moral ideals. Once in the trenches and faced with the reality of war and of their own unpreparedness, soldiers realized the falsity of this materialistic propaganda. The official campaigns of the Committee on Public Information (CPI) had presented the glories of war, not the realities: body lice, equipment and food shortages, and seemingly endless barrages around their heads. The resolve of the recruits, however, was fortified rather than undermined by the emotional propaganda that persisted alongside the materialistic propaganda. Many remained heartened by their underlying belief in the morality of their mission, inspired by German atrocity stories, posters, and films presenting Germans as beasts that had to be vanquished for the sake of humanity.

The British Emotional Precedent

Even when the U.S. was still nominally neutral, the British government primed American public opinion through an effective anti-German propaganda campaign that set the sensationalized tone for later propaganda produced by the CPI. The British government based its domestic campaign on Germany’s “Rape of Belgium,” an event hyperbolized to dehumanize the Germans. The initial intellectual justification, that Germany had violated international law by invading neutral Belgium, was quickly replaced with a more successful emotional version of the event, in which German soldiers became medieval barbarians who raped and pillaged defenseless Belgians.\(^3\) The Germans’ trespass of international law became a transgression against human decency. Cultivating this savage image abroad, Britain released the “Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages” (Bryce Report) in the U.S., a detailed list of every crime German soldiers committed in Belgium since 4 August 1914. Scholar Nicoletta Gullace asserts that the Committee and its report were especially crafted to appeal to Americans: the head of the Committee, James Bryce, had served as British ambassador to the U.S., and the report was released barely a week after German U-boats torpedoed the Lusitania, killing American civilians.\(^4\)

This British “Rape of Belgium” justification for war reverberated throughout American films, posters, and spoken word as the most cogent and memorable reason for American involvement. The Lusitania became an irrefutable symbol of German aggression. An enlistee was told in 1917 that the “sinking of the Lusitania was the last straw that led us into the war,”


\(^4\)Ibid., 29.
even though that event happened two years earlier.\textsuperscript{5} Within a week of Congress’s declaration of war, President Woodrow Wilson established the Committee on Public Information to present the war effort from a distinctly American perspective, but built on previous British efforts. Years of exposure to Britain’s publicity made the rhetorical transition to war almost seamless and might explain many men’s eagerness to enlist the first day to fight in the Britons’ “chivalrous war.”\textsuperscript{6}

Recruitment and Draft Propaganda

Appealing variously to men’s sense of sympathy, patriotism, honor, adventure, and ambition, recruitment propaganda cultivated the perception that this morally unambiguous war was not only a necessary action against an irrationally brutal enemy but also an opportunity for American men to prove and improve themselves. CPI’s chairman George Creel considered visual and auditory propaganda, such as posters, movies, and the speeches of Four Minute Men, particularly important in rousing support among the nation’s considerable non-English-speaking and illiterate populations. Continuing the “Rape of Belgium” tradition, incipient Hollywood produced anti-German films featuring close-up depictions of the suffering of French and Belgian women and children’s inflicted by merciless German soldiers.\textsuperscript{7}


Movie theaters provided venues for the remarkably successful Four Minute Men, who addressed audiences while the movie reels were changed. These speakers were initially charged with stirring up enough enthusiasm for the war so that the draft’s introduction would not result in riots, as had occurred during the Civil War.\textsuperscript{8} Creel made sure his speakers appealed to the broadest demographic possible. Typically well-known, respected members of the local community, such as doctors and lawyers, Four Minute Men represented different ethnic backgrounds, addressing audiences in Italian, Polish, Lithuanian, Magyar-Hungarian, Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Bohemian-Slovak, and Yiddish.\textsuperscript{9} The CPI standardized the Four Minute Men’s messages by providing the speakers with suggested material.\textsuperscript{10} The resultant speeches neatly packaged Wilson’s and Creel’s public sentiments explaining why America had to join the war.

According to scholar Carol Oukrop, the Four Minute Men’s speeches established that the U.S. was savior not only of the Allies but also of liberty, democracy, and humanity. The speeches referenced the Rape of Belgium, the invasion and sacrifice of France (fondly associated with the Revolutionary War’s General Lafayette), the sacrifice of England (in the spirit of

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., 610.
\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., 618.
Significance of Wartime Propaganda 85

even though that event happened two years earlier.\textsuperscript{5} Within a week of Congress’s declaration of war, President Woodrow Wilson established the Committee on Public Information to present the war effort from a distinctly American perspective, but built on previous British efforts. Years of exposure to Britain’s publicity made the rhetorical transition to war almost seamless and might explain many men’s eagerness to enlist the first day to fight in the Britons’ “chivalrous war.”\textsuperscript{6}

Recruitment and Draft Propaganda

Appealing variously to men’s sense of sympathy, patriotism, honor, adventure, and ambition, recruitment propaganda cultivated the perception that this morally unambiguous war was not only a necessary action against an irrationally brutal enemy but also an opportunity for American men to prove and improve themselves. CPI’s chairman George Creel considered visual and auditory propaganda, such as posters, movies, and the speeches of Four Minute Men, particularly important in rousing support among the nation’s considerable non-English-speaking and illiterate populations. Continuing the “Rape of Belgium” tradition, incipient Hollywood produced anti-German films featuring close-up depictions of the suffering of French and Belgian women and children’s inflicted by merciless German soldiers.\textsuperscript{7}


Movie theaters provided venues for the remarkably successful Four Minute Men, who addressed audiences while the movie reels were changed. These speakers were initially charged with stirring up enough enthusiasm for the war so that the draft’s introduction would not result in riots, as had occurred during the Civil War.\textsuperscript{8} Creel made sure his speakers appealed to the broadest demographic possible. Typically well-known, respected members of the local community, such as doctors and lawyers, Four Minute Men represented different ethnic backgrounds, addressing audiences in Italian, Polish, Lithuanian, Magyar-Hungarian, Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Bohemian-Slovak, and Yiddish.\textsuperscript{9} The CPI standardized the Four Minute Men’s messages by providing the speakers with suggested material.\textsuperscript{10} The resultant speeches neatly packaged Wilson’s and Creel’s public sentiments explaining why America had to join the war.

According to scholar Carol Oukrop, the Four Minute Men’s speeches established that the U.S. was savior not only of the Allies but also of liberty, democracy, and humanity. The speeches referenced the Rape of Belgium, the invasion and sacrifice of France (fondly associated with the Revolutionary War’s General Lafayette), the sacrifice of England (in the spirit of

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., 610.
\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., 618.
Significance of Wartime Propaganda

Anglo-American solidarity), and the faltering participation of Russia. This last was particularly important once Russia liberated itself from autocracy. As President Wilson said in his speech to Congress on 2 April 1917, “The world must be made safe for democracy.” Some speakers were so persuasive and passionate that male audience members enlisted or registered as soon as the speech ended. Corporal Martin J. Hogan determined to sign up even while the speaker was still talking and was the first to jump up when the speaker “wound up by asking all the men willing to serve the country, to see her through her present emergency with rifles in hand, to step upon the stage.”

Although Creel’s Four Minute Men program reached most of the home front population, including non-English-speaking minority groups, it is difficult to evaluate the Four Minute Men’s success in encouraging men to enlist or to register for the draft and in inculcating in them specific justifications for the war. Scholar Lisa Mastrangelo notes that the CPI declared the program a success when, on 5 June 1917, ten million men registered for the draft with “no publicized riots and few protests.” Mastrangelo, however, doubts the CPI’s claim that the Four Minute Men were the most effective recruiting tool. She attributes the results to a pre-existing general desire to take part in the war, a conclusion that does not take into account the presence of three million draft dodgers, nearly eleven percent of draft-eligible American men. But the CPI’s claim is undeniably weakened by the fact that only a few veterans were like Corporal Hogan, who remembered enlisting after listening to a Four Minute Man. Veterans instead widely echoed messages from recruitment posters.

Posters visually displayed a variety of reasons to enlist or register for the draft. Many fostered the hatred that the British had planted: the famous “Destroy This Mad Brute” poster (see Appendix 1) depicted the German soldier as a drooling ape encroaching on America’s shore from a ruined Europe, clutching a distressed, partially naked Lady Liberty. Propagandists expected that moral outrage at the actions of the “Huns” (a term coined with the initial “Rape of Belgium” propaganda that emphasized Germans’ barbarity) would inflame men to enlist. The poster “Tell That to the Marines!” (see Appendix 2) shows a man who angrily strips himself of his civilian clothes after reading the newspaper headline “Huns

13According to Alfred E. Cornebise [War as Advertised: The Four Minute Men and America’s Crusade 1917-1918, Memoirs 156 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1984), 3-6], the Four Minute Men started as a local group in Chicago on 28 April 1917 and were not endorsed formally by the CPI until 16 June 1917, but Creel took credit for starting the program in George Creel, “Public Opinion in War Time,” American Academy of Political and Social Science 78 (July 1918): 186-87; Mastrangelo, “World War I,” 612.
15H.R. Hopps, “Destroy This Mad Brute,” 1916, in Ross, Propaganda for War, ii.
Significance of Wartime Propaganda

Anglo-American solidarity), and the faltering participation of Russia.\(^{11}\) This last was particularly important once Russia liberated itself from autocracy. As President Wilson said in his speech to Congress on 2 April 1917, “The world must be made safe for democracy.” Some speakers were so persuasive and passionate that male audience members enlisted or registered as soon as the speech ended. Corporal Martin J. Hogan determined to sign up even while the speaker was still talking and was the first to jump up when the speaker “wound up by asking all the men willing to serve the country, to see her through her present emergency with rifles in hand, to step upon the stage.”\(^{12}\)

Although Creel’s Four Minute Men program reached most of the home front population, including non-English-speaking minority groups, it is difficult to evaluate the Four Minute Men’s success in encouraging men to enlist or to register for the draft and in inculcating in them specific justifications for the war. Scholar Lisa Mastrangelo notes that the CPI declared the program a success when, on 5 June 1917, ten million men registered for the draft with “no publicized riots and few protests.”\(^{13}\) Mastrangelo, however, doubts the CPI’s claim that the Four Minute Men were the most effective recruiting tool. She attributes the results to a pre-existing general desire to take part in the war, a conclusion that does not take into account the presence of three million draft dodgers, nearly eleven percent of draft-eligible American men.\(^{14}\) But the CPI’s claim is undeniably weakened by the fact that only a few veterans were like Corporal Hogan, who remembered enlisting after listening to a Four Minute Man. Veterans instead widely echoed messages from recruitment posters.

Posters visually displayed a variety of reasons to enlist or register for the draft. Many fostered the hatred that the British had planted: the famous “Destroy This Mad Brute” poster (see Appendix 1) depicted the German soldier as a drooling ape encroaching on America’s shore from a ruined Europe, clutching a distressed, partially naked Lady Liberty.\(^{15}\) Propagandists expected that moral outrage at the actions of the “Huns” (a term coined with the initial “Rape of Belgium” propaganda that emphasized Germans’ barbarity) would inflame men to enlist. The poster “Tell That to the Marines!” (see Appendix 2) shows a man who angrily strips himself of his civilian clothes after reading the newspaper headline “Huns


\(^{13}\) According to Alfred E. Cornebise [War as Advertised: The Four Minute Men and America’s Crusade 1917-1918, Memoirs 156 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1984), 3-6], the Four Minute Men started as a local group in Chicago on 28 April 1917 and were not endorsed formally by the CPI until 16 June 1917, but Creel took credit for starting the program [in George Creel, “Public Opinion in War Time,” American Academy of Political and Social Science 78 (July 1918): 186-87]; Mastrangelo, “World War I,” 612.

\(^{14}\) Statistic from Jennifer D. Keene, World War I: The American Soldier Experience (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 37.

\(^{15}\) H.R. Hopps, “Destroy This Mad Brute,” 1916, in Ross, Propaganda for War, ii.
Kill Women and Children.”

Few soldiers, however, attributed their eagerness to enlist to moral outrage. Propagandists rapidly revised their posters to encourage enlistment and registration in ways that might appeal to the majority of their audience, beginning a trend that sacrificed ideological appeals. The emphasis shifted from explaining why America was fighting the war to explaining why an individual should enlist. Since moral outrage at Germany’s belligerence and cruelty was not enough to provoke sufficient enlistments, new posters presented more material justifications. The potential of upward mobility was a popular theme: “Earn While You Learn” posters (see Appendix 3) promised education and vocational training to recruits, benefits which might have been particularly appealing to this generation of soldiers, a third of whom were illiterate. The considerable presence of these posters suggests their relative success, but recruits had mixed opinions regarding the realization of this promise, particularly its education component. Non-English-speaking recruits were often eager to receive free ESL education. Other recruits, however, expressed annoyance that they were required to take remedial English classes as a part of their training: they were “going over there to shoot Germans, not to write letters to ‘em!”

Many men attributed their enlistment to various forms of social pressure or to the sheer excitement of adventure overseas, and posters quickly adapted to reflect these attitudes. Poster creators emphasized feelings of camaraderie and subtly applied peer pressure, noticing that men often enlisted in groups. Saddler John Joseph Brennan made a point in his wartime diary that he and his friend Harry Willard joined the Army together. Sergeant Dan Edwards, already in the reserve, reenlisted the day of declaration, as did all of the men at his ranch. Even though “[h]alf of them barely knew where the war was and didn’t give a damn,” they were “sure one happy crowd,” having enlisted together. Posters responded to this social phenomenon by featuring calls to arms like “Enlist Now and Go with Your Friends” or “Fight alongside Your Friends” (see Appendix 4 and 5).

19Evan A. Edwards, From Doniphan to Verdun: The Story of the 140th Infantry (Lawrence, KS: World Company, 1920), 19, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 22.
21Lowell Thomas, This Side of Hell (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, 1932), 73, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 7.
Significance of Wartime Propaganda

Kill Women and Children.” Few soldiers, however, attributed their eagerness to enlist to moral outrage.

Propagandists rapidly revised their posters to encourage enlistment and registration in ways that might appeal to the majority of their audience, beginning a trend that sacrificed ideological appeals. The emphasis shifted from explaining why America was fighting the war to explaining why an individual should enlist. Since moral outrage at Germany’s belligerence and cruelty was not enough to provoke sufficient enlistments, new posters presented more material justifications. The potential of upward mobility was a popular theme: “Earn While You Learn” posters (see Appendix 3) promised education and vocational training to recruits, benefits which might have been particularly appealing to this generation of soldiers, a third of whom were illiterate. The considerable presence of these posters suggests their relative success, but recruits had mixed opinions regarding the realization of this promise, particularly its education component. Non-English-speaking recruits were often eager to receive free ESL education. Other recruits, however, expressed annoyance that they were required to take remedial English classes as a part of their training: they were “going over there to shoot Germans, not to write letters to ’em!”

Many men attributed their enlistment to various forms of social pressure or to the sheer excitement of adventure overseas, and posters quickly adapted to reflect these attitudes. Poster creators emphasized feelings of camaraderie and subtly applied peer pressure, noticing that men often enlisted in groups. Saddler John Joseph Brennan made a point in his wartime diary that he and his friend Harry Willard joined the Army together. Sergeant Dan Edwards, already in the reserve, reenlisted the day of declaration, as did all of the men at his ranch. Even though “[h]alf of them barely knew where the war was and didn’t give a damn,” they were “sure one happy crowd,” having enlisted together.

Posters responded to this social phenomenon by featuring calls to arms like “Enlist Now and Go with Your Friends” or “Fight alongside Your Friends” (see Appendix 4 and 5).

19 Evan A. Edwards, From Doniphan to Verdun: The Story of the 140th Infantry (Lawrence, KS: World Company, 1920), 19, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 22.
21 Lowell Thomas, This Side of Hell (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, 1932), 73, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 7.
Featuring pictures of recruits with captions like “He Did His Duty—Will You?” (see Appendix 6), posters evoked peer pressure like that experienced by Navy firefighter Russell Powers, whose “buddies...wanted to know why the hell [he had] waited so long, from the 6th. to the 8th. [of April] to get in.”

Regardless of material or social incentive, the prospect of transcending their mundane lives by crossing the Atlantic to take part in a glorious war was enticement enough for many young Americans. “[H]ope and enthusiasm” characterized the attitude of these enlistees: hope and enthusiasm for an adventure in which they were the heroes “following the flag over a shell torn field, with fixed bayonet.” Recruit
d propagation did not disabuse soldiers of this idealized, swashbuckling image of war but encouraged men to enlist on the promise of adventure. Such posters emphasized the once-in-a-lifetime quality of this opportunity to travel outside of the U.S., expenses paid. One poster (see Appendix 7) proclaimed, “Here Is Your Chance To See FRANCE AND THE RHINE” [original capitalization] in large letters overpowering

Even the call in the bottom lines to enlist. William Langer remembered that he and his friends felt keenly the urgency of this type of message. Fighting in this Great War was their “one great chance for excitement and risk.” They “could not afford to pass it up” only to continue lives that “would run in familiar, routine channels.”

The war did offer a break from routine, but not in ways that Langer and most other enlistees anticipated.

Camp and Battlefield Realities

The war in Europe resembled no other in its stagnation and bloodshed, and certainly it did not present the kind of adventure American men had been promised. When recruits, both enlisted and drafted, arrived at American and European training camps, and later the European trenches, they discovered that propaganda had sugar-coated or omitted entirely the shortcomings of American military preparation. The American government was undeniably unprepared for war, despite the claims of the CPI. The Four Minute Men tried to counter negative publicity by tailoring facts to fit their message. They spoke glowingly of the number of men signed in the different military branches, the activities of non-military government organizations, and the mobilization efforts of railways and industries. They omitted (blatantly, in hindsight) information about troops’ equipment and preparedness.
Significance of Wartime Propaganda 91

Featuring pictures of recruits with captions like “He Did His Duty—Will You?” (see Appendix 6), posters evoked peer pressure like that experienced by Navy firefighter Russell Powers, whose “buddies...wanted to know why the hell [he had] waited so long, from the 6th. to the 8th. [of April] to get in.”

Regardless of material or social incentive, the prospect of transcending their mundane lives by crossing the Atlantic to take part in a glorious war was enticement enough for many young Americans. “[H]ope and enthusiasm” characterized the attitude of these enlistees: hope and enthusiasm for an adventure in which they were the heroes “following the flag over a shell torn field, with fixed bayonet.” Recruitment propaganda did not disabuse soldiers of this idealized, swashbuckling image of war but encouraged men to enlist on the promise of adventure. Such posters emphasized the once-in-a-lifetime quality of this opportunity to travel outside of the U.S., expenses paid. One poster (see Appendix 7) proclaimed, “Here Is Your Chance To See FRANCE AND THE RHINE” [original capitalization] in large letters overpowering

even the call in the bottom lines to enlist. William Langer remembered that he and his friends felt keenly the urgency of this type of message. Fighting in this Great War was their “one great chance for excitement and risk.” They “could not afford to pass it up” only to continue lives that “would run in familiar, routine channels.” The war did offer a break from routine, but not in ways that Langer and most other enlistees anticipated.

Camp and Battlefield Realities

The war in Europe resembled no other in its stagnation and bloodshed, and certainly it did not present the kind of adventure American men had been promised. When recruits, both enlisted and drafted, arrived at American and European training camps, and later the European trenches, they discovered that propaganda had sugar-coated or omitted entirely the shortcomings of American military preparation. The American government was undeniably unprepared for war, despite the claims of the CPI. The Four Minute Men tried to counter negative publicity by tailoring facts to fit their message. They spoke glowingly of the number of men signed in the different military branches, the activities of non-military government organizations, and the mobilization efforts of railways and industries. They omitted (blatantly, in hindsight) information about troops’ equipment and preparedness.


24Robert W. Kean, Dear Marraine (n.p.: n.p. 1969), xi-xii, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 6; Justin M. Klingenberg, in One Hundred Thirteenth Engineers in France (Nancy, FR: Berger-Levrault, 1919), 78, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 9.

25Langer, Gas, xviii-xix, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 9.

26Oukrop, “The Four Minute Men,” 635.
Speakers neglected the fact that training camps in the U.S. were still being built. The first divisions were sent overseas to train under Allied leaders before being re-induced into General Pershing’s American Expeditionary Forces. Supplies, such as weapons and uniforms, were insufficient because industry was still mobilizing. Two months prior to the declaration of war, in response to the government’s requests for heavy artillery, machine guns, clothing, and other necessities, suppliers predicted that production of adequate numbers would take over a year. Recruits trained with sticks instead of guns and in civilian clothes instead of uniforms. When camps did manage to provide uniforms, they were often the wrong size. John Brennan complained that the seat of his pants “were big enough for a couple of bread baskets to hide away in.”

Even the shock of camp life, with its rigid discipline and shortage of supplies, did not prepare troops for the conditions at the front. The comparative attitudes toward the camps and the trenches are summed up by Brennan as his division marched closer to enemy fire: “We used to think that we were treated pretty rough and had hard times. But as the days roll by and we are getting nearer to the actual fighting, we seem to look back and say those were the happy days.”

Daily rations in the camps had been almost five thousand calories and heavy in protein to sustain recruits during intense training, but “a feeling of gnawing hunger prevailed almost from the period at which campaigning began to the point where it ended.” Troops on the march and in the trenches relied almost exclusively on canned foods for their one daily meal.

Some soldiers, with no other way in which to cope with the shock but humor, joked that they envied their “cooties” (body lice) because they at least “always ha[d] something warm to eat.” Vermin such as lice and rats presented unique problems. Soldiers had to improvise in their encounters with cooties and rats, as they had received no official warnings about their existence, let alone their persistence. Their uninformed solutions were often just as harmful as the pests themselves: some would steal kerosene to pour over themselves, discovering much to their discomfort that it burned them but left the lice unharmed.

In addition to the living conditions, European trench warfare was utterly alien to Americans and did not conform to the image of open warfare depicted by posters and films. The first episode of the popular newsreel series America Goes Over (1918) cleverly emphasizes Allied soldiers’ progress and motion: it glosses over the stagnation on the Western Front and shows instead activities like building bridges in Italy and marching across open fields, projecting purposeful motion.

---

28Hallas, Doughboy War, 24.
29Brennan, My Own True Story, 10.
30Ibid., 56.
31Keene, World War I, 45; Leonard P. Kurtz, Beyond No Man’s Land (Buffalo, NY: Foster & Stewart, 1937), 30, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 183.
32Charles Minder, This Man’s War (New York: Pevensey, 1931), 342, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 184-85.
Speakers neglected the fact that training camps in the U.S. were still being built. The first divisions were sent overseas to train under Allied leaders before being re-inducted into General Pershing’s American Expeditionary Forces. Supplies, such as weapons and uniforms, were insufficient because industry was still mobilizing. Two months prior to the declaration of war, in response to the government’s requests for heavy artillery, machine guns, clothing, and other necessities, suppliers predicted that production of adequate numbers would take over a year.\footnote{Hallas, Doughboy War, 24.} Recruits trained with sticks instead of guns and in civilian clothes instead of uniforms. When camps did manage to provide uniforms, they were often the wrong size. John Brennan complained that the seat of his pants “were big enough for a couple of bread baskets to hide away in.”\footnote{Brennan, My Own True Story, 10.}

Even the shock of camp life, with its rigid discipline and shortage of supplies, did not prepare troops for the conditions at the front. The comparative attitudes toward the camps and the trenches are summed up by Brennan as his division marched closer to enemy fire: “We used to think that we were treated pretty rough and had hard times. But as the days roll by and we are getting nearer to the actual fighting, we seem to look back and say those were the happy days.”\footnote{Ibid., 56.}

Daily rations in the camps had been almost five thousand calories and heavy in protein to sustain recruits during intense training, but “a feeling of gnawing hunger prevailed almost from the period at which campaigning began to the point where it ended.”\footnote{Keene, World War I, 45; Leonard P. Kurtz, Beyond No Man’s Land (Buffalo, NY: Foster & Stewart, 1937), 30, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 183.} Troops on the march and in the trenches relied almost exclusively on canned foods for their one daily meal.

Some soldiers, with no other way in which to cope with the shock but humor, joked that they envied their “cooties” (body lice) because they at least “always ha[d] something warm to eat.”\footnote{Charles Minder, This Man’s War (New York: Pevensey, 1931), 342, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 184-85.} Vermin such as lice and rats presented unique problems. Soldiers had to improvise in their encounters with cooties and rats, as they had received no official warnings about their existence, let alone their persistence. Their uninformed solutions were often just as harmful as the pests themselves: some would steal kerosene to pour over themselves, discovering much to their discomfort that it burned them but left the lice unharmed.\footnote{Horatio Rogers, The Diary of an Artillery Scout (North Andover, MA: n.p., 1975), 217, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 185.}

In addition to the living conditions, European trench warfare was utterly alien to Americans and did not conform to the image of open warfare depicted by posters and films. The first episode of the popular newsreel series America Goes Over (1918) cleverly emphasizes Allied soldiers’ progress and motion: it glosses over the stagnation on the Western Front and shows instead activities like building bridges in Italy and marching across open fields, projecting purposeful
industriousness. Also absent is footage of attacks on the Allied trenches. During such attacks veterans remembered being so “enveloped in tremendous fear” that they lost the “ability to exert muscular control.” Veterans recalled images of themselves balled up and clutching their knees as they hid in shell holes or against the back walls of their trenches. This was not the glorious, open-field fighting that “American soldiers love[d]”; it was not fighting at all, at least in their minds.

Even in battle, soldiers lost the worth that propaganda had awarded them. They were reminded not of their heroism but of their expendability: they were ordered to take care of the horses before themselves because “a man could take care of himself while a horse couldn’t, and...if a man was lost, another could take his place, but horses were scarce!” The Doughboys’ Creative Response

Faced with these dire circumstances, many soldiers found comfort in their own popular culture that flouted official propaganda and represented not the home front culture they left but their own current experiences at the front. Officers who censored letters were frequently disappointed in the lack of ideals discussed by the soldiers; instead they read letters “about [the soldiers’] health, minor discomfits of military service and family gossip.” Likewise, songs popular among the troops were rarely patriotic but rather raunchy, nonsensical, humorous, or dreamlike. Army Field Clerk Will Judy recorded that the national anthem was “sung very seldom and never of our own accord.” A private, remembering a photograph in the Literary Gazette of a chaplain blessing his troops, who sang a Protestant hymn as they marched, laughed because the songs sung by his own division “were as bawdy as the collective imaginations of 3,000 horny men could conceive.”

Some soldiers did find strength in the humanitarian appeals of early propaganda, envisioning themselves as saviors of the overrun Allies and the free world. Seeing the bedraggled dregs of British draftees in his shared trench, Lieutenant Joseph Douglas Lawrence realized that the fresh, ready-for-the-fight Americans were indeed needed: Allied forces were physically depleted and psychologically defeated in their attitude toward the war. Americans were a new hope. They were healthy and well-fed, and they sang so raucously as they marched toward stagnant battle fields that they had to be quieted so as not to attract enemy attention. They were seen as the heroes, albeit naïve ones who did not understand the rather unhe-

---

35William F. Clarke, Over There with O’Ryan’s Roughnecks (Seattle: Superior, 1966), 55-56, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 175.
36Brennan, My Own True Story, 83.
37George Mozley, Our Miracle Battery (n.p.: n.p., 1920), 48, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 182.
Significance of Wartime Propaganda

industriousness. Also absent is footage of attacks on the Allied trenches. During such attacks veterans remembered being so “enveloped in tremendous fear” that they lost the “ability to exert muscular control.” Veterans recalled images of themselves balled up and clutching their knees as they hid in shell holes or against the back walls of their trenches. This was not the glorious, open-field fighting that “American soldiers love[d]”; it was not fighting at all, at least in their minds. Even in battle, soldiers lost the worth that propaganda had awarded them. They were reminded not of their heroism but of their expendability: they were ordered to take care of the horses before themselves because “a man could take care of himself while a horse couldn’t, and...if a man was lost, another could take his place, but horses were scarce!”

The Doughboys’ Creative Response

Faced with these dire circumstances, many soldiers found comfort in their own popular culture that flouted official propaganda and represented not the home front culture they left but their own current experiences at the front. Officers who censored letters were frequently disappointed in the lack of ideals discussed by the soldiers; instead they read letters

“about [the soldiers’] health, minor discomforts of military service and family gossip.” Likewise, songs popular among the troops were rarely patriotic but rather raunchy, nonsensical, humorous, or dreamlike. Army Field Clerk Will Judy recorded that the national anthem was “sung very seldom and never of our own accord.” A private, remembering a photograph in the Literary Gazette of a chaplain blessing his troops, who sang a Protestant hymn as they marched, laughed because the songs sung by his own division “were as bawdy as the collective imaginations of 3,000 horny men could conceive.”

Some soldiers did find strength in the humanitarian appeals of early propaganda, envisioning themselves as saviors of the overrun Allies and the free world. Seeing the bedraggled dregs of British draftees in his shared trench, Lieutenant Joseph Douglas Lawrence realized that the fresh, ready-for-the-fight Americans were indeed needed: Allied forces were physically depleted and psychologically defeated in their attitude toward the war. Americans were a new hope. They were healthy and well-fed, and they sang so raucously as they marched toward stagnant battle fields that they had to be quieted so as not to attract enemy attention. They were seen as the heroes, albeit naïve ones who did not understand the rather unhe-

---

35 William F. Clarke, Over There with O’Ryan’s Roughnecks (Seattle: Superior, 1966), 55-56, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 175.
36 Brennan, My Own True Story, 83.
37 George Mozley, Our Miracle Battery (n.p.: n.p., 1920), 48, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 182.
38 Keene, World War I, 60.
39 Will Judy, A Soldier’s Diary (Chicago: Judy Publishing, 1930), 125, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 199.
40 Albert M. Ettinger, A Doughboy with the Fighting 69th (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane, 1992), 150, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 197.
Significance of Wartime Propaganda 97

roic ways of this war. One veteran reiterated the propagandistic notion that he became convinced that the Allies’ “fight [was] our fight, because it espouse[d] the principles of the United States of America, democracy, justice, and liberty.”

Others fought because they were convinced that Germans were indeed monsters. Some harbored personal vendettas against Germany after being wounded, and others could not abandon their fellow doughboys. However, a considerable portion possessed a zeal for annihilating the Germans that surpassed even these reasons, as the German atrocity stories featured in early propaganda spread across the frontline. Lieutenant Robert Hoffman, although he conceded that “little homelike touches to the places [the Germans] had left showed them to be men like ourselves who could enjoy the simple pleasures of life,” still believed that the Germans “weren’t quite human.” He even quoted the Bryce Report to provide an example of the rumors that the soldiers “were always hearing.” Sergeant Arthur Havlin echoed the sentiment that the Germans were inhuman, remembering that “the number of prisoners captured by [his] division was materially less than what it should have been” because the soldiers had heard the atrocity stories and had decided that they could not suffer a German to live. This same mindset encouraged Havlin’s division to die fighting rather than to risk capture at the hands of the Germans.

Although wartime propaganda did not influence all soldiers to the degree it did Havlin and his men, it did shape most recruits’ expectations of war so that many felt shock upon entering even the training camps and were unprepared both physically and mentally for trench warfare. Many veterans, however, remembered their determination to fight more than any resentment of their government. In his wartime diary, John Brennan admitted, “I don’t know what would happen to us if we got discouraged,” thinking only that “it would be a sad ending.” Yet despite his sickeningly uncomfortable sea journey to Europe, his confrontations with flesh-nibbling rats and body lice, and his experiences of frantically hiding from shots and shells, he affirmed that he and his fellows were “not down hearted” but eager to fight.

Conclusion

Recruitment propaganda never features the unattractive realities of war. Instead propaganda reveals a government’s effort to understand and use the prevailing emotions, needs, and desires of its citizens. In World War I, propaganda adapted, not to reflect the changing realities of war, but to account for public reactions to war itself and to offer a variety of inducements to enlist, tailored to differing motives. Some of the lessons provided by the development of World War

43Robert Hoffman, I Remember the Last War (York, PA: Strength & Health, 1940), 124, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 187.
44Ibid., 185-86, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 186.
46Brennan, My Own True Story, 54.
47Ibid., 78.
Significance of Wartime Propaganda

97

roic ways of this war. One veteran reiterated the propagandistic notion that he became convinced that the Allies’ “fight [was] our fight, because it espouse[d] the principles of the United States of America, democracy, justice, and liberty.”

Others fought because they were convinced that Germans were indeed monsters. Some harbored personal vendettas against Germany after being wounded, and others could not abandon their fellow doughboys. However, a considerable portion possessed a zeal for annihilating the Germans that surpassed even these reasons, as the German atrocity stories featured in early propaganda spread across the frontline. Lieutenant Robert Hoffman, although he conceded that “little homelike touches to the places [the Germans] had left showed them to be men like ourselves who could enjoy the simple pleasures of life,” still believed that the Germans “weren’t quite human.” He even quoted the Bryce Report to provide an example of the rumors that the soldiers “were always hearing.” Sergeant Arthur Havlin echoed the sentiment that the Germans were inhuman, remembering that “the number of prisoners captured by [his] division was materially less than what it should have been” because the soldiers had heard the atrocity stories and had decided that they could not suffer a German to live. This same mindset encouraged Havlin’s division to die fighting rather than to risk capture at the hands of the Germans.

Although wartime propaganda did not influence all soldiers to the degree it did Havlin and his men, it did shape most recruits’ expectations of war so that many felt shock upon entering even the training camps and were unprepared both physically and mentally for trench warfare. Many veterans, however, remembered their determination to fight more than any resentment of their government. In his wartime diary, John Brennan admitted, “I don’t know what would happen to us if we got discouraged,” thinking only that “it would be a sad ending.”

Conclusion

Recruitment propaganda never features the unattractive realities of war. Instead propaganda reveals a government’s effort to understand and use the prevailing emotions, needs, and desires of its citizens. In World War I, propaganda adapted, not to reflect the changing realities of war, but to account for public reactions to war itself and to offer a variety of inducements to enlist, tailored to differing motives. Some of the lessons provided by the development of World War

98

Historical Perspectives

June 2012

German to live. This same mindset encouraged Havlin’s division to die fighting rather than to risk capture at the hands of the Germans.

Although wartime propaganda did not influence all soldiers to the degree it did Havlin and his men, it did shape most recruits’ expectations of war so that many felt shock upon entering even the training camps and were unprepared both physically and mentally for trench warfare. Many veterans, however, remembered their determination to fight more than any resentment of their government. In his wartime diary, John Brennan admitted, “I don’t know what would happen to us if we got discouraged,” thinking only that “it would be a sad ending.” Yet despite his sickeningly uncomfortable sea journey to Europe, his confrontations with flesh-nibbling rats and body lice, and his experiences of frantically hiding from shots and shells, he affirmed that he and his fellows were “not downhearted” but eager to fight.

Conclusion

Recruitment propaganda never features the unattractive realities of war. Instead propaganda reveals a government’s effort to understand and use the prevailing emotions, needs, and desires of its citizens. In World War I, propaganda adapted, not to reflect the changing realities of war, but to account for public reactions to war itself and to offer a variety of inducements to enlist, tailored to differing motives. Some of the lessons provided by the development of World War

98

Historical Perspectives

June 2012

German to live. This same mindset encouraged Havlin’s division to die fighting rather than to risk capture at the hands of the Germans.

Although wartime propaganda did not influence all soldiers to the degree it did Havlin and his men, it did shape most recruits’ expectations of war so that many felt shock upon entering even the training camps and were unprepared both physically and mentally for trench warfare. Many veterans, however, remembered their determination to fight more than any resentment of their government. In his wartime diary, John Brennan admitted, “I don’t know what would happen to us if we got discouraged,” thinking only that “it would be a sad ending.” Yet despite his sickeningly uncomfortable sea journey to Europe, his confrontations with flesh-nibbling rats and body lice, and his experiences of frantically hiding from shots and shells, he affirmed that he and his fellows were “not downhearted” but eager to fight.

Conclusion

Recruitment propaganda never features the unattractive realities of war. Instead propaganda reveals a government’s effort to understand and use the prevailing emotions, needs, and desires of its citizens. In World War I, propaganda adapted, not to reflect the changing realities of war, but to account for public reactions to war itself and to offer a variety of inducements to enlist, tailored to differing motives. Some of the lessons provided by the development of World War

98

Historical Perspectives

June 2012

German to live. This same mindset encouraged Havlin’s division to die fighting rather than to risk capture at the hands of the Germans.

Although wartime propaganda did not influence all soldiers to the degree it did Havlin and his men, it did shape most recruits’ expectations of war so that many felt shock upon entering even the training camps and were unprepared both physically and mentally for trench warfare. Many veterans, however, remembered their determination to fight more than any resentment of their government. In his wartime diary, John Brennan admitted, “I don’t know what would happen to us if we got discouraged,” thinking only that “it would be a sad ending.” Yet despite his sickeningly uncomfortable sea journey to Europe, his confrontations with flesh-nibbling rats and body lice, and his experiences of frantically hiding from shots and shells, he affirmed that he and his fellows were “not downhearted” but eager to fight.

Conclusion

Recruitment propaganda never features the unattractive realities of war. Instead propaganda reveals a government’s effort to understand and use the prevailing emotions, needs, and desires of its citizens. In World War I, propaganda adapted, not to reflect the changing realities of war, but to account for public reactions to war itself and to offer a variety of inducements to enlist, tailored to differing motives. Some of the lessons provided by the development of World War

43 Robert Hoffman, I Remember the Last War (York, PA: Strength & Health, 1940), 124, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 187.
44 Ibid., 185-86, in Hallas, Doughboy War, 186.
46 Brennan, My Own True Story, 54.
47 Ibid., 78.
I propaganda are evident in subsequent military recruitment campaigns. When political goals are not sufficiently clear or compelling, more emphasis is placed on the benefits to the individual enlistee.

In the context of the shifting focus of World War I propaganda, recruitment campaigns during subsequent wars can be seen as a measure of popular support (or lack thereof) for political goals. The almost total lack of political content in today’s recruitment efforts indicates the political unpopularity of current American military actions. Studies of popular opinion during wartime often examine the impact of propaganda targeting civilians rather than potential fighters, such as the famous Four-Minute-Men and poster campaigns that promoted the purchase of Liberty Bonds. However, the development of recruitment propaganda provides just as, if not more, valuable a gauge of public opinion toward war because such propaganda has to convince people to sacrifice not just their money but their lives.

Maggie Woods is double-majoring in history, with a European emphasis, and Latin and Greek, with a preference for Latin. She is also a member of Phi Alpha Theta and Eta Sigma Phi. When she graduates from SCU in 2014, she plans to continue her historical studies in graduate school, probably on topics in medieval English history. She thanks Professor Nancy Unger for her painstaking work with her on the paper in HIST 101.
I propaganda are evident in subsequent military recruitment campaigns. When political goals are not sufficiently clear or compelling, more emphasis is placed on the benefits to the individual enlistee.

In the context of the shifting focus of World War I propaganda, recruitment campaigns during subsequent wars can be seen as a measure of popular support (or lack thereof) for political goals. The almost total lack of political content in today’s recruitment efforts indicates the political unpopularity of current American military actions. Studies of popular opinion during wartime often examine the impact of propaganda targeting civilians rather than potential fighters, such as the famous Four-Minute-Men and poster campaigns that promoted the purchase of Liberty Bonds. However, the development of recruitment propaganda provides just as, if not more, valuable a gauge of public opinion toward war because such propaganda has to convince people to sacrifice not just their money but their lives.

Maggie Woods is double-majoring in history, with a European emphasis, and Latin and Greek, with a preference for Latin. She is also a member of Phi Alpha Theta and Eta Sigma Phi. When she graduates from SCU in 2014, she plans to continue her historical studies in graduate school, probably on topics in medieval English history. She thanks Professor Nancy Unger for her painstaking work with her on the paper in HIST 101.

Appendix 1

"Destroy This Mad Brute"
Appendix 2

"Tell That to the Marines"

Appendix 3

"General Pershing Says"
Appendix 2

"Tell That to the Marines"

Appendix 3

"General Pershing Says"
Significance of Wartime Propaganda

Appendix 4

"Make the World Safe"

Appendix 5

"Give the Guard a Fighting Chance"
Significance of Wartime Propaganda 103

Appendix 4

"Make the World Safe"

Appendix 5

"Give the Guard a Fighting Chance"

Historical Perspectives June 2012
Significance of Wartime Propaganda

Appendix 6

"He Did His Duty"

Appendix 7

"Here Is Your Chance"
Significance of Wartime Propaganda

Appendix 6

"He Did His Duty"

Appendiz 7

"Here Is Your Chance"
Tough on Black Asses: Segregation Ideology in the Early American Jazz Industry

Laurel Bettis

In the time it originated, in the early 1920's, jazz music was seen as "black music" because it was played almost exclusively by African-American musicians, so the racial culture of America directly impacted the struggles of the early jazz industry. When it was just beginning, the jazz industry faced challenges that related to how the highly segregated American society perceived music that had strong African and African-American influences. Jazz music originated in the sounds of black musicians in the South, but it soon spread to become a hugely popular genre in the sprawling metropolises of the North. In the 1920s, many Southern jazz musicians moved to Northern cities like Chicago and New York, hoping to enjoy the fame and affluence of the big city. Early jazz failed to find a supportive white audience in the South, in part because segregation and racism was so ingrained in the early Southern jazz industry, and many black jazz greats would probably never have been recorded if they had remained in the South. The shift to the North relocated jazz musicians to cities where racial segregation, although still prevalent, was not as severe and enduring as it was in the South. Although jazz musicians continued to face racism and segregational practices in the white areas of Chicago and New York, these cities were the first places in which black musicians were really given a chance to be respected as artists. Though the jazz industry was founded in the heart of the South, it developed into a respected genre in the Northern cities because the racial culture of the North allowed for some steps to be taken towards racial integration.

What we would call "jazz" music was introduced to America around 1917 in New Orleans, and it had an entirely new sound. Jazz music borrowed the lilting syncopation of ragtime and blues music and incorporated elements of harmony, rhythm, and improvisation that made it a completely different type of music. Because jazz was such a unique and revolutionary genre, critics rushed to dissect the "roots" of jazz music. In both modern and early jazz criticism, the jazz sound is largely attributed to the experiences of Southern plantation slaves. Although there is more literature and controversy over the racial roots of jazz in modern jazz criticism, it appears that critics of both periods recognize slave spirituals and hollers as the formative sounds of early blues music, which formed the basis for early jazz music. Many critics posit that the jazz sound traces its lineage through the experience of African-American slaves and all the way back to the musical traditions of Sub-Saharan Africa. In exploring the African roots of jazz, these critics examine the experiences of early slaves who, taken from Africa, grew to become such an important part of Southern culture in America. If we are to see early jazz music as "black music," and if we are to explore the roots of the jazz sound both in Africa and on the American plantation, it goes without saying that jazz music in America is rooted in the South.

The more intellectual and in-depth views of jazz's African heritage arise in more modern criticism and
Tough on Black Asses: Segregation Ideology in the Early American Jazz Industry

Laurel Bettis

In the time it originated, in the early 1920’s, jazz music was seen as “black music” because it was played almost exclusively by African-American musicians, so the racial culture of America directly impacted the struggles of the early jazz industry. When it was just beginning, the jazz industry faced challenges that related to how the highly segregated American society perceived music that had strong African and African-American influences. Jazz music originated in the sounds of black musicians in the South, but it soon spread to become a hugely popular genre in the sprawling metropolises of the North. In the 1920s, many Southern jazz musicians moved to Northern cities like Chicago and New York, hoping to enjoy the fame and affluence of the big city. Early jazz failed to find a supportive white audience in the South, in part because segregation and racism was so ingrained in the early Southern jazz industry, and many black jazz greats would probably never have been recorded if they had remained in the South. The shift to the North relocated jazz musicians to cities where racial segregation, although still prevalent, was not as severe and enduring as it was in the South. Although jazz musicians continued to face racism and segregational practices in the white areas of Chicago and New York, these cities were the first places in which black musicians were really given a chance to be respected as artists. Though the jazz industry was founded in the heart of the South, it developed into a respected genre in the Northern cities because the racial culture of the North allowed for some steps to be taken towards racial integration.

What we would call “jazz” music was introduced to America around 1917 in New Orleans, and it had an entirely new sound. Jazz music borrowed the lilting syncopation of ragtime and blues music and incorporated elements of harmony, rhythm, and improvisation that made it a completely different type of music. Because jazz was such a unique and revolutionary genre, critics rushed to dissect the “roots” of jazz music. In both modern and early jazz criticism, the jazz sound is largely attributed to the experiences of Southern plantation slaves. Although there is more literature and controversy over the racial roots of jazz in modern jazz criticism, it appears that critics of both periods recognize slave spirituals and hollers as the formative sounds of early blues music, which formed the basis for early jazz music. Many critics posit that the jazz sound traces its lineage through the experience of African-American slaves and all the way back to the musical traditions of Sub-Saharan Africa. In exploring the African roots of jazz, these critics examine the experiences of early slaves who, taken from Africa, grew to become such an important part of Southern culture in America. If we are to see early jazz music as “black music,” and if we are to explore the roots of the jazz sound both in Africa and on the American plantation, it goes without saying that jazz music in America is rooted in the South.

The more intellectual and in-depth views of jazz’s African heritage arise in more modern criticism and
history. Well-known and controversial historian Amiri Baraka argues that the structure and style of early blues (and, consequently, early jazz) descended directly from African call-and-response singing and shouts. He contends that even as the jazz sound evolved into a more mainstream format, it was uniquely and exclusively the music of African-Americans; as jazz developed, “The blues timbre and spirit had come to jazz virtually unchanged, even though the early Negro musicians use[d] European instruments.”

He argues that, rather than being indicative of a unified American sound, “Blues means a Negro experience, it is the one music the Negro made that could not be transferred into a more general significance than the one the Negro gave it initially” (emphasis in original).

Authors who view New Orleans as the birthplace of jazz (as many do) often note the wide variety of cultural influences in early 20th century New Orleans, and credit several cultures in the city with inspiring the unique sound of jazz. Because jazz developed in urban New Orleans, “jazz borrowed from, among other things, protestant hymns, British ballads, Spanish songs and Afro-Spanish rhythms, French quadrilles and marches, various West African rhythms, and melodic elements found in spirituals, the blues, work songs, and field hollers.

Even in the time it was first being created, jazz critics tended to attribute the core of the jazz sound to both slave spirituals and to African musical traditions.

Various articles published about early jazz in the time it was being produced (from around 1917 through the late 20s) indicate that critics in this period held a fairly unanimous view of the relationship between jazz and race. Judging by these articles, it appears that most Americans in this period viewed early jazz music as exclusively black music, and believed that both African heritage and the American slave experience played a role in the formation of the jazz sound. Some articles were supportive of the up-and-coming genre and praised the uniquely African musical genius of the slaves. One well-meaning critic was thrilled that, “The Negroes have simply used the weird African melodies as a fascinating vehicle for Biblical truths.”

A 1919 article by a white Swiss musician Ernest Ansermet attributes the jazz sound to the “racial genius” of African-Americans. He describes various technical components of jazz music and contends that they are based in instinctual methods of African self-expression.

Not all these critics, however, were as well-meaning and supportive as Ansermet.

For many early white critics, the African roots of jazz were emphasized in order to indict the genre in a very racist way. In exploring the role of African traditions in jazz music, critics commonly referred to African civilizations and music as primitive or barbaric. Some jazz historians have noted that the early jazz era coincides with the period in which the ideology of “primitivism” was popular in America. Primitivism refers to the notion that more primitive or uncivilized

---

2 Ibid., 94.
history. Well-known and controversial historian Amiri Baraka argues that the structure and style of early blues (and, consequently, early jazz) descended directly from African call-and-response singing and shouts. He contends that even as the jazz sound evolved into a more mainstream format, it was uniquely and exclusively the music of African-Americans; as jazz developed, “The blues timbre and spirit had come to jazz virtually unchanged, even though the early Negro musicians use[d] European instruments.”¹ He argues that, rather than being indicative of a unified American sound, “Blues means a Negro experience, it is the one music the Negro made that could not be transferred into a more general significance than the one the Negro gave it initially” (emphasis in original).² Authors who view New Orleans as the birthplace of jazz (as many do) often note the wide variety of cultural influences in early 20th-century New Orleans, and credit several cultures in the city with inspiring the unique sound of jazz. Because jazz developed in urban New Orleans, “jazz borrowed from, among other things, protestant hymns, British ballads, Spanish songs and Afro-Spanish rhythms, French quadrilles and marches, various West African rhythms, and melodic elements found in spirituals, the blues, work songs, and field hollers.”³

Even in the time it was first being created, jazz critics tended to attribute the core of the jazz sound to both slave spirituals and to African musical traditions.

Various articles published about early jazz in the time it was being produced (from around 1917 through the late 20s) indicate that critics in this period held a fairly unanimous view of the relationship between jazz and race. Judging by these articles, it appears that most Americans in this period viewed early jazz music as exclusively black music, and believed that both African heritage and the American slave experience played a role in the formation of the jazz sound. Some articles were supportive of the up-and-coming genre and praised the uniquely African musical genius of the slaves. One well-meaning critic was thrilled that, “The Negroes have simply used the weird African melodies as a fascinating vehicle for Biblical truths.”⁴ A 1919 article by a white Swiss musician Ernest Ansermet attributes the jazz sound to the “racial genius” of African-Americans. He describes various technical components of jazz music and contends that they are based in instinctual methods of African self-expression.⁵ Not all these critics, however, were as well-meaning and supportive as Ansermet.

For many early white critics, the African roots of jazz were emphasized in order to indict the genre in a very racist way. In exploring the role of African traditions in jazz music, critics commonly referred to African civilizations and music as primitive or barbaric. Some jazz historians have noted that the early jazz era coincides with the period in which the ideology of “primitivism” was popular in America. Primitivism refers to the notion that more primitive or uncivilized

² Ibid., 94.

people were able to express their feelings more spontaneously and refreshingly than the civilized.\textsuperscript{6} The innovative rhythms and harmonies of early jazz were viewed by some white critics as basically modernized tribal chanting, not valuable American music. A lot of the criticism in this era, then, refers to jazz music as base, cheap, and unsophisticated. The way early critics discuss jazz music clearly reflects the way these critics felt about black musicians. Criticism from the 1920s to 1930s that focuses on the African roots of jazz clearly evidences the negative racial perceptions that were rooted in the Southern plantation culture of the 1800s. From the very beginning, jazz musicians faced prejudice because jazz was “black music,” which, in the South, translated as “slave music” or “African music”. Most early jazz critics who attributed the jazz sound to African influence demeaned jazz music and dehumanized the musicians who originated it.

A 1917 article published in the \textit{New York Sun} discussed the aggressive rhythms of “contemporary savages,” meaning jazz musicians, and confidently announced that the word “jazz” came from “the old plantation days, when the slaves were having one of their rare holidays and the fun languished, some West-Coast African would cry out, ‘Jaz her up,’ and this would be the cue for fast and furious fun. No doubt the witch-doctor and medicine-men on the Kongo used the same term at those jungle ‘parties’ when the tom-toms throbbed.”\textsuperscript{7} In a 1921 issue of \textit{The Ladies’ Home Journal}, a woman complained of the evils of jazz music and its ability to make its listeners sin. In explaining the threatening nature of syncopated rhythms, she states, “Jazz originally was the accompaniment of the voodoo dancer, stimulating the half-crazed barbarian to the vilest deeds. The weird chant, accompanied by the syncopated rhythm of the voodoo invokers, has also been employed by other barbaric people to stimulate brutality and sensuality. That it has a demoralizing effect upon the human brain has been demonstrated by many scientists.”\textsuperscript{8} She goes on to claim that music-therapy scientists had discovered that syncopated rhythms can lead to atrophied brain cells, and that “those under the demoralizing influence of the persistent use of syncopation, combined with inharmonic partial tones, are actually incapable of distinguishing between good and evil, between right and wrong.”\textsuperscript{9}

Several articles published in the twenties in \textit{The Etude}, a music teacher’s magazine, reflect similar attitudes. In various articles and editorials by music teachers, jazz music is referred to as “primitive”, “barbaric”, “savage”, and “mongrel music.”\textsuperscript{10} \textit{The Etude} editors wrote and published an article that explicitly explained that the magazine did not endorse jazz music and believed that jazz music had no place in music education. The article argued that young musicians would waste their talent playing the common, cheap, and sloppy sounds of “raw jazz,” terms that thinly veil their perception that black musicians were sloppy and crude arrangers. The editors go on to

---


\textsuperscript{7} Robert Walser, \textit{Keeping time?: readings in jazz history} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 6.

\textsuperscript{8} American Council of Learned Societies, \textit{Jazz in Print (1856-1929) an Anthology of Selected Early Readings in Jazz History}, 153.

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{10} Walser, \textit{Keeping time}, 41–54.
people were able to express their feelings more spontaneously and refreshingly than the civilized. The innovative rhythms and harmonies of early jazz were viewed by some white critics as basically modernized tribal chanting, not valuable American music. A lot of the criticism in this era, then, refers to jazz music as base, cheap, and unsophisticated. The way early critics discuss jazz music clearly reflects the way these critics felt about black musicians. Criticism from the 1920s to 1930s that focuses on the African roots of jazz clearly evidences the negative racial perceptions that were rooted in the Southern plantation culture of the 1800s. From the very beginning, jazz musicians faced prejudice because jazz was “black music,” which, in the South, translated as “slave music” or “African music.” Most early jazz critics who attributed the jazz sound to African influence demeaned jazz music and dehumanized the musicians who originated it.

A 1917 article published in the *New York Sun* discussed the aggressive rhythms of “contemporary savages,” meaning jazz musicians, and confidently announced that the word “jazz” came from “the old plantation days, when the slaves were having one of their rare holidays and the fun languished, some West-Coast African would cry out, ‘Jaz her up,’ and this would be the cue for fast and furious fun. No doubt the witch-doctor and medicine-men on the Kongo used the same term at those jungle ‘parties’ when the tom-toms throbbed.” In a 1921 issue of *The Ladies’ Home Journal*, a woman complained of the evils of jazz music and its ability to make its listeners sin. In explaining the threatening nature of syncopated rhythms, she states, “Jazz originally was the accompaniment of the voodoo dancer, stimulating the half-crazed barbarian to the vilest deeds. The weird chant, accompanied by the syncopated rhythm of the voodoo invokers, has also been employed by other barbaric people to stimulate brutality and sensuality. That it has a demoralizing effect upon the human brain has been demonstrated by many scientists.” She goes on to claim that music-therapy scientists had discovered that syncopated rhythms can lead to atrophied brain cells, and that “those under the demoralizing influence of the persistent use of syncopation, combined with inharmonic partial tones, are actually incapable of distinguishing between good and evil, between right and wrong.”

Several articles published in the twenties in *The Etude*, a music teacher’s magazine, reflect similar attitudes. In various articles and editorials by music teachers, jazz music is referred to as “primitive”, “barbaric”, “savage”, and “mongrel music.” The *Etude* editors wrote and published an article that explicitly explained that the magazine did not endorse jazz music and believed that jazz music had no place in music education. The article argued that young musicians would waste their talent playing the common, cheap, and sloppy sounds of “raw jazz,” terms that thinly veil their perception that black musicians were sloppy and crude arrangers. The editors go on to

---

8 American Council of Learned Societies, *Jazz in Print (1856-1929) an Anthology of Selected Early Readings in Jazz History*, 153.
9 Ibid.
explain that not all jazz music is bad, only the barbaric nature that is present in most dance-hall jazz. They concede that jazz music is acceptable in a few forms, such as, “high-class Jazz orchestras conducted by Paul Whiteman, Isham Jones, and [Fred] Waring,” all of whom are white musicians. Another particularly pointed piece from *The Etude* was submitted by Dr. Frank Damrosh, the Director of the Institute of Musical Art, later known as Julliard, and stated:

> If jazz originated in the dance rhythms of the negro, it was at least interesting as the self-expression of a primitive race. When jazz was adopted by the “highly civilized” white race, it tended to degenerate it towards primitivity. When a savage distorts his features and paints his face so as to produce startling effects, we smile at his childishness; but when a civilized man imitates him, not as a joke but in all seriousness, we turn away in disgust.

These articles clearly demean African-American musicians by accusing them of having “savage” African roots. Indeed, it appears that black musicians in the early years of jazz were taught to be ashamed of their African roots; Art Blakey said in an interview that he was once thrown out of school for presenting a history report that portrayed Africa in a positive light.

Although early jazz critics said some very racist and negative things about African-American musicians, they were correct in attributing the sound of jazz to the experience of black Americans in the South. The originators of jazz and blues music were almost all born in the deep South. Pianist Jelly Roll Morton and saxophonist Sidney Bechet, who are often viewed as the very first musicians to play what we would call jazz, were both born in New Orleans. Many early jazz musicians had very difficult childhoods, being raised as African-American children in the harsh segregation and racism of the South. Louis Armstrong, who developed the quintessential jazz sound of the early and mid-1920s, was born in a black ghetto of New Orleans often referred to as “The Battlefield” because it was so dangerous. He was incredibly poor in his childhood years, raised by a single mother who occasionally worked as a prostitute to support the family. Bessie Smith, often called the Empress of the Blues, “lived the kind of life she sang about in her songs,” born desperately poor in Tennessee.

The South is also where the history of African-Americans in the entertainment industry begins. Before the Civil War, minstrel shows emerged as a form of entertainment in the South and typically featured white comedians in blackface who derived their comedy from racial stereotypes and performed for all-white audiences. After the war, some black entertainers managed to find a place on the stage in minstrel shows, but were “artistically constrained by white audiences, who expected them to demonstrate de-meaning racial stereotypes characteristic of antebel-

---

11 Ibid., 42.
12 Ibid., 44.
explain that not all jazz music is bad, only the barbaric nature that is present in most dance-hall jazz. They concede that jazz music is acceptable in a few forms, such as, “high-class Jazz orchestras conducted by Paul Whiteman, Isham Jones, and [Fred] Waring,”11 all of whom are white musicians. Another particularly pointed piece from The Etude was submitted by Dr. Frank Damrosh, the Director of the Institute of Musical Art, later known as Julliard, and stated:

If jazz originated in the dance rhythms of the negro, it was at least interesting as the self-expression of a primitive race. When jazz was adopted by the “highly civilized” white race, it tended to degenerate it towards primitivity. When a savage distorts his features and paints his face so as to produce startling effects, we smile at his childishness; but when a civilized man imitates him, not as a joke but in all seriousness, we turn away in disgust.12

These articles clearly demean African-American musicians by accusing them of having “savage” African roots. Indeed, it appears that black musicians in the early years of jazz were taught to be ashamed of their African roots; Art Blakey said in an interview that he was once thrown out of school for presenting a history report that portrayed Africa in a positive light.13

Although early jazz critics said some very racist and negative things about African-American musicians, they were correct in attributing the sound of jazz to the experience of black Americans in the South. The originators of jazz and blues music were almost all born in the deep South. Pianist Jelly Roll Morton and saxophonist Sidney Bechet, who are often viewed as the very first musicians to play what we would call jazz, were both born in New Orleans. Many early jazz musicians had very difficult childhoods, being raised as African-American children in the harsh segregation and racism of the South. Louis Armstrong, who developed the quintessential jazz sound of the early and mid-1920s, was born in a black ghetto of New Orleans often referred to as “The Battlefield” because it was so dangerous. He was incredibly poor in his childhood years, raised by a single mother who occasionally worked as a prostitute to support the family. Bessie Smith, often called the Empress of the Blues, “lived the kind of life she sang about in her songs,” born desperately poor in Tennessee.14

The South is also where the history of African-Americans in the entertainment industry begins. Before the Civil War, minstrel shows emerged as a form of entertainment in the South and typically featured white comedians in blackface who derived their comedy from racial stereotypes and performed for all-white audiences. After the war, some black entertainers managed to find a place on the stage in minstrel shows, but were “artistically constrained by white audiences, who expected them to demonstrate de-meaning racial stereotypes characteristic of antebel-

11 Ibid., 42.
12 Ibid., 44.
As minstrelsy continued into the 20th century, the comedy of these shows was interspersed with more dance and musical numbers from black entertainers. For this reason, elements of minstrelsy mixed with vaudeville and ragtime acts as these genres developed, and the early sounds of ragtime and blues were associated with black entertainers from the very beginning. Some of the vaudeville shows that evolved out of minstrelsy became fixtures in the “vice districts” of Southern cities. Ragtime and vaudeville shows in Southern speakeasies and dance halls commonly featured exclusively black entertainers, and as ragtime developed into early jazz music, some of the minstrel traditions in vaudeville carried over into jazz performances. In New Orleans, some of the very first jazz clubs were owned by men who also sponsored a minstrel troupe.

Some minstrel acts developed into touring vaudeville companies that toured the South performing mostly musical numbers. When jazz music developed and became popular in the dance halls of cities like New Orleans, similar touring companies quickly set up concert circuits for jazz musicians to travel and perform in. Some of the earliest gigs for jazz musicians were arranged by the Theater Owner’s Booking Agency, or T.O.B.A., a company that hired musicians for a touring vaudeville circuit throughout the South. Founded in 1920, the T.O.B.A. hired black musicians to play for all-black audiences in white-owned clubs. In this circuit, the work was very tough and the wages were terrible. This circuit “is remembered with humorous bitterness by many black performers as viciously exploitative,” and is unsurprisingly recalled as an acronym for “Tough On Black Asses.” Trumpeter Clark Terry remembered the rough conditions of road life on the circuit; being relegated to sleep in host houses instead of hotels, he said in an interview, “I’ve slept in places that were so filthy and damp I wouldn’t dare take off my shoes. I slept with my hat, overcoat, shoes, overshoes, everything just to try to make it through the night.” Even in the 1930s, when Duke Ellington first signed on and began touring through the South, he also recalls being turned away from hotels and having to sleep on the train instead.

The tours through the South continued through the 20’s and 30’s as jazz increased in popularity, and black musicians began playing for white audiences as well as black audiences. Importantly, however, touring black musicians were not allowed to perform for integrated audiences at this time. Clark Terry recalled playing in venues with “the type of segregation that would make you bitter.” In his experience, either whites would be dancing on the floor with black

---

17 Collier, Jazz, 12–19.
18 Ogren, The Jazz Revolution, 41.
lum minstrel shows. As minstrelsy continued into the 20th century, the comedy of these shows was interspersed with more dance and musical numbers from black entertainers. For this reason, elements of minstrelsy mixed with vaudeville and ragtime acts as these genres developed, and the early sounds of ragtime and blues were associated with black entertainers from the very beginning. Some of the vaudeville shows that evolved out of minstrelsy became fixtures in the “vice districts” of Southern cities. Ragtime and vaudeville shows in Southern speakeasies and dance halls commonly featured exclusively black entertainers, and as ragtime developed into early jazz music, some of the minstrel traditions in vaudeville carried over into jazz performances. In New Orleans, some of the very first jazz clubs were owned by men who also sponsored a minstrel troupe.

Some minstrel acts developed into touring vaudeville companies that toured the South performing mostly musical numbers. When jazz music developed and became popular in the dance halls of cities like New Orleans, similar touring companies quickly set up concert circuits for jazz musicians to travel and perform in. Some of the earliest gigs for jazz musicians were arranged by the Theater Owner’s Booking Agency, or T.O.B.A., a company that hired musicians for a touring vaudeville circuit throughout the South.

Founded in 1920, the T.O.B.A. hired black musicians to play for all-black audiences in white-owned clubs. In this circuit, the work was very tough and the wages were terrible. This circuit “is remembered with humorous bitterness by many black performers as viciously exploitative,” and is unsurprisingly recalled as an acronym for “Tough On Black Asses.” Trumpeter Clark Terry remembered the rough conditions of road life on the circuit; being relegated to sleep in host houses instead of hotels, he said in an interview, “I’ve slept in places that were so filthy and damp I wouldn’t dare take off my shoes. I slept with my hat, overcoat, shoes, overshoes, everything just to try to make it through the night." Even in the 1930s, when Duke Ellington first signed on and began touring through the South, he also recalls being turned away from hotels and having to sleep on the train instead.

The tours through the South continued through the 20’s and 30’s as jazz increased in popularity, and black musicians began playing for white audiences as well as black audiences. Importantly, however, touring black musicians were not allowed to perform for integrated audiences at this time. Clark Terry recalled playing in venues with “the type of segregation that would make you bitter.” In his experience, either whites would be dancing on the floor with black

17 Collier, Jazz, 12–19.
18 Ogren, The Jazz Revolution, 41.
patrons sitting up in the balcony, or occasionally there would be black patrons dancing while the white patrons watched from the balcony. With the addition of white patrons to the T.O.B.A. halls, jazz musicians sometimes faced daily threats and horrible racism from the white people they encountered on these tours. While on tour in Arkansas, Dizzy Gillespie offended a patron at a white dance when he ignored a penny the patron had thrown onto the stage. The man later waited for Dizzy to come out of the bathroom and assaulted Dizzy with a broken beer bottle, and Dizzy wound up with seven stitches on his head.\footnote{Ibid., 179.} Fats Austin and Clark Terry were nearly killed in Jacksonville, Florida when Austin bumped into an old white woman and she claimed he tried to knock her down. Both musicians were chased by a murderous mob and only escaped by hiding in a construction site for several hours and covering themselves with mud and debris.\footnote{Ibid.}

In 1927, while Bessie Smith was giving a tent concert in Concord, North Carolina, one of her band members saw six Ku Klux Klan members approaching the tent, and warned Bessie to start running. Smith, who was known for her tough attitude, ran towards the KKK instead, hollering at them to start running before she got the whole audience to chase them down. The klansmen fled.\footnote{Burns, \textit{Jazz}.}

Even into the 1940s, by which time there were several white jazz musicians and groups, integrated bands were not allowed to tour in the South. In 1941, Artie Shaw hired black trumpeter Hot Lips Page to go on tour with his band through the South. A few weeks later, he was informed that the booking agency wouldn’t allow him to travel with a black musician in his band. His agent later presented him with a compromise, saying that Page could tour with the band, but he had to be 15 feet away from any of the other white band members during all parts of the performance. Artie Shaw refused to agree to that sort of racism, and canceled his tour rather than firing Page.\footnote{Artie Shaw, “100 Years Of Jazz Clarinetist Artie Shaw,” interview by David Bianculli, May 21, 2010, National Public Radio, http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=126972706.} Shaw later hired Billie Holiday to sing with his band, making her the first black singer to perform publicly with a white band, and was met with a lot of disapproval and scandal. He was barely allowed to tour with Holiday, but was shocked at the way she was treated by some audiences. In some venues in the South, he recalls patrons asking him to “have the nigger wench since another song.”\footnote{Ibid.}

The legacy of minstrelism and blackface comedy in Southern venues had a lasting impact on jazz music. Some artists even recall that their music wasn’t accepted and couldn’t be performed for a white audience unless it incorporated aspects of Southern minstrel shows or blackface performances, even in more Northern locations. When Duke Ellington began playing vaudeville shows in Harlem in 1926, he and his band wore powder to lighten their faces when playing for white audiences.\footnote{Burns, \textit{Jazz}.}
patrons sitting up in the balcony, or occasionally there would be black patrons dancing while the white patrons watched from the balcony. With the addition of white patrons to the T.O.B.A. halls, jazz musicians sometimes faced daily threats and horrible racism from the white people they encountered on these tours. While on tour in Arkansas, Dizzy Gillespie offended a patron at a white dance when he ignored a penny the patron had thrown onto the stage. The man later waited for Dizzy to come out of the bathroom and assaulted Dizzy with a broken beer bottle, and Dizzy wound up with seven stitches on his head.\textsuperscript{25} Fats Austin and Clark Terry were nearly killed in Jacksonville, Florida when Austin bumped into an old white woman and she claimed he tried to knock her down. Both musicians were chased by a murderous mob and only escaped by hiding in a construction site for several hours and covering themselves with mud and debris.\textsuperscript{26} In 1927, while Bessie Smith was giving a tent concert in Concord, North Carolina, one of her band members saw six Ku Klux Klan members approaching the tent, and warned Bessie to start running. Smith, who was known for her tough attitude, ran towards the KKK instead, hollering at them to start running before she got the whole audience to chase them down. The klansmen fled.\textsuperscript{27}

Even into the 1940s, by which time there were several white jazz musicians and groups, integrated bands were not allowed to tour in the South. In 1941, Artie Shaw hired black trumpeter Hot Lips Page to go on tour with his band through the South. A few weeks later, he was informed that the booking agency wouldn’t allow him to travel with a black musician in his band. His agent later presented him with a compromise, saying that Page could tour with the band, but he had to be 15 feet away from any of the other white band members during all parts of the performance. Artie Shaw refused to agree to that sort of racism, and canceled his tour rather than firing Page.\textsuperscript{28} Shaw later hired Billie Holiday to sing with his band, making her the first black singer to perform publicly with a white band, and was met with a lot of disapproval and scandal. He was barely allowed to tour with Holiday, but was shocked at the way she was treated by some audiences. In some venues in the South, he recalls patrons asking him to “have the nigger wench since another song.”\textsuperscript{29}

The legacy of minstrelism and blackface comedy in Southern venues had a lasting impact on jazz music. Some artists even recall that their music wasn’t accepted and couldn’t be performed for a white audience unless it incorporated aspects of Southern minstrel shows or blackface performances, even in more Northern locations. When Duke Ellington began playing vaudeville shows in Harlem in 1926, he and his band wore powder to lighten their faces when playing for white audiences.\textsuperscript{30} Billie Holiday recalls similar experiences playing vaudeville shows on the T.O.B.A circuit in the South in her autobiography. She

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 179.
\textsuperscript{27} Burns, \textit{Jazz}.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} Burns, \textit{Jazz}.
toured with Count Basie and a variety of other vaudeville acts, including a white Rockette-style troupe of dancers. After the first couple of shows, she says, the agency received too many complaints about “all those Negro men up there on stage with those bare-legged white girls,” and they had to rework the entire show. With the revisions to the show, the white dancers opened the show in a chorus line wearing black masks and “mammy getups.” Even worse, they told Holiday that her skin was too light, and she might be mistaken for a white woman in the lighting, so she wasn’t allowed to sing with Basie’s band of black musicians unless she wore dark grease paint on her face. Holiday and Basie were both furious, but they were bound by contract, and so Holiday was forced to perform in blackface.

In 1930, Duke Ellington went to Hollywood to appear with his band in a comedy called “Check and Double Check,” featuring the popular comedy duo Amos and Andy, two white comedians who performed in blackface as bumbling, stereotyped black characters. The studio that produced the film, fearing that the bands’ two members with the lightest skin would be seen as white, also required them to darken their faces. The infamous Cotton Club in Harlem, where several musicians including Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway began their careers, played only for white audiences, although the club was owned and run by African-Americans. Once this location became a club for white patrons, the black performers had to change their acts to include more minstrel traditions. For example, most early minstrel shows were set on antebellum plantations in the South, and the plantation setting colored the creation of early jazz clubs such as the Cotton Club in New York and a few Plantation Clubs in other cities.

Thus, jazz music originated and gained popularity in Southern vice districts and touring circuits. In the late 1910s and 1920s, however, several changes occurred that encouraged Southern jazz musicians to take their acts up North. For one thing, a market for authentic blues and jazz music began to develop in New York. In 1921, the first all-black recording company was created in New York and recorded Southern artists under the label Black Swan. Southern jazz and blues legends like Ethel Waters, Trixie Smith, and Fletcher Henderson were paid to make recordings in Long Island, New York. Some jazz musicians also went to the North because that’s where their touring performances took them. Several famous New Orleans musicians, including Louis Armstrong, went North for the first time playing for dances on Fate Marable’s river boats. One of the more negative factors that influenced the regional shift of jazz was the closing of Storyville in 1917. Storyville was the most notorious vice district in 1910s New Orleans, and was home to some of the original jazz greats and some of the first jazz clubs. However, in 1917, this secretary of the Navy ordered that Storyville be shut down because of its notorious crime and prostitution rings, forcing many

---

32 Ibid., 100.
33 Ibid.
34 Burns, *Jazz.*
toured with Count Basie and a variety of other vaudeville acts, including a white Rockette-style troupe of dancers. After the first couple of shows, she says, the agency received too many complaints about “all those Negro men up there on stage with those bare-legged white girls,” and they had to rework the entire show. With the revisions to the show, the white dancers opened the show in a chorus line wearing black masks and “mammy getups.” Even worse, they told Holiday that her skin was too light, and she might be mistaken for a white woman in the lighting, so she wasn’t allowed to sing with Basie’s band of black musicians unless she wore dark grease paint on her face. Holiday and Basie were both furious, but they were bound by contract, and so Holiday was forced to perform in blackface.

In 1930, Duke Ellington went to Hollywood to appear with his band in a comedy called “Check and Double Check,” featuring the popular comedy duo Amos and Andy, two white comedians who performed in blackface as bumbling, stereotyped black characters. The studio that produced the film, fearing that the bands’ two members with the lightest skin would be seen as white, also required them to darken their faces. The infamous Cotton Club in Harlem, where several musicians including Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway began their careers, played only for white audiences, although the club was owned and run by African-Americans. Once this location became a club for white patrons, the black performers had to change their acts to include more minstrel traditions. For example, most early minstrel shows were set on antebellum plantations in the South, and the plantation setting colored the creation of early jazz clubs such as the Cotton Club in New York and a few Plantation Clubs in other cities.

Thus, jazz music originated and gained popularity in Southern vice districts and touring circuits. In the late 1910s and 1920s, however, several changes occurred that encouraged Southern jazz musicians to take their acts up North. For one thing, a market for authentic blues and jazz music began to develop in New York. In 1921, the first all-black recording company was created in New York and recorded Southern artists under the label Black Swan. Southern jazz and blues legends like Ethel Waters, Trixie Smith, and Fletcher Henderson were paid to make recordings in Long Island, New York. Some jazz musicians also went to the North because that’s where their touring performances took them. Several famous New Orleans musicians, including Louis Armstrong, went North for the first time playing for dances on Fate Marable’s river boats. One of the more negative factors that influenced the regional shift of jazz was the closing of Storyville in 1917. Storyville was the most notorious vice district in 1910s New Orleans, and was home to some of the original jazz greats and some of the first jazz clubs. However, in 1917, this secretary of the Navy ordered that Storyville be shut down because of its notorious crime and prostitution rings, forcing many

---

32 Ibid., 100.
33 Ibid.
34 Burns, *Jazz*. 
36 Ogren, *The Jazz Revolution*, 42.
38 Ibid., 75–77.
jazz musicians out of the clubs where they made a living.\textsuperscript{39} Many of the most talented jazz musicians decided to move to the North, where they had a growing audience waiting for them. In letters he wrote shortly before his death, New Orleans jazz legend Joe “King” Oliver speaks of saving up for a ticket to New York, where he knew he would be able to find good work as a musician.\textsuperscript{40} Some Storyville players were forced instead to find work in the T.O.B.A. circuit or even in the traveling minstrel shows that survived into the 1920s.\textsuperscript{41} Many musicians and performers were also swept up in the “Great Migration” of the 1920s, in which thousands of black Southerners relocated to Northern cities in the hope of finding stability and success.\textsuperscript{42} In this period, New York and Chicago became the crucial hubs in which jazz music was played and developed. Though musicians in these cities also faced some harsh racism, and very often played in segregated clubs, it was in these cities that jazz music became available to audiences of all different races, and it was in these cities that the first integrated audiences enjoyed jazz.

The story of jazz music and segregation is particularly complex and problematic in New York, where jazz music gained popularity in two very different neighborhoods, Harlem and Times Square. The midtown area surrounding Times Square and Broadway was a predominantly white neighborhood, mostly middle and upper class. In Harlem, the jazz audience consisted mostly of very poor black residents.\textsuperscript{43} However, before jazz became a music sensation in New York, the city showed itself to be much more hospitable to black musicians than the South had been. James Reese Europe founded and played in the first African-American group to ever make records in 1913.\textsuperscript{44} During World War I, Europe led the band for the all-black Fifteenth Regiment, and incorporated his syncopation and ragtime styles into their music. He was extraordinarily popular in Europe, and came back as an honored and decorated soldier: he was the first African-American officer to see combat in this war. Unlike some musicians that came after him, Europe was proud that his band played “black music,” in a 1919 article, he referred to jazz as “negro music” and even argued that black musicians should only play music in this style, saying that, “negroes should write negro music. We have our own racial feeling and if we try to copy whites we will make bad copies.”\textsuperscript{45} Upon his return, James Reese Europe and his band were given a victory parade, and he was celebrated as the pride of Harlem as well as of midtown New York. Supportive integrated crowd came to watch his band play in New York and later in other Northern venues where they went on tour. When Europe was killed by an angry coworker in 1919, people from all over New York were devastated, and New York granted him the first official funeral granted to a black citizen.\textsuperscript{46}

After Europe’s death, however, it seems that jazz music lost its popularity with white audiences in

\textsuperscript{39} Ogren, \textit{The Jazz Revolution}, 47.
\textsuperscript{40} Nat Shapiro, \textit{Hear Me Talkin’ to Ya; the Story of Jazz by the Men Who Made It} (New York: Rinehart, 1955), 185.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 67.
\textsuperscript{42} Burns, \textit{Jazz}.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} Walser, \textit{Keeping time}, 12–14.
\textsuperscript{45} Robert Walser, \textit{Keeping time?: readings in jazz history} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 12–14.
\textsuperscript{46} Burns, \textit{Jazz}.
jazz musicians out of the clubs where they made a living.\textsuperscript{39} Many of the most talented jazz musicians decided to move to the North, where they had a growing audience waiting for them. In letters he wrote shortly before his death, New Orleans jazz legend Joe “King” Oliver speaks of saving up for a ticket to New York, where he knew he would be able to find good work as a musician.\textsuperscript{40} Some Storyville players were forced instead to find work in the T.O.B.A. circuit or even in the traveling minstrel shows that survived into the 1920s.\textsuperscript{41} Many musicians and performers were also swept up in the “Great Migration” of the 1920s, in which thousands of black Southerners relocated to Northern cities in the hope of finding stability and success.\textsuperscript{42} In this period, New York and Chicago became the crucial hubs in which jazz music was played and developed. Though musicians in these cities also faced some harsh racism, and very often played in segregated clubs, it was in these cities that jazz music became available to audiences of all different races, and it was in these cities that the first integrated audiences enjoyed jazz.

The story of jazz music and segregation is particularly complex and problematic in New York, where jazz music gained popularity in two very different neighborhoods, Harlem and Times Square. The midtown area surrounding Times Square and Broadway was a predominantly white neighborhood, mostly middle and upper class. In Harlem, the jazz audience consisted mostly of very poor black residents.\textsuperscript{43} However, before jazz became a music sensation in New York, the city showed itself to be much more hospitable to black musicians than the South had been. James Reese Europe founded and played in the first African-American group to ever make records in 1913.\textsuperscript{44} During World War I, Europe led the band for the all-black Fifteenth Regiment, and incorporated his syncopation and ragtime styles into their music. He was extraordinarily popular in Europe, and came back as an honored and decorated soldier: he was the first African-American officer to see combat in this war. Unlike some musicians that came after him, Europe was proud that his band played “black music;” in a 1919 article, he referred to jazz as “negro music” and even argued that black musicians should only play music in this style, saying that, “negroes should write negro music. We have our own racial feeling and if we try to copy whites we will make bad copies.”\textsuperscript{45} Upon his return, James Reese Europe and his band were given a victory parade, and he was celebrated as the pride of Harlem as well as of midtown New York. Supportive integrated crowd came to watch his band play in New York and later in other Northern venues where they went on tour. When Europe was killed by an angry coworker in 1919, people from all over New York were devastated, and New York granted him the first official funeral granted to a black citizen.\textsuperscript{46}

After Europe’s death, however, it seems that jazz music lost its popularity with white audiences in

---

\textsuperscript{39} Ogren, \textit{The Jazz Revolution}, 47.
\textsuperscript{40} Nat Shapiro, \textit{Hear Me Talkin’ to Ya; the Story of Jazz by the Men Who Made It} (New York: Rinehart, 1955), 185.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 67.
\textsuperscript{42} Burns, \textit{Jazz}.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} Walser, \textit{Keeping time}, 12–14.
\textsuperscript{45} Robert Walser, \textit{Keeping time?: readings in jazz history} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 12–14.
\textsuperscript{46} Burns, \textit{Jazz}.
midtown New York, and the sounds of early jazz began to grow more and more popular in Harlem. When jazz music came from New Orleans to New York in the 1920s, it had been played for several years already as ragtime or vaudeville acts of urban “vice districts,” and jazz almost immediately found a place in the Prohibition-Era speakeasies of poor Harlem neighborhoods. Here, black musicians played for black audiences, and segregation did not become an issue until a modified version of this Southern music became popular with white audiences.

Because early jazz music was so rooted in Southern ragtime and blues music, it was typically played by a small combo of instruments including piano, drums, bass, and sometimes brass instruments or vocal soloists. Early jazz music was played in small ensembles and frequently incorporated improvisation into its performances. Pianists in the jazz clubs of New Orleans and other early jazz cities were defined by their ability to improvise, and clubs frequently held “cutting contests” between musicians to determine who had the most improvisational skill. As jazz gained popularity in the North, however, many white audiences were put off by the hot jam sessions and cutting contests that were typical of Southern jazz performances. In the popular ballrooms of Harlem and Times Square, there grew a high demand for jazz music that one could dance to. The dance music, which became what we would call swing music, was typically played by a larger ensemble of piano, bass, drums, and several brass instruments. The music required specific arrangements for a large ensemble and used written sheet music, unlike the early speakeasy jazz that was improvised over a set of unwritten chords. This form of jazz music became extremely popular in New York, especially with white audiences in the ritzy ballrooms of the Times Square area. In his autobiography, Duke Ellington recalls that he could play with a small combo in Harlem clubs, but always had to get an 11-piece band together for gigs at the Cotton Club, because that music was in such high demand.

Fletcher Henderson, who was one of the first black musicians to arrange jazz music for a larger ensemble, gained popularity first in the black clubs of Harlem, but soon was in demand by white audiences. He was booked to play for the Roseland, an all-white club in the Times Square area, and soon many black musicians were taking the stage in this part of town, but they were playing a different kind of jazz. Around the same time Henderson was experimenting with what would become the “Big Band” sound, a white musician named Paul Whiteman formed the first popular 12-piece white jazz band and was immediately named the “King of Jazz.” Much to the disgust of many black musicians. Whiteman frequently bought arrangements from Henderson, and between their two bands, Henderson’s style of jazz was the first jazz music that was widely accepted by white audiences, and this style diverged significantly from the sounds of New Orleans and even other Northern cities. When Louis Armstrong moved from Chicago to New York and began playing with Fletcher Henderson, he was told that his style

---

48 Samuel Barclay Charters, Jazz; a History of the New York Scene (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1962), 119.
midtown New York, and the sounds of early jazz began to grow more and more popular in Harlem. When jazz music came from New Orleans to New York in the 1920s, it had been played for several years already as ragtime or vaudeville acts of urban “vice districts,” and jazz almost immediately found a place in the Prohibition-Era speakeasies of poor Harlem neighborhoods. Here, black musicians played for black audiences, and segregation did not become an issue until a modified version of this Southern music became popular with white audiences.

Because early jazz music was so rooted in Southern ragtime and blues music, it was typically played by a small combo of instruments including piano, drums, bass, and sometimes brass instruments or vocal soloists. Early jazz music was played in small ensembles and frequently incorporated improvisation into its performances. Pianists in the jazz clubs of New Orleans and other early jazz cities were defined by their ability to improvise, and clubs frequently held “cutting contests” between musicians to determine who had the most improvisational skill. As jazz gained popularity in the North, however, many white audiences were put off by the hot jam sessions and cutting contests that were typical of Southern jazz performances. In the popular ballrooms of Harlem and Times Square, there grew a high demand for jazz music that one could dance to. The dance music, which became what we would call swing music, was typically played by a larger ensemble of piano, bass, drums, and several brass instruments. The music required specific arrangements for a large ensemble and used written sheet music, unlike the early speakeasy jazz that was improvised over a set of unwritten chords. This form of jazz music became extremely popular in New York, especially with white audiences in the ritzy ballrooms of the Times Square area. In his autobiography, Duke Ellington recalls that he could play with a small combo in Harlem clubs, but always had to get an 11-piece band together for gigs at the Cotton Club, because that music was in such high demand.

Fletcher Henderson, who was one of the first black musicians to arrange jazz music for a larger ensemble, gained popularity first in the black clubs of Harlem, but soon was in demand by white audiences. He was booked to play for the Roseland, an all-white club in the Times Square area, and soon many black musicians were taking the stage in this part of town, but they were playing a different kind of jazz. Around the same time Henderson was experimenting with what would become the “Big Band” sound, a white musician named Paul Whiteman formed the first popular 12-piece white jazz band and was immediately named the “King of Jazz,” much to the disgust of many black musicians. Whiteman frequently bought arrangements from Henderson, and between their two bands, Henderson’s style of jazz was the first jazz music that was widely accepted by white audiences, and this style diverged significantly from the sounds of New Orleans and even other Northern cities. When Louis Armstrong moved from Chicago to New York and began playing with Fletcher Henderson, he was told that his style

---

48 Samuel Barclay Charters, Jazz; a History of the New York Scene (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1962), 119.
was “too black” for the Roseland.\textsuperscript{50}

With jazz growing in popularity with both white and black audiences, the music began to flourish in segregated speakeasies. Popular black musicians began booking gigs to play in midtown clubs for white audiences. Clubs like The Roseland and The Palace became important venues for African-American musicians to perform, and they became enormously popular with upper-class white audiences. Later into the twenties, however, many white audience members became interested in what would be considered a more fundamental jazz sound. In this era, many Harlem clubs were suddenly flooded with white patrons, and although several Harlem clubs were still segregated, it was in Harlem that the first integrated audiences for jazz music formed.\textsuperscript{51}

In the early 1920s, virtually all of the jazz clubs in New York were segregated. Even some of the black clubs of Harlem changed their rules to become establishments for exclusively white patrons, while retaining the black musicians as entertainers. The Cotton Club, which became the most famous jazz speakeasy in Harlem by the mid-twenties, became a whites-only club when white listeners began flocking to Harlem, although the owners of the club were black. Even before the Cotton Club and other all-white Harlem clubs existed, some white patrons would attend “midnight rambles” in this part of town. These were performances for white audiences in a black venue (usually more underground venues in the vice districts) after the regular show for black patrons had ended,\textsuperscript{52} and often featured more lewd and racy material than the other vaudeville shows. In other clubs, however, jazz speakeasies became places where all races could come and enjoy jazz music freely. The Savoy Ballroom in downtown Harlem is noted by many to be the first integrated club in America, and here black and white patrons alike danced to Fletcher Henderson and other jazz greats. Soon, other club owners began secretly allowing black and white audience members to mingle in the previously all-black Harlem clubs. These establishments, called “black and tans,” almost always featured black musicians, but “were designed to draw substantial white patronage.”\textsuperscript{53} In these clubs, it was more common to have a mix of black and white patrons, and the respect for the musicians seemed to outweigh and neutralize most racial tension in the audience. In fact, some argue that whites frequented the black and tans specifically because they were attracted to the idea of black entertainment, and they “believed that the black roots of jazz were what gave it value.”\textsuperscript{54}

Black and tans existed as early as the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century and continued to exist for decades. In the earlier years of the black and tans, the venues usually had separate sides of the room for black and white patrons, but by the 1930’s all the patrons interacted freely and “segregation never crossed anyone’s mind.”\textsuperscript{55} In the early jazz years, lots of white listeners were attracted to the dangerous notions associated with the black subculture of jazz. Music that was played by

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{50} Burns, \textit{Jazz}.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 16–17.
\textsuperscript{53} Collier, \textit{Jazz}, 18.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 16.
\end{flushright}
was “too black” for the Roseland.\textsuperscript{50}

With jazz growing in popularity with both white and black audiences, the music began to flourish in segregated speakeasies. Popular black musicians began booking gigs to play in midtown clubs for white audiences. Clubs like The Roseland and The Palace became important venues for African-American musicians to perform, and they became enormously popular with upper-class white audiences. Later into the twenties, however, many white audience members became interested in what would be considered a more fundamental jazz sound. In this era, many Harlem clubs were suddenly flooded with white patrons, and although several Harlem clubs were still segregated, it was in Harlem that the first integrated audiences for jazz music formed.\textsuperscript{51}

In the early 1920s, virtually all of the jazz clubs in New York were segregated. Even some of the black clubs of Harlem changed their rules to become establishments for exclusively white patrons, while retaining the black musicians as entertainers. The Cotton Club, which became the most famous jazz speakeasy in Harlem by the mid-twenties, became a whites-only club when white listeners began flocking to Harlem, although the owners of the club were black. Even before the Cotton Club and other all-white Harlem clubs existed, some white patrons would attend “midnight rambles” in this part of town. These were performances for white audiences in a black venue (usually more underground venues in the vice districts) after the regular show for black patrons had ended,\textsuperscript{52} and often featured more lewd and racy material than the other vaudeville shows. In other clubs, however, jazz speakeasies became places where all races could come and enjoy jazz music freely. The Savoy Ballroom in downtown Harlem is noted by many to be the first integrated club in America, and here black and white patrons alike danced to Fletcher Henderson and other jazz greats. Soon, other club owners began secretly allowing black and white audience members to mingle in the previously all-black Harlem clubs. These establishments, called “black and tans,” almost always featured black musicians, but “were designed to draw substantial white patronage.”\textsuperscript{53} In these clubs, it was more common to have a mix of black and white patrons, and the respect for the musicians seemed to outweigh and neutralize most racial tension in the audience. In fact, some argue that whites frequented the black and tans specifically because they were attracted to the idea of black entertainment, and they “believed that the black roots of jazz were what gave it value.”\textsuperscript{54}

Black and tans existed as early as the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century and continued to exist for decades. In the earlier years of the black and tans, the venues usually had separate sides of the room for black and white patrons, but by the 1930’s all the patrons interacted freely and “segregation never crossed anyone’s mind.”\textsuperscript{55} In the early jazz years, lots of white listeners were attracted to the dangerous notions associated with the black subculture of jazz. Music that was played by

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{50} Burns, \textit{Jazz}.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 16–17.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Collier, \textit{Jazz}, 18.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 16.
\end{itemize}
black musicians was viewed as more exotic and valuable, and white audiences flocked to various types of venues to watch black bands play. However, the appreciation that white audiences had for African-American musicians cannot always be viewed as racially positive. Again, the notion of primitivism affected white Americans’ perception of jazz music. Although the idea that jazz music was more expressive and exciting eventually helped to draw an audience, rather than making people regard jazz as “savage music,” it also carried with it some very negative racial stigmas. When Duke Ellington began headlining at the Cotton Club in the mid-twenties, the white patrons of the club excitedly referred to his sound as “jungle music,” a term which plagued African-American musicians in midtown New York for decades afterwards.

Even as jazz music gained popularity in the clubs of New York, the jazz recordings of black musicians were not nearly as readily available or as popular in midtown New York. Influential jazz writer John Hammond recalls that, after he first fell in love with jazz music in London, he had a difficult time finding recordings of black jazz musicians in New York City. White-owned record stores typically wouldn’t stock the music of black musicians, and the records of those musicians were marketed only towards the “Negro audience”. In order to find recordings of Sidney Bechet, Mamie Smith, and others, Hammond had to go to record stores in the black ghettos of New York. In his time, before the Harlem craze, “there was no such thing as integration. There were very few places where the White public went, where Negro musicians could be heard,” and New York was just as segregated as the South. Hammond later became one of the most influential people in the history of jazz music because he wanted to bring the true jazz sounds of Harlem to a wider audience. He began to write about jazz music, and he importantly urged Americans to re-evaluate their perception of black jazz musicians. Hammond organized jam sessions for black musicians on local radio stations, and later convinced a British record label (for no American labels would) to record and produce records of the black musicians in Harlem. Many jazz musicians in the 1920s owed their careers to John Hammond.

New York proved to be a pretty hospitable city to black jazz musicians as the “jazz craze” of the 1920s continued. Blues legend “Big” Joe Turner fondly recalls that he was given a paying music job within his first few hours of playing piano in a New York club. Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong were huge stars in both Harlem and Times Square, and they became respected public figures through their music. In New York, they were truly respected as artists, and they enjoyed all the wealth and fame that had previously been afforded only to white musicians. It was in New York City that these musicians became hugely popular with both black and white audience, so it was in this city that these musicians made the first attempts at using jazz for a change in the racial culture of the United

---

56 Ibid., 18.
57 Burns, Jazz.
58 Walser, Keeping time, 88.
59 Ibid., 89.
60 Burns, Jazz.
61 Shapiro, Hear Me Talkin’ to Ya; the Story of Jazz by the Men Who Made It, 174.
62 Burns, Jazz.
black musicians was viewed as more exotic and valuable, and white audiences flocked to various types of venues to watch black bands play. However, the appreciation that white audiences had for African-American musicians cannot always be viewed as racially positive. Again, the notion of primitivism affected white Americans’ perception of jazz music. Although the idea that jazz music was more expressive and exciting eventually helped to draw an audience, rather than making people regard jazz as “savage music,” it also carried with it some very negative racial stigmas. When Duke Ellington began headlining at the Cotton Club in the mid-twenties, the white patrons of the club excitedly referred to his sound as “jungle music,” a term which plagued African-American musicians in midtown New York for decades afterwards.

Even as jazz music gained popularity in the clubs of New York, the jazz recordings of black musicians were not nearly as readily available or as popular in midtown New York. Influential jazz writer John Hammond recalls that, after he first fell in love with jazz music in London, he had a difficult time finding recordings of black jazz musicians in New York City. White-owned record stores typically wouldn’t stock the music of black musicians, and the records of those musicians were marketed only towards the “Negro audience”. In order to find recordings of Sidney Bechet, Mamie Smith, and others, Hammond had to go to record stores in the black ghettos of New York. In his time, before the Harlem craze, “there was no such thing as integration. There were very few places where the White public went, where Negro musicians could be heard,” and New York was just as segregated as the South. Hammond later became one of the most influential people in the history of jazz music because he wanted to bring the true jazz sounds of Harlem to a wider audience. He began to write about jazz music, and he importantly urged Americans to re-evaluate their perception of black jazz musicians. Hammond organized jam sessions for black musicians on local radio stations, and later convinced a British record label (for no American labels would) to record and produce records of the black musicians in Harlem. Many jazz musicians in the 1920s owed their careers to John Hammond.

New York proved to be a pretty hospitable city to black jazz musicians as the “jazz craze” of the 1920s continued. Blues legend “Big” Joe Turner fondly recalls that he was given a paying music job within his first few hours of playing piano in a New York club. Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong were huge stars in both Harlem and Times Square, and they became respected public figures through their music. In New York, they were truly respected as artists, and they enjoyed all the wealth and fame that had previously been afforded only to white musicians. It was in New York City that these musicians became hugely popular with both black and white audience, so it was in this city that these musicians made the first attempts at using jazz for a change in the racial culture of the United

---

56 Ibid., 18.
57 Burns, Jazz.
58 Walser, Keeping time, 88.
59 Ibid., 89.
60 Burns, Jazz.
61 Shapiro, Hear Me Talkin’ to Ya; the Story of Jazz by the Men Who Made It, 174.
62 Burns, Jazz.
States. Although not all of these early attempts were successful, it is important that some of the first calls for integration came out of the jazz industry in New York. Although jazz retained its popularity in Southern cities such as New Orleans, these Southern venues were almost never integrated, and the black artists in these areas never gained the respect from white audiences that would have allowed them to call for change.

In 1938, radical literary journal New Masses sponsored a concert at Carnegie Hall in New York City entitled “From Spirituals to Swing,” or “An Evening of American Negro Music”. This concert incorporated pieces from African tribal music up through big band and swing hits, and chronologically tracked the development of “black music” in America. The concert was played by jazz legends including Count Basie, Lester Young, Walter Page, and Earl Warren. Most importantly, the music was played by an integrated orchestra, and the program notes very clearly explained that the aim of the concert was to create a world in which the great jazz artists, black and white, would be able to play together publicly. The concert was dedicated to Bessie Smith, who had died the previous year, and the program notes discussed at length the struggles faced by black musicians and the lack of credit they received for the music they produced. Some jazz artists also attempted to put integrated bands on the Broadway stage. Dave Brubeck also wrote a musical entitled The Real Ambassadors in the late fifties that incorporated pro-integration ideals by poking fun at hypocritical racism, and suggesting that black musicians were the new face and voice of America. The show starred Louis Armstrong and Carmen McRae, and although some of the music from this work survived, Brubeck was never allowed to produce it onstage because the cast was integrated. By this time, all-black musicals had already been appearing onstage, such as Gershwin’s 1935 opera, Porgy and Bess, but an integrated cast was still considered unacceptable for Broadway.

The segregation of the jazz industry remained at a national level long after New York musicians attempted to make some changes in the practices of the industry. Artie Shaw recalls having to give up TV appearances because he had black musicians in his band. Dave Brubeck also recalls an instance in which he had to give up a TV slot to Duke Ellington because he had just hired a black bassist, and Ellington happened to have an all-black band at the time. Brubeck’s managers offered a compromise where his bassist could be heard and recorded when the band played their set, but couldn’t be seen on television. Brubeck refused to play with those restrictions, so he lost his spot. Similarly, Ellington often had to turn down gigs and television appearances when he had Louis Bellson, who was white, on the drums. With this example in mind, Brubeck claims that by this time (the late

63 Walser, Keeping time, 101–105.
65 Ibid., 86–88.
66 Artie Shaw, “100 Years Of Jazz Clarinetist Artie Shaw,” Ensticic and Rubin, Jazz spoken here, 87.
67 Ibid., 86–88.
States. Although not all of these early attempts were successful, it is important that some of the first calls for integration came out of the jazz industry in New York. Although jazz retained its popularity in Southern cities such as New Orleans, these Southern venues were almost never integrated, and the black artists in these areas never gained the respect from white audiences that would have allowed them to call for change.

In 1938, radical literary journal *New Masses* sponsored a concert at Carnegie Hall in New York City entitled “From Spirituals to Swing,” or “An Evening of American Negro Music”. This concert incorporated pieces from African tribal music up through big band and swing hits, and chronologically tracked the development of “black music” in America. The concert was played by jazz legends including Count Basie, Lester Young, Walter Page, and Earl Warren. Most importantly, the music was played by an integrated orchestra, and the program notes very clearly explained that the aim of the concert was to create a world in which the great jazz artists, black and white, would be able to play together publicly. The concert was dedicated to Bessie Smith, who had died the previous year, and the program notes discussed at length the struggles faced by black musicians and the lack of credit they received for the music they produced. Some jazz artists also attempted to put integrated bands on the Broadway stage. Dave Brubeck also wrote a musical entitled *The Real Ambassadors* in the late fifties that incorporated pro-integration ideals by poking fun at hypocritical racism, and suggesting that black musicians were the new face and voice of America. The show starred Louis Armstrong and Carmen McRae, and although some of the music from this work survived, Brubeck was never allowed to produce it onstage because the cast was integrated. By this time, all-black musicals had already been appearing onstage, such as Gershwin’s 1935 opera, *Porgy and Bess*, but an integrated cast was still considered unacceptable for Broadway.

The segregation of the jazz industry remained at a national level long after New York musicians attempted to make some changes in the practices of the industry. Artie Shaw recalls having to give up TV appearances because he had black musicians in his band. Dave Brubeck also recalls an instance in which he had to give up a TV slot to Duke Ellington because he had just hired a black bassist, and Ellington happened to have an all-black band at the time. Brubeck’s managers offered a compromise where his bassist could be heard and recorded when the band played their set, but couldn’t be seen on television. Brubeck refused to play with those restrictions, so he lost his spot. Similarly, Ellington often had to turn down gigs and television appearances when he had Louis Bellson, who was white, on the drums. With this example in mind, Brubeck claims that by this time (the late

---


65 Ibid., 86–88.

66 Artie Shaw, “100 Years Of Jazz Clarinetist Artie Shaw.”

67 Ensticte and Rubin, *Jazz spoken here*, 87.

fifties), people didn’t have too much of a problem with black musicians but integration remained a poignant issue.69

In time, jazz music gained popularity with the audiences of New York, and the African-American jazz musicians grew to be respected nationwide for the music they produced. Popular jazz musicians like Louis Armstrong in New York were able to make and sell recordings that gave them a national following.70 As the radio became more and more important to the musical culture of America, the Cotton Club began broadcasting live recordings of the in-house jazz band on certain nights of the week. Duke Ellington recalls in his autobiography that it was because of the Cotton Club’s broadcasts that he gained a national and international fan base.71 As their music reached a national audience, jazz artists gained enough respect and popularity to push for integration on a national level. Even as early as the thirties, some musicians were attempting to portray African-Americans in a more positive light through cinema and theater. Duke Ellington was one of the leading African-American musicians to push for equality in this period, and he produced several works that were intended to support and empower African-Americans. In 1934, he worked on a short film for Paramount entitled Symphony in Black that avoided the “stereotypical, racist depictions of African-Americans which mar most early jazz films.”72 In 1941 he wrote Jump for Joy, a musical which Ellington stated was an “attempt to correct the race situation in the U.S.A. through a form of musical propaganda.”73 Ellington’s most deliberate and intensive piece that addressed the race in American society premiered in 1943, a 3-part symphonic piece entitled Black, Brown, and Beige. This work traced the African-American musical history all the way from indigenous African drumming up through modern Harlem jazz.74 Although this work wasn’t brought back to the stage until 1977, Ellington importantly drew attention to the black experience in America and how African-Americans had come to express their experiences through music.

Although not all of the attempts to change the racial perceptions of white audiences in America were successful at the time, the fact that jazz music remained extraordinarily popular even into the 1950s evidences the changing racial culture that came with jazz music. Segregation was an extremely prevalent influence in the practices of the early jazz industry of the deep South. As this music grew in popularity in the Northern cities, however, and as jazz musicians became truly respected as artists, the industry created places where integrated audiences could hear this “black music”. Over time, jazz music even became a deliberate mechanism of social change in breaking down segregational ideology and racial prejudice. Because jazz moved to and mutated in the North, the musicians were granted more opportunities and more fame with white audiences than they ever could have gained in the South, and the opportunities in the

69 Enstice and Rubin, Jazz spoken here, 87.
70 Ogren, The Jazz Revolution, 54.
71 Ellington, Music Is My Mistress, 77.
fifties), people didn’t have too much of a problem with black musicians but integration remained a poignant issue.\(^{69}\)

In time, jazz music gained popularity with the audiences of New York, and the African-American jazz musicians grew to be respected nationwide for the music they produced. Popular jazz musicians like Louis Armstrong in New York were able to make and sell recordings that gave them a national following.\(^{70}\) As the radio became more and more important to the musical culture of America, the Cotton Club began broadcasting live recordings of the in-house jazz band on certain nights of the week. Duke Ellington recalls in his autobiography that it was because of the Cotton Club’s broadcasts that he gained a national and international fan base.\(^{71}\) As their music reached a national audience, jazz artists gained enough respect and popularity to push for integration on a national level. Even as early as the thirties, some musicians were attempting to portray African-Americans in a more positive light through cinema and theater. Duke Ellington was one of the leading African-American musicians to push for equality in this period, and he produced several works that were intended to support and empower African-Americans. In 1934, he worked on a short film for Paramount entitled *Symphony in Black* that avoided the “stereotypical, racist depictions of African-Americans which mar most early jazz films.”\(^{72}\) In 1941 he wrote *Jump for Joy*, a musical which Ellington stated was an “attempt to correct the race situation in the U.S.A. through a form of musical propaganda.”\(^{73}\) Ellington’s most deliberate and intensive piece that addressed the race in American society premiered in 1943, a 3-part symphonic piece entitled *Black, Brown, and Beige*. This work traced the African-American musical history all the way from indigenous African drumming up through modern Harlem jazz.\(^{74}\) Although this work wasn’t brought back to the stage until 1977, Ellington importantly drew attention to the black experience in America and how African-Americans had come to express their experiences through music.

Although not all of the attempts to change the racial perceptions of white audiences in America were successful at the time, the fact that jazz music remained extraordinarily popular even into the 1950s evidences the changing racial culture that came with jazz music. Segregation was an extremely prevalent influence in the practices of the early jazz industry of the deep South. As this music grew in popularity in the Northern cities, however, and as jazz musicians became truly respected as artists, the industry created places where integrated audiences could hear this “black music”. Over time, jazz music even became a deliberate mechanism of social change in breaking down segregational ideology and racial prejudice. Because jazz moved to and mutated in the North, the musicians were granted more opportunities and more fame with white audiences than they ever could have gained in the South, and the opportunities in the

\(^{69}\) Enstice and Rubin, *Jazz spoken here*, 87.

\(^{70}\) Ogren, *The Jazz Revolution*, 54.


North eventually made black jazz musicians respected and influential nationwide.

Laurel Bettis is a sophomore at Santa Clara University and plans to major in History (European History emphasis) and Theatre Arts (emphasis in theatre), with minors in Women’s and Gender studies and possibly music. She is not a member of Phi Alpha Theta but hopes to be in the future, and plans to pursue a graduate degree in History after college with the eventual goal of teaching at the university level. In addition to academic interests in History, Literature, and Women’s and Gender Studies, she actively participates in the SCU Theatre department, Acappella Club, Choir, and Orchestra. She is excited to round out her perspectives on European History as a study abroad student in Florence, Italy next fall.

The image above is one of many that were widely used to portray Benito Mussolini as the embodiment of Latin athleticism. He symbolized the ‘new Italian’ that all men should aspire to emulate, and through his use of incessant propaganda, created the myth of this ‘new man’ who was heir to the glorious ancient Roman culture, spirit, and empire.¹ The rhetoric surrounding the ‘new man’ inextricably linked the strength of the Italian nation and athletic prowess, which Mussolini capitalized on more so than any other leader before him. The power displayed through the promotion of the Duce as the ultimate sportsman is apparent through the writing of Fillippo Marinetti, poet and founder of the Futurist movement, who says, “physically he is built in the Italian way, outlined by inspired

North eventually made black jazz musicians respected and influential nationwide.

Laurel Bettis is a sophomore at Santa Clara University and plans to major in History (European History emphasis) and Theatre Arts (emphasis in theatre), with minors in Women’s and Gender studies and possibly music. She is not a member of Phi Alpha Theta but hopes to be in the future, and plans to pursue a graduate degree in History after college with the eventual goal of teaching at the university level. In addition to academic interests in History, Literature, and Women’s and Gender Studies, she actively participates in the SCU Theatre department, Acappella Club, Choir, and Orchestra. She is excited to round out her perspectives on European History as a study abroad student in Florence, Italy next fall.

Virile, Yet Feminine: Sport, Gender, and Representation in Fascist Italy

Andrea Dlugos

The image above is one of many that were widely used to portray Benito Mussolini as the embodiment of Latin athleticism. He symbolized the ‘new Italian’ that all men should aspire to emulate, and through his use of incessant propaganda, created the myth of this ‘new man’ who was heir to the glorious ancient Roman culture, spirit, and empire.¹ The rhetoric surrounding the ‘new man’ inextricably linked the strength of the Italian nation and athletic prowess, which Mussolini capitalized on more so than any other leader before him. The power displayed through the promotion of the Duce as the ultimate sportsman is apparent through the writing of Filippo Marinetti, poet and founder of the Futurist movement, who says, “physically he is built in the Italian way, outlined by inspired

and brutal hands, forged and engraved according to the model of the masterly rock of our peninsula." He then continues, “His imposing, square jaw and prominent disdainful lips...spit boldness and aggression onto everything.”

This type of admiration would not have existed without Mussolini’s self-promotion of his athletic ability and the characteristics of the myth of the ‘new Italian’, since he was not pre-eminently a man of sport or very handsome. However, many men, who believed he embodied the model of “virile beauty” and wanted to “imitate his physical appearance and lifestyle,” admired him.

The image of Mussolini as the ultimate sportsman contrasted that of the *donna madre*, who was the embodiment of the ideal mother figure and was national, rural, and robust. She was responsible for the ‘fascistization’ of the family, as well as raising her children to be good soldiers who would sacrifice their lives for the rest of the nation.

This woman is also called the ‘new woman,’ who, in reality, represented a shift back to traditional ideals about women. The types of ideals that often characterized the ‘new women’ of other countries were instead negatively reflected in the *donna crisi*, the crisis woman, who was skinny, urbane, hysterical, decadent, and sterile. Her caricature was designed to symbolize the dangerous effects of modernization and the sense of independence it instilled in Italy’s female population.

There is a third image, however, which fits into neither of these categories: the image of the female athlete. These images portray women as youthful, beautiful, graceful, and strong. While they were not the female equivalent to depictions of Mussolini, they were considered “virile, yet feminine.” This portrayal of femininity and women’s involvement in athletics is an aspect of Fascism that allows for an examination of gender roles in Mussolini’s Italy. The debates that surround women’s participation in sport shows that defining these roles was a fluid process that changed not only during the Fascist era, but continues to resonate in Italy and the rest of the world today.

The position of women in Fascist Italy was one of great significance, one that has become the subject of

---

2 Ibid., 25.
3 Ibid., 23.
Virile, Yet Feminine

and brutal hands, forged and engraved according to
the model of the masterly rock of our peninsula.” He
then continues, “His imposing, square jaw and promi-
inent disdainful lips...spit boldness and aggression
onto everything.”2 This type of admiration would not
have existed without Mussolini’s self-promotion of his
athletic ability and the characteristics of the myth of
the ‘new Italian’, since he was not pre-eminently a man
of sport or very handsome. However, many men, who
believed he embodied the model of “virile beauty” and
wanted to “imitate his physical appearance and life-
style,” admired him.3

The image of Mussolini as the ultimate sportsman
contrasted that of the donna madre, who was the
embodiment of the ideal mother figure and was na-
tional, rural, and robust. She was responsible for the
‘fascistization’ of the family, as well as raising her
children to be good soldiers who would sacrifice their
lives for the rest of the nation.4 This woman is also
called the ‘new woman,’ who, in reality, represented a
shift back to traditional ideals about women. The types
of ideals that often characterized the ‘new women’ of
other countries were instead negatively reflected in the
donna crisi, the crisis woman, who was skinny, ur-
bane, hysterical, decadent, and sterile.5 Her caricature
was designed to symbolize the dangerous effects of

2 Ibid., 25.
3 Ibid., 23.
4 Efharis Mascha, “Contradiction and the Role of the
‘Floating Signifier’: Identity and the ‘New Woman’ in Italian
Cartoons during Fascism,” Journal of International Women’s
5 Victoria De Grazia, How Fascism Ruled Women, (Berkeley:
University of California Press, 1992), 73.

modernization and the sense of independence it
instilled in Italy’s female population.

There is a third image, however, which fits into
neither of these categories: the image of the female
athlete. These images portray women as youthful,
beautiful, graceful, and strong. While they were not the
female equivalent to depictions of Mussolini, they were
considered “virile, yet feminine.”6 This portrayal of
femininity and women’s involvement in athletics is an
aspect of Fascism that allows for an examination of
gender roles in Mussolini’s Italy. The debates that
surround women’s participation in sport shows that
defining these roles was a fluid process that changed
not only during the Fascist era, but continues to
resonate in Italy and the rest of the world today.

The position of women in Fascist Italy was one of
great significance, one that has become the subject of

6 Sarah Morgan, “Mussolini’s Boys (and Girls): Gender and
Sport in Fascist Italy,” History Australia 3 (2006), 4.3.
much historical scholarship over the past two decades. Earlier work on Fascism rarely dealt with the social and gendered dimensions of the regime and simply sought to understand the political implications of the ideology. These older books do provide a great overview of Italian Fascism as a whole, Edward Tannenbaum’s *The Fascist Experience* being most valuable. Another area that strongly influenced Fascist ideology and is crucial to gaining a thorough understanding of it is aesthetics. Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi’s *Fascist Spectacle* and George Mosse’s article “Fascist Aesthetics and Society: Some Considerations,” deal with the aesthetics of power in Mussolini’s Italy and argue that the search for symbols and forms to represent Fascism’s political novelty actually created its own power.

---


9 De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*; Robin Pickering-Iazzi, *Mothers of Invention: Women, Fascism, and Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); for more about women and Fascism, see: Kevin Passamore, *Women,
much historical scholarship over the past two decades. Earlier work on Fascism rarely dealt with the social and gendered dimensions of the regime and simply sought to understand the political implications of the ideology. These older books do provide a great overview of Italian Fascism as a whole, Edward Tannenbaum’s *The Fascist Experience* being most valuable.\(^7\) Another area that strongly influenced Fascist ideology and is crucial to gaining a thorough understanding of it is aesthetics. Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi’s *Fascist Spectacle* and George Mosse’s article “Fascist Aesthetics and Society: Some Considerations,” deal with the aesthetics of power in Mussolini’s Italy and argue that the search for symbols and forms to represent Fascism’s political novelty actually created its own power.\(^8\)


George Mosse also wrote *The Image of Man*, which deconstructs the idea of Western masculinity and how it came to represent, among other things, physical beauty (exemplified through sport), courage, moral restraint, and a strong will. Understanding the aesthetic construction of this masculinity, which gained an even greater emphasis under Fascism, is necessary to fully analyze the evolution of Fascist femininity. The power behind aesthetics plays a crucial role in understanding the policies dealing with gender roles and the role of women in Italian society.

The most comprehensive work investigating Fascism’s control over gender roles is Victoria De Grazia’s *How Fascism Ruled Women*, which discusses how the Fascist regime defined the place of women and how they experienced Mussolini’s rule. The underlying theme of this work is the conflict between ideas of modernity and traditional patriarchal authority in regard to women’s role in society. The experience of women under Fascism is, according to De Grazia, marked by ambiguity and ambivalence.\(^9\) This premise...
resurfaces in nearly every work examining women and ideals of femininity in Fascist Italy. Another book contributing to the dialogue of Italian Fascism and gender is Robin Pickering-Iazzi’s compilation of essays in Mothers of Invention: Women, Italian Fascism, and Culture. As the title suggests, this work specifically deals with the regime’s enforcement of the idea of women as mothers and how this image was both reinforced and challenged throughout the Fascist era. Pickering-Iazzi seeks to provide a different approach to the debate about Fascism and culture through the essays included, which offer a contrasting view to the black and white categorization of women as either the donna madre or donna crisi. This approach follows the same tenet of ambiguity that De Grazia highlights in both Fascist ideals about women and their experience of the regime. However, the topic of women’s involvement in sports is only briefly touched upon in either of these works.

Gigliola Gori addresses this issue much more thoroughly in Italian Fascism and the Female Body: Sport, Submissive Women, and Strong Mothers. Through examining the cultural context of the pre-Fascist period as well as during the Fascist era, she argues that women’s participation in sports during the Fascist period supported a certain level of gender emancipation that is often overlooked in light of the regime’s overwhelming suppression of women’s equal-

---


---

resurfaces in nearly every work examining women and ideals of femininity in Fascist Italy. Another book contributing to the dialogue of Italian Fascism and gender is Robin Pickering-Iazzi’s compilation of essays in *Mothers of Invention: Women, Italian Fascism, and Culture*. As the title suggests, this work specifically deals with the regime’s enforcement of the idea of women as mothers and how this image was both reinforced and challenged throughout the Fascist era. Pickering-Iazzi seeks to provide a different approach to the debate about Fascism and culture through the essays included, which offer a contrasting view to the black and white categorization of women as either the *donna madre* or *donna crisi*. This approach follows the same tenet of ambiguity that De Grazia highlights in both Fascist ideals about women and their experience of the regime. However, the topic of women’s involvement in sports is only briefly touched upon in either of these works.

Gigliola Gori addresses this issue much more thoroughly in *Italian Fascism and the Female Body: Sport, Submissive Women, and Strong Mothers*. Through examining the cultural context of the pre-Fascist period as well as during the Fascist era, she argues that women’s participation in sports during the Fascist period supported a certain level of gender emancipation that is often overlooked in light of the regime’s overwhelming suppression of women’s equal-
In order to fully appreciate the role that women’s involvement in sports had on shaping gender roles, an examination of the philosophies that contributed to Fascist ideology is necessary. As both the leader and founder of the Fascist movement, Mussolini integrated numerous aspects from the dominant ideologies present in Italy at the time into *la dottrina del fascismo*, specifically Futurism and Aesthetics. When combined with other doctrines coursing through the European psyche at the time, such as nationalism and imperialism, visual culture became inextricably linked to the ideological makeup of Fascism. Fascist ideology has its roots in the Futurist movement, which promoted “values such as exaltation of speed and action, championing of violence and conflict, emphasizing youth, rebelling against the past and disgust with Italian cultural stagnation, championing of the industrial age, and the espousal of fervent Italian nationalism and imperialism.” Once Fascism turned to the right in 1920, the support of Marinetti and the Futurists for Fascism dwindled, and a final break between the two that same year led to Futurism becoming a literary and artistic movement while Fascism embraced totalitarian politics. However, many Futurist themes had by this time become ingrained in Fascist ideology, including the cult of anti-intellectualism, antagonism, virility, youth, speed and sport, and an innovative use of language in political propaganda. Futurism had been gathering force among the petty bourgeoisie since its creation in 1909, but it was not until the end of World War I and Italy’s sense of frustration and disappointment with its aftermath that these ideas gained political momentum when they were paired with the newly created Fascist Party. The consciousness of the Italian intelligentsia at the time was focused on the notion that Italy was unable to compete with the European superpowers because it was stuck in the past; that “modernity remained just out of reach, forever beyond Italy’s borders, and Italians could only ‘look on and sigh with jealousy, from outside, with badly concealed rancor, like the poorest children who press their little red noses against holiday windows.” In order to break this cycle and regain the former glory of the Roman Empire that many Italians, especially Mussolini, dreamed of, dramatic change had to be made. War, they concluded, was the mechanism through which this transformation would be accomplished, preferably through the establishment of aggressive colonial policies. War was seen as a necessary condition for the spiritual rebirth of the Italian people, and the rhetoric surrounding the new Italian nationalism centered on this Futurist idea of revolutionary modernization and completely breaking with the past and tradition. In order to achieve this goal, the Italian people would

12 Gori, *Italian Fascism and the Female Body*, 12.
14 This focus on ancient Rome is directly contradictory to Futurist ideology, which emphasized a strict break with the past. Furthermore, it shows some of the inherent ambiguity that Fascism was built on.
15 Jensen, “Futurism and Fascism.”
In order to fully appreciate the role that women’s involvement in sports had on shaping gender roles, an examination of the philosophies that contributed to Fascist ideology is necessary. As both the leader and founder of the Fascist movement, Mussolini integrated numerous aspects from the dominant ideologies present in Italy at the time into *la dottrina del fascismo*, specifically Futurism and Aesthetics. When combined with other doctrines coursing through the European psyche at the time, such as nationalism and imperialism, visual culture became inextricably linked to the ideological makeup of Fascism. Fascist ideology has its roots in the Futurist movement, which promoted “values such as exaltation of speed and action, championing of violence and conflict, emphasizing youth, rebelling against the past and disgust with Italian cultural stagnation, championing of the industrial age, and the espousal of fervent Italian nationalism and imperialism.”¹¹ Once Fascism turned to the right in 1920, the support of Marinetti and the Futurists for Fascism dwindled, and a final break between the two that same year led to Futurism becoming a literary and artistic movement while Fascism embraced totalitarian politics. However, many Futurist themes had by this time become ingrained in Fascist ideology, including the cult of anti-intellectualism, antagonism, virility, youth, speed and sport, and an innovative use of language in political propaganda.¹²

Futurism had been gathering force among the petty bourgeoisie since its creation in 1909, but it was not until the end of World War I and Italy’s sense of frustration and disappointment with its aftermath that these ideas gained political momentum when they were paired with the newly created Fascist Party. The consciousness of the Italian intelligentsia at the time was focused on the notion that Italy was unable to compete with the European superpowers because it was stuck in the past; that “modernity remained just out of reach, forever beyond Italy’s borders, and Italians could only look on and sigh with jealousy, from outside, with badly concealed rancor, like the poorest children who press their little red noses against holiday windows.”¹³ In order to break this cycle and regain the former glory of the Roman Empire that many Italians, especially Mussolini, dreamed of, dramatic change had to be made.¹⁴ War, they concluded, was the mechanism through which this transformation would be accomplished, preferably through the establishment of aggressive colonial policies. War was seen as a necessary condition for the spiritual rebirth of the Italian people, and the rhetoric surrounding the new Italian nationalism centered on this Futurist idea of revolutionary modernization and completely breaking with the past and tradition.¹⁵

---


¹² Gori, *Italian Fascism and the Female Body*, 12.


¹⁴ This focus on ancient Rome is directly contradictory to Futurist ideology, which emphasized a strict break with the past. Furthermore, it shows some of the inherent ambiguity that Fascism was built on.

¹⁵ Jensen, “Futurism and Fascism.”
have to be transformed as well.

The emphasis placed on creating a new kind of Italian, more specifically the “new man” but also the “new woman,” puts aesthetics at the core of understanding Fascist ideology and policies. Aesthetics is a philosophy normally attributed to art and understanding beauty, but its application to the visual culture created by Fascism highlights important features about its principles. Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, author of Fascist Spectacle, writes that “at the heart of totalitarian politics lies the idea of creation” while showing how Mussolini fulfilled the model of the “God-like artist-creator” through his desire to shape the masses into his idea of the ideal Italian man and woman. She further argues that this goal of creating a “new society on fresh ground and free of limits from laws, tradition, or ethical values” was contingent upon depersonalization and de-individualization; people were simply something that could be shaped without protest as if there was no sensory involvement. Mussolini was therefore not only the political leader of the Fascist regime, but was the physical embodiment of the ideology “isolated like a god on Mount Olympus,” responsible for transforming Italians into “a new aesthetic model incarnated by Mussolini.” This creation of a new people was not restricted to the borders of Italy; it also was directed towards colonial policy, where “the colonies would further projects of bonifica umana (human reclamation) by producing a ‘new type of human being,’ disciplined and full of national feeling.” Colonial policy was aggressive, and this “human reclamation” was to be a laboratory for testing strategies of repression and governance.

George Mosse highlights an additional element to the understanding of Fascist aesthetics in stating, “the aesthetic of Fascism should be put into the framework of Fascism as a civic religion, as a non-traditional faith which used liturgy and symbols to make its belief come alive.” The ultimate symbol and idol of this new religion was Mussolini himself, whose image became one that symbolized everything the new Italian man should aspire to, as he “encompassed the values that were already being exploited by the Futurists.” This “cult of the Duce” evolved into a cult of physical beauty, which not only associated the “good with the true and the holy,” but also with the modernity, progress, and strength of the Italian nation. The exaltation of this new Italian race and the images illustrating it were integral in developing the new sense of nationalism that venerated war and the creation of a new Italian empire. As these desires grew and the main purpose of the nation became defined by an armed and aggressive model, the aesthetics of Fascism took on a more militarized image, which amplified the role of sporting events and physical training.

The centrality of sport and the body to Fascist ideology and politics is thus apparent, as the image of the Latin athlete epitomizes the ideals Fascism endorsed. Because the regime wished to uphold the

16 Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, Fascist Spectacle, 13.
17 Ibid.
18 Gori, Italian Fascism and the Female Body, 17-18.
have to be transformed as well.

The emphasis placed on creating a new kind of Italian, more specifically the “new man” but also the “new woman,” puts aesthetics at the core of understanding Fascist ideology and policies. Aesthetics is a philosophy normally attributed to art and understanding beauty, but its application to the visual culture created by Fascism highlights important features about its principles. Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, author of *Fascist Spectacle*, writes that “at the heart of totalitarian politics lies the idea of creation” while showing how Mussolini fulfilled the model of the “God-like artist-creator” through his desire to shape the masses into his idea of the ideal Italian man and woman.\(^{16}\) She further argues that this goal of creating a “new society on fresh ground and free of limits from laws, tradition, or ethical values” was contingent upon depersonalization and de-individualization; people were simply something that could be shaped without protest as if there was no sensory involvement.\(^{17}\) Mussolini was therefore not only the political leader of the Fascist regime, but was the physical embodiment of the ideology “isolated like a god on Mount Olympus,” responsible for transforming Italians into “a new aesthetic model incarnated by Mussolini.”\(^{18}\) This creation of a new people was not restricted to the borders of Italy; it also was directed towards colonial policy, where “the colonies would further projects of *bonifica umana* (human reclamation) by producing a ‘new type of human being,’ disciplined and full of national feeling.”\(^ {19}\) Colonial policy was aggressive, and this “human reclamation” was to be a laboratory for testing strategies of repression and governance.

George Mosse highlights an additional element to the understanding of Fascist aesthetics in stating, “the aesthetic of Fascism should be put into the framework of Fascism as a civic religion, as a non-traditional faith which used liturgy and symbols to make its belief come alive.”\(^ {20}\) The ultimate symbol and idol of this new religion was Mussolini himself, whose image became one that symbolized everything the new Italian man should aspire to, as he “encompassed the values that were already being exploited by the Futurists.”\(^ {21}\) This “cult of the *Duce*” evolved into a cult of physical beauty, which not only associated the “good with the true and the holy,”\(^ {22}\) but also with the modernity, progress, and strength of the Italian nation. The exaltation of this new Italian race and the images illustrating it were integral in developing the new sense of nationalism that venerated war and the creation of a new Italian empire. As these desires grew and the main purpose of the nation became defined by an armed and aggressive model, the aesthetics of Fascism took on a more militarized image, which amplified the role of sporting events and physical training.\(^ {23}\)

The centrality of sport and the body to Fascist ideology and politics is thus apparent, as the image of the Latin athlete epitomizes the ideals Fascism endorsed. Because the regime wished to uphold the

---

17 Ibid.
19 Ben-Ghiat, “Modernity is Just Over There,” 382.
21 Gori, *Italian Fascism and the Female Body*, 16.
22 Mosse,” Fascist Aesthetics and Society,” 246.
image of Italy as the “sporting nation par excellence,” it was necessary for sport to have a high level of visibility. Fascist Italy was the first European state to use sport for the purpose of political propaganda. Participation in sports therefore became the tool through which Italians would be physically transformed into the image desired by Mussolini. Physical training was not only a means of staying healthy, but of projecting an image of “virility” that became a defining characteristic of the new Italian. Images produced by the regime focused on the beauty of sturdy Fascist men, “eternally young and powerful,” as compared to the ugliness of non-Fascist men.

This focus on virility and the desire to transform Italy into a sporting nation propelled the development of sporting facilities and the increased involvement of students in physical education at school. In 1928 there were only 502 facilities and 180,000 students participating in physical education, but by 1935 these numbers had grown to 5,198 and 470,000 respectively. This revival of sports enthusiasm and the depiction of virility and strength as the most defining characteristics of the “new man” stemmed from the overall crisis of masculinity that plagued Europe after World War I. The perceived threat of weakness was a result of the mass amount of casualties combined with the beginning of converging gender roles and changing social and economic structures created a “deep unease about the nature of masculine identity.” Sport and physical prowess became a tool to reaffirm men’s place in society as the heroes and protectors of the nation, as well as displaying the superiority of the Italian “race” over other nationalities.

The crisis of masculinity resulted in the creation of the new Italian woman. While the model for masculine ideals paralleled the Futurist desire for a clear break with the past, the model of the ideal Fascist woman was much more ambiguous. The prevailing model of the donna madre sought to combine ideas of modernity with those of tradition, religion, and stability, and was inherently problematic and contradictory. A trend toward female emancipation had been developing since the beginning of the twentieth century, and as was typical of all countries mobilized for war, Italian

24 Ibid., 147.
25 Morgan, “Mussolini’s Boys (And Girls), 4.2.
26 Ibid., 18.
27 Ibid., 21.
29 Gori, Italian Fascism and the Female Body, 54.
image of Italy as the “sporting nation par excellence,” it was necessary for sport to have a high level of visibility. Fascist Italy was the first European state to use sport for the purpose of political propaganda. Participation in sports therefore became the tool through which Italians would be physically transformed into the image desired by Mussolini. Physical training was not only a means of staying healthy, but of projecting an image of “virility” that became a defining characteristic of the new Italian. Images produced by the regime focused on the beauty of sturdy Fascist men, “eternally young and powerful,” as compared to the ugliness of non-Fascist men.

This focus on virility and the desire to transform Italy into a sporting nation propelled the development of sporting facilities and the increased involvement of students in physical education at school. In 1928 there were only 502 facilities and 180,000 students participating in physical education, but by 1935 these numbers had grown to 5,198 and 470,000 respectively. This revival of sports enthusiasm and the depiction of virility and strength as the most defining characteristics of the “new man” stemmed from the overall crisis of masculinity that plagued Europe after World War I. The perceived threat of weakness was a result of the mass amount of casualties combined with the beginning of converging gender roles and changing social and economic structures created a “deep unease about the nature of masculine identity.”

Sport and physical prowess became a tool to reaffirm men’s place in society as the heroes and protectors of the nation, as well as displaying the superiority of the Italian “race” over other nationalities.

The crisis of masculinity resulted in the creation of the new Italian woman. While the model for masculine ideals paralleled the Futurist desire for a clear break with the past, the model of the ideal Fascist woman was much more ambiguous. The prevailing model of the donna madre sought to combine ideas of modernity with those of tradition, religion, and stability, and was inherently problematic and contradictory. A trend toward female emancipation had been developing since the beginning of the twentieth century, and as was typical of all countries mobilized for war, Italian

---

24 Ibid., 147.
25 Morgan, “Mussolini’s Boys (And Girls), 4.2.
26 Ibid., 18.
27 Ibid., 21.
29 Gori, Italian Fascism and the Female Body, 54.
women had gained many new freedoms during World War I. The innovative rhetoric of Mussolini during the early years of Fascism seemed to promote this trend, even suggesting women’s suffrage, but once the regime was on solid ground, “the question of female emancipation was set aside in favor of manly hegemony based on traditional paternalism.”

In order to harmonize this return to traditional values with Fascist modernism, domestic duties were painted as a way to take part in building the new Fascist state by bearing as many children as possible. In a speech given in 1932, Mussolini stated, “woman must obey….My idea of her role in the state is in opposition to all feminism. Naturally she shouldn’t be a slave, but if I conceded her the vote, I’d be laughed at. In our state, she must not count.”

Increasing the birthrate became a primary focus for the regime, which set the tone for policies regarding women; restrictions were placed on female employment, families with six or more children were given financial assistance, and abortion was outlawed as a “crime against the human race.” The Fascist regime had established the Opera Nazionale per la Maternita ed Infanzia (National Agency for Maternity and Infancy--ONMI) in 1925, which became an increasingly important institution in dictating policies aimed at promoting motherhood and aiding mothers in raising healthy children whose morality fit that of the Fascist regime’s.

The propaganda produced by ONMI, including the image below, created a “myth of maternity” about Italian women, yet in reality these efforts were largely ineffective. The birthrate fell from 29.9 per one thousand people in 1921-25 to 24 per one thousand people in 1931-35.

Despite the regime’s largely oppressive policies directed towards women, sport also played a central role in creating the image of the ‘new woman,’ raising numerous issues regarding contradictory gender roles. Women’s participation in sport had been present in Italian society since the late 1800’s, but became the subject of criticism from both the Catholic Church and the Fascist regime in the second half of the 1920’s; sportswomen were, for the most part, considered...
women had gained many new freedoms during World War I. The innovative rhetoric of Mussolini during the early years of Fascism seemed to promote this trend, even suggesting women’s suffrage, but once the regime was on solid ground, “the question of female emancipation was set aside in favor of manly hegemony based on traditional paternalism.” In order to harmonize this return to traditional values with Fascist modernism, domestic duties were painted as a way to take part in building the new Fascist state by bearing as many children as possible. In a speech given in 1932, Mussolini stated, “woman must obey….My idea of her role in the state is in opposition to all feminism. Naturally she shouldn’t be a slave, but if I conceded her the vote, I’d be laughed at. In our state, she must not count.” Increasing the birthrate became a primary focus for the regime, which set the tone for policies regarding women; restrictions were placed on female employment, families with six or more children were given financial assistance, and abortion was outlawed as a “crime against the human race.” The Fascist regime had established the Opera Nazionale per la Maternità ed Infanzia (National Agency for Maternity and Infancy--ONMI) in 1925, which became an increasingly important institution in dictating policies aimed at promoting motherhood and aiding mothers in raising healthy children whose morality fit that of the Fascist regime’s. The propaganda produced by ONMI, including the image below, created a

“myth of maternity” about Italian women, yet in reality these efforts were largely ineffective. The birthrate fell from 29.9 per one thousand people in 1921-25 to 24 per one thousand people in 1931-35.

Despite the regime’s largely oppressive policies directed towards women, sport also played a central role in creating the image of the ‘new woman,’ raising numerous issues regarding contradictory gender roles. Women’s participation in sport had been present in Italian society since the late 1800’s, but became the subject of criticism from both the Catholic Church and the Fascist regime in the second half of the 1920’s; sportswomen were, for the most part, considered

30 Ibid.
31 De Grazia, How Fascism Ruled Women, 234.
32 Gori, Italian Fascism and the Female Body, 62.
33 De Grazia, How Fascism Ruled Women, 62.
Virile, Yet Feminine 149

Much of this criticism stemmed from the fear of a “masculinization of Italian women, a loss of feminine modesty, and a decline in women’s interest in family and maternity.” It was also rumored that sport could make women infertile, and that the athleticism of women was “responsible for the decline in the population and excessive emancipation,” but since the regime had encouraged women’s participation in sport in its early years, it was unable to officially oppose it. Another problematic area in women’s participation in athletics was the militaristic aspect of sport; the two had been “inextricably linked in Fascist Italy long before the Second World War.” As Italy’s colonial policy became more and more aggressive and tensions throughout Europe grew, the athlete became synonymous with the soldier. Sport was therefore a masculine domain, which further heightened fears of women becoming too masculine if they participated in sport.

The solution to this dilemma came when the regime gave scientists the task of deciding which activities were appropriate for women to participate in. The Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano (Italian Olympic Committee) and the Federazione Italiana Medici dello Sport (Italian Federation of Sports Physicians) were therefore responsible for redesigning women’s sport based on a eugenic model. Activities such as swimming, skiing, skating, tennis, basketball, and certain athletics were deemed suitable for women’s health and beneficial for preparing them to be mothers of strong, healthy Italians. More competitive and aggressive activities were unsuitable for women because they were seen as weaker than men and unable to handle the stress of more vigorous sports. As for the militaristic aspects that posed opposition, the Fascist regime began to change its stance as it saw the necessity in preparing the whole country for war. Justification again was rooted in rhetoric of creating good mothers capable of bearing strong, brave children who would defend the nation. Being confident in shooting was even seen as beneficial, since “children of a faint-hearted mother were sure to be cowards.”

Despite the paternalistic approach and regulations that surrounded women’s participation in sports, a noticeable shift in the portrayal of the ideal “new woman” can be seen in images produced by the Fascist regime. The more rural, traditional motherly figure was replaced by one strongly influenced by America: “sporty, tomboyish, nimble, and slender.” This transformation still had to accommodate traditional values, for if it strayed too far into the American model, it would share too many similarities to the donna crisi, the ultimate threat to maternity and Fascist ideals of femininity. For example, the regime had a “campaign against slim women,” which promoted the idea that slimness was unhealthy. This stemmed from the need to “fight against the crisis woman,” who was excessively slim and seen not only as unhealthy from

---

35 Ibid., 147.
36 Ibid., 75.
37 Ibid., 157.
38 Morgan, “Mussolini’s Boys (and Girls),” 4.4.
39 Ibid.
40 Gori, Italian Fascism and the Female Body, 76.
41 Ibid., 77.
42 Morgan, “Mussolini’s Boys (and Girls),” 4.6.
43 Gori, Italian Fascism and the Female Body, 170.
Much of this criticism stemmed from the fear of a “masculinization of Italian women, a loss of feminine modesty, and a decline in women’s interest in family and maternity.” It was also rumored that sport could make women infertile, and that the athleticism of women was “responsible for the decline in the population and excessive emancipation,” but since the regime had encouraged women’s participation in sport in its early years, it was unable to officially oppose it. Another problematic area in women’s participation in athletics was the militaristic aspect of sport; the two had been “inextricably linked in Fascist Italy long before the Second World War.” As Italy’s colonial policy became more and more aggressive and tensions throughout Europe grew, the athlete became synonymous with the soldier. Sport was therefore a masculine domain, which further heightened fears of women becoming too masculine if they participated in sport.

The solution to this dilemma came when the regime gave scientists the task of deciding which activities were appropriate for women to participate in. The Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano (Italian Olympic Committee) and the Federazione Italiana Medici dello Sport (Italian Federation of Sports Physicians) were therefore responsible for redesigning women’s sport based on a eugenic model. Activities such as swimming, skiing, skating, tennis, basketball, and certain athletics were deemed suitable for women’s health and beneficial for preparing them to be mothers of strong, healthy Italians. More competitive and aggressive activities were unsuitable for women because they were seen as weaker than men and unable to handle the stress of more vigorous sports. As for the militaristic aspects that posed opposition, the Fascist regime began to change its stance as it saw the necessity in preparing the whole country for war. Justification again was rooted in rhetoric of creating good mothers capable of bearing strong, brave children who would defend the nation. Being confident in shooting was even seen as beneficial, since “children of a faint-hearted mother were sure to be cowards.”

Despite the paternalistic approach and regulations that surrounded women’s participation in sports, a noticeable shift in the portrayal of the ideal “new woman” can be seen in images produced by the Fascist regime. The more rural, traditional motherly figure was replaced by one strongly influenced by America: “sporty, tomboyish, nimble, and slender.” This transformation still had to accommodate traditional values, for if it strayed too far into the American model, it would share too many similarities to the donna crisi, the ultimate threat to maternity and Fascist ideals of femininity. For example, the regime had a “campaign against slim women,” which promoted the idea that slimness was unhealthy. This stemmed from the need to “fight against the crisis woman,” who was excessively slim and seen not only as unhealthy from

---

35 Ibid., 147.
36 Ibid., 75.
37 Ibid., 157.
38 Morgan, “Mussolini’s Boys (and Girls),” 4.4.
39 Ibid.
40 Gori, Italian Fascism and the Female Body, 76.
“cutting down on meals or swallowing pernicious pills,” but also unattractive.\textsuperscript{44} The image of the \textit{donna sportiva}, therefore, is a compromise between the two: plumper than the fashionable American film stars of the 1930’s such as Jean Harlow, Katharine Hepburn, Myrna Loy, and Bette Davis, yet still strong and healthy.\textsuperscript{45} The image below is one that highlights this compromise and was popularly circulated, as it was the winner of the Cremona Prize, which was awarded to “practitioners of militant art...aimed at a broad popular audience and totally at the service of Fascist ideology.”\textsuperscript{46} The Cremona Prize encouraged the production of many paintings depicting sporting themes, which often included “shapely female athletes” who were brunette and had “obviously muscular legs, robust arms, strong shoulders and rounded breasts.”\textsuperscript{47}

In addition, fashion was an important aspect of this shift in the representation of Italian femininity. Pictures from the \textit{Accademia Nazionale Femminile di Educazione Fisica} in Orvieto show how there was a change in dress; women were moving farther away from the rural depiction of the \textit{donna madre} of the 1920’s and more towards that of the \textit{donna sportiva}, which allowed athletic movement but was still modest.\textsuperscript{48} The \textit{donna sportiva} also became a figure of Italian beauty through her depiction as a swimmer, as this image was one that was particularly malleable, and could be constructed as “graceful and strong, feminine and disciplined.”\textsuperscript{49} It wasn’t an image of athletic success, but one of modernity, health, and glamour.\textsuperscript{50} She avoided makeup and trendy, seductive clothing, and aimed to be “slender, sober, and strong.”\textsuperscript{51} The term “virile, yet feminine” also came to define how the \textit{donna sportiva} was depicted by the Italian press. Although there was still considerable debate over what sporting activities were appropriate for women, female athleticism was accepted as necessary for the regime to promote an image of an Italy

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 171.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 179.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 178.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Gori, \textit{Italian Fascism and the Female Body}, 173.
\textsuperscript{49} Morgan, “Mussolini’s Boys (and Girls),” 4.6.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 4.6-4.7.
“cutting down on meals or swallowing pernicious pills,” but also unattractive.44 The image of the donna sportiva, therefore, is a compromise between the two: plumper than the fashionable American film stars of the 1930’s such as Jean Harlow, Katharine Hepburn, Myrna Loy, and Bette Davis, yet still strong and healthy.45 The image below is one that highlights this compromise and was popularly circulated, as it was the winner of the Cremona Prize, which was awarded to “practitioners of militant art...aimed at a broad popular audience and totally at the service of Fascist ideology.”46 The Cremona Prize encouraged the production of many paintings depicting sporting themes, which often included “shapely female athletes” who were brunette and had “obviously muscular legs, robust arms, strong shoulders and rounded breasts.”47

In addition, fashion was an important aspect of this shift in the representation of Italian femininity. Pictures from the Accademia Nazionale Femminile di Educazione Fisica in Orvieto show how there was a change in dress; women were moving farther away from the rural depiction of the donna madre of the 1920’s and more towards that of the donna sportiva, which allowed athletic movement but was still modest.48 The donna sportiva also became a figure of Italian beauty through her depiction as a swimmer, as this image was one that was particularly malleable, and could be constructed as “graceful and strong, feminine and disciplined.”49 It wasn’t an image of athletic success, but one of modernity, health, and glamour.50 She avoided makeup and trendy, seductive clothing, and aimed to be “slender, sober, and strong.”51 The term “virile, yet feminine” also came to define how the donna sportiva was depicted by the Italian press. Although there was still considerable debate over what sporting activities were appropriate for women, female athleticism was accepted as necessary for the regime to promote an image of an Italy

44 Ibid., 171.
45 Ibid., 179.
46 Ibid., 178.
47 Ibid.
48 Gori, Italian Fascism and the Female Body, 173.
49 Morgan, “Mussolini’s Boys (and Girls),” 4.6.
50 Ibid., 4.6-4.7.
that was modern and competitive in relation to other nations.\textsuperscript{52}

The ultimate arena for displaying this newfound Italian strength to the rest of the world was through the Olympic Games, which were viewed by Mussolini as a crucial demonstration of the success and power of his Fascist state and ideology. Fascist Italy needed wider international visibility in order to “exploit the results of its efforts to forge the ‘new Italian.’”\textsuperscript{53} Italy had been very successful in 1932 in Los Angeles, finishing second in total medals behind the United States. This success was only that of the Italian men; Italian women had not been allowed to participate, as Pope Pius XI strongly opposed women’s participation in sport.\textsuperscript{54} The 1936 games in Berlin, however, were a different story. Not only was Italy competing under a “flag of war, fresh from their imperial victory in Ethiopia, and eager to engage in another battle,”\textsuperscript{55} but also, for the first time, Italian women were allowed to enter the field of Olympic competition.\textsuperscript{56} Both Mussolini and the Italian public had viewed women participating in competitive sports in a largely negative light, but with the recent increase in international female participation in the Olympics, Mussolini saw the necessity of including Italian female athletes. If Italy was going to be viewed as a modern country by the rest of the world, Italy’s athletic prowess would have to be displayed by both men and women. In the end, it was the women, not the men, of the 1936 Olympics who had the most success. In the 80-meter hurdles, Trebisonda ‘Ondina’ Valla became the first Italian woman to win a gold medal (the only gold medal the Italians won in Berlin), while her teammate Claudia Testoni finished in third.\textsuperscript{57} These performances were decisive in Italy’s overall third place finish, and also were “a relief for the Italian press after disappointing results from the men.”\textsuperscript{58}

The positive response of the press to Valla and Testoni’s success is evident in numerous articles published in Italian newspapers. The main headline of \textit{La Gazetta dello Sport} stated, “The tricolour of Italy on the highest flagpole of the stadium with the victory of Ondina Valla in the 80m hurdles,” while other articles on the first and second pages in the issue contained stories of Valla, speaking positively of her “superb technique” and “powerful action,” and naming Testoni as a “worthy opponent.”\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Lo Sport Fascistas} Olympic edition gave even higher praise to women athletes by listing their results before the men’s, and describing Valla and Testoni as “daughters of the strong Romagna—the Duce’s birthplace—and they show in their physiques, powerful in muscles and harmonious

\textsuperscript{52} Morgan, “Mussolini’s Boys (and Girls),” 4.3.
\textsuperscript{53} Gori, \textit{Italian Fascism and the Female Body}, 145.
\textsuperscript{54} Gigliola Gori, “A Glittering Icon of Fascist Femininity,” 177.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 4.4.
\textsuperscript{56} The first Italian woman to technically participate in the Olympic Games was Rosetta Gagliardi, a tennis player, in 1920, but she did not actually qualify to play; instead, she was one of the bearers of the Italian flag. Therefore, 1936 marks the beginning of Italian women’s actual competition in the games (Gori, \textit{Italian Fascism and the Female Body}, 149).
\textsuperscript{57} This third place finish was originally disputed and Testoni was awarded fourth, but after further review she received third.
\textsuperscript{58} Morgan, “Mussolini’s Boys (and Girls),” 4.7.
that was modern and competitive in relation to other nations.\textsuperscript{52}

The ultimate arena for displaying this newfound Italian strength to the rest of the world was through the Olympic Games, which were viewed by Mussolini as a crucial demonstration of the success and power of his Fascist state and ideology. Fascist Italy needed wider international visibility in order to “exploit the results of its efforts to forge the ‘new Italian.’”\textsuperscript{53} Italy had been very successful in 1932 in Los Angeles, finishing second in total medals behind the United States. This success was only that of the Italian men; Italian women had not been allowed to participate, as Pope Pius XI strongly opposed women’s participation in sport.\textsuperscript{54} The 1936 games in Berlin, however, were a different story. Not only was Italy competing under a “flag of war, fresh from their imperial victory in Ethiopia, and eager to engage in another battle,”\textsuperscript{55} but also, for the first time, Italian women were allowed to enter the field of Olympic competition.\textsuperscript{56} Both Mussolini and the Italian public had viewed women participating in competitive sports in a largely negative light, but with the recent increase in international female participation in the Olympics, Mussolini saw the necessity of including Italian female athletes. If Italy was going to be viewed as a modern country by the rest of the world, Italy's athletic prowess would have to be displayed by both men and women. In the end, it was the women, not the men, of the 1936 Olympics who had the most success. In the 80-meter hurdles, Trebisonda ‘Ondina’ Valla became the first Italian woman to win a gold medal (the only gold medal the Italians won in Berlin), while her teammate Claudia Testoni finished in third.\textsuperscript{57} These performances were decisive in Italy’s overall third place finish, and also were “a relief for the Italian press after disappointing results from the men.”\textsuperscript{58}

The positive response of the press to Valla and Testoni’s success is evident in numerous articles published in Italian newspapers. The main headline of \textit{La Gazzetta dello Sport} stated, “The tricolour of Italy on the highest flagpole of the stadium with the victory of Ondina Valla in the 80m hurdles,” while other articles on the first and second pages in the issue contained stories of Valla, speaking positively of her “superb technique” and “powerful action,” and naming Testoni as a “worthy opponent.”\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Lo Sport Fascistas} Olympic edition gave even higher praise to women athletes by listing their results before the men’s, and describing Valla and Testoni as “daughters of the strong Romagna--the Duce’s birthplace--and they show in their physiques, powerful in muscles and harmonious

\textsuperscript{52} Morgan, “Mussolini’s Boys (and Girls),” 4.3.
\textsuperscript{53} Gori, \textit{Italian Fascism and the Female Body}, 145.
\textsuperscript{54} Gigliola Gori, “A Glittering Icon of Fascist Femininity,” 177.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 4.4.
\textsuperscript{56} The first Italian woman to technically participate in the Olympic Games was Rosetta Gagliardi, a tennis player, in 1920, but she did not actually qualify to play; instead, she was one of the bearers of the Italian flag. Therefore, 1936 marks the beginning of Italian women’s actual competition in the games (Gori, \textit{Italian Fascism and the Female Body}, 149).

\textsuperscript{57} This third place finish was originally disputed and Testoni was awarded fourth, but after further review she received third.
\textsuperscript{58} Morgan, “Mussolini’s Boys (and Girls),” 4.7.
in form, the signs of an unmistakable Italianess.\textsuperscript{60} Articles published in \textit{La Stampa} call Valla and Testoni “the stars of the big event [the Olympics],”\textsuperscript{61} include Valla in an article about Italy’s strongest athletes,\textsuperscript{62} and invite the public to express their gratitude in person to Valla, the “greatest attraction” of a meet-and-greet event organized by the Athletics Federation at Mussolini Stadium in September 1936.\textsuperscript{63} Images taken of Valla, such as the one below, also show how the public received her warmly and enthusiastically, and how she (and Testoni) became “instant celebrities and national heroes.”\textsuperscript{64}

Mussolini himself also responded very enthusiastically to the success of the Italian women in Berlin. He congratulated Valla in Rome with the other members of the Italian team, and he awarded her a gold medal for athletic valor. In an interview with her about her gold medal experience, she said, “Everyone was trying to approach Mussolini, but the \textit{Duce} said, ‘I want Miss Valla near me!’”\textsuperscript{65} This marks a definitive shift in how Mussolini viewed female athletics; instead of just participating in pre-approved activities that would make women better mothers, a select number of sportswomen could contribute to “spreading the image of Fascist sportspeople all over the world.”\textsuperscript{66}

From 1936 on, Fascist propaganda clearly supported the enrollment of girls and young women in youth sporting organizations, whereas before it had taken a more cautious approach to the matter.\textsuperscript{67} The view of the Vatican also shifted after the 1936 Olympics; Valla had a special audience with Pope Pius XI, who congratulated her and said, according to Valla’s interview, “Well done, our compliments!”\textsuperscript{68} It has been argued that because of this shift in opinion by Mussolini and the Pope, a “breach had been opened in the masculinist wall erected against women’s emancipation by the highest authorities in Italy.”\textsuperscript{69}

While the Olympic success of Valla and Testoni did result in a more accepting view of female athleticism by the press, the Fascist party, and the country’s two most important leaders, these women were mainly symbols of Mussolini’s rule and the ideals of Fascism.

\textsuperscript{64} Morgan, “Mussolini’s Boys (and Girls),” 4.7.
\textsuperscript{65} Gori, \textit{Italian Fascism and the Female Body}, 189.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 185.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 186.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 190.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 186.
in form, the signs of an unmistakable Italianess." Articles published in *La Stampa* call Valla and Testoni "the stars of the big event [the Olympics]," include Valla in an article about Italy’s strongest athletes, and invite the public to express their gratitude in person to Valla, the "greatest attraction" of a meet-and-greet event organized by the Athletics Federation at Mussolini Stadium in September 1936. Images taken of Valla, such as the one below, also show how the public received her warmly and enthusiastically, and how she (and Testoni) became “instant celebrities and national heroes.”

Mussolini himself also responded very enthusiastically to the success of the Italian women in Berlin. He congratulated Valla in Rome with the other members of the Italian team, and he awarded her a gold medal for athletic valor. In an interview with her about her gold medal experience, she said, “Everyone was trying to approach Mussolini, but the Duce said, ‘I want Miss Valla near me!’” This marks a definitive shift in how Mussolini viewed female athletics; instead of just participating in pre-approved activities that would make women better mothers, a select number of sportswomen could contribute to “spreading the image of Fascist sportspeople all over the world.” From 1936 on, Fascist propaganda clearly supported the enrollment of girls and young women in youth sporting organizations, whereas before it had taken a more cautious approach to the matter. The view of the Vatican also shifted after the 1936 Olympics; Valla had a special audience with Pope Pius XI, who congratulated her and said, according to Valla’s interview, “Well done, our compliments!” It has been argued that because of this shift in opinion by Mussolini and the Pope, a “breach had been opened in the masculinist wall erected against women’s emancipation by the highest authorities in Italy.”

While the Olympic success of Valla and Testoni did result in a more accepting view of female athleticism by the press, the Fascist party, and the country’s two most important leaders, these women were mainly symbols

---

64 Morgan, “Mussolini’s Boys (and Girls),” 4.7.
65 Gori, *Italian Fascism and the Female Body*, 189.
66 Ibid., 185.
67 Ibid., 186.
68 Ibid., 190.
69 Ibid., 186.
of greater freedom that did not really exist in Fascist Italy. In fact, the new emphasis on women’s participation in sports still contained ideals and rhetoric that maintained the pre-existing gender roles promoted by Fascism.

The selective process by which women were chosen to participate in competitive sports at a higher level is one of the main reasons women’s sports were not as liberating as has been assumed. This was the case for Valla and Testoni, who were selected at a very young age to be trained for competition. Those girls who did not demonstrate the potential for impressive athletic ability were required to follow the declarations of the Italian Olympic Committee and the Italian Federation of Sports Physicians, and were thereby limited to undemanding activities that would “preserve female grace and modesty.”

For the few who did compete at a national or international level, second-class treatment (in relation to that of male athletes) was typical; Valla recalls having to endure “horrible trips by train...sitting in a cheap, uncomfortable, second-class carriage...and poor accommodation and meal subsidies.” Italian male athletes, on the other hand, received first class travel tickets, accommodation, and subsistence. Furthermore, female athletes were not given their own official uniforms or good quality shoes for competition; moreover, these uniforms and shoes had to be returned once an event was over. These disparities reflect the dominant patriarchal views held by the majority of Italian society, which not only viewed sport as the “preeminent expression of the strength and virility of the Italian male,” but also saw the competitiveness and muscularity of some sportswomen as dangerous to traditional masculine hegemony.

Preserving the dominance of Italian masculinity was at the center of much of Fascist policy, as can be seen through the policies of Italian Olympic Committee and the Italian Federation of Sports Physicians. These organizations put men in charge of determining the appropriate leisure activities and physical education that women could participate in, further defining femininity according to patriarchal values. The message was that they were “allowing” women to partake in athletics. Although women’s involvement in physical activity did increase under Fascism, it was much smaller and more marginalized than official statistics, publications, and propaganda declared. Compared to other countries, Italian sportswomen’s achievements were actually inferior. It is also important to note that all of the media was under the control of the Fascist regime, therefore the positive reception and recognition of women’s athletic success has to be viewed more as a political tool and less as an accurate portrayal of public opinion or response. The participation of not just women, but men also, was mandated by the regime; authorities noticed those who failed to partake in what was seen as necessary for building the Italian people and nation.

---

71 Ibid., 176.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid., 185.
75 Ibid., 166.
76 Gori, Italian Fascism and the Female Body, 164.
of greater freedom that did not really exist in Fascist Italy. In fact, the new emphasis on women’s participation in sports still contained ideals and rhetoric that maintained the pre-existing gender roles promoted by Fascism.

The selective process by which women were chosen to participate in competitive sports at a higher level is one of the main reasons women’s sports were not as liberating as has been assumed. This was the case for Valla and Testoni, who were selected at a very young age to be trained for competition. Those girls who did not demonstrate the potential for impressive athletic ability were required to follow the declarations of the Italian Olympic Committee and the Italian Federation of Sports Physicians, and were thereby limited to undemanding activities that would “preserve female grace and modesty.” For the few who did compete at a national or international level, second-class treatment (in relation to that of male athletes) was typical; Valla recalls having to endure “horrible trips by train…sitting in a cheap, uncomfortable, second-class carriage…and poor accommodation and meal subsidies.” Italian male athletes, on the other hand, received first class travel tickets, accommodation, and subsistence. Furthermore, female athletes were not given their own official uniforms or good quality shoes for competition; moreover, these uniforms and shoes had to be returned once an event was over. These disparities reflect the dominant patriarchal views held by the majority of Italian society, which not only viewed sport as the “pre-eminent expression of the strength and virility of the Italian male,” but also saw the competitiveness and muscularity of some sportswomen as dangerous to traditional masculine hegemony.

Preserving the dominance of Italian masculinity was at the center of much of Fascist policy, as can be seen through the policies of Italian Olympic Committee and the Italian Federation of Sports Physicians. These organizations put men in charge of determining the appropriate leisure activities and physical education that women could participate in, further defining femininity according to patriarchal values. The message was that they were “allowing” women to partake in athletics. Although women’s involvement in physical activity did increase under Fascism, it was much smaller and more marginalized than official statistics, publications, and propaganda declared. Compared to other countries, Italian sportswomen’s achievements were actually inferior. It is also important to note that all of the media was under the control of the Fascist regime, therefore the positive reception and recognition of women’s athletic success has to be viewed more as a political tool and less as accurate portrayal of public opinion or response. The participation of not just women, but men also, was mandated by the regime; authorities noticed those who failed to partake in what was seen as necessary for building the Italian people and nation.

71 Ibid., 176.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid., 185.
75 Ibid., 166.
76 Gori, Italian Fascism and the Female Body, 164.
purpose of this mandatory participation was to create a false image of a nation that had “voluntarily become a sporting people.” Many articles emphasize that the sports victories were “admirable Fascist results” and were the product of “extraordinary courage and love for the Fatherland.” Athletics were, therefore, another way for the regime to exert control over the Italian people while promoting an image both domestically and internationally that was much more myth than reality.

Although female athleticism did not have an overall liberating effect on women, the emphasis placed on visual culture and the political motivations of depicting Italy as a sporting nation, women’s participation in sport and the debates surrounding it provide an excellent window into the examination of gender roles in Fascist Italy. Moreover, it demonstrates how this process was fluid and full of ambiguities. The marked shift in opinion after the success of the women’s team in the 1936 Olympics shows that elite female athletes were thought of as national celebrities, yet the majority of women were still subject to the belief that motherhood was the ultimate goal of all women, and that it was the responsibility of all mothers to train their families to serve Fascism and the nation. Even Valla was used to promote this model; when she became a mother in 1940, the news was used as evidence that “sporting competition and maternity were not incompatible.” While this may have had the effect of decreasing the rigidity of the rules governing women’s participation in sports, it still emphasizes the fact that women were ultimately viewed as mothers. Although gender roles did shift remotely throughout the Fascist era, protecting motherhood remained at the center of these changes. This enduring patriarchy ensured that women’s involvement in sport did not dramatically challenge the existing gender roles so central to Fascist ideology.

This lasting role of patriarchal ideals is one that would remain engrained in Italian culture long after Mussolini lost his charismatic sway over the populace and Fascism became an unsavory part of the past. Even though the totalitarian control over Italians’ lives ended with the victory of the Allies in World War II, patriarchy remained a dominant force in the construction of a post war Italian identity. As in the United States and other western European countries, the reintroduction of Italian men into the workforce emphasized the traditional model of women staying home and raising children and letting men handle the working world. However, a major victory for women in the years following the fall of Fascism was getting the right to vote in 1946, in Italy’s new Constitutional Republic, and then two years later participating in voting to formally ratify the new constitution. This new constitution included articles aimed at promoting gender equality, for example, Article 3, which declared, “all citizens possess an equal social status and are equal before the law, without discrimination to sex,” Article 37, which states, “working women shall be entitled to equal rights and, for comparable jobs,

---

77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.

80 Gori, Italian Fascism and the Female Body, 204.
The purpose of this mandatory participation was to create a false image of a nation that had “voluntarily become a sporting people.” Many articles emphasize that the sports victories were “admirable Fascist results” and were the product of “extraordinary courage and love for the Fatherland.” Athletics were, therefore, another way for the regime to exert control over the Italian people while promoting an image both domestically and internationally that was much more myth than reality.

Although female athleticism did not have an overall liberating effect on women, the emphasis placed on visual culture and the political motivations of depicting Italy as a sporting nation, women’s participation in sport and the debates surrounding it provide an excellent window into the examination of gender roles in Fascist Italy. Moreover, it demonstrates how this process was fluid and full of ambiguities. The marked shift in opinion after the success of the women’s team in the 1936 Olympics shows that elite female athletes were thought of as national celebrities, yet the majority of women were still subject to the belief that motherhood was the ultimate goal of all women, and that it was the responsibility of all mothers to train their families to serve Fascism and the nation. Even Valla was used to promote this model; when she became a mother in 1940, the news was used as evidence that “sporting competition and maternity were not incompatible.” While this may have had the effect of decreasing the rigidity of the rules governing women’s participation in sports, it still emphasizes the fact that women were ultimately viewed as mothers. Although gender roles did shift remotely throughout the Fascist era, protecting motherhood remained at the center of these changes. This enduring patriarchy ensured that women’s involvement in sport did not dramatically change the existing gender roles so central to Fascist ideology.

This lasting role of patriarchal ideals is one that would remain engrained in Italian culture long after Mussolini lost his charismatic sway over the populace and Fascism became an unsavory part of the past. Even though the totalitarian control over Italians’ lives ended with the victory of the Allies in World War II, patriarchy remained a dominant force in the construction of a post war Italian identity. As in the United States and other western European countries, the reintroduction of Italian men into the workforce emphasized the traditional model of women staying home and raising children and letting men handle the working world. However, a major victory for women in the years following the fall of Fascism was getting the right to vote in 1946, in Italy’s new Constitutional Republic, and then two years later participating in voting to formally ratify the new constitution. This new constitution included articles aimed at promoting gender equality, for example, Article 3, which declared, “all citizens possess an equal social status and are equal before the law, without discrimination to sex,” Article 37, which states, “working women shall be entitled to equal rights and, for comparable jobs,

---

77 Ibid.  
78 Ibid.  
80 Gori, Italian Fascism and the Female Body, 204.
equal pay with men,” and Article 51, which says, “all citizens of either sex shall be eligible for public office and for elective positions on conditions of equality.”

However, these provisions were not fully applied in practice, both in the professional world and the sporting world. In theory, competitive sports were open to all women, but recruitment was obstructed by the same prejudices that marked the Fascist era. The few women who did compete in international competition through the 1950’s were those who belonged to the elite group trained under the Fascist regime. The international feminist movement of the 1970’s finally sparked the true process of female emancipation in sport and other areas of life in Italy, which has been slow and continues to be held back by the patriarchal roots of Italian society; Italy still has one of the lowest female labor participation rates of any developed country, and ex-Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s sexist and often derogatory statements and policies have significantly altered the course of women’s rights in Italy.

The sluggish process of female liberation was often encumbered by Italian women themselves; their self awareness was “strongly affected by traditions that considered women to be inferior creatures capable of only being sexually promiscuous ‘demons’ or docile domesticated ‘angels’.” This can be partially attributed to the influence that the Catholic Church had on official government policies as well as public opinion in Italy. Although the Christian Democratic party, which used to represent the Vatican’s interests in politics, collapsed in 1994, the latter part of the 2000’s saw the return of the direct influence of the Church in Italian politics. This prevailing influence of a patriarchal mindset explains why women’s participation in sport produced little liberating effect among the general female populace both under Fascism and in the years following. Although some women such as Trebisonda Valla gained immense national prestige through their athletic abilities, this small elite would remain a political icon; a symbol of “congratulation but also confrontation, contradiction and paradox.” These contradictions were not only an aspect of the symbolism of the female athlete, but also an inherent part of the construction of Italian gender roles as a whole.

Andrea Dlugos is a senior at Santa Clara University pursuing a double major in History and Economics, and is a member of Phi Alpha Theta. This essay is a condensed version of her senior thesis, which she presented at the Northern California Phi Alpha Theta Conference, and was also awarded the Mehl Prize, an award given annually to the best senior thesis in the History Department. She has been interested in Italian history since studying abroad in Rome the fall of her junior year.

References:

1. Ibid., 205.
2. Ibid., 206.
3. Ibid., 205.
equal pay with men,” and Article 51, which says, “all citizens of either sex shall be eligible for public office and for elective positions on conditions of equality.”\textsuperscript{81} However, these provisions were not fully applied in practice, both in the professional world and the sporting world. In theory, competitive sports were open to all women, but recruitment was obstructed by the same prejudices that marked the Fascist era. The few women who did compete in international competition through the 1950’s were those who belonged to the elite group trained under the Fascist regime.\textsuperscript{82} The international feminist movement of the 1970’s finally sparked the true process of female emancipation in sport and other areas of life in Italy, which has been slow and continues to be held back by the patriarchal roots of Italian society; Italy still has one of the lowest female labor participation rates of any developed country, and ex-Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s sexist and often derogatory statements and policies have significantly altered the course of women’s rights in Italy.

The sluggish process of female liberation was often encumbered by Italian women themselves; their self awareness was “strongly affected by traditions that considered women to be inferior creatures capable of only being sexually promiscuous ‘demons’ or docile domesticated ‘angels’.”\textsuperscript{83} This can be partially attributed to the influence that the Catholic Church had on official government policies as well as public opinion in Italy. Although the Christian Democratic party, which used to represent the Vatican’s interests in politics, collapsed in 1994, the latter part of the 2000’s saw the return of the direct influence of the Church in Italian politics.\textsuperscript{84} This prevailing influence of a patriarchal mindset explains why women’s participation in sport produced little liberating effect among the general female populace both under Fascism and in the years following. Although some women such as Trebisonda Valla gained immense national prestige through their athletic abilities, this small elite would remain a political icon; a symbol of “congratulation but also confrontation, contradiction and paradox.”\textsuperscript{85} These contradictions were not only an aspect of the symbolism of the female athlete, but also an inherent part of the construction of Italian gender roles as a whole.

\textbf{Andrea Dlugos is a senior at Santa Clara University pursuing a double major in History and Economics, and is a member of Phi Alpha Theta. This essay is a condensed version of her senior thesis, which she presented at the Northern California Phi Alpha Theta Conference, and was also awarded the Mehl Prize, an award given annually to the best senior thesis in the History Department. She has been interested in Italian history since studying abroad in Rome the fall of her junior year.}

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 205.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 206.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 205.
\textsuperscript{85} Gori, “A Glittering Icon of Fascist Femininity,” 173.
Japan Disarmed: The Symbolism and Rejection of the Defeated Soldier in Japanese Social Media

Ian Ghow

On August 28 1945, the Empire of Japan formally surrendered to the Allied nations. The signing marked the end of an era and the death knell of the militaristic Empire. It also left millions of Japanese servicemen and colonists stranded abroad. With Japan’s economy crippled and its navy shattered, it was up to the Allies to repatriate the colonists and surrendered Japanese servicemen. Many of these servicemen would not see their homeland for years; others, especially those in Soviet captivity, would never return. Much has been written about American soldiers’ homecoming and the widespread euphoria in the United Kingdom following the end of World War II, but less has been written on the perspective of the vanquished. This may be due to the age-old adage that “History is written by the victors.” Clichés aside, the topic of the Japanese homecoming is a singular one that deserves as much attention as the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Where Pearl Harbor shocked the American public, the official surrender did the same and much more to the Japanese populace. To hear the emperor, a man whom many believed to be descended from a goddess, outline his intention to surrender, and then to have the Japanese islands occupied, provoked a deep soul-searching within the Japanese. The focus of this soul-searching was directed at the politicians and, especially, the military who had led them to believe they were winning the war. The cold, often hostile, reception of defeated Imperial Japanese servicemen, portrayed as invincible heroes by Japanese wartime propaganda, and the attitudes of the Japanese people as reflected in the social media of the time are indicative of a natural Japanese shift towards pacifism and a rejection of militarism.

The pre-modern Japanese social structure had placed the warrior class of society, the samurai, at the top for hundreds of years. They were the bureaucratic social elite, but were also romanticized in classical tales and songs extolling valor and virtues. After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the samurai class was abolished and replaced with a new Western-style military elite in 1872. The birth of the Empire of Japan also signaled the birth of Asia’s first modern military, whose objective was to protect Japan from any would-be imperial colonizer.

As a means of avoiding predation, Japan linked its modernization with joining the ranks of the imperialists following the military defeat of China in 1895 and of Russia in 1905. Propaganda and militarism in Japan increased with each success. Decades later, Japan’s encroachment in Asia increased with post-World War I colonies and the expansion into Manchuria in 1931. On the heels of these military successes, the Japanese war machine seemed invincible. When Japan entered into military conflict with China in 1937 and the Allies in 1941, more successes followed as

---

2 Ibid.
Japan Disarmed: The Symbolism and Rejection of the Defeated Soldier in Japanese Social Media

Ian Ghows

On August 28 1945, the Empire of Japan formally surrendered to the Allied nations. The signing marked the end of an era and the death knell of the militaristic Empire. It also left millions of Japanese servicemen and colonists stranded abroad. With Japan’s economy crippled and its navy shattered, it was up to the Allies to repatriate the colonists and surrendered Japanese servicemen. Many of these servicemen would not see their homeland for years; others, especially those in Soviet captivity, would never return. Much has been written about American soldiers’ homecoming and the widespread euphoria in the United Kingdom following the end of World War II, but less has been written on the perspective of the vanquished. This may be due to the age-old adage that “History is written by the victors.” Clichés aside, the topic of the Japanese homecoming is a singular one that deserves as much attention as the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Where Pearl Harbor shocked the American public, the official surrender did the same and much more to the Japanese populace. To hear the emperor, a man whom many believed to be descended from a goddess, outline his intention to surrender, and then to have the Japanese islands occupied, provoked a deep soul-searching within the Japanese. The focus of this soul-searching was directed at the politicians and, especially, the military who had led them to believe they were winning the war. The cold, often hostile, reception of defeated Imperial Japanese servicemen, portrayed as invincible heroes by Japanese wartime propaganda, and the attitudes of the Japanese people as reflected in the social media of the time are indicative of a natural Japanese shift towards pacifism and a rejection of militarism.

The pre-modern Japanese social structure had placed the warrior class of society, the samurai, at the top for hundreds of years. They were the bureaucratic social elite, but were also romanticized in classical tales and songs extolling valor and virtues. After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the samurai class was abolished and replaced with a new Western-style military elite in 1872.¹ The birth of the Empire of Japan also signaled the birth of Asia’s first modern military, whose objective was to protect Japan from any would-be imperial colonizer.

As a means of avoiding predation, Japan linked its modernization with joining the ranks of the imperialists following the military defeat of China in 1895 and of Russia in 1905.² Propaganda and militarism in Japan increased with each success. Decades later, Japan’s encroachment in Asia increased with post-World War I colonies and the expansion into Manchuria in 1931. On the heels of these military successes, the Japanese war machine seemed invincible. When Japan entered into military conflict with China in 1937 and the Allies in 1941, more successes followed as

² Ibid.
they conquered the Philippines, Malaya and Britain’s “Fortress” Singapore in 1942. As Japan went from victory to victory, the propaganda machine at home continued to pump up the virtues of a strong military. When the war began to turn against Japan, Allied bombers began their terrible fire-bombing raids and Japanese defeats were reported by newspapers as victories. Then, the United States dropped two atomic bombs and instantly killed hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers and civilians in the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Thus, when on 15 August 1945, Emperor Hirohito informed his people that he intended to surrender to prevent further loss of life, the lies about inevitable military victory were exposed and the trust between people and government shattered. Returning Japanese servicemen became a hated symbol of the war and suffering to the Japanese public, unnecessary in the postwar era, and this is reflected heavily in the social media of the time.

Many scholars have recently taken up the subject of the Japanese Empire. Few, however, have gone into as much depth as John W. Dower whose book, Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II, provides overviews, primary accounts and analysis of the situation in postwar Japan. Dower’s work is critical to this paper, especially his examination of the all-important social, political, and economic factors that shaped the defeated nation after the war. Furthermore, Dower stresses the important role of the

---


Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), General Douglas MacArthur, and his staff in the formation of a new Japan. This was to result in a democratic Japan without the means to return to its imperialistic ways.

The popular Japanese media after the end of the American Occupation also offers insight into the shifting discourse on the role of the military. This may be seen, for example, in the original Japanese release of the film, Gojira, in 1954. Since it was released soon after the end of American-imposed censorship, the film presents criticism of many facets of the conduct of the war and is reflective of the postwar attitude towards anti-militarism which would not have been in the film had censorship continued. It cannot be doubted that the film’s single greatest condemnation was directed at the Americans for unleashing atomic and nuclear weaponry, which cinematically created the well-known, nigh-unstoppable fire-breathing green monster. The importance of this source is in its lasting popularity, which is indicative of its warm reception by a sympathetic audience. Godzilla became a national icon for Japan due to the popularity of the 1954 film.

Other works that examine Japanese attitudes towards the military include Murakami Hyöe’s Japan: The Years of Trial 1945-1952, written by a Japanese veteran-turned-reporter who makes great use of Japanese sources unavailable in English; Bushido, by Nitobe Inazo, written in 1905 and reflective of the militaristic attitude in pre-war Japan; and The Atomic

---

they conquered the Philippines, Malaya and Britain’s “Fortress” Singapore in 1942. As Japan went from victory to victory, the propaganda machine at home continued to pump up the virtues of a strong military. When the war began to turn against Japan, Allied bombers began their terrible fire-bombing raids and Japanese defeats were reported by newspapers as victories. Then, the United States dropped two atomic bombs and instantly killed hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers and civilians in the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Thus, when on 15 August 1945, Emperor Hirohito informed his people that he intended to surrender to prevent further loss of life, the lies about inevitable military victory were exposed and the trust between people and government shattered. Returning Japanese servicemen became a hated symbol of the war and suffering to the Japanese public, unnecessary in the postwar era, and this is reflected heavily in the social media of the time.

Many scholars have recently taken up the subject of the Japanese Empire. Few, however, have gone into as much depth as John W. Dower whose book, Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II, provides overviews, primary accounts and analysis of the situation in postwar Japan. Dower’s work is critical to this paper, especially his examination of the all-important social, political, and economic factors that shaped the defeated nation after the war. Furthermore, Dower stresses the important role of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), General Douglas MacArthur, and his staff in the formation of a new Japan. This was to result in a democratic Japan without the means to return to its imperialistic ways.

The popular Japanese media after the end of the American Occupation also offers insight into the shifting discourse on the role of the military. This may be seen, for example, in the original Japanese release of the film, Gojira, in 1954. Since it was released soon after the end of American-imposed censorship, the film presents criticism of many facets of the conduct of the war and is reflective of the postwar attitude towards anti-militarism which would not have been in the film had censorship continued. It cannot be doubted that the film’s single greatest condemnation was directed at the Americans for unleashing atomic and nuclear weaponry, which cinematically created the well-known, nigh-unstoppable fire-breathing green monster. The importance of this source is in its lasting popularity, which is indicative of its warm reception by a sympathetic audience. Godzilla became a national icon for Japan due to the popularity of the 1954 film.

Other works that examine Japanese attitudes towards the military include Murakami Hyöe’s Japan: The Years of Trial 1945-1952, written by a Japanese veteran-turned-reporter who makes great use of Japanese sources unavailable in English; Bushido, by Nitobe Inazo, written in 1905 and reflective of the militaristic attitude in pre-war Japan; and The Atomic

---

Defeat in 1945 prompted a rejection of the militaristic symbols and traditions that had led Japan to humiliation, and this strongly felt sentiment is made clear in the postwar period media. The collective Japanese psyche shifted dramatically, and few scholars have examined the central issue of Japanese demilitarization. This paper attempts to illuminate the societal perspective of the vanquished Japanese soldier after the war and show how that experience was subsequently manifested in public opinion via social media.

Japan, like Germany, has come a long way since 1945 but, unlike Germany, it has not been as active in global politics. As Dower says in the introduction to Embracing Defeat, “What matters is what the Japanese themselves made of their experience of defeat, then and thereafter; and for a half century now, most have consistently made it the touchstone for affirming a commitment to ‘peace and democracy.’” But in the early days of the Occupation, everything was uncertain. Millions of Japanese servicemen deployed overseas, from Manchuria and China to Burma and the Dutch East Indies, had been left stranded. So too were millions of Japanese civilians who had emigrated as colonists. Despite hopes of a quick repatriation, many were to die outside Japan after the war’s end while others would take years to return. Allied forces, including the Americans, British and Dutch, employed Japanese men taken prisoner after the surrender as unpaid physical laborers up until 1947, often to rebuild and reassert the Westerners’ colonial rule in Asia.

American Influence on Japanese Opinion

The topic of Japanese attitudes as reflected by popular social media is an extremely complex one given that it is a matter of perspective and how these varied perspectives influenced the course of events. In addition to the Japanese people’s malaise (kyōdatsu) in the early years of the Occupation, the presence of American forces themselves conditioned Japanese attitudes towards the military. Despite MacArthur’s attempts to present the image of a functional Japanese government, SCAP remade Japan in the way it saw fit. For example, when the Japanese government in 1946 made minimal changes in the wording of the new Constitution demanded by SCAP, MacArthur ordered SCAP’s Government Section to create a draft of the new Constitution “to show the Japanese how it was done.” Murakami describes then-Prime Minister Shidehara Kijūrō’s reaction to the new Constitution

---

7 Dower, 30.
8 Ibid., 48.
9 Ibid..
10 Dower, 88-89.
11 Ibid, 360.
Japan Disarmed 167

Bomb Suppressed: American Censorship in Occupied Japan, by Monica Braw, which addresses the inconsistencies of American policies in Japan regarding censorship and the atomic bombings.6

Defeat in 1945 prompted a rejection of the militaristic symbols and traditions that had led Japan to humiliation, and this strongly-felt sentiment is made clear in the postwar period media. The collective Japanese psyche shifted dramatically, and few scholars have examined the central issue of Japanese demilitarization. This paper attempts to illuminate the societal perspective of the vanquished Japanese soldier after the war and show how that experience was subsequently manifested in public opinion via social media.

Japan, like Germany, has come a long way since 1945 but, unlike Germany, it has not been as active in global politics. As Dower says in the introduction to Embracing Defeat, “What matters is what the Japanese themselves made of their experience of defeat, then and thereafter; and for a half century now, most have consistently made it the touchstone for affirming a commitment to ‘peace and democracy.’”7 But in the early days of the Occupation, everything was uncertain. Millions of Japanese servicemen deployed overseas, from Manchuria and China to Burma and

the Dutch East Indies, had been left stranded.8 So too were millions of Japanese civilians who had emigrated as colonists.9 Despite hopes of a quick repatriation, many were to die outside Japan after the war’s end while others would take years to return. Allied forces, including the Americans, British and Dutch, employed Japanese men taken prisoner after the surrender as unpaid physical laborers up until 1947, often to rebuild and reassert the Westerners’ colonial rule in Asia.

American Influence on Japanese Opinion

The topic of Japanese attitudes as reflected by popular social media is an extremely complex one given that it is a matter of perspective and how these varied perspectives influenced the course of events. In addition to the Japanese people’s malaise (kyōdatsu) in the early years of the Occupation, the presence of American forces themselves conditioned Japanese attitudes towards the military.10 Despite MacArthur’s attempts to present the image of a functional Japanese government, SCAP remade Japan in the way it saw fit. For example, when the Japanese government in 1946 made minimal changes in the wording of the new Constitution demanded by SCAP, MacArthur ordered SCAP’s Government Section to create a draft of the new Constitution “to show the Japanese how it was done.”11 Murakami describes then-Prime Minister Shidehara Kijūrō’s reaction to the new Constitution

---

7 Dower, 30.
8 Ibid., 48.
9 Ibid.
10 Dower, 88-89.
11 Ibid, 360.
which banned any and all armed forces as “unthinkable, but, on learning that this was one of MacArthur’s idealistic obsessions, [Shidehara] gave up any idea of opposition.”

Japanese newspapers printed the full, complete draft of the Constitution for the Japanese public to examine on March 6. At the time, it was publicly known that there was no consensus in the government and the draft itself was dotted with “expressions and ideas that were quaintly alien.” However, both MacArthur and Hirohito publicly endorsed this draft, thereby ending any possibility of revision.

One must also be aware that the opinions expressed in the censored social media were picked and chosen and that the general Japanese public cannot be fully represented in such a limited scope. Newspapers, magazines, books, films, and a host of other forms of communications had to be translated prior to publication, and certain topics such as anything related to the atomic bombings, were taboo with unwritten but very real consequences if they were discussed. When the newspapers released the draft Constitution, American censors “suppressed all but laudatory comments.” As a result, rumors spread by word of mouth that SCAP had browbeaten Prime Minister Shidehara and his cabinet into accepting the Constitution without objections. So why was MacArthur, presented as a man so keen on establishing democracy in Japan, engaging in undemocratic activity?

The answer is probably that MacArthur did not trust the Japanese not to return to militarism. To ensure that Japan became a democracy and never returned its old habits, those who supported militarism had to be stripped of their political foundation as well as their ability to spread their ideas. MacArthur, as a military man, was more likely to respond with a typically military order than he was to actually let the Japanese government make a decision. By imposing a Constitution endorsed by the Emperor, MacArthur ensured that there was no legitimate reason to militarize. Article 9 reads, “...the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes ... Land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.”

Censorship ensured that any attempt to coordinate a large-scale rebellion against the government would be discovered. Susan Braw also asserts that censorship was used to steer the Japanese public away from criticizing the government and the Americans as well as to promote democratization. The use of censorship during the Occupation meant that the Americans’ filtered social media to fit American political agendas. This means that the social media of the time deliber-

---

14 Ibid..
15 Braw, 82-3.
16 Kawai, 52.
17 Ibid, 53.
19 Braw, 28-29.
Japan Disarmed

which banned any and all armed forces as “unthinkable, but, on learning that this was one of MacArthur’s idealistic obsessions, [Shidehara] gave up any idea of opposition.”12 Japanese newspapers printed the full, complete draft of the Constitution for the Japanese public to examine on March 6.13 At the time, it was publicly known that there was no consensus in the government and the draft itself was dotted with “expressions and ideas that were quaintly alien.”14 However, both MacArthur and Hirohito publicly endorsed this draft, thereby ending any possibility of revision.

One must also be aware that the opinions expressed in the censored social media were picked and chosen and that the general Japanese public cannot be fully represented in such a limited scope. Newspapers, magazines, books, films, and a host of other forms of communications had to be translated prior to publication, and certain topics such as anything related to the atomic bombings, were taboo with unwritten but very real consequences if they were discussed.15 When the newspapers released the draft Constitution, American censors “suppressed all but laudatory comments.”16 As a result, rumors spread by word of mouth that SCAP had browbeaten Prime Minister Shidehara and his cabinet into accepting the Constitution without objections.17 So why was MacAr- thur, presented as a man so keen on establishing democracy in Japan, engaging in undemocratic activity?

The answer is probably that MacArthur did not trust the Japanese not to return to militarism. To ensure that Japan became a democracy and never returned its old habits, those who supported militarism had to be stripped of their political foundation as well as their ability to spread their ideas. MacArthur, as a military man, was more likely to respond with a typically military order than he was to actually let the Japanese government make a decision. By imposing a Constitution endorsed by the Emperor, MacArthur ensured that there was no legitimate reason to militarize. Article 9 reads, “...the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes ... Land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.”18

Censorship ensured that any attempt to coordinate a large-scale rebellion against the government would be discovered. Susan Braw also asserts that censorship was used to steer the Japanese public away from criticizing the government and the Americans as well as to promote democratization.19 The use of censorship during the Occupation meant that the Americans’ filtered social media to fit American political agendas. This means that the social media of the time deliber-

14 Ibid..
15 Braw, 82-3.
16 Kawai, 52.
17 Ibid, 53.
19 Braw, 28-29.
ately expressed anti-militaristic themes so as to conform to SCAP’s Press Code. As a result, it is not an entirely accurate means of assessing the Japanese public’s attitude.

Similarly, the International Military Tribune for the Far East, also known as the Tokyo War Crimes Trials, played a role in placing blame entirely upon the Japanese. The entire nation was culpable, guilty of association with and support for the militaristic regime. Of the twenty-eight Class A defendants, seven were sentenced to death by hanging, thirteen were imprisoned for life, five were imprisoned for varying lengths of time, two died during the trial and one was deemed unfit to stand trial because of mental derangement.\footnote{Murakami, 212.}

Censorship thus limited the use of government publications and statements to gain an accurate assessment of the Japanese public’s shifting opinions. To gain a better understanding of the Japanese mindset of the pre-war era, one must examine the literature of the period. One such work, Nitobe Inazo’s 1905 book, \textit{Bushido}, offers an interpretation of the samurai code: “Chivalry is no less indigenous to the soil of Japan than its emblem, the cherry blossom,” he says; “It is a living object of power and beauty among us.”\footnote{Nitobe, 1.} Despite the abolition of the samurai class in 1873, Nitobe holds that samurai values were not only pertinent but present in 1905 Japan. This is not the aggressive, nationalistic militarism that arose in Japan during the 1930s but, Nitobe’s work nevertheless shows that there was a pre-existing martial pride that served as a foundation for the militarism of the 1930s. “As among flowers, the cherry is queen, so among men the samurai is lord,” Nitobe asserts.\footnote{Ibid., 111.} The samurai can act as a metaphor for the Imperial Japanese military, who were the new warrior-heroes of Japanese modernity in the pre-war era. Nitobe notes in the chapter regarding the training of samurai, “A samurai was essentially a man of action. Science was without the pale of his activity. He took advantage of it in so far as it concerned his profession of arms.”\footnote{Ibid., 65.} This disdain of non-military sciences had not disappeared when the samurai were abolished in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. In fact, it was arguably accelerated by the need to develop modern weapons to protect Japan from colonial annexation by a western power. A strong and modern military was the only preventive measure that the Japanese believed could preserve their country from the western imperial powers. One must note, however, that Nitobe’s publication in 1905 is a fore-shadowing of, but not the same as, the militarism that would grow in Japan during the 1930s, which took thoughts like Nitobe’s to an even greater extreme.

\textbf{The Attitudes of Repatriated Soldiers and Sailors}

One such extreme that was promoted during the war by Japan’s military government was the ostracism of the defeated. As a result, Japanese soldiers and sailors taken prisoner overseas were fearful of their postwar homecoming despite their desire for it. Many were plagued by fears of social ostracism by the people

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Murakami} Murakami, 212.
\bibitem{Nitobe} Nitobe, 1.
\end{thebibliography}
ately expressed anti-militaristic themes so as to conform to SCAP’s Press Code. As a result, it is not an entirely accurate means of assessing the Japanese public’s attitude.

Similarly, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, also known as the Tokyo War Crimes Trials, played a role in placing blame entirely upon the Japanese. The entire nation was culpable, guilty of association with and support for the militaristic regime. Of the twenty-eight Class A defendants, seven were sentenced to death by hanging, thirteen were imprisoned for life, five were imprisoned for varying lengths of time, two died during the trial and one was deemed unfit to stand trial because of mental derangement.20

Censorship thus limited the use of government publications and statements to gain an accurate assessment of the Japanese public’s shifting opinions. To gain a better understanding of the Japanese mindset of the pre-war era, one must examine the literature of the period. One such work, Nitobe Inazo’s 1905 book, Bushido, offers an interpretation of the samurai code: “Chivalry is no less indigenous to the soil of Japan than its emblem, the cherry blossom,” he says; “It is a living object of power and beauty among us.”21 Despite the abolition of the samurai class in 1873, Nitobe holds that samurai values were not only pertinent but present in 1905 Japan. This is not the aggressive, nationalistic militarism that arose in Japan during the 1930s but, Nitobe’s work nevertheless shows that there was a pre-existing martial pride that served as a foundation for the militarism of the 1930s. “As among flowers, the cherry is queen, so among men the samurai is lord,” Nitobe asserts.22 The samurai can act as a metaphor for the Imperial Japanese military, who were the new warrior-heroes of Japanese modernity in the pre-war era. Nitobe notes in the chapter regarding the training of samurai, “A samurai was essentially a man of action. Science was without the pale of his activity. He took advantage of it in so far as it concerned his profession of arms.”23 This disdain of non-military sciences had not disappeared when the samurai were abolished in the 19th century. In fact, it was arguably accelerated by the need to develop modern weapons to protect Japan from colonial annexation by a western power. A strong and modern military was the only preventive measure that the Japanese believed could preserve their country from the western imperial powers. One must note, however, that Nitobe’s publication in 1905 is a fore-shadowing of, but not the same as, the militarism that would grow in Japan during the 1930s, which took thoughts like Nitobe’s to an even greater extreme.

The Attitudes of Repatriated Soldiers and Sailors

One such extreme that was promoted during the war by Japan’s military government was the ostracism of the defeated. As a result, Japanese soldiers and sailors taken prisoner overseas were fearful of their postwar homecoming despite their desire for it. Many were plagued by fears of social ostracism by the people

20 Murakami, 212.
21 Nitobe, 1.
22 Ibid., 111.
23 Ibid., 65.
they had failed to protect.\textsuperscript{24} In fact, as Murakami points out, “the majority of Japanese condemned the former Japanese army and navy out of hand...no one was interested in ...whether they had distinguished themselves...or whether they had been prisoners.”\textsuperscript{25} However, when one considers the soldiers’ fears alongside the deep stigma associated with surrender and being taken prisoner, the reason becomes clearer. Japanese society had been conditioned to hold men who surrendered in contempt to the point where it was considered more honorable to die in battle than to be taken prisoner and escape captivity.\textsuperscript{26}

So to what kind of welcome did Japanese soldiers and sailors return? Cities and homes devastated by American bombers forced many Japanese to live in shantytowns.\textsuperscript{27} Many veterans who were demobilized, dressed in rags without resemblance to the smart uniforms of wartime propaganda, were shunned by their communities as defeated men stripped of their honor. Returning servicemen from China and other overseas posts were often hit doubly hard. By 1946, many Japanese had heard of stories of the atrocities committed by Imperial Japanese soldiers. As a result, they were often considered to be social pariahs and participants in horrible war crimes. In letters to the press, veterans spoke about how they received scorn from both acquaintances and strangers alike. Some voiced their sincere regret for these crimes whilst others protested their innocence and indignation at being treated as war criminals.\textsuperscript{28}

A sizeable number of repatriated soldiers found that they had been declared dead, with “their funerals conducted and grave markers erected.”\textsuperscript{29} The return of someone believed dead caused a varied range of emotions, from joy to heartbreak. Stories circulated about returning soldiers finding out that their wife had remarried, often to a brother or close friend.\textsuperscript{30} The reality of these stories is unknown but their presence is an example of the widespread confusion and tragedies brought on by the end of the war. Many letters to newspapers contained pleas for the public to distinguish between the men who had been simple soldiers in the service of their country with the “military cliques” who had been responsible for the conduct of the war. This suggests that the Japanese public, as a whole, was not making this distinction. The military had led them to war and so, in defeat, the military was, rightly or wrongly, at fault for all of it, though as we shall see, soldiers, individually, may not have been blamed.

During the process of demobilization, Japanese and American soldiers cooperated to ensure that the process went smoothly. In the reports made by General MacArthur and those made by the Japanese government’s ministry tasked with demobilization stated, “No disorders; no opposition; cooperation

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} Murakami, 226.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 226-27.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Walter Skya, \textit{Japan’s Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shinto Ultranationalism} (London: Duke University Press, 2009), 263-64
\item \textsuperscript{27} Dower, 48.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 60.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Ibid..
\item \textsuperscript{30} Ibid..
\end{itemize}
they had failed to protect. In fact, as Murakami points out, “the majority of Japanese condemned the former Japanese army and navy out of hand...no one was interested in ...whether they had distinguished themselves...or whether they had been prisoners.” However, when one considers the soldiers’ fears alongside the deep stigma associated with surrender and being taken prisoner, the reason becomes clearer. Japanese society had been conditioned to hold men who surrendered in contempt to the point where it was considered more honorable to die in battle than to be taken prisoner and escape captivity.

So to what kind of welcome did Japanese soldiers and sailors return? Cities and homes devastated by American bombers forced many Japanese to live in shantytowns. Many veterans who were demobilized, dressed in rags without resemblance to the smart uniforms of wartime propaganda, were shunned by their communities as defeated men stripped of their honor. Returning servicemen from China and other overseas posts were often hit doubly hard. By 1946, many Japanese had heard of stories of the atrocities committed by Imperial Japanese soldiers. As a result, they were often considered to be social pariahs and participants in horrible war crimes. In letters to the press, veterans spoke about how they received scorn from both acquaintances and strangers alike. Some voiced their sincere regret for these crimes whilst others protested their innocence and indignation at being treated as war criminals.

A sizeable number of repatriated soldiers found that they had been declared dead, with “their funerals conducted and grave markers erected.” The return of someone believed dead caused a varied range of emotions, from joy to heartbreak. Stories circulated about returning soldiers finding out that their wife had remarried, often to a brother or close friend. The reality of these stories is unknown but their presence is an example of the widespread confusion and tragedies brought on by the end of the war. Many letters to newspapers contained pleas for the public to distinguish between the men who had been simple soldiers in the service of their country with the “military cliques” who had been responsible for the conduct of the war. This suggests that the Japanese public, as a whole, was not making this distinction. The military had led them to war and so, in defeat, the military was, rightly or wrongly, at fault for all of it, though as we shall see, soldiers, individually, may not have been blamed.

During the process of demobilization, Japanese and American soldiers cooperated to ensure that the process went smoothly. In the reports made by General MacArthur and those made by the Japanese government’s ministry tasked with demobilization stated, “No disorders; no opposition; cooperation

24 Murakami, 226.
25 Ibid., 226-27.
26 Walter Skya, Japan’s Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shinto Ultranationalism (London: Duke University Press, 2009), 263-64
27 Dower, 48.
28 Ibid., 60.
29 Ibid..
30 Ibid.
Japan Disarmed

31 The lack of disruptions and the ready compliance of the Japanese forces to demobilize immediately show that even the soldiers were tired of fighting. In his reports, MacArthur pointed out the hugely disproportionate ratio of American to Japanese troops. Two and a half American divisions were in charge of “fifty-nine Japanese divisions, thirty-six brigades, and forty-five-odd regiments plus naval and air forces,” totaling roughly 3.5 million Japanese soldiers.32 Had the Japanese men chosen to, they could easily have ousted a relaxed, though cautious invader. Instead, they complied swiftly with orders to disarm and without the least resistance or complaint.

MacArthur relates an anecdote in his report that exemplifies the cooperative spirit between the Imperial Japanese forces and their American Occupation counterparts during the process of demobilization. An American jeep encountered a Japanese tank column on the way to a disarmament depot. To let the jeep pass, the Japanese commander ordered his tanks to halt. MacArthur continues,

“As the lead tank stopped to permit passing, the jeep driver cautiously skirted it to the left on the narrow road. The soft shoulder crumbled and the American found himself tilted at a perilous angle with his vehicle mired in the soft muck of

32 Ibid..
The lack of disruptions and the ready compliance of the Japanese forces to demobilize immediately show that even the soldiers were tired of fighting. In his reports, MacArthur pointed out the hugely disproportionate ratio of American to Japanese troops. Two and a half American divisions were in charge of “fifty-nine Japanese divisions, thirty-six brigades, and forty-five-odd regiments plus naval and air forces,” totaling roughly 3.5 million Japanese soldiers. Had the Japanese men chosen to, they could easily have ousted a relaxed, though cautious invader. Instead, they complied swiftly with orders to disarm and without the least resistance or complaint. MacArthur relates an anecdote in his report that exemplifies the cooperative spirit between the Imperial Japanese forces and their American Occupation counterparts during the process of demobilization. An American jeep encountered a Japanese tank column on the way to a disarmament depot. To let the jeep pass, the Japanese commander ordered his tanks to halt. MacArthur continues,

“As the lead tank stopped to permit passing, the jeep driver cautiously skirted it to the left on the narrow road. The soft shoulder crumbled and the American found himself tilted at a perilous angle with his vehicle mired in the soft muck of


32 Ibid..
dered portrait of MacArthur. This is, as Dower points out, an imitation of the wartime practice of sending handmade *sennin-bari haramaki*, or “thousand-stitch belly bands,” as an affirmation of the close bonds between the people at home and the soldiers abroad. 

This appeal points out that family members had no desire to blame their loved ones in uniform. To them, there was no shame in acknowledging that their husbands, brothers, sons were soldiers who lost the war. They expressed only an innate human desire to reunite the family with their missing relatives. This suggests that the public’s contempt of veterans was not always directed against the soldiers themselves but rather at the militarism and humiliation that they represented.

The sad truth is that many who returned to their native Japan returned as ashes. Many Japanese orphans were repatriated with their families’ remains tied around their neck in white boxes. Servicemen returning from abroad performed the same duty for their deceased comrades, endeavoring to find their friends’ relatives to give them some closure.

Terrific efforts were made by these soldiers to see to their responsibility to their deceased comrades before attempting to reconnect with their own loved ones.

Many of the former servicemen were “cynical and contemptuous of the officers who had led them in battle.” In a letter to the *Asahi* newspaper one former enlisted soldier wrote about how enlisted men died of starvation more often than officers and asked, “How he could give comfort to the souls of his dead comrades.” Tominaga Shôzô, and over a thousand of his comrades captured in Manchuria did not return to Japan until 1956. They had been handed over by Soviet troops to Communist Chinese troops, and kept in captivity for trial. Most were acquitted on the basis that they had shown sincere repentance during their captivity and were then repatriated to Japan. “I didn’t even feel that I had returned to my motherland… I got off the ship and walked past the welcoming crowd until I encountered my wife’s face,” Tominaga says. Even worse, in the sixteen years since Tominaga had left for China, his daughter had grown up entirely without him: “the girl standing there like a stranger was my daughter.”

### The Tokyo War Crimes Trial and the Japanese Reaction

Another factor that had huge impact on the post-war Japanese public was the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, also known as the Tokyo War Crimes Trial. The types and numbers of convicts in the Tokyo War Crimes Trials offer insight into the public’s acceptance of war responsibility. For “crimes against peace” twenty five “Class A” criminals were accused and found guilty. Seven were hanged, thirteen imprisoned for life and two were imprisoned for lesser terms. No acquittals were made for these

---

34 Dower, 50-52.  
36 Ibid, 57.  
37 Ibid, 58.  
38 Ibid, 59.  
40 Ibid, 22.  
41 Ibid.
Japan Disarmed

This is, as Dower points out, an imitation of the wartime practice of sending handmade *sennin-bari haramaki*, or “thousand-stitch belly bands,” as an affirmation of the close bonds between the people at home and the soldiers abroad.\(^{35}\) This appeal points out that family members had no desire to blame their loved ones in uniform. To them, there was no shame in acknowledging that their husbands, brothers, sons were soldiers who lost the war. They expressed only an innate human desire to reunite the family with their missing relatives. This suggests that the public’s contempt of veterans was not always directed against the soldiers themselves but rather at the militarism and humiliation that they represented.

The sad truth is that many who returned to their native Japan returned as ashes. Many Japanese orphans were repatriated with their families’ remains tied around their neck in white boxes. Servicemen returning from abroad performed the same duty for their deceased comrades, endeavoring to find their friends’ relatives to give them some closure.\(^{36}\) Terrific efforts were made by these soldiers to see to their responsibility to their deceased comrades before attempting to reconnect with their own loved ones.

Many of the former servicemen were “cynical and contemptuous of the officers who had led them in battle.”\(^{37}\) In a letter to the *Asahi* newspaper one former enlisted soldier wrote about how enlisted men died of starvation more often than officers and asked, “How he could give comfort to the souls of his dead comrades.”\(^{38}\) Tominaga Shôzô, and over a thousand of his comrades captured in Manchuria did not return to Japan until 1956. They had been handed over by Soviet troops to Communist Chinese troops, and kept in captivity for trial. Most were acquitted on the basis that they had shown sincere repentance during their captivity and were then repatriated to Japan. “I didn’t even feel that I had returned to my motherland… I got off the ship and walked past the welcoming crowd until I encountered my wife’s face,” Tominaga says. Even worse, in the sixteen years since Tominaga had left for China, his daughter had grown up entirely without him: “the girl standing there like a stranger was my daughter.”\(^{39}\)

**The Tokyo War Crimes Trial and the Japanese Reaction**

Another factor that had huge impact on the post-war Japanese public was the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, also known as the Tokyo War Crimes Trial. The types and numbers of convicts in the Tokyo War Crimes Trials offer insight into the public’s acceptance of war responsibility. For “crimes against peace” twenty five “Class A” criminals were accused and found guilty.\(^{40}\) Seven were hanged, thirteen imprisoned for life and two were imprisoned for lesser terms.\(^{41}\) No acquittals were made for these

\(^{34}\) Dower, 50-52.

\(^{35}\) Ibid, 52.

\(^{36}\) Ibid, 57.

\(^{37}\) Ibid, 58.
men. Judge Radhabinod B. Pal led the dissenting votes by reasoning that victory did not grant the right to try the defeated and that the Allies were in no position to pass fair judgment on the Japanese crimes. He even argued that if Japan were to be tried for the “indiscriminate slaughter of civilians, then America too should be arraigned for dropping the atomic bomb.” Pal felt that the “retroactive application of new law... was tantamount to the victors’ arbitrary exercise of power.”

The Tokyo War Crimes Trial was a show trial meant to publicly pin the responsibility of the war on the Japanese and to publicly punish the wartime leadership for their actions.

Murakami Hyōe examines the data and differentiates the various convicts. Murakami’s first point deals with Tōjō Hideki, the military prime minister from 1941-44 who was labeled as a “Class A” criminal. Tōjō had intended to argue every accusation placed against him and attempt to justify Japan’s actions. Marquis Kido Kōichi, a fellow “Class A” criminal and one of the Emperor’s closest advisors, stopped Tōjō by pointing out that such arguments would involve the Emperor and resurrect the issue of his culpability. Tōjō changed his approach to ensure that he would assume sole responsibility to allow the emperor to remain blameless. In his own way, Tōjō guaranteed the preservation of the Imperial dynasty and helped Japan recover from the humiliation by shouldering the emperor’s guilt himself.

**Godzilla and His Symbolism**

The media during the Occupation, as has been previously mentioned, was strictly controlled. Therefore, to get a view of Japanese public sentiment, one should turn to movies. An excellent example is *Gojira*, directed by Honda Ishiro in 1954. *Gojira* is full of subtle anti-war and anti-nuclear metaphors. The name, “Godzilla,” is an Americanization of the Japanese name *Gojira* and the two are relatively interchangeable. The movie was produced after the end of the American Occupation and its censorship. The premise of the movie is that due to nuclear bomb testing, a dinosaur living at the bottom of the ocean was exposed to a huge amount of radiation which mutated and angered the beast. The protagonist lovers are Ogata, a Japanese Coast Guard sailor, and Emiko, a nurse and daughter of Japan’s leading paleontologist, Dr. Yamane. As Godzilla’s mysterious attacks at sea turn into invasions of Tokyo, Ogata and the rest of Japan’s defense forces prove incapable of stopping the monster from destroying Tokyo and killing its inhabitants. It is only when the enigmatic Dr. Serizawa reluctantly reveals and uses his Oxygen Destroyer that Godzilla is killed, much to the sadness of Dr. Yamane. In its original release version, the movie contained messages that would not have been permitted by American censors. In fact, the 1955 American release cut most of the scenes referencing the atomic bomb or Japan’s experiences in the war to

---

42 Murakami, 213.
43 Ibid..
46 Dower, 460-61.
47 Honda, *Gojira* (DVD).
men. Judge Radhabinod B. Pal led the dissenting votes by reasoning that victory did not grant the right to try the defeated and that the Allies were in no position to pass fair judgment on the Japanese crimes. He even argued that if Japan were to be tried for the “indiscriminate slaughter of civilians, then America too should be arraigned for dropping the atomic bomb.” Pal felt that the “retroactive application of new law… was tantamount to the victors’ arbitrary exercise of power.” The Tokyo War Crimes Trial was a show trial meant to publicly pin the responsibility of the war on the Japanese and to publicly punish the wartime leadership for their actions.

Murakami Hyöe examines the data and differentiates the various convicts. Murakami’s first point deals with Tōjō Hideki, the military prime minister from 1941-44 who was labeled as a “Class A” criminal. Tōjō had intended to argue every accusation placed against him and attempt to justify Japan’s actions. Marquis Kido Kōichi, a fellow “Class A” criminal and one of the Emperor’s closest advisors, stopped Tōjō by pointing out that such arguments would involve the Emperor and resurrect the issue of his culpability. Tōjō changed his approach to ensure that he would assume sole responsibility to allow the emperor to remain blameless. In his own way, Tōjō guaranteed the preservation of the Imperial dynasty and helped Japan recover from the humiliation by shouldering the emperor’s guilt himself.

Godzilla and His Symbolism

The media during the Occupation, as has been previously mentioned, was strictly controlled. Therefore, to get a view of Japanese public sentiment, one should turn to movies. An excellent example is Gojira, directed by Honda Ishiro in 1954. Gojira is full of subtle anti-war and anti-nuclear metaphors. The name, “Godzilla,” is an Americanization of the Japanese name Gojira and the two are relatively interchangeable. The movie was produced after the end of the American Occupation and its censorship. The premise of the movie is that due to nuclear bomb testing, a dinosaur living at the bottom of the ocean was exposed to a huge amount of radiation which mutated and angered the beast. The protagonist lovers are Ogata, a Japanese Coast Guard sailor, and Emiko, a nurse and daughter of Japan’s leading paleontologist, Dr. Yamane. As Godzilla’s mysterious attacks at sea turn into invasions of Tokyo, Ogata and the rest of Japan’s defense forces prove incapable of stopping the monster from destroying Tokyo and killing its inhabitants. It is only when the enigmatic Dr. Serizawa reluctantly reveals and uses his Oxygen Destroyer that Godzilla is killed, much to the sadness of Dr. Yamane. In its original release version, the movie contained messages that would not have been permitted by American censors. In fact, the 1955 American release cut most of the scenes referencing the atomic bomb or Japan’s experiences in the war to

42 Murakami, 213.
43 Ibid..
46 Dower, 460-61.
47 Honda, Gojira.(DVD).
Japan Disarmed

give the movie a more light-hearted ending. The popularity of the franchise, combined with Godzilla’s status as a symbol of Japanese monster movies, make it an excellent example of post-censorship material, unimpeded by strict foreign censorship.\(^{48}\)

The anti-war theme is reflected in multiple instances. First, Ogata is a member of the Coast Guard tasked with rescuing Godzilla’s earliest victims: fishermen attacked at sea. Ogata’s occupation is not necessarily a military job but it is still a martial job with similarities to a military force. Its title and mission, however, are purely separated from the military so that Ogata possesses the same martial bearing as a military man but with a more benevolent purpose, consistent with Japan’s postwar prohibition of war. The first attack against Godzilla is conducted by Coast Guard frigates that launched depth charges in the area where they thought Godzilla resided. In disgust, Dr. Yamane comments that, “All they [the government] think about is killing Godzilla.”\(^{49}\) It is a thinly-veiled critique of violence as a solution when other alternatives remain unexplored.

To prepare for an invasion by Godzilla after the failed naval attack, the Coast Guard and the Army set up an elaborate defensive plan around Tokyo Bay. The use of the term “Army” by the English-language subtitling may refer to the newly created Japan Self Defense Forces or it may refer to a generic army organization that is not the Imperial Japanese Army. Regardless, the army in the movie is a well-stocked defense force with machine guns, heavy artillery, tanks and electric wire towers. None of these modern weapons, however, impede Godzilla’s rampage in Tokyo. As Godzilla is heading back to sea, the Air Force appears in modern jets, firing rockets at the monster. The rockets seem to do little more than annoy Godzilla, who subsequently submerges beneath the water. From the ruins, survivors cheer the Air Force jets as they attack Godzilla. But the monster’s departure raises the question of whether he would have left even without the Air Force’s attack and whether the cheering survivors echo the survivors of Allied bombings who continued to support the Japanese war effort in the last days of World War II. The clear conclusion is that the military solution failed to kill, deter or even shorten Godzilla’s attack on Tokyo. The movie steers the audience to see how useless the military is when, despite its best efforts, Tokyo is in ruins.

The protagonist couple, Emiko and Ogata, is a metaphor as well, representing the future of Japan that hopes for a brighter tomorrow. Oppositely, Dr. Serizawa is introduced as a veteran of the war who is trying to better the world but cannot because he is unable to find a beneficial use for his invention, the Oxygen Destroyer. Serizawa is only persuaded to use the Oxygen Destroyer against Godzilla after watching schoolchildren sing a song named “Oh Peace, Oh Light, Return,” whose lyrics (according to the subtitles) go, “May we live without destruction/May we look to tomorrow with hope/May Peace and Light return to

\(^{48}\) One necessary disclaimer is needed. This author is not fluent in Japanese and viewed the 1954 film in Japanese with English subtitles. As a result, all quotes from the movie are subtitles taken from the movie and the author cannot verify the accuracy of the translations.

\(^{49}\) Ibid..
Japan Disarmed

give the movie a more light-hearted ending. The popularity of the franchise, combined with Godzilla’s status as a symbol of Japanese monster movies, make it an excellent example of post-censorship material, unimpeded by strict foreign censorship.48

The anti-war theme is reflected in multiple instances. First, Ogata is a member of the Coast Guard tasked with rescuing Godzilla’s earliest victims: fishermen attacked at sea. Ogata’s occupation is not necessarily a military job but it is still a martial job with similarities to a military force. Its title and mission, however, are purely separated from the military so that Ogata possesses the same martial bearing as a military man but with a more benevolent purpose, consistent with Japan’s postwar prohibition of war. The first attack against Godzilla is conducted by Coast Guard frigates that launched depth charges in the area where they thought Godzilla resided. In disgust, Dr. Yamane comments that, “All they [the government] think about is killing Godzilla.”49 It is a thinly-veiled critique of violence as a solution when other alternatives remain unexplored.

To prepare for an invasion by Godzilla after the failed naval attack, the Coast Guard and the Army set up an elaborate defensive plan around Tokyo Bay. The use of the term “Army” by the English-language subtitling may refer to the newly created Japan Self Defense Forces or it may refer to a generic army organization that is not the Imperial Japanese Army. Regardless, the army in the movie is a well-stocked defense force with machine guns, heavy artillery, tanks and electric wire towers. None of these modern weapons, however, impede Godzilla’s rampage in Tokyo. As Godzilla is heading back to sea, the Air Force appears in modern jets, firing rockets at the monster. The rockets seem to do little more than annoy Godzilla, who subsequently submerges beneath the water. From the ruins, survivors cheer the Air Force jets as they attack Godzilla. But the monster’s departure raises the question of whether he would have left even without the Air Force’s attack and whether the cheering survivors echo the survivors of Allied bombings who continued to support the Japanese war effort in the last days of World War II. The clear conclusion is that the military solution failed to kill, deter or even shorten Godzilla’s attack on Tokyo. The movie steers the audience to see how useless the military is when, despite its best efforts, Tokyo is in ruins.

The protagonist couple, Emiko and Ogata, is a metaphor as well, representing the future of Japan that hopes for a brighter tomorrow. Oppositely, Dr. Serizawa is introduced as a veteran of the war who is trying to better the world but cannot because he is unable to find a beneficial use for his invention, the Oxygen Destroyer. Serizawa is only persuaded to use the Oxygen Destroyer against Godzilla after watching schoolchildren sing a song named “Oh Peace, Oh Light, Return,” whose lyrics (according to the subtitles) go, “May we live without destruction/May we look to tomorrow with hope/May Peace and Light return to

48 One necessary disclaimer is needed. This author is not fluent in Japanese and viewed the 1954 film in Japanese with English subtitles. As a result, all quotes from the movie are subtitles taken from the movie and the author cannot verify the accuracy of the translations.
49 Ibid.
Serizawa agrees to use the weapon, on the condition that he would be allowed to destroy all of his notes and work first to prevent anyone else from replicating the Oxygen Destroyer. Later in the movie, he and Ogata descend into the sea in diving suits, and before activating the Oxygen Destroyer, Serizawa yanks on Ogata’s line to signal to the people on the boat to haul him up. The scientist then activates the Oxygen Destroyer and says to Ogata that he hopes he and Emiko are happy together before cutting his oxygen and rope line to the boat. Both Ogata and Emiko are devastated that the man killed himself to give them a better future and that they had caused him to take his own life to prevent the knowledge of his dangerous invention from being copied.

It is made clear in the movie that the military was unable to do anything about Godzilla, that their weapons and attacks did nothing more than invite further retaliation. The answer could only be found in a terrifically powerful and terrifying weapon named the Oxygen Destroyer. This implies a message of the end of the military’s usefulness and the growing importance of science to shape the world. The movie is a rejection of militaristic solutions and a message that nuclear weapons cannot lead to anything but more death and sorrow. Nevertheless, it adds a cautionary message that science is also a double edged tool. It was the pursuit of science that created the atomic bombs and could lead to weapons far more lethal. If one were to view Godzilla as a metaphor for the Americans during World War II, the criticism of the military and their response becomes even more scathing because it highlights their inability to defend the country. When viewed in such a light, one cannot help but notice a cruel irony. The whole point of modernizing Japan’s military, from the Meiji period in the 1880s up to 1945, was to defend Japan from foreign occupation. Instead, the military’s actions had provoked the very conflict the Japanese had sought to avoid and, in turn, invited the Occupation they had wished to prevent.

The anti-nuclear theme that is predominant in the movie cannot be downplayed. Geiger counters are used frequently in the movie to show radiation levels. Many of these anti-nuclear messages are embedded in scenes that reference World War II. The first report of Godzilla’s attack was that there was a “sudden explosion,” reminiscent of the atomic bombs’ detonation. Godzilla’s first landfall on Odo Island leaves large, deep impressions that are radioactive and dangerous to the public. Dr. Yamane presents his findings to the Japanese Diet: “Recent nuclear experimental detonations may have drastically altered its natural habitats. I would even speculate that a hydrogen bomb explosion may have removed it from its surroundings.” To support this, he quotes how sand found where Godzilla had trod contained Strontium-90, a radioactive element only found in atomic bomb detonations, which led him to believe that Godzilla must have absorbed a massive amount of radiation and still survived.

50 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
Serizawa agrees to use the weapon, on the condition that he would be allowed to destroy all of his notes and work first to prevent anyone else from replicating the Oxygen Destroyer. Later in the movie, he and Ogata descend into the sea in diving suits, and before activating the Oxygen Destroyer, Serizawa yanks on Ogata’s line to signal to the people on the boat to haul him up. The scientist then activates the Oxygen Destroyer and says to Ogata that he hopes he and Emiko are happy together before cutting his oxygen and rope line to the boat. Both Ogata and Emiko are devastated that the man killed himself to give them a better future and that they had caused him to take his own life to prevent the knowledge of his dangerous invention from being copied.

It is made clear in the movie that the military was unable to do anything about Godzilla, that their weapons and attacks did nothing more than invite further retaliation. The answer could only be found in a terrifying weapon named the Oxygen Destroyer. This implies a message of the end of the military’s usefulness and the growing importance of science to shape the world. The movie is a rejection of militaristic solutions and a message that nuclear weapons cannot lead to anything but more death and sorrow. Nevertheless, it adds a cautionary message that science is also a double-edged tool. It was the pursuit of science that created the atomic bombs and could lead to weapons far more lethal. If one were to view Godzilla as a metaphor for the Americans during World War II, the criticism of the military and their response becomes even more scathing because it highlights their inability to defend the country. When viewed in such a light, one cannot help but notice a cruel irony. The whole point of modernizing Japan’s military, from the Meiji period in the 1880s up to 1945, was to defend Japan from foreign occupation. Instead, the military’s actions had provoked the very conflict the Japanese had sought to avoid and, in turn, invited the Occupation they had wished to prevent.

The anti-nuclear theme that is predominant in the movie cannot be downplayed. Geiger counters are used frequently in the movie to show radiation levels. Many of these anti-nuclear messages are embedded in scenes that reference World War II. The first report of Godzilla’s attack was that there was a “sudden explosion,” reminiscent of the atomic bombs’ detonation. Godzilla’s first landfall on Odo Island leaves large, deep impressions that are radioactive and dangerous to the public. Dr. Yamane presents his findings to the Japanese Diet: “Recent nuclear experimental detonations may have drastically altered its natural habitats. I would even speculate that a hydrogen bomb explosion may have removed it from its surroundings.” To support this, he quotes how sand found where Godzilla had trod contained Strontium-90, a radioactive element only found in atomic bomb detonations, which led him to believe that Godzilla must have absorbed a massive amount of radiation and still survived.

50 Ibid.
52 Ibid..
53 Ibid..
54 Ibid.
The young Ogata felt that they should kill Godzilla to prevent him from spreading death and suffering. He bluntly asked, “Isn’t Godzilla a product of the atomic bomb, which still haunts many of us Japanese?” To which, Yamane, who had been arguing for a study of the monster, responded angrily: “Don’t you think we should study this creature which lives regardless of the radiation it absorbs?”

There is a memorable scene that speaks out against nuclear weapons and the horrific aftermath inflicted on humans. It starts by showing the destruction of Tokyo where the landscape is almost entirely flat, with only partial remains of walls, street posts and piles of rubble to give the impression that this was once a city. It is an image that is starkly reminiscent of the aftermath of the bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where entire city blocks were leveled by the blast. The scene then cuts to the hospital where Emiko is helping a doctor, who is holding a Geiger counter to a child. The doctor shakes his head as he gets the reading and moves on, leaving Emiko to find a way to comfort the mother whose child is doomed to die from radiation exposure, received from Godzilla’s presence.

In the context of the Japanese social rejection of militarism post-World War II, Gojira makes a clear distinction about the powerlessness of the most modern military weapons and the growing anti-militarism in Japan. The movie’s intent is to show how detrimental the military solution is to human society and that all wars, whether nuclear or conventional, invite only more death and destruction.

It is clear that the American Occupation under MacArthur and SCAP intended to remodel Japan into a democracy in the hopes that it would never become a militaristic nation again. For this, they needed scapegoats. The most visible scapegoats were, naturally, the defeated soldiers and their leaders. The International Military Tribunal for the Far East very publicly sentenced most of Japan’s wartime leadership to death or lifetime imprisonment. The American censorship program did likewise by allowing criticism of wartime leadership and anti-militaristic opinions to be published while suppressing all views supporting militarism. This makes it impossible to say with any certainty that the social media of the Occupation period accurately reflected the Japanese public’s opinions. However, it can be said that there was staunch anti-militarism and criticism of the wartime leadership in the wake of Japan’s defeat that came from both the civilian and ex-military sectors of the Japanese population, though in varying forms.

Regardless of the American influence during the Occupation, it is evident that the Japanese public would have leaned towards pacifism. The atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki left deep emotional scars on the public psyche. This is evident in the popular 1954 movie, Gojira, which does a very good job of highlighting the military’s failure to stop Godzilla, a metaphor for the Americans and the danger of nuclear weapons. Japanese post-war pacifism probably differed from what was envisioned by MacArthur and SCAP. Most likely – mirroring – Prime Minister Shidehara’s sentiments, it may have involved some form of standing armed forces, reminiscent of the
The young Ogata felt that they should kill Godzilla to prevent him from spreading death and suffering. He bluntly asked, “Isn’t Godzilla a product of the atomic bomb, which still haunts many of us Japanese?” To which, Yamane, who had been arguing for a study of the monster, responded angrily: “Don’t you think we should study this creature which lives regardless of the radiation it absorbs?”

There is a memorable scene that speaks out against nuclear weapons and the horrific aftermath inflicted on humans. It starts by showing the destruction of Tokyo where the landscape is almost entirely flat, with only partial remains of walls, street posts and piles of rubble to give the impression that this was once a city. It is an image that is starkly reminiscent of the aftermath of the bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where entire city blocks were leveled by the blast. The scene then cuts to the hospital where Emiko is helping a doctor, who is holding a Geiger counter to a child. The doctor shakes his head as he gets the reading and moves on, leaving Emiko to find a way to comfort the mother whose child is doomed to die from radiation exposure, received from Godzilla’s presence.

In the context of the Japanese social rejection of militarism post-World War II, Gojira makes a clear distinction about the powerlessness of the most modern military weapons and the growing anti-militarism in Japan. The movie’s intent is to show how detrimental the military solution is to human society and that all wars, whether nuclear or conventional, invite only more death and destruction.

Conclusions
It is clear that the American Occupation under MacArthur and SCAP intended to remodel Japan into a democracy in the hopes that it would never become a militaristic nation again. For this, they needed scapegoats. The most visible scapegoats were, naturally, the defeated soldiers and their leaders. The International Military Tribunal for the Far East very publicly sentenced most of Japan’s wartime leadership to death or lifetime imprisonment. The American censorship program did likewise by allowing criticism of wartime leadership and anti-militaristic opinions to be published while suppressing all views supporting militarism. This makes it impossible to say with any certainty that the social media of the Occupation period accurately reflected the Japanese public’s opinions. However, it can be said that there was staunch anti-militarism and criticism of the wartime leadership in the wake of Japan’s defeat that came from both the civilian and ex-military sectors of the Japanese population, though in varying forms.

Regardless of the American influence during the Occupation, it is evident that the Japanese public would have leaned towards pacifism. The atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki left deep emotional scars on the public psyche. This is evident in the popular 1954 movie, Gojira, which does a very good job of highlighting the military’s failure to stop Godzilla, a metaphor for the Americans and the danger of nuclear weapons. Japanese post-war pacifism probably differed from what was envisioned by MacArthur and SCAP. Most likely – mirroring – Prime Minister Shidehara’s sentiments, it may have involved some form of standing armed forces, reminiscent of the
Japan Disarmed

modern Japan Self Defense Forces, and they would have been limited to deployment on the Japanese home islands. This is, however, a moot point when one considers how former servicemen were extremely critical of the wartime leadership and their conduct.

Most importantly, the Japanese soldier in the aftermath of World War II presents a strange paradox. He is a symbol of the onerous wartime militaristic faction which led Japan to defeat and humiliation, but at the same time, he is a victim of that war. The soldier who had defended the home islands before being demobilized was merely reviled. The soldier who returned from overseas suffered long periods of physical labor at the hands of Allied captors. He received the same rebuke from his community, but at least he was able to reunite with some of his family. Finally, the image of the missing soldier, whose fate is unknown, begs for sympathy for both him and his loved ones on a humanistic level because that is, ultimately, not a form of suffering one could wish upon another. Each of these three categories can be found in the analysis of postwar Japan and the views regarding soldiers.

To one degree or another, following their defeat and the full accounting of facts, most Japanese became opposed to Japan’s involvement in World War II. This was helped along, in part, by the American Occupation’s policies. However, any kind of drastic social change cannot be accepted by the general populace unless there is a willingness already in place to change. To do so without this willingness would reduce the effectiveness of any change. The fact that the majority of the Japanese readily accepted the anti-militarist limitations of the new Constitution and that the demobilized soldier came to represent a shameful period of Japanese history at all speaks to the anti-militaristic tendencies already present in the Japanese public. When amplified in social media by censorship, one would think that the sentiments were foisted upon the Japanese but that would not be wholly true. It is only when one examines social media after the end of censorship that any understanding of Japanese sentiment can be formed. With Gojira as an example, one comes to the conclusion that the military was rejected by the Japanese social media. One cannot underestimate the amount of soul-searching done by the Japanese immediately after World War II and it is evident that they would have rejected a return of militarism, which had led them to incur such devastating physical and emotional losses.

Ian Ghows is a graduating Senior History major at Santa Clara University. He is from Singapore and credits his grandfathers for his interest in History thanks to all the stories they told him as a child. Following graduation, he intends to work as a teacher before applying for graduate school to get a Masters in History.
modern Japan Self Defense Forces, and they would have been limited to deployment on the Japanese home islands. This is, however, a moot point when one considers how former servicemen were extremely critical of the wartime leadership and their conduct.

Most importantly, the Japanese soldier in the aftermath of World War II presents a strange paradox. He is a symbol of the onerous wartime militaristic faction which led Japan to defeat and humiliation, but at the same time, he is a victim of that war. The soldier who had defended the home islands before being demobilized was merely reviled. The soldier who returned from overseas suffered long periods of physical labor at the hands of Allied captors. He received the same rebuke from his community, but at least he was able to reunite with some of his family. Finally, the image of the missing soldier, whose fate is unknown, begs for sympathy for both him and his loved ones on a humanistic level because that is, ultimately, not a form of suffering one could wish upon another. Each of these three categories can be found in the analysis of postwar Japan and the views regarding soldiers.

To one degree or another, following their defeat and the full accounting of facts, most Japanese became opposed to Japan’s involvement in World War II. This was helped along, in part, by the American Occupation’s policies. However, any kind of drastic social change cannot be accepted by the general populace unless there is a willingness already in place to change. To do so without this willingness would reduce the effectiveness of any change. The fact that the majority of the Japanese readily accepted the antimilitarist limitations of the new Constitution and that the demobilized soldier came to represent a shameful period of Japanese history at all speaks to the antimilitaristic tendencies already present in the Japanese public. When amplified in social media by censorship, one would think that the sentiments were foisted upon the Japanese but that would not be wholly true. It is only when one examines social media after the end of censorship that any understanding of Japanese sentiment can be formed. With *Gojira* as an example, one comes to the conclusion that the military was rejected by the Japanese social media. One cannot underestimate the amount of soul-searching done by the Japanese immediately after World War II and it is evident that they would have rejected a return of militarism, which had led them to incur such devastating physical and emotional losses.

Ian Ghows is a graduating Senior History major at Santa Clara University. He is from Singapore and credits his grandfathers for his interest in History thanks to all the stories they told him as a child. Following graduation, he intends to work as a teacher before applying for graduate school to get a Masters in History.
Debate rages in the military community over whether women should receive equal status. In January of 2012, Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum expressed “concerns about women in frontline combat,” explaining that their presence could create “a very compromising situation...where people naturally...may do things that may not be in the interests of the mission because of other types of emotions that are involved.”\(^1\) Even though the military started accepting women into academies over thirty years ago, sex discrimination remains rife, leading to tensions between men and women, and, in slowly rising numbers, cases of sexual assault. Almost a third of all women currently serving in the military are estimated to have been victims of sexual assault or rape, a rate that is twice as high as in the civilian population.\(^2\) These results are due in large part to the deeply entrenched misogynistic culture of the military.


The traditions and cultures of United States Armed Forces have remained largely unchanged for the better part of three centuries. While the integration of African Americans into the armed forces disrupted some military traditions, racial integration was rigidly enforced and not nearly as disruptive as the integration of women. Because of its hyper-masculine, male-centered culture, the integration of women has challenged the traditions and cultures of the US military in fundamental ways.

The military claims to be in the midst of a paradigm shift from “exclusionary combat, masculine-warrior” culture, to a culture that mirrors society’s shift towards “egalitarianism and inclusiveness.”\(^3\) However, it has not made the changes necessary to accept women as truly equal members, causing women to continue to struggle to find equality in the armed forces. By their very nature, women challenge everything for which the military used to stand—because of its foundation in perceptions of manhood and masculinity.

The United States military has always been concerned with its image as a powerful, virile force. Generations of patriotic, hardworking men have protected military traditions passed down from the Revolutionary War. When the country entered the mid-20th century, most men were taking up desk jobs, leaving relatively few working with their hands—the traditional occupation of “real” men. As women entered the work force during World War II en masse, there were few careers men could enter without working side

FUBAR: A Historical Perspective on the Status of Women in the US Military

Liz Marsden

Debate rages in the military community over whether women should receive equal status. In January of 2012, Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum expressed “concerns about women in frontline combat,” explaining that their presence could create “a very compromising situation...where people naturally...may do things that may not be in the interests of the mission because of other types of emotions that are involved.”¹ Even though the military started accepting women into academies over thirty years ago, sex discrimination remains rife, leading to tensions between men and women, and, in slowly rising numbers, cases of sexual assault. Almost a third of all women currently serving in the military are estimated to have been victims of sexual assault or rape, a rate that is twice as high as in the civilian population.² These results are due in large part to the deeply entrenched misogynistic culture of the military.

The traditions and cultures of United States Armed Forces have remained largely unchanged for the better part of three centuries. While the integration of African Americans into the armed forces disrupted some military traditions, racial integration was rigidly enforced and not nearly as disruptive as the integration of women. Because of its hyper-masculine, male-centered culture, the integration of women has challenged the traditions and cultures of the US military in fundamental ways.

The military claims to be in the midst of a paradigm shift from “exclusionary combat, masculine-warrior” culture, to a culture that mirrors society’s shift towards “egalitarianism and inclusiveness.”³ However, it has not made the changes necessary to accept women as truly equal members, causing women to continue to struggle to find equality in the armed forces. By their very nature, women challenge everything for which the military used to stand—because of its foundation in perceptions of manhood and masculinity.

The United States military has always been concerned with its image as a powerful, virile force. Generations of patriotic, hardworking men have protected military traditions passed down from the Revolutionary War. When the country entered the mid-20th century, most men were taking up desk jobs, leaving relatively few working with their hands—the traditional occupation of “real” men. As women entered the work force during World War II en masse, there were few careers men could enter without working side


by side with women. This made the military an increasingly rare opportunity to perform a “man’s job.” It was seen as a beacon of masculinity and strength, a reputation the military reinforced in its propaganda posters. The young men aged eighteen to twenty-five who make up the bulk of the enlisted army personnel, are, even today, indoctrinated into this traditional masculine culture.⁴

Scholar Linda Francke notes, “The military culture is driven by a group dynamic centered around male perceptions and sensibilities, male psychology and power, male anxieties and the affirmation of masculinity.”⁵ Once recruits enter basic training, they are told that their old life is over. They are maggots, the lowest of the low in a very hierarchical structure. A group identity is created. The individual is gone; the only thing that matters are one’s fellow soldiers. This contributes to the harassment and discrimination women face in the military. Group mentality encourages behavior that an individual would not normally exhibit, and is encouraged by the over-idealization of the small percentage of men who see action. These men are considered the pinnacle of masculinity within the army, decorated with purple hearts, and ribbons. Equating masculinity with violence ignores that “only 15 percent ever fired their weapons in combat” in World War II, and “fewer than 15 percent of the hundreds of thousands of military personnel who served in Vietnam are estimated to have been in a firefight.”⁶ Despite this reality, new recruits are trained to strive for “STRAC” status—that is, “Straight, Tough and Ready for Action.”⁷

From basic training on, very close bonds are formed between soldiers. Reducing women to sex objects has been “considered essential to forming close fraternal bonds.”⁸ This brand of group mentality takes a negative turn when women come into the military. The results can be something as relatively minor as “aggressive pranks like ‘mooning’ passing cars” to violent gang rapes. “Such male-to-male displays [serve] to wean out the wimps in the male group and establish a leadership hierarchy based on daring.”⁹ One man might not do such things on his own, but as a member of a group fighting for a hierarchical position, the stakes and behaviors change.

In the past young recruits were degraded by their Staff Sergeants by the use of sexist epithets. These served to associate shame with femininity, reminding these young men to strive for masculinity. For example, the very common (until recently) chant of “this is my Rifle, this is my Gun, this is for fighting, this is for fun” was used to remind recruits that they should never refer to their rifle as a gun.¹⁰ In a hazing technique, the man who mistakenly referred to his rifle as

---


---

⁶ Ibid., 153.
⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Ibid., 159.
⁹ Ibid.
by side with women. This made the military an increasingly rare opportunity to perform a “man’s job.” It was seen as a beacon of masculinity and strength, a reputation the military reinforced in its propaganda posters. The young men aged eighteen to twenty-five who make up the bulk of the enlisted army personnel, are, even today, indoctrinated into this traditional masculine culture.4

Scholar Linda Francke notes, “The military culture is driven by a group dynamic centered around male perceptions and sensibilities, male psychology and power, male anxieties and the affirmation of masculinity.”5 Once recruits enter basic training, they are told that their old life is over. They are maggots, the lowest of the low in a very hierarchical structure. A group identity is created. The individual is gone; the only thing that matters are one’s fellow soldiers. This contributes to the harassment and discrimination women face in the military. Group mentality encourages behavior that an individual would not normally exhibit, and is encouraged by the over-idealization of the small percentage of men who see action. These men are considered the pinnacle of masculinity within the army, decorated with purple hearts, and ribbons. Equating masculinity with violence ignores that “only 15 percent ever fired their weapons in combat” in World War II, and “fewer than 15 percent of the hundreds of thousands of military personnel who served in Vietnam are estimated to have been in a firefight.”6 Despite this reality, new recruits are trained to strive for “STRAC” status—that is, “Straight, Tough and Ready for Action.”7

From basic training on, very close bonds are formed between soldiers. Reducing women to sex objects has been “considered essential to forming close fraternal bonds.”8 This brand of group mentality takes a negative turn when women come into the military. The results can be something as relatively minor as “aggressive pranks like ‘mooning’ passing cars” to violent gang rapes. “Such male-to-male displays [serve] to wean out the wimps in the male group and establish a leadership hierarchy based on daring.”9 One man might not do such things on his own, but as a member of a group fighting for a hierarchical position, the stakes and behaviors change.

In the past young recruits were degraded by their Staff Sergeants by the use of sexist epithets. These served to associate shame with femininity, reminding these young men to strive for masculinity. For example, the very common (until recently) chant of “this is my Rifle, this is my Gun, this is for fighting, this is for fun” was used to remind recruits that they should never refer to their rifle as a gun.10 In a hazing technique, the man who mistakenly referred to his rifle as

---


6 Ibid., 153.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., 159.

9 Ibid.

a gun would strip down to his underwear (or entirely) and recite this chant, clutching his crotch when referring to his gun that he was to use “for fun,” and clutching his rifle for the other lines. This and other very male-centric chants and degrading comments about acting like “sissies” or “ladies” were forbidden for fear of lawsuits when women entered the military academies and the basic training camps. Gone is yelling in soldiers’ faces or calling them names to motivate them. This new approach to training proves that the military is trying to change its image, but real change in the military with regard to female troops is slow in coming.

Women pose threats to the military culture beyond the taunts of drill sergeants however. The rhetoric in the military was to protect the weak: sisters, mothers, children—if women in the military can protect themselves, who are male soldiers protecting? World War II propaganda posters encouraged young men to “protect the nation’s honor,” represented by a young woman. The role of women in American society has undergone drastic changes. No longer is the term “breadwinner” apply exclusively to males. In 1979, women coming into the military were perceived as a threat by their male counterparts. Of eighty-seven men and seventy-six women beginning basic training at Fort McClellan in 1979, “twenty-two of the women had some college experience, as opposed to seven of the men. Only seven of the women had a GED...instead of a high school diploma, whereas thirty-six of the men had neither.” These statistics of women in the military having better educational backgrounds than their male counterparts remain typical today, exacerbating gender gap tensions—creating yet another challenge to the military’s notion of male dominance and superiority.

On the one hand, men joined the military believing it to be a boys’ club, resenting the women who were “imposing.” On the other hand, dedicated female patriots who sought entry to the military as equal comrades, and were told they cannot fight for their country. Both sides of this gender rift are frustrated with the situation and no course of action has eased the tensions. The women feel unappreciated, and the men see the women as intruders.

In a male-dominated world, women’s gender roles are tricky to navigate. What has been holding women back is the male perception that they are weak and cannot do a man’s job. Women have to prove themselves as masculine in order to gain the respect of their male counterparts. If they succeed, they risk being

---

11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
a gun would strip down to his underwear (or entirely) and recite this chant, clutching his crotch when referring to his gun that he was to use “for fun,” and clutching his rifle for the other lines. This and other very male-centric chants and degrading comments about acting like “sissies” or “ladies” were forbidden for fear of lawsuits when women entered the military academies and the basic training camps. Gone is yelling in soldiers’ faces or calling them names to motivate them. This new approach to training proves that the military is trying to change its image, but real change in the military with regard to female troops is slow in coming.

Women pose threats to the military culture beyond the taunts of drill sergeants however. The rhetoric in the military was to protect the weak: sisters, mothers, children—if women in the military can protect themselves, who are male soldiers protecting? World War II propaganda posters encouraged young men to “protect the nation’s honor,” represented by a young woman. The role of women in American society has undergone drastic changes. No longer is the term “breadwinner” apply exclusively to males. In 1979, women coming into the military were perceived as a threat by their male counterparts. Of eighty-seven men and seventy-six women beginning basic training at Fort McClellan in 1979, “twenty-two of the women had some college experience, as opposed to seven of the men. Only seven of the women had a GED...instead of a high school diploma, whereas thirty-six of the men had neither.” These statistics of women in the military having better educational backgrounds than their male counterparts remain typical today, exacerbating gender gap tensions—creating yet another challenge to the military’s notion of male dominance and superiority.

On the one hand, men joined the military believing it to be a boys’ club, resenting the women who were “imposing.” On the other hand, dedicated female patriots who sought entry to the military as equal comrades, and were told they cannot fight for their country. Both sides of this gender rift are frustrated with the situation and no course of action has eased the tensions. The women feel unappreciated, and the men see the women as intruders.

In a male-dominated world, women’s gender roles are tricky to navigate. What has been holding women back is the male perception that they are weak and cannot do a man’s job. Women have to prove themselves as masculine in order to gain the respect of their male counterparts. If they succeed, they risk being
perceived as too masculine, and are accused of being a lesbian or a bitch. Overly masculine women present a threat to their male counterparts, but there is also danger in not being masculine enough. If a female in the armed forces tries to retain her femininity she will face several challenges. If she is too “girly” she reinforces every stereotype of weakness that kept women out of the military historically, and continues to keep women out of combat. There is also the threat that if a woman appears excessively feminine, she will be perceived as “asking for it” when she is the victim of sexual assault. As a Naval officer said to female troops on the second day of boot camp, “Welcome to the fleet. In the Navy’s eyes you’re either dykes or whores—get used to it.” Trying to find middle ground between the two serves as an added stress for women in the military. Forty-nine percent of women in the military acknowledge pressures to act either masculine (33%) or feminine (26%). This pressure to act a certain way “can lead to decreased performance and efficiency on the part of those employees.” Women in the military worrying about gender roles and fitting in with their peers are likely to feel excluded and self-conscious in a group exercise or on a team.

While women’s formal acceptance into the military was long overdue, it was a result of social and political forces demanding military change. Years earlier, racial integration was not achieved as a response to social change; the military was racially integrated by an executive order from President Harry Truman that was prompted by political pressure. Racial inequality in the United States was a detriment during the Cold War. It was an Achilles heel for the United States because communism promised equal standing for all, regardless of race. Truman made the decision to integrate the military despite, rather than because of, widespread severe social opposition. The need to create a united front during the Cold War meant that from the top down, racial slurs and discrimination were not to be tolerated. Women, on the other hand, were making social strides in the 1960s and 1970s, achieving the right to birth control and abortion, even as the Equal Rights Amendment failed. Despite the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act in 1948 and the 1972 mandate that “all military occupational specialties [be] opened to WAC officers and enlisted women except those that might require combat training or duty,” women were only grudgingly accepted into the armed forces and to this day struggle for equality. Instead of being integrated in one fell, rigorously enforced, swoop as happened with race, women have been only sluggishly integrated into the military.

17 Ibid., 55.
18 Ibid., 41.
19 Ibid.
20 “President Truman’s Integration of the Armed Forces,” Congressional Digest, 89 no. 4 (Apr. 2010) 110-112.
perceived as too masculine, and are accused of being a lesbian or a bitch. Overly masculine women present a threat to their male counterparts, but there is also danger in not being masculine enough. If a female in the armed forces tries to retain her femininity she will face several challenges. If she is too “girly” she reinforces every stereotype of weakness that kept women out of the military historically, and continues to keep women out of combat. There is also the threat that if a woman appears excessively feminine, she will be perceived as “asking for it” when she is the victim of sexual assault. As a Naval officer said to female troops on the second day of boot camp, “Welcome to the fleet. In the Navy’s eyes you’re either dykes or whores—get used to it.” Trying to find middle ground between the two serves as an added stress for women in the military. Forty-nine percent of women in the military acknowledge pressures to act either masculine (33%) or feminine (26%). This pressure to act a certain way “can lead to decreased performance and efficiency on the part of those employees.” Women in the military worrying about gender roles and fitting in with their peers are likely to feel excluded and self-conscious in a group exercise or on a team.

While women’s formal acceptance into the military was long overdue, it was a result of social and political forces demanding military change. Years earlier, racial integration was not achieved as a response to social change; the military was racially integrated by an executive order from President Harry Truman that was prompted by political pressure. Racial inequality in the United States was a detriment during the Cold War. It was an Achilles heel for the United States because communism promised equal standing for all, regardless of race. Truman made the decision to integrate the military despite, rather than because of, widespread severe social opposition. The need to create a united front during the Cold War meant that from the top down, racial slurs and discrimination were not to be tolerated. Women, on the other hand, were making social strides in the 1960s and 1970s, achieving the right to birth control and abortion, even as the Equal Rights Amendment failed. Despite the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act in 1948 and the 1972 mandate that “all military occupational specialties [be] opened to WAC officers and enlisted women except those that might require combat training or duty,” women were only grudgingly accepted into the armed forces and to this day struggle for equality. Instead of being integrated in one fell, rigorously enforced, swoop as happened with race, women have been only sluggishly integrated into the military.

17 Ibid., 55.
18 Ibid., 41.
19 Ibid.
military in a stepping stone approach, from basic training, to being trained in weaponry, to one day, being in combat.

To give historical perspective, when the military was racially integrated resistance was not tolerated. As Morris J. Macgregor, Jr. writes, “from the beginning the military establishment rightly understood that the breakup of the all-black unit would...necessarily mean more than mere desegregation.” The military “used the terms integration and equal treatment and opportunity to describe its racial goals” instead of desegregation. Integration requires providing equal opportunity, not just ending segregation.24 Women, however, are still struggling to end segregation. Until full desegregation has been carried out in the military, there can be no hope of integration. The only way for women to achieve that integration is if, in the words of Karen Dunivin, “senior US military leaders...can institutionalize a cultural paradigm embodied by an inclusive whole rather than a paradigm personified by an exclusive few.”25

The double standard is revealed by comparing the case of Isaac Woodard, representing the military’s commitment to racial integration, to the Tailhook incident, representing the military’s lack of commitment to gender integration. When World War II veteran Isaac Woodard was honorably discharged from the military, he boarded a bus from Camp Gordon in Georgia to his home in South Carolina. Upon arrival in South Carolina, “Sergeant Isaac Woodard [was] taken off the bus by the town sheriff, a 210-pound white man named Linwood Shull. He [was] arrested for disorderly conduct... in none of the papers is there any suggestion there was verbal or physical violence on the part of Sergeant Woodard.”26 After his arrest he was beaten to the point of being blinded.27 When President Truman heard about this incident and learned that the officer had not been punished, he was furious. Truman told the Attorney General, “we can’t just address these ad hoc cases of violence”—something more needed to be done.28 When the police officer who brutalized Woodard was found not guilty by an all-white jury, Truman created another executive order: the Civil Rights Commission. He gave this commission the power of federal subpoena, charging it with the important task of documenting “the degree of racism in America and how we can attack it.”29 Truman also addressed the NAACP on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial: “It is my deep conviction,” he said, “that we have reached a turning point in our country’s efforts to guarantee freedom and equality to all our citizens. Recent events in the United States and abroad have made us realize that it is more important today than ever before to insure that all Americans enjoy these rights. When I say all Americans--I mean all Amer-

24 Macgregor, Jr. Integration of the Armed Forces United States Army Center of Military History, 1985, x.

27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
military in a stepping stone approach, from basic training, to being trained in weaponry, to one day, being in combat.

To give historical perspective, when the military was racially integrated resistance was not tolerated. As Morris J. Macgregor, Jr. writes, “from the beginning the military establishment rightly understood that the breakup of the all-black unit would…necessarily mean more than mere desegregation.” The military “used the terms integration and equal treatment and opportunity to describe its racial goals” instead of desegregation. Integration requires providing equal opportunity, not just ending segregation. Women, however, are still struggling to end segregation. Until full desegregation has been carried out in the military, there can be no hope of integration. The only way for women to achieve that integration is if, in the words of Karen Dunivin, “senior US military leaders…can institutionalize a cultural paradigm embodied by an inclusive whole rather than a paradigm personified by an exclusive few.”

The double standard is revealed by comparing the case of Isaac Woodard, representing the military’s commitment to racial integration, to the Tailhook incident, representing the military’s lack of commitment to gender integration. When World War II veteran Isaac Woodard was honorably discharged from the military, he boarded a bus from Camp Gordon in Georgia to his home in South Carolina. Upon arrival in

South Carolina, “Sergeant Isaac Woodard [was] taken off the bus by the town sheriff, a 210-pound white man named Linwood Shull. He [was] arrested for disorderly conduct… in none of the papers is there any suggestion there was verbal or physical violence on the part of Sergeant Woodard.” After his arrest he was beaten to the point of being blinded. When President Truman heard about this incident and learned that the officer had not been punished, he was furious. Truman told the Attorney General, “we can’t just address these ad hoc cases of violence”—something more needed to be done. When the police officer who brutalized Woodard was found not guilty by an all-white jury, Truman created another executive order: the Civil Rights Commission. He gave this commission the power of federal subpoena, charging it with the important task of documenting “the degree of racism in America and how we can attack it.” Truman also addressed the NAACP on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial: “It is my deep conviction,” he said, “that we have reached a turning point in our country’s efforts to guarantee freedom and equality to all our citizens. Recent events in the United States and abroad have made us realize that it is more important today than ever before to insure that all Americans enjoy these rights. When I say all Americans--I mean all Amer-

24 Macgregor, Jr. Integration of the Armed Forces United States Army Center of Military History, 1985, x.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
Truman’s integration of the military and continued intolerance for racial violence and injustice left no question of what would happen to those who violated his policies.

Fast forward forty-five years to the Tailhook scandal. A total of eighty-three women and seven men were sexually assaulted during a three day naval symposium. After the Inspector General and the Naval Investigative Service issued a report in April of 1992 describing the assaults, a second investigation was launched and published in September of 1992 by the Pentagon’s Inspector General. It concluded that “senior Navy officials deliberately undermined their own investigation to avoid bad publicity, and ignored the participation of senior officers at Tailhook.” In April 1993, the Pentagon Inspector General’s report was released in full, revealing that “at least 140 officers were being referred to the military services for possible disciplinary action.” Yet significantly, not one of these 140 cases ever went to trial.

One man’s blinding by a racist police officer resulted in indictments, follow-ups, the Civil Rights Commission and a public conference with the NAACP on the steps of the Lincoln memorial stating equality for all Americans. For over ninety victims of sexual assault because of misogynistic naval officers, there were in-house investigations leading to no trials, let alone criminal charges. The stark dichotomy of these two cases highlights the very different attitudes towards racial equality and gender equality in the military.

On paper, equality has been achieved for women in the armed forces. However, there are mixed messages from the top leadership when it comes to enforcement. On the one hand, women are allowed to be in the military and certain policies are strictly enforced, yet superior officers ignore hundreds of rape cases. In 1995, when a US Army recruiter was raped, the Naval Criminal Investigative Services (NCIS) refused to press charges against her Marine rapist, even going so far as to say she should be “grateful that a Marine raped [her].” Such a message makes the integration of women impossible. Soldiers follow orders, above all else. If they are ordered not to discriminate and sexual assault is not tolerated, in action as well as on paper, the number of incidents will rapidly decline. Publicly denouncing yet privately tolerating the rapist while blaming the survivor for disrupting the group dynamic reveals the persistent misogynistic attitudes of the military.

The reasons for keeping women out of combat today are very similar to the arguments that kept them out of the military in general, as well as those that were used to retain “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” The charge is that both women and homosexuals disrupt individ-

30 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
cans.” Truman’s integration of the military and continued intolerance for racial violence and injustice left no question of what would happen to those who violated his policies.

Fast forward forty-five years to the Tailhook scandal. A total of eighty-three women and seven men were sexually assaulted during a three day naval symposium. After the Inspector General and the Naval Investigative Service issued a report in April of 1992 describing the assaults, a second investigation was launched and published in September of 1992 by the Pentagon’s Inspector General. It concluded that “senior Navy officials deliberately undermined their own investigation to avoid bad publicity, and ignored the participation of senior officers at Tailhook.” In April 1993, the Pentagon Inspector General’s report was released in full, revealing that “at least 140 officers were being referred to the military services for possible disciplinary action.” Yet significantly, not one of these 140 cases ever went to trial.

One man’s blinding by a racist police officer resulted in indictments, follow-ups, the Civil Rights Commission and a public conference with the NAACP on the steps of the Lincoln memorial stating equality for all Americans. For over ninety victims of sexual assault because of misogynistic naval officers, there were in-house investigations leading to no trials, let alone criminal charges. The stark dichotomy of these two cases highlights the very different attitudes towards racial equality and gender equality in the military.

On paper, equality has been achieved for women in the armed forces. However, there are mixed messages from the top leadership when it comes to enforcement. On the one hand, women are allowed to be in the military and certain policies are strictly enforced, yet superior officers ignore hundreds of rape cases. In 1995, when a US Army recruiter was raped, the Naval Criminal Investigative Services (NCIS) refused to press charges against her Marine rapist, even going so far as to say she should be “grateful that a Marine raped [her].” Such a message makes the integration of women impossible. Soldiers follow orders, above all else. If they are ordered not to discriminate and sexual assault is not tolerated, in action as well as on paper, the number of incidents will rapidly decline. Publicly denouncing yet privately tolerating the rapist while blaming the survivor for disrupting the group dynamic reveals the persistent misogynistic attitudes of the military.

The reasons for keeping women out of combat today are very similar to the arguments that kept them out of the military in general, as well as those that were used to retain “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” The charge is that both women and homosexuals disrupt individ-

---

30 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
ual troops and unit cohesion. These arguments reflect the fact that both gays and women threaten the military’s traditional masculine ideals. A part of the tenacity of very conservative masculine views is that “the men and women serving in the armed forces today represent less than 1 percent of the country’s total population, and come heavily from rural, conservative areas in the South and the mountain West.” In addition, white males comprise roughly 70% of the officer population, and 63% of the total active-duty soldiers. An overwhelming 70% of the people in the military are of the Christian faith, which is also patriarchy-based.

The racial demographics in active-duty personnel however, are comparable to the population demographics of the country they protect. However, while 50.8% of the US population is female, only 15% of the members of the armed services are women. The argument that women and racial minorities disrupt group cohesion is belied by a study revealing that surface level diversity, such as race or gender, has “not been found useful in the study of predictors of work group outcomes.” What are more predictive of how a group will function are “deep level” diversity variables such as values, attitudes, and personality. These diversity variables were associated with “group cohesiveness, performance, group processes, and turnover.” So while diversity is proven to have a negative effect on group or unit cohesion, it is the deep level diversity, not the surface diversity, which is the problem. “The closeness of a highly cohesive group reduces internal tensions and provides a supportive environment for the attainment of the group’s goals.”

The military is creating a rift in group cohesion by denying women in the armed forces that supportive environment, alienating them and causing tension within groups.

Culture by its very definition is constantly changing, influenced by a variety of factors. However, military culture in the US has remained, for the most part, stubbornly constant over hundreds of years. The military’s lack of genuine commitment to the integration of women has led to a variety of present day problems. These patriarchal traditions and policies are falling by the wayside, too slowly for liberal women and too fast for conservative men, creating gaps both in military teams and in gender equality. The military needs to commit to shifting its culture in a profound way in order to prevent the backlash that continues thirty years after women first graduated from West Point.

This refusal within the military to acknowledge that change needs to happen has allowed problems to persist. The military’s lack of genuine commitment to the integration of women has led to a variety of present day problems. These patriarchal traditions and policies are falling by the wayside, too slowly for liberal women and too fast for conservative men, creating gaps both in military teams and in gender equality. The military needs to commit to shifting its culture in a profound way in order to prevent the backlash that continues thirty years after women first graduated from West Point.

---

37 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 71.
These arguments reflect the fact that both gays and women threaten the military’s traditional masculine ideals. A part of the tenacity of very conservative masculine views is that “the men and women serving in the armed forces today represent less than 1 percent of the country’s total population, and come heavily from rural, conservative areas in the South and the mountain West.” In addition, white males comprise roughly 70% of the officer population, and 63% of the total active-duty soldiers. An overwhelming 70% of the people in the military are of the Christian faith, which is also patriarchy-based.

The racial demographics in active-duty personnel however, are comparable to the population demographics of the country they protect. However, while 50.8% of the US population is female, only 15% of the members of the armed services are women. The argument that women and racial minorities disrupt group cohesion is belied by a study revealing that surface level diversity, such as race or gender, has “not been found useful in the study of predictors of work group outcomes.” What are more predictive of how a group will function are “deep level” diversity variables such as values, attitudes, and personality. These diversity variables were associated with “group cohesiveness, performance, group processes, and turnover.” So while diversity is proven to have a negative effect on group or unit cohesion, it is the deep level diversity, not the surface diversity, which is the problem. “The closeness of a highly cohesive group reduces internal tensions and provides a supportive environment for the attainment of the group’s goals.” The military is creating a rift in group cohesion by denying women in the armed forces that supportive environment, alienating them and causing tension within groups.

Culture by its very definition is constantly changing, influenced by a variety of factors. However, military culture in the US has remained, for the most part, stubbornly constant over hundreds of years. The military’s lack of genuine commitment to the integration of women has led to a variety of present day problems. These patriarchal traditions and policies are falling by the wayside, too slowly for liberal women and too fast for conservative men, creating gaps both in military teams and in gender equality. The military needs to commit to shifting its culture in a profound way in order to prevent the backlash that continues thirty years after women first graduated from West Point. This refusal within the military to acknowledge that change needs to happen has allowed problems to persist.

**References:**


37 Ibid.


39 Ibid.


41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 71.

escalate. By mandating and enforcing full gender equality, a new generation of military personnel can quickly create a new culture of true equality. In a military whose sole purpose is to protect and defend the people of the United States, there can be no tolerance for misogyny and sexist traditions.

*Liz Marsden is a junior history major and a new member of Phi Alpha Theta. She is interested in pursuing studies in United States social history and hopes to go on to get her Ph.D. so she can teach at a college level.*
escalate. By mandating and enforcing full gender equality, a new generation of military personnel can quickly create a new culture of true equality. In a military whose sole purpose is to protect and defend the people of the United States, there can be no tolerance for misogyny and sexist traditions.

Liz Marsden is a junior history major and a new member of Phi Alpha Theta. She is interested in pursuing studies in United States social history and hopes to go on to get her Ph.D. so she can teach at a college level.