MICHIGAN JOURNAL OF HISTORY
VOLUME X, ISSUE II

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dear Readers,

We are very excited to publish this edition of the Journal! Last term we were blown away by the responses from undergraduates around the country. We didn't think it was possible that the number could increase, but it did. Out of 87 submissions, the below authors truly embodied the spirit of the Journal and what we wanted to bring to the community of readers.

A major thank you goes out to our staff, who have worked very hard to get their edits in shape for the Journal. Once again a special thanks goes out to our Managing Editor Emily Riippa, who has worked very hard this semester to get the Journal ready for print. She has done an amazing job over the last year, and it was a joy to work with her.

It has been an honor to serve as the Editor-in-Chief for the Michigan Journal of History this past year. I came into the position knowing there needed to be a lot of changes, and the editing team jumped right on board. This past year has been a complete turnaround for the Journal, and we hope to see the number of submissions continue to increase. The amount of intellectual creativity and prowess blew us away again this term, and we encourage undergraduates to continue submitting their work.

Sincerely,

Anna Gwiazdowski
Editor-in-Chief, Michigan Journal of History

MICHIGAN JOURNAL OF HISTORY EDITORIAL BOARD, WINTER 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROAD BLOCKS TO SUFFRAGE

DAISY DOWDALL

WELLESLEY COLLEGE

In many respects, the fight for women's suffrage in Britain was an uphill battle. Although the campaign emerged as a national movement in 1872, women were not granted suffrage until 1918—nearly 50 years later—and still not on the same terms as men.[1] It is commonly believed that the road to enfranchisement was protracted due to the crippling misogyny of those in power. Certainly, prejudice did play a large part in the delay: Enlightenment-era medicine had defined women by the supposed fragility, nervous instability, and even hysterical insanity of their sex.[2] Such ideas persisted well into the 20th century and had become part of public discourse, especially as many doctors regularly expounded their theories of female weakness in popular middle-class journals.[3] Not surprisingly, these medical theories figured prominently in anti-suffragist arguments as well. They were, after all, a convenient justification for denying women the vote, as such theories rendered the issue not as one of oppression but one of women's safety and lower position in the *natural* order of society.[4]

Although the notion of female inferiority remained common in early 20th-century Britain, the strict gender norms of the previous century were in flux, with many women assuming an increasingly public role in society.[5] In particular, middle and upper-class philanthropy had somewhat normalized female involvement in public affairs. The prevalence and prestige of volunteerism had been a key factor in women gaining voting right in local elections, for example, and becoming speakers, canvassers, and fundraisers for the three national political parties.[6] Thus, by the early 20th century, many women were trusted participants in national politics, despite not being able to vote. In fact, Martin Pugh argues that, because of their involvement, by the turn of the century, the argument for women's suffrage had essentially been won: at this point, the majority of MPs supported the general idea of female enfranchisement in

---

[1] Susan Kingsley Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain, 1860-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 185.
[2] Anne Digby, "Women's Biological Straightjacket" in *Sexuality and Subordination: Interdisciplinary Studies of Gender in the Nineteenth Century,* ed. by Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (London: Routledge, 1989), 203.
[3] Digby, "Women's Biological Straightjacket," 193-194, 208.
[4] Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain*, 189-190; Digby, "Women's Biological Straitjacket," 193.
[5] Digby, "Women's Biological Straitjacket," 195.
[6] Martin Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1914-1959* (Basingstoke: MacmillanEducation, 1992), 4.

one form or another.[7]

The question, then, becomes why it took until 1918 for women to be granted even limited suffrage. Historians such as Sophia van Wingerden have successfully argued that female enfranchisement was a radical and complicated change to the voting system and that, consequently, change was inevitably slow; others, like Gail Braybon, have noted the distracting nature of the First World War in national politics.[8] This paper focuses on the roadblocks to suffrage that actually emerged from the women's movement itself. I examine the period between roughly 1905 and 1914 to show that internal division, militancy, and a failure to ally itself with one of the "big three" political parties significantly hindered the suffrage campaign. In my conclusion, moreover, I briefly consider why women were finally granted suffrage in 1918, arguing that the breakthrough was not a simple result of changed perceptions of women but was actually an afterthought in larger electoral reform.

One of the major problems the suffrage campaign faced was its lack of a coherent platform. Instead of presenting a united front in the fight for suffrage, a number of splinter groups formed, advocating for enfranchisement along different terms and employing wildly different tactics; these groups were often hostile to each other. Fractures began properly in 1903, when a group of women, including Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst, broke from the non-militant and decidedly middle-class National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) to form the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). From 1903 to 1906, the WSPU, which emphasized "deeds not words" and, initially, universal female suffrage, received its main support from radical suffragists and socialists.[9] However, in 1906, Christabel Pankhurst decided that the WSPU had become too dependent on its working class contingent, shifting her focus from universal adult female suffrage to the enfranchisement of women of a certain socioeconomic status.[10] She justified this new platform as being more realistic: conservative lawmakers, Pankhurst reasoned, would be more sympathetic to suffrage bids that mirrored existing voting rights for men.[11]

This changed position stirred considerable controversy within the WSPU's ranks. Many

[7] Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement*, 35.
[8] Sophia A. van Wingerden, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain, 1866-1928* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 28; Gail Braybon, *Women Workers in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2012), 86.
[9] Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2000), 205.
[10] Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 208.
[11] Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us,* 209.

radical suffragists and socialists alike were displeased by the narrowed franchise demands and consequently distanced themselves from the WSPU. Broadly, their opinion can be understood through an article written by the radical suffragist Julia Dawson. She argued that, although the WSPU spoke of granting votes for women, "they really mean votes for some women. Not for me, certainly…but for some other women who have qualifications which [working-class women] have not."[12] Finally, in late 1906, the WSPU officially dropped its working-class contingent, with Christabel Pankhurst explaining that "it is now evident that the House of Commons…are more impressed by demonstrations of the feminine bourgeoisie than of the female proletariat."[13] Whatever her larger political objectives, Pankhurst's decision alienated most working-class suffrage campaigners from the WSPU, including those who supported limited female enfranchisement as a temporary measure.[14]

In short, differing opinions about which women should be granted the vote prevented the suffrage campaign from forming a single cohesive platform. It should be emphasized that these conflicts did not fundamentally prevent women from getting the vote until 1918; however, they certainly did detract from the momentum of change in broad terms, as the movement's rocky politics meant that time and energy that could have been used to tackle external obstacles to suffrage were instead expended on internal conflict, and advocates of women's suffrage were, as previously mentioned, unable to act as a unified front against anti-suffragists, whereby they would likely have been a more compelling force.

Division within the campaign did not only originate from arguments about which women should be represented but also from *how* the movement should be run. Friction continued to shake the WSPU, for example, as members grew unhappy with what Teresa Billington-Greig referred to as "the dictatorship" of the Pankhursts: about a fifth left the group in 1907 to form the Women's Freedom League, marking the beginning of a series of splits that occurred as the Pankhursts became increasingly rigid about the WSPU platform.[15] However, the most pressing issue by far regarded the militancy of the suffragettes, a subgroup of mostly middle-class members of the WSPU. Although suffragette militancy started out as nonviolent, after the anti-suffragist H.H. Asquith became prime minister in 1908, suffragettes started to throw stones,

[12] Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 209.
[13] Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 211.
[14] Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 210.
[15] Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 214-215.

attack police officers and, once in prison, hunger strike.[16] The violence continued to mount: In March 1912, Emmeline Pankhurst and two hundred women rioted in central London, shattering windows, including some at 10 Downing Street. After Asquith announced in January 1913 that government would not amend laws concerning women's suffrage as part of a larger suffrage bill, suffragettes began to pour acids in pillar boxes, cut telegraph wires, slash pictures in public galleries, and commit arson and small-scale bombings.[17]

The behavior of the suffragettes generated further antagonism within the larger suffrage campaign. The violence—in particular, that which seemed largely unprovoked—angered members of the NUWSS. While the relationship between the NUWSS and the WSPU had always been rocky, Millicent Fawcett, the president of the NUWSS, began publicly to lambaste the WSPU in response to the violence.[18] Suffragette militancy also estranged many radical suffragists, both within and outside of the WSPU. Members of the Women's Cooperative Guild Congress, for example, expressed concern about what they perceived to be wealthy women indulgently using "brute force" to undermine the cause.[19] A letter written by a group of radical suffragists to Millicent Fawcett, for instance, condemned the behavior of leisured suffragettes, likening it to that of "offensive" children and arguing that it greatly hindered the suffrage campaign.[20] Certainly, large swathes of the women's movement were concerned about the negative effects of suffragette activism; quite apart from the morality of the violence, they worried that unhinged militancy fostered the perception of suffragists as insane, bored troublemakers.[21]

Yet again, divisions between the militant and non-militant branches of the women's movement prevented them from coalescing and forming a united, and theoretically more effective, front. However, militancy carried with it another roadblock to the enfranchisement of women: just as some had feared, the militant tactics of the suffragettes alienated politicians and members of the general population who had previously supported the movement.[22] Such behaviour, especially coming from supposedly respectable women, shocked society and reaffirmed many of the previously discussed ideas of women's natural inferiority. In response to

---

[16] Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain*, 201.
[17] Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain*, 201-202.
[18] Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 215.
[19] Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 209.
[20] Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 210.
[21] Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement*, 4.
[22] Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement*, 5.

the violence, for example, Sir Almroth Wright, MD described all female suffragists and suffragettes as suffering from a "mental disorder" triggered by their attempts to surmount their "intellectual limitations."[23] This phenomenon, he maintained, constituted proof that women should not be granted the vote, as even campaigning for enfranchisement had already thrown many of them into a state of dangerous insanity.[24] One could only guess at the amount of inner turmoil and mental perturbation that actual voting would incite.

Militancy, then, produced deep division within the women's movement, while also confirming some observers' beliefs that women were unable to behave like thoughtful adults in the public sphere and therefore should not be granted such a large responsibility as the vote. Despite all of the internal problems the campaign faced, however, one of the main reasons the movement did not achieve its goal until 1918 involved its inability to garner official support from any of the "big three" parties—in particular, from Labour and the Liberals, which were both somewhat sympathetic to the cause.[25]

For its part, Labour disliked the NUWSS's and, later, the "bourgeois" WSPU's focus on limited franchise, arguing that anything other that universal adult suffrage would merely strengthen propertied interests.[26] Labour's suspicions caused problems for middle-class suffragists and suffragettes alike. While the endorsement of a fairly influential political party was theoretically very attractive, middle-class campaigners were wary of embracing universal suffrage to conform to Labour policy. Indeed, they knew that doing so could estrange Liberals and Conservatives, who were unlikely to approve of such radical electoral reform in the early 1900s.[27] Even radical suffragists, who were more focused on positive reform for the working classes than their middle-class counterparts, found themselves unable to collaborate with Labour. Many of these radical suffragists argued for the vote as something that could raise the living conditions—and especially the pay—of working women. Labour, however, with its focus on the "family wage" earned by a single male breadwinner, shied away from the idea of improved wages for women. The tensions caused by this disagreement ultimately led to Labour refusing to

---

[23] Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain*, 202.
[24] Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain*, 203.
[25] Claire Hirshfield, "Fractured Faith: Liberal Party Women and the Suffrage Issue in Britain, 1892-1914" in *Gender and History* (2:2, 1990), 173.
[26] Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 239.
[27] Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us* , 240.

endorse the basic platform of most radical suffragists.[28]

With the women's movement fundamentally at odds with Labour, the question became whether the Liberals would officially endorse the female suffrage, particularly the platform of the moderate, largely middle-class NUWSS. However, even when the Liberals were somewhat supportive of limited female suffrage, from roughly 1905 to 1908, they still refused to endorse it out of concern that enfranchised women might tip the balance in favour of Tory candidates in a number of their constituencies. Liberal Prime Minister Campbell-Bannerman, for example, despite advising suffragists to "go on agitating and holding meetings, pestering people as much as they can," refused to represent them in Parliament because of this fear.[29] Liberal support of suffragists became even flimsier when H. H. Asquith succeeded Campbell-Bannerman as prime minister in April 1908. Unlike Campbell-Bannerman, who had insisted that he unofficially supported women's suffrage, Asquith and his new cabinet were personally and collectively hostile to the idea.[30] The "natural sphere" of women, Asquith declared in Parliament, "is not the turmoil and dust of politics but the circle of social and domestic life."[31] Women, to Asquith's government, were simply unfit to participate in elections.

Put simply, the women's movement had difficulty finding their niche in party politics, instead losing themselves in what Liddington and Norris describe as a "political wilderness."[32] Neither of the two parties whose support the suffrage campaigners had a chance of receiving refused to endorse the movement. At best, suffragists were told to modify their cause to better mesh with a pre-existing platform or to be patient, while at worst, they were met with point-blank refusals rooted in gender prejudice.

We have seen the problems the suffrage campaign faced in the pre-war period: division caused by disputes over which women should be represented and how the movement should be run, prevented them from presenting a united front, while their platform remained too much at odds with that of Labour and the Liberals to receive any mainstream support in Parliament. When, and under what conditions, then, did women finally become enfranchised? With the *Representation of the People Act of 1918*, Parliament allowed property-owning women over

---

[28] Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 249.
[29] Hirshfield, "Fractured Faith," 184.
[30] Hirshfield, "Fractured Faith,", 189.
[31] Hirshfield, "Fractured Faith,", 190.
[32] Liddington and Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, 253.

thirty to vote, thus granting suffrage to 39.6 percent of British women.[33] While the intricacies of this argument are beyond the scope of my paper, some historians have claimed that First World War was largely responsible for 1918's partial female enfranchisement, as women's participation in the war effort had fostered a newfound respect for them. Upon closer examination, however, such an argument quickly loses credibility: The great majority of women who participated in the war effort, after all, were not enfranchised in 1918, as most of them were still under thirty.[34] The War also did not end the tradition of egregious sexism in British politics. For example, Asquith only changed his stance on female suffrage in an attempt to remain in power; as late as 1920, he could be found arguing that women "are for the most part hopelessly ignorant of politics, credulous to the last degree, and flickering with gusts of sentiment lie a candle in the wind."[35]

In fact, female enfranchisement came about almost incidentally, as essentially an afterthought in a bill that was meant to remedy issues concerning male suffrage.[36] By 1918, many MPs understood that some reform to women's voting rights (or lack thereof) was inevitable. They also thought that including a clause concerning limited female suffrage in a more general bill would appease most suffragists, while also allowing Parliament to sidestep more radical subjects, like universal female suffrage.[37] The achieved measure of enfranchisement was indeed calculated to be "safe" by the establishment's standards. Placating suffragists would hopefully prevent a return to prewar contention and violence, while female voters would still comprise less than half of the electorate, thereby remaining a minority voice in politics.[38] More generally, because most enfranchised women were to be middle-class wives and mothers, politicians did not anticipate them to be politically radical.[39] Theoretically, they would either vote along the same lines of their husbands or for an alternative moderate candidate.

Although the 1918 enfranchisement of women is often touted as a revolutionary change in British politics and the start of a new age for women, legislators and policy-makers in 1918 clearly did not see it that way. In the unstable postwar world, where fears of violence and social unrest were ever-present, the enfranchisement of this select group of women could only help to stabilize the established political system. Certainly, as we have seen, the 1918 enfranchisement

---

[33] Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement,* 34.
[34] Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement*, 24.
[35] Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement*, 40.
[36] Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement*, 35.
[37] Hirshfield, "Fractured Faith," 195.
[38] Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement*, 36.
[39] Ibid, Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement*, 40-41.

measures explicitly sought to entrench the traditional order through a "bandage solution" to the suffrage debate and by further privileging elite voices in politics. Women's suffrage was not, then, indicative of radical reform but of deep-rooted conservatism's adaptive capacity to survive.

Works Cited

Braybon, Gail. *Women Workers in the First World War*. London: Routledge, 2012.

Digby, Anne. "Women's Biological Straightjacket." In *Sexuality and Subordination: Interdisciplinary Studies of Gender in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall. London: Routledge, 1989.

Hirshfield, Claire. "Fractured Faith: Liberal Party Women and the Suffrage Issue in Britain, 1892–1914." *Gender and History* 2, no. 2 (1990).

Kent, Susan Kingsley. *Sex and Suffrage in Britain, 1860-1914*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Liddington, Jill, and Jill Norris. *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement.* London: Rivers Oram Press, 2000.

Pugh, Martin. *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain, 1914-1959*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1992.

van Wingerden, Sophia A. *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain, 1866-1928* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999.

Legend and Legacy: A Rhetorical History of Lewis and Clark

Jake Sonnenberg
Stanford University

This summer, the Lewis and Clark Foundation will host the 25th Annual Lewis and Clark Festival in Great Falls, Montana. This small city of less than 60,000 people marks an important point on the map of American History and the portrait of American Psychology. Geographically, however, Great Falls' location is un- remarkable. Lying seventy miles northeast of Helena, Montana, the inconspicuous Great Falls is commonly defined by its proximity to other towns and landmarks. This small city of less than 60,000 people, however, marks an important point on the map of American history and the portrait of American psychology.

Although today Great Falls seems a quotidian western city among hundreds of others, it once bore witness to a harrowing encounter. In the summer of 1805, the Missouri River's cascading rapids at Great Falls forced the members of the Lewis and Clark expedition to make a grueling portage and simultaneously abandon their hopes of discovering a continuous water route to the Pacific. The agony of this humbling experience was vividly described in *The Journals of The Lewis and Clark Expedition,* which were meticulously recorded by Lewis, Clark, and others throughout their cross-country expedition. After confronting wild grizzly bears and enduring an overland march that nearly killed William Clark, Lewis remarked on June 14, 1805 that it seemed as if "all the beasts of the neighbourhood had made a league to destroy [sic] me, or that some fortune was disposed to amuse herself at my expence [sic]."[1] Caught in the midst of a difficult struggle, facing the prospect of agonizing humiliation, and seemingly at a loss for rational explanation, Lewis surrendered his fate to the whims of nature. Resigned to the mercy of wild beasts and fortune, he found himself at the pinnacle of despondence.

Despite marking a low-point for the Lewis and Clark expedition, the portage at Great Falls is recalled triumphantly in America's collective memory. Charles Fritz's painting *The

---

[1] Meriwether Lewis, 14 June 1805, *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition,* ed. Gary Moulton (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002): University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries Electronic Text Center, 27 January 2012 and Great Falls Portage, *Lewis and Clark Expedition: A National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary,* National Park Service, 2 February 2012, http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/lewisandclark/gre.htm.

Arrival of Captain Meriwether Lewis at The Great Falls (2005), one of the most famous images of the Lewis and Clark expedition, underscores this paradoxical movement, in which a moment of despair is transformed into one of achievement.[2] Fritz depicts Lewis standing proudly on a boulder overlooking the falls. His eyes locked on the horizon, Lewis is an idealized explorer in an idealized scene. The absence of hardship, an overabundance of light, and an intensity of majestic landscapes in Fritz's painting sear a powerful narrative into the mind of any viewer. Seemingly at odds with historical events, the image is a picture of pure accomplishment and absolute serenity.

Fritz's deviation from the historical record presents a complex puzzle that calls into question modern understandings of history as well as the ways in which the past is interpreted and represented. Most importantly, it is vital to consider why an artist would portray the Lewis and Clark expedition in a manner that contradicts widely available historical records as well as the journals of the individuals who actually experienced the historical events in question. Professor Jerzy Topolski, a prominent scholar of history and historiography, examines this issue in his article, *The Role of Logic and Aesthetics in Constructing Narrative Wholes in Historiography* (1999). Topolski contends that "imagination as well as logic [...] generates the more or less concretized images constituting the background onto which the historian, 'playing' with basic information, imposes some content and portrays some event by means of a narrative," underscoring the complexity and fluidity of historical interpretation.[3] Although there is only one correct version of history, in the sense that only one course of events could have transpired prior to the present, Topolski stresses the multiplicity of historical narratives that can be drawn from the same set of facts. Thus, although Fritz's painting is somewhat incorrect because it might mischaracterize the past, it may still be possible to understand it as legitimate history. Since modern historians cannot actually witness the portage at Great Falls, it seems as if they have no choice but to construct, or to an extent imagine, historical narratives out of the few accessible fragments of information.

Pursuing this line of analysis further, it seems as if multiple contradictory narratives of the Lewis and Clark expedition can reasonably be considered true, because the same pieces of evidence can support a variety of theories. Topolski expands upon this point, explaining "one

---

[2] Charles Fritz, *The Arrival of Captain Meriwether Lewis at The Great Falls,* 2005.

[3] Jerzy Topolski, "The Role of Logic and Aesthetics in Constructing Narrative Wholes in History," *History and Theory,* 38.2 (1999): 198.

evidence source can underwrite many different theories. [...] One and the same source of information may be used to construct various historical accounts of any fragment of the past."[4] Understanding history in this way, perhaps Fritz's depiction does not actually stray from the historical "facts" any more than the writings of an author who imagines the portage at Great Falls as a terrifying and humbling journey. "Facts" about the expedition's struggles at Great Falls cannot possibly chronicle anything more than a tiny sampling of the countless events that took place during the summer of 1805. Indeed, it is impossible to say for certain that there was not a moment in which Meriwether Lewis stood tall on a boulder, triumphantly overlooking the Great Falls, just as Fritz imagined.

Topolski's conceptualization of historiography as a rhetoric in flux presents a major obstacle to modern understandings and analyses of the Lewis and Clark expedition. To accept historical records as utterly indeterminate is to undercut historians' ability to assert with confidence what actually happened in the past. On the other hand, proclaiming one definitively correct version of history makes it nearly impossible to make sense of the varied representations of the past that linger in the modern world.

Despite this historical ambiguity, modern Americans fondly and feverishly celebrate the legacy of the Lewis and Clark expedition as a definitive and profound historical event. Historian Thomas Slaughter, in his book *Exploring Lewis and Clark* (2003), declares that modern portrayals of the Lewis and Clark expedition "blending fact, fiction, and myth have buried the explorers under a mountain of celebratory words."[5] As Topolski would say, injecting an element of myth into an historical event, modern narratives of the Lewis and Clark expedition "concretize" the past. Ambiguity is removed from the story, and the past morphs into a very specific and easily knowable tale. Discussing modern accounts of the Lewis and Clark expedition, historians Kris Fresonke and Mark Spence remark that the "most remarkable feature [...] is not the volume of material, but its narrow scope."[6] The consistency of Lewis and Clark narratives is stunning, something that Fresonke and Spence liken to "a favorite national children's bedtime story—which [...] Americans insist on hearing over and over."[7]

The very particular narrative of the Lewis and Clark expedition espoused by America's

---

[4] Topolski, "The Role of Logic and Aesthetics," 199.

[5] Thomas P. Slaughter, *Exploring Lewis and Clark* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), xvi.

[6] Kris Fresonke and Mark Spence, *Lewis and Clark: Legacies, Memories, and New Perspectives* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 20.

[7] Fresonke and Spence, *Legacies, Memories, and New Perspectives*, 20.

collective memory is sustained through modern attitudes towards Lewis and Clark. The two explorers are not merely respected or honored. They are adored. In an article penned as the expedition's bicentennial approached, University of Miami History Professor Andrew Cayton explains that the nation's excitement about Lewis and Clark amounted to "a fascination that took hold [...] and threatens to swamp us all."[8] This zeal of enthusiasm continues to this day. Nearly two thousand Americans will travel to the Lewis and Clark Festival in Great Falls this summer.[9] Lewis and Clark festivals in places like Cut Bank, Montana, Onawa, Iowa, St. Clark, Missouri, and Clarksville, Indiana will overrun the western and central United States in the summer months, as they do every year.

Although the Lewis and Clark expedition has come to be seen as "an iconic narrative of Americana," as Cayton describes it, it is unclear what drives the intensity of attention that is paid to the expedition.[10] Turning to Lewis and Clark festivals' own promotional materials offers insights into the appeal of the expedition. For instance, the festival in Great Falls suggests that, if visitors are lucky, they might be able to "re-live the high energy" of the expedition.[11] Cut Bank's festival actually promises to let patrons "live the experience."[12] It seems, then, that some Americans flock to Lewis and Clark festivals to fill themselves with the vivaciousness of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Hoping to live the experiences of Lewis and Clark, they apparently see the expedition as a catalogue of larger-than-life experiences, a set of magnificent phenomena utterly inaccessible during ordinary life.

But what is it about the Lewis and Clark expedition that Americans want to re-live? What are the experiences that they want to re-create? The beauty captured in paintings like Fritz's suggests that Americans are drawn to the notion of traversing a vast and uncharted wilderness, of encountering and somehow triumphing over the grandeur of nature. However, despite its elegance, this explanation is incomplete. Thousands of nameless fur-trappers, anonymous

---

[8] Andrew Cayton, "Telling Stories About Lewis and Clark: Does History Still Matter?" Review of *Exploring Lewis and Clark: Reflections on Men and Wilderness* by Thomas P. Slaughter, *Prologue to Lewis and Clark: The Mackay and Evans Expedition* by W. Raymond Wood, Lewis and Clark: *Across the Divide* by Caroln Gilman, and *The Literature of the Lewis and Clark Expedition: A Bibliography and Essays,* by Stephen Dow, Doug Erickson, Jeremy Skinner, and Paul Merchant, *Great Plains Quarterly,* IV (2004): 283.

[9] "Lewis and Clark Festival Turns 20," KFBB, 27 June 2009, http://www.kfbb.com/news/ local/49345562.html>.

[10] Cayton, "Telling Stories," 283.

[11] 22nd Annual Lewis and Clark Festival (Lewis and Clark Foundation, 2011).

[12] *Lewis and Clark Festival, Montana,* Official Travel Site, 2011, 12 February 2012, http:// visitmt.com/categories/moreinfo.asp?IDRRecordID=9254&siteid=1.

explorers, unknown traders, and ordinary weekend hikers have ventured into the wild, faced difficult trials, and immersed themselves in the natural world, often times many years before Lewis and Clark ever set foot in the western United States.[13] Yet, as Cayton explains, it is easy to "witness the obscurity of their accomplished predecessors."[14] Americans do not fondly re-tell the stories of Alexander Mackenzie, who traversed the wilds of North America a decade before Lewis and Clark, nor do they celebrate the accomplishments of James Mackay and John Thomas Evans, who mapped the Missouri Valley during their expedition from 1795-1797.[15] More than the appeal of critical encounters with nature, then, must drive adoration of the Lewis and Clark expedition in the nation's collective memory.

Popular narratives of the Lewis and Clark expedition focus heavily on the majestic storyline of Lewis and Clark, as the 'first' people to explore the west. In what is likely the most significant book ever written about Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, Stephen Ambrose embraces this narrative with elegance and dramatic force. Few images capture the sentiment of his popular account better than the simple engraving on the spine of Ambrose's book. In gold block letters, against a backdrop of deep green leather, it reads: *Undaunted Courage.*[16] Imposing, yet unassuming, the title and its setting conjure feelings of drama and tranquility, vulnerability and fortitude, uncertainty and strength. From the cover of his book through its final pages, Ambrose presents an account centered on indefatigable bravery and unflinching might.

Ambrose's narrative fits well with and complements the rhetorical grandeur surrounding modern attitudes towards the Lewis and Clark expedition because it embraces spectacle and magnificence. Like festivals that promise to expose visitors to experiences of greatness, Ambrose champions the drama surrounding the iconic adventure. As he describes Lewis preparing to set off on his journey, Ambrose begins to build a narrative of conquest and heroism. Declaring that Lewis "was as close to entering a completely unknown territory [...] as any explorer ever was," he goes on to assert that Lewis "was entering a heart of darkness."[17] Here, Ambrose betrays the totalizing nature of his narrative. In this epic storyline, the west is not only unfamiliar and external to the known world but also dangerous and imposing. Ambrose portrays the uncharted

---

[13] Cayton, "Telling Stories," 283 and Slaughter*, Exploring Lewis and Clark*, 39.
[14] Cayton, "Telling Stories," 283.
[15] Cayton, "Telling Stories," 283.
[16] Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of The American West, Collector's Ed.* (Norwalk, CT: The Easton Press, 1998): cover.
[17] Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of The American West* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 216.

western territories as the very epicenters of peril. If the west was a heart of darkness, Lewis and Clark were the deliverers of light.

Ambrose's narrative is also consistent with modern depictions of the Lewis and Clark expedition. In his essay *Why Lewis and Clark Matter* (2003), Lewis and Clark historian James Ronda agrees, explaining "textbook history often portrays Lewis and Clark as the vanguard of America's triumphant westward expansion, a movement that brought civilization and progress to a savage wilderness."[18] From Fritz's portrayal of a gloriously victorious Meriwether Lewis to Ambrose's dramatic chronicle of grand legacies, it seems as if the themes of triumph and inevitable progress are inescapable in modern depictions of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

In his essay *On the Tourist Trail with Lewis and Clark: Issues of Interpretation and Preservation* (2004) Andrew Gulliford deconstructs the dramatic narrative championed by Ambrose and American society. Quoting Ronda, Gulliford explains that Lewis and Clark explored "a crowded wilderness," full of Native Americans, fur trappers, traders, animals, societies, feuds, alliances, and histories.[19] Arguing that "the expedition would have failed miserably without the constant support and guidance of Native Americans," Gulliford's alternative narrative stresses cooperation and interdependence, rather than individual persistence and strength.[20] This is a far cry from Ambrose's image of Lewis and Clark as conquering heroes who bested men, beasts, and the wild in order to reach the ocean and expand an empire. Gulliford insists instead "Lewis and Clark moved, not through an unknown wilderness world, but rather through an Indian landscape where even the rocks and trees had names."[21] Gulliford's suggestion that such small features were labeled by the time that Lewis and Clark arrived powerfully rejects Ambrose's claim that their expedition was entering completely unknown territory.

The glaring incongruity between fact and legend suggests that the popular rhetoric of the Lewis and Clark narrative has been somehow fabricated, entrenched, and maintained over time. Despite its prevalence, the roots of America's dramatic narrative are surprisingly elusive in *The Journals of The Lewis and Clark Expedition.* In the expedition's journals, one finds plenty of

---

[18] James P. Ronda, "Why Lewis and Clark Matter," *Smithsonian* (2003), 1.
[19] James P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark Among the Indians* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 2.
[20] Andrew Gulliford, *On the Tourist Trail With Lewis and Clark: Issues of Interpretation and Preservation, Lewis and Clark: Legacies, Memories, and New Perspectives,* ed. Kris Fresonke and Mark Spence (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 244.
[21] Gulliford, *On the Tourist Trail*, 244.

rhetoric reflecting uncertainty and simplicity. Consider Clark's entry for May 12, 1804. His account of the entire day consists of nothing but brief statements: "Doctor Catlet set out at 11 o'clock," "rain all evening," and "I still arranged the stores."[22] Clark's unemotional tone makes it difficult to imagine someone wanting to re-live his experiences. It seems odd that anyone would want to re-live February 13, 1805, when all Lewis had to say was "the morning cloudy— thermometer 2° below naught—wind from the SE-- visited by the Black-Cat—gave him a *battle ax* with which he appeared much gratified."[23] Even a brief examination the expedition's journals demonstrate that the trip's logs are not about America's inevitable march to the Pacific or, as Ambrose puts it, the "opening of the American West."[24] They are instead about monotony, science, measurement, and frustration. The two explorers generally focus on their day-to-day struggles and operations, specific plants and animals, and ordinary events. This story seems significantly less appealing than the heroic tale chronicled by Ambrose and America's popular psyche. If the majestic narrative presented by Ambrose is true, Lewis and Clark seem to have made every effort to conceal it.

However, on April 7, 1805, the day of their departure, the dryness of Lewis' journal gives way to something gentler. Surveying the supplies, boats, and men that would journey west with him, Lewis explains that, although their "little fleet" was not "so respectable as those of Columbus or Capt. Cook," it was still viewed by the explorers "with as much pleasure as those deservedly famed adventurers ever beheld theirs."[25] At this moment of embarkation and suspense, Lewis swells with pride. Dramatically declaring that his expedition would "penetrate a country [...] on which civilized man had never trodden," Lewis' dramatic rhetoric demonstrates that he has already begun to construct his preferred narrative of his journey.[26] Likening himself to some of history's most renowned explorers, Lewis envisions himself ranking among the icons of intrepid discovery.

Lewis' narration cuts to the core of the legacy of his expedition. For Lewis, as for all great explorers, to succeed is to be first. Like Columbus, who painstakingly wove fiction and falsehood into his records to portray himself as the "first" person to see the new world, Lewis

---

[22] William Clark, 12 May 1804, *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition,* ed. Gary Moulton (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002): University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries Electronic Text Center, 27 January 2012.
[23] Lewis: 13 February 1804.
[24] Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage* (1996), 5.
[25] Lewis, 7 April 1805.
[26] Lewis, 7 April 1805.

goes to great lengths in his journal to secure a spot for himself on the mantle of historical "firsts."[27] Addressing this phenomenon, Slaughter describes the journals "as crafted perspectives consciously framed with a view to their effect on audiences."[28] Deliberately fashioned to communicate and defend the significance of the expedition and the legacy that Lewis and Clark hoped would succeed their journey, the journals are more than scientific logs. For Lewis and Clark, the journals became an opportunity to concretize a legacy and dictate how they would be remembered. In their journals, Lewis and Clark wrote their own history.

In writing and shaping how history would remember them however, Lewis and Clark helped transform their expedition from an historical event into a type of mythical tale. Perhaps understanding the expedition as a legendary story can help make sense of the rhetorical uncertainty that surrounds it. The Lewis and Clark story, as it is generally understood, has become a legend in the truest sense. It is a story that is celebrated for its stylistic and dramatic appeal, a chronicle of events that is captivating and exciting, dangerous and monumental. As Cayton notes, the main reasons people are drawn to the Lewis and Clark expedition are "more literary than historical."[29] Historical "facts" about whether or not Lewis and Clark were actually the first people to explore the west or about the expedition's genuine historical significance take a back seat to the construction of an epic account.

Approaching the Lewis and Clark story as a literary account helps make sense of many contradictory, inaccurate, and hyperbolic characterizations of the past. In popular narratives, and even historical texts, Lewis and Clark are portrayed as classical heroes. They are archetypes of strength, bravery, and fortitude. Ambrose, for example, asserts that Lewis' "determination was complete" as he prepared to set sail and that "he could not, would not, contemplate failure."[30] This seems impossible, inhuman even. Are we to believe that Lewis, a man who stood at the edge of the known world, was truly incapable of even thinking about failure? Did he really, as Ambrose claims, know that "he would be making history"?[31] Ambrose's willingness to use superlatives and to make bold and unqualified declarations is stunning but also befitting of the legacy that he seeks to perpetuate. In passages like this, Ambrose's writing read like a novel because his work is written, perhaps unwittingly, as a dramatic story more than as a genuine

---

[27] Slaughter, *Exploring Lewis and Clark*, 33-34.
[28] Slaughter, *Exploring Lewis and Clark*, 51.
[29] Cayton, "Telling Stories," 284.
[30] Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage* (1996), 216.
[31] ibid.

chronicle of the past.

In a sense, the Lewis and Clark expedition has always been seen as a story more than it has been seen as an historical event. Thomas Jefferson, the main sponsor of the Lewis and Clark expedition, actually referred to the journals of Lewis and Clark as "literary" as early as 1803.[32] The characterization of the Lewis and Clark story as literature is nothing new. However, the Lewis and Clark expedition is not just a story but also a journey. It is one of the types of narratives that novelist Willa Cather proclaimed would "go on repeating themselves as fiercely as if they had never happened before."[33] There is something irresistible about this journey, its context, the transformations that took place around it, and the revolutionary people and events that shaped it. Occurring at the threshold of America's rapid ascension to power and industrialization, this journey to the Pacific is an allegorical tale. Binding the North American continent, Lewis and Clark dramatically bade farewell to the past and gracefully ushered in the future.

However, even this canonized and concretized legacy is profoundly fluid, constantly changing and ever evolving. The Lewis and Clark expedition has meant many different things to many different people. As John Spencer explains in his essay *We Are Not Dealing Entirely with the Past* (2004) , while some historians today celebrate the expedition as a seminal moment of progress, a shining beacon of America's bold pursuit of destiny, others deride it as a colonialist enterprise, yet another dark chapter of conquest on America's tireless imperial march.[34] Throughout history, the expedition's legacy has changed dramatically as well. Spencer explains that although the expedition was largely ignored and considered historically and scientifically inconsequential when it first concluded, it gained prominence again in the late nineteenth century, when proponents of America's new industrialist society "invoked Lewis and Clark to justify the new social order, seeing an opportunity to "link the new society to a more fluid, democratic past."[35] Spencer traces this evolution into the modern day, a time in which he believes that diverging legacies have led to the growth of a new narrative, where Lewis and Clark have begun to "symbolize exactly the opposite of what they stood for a hundred years ago:

---

[32] Fresonke and Spence, *Legacies, Memories, and New Perspectives*, 2.
[33] Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913), 119 in Ronda, "Why Lewis and Clark Matter," 1.
[34] Ronda, "Why Lewis and Clark Matter," 1.
[35] John Spencer, "We Are Not Dealing Entirely With the Past: Americans Remember Lewis and Clark," in *Legacies, Memories, and New Perspectives*, 160.

environmentalism [...] instead of industrial development, multiculturalism instead of [...] imperial conquest."[36] The dynamic nature of its legacy suggests that something magnificent lies at the heart of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

However, this dynamism might also suggest something more enigmatic as well. The legacy of the Lewis and Clark expedition has garnered consistent and nearly endless fascination throughout the years, yet its central tenets and ultimate commitments steadfastly resist static definition. It is mystifying that this event, which has always derived its greatest meaning from its historical grandeur, has left a legacy that is simultaneously so uncertain and so vibrant. Despite its critics, its detractors, its opponents, its revisionists, and its champions, the expedition has remained a perennial force in American culture for well over one hundred years. No matter the time, nor the place, the Lewis and Clark narrative has offered a majestic historical backdrop to pressing issues and changing attitudes.[37] The Lewis and Clark story has also always been uniquely American, combining growth and destiny, progress and nature, hardship and triumph. It is familiar, since Lewis and Clark travelled across what is now the heartland of America, but it is also foreign, since Lewis and Clark were, in a way, the first and last truly great American explorers.

When they set out on their expedition, Lewis and Clark were in a situation utterly foreign to any American who is alive today. The two men, and the party of explorers that they commanded, did not know where they were going. Admittedly, they knew some things about the west. Many travelers had been there before. However, a map printed by French cartographer Nicolas de Finiels in 1798 betrays the deep extent of their ignorance. Carried by Lewis and Clark during their travels through the Missouri River, Finiels's simple *Map of Missouri River and Vicinity from Saint Charles, Missouri, to Mandan Villages of North Dakota,* is strikingly sparse and remarkably inaccurate. Not only is it not drawn nearly to scale, the map also amounts to little more than a rough outline of a few converging rivers. It is devoid of topographical features or names of most settlements and many prominent locations.[38] So lacking in reliable information were Lewis and Clark that, at one point, the two men actually thought that they might discover living wooly mammoths, then referred to as "The Ohio Monster," whose fossils had been

---

[36] Spencer, "Americans Remember Lewis and Clark," 160.
[37] ibid.
[38] Nicolas de Finiels, *Map of Missouri River and vicinity from Saint Charles, Missouri, to Mandan villages of North Dakota,* Online, 1798, From Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, 5 March 2012, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4127m.ct000583.

uncovered along the Ohio River.[39] Lewis, Clark, and even Thomas Jefferson were enveloped in the frenzy of adventure. Travelling to what seemed to be another world, even encounters with mythical creatures seemed possible.

These great explorers journeyed to a place that neither Lewis, nor Clark, nor anyone that either man had ever met could accurately describe—neither its basic geography, nor its most common inhabitants, nor its history, nor even its weather. Modern Americans have never known what it is like to venture into the wild—to voyage somewhere that has not been mapped out, scanned by satellites, surveyed by engineers, measured by radar, photographed from the air, travelled by humans, conquered. Certainly, we may try to capture a taste of this feeling. We visit national parks, camp out in the wilderness. Even then, when we venture beyond the comfort of the concrete jungles that we inhabit, we remain confined within rigidly defined spaces and ultimately pre-examined locations. There is nowhere else to go. If we are trapped by the limits of our world, then the world that Lewis and Clark explored was limitless.

When they address this topic, modern narratives of the Lewis and Clark expedition generally focus on how Lewis and Clark made the unknown known. Like Fritz's idealized scene and Ambrose's theatrical rhetoric, they tend to ignore the vulnerability and lack of knowledge of two of history's greatest explorers. Hardly anyone pauses to consider things like Jefferson's hope to find "The Ohio Monster" and what it might reveal about the expedition's more intimate secrets. Lewis and Clark set off into a land in which they expected to encounter actual monsters. One can only imagine the uncertainties and reservations harbored by these men. Still, these themes are hardly ever confronted in narratives of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Despite being largely overlooked in modern chronicles of the expedition, it seems as though weakness and vulnerability should be central components of a story about any kind of journey. After all, journeys are captivating not just because they traverse physical spaces but also because they facilitate travels through personal struggles, contemporary attitudes, and even more complex planes of meaning. Audiences adore stories in which great men are changed by their surroundings and brought to their knees by the vastness of nature, the challenges that they face, and the hardships that they must endure. Readers long for their heroes to proudly brandish their humanity, to shed the impregnable armor of their personas, and show the world that despite their

---

[39] Adrienne Mayor, *Fossil Legends of the First Americans* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 57- 58.

heroism, they are like us. Americans adore the image of the naval officer stealing a kiss as he returns home; though he is a hardened warrior, he is still in love.

In his essay *What Sacagawea Means to Me* (2002), Sherman Alexie approaches the legacy of the Lewis and Clark expedition with an eye towards historical contingency and rhetorical indeterminacy. Dissecting the binaries and historical biases that have clouded modern understandings of the expedition, Alexie's writing clashes with popular narratives. Declaring "in the future, every U.S. citizen will get to be Sacagawea for 15 minutes," Alexie attempts to create a space in which contemporary readers can come to terms with the multiplicity of historical narratives embodied by the Lewis and Clark expedition.[40] Encouraging readers to re-live the experiences of Sacagawea, Alexie offers an alternative to the festivals that litter the American west, which seek only to let visitors re-live the experiences of Lewis and Clark themselves. Still, Alexie's alternative paradigm does not reject narratives like Ambrose's in which "the two captains will lead the adventure, fighting rivers, animals, weather and diseases for thousands of miles."[41] Rather, it asks readers to "march right beside them" and imagine themselves as "aboriginal multitasker[s]" who "will also breast-feed."[42] For Alexie, there is more to the story than conquest and heroism. Building upon historical inquiries like Gulliford's, Alexie's narrative challenges modern understandings precisely because it demands ambiguity.

Although external forces and historical contingencies foundationally influenced the course of their expedition, both Lewis and Clark reveal a persistent resistance to this clear vulnerability. In his journals, Lewis chose to explicitly narrate the story of his rise to historical prominence. Clark, on the other hand, exposed splinters of his preferred narrative in the act of creating his journals. In his original notes on August 22, 1804, Clark references "This creek I call Roloje, a name given me last night in my sleep."[43] However, in the edited transcript of the journal that he submitted for publication, he speaks only of "this creek I call Roloje." There is no mention of the dream.

Clark's self-editing divulges the manner in which he hoped to be remembered. Like Lewis, Clark seems reluctant to admit to weakness or fallibility. Perhaps it would appear childish or unprofessional for a great explorer to name a river on the basis of a dream. However, it also

---

[40] Sherman Alexie, "What Sacagawea Means to Me," *Time,* 8 July 2002.
[41] ibid.
[42] ibid.
[43] Clark: 22 August 1804.

seems poetic. The prophetic William Clark, face to face with the wild, finally succumbs to a whim and abandons pure science. Projecting his dreams and his musings onto the landscape around him, he creates fantasy. Why, though, is this unacceptable for Clark? Perhaps naming a creek for a dream would represent a momentary lapse in judgment, a departure from diligent scientific methodologies.[44] Meticulously removing this miscarriage from his journals, Clark demonstrates that he, like Lewis, has already begun to consciously shape the rhetoric that will be his legacy. Still, Clark's willingness to ultimately name the creek Roloje is pleasing, somehow reassuring. Despite their grand legacies and heroic personas, at least we know that these men dreamed as well.

---

[44] Slaughter, *Exploring Lewis and Clark*, 21.

LABOR POLITICS AND THE HISTORICAL MEMORY OF 1989

JACK FULLER

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

On April 26th, 1989, an unidentified informant at the Emergency Session of the Politburo Standing Committee in Beijing relayed information to be sent to the Asian Affairs branch of the National Security Council. According to senior party officials, "the situation was extremely grave." Thousands of students mourning the death of Hu Yaobang, supported by "illegal organizations of workers," were "causing disturbances" in all major cities across China; at the epicenter in Beijing, illegal workers' unions had amassed over 10,000 supporters. Party leader Deng Xiaoping commented on the necessity of military action, "Even if the workers and farmers were to join the students, we can still rely on more than three million soldiers to maintain law and order."[1] Over a month later, the American ambassador in Beijing, James Lilley, confirmed their fears: "Several hundred to one thousand workers demonstrated at the south gate of the Public Security Bureau on May 30th."[2] Less than a week later, hundreds—if not thousands—of Chinese citizens were killed by advancing troops, and the People's Liberation Army was in control of Tiananmen Square.

Within hours of the alleged massacre, on June 5th, President George H.W. Bush publically condemned the Chinese government for "brutally suppressing popular and peaceful demonstrations" of students who advocated "basic human rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and freedom of association."[3] The Bush administration's public assessment of the Tiananmen crisis as a student led, pro-democracy protest forcefully suppressed by the Chinese government is, however, a far cry from multi-faceted and cross-class protest movement that the Bush Administration and Chinese Government observed for months before the infamous military crackdown in June. Although President Bush and his administration

---

[1] National Security Council Memo to Douglas Paal, "Paal Douglas H., Files, 1989-1990 China Files, China-Domestic Policy 1989 [4], [OA/ID CF00317-004]," *Tiananmen Square and U.S.-China relations, 1989-1993 Collection* (1989): 2, http://go.galegroup.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/gdsc/ (accessed December 12, 2013).

[2] "James Lilley cable to Douglas Paal," *White House Situation Room Files, Tianamen Square Crisis File, China - Part 2 Of 5 Tianamen Square Crisis*, (1989): 4.

[3] George Bush, "The President's News Conference," *The American Presidency Project*, (1989). http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18515

undoubtedly understood the economic nature of the protest, a confluence of political pressure to condemn human rights abuses, as well as the perceived economic necessity of maintaining close economic ties with the Chinese government, confined the Bush administration to acknowledging only the student massacre, thus deliberately avoiding the labor politics of the 1989 protest movement. The Bush administration's decisions regarding the public portrayal of the Tiananmen protest, then, played a fundamental role in altering the dominant historical memory of 1989, creating a situation where the widely-held narrative of the Tiananmen Square massacre no longer includes the involvement of the very people who incited the government to deploy force in the first place—the workers.

The vast majority of academic inquiry regarding the Chinese government's response to the Tiananmen crisis has conformed to the dominant narrative of a government suppression of student-led protest for democratic reform.[4] As one scholar summarized, "Conservatives reacted violently, purging reformers from top leadership positions and slaughtering thousands of students and demonstrators."[5] With the exception of a few scholars who have inquired into the labor politics of the protest, the story of the workers in Tiananmen Square has been lost.[6] This is not surprising, considering the trend of media outlets immediately repeating the student-led democratic protest narrative combined with Bush's rhetoric in the June 5th press conference.[7] Soon, the image of students dying under the Goddess of Democracy statue became the symbolically dominant—and inspiring—historical memory of those who watched the crisis unfold from their television screens; as one observer wrote to the *New York Times* on June 11th, "those students died in the shadow of a symbol that is specifically ours, too. We hope the Chinese students realize how moving that is for the people of New York City and the United States at large."[8] In recent years, however, the declassification of many White House Situation

---

[4] For Example, see: Jonathan Lipman, Barbara Molony, and Michael Robinson, "Social Transformations and Economic Growth" in *Modern East Asia*, (2012): 401-404. AND: Benedict Stavis, "China Explodes at Tiananmen," *Asian Affairs 17* (1990), 51-61.

[5] Benedict Stavis, "China Explodes at Tiananmen," *Asian Affairs* (1990), 51.

[6] Andrew G. Walder and Gong Xiaoxia, "Workers in the Tiananmen Protests: The Politics of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs, No. 29.* (1993).

[7] See: ABC World News, June 4, 1989. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9AvUuEPgvA AND https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAJNgWpiP3Q

[8] Paul Berman and David Denby, "The Statue of Liberty in Tiananmen Square," *The New York Times*, June 11, 1989. http://search.proquest.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/docview/110361254/abstract/14249823AC83804C879/

Room files and intergovernmental communications have opened new avenues for interpretation previously unavailable for academic analysis.

The role of the workers in the 1989 protests is crucial in understanding the evolution of the democratic protest narrative and the gradual silencing of the working-class struggle in China. As the April 26th cable indicates, party officials were immediately concerned about the role of "illegal" organizations of workers supporting the student protest.[9] Indeed, soon after the party declared martial law in Beijing, the Workers Union Committee was joined by the Beijing Workers Autonomous Union, a newly formed organization calling for massive labor strikes, defense of students in the square, and a rapid dissemination of information to workers and all sects of society.[10] In one of the only pieces of academic inquiry into the labor politics of the Tiananmen protest, political sociologists Andrew G. Walder and Gong Xiaoxia write that, "while the student movement did acknowledge issues of concern to workers—most notably inflation and official corruption—these issues were just the beginning of the workers' concerns." According to the translated handbills and interviews from the workers, members of the union also demanded price stabilization, representation in negotiations, and an end to administrative incompetence.[11] Despite their diverging political goals, the workers often acted in tandem with student protestors; one cable, uncovered from the White House Situation Room Files reporting on the protests in Chengdu, demonstrates the intimate and combined efforts of the students and workers, reading, "The crowd moved from afternoon tactics of throwing shoes, then stones— many of which came from near-by sidewalks which helpful construction workers chipped into small rocks."[12]

As classified cables from Beijing and other surrounding cities continued to flow into the White House Situation Room and the Asian Affairs branch of the National Security Council, the Bush administration learned more and more about the events unfolding in China based on the

---

[9] National Security Council Memo to Douglas Paal,"Paal Douglas H., Files, 1989-1990 China Files, China - Domestic Policy 1989 [4], [OA/ID CF00317-004]," *Tiananmen Square and U.S.-China relations, 1989-1993 Collection* (1989), 2, http://go.galegroup.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/gdsc/ (accessed December 12, 2013).
[10] Beijing Workers' Autonomous Union Preparatory Office Public Notice no. 1 in Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement, ed. Minzhu Han and Sheng Hua (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1990), 273.
[11] Andrew G. Walder and Gong Xiaoxia, "Workers in the Tiananmen Protests: The Politics of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs, No. 29.* (1993): 17-19. accessed December 12, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2949950.
[12] "James Lilley cable to Douglas Paal," *White House Situation Room Files*, *Tiananmen Square Crisis File, China - Part 2 Of 5 Tiananmen Square Crisis* (1989), 2.

perceptions and evaluations by American diplomats and ambassadors in China. By early June, the Bush administration had access to information from officials, both in Washington and from China that conveyed a narrative of students and workers with different agendas, protesting side by side against the Chinese government. As early as April 21ˢᵗ, cables from Winston Lord, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, conveyed how "more and more workers are taking part in student activities."[13] On April 26ᵗʰ, as the protests grew, Washington received news from their unidentified informants in Beijing that "students were receiving substantial support from other sectors of society, especially from workers" and that the illegal Workers Union Committee had set up in Beijing.[14] By mid-May, James Lilley reported that "several hundred thousand students, workers, and other demonstrators remained on Tiananmen Square throughout the night" and that the next day's wave of arriving protestors was "approximately 80 percent workers."[15] Later in May, Lilley wrote that hundreds, if not thousands, of workers were gathered and that "public security officers arrested three members of the Beijing Workers Autonomous Union."[16] These statements sent to the National Security Council every morning conveyed an increasingly strong presence of organized labor protest. Government officials, however, were not the only people to see working class struggle as the events in Beijing unfolded.

In addition to the observations made by American diplomats, ambassadors, and unidentified informants, independent American newspapers were also among those to witness the protest as a cross-class movement. In early May, during the initial phases of the protest, one *New York Times* reporter wrote that, "Not only a call for democracy, but also anger over inflation and corruption seemed to impel tens of thousands of workers to join students today in demonstrating in Tiananmen Square."[17] Later that same month, a writer for the *Wall Street Journal* wrote that, "what we are seeing is one act in an epic struggle, between workers and bosses, rich peasants and poor peasants, liberal reformers and nationalists, capitalists and anti-

---

[13] National Security Council Memo to Douglas Paal,"Paal Douglas H., Files, 1989-1990 China Files, China - Domestic Policy 1989 [4], [OA/ID CF00317-004]," *Tiananmen Square and U.S.-China relations, 1989-1993 Collection* (1989): 2, http://go.galegroup.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/gdsc/ (accessed December 12, 2013).

[14] National Security Council Memo to Douglas Paal, 2.

[15] National Security Council Memo to Douglas Paal,"Paal Douglas H., Files, 1989-1990 China Files, China - Domestic Policy 1989 [4], [OA/ID CF00317-004]," *Tiananmen Square and U.S.-China relations, 1989-1993 Collection* (1989): 2, http://go.galegroup.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/gdsc/ (accessed December 12, 2013).

[16] "James Lilley cable to Douglas Paal," *White House Situation Room Files*, (1989), 4.

[17] Sheryl WuDunn, "Workers Joining Students in Beijing Demonstrations," *New York Times*, May 5, 1989, 1. http://search.proquest.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/docview/110286417/1426C696C0B44EFC447/7?accountid=14667

capitalists."[18] While the authors and editors of these newspapers articles do not have the same authority to gauge the nature of the protest as those who had access to classified government information and secret meetings between premier party officials, they are—like the cables—primary accounts of the type of observations regarding the cross-class nature of the protest that were prevalent before, during, and after the crackdown in June. Even over a year later, Robin Munro, a *Nation* reporter who witnessed the crackdown in Beijing, wrote an editorial explaining how "the massacre in Tiananmen Square" was actually of the workers and not students, thus further demonstrating how the narrative of the worker protest was still engrained in the minds of those who witnessed the events in Beijing firsthand.[19]

Just as newspapers and top-level Bush administration officials were acutely aware of the prevalence of the working-class protest and their economic demands, so too were senior party officials in China. The narrative of the worker rebellion was prevalent, as was the fear that workers would support the students and incite new reforms. The cables from inside the Emergency Meeting of the Politburo in April noted that the government was even taking steps to "re-employ several thousand workers" who were laid off in an attempt to diminish the worker support of the students and prevent them from joining in the ranks of other unemployed workers.[20] Publically, however, the party did not denounce the worker's organizations as illegal, or blame them for causing serious disturbances to state enterprises; instead, as Lilley observed from the "Urgent Public Notice" of the Beijing Municipal Government, they blamed the turmoil on a "handful of ruffians" who were, "wantonly making rumors to instigate the masses."[21] In a May interview with Li Peng, the Premier even told students that "neither the government nor the Party has ever stated that the masses of students were creating turmoil" but that instead the real trouble came from "all sorts of idlers and riff-raff from many cities" that were "descending on Beijing in the name of the students."[22] Although the party never publically admitted who these

[18] Alexander Cockburn, "Millions in Tiananmen Square, but Not of One Mind," *Wall Street Journal*, May 25, 1989, 19.
http://search.proquest.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/docview/135371678/1426C696C0B44EFC447/5?accountid=14667
[19] Robin Munro, "Remembering Tiananmen Square: Who died in Beijing, and Why," *The Nation*, June 11, 1990.
[20] National Security Council Memo to Douglas Paal,"Paal Douglas H., Files, 1989-1990 China Files, China - Domestic Policy 1989 [4], [OA/ID CF00317-004]," *Tiananmen Square and U.S.-China relations, 1989-1993 Collection* (1989), 2. accessed: Web. 12 Dec 2013, http://go.galegroup.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/gdsc/
[21] "James Lilley cable to Douglas Paal," *White House Situation Room Files*, *Tianamen Square Crisis File, China - Part 2 Of 5 Tianamen Square Crisis*(1989), 1.
[22] "Students interview of Li Peng, May 18, 1989," *Chinese History: Diverse Perspectives from 1644 to Present* ed. David G. Atwill and Yurong Y. Atwill, 2010, 331.

"handful" of people were, the cables sent from China to the Bush administration in Washington reveal that not only was the government deeply fearful of the workers' involvement, taking preventative action to delay it, but also that they had begun arresting the leaders of the Beijing Workers Autonomous Union—an organization that, by their own admission, intended to support the students and encourage labor strikes to gain support for economic reform.[23]

As the cables from China reveal, the Bush administration was acutely aware of the working-class struggle intertwined within the student protest movement before, and during the declaration of martial law. On June 5th, however, Bush told the press corps and the American people that he wouldn't break relations with China and leave "kids struggling for democracy and freedom" to the "devices of a leadership that might decide to crackdown further."[24] Before the administration could come out publicly against the actions of the Chinese government, they undoubtedly had to make decisions about how to portray their understanding of the situation to the public. While historians do not have complete access to the private conversations and decisions made by top-level officials, we do have solid indication that the administration carefully calculated how to portray the protest. As a memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, President Bush's National Security Advisor, indicates, the National Committee of US-China relations held an "Emergency China Conference" in early June to assess the implications of the protests. On the third page, the memo notes, "There was a broad agreement in the conference with the thesis that the US government and academics should express outrage over the events in Tiananmen Square," indicating that senior party officials were privately discussing how to publicly handle the situation.[25] The memo also outlines that the problems of uncontrolled inflation and unequal wealth distribution due to economic corruption by party elites were also discussed—the very sort of issues that workers in China raised in May and June.[26] Despite this private acknowledgement and concern for the cross-class and multi-issue nature of the protest, public documents reveal that along the way, the administration, and even Ambassador Lilley, gave 'recommendations' on how to portray the situation to the press as "citizens" making "a

---

[23] "James Lilley cable to Douglas Paal," *White House Situation Room Files*, *Tianamen Square Crisis File, China - Part 2 Of 5 Tianamen Square Crisis* (1989), 1.
[24] George Bush, "The President's News Conference," *The American Presidency Project*, (1989) http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18515
[25] "Douglas Pall to Brent Scowcroft," *Rodman, Peter W., Subject Files*, *China,* (1989), 3.
[26] "Douglas Pall to Brent Scowcroft," (1989), 2.

passionate statement in favor of democracy."[27] Even President Bush himself can be seen deliberately avoiding, if not lying, about Deng Xiaoping's plan to deploy the People's Liberation Army upon the occasion that the workers joined in the protest—information that he had access to as early as late April.[28]

Given the indication that Bush administration officials deliberately avoided any indication that Chinese citizens advocated anything other than democratic reform, as well as their knowledge of the Chinese government's intentions to deploy force, it is important to understand why the administration may have made the choices that it did to ignore the working-class protest. As the nation learned of the crisis in China, the administration received political pressure from human rights activists, concerned students, and even the President of Taiwan to condemn the actions of the Chinese government and take both economic and political action against them.[29] By June 13th, Congress had even begun to take action, exemplified by Tom Lantos' introduction of HR 2613, a bill "to suspend most-favored-nation treatment for the products of the People's Republic of China . . . until that country recognizes and protects fundamental human rights."[30] As the President's statements indicate, despite the domestic and international pressure to end MFN status, the administration felt that it was necessary to maintain economic ties with China, and thus continue MFN trade status.[31] As a memorandum for the Office of Cabinet Affairs outlines, the administration saw that the refusal of MFN status would not only further alienate Chinese leaders, but would be detrimental to U.S consumers, destroy Hong Kong's economy, and put

---

[27] James Lilley cable to Douglas Paal," *White House Situation Room Files*, *Tianamen Square Crisis File, China - Part 2 Of 5 Tianamen Square Crisis* (1989).

[28] George Bush, The President's News Conference," (1989): In the Q&A section of the June 5 Press Conference, one reporter asked the President: "But Mr. President, there have been reports that Deng was behind the move to order the troops, and other reports that he's ailing and in a hospital. What do you know about that, sir?" to which President Bush Responded, "Don't know for sure on either, and I've talked to our Ambassador on that, as I say, last night, and we just can't confirm one way or another."; National Security Council Memo to Douglas Paal,"Paal Douglas H., Files, 1989-1990 China Files, China - Domestic Policy 1989 [4], [OA/ID CF00317-004]," *Tiananmen Square and U.S.-China relations, 1989-1993 Collection* (1989), 2, http://go.galegroup.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/gdsc/ (accessed December 12, 2013).

[29] For Example, See: Shang Su-quei to George H.W. Bush, *Public Mail Files*, *China Unrest, P-35 China Letters and Returns*, (1989). AND: Raymond Jewett to George H.W. Bush, *Public Mail Files*, *P-35 China Letters Various Dates,* (1989).; "Chinese Students from MIT, Boston, and Harvard to George H.W. Bush," *Paal, Douglas H., Files, 1989-1990 China Files, China* ,(1989); "AIT Taipei to AIT Washington," *Square Crisis File*, (1989).

[30] HR 2613 IH, 101st Congress. (1989)

[31] George Bush, "The President's News Conference," *The American Presidency Project*, (1989). http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18515

over four billion dollars of investments in China at risk.[32] As their ultimate decision to continue MFN status demonstrates, this was not a risk that the Bush administration was willing to take.

In the end, the administration acted as any other rational actor would, given the political circumstances of the situation and the perceived national interests of the country. They condemned the Chinese government, imposed limited sanctions, and made the decision to continue to extend Most Favored Nation trade status to an administration that was willing to deploy the People's Liberation Army on the very people it was designed to protect. In doing so, the Bush administration helped create a narrative that has altered the dominant historical memory of 1989—one that helps preserve the legitimacy of both the American and Chinese governments. Until information regarding the political realities of the Tiananmen Square protest is made widely available, most of the world will remember the Chinese government suppressing a rebellion of democratic students incited by "a handful of ruffians," not a widespread and publically supported movement of students, workers, and intellectuals. Likewise, the United States will not—thanks to the carefully crafted response of the Bush administration—be remembered as a nation that trades in the products of a labor system tightly controlled by the threat of force. Until that day, the role of the workers in 1989 will remain enshrined only in the memories of those who witnessed crisis unfold firsthand. For now, the historiographical debate continues.

---

[32] J. French Hill, "Fact Sheet on Continuation of MFN for China," *Hill, J. French, Files*, (1989).

Leading From the Front
An Analysis of What Made a Successful Civil War Unit

Ian Gorham

University of Michigan

As the Civil War dragged on into the summer of 1864, observers and participants concentrated their focus on the Overland Campaign being waged in Virginia. Brutal battles like The Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, North Anna, and Cold Harbor pitted the full might of the Army of the Potomac against the Army of Northern Virginia. Meanwhile, Confederate Lieutenant General Jubal Early's Army of the Valley was under orders from General Robert E. Lee to head north to Maryland.[1] Washington, D.C. had been left vulnerable to an attack from Early, as few Union troops remained there. The 3rd Division of the Union VI Corps, which included the 10th Vermont Infantry, was ordered to reinforce the untested "Hundred Days Men," men who had literally been in the military for around one hundred days, in Washington and departed from Petersburg, Virginia on July 6, 1864.[2] The Confederates outnumbered the Union almost three to one when the Union confronted Jubal Early at Monocacy Junction in Maryland. Though the battle was won by the Confederate Army, the Union managed to hold off Early long enough that he was later unable to attack Washington D.C.

What did the 10th Vermont Infantry possess that allowed them to succeed in a battle like Monocacy where they were severely outnumbered? A Civil War Infantry Regiment was made up of men from all walks of life who could not simply grab a weapon and charge into battle: they needed to be drilled so they could efficiently maneuver on a battlefield. Once on the battlefield, a regiment needed to trust that those ranked above and below them would do their duty. When the time came to do so, Union soldiers had to believe in their cause fully, or they would not go the extra mile for victory. The 10th Vermont Infantry was fortunate to be composed of men who believed in each other and the Union, beliefs instilled in them by the leadership of the regiment. Officers such as William Wirt Henry, Lemuel Abbott, and George Davis set the example in

---

[1] Shelby Foote, *The Civil War v.3* (New York: Random House, 1974), 446.
[2] Edwin Haynes, *A History of the Tenth Regiment, Vermont Volunteers* (Lewiston, 1870), 86.

camp and on the battlefield. The senior enlisted men, known as non-commissioned officers, listened to these men and sought to learn from them. With great leadership at all levels of the regiment, the 10th Vermont Infantry would find tremendous success during the Civil War.

To analyze the 10th Vermont Infantry Regiment, it must first be established what a regiment consists of and where it falls in the hierarchy of the Union Army. A volunteer infantry regiment was composed of ten line companies listed A through K as well as a Field and Staff unit. The Field and Staff Company consisted of the regiment's commanding officer, a colonel; an executive officer, a lieutenant colonel; and a major, who would assist the previous two officers. Also included were an adjutant, a quartermaster to issue gear, several surgeons and a chaplain.[3]

Companies were commanded by captains who reported to the Field and Staff Company.[4] As casualties mounted throughout the war, it was quite common to find a lower ranking officer occupying the position usually assigned to someone much senior.[5] An army was the largest unit during this time, such as the Army of the Potomac. Comprising an army was a corps, which in turn was comprised of several divisions; divisions were made up of brigades, which were a collection of several regiments. During the Overland Campaign, all Union armies fell under the command of Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant.[6]

The 10th Vermont Infantry had a bevy of good officers leading the regiment into battle. William Wirt Henry, who would win a Medal of Honor at Cedar Creek, took command of the 10th Vermont Infantry after the resignation of Colonel Albert Jewett on April 25, 1864 and would command the unit through its most difficult fighting and the duration of the Overland Campaign.[7] Henry was held in high esteem by his men. When he finally resigned in the winter of 1864, the 10th Vermont would be sad to see their leader go.[8]

Henry first served as a lieutenant in D Company of the 2nd Vermont Infantry in 1861. In a letter to his wife, he talks about two particular privates in his company that he is glad to see receive a discharge due to illness.[9] This is a particularly telling statement in two regards. First, he knows the names of his men and cares about their situation enough to discuss it with his wife.

---

[3] Haynes, *A History of the Tenth Regiment,* 10.
[4] ibid.
[5] Haynes, *A History of the Tenth Regiment,*133.
[6] Haynes, *A History of the Tenth Regiment,* 60-61.
[7] Haynes, *A History of the Tenth Regiment,* 64.
[8] Lemuel Abbott, *Personal Recollections and Civil War Diary, 1864* (Burlington: Free Press Printing, 1908), 240
[9] William Wirt Henry to Mary Jane Henry, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, Vermont, http://cdi.uvm.edu/collections/item/cwvhsHenryWilliam01 (accessed October 21, 2013)

Second, according to Henry, Major General George McClellan was not apt to grant discharges, even for legitimate problems.[10] It would have been Henry's duty to push these discharges through his chain of command and ultimately to McClellan.

After Henry's own discharge due to illness from the 2nd Vermont Infantry, he received several letters from enlisted men begging him to return. [11]However, not all enlisted men were as eager to serve with their officers as those in the 2nd Vermont Infantry. A soldier in the 27th Massachusetts wrote home that he hated how his officers drove him and the men in his unit like slaves.[12] Robert Gould Shaw, a captain in the 2nd Massachusetts, lamented his men's lack of discipline in everything they did.[13] Colonel Henry learned quickly how to toe the line between being an authoritarian and a pushover. There is also little doubt that Henry's experience interacting with enlisted men at the company level in the 2nd Vermont Infantry gave him valuable insight once he was promoted to command the 10th Vermont Infantry.

Henry was originally appointed a Major in the 10th Vermont Infantry, but after the unit's lieutenant colonel resigned, he advanced to the position on November 2, 1862.[14] The 10th Vermont Infantry spent the winter of 1862 in Maryland. Life in winter camp was marked by little activity. On the first page of his diary on January 1, 1864, Lemuel Abbott tells readers in a footnote that, "The most interesting part of this diary commences on May 3rd, 1864," in case readers wished to skip ahead to a more exciting part.[15] Soldiers were constantly coming and going on passes, wives joined their husbands in camp, and some studied for appointments to a higher rank in other regiments.[16] Lieutenant Colonel Henry no doubt spent this time endearing himself to his regiment. In fact, on January 19, 1863, the Non-Commissioned Officers of Company B bought him a sabre to show their appreciation.[17]

[10] Charles Dillingham to William Wirt Henry, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, Vermont, http://cdi.uvm.edu/collections/item/cwvhsDillinghamCharles03 (accessed October 21, 2013)
[11] William Wirt Henry to Mary Jane Henry, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, Vermont, http://cdi.uvm.edu/collections/item/cwvhsHenryWilliam08 (accessed October 21, 2013); Edward Murphy to William Wirt Henry, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, Vermont, http://cdi.uvm.edu/collections/item/cwvhsMurphyEdward01 (accessed October 21, 2013)
[12] Oscar Ladley to to mother and sisters, May 22, 1861, in James McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 47.
[13] Robert Gould Shaw to Francis G. Shaw, August 29, 1862, in McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades,* 48.
[14] William Wirt Henry to Mary Jane Henry, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, Vermont, http://cdi.uvm.edu/collections/item/cwvhsHenryWilliam33 (accessed October 21, 2013)
[15] Abbott, *Personal Recollections,* 1.
[16] Abbott, *Personal Recollections,* 6,7,23.
[17] Justin Carter to William Wirt Henry, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, Vermont, http://cdi.uvm.edu/collections/item/cwvhsHenryWilliam48a (accessed October 21, 2013)

Although Henry had endeared himself to his men in the comforts of winter camp, the true test would be how he handled himself in battle. James McPherson asserts that even a hated officer could win the appreciation of his men by displaying courage under fire. A Massachusetts lieutenant wrote regarding entering battle, "I knew if I flinched I was ruined."[18] Ulysses S. Grant took command of the Army of the Potomac in March of 1864 and reorganized the units. The 10th Vermont would fall under the 3rd brigade of VI Corps. Shortly before the Overland Campaign was set to commence, Col. Albert Jewett resigned as the Commanding Officer of the 10th Vermont Infantry on April 25, 1864, which advanced Henry to the position.[19]

At the Battle of the Wilderness in May 1864, the 10th Vermont Infantry found themselves held in reserve. On May 6, Confederate Major General Martin L. Smith reported to Lieutenant General James Longstreet that Major General Winfield Scott Hancock's flank was exposed. Longstreet knew this was a chance to deal a heavy blow to the Union and made preparations to attack. At 11 am, the attack commenced on Hancock's left flank. The foray was summed up by Hancock's statement to Longstreet years later, "You rolled me up like a wet blanket."[20] As the Confederate Army poured into the center of the Union Army, Brigadier General William Morris gave the order to his brigade to stand their ground and repulse the flanking Confederates. Only two regiments remained in reserve, the 10th Vermont and the 106th New York.

As they formed their lines, Henry rallied his men by asking Lieutenant Colonel Townsend of the 106th New York Infantry to join his men in three cheers. Both regiments responded loudly, and the Union was able to hold their line and prevent the battle from turning into a rout. Henry displayed bravery and leadership at a critical time on the battlefield: his rallying cry livened up the regiment at a critical juncture of the battle. Had a stand not been made at this point, the Confederate Army could have cut the Union forces in half and dealt a catastrophic blow to the Army of the Potomac.[21]

Conversely, we see the result of poor leadership on the Confederate side of the lines. After Longstreet had ordered the attack, he was severely wounded by friendly fire. Having to be removed from the field of battle, Longstreet was replaced by a major general with no combat

---

[18] Robert Carter to father, July 1861, in McPherson, 58.
[19] Haynes, *A History of the Tenth Regiment,* 61.
[20] Foote, *The Civil War*, 177.
[21] Haynes, *A History of the Tenth Regiment,* 66-67.

experience.[22] With an officer that knew nothing in command of the I Corps, the Confederate Army's ability to fight was hurt severely, and its chances to exploit the flanking movement it had executed were surely reduced.

It is here that we see the merits of being a "fighting officer" pay significant dividends on the battlefield. If men were resentful of their officers, they usually let loved ones know through letters. One soldier in the 1st Rhode Island Cavalry referred to his Colonel as, "a lunk headed old fool… the old puke… a God damned fussy old pisspot utterly incompetent for the position he holds."[52] Some enlisted men even discussed shooting officers they did not like.[53] Henry, due to his status as a fighting officer and good rapport with his men, would not have to worry about his men following him into battle because they trusted him. The major general who replaced the legendary Longstreet however, would not be able to rely on his men to instantly obey his orders.

At the Battle of Cedar Creek, Colonel Henry again displayed his superb leadership in what would be his final battle of the war. After having lost a finger at Cold Harbor in June 1864, Henry had been in and out of the hospital. Major Edwin Dillingham had commanded the 10th Vermont from August 21 until his death on September 19, 1864 due to Henry's persistent infections.[23] Henry had never fully recovered and had a high fever before the battle.[24] Despite his fever, Henry would compose himself enough to lead his men into battle. On the morning of the battle, October 19, a heavy fog masked the Confederate movement and allowed them to set up on the Union's left flank, unbeknownst to the Union soldiers.

As dawn broke, the Confederate Army charged upon the unsuspecting Union and found their enemies wholly unprepared for battle. One South Carolina soldier remarked that many of the Union soldiers were only half dressed.[25] The Union Army embarked on a frantic retreat in which they lost guns, men, and ground. Lost in the retreat were three cannons from McKnight's Battery 5th U.S. Artillery, which the advancing Confederate Army was about to turn on the Union soldiers. Brigadier General James Ricketts rode up to his brigade of the VI Corps, which was the first unit to establish a proper defensive line, and ordered them to retake the lost cannons. The 10th Vermont Infantry, with Colonel Henry at the front, led the charge and successfully retook the lost artillery. As the brigade dragged the cannon back to the Union lines,

---

[22] Foote, *The Civil War*, 182.
[23] Haynes, *A History of the Tenth Regiment,* 173.
[24] George G. Benedict, *Vermont in the Civil War* v. 2 (Burlington: Free Press Association, 1888), 323.
[25] Foote, *The Civil War*, 567-568.

Colonel Henry collapsed due to his fever. Luckily, two of his soldiers saw Henry go down and carried him back with them.[26] Colonel Henry would be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for leading the charge that day.[27]

As was stated above, the 10th Vermont Infantry was the first unit to establish a proper defensive line. Since the Confederate Army was advancing closely on their heels, a unit would only have a short amount of time to stop and properly setup in a defensive posture. The 10th Vermont Infantry had been through countless battles by this time and maneuvering under fire was now second nature. A less disciplined unit may have continued to run, but the 10th Vermont Infantry was able to stop and be in position to retake McKnight's Battery. Had the 10th Vermont Infantry not stopped where it did, those cannons would have been turned on the Union and produced casualties that may have prevented the Union's ability to counter attack.

Fighting officers like Henry were critical to Union victories on this day and others throughout the Civil War. The mere arrival of Major General Phillip Sheridan at Cedar Creek was marked by raucous cheering and, to paraphrase Edwin Haynes, "A tender embrace from General Custer."[28] In what would come to be known as "Sheridan's Ride," the beloved general rode into Cedar Creek during a lull in the fighting. Jubal Early had not ordered his men to drive the Union from the field in what one of his aides called, "that fatal halt."[29] Early's mistake would be Sheridan's chance to change the Union's fortunes. Now led by Sheridan, the Union Army was able to push the Confederates back and win the day.

It was not just a commanding officer, however, that made a regiment successful. The captains and lieutenants who closely interacted with the enlisted men had to be equally as sharp. The best example of a company-grade officer (captain or below) in the 10th Vermont Infantry was Lemuel Abbott. Abbott was able to find his diary thirty-eight years after the Civil War, and it encompasses the events of the Civil War from January 1, 1864 until its conclusion.[30]

Lieutenant Abbott had attended Norwich University, a military school in Vermont, which gave him a good knowledge of drill and tactics.[31] During the winter of 1863 to 1864, one could find a good amount of junior officers and non-commissioned officers in Abbott's tent studying

---

[26] Benedict, *Vermont in the Civil War*, 323-325.
[27] "Medal of Honor Recipients," Civil War (G-L), http://www.history.army.mil/moh/civilwar_gl.html#HENRYWW (accessed November 4, 2013).
[28] Haynes, *A History of the Tenth Regiment,* 130
[29] Foote, *The Civil War*, 569.
[30] Abbott, *Personal Recollections,* vi.
[31] Abbott, *Personal Recollections*, 7.

maneuvers. By Abbott's count, he had a class of seventy-five enlisted men whom he taught daily about tactics and drill.[32] Having an officer who knew anything about drill was a victory in itself in a volunteer unit. But having an officer who was well versed in military life, such as Abbott, and shared that knowledge with enlisted men was an invaluable asset.[33]

The purpose of these meetings was twofold and adds another layer to what made the 10th Vermont Infantry an excellent unit. Not only did men of the 10th Vermont want to learn the intricacies of military strategy, these men wanted to earn commissions in colored regiments.[34] The fact that so many men wanted the chance to command colored regiments shows their dedication to the Union's cause. Abbott himself sought out an appointment in a colored unit, although his opinion of colored troops was suspect. When meeting a former 10th Vermont Infantry soldier who had recently become a colonel in a colored regiment, the colonel tells Abbott that his opinion of colored soldiers is not high. Abbott defers to his opinion, since it was the colonel who would know better than he.[35]

Later, as Abbott reflected on the Battle of Monocacy in July 1864, he declared the reason for the 10th fighting so hard was that "We were in the field to preserve the Union and to eliminate the national parasite of human slavery."[36] Though Abbott may have had reservations about colored troops, he was vehemently against the institution of slavery. Colonel Henry was a believer in the abilities of colored troops, going so far as to say that their performance in battle should have eliminated prejudice against them in the Army.[37] Henry, Abbott, and the seventy-five men, many of whom were non-commissioned officers, aspired to serve in colored regiments says that much of the leadership of the 10th Vermont Infantry did not believe in slavery.. The motivation Abbott expressed about ending slavery no doubt manifested itself as a motivation to train his men and achieve victory on the battlefield for Vermont and the Union.

The Battle of Monocacy that Abbott referred to was arguably the pivotal battle the 10th Vermont Infantry had fought during the war. Abbott would concur in his journal in the days to follow, saying it was without a doubt the most important battle he had participated in.[38]

---

[32] Abbott, *Personal Recollections*, 3.
[33] McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades,* 46.
[34] Abbott, *Personal Recollections*, 20.
[35] Abbott, *Personal Recollections*, 93.
[36] Abbott, *Personal Recollections*, 118.
[37] William Wirt Henry to Mary Jane Henry, July, 3, 1864, William Wirt Henry Papers, Vermont Historical Society, Barre.
[38] Abbott, *Personal Recollections,* 114.

Confederate Major General John B. Gordon would say that Monocacy was one of the hardest fights he had experienced during the war.[39] The 10th Vermont Infantry would have two men, First Lieutenant George Davis and Corporal Alexander Scott, win Medals of Honor for their actions during the battle.[40]

Confederate Lieutenant General Jubal Early and his Army of the Valley were ordered from Cold Harbor on June 13 to sneak up behind the Union Army, which had its sights set on Richmond. [41] This, the Confederacy hoped, would force Grant to send troops to protect Maryland from Early's advance. On July 6, Grant ordered the 3rd Division of VI Corps to detach from his army and sail for Baltimore.[42] Colonel Henry, in a letter to his wife, was in high spirits, as he determined that nothing in Maryland could be worse than what awaited the unit in Virginia.[43]

 Major General Lew Wallace was in charge of the defense of Washington and decided the stand against Early would be at Monocacy Junction, where the road split east for both Washington and Baltimore. By July 7, Wallace had only been able to gather 2,300-2,500 men, most of which were "Hundred Days Men," meaning that they had never seen combat. Luckily for Wallace, the Third Division of VI Corps was preparing to march from Baltimore at that moment and would add a veteran presence to the Union force.[44] Even with the Third Division en route, Early had 14,000 hardened veterans to Wallace's 7,000, only two-thirds of which had combat experience.[45] The 10th Vermont Infantry and its division were all that stood between Early and Washington D.C. As dawn broke on July 9, 1864, citizens close to the battle site ran from their homes with anything they could carry. They likely thought the cause was hopeless, but to quote what Lieutenant General Early said to Major General Gordon at Cedar Creek a few months later, "This is the VI Corps, General. It will not go unless we drive it from the field."[46]

At daybreak, Early's army advanced toward the Union skirmish line, which was staged on the other side of the Monocacy River facing west, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Charles Chandler of the 10th Vermont Infantry. The skirmish line held for approximately an hour before

---

[39] Abbott, *Personal Recollections,* 111.
[40] Abbott, *Personal Recollections,* 105.
[41] Foote, *The Civil War*, 446.
[42] Foote, *The Civil War,* 450; Abbott, *Personal Recollections*, 93.
[43] William Wirt Henry to Mary Jane Henry, July, 9, 1864, William Wirt Henry Papers, Vermont Historical Society, Barre.
[44] Foote, *The Civil War,* 451; Abbott, *Personal Recollections,* 114.
[45] Foote, *The Civil War,* 446, 452; Abbott, *Personal Recollections*, 88.
[46] Foote, *The Civil War,* 568.

they were overwhelmed on their left flank and their front. Lieutenant Davis of the 10th Vermont Infantry led the skirmishers in a retreat east over the bridge, which they then set ablaze to thwart the Confederate advance. Lieutenant Abbott recalls watching the retreat with astonishment and seeing a Private O'Brian of D. Company fall forty feet through the bridge to the river below and escape. Major General Wallace had also noted Lieutenant Davis's handiwork in pulling his men out and nominated him for the Medal of Honor he would later receive.[47]

Confederate artillery continued to shell the Union at an impressive rate. At this time only half of the Third Division was at Monocacy. The 2nd Brigade had yet to show and never would, depleting the Union force to approximately 5,000 men.[48] Early now held nearly a three-to-one advantage in manpower over Wallace. The Confederate Army had made its way over a ford in the Monocacy River two miles south of where the bridge had been, affording the 10th Vermont Infantry and the 1st Brigade valuable time to prepare a defense. The 10th Vermont Infantry held their position, along with five other regiments, for eight hours against six Confederate brigades. Ultimately, artillery and a devastating frontal assault would force Wallace to order a retreat.[49]

The retreat was a difficult endeavor, as it required the Union Army to move north, parallel to the battle line, and escape to the right of it.[50] The left of the line, including the 10th Vermont Infantry, was cut off by the advancing Confederates, and the infantry had to escape through the woods behind them to the Baltimore Pike. Early had captured over one thousand Union Soldiers but did not want to be further slowed by taking on more prisoners. The Union defenders were now out of his way, and the path to Washington was clear.[51]

As Early's army descended on Washington, they came into range of Fort Stevens. Due to losses from the Battle of Monocacy and the breakneck pace at which he had marched his men, the Army of the Valley now only numbered around 10,000. Shortly after arriving on the outskirts of Washington, Early noticed a cloud of dust on the horizon. The entirety of the Union VI Corps was marching in to reinforce the capital.[52] Early was not dissuaded from his plans to attack Washington and sent scouts into the city. Their reports indicated that not only had the VI Corps arrived but also the Union XIX Corps. Early changed his mind about scaling a full assault, and

---

[47] Abbott, *Personal Recollections,* 104-105.
[48] Abbott, *Personal Recollections,* 106; Haynes, *History of the Tenth Regiment,* 92.
[49] Abbott, *Personal Recollections,* 106; Haynes, *History of the Tenth Regiment,* 92.
[50] Haynes, *History of the Tenth Regiment,* 92.
[51] Foote, *The Civil War,* 452.
[52] Foote, *The Civil War,* 454.

only minor skirmishing would mark what would come to be known as the Battle of Fort Stevens.[53]

It is a very plausible argument that the 10th Vermont Infantry along with its brigade saved Washington from being sacked. These hardened veterans stood their ground against overwhelming odds and delayed Early enough that, by the time Washington was in his sights, so were Union reinforcements. Lemuel Abbott recalled the ovation the 10th Vermont Infantry received as they marched down Pennsylvania Avenue a few days later, saying, "The ovation given that part of Rickett's Division of the famous historic fighting Sixth Corps…as it marched up Pennsylvania Avenue and especially the bullet, shell, weather beaten and battle torn flags of the tenth Vermont…is a proud and pleasant memory never to be forgotten. It was the event of the day, not other regiment within hearing, receiving such a continuous and noisy reception."[54] While there is no data of the decibel level achieved that summer day in July, it is safe to say that the men of the 10th Vermont Infantry deserved every cheer they got.

In conclusion, it was the superior leadership of the 10th Vermont Infantry that allowed them to experience success during the Civil War. They were able to maneuver quickly on the battlefield and were proficient with their weapons. Down time during the winter was spent learning drill and tactics, with many in the regiment doing so on their free time. Courage in battle was apparent as the 10th Vermont Infantry often fought against undesirable odds. From Colonel Henry down to his non-commissioned officers, these men not only trained their subordinates as best they could but developed relationships with them that allowed for a strong trust to be built. This trust enabled Colonel Henry to lead the charges at The Wilderness and Cedar Creek and Lieutenant Davis to have his men hold the skirmish line at Monocacy.

Little actions such as the men buying Colonel Henry a sword or Lieutenant Abbott spending his time tutoring men on military subjects were the foundation of a mutually beneficial relationship for the men in the 10th Vermont Infantry. It allowed Colonel Henry to know that his style of command was working, which would let him lead a charge against the enemy with the confidence that his men would be right behind him. Not only did Lieutenant Abbott's classes help teach the men invaluable knowledge, his efforts showed them that he was willing to work on his personal time for their benefit. Undoubtedly, the men would want to repay Abbott for his

---

[53] Foote, *The Civil War,* 460.
[54] Abbott, *Personal Recollections*, 116.

help and would do so on the battlefield. The leadership of the 10th Vermont Infantry instilled a trust in their men that allowed them to fight in any battle, charge any position, and ultimately defeat the Confederacy and preserve the Union.

Works Cited

Abbott, Lemuel A. *Personal Recollections and Civil War Diary*. Burlington: Free Press Printing, 1908. Accessed October 19, 2013. https://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=LBGox_7 9mrgC&pg=GBS.PR1.

Benedict, George G. *Vermont In the Civil War*. Vol. 2. Burlington: Free Press Association, 1888.

Charles Dillingham to William Wirt Henry, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, Vermont, http://cdi.uvm.edu/collections/item/cwvhsDillinghamCharles03 (accessed October 21, 2013)

Edward Murphy to William Wirt Henry, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, Vermont, http://cdi.uvm.edu/collections/item/cwvhsMurphyEdward01 (accessed October 21, 2013)

Foote, Shelby. *The Civil War: A Narrative*. Vol. 3. New York: Random House, 1974.

Haynes, Edwin M. *A History of the Tenth Regiment, Vermont Volunteers*. Lewiston: Tenth Vermont Regimental Association, 1870. Accessed October 16, 2013. https://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=12qKDHr OpfoC&pg=GBS.PR1.

Justin Carter to William Wirt Henry, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, Vermont, http://cdi.uvm.edu/collections/item/cwvhsHenryWilliam48a (accessed November 15, 2013)

McPherson, James M. *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

"Medal of Honor Recipients (G-L)." Medal of Honor Recipients. August 13, 2013. Accessed November 4, 2013. http://history.army.mil/moh/civilwar_gl.html#HENRYWW.

William Wirt Henry to Mary Jane Henry, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, Vermont, http://cdi.uvm.edu/collections/item/cwvhsHenryWilliam01 (accessed October 21, 2013)

William Wirt Henry to Mary Jane Henry, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, Vermont, http://cdi.uvm.edu/collections/item/cwvhsHenryWilliam08 (accessed October 21, 2013)

William Wirt Henry to Mary Jane Henry, Vermont Historical Society Library, Barre, Vermont, http://cdi.uvm.edu/collections/item/cwvhsHenryWilliam33 (accessed October 21, 2013)

William W. Henry to Mary Jane Henry, May 17, 1864, July 3, 1864.

The Warsaw Ghetto and The Shanghai Ghetto: The Differing Histories of Anti-Semitism and Legacies of the Holocaust

So Yeon Jeong

Wellesley College

Nazi Germany's Warsaw ghetto and Japan's Shanghai ghetto offer very different perspectives of ghettos during the Holocaust. The varying conditions and outcomes in these ghettos were in part due to the different historic relationship of the Jewish minority with the majority population. The Nazis developed their anti-Semitism in the Warsaw ghetto through the intense local policing and eventual policy of extermination of the Jews, drawing on a long history with a Jewish minority. Though both the Warsaw and Shanghai ghettos were created under similar ideas and political institutions, German-occupied Europe was much more receptive to anti-Jewish policies due to its enduring history of anti-Semitism. On the other hand, not only did the Japanese authorities in Shanghai have other political interests, but they and the residents of Shanghai had no similar historical relationships with the Jews. The absence of an anti-Semitic history impacted the different regulations and interactions, the most significant of which was the Japanese refusal to carry out the annihilation of the Jews. The differences between the two ghettos, however, do not lie in "better" and "worse" conditions but rather in the tailoring of racial policies to the specific needs of wartime Warsaw and Shanghai.

Shanghai as an escape

Anti-Semitism in Europe worsened during the postwar depression as Hitler and the Nazis rose in power in Germany. Germany experienced severe economic crises including inflation and unemployment after World War I. Ernest Heppner argues in his memoir, *Shanghai Refuge,* that during the 1920s, "the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP, the Nazis) used this opportunity to transfer the sense of helplessness felt by the majority of Germans into anger

against Jews."[1] Hitler came to power as chancellor in 1933, and Germany became a totalitarian state in which anti-Semitism became more pronounced. However, even before 1933, Ernest Heppner recounts the difficulties he experienced as a minority Jewish child: "I learned very early to live with crude anti-Semitism. For me, being beaten and spat at and cursed became part of growing up as a Jew."[2] Because of the historical roots of social anti-Semitism, Nazi Germany was able to increase such discrimination to a brutal degree. In November 1938, during the Kristallnacht pogrom, Germans and Austrians burned nearly every synagogue and prayer house in Vienna, plundered thousands of Jewish shops, and threw Jews out of their homes. After the violence, even the most patriotic German Jews scrambled to leave the country.[3]

With the rapid increase in the persecution of Jews in Nazi occupied territory, the Jewish population sought to escape this campaign of terror. The lack of visa or passport requirements made Shanghai one of the only viable options for Jews looking to escape persecution in Nazi occupied territories. Ursula Bacon in her memoir, *Shanghai Diary,* expresses the lack of options Jews had in escaping their persecution:

> The rest of the world had closed its myopic eyes to the horrors of Nazi Germany, closed its ears to the pitiful cries for help and consequently, barred its door to those trying to escape from the nightmare of calculated genocide. America, Mexico, Canada, South America, Central America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, not to mention the European nations and their colonies, all were unwilling to accept refugees.[4]

With few borders, Shanghai began to receive large numbers of Jewish refugees. Though Central European Jewish professionals began to arrive in Shanghai as early as 1933, a larger wave of immigration began in March 1938 with the Nazi invasion of Austria and the rapid persecution of its Jewish population.[5] These numbers only increased further in 1939 as panic in Europe spread,

---

[1] Ernest Heppner, Shanghai Refuge: A Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto (University of Nebraska Press: 1995), 3.
[2] Hepper, Shanghai Refuge, 7.
[3] Anthony Hughes, "Sport and Jewish identity in the Shanghai Jewish Community 1938-1949," International Sports Studies 21.1 (2001): 45.
[4] Ursula Bacon, Shanghai Diary: A Young Girl's Journey from Hitler's Hate to War-Torn China (M Press, 2007), 1.
[5] Avraham Altman and Irene Eber, "Flight to Shanghai, 1938-1940: The Larger Setting," in Yad Vashem ((2000), 1-2.

and by the end of the year, nearly 20,000 Jewish refugees inhabited Shanghai.[6] The refugees arrived via German, Italian and Japanese ocean liners that picked up people who had fled from their homelands to port cities.[7]

The lack of such passport and visa requirements in itself demonstrates the limited history of anti-Semitism of the city, which would later define the characteristics of the Shanghai ghetto. Ernest Heppner recounts the novelty of the relationship: "Initially, the influx of refugees had no economic impact on the Chinese. Neither they nor the Japanese knew what a Jew was. We had landed in a country that had apparently never experienced any anti-Jewish manifestations. The philosophies of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Shintoism never taught hatred or contempt for other religions. It seemed we had found a haven - a country without anti-Semitism!"[8] Even the earliest interactions between the Jews and Shanghai residents demonstrates the absence of anti-Semitism. Furthermore, in 1938 the city of Shanghai was not legally within any sovereign power's jurisdiction, and the only authority that could control the entire city, the Japanese military, would have had difficult red tape to cross.[9]

However, influx of Jewish refugees in the late 1930s was not the first time that Shanghai was inhabited by Jews. Shanghai had a diverse and rich historical relationship with Jewish immigrants, just one not characterized by anti-Semitism.

> Shanghai's status as a great trading city and open port had attracted Sephardic (Baghdadi origin) Jews ... By the turn of the century, there were about 1,000 Sephardic Jews in Shanghai from among the wealthiest families in Asia. The second phase of this history began in 1900 when new waves of mainly Russian (Ashkenazi) Jews began to arrive. These newcomers were primarily shopkeepers and restaurateurs, though some were wealthy Jews who had fled the 1917 communist revolution and who survived by selling the jewellery and gold they managed to get out of Russia. By the 1930s there was a well-organised community of about 5,000. Some Russian Jews had settled in Harbin after 1917 and had been forced south after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1937.[10]

The complexity of the Jewish demographics of Shanghai extended to the rest of the city's population. In fact, the port city was divided into three distinct physical areas and was a mosaic

---

[6] Hughes, "Sport and Jewish Identity in the Shanghai Jewish Community 1938-1949," 45.
[7] Altman and Eber, "Flight to Shanghai," 1.
[8] Heppner, Shanghai Refuge, 42.
[9] Altman and Eber, "Flight to Shanghai," 12.
[10] Hughes, "Sport and Jewish Identity in the Shanghai Jewish Community," 45.

of peoples from forty-six nationalities, each with its own niche: the International Settlement, operated by autonomous European powers and by the Japanese, the French Concession, and the Chinese districts and neighborhoods encircled the foreign enclaves.[11] The Chinese vastly outnumbered the foreigners, particularly after the 1938 hostilities in the vicinity of Shanghai, when Chinese refugees poured into the city.[12] By 1930, the Japanese made up about half of the foreign community and occupied most of the territory. The Jewish refugees' relationship with Shanghai, otherwise lacking in a history of anti-Semitism, was complicated by the population of white Russians. With growing numbers of Central European refugees, some of the white Russians found themselves competing for jobs with the new arrivals, which accelerated the anti-Semitic feelings that already existed among the white Russians.[13]

In addition, the Germans fostered anti-Semitism in Shanghai. Shanghai had strong German influences, particularly because of the Japanese alliance. The Germans exploited the lack of unity among foreigners in Shanghai through their anti-Semitic media portrayals, instilling fear in the different populations of Shanghai.[14] The Nazis established a church, a German-language radio station, a Nazi newspaper, the *Ostasiatischer* (East Asian) *Lloyd,* their own chamber of commerce, and a Gestapo office. The experience of refugees in encountering the German pressure in Shanghai is recounted in Ursula Bacon's memoir: "From its balcony flew the offensive red, white, and black flag of Hitler's German Reich - the huge, hateful swastika fluttered mockingly in the breeze under a clear china-blue sky."[15]

However, the Japanese allowed the arrival of large numbers of refugees, despite being allies with the Germans, due to their grand misconception of Jews as influential agents in international affairs.[16] The misguided beliefs the Japanese officials held about the Jewish population came from the lack of a historical relationship and knowledge of Judaism. Heppner in his memoir argues that the "Japanese, who had never encountered a Jew and knew nothing about Judaism, honestly believed ... that these mythical Jews were involved in a world conspiracy and that Jews controlled the banks, the economy, and the governments of the Western world."[17] As a result of these misguided beliefs of the ubiquitous power of Jews on the world order, Japanese

---

[11] Alex Ross, Escape to Shanghai: A Jewish Community in China (Free Press,1993), 23.
[12] Altman and Eber, "Flight to Shanghai," 10.
[13] .ibid.
[14] Heppner, Shanghai Refuge, 43.
[15] Bacon, Shanghai Diary, , 1.
[16] Hughes, "Sport and Jewish Identity in the Shanghai Jewish Community," 45.
[17] Heppner, Shanghai Refuge, 103.

authorities therefore led to a lack of anti-Semitism and instead a presence of tangible policies that sought Jewish presence in Japanese occupied territories. For example, on March 2, 1939, the Japanese Foreign Minister, Hashiro Arita, declared publicly in the parliament that there would be no policies discriminating against Jews.[18]

The positive opinion of the Jews meant that by 1939, the 20,000 Central European refugees who had arrived in Shanghai were exposed to minimal anti-Semitism and few discriminating policies. The Jews were able to create a community for themselves in a foreign land despite the Nazi presence. The massive influx of Jews added to shortages of living space, as thousands of Chinese war refugees also streamed into the city from the countryside.[19] Conditions in Shanghai were difficult. Kaplan recounts the initial difficulties of Shanghai in her memoir:

> The Jewish relief organizations in Shanghai are overloaded with the sudden influx of so many needy. As there is no other solution, we stand in line with the others to ask for initial aid in finding a small flat where we can live and some rations to keep us from starvation. The feeling of such poverty weighs the refugees down like a physical burden. Heads are bent, faces are dour. With the few remaining pennies from the pittance allotted to us on our departure from Vienna, we are virtually destitute. The Nazis have managed, as they had planned, to send us into the world as beggars.[20]

Under Nazi policy, the Jews had been allowed to leave with limited possessions. Nazis stole their wealth and other possessions. Poverty weighed heavily on the Jewish refugees, especially initially as jobs were difficult to find. Some professionals and wealthier refugees could settle in the French Concession and International settlement, but most settled in Japanese occupied Hongkew, which had been badly destroyed from air raids and shellings.[21]

Nazi policies continued to influence the Jewish refugees in Shanghai in negative ways as they tried to create a community for themselves. On November 29, 1941, the German Consul General in Shanghai informed the Shanghai Municipal Council that Jews living outside Germany had lost their citizenship. Heppner expresses in his memoir the isolation that he felt as a Jew in Shanghai: "We were now considered stateless; we had no consular protection, and in Shanghai

---

[18] Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 104.
[19] Hughes, "Sport and Jewish Identity in the Shanghai Jewish Community," 45.
[20] Vivian Jeanette Kaplan, Ten Green Bottles: The True Story of One Family's Journey from War-torn Austria to the Ghettos of Shanghai (St. Martin's Press, 2004), 132.
[21] Ross, Escape to Shanghai, 25.

that meant that we had no rights whatsoever."[22] The difficult circumstances that the Jewish refugees from Central Europe faced in Shanghai were therefore representative more of the anti-Semitic roots of Nazi German policy than of Shanghai's relationship to the Jews.

Ghettoization as a process of control and compromise

Ghettoization arose as a process of institutional discrimination and establishment of control against the Jewish minority population by the Nazis all throughout Europe, the process itself drawing upon the long history of anti-Semitism in the region. The Nazis emphasized their power and control in physical space over Europe's Jews through ghettoization in more than 40,000 cities.[23]

> The creation, existence, and destruction of the ghetto involved a perverse civic planning, as blueprints of annihilation were mapped onto a real world of schools and playgrounds, churches and synagogues, hospitals, restaurants, hotels, theaters, cafés, and bus stops. These loci of urban life ... acquired entirely new associations: Residential streets changed into sites of executions; hospitals became places for administering death; cemeteries proved to be avenues of life support.[24]

The ghettoization of the Jewish population of Warsaw and Shanghai reflected this imposition of power upon physical space. Yet ghettoization as a process was very much a part of a policy of the Nazis, who carried it out in Warsaw and other cities they occupied and pressured the Japanese to impose the same policy. Though the ghetto as an institution in both Warsaw and Shanghai came from similar ideas of control, ghettoization during the Holocaust was a product of anti-Semitic history of the Nazis. In addition, the ghetto in Warsaw was the target of more violence and brutal local discrimination than that ghetto in Shanghai, although the latter did not lack it completely.

Ghettoization established Nazi control over Warsaw's Jews, and also took away all trappings of formal society, including personhood, mobility, identity, rights, sustenance, and basic needs of the Jews. Twenty-seven days after the German invasion of Poland, on September 1, 1939, the victorious German army marched into the city of Warsaw and established a military

---

[22] Heppner, Shanghai Refuge, 101.

[23] Craig Wilder, "The Ghetto: From Venice to Harlem" (classroom lecture, Cambridge, MA, April 8, 2013).

[24] Michael Grynberg, editor, Philip Boehm, trans., Words to Outlive Us: Eyewitness Accounts from the Warsaw Ghetto (New York, Picador: 2003), 3.

government, beginning an occupation that would be harsh, particularly for a Jewish community of more than 350,000.[25] The German *Schutzstaffel* (SS), an elite security force known for its brutal methods, "established a *Judenrat,* or Jewish council to carry out their orders in the Jewish community."[26] A long list of repressive policies followed. Jews had to identify themselves with armbands bearing the six-pointed Star of David, had to identify their businesses with 'Jewish owned' signs in the windows, could not hold government jobs, found their bank accounts frozen, could not employ Gentiles (non-Jews) in their homes and businesses, had a nightly curfew, were expelled from professions, and even could not ride on trains without special permission. Jewish males between the ages of sixteen and sixty had to register for forced labor and work camps for the Nazis without payment.[27]

On Yom Kippur, October 12, 1940, all Jews in Warsaw had to leave their homes and move into the ghetto, a district that had been destroyed by shelling destruction.[28] In November, the Germans closed off the ghetto with a brick wall more than eleven feet high, topped with barbed wire and broken glass. More than 400,000 Jews crowded into an area the size of New York City's Central Park, living in substandard apartments and facing chronic problems with water, electricity, and waste removal.[29] Through starvation rations and poor sanitation, the Germans turned the ghetto into a death trap, as "thousands of Jews died from overwork, starvation, and epidemic diseases of typhus and tuberculosis."[30] The destruction of human life was so great that the ghetto population of around 550,000 at the beginning of the German occupation had been reduced to approximately 360,000 by 1942.[31] Each morning, authorities gathered corpses from the sidewalk.[32]

Ghettoization was entrenched in a deep history of German anti-Semitism. The local Polish population, however, also showed increasing hostility towards the Jews. Linda Altman notes that there was a deep-rooted history of anti-Semitism in Poland:

---

[25] Linda Jacobs Altman, The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: Striking a Blow Against the Nazis (The Holocaust Through Primary Sources) (Enslow Publishing Inc., 2011), 5.
[26] Altman, *The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*, 11.
[27] Altman, *The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*, 7.
[28] ibid.
[29]. Ibid.
[30] Altman, *The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*, 9.
[31] "Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, 1943," *Revolution* (1990): 27.
[32] Ibid., 27.

> Polish Jews lived with discrimination long before the Nazis conquered their country. Antisemitism was just a "normal" part of everyday life. Jews were formally banned from civil service jobs. None worked in state-controlled banks or businesses. Only a few managed to become railroad workers or public school teachers. Independent shopkeepers lost profits when the government declared Sunday the official day of rest. Under Jewish law, they could not work on the Sabbath (Saturday). And, under Polish law, they could not work on Sunday. This made it difficult for them to compete with Gentile businesses. This persecution could turn violent in an instant. Long before anybody heard of Adolf Hitler, Polish Jews lived in fear of *pogroms,* "spontaneous" massacres that were usually organized by antisemitic groups and were tolerated by the government.[33]

Polish Jews in the Warsaw ghetto were met with increasing anti-Semitism not only from the German authorities but also from Polish citizens. The Germans launched a huge propaganda campaign to vilify the Jews in the eyes of the Poles, and many began to curse the Jews.[34] "Jews were subjected to public humiliation, rounded up for forced labor, beaten and robbed, raped, and murdered--by the Germans themselves, by the *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans living in Poland), by the Polish rabble, and later on, by Ukrainian, Latvian, and Lithuanian auxiliaries."[35] The ghettoization of Warsaw can therefore largely be seen as a process of control and brutality facilitated by entrenched histories of European anti-Semitism.

The process of ghettoization in Warsaw and Shanghai had similarities, but the creation of the Shanghai ghetto in itself was a political compromise between the Japanese and the Germans. The Japanese had a fairly non-discriminatory policy toward the Jews, but in the spring of 1942, German pressure for anti-Jewish regulations increased. Colonel Josef Meisinger, the chief of the Warsaw Gestapo and known as the "Butcher of Warsaw," had been dispatched to Shanghai. He was reported to have brought with him canisters of Cyclon gas to exterminate the Shanghai Jews.[36] The ghettoization process in Shanghai was very much a political compromise. On February 19, 1943, the Japanese military occupation authorities had officially proclaimed the establishment of a "Designated Area of Stateless Refugees" - a euphemism for a ghetto.[37] The ghetto was not part of Japanese policy and its creation was motivated by German pressures:

---

[33] Altman, The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, 26.
[34] Grynberg and Boehm, Words to Outlive Us, 19.
[35] Grynberg and Boehm, *Words to Outlive Us*, 19.
[36] Heppner, Shanghai Refuge, 104-105.
[37] Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 111.

On January 22, 1951, the former German Consul General of Tientsin, Fritz Wiedemann, shed light on the proclamation of the ghetto by releasing a statement confirming that "the internment of Central European emigrants, as a rule primarily Jews who had emigrated from Germany and Austria to China, had taken place upon the instigation of the German government then in power. The Japanese themselves were not anti-Semitic, and we were under orders to instruct the Japanese authorities about the racial policies of Germany and to suggest appropriate measures. There was no doubt in my mind that the internment of the Jews in the Shanghai ghetto had been instigated by German authorities. From my work with Hitler I know that as a matter of policy, pressure was exerted upon friendly governments in that direction.[38]

The Shanghai ghetto was a result of this political relationship between the Japanese and German allies.

The German influence in the ghettoization process does not negate the increase in control the Japanese authorities sought with such discrimination. With the growing pressure from the German government to create the Shanghai ghetto also came discriminatory guidelines. The set of policies under which the ghettos functioned were therefore very similar. The ghettoization of the Jews in Shanghai echoed the ghettoization of Jews in German occupied territories, as the Germans shared their methods with the Japanese.[39] The proclamation took effect on May 18, 1943, signifying the "end to the relative freedom they [the Shanghai Jews] had enjoyed and raised horrifying memories of centuries of oppression against the Jews and of enforced segregation, from Venice in 1515 to Lodz and Warsaw in 1940."[40]

Although Hongkew had been a de facto segregation area for years, ghettoization meant significantly worse conditions for the Shanghai refugees. With Jews required to move into the ghetto, a territory totaling less than three quarters of a square mile now housed more than 18,000 refugees among approximately 100,000 Chinese.[41] "Shoddy lane houses built for three or four people now were crowded with ten or twelve."[42] Malnutrition and disease became common, as more and more families lost their sources of income and suffered from the high population density. In fact, much like Warsaw, coolies pushed carts around the city to gather up, depending on the weather, sixty to eighty corpses from the streets.

---

[38] Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 112.
[39] Kaplan, Ten Green Bottles, 197.
[40] Ross, Escape to Shanghai, 177.
[41] Heppner, Shanghai Refuge, 113.
[42] Ross, Escape to Shanghai, 177-178.

In addition to the worsening conditions, Shanghai Jews found increasing anti-Semitic local interactions. The refugees faced social restrictions, including not being able to leave the ghetto without a special identification pass, having to follow a curfew, and moving their shops into the Hongkew district. Barriers were erected at checkpoints guarded by White Russian police, Japanese soldiers, and members of the Jewish Pao Chia authorities.[43] The anti-Semitic histories of the White Russians inflamed policing, and White Russian policemen mercilessly extorted Jews.[44] In addition, the Japanese authorities increased their anti-Semitic control, using their power to abuse and intimidate the refugees. Getting the identification pass was often a humiliating experience, and the applicant risked mistreatment.[45] "The man in charge of issuing most of the passes ... was a short schizophrenic Japanese named Ghoya who liked to call himself the King of the Jews."[46] "Okura, the other Japanese who issued passes, was not as irrational as Ghoya, but he was more dangerous. The unlucky applicant who had to deal with him might be slapped, beaten, and kicked, and ran the risk of being sent to the bunker, a lice-infested jail within the police station. A sentence to spend a night in this place could be equivalent to a death sentence."[47]

The Japanese military police, known as the *kempetai,* and its interrogation house caused grave fear among the Jewish refugees. The soldiers acted threatening, destroying the refugees' possessions at random and picking up refugees for interrogation. The interrogated Jews joined "other foreigners and Chinese and even Japanese in the lice-infested cells of the Kempetai's headquarters, the infamous Bridge House."[48] Hermann Natowic, a popular soccer referee, was surprised by Japanese soldiers, who accused him of being a spy and beat him with their fists and sticks and forced him into a burlap sack. He spent five months in Bridge House, controlled by the *kempetai.* The Bridge House had dozens of cells and torture chambers used for "hundreds of Chinese and foreigners accused of spying, operating shortwave transmitters, or other crimes were interrogated and tortured there during the war. Many died from torture and disease."[49] The Bridge House was a similarity between the Shanghai ghetto and the Warsaw ghetto. However, the

---

[43] Heppner, Shanghai Refuge, 113.
[44] Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 114.
[45] Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 113.
[46] Ross, Escape to Shanghai, 205.
[47] Heppner, Shanghai Refuge, 115.
[48] Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 108.
[49] Ross, Escape to Shanghai, 187-188.

Shanghai ghetto differed fundamentally because the Japanese set some limits on Jewish destruction.

The ghetto as a mechanism for genocide and escape

Before the Shanghai ghetto was even officially mandated, Nazi Germany had decided to take action to exterminate the entire Jewish population and used its ghettos as a mechanism to do so. Germany tried to get the Japanese to turn the Shanghai ghetto into an instrument for genocide as well, while the Japanese steadfastly refused a genocidal policy. The resistance on the part of the Japanese was not simply moral; instead, this limit was the product of the tension within the political alliance between Germany and Japan and of the historical absence of anti-Semitism from the Japanese and the rest of the Shanghai population with the Jewish minority. On the other hand, the Jewish minority had been in long contact with the rest of the Polish population as well as with the German authorities. For this reason, the progression of the Warsaw ghetto was highlighted by strict local policing and violence. In addition, Nazi Germany's decision to exterminate the Jewish population arose partly from a long history of anti-Semitism. Therefore, the anti-Semitic violence and severe discriminatory policies against and eventual extermination policy of Jews was partly a product of this entrenched legacy of anti-Semitism.

The Warsaw ghetto became central to the Nazis' extermination of the Jews, culminating in 1942 with the official decision to exterminate the Jewish population. Even the original process of ghettoization in Warsaw was a step towards genocide, although the Nazis' exact political decision had yet to be made.[50] "The planned concentration of Jews in selected towns was clearly seen as the first step in the achievement of the final goal of their removal--although at that point the Nazis were still considering options other than extermination. As we now know, the ultimate objective became clarified in a program of mass murder presented at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942."[51] The destruction process of the Jews, however, began before the Wannsee Conference, in the deadly conditions of the ghetto. The deliberate food and water shortage and concentration of so many people in such a small space turned the population into "skeletons who died of typhus by the tens of thousands."[52] "Their bodies were picked off the sidewalks each morning. The destruction of human life was so great that the Ghetto population of around

---

[50] Tim Cole, Holocaust City: The Making of a Jewish Ghetto (New York: Routledge, 2003), 30.
[51] Grynberg and Boehm, Words to Outlive Us, 10.
[52] "Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, 1943," 27.

550,000 at the beginning of the German occupation had been reduced by 1942 to something near 360,000."[53]

The destruction of the Jews through the ghettoization process culminated in institutional genocide, manifesting the deep histories of German anti-Semitism. When the official decision to exterminate the Jews had been made, the Nazis undertook the mass killings of the Jews in Warsaw. The killings began on April 17, 1942, when fifty-one Jews were executed, followed by nearly consecutive nights of systematic executions. Victims were dragged from their homes, where a car was waiting out front, and the Germans fired several rounds into the back of victims' heads and left the corpses on the streets.[54] Another mass killing of over one hundred Jews took place on July 2, and just twenty days later, on July 22, the SS announced that "all the Jews irrespective of sex and age, with certain exceptions, will be deported to the East'" and ordered the Judenrate to provide six thousand people by four o'clock in the afternoon and nine thousand people the next day.[55] During that summer, in what is known today as the Great Liquidation, the Nazis sent roughly 300,000 Jews to die, in the gas chambers of Treblinka, leaving a ghetto population of just 60,000 from the original 550,000.[56] Such institutionalized genocide was a result of not only the political realities of Nazi Germany but also of its entrenched anti-Semitic history.

After the Great Liquidation, the surviving population of 60,000 prepared to fight back against this brutality. Though the Jews knew that they had little chance of surviving or defeating the Nazis, they collected as many weapons as they could make or steal and mounted a furious, last-ditch armed struggle. Using Molotov cocktails, pistols, and a few machine-guns, they engaged the German army for longer than the armies of many nations.[57] Though the Jews did not expect to win, "they vowed to make the Nazis pay dearly for every Jewish life lost in that grim place behind the wall."[58] By the end of the Warsaw Uprising, the ghetto itself had been completely razed, and the population had perished. The Warsaw ghetto was later demolished.

The extermination campaign in Shanghai did not go far. "No matter in what country Jews were living, schemes were developed to single them out from the general population and to

---

[53] Ibid.
[54] Grynberg and Boehm, Words to Outlive Us, 50.
[55] Altman, The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, 22.
[56] Altman, *The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*, 27.
[57] "Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, 1943," 27.
[58] Altman, The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, 9.

attempt their extermination. The plan proceeded with typical German efficiency in many European countries, but Japan, the Nazis' Axis partner, resisted dealing as requested with the Jews under its jurisdiction.[59] The Japanese limitations strongly influenced the extent to which the Jewish population of Shanghai found an escape from Nazi policies. The eerie possibilities for the Shanghai Jews can be seen in the rumors of a German extermination camp in Shanghai:

> Inside a cavernous brick building, Fuchs saw a dozen rounded, white, eight-foot high structures that appeared to be ovens. They apparently had never been used. There appears to be no remaining evidence, either documentary or photographic, of the Shanghai death camp. Some have suggested that the rumor spread as a way to assuage the refugees of their guilt for having survived. But Curt Fuchs, a reliable witness for so much else from Shanghai, has no doubts about what he saw.[60]

The limitations the Japanese authorities had about against the extermination of the Jews were based on the absence of a historical relationship with a Jewish minority and the political relationship with Nazi Germany. In addition, Japanese refusal to exterminate the Jews was also within the context of political power play within the alliance between Germany and Japan: "We know that the Germans are exerting pressure for our destruction. The Japanese, who we can surmise from what we have seen, have been unwilling to kowtow to the Germans have however struck a compromise with their persuasive allies."[61] Though allies, the Japanese and Germans had a tense relationship, and Japan tried to maintain its autonomy and show its strength against Germany by resisting this policy of Jewish destruction. The ghettoization of the Jews in Shanghai marked the extent to which the Japanese were willing to cooperate with German policy.

The Jews of the Shanghai ghetto, saved from extermination by the Japanese authorities, experienced their share of discrimination and were threatened by the increasing air raids from the Pacific War with the United States. They found relief with the defeat of the Japanese in WWII and the subsequent emancipation of the ghetto. A few months after the German surrender in May 1945, American bombers appeared over Shanghai. The ghetto soon became a target for the

---

[59] Heppner, Shanghai Refuge, 104.
[60] Ross, Escape to Shanghai, 230-231.
[61] Kaplan, Ten Green Bottles, 198.

United States because it housed many Japanese military installations.[62] The warfare caused many casualties and also left many Jews and Chinese homeless.[63] However, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on August 7 and the subsequent surrender of Japan on August 14, 1945, alongside the end of the ghetto, finally marked the conclusion of the escape of the Jewish refugees. Despite their strong community in Shanghai, the Jewish refugees soon left to build lives in America, Australia and Israel (which became the only choice for more and more refugees as the political and economic situation for Shanghai deteriorated and other countries closed their doors).[64] As the Chinese Civil War progressed and communists advanced, most foreigners remaining in China were desperate to get out, and by the spring of 1949, few Central European Jews remained in Shanghai.[65]

The ghetto of the Holocaust in collective memory

The memories of the Jewish minority during the Holocaust in Warsaw, Poland, remain strong, while the experiences of the Jewish minority in Shanghai, China do not ; theWarsaw ghetto is embedded in the collective memory of the Holocaust for the Jewish population and their experiences. The Warsaw ghetto was not only the largest ghetto established under Nazi Germany, but the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was and continues to be a symbolic moment for Jews: "The fighting would last for twenty-eight days, and, in that time, would touch every life in the ghetto: resistance fighter and their allies, Jews who had feared provoking the Nazis, the starving masses who were too far gone to care. It touched the Nazis as well, giving them a hard lesson about fighting an enemy with nothing left to lose. The experiences of all these people not only tell the story of the uprising, but also put a human face on one of the most inhuman periods of history."[66]

The limited remembrance of the experiences of the Central European Jewish refugees in Shanghai in both the physical space and the collective memory of the Holocaust demonstrates again the muted relationship Shanghai had with its Jewish minority. "In the twentieth century, in the Far East, West Europeans - modern, assimilated Jews - were once again confined to a ghetto. Again this environment, or set of circumstances, produced a closely knit community and a

---

[62] Heppner, Shanghai Refuge, 122, 131.
[63] Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge*, 125.
[64] Ross, Escape to Shanghai, 242.
[65] Ibid., 249.
[66] Altman, The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, 5.

microcosm of Jewish life that flourished in an alien and hostile environment."[67] Though the Shanghai Jewish refugees created a lively community, they considered the city a temporary refuge and not a permanent home. Few people have ever heard of the Shanghai ghetto, and it does not play a large role in the collective memory of the Holocaust: "the historical separation between the Chinese and foreigners remains, long after the foreign enclaves established in the nineteenth century have lost their legal status."[68]

Both the Warsaw and Shanghai ghettos represented different yet discriminatory experiences for the Jewish populations. However, focusing on what minute characteristics determine their qualifications under the umbrella term of "ghetto" trivializes the real human experiences of the two. While it is important to consider the context of a certain occurrence, equally important is the need to value the human experiences for themselves. The ghettos have "left a legacy of vibrant Jewish community in the strangest of places and the most difficult of times."[69] Focusing on the minutia of what characteristics are necessary for a situation to be qualified as a "ghetto" can undermine the importance of the actual experiences and memories of those involved.

---

[67] Heppner, Shanghai Refuge, 176.
[68] Ross, Escape to Shanghai, xii.
[69] Ross, *Escape from Shanghai*, ix.

Works Cited

Altman, Avraham and Eber, Irene. "Flight to Shanghai, 1938-1940: The Larger Setting." *Yad Vashem.* Place of Publication: Publisher, 2000

Altman, Linda Jacobs. *The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: Striking a Blow Against the Nazis.* Enslow Pub. Inc., 2011.

Bacon, Ursula. *Shanghai Diary: A Young Girl's Journey from Hitler's Hate to War-Torn China.* Milestone Books, 2002.

Cole, Tim. *Holocaust City: The Making of a Jewish Ghetto.* New York: Routledge, 2003.

Eber, Irene. *Voices from Shanghai: Jewish Exiles in Wartime China.* The University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Janklowicz-Mann, Dana and Mann, Amir. *Shanghai Ghetto.* DVD. Performed by Eber, Irene; Grebenschikoff, I. Betty; Jaklowicz, Harold; Kohn, Alfred; Kranzler, David. 2002. Santa Barbara: New Video Group, 2005. Medium.

Grynberg, Michal, editor. Boehm, Philip, trans. *Words to Outlive Us: Eyewitness Accounts from the Warsaw Ghetto.* New York: Picador, 2003.

Kaplan, Vivian Jeanette. *Ten Green Bottles: The True Story of One Family's Journey from War-Torn Austria to the Ghettos of Shanghai.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002.

Heppner, Ernest G. *Shanghai Refuge: A Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto.* University of Nebraska Press, 1993.

Hughes, Anthony, "Sport and Jewish Identity in the Shanghai Jewish Community 1938-1949." *International Sport Studies,* vol 21, no. 1, 2001. University of New South Wales.

Ross, James R. *Escape to Shanghai: A Jewish Community in China.* The Free Press: 1994.

f"Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, 1943" *Revolution.* (Spring 1990).

Wilder, Craig. "The Ghetto: From Venice to Harlem" (classroom lecture, Cambridge, MA, April 8, 2013).

Yad Vashem. *The Holocaust, The Ghettos: Warsaw Ghetto.* www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/about/03/warsaw.asp (accessed May 2, 2013).

THE MEN OF CREEDMOOR RIFLE RANGE

LINDSAY SOVERN

BROWN UNIVERSTY

On July 16, 1907, *The New York Times* published a letter from President Theodore Roosevelt to New York City high school student Ambrose Scharfenberg, congratulating Scharfenberg on winning the Public School Athletic League's shooting trophy at Creedmoor Rifle Range. President Roosevelt wrote:

> I am glad to see how well you have done in all the competitions in which you shot during the year, alike in the Whitney Trophy competition, the individual match shoot at Creedmoor, and the inter-scholastic match. Many a grown man who regards himself as a crack rifle shot would be proud of such a score.[1]

For Roosevelt, Scharfenberg's skill for shooting rifles held national import. Because the United States had such a small standing army, Roosevelt believed that trained volunteers were vital, and for that reason, he wrote, "The Public Schools Athletic League has done fine work for the city and for the country in introducing and promoting athletics and a love for manly sports." Roosevelt celebrated Scharfenberg's success in both nationalist and gendered terms, drawing a clear connection between manly militarism and preserving the United States.

Historian Gail Bederman's analysis of Roosevelt's imperial masculinity sheds light on why Roosevelt might pen such a letter to a high school student. Bederman writes:

> As [Roosevelt] saw it, the United States was engaged in a millennial drama of manly racial advancement, in which American men enacted their superior manhood by asserting imperialistic control over races of inferior manhood.[2]

For Roosevelt, the more white American men who could shoot rifles, the better—white American supremacy hung in the balance—unless asserted through skilled militaristic control of those who were not "civilized." Roosevelt extends value to the institutions that support this

---

[1] "President on Shooting." *The New York Times*. July 16, 1907.

[2] Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 171.

mission: he praises the Public Schools Athletic League explicitly, and implicitly honors Creedmoor, the Queens County shooting range where Scharfenberg competed.

Despite Roosevelt's vision of Creedmoor as a site for advancing white manly American exceptionalism, New York State Governor Charles Evans Hughes shut down the rifle range only a year after Roosevelt published his letter, when Hughes "[became] convinced that target practice in that rapidly growing district was dangerous."[3] A year after that, in 1909, the New York State Commission in Lunacy ignored local landowners' opposition and opened Creedmoor State Hospital, as a Farm Colony of Brooklyn State Hospital with thirty-two patients.[4]

If President Roosevelt's letter to Scharfenberg demonstrates his view of Creedmoor as a place for young white American men to learn shooting skills to eventually carry out the United States' imperial mandate, his very investment in that mission reveals even more about how he defined his own American identity. In *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America,* historian Richard Slotkin writes:

> For Roosevelt and his fellow clubmen, the ritual of veneration of archetypal frontiersmen like Boone and Crockett was an American equivalent of the Victorian gentleman's playing at medieval chivalry. But their choice of ancestors, and the rituals through which they affirmed their connection, reflected the ideological needs of a distinctly American gentry.[5]

Roosevelt remakes himself in the image of western frontiersmen, and in doing so confers value on that archetype as worthy of his aspiration. Roosevelt's conception of his own American identity becomes bound up in his mission to embody the frontiersman ideal.

But unlike Roosevelt, who created "an American equivalent" of medieval chivalry, the men of Creedmoor Rifle Range chose instead to play at British medieval chivalry. In this paper, I use *The New York Times* and *Forest and Stream: A Journal of Outdoor Life, Travel, Nature Study, Shooting, Fishing, Yachting* to explore the public discourse surrounding Creedmoor's transformation from a nationally recognized rifle range into a psychiatric hospital. Beginning with Creedmoor's inception as a rifle range in 1873, I consider: what goals did Creedmoor's founders have for the range? How did the men who frequented the range articulate its value?

---

[3] "To Sell Creedmoor Range" *The New York Times*. Jan. 16, 1909.
[4] "Creedmoor Psychiatric Center History," http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/facilities/crpc/history.htm
[5] Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America,* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), 38.

How did they respond to Creedmoor's transformation? Similar to how Slotkin uses Roosevelt's choice of ancestors and manly rituals to determine his ideology, and how Bederman considers that ideology in gendered terms, I explore the distinct masculine discourse surrounding Creedmoor that cast the range as a British rather than American western descendant.

The Origins of the Range and its Purposes

Creedmoor Rifle Range shares its origins with the National Rifle Association (NRA). In an 1898 article on the establishment of Creedmoor, *The New York Times* reports that Col. Henry Glenville Shaw of New Jersey formed the NRA on a rifle range in Queens in 1873 and proposed that it be named Creedmoor after the Creed family that had farmed the land previously.[6] Many of the NRA's earliest members served in the National Guard and "noted the absurdity of a guard with guns but no shooting skill," thus initially defining Creedmoor as a site for refining military skill.[7]

The NRA first created Creedmoor in the British shooting range Wimbledon's image, and then as its competition. Creedmoor opened on June 21st, 1873, and the next day, the *Times* published an article entitled, "America's Wimbledon," quoting General Sherman of the National Guard and the President of the NRA:

> When I was in England I heard much of the school at Wimbledon, which serves
> as a model for yours… I therefore authorize you to say that I, in common with all
> the officers of the army, am pleased to know that you have organized this
> association in New York on a scale that entitles it to the name of national.[8]

The NRA hoped that Creedmoor would symbolize for the United States what Wimbledon did for Britain: that American marksmen were skilled enough not only to protect the nation but to compete on an international level with the British. In matching Wimbledon's role for national protection, Creedmoor would push the United States to match Britain's greatness.

As Creedmoor's view of Wimbledon took on a more competitive edge, gendered undertones emerged. A year following Creedmoor's opening, *Forest and Stream* expressed anxiety because of differences between Wimbledon's rules and Creedmoor's rules:

---

[6] "Origins of Creedmoor," *The New York Times*. May 27, 1898.
[7] "The Decline of Creedmoor," *Forest and Stream: A Journal of Outdoor Life, Travel, Nature Study, Shooting, Fishing, Yachting*. June 23, 1892.
[8] "America's Wimbledon," *The New York Times*. June 22, 1873.

> If we are beaten [by British marksmen], we do not wish it to be said, "These are better men;" or if we are the conquerors we do not desire to have the merit of our team diminished my one tittle by the carping remark, "Oh, there are quite as good men to be found down South, or out West."[9]

This concern that Wimbledon's rules might give British riflemen an advantage over Creedmoor's riflemen is telling, as it shows anxiety about being perceived not just as lesser marksmen, but as lesser men. As they carved a masculine image through shooting skill, Creedmoor members also distanced themselves from skilled shooters in the South and West. Like Roosevelt, Creedmoor's men saw Creedmoor as a site for performing masculinity, but unlike Roosevelt, they did not seek to share that masculinity with Western men.

Historian Amy Greenberg might interpret this anxiety about becoming lesser men as part of a crisis of masculinity. In *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*, Greenberg argues that because of economic depression and feminist activism, late 19th century masculinity fell into a crisis as men strained to regain manly honor. Under Greenberg's lens, then, the NRA and Creedmoor formed in reaction to a masculine crisis and therefore might be understood as a compensatory movement to reassert manhood through the violence of what she defines as martial manhood. Greenberg contends that following the U.S.-Mexican War, there emerged "two preeminent and dueling mid-century masculinities: *restrained manhood* and *martial manhood*."[10] While restrained manhood centered on moral and religious ideals, martial manhood opted for more physical demonstrations of masculine aggression. Greenberg directs her analysis of masculinity towards Manifest Destiny, or the notion that the United States was destined to expand its territory, one way or another. Those who embodied restrained masculinity advocated religious and commercial American expansion, while those who embodied martial masculinity supported aggressive American expansion.[11]

Bederman protests the notion of masculine crisis and contests Greenberg's binary masculinity. Instead, in "Remaking Manhood Through Race and Civilization," Bederman conceives of gender as a process and writes:

---

[9] "Creedmoor." *Forest and Stream.* Sept. 24, 1874.

[10] Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 11.

[11] Ibid, 17.

> …to imply that masculinity was in crisis suggests that manhood is a transhistorical category of fixed essence that has its good moments as well as its bad, rather than an ideological construct which is constantly being remade.[12]

Masculinity does not fall into crisis but rather shifts in meaning and modes of expression. For Bederman, the NRA and Creedmoor would not serve as products of masculine crisis, but a late 19th century shift in how men understood their gender; because of recurring economic crises, upper-class men now embodied manliness differently. Consequently, leisure activities like shooting, and sports more generally, became central to white powerful manhood.[13] In contrast to Greenberg's dichotomizing of restrained and martial masculinities, Bederman offers a more complex construction of white upper-class masculine image which understands shooting rifles as a sport requiring both physical strength and refined skill.

Despite their different choices of ancestry, the men of Creedmoor designated Creedmoor as a masculine site, just as Roosevelt did his cattle ranch in South Dakota.[14] Creedmoor members defined shooting as a natural entitlement afforded them by their gender. *Forest and Stream* reports in 1874:

> The excitement about Creedmoor was never before so intense as during the past week… Even the fair sex was out in exceedingly large numbers, and their gay toilets, contrasting as they did with the showy uniforms of the National Guard and the sombre black of the citizens, gave a most pleasing animation to the scene.[15]

For *Forest and Stream,* women's presence at Creedmoor is notable not just because of its irregularity but because women provide pleasant gender contrast: male presence at the shooting range is only natural, and adding women to the mix brings maleness into flattering relief. Women's appearances at the shooting range likely stood out because, as Greenberg notes, late 19th century dominant conceptions of femininity remanded women to domestic roles. To form an imperfect analogy about gender and belonging, then: wealthy white men were to the shooting range what wealthy white women were to the home.[16] However, even those women at the

---

[12] Gail Bederman, "Remaking Manhood Through Race and Civilization" in *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 11.
[13] Ibid, 15.
[14] Bederman, "Theodore Roosevelt," 176.
[15] "Creedmoor," *Forest and Stream,* Oct. 8, 1874.
[16] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 7.

shooting range appear as an extension of domestic function, as they carry their "gay toilets" to support their husbands, not wow the crowds with their own shooting prowess.

On the rare occasions when women did shoot guns, the men of Creedmoor accommodated their perceptions of women as weak. On "Ladies Day at Creedmoor," "Rifles of small bore and light recoil had been provided… [and] To protect them from the heat of the sun, marquees were provided to shelter the ladies at the firing point."[17] In protecting their "wives and sweethearts" with these measures, the men of Creedmoor not only define themselves as categorically stronger than women but generously cast themselves in the role of the manly protector. Again, in accordance with Greenberg's analysis of late 19th century gender, this is unsurprising, as Greenberg contends that a primary goal of white masculinity was to protect white women.[18] The men of Creedmoor define shooting as a practice for male leisure but one that can be altered to temporarily entertain weak women.

Beyond designating the British marksman as ancestor and competitor, the men of Creedmoor configured the American marksman as the descendant of a British masculine archetype—the knight:

> …how the smiths and armorers worked manfully for the knights who were to try their skill…In our prosaic times the simple substitution would be that of a rifle for a lance, of a butt for a shield; for now rifle makers and gunsmiths are busy getting their arms in order for the Fall Meeting of the National Rifle Association.[19]

With this description, *Forest and Stream* frames rifle shooting by NRA members at Creedmoor as a more modern version of early British knight practices. In contrast to Roosevelt, who accessorized with both "civilized" rifles and "the clothing of savages," the men of Creedmoor divorce their masculine image entirely from the "savage," instead focusing only on their sport's British roots.[20]

British knights enjoyed class privilege, and similarly, the NRA conceived of Creedmoor as a site for leisure and did not welcome lower class participation. In this, the men of Creedmoor align with Roosevelt. Slotkin writes, "Roosevelt's hunting also has a 'class' character. He insists

---

[17] "Ladies' Day at Creedmoor." *The New York Times*. June 27, 1878.
[18] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 201.
[19] "Creedmoor: The Irish Team—Fall Meeting—Scores." *Forest and Stream; A Journal of Outdoor Life, Travel, Nature Study, Shooting, Fishing, Yachting*. Sept. 24, 1874.
[20] Bederman, "Theodore Roosevelt," 176.

that he is not a 'game butcher' who hunts animals for profit or subsistence."[21] Creedmoor also emphasized that shooting rifles on a range provided leisure, unlike the practice of hunting animals to survive. In 1876, just three years after its inception, Creedmoor introduced a "Running Deer" target, because "many of the Creedmoor marksmen who are old hunters have frequently complained that the off-hand shooting at an immovable target had a tendency to make them 'too slow on the trigger.'"[22] But while Roosevelt might have considered the faux deer paltry mimicry of the game he shot on his South Dakota ranch, Creedmoor did not introduce the Running Deer target to prepare members for actual hunting, but to maintain their athleticism.

The NRA's ritual of restricting membership implies that Creedmoor excluded members on a classist basis. The organization's "Rules of Creedmoor Range" prioritize questions of membership above questions of safety. While the first rule stipulates, "The range can only be used by members of the association [NRA]," safety only arises as a concern in the second rule, "To avoid accident and insure the enforcement of the prescribed rules, each member visiting the range for practice is required to enter his name in the range-book."[23] Even though safety is listed as basis for the second rule, this rule's more significant consequence is its reinforcement of the first rule: only members can shoot, and to prevent nonmembers from shooting, members must sign in. Although these efforts to restrict membership alone do not constitute *class-based* exclusion, the NRA's discouragement of police officer practice at the range adds a classist tinge to the "Rules of Creedmoor Range."

While Creedmoor welcomed National Guard militiamen and local wealthy white men, it discouraged New York City police membership. Even as the range hailed soldiers whose skill contributed to "the once unsurpassed prestige of the American rifleman," the *Times* derides plans for local policemen to train at Creedmoor in 1873:

> Now, the police riflemen, we have no doubt, will enjoy their holiday greatly, and the peace of the City may not suffer irremediably from their absence… The police have one function to fulfill, the militia another. Let us not confound the two… Let [them] leave the rifles to the militiamen at present…

---

[21] Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 41.
[22] "Rifle: A New Departure in Rifle Shooting," *Forest and Stream.*
[23] "The National Rifle Association –Rules of the Creedmoor Range," *The New York Times*. May 29, 1873.

Although President Roosevelt would later exalt a high school boy's skill on the shooting range, according to the *Times*, it is so unnecessary for policemen to learn to shoot rifles that their trip to Creedmoor constitutes a vacation. In contrast to the wealthy members of the NRA who shot at Creedmoor purely for sport, the *Times* takes exceptional issue to the possibility of the same for policemen. Furthermore, the *Times* taunts New York City policemen by pointing out that they perform their duties so poorly, their absence might go unnoticed. By drawing such distinct boundaries between marksmen and policemen, the *Times* portrays marksmanship as an ideal unattainable to some, and so effectively increases the marksman's discursive value. Like both British knights and Roosevelt, righteous Creedmoor members were wealthy and skilled soldiers.

Creedmoor Rifle Range at Risk

At Creedmoor's pinnacle in the mid-1880s, the *Times* wrote that the rifle range achieved its resemblance to Wimbledon: "Not only is this recognized as the parent range, to which is due the introduction of modern marksmanship into this country, but a victory at Creedmoor carries with it all the official weight of one at Wimbledon."[24] Creedmoor's success rested on its similarity to Wimbledon, but just a few years following the *Times*' observation, Creedmoor fell into decline. Still, even in regression and eventually closing, Creedmoor maintained its view of the British as worthy opponents. As Creedmoor experienced fiscal distress in the mid-1880s, the *Times* appealed to state intervention to save the rifle range:

> No one can dispute the value of the reputation acquired by Creedmoor in the international victories at Creedmoor over Great Britain, Ireland, Canada, Australia, in stimulating the art of rifle firing, but while those victories are just a source of patriotic pride, the improvement of the militia organizations in the use of those weapons is after all the chief benefit that has been or can be secured from Creedmoor.[25]

As the *Times* contends that victories over the British, Irish, Canadians, and Australians produced patriotism, it also defines American patriotism in opposition to those powerful and skilled opponents. Considering that the founders' initial goal was to create a space for American riflemen to match British riflemen**,** the *Times'* appeal for Creedmoor's preservation indicates

---

[24] "Creedmoor," *The New York Times*, Sept. 27, 1885.
[25] "Creedmoor," *The New York Times*, July 18, 1889.

success. But even that white male American competitive sporting success falls short in defining Creedmoor's greatest service: training for American militiamen.

Again, unlike Roosevelt who literally moved west to form his Western public image, Creedmoor stood in opposition to the West even when failing financially.[26] The *Times* marks Creedmoor as an American shooting range, distinct from any at the frontier:

> Creedmoor must now be regarded as essentially a national range… If Congress should aid Creedmoor, a cry would be raised for another Creedmoor at the West and another at the South, so that there might turn out to be less comprehensiveness in the Long Island range than now.

The possibility that shooting ranges out West might have resembled Creedmoor is less than heartening—it's a reason to avoid aid from New York State. Part of what made Creedmoor special was its singularity for the United States. Other American ranges of its kind elsewhere in the country would diminish its uniqueness. Just as there existed only one Wimbledon, there should exist only one Creedmoor.

New York State realized the *Times'* appeal to save Creedmoor from financial destruction in 1889, with a deal for "225 acres of ground, with the buildings, rifle ranges, and appurtenances at Creedmoor for the nominal sum of $25,000."[27] But this rescue proved short-lived, as the local Queens community began to view Creedmoor as dangerous. The *Times* reported on June 30, 1907, "Stirred by the complaints of farmers who declare that their lives are endangered when working in their marked gardens by bullets from Creedmoor," including the near-fatal shooting of a "Polish woman," Governor Charles Evans Hughes called for a Grand Jury to investigate. Some bullets penetrated farmers' homes; for example, "Philip Hoeffner tells a story that smacks of war experiences…In May, 1906, while at work in his yard, a bullet passed through his trousers just above his ankle."[28] A year later, in 1908, Governor Hughes closed the range.

Even though in 1889 the *Times* sang Creedmoor's praises in an effort to save the range, there seem to have been few objections to its closing in 1908. This might be because following the original sale of Creedmoor to New York State in 1889, the NRA had all but left Creedmoor,

---

[26] Bederman, "Theodore Roosevelt," 176.
[27] "The State Gets Creedmoor." *The New York Times*. Sept. 4, 1889.
[28] "Creedmoor Bullets Imperil Farmers," *The New York Times*. June 30, 1907.

leaving the rifle range almost exclusively for state militia usage.[29] Three years after Creedmoor's initial sale, the NRA expressed its outrage, noting the "rank ingratitude of ousting the N.R.A. from its range at Creedmoor."[30] Because the NRA had founded Creedmoor, *Forest and Stream* considered New York State's purchase of the range and subsequent restrictions on NRA usage unappreciative. *Forest and Stream* continues:

> Discipline prevents members of the guard from expressing their opinions. The directors of the N.R.A. have too much respect for their own dignity and the distance to their adversary to stoop low enough to meet him on his own level. But the public at large who know the facts will not hesitate to say that someone has blundered…[31]

Forest and Stream emphasizes the restraint of NRA supporters and so, at least on the surface, credits the NRA with self-control characteristic of Greenberg's "restrained masculinity." Ironically, even as *Forest and Stream* praised the NRA's restraint, the journal indulges aggressive outrage more characteristic of Greenberg's "martial masculinity."

In its nostalgia for Creedmoor's past, *Forest and Stream* defines Creedmoor as a gestational site for birthing marksmen. Following its outrage at New York State's control of Creedmoor Rifle Range, *Forest and Stream* proposed a new Creedmoor. In 1887, the journal describes the NRA's plans to transplant Creedmoor "to a spot where it will not die of neglect."[32] Although Queens County offers particularly apt land for a rifle range ("No such lawn exists anywhere the world over as a pathway for bullets"), *Forest and Stream* concedes, "it is doomed nonetheless because it is out of the track of travel."[33] Even though Creedmoor's land added to its uniqueness as an American rifle range, its location lessened its value. The Queensboro Bridge that made Queens County more accessible to Manhattan was not built until 1909—the year before the state would reopen Creedmoor as a psychiatric hospital.[34] But even as *Forest and Stream* recognizes that Creedmoor's time as a rifle range has lapsed, the journal mourns the loss:

---

[29] "Disposing of Creedmoor," *The New York Times*. June 20, 1889.
[30] "The Decline of Creedmoor," *Forest and Stream*. June 23, 1892.
[31] Ibid.
[32] "A New Creedmoor," *Forest and Stream*, Feb. 3, 1887.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Vincent F. Seyfried and William Asadorian, *Old Queens, N.Y. in Early Photographs* (Toronto: General Publishing Company, 1991), xi.

> Some there are who feel a bit of sentiment for the mother range at Creedmoor,
> who think that it would be a pity and something even of a rude shock to leave the
> name behind when the new spot is taken as the range of the future. Perhaps it
> would be a good idea to carry forward the name in some way, to at least embody
> in the new some remainder of the old range…[35]

As *Forest and Stream* describes Creedmoor as "the mother range," the journal characterizes Creedmoor not just as a home for American patriotic shooting competitions but a birthplace and site for male maturation: just as Roosevelt implied in his letter to Scharfenberg, Creedmoor facilitates male development into soldiers and marksmen. Leaving behind Creedmoor entirely would be a traumatic "rude shock," because Creedmoor came to occupy as prominent a role in a young man's development as his mother might have, had she been a shooting range. It's not clear that the NRA ever established a new Creedmoor Rifle Range, but the NRA did retain usage of Creedmoor for 10 days every year, until Governor Hughes closed the range in 1908.[36]

Creedmoor's land value contributed to its specialness as an American rifle range but became contentious in its conversion to a psychiatric hospital. When New York State announced plans to reopen Creedmoor a year later as a psychiatric hospital, it was not the men of Creedmoor who voiced opposition but local wealthy Queens residents. The *Times* reports that when a state institution in Brooklyn could no longer accommodate the steadily increasing number of "insane," the State Lunacy Board decided to build on the land where Creedmoor Rifle Range stood to "relieve the congestion," in part because Creedmoor's water supply could support the hospital.[37] The *Times* reports that wealthy Queens residents, including members of the Nassau Country Club, and Real Estate interests were the primary opponents of the hospital, because they believed the land was too valuable to be tarnished by a mental hospital.[38]

In this spirit, the *Times* alleges that "shrewd politicians" conspired over four years to close Creedmoor Rifle Range and benefit from the land's dispersal and sale but did not expect that the State Lunacy Commission would plan to transform the range into a mental hospital:

> Stories began to appear about how bullets had killed farmers' cows, clipped
> pieces from passing carriages, and bored holes through William K. Vanderbilt's

---

[35] "A New Creedmoor," *Forest and Stream*, Feb. 3, 1887.
[36] "Disposing of Creedmoor," *The New York Times*. June 20, 1889.
[37] "To Sell Creedmoor Range," *The New York Times*, Jan. 16, 1909.
[38] "Seeks Governor's Aid: Paul Cravath Takes Long Island Protest Against Insane Hospital," *The New York Times,* April 7, 1909.

home at Deepdale…The plan of the politicians was to buy Creedmoor's 400 acres from the State at bargain prices, develop it, and sell it in lots.[39]

With this conspiracy theory, the *Times* demonstrates its own tender protectiveness of Creedmoor Rifle Range that wrongfully fell victim to greedy politicians' treachery. Furthermore, the *Times* supports those wealthy Queens residents who fear the proximity of a mental hospital, citing their argument that "the 400 acres will not give sufficient room for the lunatics to exercise and work in."[40]

It seems not only that those wealthy Queens residents lost their fight but also that members of Creedmoor Rifle Range did not join them in opposing the psychiatric hospital's construction. The *Times* reports that since Creedmoor's closing as a range in 1907, New York guardsmen practiced shooting at Sea Girt, New Jersey. Given that the NRA had all but abandoned Creedmoor in 1889, and that guardsmen practiced in New Jersey after 1908, it stands to reason that Creedmoor Rifle Range members did not protest its transformation to a psychiatric hospital because they no longer had a stake in Creedmoor's land by 1910.

Creedmoor's image as America's Wimbledon shifted, in hindsight, following its makeover. In "New York Soon to Have Finest Rifle Range In World," the *Times* reports on October 2, 1920, that "with the abandonment of Creedmoor," the imminently opening Blauvelt Range west of the Hudson River will offer a superior shooting experience than Creedmoor did. The *Times* quotes Col. Nathaniel B. Thurston:

> If such a scene as this does not inspire the best that is in a man, I don't know what will…Creedmoor, with its sameness of scenery, was not fitted to stir a man's pulses, but how can one look across this vast expanse...and not go about his work with better spirit?[41]

With this gendered praise for Blauvelt, Thurston implicitly deems Creedmoor not only less geographically desirable than Blauvelt but also poorly suited for masculine leisure specifically. The *Times* then lists the differences between Creedmoor and Blauvelt that surpass geography: changes in scoring, as well as a more "pleasant and sanitary" open-air gallery for shooting. Creedmoor and Blauvelt also had different founders—while the NRA created Creedmoor and

---

[39] "Mrs. Mackay Wars on New Asylum," *The New York Times*, April 1, 1909.

[40] "Mrs. Mackay Wars on New Asylum," *The New York Times*, April 1, 1909.

[41] "New York Soon to Have Finest Rifle Range in World," *The New York Times*, Oct. 2, 1910.

then sold it to New York State, the State itself created Blauvelt specifically for National Guard usage. Along with these variances between the two ranges came a shift in visions of grandeur: the fantasy of creating the best rifle range in the nation at Creedmoor morphed into a vision of "the finest rifle range in world" at Blauvelt. With this last distinction, Creedmoor's memory as the United States' Wimbledon recedes, overshadowed by Blauvelt's impending international greatness.

Conclusion

From Creedmoor's birth to its closing, the range offered primarily white, wealthy Queens men leisure and the sense that they were accumulating skills to serve their nation, whether that service be in military battle or international competition with Great Britain. Creedmoor served as a masculine site, but of a specific kind: the range formed not in the image of the American Western frontiersman but in the image of the British Knight. Through excluding both women and lower class men, the NRA shaped the vision of white, wealthy, masculine Creedmoor's future, until financial concerns cut the fantasy short. But when New York State bought Creedmoor, the range retained its mission to become the American Wimbledon. Only when Governor Hughes closed Creedmoor did the range finally relinquish its rivalry with Britain. Because the NRA and National Guard had long left Creedmoor before New York State reopened it as a psychiatric hospital, objections to the hospital were raised not by Creedmoor riflemen, but by local wealthy Queens residents. Even though the psychiatric hospital inherited Creedmoor's name, the rifle range's spirit of competition with its ancestor Wimbledon later reemerged in Creedmoor's own descendant Blauvelt.

HOW AMERICAN ENERGY DEPENDENCE SPARKED AL-QAEDA'S WAR ON THE UNITED STATES

BEN GOTTESDIENER AND DAVID SUTTER

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

In 1998, 2000, and 2001, al-Qaeda executed major attacks against American targets both in the United States and abroad. The first, on August 7th, 1998, involved two explosive-laden trucks, which detonated almost simultaneously at the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, killing two hundred and twenty-four people in total. Next, in 2000, on October 12th, suicide bombers detonated a small boat packed with explosives alongside the hull of the USS Cole, a Navy destroyer, in Aden, Yemen, killing seventeen American sailors. Finally, on September 11th, 2001, nineteen hijackers overtook four U.S. commercial airliners and crashed them into both towers of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and into an open field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Two thousand, nine hundred and seventy-seven Americans lost their lives that fateful Tuesday. A moderate amount of recent literature explores the roots of al-Qaeda and the logistical, ideological, and historical details of its formation. However, much less is written about *how* the United States became al-Qaeda's top target. Amongst what is known and written, there are several prominent theses about how the U.S. came to find itself in al-Qaeda's crosshairs and which points in history serve as inflection points for the radicalization of bin Laden and al-Qaeda against the United States. These include the rise of Western influence in the Middle East and the United States' continual support of Israel, especially in Israel's military efforts against Lebanon in 1982. We contend, however, that these existing theses are underdeveloped. Although they may be a piece of the story, we propose an alternative argument that explains the more significant roots of al-Qaeda's lifelong vendetta aimed at destroying the United States. We argue that America's decision to protect Saudi Arabia and Kuwait militarily against the Iraqi invasion in 1990, a decision rooted in America's dependence on foreign energy, was the tipping point for bin Laden and allowed him to focus on attacking the United States. Throughout this piece, we trace the historical roots of al-Qaeda, chronicle the parallel history of the United States' dependence on energy from the Middle East, and lastly, analyze how the

intersection of these two narratives sparked bin Laden and al-Qaeda's deathly vendetta towards the United States that continues to this day.

The Roots of al-Qaeda Before 1990

The United States was not always the primary target for al-Qaeda. To understand this, we must trace the history of the organization to its roots in the 1960s. Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) was an influential Egyptian intellectual who lived in the United States from 1948-1950. Qutb, a devout Muslim, found the United States to be hopelessly immoral and in desperate need of reform. He returned to Egypt and, in 1964, published an influential radical text titled *Milestones*, which framed the West as an enemy of Islam based on its notions of immorality and its worship of materialism. "Mankind today is on the brink of precipice, because humanity is devoid of those vital values that are necessary not only for its healthy development but also for its real progress."[1] *Milestones* argues that the world is in need of new leadership, that Islam is the answer to this call, and that this must be achieved by any means necessary: "The establishment of the dominion of God…cannot be achieved only through preaching."[2] Qutb became a leading figure for the Muslim Brotherhood, an organization that opposed western influence in Egypt in the 1960s. Qutb was later imprisoned for his role with the Muslim Brotherhood, tortured, and eventually killed. His writing became extremely influential for those who also thought that western influence in the Arab states was polluting the vision of operating pure Islamic states.

Ayman al-Zawahiri would lead Qutb's vanguard.[3] Zawahiri grew up hearing tales of Qutb's heroism and was influenced by his readings. Zawahiri created a group of Egyptian Islamists dedicated to targeting then Egyptian President Nasser's regime, which was prone to western influences. Their primary objective was not just targeting the regime but also defeating the "near enemy," which was impure Muslim society. "Zawahiri sought to restore the caliphate, the rule of Islamic clerics, which had formally ended in 1924 following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire…Once the caliphate was established, Egypt would become a rallying point for the rest of the Islamic world."[4] Throughout the 1970s, Zawahiri's underground terrorist cell continued to grow, and by 1974, it had reached forty members. In 1980, Zawahiri, then a doctor,

---

[1] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Ontario: Islamic Book Service, 2006)
[2] Qutb, *Milestones.*
[3] Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower* (New York: Knopf, 2006), 38
[4] Wright, *The Looming Tower,* 46.

traveled to Peshawar, Pakistan to work for the Kuwaiti Red Crescent, the Islamic arm of the International Red Cross. This trip occurred during the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and Zawahiri came home to Egypt with numerous stories of the heroic Afghan fighters and the miracles he witnessed. Upon his return to Egypt, Zawahiri returned his focus to establishing Egypt as an Islamic state, but the heroism of the mujahedeen (the Afghan defense forces) would forever stick with him. It was not until 1986 that Zawahiri would meet bin Laden and form the roots of what would become al-Qaeda.

Throughout the 1970s, Osama bin Laden, the son of wealthy, powerful Saudi businessman Mohammed bin Laden, was also following a similar path to radicalization, one parallel to Zawahiri. Bin Laden first traveled to Pakistan and then Afghanistan in 1979. There, he was both appalled by the brutality of the Soviet invasion and at the same time inspired by the heroism of the Afghan mujahedeen forces. The most influential figure in Bin Laden's involvement in the fight against the Soviets was the Palestinian scholar and ideological leader of Afghan resistance fighters, Abudullah Azzam.[5] Azzam was born in Jenin in 1941 and fled Jordan after Israel captured the West Bank in 1967. After getting a job teaching at the International Islamic University in Islamabad, he began travelling to Peshawar each weekend to speak with Afghan resistance fighters. Azzam became enamored with the "holy warriors" and would soon dedicate his life to recruiting young *jihadis* and funneling them into Afghanistan to be trained as warriors. To the young resistance fighters, Azzam was something of a warrior priest: "Jihad and the rifle alone; no negotiations, no conferences, no dialogues," he would proclaim.[6] Azzam and bin Laden met in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where bin Laden had grown up. Bin Laden saw Azzam as a mentor and a spiritual leader, and in turn, Azzam became fond of the young, powerful Saudi. It would be Azzam who first brought bin Laden to the front lines of the war against the Soviets. After bin Laden raised ten million dollars for the resistance in 1984, the two became partners. Azzam and bin Laden set up a formal office that acted as a central location for their extensive fund raising efforts. The office, known as the Service Bureau, soon became a staging point for young Arabs looking for a way to join the fight in Afghanistan. The two certainly made for an effective partnership; bin Laden, with his extensive wealth, provided the funding, while Azzam traveled the region distributing books, videos, and cassettes that proclaimed his call to *jihad.*

---

[5] Wright, *The Looming Tower,* 95.
[6] ibid.

These tapes were circulated en masse and became powerful recruiting tools for those young Arabs who would soon become fascinated with the reality Azzam had created. Under Azzam's spell, with financial backing from bin Laden, thousands upon thousands of young Arabs took up *jihad* as their duty and martyrdom as their goal. Fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan would be just the first battle in what would soon become a global war.

In 1986, Zawahiri returned to Pakistan to work for the Red Crescent again. This trip, however, would have a different end. It was here that Zawahiri first crossed paths with Osama bin Laden, who was lecturing at the same Red Crescent hospital. Upon meeting, the two became close. Noting their shared ideology and common goal, the two realized that their relationship could be mutually beneficial: Zawahiri needed a financier to support his eventual restoration of Islamic rule in Egypt, and bin Laden needed Zawahiri's vision and guidance on how to repel the Soviets from Afghanistan and then take the fight to the West.[7] Together, in 1988, Azzam, Zawahiri and bin Laden decided to form the organization that would eventually become al-Qaeda. After the Soviet Union withdrew its forces from Afghanistan in 1989, bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia a hero in 1990 with the seeds of his newly formed global terrorist network planted.

A Parallel History of American Energy Dependence

In the late 1950s, for the first time, domestic consumption of energy surpassed domestic production. Up until that point in time, the United States had been one of the largest producers of energy, especially oil, in the world; although one of the top consumers as well, the U.S. always produced more than it consumed. This global pecking order changed in the late 1950s. The path to dependence was a combination of diminishing growth rates of production and a massive influx of consumption in the aftermath of World War II. This paper mainly analyzes the many implications of energy dependence; however, in order to fully understand these implications, it is important to first look at how the United States became dependent on foreign energy.

Historically, much of America's oil came mainly from middle of the country from states such as Texas and Oklahoma. As time went on and the oil fields in these states matured, the rates of production began to level off and could not keep up with consumption, especially as demand for oil grew at an unprecedented pace:

---

[7] Wright, *The Looming Tower,* 145

> "The subsequent drop in production was due not to state regulation but rather to declining flow rates for mature fields. Oil production for the United States as a whole peaked in 1972 despite the production incentives subsequently to be provided by huge price increases after 1973 and the exploitation of the giant Alaskan oilfield in the 1980s."[8]

Despite an increase in the production of natural gas and coal, production simply could not keep up with demand.[9]

After World War II, the United States experienced a boom in the consumption of energy. In the immediate aftermath of the war, when gasoline rationing was lifted, there was an explosion in fuel consumption, an explosion that no one, including the oil industry, was prepared for. In 1945, there were twenty-six million cars in service; by 1950, there were forty million cars in service. Gas sales were up 42% in these five years, and oil was surpassing coal in terms of consumption, as the American economy was becoming increasingly petroleum-centered. To account for this, the United States began importing more oil and in 1948, for the first time, imports of oil exceeded exports.[10]

As a result of this shifting trend, the epicenter of global petroleum production shifted to the Middle East. Middle Eastern oil-producing nations, such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait, began ramping up production to meet the increasing global demand, and in a few short years, the United States was importing nearly 30% of its energy from the region. American energy dependence on foreign sources was born. By 1990, at the onset of the Gulf War, the United States dependence on foreign energy had only grown: that year, the United States consumed approximately 17 million barrels per day but produced approximately 11.1 million barrels of oil per day (about 65 percent of its daily consumption). [11]

August 2, 1990: Parallel Histories Converge

On August 2nd, 1990, Iraq launched an invasion of Kuwait over a dispute regarding revenue from oil fields on the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. Over the course of a few days, Iraq, which had the fourth largest army in the world at the time of the invasion, quickly overwhelmed the Kuwaiti defense forces. After the relatively painless invasion, Iraq now stood well prepared to

---

[8] James D. Hamilton, *Historical Oil Shocks: Working Paper 16790.* National Bureau of Economic Research, 13
[9] Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 570
[10] Daniel Yergin, *The Prize,* 391
[11] EIA International Energy Statistics

launch an attack on neighboring Saudi Arabia, who, despite having a plethora of cutting edge military technology, did not have an adequate military to operate it.[12] Saudi Arabia presented an extremely attractive opportunity for Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, as the country is one of the world's largest oil producers; control of Saudi Arabia's oil would mean an economic and political chokehold on the world, which relied on Middle Eastern oil to power its economies. This was of paramount concern to the United States, as a successful invasion would give Saddam Hussein control over a large portion of the world's oil reserves. The 1973 oil embargo and the potential to use oil as a political weapon and cripple the American economy again were still fresh in the thoughts of many policymakers. This would have been in direct confrontation with vital United States energy interests in the region, and the United States was forced to decide whether or not it sought to engage in what April Glaspie, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, called, an "Arab-Arab conflict," protect Saudi Arabia, and drive the Iraqi army out of Kuwait.[13] The decision to protect Saudi Arabia was made swiftly in the United States; but first, the United States had to convince the Saudi royalty to *allow* American troops into the country.

When the invasion occurred, the prospect of the United States protecting Saudi Arabia was not met with widespread acceptance, especially by Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden believed that, in general, Saudi Arabia and other Arab states did not need to rely on the West as much as they did, especially in regards to military force: "When the Iraqi army poised on the Saudi border, bin Laden wrote a letter to the king [of Saudi Arabia] beseeching him not to call upon the Americans for protection; he followed this with a frenzied round of lobbying the senior princes."[14] When the invasion occurred in 1990, bin Laden viewed this as a perfect opportunity to amass a force of fighters to defend the holy land in similar fashion to the defense of Afghanistan in 1979 from the Soviet Union: "I am ready to prepare one hundred thousand fighters with good combat capability within three months."[15]

After being dismissed by the Saudi royalty, bin Laden turned to the clergy. Not only did bin Laden want Saudi Arabia and other Arab states to stop relying on the West, but moreover, he could not bear the thought of infidels, such as Jews and Christians, stepping foot in the Holy

---

[12] Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower,* 177
[13] Stanford University World Association of International Studies
http://wais.stanford.edu/Iraq/iraq_andambassaprilglaspie22303.html
[14] Wright, *The Looming Tower,* 178.
[15] Wright, *The Looming Tower,* 179.

Land. "His case against American assistance rested on the Prophet's remark, as he lay dying, 'Let there be no two religions in Arabia.'"[16]

The Saudi monarchy grappled with the dilemma. Although to westerners the decision may seem like a simple choice, as the Saudi military was surely unable to defend itself, many, along with bin Laden, were vehemently opposed to having American troops protect the holiest place in Islam. In the aftermath of the conflict, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and a team of advisors flew to Saudi Arabia to meet with King Fadl and persuade him to allow American troops to defend the Holy Land. There were two major oppositions to allowing Americans into Saudi Arabia: the fear of a permanent occupation and the lack of religious backing from the clergy. The first roadblock was overcome when Cheney pledged, in the name of the President of the United States, that the troops would leave the country immediately at the end of the conflict.[17] To overcome the second source of opposition, "the Saudi government pressured the clergy to issue a fatwa endorsing the invitation of non-Muslim armies into the Kingdom on the excuse that they were defending Islam. This would give the government the religious cover it needed."[18]

By August 7th, 1990, the first American troops arrived in Saudi Arabia, and within three weeks of the issuance of the fatwa by the Saudi clergy, half a million American troops had arrived in Saudi Arabia. On September 11th, 1990, President George H. W. Bush stated, "Within three days, 120,000 Iraqi troops with 850 tanks had poured into Kuwait and moved south to threaten Saudi Arabia. It was then that I decided to act to check that aggression."[19] Early in 1991, Congress authorized the use of military force to attack Iraq and drive the Iraqi army out of Saudi Arabia. This would later come to be known as the Gulf War.

The decision by the United States to protect Saudi Arabia and subsequently Kuwait was a product of America's dependence on foreign energy from the Middle East. If Saddam Hussein had seized control of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, he would have controlled an incredible amount of the world oil supply; had he been able to do so, he would have had invaluable political and economic power over the United States. Although many primary documents from the Gulf War are yet to be declassified, it is clear that the United States simply could not afford to allow Iraq and Hussein to monopolize the oil supply in the Middle East, and the decision by President Bush

---

[16] Wright, *The Looming Tower,* 180.
[17] Wright, *The Looming Tower,* 178.
[18] Wright, *The Looming Tower,* 180.
[19] President Bush address to a joint session of Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis. September 11, 1990.

and policymakers to military protect Saudi Arabia and intervene in Kuwait was one made with little hesitation, driven by America's dependence on foreign energy.

Ramifications of Bush's decision were more complex in Saudi Arabia, however. "Although the Americans – and other coalition forces – were stationed mainly outside cities in order to stay out of view, Saudis were mortified by the need to turn to Christians and Jews to defend the holy land of Islam. That many of these foreign soldiers were women only added to their embarrassment. The weakness of the Saudi state and its abject dependence on the West for protection were paraded before the world thanks to the 1,500 foreign journalists who descended on the Kingdom to report on the buildup to the war." Wright notes, "There was a combustible atmosphere of fear, outrage, humiliation, and xenophobia, but instead of rallying behind their imperiled government, many [progressive] Saudis saw this as a one-time opportunity to change it."[20] In the aftermath of this conflict, many Saudi progressives sought to end the ban on female driving and end discrimination based on tribal affiliation, among other factors. This further fueled bin Laden's anger over the entire conflict: he wanted to rid Saudi Arabia of western influence and western reliance, but not only had the Kingdom allowed "infidels" to protect the Holy Land, now Saudi progressives were pushing western influences. Saying bin Laden was furious at this time is surely an understatement.

On March 6th, 1991, President Bush stood before Congress and the American people and delivered his famous New World Order Speech:

> Now, we can see a new world coming into view. A world in which there is the
> very real prospect of a new world order. In the words of Winston Churchill, a
> "world order" in which "the principles of justice and fair play ... protect the weak
> against the strong ..." A world where the United Nations, freed from cold war
> stalemate, is poised to fulfill the historic vision of its founders. A world in which
> freedom and respect for human rights find a home among all nations. The Gulf
> war put this new world to its first test, and, my fellow Americans, we passed that
> test.

These words, however, were not received in the same way across the world by Osama bin Laden. As Wright states, "He also wanted to create a new world order, one that was ruled by Muslims, not dictated by America and enforced by the UN. The scale of his ambition was beginning to

---

[20] Wright, *The Looming Tower,* 181.

reveal itself. In his fantasy he would enter history as the savior of Islam."[21] This was the turning point for bin Laden. The United States now became the primary target of his budding international terrorist network. America's dependence on foreign energy left it no choice but to militarily intervene in the conflict. Little did America know that this intervention sparked Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda to dedicate the lifespan of their organization to destroying the United States and everything it stands for.

The Aftermath

Even after the Saudi government had decided to allow the United States to defend it, bin Laden did not silence his opposition to the decision. He continuously appealed to religious and political leaders to the point where his views were becoming increasingly radical to many Saudi monarchs. "For the first time he [Prince Turki] was alarmed by the "radical changes' he saw in bin Laden's personality. He had gone from being a "calm, peaceful and gentle man," whose only goal was the help Muslims, to being, "a person who believed that he would be able to amass a command a force an army to liberate Kuwait. It revealed his arrogance and his haughtiness."[22] Ultimately, bin Laden was expelled from the country, and his passport was revoked. Much to bin Laden's fortune, in 1989 Hassan al-Turabi, an Islamic fundamentalist who shared bin Laden's views that the Arab states were too reliant on the west and were plagued with western influence, came to power in Sudan. Turabi invited bin Laden and his budding group in al-Qaeda to take refuge in Sudan in exchange for their help in developing Sudan's infrastructure. Bin Laden accepted this invitation, and al-Qaeda moved to Sudan.

This was a crucial moment in the history of al-Qaeda; bin Laden was able to take his radicalized views towards the United States stemming from the Gulf War and transform them into a global terrorist network dedicated to terrorizing the United States. The eight years [1991-1998] bin Laden spent in Sudan allowed him to develop, without external pressures, a group of rogue fighters into a global network of highly motivated and trained terrorists.

---

[21] Wright, *The Looming Tower,* 183.
[22] Wright, *The Looming Tower,* 180.

Conclusion

The history of al-Qaeda after bin Laden left Sudan in 1998 is well known. Al-Qaeda was able to execute three major attacks on the United States within a span of four years, killing thousands of Americans. When we look back on the history of al-Qaeda, its radicalization, and the establishment of the United States as its main target, it is clear that the United States' protection of Saudi Arabia in 1990, which was a product of the United States' dependence on foreign energy from the Middle East, was the crucial inflection point in the radicalization of bin Laden and al-Qaeda. As a result, the United States then became their primary target. It is not the goal of this paper to conclude that the American defense of Saudi Arabia was the *sole* factor in making the United States al-Qaeda's primary target, but instead, we argue that this was the most significant factor of many complicated and competing influence

THE EVOLUTION OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER IN AMERICAN CINEMA AND CULTURE

PATRICK VAN HACKELING

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

The Vietnam War ended in 1975 with approximately thirty percent of all veterans who served coming home with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).[1] PTSD was not a new occurrence, however; it was present in literature as early as the eighth century BC in Homer's *Iliad*.[2] Despite this, it was not until 1980 that the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders officially recognized the term.[3] Since this time, post-traumatic stress disorder has developed an increasingly strong presence in American film, television, and media at large. This paper seeks to shed light on the reasons why PTSD made such a sudden and immediate impact on American entertainment and culture, as well as how it has managed to remain influential today. To do this, the paper will be divided into three main sections: cultural representations of PTSD post-Vietnam up to the *Rambo* era, cultural representations of PTSD during the *Rambo* era, and cultural representations of PTSD today.[4] The first section, cultural representations of PTSD post-Vietnam up to the *Rambo* era, will analyze the artistic, ethical, and social fabrics surrounding the years 1976 to 1982 and their effects on American perceptions of, and attitudes toward, PTSD. The second section, cultural representations of PTSD during the *Rambo* era, will place a special emphasis on PTSD's growing involvement in political tactics and media presence. The third section, cultural representations of PTSD today, will illustrate the extent to which PTSD as a subject matter has grown and the new mediums it encompasses. The objective of this history is to make more transparent PTSD's emergence and continued prevalence in American cinema and culture up to the present day.

Cultural representations of PTSD in the United States in the 1970s enabled Americans, for the first time, to define the disorder. Given the pessimism of the times and hyperrealistic

---

[1] U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, *National Center for PTSD* (Washington DC: USA, 2007) http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/ptsd.asp

[2] Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Le monde d'Homère* (France: Perrin, 2000) 19.

[3] David H. Marlowe, *Psychological Consequences of Combat and Deployment with Special Emphasis on the Gulf War* (California: Rand, 2001) 98.

[4] The *Rambo* era: 1982-1988 (*First Blood-Rambo III*)

portrayals of PTSD on the big screen, however, 1970s films dealing with PTSD were inclined to craft the disorder so as to highlight a larger theme: the irrationality of war. Then, in the 1980s, cultural representations of PTSD rapidly transformed into a means of manipulating both contemporary politics and historical memory. The *Rambo* films of the 1980s played an instrumental role in this change, as they focused more on becoming cinematic epics where PTSD was wielded not as a disorder but as a weapon. Through an analysis of the changing cinematic portrayals of PTSD, the culture, politics, and attitudes of the times will be revealed as just as unstable and noteworthy as PTSD itself. Moreover, PTSD will be proven to be a culturally defined disorder that is as much a product of popular cultural representations and depictions as it is of clinical diagnoses; hence, a history of PTSD in American cinema will uncover the tenor of the politics and culture of the United States during the eras (the 1970s and 1980s) in which it was first named and conceptualized.

Despite roughly three thousand articles on the subject of PTSD having been published in the past twenty-five years, the scholarly works devoted to PTSD as a cinematic and cultural phenomenon are sparse.[5] For this reason, it is imperative to analyze the historiography of PTSD in American studies and history. Nearly all of the scholarship on the history of PTSD begins with the end of the Vietnam War and America's perception of what transpired during its first wartime loss. In the immediate aftermath of the war, back home in the United States, ordinary citizens were having trouble grasping how it was that the United States could lose to such an inferior adversary and what modern warfare must be like that soldiers were coming back utterly broken down and lost. For the first time in the twentieth century, there were no great parades. Instead, more common were protests ostensibly geared towards chastising these returning veterans as murderers. With nothing uplifting about this war to be told and no exact feeling of being at war that could be relayed, Hollywood set out to portray the war as less about the soldier's impact on the war (as was a habit of cinema of the past) and more about the impact of the war on the soldier. As Mark Taylor points to in his *The Vietnam War in History, Literature, and Film*, "It has become a widely held assumption that, as a postmodern war, portrayals of the war in Vietnam demand a postmodern style to be meaningful, or indeed to be meaningless in order to reflect the meaninglessness of the war."[6] Thus, the films of this generation depicted

---

[5] Marlowe, *Psychological Consequences of Combat and Deployment*, 103.
[6] Mark Taylor, *The Vietnam War in History, Literature and Film* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 24.

largely internal struggles. Such portrayals were relatively unheard of in previous American war-based cinema as "psychic stress still made people uncomfortable."[7] Now, however, with the release of critically acclaimed films such as *The Deer Hunter* (Cimino, 1978) and *Apocalypse Now* (Coppola, 1979), audiences became intrigued by these startling depictions of men at war. Most scholarly works agree, as stated specifically by Raya Morag in *Defeated Masculinity: Post-Traumatic Cinema in the Aftermath of War*, the humiliation of man by war through captivity, fratricide, demasculinzation, torture, and split identities enthralled audiences, and so Hollywood continued to pour out films bound tightly to these themes.[8]

Then, in 1982, with a new president in the Oval Office, a new wave of PTSD cinema emerged: the *Rambo* era. Along with the three *Rambo* installments that comprised this decade came the reimagining of history, or, as famed film critics Siskel and Ebert dubbed such movies, "this time we win films."[9] As much of the scholarship suggests, films of this nature (such as Clint Eastwood's 1982 *Firefox*, Ted Kotcheff's 1983 *Uncommon Valour*, Joseph Zito's 1984 *Missing in Action*, Edward D. Murphy's 1984 *Heated Vengeance*, and Fred Olen Ray's 1986 *Armed Response*) were much more politically motivated than their predecessors, as they associated U.S. militarism with patriotism and treated PTSD as a weapon, not a defect. Whereas in the post-Vietnam PTSD cinema leading up to this point, veterans suffering from PTSD were seen as either lone, gun wielding, psychopaths like Travis Bickle in Martin Scorsese's 1976 *Taxi Driver* or crippled, debilitated, suicide seekers like Nikonar Chevotarevich in *The Deer Hunter*, in the *Rambo* era they were portrayed as righters of wrongs and heroes. Then, as the decade came to a close and the *Rambo* phenomenon exited the filmic scene, yet another wave came in—a wave that would be the last well-documented, and largely popular, of its kind.

Critical and commercial successes such as *Born on the Fourth of July* (Oliver Stone, 1989) and *Forrest Gump* (Robert Zemeckis, 1994) began to take on the themes of survival guilt, making peace with the past, soul-searching, and social activism. Through these films, a new trend was announced—the third and final that nearly all of the historiography on the topic agrees upon: how the soldier copes with his wartime experiences. No longer were these veterans crazed loners or quasi-super heroes but rather simply men trying to deal with immeasurable hardship.

---

[7] Rebeca Maseda and Patrick L. Dulin, "From Weaklings to Wounded Warriors: The Changing Portrayal of War-related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in American Cinema," *49th Parallel* 30 (2012): 6.

[8] Raya Morag, *Defeated Masculinity: Post-traumatic Cinema in the Aftermath of War* (Bruxelles: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2009), 167-234.

[9] Maseda and Dulin, "From Weaklings to Wounded Warriors," 15.

Audiences adored this for some time--until this trend continued with little to no growth and then another American war broke out, a war that did not translate on the big screen as well as the earlier Vietnam films had.

This is the point where it is generally understood that the U.S. underwent a cultural burnout with films dealing with PTSD. Many scholars, such as Martin Barker, believe audiences' feelings about more recent films on PTSD went beyond simply being worn out by the genre and more towards being poisoned by it.[10] They believe that the fact that the Iraq War ran concurrent with the releases of these films contributed to moviegoers becoming less enthused to go see them. Moreover, many people were immediately put off by these films due to their overt political agendas. And while films dealing with PTSD during the *Rambo* era are guilty of a similar act, they made certain to be clear that they were pro-American and in support of the troops. It is unanimously recognized, however, that the sole universally acclaimed film from this more recent era, Kathryn Bigelow's 2008 Academy Award-winning *The Hurt Locker*, managed to avoid both saturating its core with politics and portraying PTSD as a disability. Instead, it focused entirely on its protagonist's need for adrenaline and how this fixation is advantageous to him in his heroic line of work. Still, *The Hurt Locker* is an isolated example for a genre that, as a whole, has not faired well at the box office since the early to mid-1990s. Even so, not a single historian has yet to declare that PTSD Cinema is on its way out, either in volume or in quality.

Cultural representations of PTSD post-Vietnam up to the *Rambo* era

America in the 1970s was a place of great change all around. In terms of society at large, there was an overwhelming sense of national pessimism and individual hedonism. There was an increasing distrust of politics in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal; life was of a fickle and frantic stock with disillusionment running rampant, and any sort of optimism being pierced by a nostalgic and selfish entreaty for a time of innocence was gone and done away with. In the words of famed countercultural icon, Hunter S. Thompson:

> It seems like a lifetime, or at least a Main Era—the kind of peak that never comes
> again… the middle sixties was a very special time and place to be a part of.
> Maybe it meant something. Maybe not, in the long run… but no explanation, no
> mix of words or music or memories can touch that sense of knowing that you

---

[10] Martin Barker, *A 'Toxic Genre' The Iraq War Films* (London: Pluto Press, 2011), 1.

were there and alive in that corner of time and the world. Whatever it meant…
History is hard to know, because of all the hired bullshit, but even without being
sure of "history" it seems entirely reasonable to think that every now and then the
energy of a whole generation comes to a head in a long fine flash, for reasons that
nobody really understands at the time—and which never explain, in retrospect,
what actually happened… There was madness in any direction, at any hour…You
could strike sparks anywhere. There was a fantastic universal sense that whatever
we were doing was right, that we were winning… And that, I think, was the
handle—that sense of inevitable victory over the forces of Old and Evil. Not in
any mean or military sense; we didn't need that. Our energy would simply
prevail. There was no point in fighting—on our side or theirs. We had all the
momentum; we were riding the crest of a high and beautiful wave… So now, less
than five years later, you can go up on a steep hill… and with the right kind of
eyes you can almost see the high-water mark—that place where the wave finally
broke and rolled back.[11]

People had become skeptical of the motives of those that had led them to war, a war that
they had lost and had yet to find any meaning in. The economy continued to suffer after the
1973-1974 stock market crash, which came to be known as the first event since the Great
Depression to have a long lasting effect on the American financial system.[12] Inflation was
widespread. Government price controls became universal as the United States implemented odd-
even rationing to restrict the consumption of gas in the United States.[13] Finally, at the close of
the decade, the 1979 energy crisis ushered the U.S. into the 1980s. With Reagan's election,
many more changes were to occur, as much of the Democratic tapestry of the Carter
administration was done away with and replaced with reduced tax rates, deregulation of the
economy, a reduction in government spending, and a massive military buildup to ensure victory
in the event of war with the USSR--or evil empire, as Reagan was keen on calling it.

I contend that American PTSD cinema began with *Taxi Driver* in 1976.[14] This is a
departure from most previous analyses on PTSD in post-Vietnam American cinema, which
typically cite *The Deer Hunter* as the first of this genre. While *Taxi Driver* does not address
PTSD as directly as *The Deer Hunter* nor is its intent to show how the war directly affected its
protagonist, Travis Bickle, the film's effect on American PTSD culture was immense

---

[11] "Quote by Hunter S. Thompson," *Goodreads, Inc,* http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/1074-strange-memories-on-this-nervous-night-in-las-vegas-five (accessed December 13, 2013)

[12] Pierre Perron, "The Great Crash, the Oil Price Shock, and the Unit Root Hypothesis," *Econometrica* 57.6 (1989), 1361-1401.

[13] Michael J. Graetz, *The End of Energy: The Unmaking of America's Environment, Security, and Independence* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2011) 284.

[14] At which point cultural representations of PTSD began.

nonetheless. Around this time, given the newfound reach of television and news publications, American society was beginning to calibrate its mind to the idea that Vietnam veterans were mentally unstable and could become unhinged at any moment. Two examples of newspaper headlines of the times were "'Veteran Beheads Wife With Jungle Machine' and 'Ex-Marine Held in Rape Murder.'"[15] After seeing *Taxi Driver* in theaters and witnessing a delusional, insomniac assassin who not merely on the loose but rather hailed as a hero by society at large, audiences got their first taste of "what it must feel like" to be a veteran. Travis is a dangerous, drug-addicted, obsessive loner who is out of touch with reality to the point where he would take a girl he likes to a pornographic theater on their first date, then harass and stalk her after she tells him that she does not want to see him again. In sum, Travis elicits the entire spectrum of PTSD symptoms. He has difficulty falling and staying asleep, is irritable and prone to outbursts of anger, finds it difficult to concentrate, maintains an exaggerated startle response, remains hypervigilant at all times, has lost interest in activities and life in general, feels detached from others and emotionally numb, and senses the limitedness of his future.[16]

Audiences were as drawn to *Taxi Driver* because it was unlike anything they had ever seen. Not only was it one of the first post-Vietnam films, but its plot was unlike anything that had ever been told, and Travis Bickle was a character unlike any they had been shown before. Scorsese asserted his preeminence as *the* director of his time, and the film's dark and unsettling ending was as powerful as Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941) and as open to interpretation as Christopher Nolan's *Inception* (2010). And while all of this was at the forefront of each audience members' mind, the film's subtle PTSD-driven backdrop was left to fester in their subconscious for years to come. The inability of viewers to forget what they had witnessed onscreen, coupled with its provocative and ambiguous message, played a tremendous role in the film's critical reception.[17]

---

[15] Taylor, *The Vietnam War in History, Literature and Film*, 132.

[16] United States, American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th ed*. (Washington: GPO, 1994).

[17] In terms of accolades, the film wound up being nominated for four Academy Awards, including Best Picture, won the Palme d'Or at the 1976 Cannes Film Festival, was ranked by the American Film Institute as the 52nd greatest American film in their "AFI's 100 Years…100 Movies" (10th Anniversary Edition) list, named the 31st greatest film ever by Sight & Sound on its decadal critics' poll and 5th on its directors' poll, and was selected to be preserved in the National Film Registry in 1994, as it was considered "culturally, historically or aesthetically" significant by the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress.

The next dominant film in this early PTSD genre was *The Deer Hunter*. Like *Taxi Driver*, its cultural significance would prove astounding. Unlike *Taxi Driver*, though—which lost to a much more uplifting, crowd-pleasing *Rocky* (John G. Avildsen, 1976)—this morose film would go on to win the Academy Award for Best Picture.[18] *The Deer Hunter* was one of the first Hollywood films to tackle American involvement in Vietnam and the first to directly approach the topic of post-traumatic stress disorder. That is to say, unlike any film before it, it presented PTSD (even if PTSD had yet to be entered in the medical vernacular at the time) as a central fixture in its plot. It was also the first film of its genre to utilize flashbacks in order to "cut scenes of warfare into civilian episodes in a dramatic and abrupt manner."[19] This idea of veterans being able to slip out of reality and back into the war would be one of the most common tropes of PTSD films, even to the present day, and has formed a great part of Americans' cultural misunderstandings of what PTSD actually is. Undeniably, the film's use of flashbacks as a cinematic effect became a visceral means to a poignant end; it immersed its audience in feelings of helplessness and disassociation, which many veterans suffering from the disorder could relate to. As a cultural phenomenon, these flashbacks contained an equally provocative meaning: the "Me" Generation was losing faith in itself and being forced to retrace its steps to see where it all went bad. With the fight for the Cold War dishonored in the wake of political scandal and a reawakening and reevaluation of social ideals taking place during the counterculture's rise and expansion, Americans far and wide were now asking themselves, "Are we truly the greatest nation in the world, or is that just another myth?" To search for the answer to this question, they began to rewind and internalize what had taken place; no longer would they simply submit to national hedonism masked by patriotism or remain willfully ignorant of atrocities now deemed bygones.

Other common elements in American PTSD cinema first evoked in *The Deer Hunter* include a loss of innocence, captivity, fratricide, demasculinzation, tortured body, ahistoricity, and split identity. Moreover, *The Deer Hunter* illustrates three different kinds of men afflicted with PTSD: one being a demasculinized, disillusioned man, Mike; another being a physically disabled, handicapped man, Steven; and the third being an inconsolable, near vegetative man,

---

[18] Other accolades included being listed as the 53rd Greatest Movie of All Time on the 10th Anniversary Edition of the "AFRI's 100 years…100 Movies" list (one spot behind *Taxi Driver*) and being selected for preservation in the US National Registry by the Library of Congress.

[19] Edgar Jones, et al., "Flashbacks and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Genesis of a 20th-Century Diagnosis," *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 182 (2003): 158-163.

Nick, who will not allow himself to go home and who subjects himself to suicidal actions day in and day out. The fact that the film builds multiple scenarios in which soldiers deal with PTSD is culturally significant in both how its makers were trying to convey this range of affliction as well as how greatly it was overlooked by audiences. For example, when the majority of people recall the film, Nick is at the forefront of their minds, while Mike and Steven are hardly even in the running. This is important to note because this emphasis on the extreme proved exceedingly vital to American PTSD Cinema in the eighties. The final facet of this film I would like to point to is its ending. After three lengthy acts, *The Deer Hunter* concludes with a short epilogue. In it, the hometown group gets together after Nick's funeral and begins to sing "God Bless America" before the credits roll. This was supposed to add a sliver of optimism to an otherwise bleak portrayal of men whose lives were utterly ruined by the war. Its intent was to instill in the audience some sense of knowing that the soldiers' efforts were not meaningless, and that there is still hope. As well, it was meant to provide a sort of qualification for American involvement in Vietnam; while the war was an utter disaster in terms of the price American soldiers paid, it provided the country with insight as to how strong its convictions and resolve really were.[20]

The final 1970s film that established the PTSD genre was another award-winning piece titled *Apocalypse Now*.[21] This film, like *The Deer Hunter*, explored multiple forms of PTSD. Captain Willard—the film's protagonist—exhibits symptoms such as alcoholism, self-destruction, disillusionment, and hyperarousal, while Colonel Kurtz—the film's antagonist—is portrayed as deranged, volatile, and without interest in life in general. Like *Taxi Driver*, this film does not intentionally direct its primary emphasis toward PTSD. Rather, it is set on portraying the hell that is war and how all that are a part of war will somehow be destroyed by it. However, the fact that its two main, somewhat polarized, characters both suffer severely from PTSD-like symptoms increases the role of the disorder in the viewer's assessment of the film as a whole far more than if the viewer were to assess *Taxi Driver*.

Furthermore, unlike the other films mentioned so far, *Apocalypse Now* was the first post-Vietnam PTSD film to portray the afflicted solely as warriors. Captain Willard represents the

---

[20] It would make for interesting research on a similar topic, if one were to compare the endings of *The Deer Hunter* and *Full Metal Jacket* (Stanley Kubrick, 1987). In the final scene of the Vietnam-based picture, *Full Metal Jacket*, a group of Marines—having just killed a teenage female sniper—marches back to their camp singing the Mickey Mouse March, a song they had been taught during their basic training.

[21] Some of its accolades include a nomination for Best Picture at the 1979 Academy Awards, selection for preservation by the National Film Registry, and a ranking of #14 in the Sight and Sound Greatest Films poll.

order-obliging soldier who will regret his decision to blindly follow instructions until the day he dies because he knows he is entirely responsible for the deaths of all those that were under his command. Colonel Kurtz represents the soldier who could not take it anymore and snapped, lost his foothold on reality, and refused to return to the life he led before—opting for death instead. And while these depictions offered audiences a great opportunity to probe the meanings surrounding them, newer, more action-packed Hollywood films would soon displace this mainstream and underground alike yearning for the truth, no matter how grim it might be; for as the seventies gave way to the eighties, a new president, new values, and a new depiction of the Vietnam War and the soldiers who fought in it would be ushered in as well.

Cultural representations of PTSD during the *Rambo* era

The zeitgeist of the 1980s was meant to be one of acceleration to previous excellence. At the forefront of this was President Reagan, whom historian Gary Wills referred to as "the great American synecdoche," or the embodiment of postwar America.[22] A man who lived in a nostalgic way—like a character from a film he might have acted in during the golden age of Hollywood—Reagan desperately sought a history that was uncomplicated by the 1970s. Instead of looking inward, he ushered the U.S. to look outward to new horizons and possibilities. According to his principles, the cure for pessimism was patriotism, and the cure to mourning was going out and doing—reclaiming what was once and would soon again belong to the United States. With the subsequent collapse of the USSR, the U.S. economy in upswing, and "the greatest country in the world" once again situated as the world's undisputed hegemon, Reagan's promise of historical reversion would almost seem prophetic at surface level; and along with this renewed faith in American government coincided the rebirth of a national reverence for those who had fought and sacrificed so much for their country.

However, the 1980s were not only a time of Reaganomics and return to glory. Corruption on Wall Street, economic cycles of speculative boom and bust, widespread cultural wars, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic also steered the decade. As Graham Thompson writes in *American Culture in the 1980s*, "One of the problems with defining the 1980s as Reagan's America is that it projects a sense of unity that does not stand up to analysis."[23] Many felt that

---

[22] Graham Thompson, *American Culture in the 1980s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007), 3.
[23] Thompson, *American Culture in the 1980s*, 30.

the decade was one of intolerance of dissension or even tyranny of the majority. For the most part, issues involving gay rights, abortion, education, and the arts had been swept under the rug in an attempt to avoid confronting the ethical questions of the minority culture in the national spotlight.[24] As such, the zeitgeist of the 1980s might more accurately be conveyed as a polarization of American values and ideals as the country itself pursued preeminence by any means necessary.

In 1982, the first of three installments in the 1980s (and four total) of the *Rambo* franchise came to the big screen. With less than half the budget of *Apocalypse Now*, it grossed roughly five-thirds the amount *Taxi Driver* and *The Deer Hunter* had at the box-office combined. Its 1985 sequel made over twice that. So, while these earlier films of the 1970s were critical and award-winning successes, they never reached the level of box-office blockbuster status as the *Rambo* films did. And while these films are more often than not equated with 1980s action movie blockbusters such as *The Terminator* (James Cameron, 1984) and *Predator* (McTiernan, 1987), they were also an integral part of the reconfiguration of American PTSD cinema cinematically, politically, and culturally.

In terms of their deviation from 1970s American PTSD cinema, films of the *Rambo* bloodline focused less on the soldier's internal war and more on how he could positively affect an ever belligerent world with his wartime experiences. Moreover, they also broached the themes of historical memory and nostalgia for a more simplified age—one where good was always positively good and evil was always demonstratively evil, or, as film critic Vincent Canby called it, "pure 30's make-believe."[25] Feeding off of the realization that the American public—having been bogged down with the harsh realities of the Vietnam War since the 1960s—was seeking a resolution to overcome the angst of the war, the producers of the *Rambo* films adopted a new mentality: because "objective truth is not attainable," it is best to go with the *one* that will sell.[26] And while these movies still dealt with tried and true facets of PTSD cinema such as captivity, tortured body, and split identity, they did so in a far more reassuring, heroic light.

In the film's first installment, *First Blood* (Ted Kotcheff, 1982), instead of showing the afflicted being assigned a horrid lot for the rest of his life, protagonist John Rambo would go on

---

[24] Thompson, *American Culture in the 1980s,* 31.
[25] Vincent Canby, "Pure 30's Make-Believe," *New York Times*, November 22, 1976, accessed December 10, 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/movies/bestpictures/rocky-re.html.
[26] Taylor, *The Vietnam War in History, Literature and Film*, 29.

to use his skills and PTSD symptoms "to fight police brutality, prejudice against veterans and an overall inept bureaucracy, all the while bringing honour to his fellow Vietnam veterans."[27] The film begins with the former elite United States Army Special Forces member returning home as the sole survivor of his unit. While walking through town, he is spotted and promptly escorted out by a loud and obnoxious sheriff. When Rambo returns a short while later, he is arrested and subsequently harassed by the head deputy. The harassment escalates to the deputy and two other officers attempting to dry-shave him with a straight razor, triggering a flashback of Rambo being tortured in a North Vietnamese POW Camp and causing him to lose all previously demonstrated restraint and control. Fighting his way out of the room, he escapes into the wilderness—a terrain he is all too familiar with due to his training and experiences at war—where he is pursued by the sheriff and all his troops. After being shot at without warning, Rambo indirectly causes the shooter to fall to his death. Unable to persuade the sheriff that his deputy's death was an accident, Rambo escapes further into the wilderness, where he is pursued at all costs. From this point until its conclusion, the film features little else besides Rambo exhibiting his extreme adroitness as a military weapon and the sheriff acting obstinately, irrationally, and with unbridled prejudice. As its conclusion is reached, Rambo is cornered but will not surrender. When Colonel Trautman, the man who trained Rambo, attempts to reason with him and convince him that the fight is over, Rambo lashes out, "*NOTHING IS OVER!!!* … You just don't turn it off… It wasn't my war… *you* asked me, I didn't ask *you!!!* … and I did what I had to do to win, but somebody wouldn't let us win! Then I come back to the world, and see all those maggots at the airport… spittin', callin' me baby-killer and all kinds of vile crap! Who are they to protest me? I've *been* there!" before finally relenting and, through sobs, tries to explain the horrors he witnessed in Vietnam.[28] After turning himself in and subsequently being arrested, the credits roll as John Rambo walks out of the police station looking tired and beaten but not broken, Colonel Trautman flanking his side with head held high.

With this, audiences and American culture at large came to view the Vietnam War and the veterans who fought in it under an entirely different, more expansive scope. For the first time, the war was depicted as something that could have and should have been won if it were not for the liberal left—if it had not impeded the United States' military and its noble cause, headed

---

[27] Maseda and Dulin, "From Weaklings to Wounded Warriors," 16.

[28] Harvey R. Greenberg, *Screen Memories: Hollywood Cinema on the Psychoanalytic Couch* (New York: Columbia UP, 1993) 104.

by its noblest and bravest of troops. At the same time, American society was urged to peer inside itself and at its treatment of Vietnam veterans up to this point. They were forced to come to terms with how *they* were responsible for inducing these feelings of distrust and hostility among the men who had fought so valiantly to protect their livelihood. As Harvey Greenberg cites in his *Screen Memories: Hollywood Cinema on the Psychoanalytic Couch*, "America created Rambo out of youth's idealism, then abandoned him. His last shred of identity derives from the craft and fellowship of a war no one wants to remember."[29] With this portrayal, the attitudes of the returning soldiers were put into perspective for all of America to see.

Now, audiences had the opportunity to view not PTSD as the disease but rather society's judgment of those affected by it. Even so, and akin to the temperament of Reagan's presidency as a whole, this ultimate good that the film managed to do was attained through relatively extreme means. For example, while it was helpful for American public to be at last presented with a depiction of PTSD as something that was not completely debilitating or entirely the fault of the soldier, the idea that the nation was just as guilty as the Viet Cong in triggering the disorder was as preposterous as defining the struggle between the U.S. and the USSR as an "age old struggle between good and evil."[30] Nevertheless, and again very much like Reagan's presidency as a whole, the message was clear and heard all around. As such, through its boldly improbable plot line, *First Blood* was more successful than any prior film of the PTSD genre in both stimulating reflection among audiences and deeply engaging them in a purely visceral, thrill-seeking manner.

In 1985, its sequel, *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (George P. Cosmatos), premiered with a different plotline but near identical themes. In this film, John Rambo is working in a labor camp prison after the events of the first film when Colonel Trautman visits him and offers him a chance to be released and given full clemency. In exchange, Rambo must go back to North Vietnam and search for POWs. While meeting with the unbearably bureaucratic Marshal Murdock, Rambo is told that he is only to photograph the POWs--not to rescue them--so that the public's demand for knowledge of them can be quelled. After this exposition, like its predecessor, *Rambo: First Blood Part II* greatly abandons its post as a social commentary in

---

[29] Greenberg, *Screen Memories: Hollywood Cinema on the Psychoanalytic Couch*, 104.

[30] G. Thomas Goodnight, "Ronald Reagan's Re   formulation of the Rhetoric of War: Analysis of the "Zero Option," "Evil Empire," and "Star Wars" Addresses," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72.4 (1986): 390, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00335638609383784 (accessed December 14) 2013,

favor of high-powered action sequences and unadulterated machismo. Stranded and left only with his knives and bow and arrows, Rambo somehow manages to save the POWs; however, when he calls for extraction, Murdock is afraid of the backlash that will follow with their arrival and calls for the rescue helicopter to turn around. Rambo and the POWs are quickly recaptured, and he is subsequently tortured by a Soviet officer until his love interest, Co Bao, helps him escape, only to be killed immediately afterwards. With Co Bao's death, Rambo explodes into a rage and manages to kill all enemies in his midst. He then proceeds to bury her before taking out the rest of the Vietnamese-Soviet army and rescuing all the POWs. In its resolution, like its predecessor, the film returns to the themes of injustice and mistreatment that were greatly present near the beginning. Rambo threatens Murdock with his knife and demands that he find and bring home all remaining U.S. POWs in Vietnam, at which point Trautman reappears. After urging him not to hate "our country," to which Rambo replies, "Hate? I'd die for it," he inquires, "Then what is it you want?" What follows next is essentially the political message of the film in its entirety: "I want, what they want, and every other guy who came over here and spilled his guts and gave everything he had, wants! For our country to love us as much as we love it!"[31] With this, Rambo walks off into the distance, leaving his future to be decided.

Perhaps because the film was so much like its predecessor, or possibly because it was so much better known, *Rambo: First Blood Part II* injected itself into the lifeblood of society instantaneously. Spotting an opportunity to advance his own militaristic agenda, President Ronald Reagan cashed in on the fervor surrounding this reimagining of history at a Washington press conference in 1983 when he half-joked, "After seeing *Rambo* last night, I know what to do the next time this happens."[32] This would not be the last time that President Reagan used the power of the media for his own intensive purposes in the 1980s. During his re-election campaign in 1984, after having been rebuffed by Bruce Springsteen—who at the time had the number one selling album in the United States and a record-tying seven Top 10 singles—Reagan went ahead anyway and used sound bites from his hit single, "Born in the U.S.A.," remarking at a campaign stop in Springsteen's home state of New Jersey, "America's future rests in a thousand dreams inside your hearts; it rests in the message of hope in songs so many young

---

[31] "Rambo: First Blood Part II (1985) – Quotes," Internet Movie Database, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0089880/quotes (accessed December 20, 2013)

[32] "25 Classic Quotes on Western Hegemony," Sunnahonline, http://sunnahonline.com/ilm/contemporary/0013.htm (accessed December 1, 2013)

Americans admire: New Jersey's own Bruce Springsteen. And helping you make those dreams come true is what this job of mine is all about."[33]

In these instances, by only unveiling the part of the picture he wanted people to see, Reagan was doing to Springsteen's song what *Rambo* had done to PTSD. He was manipulating it to fit his agenda—making it a nationalistic anthem, something that, when looked at more closely, is really nothing of the kind. Just as the *Rambo* films were at a deeper level about one war hero's struggle with the social injustices he faced once home, "Born in the U.S.A." was really about "a working-class man" {in the midst of a} "spiritual crisis, in which man is left lost… It's like he has nothing left to tie him into society anymore. He's isolated from the government. Isolated from his family… to the point where nothing makes sense."[34] Still, one would never know this based on the snippets of the chorus Reagan used at various press stops along his path to re-election, just as one would not know the true nature of the *Rambo* films if one were to fixate only on the action sequences that made up roughly three-quarters of the first two in the series. When Bruce Springsteen explained his understanding of this national phenomenon of forget-and-be-proud, he reasoned that it had come to preeminence because, "…what's happening now is people want to forget. There was Vietnam, there was Watergate, there was Iran—we were beaten, we were hustled, and then we were humiliated. And I think people got a need to feel good about the country they live in. But what's happening, I think, is that that need, which is a good thing, is gettin' manipulated and exploited."[35] Four years later, this need—while not totally disavowed—was running out of steam.

And so, with Reagan on his way out of office, the third and final installment of the *Rambo* era, *Rambo III* (Peter MacDonald, 1988), came to be. The least commercially successful of the *Rambo* era, it was also the first to be directed by someone who had yet to direct a feature. Partly due to a cultural burnout in regards to militarization but more so simply because people had grown accustomed to the formula and strings behind its machination, the film did not fair well among critics or really anyone outside of the target young male audience. In fact, it currently holds the lowest IMDb score of all the *Rambo* installments (5.4/10), has a mere 36%

---

[33] Craig Hansen Werner, *A Change Is Gonna Come: Music, Race & the Soul of America* (New York: Plume, 1998), 246.

[34] Jefferson Cowie and Lauren Boehm, "Dead Man's Town: 'Born in the U.S.A.,' Social History, and Working-Class Identity," *American Quarterly* 58.2 (2006): 353-378, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v058/58.2cowie.html.

[35] Dave Marsh, *Bruce Springsteen: Two Hearts, the Story* (New York: Routledge, 2003). 504.

approval rating on Rotten Tomatoes (compared to *First Blood*'s 87%), and was even nominated for five Razzie Awards, with Sylvester Stallone taking home the award for worst actor of 1988 (his fourth in this category, one of the others being for *First Blood: Part II*).[36]

Given that the film is no longer about the Vietnam War and no longer truly addresses PTSD as a culturally derived affliction, its plot can best be summed up as: a superhero-like John Rambo reluctantly accepts a mission to free American POWs after being told by U.S. officials that if he is captured or killed the government will deny that it ever sanctioned the mission. Once there, he manages to save all the POWs, kill the Soviet villains, and barely make it out alive.

More so than the two films before it, *Rambo III* employs the theme of escapism with John Rambo having retreated into the jungle at its beginning.[37] Somewhat less than *First Blood* and *First Blood: Part II*, the film does not make it one of its core objectives to paint American liberalism and hypocrisy as an equally responsible enemy to America. Whereas in the first two films, the American public and government are made out to be active perpetuators of injustice, *Rambo III* portrays the U.S. government as keener on turning a blind eye and avoiding public outcry than actually doing any good. Like the others, it calls on much of its age's cultural representations of PTSD via John Rambo's superior strength, tolerance of pain, hypervigilance, isolationist tendencies, and overall portrayal as the quintessential tragic warrior. Essentially, it presents PTSD as a weapon that, when put to use can do immeasurable good. What is also noteworthy is how the day-to-day struggles of living with PTSD are now omitted, or rather insinuated, and in their stead reigns the rare but always ready if need be ability to revert back to a wartime mentality and harness a vicious killer instinct.

Since this time, relatively few films dealing with PTSD have been met with the critical acclaim of the artistic films of the 1970s or had the cultural impact of the blockbuster *Rambo* films of the 1980s, with the sole exception being 2008's *The Hurt Locker*.[38] And while there are

---

[36] "Rambo III," Internet Movie Database, accessed December 12, 2013, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0095956/; "Rambo III (1988)." RottenTomatoes, http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/rambo_iii/ (accessed December 12, 2013); "First Blood (Rambo: First Blood) (1982)" RottenTomatoes, accessed December 12, 2013, http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/rambo_iii/; "Sylvester Stallone Awards." Internet Movie Database, http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000230/awards (accessed December 12, 2013).

[37] This theme continues into the fourth and final installment of the *Rambo* franchise, *Rambo* (Sylvester Stallone, 2008).

[38] *The Hurt Locker* was nominated for nine Oscars and won six, including Best Picture, at the 2010 Academy Awards, and earned over triple its budget at the box office.

numerous opinions on why this is so (e.g. cultural burnout with the genre in general, poor production quality behind these films being made, the adverse effect of movies being made about ongoing wars, etc.), at this point in time they are mostly speculative. Regardless, they are the topic of another study, as this paper is geared toward analyzing the relationship between the PTSD culture surrounding the Vietnam War and American society at large. Interestingly, however, while depictions of PTSD have not proven effective at the box-office in more recent times, they have found other ways of meaningfully injecting themselves into the culture.

Cultural representations of PTSD today

While the 1970s exhibited a PTSD culture in film through the disillusionment and pure terror featured in classics such as *The Deer Hunter* and *Apocalypse Now*, and the 1980s illustrated their relationship with PTSD culture through a reinvention of the past and call for masculine pride in blockbusters such as *First Blood* and *First Blood: Part II*, as the latter period was ushered out so was much of the emotion attached to the culture of these eras. And although the PTSD culture still prevailed both commercially and critically until the mid-1990s, the films of this new era began to turn away from condemnations of war and its critics. Now, they began to focus on social issues and the idea of where the soldier goes after the war is in his past.

Once this honeymoon period (1989-1994) was over, however, the American public's desire to voluntarily watch representations of PTSD onscreen hit an all-time low that I contend is still ongoing in terms of audience and critical interest.[39] None of these films have even come close to reaching blockbuster status, and, with the exception of *The Hurt Locker*, none of them have stood out critically either. Even so, films that embrace the topic of PTSD are still emerging from filmmakers' imaginations.

One of the main reasons for this, I believe, is that PTSD has become such an integral part of our everyday culture since the September 11 attacks. Today, it is estimated that 7 to 8 percent of the U.S. population will have PTSD at some point in their lives, approximately 5.2 million adults have PTSD during a given year, and 11 to 20 percent of veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, as many as 10 percent of Gulf War veterans, and 30 percent of Vietnam

---

[39] From Oliver Stone's *Born on the Fourth of July* through Robert Zemeckis' *Forrest Gump*.

veterans are currently suffering from the disorder.[40] As well, twenty-two veterans commit suicide each day on average, with the overwhelming majority of them being over the age of fifty; furthermore, because the death toll rates in military interventions have substantially decreased since the Vietnam War, the percentage of troops that live through their service is much higher.[41] With this, we are now witnessing firsthand the simultaneous progression of aging veterans suffering from the disorder, as well as the young men and women who are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and are being diagnosed with PTSD. This, coupled with the recently increased call for mental health reform, has turned PTSD into a national issue.

The other reason I believe PTSD is still playing a large role in Hollywood films today is because kindred mediums have found great success working with it as a subject matter, and many filmmakers still believe this means that there is hope for PTSD on the big screen. The mediums I am referring to are premium and regular cable television and include a range of genres. Hit shows that have addressed the topic of PTSD in one or more episodes but have not focused on it for an extended period of time include *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* (FX, 2005), *Modern Family* (ABC, 2009), *Saturday Night Live* (NBC, 1975), and *The Simpsons* (Fox, 1989)—all of which are comedies. Hit shows that have paid especial emphasis on the topic include *Boardwalk Empire* (HBO, 2010), *Rescue Me* (FX, 2004), *Breaking Bad* (AMC, 2008), *Band of Brothers* (HBO, 2001), *The Pacific* (HBO, 2010), *Ray Donovan* (Showtime, 2013), and *Homeland* (Showtime, 2011)—all of which are dramas. This paper will focus solely on the comedic series in this spectrum, as they are more relevant to its particular topic of study. As such, I will now discuss each of these show's representation of PTSD and their relationship with our present day culture.

It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia has been making waves in the TV world since it debuted in 2005. It broaches controversial subject matter in the most irreverent ways imaginable in nearly all its episodes, and in two of its episodes—the season two premiere, "Charlie Gets Crippled," and episode four of its ninth and most recent season, "Mac and Dennis Buy a Timeshare"—the show incorporates PTSD into its storyline. For purposes of brevity, I am going to solely focus my attention on the former of these episodes.

---

[40] "PTSD: National Center for PTSD," U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, updated 31 Oct. 2013, accessed http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/how-common-is-ptsd.asp (December 1, 2013).

[41] Kevin Freking, "Veteran Suicide Rate At 22 Each Day, Department Of Veterans Affairs Report Finds." *The Huffington Post*, February 1, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/01/veteran-suicide-rate_n_2599019.html (accessed December 4, 2013).

In "Charlie Gets Crippled," Charlie, one of the show's five main characters, is bound to a wheelchair after being run over by a car. He then proceeds to milk his affliction by dressing up as a Vietnam veteran and playing on people's sympathies—strictly speaking, the strippers at a club he visits. After one of the strippers comes up to him and asks, "Look at you, sweetie. What happened?" Charlie ostensibly snaps and yells in a war-torn voice, "Viet-goddamn-nam, that's what happened! Go get me a beer, bitch!"[42] This incident highlights three key points. Firstly, it sarcastically draws on the assumption that an unenlightened individual like Charlie would actually believe that is what most Vietnam veterans are like, crazed and abusive. Secondly, it shows that, just because PTSD is a serious issue, it does not mean it cannot be the subject of humor. Lastly, it satirizes the oversaturation of images of suffering veterans from the Vietnam War in the media today and in recent past. Thus, this scene—while mildly insensitive and crass—brings levity to something that would otherwise be left as a dark thought in the back of most PTSD-aware Americans' minds.

In the opening montage of the season five premiere of the Emmy award-winning sitcom *Modern Family*, Claire Dunphy, one of the show's leads, is walking through an exaggerated scene in her home, smoke (from the kitchen) and the sound of gunshots (from the television) filling the air. As she slowly makes her way through with an impeccable two-thousand-yard stare drawn to her face, her voiceover plays. "Soldiers talk about that moment when they shut off, when the war finally wins. For me, that moment is four days into summer vacation."[43] A close-knit parody of the opening scene of Captain Willard's voiceover in *Apocalypse Now*, this scene demonstrates how, without purposely sounding offensive like Charlie in *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, a show can still make a comedic connection with a sensitive topic like PTSD. Furthermore, just as in *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, the scene's humor rests equally in the awareness it exhibits by acknowledging the ubiquity of cultural images such as these in contemporary American society.

A somewhat less sympathetic example of humor being brought forth about PTSD was exhibited in a 2012 *Saturday Night Live* sketch about puppeteering, in which comedian Bill Hader played a veteran of Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada. Purposely over-the-top and unsettling, the puppeteer—whose puppet is a replica of himself—repeatedly conveys the horrors

---

[42] "Charlie Gets Crippled," *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, television, FX: June 26, 2006.
[43] "Suddenly, Last Summer," *Modern Family*, television, Los Angeles: KABC-TV, September 25, 2013. Television.

he witnessed while in Grenada. By exhibiting virtually every diagnosable symptom of PTSD, the sketch yields a reflexive portrayal of the caricature most uninformed Americans would think of when they try and picture a veteran living with PTSD.

A similar caricature exists in the character of Principal Seymour Skinner on *The Simpsons*. Principal Skinner, who occasionally lapses into laughably nightmarish flashbacks of his time spent in Vietnam, was a Green Beret in the United States Army. For three to four days of the eighteen months he spent as a POW of the Viet Cong, he was trapped in a swimming pool full of earthworms. Aside from being a strict disciplinarian from his days in the army, Skinner is also extremely bitter about the treatment he and his fellow Vietnam veterans received once back in the States. A clear-cut parody of John Rambo, Skinner's character can best be described as a comedic rehashing of novelist, Hari Kunzru's, belief that, "The true voice… is revealed to be that of American moralist… one who often makes himself ugly to expose the ugliness he sees around him."[44] Through Principal Skinner, the creators of *The Simpsons* are seeking to expose the absurdity of taking a character like John Rambo as an accurate representation of the average Vietnam veteran.

On this issue of mock representations of PTSD, Marine Corps veteran Daniel Egbert relayed, "I don't mind if shows poke fun at PTSD, because it's not just me or my fellow veterans that it's poking fun at. I feel like people that can pick out the true problems of PTSD and exploit it for humor get it better than the *Hurt Locker* writers. Maybe they don't understand it better, but they definitely deliver it in a way that resonates with veterans better. We laugh at it, enjoy it, share it, rather than the *Hurt Locker* or *Stop-Loss* where it just pissed us off."[45] Mr. Egbert highlights some very critical points here. First and foremost, he sees these scenes and characters not as attacks or judgments on veterans suffering from PTSD, but rather as humorous ways for people who do not have PTSD to relate. He recognizes that these shows are parodying the cultural representations of PTSD since *Taxi Driver* and not the actual cases or experiences of PTSD. Furthermore, the depictions do not simply make him accept the realities as nonissues. Instead, he and his fellow veterans derive a sense of joy from seeing how people view PTSD as well as how they view the people who claim to understand what PTSD is without having suffered from it. Lastly, because of this inundation of PTSD in film, television, on the Internet,

---

[44] Hari Kunzru, "The First Person, Steroid-Enhanced*," London Review of Books* 20.20 (1998): 33-34, http://www.lrb.co.uk/v20/n20/hari-kunzru/the-first-person-steroid-enhanced (accessed December 1, 2013).
[45] Daniel Egbert, personal interview, November 2, 2013.

and in the tabloids, Egbert believes that its representations work best now as parody, not serious social drama. Nevertheless, their impact is just as significant as that of the films of the 1970s and 1980s.

From these shows, we can pinpoint fairly accurately how America's cultural representations of PTSD and relationship with it have matured since the first thirteen years after the Vietnam War. These portrayals indicate that society has made great strides in terms of not only being able to deal with the idea of PTSD—as was the first necessary step for PTSD cinema's post-Vietnam birth—but also in being able to find a grounds to relate with those suffering from it. By making light not of the disorder but of the universal perception of what it actually is, the culture affords itself the opportunities to both redress past prejudices as well as produce a starting point that allows for the opening up of a larger conversation: if *that* is not an accurate depiction of PTSD, then what is? And although there is no definitive answer to this statement, it is precisely the reason why this conversation needs to be had.

What these comedies also allow is for society to view other representations of PTSD with a keener, more discerning eye. With them, it can make more informed decisions of how to regard today's movie and television representations of PTSD whether it be William James in *The Hurt Locker* or Jimmy Darmody in *Boardwalk Empire*.[46] Judging from this matchup alone, it can be said with a fair degree of certainty that America's perception of PTSD has changed—which is noteworthy but not commendable in and of itself, as the shift from 1970s PTSD cinema to the 1980s illustrates—but more importantly been broadened; while the cultural representations of PTSD in the 1970s and 1980s were expansive, they were also constricted by their desire to show too much in too little time.

Whereas the entire spectrum of PTSD symptoms is seemingly enumerated in the first three films discussed in this paper—from Travis Bickle's psychosis to Mike Vronsky's anxiety to Colonel Kurtz's delusions (each of which adheres more closely to providing an allegory of war than to depicting an accurate representation of a veteran with PTSD)—today's representations are more varied as well as relatively objective in their depth of analysis. Over the last decade, we have been able to peer into the minds of multiple PTSD victims and see how they can be self-destructive, emotionally unstable, conflicted, apprehensive, alcoholic, or lifted

---

[46] William James was the protagonist of *The Hurt Locker;* Jimmy Darmody was a central character in the 1920s-based drama. Some of the PTSD symptoms he exhibited were: depressive and dissociative tendencies, survivor guilt, and a sense of a limited future.

from their depression.[47] Moreover, a good number of these representations are not solely related to the character's experiences at war, illustrating how America's cultural spectrum of PTSD has been augmented to include other forms of trauma as well. Now, its expanse ranges from genetic predispositions to childhood memories triggered by aging, although military service remains a popular catalyst. This is critical because while less than 0.5 percent of the American population serves in the armed forces, as mentioned earlier, it is estimated that 7 to 8 percent will experience PTSD at some point in their lives (with women being twice as likely as men).[48] And while there are 5.2 million different ways PTSD can be conveyed in a given year, the simple fact that the culture's wealth of resources continues to grow enables that culture's capacity to view and understand that much more.

Conclusion

Cultural representations of the traumas of war were around for thousands of years before the term PTSD even entered the medical vernacular. And yet, it was not until the end of the Vietnam War that they really developed a mainstream presence in American society. Spurred by a group of films—each of which was unprecedented in terms of material and execution—a subtle yet impactful revolution came alive in the United States. In this revolution, American citizens began to reevaluate their conceptions of war as well as the soldiers who fought in it. For the first time, they were granted permission to see what these men had seen and try and feel what they now feel. And while these films were meant to be taken more figuratively than literally, they still provided an insight that had never before been available to them.

Then came the 1980s, Reagan, and the *Rambo* phenomena. Alongside an arms escalation, supply-side economics, and MTV, now came *First Blood*, *First Blood: Part II*, and *Rambo III*. In the spirit of threes, here are the three most critical things to take away from the cultural representations of PTSD in the 1980s. Firstly, never before had PTSD been shown as a strength and not a weakness. John Rambo used every ostensible negative allotted to him and turned it into something he could wield as a weapon. His hypervigilance made him harder to

---

[47] Representations of each of these characters are listed as follows: E.g. Tommy Gavin (main character) in *Rescue Me*.; E.g. Brendan Donovan (lead character) in *Ray Donovan*.; E.g. Nick Brody (main character) in *Homeland*; E.g. Hank Schrader (lead character) in *Breaking Bad*.; E.g. Lewis Nixon (lead character) in *Band of Brothers*; E.g. Richard Harrow (lead character) in *Boardwalk Empire*.

[48] "PTSD Frequently Asked Questions," Military Advantage, http://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/ptsd-frequently-asked-questions.html (accessed December 14, 2013).

trace, his detachment made him more resistant to pain, and his outbursts of anger made him a force to be reckoned with. Secondly, the *Rambo* era called for the American public to reflect on the way they had treated the soldiers who fought to protect their freedoms and to contemplate their culpability in "inflicting" the disorder on these men. Whereas in the 1970s these men were typically viewed as the losers of an unnecessary war, now their efforts were lauded as heroic and admirable. Lastly, and tied to this notion, these films offered a new take on the war, its outcome, and who was to blame. They told an entirely different story, one where the war was a noble cause that could have and should have been won if not for the cowardly left.

As the 1980s came to a close, PTSD had been represented in two highly distinct forms: through the critical successes of internalized conflicts and through the commercial successes of action-packed hypermasculinity. Then, for a time that has continued for the most part into the present, there was a lull in American PTSD cinema. The issue was not that films on the subject stopped getting made but rather that the culture had grown somewhat uninterested in them. However, beginning in the early 2000s, a new surge of cultural representations of PTSD took over American society through a different medium: television. Along with this outpouring of newly appreciated PTSD-related content came variation and clarity, essentials for cultural understanding that had been sorely missing from the 1970s and 1980s.

PTSD representations can presently be found in family sitcoms, cartoons, sketch comedy shows, dramas, and comedy-dramas. This allows for the topic of PTSD to be approached from newer, less intrusive places of intrigue. Furthermore, the current pool of TV characters with PTSD is larger than ever before. As such, there is a much lesser mandate to conflate these characters' traits so as to represent them as more than who they really are.

While the issue of cultural understanding of PTSD is far from being resolved, it can at the very least be said that American society has made great strides in this direction. In the 1970s, PTSD was allowed to be almost anything in an attempt to explain the chaos and confusion of war to a body of people who, up until that point, knew nothing about the losing side of battle. In the 1980s, this culture grew into an unrecognized historical struggle that allowed for unrooted patriotism through the exploration of a fictitious past—one where the U.S. always came out on top. Today, PTSD culture is abundant, influential, and, perhaps most importantly, diverse in its portrayals and mediums of portrayal. There is, as there consistently has been ever since *Taxi Driver* in 1976, the dramatic angle. However, there is now a comedic one as well; and while

comedy is assuredly not the solution to this problem, it helps better seek one out.

As society continues on its search, the culture will—as it has—become more attuned to the nature of trauma, and the optimism of today will eventually allow for tomorrow's casting of a great blanket of comfort, not shade, on the pessimism and uncertainties of the 1970s and 1980s.

Works Cited

"25 Classic Quotes on Western Hegemony." <u>Sunnahonline.com</u>. Accessed December 1, 2013.
http://sunnahonline.com/ilm/contemporary/0013.htm.

Apocalypse Now. Dir. Francis Ford Coppola. Perf. Marlon Brando, Robert Duvall, Martin Sheen,
Frederic Forrest, Albert Hall, Sam Bottoms, Laurence Fishburne, Dennis Hopper. United
Artists, 1979.

"Apocalypse Now." Internet Movie Database. Accessed October 5, 2013.
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0078788/.

Barker, Martin. *A 'Toxic Genre' The Iraq War Films.* London: Pluto Press, 2011. 1. Print.

Canby, Vincent. "Pure 30's Make-Believe." *The New York Times*, November 22, 1976. Accessed
December 1, 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/movies/bestpictures/rocky-
re.html.

"Charlie Gets Crippled." *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*. Television. FX: June 26, 2006.

Cowie, Jefferson, and Lauren Boehm. "Dead Man's Town: 'Born in the U.S.A.,' Social History,
and Working-Class Identity." *American Quarterly* 58.2 (2006): 353-378. Accessed
December 1, 2013.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v058/58.2cowie.html.

Deer Hunter, The. Dir. Michael Cimino. Perf. Robert De Niro, Christopher Walken, John
Savage, John Cazale, Meryl Streep, George Dzundza. EMI, Universal Pictures,
Columbia, Warner, 1979.

"Deer Hunter, The." Internet Movie Database. Accessed October 5, 2013.
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0077416/.

Egbert, Daniel. Personal interview. 2 Nov. 2013.

First Blood. Dir. Ted Kotcheff. Perf. Sylvester Stallone, Richard Crenna, Brian Dennehy. Orion
Pictures, 1982.

"First Blood." Internet Movie Database. Accessed December 12, 2013.
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0083944/

"First Blood (Rambo: First Blood) (1982)." RottenTomatoes. Accessed December 12, 2013.
http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/rambo_iii/.

Freking, Kevin. "Veteran Suicide Rate At 22 Each Day, Department Of Veterans Affairs Report Finds." *The Huffington Post*, February 1, 2013. Accessed December 1, 2013. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/01/veteran-suicide-rate_n_2599019.html.

Goodnight, G. Thomas. "Ronald Reagan's Re-formulation of the Rhetoric of War: Analysis of the "Zero Option," "Evil Empire," and "Star Wars" Addresses." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72.4 (1986): 390. Accessed December 12, 2013. http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00335638609383784>.

Graetz, Michael J. *The End of Energy: The Unmaking of America's Environment, Security, and Independence*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2011.

Greenberg, Harvey R. *Screen Memories: Hollywood Cinema on the Psychoanalytic Couch*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

"How Common is PTSD?" U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Published July 5, 2007. Accessed October 5, 2013. http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/how-common-is-ptsd.asp.

Jones, Edgar, Robert Hodgins Vermaas, Helen McCartney, Charlotte Beech, Ian Palmer, Kenneth Hyams, and Simon Wessely. "Flashbacks and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Genesis of a 20th-Century Diagnosis." *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 182.1 (2003): 158-163.

Kunzru, Hari. "The First Person, Steroid-Enhanced." *London Review of Books* 20.20 (1998): 33-34. Accessed December 1, 2013. http://www.lrb.co.uk/v20/n20/hari-kunzru/the-first-person-steroid-enhanced.

Marlowe, David H. *Psychological Consequences of Combat and Deployment with Special Emphasis on the Gulf War*. California: Rand, 2001. 98-103. Print.

Marsh, Dave. *Bruce Springsteen: Two Hearts, the Story*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Maseda, Rebeca, and Patrick L. Dulin. "From Weaklings to Wounded Warriors: The Changing Portrayal of War-related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in American Cinema." *49th Parallel* 30.1 (2012): 6-20.

Morag, Raya. *Defeated Masculinity: Post-traumatic Cinema in the Aftermath of War*. Bruxelles: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2009..

Perron, Pierre. "The Great Crash, the Oil Price Shock, and the Unit Root Hypothesis." *Econometrica* 57.6 (1989): 1361-1401.

"PTSD Frequently Asked Questions." Military Advantage, 2009. Accessed December 14, 2013. http://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/ptsd-frequently-asked-questions.html.

"PTSD: National Center for PTSD." U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Published October 31, 2013. Accessed December 1, 2013. http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/how-common-is-ptsd.asp.

"Rambo." Internet Movie Database. Accessed December 12, 2013. http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0462499/.

"Rambo III (1988)." RottenTomatoes. Accessed December 12, 2013. http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/rambo_iii/.

Rambo III. Dir. Peter MacDonald. Perf. Sylvester Stallone, Richard Crenna, Marc de Jonge, Kurtwood Smith, Kurtwood Smith, Sasson Gabai, Spiros Focas. TriStar Pictures, 1988.

"Rambo III." Internet Movie Database. Accessed December 12, 2013, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0095956.

"Rambo III (1988)." RottenTomatoes. Accessed December 12, 2013, http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/rambo_iii/.

"Rambo: First Blood Part II (1985) - Quotes." Internet Movie Database. Accessed December 20, 2013. http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0089880/quotes.

Rambo: First Blood Part II. Dir. George P. Cosmatos. Perf. Sylvester Stallone, Richard Crenna, Charles Napier, Steven Berkoff, Julia Nickson, Julian Turner. Tri-Star Pictures, 1985.

"Charlie Gets Crippled." *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*. Television. FX: June 26, 2006.

"Seth MacFarlane/Frank Ocean." *Saturday Night Live*. Television. NBC: New York City. September 15, 2012.

"Suddenly, Last Summer." *Modern Family*. Television. ABC: September 25, 2013.

"Sylvester Stallone Awards." Internet Movie Database. Accessed December 12, 2013. http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000230/awards.

"Taxi Driver." Internet Movie Database. Accessed October 5, 2013. http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0075314/.

Taylor, Mark. *The Vietnam War in History, Literature and Film.* Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2003.

Thompson, Graham. *American Culture in the 1980s*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.

Thompson, Hunter S. "Quote by Hunter S. Thompson." Goodreaders. Accessed December 17, 2013. http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/1074-strange-memories-on-this-nervous-night-in-las-vegas-five.

United States, American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th ed*. Washington, GPO, 1994. Print.

Vidal-Naquet, Pierre. *Le monde d'Homère.* France: Perrin, 2000.

Werner, Craig Hansen*. A Change Is Gonna Come: Music, Race & the Soul of America*. New York: Plume, 1998.

JOURNEY OF THE MAD SCIENTISTS
A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY INTO THE ATOMIC BOMB AND HUMAN RIGHTS

MARCUS NAPPIER

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

The United States' decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan remains one of the most controversial topics in US history and has stimulated continuous heated debate amongst historians and philosophers alike. The role of the scientists in the Manhattan Project and subsequent conclusions about moral responsibility has also been called into question. This paper seeks to enter into these philosophical debates and argue that the moral and ethical concerns expressed by scientists, especially after the German surrender, towards the development of the bomb reflect historical and philosophical ideas of human rights and just conduct in wartime. However, we must first establish a philosophical framework for thinking about these issues. The first part of this essay will demonstrate how considerations of civilian immunity during wartime rely on intrinsic natural laws that dictate human behavior and in effect, create societies that protect human rights, and will rely on earlier theories of natural law that were developed by Hugo Grotius, John Locke, and John Rawls. The second part of this argument seeks to chronicle the historical narrative of the scientists' attitudes and examine how these attitudes align with particular philosophical conclusions of just war theory. This narrative begins with the work of Leo Szilard in late 1939 and culminates with the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima in August 1945. This paper will then conclude with some considerations about moral responsibility and whether this is applicable in light of these earlier discussions of the immorality of the atomic bomb.

Philosophical Framework

Before we can pass judgment on the use of the atomic bomb or the concerns of the scientist, we must first unpack the philosophical arguments of Grotius, Locke, and Rawls. Grotius was a 16th century Dutch writer on political philosophy and religion, whose book, *On the Law of War and Peace* served as a critical foundation for later ideas about natural law and just war theory and was a crucial influence on later philosophers like Pufendorf, Vattel, and Locke in

particular. Unlike Locke, Grotius did not spend much time specifically defining natural rights, but discussed the role of rights in the state of nature. "Civilians call a faculty a right, which every man has to his own. To deprive another of what belongs to him is repugnant to the law of nature."[1] While Grotius offers little details about what these rights are, he does emphasize that men possess these rights in the law of nature and it would go against this law of nature to take away these rights.

Grotius also emphasized that justice was a critical part of this law of nature and played a crucial role in regulating human behavior. This idea was derived from many older Greek writers, and was also a key part of Rawls' late works. "Thus Socrates and Diogenes too, have correctly maintained that justice is a virtue which makes us useful to ourselves as well as to others, so that the just man will in no way inflict injury upon himself or upon any of his members."[2] Grotius highlights the role of justice in natural law and demonstrates how this characteristic of man dictates their behavior towards each other, which maintains the idea that moral behavior as dictated in this natural state revolves around a respect for the rights of man. These two points establish consistent themes that in one way or another were both continued in the works of Locke and Rawls.

John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* maintains this theme as well, but the focal point of his work, which he is probably most recognized for, emphasized the definitive natural rights of civilians. This remains one of the most renowned points in Locke's work and proved to be very influential on American Revolutionaries years later. Locke defined these natural rights as, "those of life, liberty, and possession."[3] These of course were later adopted in the US Constitution as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." While Grotius cited justice as a way to regulate the behavior of man, Locke emphasized that reason was to play a critical role in natural law. "The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one; which is that law, teaches all mankind, that being all equal and independent no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions."[4] Both writers stress that the protection of

---

[1] Hugo Grotius, *On the Law of War and Peace*, trans. A.C. Campbell, A.M. (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001), 8.
[2] Hugo Grotius, *Commentary on the Law of Prize and Booty*, ed. and with an Introduction by Martine Julia van Ittersum (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2006).
http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=1718&chapter=77220&layout=html&Itemid=27
[3] John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (London: Printed for C. and J. Rivington, 1824), 133.
http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044009555855;view=1up;seq=141
[4] Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, 133.

one's rights in natural law both identify the infringement of these rights as detrimental to the law of nature. The language used by both writers is, of course, no accident. "Inflict injury" would resurface in later discussions about the conduct in wartime in Grotius' work and "harm" similarly in Locke's work. It is important to note that both writers emphasized that violence against man in an attempt to take away these rights was immoral.

John Rawls wrote *A Theory of Justice* and *The Laws of Peoples* in 1971 and 1999 respectively, well after the writings of either Grotius or Locke. Despite the immense gap between the authors, Rawls's conclusions did not differ much from those of Grotius or Locke. Rawls argued that if people were placed in a position in which they didn't know all facts about themselves, a term he defines as the "original position", and then they would develop two key principles of justice. "The first principle of justice is that every individual has an equal right to basic liberties. As basic liberties, they are inalienable; no government can remove or infringe upon them."[5] The role of justice as a determinant of human behavior was important to Rawls, more apparent in the fact that his entire book was dedicated to the concept. Rawls also represents a bridge between Locke and Grotius in the sense that Rawls also extensively highlighted the role of the social contract in the human affairs and the relationship between man and society as well as the obligations of that society. This will be discussed more in the next piece of this argument, but Rawls' book, *The Laws of Peoples*, stressed this frequently as well. Now let us turn to the second part of this philosophical framework and examine how these natural laws allow the formation of societies that also value natural rights.

While natural law stresses that we have human rights that cannot be taken away, the establishment of civil societies also serve an important role to protect these natural rights. Grotius emphasized that civil society was in itself a unique phenomenon yet many of the laws that Grotius perceived existed in nature again manifested in his concept of civil society. Grotius' concept of justice insisted that men also would find ways to preserve their well-being. "Just as all the bodily members function in mutual harmony because it is the advantage of the whole that the individual parts be preserved, even so mankind will show forbearance towards individuals because we are born for a life of fellowship."[6] This point is of use to us because it reflects the importance of society, or mutual harmony between men and how it further preserves their rights.

---

[5] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 53
[6] Grotius, *Prize and Booty*

As we saw earlier, natural law dictates moral behaviors between men, placing specific value of human rights. Grotius, as well as Locke and Rawls, emphasize that civil society helped to further protect these natural rights. Grotius even expounded on this further, "Now men most emphatically upon the proposition that it behooves us to have a care for the welfare of others; for the acceptance of this obligation might almost be termed a distinguishing characteristic of man."[7] Again, Grotius signifies that a mutual harmony between men will help to ensure that the welfare of others is protected.

Locke, a prominent social contract theorist, stressed the specific obligation that governments had to ensure the protection of the rights of citizens. This was one of the pinnacles of his work, *Treatises of Government*.

> The great end of men's entering into society, being the enjoyment of their properties in peace and safety, and the great instrument and means of that being the laws established in that society; the first and fundamental positive law of all commonwealths is the establishing of the legislative power; as the first and fundamental natural law, which is to govern even the legislative itself, is the preservation of the society, and (as far as will consist with the public good) of every person in it.[8]

Locke spends a considerable amount of time in his work discussing the foundation and role of government in the life of man, undoubtedly influenced by the role of absolute monarchy throughout his own lifetime. The excerpt above provides a crucial insight to the groundwork of Locke's ideas. Locke's initial point is that man first enters into society to enjoy his natural properties in peace. Once again, we see a similar conclusion to Grotius' ideas in that the fundamental purpose of this society is the protection of the people within. Locke's ideas were expressed and spread in the next third of a century by Bernard Bailyn's pamphlets from the American Revolution and were a critical foundation of the Constitution.

John Rawls discussed the ideas of civil society and their role in protecting human rights in his later book, *A Law of Peoples.* Rawls's idea of a "society of peoples," which he says consists of citizens who abide by his laws of peoples, is "a reasonably just constitutional democratic society, to review, is one that combines and orders the two basic values of liberty and equality in terms of three characteristic principles. The first two specify basic rights, liberties,

---

[7] Grotius, *Prize and Booty.*
[8] Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, 208.

and opportunities, and assign to these freedoms a priority, characteristic if such a regime."[9] It cannot be lost on us that Rawls emphasized constitutional democratic societies, and repeatedly used the US as a leading example in *The Law of Peoples.* Again we find similar conclusions to both Grotius and Locke. Rawls's idea of society is based upon his idea of justice, highlighted in both *A Theory of Justice* and *The Law of Peoples*. This Law of Peoples dictates this Society of Peoples, therefore placing values on human rights within the context of a society.

Similarly to Grotius and Locke, Rawls stresses as well that this Society of Peoples places a priority on these freedoms. Based upon these arguments, we can clearly conclude that societies have a special obligation in protecting human rights. However, war undoubtedly complicates these obligations as military and strategic considerations burst to the forefront. Just War theory, the moral considerations that act as guidelines for constituents, has been always been relied on in these moral debates. Grotius, Locke to a certain extent, and Rawls all discussed the limits of combat and how they were to guide nations in various aspects of warfare. Some scientists who worked on the Manhattan Project developed many ethical and moral concerns about the bomb that reflected similar ideas of just war theory. Let us now turn to this narrative, and see how and why these concerns developed, intertwining their views with the philosophical conclusions of just war theory.

Early Development and the German Threat

The narrative begins in mid-July 1939, when Leo Szilard, a Hungarian-born physicist traveled to Long Island to visit Albert Einstein. Szilard, along with Einstein, planned to deliver a letter addressed to President Roosevelt, which would eventually initiate a series of events that culminated in the eventual creation of the Manhattan Project in 1942. Szilard and fellow Hungarian physicist Eugene Wigner had only months earlier conducted an experiment that proved the possibility of a nuclear reactor. Szilard was concerned that Germans would soon attempt the same experiment and utilize the knowledge to create their own atomic program, and, as we will see, Szilard's concerns about the Germans atomic program and the German war machine plagued him for the duration of the war. Szilard, with the help of Einstein, drafted a letter for President Roosevelt that detailed his recent findings about atomic energy as well as his concerns about Germany:

---

[9] John Rawls, *The Laws of Peoples*, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1999), 23.

This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it is conceivable – though much less certain – that extremely powerful bombs of a new type may thus be constructed. A single bomb of this type, carried by boat and exploded in a port, might very well destroy the whole port together with some of the surrounding territory. However, such bombs might very well prove to be too heavy for transportation by air.[10]

Szilard and Einstein established the bomb's potential capabilities and demonstrated even then an atomic bomb's destructive power. In addition to the details of a bomb's capabilities, Szilard warned Roosevelt about the status of German scientists and the progress of their atomic program. The progress of the Germans heavily impacted Szilard, and, as we will see, Hitler's Germany remained a driving factor for many other scientists in the earlier phases of the war. After receiving this letter, Roosevelt made a number of key organizational decisions to ensure the controlled development of this technology, like establishing the National Research Defense Committee on June 12, 1940. A year later, Roosevelt authorized the creation of the Office of Scientific Research and Development on July 28, 1941. The attack on Pearl Harbor abruptly ended America's neutrality in the war, yet many of the scientists' concerns remained fixed on Germany. As we will see, the militarization of the atomic bomb reached new heights as the German threat seemed more and more pressing, while the scientists' fears drove them to work unquestionably on the bomb.

Edward Teller, another Hungarian physicist and friend of Leo Szilard, was working on a plutonium project at the University of Chicago before he joined the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos. Similar to Szilard, he also reflected on their preoccupations with the German war machine.

I remember specifically Oppenheimer's prediction that only an atomic bomb could dislodge Hitler from Europe…Pearl Harbor had marked a turning point in our lives. The storm cloud that had driven us from Europe had created a seemingly impenetrable darkness. The Nazis had captured Poland, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, France, and now were at the gates of Moscow…. there seemed little possibility of stopping the spread of that horror.[11]

---

[10] Leo Szilard, *Leo Szilard: His Version of the Facts*, ed. Spencer Weart, Gertrud Szilard (Massachusetts: 1978), 94.
[11] Edward Teller, *Memoirs: A twentieth-century journey in science and politics* (Cambridge: Perseus, 2001), 161-162.

As the war in Europe escalated, the atomic bomb appeared a viable solution to Hitler's domination of Europe.

The fear of atomic bombs being dropped on American cities relentlessly drove the work of the scientists. Some displayed no reservations about using the bombs against the Germans. As put by Hans Bethe, "It was war. It was a very brutal war. And I did not mind the possibility that the bomb would be used against Germany."[12] But in his popular work, *de jure belli ac pacis libri tres* (*On the Law of War and Peace: Three Books*), Grotius discussed just causes for retaliation in wartime, more specifically whether perceived threats are just causes for military action. "The danger, again, must be immediate and imminent in point of time. I admit it to be sure, that if the assailant seizes weapons in a way that his intent to kill is manifest the crime can be forestalled. But those who accept fear of any sort as justifying anticipation slaying are themselves greatly deceived."[13] Grotius stressed that fear itself did not satisfy a just cause for military action. Not all scientists actively supported the idea of dropping bombs on German cities in anticipation of a German attack, yet the quick development of the bomb before the Germans seemed to establish a sense of security. Szilard in particular was very motivated by the German menace, which he discussed in a series of correspondence to coworkers. "Nobody can tell whether we shall be ready before German bombs wipe out American cities. Such scanty information as we have about work in Germany is not reassuring and all one can say with certainly is that we could move at least twice as fast if our difficulties were eliminated."[14] If we consider retaliation in this context, Grotius also argued that going beyond what is just in punishing another is unjust in itself. If dropping one atomic bomb is unjust, surely punishing another with an atomic bomb is equally unjust. Szilard stressed later in 1945 in his petition to President Truman that early development of the bomb relied upon the ability to counterattack Germany had they used the same methods.

Does this make the actions of the scientists unjust? Szilard clearly believed that the German threat was real despite unrealizable information. There seemed to have been no concerted plan to actually use the atomic bombs against Germany, even though Roosevelt rapidly moved along the development stages of the project. However, Grotius's ideas are

---

[12] I Am Become Death: They Made the Bomb, directed by Arthur Craig, (1995, New York, NY: Icarus Films, 1995), VHS.
[13] Grotius, *War and Peace*, 64.
[14] Szilard, *His Version*, 152.

important here in evaluating early views of few scientists early on in the project's development. We will see many of these views drastically shift in late 1944 and 1945, especially with the German surrender in early May.

Victory in Europe

August 13, 1942 marked a turning point in history with the creation of the Manhattan Project, developed by the Army Corps of Engineers. John Robert Oppenheimer was selected to head the project in Los Alamos and played a prominent role in the development of the atomic bomb. Site Y, or the Los Alamos site as it is most commonly referred to, was the site dedicated to the bomb's physical construction and also dedicated to research. Clearly with the development and creation of the Manhattan Project by the Army, the United States had fully committed itself to the militaristic applications of atomic energy.

As was discussed earlier, the German threat remained on the minds of those working in Los Alamos and Chicago. Robert Wilson, a group leader in the Manhattan Project, later reflected on his early experiences working at Los Alamos. "It is easy to be a pacifist through talk. Could I let Germany and Hitlerism rise? No I could not. The most pacifist thing I could do was work on the uranium project, showing you how wrong a person can be."[15] Wilson believed that the Germans constituted a grave threat, which could only be defeated by using the bombs. Wilson's comments bears resemblance to Teller's comments in Chicago who also claimed the bombs would be the solution to stopping the German war machine. But as the European war drew to a close, a shift of focus took place that forever changed the nature of the project. With this shift in focus also came a shift in attitudes amongst those who worked on the project. As the war in Europe drew to a close, ethical and moral questions developed much more frequently as to why the project was being allowed to continue. The victory in Europe was a turning point for the United States and the Manhattan Project, which raised more questions than answers.

The German defeat prompted a significant change in some of the attitudes of the scientists. On May 7, 1945, the European War had ended, and Germany had been defeated. With a German threat no longer practical, the United States then shifted its military focus to Japan. Many scientists questioned the continued work on the bomb and claimed that with Germany's defeat, the bomb's purpose was now unclear. "Initially we were strongly motivated to produce

---

[15] I Am Become Death: They Made the Bomb.

the bomb because we feared that the Germans would get ahead of us, and the only way to prevent them from dropping bombs on us was to have bomb in readiness ourselves. But now, with the war won, it was not clear what we were working for."[16] Leo Szilard and many of his colleagues in Chicago questioned the reasons why the bombs were still being developed. Earlier concerns about Germany were predicated on the idea that the Germans were also developing nuclear weapons to use on Americans. In a sense, the scientists had developed their own idea of just war in which the use of nuclear weapons was only permitted if another country possessed them. When the war in Europe ended, the probability of a nuclear attack vanished. Therefore, it is no surprise that the further development of the bomb at this point seemed uncertain.

As Szilard himself stressed, the scientists were unsure to why such importance was assigned to the project. However, it is also important to understand that not every scientist thought along these same lines. As Robert Wilson, a group leader at Los Alamos, explained it, "I would to think now that I at the time of the German defeat, I would have stopped taken stock thought it all over very carefully and walked away from Los Alamos at that time. I cannot understand why I didn't take that act, but on the other hand it was also not in the air. At the time, it was just not something that was apart of our lives. Our life was directed to do one thing, it was though we had been programmed to do it."[17] Wilson alludes to several key ideas in this excerpt from an interview conducted several years later. It is first important to understand that scientists did face a degree of isolation at the Los Alamos site and were not privy to political and military strategic considerations. While Szilard and others considered whether the project should continue, Wilson highlighted the ways that the work on the bomb at Los Alamos enveloped many of the scientists' lives. At such a critical juncture in the war, little time was spent on considerations about why one should or should not continue working.

If we return to the quote by Szilard, we find that he insinuates that the bomb is no longer necessary and is hesitant about further development. In an interview conducted by US News and World Report in 1960, Szilard was asked when his misgivings about the bomb first developed.

> Well, I started to worry about the use of the bomb in the spring of '45. But misgivings about our way of conducting ourselves arose in Chicago when we first learned that we were using incendiary bombs on a large scale against the cities of Japan.

---

[16] Szilard, *His Version*, 181.
[17] The Day After Trinity: J. Robert Oppenheimer and the Atomic Bomb, directed by Jon Else, (1981, Santa Monica, CAL Pyramid Films, 1981), VHS.

>This, of course, was none of our responsibility. There was nothing we could do about it, but I do remember that my colleagues in the project were disturbed about it.[18]

Szilard clearly had a conception of morality and ethical behavior in wartime if he was dissatisfied with America's firebombing campaign against Japanese cities. Again the arguments of Grotius are helpful in understanding the context of some of these moral concerns. Grotius concluded that the nature of humanity itself served a distinct role in regulating military decisions, especially those that involved innocent civilians. We saw this manifested earlier in Grotius' ideas about natural law and man's inclination to join one's self together for mutual preservation. Grotius claimed "though there may be circumstances, in which absolute justice will not condemn the sacrifice of lives in war, yet humanity will require that the greatest precaution should be used against involving the innocent in danger."[19] Grotius highlights the need for caution in condemning innocent civilians to death. It is easy to see how Szilard thought along these lines, especially after the German surrender, because Japan did not possess the means of destruction as they thought the Germans did. Szilard voiced these ideas particularly strongly, yet he was not alone. Other scientists at Chicago and the research site in Oak Ridge felt the same way, which Szilard also discussed in the interview.

After the German surrender, the remaining three months of the Pacific War became a boiling point of anxiety, tension, and crucial decision making that fundamentally altered the course of history. The attitudes of many scientists changed drastically after the Trinity test and the final preparations to use the atomic bomb. This critical three-month period would prove a tipping point that led to the utilization of the world's first atomic weapon.

Trinity to Hiroshima, An Unstoppable Force

Only two days after the German surrender, the United States at the request of Secretary of War Henry Stimson, created the Interim Committee, a top-secret group of military, political, and scientific personnel, to discuss the feasibility of using the atomic bomb. Oppenheimer, who was in charge at Los Alamos, was invited to take part in the Scientific Panel that also consisted of Enrico Fermi, Arthur Compton, and Ernest Lawrence, all prominent physicists qualified to make such recommendations. These scientists were placed in a position of considerable influence and

---

[18] Leo Szilard, "President Truman Did Not Understand," *US News and World Report*, August 15, 1960. http://members.peak.org/~danneng/decision/usnews.html (accessed October 8, 2013).
[19] Grotius, *War and Peace*, 321.

power, similar to Oppenheimer's appointment as head of Los Alamos. The delegation and distribution of authority will become important in later discussions about responsibility, but the Interim Committee at this critical juncture was a landmark organization to help with the functionality of the project.

It is with the Interim Committee that the idea of a demonstration of the atomic bomb originated. The minutes from a meeting on May 31 emphasize how far the decisions on the atomic bomb had come in just a short month. The use of the atomic bomb on Japan was thoroughly discussed, and it was concluded that a demonstration would not be feasible. "After much discussion concerning various types of targets and the effects to be produced, the Secretary expressed the conclusion, on which there was general agreement, that we could not give the Japanese any warning."[20] Many scientists disagreed with this decision and felt that a demonstration would give the Japanese a chance to surrender; yet it was the Scientific Panel that made the critical observation that a demonstration was not feasible.

The May 31st meeting of the Interim Committee also recognized the issue of "undesirable scientists" and the problem they posed to the effectiveness of the project: "General Groves stated that the program has been plagued since its inception by the presence of certain scientists of doubtful discretion and uncertain loyalty."[21] This short excerpt from the Committee demonstrates that their superiors knew about the ethical and moral qualms of many scientists, which heavily impacted their commitment to their work. This was also a testament to the increased vocalization of many of these concerns. As we will see, petitions emanating from Chicago and Oak Ridge, as well as growing qualms from Los Alamos, plagued the remaining anxiety filled moments. The Trinity Test two weeks later on July 16 was the watershed moment for the Manhattan Project. The test was the first time that these scientists could witness three years worth of hard work. In a memorandum to Henry Stimson two days after the test, General Groves stated that, "We are all fully conscious that our real goal is still before us. The battle test is what counts in the war with Japan."[22] General Groves, a member of the Army Corps of

---

[20] Notes of Meeting of the Interim Committee, May 31, 1945, Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb Documents, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library. http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/bomb/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1945-05-31&documentid=39&studycollectionid=abomb&pagenumber=1
[21] Interim Committee, May 31, 1945, Truman Library.
[22] Leslie. R. Groves to Henry Stimson, July 18, 1945. Lamont Papers, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library. http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/bomb/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1945-07-18&documentid=2&studycollectionid=abomb&pagenumber=1

Engineers and leader of the Manhattan Project, emphasized that the Trinity Test proved the capabilities of the atomic bomb as the solution to the war in the Pacific.

Upon seeing the brilliant luminescence at Trinity, Oppenheimer recalled a somewhat odd quote from the Bhagavad-Gita, "I am become Death, the Destroyer of Worlds."[23] The spectacle of the bomb impacted many of the men who had spent three years working on it. Oppenheimer himself, who read the entire literature of the Bhagavad-Gita and studied Sanskrit in the early 30s, was caught between the role of scientist and decision-maker. His role as a member of the Scientific Panel who advised for the use of the bomb as a psychological weapon in order to shorten the war conflicted with any moral qualms that were exhibited by other scientists. This particular reference to the Gita echoed the idea of righteousness of killing. Oppenheimer's reference to the Gita was partially an acceptance of his role as leader of Los Alamos and the sort of responsibility that he bore for the creation of the bomb. Yet Oppenheimer, as did many scientists at this particular moment, became acutely aware of the sense of destruction that would befall the Japanese people. While the literature of the Gita is extensive and complex, it does form a basis for Oppenheimer's particular idea of ethical conduct of wartime. We must keep in mind that Oppenheimer is very different than other scientists that we have encountered such as Teller, Szilard, or Wilson. His role as advisor, again, is particularly important in how he dealt with moral qualms about the bomb.

Many of the moral concerns by these other scientists rested in the struggle between a demonstration and the seemingly inevitable commitment to using the bomb. Teller penned a letter Szilard on July 2nd that reflected the ways one tried to grapple with these moral concerns: "First of all, let me say that I have no hope of clearing my conscience. The things were are working on are so terrible that no amount of protesting or fiddling with politics will save our souls."[24] Like Szilard, Teller also had strong reservations about the bomb and his ethical considerations weighed on him for the remainder of the war. Szilard was very moved by the argument for a demonstration and facilitated a petition at Chicago and Oak Ridge for support. The petition demanded that the Truman reconsider the decision to use the bomb and touched on moral conventions that should guide the United States for such decisions.

---

[23] Teller, *Memoirs*, 219.

[24] Teller, *Memoirs*, 206.

All the resources of the United States, moral and material, may have to be mobilized to prevent the advent of such a world situation. Its prevention is at present the solemn responsibility of the United States. The added material strength which this lead gives to the Untied States brings with it the obligation of restraint and if we were to violate this obligation, our moral position would be weakened in the eyes of the world and in our own eyes.[25]

Szilard feared that using the atomic bomb on Japan would set a precedent for future destruction, which would endanger the lives of millions around the world. It is interesting that Szilard argues that the United States has an obligation of restraint because of our moral position. This opinion was echoed years later in an interview where Szilard confessed that, "Prior to the war, I had the illusion that up to a point the American Government was different. This illusion was gone after Hiroshima. Perhaps you remember that in 1939 President Roosevelt warned the belligerents against using bombs against inhabited cities, and this I thought was perfectly fitting and natural."[26] Again, Szilard's moral concerns ring loud and clear. Szilard clearly had a conception of the United States in a unique moral position in world affairs. It may seem a stretch to suggest that Szilard was specifically referencing America's adoption of Lockean ideas of natural rights and their subsequent value in society. However, it cannot be ignored that Szilard believed that the moral code of the United States would safeguard against the killing of innocent civilians.

The arguments of Grotius, Locke, and Rawls would all point to similar conclusions as Szilard. America's foundation, as we discussed earlier, was based upon Locke's ideas of natural rights. Szilard's claims are no doubt well founded in light of this particular discussion. Seventy-seven scientists at Chicago and Oak Ridge eventually signed the petition, but Truman never received it. It is debatable whether the petition would have dramatically altered Truman's decision; yet the petition was a last ditch attempt to divert the inevitable. But no manner of words could explain what was to come on August 6, at 8:15 am. The world as the scientists knew it would suddenly change forever.

The war in the Pacific reached its climax on August 6, when the Enola Gay took off at 8:15 am and dropped its load over Hiroshima. On that day, the United States ushered in a new age in world history. Two days later, Nagasaki was leveled by a second atomic bomb. The death toll at Hiroshima, including recent radiation deaths exceeds 110,000; at Nagasaki, 70,000 were killed. Some 62.9 percent of the buildings in Hiroshima were completely burned or destroyed,

---

[25] Szilard, *His Version*, 211.
[26] Szilard, "President Truman Did Not Understand," *US News and World Report*, August 15, 1960.

while 22.7 percent of Nagasaki was completely destroyed or burned.[27] After years of strenuous work, some scientists were anxious about the success of the bombs as they were dropped on their targets; however, when news of their successful detonation reached Los Alamos, many scientists experienced varied reactions. Some, like Oppenheimer, were happy that the bombs detonated successfully and had not malfunctioned. Many other scientists, on the other hand, were horrified as to what the bombs had done. Bob Wilson reflected on how he reacted to news of the bomb's detonation over Hiroshima: "I was sick. I thought I would vomit, I was overwhelmed."[28] Wilson later went on to give up his security clearance to the project and formed the Association of Los Alamos Scientists, which pushed for international control of nuclear weapons.

Not all reactions were this severe, yet the atomic bomb's destruction of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki forced every scientist to reflect on what had been done and his role in bringing about the destruction. Hans Bethe, a physicist at Los Alamos, recalls how he felt after the bomb was dropped. "Somehow, I can't feel that it's something I would not have done or should not have done. The reasons for doing it, the worry about fascism were quite valid, the sense that there was no way of stopping this from being done. I think it would have been good to stop a little sooner after VE Day, or certainly would have been good to never use the thing on the city, and certainly not to use two of them."[29] Wilson's, Bethe's, and Szilard's reactions to the decision to use the bombs all centered on the immorality of using the bombs on Japanese civilians. John Rawls's arguments in his book, *The Laws of Peoples*, which heavily focused on just war doctrine and killing innocent civilians, are very useful to us here: "Well ordered peoples must respect, so far as possible, the human rights of the members of the other side, both civilian and soldiers, for two reasons. One is simply that the enemy, like all others, has these rights by the Law of Peoples."[30] Rawls stresses that the rights of the civilian enemy must still be respected in wartime and cites the firebombing of Japan as well as the use of the atomic bomb as grave wrongs. These scientists were horrified at the nature of the destruction and the significant loss of life.

A week later, Japan surrendered to the United States, and the most brutal war in history had ended. Many questions remained about the future of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy.

---

[27] Eisei Ishikawa and David L. Swain, *Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Physical, Medical, and Social Effects of the Atomic Bombings* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 57.
[28] I am Become Death: They Made the Bomb.
[29] The Day After Trinity: J. Robert Oppenheimer and the Atomic Bomb.
[30] Rawls, *The Laws of Peoples*, 96.

Some scientists, such as Bob Wilson and Robert Oppenheimer, went on to press for international control of nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. Leo Szilard, in some of his discussions with Teller, foresaw the nuclear arms race that developed between the US and the Soviet Union. What is beyond any doubt is that the scientists played a crucial role in making this a reality and their attitudes over time shed light on their experience during the project. One of the most important points here is that no scientist experience was the same. Some scientists, such as Leo Szilard and Edward Teller, had concerns about the atomic bomb and what it meant for global affairs since the beginning. Robert Oppenheimer was placed in a unique position amongst his peers that gave him influence in scientific as well as political circles. However, when the bomb was dropped on Japan on August 6th, it forced everyone to consider right or wrong. Many scientists were moved by the destruction of Japan and regretted their participation in the project. Now we must turn to the moral questions about the atomic bomb, one of the most controversial military strategies in history. What can be said about the scientists who participated in this project? Can we assign moral blame to the scientists for creating this weapon? These are the questions we must now try to answer.

Responsibility

The question of responsibility and whether it can be assigned to these specific individuals is a difficult one. It has been argued that science itself is morally neutral, but this argument is of no use to us, because it does not seriously investigate the role of the scientist. It is too neat and clean. This paper concludes that assigning moral blame is unwarranted because responsibility for the bomb was very diffused and many of these scientists were divorced from the decision-making process. First we must define what we mean by responsibility. Responsibility, as it will be used in this context, refers to an acceptance for causing a particular action. However, this discussion also begs the question of moral responsibility. Moral responsibility denotes an acceptance of blame for an unjust action or a resemblance of guilt for said action. Many of the scientists, Szilard and Teller specifically, developed their own ideas about their responsibility as scientists, which rested on the idea that they had an obligation to voice their opinions about the appropriate use of the technology. Let us briefly examine this difficult question and we will find that these scientists, while responsible for the development of the technology itself, cannot be faulted for the immoral decision to use it.

One of the biggest problems of assigning any kind of moral blame is that the Manhattan Project exemplified the complexities of an individuals' role inside a larger organized project. We have seen that scientists continuously made choices about whether to work on the project, and we have seen how their attitudes shifted over time. Szilard, and others such as Teller or Bob Wilson, clearly identified with some idea of morality as their concerns about building the bomb deepened. Yet there were hundreds of physicists working at Los Alamos, and each of them played a role in making the bomb. However, surely if one decided to walk away--which some did--the bomb would be completed anyway. The evolution of their attitudes also makes it difficult for one to assign blame because over time many scientists identified with ideas of morality that dictated the immorality of using the bomb. At various points in time, the scientists' concerns about the bomb changed, as we have already seen. Early on, they were fearful of German domination--which seemed a legitimate concern at the time--yet many grew concerned after the German defeat. The way they intended to use the bomb differed significantly than the eventual outcome, which leads to the second point that the scientists were ultimately not responsible for the final result.

These arguments raise various questions about the responsibility of the scientist. What is most interesting is the concept of responsibility that some of these scientists themselves developed towards the end of the war, mainly after the German surrender and the Trinity Test. Szilard, who has been a key figure throughout this narrative, contemplated this frequently, especially in the petition that he drafted in Chicago. Teller in his later memoirs reflected on his reactions to Szilard's petition (a copy of it was sent to Teller to circulate at Los Alamos):

> Szilard's petition made an important point: We, the small sample of population who worked on and knew about the bomb, had a responsibility to consider and discuss that knowledge and to provide our perspectives. Indeed, the petition was an entirely proper way to communicate some of this knowledge to those who had to make the immediate practical decisions. Today, half a century after these events, I have reached three conclusions about that important matter. First, Szilard was right, as scientists who had worked on producing the bomb, we bore a special responsibility. Second, Oppenheimer was right. We did not know enough about the political situation to have a valid opinion.[31]

Teller also believed that scientists bore a special responsibility to voice their opinions about the technicalities of the bomb. One, of course, could argue that this was the precise job of the

---

[31] Teller, *Memoirs*, 206-208

Scientific Panel that aided the Interim Committee. However, the Panel did not represent a consensus of the scientific community but only a small portion. Teller's comments at first seem slightly contradictory because he says that scientists have a responsibility to provide perspectives, yet that they didn't know enough to have a valid opinion. This particular quote is a testament to the scientists' extraordinarily alienated positions from the political elite, meaning that their opinions were effectively diminished.

As we saw earlier with Szilard's petition, concerns about the bomb were raised; yet (as the Interim Committee carefully noted) these concerns were viewed as setbacks. They were not seriously considered at all. This alienation from the decision makers provides another reason why the blame is unwarranted. The scientists did not make the decision to drop the atomic bomb, and the administrative hierarchy ultimately decided how the bomb was used. This particular argument would follow the earlier philosophical arguments that state--more specifically the leaders of these states--are the decision makers in wartime. Rawls more specifically outlined a principle of the statesman, who was most qualified to represent his people and their aims.[32] If we follow this argument, Truman bears the utmost responsibility for dropping the bombs, and the divide between the hierarchy and the scientist community helps to demonstrate that. The scientists' role is hardly neutral, and the Manhattan Project presents one of the most interesting cases in history that establishes that. This discussion has only attempted to address a few of the difficulties associated with assigning moral blame, but the controversy surrounding the scientists' role will continue to be the subject of debate for years to come.

Conclusion

The story of the scientists in the Manhattan Project is an intriguing one, and it is a story that has largely been ignored. This paper has looked at philosophical arguments of Grotius, John Locke, and John Rawls to establish a framework of moral truths that rests on the protection of human rights. The first part of this essay examined how considerations of civilian immunity during wartime rely on intrinsic natural laws that dictate human behavior and, in effect, create societies that protect human rights. The second part of this essay sought to tie in the attitudes of scientist with conclusions of just war theory and demonstrate how moral concerns that developed in the mid-1940s paralleled some of the conclusions that both Rawls and Grotius developed. This

---

[32] Rawls, *The Laws of Peoples*, 97.

discussion culminated with ideas about moral responsibility, and ultimately concluded that moral blame is unwarranted.

This conclusion was based on the nature of the organization of the project in that the responsibility for the bomb was very diffuse, and individual choices in the larger picture mattered very little. The scientists themselves developed their own ideas about their responsibility to the decision makers yet the divide between the political hierarchy and the science community proved very difficult to unite. This paper is not only a serious study of just war and the boundaries of wartime conduct, but a study of human nature in the midst of that war. These scientists will forever remember the role they had in this critical moment in history, and the atomic age changed the nature of warfare for years to come. Yet we must always continue to be cognizant of these boundaries in wartime. Just war theory can continue to be a valuable tool to understand acts of war, and we must continue to be critical of war's inert destructive force and the innocent lives it may claim.

Works Cited

Bird, Kai, and Martin J. Sherwin. *American Prometheus: The triumph and tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer*. 1st Ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.

Cotkin, George. *Morality's Muddy Waters: Ethical quandaries in Modern America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

Else, Jon. *The Day After Trinity*. Santa Monica, Calif.: Pyramid Films, 1981.

Grotius, Hugo, and Archibald Colin Campbell. *The rights of war and peace: Including the law of nature and of nations* [De jure belli et pacis. English]. London: B. Boothroyd, 1814.

Hargittai, István. *The Martians of science: Five physicists who changed the twentieth century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip061/2005029427.html; http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0636/2005029427-d.html.

Hiroshima-shi Nagasaki-shi Genbaku Saigaishi Henshu Iinkai. *Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the physical, medical, and social effects of the atomic bombings* [Hiroshima Nagasaki no genbaku saigai. English]. New York: Basic Books, 1981.

Jungk, Robert. *Brighter than a thousand suns; a personal history of the atomic scientists* [Heller als tausend Sonnen. English]. 1 American ed. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1958.

Lanouette, William, and Bela A. Silard. *Genius in the shadows: A biography of Leo Szilard: The man behind the bomb*. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1992.

Locke, John. *Two treatises of government*. New ed. London: Printed for C. and J. Rivington, 1824.

———. *Essays on the law of nature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954.

Mac Caig, Arthur, Jean-Baptiste Léonetti, France 3 cinéma, AGAT Films & Cie, Kalamazoo Films Production, and First Run/Icarus Films. *I am become death*. New York: First Run/Icarus Films, 1995.

Mason, Richard. *Oppenheimer's Choice: Reflections from moral philosophy*. SUNY series in philosophy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0516/2005020545.html.

May, Larry, Eric Rovie, and Steve Viner. *The morality of war: Classical and contemporary readings*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip052/2004023983.html.

Oppenheimer, J. Robert, Alice Kimball Smith, and Charles Weiner. *Robert Oppenheimer, letters and recollections*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Rawls, John. *A theory of justice*. Rev ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999.

Rawls, John. *The law of peoples; with, the idea of public reason revisited* [Law of peoples]. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Schweber, S. S. *Einstein and Oppenheimer: The meaning of genius*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Stoff, Michael B., Jonathan F. Fanton, and R. Hal Williams. *The Manhattan Project: A documentary introduction to the atomic age*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991.

Szilard, Leo, Spencer R. Weart, and Gertrud Weiss Szilard. *Leo Szilard, his version of the facts: Selected recollections and correspondence*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978.

Szilard, Leo. "President Truman Did Not Understand," *US News and World Report*, August 15, 1960. Accessed October 8, 2013. http://members.peak.org/~danneng/decision/usnews.html.

Teller, Edward, and Judith L. Shoolery. *Memoirs: A twentieth-century journey in science and politics*. Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Pub, 2001.

Truman Presidential Library. Leslie. R. Groves to Henry Stimson, July 18, 1945, Lamont Papers.

Truman Presidential Library. Notes of Meeting of the Interim Committee, May 31, 1945, Miscellaneous Historical Documents Collection.

Tuck, Richard. 1999. *The rights of war and peace: Political thought and the international order from Grotius to Kant*. New York: Oxford University Press.

THE INESCAPABLE POLITICS OF IDENTITY: SHIRLEY CHISHOLM'S RUN FOR PRESIDENT AS DEPICTED BY THE PRESS

SARAH PAULING

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

On January 25th, 1972, Senator Shirley Chisholm of New York's 12th Congressional District announced her campaign for the Presidency of the United States. Contemporary media outlets immediately began to comment on the importance of her candidacy, which they predicted to be historically groundbreaking notwithstanding the election's outcome. Chisholm's declaration represented two cultural turning points from the outset. She became the first major-party black candidate for the highest office in the land. Her executive bid also represented the first time in the country's history that a woman competed for the Democratic presidential nomination. Members of the press, both within the mainstream and black media, lauded Chisholm's boldness and tenacity, depicting her campaign as a threat to the patriarchal, restrictive culture that stood opposed to women's participation in the polity. These journalists, nonetheless, universally acknowledged the unlikelihood of a black woman capturing the White House. Most publications thus focused on the societal implications of her "symbolic" run. Other media outlets, such as the conservative *Wall Street Journal*, criticized her bid with dismissive language and implied that her race and sex impeded her capacity to govern. Despite Chisholm's insistence that she was not a "special interests" candidate, her role in society as an African-American woman permeated the majority of her campaign. Though Chisholm articulated her own goals and visions for equality in America without forming any exclusive political alliances, the gender and racial implications of her candidacy armed the press with ammunition to portray her campaign through a narrow lens of identity politics.

Background

Chisholm approached the 1972 election as a successful career politician. Initially, she was elected to the New York State Legislature in 1964 before gaining a seat in the House of Representatives in 1968. Her early political success positioned her into an important historical context: she was the first black woman to be elected to Congress. Once there, Chisholm quickly

established herself as a powerbroker willing to labor on behalf of vulnerable Americans. She pursued an agenda to improve employment opportunities as well as access to health care and social services for urban, working-class denizens. She also expressed strong pacifist convictions and a firm opposition to the military draft, earning accolades from various antiwar factions and liberal voting blocs.[1]

In 1971, Chisolm was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus.[2] The same year, she became one of the four original members of the National Women's Political Caucus, explaining to the Associated Press that she "had met far more discrimination because [she was] a woman than because [she was] black."[3] This recognition of her struggles as a woman emerged as a recurring theme of Chisholm's presidential bid. Even as she repeatedly disavowed being a "special interests" candidate, she frequently identified very strongly with her role as a woman in various interviews conducted throughout the first few months of 1972.

Chisholm's early days of service in the House of Representatives revealed her political chutzpah and unwillingness to tolerate trivial appointments. She was assigned initially to the Agricultural Committee despite representing an urban political district. Her request for reassignment was met with surprise as this assertiveness was rare and especially unexpected for a black woman. Chisholm, nevertheless, was placed on the Veterans' Affairs Committee and later assigned to the Education and Labor Committee, which she believed to be more aligned with her own interests as well as the prerogatives of her constituents. Her insistence on what she considered a proper placement reflected the slogan under which she had run for congressional office: she boasted her position as a politician who was "unbought and unbossed" by the governmental system and by the Democratic political machine. Chrisholm's critics swiftly interpreted her self-assuredness as a stubborn reluctance to consider the best interests of her potential supporters. Likewise, her campaign for the Presidency of the United States was marred by the media's uneven treatment, with a majority emphasizing her divided loyalty to African-American and female voting blocs. Yet, while serving in Congress, Chisholm demonstrated an ability to dismiss criticism from conservative factions and to enact changes that evinced broad support of women. Through her congressional voting record and her personal staffing policy, she

---

[1]Shirley Chisholm, *The Good Fight* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).
[2] Coralie Carlson, "Pioneering Politician, Candidate Dies," *Washington Post*, January 3, 2005.
[3]Jo Freeman, *Shirley Chisholm's 1972 Presidential Campaign*. http://jofreeman.com. (Accessed November 15, 2013).

championed women, and half of the women associates Chisolm hired to work in her office were black.[4]

In 1972, Chisholm decided to make a bid to become the Democratic Party's Presidential nominee. Reactions were mixed even in the black press, and many papers focused on her potential for dividing the base or turning off white liberals who were less likely to vote for a black woman.[5] Many were upset that she had decided to run without consulting the black community's most prominent black leaders, prompting discord among the ranks. Chisholm was maligned as a lone agent who made a nearly split-second decision to run for the presidency, alienating a large, influential part of her base.[6]

The black and white press, however, commended Chisholm's bravery. Depending on the political views of the reporter, the worthiness of her cause was also acknowledged. She was seen as an integrationist, and her courage was praised as she survived three assassination attempts throughout her campaign from less sympathetic forces.[7] Chisholm also gained support from prominent women's groups, namely the National Organization for Women (NOW), formerly led by Betty Friedan. Given Friedan's and NOW's influential roles in the women's liberation movement, Chisholm's connection to the group signified her strong identification with women's causes, despite her intent to portray an image of a wide-reaching candidate without biases engendered by personal politics.[8] NOW's espousal only complicated Chisholm's relationship with the press who continued to reduce her campaign to identity politics. Further, they accused Chisolm of privileging her gender in political decisions and alleged that she actively sought the backing of high-profile women activists.

Chisholm's presidential bid, as expected, failed. She was defeated at the July Democratic National Convention, and George McGovern was chosen as the party's candidate despite several white candidates choosing to release their black delegates to her in a symbolic gesture. These presidential aspirants indicated that any African-American delegates who had planned to cast ballots for them should vote for Chisholm instead—a token action that was met with varied reaction from blacks and whites alike. [9] Her convention loss limited her campaign to

[4] Freeman, *Shirley Chisholm's 1972 Presidential Campaign.*
[5] "Symbolic Candidacy," *New York Times,* January 27, 1972.
[6] "Politics in Black," *New York Amsterdam News,* January 29, 1972.
[7] Donn Swaby, "Shirley Chisholm: A True Revolutionary," *Huffington Post,* February 19, 2009.
[8] Laurie Johnston, "Dream for Women: President Chisholm," *New York Times,* February 14, 1972.
[9] Paul Delaney, "Blacks are Divided on the Convention," *New York Times,* July 16, 1972.

approximately six months, but the conversations generated by her run were paramount and transformative in both the black press and mainstream newspapers. Chisholm was destined to become a part of a fixed political narrative around which the press could not only put forth their talking points but also assert their views.

Overlapping Identities

Despite this political maelstrom surrounding Chisholm, she endeavored to avoid any association with identity politics throughout her campaign. She frequently insisted that she was not a "special interests" candidate, hoping to curry the favor with diverse constituencies throughout the country. According to Chisholm, she ran because a broad array of groups requested her to vie for the presidency.[10] Her objective, then, was to represent America, not any specific demographic. During the announcement of her candidacy, Chisholm articulated this perspective. She remarked, "I am not the candidate of Black America though I am black and proud. I am not the candidate of the Women's Movement of this country, although I am a woman and equally proud of that. I am not the candidate of any political bosses or special interests."[11] Chisholm, with this declaration, hearkened back to her "unbought and unbossed" slogan, stressing her capacity to stay above the political fray and her eagerness to appeal to a broad electorate. Her resolve was greeted with uncertainty within the African-American community and beyond, as many questioned the wisdom of denying that her politics would be influenced by her identity as an African American and a woman.

Chisholm, both during her presidential bid and later in her writings, often verbalized the ways in which she felt pressured to become either the "black" or the "female" candidate.[12] In her opinion, this was not a viable tactic. It was integral to her campaign strategy not to be defined along these lines, as to do so was equivalent to being backed into a corner. Other persons, however, did not see that option in such a negative light; as the months passed and her presidential run ended, the black press began to wonder whether Chisholm should have made more of an effort to become the candidate of choice for a specific demographic. The mainstream press echoed the sentiment. One *New York Times* article, predicting the rise of "identity politics"

---

[10] Norman C. Miller, "Mrs. Chisholm Insists on Running, to Dismay of Many Politicians," *Wall Street Journal,* February 14, 1972.

[11] "Shirley no Special Interests Candidate," *Los Angeles Sentinel,* February 10, 1972.

[12] Shirley Chisholm, *The Good Fight.*

as the future of the political arena, postulated that future elections would be primarily decided by which candidates voters identified with. Different political blocs, including African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, senior citizens, women, and youth, were expected to dictate American politics.[13] Given this outlook, spectators mused, Chisholm should have appealed to a narrower constituency.

The criticisms of Chisholm's broadmindedness were not curtailed by her failed bid, though they took on a more contemplative tone. The press concentrated on whether or not her campaign might have widespread repercussions or would epitomize failure on the part of either black or white America. Chisholm now explained the motivations behind her presidential run more freely: in her writings she stated that she had run against impossible odds to "demonstrate the sheer will and refusal to accept the status quo." She also emphasized her early awareness of the symbolic nature of her bid.[14] "The next time a woman runs, or a black, or a Jew or anyone from a group that the country is 'not ready' to elect to its highest office, I believe that he or she will be taken seriously from the start," Chisolm avowed, pinpointing her candidacy as seminal in opening the gateway to politics on a national scale for those persons who had been historically left out of the mainstream.

Division in the Black Press

Perhaps the demographic most divided over Chisholm's candidacy was the black press. The *Atlanta Daily World* first announced her candidacy on January 27th, 1972 in a brief, three-paragraph notice that highlighted her decision neither to become the "Women's Lib" candidate nor the candidate for "Black America." The article stuck verbatim to Chisholm's announcement, leaving no room for praise or condemnation. After referencing her intention to run as "the candidate of the people," however, the writer quoted her as saying, "My presence before you now symbolizes a new era en American political history."[15] Though Chisholm attempted to distance herself from the image of a special interests candidate, she was capable of seeing the usefulness of her undoubtedly monumental decision to run, as the historical uniqueness of her bid was critical to exemplifying her moral strength.

---

[13] Robert B. Semple, Jr., "Caucuses are Bound by Common Identity," *New York Times,* July 11, 1972.
[14] Shirley Chisholm, *The Good Fight.*
[15] "Shirley Chisholm Announces," *Atlanta Daily World,* January 27, 1972.

The segment of the black press that ranged from neutral to favorable towards Chisholm's run certainly did not ignore the historical implications of her campaign. Even a terse announcement was sure to allude to significance in political history. Chisholm, like the black press, exploited this tactic. She emphasized her separation from special interest groups while simultaneously drawing attention to her deep connections to those constituencies. The *Chicago Daily Defender* called her a brave woman with "deep social insight," extolling her political savvy and preference not to isolate herself inside one faction. She was also celebrated as an up-and-coming "black powerhouse" who—although extremely unlikely to earn the Party's nomination—would arrive at the National Democratic Convention with "enough political strength and prestige to demand and get her slice of the pie."[16] Many of the earliest reports of her run were tinged with this excitement. Yet, these accounts were certainly not unanimous in their presentation of her actions.

One of the chief criticisms of Chisholm's campaign was that she was not taking wider political strategy into consideration, choosing to run despite the wishes of other black politicians, her constituents, and the African American community as a whole. The *New York Amsterdam News* ran a brief piece on January 29th summarizing reactions to Chisholm's announcement, first focusing on the meeting held by black elected Democrats in order to decide how to approach her decision, which was made, in their opinion, without proper consultation of their demographic. The next segment functioned as a generalization of public opinion on her campaign, concluding that "there a lot of the Black brothers and sisters who are unhappy. SHIRLEY is just not their cup of tea and they feel boxed and helpless."[17] Next, the writer summarized the political strategies being implemented to make do with the situation: Mayor John Lindsay of New York City was urged by his strategists not to run delegates against her so as not to divide the black community. This was a common theme in many of these papers: Chisholm could split the black vote and hand the election to a more conservative candidate. The *Atlanta Daily World* welcomed her to campaign in their city and wished her well in her endeavors but advised that she "reconsider political plans, as far as the presidency is concerned, at least for this year," fearing that she would divide black Florida voters particularly and aid in George Wallace's candidacy.[18]

---

[16] "A Courageous Woman," *Chicago Daily Defender,* February 1, 1972.
[17] "Politics in Black," *New York Amsterdam News,* January 29, 1972.
[18] "The Chisholm Candidacy," *Atlanta Daily World,* February 3, 1972.

Many felt, as the *Amsterdam News* posited, "boxed in" and obligated to support her run so as not to create such a divide.

This attitude--that the black political community had to compensate for and support Chisholm's run against their wishes--seems to have been just as, if not more, widespread as the attitude praising her decision. The *Afro-American* reported on the "weeks of secret and complex negotiation" necessary to create some sort of unified coalition backing her in the community, eventually including prominent black figures that had earlier condemned her run. "Shirley was out there and we had to make a decision," Percy Sutton, president of the Manhattan Borough, was quoted as saying. "She put a number of us on the spot." He also added that, now that she was running, during the March Congressional Black Caucus they were hoping to create a climate where it would be "extremely difficult for anyone claiming to be black to support a white candidate."[19] The general mood portrayed by many black papers of the time seemed to be a mixture of pride, as portrayed in the *Defender,* and irritated acceptance, as in the coalition described by the *Afro-American.* Chisholm's claim that she was not running on behalf of any specific demographics did not seem to alleviate the feeling in the black community that she was very much their representative and that African Americans would be affected by her run, no matter the outcome.

Critics of Shirley's run gave various reasons for their objections in the black press, one of the most overwhelming being the sheer unlikelihood of her success. Some appreciated the idea of a symbolic candidacy, but others were more results-oriented. The same *Atlanta Daily World* article that lamented the possibility of a Florida split opened with the statement that "anyone desiring to aspire for this high office ought to be a person with at least a fighting chance." It then went on to say that "this good woman" did not have any possible way of winning the election.[20] In this sense, her run would be counterproductive: a split through the African American voting bloc, with no possible gains other than a sense of defeat for her supporters. Even those who emphasized their admiration for Chisholm often did not feel that she had made a productive decision: a letter to the editor printed in the *Chicago Daily Defender* summarized many of the most common arguments against her run, while noting firmly that the writer thought she was "intelligent, a good speaker, groomed, and above all a lady." Despite the fact that Chisholm had

[19] "Shirley may be Gaining United Backing for Drive," *Afro-American,* February 12, 1972.
[20] "The Chisholm Candidacy."

all the "ingredients of a winner," the author lamented that she was "before her time" and did not stand a chance against her competitors. His objection, it should be noted, was not to the idea that an African American could become president in 1971 but to the idea that a *woman* could win such an election. This comment and comments like it may have influenced Chisholm's later statement that she faced more discrimination as a woman than she ever did as an African American. This article, however, linked her run firmly back to the question of her race: "The idea that a black can run will be proven. The fact that a black woman is running is being proven. However, the basic fact that will be proven is that a Black ran and lost."[21] Though the writer initially stated that the factor holding Chisholm back was her gender, he assumed that her failure to succeed would create more far-reaching effects in the black community. By choosing to run with two strongly stigmatized identity factors holding her back, Chisholm was, in the eyes of many in the black community, throwing away the chances for African Americans to become more influential in national politics during the 1972 election cycle in which she would participate.

In the early days of Chisholm's run, articles in the black press often discussed alternative candidates, whether directly positing that they should be running in her stead or indirectly implying their advantages over her. The *New York Amsterdam News* reported that Representative Walter Fauntroy would not be deterred from mounting his own candidacy, hoping to "lead the Washington, D.C. Democrats delegation to the Democratic National Convention." His supporters were portrayed in the article as favorable towards Chisholm personally, but solidly in favor of Fauntroy's run. As Chisholm's campaigning was much more far-reaching than Fauntroy's, since Fauntroy principally remained in D.C., Chrisholm ultimately proved more influential in the 1972 election.

For a time, rumors circulated through various black papers that the Reverend William A. Jones would run against Chisholm, as Jones strongly opposed Chisholm's campaign on the basis of its slim chance for success. He stated that he had been approached by various dissatisfied constituents of Chisholm's and that he believed her run was a fantasy in a time for "ruthless realism." However, Jones ultimately declared the claims that he planned to run for office were

---

[21] Louis Fitzgerald. "From our Readers: Shirley shouldn't run!" *Chicago Daily Defender,* February 19, 1972.

fallacies invented by the press.[22] This represented the willingness of many members of the black press to seek out alternatives to Chisholm's campaign, perhaps believing as Jones did that she only believed herself untouchable because she was surrounded by the "feminine mystique – the halo around her head…This whole thing of being the first black woman in Congress."[23] Jones also categorized her response to his criticism as "hysterical," informing her in an open letter that her "weight in pounds and the weight of any opponent have nothing to do with creativity, ingenuity and statesmanship."[24] His references to her gender, both obscure and direct, emphasized his disdain for the idea that Chisholm would try to run on the basis of her historical importance as a pioneering female figure in American politics, even as he stressed the importance of increasing black representation in the government, preferably through male leadership that stood a chance of winning elections.

Portrayal in the Mainstream Press

Although Chisholm's bid was not universally lauded in either the mainstream or the black press, the nature of the mainstream press's criticism was often different than in the black press. The *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal,* two prominent papers in her home state, provide various examples of these misgivings. Although she was not as frequently mentioned in these sources as she was in the black press, Chisholm appeared in a number of reports on the grander political arena, used to emphasize what effects her run could have on the election as a whole or as a contrast to her competitors. Statistics in these papers frequently highlighted her much smaller support base in comparison with the other candidates, without providing elaboration on her politics or her overall role in the race.[25] She was particularly contrasted with George McGovern and Hubert Humphrey, who were considered to have strong support from the party and received much of the mainstream media's attention.

One early *New York Times* article, while recapping the strongest contenders, categorized Chisholm as far behind in terms of crowd size at the Democratic Presidential caucuses, meanwhile describing McGovern, Humphrey, and Edmund Muskie as commanding thousands of

---

[22]"Shirley's in; Faces Home Threat," *Afro-American,* February 5, 1972; William A. Jones. "Rev. Jones Re-Blasts Cong. Shirley Chisholm," *New York Amsterdam News,* February 12, 1972.
[23]Shirley's in; Faces Home Threat."
[24] William A. Jones, "Rev. Jones Re-Blasts Cong. Shirley Chisholm," *New York Amsterdam News,* February 12, 1972.
[25]Thomas P. Ronan, "M'Govern Gains Coalition's Vote," *New York Times,* January 30, 1972.

voters.[26] This reflected the often dismissive attitude mainstream papers took towards the viability of her run. Another article used Chisholm to illustrate McGovern's position on race relations: he "unhesitatingly" signed a petition demanding bail for Angela Davis and was, "until Representative Shirley Chisholm entered the race recently," the only candidate to endorse the demands the Black Caucus had made of Nixon the previous year.[27] In this article, Chisholm served only as an illustration of the uniqueness of McGovern's politics; he was stated to be the only white male in the running who acknowledged the political desires of the black voting bloc, linking his concern for the community with the positions of an actual member of that community. Chisholm's role in this type of article was placed as a contrast with the more promising candidates; more explicitly, how her run could help or hinder other candidates' campaigns became a topic of discussion. One article brought up the possibility, also acknowledged by the black press, that Chisholm could divide the Florida vote and ultimately spur on the campaign of George Wallace. An aide to Mayor John Lindsay of New York City was also quoted as saying that she had "siphoned off many good campaign workers" from opportunities to support the mayor, despite the two of them running on similar platforms. This implied that Lindsay's campaign should take political priority over Chisholm's in order to achieve solid results.[28] In both points, this piece discussed her more as an obstacle than as a legitimate contender for the presidency. The mainstream press, in general, took Chisholm's run in the wider context of the election, in contrast with the black press's vested interest in her success.

Several mainstream articles, however, dealt more directly with Chisholm's bid. The *New York Times* article that announced her candidacy was lengthier than its brief counterpart in the *Atlanta Daily World.* The writer opened with acknowledgement of the historical importance of her run, then immediately moved on to doubts about her ability to win the election. The article asserted that "even several of her admirers conceded privately that she had at least two strikes – her sex and her race – against her." While the *Atlanta Daily World* article worked to maintain a superficial sense of neutrality, only indicating the historical implications of her run through direct quotes of her announcement or through subtle wording, this article immediately declared

---

[26] "3 Candidates Display Strength at Coast Democratic Caucuse,." *New York Times,* February 14, 1972.
[27] Christopher Lyndon, "McGovern Backers Decry One-Issue Image, but Vietnam Remains as the Key Factor in His Campaign," *New York Times,* February 22, 1972.
[28] Paul Delaney, "Chisholm Appeal Divides Blacks; Imperils Liberals in Florida Race," *New York Times,* March 14, 1972.

the unlikelihood of her victory. A "third strike," according to the writer, was that she did not have significant backing from "women, blacks or youths, although she was obviously appealing to all three groups." This statement contrasted with Chisholm's declaration that she was not running on behalf any specific demographics, a policy that formed an integral part of the very announcement speech that this article, published January 26th, was reporting. As Chisholm announced her candidacy the day before, the reporter's statement implies that the article immediately jumped to the conclusion that she would be running on the basis of her personal identity, despite her words to the contrary, without allowing time for her to either follow or reject her chosen strategy. Her words about running for America as a whole were not mentioned anywhere in the article.[29] This exclusion supports the conclusion that Chisholm would not be able to avoid being seen as the black or female candidate, despite her efforts to the contrary.

This trend continued in other articles reporting her run: on January 28th, the *Wall Street Journal* published a piece discussing the amount of candidates vying for office under the title "All Those Candidates – Is It A Joke?" The writer described Chisholm as a "cause candidate," who hoped to influence policy and "demonstrate to fellow Democrats the primary voting clout of women and blacks." Again, while this may have been one of Chisholm's unstated motivations, this assertion contradicted what she stated while announcing her run. Like the *Chicago Daily Defender* article that granted she would have enough strength to "demand her slice of the pie," this article focused on the assumed implications of her campaign rather than on her stated message. Curiously, before describing Chisholm as a cause candidate, the writer dedicated a small paragraph to Walter Fauntroy, the African American candidate from Washington D.C., as an "old-fashioned favorite son, hoping to cement his power base at home."[30] Although Fauntroy was also black, the paper did not classify him as campaigning solely to make a point, despite acknowledging the likelihood that his goal was not to win the election. He and Chisholm are both regarded as the first African Americans to win a presidential primary, but Chisholm was portrayed by the mainstream press as a "cause candidate," while Fauntroy was less likely to be treated as such. This suggests the possibility that the interesctionality of her race and her gender caused the media to view her as inherently more radical and more connected to her personal

---

[29] Frank Lynn, "New Hat in the Ring: Mrs. Chisholm's," *New York Times,* January 26, 1972.
[30] Arlen J. Large, "All those Candidates Is it a Joke?" *Wall Street Journal,* January 28, 1972.

identity than was Fauntroy, cementing the idea that Chisholm had difficulty escaping the effects of identity politics on her run.

The mainstream media also covered the enmity between Chisholm and Reverend William A. Jones, the other black male figure rumored early in her campaign to be running against her. Like the *New York Amsterdam News*, the *New York Times* described Jones' criticisms of Chisholm, again citing his desire for "ruthless realism" in particular. The writer included the same reference to Jones's interactions with Chisholm's dissatisfied constituents, as well as his desire to back someone else from the community who had a greater chance of success. The principle difference between the two articles, however, can be found in the closing paragraphs of the *New York Times* piece, which summarized Jones's years of activism and his position as chairman of Operation Breadbasket. This likely served as a method of refreshing the memory of white readers who may not have been as familiar with the Reverend's legacy, but the description also very prominently used the name of Martin Luther King Jr. to link Jones's identity with that of the beloved late organizer and activist. In an unrelated paragraph, the article described the function of Operation Breadbasket, founded by King, to improve economic opportunities for African Americans.[31] The effect of this segment appears to be to position Jones as morally sound and superior to Chisholm in terms of experience and impact on the black community by using the name of an activist who had been more thoroughly accepted by the media – and white Americans. The mainstream press could cast aspersions on Chisholm's career by comparing her with figures considered to be better representations of the black community. As she could never fully escape being defined by her identity, this approach was particularly effective, as she was portrayed as inferior in the arena that the country considered her to represent.

The mainstream press also covered the wider conflict Chisholm created in the black political community, but its depiction was sometimes conveyed in more aggressive language than in the black press. One article described the "about face" of black politicians that were forced to form a coalition to support her in order to avoid a "major, fratricidal battle that appeared inevitable among black politicians."[32] This dramatic language created an image of a community torn in two and unable to compromise due to Chisholm's influence, whereas the same problems were covered in the black press in a less alarmist manner. In this way, Chisholm

---

[31] Thomas A. Johnson, "Head of Operation Breadbasket Says He Opposes Mrs. Chisholm," *New York Times,* January 27, 1972.
[32] Johnson, "Head of Operation Breadbasket Says He Opposes Mrs. Chisholm."

was used by outside sources to portray the African American community as difficult to unite under a single banner and likely to collapse inward under the pressure of the election.

In a slightly different tack, the *Wall Street Journal* took the dramatic depiction a step further in a piece entitled "Black Democrats Find Unity Elusive," which described the "militant black leaders" that would use threats to force the Democratic National Convention to acquiesce to their demands in order to compensate for the chaos introduced by Chisholm's run. Her image was linked in this way to both militancy and disorder. The article also included a quote from Chisholm to the effect that she had urged other black politicians to use her as their "instrument" after the coalition was formed to support her. Sutton, who in the *Afro-American* had explained the need to "make a decision" to back Chisholm despite their misgivings, was quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* piece as saying, "If I join her, she is accountable to me."[33] This article painted an image of Chisholm as under the influence of her male coalition, making her appear almost as a figurehead for a wider "black agenda." While mentioning the supposed chaos that Chisholm introduced, its argument did not choose to focus on the divided black voting base, instead suggesting a turn towards radicalism in the attitudes and actions of black voters that seemed threatening for white Americans. Chisholm, in this depiction, was simultaneously a rogue force that allowed for the introduction of "militant" black politics as a consequence, as well as a potential figurehead for an almost sinister alliance of black leaders who hoped to control the tide of the election through her.

In Context of the Women's Liberation Movement

Despite Chisholm's public attempts to distance herself from the image of a "cause candidate," her gender was ultimately impossible to ignore for both the media and her potential supporters. Although the black press was more likely than the mainstream press to focus on this aspect of her identity, as it was seen to hinder their cause, some mainstream articles nevertheless gave her gender a different treatment than the issue of her race. One article in the *Wall Street Journal* explored the conflict between her supposedly "women's lib" politics and support from the black community. Alcee Hastings, a black leader in Florida who chose to back Edmund Muskie, was quoted as saying that "black men can't very well identify with women's lib," treating her alliance with the feminist movement as a given and implying that this trait would

---

[33] Norman C. Miller. "Black Democrats Find Unity Elusive," *Wall Street Journal,* Mar 10, 1972.

overrule any positive contribution Chisholm could make to the experience of black men in the United States.[34] Other men expressed confusion over her "mystique," indicating that they did not understand the appeal or the purpose of her "quixotic" campaign. The article tacitly argued that Chisholm would have difficulty drawing support from any of her supposed bases of blacks or women, correlating with the previously-mentioned *Atlanta Daily World* article that denied her ability to gather significant backing from any of these identity groups. Both the black and mainstream press often chose to highlight the conflict of interest inherent to Chisholm's female identity in the political arena, even at the expense of her black support.

However, this same *Wall Street Journal* article acknowledged that some women found a great deal of inspiration in Chisholm's run: a "white, well-to-do Miami housewife" who was noted as "no militant women's liberationist" gave a brief interview about her enthusiasm for Chisholm's run, remarking that she might choose to give her a vote despite the clear impossibility of her victory. The article compared the woman's excitement with the "enthusiasm she might be expected to reserve for her grandchildren," also noting that she knew about Chisholm through attending her husband's social luncheons, an expected role for an upper-class housewife. The article chose to dedicate most of the two paragraphs discussing the housewife's political opinions to remind the reader about both her social role as a woman and her unthreatening non-militancy. This served a heavy contrast with the depiction of Chisholm herself in the piece: the writer described her as "delighted" about the prospect of creating a split in the black and white liberal voting blocs, juxtaposing Alcee Hasting's negative view of Chisholm's counterproductive bid with her own "dramatic" words about the entire country willing her to run in their honor. The article depicted the candidate as self-congratulatory, describing her own "brilliant mind" and making "startling proposals" about potential presidential actions.[35] Ultimately, the efforts made by the writer to categorize the white supporter as non-threatening and domestic only served to heighten the sense of confusion around Chisholm's "mystique." Every other interview centered on someone who either did not understand the purpose of Chisholm's run or thought she would have trouble garnering support. The message seemed to be that Chisholm's appeal to her limited female supporters was inexplicable, due to their traditional femininity when contrasted with her "unbossed" nature, and that the impossibility of translating

---

[34] Norman C. Miller, "Mrs. Chisholm Insists on Running, to Dismay of Many Politicians," *Wall Street Journal,* February 14, 1972.
[35] Miller, "Mrs. Chisholm Insists on Running, to Dismay of Many Politicians."

this appeal into crucial male support would hinder her campaign. However, the interview also provided a glimpse into what her campaign meant for some women in 1972 America, even those the press regarded as not militant enough to associate with the women's liberation movement.

Other papers chose to focus more directly on her impact on women, whether or not she was gaining their votes. A *New York Times* article entitled "Feminists vs. the Media: Signs of Change" listed Chisholm as one of the important role models featured in *Progressive Woman,* a magazine created with the express intent of broadening the scope of magazines meant to appeal to women instead of relegating them to homemakers or parents. The creator of the publication emphasized that this was not a "cause" magazine; Chisholm's inclusion was, therefore, meant as a message to women across the political spectrum, treating her as a positive example of an active woman in a changing world.[36] Despite some men's apparent reluctance to support her "women's lib" politics, Chisholm had clearly obtained the approval of certain women from a wide variety of backgrounds, from the white housewife in the *Wall Street Journal* article to the editors of *Progressive Woman* magazine, even if many were hesitant to give their votes to what the media branded as a symbolic cause candidate.

It should be noted that this *New York Times* article also discussed Gloria Steinem, who had been featured in an explicitly feminist magazine, in much the same vein.[37] This directly associated Chisholm with one of the most prominent feminists of the era and therefore identified her with the women's liberation movement, albeit through her run for president in a male-dominated arena rather than for her stated political positions. Regardless of how she chose to define her relationship with the feminist movement in her public speech, Chisholm's actions themselves were seen as a bold statement for women's rights by the press. This perception caused her to be depicted as a role model to many women, showcasing the possibility of a future wherein a woman running for president of the United States may stand a chance of succeeding. Despite her desire to not be defined specifically as a women's candidate, this sentiment was in line with Chisholm's own writings after the election, which indicated that she was strongly aware of her impact on the women's liberation movement. [38] Chisholm consistently acknowledged her gender's effect on her political life--sometimes, as discussed, to a greater degree than she acknowledged the effects of her race.

[36]Linda Charlton, "Feminists Vs. the Media: Signs of Change," *New York Times,* March 14, 1972.
[37] Charlton, "Feminists Vs. the Media: Signs of Change."
[38] Shirley Chisholm, *The Good Fight.*

Chisholm's campaign definitely made an impact in the consciousness of women, whether or not they chose to give her their votes. A mostly humorous article in the *New York Times* entitled "Dream for Women: President Chisholm" described a literal dream sequence in which she was elected president and subsequently met with her Cabinet (including "Anti-Machismo Secretary Gloria Steinem") to create an agenda for the coming term, centering on the rising adult male delinquency rate, a plan for "instituting some play-therapy groups in which they could work out their aggressive feelings," and converting the Pentagon into a senior housing project.[39] The dream, which overall maintained a sense of playful positivity towards Chisholm's campaign, was proposed by Representative Bella Abzug of NOW, who nevertheless "offered no concrete endorsement of Representative Shirley Chisholm's campaign for the Presidency."[40] Even a social activist with a vested interest in the possibility of a female president did not immediately throw her support behind what was apparently a symbolic attempt above all else. Despite often highlighting this type of hesitation, the press also acknowledged the importance of Chisholm's run to women from various backgrounds and political alliances. A large problem, according to many writers, was her inability to translate this value into concrete support. She was quickly branded a women's liberationist candidate, which alienated many male voters and made those who supported women's rights wary of wasting their votes.

The Democratic National Convention

Although the black press was quick to acknowledge that Chisholm did not enter the July convention with a strong chance at nomination, the papers' coverage of the event was generally positive in discussing the growing black influence in the national political arena, and many hypothesized about what Chisholm's run might symbolize for the future. One enthusiastic article in the *New York Amsterdam News* postulated that a black president could be possible as soon as 1980. The assessment was drawn from Assemblyman Samuel Wright of Brooklyn, who told a reporter in a telephone interview that black politicians "played a very prominent role" at the convention in comparison with the previous event, held in 1968 in Chicago. According to Wright, these delegates participated in floor debates and commanded attention in discussions of public policy, representing well every state with a sizeable black population. He described the

---

[39] Laurie Johnston, "Dream for Women: President Chisholm," *New York Times,* February 14, 1972.
[40] Johnston, "Dream for Women: President Chisholm."

representatives as unified, proudly noting the solidarity that arose with the realization that the black vote was necessary for any potential Democratic candidate pursuing election. Significantly, Wright felt that every candidate was "vying for the support of the Black delegates," supporting the idea that, although Chisholm did not achieve nomination by the party, she represented an increasing African American presence that white politicians would be unwise to ignore.[41]

An *Amsterdam News* review of a then-newly-published book entitled *The Ethnic Factor: How America's Minorities Decide Elections* correlated this view, opening with the question of whether Chisholm would have made a greater impact had she been "a candidate of the Blacks." The article quoted, "A serious, independent Black presidential candidacy will inspire defeat for the Democrats – so dependent is the Democratic Party on black support." This book went on to say, however, that this hypothetical black candidate would not be able to win the election without reaching outside of the African American voting bloc, as winning would be mathematically impossible without white support.[42] The article answered its question, therefore, by concluding that an independent black candidate would be counterproductive at that point but that the black population's strength in the Democratic Party was sufficient to bargain and achieve its own political goals. This conclusion supported the theory that group identity would be the determining factor in any future election, as well as hinting that the effects of Chisholm's run would be better measured by the influence gained by the various black delegates not running for presidential office than by her failure to achieve the nomination. In the context of this article, Chisholm again appeared to be incapable of distancing herself from her identity, as the writer implied that her actions had the most effect on the votes of African Americans (and would have been even more significant had she run independently, albeit to disadvantageous effect). According to both the writer for the paper and the authors of the new book, however, being tied to a specific demographic with articulated demands would soon be seen as not an unproductive position to occupy in the national political field.

The mainstream press, in contrast to the overall hopeful outlook of the black press, presented a stunningly different view of what the convention represented for the black voting bloc. The *New York Times* article "Blacks Are Divided on the Convention" characterized the

---

[41] Willie Hamilton, "Predicts Black President of United States in 1980," *New York Amsterdam News,* July 29, 1972.
[42] Simon Anekwe, "Shirley's Book Helpful? Only '72 Elections can Tell," *New York Amsterdam News,* July 15, 1972.

outlook as grim, focusing on the schism Chisholm had caused from the beginning of her campaign. "Almost to a person," according to the article, blacks felt that "the quest for black unity had been a failure, with more disharmony displayed than at any time since the plea for unity went out over a year ago." Chisholm was met with "smoldering resentment," which almost "broke into open warfare between the Brooklyn Representative and other black leaders."[43] This strong language belied a startling difference in perception between the black and the mainstream press. Like the *Times* article that in January had described the division over Chisholm as "fratricidal,"[44] the mainstream press again used hyperbolic language to paint the image of a community torn in two by political frictions. Chisholm, in this depiction, was a specter of disunity that threw the supposed chaos of the African American voting bloc into sharp relief for white Americans over the course of the convention. The article described the black delegates as disillusioned, becoming aware of their own "inexperience" in the political playing field, a dismissive descriptor that seemed to equate the historical lack of black candidates for presidential office with a lack of participation in the political arena overall.[45] This again is in contrast to the *Amsterdam News* article that described the prominent role black politicians played at the convention, commanding attention and skillfully articulating the needs of their communities.[46] The difference between the hopeful prediction of a black president in 1980 and the perception of "open warfare" between black leaders suggests a clear disconnect between the black and mainstream press in their depictions of black voting power and political clout at the 1972 convention, particularly in terms of what Chisholm's run meant for the concept of black political unity. In both versions of the events, she remained tied to her symbolic significance, negative or positive, for future generations of black politicians.

Conclusion

A succinct indicator of changing perceptions of the political playing field can be found in the previously-mentioned *New York Times* article published on July 11th, the second day of the convention, which predicted the rise of identity politics on a national scale. "Caucuses are Bound by Common Identity" by Robert B. Semple, Jr. indicated the certainty that "special interest"

---

[43] Paul Delaney, "Blacks are Divided on the Convention," *New York Times,* July 16, 1972.
[44] Johnson, "Head of Operation Breadbasket Says He Opposes Mrs. Chisholm."
[45] Delaney, "Blacks are Divided on the Convention."
[46] Hamilton, "Predicts Black President of United States in 1980"

groups including women, blacks, Hispanics, "Indians, youths, and senior citizens" would all have much to say about the course of American political history in the coming years. The story was illustrated by a report of George McGovern, winner of the Democratic nomination, committing a political *faux pas* in front of a caucus of a thousand women at the Carillon Hotel wherein he gave the credit for the increased presence of women at the convention to "Adam." He was met with boos and hisses, and was forced to attempt a quick recovery ("Should I have said Adam and Eve?") before moving on. The article defined this moment as indicative of "the emergence of proud and vocal clusters of people bound together less by geographical or even ideological interests than by a sense of common identity and shared grievances." This rising sense of "group identity," as the writer described it, would be an unavoidable determining factor in American elections, as George McGovern was forced to learn "the hard way."[47] Shirley Chisholm, the first female candidate for the Democratic nomination and a divisive element in the black political community for approximately six months leading up to the convention, was already aware.

Chisholm approached her campaign with the same "unbossed and unbought" attitude that defined her career in the New York State Legislature and the United States House of Representatives. She began her bid for the presidency without going through what many considered to be the appropriate channels, not consulting with prominent black politicians or strategizing with them for the best possible chance of winning the presidency. Many writers and commentators were uncomfortable with her run, feeling that a black man would be a more logical option for attracting the liberal white vote, which was crucial for gaining traction in the national arena; Chisholm instead chose to center much of her campaign around the message that she was running for the nation as a whole instead of for the interest groups that would benefit most from her successful candidacy. This tactic would be met with a mixed reception, both from the black and the mainstream press, and most articles that discussed her bid would do so in the context of either her race or her gender, regardless of the intersectional image Chisholm wished to present. She herself acknowledged strong ties to her identity, especially as a woman, and indicated in her later writings that she wanted to create a path for future minorities hoping to run for office. Thus, the strategy of cultivating an image that did not cater to any specific demographics did not serve to advance her political goals.

---

[47] Robert B. Semple, Jr., "Caucuses are Bound by Common Identity," *New York Times,* July 11, 1972.

Her campaign did, however, signal the wider acknowledgement of the identity politics that drove American elections, and indicated to white male politicians the necessity of appealing to those "special interests" whose support or opposition could steer the course of their careers. Chisholm's run also provided a touchstone for various media outlets both within and outside of the black community, allowing commentators to discuss both her personal merits or faults and the significance of race and gender in national politics in a wider scope. By choosing to run against insurmountable odds, Chisholm jumpstarted a national discussion about the role of identity in a world that was simply "not ready" for her to obtain that type of power and about the potential for a future in which any individual who chooses to run for the nation's highest office, no matter their personal background, "will be taken seriously from the start."[48]

---

[48] Shirley Chisholm, *The Good Fight.*

Works Cited

Newspaper Bibliography

Afro-American

Atlanta Daily World

Chicago Daily Defender

Los Angeles Sentinel

New York Amsterdam News

New York Times

Wall Street Journal

THE MASS LYNCHING OF ITALIANS IN 1891 NEW ORLEANS: MARKING ITALIANS AS RACIALLY "DAGO"

NICHOLAS BORKOWSKI

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

On Saturday, March 14, 1891, Pasquale Corte, the Italian Consul in New Orleans, sent an urgent telegraph to his superior in Washington, D.C. Translated to English by the U.S. State Department the telegram read: "Mob led by members of the Committee of Fifty took possession of jail; killed eleven prisoners; three Italians, others naturalized. I hold mayor responsible. Fear further murders. I am also in great danger. Reports follow."[1] Consul Corte's telegram clearly expressed his fear of a reprisal for the murder of Police Chief Hennessy, and that persons of Italian origin, including himself, were in danger in the city. His diplomatic responsibility explains his focus on the victims' nationality. Corte was confident that the leaders of the lynch mob were members of the city council-appointed vigilance committee, referred to as the Committee of Fifty, designed to eliminate vendetta societies in New Orleans. Ultimately, Consul Corte blamed government officials and held New Orleans' Mayor Joseph A. Shakespeare responsible for the actions of the mob. Consul Corte escaped danger. No more murders ensued after the mass lynching. The violence that occurred that morning in broad daylight, however, left Consul Corte fearing for his life and for the safety of the Italian community in New Orleans. The "mob led by members of the Committee of Fifty" had violently lynched eleven men, all of who were considered racially "Italian." Jim Caruso, one of the eleven Italians, had been shot at least forty-two times. Another victim of the mob, Emmanuele Polizzi, was hung four times before he finally died. This brutality seems to exceed any Victorian levelheaded pursuit for justice.

Two days after the lynching, the governor of Louisiana, Francis T. Nicholls, sent the United States Secretary of State, James G. Blaine, a telegram explaining that all was now quiet in New Orleans and that "the recent action was directed against particular individuals; their race or nationality was not a factor in the disturbance." The Governor's telegram belies the brutal and excessive violence of the lynching by representing the vengeful murders as a "recent action" or

---

[1] United States Dept. of State, *Correspondence in Relation to the Killing of Prisoners in New Orleans on March 14, 1891* (Washington: GPO, 1891).

"disturbance." His explanation that race and nationality are not involved does not explain the fear Consul Corte had for his life and the lives of members of the Italian community in New Orleans. If the lynching was just a "disturbance" directed against "particular individuals," why was Corte afraid? The 1891 New Orleans mass lynching of eleven Italians was racial violence towards Italian immigrants. The racial violence was in part motivated by political and economic gains from the oppression of the Italian community by those in power in New Orleans.

Between the years 1880-1992 lynch mobs murdered 2,805 victims. The overwhelming majority of the lynch victims were African-American.[2] The Italian victims are some of the almost 300 "white" persons lynched. This paper suggests that a significant portion of New Orleans society of 1891 did not consider Italians white so much as they perceived Italians as "Dago," a derogatory term that marked Italians as racially inferior to whites.

This paper is situated in a scholarly conversation about race, nativism, and lynching. Thomas C. Holt argues that historians need to link everyday individual thinking to everyday social thinking in order to understand the historical markers of race with ultimately the goal to end racism.[3] Martha Hodes addresses the nuances of racial marking in different regional and cultural contexts and examines the 1890 census to reveal the "pretension to measurable categories of race and to fraction-free whiteness."[4] Hodes's scholarship demonstrates that in 1891, whiteness was the departing point from which all other racial categories were delineated, starting with black and moving to increasingly complicated racial identities.

David Rodeiger identifies race as a "category into which the social and intellectual structures of the United States placed new immigrants" in his book *Working Towards Whiteness*.[5] This paper explores the process by which the Italian immigrants of New Orleans were placed into such racial categories. Roediger presents a narrative of what it was like to "live in between" the stark racial binaries of 1890-1945. Similarly to Roediger, in an analysis of the lynching of five Italian immigrants in rural Louisiana in 1899, Peter Vellon asserts the racial

---

[2] Stewart Tolnay and E. M. Beck, *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930* (Chicago: Illinois UP, 1995) ix.

[3] Thomas Holt, "Marking: Race, Race-making, and the Writing of History," *The American Historical Review* 100 (1995): 1-20.

[4] Martha Hodes, "Fractions and Fictions in the United States Census of 1890," in *Haunted by Empire*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006): 265.

[5] David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White, The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic, 2005) 8-10.

"between status" Italian's immigrants were placed into.[6] Vellon argues that the "between" white and black racial status placed on Italians "licensed white southerners to employ the racial tool of lynching to control Italians, as they had so often with African Americans.[7]"

Roediger explains race as an economic factor and disregards the longer history of race in the United States. In *Whiteness of a Different Color*, Matthew Jacobsen argues that Roediger's study of whiteness fails in two important respects. Jacobsen follows in Roediger's footsteps but explores the longer history of "glacial movements" of racial categories vis-a-vis whiteness in the United States. Jacobsen also departs from Roediger's precedent when he moves beyond an economic explanation to include a political and social explanation. Jacobsen recasts "the saga of European immigration and assimilation in the United States as a racial odyssey."[8] He identifies race as both a "public fiction," in other words a "mode of perception contingent upon the circumstances of the moment," and as a "kind of social currency" that results from and acts to organize relationships of power. The identification of race as a "social currency" is similar to Roediger's conception of a "psychological wage" of whiteness. Jacobson asserts that race in the history of the United States has been fashioned by two forces; one of which is economic and the other political -- capitalism and republicanism, respectively.[9] Both of these forces --capitalism and republicanism--shape the conceptions and perceptions of race with regards to the Italian immigrants who were lynched in New Orleans in 1891.

John Higham argues that the initial enmity toward Italian immigrants "fastened on stereotyped traits." Higham writes, somewhat ironically, "Wherever [Italians] went a distinctive sobriquet followed them. 'You don't call … an Italian a white man?' a West Coast construction boss was asked. 'No, sir,' he answered, 'an Italian is a Dago."[10] In Higham's scholarship, the derogatory term "Dago" becomes a term steeped in race and immigration; it is associated with "stereotyped traits."

Issues of race and ethnicity did indeed motivate the lynching of the eleven Italians on the Saturday morning in 1891. The events that culminated that day began several months earlier when a popular New Orleans Chief of Police was shot. On the evening of October 15th, 1890,

---

[6] Peter Vellon, "Between White Men and Negroes: The Perception of Southern Italian Immigrants through the Lens of Italian Lynchings", 28.

[7] Vellon 30.

[8] Matthew Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1998)*,* 12

[9] Jacobson 13.

[10] John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860*-1925 (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1955), 66.

several unidentified assailants shot Police Chief David C. Hennessy while he was on his way home to 275 Girod Street. He was a teetotaler in a city where alcohol was heavily consumed and lived with his mother in a working-class neighborhood sometimes referred to as a slum. Hennessy's friend, Bill O'Connor, a captain in the private agency called Boylan Protective Police, had dined with Hennessy that night and was nearby when Hennessy was shot. He told reporters later that night, "Bending over the Chief I said to him: 'Who gave it to you Dave?' He replied, 'Put your ear down here.' As I bent down again, he whispered the word 'Dagoes'."[11] Hennessy lived for nine hours after he was shot. In Charity Hospital, where Hennessy was being kept alive, Mayor Shakespeare ordered the police force, "Scour the whole neighborhood! Arrest every Italian you come across, if necessary, and scour it again tomorrow morning as soon as there is daylight enough. Get all the men you need."[12] More than one hundred and fifty Italian males were arrested within a day of Hennessy's death. Arrests continued until, according to Robert Marr's history of the event published in 1891, the "parish prison was fairly gorged with Italians."[13] At the turn of the twentieth century, there was a steady increase in the number of foreign-born Italian residents in New Orleans. In 1880, the population was 1,995, and by 1890, there were 3,622 foreign-born Italians residing in New Orleans. This trend continued, and by 1910, the number reached 8,066.[14]

The city reacted intensely to the murder of their stalwart police chief. Hennessy had gained the attention of the national media in 1881 when he arrested the Sicilian bandit Guiseppe Esposito, who had lived in hiding from Italian authorities under an alias in New Orleans. Hennessy had a proven track record of good police work. He was in charge of a private police force organized by the Farrell Detective Agency that had been praised for its exemplary maintenance of order for the New Orleans World Fair of 1884-1885. As part of his reform policies of his second election Mayor Shakespeare appointed Hennessy as Police Chief in 1888. Hennessy's murder prompted anxiety about safety from the mafia. As much as the city was sad to have lost "one of the best-known men in the community…[a man who] was naturally intrepid, courageous, and sagacious," as said by the local *New York Times* correspondent in New Orleans,

---

[11] Richard Gambino, *Vendetta: A True Story of the Worst Lynching in America, the Mass Murder of Italian-Americans in New Orleans in 1891, the Vicious Motivations Behind it, and the Tragic Repercussions that Linger to this Day* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977) 4.

[12] Gambino 7.

[13] Robert Marr, "The New Orleans Mafia Case," *American Law Review* (1891) 417.

[14] Paulo Giordano, "Italian Immigration in the State of Louisiana: It's Causes, Effects, and Results," *Italian Americana* 5.2 (1979): 170.

the anxiety and fear was also directed toward the fear of vendetta societies turning on Americans. Hennessy's murder was identified in the *New York Times* as the "first instance" of the vendetta in New Orleans in which "an American has been the victim."[15] Bill O'Connor's statement to the effect that Hennessy said "Dagoes" murdered him kindled racist and nativist ideas, leading the city to quickly blame the Italians for the murder of Hennessy.

On November 20th, 1890, a grand jury indicted Peter Natali, Antonio Scaffidi, Antonio Bagnetto, Manuel Politz (Emmanuele Polizzi), Antonio Marchesi, Pietro Monasterio, Bastian Incardona, Salvatore Sincere, Loretto Comitz, Charles Traina, and Charles Pietza for murder and shooting with intent to kill. Joseph P. Macheca, James and John Caruso, Charles Matranga, Rocco Geraci, Charles Patorno, Frank Romero, and Gaspare Marchesi, the child of Antonio Marchesi, were indicted on two counts as accessories before the fact.[16] The court documents from the trail are not extant. However, newspapers like *The Times-Daily* and the *Daily Picayune,* and the narrative of the Hennessy case in the 1891 *American Law Review*, covered the activity of the trial. The prosecution's evidence was paltry and circumstantial. The fact that some of the indicted defendants lived near Hennessy, or that they moved close to his house in the months before the murder, was taken to establish that there was a stiletto conspiracy to murder Hennessy. Witnesses identified Joseph Macheca as the man who used a fake name to rent the shanty across from Hennesy's home, in which Monasterio lived.[17] The evidence primarily consisted of witness testimony, but, ironically, there were no witnesses to the actual shooting.

On March 13 at 3pm the jury delivered a verdict of not guilty for Incardona, Matranga, Bagnetto, the two Marchesi and Macheca. The court declared a mistrial for Scaffidi, Politz, and Monasterio. Despite the not guilty verdict, all of the men were taken back to the prison because of a legal technicality. A segment of white nativist New Orleaneans reacted to the verdict with indignation. The city was angry, and all throughout the city, "threats of lynchings were heard."[18] Two meetings were held on March 13 to plan a remedy for the injustice of the verdicts. The "call" to action, which appeared in the morning papers the next day, were drawn up in the second meeting and read, "Mass Meeting! All good citizens are invited to attend a mass meeting on

---

[15] "Shot Down at His Door: The Chief of the New Orleans Police Brutally Murdered," *New York Times* 17 October 1890.
[16] Marr, "The New Orleans Mafia Case" 418; Gambino 150-151.
[17] Robert Marr. "The New Orleans Mafia Case," *American Law Review* (St Louis: Review Publishing Co. 1891) 424.
[18] Marr 427.

Saturday, March 14, at ten o'clock, to take steps to remedy the failure of justice in the Hennessy case. Come prepared for action."[19] By 10:15, the meeting ended, and within ten minutes the mob assailed the parish prison. The short duration of the meeting, which lasted only fifteen minutes, demonstrates that the leaders had no intention of simply organizing for a rally or protest but that they instead intended to gather a mob for action. The crowd whistled and jeered, "Who Killa da Chief?"[20] John C. Wickliffe, one of the orators at the meeting, and three other men guarded the entrance to the prison to admit only men with weapons.

Of the nineteen Italians in the prison for Hennessy's murder, eleven were lynched. Macheca, Scaffidi, and Antonio Marchesi hid together and were shot by part of the mob. Geraci, Monasterio, Traina, James Caruso, Romero, and Comitz retreated to the women's section of the prison and were all shot by others in the group. The mob took Bagnetto from the women's area of the prison and hanged him on a tree in front of the prison. Members of the mob dragged Politz out from under a staircase and hanged him on a lamppost. On the first try, the hang rope broke. On the next two tries, Politz managed to climb up the rope. Finally, members of the mob tied his hands, and he finally suffocated on the fourth try. The crowd cheered at Politz's hanging and rushed to his body to tear his clothing off to divide up as souvenirs.[21] The violence was brutal and excessive: James Caruso was shot at least forty-two times. By 11 the next morning, the violence was done, and the mob marched back to the Henry Clay statue, greeted by cheers from the ladies and children on the balconies of department stores on Claiborne Avenue. According to both *Harper's Weekly* and the 1891 *American Law Review*'s summary of "The New Orleans Mafia Case," the crowd then dispersed quietly. In contrast, in a letter to Baron Fava dated the day after the lynching, March 15, 1891, Consul Corte wrote that after the lynching the crowd headed for an Italian neighborhood. "Three colored men" attacked Consul Corte as he returned to his consulate from the prison. Corte wrote,

> A moment later Mr. Papini, the clerk of the consulate, made his appearance, pale
> and greatly frightened, and told me that he had heard the crowd raise the cry of
> "Kill the Italian!" in consequence of which he had been obliged to take refuge in a
> store. The crowd now started for Poydras Market, which is almost entirely
> inhabited by Italians...

---

[19] "Mass Meeting!" *The Daily Picayune* New Orleans, Saturday, 14 March 1891.

[20] "The Mafia and What Led to the Lynching," *Harpers Weekly* Mar. Vol. 35 No. 1788: 227.

[21] Ibid. The pages in *Harpers* relevant to my research include 217 and 225-227.

In the letter to Baron Fava, Consul Corte recounted the lack of concern shown by the Governor and Mayor. During the lynching, city and state officials stood idly by.

Governor Nicholls lied in his telegram; race and nationality played a most significant role in the "disturbance." The allegation that the murderers of Chief of Police Hennessey were Italian was never substantiated. There was no guilty verdict for any of the eleven men lynched. Ultimately, the only evidence that the mob needed for the eleven men they vengefully lynched was their Italian ancestry.

Race is a cultural construction. David Roediger identifies race as a "category into which the social and intellectual structures of the United States placed new immigrants."[22] The men who were lynched were first- and second-generation Italian immigrants. As new immigrants, they had been placed into a racial category outside of the black-white binary. In 1891, people understood race as a conflation of biological traits--a person's physical morphology--and cultural traits like language.[23] Mathew Jacobson argues that race has little to do with biology but instead "resides in politics and culture."[24] Race is a category that is in dialogue with politics and culture.

The racial stereotype of Italians, and especially Sicilians, as "Dagos" that permeated everyday life during the 1890s functioned to support the larger social, cultural, and political forces that condoned the brutal spectacle of the lynching. The lynching was, in many ways, a permutation of the same kind of thinking that condoned and employed the term "dago" to demean the southern Italian immigrants. It denigrated the new arrivals, who were often Sicilians, as knife-wielding mafia criminals who couldn't speak English and had neither the ability nor the desire to assimilate. The derogatory term "dago" came to label the stereotyped Italian racial category. The origins of the term were contested even in 1890, and any fixed definition of the term "dago" is perhaps unreasonable because it is a dynamic imagined stereotype. A New Orleans newspaper article written five years after the lynching entitled "The Chicago fruit stall men object to being called dago" offered its understanding of the history of the slur. About thirty or forty years before 1896, when the article appeared in *The Daily Picayune*, "dago" was a term used as a synonym for "'rat," or one who takes the place of a striker in work requiring skill and experience. The article explained that "in the beginning of the

---

[22] Roediger 8-10.

[23] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 28-29.

[24] Mathew Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1998) 8-9.

century 'dago' meant small shopkeepers, 'bumboat' people, who supply sailors with fruits, bread, butter and other articles."[25] A particularly racist article in *The Popular Science Monthly* presented the problem, "What shall we do with the "Dago"?" This article explained that the word "dago" is a "corruption of hidalgos, which though Spanish and not an Italian word, once came to be sneeringly applied to a foreigner of Latin Europe out of his element."[26] The term hidalgo, which originally meant a Spanish gentleman, was corrupted into "Dago" and by the work of racist ideology became loaded with negative meaning. "Dago" implied placement at the lower end of civilization and a certain darkness of skin. It was a racial category that was dissociated from whiteness as a subordinate.

The term "Dago" functioned similarly to "Negro" and reinforced white supremacy and oppressed the "other" on racial terms. "Dago" permeated the the American vernacular. Even the man who would soon become president referred to Italian diplomats as "dagos." In a March 21st, 1891 letter to a family member, Theodore Roosevelt wrote that on Monday "various dago diplomats were present" at dinner. They were "all much wrought up by the lynching of the Italians in New Orleans." Roosevelt presented his take on the lynching in New Orleans in the letter: "Personally I think it rather a good thing and said so." Roosevelt's opinion was in keeping with his ideas in *The Winning of the West*, his four-volume history of the crafting of the white masculine American race in the eighteenth-century American West.[27] In *The Winning of the West*, Roosevelt claimed the descent and distinction of the American race from the English race. In *The Winning of the West,* the enemy of the manly white American was the savage Native American, while "negroes" could live peacefully with the superior civilized white American race. Roosevelt then might have envisioned the "Dagoes" in New Orleans as a stand-in for the Indians in his narrative understanding of the national identity of white, racially victorious, manly Americans. Roosevelt would have thought of the leaders of the lynch mob as akin to cowboys that demonstrated their heroic masculinity by fighting savage Indians.[28]

Roosevelt's heinous reaction to the lynching was all too common. In an interview with the *New York Times,* John P. Richardson, a New Orleans "merchant prince" whose dry goods

---

[25] "The Chicago fruit stall men object to being called dago," *The Daily Picayune*, (New Orleans, LA) Saturday, November 07, 1896; pg. 4; Issue 288; col F.
[26] Appleton Morgan, "What shall we do with the 'Dago'?," *The Popular Science Monthly* Nov. 1890 to April 1891: 172-179.
[27] Bederman 178.
[28] Bederman 172-180.

house amassed sales of $1.2 million annually, commented, "the lynching in New Orleans Saturday is just the thing that should have occurred."[29] Five times in his two-paragraph justification of the lynching, Richardson used the word mafia to characterize a cultural trait of the Italian race. Mafia-ness operated in a racial way to categorize Italians, and particularly Sicilians, as biologically and culturally prone to violence. Because they were descendants of members of a violent society in Italy, they brought those imagined traits of mafia-ness with them to New Orleans.

The idea of mafia-ness as a racial trait is embedded in "The Committee of Fifty's Open Letter to All Italian-Americans, October 23, 1890." The Committee of Fifty was organized at Mayor Shakespeare's behest to eradicate the "mafia" presence in New Orleans. The letter drew an implicit connection between criminal guilt and mafia-ness to race. In this historical context, the mafia was considered foreign. The idea of the mafia as the result of racial characteristics as "sneaking and cowardly Sicilians, the descendants of bandits and thieves" made it a concept that did the work of racial ideology.[30] The Committee of Fifty's letter stated, "We believe that the great majority among you are honest, industrious, and good citizens, and abhor crimes as much as we do."[31] Clearly, the Italians were considered different from the "us" who wrote the letter. The prompt of the letter to "send us the names and history (so far as you know it) of every bad man, every criminal, and every suspected person of your race in the city or vicinity" is less opaquely racist. The criminals or suspects can only be Italian, and being a member of the Italian race is the first step towards being a suspect. The Committee of Fifty thus racially associated being Italian with being a murderer.

Italian diplomats were outraged by the open letter to the New Orleans Italian community. After reading in the New York press that the Committee of Fifty declared that "it would proceed to extreme and harsh measures, and by summary means without process of law, means which might strike the innocent as well as the guilty," the Italian Assistant Secretary of State, Damiani, asserted the right of the Italian Ambassador in Washington, Baron Fava, to remind the authorities in New Orleans of the "sentiments of justice and humanity which our conationals have the right to expect, and which the authorities of New Orleans seem inclined to violate."[32]

---

[29] "The Lynching Justifiable," *New York Times* 17 March 1891: 2.
[30] Richard Gambino, *Vendetta* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977) 148.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Correspondence.

Several months later, after the murder of Chief Hennessey, sixty-one names appeared affixed to the advertisement for a "Mass Meeting!" which appeared in *The Daily Picayune* on Saturday, March 14, 1891. These men bear a substantial part of the burden of responsibility for the brutal murders of eleven innocent Italians later that morning. Edgar H. Farrar's name appears on the call for a "Mass Meeting!" printed in several New Orleans newspapers the day before and again the morning of the lynching. Understanding the social position of one name-- Edgar H. Farrar--gives a sense of the group's socio-economic status. Farrar was a successful lawyer and national figure. He served as the president of the American Bar Association and was a trustee of Tulane University, the primary educational institution in the state at the time.[33] His obituary, published in 1922, connected Farrar to the Crescent City lynching: "For years Mr. Farrar was chairman of the Executive Committee of 100 to reform municipal government in New Orleans, and was chairman of the Committee of Safety formed to prosecute the assassins of Chief of Police David Hennessey."[34] The obituary mentioned a "Committee of Safety," also known as the "Committee of Fifty." Farrar, like a sizable portion of the New Orleans elite, was proud to sponsor and participate in the mob lynching.

The "Mass Meeting" document is entrenched in a discourse of civilization that functions similarly to reproduce white supremacy. Many newspapers presented the lynching as a "civilized" act. The *Texas Dallas Paper* painted the violence as an orderly civilized affair: "the work of blood was accomplished without unnecessary disorder… It was not an unruly midnight mob. It was simply a sullen determined body of citizens who took in their own hands what justice had ignominiously failed to do."[35] This description of a "body of citizens" strikingly resembles the collection of "good citizens" that the "Mass Meeting!" advertisement called to action. The "Mass Meeting!" advertisement reveals a society in which it is completely reasonable for "good citizens" to organize a meeting with every intention of steering towards violent action to "take steps to remedy the failure of justice."[36] The violent actions of the mob were not about justice but actually about racism and oppression. Similarly, it has been convincingly argued that the lynching of black men for allegedly raping or infringing on the sexuality of white women was never about justice; it was about economic and political

---

[33] "Obituary Edgar H. Farrar." *Louisiana State Bar Association Report* 1922: 197-198.
[34] Ibid.
[35] "Hennessy Is Avenged." *Dallas Morning News* 15 March 1891.
[36] "Mass Meeting!" *The Daily Picayune* New Orleans, Saturday, March 14, 1891.

oppression of blacks and the reproduction of white supremacy.[37] The newspaper advertisement informed readers about the mass meeting, persuaded them to come, and served to validate the actions of the mob before they took place. The logic of the advertisement was that if one were a "good citizen," one was "invited" to participate. Further, readers are told to "come prepared for action." This logic turned the "mass meeting" into the civic duty of right-minded individuals to lynch eleven Italians, none of whom had been found guilty by law for the murder of Hennessy. Perhaps more interesting is the characterization of the group of men who participated in the lynching as respectable citizens of New Orleans. To some extent, this resembles *L'Italo Americano*'s representation of the participants in the lynching. *L'Italo Americano* described the majority of the mob as "the civilized and educated portion of the community" of New Orleans.

The Committee of Fifty did not fail to deliver their own take on the events. They produced a report called the *Report of the committee of fifty citizens on the existence of secret societies of New Orleans,* which they published in the New Orleans *Picayune* on May 15, 1891. The report stated that the last words of the Police chief were "The Dagoes did it," suggesting that the lynching was "inevitable" and that it "followed as the night the day." It also suggested that the actions of the mob "have been approved by this community and the entire country." The *Report of the Grand Jury* concluded, "The magnitude of this affair makes it a difficult task to fix guilt upon any number of the participants; in fact, the act seemed to involve the entire people of the parish and city of New Orleans, so profuse is their sympathy and extended their connection with the affair."

Despite these reports, public opinion did not unanimously support racial prejudice against Italians nor was it unanimously in favor of violent justice in reaction to the not-guilty verdicts. The morning of the lynching, March 14, 1891, *The Daily Picayune* printed an opinion piece expressing their desire that the mass meeting be kept just and peaceful. It was of the utmost concern for the New Orleans newspaper that participants keep racial prejudice out of the mass meeting.

> Above all things let not this affair be made the theme and occasion for a race war. There is no reason for a prejudice against Italians. Hennessy was doubtless murdered by Italians, but not by the Italians as a race, as a class, or for any race or

---

[37] Stewart Tolnay and E. M. Beck, *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930* (Chicago: University Press of Illinois, 1995) 17-19.

national object. They happened to be Italians, as they might have been Americans. The outraged law cries out against murderers, whoever they may be, but not against Italians. Let us have no race prejudice in this business.[38]

The fact that the paper even felt the need to include this article is telling of the racial prejudice against Italians that surrounded the Hennessy affair and permeated New Orleans society. However, the article also demonstrates that some readers had neither the interest in a violent conflict nor any racial prejudice against Italians. *The Daily Picayune* opinion article "At the Feet of Clay," about the "Mass Meeting," conveyed that the paper was disappointed that the "call" did not express the "object of the meeting" and left the intentions of the meeting unclear. The opinion piece was confident that "the object of the meeting is wholly in the interest of peace" as much as justice and considered the signature of such well-respected men as a guarantee of the peaceful nature of the mass meeting. The newspaper's worry that the meeting would be an occasion for a "race war" could be explained by recent examples of violent race conflicts in Louisiana. One such conflict was the Colfax Massacre in rural Louisiana in 1873. Similarly, at the "Battle of Liberty Place" in 1874, white Democrats formed the Crescent City White League and fought against blacks and Republicans in an insurrection against the Reconstruction government in downtown New Orleans.[39] The opinion article's desire to keep race out of the mass meeting displays that their wavering confidence in the peaceful nature of the meeting. Conversely, in a letter to Ambassador Fava, Consul Pasquale Corte wrote, "The violent articles which appeared in the newspapers, such as the 'Daily States' and the 'Delta,' which papers, in the name of the Committee of Fifty, announced that a meeting would be held on the following day to take vengeance, left no doubt as to the choice of the means of which it proposed to make use."[40] Corte's understanding that the "Mass Meeting" advertisement meant violence was in sharp contrast to *The Daily Picayune*'s opinion that the meeting would remain peaceful. The opinion piece preemptively wiped the newspaper's hands of any blood, since the article proclaimed that the paper expected nothing but a peaceful meeting. It also attempted to avoid another political but race-driven violent conflict like the "Battle for Liberty Place," in which there were about a hundred casualties.

[38] "At the Feet of Clay," *The Daily Picayune* New Orleans, Saturday, March 14, 1891.

[39] Charles Lane, *The Day Freedom Died: The Colfax Massacre, the Supreme Court, and the Betrayal of Reconstruction* (New York: Holt, 2009).

[40] Also Correspondence in Relation to… 21 {enclosure -translation} Consul Corte to Baron Fava. Gambino. Appendix K.

The lead spokesman of the meeting incited racial violence against Italians who he thought of as aliens to his community. William S. Parkerson, who was not a member of the Committee of Fifty but whose name appears at the top of the right hand column of signees of the "Mass Meeting" advertisement, led the mob. Parkerson, who had practiced law in New Orleans for a decade by the time of the lynching, was a talented orator. Farrar and Parkerson were both white lawyers who led their "community" to break into the Parish Prison and lynch eleven legally innocent Italian men. In a speech to the mob before the violence began, Parkerson labeled the entire jury as perjurers and scoundrels, posing questions intended to incite the crowd to carry out the lynching. Parkerson asked, "What protection, or assurance of protection, is there left us, when the very head of our police, our chief or police, is assassinated in our very midst by the Mafia Society, and his assassins are again turned loose on the community?" Parkerson did not include Italians in his conception of his community; rather, he called on the men to "see the murder of D. C. Hennessey vindicated."

The everyday practice of the dynamic ideology of manliness was used to provoke and condone the lynching. Parkerson tied the willingness to "set aside the verdict" to the honor of the mob members' manhood. In the last line of his speech, Parkerson bids the "Men and citizens of New Orleans, follow me, I will be your leader!"[41] Parkerson is here the embodiment of Bederman's category of white manliness, valuing bold virile leadership and orderly civilization; he would have been admired as a sign of progress because he was seen as participating in the civic duty of justice.[42] While Parkerson could be perceived as an exemplar of the civilized white man, he was also virile and the type of strong man that could reproduce and continue the evolution of the white race. Like Roosevelt, Parkerson imagined manliness as being willing to remedy the failure of justice with violence.

The leaders of the mob took steps to ensure that violence was carried out against the Italians. *Harper's Weekly* wrote, "W. S. Parkerson, the District Attorney, John C. Wickliffe, and Walter D. Denegre were at the head of the committee." Wickliffe had been the District Attorney in the years before the Hennessy Case but did not serve as the prosecutor in the proceedings surrounding the lynching. The mob took possession of the parish prison, but no more than sixty men were admitted inside because "John C. Wickliffe stood at the broken door." He examined

---

[41] Gambino 157.

[42] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

those who tried to enter and, according to *Harper's*, only "if they were armed, and said they meant to use their weapons, they were passed on."[43] Only those who were prepared to be violent were admitted entrance into the prison. Spectators remained outside.

The *Harper's Weekly* article almost reenacted the lynching, in the same way a photograph or motion picture would. The descriptive narrative of the article made the lynching present and visceral for readers; it disparaged Italians and Sicilians, especially of the lower class.[44] [45] This edition of *Harper's Weekly* included sketches of the lynching, and there is evidence to suggest that the lynching may have been photographed, as there exists at least one photo of the crowd in front of the parish prison after the lynching.[46] Witnesses to the lynching took souvenirs: the clothing from Politz's body, for example, was ripped off his hanging body. The narrative, sketches, photographs, and souvenirs became objects of everyday racism towards the Italians, and the sketches of the lynching activity reenacted the spectacle for the curious reader. By reenacting the spectacle, such sketches condoned the racist tones of the lynching, and both the spectacle of the lynching and the acts of witnessing gave social significance to the violence. Amy Louise Wood discusses how the act of witnessing performed by white southern spectators gave lynching symbolic power to enact and maintain native white domination over people with black skin. Likewise, the newspaper and magazine coverage of the 1891 lynching expanded the participants in the spectacle of the lynching to include everyone who read a story of the events at the prison or used the word "dago." By engaging with the literary and visual reproductions of the lynching, a substantial portion of the American public participated in the racial and nativist thinking that was behind the violence. The literary and visual spectacles of the lynching lessened real sympathy for the victims by presenting the actions of the perpetrators as a kind of adventure story that ultimately tended to sympathize with the lynch mob.[47]

---

[43] "The Mafia and What Led to the Lynching," *Harpers Weekly* (Volume XXXV. NO. 1788) 227.

[44] Amy Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina UP, 2009) 73.

[45] Perhaps the focus on the lower class occurred because Harper's realized that it had upper-class Italian readers, or more speculatively, the writer may have known and had interacted with upper class Italians and thought of them differently. But the Italians who were lynched were not all lower class.

[46] The Parish Prison, where eleven Italian prisoners were lynched, March 14th, 1891. (From a photograph taken immediately after the event.) 1891. The Historic New Orleans Collection.

[47] Amy Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina UP, 2009) 3.

The lynching of Italians was less about skin color than it was about nativism: although perhaps darker than Anglos, Italians were often identified in official documents of the state as having white skin color. Nativism thus becomes a relevant idea to understand the xenophobic prejudice towards Italians around the 1890s in New Orleans. John Higham defines racial nativism as a mode of nativism that plays on the sentiment of fear and hatred towards alien, un-American, individuals who do not assimilate. Higham's idea of "nativism" can be understood as the spirit of a certain kind of jingoist prejudice. This jingoist prejudice against culturally Italian persons deemed them "un-American" and stereotyped them as "Dagos."

From an Italian immigrant perspective, the lynching was an assassination. According to an editorial in *L'Italo Americano* translated and reprinted in the *New York Times* on March 22, 1891, "political ambition is the true motive of the assassination." What were the connections between race and politics in New Orleans and Louisiana at the time? Native-born whites were concerned with the recent enfranchisement of blacks during Reconstruction and the impact that the new votes would have on politics.[48] Like other southern states, Louisiana had adopted a legal segregation of races that would soon make it practically impossible for blacks to vote. Prominent members of the Italian community in New Orleans, however, had clearly gained economic and political clout: in *Vendetta,* Richard Gambino asserts that Joseph P. Macheca, one of the eleven men who were lynched, was the most influential Italian-American in New Orleans.

José Martí, a Cuban nationalist, addressed the political motivation behind the racial violence of the lynching. Martí criticized the lynching, and connected it directly to political rivalries in New Orleans. From Buenos Aires in the summer of 1891, Martí wrote a scathing report of the events of the lynching in which he begins, "From this day on no person who has known pity will set foot in New Orleans without horror."[49] Martí was dramatic and poetic. Despite a few errors in his facts, his narrative rings truer than most. He wrote, "They called them 'Dagos,' a nickname that makes a Sicilian's blood boil." Martí wrote that the Italian population of the United States,

> Stood up for [the Italians in New Orleans]; their press denied, as did their
> prominent men, that there was a *Mafia*, or a *Stiletto,* or a *Stopaliagien* society, or

---

[48] George Cunningham, "The Italian, a Hindrance to White Solidarity in Louisiana, 1890-1898." *The Journal of Negro History* 50 (1965): 22-36.
[49] José Martí, "Mob Violence in New Orleans" *La Nación* [Buenos Aires] 20 May 1891.

any possibility of proving such a thing… They insisted that the root of this vicious persecution was to be found in the political rivalries, in the determination to intimidate the Italians who would not submit to the will of their persecutors to get them out of New Orleans and out of the polls. They declared that a devilishly political conspiracy was being hatched.[50]

Martí captures the tragedy of the lynching. He speaks to the spectacle and the witnessing involved in the lynching of the eleven Italians in New Orleans. He ends with the mundane reality of the everyday, as the lynching activities took less than an hour and the lawyers and businessmen who participated went on with their Saturdays after participating.

Gambino's analysis of the motivation behind the lynching insists that it was meant to devastate "the rising economic power and social threat of the Italian community."[51] Gambino writes, "By destroying Joseph Macheca, New Orleans' most prestigious and wealthy Italian, and by persecuting the entire Italian community, the "dagoes" would be put in their place. And Macheca's very profitable waterfront influence would be taken over by "responsible" citizens, some of whom… were principal persecutors of the Italians."[52]

The editorial in *L'Italo Americano* recasts the discourse of civilization to argue against the lynching. For the Italian authors, there is no question that they live in a "civilized era"; they invested in "civilization" despite the fact that its dominant members have excluded them. They called for Italians to protest the "unworthy and brutal political assassination" with their votes: "Supremacy of the law must be our motto and the only aim of our desire."[53]

Reworking the discourse of civilization was also simultaneously used as a tool to criticize lynching in the young anti-lynching campaign. In October of 1892, Ida B. Wells similarly inverted the discourse of civilization with regards to justification of lynching of blacks. Her pamphlet *Southern Horrors* recasts black men as the personification of ideal civilized manliness and lynching as a practice that "embodied white men's lust running amok."[54] In the white lynching scenario, black men were depicted as uncivilized lustful rapists; Ida B. Wells turned this upside down and "warned that [white] Southern men's unrestrained lust had spread north

---

[50] Bederm.
[51] Gambino 48.
[52] Ibid.
[53] "A Review of the Lynching: Good Advice for Italian People by an Italian Journal." *New York Times* page 2, 22 March 1891.
[54] Bederman 57-59.

and corrupted Northern men's manliness."[55] Unfortunately, most whites, until Wells's two British tours in 1893 and 1894, ignored the arguments in *Southern Horrors*.[56] The Italian opinion piece in *L'Italo Americano* failed to go as far as Wells. It did not present the members of the lynch mob as a vendetta society, but instead claimed the moral high ground. By deciding not to retaliate violently to the assassination of the eleven innocent Italians, the Italian community made themselves into a civilized community who abided by the law.

The mindset of the Committee of Fifty was molded by racial nativism. It concluded that the trial was a disgrace, that the lynching was praiseworthy, and that Italians were not capable of being citizens of the United States. The grand jury delivered no indictments, but the committee recommended the "entire prohibition of immigration from Sicily and lower Italy." They drew on the nativist precedent of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and compared the southern Italians to the Chinese, considering southern Italians "undesirable citizens" who do not deserve the "blessings of a freedom and civilization which they are not only unable to appreciate, but which they refuse to understand or accept." The report reveals that Italian immigrants were thought of as inferior and an "other," thus becoming racially constructed as unworthy of United States citizenship, just as the Chinese had been with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. John P. Richardson, the "merchant prince" interviewed by the *New York Times*, also drew a comparison to the Chinese immigrants, saying that "the Italian colony in New Orleans, which includes possibly a larger number than all the other in the country combined, is a menace to American citizenship and good government. Why, I had rather have a thousand Chinamen than one Italian." Richardson called Italians "treacherous" and "revengeful" and looked forward to the time when the "Italian colony will be wiped out."[57]

Before Louisiana agriculture leaders encouraged Italians to immigrate to Louisiana in order to fill the severe shortage of labor caused by "the abolition of slavery and the migration of Blacks to the North," the plantation owners had successfully used Chinese laborers. The United States had encouraged Chinese workers to immigrate earlier in the century, and they had done so in substantial numbers. Employers in the United States employed Chinese workers at low wages and, after the Civil War, resentment against the Chinese workers grew. In 1871, Chinese

---

[55] Ibid, 59.
[56] Ibid, 59-71.
[57] "The Lynching Justifiable," *New York Times* 17 March 1891: 2.

laborers who were dissatisfied with their wages and working conditions broke their contracts and went elsewhere for work.[58]

Erika Lee argues that, by the passage of the first Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, the United States became a "gatekeeping nation" that adopted a more restrictive and exclusionary immigration policy. Chinese exclusion worked "to establish and normalize American gatekeeping," and it altered "the ways in which Americans thought about race and immigration."[59] The new exclusionary policies and the nativist mindset redefined "what it meant to be an "American.'"[60] To be American was to not be a Chinese immigrant nor, evidently, was it to be an Italian, much less, a Sicilian immigrant. The 1891 lynching of the eleven Italians in New Orleans was situated during what Lee calls the "Exclusion Era." Italians, like the Chinese, were not included in the new definition of the white American. The Chinese were conflated as alien threats, regardless of citizenship or whether they were natively born.[61] The Italian immigrants, regardless of whether they were native born like Joseph P. Macheca, also became conflated as an alien threat to the American civilization. That much is made clear by the activity and discourse surrounding the lynching.

The lynching served more to further racism and nativism than it did to deter Italians from migrating to the United States and New Orleans. In fact, the Italian immigrant community in New Orleans continued to grow in the two decades following the lynching. This trend was true nationally as well: in the first two decades of the twentieth century, Italians were comprised the largest population of immigrants (two million in 1901-1910, and 1.1 million in 1911-1920) to the United States.[62] The United States was, however, becoming more of a gated nation. To some extent, the 1891 lynching was a reflection of the movement towards an exclusive definition of the American identity. The political trajectory, which perhaps began with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, continued with formation of the 1907 legislative commission. This commission ultimately helped pass into law the national origins quota system of the 1920s designed to restrict Eastern European, Southern European, and Asian immigration.

---

[58] Paulo Giordano, "Italian Immigration in the State of Louisiana: It's Causes, Effects, and Results," *Italian Americana* 5.2 (1979): 164.
[59] Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina UP, 2003) 246.
[60] Lee 6-7.
[61] Ibid, 243.
[62] Maria Isabel Medina, *Migration Law in the USA* (Rijnland in Leiden, Netherlands: Kluwer, 2011) 20.

The mass lynching of eleven Italians in 1891 embodied racist and nativist attitudes towards Italian immigrants and was condoned as justice. Government officials denied any connection between race, nationality and the activity of the mob, but this denial was unfounded in reality. White New Orleans elites, and Mayor Shakespeare in particular, lumped Italians together as racially "dago" mafia ruffians. The lynching also appears to be in the flow towards the national origins quota system. It was nativist and racist: the geopolitical ramifications of comparing Italians to Chinese immigrants make clear that the same type of racial thinking that the lynching reified had implications for the political and economic aims of United States imperialism at the turn of the twentieth century. Big Stick Diplomacy contrasted a savage to a white civilized man. Consequently, based on permutations of racial thinking, the white man became understood as having a burden to police and control regional peoples who were identified as racially inferior, like the Italians in 1891 New Orleans.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

"A Review of the Lynching: Good Advice for Italian People by an Italian Journal." *New York Times* 22 March 1891. Page 2.

"At the Feet of Clay." *The Daily Picayune* 14 March 1891. Print. Page 4.

Harper's Weekly. "The Mafia and What Led to the Lynching." Volume XXXV. NO.1788.

"Hennessy is Avenged." *Dallas Morning News* 15 March 1891. Print.

"The Lynchers Justified: Report of the Grand Jury of New Orleans." *New York Times* (1857-1922); May 6, 1891; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2009) pg. 1.

"The Lynching Justifiable." *New York Times* (1857-1922); 17 March 1891; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2009) pg. 2.

Louisiana State Bar Association. "Obituary Edgar H. Farrar." Louisiana State Bar Association Report Appendix H: 197-198. Montgomery-Andree Print Company, 1922.

Martí, José. "Mob Violence in New Orleans." *La Nación* [Buenos Aires] 20 May 1891. *Martí on the USA*. Trans. Luis Baralt. Chicago: Southern Illinois UP, 1966.

Morgan, Appleton. "What shall we do with the "Dago"?" *The Popular Science Monthly* Vol. 38 Nov. 1890 to April 1891: 172-179.

"The New-Orleans Affair." *New York Times* (1857-1922); Mar 16 1891; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2009) pg. 4.

"None Guilty!" and "Mass Meeting!" *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans, LA] 14 March 1891 Saturday.

Roosevelt, Theodore. *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt*. 21 Mar. 1891. Letter. MS Am 1834 (307). Theodore Roosevelt Collection. Houghton Library, Harvard University. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University. October 06, 2013. Accessed October 6, 2013. http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record.aspx?libID=o280928.

"Shot Down at his Door: The Chief of the New-Orleans Police Brutally Murdered." *New York Times* 17 October 1890.

United States. Dept. of State. *Correspondence in Relation to the Killing of Prisoners in New Orleans on March 14, 1891*. Washington: GPO, 1891.

Secondary Sources

Bederman, Gail. *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Botein, Barbara. "The Hennessy Case: An Episode in Anti-Italian Nativism." *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 20 (1979): 261-279.

Brundage, W. Fitzhugh, et al. *Under Sentence of Death: Lynching in the South*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

Cunningham, George. "The Italian, a Hindrance to White Solidarity in Louisiana, 1890-1898." *The Journal of Negro History* 50 (1965): 22-36.

DeLucia, Christine. "Getting the Story Straight: Press Coverage of Italian-American Lynchings from 1856-1910." *Italian Americana* 21 (2003): 212-221.

Gambino, Richard. *Vendetta: A True Story of the Worst Lynching in America, the Mass Murder of Italian-Americans in New Orleans in 1891, the Vicious Motivations Behind it, and the Tragic Repercussions that Linger to this Day*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1977.

Giordano, Paolo. "Italian Immigration in the Sate of Louisiana: Its causes, Effects, and Results." *Italian Americana* 5 (1979): 160-177.

Guglielmo, Jennifer, and Salvatore Salerno, eds. *Are Italians White? How Race is Made in America*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Guglielmo, Thomas. *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Higham, John. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism*, 1860-1925. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955.

Hodes, Martha. "Fractions and Fictions in the United States Census of 1890," in *Haunted by Empire*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. 240-70.

---. "The Mercurial Nature and Abiding Power of Race: A Transnational Family Story," American Historical Review 108.1 (2003): 84-118.

Holt, Thomas, "Marking: Race, Race-making, and the Writing of History," *The American*

Historical Review 100/1 (1995), pp. 1-20.

Lane, Charles. *The Day Freedom Died: The Colfax Massacre, the Supreme Court, and the Betrayal of Reconstruction*. New York: Holt, 2009.

Lee, Erika. *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943*. Chapel Hill: North Carolina UP, 2003.

Mangione, Jerre, and Ben Morreale. *La Storia: Five Centuries of the Italian American Experience*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992.

Medina, M. Isabel. *Migration Law in the USA*. Rijnland in Leiden, The Netherlands: Kluwer, 2011.

Rimanelli, Marco and Sheryl Postman, eds. *The 1891 New Orleans Lynching and U.S.-Italian Relations: A Look Back*. New York: Peter Lang, 1992.

Roediger, David R., Leola Johnson, and James Barrett. *Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Roediger, David R. *How Race Survived US History: From Settlement and Slavery to the Obama Phenomenon*. London; New York: Verso, 2008.

---. *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey From Ellis Island to the Suburbs*. New York: Basic Books, 2005.

Saxton, Alexander. *The Indispensible Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California.* Berkeley: California UP, 1971.

Shankman, Arnold. "The Image of the Italian in the Afro-American Press 1886-1936." *Italian Americana* 4 (1978): 30-49.

Smith, Tom. *The Crescent City Lynchings: The Murder of Chief Hennessey, the New Orleans "Mafia" Trials, and the Parish Prison Mob*. Guilford: Lyons Press, 2007.

Tolnay, Stewart and E. Beck. *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930*. Chicago: University Press of Illinois, 1995.

Vellon, Peter. "'Between White Men and Negroes': The Perception of Southern Italian Immigrants Through the Lens of Italian Lynchings," in *Anti-Italianism: Essays on a Prejudice*, ed. William J. Connell. New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2010. 23-32.

Wood, Amy Louise. *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.