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*Perspectives in History*

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## Letter from the President

Once again, another year is at an end for Northern Kentucky University's chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, Alpha Beta Phi. In that time, it has been both an honor and privilege to serve as this chapter's President. Therefore, I would like to introduce our annual publication of *Perspectives in History*. As in preceding years, this Journal contains historical articles written by some of Northern Kentucky University's best and brightest students.

Much of the success of *Perspectives* is due to the student contributors who have spent many hours research and writing their articles. In addition, it should be mentioned that *Perspectives in History* would not be possible without our talented team of editors. Timothy "Chase" Johnson, our Student Editor, worked diligently during the editing and selection process. Amanda Lehw, the Co-Editor, worked tirelessly to ensure the success of this year's Journal. Finally, our Faculty Editor/Journal Advisor, Dr. Eric R. Jackson, has done an excellent job as a leading figure for our team of editors. Dr. Jackson worked nonstop editing papers, communicating with applicants, and doing a thorough job in selecting articles for the Journal. Therefore, I would like to thank all three for their hard work and for taking time out of their busy schedules to ensure that this edition of *Perspectives* is of high quality.

For over thirty years, much of our chapter's success can be owed to the faculty and staff from NKU's History and Geography Department. Collectively they all have been of great assistance and we value them all for helping and inspiring us. I would first like to thank Lou Stuntz and Jan Rachford for all the work they did in assisting us on a daily basis and for donating items during our bake sales. Also, I would like to thank our Department Chair, Dr. Burke Miller, who always went out of his way to ensure the success of our chapter and its members as well as offering advice when we needed it most. Lastly, I would like to thank our Faculty Advisor, Dr. Jonathan Reynolds, for everything, he has done for us this year and countless other. Not only was he an excellent faculty advisor but he was a constant source of wisdom and was an inspiration for us all. However, this was Dr. Reynolds last year as our Faculty Advisor. He will be greatly missed. However, we will always remember his service as our advisor. With this beings said, I would like to introduce and welcome our new faculty advisor, Dr. Andrea Watkins. I have no doubt that she will provide our chapter with excellent leadership and guidance in the years to come.

This has been an eventful year for our chapter. As is usual we continued some of the community programs we have been practicing for many years. Through our bake sales, we were able to donate items to such programs as NKU's VA Fill the Boot program that benefits the USO center at CVG Airport. We also participated in the Polar Bear Plunge, the proceeds of which goes to Special Olympic athletes. This year we also helped with NKU's annual Relay for Life which raises money to fight cancer. Additionally, we have been active in many academic affairs. Our Pizza and Papers program helped many students from a multitude of disciplines in writing and editing their papers. In addition, two of our chapter's members won awards for the papers they presented during this year's Regional Conference held at the University of the Cumberland.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the 2016-2017 officers of our chapter. Our Vice President, Kati McCurry for her leadership skills; our Treasurer/Secretary, Lauren Teegarden for her hard work and dedication; and our Wellness Officer, Jack Silbersack. Finally, I would like to thank all of our chapter members for their hard work and devotion. With that, I hope you enjoy our 32<sup>nd</sup> Edition of *Perspectives in History*.

**Harrison Fender**

*President of Alpha Beta Phi chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, 2016-2017*

## Foreword

Welcome to the 2016-2017 edition of Perspectives in History. My name is Chase Johnson I am the Editor of the Journal this year. Perspectives is the annual student lead publication with a focus on bringing a diverse range of historical articles and book reviews. Perspectives in History is our Phi Alpha Theta chapter's award-winning journal that displays articles, book reviews, and other work of some of our best and brightest minds of my fellow-classmates in the Department of History and Geography here at Northern Kentucky University. It has been an honor being Editor of the journal this year, but I would not have been able to do this alone. I would like to thank Dr. Eric R. Jackson for being our faculty supervisor, without his tireless dedication and helpful advice the Journal would not be nearly as good as it is. I would also like to thank my fellow members of Phi Alpha Theta who have contributed to, and supported Perspectives in every way possible. Finally, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the publication of the journal because without them we would have nothing. Such as our incoming Editor Michael Johnson who has certainly proved his worth with his article titled Russian Intervention in the Middle East, or Contributor Christina Leite and her piece Corset Myths and the Democratization of Women's Fashion in Victorian England. These scholars and several more are presented inside. Therefore, without further ado it is my honor to present to you Perspectives in History.

### Chase Johnson

*Editor of Perspectives in History, 2016-2017*

## PERSPECTIVES

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### **Russian Intervention in the Middle East: A Comparative Study of Russian Support of Near Eastern Governments and U.S. Support of Terrorism Against These Governments**

*Michael Johnson*

Viewing the Islamic world, one could wonder how this current state of affairs could be so unstable and how this could of happened. One might also wonder how the United States of America with its 580-billion-dollar defense budget could have fought a war for 13 years in the Middle East and had US casualties in Afghanistan alone stand at 2,349.<sup>1 2</sup> This paper will compare the current state of affairs in Syria and Afghanistan and contend that the rise of the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and the Islamic State is a direct result of United States' involvement in the Soviet-Afghan War of 1979-1989 and reflects the effect of the "Cold Warrior" mentality that remains in US foreign policy. This paper will discuss the purported reasons the Soviet Union decided to launch military operations in Afghanistan, the progress of the war prior to U.S. funding of the Mujahideen fighters, and the effects of Soviet withdrawal from the State of Afghanistan and the greater Near East. It will review the rise of the international terrorist organization in the region and finally how the reckless and shortsighted foreign policy of the U.S. and its affiliates largely incited the current situation to develop.

Before any serious discussion about the United States' midwifing of Middle Eastern terrorism, a discussion regarding a former 20<sup>th</sup> century superpower that had its own decade-long war in Afghanistan that served as the catalyst for two decades of reckless U.S. foreign policy is necessary. That superpower was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, known to most of the world as the USSR and often referred to simply as Russia. On 27<sup>th</sup> of April 1978 a coup d'état in Afghanistan would become known, historically, as the "Saur Revolution," Saur is the Persian word for the month for April. This coup d'état was the second of that decade for Afghanistan. In 1973, the King of Afghanistan was overthrown by Mohammed Daoud Khan the former Prime Minister of that country and cousin to said King. Khan's government established a single-party republic that was politically left-leaning. However, his time in office was short-lived as his government was overthrown by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) which professed a Marxist ideology. This new party established ties with Moscow and in doing so alienated its native population. Soon the rural population of the majority Sunni Islam country, feeling threatened by the "atheistic Marxists" in power, launched a rebellion against PDPA rule. On 15 March 1979, an Afghan army division stationed in the western city of Herat mutinied against the

PDPA; they massacred the Soviet advisers and their families living in the city, ending with a death toll of 5,000 after loyalist subjugated the revolt.. Soon after this the PDPA asked the USSR, its Marxist ally, for help to defend its political hold on the country. Reasons for the Soviet's this war in Afghanistan are many, but as Artemy Kalinovsky summarized in *Decision-Making and the Soviet War in Afghanistan: From Intervention to Withdrawal*, Soviet policymaking during the decade came from a narrow circle within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Politburo<sup>3</sup>. Kalinovsky states that this narrow circle believed that failure in Afghanistan would damage the Soviet Union's position and authority as leader of the Communist movement and supporter of "national liberation" movements.<sup>4</sup> He also states that, due to positive reports on the ground in Afghanistan, the Politburo believed it could transform Afghanistan, stabilize the government, and achieve international recognition of the communist government in Kabul. These listed factors caused the Soviet Union to, reluctantly, mobilize its massive military assets into the mountainous country to defend its ideological ally. The Soviets, like the United States in Vietnam, first sent military advisors simply to train the loyalists. However, this proved unfruitful as many soldiers deserted or mutinied as in Herat. So, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 1979 the Soviet Armed Forces launched an intervention of the 40<sup>th</sup> Army group into Afghanistan numbering 75,000 total. The Soviets expected that this conflict would last just a few months. What was supposed to be a few months turned into a 10-year bloody conflict. The Soviet Union's strategy during the war was not to focus on the rural areas of the country, but to consolidate its forces in urban centers where PDPA power was strongest, and secure the transportation networks of the country with the primary focus on using air and armored vehicle assets to achieve operations, and to focus on operations primarily to instill fear into the rural civilian population. The rationale for this largely indirect strategy was the Mujahideen.

The Mujahideen is where the United States enters the picture and will serve as a comparison to the modern U.S. funding of fighters in Syria. The Mujahideen were resistance fighters who, for the most part, came from the eastern part of Afghanistan and Pakistan the majority of whom are ethnic Pashtun. Many were jihadist believing this resistance was a holy war in defense of the Dar al-Islam and against Marxism and Atheism. The Mujahideen were, initially, actively supported by only Pakistan, who greatly feared that the presence of a Soviet-allied neighbor to the west in addition to Soviet-supported India to its east would undermine its national sovereignty. With scant international support initially, the Mujahideen had to rely heavily on guerrilla warfare tactics in the mountainous passes of Afghanistan focusing their attacks on passing Soviet convoys. This caused the war to be in precarious balance with Mujahideen winning mostly in their hit and run skirmishes, and Soviets gaining military advances with its armored vehicles like the T-62 main battle tank or Mil Mi-24 gunship helicopter popularly known to westerners as the Hind-D. The use of advanced Soviet weaponry in the conflict was partially why the U.S. decided to get more deeply involved in the war. In the first weeks of the war, the United States had provided very limited military support to the Mujahideen and condemned the Soviet conflict through rhetoric with such statements as *The Carter Doctrine* of January 1980 in which President Jimmy Carter stated, "Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain

control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."<sup>5</sup> The limited military aid mentioned was a plan drafted by the Central Intelligence Agency known as "Operation Cyclone."<sup>6</sup> The United States would spend hundreds of millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars to train and arm the Islamic fighters in Afghanistan, flying some of them to Virginia to be trained in sabotage and espionage. However, as mentioned previously, this support during the first half of the war only went so far, as the Soviets still had air superiority over the Afghan fighters. Also, the U.S. did not supply the Afghans with any weaponry engineered in the U.S.; the Afghans had only weapons such as Russian Kalashnikov rifles and RPG-7's supplied by China. These weapons were distributed by Pakistani intelligence agents to conceal U.S. involvement as much as possible. In 1986 however, the United States decided to start supplying more advanced, American weaponry to the Mujahideen, primarily the FIM-92 Stinger. This push for more advanced weaponry was spearheaded by conservative lobbyists from *Free the Eagle* and members of the defense department, most notably Michael Pillsbury. The new plan to add this weapon system to the Mujahideen's arsenal would have been almost impossible to implement if it had not been for Congressman Charlie Wilson of Texas. Charlie Wilson had a near obsession with the Soviet conflict in Afghanistan. Since the beginning of the war he had tried to find ways to help the Mujahideen defeat the Soviet Union. He tried, years earlier, to supply the Afghans with various weapons to give them an edge, such as 12.7mm incendiary ammunition and Swiss made Oerlikon 20 mm cannon. The FIM-92 was his dream weapon, he called it the "silver bullet" to kill the Soviet monster weapon (the Mil Mi-24 gunship). Driven by this obsession of winning in Afghanistan, Charlie Wilson developed a good relationship with the Pakistani president Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq. Recall that the only channel the United States had to supply the Mujahideen fighters was through Pakistan. President Zia was reluctant to introduce U.S. manufactured weapons into the conflict fearing that the Soviets would retaliate. Charlie Wilson, who after years of knowing Zia and defending him back home in the States, put Zia's fears to rest.

The Stinger surface to air missile system proved to give the Afghans a greatly needed edge to diminish the Soviet air superiority. On February 15, 1989, after years of military setbacks and domestic troubles caused by such programs as Glasnost (openness) and perestroika (reconstruction), the last Soviet troops were pulling out of Kabul. The jihad waged by the Mujahideen was won. In 1991, the year the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was disbanded, the United States viewed the Afghan-Soviet war as one of the greatest victories in the history of its nation's covert-operations. It had succeeded in humiliating the Soviet Union, sowing seeds to aide in her disintegration, defended America's hegemony over the Middle East, and did so with guerilla fighters who were, for the most part, untrained. However, in 1991 few could have seen how much of a mistake it was to spend so many millions of dollars in this foreign conflict. For the new enemy that rose from the ashes of the "Soviet Empire" could arguably be considered far more dangerous than the Soviets ever were. After the Soviet-Afghan War ended, Afghanistan was in chaos. In 1992, the communist government of Afghanistan collapsed. In the absence of any powerful central

government, Afghanistan was carved up into petty fiefdoms controlled by former Mujahideen fighters who, because of the United States and Pakistan, had plenty of firearms and ammunition to control their new fiefdoms. These fiefs ruled their territories with their own laws and taxes. David B. Edwards, a Social Science professor at Williams College in Massachusetts who specializes in near east studies and was in Afghanistan at the time, described how one couldn't drive 10-20 miles without being stopped to pay a "tax" to the local warlord.<sup>7</sup> He also described how these fiefs would kidnap boys and girls to be slaves. So, in this chaos caused by withdrawal of the Soviet 40<sup>th</sup> Army, a new faction of former Mujahideen arose, disenfranchised by the chaos in their motherland. This group began to oppose the fiefs in an attempt to restore peace in Afghanistan. The group of young men gained support among their countrymen due to their quest for a stable and peaceful homeland. This group was the Taliban which means student in Arabic. In 1995, the Taliban finally seized power and implemented extreme fundamentalist Islamic policies. These policies were partially inspired by the large Wahhabi influence that entered the country during the Soviet war through the large amount of foreign aid and number of Mujahideen volunteers that came from Saudi Arabia. A puritanical Islam quickly became unpopular with the populace. These fundamentalists policies banned virtually all women's rights that had been gained under communist rule, forced ethnicities with non-Islamic names to change their names, forced grooming habits, and banned certain books, etc. The Taliban also allowed certain extremist groups, such as Al-Qaeda, safe havens in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda, itself, was formed in Peshwar, Pakistan, primarily of former Mujahideen fighters, by Usama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abdullah Yusuf Azzam. It was during the Soviet-Afghan war that bin Laden first took part in an armed jihad, by financing the Mujahideen using his personal wealth from his family's construction business. Al-Qaeda would not remain a single operation, but became a "franchised" terror group with independent cells operating across the world.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of an independent, and weakened, Russia, the United States became the unipolar power, with absolute hegemony over the international stage. This created a situation in which the United States was left with the ability to engage in any foreign policy, however reckless, and not be condemned or seriously challenged by another great power. This is partially how the modern parallel to the Soviet-Afghan war has evolved into its current shape. That parallel is the Syrian Civil War. The civil war in Syria began on 15 March 2011. It had its immediate origins in the so-called Arab Spring, which saw the toppling of Arab governments starting in Tunisia and spreading across the Maghreb and into the Middle East itself. This 'populist' movement erupted into violence, "in the southern city of Deraa after the arrest and torture of some teenagers who painted revolutionary slogans on a school wall. After security forces opened fire on demonstrators, killing several, more took to the streets. The unrest triggered nationwide protests demanding President Assad's resignation. The government's use of force to crush the dissent merely hardened the protesters' resolve. By July 2011, hundreds of thousands were taking to the streets across the country."<sup>8</sup> This civil unrest gave the United States an opportunity to realize a longstanding foreign policy objective, the overthrow of the

Alawite-Shia Assad government, whom they had wanted removed from power since at least 1971 when former president Hafez al-Assad granted the Soviet Union the naval base at Tartus.

Tartus is, to date, the only Russian naval facility in the Mediterranean, and is a strategic liability to the United States. In addition to being friendly to the Russian government, the Assad government is politically allied to the Islamic Republic of Iran. This relationship dates to the 1980s, when Syria politically allied with non-Arab Iran against the rival Baath government of Iraq. Allying with Iran put a target on the Assad family by Shia Iran's rival regional powers of Turkey and Saudi Arabia. In addition, Syria under Assad has allowed the flow of materials from Iran to Hezbollah in Lebanon, creating an addition target for the Israeli lobby in Washington. The United States, seeing this as an opportunity for Western interests, began supporting the opposition against Bashar al-Assad. Along with Saudi Arabia and Turkey, the United States began funding the rebels against the government, seeking a forced non-democratic regime change as previously achieved in Libya by its support of the deposal of Gadhafi. By February 2014, US Director of National Intelligence (DNI), James Clapper, estimated the strength of the insurgency in Syria at, " somewhere between 75,000 to 80,000 or up to 110,000 insurgents" who were then organized into more than fifteen hundred groups of widely varying political leanings.<sup>9</sup> However, the United States was aware that the majority of these groups were influenced by Al-Qaeda in Iraq, which would become better known as the Islamic State.

The same organization that had its origin in the Soviet-Afghan War was, once again, going to receive funding and training supplied by the United States in order to thwart Russian geopolitical interests. Al-Qaeda in Iraq had its roots in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, when the United States unilaterally invaded Iraq without first obtaining a UN Security Council resolution. No such resolution could have been drafted for invasion, as no nation was an aggressor as outlined in the Security Council's charter. The power vacuum created by reckless U.S. foreign policy, resulted in Saudi Arabian Wahhabi-inspired radicalism to fester in Afghanistan. As declassified secret U.S. government documents produced in August of 2012 show, the U.S. was well aware that the majority of the force driving the Syrian rebellion came from Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and the Muslim Brotherhood in addition to various Salafist movements.<sup>10</sup> Regardless of this fact established in 2012, the U.S. government continued to fund various groups, declaring them "moderates" and spending over 440 million dollars to date.<sup>11</sup> These weapons and training ended up helping AQI to transform itself into the Islamic State, just as the U.S. government had predicted it would. So in fact, the United States helped create the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, by recklessly giving weapons to anyone fighting Assad.

This brings us to the final point; the U.S. would not be engaged in a 15 year conflict in the Middle East or, at least not for the same reasons, if for one they had simply left the Soviet Union alone in Afghanistan. The Soviets would have eventually withdrawn from the conflict as war was already a drain on their weakening economy. The Mujahideen were receiving foreign aid and personnel from Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and China. Many people within the various Soviet republics, thanks to the liberal policy of glasnost, were trying to gain independence. Also, in siding with the Mujahideen,

the United States left future terrorists the tools to harm American citizens. Some of al-Qaeda's best bomb makers learned their craft from the CIA who trained these future extremists in Virginia. If the United States had tried to stop the collapse of the Soviet Union instead of the seeking its, the world might be in a better place. The bipolar power balance of the United States in the West and the Soviet Union in the East provided a semblance of order to the world. The United States maintained the status quo in the Western world and the Soviets kept the status quo in the Eastern world. The Communist party might have evolved in the way modern China has wherein Capitalism is the economic formula and Communism the base of political power. Moreover, if the United States had learned from its mistakes in the Soviet-Afghan War, it might temper this reckless foreign policy of "hammering nails" wherever it perceives them to be. If the U.S. could abandon its inherent "Russophobia" and irrational acrimony toward Russia and Russian civilization, many of the modern woes of Syria could be solved. The United States should try and prevent the collapse of one of the only secular republics in the Middle East, rather than attempting to thwart Russia's every move in Syria, and allow democracy to evolve organically. If the U.S. would cease exacerbating the spread of Islamic State, by aiding and abetting Saudi Arabia and Turkey by the adhering to the Western world's mantra of "Assad must go," and funding rebels, the current Middle East could be a much calmer place. Unfortunately, the U.S. most likely will keep its irrational stance of refusing to work with the Russian Federation. Since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the United States of America has obsessively sought to hegemony over the Middle East and its oil reserves; abandoning the unipolar model of the post-Cold War era, might provide a better chance at achieving peace across the globe.

## Endnotes

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## PERSPECTIVES

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### **“The Editor and the immigrants” George Denison Prentice’s Utilization of slavery, nativism, and immigration as well as the Impact of the “Blood Monday” election riots in Louisville, Kentucky, 1855 – A Snapshot Perspective**

*Bruce and Mary Lou McClure*

On election-day, August 6, 1855, riots erupted around the polls in Louisville, Kentucky, targeting the immigrant community, leaving burned-out buildings and businesses and at least nineteen people dead in its wake. Anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant violence and brutality marked these riots. They began with pushing, jostling and intimidation at the crowded polls and ultimately developed into general mayhem. They stemmed from competition and hostility between the American Party (Know-Nothing Party) that had been developing in Louisville for the previous six years and the German and Irish Immigrant community that had been growing in number and focus under the leadership of educated radicals that had settled in the area since 1848. At stake was city and state government. At issue was the right of immigrants and naturalized foreigners to participate in and control government. The catalyst was the issues of slavery and abolition as a threat to the Union and the economic stability and public safety of Kentucky and the South. The riots were a continuation of collective violence as political tools in the age of Jackson. Their intensity and deadly effect were the result of a dangerous mixture of the conflict between nativists and radical German immigrants and the increasingly divisive debate over the abolition of slavery.

This deadly mixture of ideologies set in the slave state of Kentucky culminated in a bloody collision on August 5, 1855. This violent and tragic election-day lives in Louisville history and the history of Kentucky under the moniker of “Bloody Monday.” Historians have since debated the sources of the disturbances, focusing respectively on the election laws, party politics, and the controversial editor of the *Louisville Daily Journal*, George D. Prentice, as the causes and catalyst. All who have dealt directly with the riots concur they were terrible in their intensity and brutality, and an unusual occurrence for the city. They also focus almost entirely on George D. Prentice. Scholars have not, however, considered the existence of the issue of slavery in Kentucky as a causative factor in the intensity of the riots and the level of brutality that occurred. This article explores the demographics and key components of the political and cultural dynamics of Louisville and Kentucky in 1855 in an effort to determine the immediate and long term causes of “Bloody Monday,” and its significance as indicative of Jacksonian collective violence. Moreover, it examines the impact of that component

of slavery in Kentucky, so long overlooked by historians, and its utilization by the nativists and George Dennison Prentice as a viable explanation for the heightened level of violence on “Bloody Monday.”

Historian Betty Congleton has steadfastly defended Prentice and placed the blame squarely on the Louisville city government and state election reform that caused the lack of sufficient voting stations in the precincts as the primary causes of the riots. She also cites the presence of a volatile immigrant German population in the city as a central factor. She points out that Prentice tried to correct the former cause of the riots by calling for more voting stations. She argues that the deficiency of voting places denied access to nearly one half of the city’s citizens.

The new state constitution approved in 1850 shortened the voting time from three days to one, and state statutes left the determination of the place of voting to the discretion of the mayor and city council. This worked fine in other cities, but Louisville erupted in sweeping violence. The underlying causes, argues Congleton, were directly related to the existence of a large foreign-born population with men who were “imbued with revolutionary ideas” and “accustomed to practices of crude violence,” arousing “suspicion and distrust.”<sup>1</sup> Although Congleton vaguely alludes to a heritage of collective violence, she infers that this heritage belonged solely to the immigrants. Although she places responsibility for the insufficient voting mechanisms in Louisville on the actions of the city officials, she does not mention that the American Party had control of those instrumentalities at the time of the election. To Congleton “Bloody Monday” was simply a collision between insufficient voting apparatus and a troublemaking immigrant population who reflected revolutionary ideals born of European experiences in the upheavals of 1848 in the old country. She focuses her argument on the defense of George D. Prentice, arguing that there were other dynamics at work. She does not mention the fact that the new Constitution of 1850 also reaffirmed slavery in Kentucky. Indeed, she does not address the dynamic of slavery and the impact of the anti slavery movement in Kentucky at all. Her purpose is narrowed to a defense of George Prentice.

Wallace S. Hutcheon, Jr. attributes the Louisville riots to a combination of the immigrant population in Kentucky, the rise of Nativist opposition to their presence, and the rapid development of a potent political expression of the two “anti’s” in the 1850s: anti-Catholicism (immigrant) and the anti-Know-Nothings among the radicals of leadership of the immigrant population.<sup>2</sup> He does not directly address two other opposing forces in Louisville at the time: anti-abolition and abolition, or the issue of slavery in Kentucky. To Hutcheon the riots were the result of a lack of sufficient polling places, especially in the wards heavily populated by immigrants, the vehement press and leadership, citing Prentice and venerable Whig U.S. Senator and former Kentucky governor John J. Crittenden, and the lack of sufficient leadership among the Democrats and the anti-Know Nothings.<sup>3</sup> But most ardently, Hutcheon blames “those unhappy traits-Prejudice and Bigotry based on Ignorance-that, sadly, have to be taken into consideration whenever analyzing the American character.”<sup>4</sup> Hutcheon does not place “Bloody Monday” in the context of antebellum American cities and overlooks the activities of anti-Know-Nothing groups in the weeks leading up to the election. His analysis is self contained, addressing only Cincinnati, Ohio, in his

discussion of anti-Catholicism. More pointedly, he does not address the battle between pro slavery nativists and anti slavery Germans that was intensifying in the press between the *Louisville Journal*, the *Louisville Courier*, the *Democrat*, and German papers such as the *Anzeiger*. Like Congelton, he does not seem to recognize the nativist, and Prentice's view of the abolition of slavery as a danger to Kentucky and national political and social unity and innate southern fears of racial and social control.

Forces were at work that strongly affected Louisville as they did other antebellum cities of its size. Moreover, Louisville's disturbances were in one critical way unique to the city when compared to antebellum collective violence in other urban areas. They occurred within the context of an intensifying state wide debate concerning the survival of slavery within Kentucky and the South. In 1849, a Constitutional convention proposed a reaffirmation of the institution of slavery in the state. The Constitution containing this proposal was approved in 1850, restating Kentucky's position on the peculiar institution. Kentucky was to remain a slave holding state.<sup>5</sup> The Germans and Irish in Louisville opposed slavery.

Hutcheon, Congelton and other scholars focus almost exclusively on the impact of Prentice. None however addresses the issue that became a dangerous point of contention between the radical German leadership and the rising Know Nothing nativists in Louisville. Prentice was a willing, vitriolic crusader and vehicle for the American Party's assault on the groups that opposed slavery. He was not however the source of the anti-abolitionist impulse.<sup>6</sup> To focus principally on the venomous editor of the *Louisville Journal* cloaks the hotly contested issue that brought Louisville to the intense violence it experienced on August 6, 1855. If Prentice's diatribes were, according to one historian, dangerously irresponsible on the eve of the election, then what caused his editorials to spark such brutality?<sup>7</sup> The issue of slavery and abolition intensified the intellectual struggle between immigrants and nativists in Louisville that ultimately was violently played out on Bloody Monday and in the final antebellum years that followed. As David Brion Davis observed, the issue of racism was not originally an essential component of the counter subversive ideology.<sup>8</sup>

However, as noted by historian Harold D. Tallant, race and slavery were critical issues in ante bellum Kentucky. Two views supporting slavery were present in Antebellum Kentucky, the view of slavery as a "positive good" and, more prevalent in Kentucky, the view that the institution was a "necessary evil." The positive good theory had been steadily embraced by the lower south and southwest as cotton became king, ultimately developing an inflexible position in opposition to abolition, the position that slavery was a positive good, not an evil, when two races are brought together. Most Kentuckians, however, held fast to the older long standing view that slavery was a "necessary evil," necessary for racial control of the African Americans while the races coexisted in America. So long as blacks and whites were mixed together, the result would be racial competition. Emancipation would lead to racial war of retribution against the whites for injustices done to them both before and after slavery. Slavery was evil, but it was a necessary evil, for the control of the black race and protection of white society until slavery could die an inevitable death at the hands of law makers or by its own evil nature. But as abolition steadily rose in the north, confronting the positive good theorists of the lower south, those who clung to the necessary evil

doctrine in Kentucky found themselves in a precarious position between two growing, inflexible forces.<sup>9</sup> Kentuckians viewed abolitionist threat to slavery as a threat to the common good, the threatened destruction of a necessary protection from the inevitable specter of racial war.

Tallant asserts that the 1849 constitutional convention in Kentucky was a crossroads for the state. Proslavery advocates united with other factions and the new constitution "convinced many Kentuckians that slavery had become more or less a permanent fixture in their state."<sup>10</sup> As Tallant argues, "the idea that slavery was not dying did encourage many Kentuckians to embrace the peculiar institution more tightly... The most immediate effect of this new way of looking at slavery was a marked increase in Kentucky of a mode of political activity that historian William J. Cooper has called the 'politics of slavery'."<sup>11</sup> Tallant contends that most political issues in the 1850s, were interpreted, "at least partly by the criterion of how they affected slavery."<sup>12</sup> Such was the case in Kentucky. As slavery became an issue, it increased the odds of counter subversive activities against the German intelligentsia in Louisville with violent results. Prentice, like many Kentuckians, viewed abolition as a danger to Kentucky's social structure and, with the ever growing inflexible position of the lower south, a growing catalyst for national war. The German intelligentsia posed a threat to the institution which was a necessary evil in Kentucky and the Know Nothing party and Prentice actively engaged in the politics of slavery to stop them.

Further, scholars stop short of placing "Bloody Monday" in the context of collective violence in the Jacksonian era. All of the components addressed in these works are germane to the riots and are valid questions and arguments, but the conclusions drawn are too narrow to determine the significance of "Bloody Monday" in America, Kentucky or Louisville in 1855. Perhaps, Hutcheon's "unhappy traits" argument comes closest to finding the forest in the dominant trees of dynamics that existed in politically virulent Louisville on the eve of August 6, 1855. There was a pattern of group on group violence present in the city that was indicative of Jacksonian era riots and demonstrations.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, speaking to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois in 1837, Abraham Lincoln made a poignant and ominous observation about mob violence in antebellum America, stating "in this land so lately famed for law and order," accounts of outrage, violence and social unrest had become "the everyday news of the times." He lamented that mobs and collective violence had displaced the "sober judgment of the courts" and pervaded the country from New England to Louisiana; they are neither peculiar to the eternal snows of the former nor the burning suns of the latter; they are not the creatures of climate, neither are they confined to the slaveholding or the non slaveholding states. Alike they spring up among the pleasure-hunting masters of Southern slaves, and the order-loving citizens of the land of steady habits. Whatever then their causes be, it is common to the whole country.<sup>14</sup>

Nearly twenty years later Lincoln's words would ring true in Louisville, Kentucky.

The riots in Louisville occurred in a time of urban violence, but they were unusually deadly for the Age of Jackson. The component that escalated the level of brutality on August 6, 1855 was abolition and its relationship to the German radicals within the city. Pro- slavery Louisvillians and Kentucky nativists intensified their attacks,



led by the counter subversive press to focus not only on anti-Catholicism but on the abolitionist platform of the immigrants. The former Whig newspaper, Prentice's *Louisville Journal*, endorsed the Know-Nothings because of the issue of slavery. Its editorials viciously battled an aggressive Democratic Party and German press in the city.<sup>15</sup> Why were the German Catholics targeted so intensely when such was not the case in other cities where anti-Catholicism had been the impetus for collective violence, focusing exclusively on the Irish?<sup>16</sup> The Germans, to the Louisville nativists, had become a subversive group that threatened slavery. Set against the backdrop of a state government that had formally reaffirmed its support of slavery, these dynamics in Louisville were a recipe for disaster especially in an era when collective demonstration and violence was a common political vehicle for electoral success and in a political environment where a threat to a necessary vehicle of racial control was viewed as dangerous.

Moreover, the issues of ethnicity and race permeate the historical record surrounding the August 6 riots as they did in this era generally. By 1855, westward expansion, economic growth, the transformation of America's work force to an immigrant majority, and the anti-slavery policies and beliefs of the immigrants thrust slavery and abolition to the forefront in national debate. The abolition issue hastened the decline of the Whig party and stimulated the growth of the Know-Nothing Party, nationally and in Kentucky. Placing Bloody Monday in the national context of those tumultuous pre-Civil War years and determining the causes and meanings of that tragic election suggests that Bloody Monday at once reflected the era Lincoln lamented in the 1830s, and stands as an example of the level of ferocity and brutality it would reach as it climaxed in the last decade before the Civil War when the divisive issues of slavery and abolition would be addressed by the nativists. The fiery state wide debate over abolition heightened the intensity of mob action in Louisville on Bloody Monday. Kentucky had made its position clear that it was to maintain the institution of slavery. The Whig party had crumbled in large part because of the debate over expansion of slavery into the West and the hotly contested issue of abolition. The bulk of Louisville's Whigs turned to the Know Nothing party that opposed abolition, recognizing slavery as a necessary means of racial control. Louisville's Germans opposed slavery. The American (Know Nothing) party focused its heated attack upon the German and Irish community first through the anti-Catholic rhetoric common among counter subversives and then through collective violence at the polls and in the immigrant communities.

The cultural, racial, ethnic and political tumult in Louisville in that era is in many ways exemplary of the antebellum times. Furthermore, the pattern of disturbances in Louisville reflects the fact that collective violence was a function by which groups attained their goals. Anti-government rioting (as in the 1960s sense) is not evident in 1850s Louisville. The violence was more regularly between groups seeking power and political control. The American Party, strengthened by the faltering of the Whig Party, focused on the German and Irish immigrants and naturalized citizens as a threat to the economy of Louisville, Kentucky, and the South. As in other states such as Tennessee and Virginia, Kentucky witnessed the growth of an immigrant population that supported the faltering Democratic party of Andrew Jackson. These foreigners, aligned with the Democratic Party, were seen as the cause of the defeat of Whig

candidates, especially the beloved Henry Clay. And, most critically, they opposed slavery.<sup>17</sup> The majority of Kentucky's immigrants were in Louisville. The state's principle Whig organ, the *Louisville Journal*, was also in the state's largest city.

Native white Louisvillians engaged in what David Grimsted identifies as "riot conversation" as groups came to grips with the issues of economy, political power, the transition of political parties and, in Louisville and Kentucky, the potential threat of the transformation of slaves from chattel into freedmen at the expense of the southern economic labor structure and the safety of white Kentuckians. Both the immigrants and the professional class of lawyers, doctors, congressmen, and newspaper editors, or "Gentlemen of Property and Standing" as they called themselves, had a relevant interest in this debate. This latter group represented the leadership of the growing Know-Nothing party in the state. A long tradition of mob violence in Louisville existed during the antebellum era suggesting that these leaders did not see street violence between groups as all that unusual. Collective violence was a vehicle of reform and political achievement.<sup>18</sup>

In 1855, Louisville, Kentucky was a booming western city. Nestled on the Ohio River, at the falls of the Ohio, the city had steadily developed into a dynamic epicenter of commerce, trade, wealth, and employment. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Louisville was deeply involved in commerce between cities and states north up the Ohio to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and beyond, and south down the river to New Orleans, Louisiana. The city evidenced the escalating prosperity of a commercial hub. Tobacco, pork packing, and general wholesale trade boomed to an annual total of \$20,000,000 by 1850, and it had become the tenth largest city in America. Through the first half of the nineteenth century, the city had established the University of Louisville, a horse racing course, and had become the first western city to light the streets with gas lamps.

This was the era of the massive river steamboats. The route between Louisville and New Orleans was recognized as the most heavily traveled trade route on the river and the short Ohio River link between Louisville and Cincinnati, Ohio was perpetually booked on all packages. Like Cincinnati, Louisville was a center of industrial growth, offering opportunities for skilled and unskilled labor in a variety of industries and vocations, and thus became a magnet for European immigrants seeking jobs and a new life in America. Unlike Cincinnati, however, Louisville was located in the slave state of Kentucky.

While by 1860 Cincinnati was the site of the largest population of freed blacks of any city in Ohio, Louisville was a center of slave trade in a state that had developed a thriving industry in the sale and transport of chattel slaves. Accordingly, to the citizens of Louisville, it was commonplace to witness the spectacle of groups of shackled slaves being transported through the streets either to or from the river and the Portland canal wharfs, the public sales of women and children, and open whippings of slaves by their masters and overseers. As early as 1820, blacks accounted for 28% of Louisville's population, perhaps accounting for the designation of a portion of the city's income for the development of a police force.<sup>19</sup>

The urban atmosphere, however, provided less stringent control over freedmen

and resident slaves than existed in the rural interior of the state. Most of the city's slaves were owned by merchants and businessmen and were scattered about the city in contrast to the large, concentrated populations found on large southern plantations. Indeed, the percentage of slaves to the city's population decreased from 28% in 1820 to less than 13% in 1850. African American churches were established, and offered a place of worship for freed blacks and slaves. These congregations were tolerated by the city government so long as they worshipped in an orderly manner and under the supervision of "some respectable white man." In his examination of slavery in antebellum cities, Richard C. Wade argues that these churches forged the black leadership for the African American community well into the future. These enclaves of free worship, although closely observed and tolerated, must have caused some level of angst for the pro-slavery elements of the city. Nevertheless, Louisville's newspapers were rife with the daily advertisements of rewards being offered for the capture and return of runaway slaves.<sup>20</sup> For slaves, the city was an embarkation site for being sold down river to the plantations of the Deep South.

Cultural climate surrounding the city's attitude toward blacks may perhaps be glimpsed by the fact that Louisville was the birthplace of Thomas D. Rice's caricatures of blacks in his song, "Jim Crowe," beginning the American minstrelsy.<sup>21</sup> It was certainly acceptable to use black men as a source of humor as in the case of T.D. Rice's black-faced caricature performances and newspapers such as the *Louisville Journal*, barbing in an exchange with the *Cincinnati Times* that "she (Cincinnati) has done a thing so little as to construct an underground railroad and steal a nigger every now and then."<sup>22</sup> The slaves and freedmen, it would seem, were not only a comedic contrivance in the culture of Louisville but also a point of contention when dealing with the press of a non-slave holding state. Black people slave and free, would serve as a political foil when the Know-Nothings exploited "politics of slavery" to grasp for and attain power in the city.

By 1850, however, the white population, through its fledgling police forces and militia controlled the African American population of Louisville. The black population predominately held certain occupations such as barbers, waiters, cooks, wharf workers, and laborers in general. They were a population that was politically silent, disenfranchised, and excluded from the fledgling labor organizations. However insignificant were slaves and freed people of Louisville and Kentucky to the balance of city and state political power, they were destined to become an active component for sweeping social and political change in the Commonwealth and the nation in the decades ahead.<sup>23</sup>

By 1850, Louisville boasted 43,219 residents, 12,461 of whom were foreign born, with 7,357 being German. By 1852, the German population had soared to 18,000. Irish immigrants added to the mix with the 1850 seventh census reporting the presence of 3,105 Irish-born residents. Fleeing the potato famine in Ireland, these Irish immigrants were arriving every day. The census reported Kentucky's population to be 761,413 in 1850. Of these, 31,404, or 4.1 %, were foreign-born; indeed, over half of foreign-born Kentuckians resided in Louisville, a figure that does not account for the American-born children of immigrants. The entire German element of Louisville was estimated to be approximately 20,000 in 1852. This immigrant population continued to surge in number and by 1855 it comprised 35% of the city's population

and had become a powerful economic, cultural and political force.<sup>24</sup>

Most of the Germans lived in the east end of the city and a large percentage had come from their homeland fleeing the unsuccessful revolutions of 1848. These were a more aggressive wave of immigrants than had come before them. They were educated, outspoken, possessed liberal political views, and sought political input, jobs, and a measure of control of government. These "Forty-Eighters," as they were called, wished to maintain identification with the fatherland, and they wanted jobs. In 1849, the German language newspaper, the Louisville *Anzeiger*, began publication, urging the Germans to retain their native language and customs. Although the Forty-Eighters did not always represent the attitudes of the majority of Louisville's German population, their public presence ensured their inevitable recognition with the German Catholic community generally. These radicals formed their own political party, the *Bund Freier Manner*, in 1853. In 1854, they promulgated the "Louisville Platform" that condemned European despots, race, class privilege, American neutrality in foreign affairs, and the institution of slavery. The Preamble denounced slavery and indicted America for the existence of slavery in the face of the Declaration of Independence. The platform called for the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, the prohibition of slavery in the western territories, the gradual abolition of slavery in the south, and political and social equality for black people.<sup>25</sup> Oddly enough, they also denounced the Pope and Jesuits.<sup>26</sup> Notwithstanding the last denouncement, the radicals' position on slavery and demands on American government would cause them to become a lightning rod for the wrath of slaveholding Whigs and nativists, who would soon comprise the Know-Nothing party in Kentucky.

Germans founded the St. Joseph's Orphan Society in 1849, the Liederkranz Singing Society in 1848, and the German gymnast society, the Louisville *Turnverein*. Catholic parishes grew dramatically in number, and an estimated thirty German language newspapers like the *Anzeiger* thrived in the city. Germantown, a marshy area of the city also known as "Frogstown," was the residential core of the city's German Catholic immigrant population.<sup>27</sup> By 1850, the German population had transformed Louisville's workforce as it had done across the nation. German craftsmen and intellectuals began to assert themselves politically in the city. The *Anzeiger* was founded on March 1, 1849, by the young German immigrant Georg Philip Doern and Otto Schaeffer. The paper was heavily influenced by radical German leaders such as Karl Heinzen, who rivaled George D. Prentice in outspoken presentation of his opinion. Heinzen asserted that the American republic could do nothing for freedom in Europe until it "has shaken the yoke of slavery from its neck."<sup>28</sup> As Bruce Levine observes in his study of the "Forty Eighters," "The ownership of one human being by another clashed head-on with the democratic ideals of 1848" and hearkened the German immigrants back to the "memories of aristocracy."<sup>29</sup> In an era when German immigrants were transforming the face of wage labor in America, radical "Forty Eighters" like Heinzen found eager support and approval from crowds of working immigrants and freedmen. The Germans aligned themselves politically to the Democratic Party and repeatedly interacted with the freedmen and abolitionists in the urban areas. In 1851 freed blacks in Cleveland offered "material aid" to the Forty Eighter Democrats who in turn vowed that once they had obtained their free Democratic German republic in the coming

struggle in Europe, they would “use all means which are adapted to abolish slavery, an institution which is so wholly repugnant to the principles of true democracy.”<sup>30</sup> This growing ideological affiliation between the freedmen, anti-slavery and recognized German leaders such as Heinzen attracted the apprehension of the nativists and pro slavery advocates and brought the issue of slavery more directly into the center of the politics of Louisville and Kentucky.<sup>31</sup>

Although representing the largest immigrant populace in antebellum America, the Irish were not as numerous in Louisville as the Germans. But their presence was certainly recognized by native-born Americans there as the Irish Potato Famine of 1845-1846 drove a growing number of poor Irish immigrants to the United States, with a large number spilling from the Atlantic seacoast into the Ohio Valley. With the Catholic population tripling, they established St. Patrick’s Church in 1853, clearly marking the sustained presence of the Irish Catholic community. Working as candle-makers, grocers, boardinghouse proprietors, carpenters, tanners, stonemasons, bricklayers, and riverboat porters, several of these new people, such as John and Francis Quinn, enjoyed financial success. The Quinn family built row houses, known as “Quinn’s Row,” and rented them to the Irish. This Irish Catholic community would be the site of some of the most brutal mob violence on “Bloody Monday.” The majority of the “Potato Famine Irish” were poor tenant farmers who competed with black freedmen and slaves for the jobs located at the bottom of the city’s economy.<sup>32</sup>

The Catholic population increased steadily in Louisville, and many of these liberal minded immigrants and their native born offspring opposed slavery, the death penalty, and called for women’s rights. By 1855, these opinions were published repeatedly in the newspapers such as *Herald des Westens* [Herald of the West], and had drawn the keen focus and ire of the growing number of nativists in the city. By the spring of 1855, a society known as the “Sag-Nichts” [Say Nothings], comprised of German and Irish Catholics, had developed and grown in size, and openly posed a threat to the rising nativist impulse. By that summer, this society was a target and rationale for open hostility toward immigrants and anti Catholic sentiment. The Germans and Irish were a visible presence in Louisville. The American Party, Louisville’s Know-Nothing party would draw a political line in the sand with the immigrants, and repeated clashes between the competing groups vying for power would lead to “Bloody Monday.”

After Bloody Monday, the Know-Nothings, attracting negative national press for the extent of human loss in the riots, would quickly decline. In 1857, Louisville’s city government would follow other cities in the East by beginning the organization of a professional police department, perhaps in an effort to deter the type of collective violence so prevalent in the years before.<sup>33</sup>

And Prentice, in a continuing attempt to preserve the Union, and connect with a prevailing party, would support John Bell and the Union electoral ticket in the election of 1860. It is perhaps a fair conclusion to place some culpability on Prentice for “Bloody Monday” even though he entered the battle late in the game. Also, there were forces at work that were perhaps beyond his understanding. Yet he did put forth his ultimate effort in winning the election for the American Party, which was victorious on August 6, 1855. The issue of slavery contributed to the victory and the level of

violence that occurred at and around the polls. In later years it seems that Prentice recognized his tenacity in a small note on *Journal Office* stationery on December 1, 1865, when he wrote, “Walk fast till you occupy the right position, and then stand fast.”<sup>34</sup> The right position, as Prentice saw it during the political crisis that developed in the 1850s and during the election of 1855 was pro slavery, unionist Kentuckian who struggled with his fears for a slaveholding society faced with a growing threat of abolition.

## (Endnotes)

1 Betty Congleton, “George D. Prentice and Bloody Monday” A Reappraisal”, *The Register*, 63, Vol.3, July, 1965, .231-234.

2 Wallace S. Hutcheon, Jr, “The Louisville Riots of August, 1855”, *Register* 69 (April 1971) 150. 152.

3 *Ibid.*, 163. Hutcheon observes that the immigrants relied solely on Bishop Martin J. Spalding and Benedict J. Webb, editor of the *Catholic Advocate*. These men “ably defended the Catholics and foreign born,” writes Hutcheon, “but their role was defensive, while Prentice and the Know-Nothings were on the offensive” against Catholicism. Hutcheon seems to lament that the Germans and Irish were under-represented because the leaders believed in peace.

4 *Ibid.*, p.169.

5 Charlie Bush, ed., *A Citizen’s Guide to the Kentucky Constitution* (Frankfort, KY, 1987),

6 McGann, “Nativism in Kentucky to 1860,” 91; Charles E. Deusner, “The Know Nothing Riots in Louisville, 1855,” *Register of Kentucky Historical Society*, LXI (April 1963): 146; Hutcheon, 169; William C. Mallalieu, “George D. Prentice: A Reappraisal Reappraised,” *Register of Kentucky Historical Society* LXIV (January 1966): 47. McGann places blame squarely on Prentice and former Governor and Whig John J. Crittenden who strongly supported the American Party. She cites Prentice’s hostile anti Catholic editorials but does not address the issue of anti abolition. Mallalieu and Hutcheon tend to spread the blame to immigrants, in part to Prentice, and those “unhappy traits” proffered by Hutcheon. All of these writers step deftly past the growing issue of abolition in Kentucky and focus on indicting or defending Prentice for his anti-Catholic and immigrant rhetoric, all of which was standard fair among nativist editors of the day. Davis, 217-218. The nativist attack on the immigrants in Louisville added a transforming issue to the counter subversive intellectual arsenal; the issue of slavery.

7 Thomas P. Baldwin, “George D. Prentice, The *Louisville Anzeiger*, and the 1855 Bloody Monday Riots,” *The Filson Club Quarterly*, 67, No. 4, (October, 1993) 494-495; Focusing on a selection of exchanges between Prentice and Georg Philip Doern, editor of the German language newspaper, the *Anzeiger*, Baldwin argues that Prentice was irresponsible in his editorials, calling the Know-Nothings to arms while Doern maintained a level of professionalism in his approach. Baldwin does not address the issue of slavery or why the level of violence was so intense. Like other authors, he focuses on Prentice’s impact.

8 Davis, 213, fn 26.

9 Harold D. Tallant, *Evil Necessity, Slavery and Political in Antebellum Kentucky*, (University Press of Kentucky, 2003) , 5-15. Tallant argues that as the positive good advocates rose to prominence in the south and abolition developed in the north, the necessary evil advocates found themselves dwindling. These Kentuckians viewed slavery as ruinous for the nation, but felt that, so long as the races cohabited the nation, there was need for slavery to control the Negro and avoid racial war. Tallant’s thesis is useful in explaining the virulent anti abolition stance of Kentuckians such as Prentice, who saw abolition as a catalyst for dividing the nation and war.

10 *Ibid.*, 158

11 *Ibid.*, 158-159

12 *Ibid.*, 159

13 Michael Feldberg, *The Turbulent Era; Riot and Disorder in Jacksonian America* (Oxford Press, 1980), 5, 6, 34-35. In an examination of antebellum violence, Michael Feldberg, citing a study by John C. Schneider, offers the statistic that at least 70% of cities with populations of 20,000 or more by 1850 experienced some degree of major disorder from 1830-1865, noting that these disturbances reflected

certain major categories and characteristics. These categories are anti-immigrant, religious, anti-abolition, anti-black, and political collective violence. He further notes that there were what he defines as “expressive and recreational riots” including gang fights, firemen fights, election riots, and community solidarity riots and demonstrations. Louisville on the eve of “Bloody Monday had exhibited all of these “unhappy traits” that were present in other cities in the era. In 1854 a Catholic priest was tarred and feathered in Ellsworth, Maine. Joseph Smith was lynched in Illinois. Violence based on religion and ethnicity was common to collective violence in Jacksonian America. And Louisville was no exception. Three years after Bloody Monday, between fourteen and one hundred Germans were killed in Louisville in anti-immigrant rioting.

14 T. Harry Williams, ed., *Abraham Lincoln; Selected Speeches, Messages, and Letters* (New York, 1957) 6-7, 14; See, Michael Feldberg, *The Turbulent Era: Riot and Disorder in Jacksonian America* (Oxford Press, 1980), 4.

15 Tallant, 156-157, 13; Tallant notes that, at the constitutional convention of 1849 “a large and persistent group of delegates- mostly Democrats-who wanted a guarantee the right of the citizens of Kentucky to import slaves for their own use. They argued that unless the right to import slaves was guaranteed in the constitution, the legislature could again prohibit slave importation, thus limiting the ownership of slaves to Bluegrass ‘aristocrats’ who would grow rich by selling their slaves at inflated prices.” The ban on importation would limit the “average farmer” from advancing himself economically by purchasing slaves. This pro-slavery position within the party, argues Tallant, was a threat to those holding fast to the “necessary evil” doctrine, presumably endorsing the importation of more slaves into Kentucky and increasing both the “evil” and the potential threat of rebellion.

16 *Ibid.*, 35-36; Feldberg offers evidence that anti-Catholic riots focused on the Irish. He notes that German Catholic churches were bypassed by mobs in the Philadelphia riots and points to Louisville’s riots of 1858 where one hundred Germans were killed in the anti German riots. Feldberg’s findings support the premise that the level of violence toward Germans in Louisville was an exception to the norm in antebellum urban America.

17 Deusner, 130-131; *Louisville Journal*, November 6, 1852.

18 David Grimsted, *American Mobbing 1828-1861; Toward civil War* (NY, 1998) ix, 14, 110, 201; See Leonard L. Richards, *Gentlemen of Property and Standing: Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America*, (NY, 1970) 5, 131-136, 161-163. Richards offers evidence that the anti-abolition mobs were comprised of a disproportionate number of “commercial and professional men,” varying in percentage from city to city. He further argues that, by 1840, anti-abolition violence had subsided in part because of concerns for the basic rights of white men arising out of incidents of the deaths of white men such as A.J. Lovejoy in Alton, Missouri.

19 Yater, 42; The same occurred in Kentucky statewide. In 1830, 24% of the state population was slaves, representing the peak. By 1850, the number had declined to 21.5% in the state. (Klotter & Harrison, *New History of Kentucky*, 99, 167.

20 Yater, 39-42; Richard C. Wade, *Slavery In The Cities; The South, 1820-1860* (NY, 1964) 326, 167-168. Wade argues that percentage of slaves declined in Louisville from 1820-1860, while the slaves and freed blacks had access to African American churches that ultimately would provide leadership for the African American community. Louisville had three Methodist and one Baptist churches that were tolerated by local government so long as they were “orderly, and under the supervision of some respectable white man.”

21 *Ibid.*, 59.

22 *Louisville Journal*, July 3, 1855.

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Executive Documents of the 33rd Congress, XIII,41; Louisville Daily Journal*, August 25, 29, 1851, March 31, 1852, October 29, 1852; Charles E. Deusner, *The Know Nothing Riots in Louisville*, Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, 61, (April, 1963), 122-147.

25 See, Talant, 162

26 Agnes Geraldine McGann, “The Know-Nothing Movement in Kentucky,” *American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* XLIX (1938) 298.

27 *Louisville Anzeiger*, March 1, 1898; See, Robert C. Jobson, “German-American Settlers of Early Jefferson County, Kentucky,” *The Filson Club History Quarterly*, 53 (October, 1979): 344-357; Elsie Rowell,

“The Social and Cultural Contributions of the Germans in Louisville from 1844-1855,” M.A. Thesis, University of Kentucky, 1941.

28 Bruce Levine, *The Spirit of 1848 German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and the coming of the Civil War*, (University of Illinois, 1992) 149.

29 *Ibid.*

30 *Ibid.*

31 *Ibid.*; Levine argues that industrialization, immigration, and the mounting struggle over the future of slavery reorganized political life and destroyed the Whigs, split the Democrats, and spawned the Republicans. Meanwhile, immigration transformed the American wage earning force into a majority of foreign born or their offspring. Louisville’s population of “Forty Eighters,” both intellectuals like Heinzen and German Craftsmen were extremely active in their assertions for German freedom and the denunciation of slavery. The Preamble to the Louisville Platform was printed in German papers across the country, chastising America and demanding the abolition of slavery. Counter subversives such as Prentice and the Know-Nothings had educated resistance in their attacks on immigrants.

32 See, Yates, 65 (The Catholic population of Louisville swelled to such a level that the bishop’s seat was moved from Bardstown to Louisville in 1841 and a new Cathedral opened in 1852).

33 See, Feldberg, 108; John E. Kleber, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Louisville*, (University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 565.

34 The Prentice Papers: Miscellaneous papers; Catalog #40, 1996, The Filson Historical Society, Louisville, KY. It should be noted that, on February 25, 1864, in a letter to an old friend who was contemplating a run for office in Maryland, Prentice expressed his “very kind opinion of Mr. Lincoln personally,” but that he had “heard of some perfidy on the part of the Administration.” He queried “When does the election take place?” He writes on that he had “little doubt, as you have, my dear Hancock, that slavery is destined to be soon destroyed by this war. I predicted such a result fifty times in the Louisville Journal those years ago with a view to discredit the maddened South from secession. But my opinion is that it would be better that slavery should be destroyed by the natural and inevitable operations of the war than by emancipation proclamations and congressional legislation. If a state chooses to abolish slavery within her own limits, I can have no objection. It might, for aught I know, be the best policy for Maryland.” Illinois State Historical Library, Archives, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library; February 25, 1864 Prentice letter to John Hancock. With emancipation becoming a reality through the war, Prentice stood fast to his position that the institution was best dissolved by the volition of the individual states. Although he mentions Maryland by name, his sentiment can certainly be applied to his own state of Kentucky. In attacking the pro slavery secessionists and the anti-slavery immigrants “those years ago” Prentice had exhibited the characteristics of those who embraced slavery as an evil necessity. To Prentice, slavery and the extreme factions pro and con threatened the peace and safety of the nation and Kentucky.

## Martin Luther and the Political Impact of his Essays

*Chase Johnson*

In Martin Luther's essays "To the Christian nobility of the German Nation", and "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church", Luther made various points about certain church practices, which he found unsavory or just wrong. The themes in this paper are how Luther used a scripture based approach, and how the church responded. This is to show the basis for not only Christianity as we know it today, but to show a shifting political landscape from the pope having power on par with a king to secular governments taking control. These are not the ravings of a Heretical Anarchist, or a firebrand religious revolutionary. Instead they are the well-meaning, well researched, and passionate treatises of a very intelligent and moral man who saw firsthand serious corruption.

Before we discuss the essays themselves I believe it is important to give some perspective on the world in which Luther lived, and his education. Luther was a monk of the order of the Augustinian Hermits (an order that puts an incredibly high value on education)<sup>1</sup>, and had earned not only a Master of the arts, but a Doctoral degree in theology. Add these facts to him having been ordained as a priest and we see an incredibly well educated man who cares about his faith. Out of a desire to debate the issues of his faith in an academic setting, challenged the status quo, and brought attention to the issues of the Church. This is met at 1<sup>st</sup> with a warning and eventually leads up to a literal death sentence stopped only by Luther's powerful friends.

In these essays Luther challenged a variety of Church Traditions, and what he viewed as corruption. The issues that form a massive part of this work are the three walls of the Romanists (addressed in "To the Christian nobility of the German Nation"), and his views on the sacraments (Addressed in "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church").

### THE THREE WALLS OF THE ROMANISTS.

In his 1<sup>st</sup> essay Luther explained the three walls of the Romanists, and the reasons they keep the Vatican in power. The walls are described as follows: 1) Spiritual over temporal power; 2) The authority to interpret scripture; 3) The authority to call a council. Each of these walls are how Luther explained how the Vatican keeps the nobility and the common folk down, and thus dependent on the Vatican for their religious guidance. Let's examine the walls, starting with the 1<sup>st</sup> one. The 1<sup>st</sup> wall is

Spiritual over temporal power, and with this the Vatican asserted itself over the various governments that fall under its banner, effectively taking away any governments power to punish or sanction the members of the church. Luther said it best with "First, when pressed by the temporal power, they have made decrees and said that the temporal power has no jurisdiction over them, but, on the other hand, that the spiritual is above the temporal power."<sup>2</sup> "In this wise they have slyly stolen from us our three rods that they may go unpunished, and have ensconced themselves within the safe stronghold of these three walls, that they may practice all the knavery and wickedness which we now see."<sup>3</sup>

This is further exemplified by the way the estates of the church and nobles are separated into a Temporal, and spiritual estate. Luther argued that being Christians we are all part of the spiritual estate, and he cited the book of 1st Corinthians with "as Paul says in I Corinthians 12:12, We are all one body, yet every member has its own work, where by it serves every other, all because we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are all alike Christians; for baptism, Gospel and faith alone make us "spiritual" and a Christian people."<sup>4</sup> This is a great example of Luther using scripture to back up his argument, and one of the few reasons the church had a difficult time putting down his "heresy". With this Luther proved that the priesthood, while important shouldn't have extra authority over the governments of its followers.

The second wall is the right to interpret scripture. Not only did the church have the sole authority to give the official meaning of the bible, but had the sole authority to translate the bible into other languages. Using the attraction of demons to a lay man as their justification, they effectively held a monopoly on belief and anyone who disagreed is easily dismissed and made an example of as a heretic. This wall is explained by Luther when he says "Second, when the attempt is made to reprove them out of the Scriptures, they raise the objection that the interpretation of the Scriptures belongs to no one except the pope."<sup>5</sup> With having saying that only the pope has the authority to interpret scripture it automatically made the lives of would be reformers to be incredibly difficult, as who sounds more credible the Pope or a peasant? This is where Luther came in as a priest and a doctor of theology. He had the background and credibility to make these arguments, whereas others did not and were relatively easy to deal with.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> wall is the right to call councils. It states very plainly that only the Pope had the authority to call a church council. Luther explains with "Third, if threatened with a council, they answer with the fable that no one can call a council but the pope."<sup>6</sup> This is a point of Luther's argument where he cites history, using the council of Nicaea which was called by Emperor Constantine. Luther had a variety of sources other than the bible to draw on. Historian Carl P. E. Springer writes "Luther's relationship to, and use of Virgil needs to take into full account the fact that the reformer not only knew Virgil's works and quoted from him frequently, but also himself composed

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2 Luther, Martin. *Three Treatises*. 2d Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. 10.

3 Luther, Martin. *Three Treatises*. 2d Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. 10.

4 Luther, Martin. *Three Treatises*. 2d Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. 12.

5 Luther, Martin. *Three Treatises*. 2d Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. 10.

6 Luther, Martin. *Three Treatises*. 2d Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. 10.

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1 "Order of St. AugustineAugustinians". Catholic-Hierarchy.org. David M. Cheney. Retrieved 10 March 2016

verses based on Virgil”<sup>7</sup>

With these arguments Luther effectively tears down the papal justifications for their “walls” and earns the increased ire of the Catholic Church which is expressed in the papal bull titled *Ex Surge Domine*. This serves to declare Luther a heretic and offer him the chance to recant, which of course Luther refuses to do. This leads us to the next of these treatises “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church”.

### **THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY OF THE CHURCH, AND THE ARGUMENT AGAINST THE SACRAMENTS.**

There are 7 accepted sacraments in the Catholic Church they are, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist aka the lords supper, Penance, the Anointing of the sick, Holy orders, and Matrimony. This essay is far more accusatory and angry, than his address to the German Nobility. And the reason for that is Luther has been attacked by multiple opponents, and at this point been called a heretic. He has a reasonable justification to why he is angry, and it comes through in the work. 1<sup>st</sup> at the Italian friar of Cremona Isolani “Of that Italian friar of Cremona I shall say nothing. He is an unlearned man and a simpleton”<sup>8</sup>. Luther went on to systematically take apart Isolani’s arguments against him chiefly the argument that with Luther’s monastic vows, and the fact that the old Roman Empire has been transferred to the Germans in the form of the Holy Roman Empire that he should be moved by this. Luther says at the end of his refuting of Isolani “He does not deserve to be treated harshly, for he seems to have been prompted by no malice; nor does he deserve to be learnedly refuted, since all his chatter is sheer ignorance and inexperience.”<sup>9</sup> Luther proclaimed that to not only insult him but to discredit him. He calls him a simpleton and says he is not worth Luther’s time or effort. The tone of this piece is very abrasive.

Luther explained his feelings about each of the sacraments in great detail as well as his arguments as to why the only sacraments that truly matter are Eucharist, baptism, and Penance<sup>10</sup>, disregarding all of the rest as he could find no verse in scripture to support those other 4. When he goes into the 3 sacraments that he approved of, he had a few changes that he would like to see made such as the inclusion of the Laity in the lords supper saying “Christ stand unshaken, who says—not by way of permission, but of commandment “Drink ye all of this.” For if all are to drink of it, and this cannot be understood as said to the presbyters alone, then it is certainly an impious deed to debar the laity from it when they seek it,”<sup>11</sup> he used this argument to further show that the church shouldn’t have authority over this saying that according to the bible Christ put this on earth for everyone not just priests, and therefore everyone should have equal access to the entire sacrament. He went on to say “This monstrous perversion seems to date from the time when we began to rage against Christian love for the

riches of this world”<sup>12</sup>, obviously this enraged Luther which is one of the reasons he referred to the pope as the antichrist.

The next sacrament that Luther discussed is baptism, and he praises that it is the least corrupted of all the sacraments with “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to the riches of His mercy has at least preserved this one sacrament in His Church uninjured and uncontaminated by the devices of men”<sup>13</sup>. With this statement it’s obvious that Luther considered this sacrament in and of itself to be what god intended, but Luther did take issue with how it is implemented within the church. While Luther did say that it is very much the same sacrament that it always has been and that works great for children he mentioned that adults can get lead astray, not from having been baptized but in their understanding of being forgiven of their sin “Yet, though Satan has not been able to extinguish the virtue of baptism in the case of little children, still he has had power to extinguish it in all adults; so that there is scarcely any one nowadays who remembers that he has been baptized, much less glories in it; so many other ways having been found of obtaining remission of sins and going to heaven. Occasion has been afforded to these opinions by that perilous saying of St. Jerome, either misstated or misunderstood, in which he calls penitence the second plank of safety after shipwreck; as if baptism were not penitence. Hence, when men have fallen into sin, they despair of the first plank, or the ship, as being no longer of any use, and begin to trust and depend only on the second plank, that is, on penitence.”<sup>14</sup> Luther then accused the various officials of not doing their duty, and if not encouraging penance, then covering up the effect of baptism to encourage religious vows or service to the church “By this impious doctrine they deprive the whole world of its senses, and utterly extinguish, or at least bring into bondage that sacrament of baptism, in which the first glory of our conscience stands. Meanwhile they senselessly persecute wretched souls with their contrition, their anxious confessions, their circumstances, satisfactions, works, and infinity of such trifles”<sup>15</sup>. Luther also made the point that unless you refuse salvation itself Baptism never wears off and that while doing works is fine it’s not what gets you into heaven.

This essay is challenging the church even more so than the address to the nobility because where as in that he attacked the institution of the church he didn’t attack anyone personally, like he did in the captivity.

All in all both of these essays are valuable historically not only for giving us the issues of the time, but giving us an inside look of the mind of Martin Luther. As well as his basis for challenging the church. Without these we would have a much harder time today understanding Lutheranism’s origins, as well as the reformation in general. As the above documents show the various factors of Luther’s rise helped him to oppose what he saw as the more corrupt elements of the Catholic Church. Both of these essays are more political than Luther’s third *Sola Fide* which is more centered on the more religious aspects of his disagreement with the Church. With these two essays we see Luther use a variety of arguments both theological, and academic to

7 Springer, Carl P. E.. 2003. “Arms and the Theologian: Martin Luther’s “*adversus Armatum Virum Cochlaicum*””. *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 10 (1). Springer: 38–53. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30221884>.

8 Luther, Martin. *Three Treatises*. 2d Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. 131.

9 Luther, Martin. *Three Treatises*. 2d Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. 132.

10 Luther, Martin. *Three Treatises*. 2d Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. 132

11 Luther, Martin. *Three Treatises*. 2d Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. 136

12 Luther, Martin. *Three Treatises*. 2d Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. 138

13 Luther, Martin. *Three Treatises*. 2d Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. 178

14 Luther, Martin. *Three Treatises*. 2d Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. 179

15 Luther, Martin. *Three Treatises*. 2d Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. 183

make his points very clear. Not only does he succeed, but he also defended his position against those who challenged it. The response to these essays by the church was to attack Luther on both a personal and academic level. The first of these is by a Dominican Friar named Johann Tetzel. Who tried to counter Luther's 95 theses with his own 106. Luther wasn't impressed, and neither was anyone else as Tetzel faded into relative obscurity after his arguments with Luther. After him come several defenders of the catholic faith including King Henry VIII of England, the Friar of Cremona (as mentioned above), and the man who lead the charge against Luther, Johann Eck. Eck was Luther's main opponent in several debates, and was able to counter Luther's own scripture based approach with other biblical evidence. Eck was personally invited to Rome by Pope Leo X. Leo proceeded to make Eck the Papal emissary, and they worked together to create several anti-Luther essays and Papal bulls<sup>16</sup>. They varied in both subject, and quality, but the key message behind all of them is Luther is wrong here's why. Luther responded to each with essays of his own<sup>17</sup>, and a war of theological writing ensues. This ends when Luther is called before the Holy Roman Emperor and representatives of the Catholic Church at the Diet of Worms. The Diet consisted of two hearings where Luther explains, and defended his theology, and after Luther is kidnapped by his friend, and noble lord the elector of Saxony Fredric of Saxony. During this period he is taken to a fortress (the Wartburg), and there assumes the name Junker Jorge to avoid the diet's guilty verdict.

The thing that set Luther apart from many of the other Reformers of the era is that he survived, and actually changed the policies of the Holy Roman Empire. Up to this point the entire empire had been catholic, but because enough princes backed Luther the law of the empire changed. Under the new laws each province was able to decide for itself, and if you weren't the type of Christian that was the official religion of the region, you were free to leave if you so wished. This is a massive change not only for the Holy Roman Empire, but for the entirety of Europe. It is because of Luther and those like him<sup>18</sup> that we saw more forms of Christianity in Western Europe become accepted than just Catholicism.

Luther marked a new beginning for a more secular world, and it is at this time we see more humanism, and achievements in the science, and arts. With this it begins to look less like the medieval past, and more like today.

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16 Ex surge dominae, Decret Romanum Pontificem, Excusatio, De primato Petri adversus Ludderum, Epistola ad Carolum, to name some of the biggest ones

17 Sola fide, Against the Execrable Bull of the Antichrist among others

18 Calvin, and Zwingli etc.

### Nightmare in the Colonies: Struggles during the East African Campaign

*Harrison Fender*

At the start of the First World War the Allies initiated a series of attacks on Germany's colonies and territorial possessions throughout the globe. The Allies encountered little to no resistance and within a year Germany's empire was virtually gone. By 1916 German forces in Kamerun surrendered leaving East Africa as the last location of German resistance. Unlike the other colonies, the German forces in East Africa would not surrender until the end of the war in 1918. Yet, because East Africa was far away from strategic and tactically important locations in Europe it was considered a "sideshow" and its role in the war was downplayed. Despite the East African campaign being considered a "sideshow" it proved to be just as much a struggle as the war in Europe. Here, as in Europe, the armies had to fight under extreme pressure and at times difficult conditions.

Although the East African campaign was not the focal point of the war for those involved in the campaign it was still a serious affair. Commanders, quartermasters, and colonial officials had to struggle not only in raising and supplying an army but in maintaining internal security. Accomplishing these goals was a challenge for all because the armies in East Africa were never intended to fight against an equally matched force. Most of the armies in the region were small and were trained and armed to prevent a local uprising.

The major belligerents during the East Africa campaign were Germany, Great Britain, Belgium, and Portugal. All four had at least one colony in the region of varying age, size, and makeup. By far the newest player in the region was Germany which had proclaimed German East Africa as an imperial colony in 1891. German colonial efforts in the region began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century when treaties were signed with local rulers by German explorers and colonial advocates. Alternatively, the oldest European power in East Africa was Portugal which had a presence in the region since the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Although Portugal had the oldest colony it's strength and power was considerably less than its colonial neighbors. Such was the case that there were times when Germany and Great Britain considered seizing the Portuguese colony and dividing it.<sup>1</sup> Belgium, although not a major colonial power, had the largest colony in the region. The Belgian Congo was truly massive and stretched from the African Great Lakes in the center of the continent to the Atlantic Ocean. Unlike Germany, Belgium, or Portugal, Great Britain had the most colonies in East Africa. By 1910 Great Britain had the colonies of Uganda, Nyasaland, Rhodesia, and the British East African Protectorate within the region.

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1 Woodruff D. Smith, The German Colonial Empire (The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1978), 220

Taking over German East Africa should have been an easy task for the Allies. After all, Germany's other colonies fell quickly with few offering any real resistance. For the Allies German East Africa was important geographically because it connected all the other colonies in the region. In 1916 Frank R. Cana expressed this in an article from the *Geographical Journal* saying, "No other German possession in Africa occupied so commanding a position, geographically, as German East Africa."<sup>2</sup> Not only was it important geographically but it contained a wireless station which could relay messages to German merchant raiders and warships operating in the Indian Ocean. In addition, German warships could potentially find shelter in German East Africa's harbors and bays. Therefore, when the war began Allied commanders had some justification for invading the German colony.

Despite Allied justifications there were many in East Africa who wanted to stay out of the conflict and maintain the *status quo*. Many colonial officials pointed out articles X, XI, and XII of the 1885 Berlin Act which guaranteed the neutrality of the region should a war breakout.<sup>3</sup> Neutrality was important for several reasons: to protect commerce, ensure the safety of settlers and their property, and perhaps most importantly prevent local uprisings. The fears of an uprising plagued the minds of many colonial officials and for good reason. Many colonies had experienced unrest in some form since their founding. German East Africa experienced the destructive Maji-Maji Rebellion several years prior which resulted in thousands of casualties. Colonial officials feared that if the local population saw Europeans fighting each other then they would lose prestige within the colonies and their grip on their subjects would weaken.

However, war came to East Africa despite the wishes or fears of colonial officials. To be fair both the Germans and the British provoked one another before the fighting had officially started. On August 8, the Royal Navy cruisers HMS Pegasus and HMS Astraea bombarded the capital of German East Africa, Der es Salaam, destroying its wireless station. The Germans meanwhile commenced border skirmishes against Allied colonies. In one instance the Germans attacked the Portuguese who were at the time neutral. Paul von Lettow, the commander of German East Africa's garrison, had even begun contemplating how he would attack the British. In his memoirs, *My Reminiscences of East Africa*, he explains his decision in the early days of the conflict saying, "My view was that we would best protect our colony by threatening the enemy in his territory. We would very effectively tackle him at a sensitive point, the Uganda Railway."<sup>4</sup>

When it became clear that the war had spread to East Africa the various powers mobilized their colonial armies. On paper the Belgian Congo was superior in numbers with 15,000 soldiers organized into the *Force Publique*. Despite its large size the force was spread thin throughout the colony. Even worse for them was the fact that the Germans overran Belgian armaments factories and depots during their advance in

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2 Frank R. Cana, "Frontiers of German East Africa," *The Geographic Journal* 47, no 13 (1916): 297, Accessed January 9, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1779697>

3 Jim Jones, "General Act of the 1885 Conference of Berlin," *West Chester University*, last modified 2014, <http://courses.wcupa.edu/jones/his312/misc/berlin.htm>

4 Paul Von Lettow, *My Reminiscences of East Africa* (Forgotten Books, 2012), 21

1914. Due to this the *Force Publique* had to rely on the French and British for weapons.<sup>5</sup>

Besides weapons, the *Force Publique* received thousands of carriers from the British. Although the aid was appreciated by the Belgians, at times this was an inconvenience for the British. As explained by historian G.W.T. Hodge, in 1916 the Belgians had stopped their advance across German East Africa once they reached Tabora. To entice the Belgians to continue their advance the British agreed to supply the *Force Publique* with an extra 6,000 carriers from Uganda.<sup>6</sup> For the British this was a burden because they too were advancing against the Germans and needed carriers for their own force.

From the outlook, it appeared that the Germans wouldn't be able to hold off for long once the Royal Navy had blockaded Germany from its colonies. But this wasn't the case as the Germans in East Africa was always able to sufficiently supply itself through resources within the colony. When the war began the German's protection force in East Africa, the *Schutztruppe*, contained nearly 3,000 soldiers which was spread out across the colony. Although the *Schutztruppe* was small compared to the *Force Publique* it was a highly disciplined and professional force; part of this was due to the officers who were of quality stock. Some even had experience fighting in colonial wars and had learned bush warfare tactics from their adversaries. Von Lettow mentioned this in his book saying, "The Herero and Hottentot Rebellion in South-West Africa introduced me to the peculiarities of bush warfare. At that time I gained abundant personal experience, not only from the natives, but also from the Boers."<sup>7</sup>

One of the *Schutztruppe's* most stunning victories came early in the war during the Battle of Tanga where a British amphibious landing was repelled. Capitalizing on their success the Germans advanced into British East Africa and began a series of attacks on the Uganda Railway. Yet, for the Germans, the nature of conventional warfare had a drawback which became aware after the Battle of Jassini in January 1915; at that time Jassini was occupied by an Allied force consisting mostly of Indian soldiers. Under von Lettow the Germans assaulted the Indian's position forcing them and later the Allies to withdraw. The battle was a victory for the Germans but a costly one. Von Lettow later noted, "Although the attack carried out at Jassini with nine companies had been completely successful, it showed that such heavy losses as we also had suffered could only be borne in exceptional cases."<sup>8</sup>

Unsurprisingly, throughout 1915 and into 1916 the Allies advanced deeper into German territory. With the loss of men and equipment the Germans had no choice but to retreat further into the colony. Regarding the effects of the Battle of Jassini historian Harry Facitt wrote, "This had been a costly battle for the Germans as one-seventh of their regular army officers were lost. This influenced a change in German tactics for the remainder of the campaign."<sup>9</sup> The new tactic adopted by the Germans

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5 Peter Abbot, *Armies of East Africa* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2002), 18

6 G.W.T. Hodge, "African Manpower Statistics for the British Forces in East Africa, 1914-1918," *The Journal of African History* 19, no. 1 (1978): 106, Accessed January 12, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/180614>

7 Lettow, *My Reminiscences*, 16

8 Lettow, *My Reminiscences*, 63

9 Harry Facitt, "The "Foreign Service" Half of 1 King's African Rifles-Nyasaland Askari in British & German East Africa Part 1: August 1914 to January 1915," *The Society of Malawi Journal* 61, no, 1 (2008): 50, Accessed January 12, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29779254>



was to become a mobile force whose small size could outpace the much larger and slower Allied armies.

In terms of acquiring soldiers, the British were almost always stuck in a unique position when compared to the Belgians and Germans. At first British forces in East Africa was not as numerous as the *Force Publique*. However, this was only a problem in the opening months of the war. To its advantage the British had the entirety of its empire to recruit soldiers from. Throughout the war soldiers from such places as Canada, South Africa, and Australia would fight on many fronts. India provided thousands of soldiers who would serve in Mesopotamia, Western Europe, and Africa.

Unfortunately for the British the performance of the Indian soldiers was mixed in East Africa. On the one hand, they were a much-needed addition to British forces in the early months of the war. Yet their success in East Africa wasn't entirely successful as noted by such battles as Jassini and Tanga. However, the argument could be made that they were not fighting in the best condition during the early months of the campaign. For example, before the Battle of Tanga many were not given proper training before embarking on the invasion and most were suffering from seasickness.<sup>10</sup> Also, unlike the *Schutztruppe* or even the King's African Rifles, both the soldiers and officers from the Indian force were not familiar with local tactics or the regional geography. In time, Indian soldiers were largely withdrawn from the East African campaign and diverted to other areas.

The bulk of British forces in East Africa would be organized around the King's African Rifles. On the eve of war the King's African Rifles in the East African Protectorate were organized into three battalions. These battalions were comprised of men from different parts of Africa such as Nyasaland, Uganda, and the East Africa Protectorate. As previously mentioned colonial officials feared that the war would result in internal unrest within the colonies. For the British, this fear was not in vain as internal unrest did strike in at least two colonies which were of value to the East Africa campaign.

The first major uprising was the Giriama Revolt in the East African Protectorate. The nearly 60,000 Giriama lived in the Seyidie Province in the north of the colony. For generations they were heavily involved in the regions ivory trade. For the most part they ignored British authority and dismissed labor requirements enforced upon them.<sup>11</sup> The relation between the British and Giriama worsened when one of their shrines was destroyed by the British in early August resulting in a rebellion. Immediately the British sent at least two companies of the King's African Rifles to stop the rebellion from spreading. The rebellion didn't last long and by the end of the month the Giriama were pacified. The Giriama agreed to send men to serve in the British Carrier Corps and had to pay a large fine. Yet the Giriama never gave up the fight against the British and engaged in passive forms of resistance. Many of the Giriama who were forced to join the Carrier Corps deserted at almost every opportunity.<sup>12</sup>

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10 Byron Farwell, *The Great War in Africa* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1986): 164

11 Donald C. Savage and J. Forbes Munroe, "Carrier Corps Recruitment in the British East Africa Protectorate 1914-1918," *The Journal of Africa History* 7, no.2 (1966): 318, accessed January 10, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/179957>

12 Savage and Munroe, *Carrier Corps Recruitment*, 327

The British were lucky in that the Giriama Rebellion was contained before it could spread. While the rebellion did divert some soldiers away from the front it wasn't enough to change the outcome of any major battles. However, when a revolt occurred in India the impact was much greater. When the Ottoman Empire entered the war, the British feared that the Muslims under its domains would rally behind the Ottoman declaration of *jihad*. For British officials, this was a cause for concern regarding the safety of India. Both India and the surrounding region had a high population of Muslims which might side with the Ottomans. Yet, despite British fears, it wasn't the Muslims that took advantage of the war but Indian nationalists.

In 1915, Indian nationalists attempted to thwart British authority in the subcontinent by rebelling.<sup>13</sup> Nationalists revolts broke out in India and Singapore where Indian soldiers were stationed. Although the revolt never became severe, from then on, the British kept a majority of Indian soldiers within the subcontinent to keep security tight. From then on, the British recruited soldiers from across Africa for the East African campaign.

Administrative difficulties aside, when it came to fighting or the movement of supplies the East African campaign was fraught with difficulties. For many of the soldiers and officers fighting in East Africa was just as horrid as the war in Europe. Sickness such as malaria and dysentery tore through whole bodies of men. To put it in perspective, the 9<sup>th</sup> South Africans started the campaign in February 1916 with 1,135 soldiers and officers. Seven months later they had just 116 left; many were not battlefield casualties.<sup>14</sup> Malaria would have torn through the *Schutztruppe* if it hadn't been for their ability to refine quinine out of tree bark. Sickness aside even nature made fighting the war in East Africa even more of a hazard than it already was. The Battle of Tanga has sometimes been referred to as the Battle of the Bees.<sup>15</sup> At one point during the battle some beehives were hit by gunfire causing a swarm of bees to attack nearby soldiers.

East Africa proved to be a headache for quartermasters on both sides. All had to deal with the problems of feeding and supplying armies in an environment where the main mode of delivering supplies was not by car or train, but on the shoulders of men. Although the British had numerous trucks in their inventory, the primitive roads made them all but useless and they had to contend with something else. Oxen and horses were soon found to be useless as they were severely affected by the tsetse fly and other various diseases. To put it in perspective, in a three-month period in 1916 nearly 19,000 horses and 10,000 mules perished.<sup>16</sup>

Due to the region being unsuited for trucks or pack animals the British realized that they needed to utilize carriers to transport supplies to the armies. This would require thousands of men to be recruited from across East Africa. Leading the effort was Lieutenant Colonel O.F. Watkins whose duty was to oversee the Carrier Corps in British East Africa. Throughout the war Watkins and those below him encountered frequent problems in recruiting carriers for the war effort. Part of the problem rested

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13 Edward Paice, *World War I the African Front* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2008):214

14 Farwell, *The Great War in Africa*, 295

15 Farwell, *The Great War in Africa*, 171

16 Farwell, *The Great War in Africa*, 306

with both the settlers and the colonial government. The settlers argued that they needed people to work on their farms and plantations while the government declared that it needed laborers for railway construction and dock work. As the war dragged on it became more difficult for Watkins to fill the quotas. Many potential carriers had heard of how deplorable conditions were working for the army. Low pay and backbreaking labor combined with the hostile environment were some of the conditions that carriers faced. Upon hearing of these conditions many escaped to the backcountry or found work on farms or hid in mission stations.<sup>17</sup> Desertions were also common as some grew tired of the conditions and being away from home for extended periods.

Like the British, the Germans almost exclusively had to use carriers to transport their supplies. The total number of carriers employed by the Germans is not known as sufficient records were never kept. Their reliance on carriers was more than just hauling supplies, they were to ease the burden of the *Askari's*. Unlike the British, at least every German *Askari* was assigned two carriers who carried the bulk of the soldier's gear.<sup>18</sup> Compare this to the average British soldier who had to carry most if not all of his gear wherever he went.

There is no doubt that conditions were just as bad for those fighting for the Germans as they were for the Allies. Many deserted the Germans for the same reason as those serving for the British. When discussing the desertions von Lettow wrote, "Many were war-weary. Added to this, there was in many cases the feeling of uncertainty as to where the campaign was going to lead them. The great majority of black men cling to their homes and relations."<sup>19</sup>

The war in East Africa didn't end until November 25, 1918 when von Lettow and the *Schutztruppe* learned of Germany's surrender to the Allies. The war was devastating for those living in the region. On both sides the death toll was high and the destruction to homes, property, and the land was severe. As per the Treaty of Versailles Germany's colonies were relinquished to the Allies. The bulk of German East Africa would end up in British hands with Belgium and Portugal receiving smaller sections of the ex-German colony.

There can be no denying that the First World War introduced many problems to the leaders of Europe. During the war, political and military leaders encountered numerous setbacks ranging from strikes to stalemate on the fronts. The war in Europe was, without doubt, where victory would be won or lost. With this in mind, the East African campaign was not on the priority list for those thinking about Flanders, Ypres, or Verdun. Yet the "sideshow" that was the East African campaign was still plagued by the same problems as those in Europe. Soldiers faced death and a hostile environment on a daily basis. Military and colonial leaders had to guarantee victory while maintaining internal security. Meanwhile, the people faced uncertainty regarding the safety and wellbeing of their fathers, husbands, and sons who were fighting on the front.

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17 Savage and Monroe, *Carrier Corps Recruitment*, 329

18 Paice, *The African Front*, 287

19 Lettow, *My Reminiscences*, 244

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## The Eugenics Movement and Its Impact:

### A Snapshot

*Gloria Martin*

Nothing is stronger than racism and prejudice that is supported by scientific evidence. Likewise, “A basic problem is racism, namely, antisocial beliefs and acts which are based on the fallacy that discriminatory intergroup relations are justifiable on biological grounds.”<sup>1</sup> In order to advance the human species, the American eugenics movement was created by Sir Francis Galton at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Galton, seeking to understand human evolution, attributed human behavior to inherited traits. Hence, alcoholism, laziness, financial success, and intelligence were viewed as resulting from pure or unfit breeding. As a result of the study of human evolution and the application of Social Darwinism, human hierarchies were formed. Humans, to eugenicists, were seen to evolve at different rates among races and ethnic groups, which were viewed as biologically different and unequal. To determine the intelligence or aptitude of individuals and racial groups, intelligence tests and the study of craniology attempted to separate and distinguish the races into a hierarchy. Based on the theory of racial hierarchy, eugenicists sought to preserve and enhance superior races through discrimination, sterilization, reproduction propaganda, and legal actions.

To restrict particular ethnic groups and people who were considered “feeble-minded,” immigration restrictions, forced sterilization, and the encouragement of abortions were tactics used to preserve the “pure” and “more intelligent” humans. Central movers and shakers of the eugenics movement in the United States included: Sir Francis Galton, Charles Davenport, Henry Laughlin, and Henry Goddard. The eugenics movement was initiated through the social application of Darwinism and the continued study of human evolution, which led scientists and progressive thinkers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to conclude that humans are in a hierarchy of development.

Social Darwinism was the backbone of the eugenics movement. As in the process of evolution and natural selection, Social Darwinism, justified the advancement of particular races or cultures based on the survival and the advancement of the fittest. The theory of evolution views changes over time in which organisms seek to achieve perfection or adaptation. This biological evolutionary process was then applied to humans socially and physically. Eugenicists theorized that humans evolved at different rates, hence they concluded that modern humans were not all genetically equal. Dr. Charles Davenport, a eugenicist, put forth his reasoning for studying eugenics, “The races of man are being studied not merely to list their differences, but to find how

those differences arose and how they are transmitted .... The consequences of combinations of these traits in the instincts, interests and behavior of individuals. At last are studying man as the product of breeding and as the subject of an evolutionary process.”<sup>2</sup> Likewise, eugenicists were interested in determining what traits were inherited and whether one’s social standing or moral character could be predicted through their pedigree.

Due to the application of Social Darwinism, humans were categorized based on ability, intelligence, and moral standing to determine their level in the hierarchy of development. However, the hierarchy through which eugenicists divided the races was not simply a taxonomy of simple to complex organisms. The eugenic hierarchy divided races and nationalities into unique levels in which no aspect of a lower level race could exist in an upper level race. Thus, to eugenicists like Charles Davenport, white people were entirely different from black people.

The fact that not only our physical but also our mental and temperamental characteristic have a hereditary basis has certain important social bearings. It leads us to regard more charitably the limitations of our fellow men. The false doctrines of human equality at birth and of freedom of the will have determined a line of practice in the fields of education and criminology.<sup>3</sup>

Davenport insisted that a musician’s or an artist’s ability is an inborn trait. Similarly, he tied behavior, intelligence, and aptitude to inherited traits.

Not only were eugenicists like Francis Galton and Charles Davenport concerned with understanding human evolution, but they wanted to know how to predict and encourage human evolution. Based on the presupposition that humans evolved uniquely, Galton looked to measure and define the scientific differences between races and even those of moral character. In a letter to a newspaper about African slavery, Galton explained how Africans were not equal to whites and insisted that Africans should be taught like children and whites were correct to have mastery over those who were not their equal. Galton stated, “I do not join in the belief that the African is our equal in brain or in heart; I do not think that the average negro cares for his liberty as much as an Englishman ... we have an equal right to utilize them to our advantage ...”<sup>4</sup> As demonstrated in his letter, Galton was biased in his view towards those who are black. Likewise, the eugenics movement perpetuated discrimination of other minority races and embraced stereotypes.

A major factor of eugenics was the attribution of moral activity to one’s biological structure and inherited genes. While eugenicists understood that certain characteristics of humans were inherited, eye color for example, they made the mistake of connecting qualitative information, moral character, to quantitative, biological information. Accordingly, “Eugenics was based on the the notion that most human behavior, personality, social, as well as physical traits are inherited”.<sup>5</sup> Generalization of groups was a key element of eugenics.

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2 Charles B. Davenport, “Research in Eugenics.” *Science* 54:1400 (1921): 391.

3 Charles B. Davenport, “Research in Eugenics.” *Science* 54:1400 (1921): 394.

4 Sir Francis Galton, “Negroes and the Slave Trade,” *The New York Times* (1857)

5 Garland E. Allen, “The Misuse of Biological Hierarchies: The American Eugenics Movement, 1900-1940” *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 5:2 (1983): 108.

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1 “Statement on Race and Racial Prejudice.” UNESCO (1967)

Galton encouraged people to view and study communities and social groups and see which groups were successful and which people were degenerate. He noted that environment was important in perpetuating particular lifestyles. Galton compared two different racial or ethnic communities and defines communities as comprising of families, common interests, lifestyles, or nations. One community Galton observed was prosperous and the other was slothful and decadent. He concluded that the environment of the community perpetuated similar lifestyles and that racial and ethnic groups created various environments. To Galton, a eugenic individual had above average intelligence and a strong work ethic.<sup>6</sup> Even though the process of inheritance and pedigree could not be lab tested on humans, Francis Galton and Henry Laughlin studied eugenics by scientifically observing families, racial, and social groups.

Looking at humans through the spectrum of evolution was not unique to Galton. One of Galton's cousins was Charles Darwin, who was the founder of the theory of evolution. A crux of the eugenics argument was based on evolutionary principles. Those ideas focused on the evolutionary process of humans. Galton presumed that human evolution, although linear, took place at different speeds around the world. Hence, a pivotal aspect of the eugenics argument is that not all humans have equally evolved and some humans are more biologically evolved than other humans. The goal of eugenicists was to determine how to grade and differentiate racial groups biologically in order to preserve and encourage more pure and intelligent races.

How then were eugenicists able to determine which people were more evolved? The hierarchy was determined by intelligence, moral character, and social standing. The hierarchy which developed was a mirror image of early 20<sup>th</sup> century society. In the 1900s, social classes were based on race and the discrimination of non-whites and even non-Americans. Hence, in a time of racism, eugenics offered a scientific justification for the American class structure. Likewise, the notion that whites were more privileged than African Americans was due to the fact that white Americans were more evolved than African Americans or other non-white Americans. Critics of eugenics in the scientific community, including H.J Muller and J.B.S Haldane, both geneticists, argued that eugenicists were attempting to justify the status quo through reactionary conclusions.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the theory of eugenics for the public was vastly popular due to its combination of Mendelian science and theory.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Gregor Mendel created a method of predicting certain physical inherited traits based on dominant and recessive genes. Mendel kick started the modern genetics movement and based inheritance on the actions of DNA and RNA and the combined genetic influence of both parents on the child. Unlike eugenic theories, Mendel's conclusions could be tested and replicated. On the other hand, "... Galton's view of heredity was a hodge-podge. His ideas were largely statistical and he had no consistent way of predicting the outcome of specific breeding experiments"<sup>8</sup> Galton was limited to observing the results of a person's family tree and genetic and health history. Accordingly, the information Galton and his compatriots received

6 Sir Francis Galton, "Eugenic Qualities of Primary Importance" *Eugenics Review* 1 (1910): 76.

7 Allen, "The Misuse of Biological Hierarchies" 119.

8 Allen, "The Misuse of Biological Hierarchies" 109.

when interviewing subjects and observing, was subject to bias and information was often incomplete.

Galton supported his usage of observation by stating that observing groups based on qualitative eugenic values deterred bias, while observing individuals would produce bias. Similarly, Galton noted, "It may fairly be assumed that the presence of certain inborn traits is requisite before a claim to eugenic rank can be justified ... to consider groups of individuals and to compare the qualities that distinguish such groups as flourish or prosper from other of the same kind that decline or decay".<sup>9</sup> To add validity to the eugenic proposal, the Mendelian study of genetics was appropriated by eugenicists. For eugenicists like Charles Davenport, who worked with Galton, Mendelian genetics gave the eugenic argument hard evidence that certain traits were genetically determined.

Mendel's advancements in genetics were misused by Davenport and Galton due to their application of "moral genes" to Mendel's probability of inherited traits. Most eugenicists were interested in a far broader range of human traits, particularly those relating to behavior and personality. For example, "Davenport tried to show that conditions such as alcoholism, seafaringness, moral degeneracy, criminality and feeble-mindedness were due to or a few Mendelian genes inherited in a dominant or recessive way."<sup>10</sup> Mendelian principles of heredity were construed and morphed into a pseudo-science that applied character or human action to biology. A central aspect of eugenic theory was statistical and based on probability and likelihood of outcome. Because eugenicists generalized communities and attributed or solidified stereotypes, it was reasoned that these traits were hereditary.

To separate humans into a hierarchy based on race, biological differences between races were sought to prove a hierarchy. Limited in testing methods, eugenicists turned to the 18<sup>th</sup> century practice of craniology to justify their position on polygenesis, which is the theory that the races developed differently. Samuel George Morton, a prominent physician who greatly contributed to craniology, determined that the differences in the human skull dictated human intelligence. Craniology, a pseudoscience, measured the bumps on a person's head, and together with facial measurements, eugenicists believed they were able to measure the intelligence of the individual. Besides classifying individuals based on physical features, the eugenics movement created the intelligence test which was made mainstream by Henry Goddard.<sup>11</sup>

Intelligence testing came to vogue in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and was promoted by Henry Goddard, who first coined the term "moron."<sup>12</sup> How, though, does one test something as qualitative as intelligence; what even is intelligence? To answer those questions for himself, Goddard observed and studied children at a school for the "feeble-minded". Taking notes from Alfred Binet, a Frenchman who was credited with creating the first intelligence test, Goddard crafted his own test for judging and measuring intelligence. Similar to moral character, intelligence was to eugenicists an

9 Galton, "Eugenic Qualities of Primary Importance," 74.

10 Allen, "The Misuse of Biological Hierarchies" 113.

11Ludy T. Benjamin, "The Birth of American Intelligence Testing" *American Psychology Association* 40:1 (2009): 20.

12 Benjamin, "The Birth of American Intelligence Testing" 20.

inherited trait. To Goddard, intelligence was a determining factor in the ability of an individual to control and shape their emotions. Goddard stated that “so that in determining the mental level of an individual, we are ascertaining how much power of control he has over these fundamental instincts and emotion.”<sup>13</sup> Likewise, those who were feeble-minded, disabled, or suffered from diseases like epilepsy, were also considered to pass those traits on to their children.

In a 1912 study of the Killikak family, “The Killikak Family: A study in the Heredity of Feeble-mindedness”, Goddard observed and characterized a family’s intelligence. To Goddard, the family was split, the father, Martin Killikak married a good woman and they went on to have moral and upstanding children. Also, Martin had liaisons with a “feeble-minded” barmaid with whom he also had children. The children of the affair, Goddard noted were alcoholics, sexually immoral, and one died in infancy. As a result of his research “Goddard believed that feeble-mindedness was dangerous to society. He affirmed that feeble-minded people were ‘multiplying at twice the rate of the general population’, thus producing more feeble-minded children with which to clog the wheels of human progress”<sup>14</sup> Goddard concluded that individuals who were feeble-minded should be tested and not be allowed to reproduce, and he warned intelligent individuals against wanton involvement with the feeble-minded.

The ramifications of Goddard’s study of the Killikak family were influential in making the concept of “bad breeding” mainstream. Feeble-mindedness became a social issue; poverty, immorality, and economic woes were blamed on the population rise of the feeble-minded. Although, those who were labeled as feeble-minded were not only African Americans, those of other nationalities and races were largely targeted. In 1924, the Immigration Restriction Act, also known as the Johnson Act, was enacted to limit the number of immigrants of certain nationalities from entering the United States.<sup>15</sup> Those who were from Africa or the sub Mediterranean were limited in admittance; the least restricted were British immigrants due to their higher racial status.

At Ellis Island, a check point for those immigrating to the United States, applicants were required to pass Goddard’s intelligence test. Goddard was invited to personally test and look for “morons” at Ellis Island. He “asserted that most of the Ellis Island immigrants were mentally deficient. For example, he indicated that 83% of all Jews tested were feeble-minded, as were 80% of the Hungarians, 79% of the Italians, and 87% of the Russians.”<sup>16</sup> As demonstrated through Goddard’s tests, white American superiority was perpetuated. A culture of fear of feeble-minded people and immigrants ruining the nation and destroying the economy led to the forced sterilization of those deemed feeble-minded and/or criminals and additional anti-immigration legislation. Goddard though, was not the only eugenicist conducting tests to determine intelligence and one’s level in the hierarchy in human development.

Henry Laughlin, was a staunch supporter of sterilization and anti-immigration laws. He supported and helped pass the Immigration Restriction Act by arguing against

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13 Henry Goddard. “Human Efficiency and Levels of Intelligence.” Lecture, Princeton University, April 7, 1919. 47.

14 Kwame Dakwa, “Human Intelligence.” *Human Intelligence: Henry Goddard*. 2011

15 Dakwa, “Human Intelligence.”

16 Dakwa, “Human Intelligence.”

increased immigration to Congress. “Laughlin’s institutional surveys were presented to the United States Congress in 1922 and 1923 as evidence that the inferior sub-alpine, Mediterranean and Jewish races were genetically inferior to Nordics, and thus placed a larger burden on society.”<sup>17</sup> Laughlin held the position that the number of individuals in the United States with defects was rising and placing an economic and social burden on the government. Also, because Laughlin deemed intelligence and ability as inherited, the reproduction of the non-intelligent was a threat to the country. Even though Laughlin’s statistical evidence showed that more white southerners were institutionalized than African Americans, he concluded that due to the nature of their location, black southerners opted to go without special care, which was way their numbers were lower. Hence, Laughlin disagreed with his own findings and went to such an end as to justify his conclusions despite contradiction with the evidence.

The perpetuation of the idea that intelligence or lack thereof was inherited was prominent in American culture. Magazines like “The Saturday Evening Post” and books and articles such as Madison Grant’s, “The Passing of the Great Race” made inherited feeble-mindedness or intelligence a mainstream ideology. Also, a film, *The Black Stork*, depicted a surgeon who would not save the life of a defective child. In the story, other doctors did choose to help the child, but when the child grew up, he was a terror. The film ended with the revelation that the child was a nightmare and the mother decided to get tested to see if she was fit to bear children. Movies and articles were not the only avenues of spreading the message of eugenics, as universities began opening their doors to the teachings of eugenics; 376 colleges were teaching eugenics by 1938.<sup>18</sup> Hence, American social classes and the hierarchy of nationalities based on eugenics was solidified.

American culture was not unique in its support of sterilization and fear of the “feeble-minded.” The Nazis took notice and applied intelligence testing and heredity guidelines to their agenda and Goddard’s research on the Killikak was republished in Germany in the 1940s. Consequently, Goddard walked back many of his views on eugenics beginning in the 1920s, but his research co-opted twenty years later to further racial propaganda in Germany. A common misconception about Nazi Germany is that the eugenics movement and the concept of sterilization began in Germany, in reality, those ideas were borrowed from American theorists. As Goddard began to criticize his own intelligence tests, he stated that there should not be restrictions on the reproductive rights of the non-intelligent.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, he was horrified to see his work as justification for Hitler’s holocaust against the Jews and the disabled. Unlike Goddard, Henry Laughlin remained a supporter of Germany and even accepted an award from a Nazi held college which praised his work on eugenics and his support of sterilization.

The reduction of immigrants was only one measure which was implemented to reduce the number of defective individuals in the United States, as sterilization became a solution to preserving the pure race. As in the push to restrict immigration Henry Laughlin again took center stage in a quest to promote the sterilization of the unfit.

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17 Allen, “The Misuse of Biological Hierarchies” 118.

18 Allen, “The Misuse of Biological Hierarchies” 116.

19 Dakwa, “Human Intelligence.”

Laughlin, who at that time was head of the Eugenics Record Office, a facility that recorded detailed information about races and those with disabilities in regards to their intelligence. Operating like a special interest group, the Record Office worked with individual states to enact state mandated enforced sterilization laws. The Eugenics Record Office was funded by the Carnegie Foundation until 1939.<sup>20</sup> By 1935, Laughlin was successful in his mission and twenty-two states had sterilization laws. Reasons for sterilization included multiple incarcerations for sexual misconduct (rape, abuse, or lude behavior) enrollment in a mental institution, and failing or doing poorly on an intelligence test. Also, in that same year, Laughlin boasted of the success of sterilization legislation and stated that since the state laws had gone into effect, over 20,000 sterilizations had occurred.<sup>21</sup>

As revolutionary as Laughlin's ideas were, they were not unique nor new. Laughlin was notable because his ideas were legalized. In 1897, House Bill 672 was sought to legalize involuntary sterilization of those in mental facilities. The bill was promoted by W.R. Edgar, a physician and congressman, and was titled "An Act for the Prevention of Idiocy". Purely based on the ideas of eugenics, the bill intended to "provide restriction relative to persons, inmates of certain State institutions, that such inmates shall cease to be productive, providing rules and modes of procedure to restrict the propagation of their kind."<sup>22</sup> Even though House Bill 672 did not succeed, the seeds of forced sterilization were planted and when similar ideas were again proposed, the result was in favor of eugenics. Eugenists like Laughlin were building their theories and actions on a history of Darwinian and eugenic principles.

America was not the only country to enact sterilization laws, German eugenics also developed out of the American experience. Germany passed the Nuremberg laws in 1935 which mandated the sterilization of the unfit. The eugenics movement had created "empirical" evidence for the hierarchy of races, hence sterilization was viewed as justified. The movement towards sterilization prompted marriage laws and concern about marrying unfit individuals or outside of one's race.<sup>23</sup> Hence, sterilization, immigration laws, and inter-marriage legislation all worked in concert and were viewed as securing the pure race and protecting the hierarchy of races.

As sterilization and anti-immigration laws were meant to limit the reproduction and the increase of less intelligent nationalities, eugenicists also sought to protect the genetically pure from the people of the lowest rung of the hierarchical ladder: African Americans. Eugenics provided a seemingly scientific backing to discrimination and racist actions against African Americans. Davenport himself strongly discouraged inter-racial marriage. In 1927, Davenport stated, "one often sees in mulattos an ambition and push combined with intellectual inadequacy which makes the unhappy hybrid dissatisfied with his lot . . . . A hybridized people are a badly put-together people

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20 "Eugenics Record Office Records :: American Philosophical . . .," 1, accessed November 22, 2016, <http://amphilsoc.org/collections/view?docId=ead/Mss.Ms.Coll.77-ead.xml>.

21 Allen, "The Misuse of Biological Hierarchies" 122.

22 Largent *Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States*. (Rutgers University Press, 2008): 66.

23 Largent *Breeding Contempt* 65.

and dissatisfied restless, ineffective people."<sup>24</sup> Davenport thus inferred that white people were ambitious while black people were intellectually lacking, and when combined, create an individual who is self-hating.

Eugenics gave scientific support as to how society deemed blacks as biologically different from whites and thus should not mix. The concept of inherent differences between groups and cultures continued to permeate society despite scientific advancement and clarification. A noted historian, John Jackson Jr., noted the connection between eugenics and miscegenation laws, "Pointing to the 1924 Virginia Racial Integrity Act, the strictest such law in the nation, he explained that 'it was the first miscegenation law in the nation passed on a eugenics basis.'"<sup>25</sup> After further studies of Mendelian genetics, geneticists determined that traits were not tied to a single gene and recessive genes were difficult to change despite "proper" breeding. In fact, health and genetic benefits of interracial marriage directly opposed eugenicists' claims that everyone should stick to their own kind.

Although laws against interracial marriage laws in the United States were present since the nation's founding, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, several states passed and re-implemented anti-miscegenation laws. While not falling into the correlation vs causation fallacy, it can be noted that eugenics and proposed scientific findings against interracial relations aligned with the times as states like Oklahoma, Maryland, and Louisiana created anti-miscegenation laws. Even though anti-miscegenation laws were never enacted on a federal level, they were prevalent in state legislation. Anti-miscegenation laws were not overturned federally until 1967 when the Supreme Court proclaimed in the *Loving v. Virginia* case that anti-miscegenation laws were unconstitutional.

The eugenics movement along with the legislation to separate national and racial groups began to lose popularity during World War II. As the atrocities which were brought to light in Nazi Germany, many eugenicists like Henry Goddard rejected the hierarchy of humans. Germany had taken eugenics to its logical end of mass elimination of unfit peoples. Although the realization of the implications of eugenics reduced its social acceptance in the United State, the roots of eugenics thrived. Racism and belief in inherent differences between nationalities and races endured despite knowledge of the atrocities of Nazi Germany and the revealing of bad scientific practices within the eugenics movement

Eugenics perpetuated racism and discrimination throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Based on Social Darwinism, eugenicists evaluated and observed communities and generalized their social standing and application to society. Eugenists deemed non-white groups and nationalities as beneath and separate genetically and morally from white Americans and certain white Europeans. To determine intelligence and hierarchical ranking, intelligence tests and analysis of one's pedigree ranked individuals. Unfit or feeble-minded people were often institutionalized or sterilized. Also, immigration reforms to reduce the number of unfit nationalities entering the United States were based on eugenic principles. Within the United States inter-racial marriage laws and other discriminatory practices furthered a racial divide which reinforced the

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24 Allen, "The Misuse of Biological Hierarchies" 113.

25 Mark Largent *Breeding Contempt* 65.

mindset of biological difference between races. American eugenics justified discriminatory practices and also influenced the development of Nazi Germany's mass genocide of those deemed as unfit or feeble-minded. The concept of a racial hierarchy based on supposed biological evidence resulted in legal actions in the United States which widened the racial divide and furthered cultural mindsets that perpetuated racism and discriminatory practices.

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## PERSPECTIVES

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### Corset Myths and the Democratization of Women's Fashion in Victorian England

*Christina Leite*

Extreme cases of body modification, cultural in rationale or otherwise, are consistently subject to taboos applied by those with outside perspectives. In the example of tight-lacing in Victorian era England, there is a very convoluted public understanding of why this custom was practiced. Modern media and literature fail to identify the differences between corsetry and tight-lacing. Many corset wearing women were against tight-lacing. Romanticized notions of the corset leave the general public with the impression that a tiny 14-17 inch waist was average amongst Victorian era women. Other factors to consider are that humans in the past were physically smaller in bone structure, as proved by one of the first female historians focusing on fashion, Doris Langley Moore. In the 1950s, Moore measured the waistbands of some 1,000 19th-century dresses in museum collections and found none smaller than 20 inches. It is also important to consider the variation in units of measurement throughout history in questioning the accuracy of waist size claims. The average corset size of Victorian women was actually no smaller than 24-30 inches. In reality, women who laced their corsets any tighter than 24 inches were considered "tight-lacers" and were criticized for their diversion from publicly agreed upon beauty norms.

Unless a woman's waist was naturally narrow, her tight-lacing practices were viewed as a sort of deception against men. Some women were known to purchase 18 inch corsets that had to be laced very loosely just so they could announce that they had an 18 inch corset on.<sup>1</sup> Another modern myth of corsetry is that some women had their lower ribs removed to fit into smaller corsets. This is a silly accusation given that surgery was a last resort in a time period where some doctors still refused to believe that illnesses could be caused by tiny organisms called bacteria and therefore didn't see any purpose in washing their hands before surgery. The survival rate of surgery in the 19th century was so low that it would be ridiculous to undergo such a procedure. These misconceptions can be easily remedied by consulting the perspective of women who actually wore corsets and tight-laced themselves.

As a minority amongst corset wearers, tight-lacers faced rejection and alienation from other corset-wearing women as well. Victorian morality resulted in rigid moral restrictions women placed upon themselves in pursuit of the docile and passive feminine "ideal". Medicinal technology was not adequate during the Victorian era to provide an accurate understanding of the health effects of corsetry despite honest efforts, and many of the newspaper publications at the time warning against the dangers of corsets were met by inquiries of women supporting the body modifications

<sup>1</sup> *The Dress Reform Problem: A Chapter for Women*. London: Hamilton, Adams, 1886.

and seeking medical proof and evidence in such claims. The lack of women in these professions left a gap in proper representation of the female perspective regarding debates on corsetry. This leaves the question to be asked, if women were so victimized by corsetry, why did they still put themselves in such conditions—and in many cases defend the practice to other women? The motive of this research is to reveal a more in-depth understanding of the historical female perspective in extreme body modification by recognizing who it was who wrote history at the time, and from what perspective and societal condition.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the first recorded mention of the word “corset” is a 1299 account of the fashions at the court of King Edward I<sup>2</sup>. The popularization of corsetry in Europe has been credited to Catherine de’ Medici, queen of France under the rule of King Henry II. During the 1550’s. The word “corset” originally referred to a thick cloth bodice that moderately slimmed the wearer’s waist and accentuated the breasts. As technology rapidly began to increase, whalebone and steel rods were utilized in the design of corsets. This boning inserted into panels of the corset was referred to as “stays”. Contrary to the common belief that the corset was an instrument of male oppression over women, it was actually the garment’s popularity amongst the elite that served as a standard to strive for lower class women.<sup>3</sup> Thus, mothers began to introduce their daughters to soft corsets working up to boned corsets at very young ages. The fact that it was a parental figure introducing such body modifications to her own children indicates the importance outside of fashion these mothers held in such customs. Young girls who trusted their mother’s judgment despite the slight discomfort of constricting attire grew up accepting that molding their bodies to accentuate their femininity was in the best interest for their futures. Mothers laced their little girls’ waists with the intention of improving their chances in competing with other girls to marry.

The Industrial revolution increased in momentum during Queen Victoria’s reign with the invention of steam powered technology. Medical and technological advances of the Victorian era took corsetry to the extreme as new shapes and designs of corsets emerged, and factories began to mass produce the garment as demand for the corset grew. Advertisements for corset makers often included imagery of a hard-working factory, smoke stacks indicating heavy operation. This marketing technique appealed to the nationalistic demographics, insinuating that the corset market was beneficial to the economy.<sup>4</sup> By the late 16th century, women had access to more heavily structured corsets and a larger variety of cheaper materials, and tight-lacing emerged as a race to the smallest waist.<sup>5</sup>

Tight-lacing women still strove for waists smaller than 23 inches, despite the ridicule they faced. The “wasp waist” silhouette, named after the insect’s segmented body, was a fad sought after by extreme tight-lacers who aimed for 14-18 inch waists. Extreme tight-lacing was most popular as a niche fad in the 1870’s and 80’s. Women habitually

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2 Liu, Elise. “The Infamous Hourglass -Constructing the Perfect Female Figure.” Harvard Writes. Accessed November 21, 2016. [http://harvardwrites.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/HW\\_Liu.pdf](http://harvardwrites.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/HW_Liu.pdf).

3 Steele, Valerie. *The Corset: A Cultural History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

4 (Steele, 19.)

5 Kunzle, David. *Fashion and Fetishism*. London: Penguin, 2002.

tightened their corset laces beyond comfort in efforts to condition their waist into permanent reduction. Actresses were the most competitive in tight-lacing. This technology in combination with the democratization of fashion presented women of all social classes with an opportunity to create a self-defined identity in competition with upper-class women who used fashion as a means for distinguishing themselves from the masses.<sup>6</sup> Elise Liu noted in her award winning piece analyzing the “Infamous Hourglass” that though technology had provided women with freedom from the restrictions of their genetic heritage, they became slaves nonetheless to the endless struggle for self-improvement.<sup>7</sup> Rather than appreciating the bodies they were born with, women were mocked for their vanity and discontentment.

This “fashion slavery” is nothing new, nor has it disappeared with new generations. Humans have sought to adorn themselves in various ways through multiple cultures and generations. Democracy of fashion comes in to play when considering the ideology left behind from the Sumptuary laws or “acts of apparel” passed by King Henry VIII of the Medieval ages. These laws were utilized by higher-status groups in England to regulate the clothing options people had access to depending on their status. These laws emphasized and defined the differences between the classes, allowing wealthier individuals to differentiate themselves from the rest of the population. The 1363 statute to the Clothing Law of 1337 states that the wives of poor farmers and craftsmen cannot wear any veil or kerchief made of silk... the higher-status groups, however, are allowed to wear whatever imported items they wanted. Luxuries were reserved for the upper class due to the belief at the time that it was for the public good. The sliding scale of sovereignty left those with high status to believe luxury in individuals had to be prevented, or the state was at risk of corruption and the nation’s existence as a whole would be endangered.<sup>8</sup>

Corsetry was not always a controversial topic. Around the same time tight-lacing was becoming a niche trend, Medical professionals emphasized arguments against the practice in response to the changing global ideals regarding beauty standards. This shift in public acceptance began in the 1790’s along with the ideology of the French Revolution.

The French Revolution sparked a rejection of upper-class culture, and the corset—having been introduced to popular fashion by the French monarchy—gained a new symbolism as an object of oppression. The pursuit of Democracy sparked by the French Revolution involved fashion as well. However, it was a process, and a new beauty standard was still applied to women, this time not by the nobility only, but by society as a whole. With global perceptions of beauty and self-identity in search of a new idol to aspire to, doctors began to consult classical works of art as models for human anatomy and beauty standards. The trend of upper-classes setting beauty standards can be traced through history by analyzing the portrayal of beautiful women in popular historical works of art. European Renaissance era paintings reveal the feminine ideal of the time to be full figured and light skinned, a prime example of this

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6 (Steele, 36-48.)

7 (Liu, 2.)

8 Baldwin, Elizabeth. “Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England.” Accessed December 06, 2016. [https://archive.org/stream/sumptuarylegisla00bald/sumptuarylegisla00bald\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/sumptuarylegisla00bald/sumptuarylegisla00bald_djvu.txt)



is the Birth of Venus painted in in the mid 1480's by Sandro Botticelli, the pinnacle of femininity at the time.<sup>9</sup> Full figured women were a symbol of wealth portraying the accessibility to food such women would have as opposed to thin poor women. Fair skin common in such paintings symbolized wealth in that the observer can infer that a pale woman does not spend much time laboring outdoors at the mercy of the sun's rays.

Medical professionals in Victorian England also looked towards classical works of art in efforts to understand body modifications and what the body should look like. English anatomist William Henry Flower published a book called *Fashion in Deformity, as illustrated in the customs of barbarous and civilised races* in 1881 in efforts to catalog body modification trends around the globe. Following a few pages where he discussed the process of Foot-binding, Flower states that though the custom might seem strange and foreign to an outside observer, it is not too far off from what the majority of Europeans subject themselves and their children to as well. He points out that by wearing poorly shaped shoes that tapered to a narrow toe, Western cultures are also guilty of modifying their bodies and deforming their feet. It is here that a true periodical medical perspective is revealed, "Let anyone take the trouble to inquire into what a foot ought to be. For external form look at any of the antique models,--the nude Hercules Farnese or the sandalled Apollo Belvidere,"<sup>10</sup> This quotation reiterates that doctors indeed used classical works of art by ethnic groups deemed "civilized" by their standards, to formulate their basis for what human anatomy should look like. By such logic, is that to say modern historians and medical professionals should look towards today's oldest depictions of the human figure to define a beauty standard for what is "natural beauty"? The flaw with this, was that it contradicted the movement for fashion democracy and self-identity by still presenting women with a standard to strive for rather than supporting individualistic concepts of beauty. Though the intention was to liberate women from fashion's oppression, the dress reformers and doctors continued to oppress those who did not agree with their definition of "fashion freedom". Women who adhered to society's previous call for thin waists were left behind as outdated and considered "fashion victims". Tight-lacing women were discriminated against more than ever as medical professionals questioned their sanity in choosing to lace despite changing philosophies of fashion.

In response to the rejection of French nobility fashions and oppressive culture, the search for a new understanding of beauty through historical art pieces resulted in the Empire silhouette returning to popular fashion. The empire silhouette of Greco-Roman and Neoclassical fashion was characterized by a tight fitting bodice to emphasize the chest ending just under the bust line, and a loose fitting long skirt that flowed freely rather than multiple layers of petticoats. Because the Empire Silhouette became the new feminine "ideal" and the formerly adored "hourglass" silhouette emphasized by the corset entered much debate and disagreement, the Corset Controversy gained global attention in published media.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Harris, Beth, and Steven Zucker. "Botticelli, Birth of Venus." Khan Academy. Accessed December 07, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Flower, William Henry. *Fashion in Deformity, as Illustrated in the Customs of Barbarous and Civilised Races*. London: Macmillan, 1881. pg 64-65

<sup>11</sup> Jenkins, David (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, Cambridge University Press,

In 1869, the Corset Controversy was amplified by a note that was published in the British medical journal *The Lancet*, and later re-printed in *The Times of London*. This medical publication essentially and rather offensively, claimed that until women found value in "educating themselves" and acknowledging the health risks of corsetry, rallying against it was pointless.<sup>12</sup> This publication reveals the inference that tight-lacing women were viewed as ignorant in their vanity by the majority of medical professionals.

Despite the efforts of the few pro-tight-lacing women to provide a differing perspective in anonymous letters to various newspapers, their efforts were drowned out by the general public's opinion. This is due primarily to the fact that females had been slowly but surely pressured out of the medical profession in Europe since the 15th century<sup>13</sup>, and remained a rarity in the European medical field until the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In fact, up until around the 17th century, if you were a successful healer as a female, you were at risk of being accused of witchcraft and being burned at the stake.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the medical industry would see no significance in the female perspective of tight lacing, both medical and otherwise. In Victorian England, it was common practice to ship women off to insane asylums horrific in practice, for the slightest notion of the ambiguous indications of "Female Hysteria"--a fake diagnosis men in the medical field formulated that justified sending women to these asylums. Women could be sent away, forcibly sterilized, or subject to torturous "cures" for an extensive amount of symptoms like nervousness, irritability, sexual desire, or in contradiction, loss of sexual desire, amongst countless other general symptoms and treatments deemed torturous by today's medical standards. Corsets were also named a cause of Female Hysteria. When questioning the validity in an English Victorian era medical publications in media in regards to women's health and sexuality it is important remember the level of technology doctors had to work with, as well as the social and moral implications on their psychology and how it effected their practice and decisions. Because such male doctors held all the medical credibility in Victorian England, and they frequently spoke out on the corset controversy in newspapers, the opinion of the general public followed without acknowledging any significance in the supporting female viewpoint.<sup>15</sup>

Men in the medical field also linked corsets to a number of both internal and external health issues, primarily focusing on internal organs. However, many of their arguments have been debunked by Valerie Steele in her book *The Corset: A Cultural History*. Though corsets have been proven to increase the wearer's blood pressure by 6-15%, there is no actual evidence from specifically cited autopsies supporting medical

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September 2003, p. 903

<sup>12</sup> *The Lancet*, Volume 94, Issue 2400, 28 August 1869, "The Waist of the Period"

<sup>13</sup> Bourdillon, Hilary. *Women as Healers: A History of Women and Medicine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988 14-16.

<sup>14</sup> Zwierlein, Anne-Julia. 2014. "The Texture of Her Nerves and the Palpitation of Her Heart": Vocation, Hysteria, and the 'Surplus Female' in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Medical Discourse." In *Gender and Disease in Literary and Medical Cultures*, 109-123. Heidelberg, Germany: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014. MLA International Bibliography, EBSCOhost (accessed October 27, 2016).

<sup>15</sup> Levack, Brian P. "The Decline and End of Witchcraft Prosecutions." *Oxford Handbooks Online*. 26 Oct. 2016. <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199578160.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199578160-e-25>.

claims that the heart is at all damaged by corsetry. Claims that corsetry lead to cardiac palpitations and other circulatory issues from constriction were also left un-validated due to lack of medical evidence.<sup>16</sup> Many Victorians were convinced that the corset could cause mammary abscesses. However, bacteria is the cause of this common inflammation of the breast tissue, meaning clothing of any type could have caused the abscesses in a time period that practiced poor general hygiene.<sup>17</sup> Victorian doctors were convinced that the liver could also be affected negatively in many different ways by the corset's compression. However, modern medicine indicates that livers vary greatly in size and shape, and most of what Victorian doctors thought was deformation of the liver was simply varying liver appearances that may have confused medical professionals at the time.<sup>18</sup> The uterus was believed by Victorian doctors to be the most important organ in the female body, and claimed that it suffered the most out of all of the organs from tight-lacing. Doctors stated that corsets could prevent proper development of the uterus and its muscles. However, as with previous medical arguments, there is no confirmed medical evidence from autopsies or otherwise to back up this theory. Steele makes a significant point that a properly laced corset compresses the organs no more than a baby does during pregnancy. Another medical assertion that emerged from the Victorian era claimed that corsets prevented the lower parts of the lungs from expanding completely while breathing, applying additional strain and making the wearer susceptible to pneumonia or tuberculosis. Steele argues that though tightly laced corsets do cause the wearer to be short of breath, the corset had been associated with tuberculosis before the discovery of the bacillus bacteria, suggesting that the corset may have only aggravated the condition rather than being directly responsible. In addition, many women did not know how to waist train properly, which is a gradual process.<sup>19</sup>

Just because these medical assertions have not been validated does not mean all Victorian health concerns regarding corsetry were inaccurate. Instances of broken ribs have and still do occur, though the general consensus now points the blame once more at improper use of the corset rather than the corset itself-- much like if someone wore braces improperly resulting in deformation. The stomach, colon, and back muscles were affected the most from repetitive tight-lacing. An overly tightened corset can cause indigestion and inability to eat an entire meal, constipation due to poor diet which could have led to death, and weakened back muscles from relying too much on the corset's support is proven to lead to chronic back pain. Certain styles of corsets effected the body more negatively than others.<sup>18</sup>

Malpractice in waist training was a common argument against dress reformers and medical publications. Corsets that were more considerate of human anatomy were prioritized as innovative designs were produced and advocated as an alternative to "outdated" designs. Modern society is accustomed to fashion illustrations and caricatures

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16 (Steele, 48-62)

17 Crutchfield, Eugene Lee, M.D. "Some Ill Effects of the Corset." Gaillard's Medical Journal 67 (July 1897): 37-14. Google Books. Web. 21 November 2016

18 Zurndorfer, Harriet Thelma. Chinese Women in the Imperial Past: New Perspectives. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

19 Steele, pg 20-38

of women with tiny waists. However, many of those illustrations are intended to be either comical or aspirational. In her essay, "The S-Bend in Context", Marion McNealy contrasts drawings of the notoriously unhealthy straight-front S-Bend corset, associated with particularly unnatural posture, with photos of actual women wearing them. She discovered that their posture was not nearly as extreme as the drawings and advertisements would imply. Even in photos of extreme tight-lacers—most of whom were actresses—display a sort of uncomfortable posture as though they are laced tighter than normal for the photo. Also, photo retouchers were capable of narrowing women's waist sizes long before the invention of Photoshop.<sup>20</sup>

Medical warnings did not fall upon deaf ears, however. In 1848 an English corsetier named Madame Roxey A Caplin released a line of what she referred to as "hygienic corsets". Caplin expressed the supporting female perspective of corsetry in the following passage from her book *Health and Beauty; or corsets and clothing constructed in accordance with the physiological laws of the human body*;

The evils are all portrayed by a master hand, but there is not one hint that can be of the least service to the world by remedying it... It never seems to have occurred to the Doctors that ladies must and will wear stays, in spite of all the medical men of Europe. The strong and perfect feel the benefit of using them; and the weak and delicate or imperfect, they are absolutely indispensable.

In summary, though men in the medical field were doing an effective job at trying to point out some of the health risks of poorly made corsets with good intentions, they were doing nothing to contribute to improving the structure of the garment; identifying only a problem without seeking a solution. Caplin further argues that women wear corsets because it allows them to preserve the appearance of youth, and that a primary reason for the medical risk in corsetry was contributed by the increase in homemade corsets by women uneducated in the craft. Caplin's arguments have valid points, all beneficial to one who makes a living making corsets. Her most significant contribution to shedding light on the supporting female perspective of corsetry is in her statement that women will wear corsets even if they fully understand the health risks pointed out. Therefore, it can be inferred that corset wearing women were not all ignorant to opposing medical arguments. To put it simply, many women practiced these modifications even after they became controversial for the simple fact that it made them feel beautiful. The human pursuit of beauty—not solely physical—is universal. We can see a similar pattern in women's behavior in the body modifying acts of wearing uncomfortable push-up bras, expensive make up that is harmful to the skin, and high heels that affect the ankle and back—in addition to women who still today enjoy the feeling of a properly sized and laced corset.<sup>21</sup> Today there is a resurgence of both full figure and small waists in women in public beauty standards, this time in combination, as famous individuals like Kim Kardashian are idolized for

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20 McNealy, Marion. "Charlybu." Foundations Revealed: The Corset Maker's Companion. Accessed December 07, 2016. <http://www.foundationsrevealed.com/free-articles/180-the-s-bend-in-context>.

21 Steele, pg. 40-43

the curviness of their silhouettes. Which is interesting enough seeing as how she is also responsible for re-popularizing the corset and waist training, this time with boneless latex waist cinchers designed to be worn while working out.<sup>22</sup> Plastic surgery, another extreme body modification, is normalized in today's society, yet people who go under the knife are still met by criticism just as women who wear heavy makeup or dye their hair are told they are lacking "natural beauty".

Regardless of medical data, there were still women who sought to eradicate the corset from fashion altogether, still considering the garment an object of oppression. Around the world, the corset was debated by women and men alike. This 1891 example of the American feminist perspective on corsetry argues more so against the demand of beauty standards as a whole rather than only against tight-lacing:

THE SLAVES OF FASHION, through Long Centuries Women Have Obeyed Her Whims

It is difficult to imagine a slavery more senseless, cruel or far-reaching in its injurious consequences than that imposed by fashion on civilized womanhood during the last generation. ... the tight lacing required by the wasp waist has produced generations of invalids and bequeathed to posterity suffering that will not vanish for many decades. ... And in order to look stylish, thousands of women wear dress waist so tight that no free movement of the upper body is possible; indeed in numbers of instances, ladies are compelled to put their bonnets on before attempting the painful ordeal of getting into glove-fitting dress waists.<sup>23</sup>

The writer, though female, comes from Chicago in America, and does not indicate any personal experience with tight-lacing, only observations. The "generations of invalids" is also a heavily biased claim lacking evidence, reflecting the ideology at the time that tight-lacing corsets disabled women from contributing to society through labor. Not all American women saw the corset as an instrument of "slavery", just like the English women who defended their right to individual fashion tastes. The following excerpt comes from an 1893 letter to the *Boston Globe*:

I myself have never felt any ill effects from nearly 30 years of the most severe tight lacing, nor have I yet found any authentic case of real harm being done by stays, even when laced to the utmost degree of tightness, both day and night. People who write against the practice of tight lacing are either those who have never been laced and have never take the trouble to inquire into the pros and cons of the subject, or those who have, perhaps been once lace up very tightly in badly made, ill-fitting stays with the settled determination of finding them most awful instruments of torture. Those who have been systematically laced up in proper stays from their childhood are the only ones who are capable

<sup>22</sup> "The Kardashian Waist Training Corset Craze." CorsetCenter.com. 2016. Accessed December 06, 2016.

<sup>23</sup> "The Slaves of Fashion" *Chicago Tribune* (5 September 1891)

of forming a right judgment on this subject and I hope you will allow tight lacers the opportunity of defending themselves against the enemies of trim little waist.<sup>24</sup>

Clearly, the indecision regarding the corset was not solely a European debate. However, these perspectives do not accurately convey the perspective of a tight-lacing woman who has lived her life under the fragile and delicate feminine modesty mandated by Victorian morality. English women

who supported tight-lacing also wrote anonymously in newspapers in efforts to let their perspectives on the corset controversy be heard. The London women's newspaper founded in 1890, *The Gentlewoman*, is an excellent primary source for variations in Victorian female perspectives regarding tight-lacing. While the publishing author is very blatantly against tight-lacing; women from varying demographics wrote letters to the editor to discuss their experiences, and not all of them agreed with the war being waged on corsets. One such example can be found in the following letter written by a tight-lacing woman in response to the Newspaper's 1883 article The Sin and Scandal of Tight-lacing;

I had an experience in tight-lacing that may be interesting. My education was finished in a boarding-school near London, Eng., and figure-training was strictly attended to. Soon after my arrival the principal examined me and decided as to the size to which my waist should be reduced. I was quickly encased in a pair of stays, filled with bones, and with an almost inflexible busk, and before many minutes were over I knew what tight lacing meant. Each evening before going to bed, and each morning as soon as I got up, one of the under governesses drew the laces a little tighter, so that in a week my waist was reduced five inches. After that, I was only reduced half an inch a month, till, when I left, I measured just seventeen inches. For the first month the pain from the continued compression was very severe, but nature soon accommodated itself to the pressure and I began to enjoy the sensation of tightness. I have continued tight-lacing ever since, and my health has in no way suffered and the charm of my figure is more than compensation for the amount of suffering I had to undergo. I have not been without a pair of stays, excepting the few minutes I spend in the bath, for over seven years, so I think I can speak with some experience.

Yours, etc.,

A Tight Lacer<sup>25</sup>

Popular media has sensationalized, fetishized, and demonized many body modifications that indicate individualism while simultaneously accepting body modifications that fit within societal beauty standards, and continues to do so today. The Victorian Corset Controversy is a prime example of this recurring theme. Western

<sup>24</sup> "Believes in Tight Lacing" *Boston Globe* (26 January 1893)

<sup>25</sup> "The Sin and Scandal of Tight Lacing" *The Gentlewoman*, 1883

newspaper publishers and medical professionals did not think it necessary to consult the viewpoint of tight-lacing women on a matter regarding their own health.

Another key factor in the Corset Controversy was the duality of feminism. Feminism in the Victorian era was different from feminism today, the strict morality and feminine gender expectations were not imposed on women only by men. Ironically, the pressure to abide by the Queen Victoria's conservative moral standards was as strongly applied by women themselves. The queen for which the era gained its name idolized the female attributes of docility, obedience, and reservation; all aspects women strove to embody in portraying the fragile femininity of a tightly-laced waist, and the discipline inferred by waist training. Victorian morals were also extremely harsh on female sexuality.

The oppression of Victorian era morals and society on female sexuality drove many women to embrace the corset in revolt of their lack of control regarding their own bodies. This variance in women's opinions regarding corsets is reflected in their perception of their individual sexuality. As Leigh Summers highlighted in her study that the corset provided women with a socially acceptable eroticism in a period and place where cultural circumstances condemned female sexuality as either negligent or demonic.<sup>26</sup> In Victorian England, perceptions on the ideal female body figure, and the corset altered both the female body and perceptions of beauty as it turned deformity into a requirement of beauty.<sup>27</sup> Though most women in Victorian England would agree that some form of corset is necessary to daily fashion, lacing them to narrowly tapered waists sparked the corset controversy most likely in correlation to the medical theories that the functionality of the uterus would be impacted. In a male-oriented society like Victorian England, expectations of the female gender centralized around a woman's moral role to reproduce. With reproduction being a woman's primary purpose in society in addition to domestic labor, it is understandable that the majority of the English population was not in favor of a custom like tight-lacing, that was thought to be damaging to reproductive organs. However, the corset did aid the Victorian definition of society in amplifying a woman's image of vulnerability and fragility—implying a passive and obedient nature attractive to male suitors. In contrast, dress reformists waged what they considered a war between fashion and health against tight-lacing—crediting the “damaged mentalities” of those who supported corsets to male fetishism and oppression.

This research shows that in the majority of cases, women continued wearing corsets and tight-lacing because it increased their self-confidence and in doing so, made them happier in general. In some cases, the willing body-modifying woman was aware of the societal state her gender placed her in in the reality of her present, and in revolt against the social constricts of femininity, found solace in taking control of the bodily burdens expected of them, striving to use them to their advantages. In other cases, these body modifying women practiced these modifications because at one point in their culture's history, small waists were the feminine ideal of beauty as society had determined them to be. It is only after societal ideological shifts took place, that body-

modifying women were left behind rapidly changing fashions as their differences from the new social norms left them isolated and misunderstood.

The key significance of the perspective of willing tight-lacing women, was that in a time period and nation struggling to define freedom, women who chose to modify their bodies contrary to social acceptability represented the development of a self-identified beauty standard. Though society initially exposed these women to extreme beauty expectations, by the time the course of fashion changed, these women were already armed with a perception of beauty and self-realization that allowed them to deviate from society's ever changing feminine expectations and formulate their own individual understanding of beauty. Such free-thinking women were met by fear responses and retaliation through campaigns against corsetry. It is doubtful that the people arguing against tight-lacing consciously considered the ideological aspects of the Corset Controversy, or what such individualistically thinking females meant for the existing male-oriented structure of society. To many Victorian English women, the struggle for some form of control over one's own future in a culture directed by men was mirrored in the race to tighten laces to diminish waist measurements. To other women, the corset served as a symbol of individualism and self-awareness through fashion Democracy. Other women considered the corset a symbol of sexual control in a sexually repressed society. Others simply felt beautiful in their corset.

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26 Summers, Leigh. *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset*. Oxford: Berg, 2001.

27 Ballin, Ada S. *The Science of Dress in Theory and Practice*. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1885.

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## Nellie Bly: Breaking the Mold

Kati McCurry

In the Twenty-first Century, women journalists are not an uncommon sight. However, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, women in journalism were scarce at best. The few women that were journalist mainly wrote “women’s ads,” beauty, love advice, and cleaning tips. Women out in the field reporting and writing about serious issues was simply not acceptable to that world. One woman broke that mold; her name was Nellie Bly. She was born Elizabeth Jane Cochran on May 5, 1864, just outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> Through her stories and globe-trotting, Nellie Bly set a new mold for women in journalism by becoming one of Americas first female investigative journalists.

Nellie Bly became known for her “stunt reporting,” which was when the writer went undercover to reveal “behind the scenes” truths.<sup>2</sup> In fact, this is the exact type of reporting that granted her entrance into writing for one of the country’s most successful and imitated newspapers in the country, *The New York World*. When she was first denied a job by this newspaper, Bly began writing for the women’s column in the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* in order to have an income. She decided to interview various popular New York newspapers to see what it would take for a woman to be hired as a reporter. To her dismay, many were opposed the idea of hiring women. As the editor of *The World* said to Bly, “A Man is of far greater service.”<sup>3</sup> Once that article was published, Nellie Bly was in the spotlight for her cunning way of uncovering the truth, which helped land her an assignment writing for *The World*. Little did she know this assignment would be the one to put her on the front page.

The first assignment given to Nellie Bly by *The World* was to go undercover as an insane woman, and get herself committed to the Women’s Lunatic Asylum in Blackwell Island, NY. The objective was to uncover how the women patients were really being treated, due to many rumors of the horrid conditions. If Bly could finish the job, and do it well, she could be hired as a full-time reporter. Bly gave her name as Nellie Brown and checked herself into Matron Irene Stenard’s Temporary Home for Women. After having two meals, she began to have irrational conversations with herself, and was committed that very night.<sup>4</sup> Bly was in the asylum for ten days, and she explained every detail. She wrote about the filthy conditions and nurses who beat and abused the patients. One of her accounts tells about a patient whom they called Urena. When Urena’s age was questioned and she was taunted by the nurses, she worked herself into a frenzy. This led to them choking her, “this made the poor creature cry even more, and so they choked her.” *The World* first published this story as a mystery to gain the attention of the audience. Once her stay was complete and the piece was fully written, Bly’s expose appeared on the front page of the paper, on the right hand side. People were horrified to read such graphic detail as Bly described in her piece, she

even included the sensations she felt while being carted to her examination on the dirty table. Thanks to this piece, Bly was now front and center in the world of journalism.

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Her piece on Blackwell Island was just the beginning. After that story, Bly continued her investigative work. She exposed the corruption and injustice felt by those who lived in poverty, revealed crooked lobbyists, brought into light the treatment of women prisoners by police, and many more injustices. While she was in the Trenton Penitentiary reporting on the treatment of women prisoners by the police, she also reported on the baby buying trade that was conducted within the prisons. She undercovered these facts by posing as a would-be mother interested in purchasing an infant. One of the key components that made Bly so successful, with her stories, was her ability to manipulate her appearance in the presence of men in authority. She used this talent to make these men see what she wanted them to see. This led her to be able to find out the facts, and not just the smoke screen in front. Now a New York sensation and front page reporter, Nellie Bly had broken the mold for women in journalism, and in other professions as well. However, she was not met with ‘hearts and flowers.’ Many traditional journalists gave harsh reviews on the type of reporting Bly did. Even some women journalists, such as Ida Tarbell, scrutinized this new type of reporting. They felt it was too dangerous and bold for a woman to be doing. Despite the critics, Bly was climbing to the top, and her next stop would lead her around the world.

Now that she was a big-name New York reporter, Nellie Bly desperately wanted to spread her wings in a new adventure. She decided to pitch an idea to Pulitzer that would turn heads everywhere; she wanted to travel the world. Jules Verne had written a book titled, *Around the World in 80 Days*, wherein the main character, Captain Phileas Fogg, had traveled the world in exactly 80 days. Bly wanted to take this adventure around the world to see if she could accomplish this circumnavigation in less than eighty days. Even though she was one of the papers most successful reporters, Pulitzer was not convinced. Going undercover around New York was one thing, a woman traveling around the world alone was just plain crazy, in his eyes. He stated his hesitancy by saying that having a woman traveling around the world was too much hassle because she would need a man to go with her to keep her safe, and she would carry entirely too many bags. In the true tenacious spirit that was the essence of Nellie Bly, she prepared for this journey wearing only one dress and packing necessities to fit in one bag. She carried her money in a bag tied around her neck, and she was ready to travel the world.<sup>6</sup>

Bly left New York on November 14, 1889 and began her journey.<sup>7</sup> On her journey, Bly crossed the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. She traveled across the continents of Europe, Africa, and Asia. Her modes of transportation included ship, train, and burro.<sup>8</sup> During the beginning of the trip, the paper had to devise creative ways to make this trip sound exciting, given that her travels were relatively glitch free but getting current information back to New York in a timely manner was quite a hassle.

While in Europe, Bly went to Amiens to have an interview with Jules Verne himself. During their interview, Verne told her where he got the inspiration for his book, which, to her surprise, came from a French article that detailed how a journey around the world could be made. To Bly’s disappointment, the visit had to be cut short so

that history could be made. Upon her departure, Jules and Madame Verne kissed her goodbye, which was a rare gesture to strangers in that part of the world. She had wriggled her way into their hearts, and afterwards Jules Verne stated that Nellie Bly was “the prettiest young girl imaginable.”<sup>9</sup> The success of Nellie Bly also led to continued success for Verne, whose book was reissued due to the popularity her journey brought.

Continuing on, Nellie Bly traveled to many other areas and towns. She stopped in Britain, which elicited her comments on the British men she encountered. She was not fond of the men’s arrogance, and found them rather insulting. She was, however, increasingly amused to find that when the men turned away, the British women felt the same way she did. She also had some battles with Mother Nature along the way. While traveling by ship through Singapore and Hong Kong, she encountered a monsoon. Even through the doubts, trials, and tribulations Nellie Bly made history. She returned home to New York safely on day seventy-two.

Following her history making moment, *The World* was thrown a curve ball. Nellie Bly resigned shortly after returning home from her seventy-two-day journey. While she did not come out publicly and state why, she later confided to a friend and fellow reporter that she had been angered at how she was treated when she returned home. *The World* had offered her no congratulations, no thanks, and no raise for this huge accomplishment that had been made. She felt that it was best she resign and leave. Even though Bly had taken a hiatus, she was still making a significant impact. More and more women entered the journaling world, and began to speak out for equality in this male dominated profession. The problem many of these women encountered was the prejudice that a few bad apples caused trouble for the whole group. Some of the women had a reputation for complaining as well as not being able to handle the white male dominated newsrooms. This impeded the expansion for women, which they had fought for over a century. Even though little progress was being made, women were beginning to speak out, using Nellie Bly as their example and inspiration. Women were building a foundation on which to start their fight, all because of Bly.

During this time, *The World* fell into utter chaos. Pulitzer kept firing and hiring so many people that most could not keep track of who was in charge of what. During that chaotic time, Nellie Bly went to White Plains, where her mother had leased a farm. She and her mother thought that perhaps the rural setting would help heal the depression she felt from facing the unknown.<sup>10</sup> Shortly after a vacation to London with her mother, Pulitzer lost *The World*, which was now under new control and included a new face named Goddard.<sup>11</sup> His first order of business was to extend a job offer to Nellie Bly, which she graciously accepted. She had been out of the limelight for long enough, and was eager to get back in the game.

Nellie Bly became famous for her investigative journalism through her in depth stories and globe-trotting, making her one of America’s first female investigative journalist. This is only a small portion of the amazing adventures Nellie Bly had. It is because of her perseverance that women had the courage to fight for equality, and change the face of journalism forever. Her tenacious spirit and well written stories are still talked about and applauded today. In the opinion of this writer, Nellie Bly was more than just a reporter, she is the ideal of how a woman should be. She was

classy, polished, rebellious, stubborn, and quick witted. She is important not just because of the mold she broke in the reporting world, but the fact that she infiltrated a male dominated career and made a name for herself despite all the odds that were against her.

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## A Historiographical Review of Chancellor Williams' *The Destruction of Black Civilization*

by Chad Dunbar

*The Destruction of Black Civilization*, the signature work of Chancellor Williams, is widely hailed as one of the classics of Black Studies and African History. Williams delivers a three-fold thesis: 1) Europeans have conspired to hide, deny, and appropriate the history and accomplishment of Black Africans; 2) Europeans and Arabs are primarily responsible for destabilizing and exploiting Africa and its people; and 3) African people must champion their own scholarship on African history in order to reclaim their past glory and undo the detrimental effects of Western colonialism and imperialism. He vehemently refuted the thesis George Murdock's *Africa: Its People and Their Culture* (1959), which attempted to claim that Whites were the first to inhabit Africa, despite much archeological and oral tradition evidence to the contrary (not to mention recent genetic evidence from ancestral DNA studies such as National Geographic's Genographic Project).<sup>1 2</sup>

Furthermore, Williams thus argued against the methodology of racial classification used by many Eurocentric anthropologists and historians in regards to Africa, citing that they frequently misclassified people. Almost as a rule, any group of Africans that had achieved fame and influence were recast by Eurocentrists as "Caucasoids", despite actually being what we would now call "Black". This historical chicanery is consistent with the works of James Breasted and other Eurocentric scholars of the time, whose works sought to justify the perpetration and continuance of colonialism and imperialism against Africans.

Williams' book speaks to a philosophical dilemma known as "The African Predicament", first touched on by Stanislaw Andreski (1968) and later expounded upon by Obi Oguejiofor (2001), in which Africans find themselves in a precarious state of defining their African identity not based on their own internal choice of definitions and interpretations, but as primarily dependent on what Americans or Europeans dictate it to be.<sup>3</sup> Williams' *The Destruction of Black Civilization*, much like Amos N. Wilson's *The Falsification of Afrikan Consciousness* (1993), speaks to this problem in its historical context: a deep yearning for self-definition and recognition beyond the mask of White-dominated ideology.<sup>4</sup> After all, as Wilson cleverly stated "to manipulate history is to manipulate consciousness; to manipulate consciousness is to manipulate possibilities; and to manipulate possibilities is to manipulate power".<sup>5</sup> *The Destruction of Black Civilization* stands as a bold refutation of this insidious manipulation of the Black psyche and the Black experience. Williams, much like Isaiah Adujo Ngedu, believed that African history must be written by African scholars in order to ensure authenticity and control the narrative because a people without an identity

which is uniquely and self-determinedly theirs will crave any identity to fill in the gap; however, since the substitute identities in question are externally derived, they yield only second-class citizenship and personhood.<sup>6</sup>

Chancellor Williams delivered his argument in the socio-historical context of Western academia's general attitudes towards African Studies and Black History, during the 1960s and 1970s. One must keep in mind that universities were less inclusive places during this period. The field hadn't advanced nearly as far as it has today, and professors of that time often had to overcome the status quo of biased curriculums bogged down by frequent references to the works of racist Western academics steeped in the bigotry of colonialism's heyday. These Eurocentric scholars actively spent their time providing rhetorical and ideological cover for the continued systematic exploitation and marginalization of Africans. For example, Williams points out the environment of Western academic circles in African studies during the 1970s and 1980s left students more familiar with Cecil Rhodes than any African leaders: past, present, or future. Thus, academia was a hostile place for the author relative to today's environment.

According to his research assistant, Oggie Ogburn (2000), Dr. Chancellor Williams grew up in the reconstruction South, the son of a former slave (father) and a cook (mother).<sup>7 8 9</sup> He spent 16 years writing and compiling research for *The Destruction of Black Civilization* across several continents despite having been blind for at least 12 years before it was ever published.<sup>10 11</sup> Nevertheless, Williams earned a BA in Education and a MA in History from Howard University, followed by a PhD in Sociology from American University in 1949 before serving as a visiting research scholar at both the University of Oxford and the University of London.<sup>12 13</sup> In 1956, he began his field research in African History at University College in Ghana.<sup>14</sup> The entire time, he grappled with a prevailing disciplinary assumption that Black Africans had no history and had contributed nothing of value to the world or civilization in general. Nonetheless, he overcame all of these obstacles and managed to publish one of the most significant works in both the fields of African History and Black Studies. Given the socio-historical context of his life and work, it would only be fair to temper many of the criticisms aimed his way.

*The Destruction of Black Civilization* was originally published in 1971, with a second edition in 1974, and a third edition in 1987. The first edition was released under a White-owned publishing company (Kendall Hunt), yet earned him acclaim and an award from the Black Academy of Arts and Letters, while subsequent editions of the book were released by a Black publisher (Third World Books), and were greatly expanded and revised.<sup>15</sup> The latter editions of the book gained Williams a cult following both inside academia and within the African-American community at large, which persists to this day.

The first edition of the book received critical acclaim from a wide range of scholars during the early 1970s. This host included C. L. R. James (1971), Ernest J. Wilson III (1973), Haki R. Madhubuti (1974), John Henrik Clarke (1975), and novelist John Oliver Killens (1975): all of whom expressed high regard for the first edition of *The Destruction of Black Civilization*, giving it glowing reviews and citing it thoroughly in published works.<sup>16 17 18 19</sup> Unreservedly, Wilson, writing in *The Black Scholar* journal (1973), exclaimed that:



“At last we have a book that answers our needs. Chancellor Williams of Howard University has drawn upon his two decades of research in Africa, Europe and the Americas to give us a thoughtful black re-interpretation of important themes in African history.” (Wilson 1973: 58)

Wilson did not stand unaccompanied in his opinion. During the very year of the book’s first release, C. L. R. James went so far as to call into question the adequacy of African History courses taught by Kennell A. Jackson, then an assistant professor at Stanford University, due to the exclusion of *The Destruction of Black Civilization* as a required textbook for any of his classes, at the time.<sup>20</sup> Jackson (1976) later described Chancellor Williams as the intellectual descendant of Leo Hansberry, one of the earliest African-American historians specializing in African history that also taught alongside Williams at Howard University, for a time (Wilson also concurred with this assessment, as well).<sup>21 22</sup> When the second edition was published in 1987, it received further acclaim from John Henrik Clarke and New Jersey poet laureate Amiri Baraka.<sup>23</sup>

The scholarly impact and legacy of Williams’ climactic book has continued to endure through the decades up through present day. The great Ghanaian writer Ayi Kwei Armah borrowed heavily from the Afrocentric thesis of Williams’ *The Destruction of Black Civilization* (along with the historical works of Williams’ fellow contemporaries Cheikh Anta Diop, Théophile Obenga, and Yosef A. A. ben-Jochannan) in crafting his novels *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973), *Osiris Rising* (1995), and *KMT: The House of Life* (2002).<sup>24</sup> The book was also recommended by Cecilia J. Myrick, in her 1996 teacher-research study which categorized African and African-American students based on their reaction to the notion of a shared common Black diasporic identity, as still being especially beneficial to students who are either initially hostile or accepting toward the notion (the other categories being indifferent, resentful, and African centered).<sup>25</sup> John Henrik Clarke, a contemporary of Williams, described *The Destruction of Black Civilization* as “a foundation and new approach to the history of our race” that “shifted the main focus from the history of Arabs and Europeans in Africa to the Africans themselves—a history of the Blacks that is a history of Blacks”.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, in an encyclopedia edited by Ama Mazama and Molefi Kete Asante (2005), Serrano described *The Destruction of Black Civilization* as a ground-breaking “book of enduring power” that greatly expanded the field of African history.<sup>27</sup>

Williams’ work has continued to be hailed even into the most recent decade by scholars such as Molefi Kete Asante (2009), and Ozodi Osuji (2012) among others.<sup>28 29 30 31</sup> *The Destruction of Black Civilization* has recently continued to be included as required reading on syllabi for coursework at many academic institutions including the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. Williams’ book also continues to command wide appeal and respect amongst the general public, as well. Currently, *The Destruction of Black Civilization* still enjoys a stellarly positive 4.8 out of 5-star rating on Amazon (with 303 customer reviews, 84% of which gave it 5 stars), as well as a 4.53 out of 5-star rating on Goodreads (with 877 ratings).<sup>32 33</sup>

While this book is a classic, and usually one of the first scholarly in-depth African

History books that many first come across in inner-city bookstores, it is not without its controversy. One such controversy is the book’s perspective of viewing all those who interacted with the African continent through the lens of a 1970s-era American race model, categorizing them as either White, Black, or Asian, in regard to events as far back as 4,500 BCE, despite the fact that the aforementioned notion of race wasn’t fully conceptualized in society until much later. Williams’ racial interpretation is an incarnation of the logical fallacy of projection bias, in which he assumes that all people of another place, time, and circumstance possess identical desires, interests, concerns, and outlooks as his own.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, while many scholars of Afrocentrism (a school of thought within Black Studies born out of struggle and conflict during the civil rights movement) still wholeheartedly exalt this book, there are many within Africana Studies (a subsequent interdisciplinary field of Pan-African studies born from a theoretical refinement of Black Studies for the purpose of mainstream acceptance within academia) that view the author’s militant and race-based view of history as detracting from the book’s value and usefulness as an objective historical work. Notably, Osuji (2012) objects to parts of Williams’ thesis, which seek to contextualize the entire history of Africa as a dichotomy of Black protagonists versus White and Arab antagonists, pointing out that Black scholars should not fall into the trap of blaming all that is wrong in Africa on Whites by way of blanket indictment, as seen on pages 184-185, similar to Walter Rodney’s *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972).<sup>35</sup> To do so would entail succumbing to the logical fallacy of scapegoating, thus denying any responsibility for all failures and misfortunes, invariably placing the blame on others.<sup>36</sup> Kendall A. Jackson (1976) supported this appraisal, pointing out that to evaluate the extended history of entire civilizations and explain their socio-political dynamics solely through the lens of strictly demarcated racial categories of modern America is to fall under the sway of the same chimera that misled the Eurocentric writers he so staunchly opposed.<sup>37</sup>

Chancellor Williams triumphantly celebrates every victory by a Black military force against non-Black invaders (and equally laments every defeat), but largely ignores most battles in which both combatants were Black nation-states. Furthermore, Williams’ account of African history, and life in general, is portrayed in an extreme dichotomy of either an idealistic utopia or a never-ending series of harrowing escapes from the non-stop pursuit of invaders and slave raiders (otherwise known as the broken or war-torn Africa trope). Passages such as the following are good examples of the latter:

“...Building an advanced system of life, then having it destroyed; building again, destruction again, migrating and building somewhere else, only to be sought out and destroyed again; moving, moving, moving, always moving, rebuilding and moving, again and again...” (Williams 1987: 160)

This stylistic feature, as well as its tone, put it in stark contrast to the less sensational and more objective accounts found in later era mainstream Black Studies textbooks such as *From Slavery to Freedom* by John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss (2000) or *Africa in World History* by Erik Gilbert and Jonathan T. Reynolds (2012).<sup>38 39</sup>

Ironically, Williams has certain similarities to Eurocentric authors such as J.H. Parry, who's 1949 book *The Establishment of the European Hegemony, 1415-1715* (originally titled *Europe and a Wider World*) is virulently racist (he referred to indigenous South Americans as "barbarous", "repugnant", and better off under Spanish imperial rule) while containing a plethora of well-researched historical information.<sup>40</sup> In their ethnocentric treatments of history, both Williams and Parry make use of the logical fallacy of ethnic prejudice in order to advance their arguments, by marginalizing ethnic out groups mainly on the basis of belonging to a different ethnic group: Williams by demonizing all Europeans and Arabs, and Parry by dehumanizing indigenous South Americans.<sup>41 42</sup> Thus, both authors, despite the praise-worthy depth and breadth of their research, allow the racially charged rhetoric and propaganda to detract from their works, which undermines their objective integrity. Moreover, both Williams and Parry, in their ethnocentric approaches, also seem to craft their historical arguments in the form of a priori arguments by starting with predetermined conclusions and then selectively seeking out reasonable or seemingly reasonable arguments with which to justify and defend their positions, all while ignoring contrary evidence.<sup>43</sup>

One such error, regarding Africa's geological features, appears on page 190, in a section named "To The Caves, To The Hills", which alludes to an enclosed narrative of Black Africans retreating to caves to seek refuge. This is false because Africa doesn't have many caves, except for the northern and southern tips (the former from which they were fleeing), since Africa is a shield of tectonically stable Precambrian rock that (with the exception of the northern and southern tips) hasn't been submerged beneath the ocean long enough to accumulate enough limestone to form karst caves.<sup>44 45 46</sup> As argued by Gilbert and Reynolds (2012), "African history, like any other history, unfolds in the context of a physical setting that constrains and shapes the decisions and options faced by the human actors who make history".<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, Osuji (2012) questions the historiography put forth by Williams asserting that the Mali, Songhai, Mossi and Hausa states were all toppled as a direct result of Arab-Muslim ideology and aggression.<sup>48</sup> Osuji also points out a general lack of documented data and proper citations throughout the book, which unfortunately gives parts of *The Destruction of Black Civilization* a speculative undercurrent.<sup>49</sup> Thus, from both a historical disciplinary perspective and an interdisciplinary perspective, the objective integrity of the work has been partially compromised by both personal and disciplinary bias, which is dispersed throughout.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, Williams must thoroughly be applauded for the sheer amount of information that he was able to uncover before the age of the internet, cellular phones, or home personal computers. Contemporary historians, further removed from the Black Power Movement, may find it is harder to get swept up in the emotional appeals for militant revolution that are sprinkled throughout the book. But once again, despite a few errors, this is still a relatively information-rich book when compared to other works of the same timeframe. For those who have read it at the start of their historical odyssey through academia, it definitely deserves a re-reading for reflection.

And on a final note, to dispel an urban legend surrounding the death of Dr. Chancellor Williams: He wasn't quietly killed by "the man", at all. He died at the age of 98 from respiratory failure, in a Washington, D.C. hospital, which he had been

staying in for several years.<sup>51 52 53</sup> Furthermore, his work had been so widely spread by that time, that any attempt to silence him by force would have been counterproductive to anyone inclined to do so, since it would have ultimately transformed a dying man into a martyr. Besides, his work was profound enough not to require an urban legend in order to drive its sales. Its legacy continues to speak for itself.

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