

tJhs

Towson
Journal of
Historical
Studies

Volume 17

2020

Department of History
College of Liberal Arts
8000 York Road, Towson MD 21252

Towson Journal of Historical Studies is a faculty refereed journal for the publication of original undergraduate work in history.

Towson Journal of Historical Studies, 2020 Edition

2020 Editorial Collective

Sara Cantler
Klara Cachau-Hanshardh

2021 Editorial Collective

Al'Iyienah Howell
Daniel Ashby
Peyton Cleary

Table of Contents

Note From The Editors iv

Feature Articles

Brandon Grosch The Use of Terror as a Weapon by the 1
Luftwaffe, 1937-1945

Kieron Lynch Reagan and the AIDS Crisis 16

Catherine Campbell “The Great American Race Problem:” 29
The Eugenics Movement and
Scientific Racism in the United States
during the 20th Century

Research Notes

Victoria Johnson (with Icelandic Viking Literature: *Egil’s Saga* 49
Karen Oslund) Family Tree

Note From The Editors

As editors of the upcoming 2021 Towson Journal of Historical Studies, we were tasked with completing the 2020 edition after production was halted in the spring due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We would like to thank the original editors of the 2020 edition, Sara Cantler and Klara Cachau-Hanshardh, for their hard work and dedication to the journal prior to the onset of the pandemic. Without the groundwork they laid, this edition would not have been possible. In addition, due to the pandemic, we elected to publish the 2020 edition digitally. We would like to thank the authors and our faculty advisors for their flexibility in rapidly preparing the journal for online publication.

In this edition, the authors have contributed to a diverse, qualified body of work spanning many cultural contexts and time periods. This edition offers scholarship on the German *Luftwaffe* during World War II, the American AIDS crisis of the 1980s, twentieth-century eugenics and scientific racism in the United States, and the family of Egill Skalla-Grimsson, a Viking featured in the Icelandic text *Egil's Saga*. The diversity and scope of these articles represent the quality of scholarship completed by undergraduates at Towson University.

We would like to thank our faculty advisor, Dr. Oluwatoyin Oduntan, and Dr. Ronn Pineo, both of whom have been sources of support and guidance during both the pandemic and the overall editing process. Furthermore, we would like to thank the faculty editors who volunteered their time to review submissions. Although our editorial board did not get the chance to work with them directly, we are deeply appreciative of their contributions and look forward to working together in 2021.

Please enjoy the following collection of Feature Articles and Research Notes—they have been an honor to review.

Towson Journal of Historical Studies

Co-Editors

Al'lyienah Howell

Daniel Ashby

Peyton Cleary

Feature Articles

The Use of Terror as a Weapon by the *Luftwaffe*, 1937-1945

Brandon Grosch

Jackie Hanauer survived one of the most harrowing periods of British history. As a child from London in the 1940s, Jackie experienced firsthand the rain of fire which turned up streets, shattered houses, and collapsed bridges that the German *Luftwaffe* brought to England for the better part of an entire year. Jackie never particularly feared the German bombers, perhaps because she was so young at the time. She even went so far as to say that her “best pleasure was to go play in the bomb damage.”¹ However, she did recall a fear of the second wave of German attacks in 1944 and 1945, when the V-1 “doodlebug” rockets began falling over London. The *Luftwaffe* had resorted to its last-ditch efforts to push Britain out of an air war that Germany had no capability of winning. The deep buzzing of these long-range rockets launched from France or the Low Countries was routinely considered one of the most haunting sounds from all of World War Two. Invariably an eerie silence followed the bomb’s droning for no more than two seconds before the crash of an explosion rocked the foundations of the houses standing in the targeted cities. If Heinkel-111 *schnellbombers* did not scare a young Jackie, the *Luftwaffe*’s flying bombs certainly did.²

While the V-bomb strikes characterized the final German attacks on a civilian population in World War Two, they were hardly the first of their kind. Both sides of the war used terror as a primary weapon against the civilian populations of their enemies. Where did this particular doctrine of destruction come from? Did the use of terror as a weapon originate as a tactical tool in the frontline aviation units, or from somewhere else? This paper aims to focus on German aggression against strictly civilian populations. I argue that such attacks found their roots not in the brutality of a total war waged for the survival of a perceived civilization, but rather in the cold brutality of the hierarchy of the Nazi Party and its most closely conforming military branch, the infant *Luftwaffe*. Despite efforts to retain a legalistic and relatively moral image through propaganda, the Nazis began committing *Luftwaffe* airstrikes against civilians as early as 1937.

We will begin a bit earlier, however. In 1935, the German Great War General Erich Ludendorff described the relationship between military targets and civilians in his memoir *der totale Krieg*, or total war. As the military historian Stephen Roberts states, “[Ludendorff] argued that in such a conflict the distinction between combatants and noncombatants was indistinguishable, and that

¹ David Ian Hanauer, “Experiencing the Blitz: A Poetic Representation of Childhood in Wartime London,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 20, no. 5 (April 2013): 593.

² *Ibid.*, 594-595.

civilian resources and infrastructure were legitimate military targets.”³ This is not a surprising stance to those familiar with Ludendorff’s character. Williamson Murray’s *Military History* article “Tactical Genius, Strategic Fool” highlights a telling event early in Ludendorff’s career during the First World War. Murray suggests that “[Ludendorff] was probably also involved in a number of atrocities, in which German troops shot Belgian civilians (upward of 6,000 by the end of September) in retaliation for the supposed activities of guerilla fighters known as *franc-tireurs*.”⁴ By 1935, the general German doctrine had reflected Ludendorff’s actions in 1914, considering civilians as legitimate targets for military aggression despite their inability to fight back. The full extent of Ludendorff’s influence on the *Luftwaffe* revealed itself only two years later, when the Nazi war machine produced its first atrocity of an industrial scale.

1937 witnessed a world descended into near chaos. Imperial Japan expanded its occupation of China, Joseph Stalin committed a bloody purge of political dissidents in the USSR, and a protracted civil war raged in Spain. This war became a proxy conflict, the outcome of which both Fascist and Leftist regimes around the world had a stake in. One of these regimes was Nazi Germany. Wanting to prevent an encirclement of communist and socialist governments as well as needing a testing ground for the newly militarized *Luftwaffe*, Hitler committed the Condor Legion of bombers to aid General Franco’s Nationalist forces in Spain. The Condor Legion served as a laboratory for *Luftwaffe* command, and almost every lesson learned during the Spanish Civil War informed German air strategy during the coming conflicts. The culmination of the educational experience for Condor Legion commanders was the bombing of the city of Guernica. Immortalized in human consciousness by Pablo Picasso’s namesake painting, Guernica represented the beginning of prominence for terror bombing in German doctrine.

On a relatively quiet afternoon in April, countryside traders made their way into the small town in order to participate in the weekly market day. At the time, few to no soldiers resided in Guernica and as a result the war had not yet touched it. Roberts suggests that the Condor Legion’s commander selected the town for this exact reason. He would be able to measure the destruction caused by an attack accurately.⁵ Some traders were turned away by town guardsmen because the church bell rang out, signaling an incoming air raid. Unfortunately, not everyone was so lucky. After an initial attack run from a single Heinkel-111, one of which is shown in Figure 1, second and third waves of bombers caught first responders trying to help the wounded as well as destroying buildings that had not yet been damaged.⁶ A *British Pathé* video captured images of steaming piles of rubble in place of some buildings. Teams of men dug out survivors and moved corpses wrapped in blankets. Whole truckloads of families evacuated the city. Guernica’s civilians would not escape Fascist wrath, however, as their flight took them further into the “Iron Ring” around the Republican stronghold of Bilbao. Soon German, Italian, and Spanish Nationalist forces attacked Bilbao even more brutally.⁷

³ Stephen Roberts, “Guernica,” *Military History* 35, no. 1 (2018): 26.

⁴ Williamson Murray, “Tactical Genius, Strategic Fool,” *Military History* 25, no. 4 (2008): 44.

⁵ Roberts, “Guernica,” 26.

⁶ *WWII/ Heinkel bomber over England*. Encyclopedia Britannica ImageQuest.

⁷ “Ruins of Guernica after Air Raid,” British Pathé, filmed 1937, Guernica, Spain, video, 0:37, <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/VLVAADFJO6XS7FTJOLQPWMA1FIO9S-RUINS-OF-GUERNICA-AFTER-AIR-RAID/>.

After the Heinkel medium bombers exhausted their reserves of incendiary bombs, the civilians of Guernica once again believed they were safe. They ventured out to assist the dead and dying. Once again, the Germans had set a trap. Dust kicked up around the Spaniards as German fighters strafed the streets with machine guns and pilots dropped grenades on clusters of defenseless people on the ground. After the attack, in the words of one reporter who was an eyewitness to the bombing, “large parts of Guernica aren’t a shell but an ash heap.”⁸ The concept of attacking a civilian population with such unflinching ferocity was so unheard of that people around the world had difficulty accepting that such an event had even occurred. Only days after the attack, *The Sun* in Baltimore published a story by G.L. Steer confirming reports of a German air attack on the Spanish city.⁹ Steer felt the need to strike down claims that no such attack had ever occurred. He did so by recounting his harrowing experience on the day of the attack. He spoke of being machine-gunned and detailed the planes with unmistakably German markings attacking the city. The day after the attack, Steer went into the town to find evidence. He discovered fragments of bombs “exactly of the same metal as bombs lately used by Gen. Emilio Mola’s German planes on the front line,” which also bore the German crest of the golden eagle.¹⁰ Some, including the mayor of Guernica, refused to believe that a planned attack with this level of viciousness could have happened. Steer provided compelling evidence that the *Luftwaffe* was more than capable of executing such a diabolical plan. Finally, the German experiment in bombing for terror ended with more twisted success than Ludendorff or even the Legion’s commander, the infamous Nazi field marshal Hugo Sperrle, had likely hoped for.

Relatively few casualties plagued Guernica by comparison to World War Two standards, but the breach of wartime etiquette signaled much more sinister acts of war to come. The bombing of Guernica became, in Stephens’ words, “the symbolic act that defined the greater atrocity—a calculated attack on a town or city crowded with civilians,”¹¹ and this atrocity returned with the onset of World War Two. Military historian James Corum identified the connecting thread between the Spanish Civil War and World War Two, saying “the Condor Legion’s experience in breaking the Basque fortifications at Bilbao in June 1937 foreshadowed the use of massed German aircraft to destroy the Polish fortifications at Modlin in September 1939.”¹² Similarly, the same tactics used at Guernica returned time and again in civilian centers of Poland, France, the Low Countries, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain.

Lessons learned from the Condor Legion were applied in German air operations training throughout the Second World War. An inferno rained from the skies over Warsaw, Rotterdam, the Champagne city of Mareuil, Paris, London, Moscow, and London once again between the years of 1939 and 1945.¹³ For most of this period, the sounds of the *Junkers* Ju-87 Stuka represented the haunting impact of German terror bombing. First, the low drone of dozens of piston engines pierced through the peace of a sunny, cloudless day. Next, as the silhouettes of

⁸ G.L. Steer, “WRITER AFFIRMS GUERNICA BOMBING: London Times Correspondent Visited Basque Holy City Day After Attack Asserts Walls And P.oofs ‘Were Missile-Pierced Before Burning,’” *The Sun*, May 5, 1937.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Roberts, “Guernica,” 26.

¹² James Corum, “The Spanish Civil War: Lessons Learned and Not Learned by the Great Powers,” *Journal of Military History* 62, no. 2 (April 1998): 326.

¹³ Elie Poulard, *A French Slave in Nazi Germany: A Testimony*, trans. Jean Poulard, ed. Jean Poulard (South Bend: Notre Dame Press, 2017), 8.

their inverted-gull wings filled the sky over a target city, they suddenly turned and literally screamed into action. As the dive bombers pushed their noses down into an almost ninety-degree angle, civilians on the ground heard an air-driven siren that started at a low rumble and slowly escalated into an unholy screech followed by earth-shaking explosions as whistling bombs impacted buildings and streets populated by civilians who could not get themselves to shelter in time.¹⁴ The siren, combined with deceptively simplistic cardboard fins attached to the bombshells which created the descending whistle sound popularly associated with all bombs, announced destruction falling terminally towards helpless targets on the ground. These features, together referred to interchangeably as the “Trumpets of Jericho” by German aircrews, were so iconic that almost every allied propaganda film from the era featured their harpy-like auditory assaults whenever showing a German aircraft, regardless of whether or not the plane was actually a Stuka.

The Stuka did not always scream during its hunt, however. The beginning of the Stuka’s technical history does not indicate an operational bias towards terror. *Junkers Flugzeug- und Motorenwerke AG* (JFM), the production company responsible for the Stuka and other German bombers, wrote operational manuals, called *Betriebsanleitungen*, for its aircraft. These users’ manuals were much like those a car company would produce today. The manual for the early-war model of the Stuka, the B-1, featured many diagrams of the aircraft and its various subsections, such as figure 2, informing its pilots and mechanics about the important systems equipped on the aircraft and recommendations on how to get the best performance from the machine in flight.¹⁵ The most important detail, however, was missing from the manual. None of those plans show the siren. No portion of the passages on the *Rumpfwerk* (fuselage) or *Fahrwerk* (undercarriage), where the siren was mounted on the Stuka, mentioned the noisemaker itself.¹⁶ A *Critical Past* video also shows a Stuka attack on a Polish target in 1939. It too features no siren sound.¹⁷ William Green, a late-20th century military aviation historian, documents in an albeit slightly outdated but nevertheless comprehensive reference, the various versions of the Stuka. His diagrams feature the siren on the aircraft and a short description identifying its only purpose as to spread terror among those on the targeted grounds.¹⁸

This thread is common among historians who study the Stuka. No purpose existed for the siren apart from striking fear into the hearts of its targets. In fact, it created additional drag on the airframe, meaning the plane itself performed more poorly with the siren than without. Despite this, the *Luftwaffe* retained its use until the Stuka’s obsolescence in the mid-war, although the plane itself was never fully retired until the war’s end. In one Frenchman’s memoir of the war, this view is corroborated as he explicitly cites the Stuka in an attack on his region. In the words of Elie Poulard,

¹⁴ The Associated Press, “Stukas Divebombing – World War II – Sound,” YouTube Video, 0:46, published July 21, 2015.

¹⁵ *Ju-87 B-2 Betriebsanleitung, Juni 1940* (Dessau: JFM, 1940), 2:2.

¹⁶ *Ju-87 B-1 Betriebsanleitung, April 1939* (Dessau: JFM, 1940), 2:1.

¹⁷ “German Ju-87 Stuka dive bombers attack Westerplatte in Gdansk, Poland, during World War II,” *Critical Past*, filmed in 1939 in Gdansk, Poland, video, 5:47, https://www.criticalpast.com/video/65675037614_Stukas_loading-bombs_bombing-a-railway-yard_crash-landing/.

¹⁸ William Green, *Warplanes of the Third Reich* (London: MacDonald & Co., 1970), 428.

on the morning of Sunday, May 19, it was our turn. I was getting ready to go to Mass when Stukas arrived above Mareuil... these planes were equipped with a siren and their bombs with whistles. All that made such a terrifying noise that it led to some panic in part of the village's population... The same day, around two o'clock in the afternoon, a new wave of Stukas bombed the whole length of Mareuil.¹⁹

Poulard experienced firsthand the screeching nightmares that were the “Trumpets of Jericho,” shown mounted on some *Stukas* in figure 3, and he specifically experienced them while never being anywhere near the frontline of combat throughout the war.²⁰ Poulard never served as a soldier. He only mentioned the Stuka at the beginning of the war when he lived as a civilian in a small town with slight industrial capacity. Mareuil could not have been a truly military target for the *Luftwaffe*. Poulard, his family, and the other French civilians surviving there at the time were the intended casualties of these attacks.

These varied sources from slightly different periods of the war suggest that the siren and whistle combination was not originally included in the design, nor was it implemented on the factory line by *Junkers*. I find it much more plausible that the “Trumpets of Jericho” were an innovation of the field rather than of the designer's office and were implemented by dive-bombing *Stukageschwader* units on an individual basis, probably at the behest of senior *Luftwaffe* commanders. Nonetheless, popular perspective remembers the Ju-87 as the most iconic weapon of terror in military history despite only about six years of service in the air.

Throughout the early years of the war, German officials tried to provide a legalistic image, often by shifting blame for the onset of terror bombing to the British. In May 1940, the *New York Times* published a column claiming that Hermann Göring, the supreme commander of the *Luftwaffe*, threatened retaliatory strikes against Great Britain, specifically using the word terror in its inflammatory language.²¹ Promising “mighty blows” against the British body and flexing the perceived muscle of the German air force, Göring was laying blame for his intentional targeting of civilian populations squarely on British military operations against Germany.²² While this was framed as a retaliation for British operations and the Blitz—an all-out aerial assault aimed primarily against civilians which lasted almost a full year—is often cited as the beginning of German aggression towards civilian populations, that explanation is far from the truth. It is important to remember that Nazi fire rained on Warsaw and other Polish cities months before the publication of this article, not to mention Guernica years before. While Göring threatened only Great Britain, the *Luftwaffe* went on to target Dutch and Belgian cities as well as French border towns like Mareuil with terror strikes only five months later, using the same methods that were tested at Guernica. The first sorties of the Blitz didn't fly until early July of 1940, long after the *Reichsmarschall* made his threat.

¹⁹ Poulard, *A French Slave*, 8.

²⁰ *German Bombers -- German Stuka dive bombers photographed, c1942, during World War II*. Encyclopedia Britannica ImageQuest.

²¹ “Goering Threatens Terror for British: Nazis will Unleash World's Worst Air Raids and Smash Blockade, He Predicts ‘mighty blows,’” *United Press*, December 1939.

²² *Ibid.*

Conversely, Winston Churchill gave Germany an identical threat in 1941. In an *Associated Press* article from only months after *Luftwaffe* sorties over London ended, Churchill stated that the British had only “thrown upon Germany about half the tonnage of bombs thrown by the Germans upon our cities during the whole course of the war.”²³ While propaganda was certainly the Prime Minister’s main motivation, his statistic does indicate an operational preference towards high-volume bombing on civilian populations within German command, at least from the British perspective and in contrast to pre-Blitz British doctrine. Jackie Hanauer’s and Elie Poulard’s experiences as terrorized civilians were engineered intentionally by the *Oberkommando der Luftwaffe* (OKL), the high command of the German air force, and they were hardly unique throughout the early and enduring course of the war.

Poulard, a civilian from the Champagne border region of France and thus one of the first in Western Europe to experience the wrath of the German war machine, told of similar horrors faced by Hanauer throughout the war. While most of his memoir focuses heavily on his term as a forced laborer in Germany, the early portions of coverage on the war include some telling passages related to his experience as a target of bombing and strafing attacks. He vividly recalled events of air raids, such as one on May 10, 1940, saying, “I was suddenly awakened by the noise of motors and machine-gun fire from airplanes. At that moment we became aware that the German attack had started, and the real war had begun.”²⁴ Poulard then spent the majority of the next few weeks in an inconsistent routine of hiding in ditches from low flying, presumably German, aircraft, listening to the distant sounds of air battles between the RAF and the *Luftwaffe* and hearing about dozens of French cities being bombed out on the radio.²⁵

Over time, the constancy of airborne operations over civilian regions of France made French citizens habitually nervous. The *Luftwaffe* had its own habit of targeting cities with little military importance but high concentrations of noncombatant populations. One day, as Poulard and his family waited to board a train to retreat further south and escape the German advance, the horrors they were trying to escape finally caught up with them. In his words, “there was an air alert, and I became very anxious. I was asking myself whether we would get to our destination safe and sound.”²⁶ The *Luftwaffe* achieved its goal of striking fear into the hearts of French civilians, and now Elie Poulard was questioning the safety of his family’s immediate future, despite the only trigger for such a reaction being the mere suggestion of an air assault, but not an actual attack.

Just like the original blurring of the line between civilians and combatants came from the highest level of German command in the interwar period, the development and use of terror as an operational tool came almost exclusively from the highest ranks of the *Oberkommando der Luftwaffe* and even Hitler himself. Samuel Miner has detailed just how close the *Luftwaffe* came to extending the reach of its terror outside Germany’s zone of operations, in order to bring a tried method to harass British subjects globally, such as in the Middle East.

²³ “Churchill Claims Air-War Equality: Promises Bombing of Reich Will Outstrip London’s – Reiterates ‘No Truce,’” *Associated Press*, July 1941.

²⁴ Poulard, *A French Slave*, 7.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 8.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 9.

During the Second World War, Germany held a vested interest in spreading discontent among the subject peoples of British colonial territories. One focus was on aiding the Arab nationalists in the Middle East, who rejected Jewish Zionism. Miner claims that even under the extreme pressure of the Anglo-American-Soviet alliance in the later years of the war, the Nazi regime still genuinely considered sending detachments of a diminishing *Luftwaffe* to strike “against Palestinian Jewry.”²⁷ In a *Luftwaffe* intelligence report, one officer suggested an aerial attack on civilian centers in

Jerusalem in November [1943] on the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration... he suggested ‘a symbolic attack on the Jewish agency’ which was ‘the largest ministry building Zionist administrative positions.’ The location of the building was known in the city plans of Jerusalem and therefore could be targeted.²⁸

Jerusalem is the most alarming of the Middle Eastern targets named by the OKL, although Nazi memos considered many others. In order to strike a blow to the organization of Jewish people outside of Europe, the Nazis considered bombing centers of power within the most important city in Judeo-Christian religious tradition, Jerusalem. The attack would have had no military impact, it would only have served to send a symbolic message against “world Jewry” while promoting the *Luftwaffe*’s complementary doctrine of massed bombing of civilian populations. The perceived successes of the *Luftwaffe* encouraged Nazi leadership to extend its terror campaign globally. Anti-Semitic ideology fused with the technologies of war to expand Nazi terror as far as it would go. In fact, Miner directly connects this proposed action to that of modern terrorism. He says,

attacks against symbolic targets as a substitute for inaccessible centers of gravity follow a classic terrorist formulation. The Germans did not know where the conference was, so they would target a symbolic embodiment of Zionism in the hopes of instilling fear among the Jewish population... *Luftwaffe* planners openly admitted that there were no major industrial targets in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, or Haifa. Bombing those targets would only succeed in terrorizing the Jewish population and killing as many Jews as possible.²⁹

Reichsmarschall Göring is attributed in the article as being the single official who rejected the proposal, although not on any kind of moral grounds. By 1943 and 1944, the *Luftwaffe* was beaten in every aspect of the air war and was desperately trying to retain its strength for the final conflict over Germany itself. The only airbase close enough to launch a strike against Jewish Palestine was Crete, which was increasingly threatened by Anglo-American forces on Sicily and in Egypt. Göring had no option but to reject the proposed terror attack because “the weight of the Allied armies advancing from all directions and an aerial campaign was sapping the *Luftwaffe*’s remaining strength.”³⁰

²⁷ Samuel Miner, “Planning the Holocaust in the Middle East: Nazi Designs to Bomb Jewish Cities in Palestine,” *Jewish Political Studies Review* 27, no. 3-4 (Fall 2016): 22.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 23.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 23-26.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 22.

Before the final years of the war, however, Hermann Göring's relationship with Adolf Hitler made any actual reservations he may have had about the benefits of terror bombing irrelevant. Richard Overy, an esteemed military aviation historian, shone a light on Hitler's overbearing role in the management of the *Luftwaffe* in an article from the *Journal of Contemporary Military History*. In classic fashion for a micromanaging leader, the *Führer* "insisted that the final decision should rest with him... increasingly after 1943, decisions about the use of the air forces were taken by Hitler at his Supreme Headquarters without consulting the *Luftwaffe* commander-in-chief first."³¹ Overy goes on to explain that while most of the popular blame was aimed at Göring for the failures of the *Luftwaffe*, Hitler was actually to blame for the majority of the late-war operational failures experienced by the German air force.

Part of this is due to Hitler's total ignorance of how air warfare was conducted, another part due to his insistence on maintaining the *Luftwaffe*'s autonomy within the hierarchy of the military because it was "a branch of the armed services largely under [the Nazi Party's] own political control, uninfluenced by the institutions of the old Prussian state."³² A large portion of the blame for the failures of the *Luftwaffe*, however, lies in the doctrinal adherence to terror bombing as a method to win the war rather than simply to beat civilian populations into fearful submission. As the war progressed and prospects of a Nazi victory became bleaker, Hitler turned more and more towards this backwards methodology. Göring certainly supported it at the outset of hostilities and often stood silently as his resources were mismanaged toward the end of the war.

Overy does, however, admit the faults of Göring as well. The strained relationship between the head of the Nazi Party and his second-in-command exacerbated almost every issue the *Luftwaffe* had on an operational level. Much like the *Kriegsmarine* tended to do, "Göring's fear of Hitler led him to falsify or misrepresent what information was available in the direction of an uncritical... interpretation of air strength."³³

Beyond a poor relationship with Göring, Hitler also repeatedly insisted on terror tactics in *Luftwaffe* doctrine. Overy refers to Hitler's "attachment to bombing as a terror weapon" several times throughout the article. Overy also argues that "the preoccupation with terror governed" operational decisions. In other words, "All new demands were formulated in terms of repaying terror with terror rather than what would be militarily most advantageous."³⁴ This is where the concept for the V-1 and V-2 bombing campaign on London came from. This is where the plan to terrorize British children like Jackie Hanauer with the buzzing drone of unmanned rockets, in a last-ditch attempt to force Great Britain's abdication, was formulated.

While Overy lays the majority of the blame for terror doctrine on Hitler's shoulders, my work shifts the needle of responsibility towards a more even balance with Göring. Hitler framed almost all of his arguments in favor of terror bombing within the context of a total war for the survival of his nation, entirely after the Blitz and mostly after 1943. If we only consider Hitler's path to support of such operations, we omit more than half of the time period in which the

³¹ Richard Overy, "Hitler and Air Strategy," *Journal of Contemporary Military History* 15, no. 3 (July 1980): 405.

³² *Ibid*, 406-407.

³³ *Ibid*, 407.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 411.

Luftwaffe committed acts of terror against civilian populations. Hitler, evidently, was somewhat ignorant of Guernica.

Göring, on the other hand, was commander of the *Luftwaffe* the entire time. From 1936 until the end of the Second World War, Göring was in charge of air force doctrine. It is highly unlikely that *der totale Krieg's* doctrine was developed and tested in Spain, then implemented on an industrial scale in Poland and Western Europe, without Göring's knowledge and support. It is possible that he simply didn't want to anger Hitler by committing *Luftwaffe* resources to other pursuits, but far more plausible that Göring himself saw merit in the terrorizing aspects of bombing noncombatant population centers. This is corroborated by Göring's place as the very first to be named as a defendant at the Nuremberg Military Tribunal for Major War Criminals.³⁵

Hermann Göring was one of the few highest-ranking Nazi officials to stand trial for his actions during the Second World War. In the *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Volume I*, published by the US provisional occupation government over Germany, Göring is mentioned specifically as participating in actions with the intent of spreading terror.³⁶ While the Tribunal never explicitly names the bombing of civilian populations as one of the crimes against humanity or crimes of aggression tried in court, this is likely due more to the fact that allied bombing doctrine included a similar method than to a lack of terror bombing from the *Luftwaffe*. It does, however, identify Göring as a key player in the crimes against peace committed by the Nazi regime, being instrumental in the rearmament of the *Wehrmacht*, the buildup of the *Luftwaffe*, and in the waging of aggressive war against Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Great Britain.³⁷

Ultimately, the Tribunal named Göring, shown on trial in figure 4, guilty on all four counts of war crimes brought against him.³⁸ The final paragraph of judgement against the *Reichsmarschall* gave the man no quarter:

There is nothing to be said in mitigation. For Göring was often, indeed almost always, the moving force, second only to his leader. He was the leading war aggressor, both as political and as military leader; he was the director of the slave labor program and the creator of the oppressive program against the Jews and other races, at home and abroad. All of these crimes he has frankly admitted. On some specific cases there may be conflict of testimony but in terms of the broad outline, his own admissions are more than sufficiently wide to be conclusive of his guilt. His guilt is unique in its enormity. The record discloses no excuses for this man.³⁹

A case could have certainly been made for more than only four counts, but prosecutors from the allied countries likely didn't want to bring charges of air-based terror against civilians while Dresden, Cologne and Berlin laid in ruins due to bombs dropped by the American 8th Air Force

³⁵ Office of Military Government for Germany (US), *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg 14 November 1945-1 October 1946* (Nuremberg: 1947), 27.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 33.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 279-280.

³⁸ *Nuremberg Trials, Hermann Goering*. Encyclopedia Britannica Imagequest.

³⁹ Office of Military Government for Germany (US), *Trial of the Major War Criminals*, 282.

and the shock of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had not yet worn off in the East. Nonetheless, Göring's enormous guilt extended beyond slave labor to the development and execution of a military doctrine outlining the intention to bomb urban civilian centers with the sole purpose of spreading terror across the populous of enemy nations. Göring committed intentional violations of the Geneva Conventions. His judgement ties him directly to the processes of the Holocaust commonly seen as enacted by the *Waffen SS* but few other portions of the German military.

War always brings horrors with its onset and often, in times of desperation or under the guise of defending the survival of a civilization, civilians will come under the crosshairs of retaliatory strikes. Terror is often a weapon wielded by those who have no other choice. In this case, however, the Luftwaffe built into its basic doctrine the use of terror bombings as part of the standard toolset of air operations. The German air force, headed by Hermann Göring and controlled in large part by Adolf Hitler, picked up the weapon of terror voluntarily.

Many people tend to question the level of culpability of the regular German military in the destructive processes of the Holocaust. Most historians who study the subject ignore the roles of military branches separate from the *Waffen SS*, with the singular exception of the Wehrmacht. After the research I have done, I can firmly argue that the Luftwaffe, the closest independent branch of the military to the Nazi Party, was fully integrated into the spirit of destruction and extermination embraced by the *Waffen SS* and other perpetrators of genocide. The German air force found the most efficient methods to inflict damage and spread fear among noncombatants using clinical methods of experimentation, and it did so as soon as German flying units were deployed anywhere under the Nazi flag. It combined the chaotic destruction of war with the deliberate and blanketed use of extreme violence against helpless targets characteristic of the Holocaust. Instead of noncombatants being brought to stationary factories of death, the Luftwaffe brought motorized destruction to their targets. Rather than furnace fires constrained to a crematorium, it rained liquid flames in the form of incendiary bombs. Rather than striking fear into those who never knew whether they were the next to be sent onto a train bound towards the camps in the east, the Luftwaffe brought that destruction to the homes of the defenseless, instilling the same fear under a different context.

From Erich Ludendorff's *der totale Krieg* to Hermann Göring's stewardship of the Luftwaffe to the total takeover of air-based operations by Adolf Hitler himself in the final stages of the war, the Nazi regime never broke its adherence to terrorizing civilians like the Spaniards of Guernica, Elie Poulard, or Jackie Hanauer from the skies. Orders and doctrinal support from the highest levels of the Nazi command structure trickled down into mechanical and industrial innovations of terror, exemplified by the "Trumpets of Jericho" on the Ju-87 Stuka and the V-1 "buzz bomb" flying rockets, both used predominantly against civilian populations.

While some historians may lay greater blame squarely on Hitler's shoulders, the core of the support for such actions came in equal amounts from Hitler, Göring, and lesser officers of the Oberkommando der Luftwaffe. Germany did not simply stumble upon an effective strategy to combat Anglo-American incursion in the face of overwhelming odds in the air. Terror as a weapon of the air force was deliberately researched, implemented, improved upon, and wielded consistently by the Luftwaffe between 1937 and 1945.

Appendix



Figure 1: A lone Heinkel-111 bomber flying over England. WWII/Heinkel bomber over England. Encyclopedia Britannica ImageQuest, photograph.

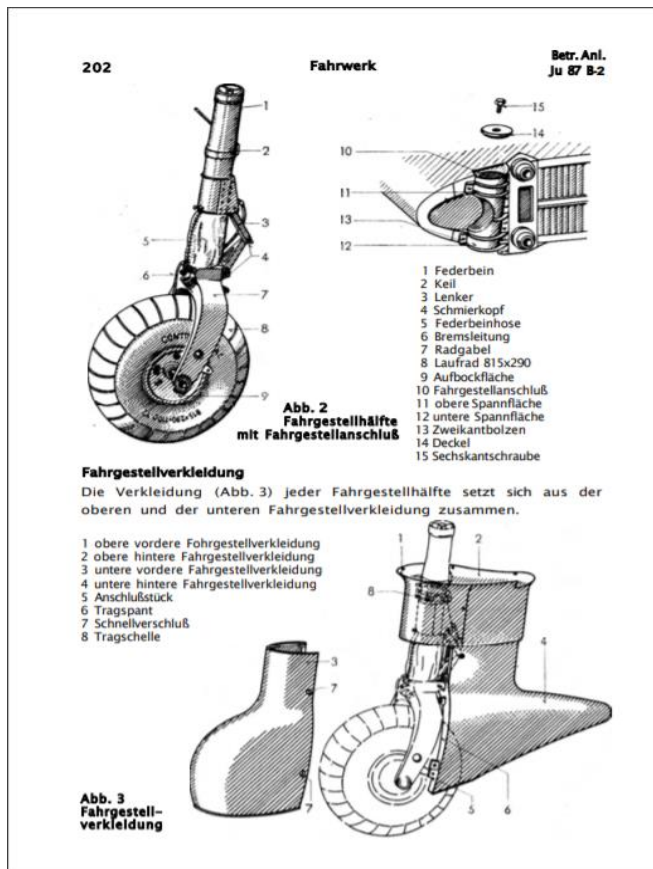


Figure 2: A diagram from the Ju-87 B-2 Betriebsanleitung showing the gear legs and, notably, no siren installation. Ju-87 B-2 Betriebsanleitung, April 1939. Dessau: Junkers Flugzeug-und-Motorenwerke Aktiengesellschaft 1940.

<https://stephentaylorhistorian.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/ju-87b2.pdf>



Figure 3: Two Stukas equipped with their iconic air sirens. The sirens were mounted on the gear legs just below the wings. German bombers – German Stuka dive bombers photographed, c1942, during World War II. Encyclopedia Britannica ImageQuest, photograph.



Figure 4: Hermann Göring on the witness stand at the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal. Nuremberg Trials, Hermann Goering. Encyclopedia Britannica ImageQuest, photograph.

Bibliography

- British Pathé. "Ruins of Guernica After Air Raid 1937." Filmed 1937, Guernica, Spain. Video, 0:37. <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/VLVAADFJO6XS7FTJOLQPWMA1FIO9S-RUINS-OF-GUERNICA-AFTER-AIR-RAID/>
- Corum, James. "The Spanish Civil War: Lessons Learned and Not Learned by the Great Powers." *The Journal of Military History* 62, no. 2 (April 1998): 313-334, JSTOR.
- Critical Past. "German Ju-87 Stuka dive bombers attack Westerplatte in Gdansk, Poland, during World War II." Filmed 1939, Gdansk, Poland. Video, 5:47. https://www.criticalpast.com/video/65675037614_Stukas_loading-bombs_bombing-a-railway-yard_crash-landing
- Green, William. *Warplanes of the Third Reich*. London: MacDonald & Co. 1970.
- Hanauer, David Ian. "Experiencing the Blitz: A Poetic Representation of a Childhood in Wartime London." *Qualitative Inquiry* 20, no. 5 (April 2013): 584-599.
- Miner, Samuel. "Planning the Holocaust in the Middle East: Nazi Designs to Bomb Jewish Cities in Palestine." *Jewish Political Studies Review* 27, no. 3-4 (Fall 2016): 7-33, JSTOR.
- Murray, Williamson. "Tactical Genius, Strategic Fool." *Military History* 25, no. 4 (2008): 42-49.
- Office of Military Government for Germany (US). *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg 14 November 1945-1 October 1946*. Nuremberg, Germany. 1947, Library of Congress.
- Overy, Richard. "Hitler and Air Strategy." *Journal of Contemporary History* 15, no. 3 (July 1980): 405-421, JSTOR.
- Poulard, Elie. *A French Slave in Nazi Germany: A Testimony*. Translated by Jean V. Poulard. Edited by Jean V. Poulard. South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017.
- Roberts, Stephen. "Guernica." *Military History* 35, no. 1 (2018): 22-29.
- Steer, G.L. "WRITER AFFIRMS GUERNICA BOMBING: London Times Correspondent Visited Basque Holy City Day After Attack Asserts Walls And P.ooFs 'Were Missile-Pierced Before Burning.'" *The Sun*, May 5, 1937, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- The Associated Press. "CHURCHILL CLAIMS AIR-WAR EQUALITY: Promises Bombing of Reich Will Outstrip London's – Reiterates 'No Truce.'" *New York Times*, July 15, 1941, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

The Associated Press. "Stuka's Divebombing – World War II – Sound." YouTube video, 0:46, posted by "British Movietone," July 21, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YP5-lgFaCBg>

The United Press. "GOERING THREATENS TERROR FOR BRITISH: Nazis Will Unleash World's Worst Air Raids and Smash Blockade, He Writes Predicts 'Mighty Blows.'" *New York Times*, December 31, 1939, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

Reagan and the AIDS Crisis

Kieron Lynch

When a virus attacks the body, the immune system comes to its defense. When ill, the host should make all attempts to support the immune system in healing itself; ignoring an illness only helps to spread the virus further. However, in the 1980s, a sickness would be allowed to gain momentum due to a lack of effort from the host: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). At this time, America was also developing a new identity with the rise of neoconservatism that focused on family values. The movement's stern views not only on gay sexual identity but also on sexuality in general put it at direct odds with those affected by AIDS. Ronald Reagan, originally a progressive midwestern man, would ultimately become the face of this neoconservative lifestyle and forward their agenda as the president of the United States. This attention to neoconservative values is the reason his administration shifted focus away from the growing AIDS crisis. It is also the reason that the gay community in the United States was forced to rise up and provide the resistance their country's leadership would not. Reagan's refusal to adequately respond to the virus until late in his second term represents a failure of the federal government.

Ronald Reagan's presidential victory in 1981 was aided by massive evangelical support. His open love for the church and his religious base would make him a popular role model for social conservatism. His religious identity often defined the morals of his administration, how he hoped to run the country, and eventually lead to his reinvigoration of the war on drugs and strengthened his stance against the USSR. Evangelical support was crucial to Reagan and as president, he often made it his main priority to keep this base happy. However, this was something that became hard to do when it came to the AIDS crisis, which was disproportionately affecting gay men at this point and becoming a controversial issue within the U.S.¹

Ronald Reagan's Early Life

Ronald Reagan was a typical child of the Midwest. After moving around the country during his childhood, his family found their permanent home in Dixon, Illinois. His father, Jack Reagan, was a shoe salesman with a charming personality, but he found little success as a businessman. His mother, Nelle, struggled as her husband's lack of achievement turned him to alcoholism;

¹ John Patrick Diggins, *Ronald Reagan: Fate, Freedom, and the Making of History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), 87.

however, she made sure her children had what they needed. Her strong spiritual beliefs helped keep her life composed. As historian Robert Collins mentions, “[Nelle] worked tirelessly to hold her family together through personal and economic adversity, finding both inspiration and consolation in her deep evangelical religious faith as a member of the Christian church.”² Reagan’s childhood would lay the groundwork for the man he would become. In Dixon, he would go from being a skinny kid with a vision problem to a quarterback who dated the girls everyone wanted. However, while Reagan was a beloved and popular person most of his life, he lacked attention from his father. He would never have the strong relationship with his father that he yearned for; instead, Jack Reagan was cynical and detached from his sons.³ One of the only meaningful things Ronald would receive from his father was the nickname “Dutch” at his birth.⁴ Though Reagan struggled with his relationship to his father, his mother’s support would become a source of happiness during these years. Nelle Reagan made her son feel like the world wasn’t a bad place and that through God, and hard work, one will always be able to find some form of joy. Her ardent optimism would be a constant during Reagan’s youth and helped propel him to college, making him the first in his family to attend.⁵ Reagan would take his mother’s advice to heart, and when comparing his parents, he would say: “While my father was a cynic and tended to suspect the worst of people, my mother was the opposite. She always expected to find the best in people and often did.”⁶

On the other hand, it can be said that Nelle Reagan’s most influential lesson to her son was the power of religion. From a young age, she taught Reagan Christian values such as prayer and kindness. This laid the foundation of his future administration’s social values. Reagan asked to be baptized at the age of twelve, he prayed often, and he found that his faith kept him hopeful in even the darkest times. This helped create the image of optimism Reagan was known for, even quoting his mother saying, “In the end, everything worked out for the best. If something went wrong, she said, you didn’t let it get you down: you stepped away from it, stepped over it, and moved on.”⁷

The role Reagan’s father played in his youth led to him developing serious social issues that lasted throughout his life. Jack’s alcoholism and strenuous work schedule left little time for his children. Peggy Noonan, a speechwriter and eventual life-documenter for Reagan, theorized that “his life-long emotional reserve was typical of children from alcoholic homes. Experts have observed that, because they come to distrust the alcoholic parent, such children often develop the colossal fear of being close.”⁸ Both Reagan and his brother would have a difficult time making genuine connections with others. As Reagan would later explain, “I think this reluctance to get

² Robert M. Collins, *Transforming America: Politics and Culture During the Reagan Years* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 30, EBSCO eBook Comprehensive Academic Collection.

³ Collins, *Transforming America*, 31.

⁴ Ibid, 30.

⁵ Ibid, 32.

⁶ Ibid, 31.

⁷ Ibid, 32.

⁸ Ibid, 31.

close to people never left me completely. I've never had trouble making friends, but I've been inclined to hold back a little of myself, reserving it for myself."⁹ This distance would plague the president in his later years. Those who couldn't break his shell, like some of his own children, would struggle to see their father care so deeply for others while not receiving it themselves.¹⁰ However, those who he did become close to would be held dearly to him. This can be seen through Reagan's actions after his friend from his acting years, Rock Hudson, died from the AIDS virus in 1985. This moment was the breaking point for the president when he finally decided that those infected with the AIDS virus needed his help.

Nelle Reagan would also be one of the sources for her son's desire to act. She encouraged his talent during his early years because she herself was a bit of an actress. As John McCollister reported in *The Saturday Evening Post*, "Her favorite escape from the gnawing problems of the day was performing for her local church and community theatrical groups."¹¹ Back when he wasn't the image of masculinity he would come to embody, young Reagan would read dramatic novels that drew out his inner thespian. Although Reagan was more inclined towards sports, it was Nelle who would put him in local church productions, as she envisioned the actor he would later become. After graduating from Eureka College in 1932, the future president found himself in the midst of the Great Depression. His father was a strong supporter of President Roosevelt's New Deal, but "Dutch" grew to despise the tax heavy plan.¹²

Using the talents he developed in college and insistent on fulfilling his childhood fantasy of acting, Reagan found a job in local broadcasting after graduation. This was a deliberate choice for Reagan because for one, the money was better than anything he was going to get anywhere else in Illinois, and two, he had a feeling that radio would get him into acting. He himself said: "I'd seen several movies in which sports announcers played themselves and thought there was a remote possibility the job might lead me into the movies."¹³ It wouldn't be long after this when he would be moving to Hollywood to begin a successful career.

Reagan's Transition into Politics

After a few years and a dozen plus bad movies, Reagan started to make a name for himself. He began appearing in bigger pictures, served in the Second World War, and earned a reputation for being as brilliant as he was handsome. As a young man, Reagan had also developed a political identity from discussing philosophies with his liberal father. This would affect the decisions he made after his war service, such as coming home and joining various progressive organizations. During these years, he would identify as a fan of the New Deal because his father supported it in their hometown of Dixon during the Great Depression. This would change, however, in 1950

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ John McCollister, "The Unflappable Nelle Reagan," *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 1, 1985, 36, MasterFILE Premier.

¹² Collins, *Transforming America*, 30.

¹³ Ibid, 33.

when Richard Nixon ran for the California state senate. Reagan originally supported Nixon's opponent Helen Gahagan (partly because she was actor Melvyn Douglas' wife) but would come to support Nixon instead. As John Diggins put it, "Later [Reagan] belatedly realized that most of his friends were Republicans. FDR was dead and so was Reagan's father, who always voted Democrat."¹⁴

When Reagan was elected president of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) in 1947, with whom he had been a member for years, he was tasked with addressing the growing communist problem in Hollywood. This experience would be the basis for his extreme anti-red stance in his presidency, with Reagan saying that the SAG years gave him "firsthand experience how Communists used lies, deceit, violence, or any other tactic that suited them to advance the cause of Soviet expansion. I knew...that America faced no more insidious or evil threat than that of Communism."¹⁵ Despite originally supporting some Communist causes in Hollywood and joining others in resistance of American nuclear bombs, Reagan eventually began searching for loyal allies to help build what became known as the Hollywood blacklist—effectively a "do not hire" list for suspected Communist sympathizers during the Cold War.¹⁶

His time as the SAG president left Reagan bitter against the left. He came to view them as a gateway to Communism, as weak against the Russians in the Cold War, and unable to look straight at issues he "now saw so clearly."¹⁷ Reagan's views on the New Deal also changed as he became more successful, now seeing taxes as a system designed to punish those who work hard. The real workers in the country were no longer being used to help the less fortunate, but as a means to fund a country that would be doing just fine without their extra tax dollars. It was at this point that Reagan began voting publicly for conservative nominees. For example, he voted for Eisenhower in both presidential elections and advocated once again for Richard Nixon when he ran for president. As Collins states, "[Reagan] campaigned in 1960 as a Democrat for Nixon, retaining his Democratic registration only because of Nixon's belief that Reagan would be more helpful by appearing to cross party lines with his support."¹⁸

When Nixon ran for Governor of California in 1962, Reagan officially switched his affiliation to the Republican Party. Although his film career began to decline after taking on more political responsibility, he now found himself in the spotlight once again. As most of his friends had been conservatives for years, his influence spread quickly. Audiences came in droves to hear him speak about problems they themselves faced, such as high taxes. At this point, California had a powerful economy, but the richest often complained how the state could thrive even more if they were allowed to spend their money freely. Conservative higher ups "saw in Reagan a charismatic

¹⁴ Diggins, *Ronald Reagan*, 87.

¹⁵ Diggins, *Ronald Reagan*, 100.

¹⁶ George H. Nash, "Reagan's Right Turn," *Modern Age* 60 no. 2 (2018): 40-41, Education Research Complete.

¹⁷ Collins, *Transforming America*, 37.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 37.

amateur with a gift for articulating their mutually shared values.”¹⁹ Reagan’s popularity with the affable conservatives made him the obvious candidate for Governor of California in 1966.

The Rise of the Neoconservatives

As America’s social boundaries were being broken in the 1960s by counterculture movements, there was a growing group who began to believe that the country had taken a misstep. Conservatives have often thought that Americans ought to stay a respectful and faithful populace. Russel Kirk argued that one of the canons of conservative thought is “belief that a divine intent rules society as well as conscience, forging an eternal chain of right and duty which links great and obscure, living and dead” and that all “political problems, at bottom, are religious and moral problems.”²⁰ This fight to have a religious authority in our societal system has influenced conservative politics in some capacity since at least the 1950s. Right-leaning thinkers often fear that a more liberal social order will inherently allow corruption. In other words, many conservatives believe that if Americans do not fear a deity, and if they believe in giving power to all groups of people, then they will allow sin to grow.²¹

This growing group of “neoconservatives” was made up of formerly left-leaning ideologues who grew weary of the post-New Deal country. The radical changes seen in the 1960s made them fearful of what the country was going to become if this new social structure was allowed to make the rules. To the neoconservatives, liberal thought was pleasant but impractical as welfare became a bigger government focus. They believed that society’s problems were less of a political matter and that the government should instead stay focused on fighting issues like communism in the markets rather than dictating people’s lives. For a man like Reagan, this couldn’t have arrived at a better time. As Collins writes, “Their analytical rigor and sophistication gave their particular ideas, which fitted comfortably at numerous points with Reagan’s approach to governance, both currency and legitimacy.”²²

During his first presidential campaign in 1980, Reagan ran on the promise of restoring conservative family values. In a shift from the previous decade’s sexual revolution and subsequent cultural shake up, Reagan and his fellow conservatives felt that America had taken the wrong turn when it moved away from the traditional family structure. One could ask how a man in his 70s challenged this open minded, carefree generation. The answer is simple: charm. Reagan had a powerful personality, one that somehow made him so likeable as a person that some of his staunchest critics would thaw and leave him smiling when they sat down to talk. This was of course deliberate; the president molded an image of himself to be what America needed. As John Diggins wrote, “whatever controversies surrounded his politics, Reagan’s

¹⁹ Ibid, 39.

²⁰ Ronald Story and Bruce Laurie, *The Rise of Conservatism in America, 1945-2000: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2008), 47.

²¹ Story and Laurie, *The Rise of Conservatism*, 48.

²² Collins, *Transforming America*, 47.

personal leadership was cheerful, credible, and courageous, and it carried the day. There was always in Ronald Reagan a charismatic presence.”²³

The family was a pillar of neoconservative politics and having a neoconservative president in power by the 1980s was going to be their chance at taking back American culture and reinstating traditional family values. As former senatorial aid Paul Weyrich said, “The family will be to the decade of the 1980s what environmentalism and consumerism have been to the 1970s and what the Vietnam war was to the 1960s.”²⁴ Weyrich curated what became known as the “Moral Majority,” a dedicated religious group supporting conservative politics in the fight against sinful values. These “sinful” values included abortion, feminism, and the growing homosexual presence in the United States. This group would be the catalyst to modern religion in politics; a uniting force that stands strong even to this day as an enemy to progressive politics.²⁵ Both neoconservatives and the Moral Majority could not have been given a more powerful candidate than Ronald Reagan. In what would become a historic race to take the soul of the country, Reagan would be elected president, beating the unpopular incumbent Jimmy Carter by a landslide.²⁶ Fighting for an anti-communist, pro-worker, and morally superior country, “Dutch” resonated strongly with a frustrated nation. This victory united the nation and, moving forward, it seemed like America was on its way to unparalleled success. However, for some groups, their lives would be directly impeded as a result of this election. As Reagan gained more power, so did the neoconservatives, who would use it to suppress members of the LGBT community.

The religious right that Reagan helped bring into power had been attempting to suppress the rights of the LGBT community for some time. The conflict between these two groups built some of the social groundwork that we see in our society today. Not nearly as polarized publicly, those who identify as members of the LGBT community, today known as the LGBTQIA+ community, now enjoy many liberties earned by their predecessors. These opportunities were not simple to achieve and cannot be forgotten, as the rise of the religious right is directly connected to early LGBT activism.²⁷ Being openly homosexual in the 1980s was by no means simple.

Homosexuality was still quite taboo in many parts of the country, to the point where discussion of it was largely an impossibility. Ronald Reagan and his wife Nancy seemed to have had little issue with the gay community, as Diggins notes: “Nancy Reagan’s interior decorator stayed overnight in the White House with his lover.”²⁸ However, this did not mean that her husband was willing to acknowledge the struggles of the gay community. Reagan personally fought issues in the country such as drug use and communism but left certain social reforms (such as those targeting the growing AIDS epidemic) to members of his administration.

²³ Diggins, *Ronald Reagan*, 306.

²⁴ Story and Laurie, *The Rise of Conservatism*, 115.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 114-115.

²⁶ Collins, *Transforming America*, 36.

²⁷ Amy L. Stone, “The Impact of Anti-Gay Politics on the LGBTQ Movement,” *Sociology Compass* 10, no. 6 (June 2016): 459-467, doi:10.1111/soc4.12373.

²⁸ Diggins, *Ronald Reagan*, 323.

The AIDS Crisis

In 1979, gay men began arriving in clinics in San Francisco, fearful of swollen glands they were starting to develop. Due to a lack of knowledge about gay health, many doctors just advised them to abstain from sexual contact for a bit and see if that helped.²⁹ It did not, and soon many of these patients began to die from unusual diseases; diseases that were usually seen in much older people. Stories started coming out about “exotic” diseases infecting gay men throughout New York in 1981. This was followed by an official CDC report to doctors across the country to look out for a cancer seen only in homosexuals.³⁰ It wouldn’t be learned until 1982 that AIDS was contracted both sexually and by the transfusion of infected blood. The CDC reported those most at risk of getting the disease were gay men, needle-focused drug addicts, and people who received multiple blood transfusions. By 1984, almost 5,000 people would be diagnosed with the AIDS virus.³¹

This issue was not helped by the conservative majority in power. The religious right had long fought against the gay community’s existence and were now given, in their eyes, spectacular proof that they were justified. Patrick Buchanan, an advisor to presidents Nixon, Ford, and then director of communications for Reagan, had said that “the poor homosexuals; they have declared war upon nature, and now nature is exacting an awful retribution.”³² Reagan did not agree with this sentiment, but still did not go out of his way to help those who were slowly dying of the disease. In direct contrast to this, Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom at the time, decided to take the fight upon herself and the government. Not encumbered by a religious base to the degree that Reagan was, Thatcher had the government directly focus on AIDS research. The government funded what Thatcher deemed necessary to help, and her direct approach would not only save lives, but provide proper ways to prevent the disease as well.³³ In addition to suffering from the virus itself, victims also had to contend with the rumor that you could contract AIDS from simple physical contact with someone infected. One of the driving factors that ended this rumor in the United Kingdom and also influenced the United States was Princess Diana intentionally being photographed shaking an AIDS patient’s hand.³⁴ For many people, seeing such an important, globally recognized figure doing something so taboo shook their beliefs and helped them move past their fear of the victims.

In the United States, the Reagan administration struggled with the growing epidemic. For some in the administration, they wanted to avoid talking about the “gay problem” and instead focus on those who got the virus from a bad blood transfusion, distancing the discussion of the virus from the issue of sexuality. By focusing on this, as well as babies born with AIDS given to them from

²⁹ Collins, *Transforming America*, 134.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 134-135.

³¹ *Ibid*.

³² *Ibid*, 135.

³³ Diggins, *Ronald Reagan*, 322.

³⁴ “Angel's hand to an Aids victim - Ten years on: Memories of a people's Princess,” *News of the World*, August 26, 2007, NewsBank.

their mother, the government would be able to appear as if it was concerned while simultaneously ignoring the overwhelming number of gay victims.³⁵ Even before the AIDS crisis began, there was already an abhorrent amount of medical negligence that the gay community had to contend with. Gay men in particular had a habit of ignoring medical issues due to a fear of doctors. This was especially prevalent in the 1970s when being gay was considered a medical disease. As historian Katie Batza notes in her book *Before AIDS: Gay Health Politics in the 1970s*, “Gay men avoided interactions with doctors, however, because such visits often led to misdiagnosis, judgement, ostracism, and treatment for their sexuality rather than their medical ailments.”³⁶ This fear led many gay men to hide their illnesses due to their desire to avoid inappropriate and insulting questions about their sexual activity. In addition, the process of notification protocol followed by doctors essentially forced patients to name everyone they had recently had a sexual encounter with in order to prevent the spread of diseases. After naming them, the hospital would then call those named and inform them that their recent partner had tested positive for a venereal disease.³⁷

For gay men, this process was a challenge for multiple reasons. For one, many were not out publicly yet and notification protocol could force them out of the closet, especially if they had relationships with both men and women. Secondly, if the women informed were homophobic (something normal for this time), their lives could be made more challenging and their home lives could be endangered if word got out. Interaction between gay men in some communities would be anonymous for this exact reason; anonymity would directly impede the ability to name certain partners who never revealed their identities in the first place.³⁸

Many doctors of this era also believed that there was not enough information in their schooling to adequately treat sick patients who were gay.³⁹ Besides the fact that homosexuality was considered a disease, being openly gay was still culturally taboo. Those who were openly gay would face scrutiny during simple checkups from the homophobic medical staff. Withstanding this abuse often resulted in pressure to answer degrading, personal questions that only served to humiliate them. After suffering this continued mistreatment, those in the gay community knew something needed to change, and many members sought to build a network of gay health clinics during the 1970s. Their goal was to help combat venereal diseases, but also to perform meaningful research to help change the perception of homosexuality. As Batza wrote, “clinics proved the lifeblood of this transformation...the national infrastructure reflected the varied origins of the community clinics on which it relied, implementing research and networking tools to improve health *and* challenge political oppression.”⁴⁰ By the time the AIDS crisis had arrived, these clinics were readily equipped to help those suffering. However, while the gay community

³⁵ Diggins, *Ronald Reagan*, 324.

³⁶ Katie Batza, *Before AIDS: Gay Health Politics in the 1970s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 1, EBSCO eBook Comprehensive Academic Collection.

³⁷ Batza, *Before Aids*, 2.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 3-4.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 109.

may have evolved their medical treatment, they were still some time away from true acceptance in Reagan's America.

It's no secret that the AIDS crisis was a devastating blow to the gay community. Since its first arrival, it has killed hundreds of thousands of people. Another unfortunate reality is that the AIDS crisis was but another step on the ladder of gay oppression. For many in the gay community, it felt as if AIDS was just the next thing to kill them, and that it wouldn't be the catalyst to end their suffering in America. Ben Schatz would describe his experience as:

“I sometimes feel like gay men are dangling by their fingers from the edges of a roof, and every minute or so you can look over at the man next to you just in time to see him let go and drop. But up on top of the roof, the rest of the country is having a cocktail party- and except for those people who are walking around stepping on your fingers, they're not even aware we're hanging there. Yet man after man lets go and falls, and you're dangling there and thinking, 'Can I really hang on? How long can I hang on? This seems impossible.' And man after man loses his grip and falls to his death, and up above you hear ice tinkling in the glasses, but the pile of bodies down below is just getting higher and higher.”⁴¹

To sum it up in one word: ignored. Schatz saw people who knew he needed help, yet all they did was walk away. Ignored is the perfect way to describe gay men with AIDS in the 1980s. Ignored by the populace because of their sexuality, then blamed for their disease for that sexuality. It seemed as though the gay community couldn't win.

By 1985, the AIDS virus had gained terrifying momentum. Even as the death toll rose rapidly, Americans still refused to budge on their beliefs of gay people. Many of them had people in their lives who had gotten the disease, but still had a tough time accepting the lifestyle they lived. As a result, some people even went so far as to hide their AIDS diagnosis so that the people in their lives would not discover their sexuality. As historian Christopher Capozzola wrote about this experience, “Many early victims of AIDS refused to be identified as such in their obituaries, and gay friends and lovers were often excluded by the deceased's families from funeral services and burials.”⁴² They were treated like lepers, as if being gay inherently meant you had or were going to get AIDS.

The Reagan Administration's Response to the AIDS Crisis

As a further testament to the ways in which the gay community was ignored during the AIDS crisis, the Reagan administration often bypassed gay men when working with AIDS funding. Ronald Reagan himself was, to say the least, slow with getting involved in the federal government's response to the crisis. His surgeon general, Dr. C. Everett Koop, had long wanted

⁴¹ Collins, *Transforming America*, 135.

⁴² Christopher Capozzola, “A Very American Epidemic: Memory Politics and Identity Politics in the AIDS Memorial Quilt, 1985–1993,” in *The World Sixties Made: Politics And Culture In Recent America*, ed. Van Gosse and Moser Richard (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 219-241

to implement a federal response to the crisis. Koop advocated for government funding for sex education programs and wanted to spread awareness for condoms as a deterrent to AIDS.⁴³ However, Reagan was still a religious man by nature and some of Koop's suggestions were at odds with his religious beliefs. In his youth, Reagan didn't have problems with pre-marital sex, and by most accounts was very accepting of gay people. However, it is possible this faded as he aged. He couldn't, however, forget those who had gotten him where he was: his religious base. He knew he needed them to win reelection in 1984, so while he empathized with the thousands living with the virus, he put them and the AIDS crisis on the backburner.

The response (or lack thereof) from Reagan was felt throughout the gay community. The most popular man in America, the man who was supposed to be their leader and fight for them, was among those who ignored them. Although there were thousands dying, the president would not even mention the virus by name. Under Reagan, neoconservatism was flourishing and the aforementioned return to "family values" had many people pushing anything related to the gay community away. As their loved ones began abandoning them, it became important to gay activists in this time to find a way to prove how bad things were getting for AIDS victims. They wanted to develop a way to get the names and stories of those who had already died out to the larger public so that people could come to accept them. It was this resolve that created the famous AIDS quilt.

Cleve Jones, the creator of the NAMES project AIDS memorial Quilt, said: "I felt that we lived in this little ghetto on the west coast which would be destroyed without anyone in the rest of the world even noticing. I knew we needed a memorial."⁴⁴ For many deceased victims, they wanted their sexuality to be intentionally excluded from their obituaries and all discussion about it silenced at their funeral. The taboo nature of being gay in this time could also impact one's family, and many didn't want to cause issue for them. The AIDS quilt was created instead to celebrate those who had died and praise them for being happy with the people they were. Personal patches were crafted to showcase a loved one during their life and would include blank paper for people to write stories about them. Jones wanted not only the general public to see the quilt, but the Reagan administration as well. On this subject, he wrote, "I was obsessed by the idea of evidence...I felt that if there were a field of a thousand corpses, people would be compelled to act. I wanted to create evidence of AIDS deaths and by extension create evidence of government failure."⁴⁵

By 1985, the death toll from the AIDS virus had reached around 25,000 and it was becoming increasingly difficult to continue ignoring the epidemic. The American public was becoming slightly more sympathetic to the crisis and Reagan had successfully won reelection in 1984. It was in 1985 that the first major figure would perish from the disease and their death would shake the nation out of its willful ignorance. That celebrity was actor Rock Hudson, a somewhat

⁴³ Diggins, *Ronald Reagan*, 322.

⁴⁴ Capozzola, "A Very American Epidemic," 222.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 94.

successful television actor who had enjoyed relative popularity since the 1950s.⁴⁶ Until this point, Reagan had been actively blocking his surgeon general from discussing the federal response to AIDS. According to Diggins, “it was not until he learned of the illness of his friend [Rock Hudson] in 1985...that Reagan took the AIDS plague seriously and ordered government resources to fight it.”⁴⁷ Losing Hudson woke people up. Suddenly it wasn’t just something affecting gay strangers. Now, cultural icons were dying, cultural icons that were in fact actively hiding their sexuality. It put a mirror up to America’s face and showed the country just how wrong it had been. For Reagan in particular, this experience was difficult because Hudson had been a friend of his from his acting years. For a man who already struggled with connecting with people on a personal level, losing a true friend became too much.

It was 1986 when the president finally mentioned the AIDS virus by name. By this time, over 21,000 American citizens had died from it.⁴⁸ Reagan finally discussed federal funding to help combat the virus and assured those suffering that they were in his thoughts. This ambiguous and late response to one of the most devastating diseases in history occurred when the president was nearing the end of his post. Ronald Reagan had won his second term, and throughout both terms the economy and war on drugs had remained his main focus. For “Dutch,” it took a friend dying to make him acknowledge the countless people that were suffering. Though not an ignorant man, Reagan’s silence during the crisis puts him at the center of gay resistance. He could have at any point tried to help earlier, and while he couldn’t personally have created a cure, the people dying would have known that work was being done against the disease that took their lives. Reagan’s reluctance to compromise the support of his religious base and step away from his neoconservative values in order to take action against a deadly virus stands as an example of government failure. If success isn’t intended for all, if the helpless are excluded from the conversation, then a government isn’t doing its job.

⁴⁶ Collins, *Transforming America*, 136.

⁴⁷ Diggins, *Ronald Reagan*, 322.

⁴⁸ Capozzola, “*A Very American Epidemic*,” 227.

Bibliography

- “Angel's hand to an Aids victim - Ten years on: Memories of a people's Princess.” *News of the World*, August 26, 2007. NewsBank.
- Batza, Katie. *Before AIDS: Gay Health Politics in the 1970s*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. EBSCO eBook Comprehensive Academic Collection.
- Capozzola, Christopher. “A Very American Epidemic: Memory Politics and Identity Politics in the AIDS Memorial Quilt, 1985–1993.” In *The World Sixties Made: Politics And Culture In Recent America*, edited by Van Gosse and Moser Richard, 219-41. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003.
- Collins, Robert M. *Transforming America: Politics and Culture During the Reagan Years*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. EBSCO eBook Comprehensive Academic Collection.
- Diggins, John Patrick. *Ronald Reagan: Fate, Freedom, and the Making of History*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008.
- McCollister, John. “The Unflappable Nelle Reagan.” *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 1, 1985. MasterFILE Premier.
- Nash, George H. “Reagan’s Right Turn.” *Modern Age* 60 no. 2 (2018): 33-49. Education Research Complete.
- Stone, Amy L. “The Impact of Anti-Gay Politics on the LGBTQ Movement.” *Sociology Compass* 10, no. 6 (June 2016): 459-467. doi:10.1111/soc4.12373.
- Story, Ronald, and Bruce Laurie. *The Rise of Conservatism in America, 1945-2000: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2008.

“The Great American Race Problem:” The Eugenics Movement and Scientific Racism in the United States during the 20th Century

Catherine Campbell

On April 29th of 1904, the people of St. Louis, Missouri worked tirelessly into the night in preparation for what would become one of the greatest fairs in the history of the world, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition.¹ The following day, millions of people filled the decorated streets of downtown St. Louis, gathering at the Louisiana Purchase Monument for the opening ceremonies.² The crowd waited with anticipation for President Theodore Roosevelt to deliver his commencement speech.³ According to *The Times Dispatch*, the exposition consisted of “the most representative collection of the resources, industries, art, peoples, and customs of the world ever assembled.”⁴ People traveled to St. Louis hoping to be amazed by the fascinating exhibits at the World’s Fair.⁵ However, some people, such as Congolese man Ota Benga, were coerced into making the voyage.⁶

¹ “Greatest Fair in World’s History is Now but a Name,” *The St. Louis Republic*, December 02, 1904. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84020274/1904-12-02/ed-1/seq-1/#words=Purchase%2BFAIR%2BFair%2BPURCHASE%2BLouisiana%2BEXPOSITION%2BExposition%2BLouisiana>; “The Fair Opening,” *The Evening Bulletin*, April 30, 1904, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87060190/1904-04-30/ed-1/seq-1/#words=Purchase%2Bfair%2BFAIR%2Bopening%2Bopen%2BFair%2Bopened%2BExposition%2BLouisiana%2BOpened>.

² “The Fair Opening,” *The Evening Bulletin*, April 30, 1904, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87060190/1904-04-30/ed-1/seq-1/#words=Purchase%2Bfair%2BFAIR%2Bopening%2Bopen%2BFair%2Bopened%2BExposition%2BLouisiana%2BOpened>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ “Great Fair Now But A Memory,” *The Times Dispatch*, December 02, 1904, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038615/1904-12-02/ed-1/seq-1/#words=fair%2BPurchase%2BLouisiana%2BFair%2BExposition>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Karen Sotiropoulos, “‘Town of God’: Ota Benga, the Batetela Boys, and the Promise of Black America,” *Journal of World History* 26, no. 1 (March 2015): 42.

In the early 1900s, social Darwinists were seeking scientific justification for their theories and would often use fairs and zoos to promote their racist ideologies.⁷ People from various ethnic backgrounds were brought to the United States and used in public displays called “anthropology villages.”⁸ These anthropological villages were intended to justify the dominant racial hierarchy, in which Blacks and other minorities were at the bottom.⁹ Benga was lured to St. Louis under the assumption that freedom and opportunity awaited him.¹⁰ However, when he arrived, he was put in an exhibit where crowds of people taunted, laughed, and prodded at him and where scientists examined him.¹¹ Benga had entered a world where both society and science considered him to be subhuman.

In the early 20th century, contemporary ideas about science and racism amalgamated in the name of white supremacy. Social Darwinists and white supremacists immersed themselves in the latest studies of genetics and heredity in an effort to prove that darker skinned people were inherently inferior.¹² The extent that scientific racism was sensationalized in the United States is not surprising considering the country was founded on imperialism, the brutalization and forced assimilation of indigenous peoples, and the enslavement of Africans.¹³ Prominent leaders and scholars became fixated on the idea that races had a scientifically predetermined level of physical and intellectual ability.¹⁴ This fixation, and the belief that human beings could be strategically bred in order to produce a superior “stock,” would result in the emergence of the American eugenics movement.¹⁵

It became obvious to white supremacists in the United States that eugenics could be used as a tool to maintain their dominance over other races, particularly African Americans.¹⁶ Scientific evidence is an appealing tool for white supremacists, although today we acknowledge that eugenics is pseudoscience because it allows people to believe that their determined racial hierarchy is undeniable. That being said, ideas of social hygiene and racial purity occupied the minds of Black scholars as well.¹⁷ In the present day, it is easy to come to the conclusion that human breeding in the name of social progress and racial fitness is not scientifically logical or morally tenable. Nevertheless, in its day, eugenics was respected and endorsed by prominent scholars of various races from many fields.¹⁸

⁷ Susan Currell and Christina Cogdell, *Popular Eugenics: National Efficiency and American Mass Culture in the 1930's* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 362.

⁸ Sotiropoulos, “*Town of God*,” 42.

⁹ *Ibid*, 44.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 51-51.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 42.

¹² Rutledge M. Dennis, “Social Darwinism, Scientific Racism, and the Metaphysics of Race,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 64, no. 3 (Summer 1995): 244.

¹³ Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak: Eugenic and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2003), 22.

¹⁴ Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race: Or, The Racial Basis of European History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), 3.

¹⁵ John P. Jackson Jr. and Nadine M. Weidman, “The Origins of Scientific Racism,” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 50 (Winter 2005-6): 66.

¹⁶ Carol M. Taylor, “W. E. B. DuBois's Challenge to Scientific Racism,” *Journal of Black Studies* 11, no. 4 (June 1981): 450.

¹⁷ Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 230.

¹⁸ Black, *War Against the Weak*, 31.

Both Black and white scholars embraced eugenic ideology; however, they were motivated for different reasons. It seems relatively obvious that desperate and relentless white supremacist scholars would attempt to use science to justify their racial hierarchy. However, the fact that Black scholars also adopted eugenics seems far less obvious. The various ways Black and white people adopted eugenics directly reflects the racial situation of the 20th century. White people believed that their race was inherently superior and, therefore, considered themselves entitled to a dominant position in society.¹⁹ As such, Eugenics was a crucial piece of the white-power puzzle. Black people, on the other hand, rejected the racist and hateful aspects of eugenics and instead adapted the ideology in an effort to uplift the Black population socially, economically, and politically.²⁰

Historiography of Eugenics

When studying the history of the United States, eugenics can sometimes be overlooked. People often do not like to shine a light on the corruption and degradation that has taken place in their country, especially when the nation's most influential people were promoting it. For that reason, topics like eugenics are often scarcely mentioned. However, in recent years, scholars have recognized the importance of talking about dark and disturbing topics such as eugenics in an effort to educate people and help them better understand our past.

Eugenics gained popularity and became mainstream in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as new ideas about science and race circulated. According to historian Diane B. Paul, it was not until around the 1960s that scholarship on the history of eugenics started to emerge.²¹ An early publication summarizing the history of eugenics is Mark H. Haller's *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought*.²² In this text, Haller explores the emergence of the eugenics movement in relation to 20th century ideas of progressivism and social thought.²³

While historians such as Haller were exposing the eugenics movement, others were defending it. In the article "How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?," psychologist Arthur Jensen argued that Black people were intellectually inferior to white people and presented IQ tests as evidence.²⁴ His methodology was eerily similar to eugenicists of the early 20th century. In the last two decades of the 20th century, scholars continued to differ over the credibility of eugenics. One influential publication was Daniel Kevles' *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity*.²⁵ According to Diane B. Paul, Kevles brought the scholarship on

¹⁹ Madison Grant, "Introduction," in *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), xxix-xxxix.

²⁰ Shantella Y. Sherman, "In Search of Race Purity: Popular Eugenics and Racial Uplift among New Negroes 1915-1935" (PhD diss., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2014), 3.

²¹ Diane B. Paul, "Reflections on the Historiography of American Eugenics: Trends, Fractures, Tensions," *Journey of the History of Biology* 49, no. 4 (December 2016): 645.

²² Mark H. Haller, *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963).

²³ Haller, *Eugenics*, v-vi.

²⁴ Arthur Jensen, "How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?," *Harvard Educational Review* 39, no. 1 (1968): 1-23.

²⁵ Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

eugenics up to date by including information about post-World War II efforts and new genetic technologies.²⁶ One of the more recent publications that supported eugenic thought was Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein's *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*.²⁷ Herrnstein and Murray perpetuated the idea that minorities were genetically inferior based on the social Darwinist ideology of survival of the fittest.²⁸ Thankfully, most modern scholars acknowledge the fallaciousness of Herrnstein and Murray's argument.²⁹ Since World War II, scholarship on eugenics has evolved rapidly as ideas about race and science have continued to change. As a result, other disciplines such as psychology and sociology have included eugenics in their scholarship as well. Hopefully in the years to come, people will be more open to discussing sensitive issues like eugenics for the sake of enlightening people about the past and preventing similar events in the future.

Science in the Early 20th Century

The publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origins of Species* in 1859 inadvertently provided scientific racists with a foundation to formulate their theories.³⁰ One of Darwin's most significant discoveries presented in the text was the process of natural selection. Natural selection is the idea that any living organism will adapt and change over time based on the environment it is exposed to in order to better survive.³¹ Organisms with more desirable attributes will thrive in their environment, reproducing with one another and eventually breeding out organisms with weaker traits. Darwin applied his ideas of biological evolution and natural selection specifically to animal species. He did not seriously entertain the possibility of applying his ideas about evolution to human beings.³² Despite this, and the fact that he openly believed there were no fixed distinctions between species, his groundbreaking ideas were manipulated to legitimize racist ideologies surrounding heredity.³³

Another scientist whose discoveries were manipulated in the name of scientific racism was the Austrian monk Gregor Mendel.³⁴ Mendel genetically crossed tall pea plants with short pea plants and discovered that there was a 3:1 ratio that the offspring of the two plants would be tall. He concluded that specific characteristics in pea plants, such as height, were preserved and passed down to future generations. When Mendel published his work in the 1860s, his discoveries were largely ignored by the scientific community for three decades. It was not until the late 19th century that Mendel's work received significant attention, namely from pseudoscientists such as Charles Davenport who were looking for evidence to support their racist theories of heredity.³⁵ The rediscovery of Mendel's work in 1900 encouraged scientific racists and strengthened their

²⁶ Paul, "Reflections on the Historiography of American Eugenics," 646.

²⁷ Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (New York: Free Press, 1994).

²⁸ Dennis, "Social Darwinism," 248.

²⁹ John H. Kranzler, "Commentary on Some of the Empirical and Theoretical Support for The Bell Curve," *School Psychology Review* 24, no. 1 (March 1995): 36.

³⁰ Jackson Jr. and Weidman, "The Origins of Scientific Racism," 69.

³¹ *Ibid*, 66.

³² *Ibid*, 244.

³³ *Ibid*, 243.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 69.

³⁵ *Ibid*.

belief that they would soon be able to manipulate the laws of human heredity to benefit their racist agenda.³⁶

As ideas about evolution and race circulated in the scientific community, Herbert Spencer boldly attempted to connect Darwin's theory of natural selection to human society; an idea now referred to as social Darwinism.³⁷ Although Spencer was British, social Darwinism became popular in the United States because it supported already established ideas about white supremacy.³⁸ Spencer coined the phrase "survival of the fittest," which he argued is how people should view specific groups who are struggling economically, socially, or politically.³⁹ He believed that if one race or group of people were in a disadvantaged position in society, it was a result of inherent inferiority and they should not have the opportunity to compete with the superior races.⁴⁰ According to Spencer, conflict between races was necessary for social progress because it was part of the natural order of things for the Anglo-Saxon race to dominate other races.⁴¹ It seems that he was analyzing world history from an exclusively white lens, not considering a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, or multi-cultural perspective. Spencer ignored the fact that American society was built on racism. As a result, certain groups of people are severely disadvantaged not because of their genetics, but because white Europeans established the United States through the abuse, exploitation, and discrimination of other races.

Spencer's social Darwinist ideologies were adopted by several scholars, including the United States' first sociologist, William Graham Sumner. Sumner strongly believed that everyone is born into the world on an equal playing field with the same access to opportunities and ability to gain status, regardless of race. According to Sumner, personal motivation and natural ability determined whether or not an individual would be successful. However, he failed to consider the reality that if you are not white in the United States, you are automatically at a disadvantage. Sumner applied Spencer's notion of "survival of the fittest" to American slavery in an attempt to justify his beliefs. He argued that the white American business class was able to thrive economically, culturally, socially, and politically because whites were inherently superior to all other races.⁴²

White People in the U.S. During the Early 20th Century

Ideas about white supremacy and imperialism can be seen in European and American history for centuries. However, as scientific racism gained popularity, these ideas received more attention. In 1899, William Z. Ripley published *Races of Europe*, a text in which he distinguished a tripartite racial hierarchy of European white races.⁴³ According to Ripley, the superior race was Teutonic, otherwise known as Nordic or Aryan, followed by the Alpine, and then

³⁶ Thomas C. Leonard, "'More Merciful and Not Less Effective': Eugenics and American Economics in the Progressive Era," *History of Political Economy* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 691.

³⁷ Taylor, "W. E. B. DuBois's Challenge to Scientific Racism," 451.

³⁸ Dennis, "Social Darwinism," 244.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Jackson Jr. and Weidman, "The Origins of Scientific Racism," 69, 71.

Mediterranean.⁴⁴ Belief in a superior Teutonic race came to be known as Nordicism.⁴⁵ According to John P. Jackson and Nadine M. Weidman, Nordicists made two significant contributions to race theory. First, that “civilization itself was the product of race,” and second, that “race was the basis of social order.”⁴⁶ Nordic, or Anglo-Saxon, supremacy was promoted internationally in conjunction with the belief that a person is defective if they are not of Germanic descent.⁴⁷ According to Madison Grant, an American Nordicist and eugenicist, the Nordic race was the “white man par excellence” due to its physical characteristics and ability to establish civilization.⁴⁸

The United States in the early 20th century was rife with white supremacy, racism, and violence. The end of the post-Civil War Reconstruction period brought with it Jim Crow laws that enforced segregation against Black Americans. It was difficult enough for Black people to integrate into American society after the Civil War and beginning in the 1870s, their exclusion and deprivation would be protected by law. However, Jim Crow laws were not the only way white America intended to diminish African Americans’ chances of upward mobility—they also used violence. Lynch mobs became increasingly popular at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.⁴⁹ Many social scientists of the day argued that lynch mobs and violence towards Black people was a natural instinct for white people who were protecting themselves from racial inferiority.⁵⁰ There was also a popular, but fallacious, rhetoric that Black men, unable to repress their sexual urges, were savagely raping white women at an alarming rate.⁵¹ Pseudoscientists argued that this was because Black men were intellectually inferior, and believed that having sex with a white woman would increase the health of the Black race.⁵² Both of these claims are clearly problematic; however, they were used to justify violence against African Americans in an attempt to further oppress them.

The belief that Northern Europeans and Americans were inherently superior to Africans, Native Americans, Asians, and Latin Americans was already firmly established throughout western civilization by the early 20th century.⁵³ Nordicism strengthened beliefs about white supremacy which, in turn, further justified violence and imperialism. Once scientific racism fully embraced Nordicism, there was an even stronger argument that Europe and the United States should attempt to gain control of areas and groups of people that were believed to be inferior. Nordicism, white supremacy, and social Darwinism were integral to the development of scientific racism and eugenics.

Blacks Americans in the Early 20th Century

⁴⁴ Ibid, 69.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 70.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Black, *War Against the Weak*, 29.

⁴⁸ Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, 167-168.

⁴⁹ Robert H. Terrell, *A Glance at the Past and Present of the Negro* (Washington: R. L. Pendelton, 1903), 14.

⁵⁰ Taylor, “W. E. B. DuBois’s Challenge to Scientific Racism,” 452.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Dennis, “Social Darwinism,” 245.

In the early 20th century, most Black Americans were struggling to find their place in white American society, and many were stuck in impoverished living situations.⁵⁴ It was also difficult to obtain agency, as they were displaced throughout the country. According to Ashton L. Sewell, Black Americans struggled to unite in the U.S. because they did not share a common heritage due to their forced migration from east, west, and central Africa during the trans-Atlantic slave trade.⁵⁵ Sewell argues that Black Americans experienced a lack of connectedness and community which impacted their ability to gain substantial power and influence, ultimately forcing them into a disadvantaged position in American society. Sewell also emphasizes that centuries of forced servitude made it nearly impossible for Black people to integrate into society successfully after emancipation and Reconstruction.⁵⁶ African Americans were deprived educationally, politically, and economically from the time they were forced onto the American continent.⁵⁷ The unfortunate reality was that in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many Black Americans were still struggling because of their past enslavement and commodification.⁵⁸ In addition, they were the target of white violence, since white Americans saw Black people as the primary cause of the Civil War and an overall threat to white dominance.⁵⁹

Black Americans did, however, accomplish tremendous racial progress in the late 19th and early 20th centuries despite overwhelming oppression.⁶⁰ For example, the New Negro Movement was taking place not only in Harlem, but all over the world.⁶¹ Through this movement, Black Americans were regaining control over their identity, rejecting old stereotypes, and embracing their cultural nuances in areas such as literature, music, and art. The entire Black population embraced similar ideas about racial uplift that involved challenging segregation, political protest, cultural expression, and intellectual debate.⁶² Self-determination and an emphasis on a shared African heritage were two major components of the New Negro Movement.⁶³ The dominant white culture of the United States had created caricatured Black stereotypes such as the joyful mammy, the incompetent sambo, and the docile Uncle Tom.⁶⁴ These controlling stereotypes robbed Black Americans of their ability to create a collective identity. As such, the New Negro Movement would focus on taking that power back and creating an international Black identity of strength, resilience, and pride.⁶⁵ The dedication and enthusiasm of the New Negro Movement was likely threatening to white people, giving them even more incentive to embrace eugenics.

White Eugenics

⁵⁴Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation*, 18.

⁵⁵ Ashton L. Sewell, *The Roots of the Universal Negro Convention: An historical background and review of the causes leading up to the great Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World*, 1920, Emory University, 1920, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100788180>.

⁵⁶ Sewell, *The Roots of the Universal Negro Convention*, 20-21.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Terrell, *A Glance at the Past and Present of the Negro*, 4.

⁵⁹ Sewell, *The Roots of the Universal Negro Convention*, 20-21.

⁶⁰ Davarian L. Baldwin and Minkah Makalani, *Escape from New York: The New Negro Renaissance beyond Harlem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 5.

⁶¹ Baldwin and Makalani, *Escape from New York*, 5.

⁶² Ibid, 5, 8.

⁶³ Ibid, 20.

⁶⁴ Nathan Irvin Huggins and Arnold Rampersad, *Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 57.

⁶⁵ Huggins and Rampersad, *Harlem Renaissance*, 59.

Francis Galton, an English scholar and Darwin's cousin, was inspired by evolution, social Darwinism, and scientific racism. He eventually combined those ideologies into one concept he called eugenics.⁶⁶ The word "eugenics" derives from the Greek word "well-born" and can be described, in the words of Thomas C. Leonard, as a "movement to improve human heredity by the social control of human breeding, based on the assumption that differences in human intelligence, character, and temperament are largely due to differences in heredity."⁶⁷ The basic ideology of eugenics was that people with good attributes should reproduce and people with bad attributes should not.⁶⁸ Galton believed that the racial hierarchy, which placed white people at the top and Black people at the bottom, was the result of evolution's natural progression.⁶⁹

In the first half of the 20th century, nearly every modern society embraced eugenics in some way, although not all eugenic programs were designed with racism in mind. For example, some countries had prenatal care practices that, because they were designed to control breeding, would have been considered eugenics but were not directly motivated by racism.⁷⁰ Eugenics in the United States initially focused on the study of lower-class white families who were considered to be degenerate, passing down qualities such as alcoholism, criminality, and prostitution.⁷¹ However, during the Progressive Era, racism became a primary feature of U.S. eugenics.⁷²

The complex racial climate of the United States made it the perfect place for eugenics to rear its ugly head.⁷³ Edwin Black offered a compelling observation when he stated that "America had been breeding humans even before its inception."⁷⁴ The whole institution of American slavery was grounded in the ideology of human breeding.⁷⁵ White Americans, who already viewed themselves as the superior race, attended auctions where they would purchase other human beings depending on various physical and mental capabilities.

The United States had been a racially hostile place for non-white people since its origins, which provided the perfect environment for eugenics to thrive in. The abolition of slavery in the United States in 1865 did not have a racially harmonious outcome. Black Americans were still seen as inferior and were forced to live under the cruelty of white power and discrimination. Other ethnic groups also suffered at the hands of white Americans. Native Americans experienced the brutality of white supremacy and power since the first Europeans stepped foot on the continent. Mexicans in western and southwestern America were victimized after the Mexican American War. In addition, immigration was seen as a threat to white racial purity, resulting in laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. There was even extreme discrimination against southern European immigrants, who were not seen as fully white.⁷⁶

⁶⁶ Black, *War Against the Weak*, 14-15.

⁶⁷ Leonard, "'More Merciful and Not Less Effective,'" 690.

⁶⁸ Jackson Jr. and Weidman, "The Origins of Scientific Racism," 70.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁷¹ Leonard, "'More Merciful and Not Less Effective,'" 691.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Black, *War Against the Weak*, 22.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

In the early 1900s, American biologist Charles Davenport became obsessed with Francis Galton's work on eugenics.⁷⁷ Eugenics was appealing to Davenport because, in addition to being a scientist, he wanted to create a superior Nordic race.⁷⁸ By advocating his racist rhetoric, Davenport gained the support of some of the wealthiest men in America at the time, including Alexander Graham Bell, Andrew Carnegie, Woodrow Wilson, and Dr. John Harvey Kellogg.⁷⁹ They provided Davenport with the money and tools he needed to establish the Eugenics Records Office and a biological laboratory for experimental evolution in Cold Spring Harbor, New York.⁸⁰ Davenport started collecting information from various resources such as charity records, mental health facilities, schools and homes for the deaf and blind, prisons, hospitals, and almshouses.⁸¹ Several other racist American scholars, such as Harry H. Laughlin and Madison Grant, joined Davenport on his mission to breed the human population and maintain white supremacy.⁸² By the late 1910s, eugenics was firmly established in the United States.⁸³

Eugenicists wanted their research to receive the same level of academic respect as the natural sciences.⁸⁴ In an effort to legitimize their pseudoscience, eugenicists developed various standardized tests they believed could measure physical and intellectual ability.⁸⁵ However, these tests lacked scientific credibility and were just another tool to argue for white supremacy.⁸⁶ One of the most popular tests was the Binet Intelligence test.⁸⁷ The Binet test was designed for children between the ages of three and thirteen and consisted of about fifty-six tasks and questions.⁸⁸ Eugenicists believed that if they could measure a child's judgement, resourcefulness, and adaptability, they could determine whether or not they would become a valuable member of society.⁸⁹

The criteria of assessments such as the Binet test reveal how unsystematic and flawed they truly were. In one session of the test, six-year-old children were given a set of pictures and they had to determine which pictures were aesthetically appealing.⁹⁰ In another session, eleven-year-old children had to identify, and react properly, to an odd statement.⁹¹ Both of these tasks are completely subjective. Differences in education, class, and race would influence every child's

⁷⁷ Ibid, 32.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 37.

⁷⁹ Black, *War Against the Weak*, 43-44, 69-70, 88; "Alexander Graham Bell as Chairman of the Board of Scientific Directors of the Eugenics Record Office," *Eugenical News*, August 1929, http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=1440.

⁸⁰ Black, *War Against the Weak*, 45; Jackson and Weidman, "The Origins of Scientific Racism," 74.

⁸¹ Black, *War Against the Weak*, 45.

⁸² Jackson Jr. and Weidman, "The Origins of Scientific Racism," 73-74.

⁸³ Ibid, 75.

⁸⁴ Dennis, "Social Darwinism," 246.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 247.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 246.

⁸⁸ Leonard Porter Ayres, "The Binet-Simon Measuring Scale for Intelligence: Some Criticism and Suggestions," December 16, 1911, http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=1440.

⁸⁹ Ayres, "The Binet-Simon Measuring Scale for Intelligence," December 16, 1911, http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=1440.

⁹⁰ "Schedule and Apparatus for the Binet Test," *The Harry H. Laughlin Papers*, 1921, http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=1102.

⁹¹ Ayres, "The Binet-Simon Measuring Scale for Intelligence."

decision.⁹² Therefore, eugenicists could manipulate the test's criteria in order to come to the conclusions that would support their argument. These test results were used by eugenicists to validate their beliefs about white superiority and strengthen their argument that Black Americans, and other minorities, were inadequate members of society because of their genetic makeup.⁹³

Eugenicists also sought to eliminate the reproductive rights of those they deemed degenerate and defective.⁹⁴ Sterilization became eugenicists preferred method to achieve this goal; however, life segregation, restrictive marriage, and euthanasia were also considered appropriate birth control methods.⁹⁵ Eugenicists believed that inferior people should not be allowed to reproduce because they would pass down their undesirable traits to their children.⁹⁶ Lower class whites and minorities, particularly Black Americans, were targeted by sterilization efforts. By 1935, the majority of states in the U.S. had legalized sterilization.⁹⁷ Every state possessed a specific criteria to determine if someone should be sterilized.⁹⁸ According to "The State Criteria for Legal Eugenic Sterilization," someone in Oregon could be sterilized if they were considered feebleminded, insane, an epileptic, a habitual criminal, a moral degenerate, or a sexual pervert.⁹⁹ In Alabama, the only required qualification for sterilization was "feeblemindedness."¹⁰⁰ The vagueness of these qualifications meant that eugenicists could sterilize anyone who they believed was a threat to white racial purity.

Miscegenation, the interbreeding of different racial groups through sex or marriage, was also seen as a significant danger to white racial purity.¹⁰¹ Marriage laws quickly became another way for eugenicists to ensure that white people were only reproducing with other white people. For example, The American Eugenics Party believed that "national laws must be enacted to prohibit marriage between the races and encourage stock (ethnic group) purity. The negroes are too different genetically and will always be a source of conflict. Negroes must be resettled in Africa."¹⁰² Varying states allowed a certain amount of "negro blood" to be present in mixed marriages.¹⁰³ For example, in Maryland, it was legal for 1/8 amount of "negro blood" to be present in a marriage, while in Alabama, Georgia, and Virginia, all mixed marriages were

⁹² Dennis, "Social Darwinism," 247.

⁹³ Ibid, 246.

⁹⁴ "Means Proposed For Cutting Off The Supply of Human Defectives and Degenerates," *The Harry H. Laughlin Papers*, http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=978.

⁹⁵ "Means Proposed For Cutting Off The Supply of Human Defectives and Degenerates," *The Harry H. Laughlin Papers*, http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=978; Black, *War Against the Weak*, 21.

⁹⁶ "General Questionnaire on the sterilization of 'defectives'," *American Philosophical Society*, 1912, http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/image_header.pl?id=535&printable=1&detailed=0.

⁹⁷ "Legislative status of Eugenic sterilization in the several states of United States, January 1935," *The Harry H. Laughlin Papers*, 1935, http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=949.

⁹⁸ "State Criteria For Eugenic Sterilization," *The Harry H. Laughlin Papers*, 1935, http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=948.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Black, *War Against the Weak*, 31.

¹⁰² "American Eugenics Party Platform," *American Philosophical Society*, 1964, http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=762.

¹⁰³ W. A. Plecker, "Amount of Negro and Other Colored Blood Illegal in Various States for Marriage to Whites: 1929," *Eugenical News*, 1929, http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=1442.

illegal.¹⁰⁴ Based on the various restrictions eugenicists put on marriage and reproduction, it is obvious that African Americans were one of their primary targets.

Black Opposition to Eugenics

Black scholars were acutely aware that white supremacy and racism were fundamental to eugenic ideology. Many Black intellectuals such as Kelly Miller, a professor at Howard University, set out to debunk white eugenicists' theories.¹⁰⁵ He openly accused white eugenicists of conducting biased and faulty research.¹⁰⁶ Miller pointed out that mainstream white eugenicists were accumulating damaging information about the Black population, such as high crime rates, because that was the only information they were interested in recording.¹⁰⁷ White eugenicists only searched for negative information about Black Americans because they knew it would support their supremacist narrative.¹⁰⁸ Miller argued that if white racist scientists studied every race the same way they were studying Black people, they would find that each race possessed undesirable characteristics.¹⁰⁹

In the early 1910s, Thomas Dixon Jr., an American author and white supremacist, published an openly racist novel titled *The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden 1865-1900*.¹¹⁰ Dixon argued that no amount of education could bridge the evolutionary gap between the white and Black races.¹¹¹ His ideas were in alignment with mainstream eugenicists who believed that African Americans' societal struggles were the result of genetics, not environmental factors.¹¹² In response to Dixon's novel, Kelly Miller published a twenty-one page paper discrediting his argument, and condemning him.¹¹³ He accused Dixon of subscribing to an embarrassingly out of date and disreputable ideology that suggested Black skulls were too thick to retain knowledge.¹¹⁴ Miller provided examples of the progress the Black population had made in the years since emancipation.¹¹⁵ Miller emphasized Dixon's privilege and ignorance by proclaiming, "You are a white man born in the midst of the civil war, I am a Negro born during the same stirring epoch. You were born with a silver spoon in your mouth, I was born with an iron hoe in my hand."¹¹⁶

W. E. B. DuBois was also very critical of white eugenics. DuBois discredited the methodology of mainstream eugenicists who did not consider environmental or historical factors and their

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation*, 81.

¹⁰⁶ Kelly Miller, *Race Adjustment: Essays on the Negro in America* (New York & Washington: The Neale Publishing Company, 1908), 95.

¹⁰⁷ Miller, *Race Adjustment*, 95.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Kelly Miller, *As to the Leopard's Spots: an open letter to Thomas Dixon Jr.* (Washington DC: Hayworth Publishing House, 1905), 4-5.

¹¹¹ Miller, *As to the Leopard's Spots*, 4-5.

¹¹² Taylor, "W. E. B. DuBois's Challenge to Scientific Racism," 457.

¹¹³ Miller, *As to the Leopard's Spots*, 5.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 3.

impact on racial progress.¹¹⁷ Similarly to Miller, DuBois argued that the social problems within the Black community, such as high crime rates, were not because of genetic inferiority, but because of environmental factors.¹¹⁸ He argued that crime rates could be higher within Black communities because of the abundant suffering they had experienced in the United States since its origins.¹¹⁹ Excessive crime in the Black community could be a result of an adverse environment, not genetic inferiority.¹²⁰ DuBois also accused white eugenicists of conducting biased research, ignoring any information that would contradict their racist beliefs.¹²¹

Black Adaptation of Eugenics

Black Americans recognized the various ways white eugenicists were attempting to dehumanize them, and yet, many prominent Black scholars embraced eugenic ideologies in order to promote racial progress.¹²² Eugenics was appealing to the Black intellectuals of the New Negro Movement who were focused on the social, political, and economic uplift of the Black population.¹²³ Shantella Y. Sherman referred to the fusion of the New Negro Movement and popular eugenics as “New Negro Eugenics.”¹²⁴ According to Sherman, New Negro Eugenics “noted differences between inherited traits and learned behaviors dictated by environment, and used social engagement and education to transform the marginally fit into useful and progressive members of the race.”¹²⁵ Black scholars such as W. E. B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, William Hannibal Thomas, and Kelly Miller all incorporated eugenics into their work. These men, with the exception of Thomas, did not fully endorse mainstream eugenics. Instead, they adapted some of the key components of eugenics, such as racial purity, nationalism, and strategic breeding, in conjunction with the universal movement for Black progress and liberation.¹²⁶

DuBois focused primarily on the social problems that plagued Black people in American cities and argued that it was the responsibility of Black intellectuals to uplift the remainder of the population.¹²⁷ In *The Philadelphia Negro*, DuBois divided the Black population into four different “grades.” The first grade was “families of undoubted respectability earning sufficient income to live well.” The second grade was “the respectable working-class.” The third was “the poor,” and the fourth and final grade was the “submerged tenth.”¹²⁸ According to Sherman, DuBois’s categorization of each grade was based on eugenic principles.¹²⁹ She observed that DuBois believed poverty and a lack of motivation were inherited traits; a result of unhealthy and unproductive breeding among Blacks.¹³⁰ DuBois also claimed that white people in the United States “may rightly demand” that Black Americans make “at least every effort and sacrifice

¹¹⁷ Taylor, “W. E. B. DuBois Challenges to Scientific Racism,” 457.

¹¹⁸ W. E. B. DuBois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1899), iv.

¹¹⁹ Taylor, “W. E. B. DuBois Challenged to Scientific Racism,” 457.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid, 458.

¹²² Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation*, 80.

¹²³ Ibid, 81.

¹²⁴ Sherman, *In Search of Purity*, 4.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 9-10.

¹²⁷ W. E. B. DuBois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, iv-v. 392.

¹²⁸ DuBois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, 311; Sherman, *In Search of Purity*, 4-6.

¹²⁹ Sherman, *In Search of Purity*, 4-6.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 5-6.

possible on their part toward making themselves fit members of the community within a reasonable length of time.”¹³¹ DuBois called on upper class Black Americans to assist the masses in achieving the desired level of civilization.¹³²

Marcus Garvey was another significant Black scholar who incorporated aspects of eugenics into his doctrine.¹³³ Founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, Garvey was heavily involved in the New Negro Movement and dedicated his life to Black Nationalism, race purity, and race consolidation.¹³⁴ Labeled “the man of the hour” by Ashton Sewell, Garvey was considered a champion of Black unity and independence.¹³⁵ Garvey advocated for the mass migration of Black people to Africa, arguing that they had the right to reestablish themselves as a nation in the place of their origin.¹³⁶ Although white American eugenicists did not typically suggest mass migration to their places of origin in Europe, they had similar beliefs to Garvey regarding nationhood for racial groups. Garvey was so dedicated to separatism and racial consolidation that he met with a Ku Klux Klan grand wizard, Edward Young Clarke, to discuss the importance of maintaining racial purity among both Black and white people.¹³⁷

Garvey emphasized the importance of proper breeding when maintaining the health and purity of the Black population.¹³⁸ Both Garvey and his wife, Amy Jacques Garvey, circulated information about sex, motherhood, and racial hygiene in his newspaper, the *Negro World*.¹³⁹ There was immense pressure put on Black women to choose their partners carefully and give birth to racially fit babies.¹⁴⁰ According to Michele Mitchell, Garvey published an article about a group of Black men who attacked a Black woman for being in an interracial relationship with a white man.¹⁴¹ The purpose of this publication was to remind African Americans that they should take reproduction seriously because the future success of their race depended on it.¹⁴² Garvey and his UNIA colleagues regularly published articles in the *Negro World* regarding their strong opinions about sex and race consolidation.¹⁴³

William Hannibal Thomas, a Black scholar, was extremely critical of the Black race and shared similar ideas about race as mainstream white eugenicists.¹⁴⁴ He genuinely believed that the Black race was separate from the rest of humanity because of its genetic inferiority.¹⁴⁵ Thomas’s ideas

¹³¹ DuBois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, 389.

¹³² *Ibid*, 392.

¹³³ Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation*, 219-220, 230.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 220-221.

¹³⁵ Sewell, *The Roots of the Universal Negro Convention*, 23.

¹³⁶ Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation*, 219; Marcus Garvey, “What ‘Back to Africa’ Means [title for Marcus Garvey's letter appearing in the January 30, 1926 issue of the *Negro World*],” *Negro World*, January 30, 1926, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/8eab5ce5-8b54-7264-e040-e00a18067efa>.

¹³⁷ Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation*, 220.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 224-230.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 219, 231.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 234-235.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 219.

¹⁴² *Ibid*.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 224-230.

¹⁴⁴ Sherman, *In Search of Purity*, 7.

¹⁴⁵ Sherman, *In Search of Purity*, 7; William Hannibal Thomas, *The American Negro: What He Was, what He Is, and what He May Become; a Critical and Practical Discussion* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908), 105-106.

about race purity and pride were completely contradictory to Garvey's.¹⁴⁶ While Garvey advocated for a pure Black African race, Thomas believed that Black people with darker skin were even farther removed from the rest of civilized humanity.¹⁴⁷ His criticism of his own race is shocking. In "*The American Negro: What he was, What he is, and What he may become; a Critical and Practical Discussion*," Thomas declared, "the negro represents an intrinsically inferior type of humanity; and one whose predominant characteristics evince an aptitude for a low order of living."¹⁴⁸ Thomas alluded to his belief that Black people should strive to assimilate into the white population when he asked himself: what more is a Black person than "an unassimilated ward of Western civilization."¹⁴⁹ Clearly, Thomas's adaptation of eugenics was more racist and hateful in comparison to his colleagues.

Kelly Miller also embraced eugenic ideology despite his criticism of both white eugenicists and Thomas.¹⁵⁰ According to Shantella Y. Sherman, Miller primarily focused on breeding methods.¹⁵¹ During his time as a professor at Howard University, Miller taught his students about race consolidation.¹⁵² Miller's ideas about breeding were in alignment with mainstream eugenics, according to Sherman.¹⁵³ In, *The Primary Needs of the Negro Race*, Miller argued that Black Americans were disadvantaged in society because they missed out on the gradual process of evolution.¹⁵⁴ According to Miller, the Africans who were first forced onto the American continent were a "backwards people."¹⁵⁵ He claimed that they were taken from uncivilized Africa and were abruptly exposed to a fully advanced civilization.¹⁵⁶ As a result, Miller argued, Black Americans were deprived of the natural process of evolution, so their inferiority was caused by faulty genetics.¹⁵⁷

Conclusion

In the early 20th century, both Black and white scholars recognized the ways in which the eugenics movement would support their racial agendas. For centuries, many whites have been fixated on imperialism and Nordicism, determined to maintain their political, social, and economic dominance over other races. Many white supremacists already embraced social Darwinism, believing that racial discrimination and abuse was the natural order of things. The emergence of scientific racism and eugenics only strengthened their beliefs, motivating them to attempt to legitimize white supremacy through IQ tests, sterilization, and race mixing laws.

¹⁴⁶ Sherman, *In Search of Purity*, 7; Thomas, *The American Negro*, 105-129.

¹⁴⁷ Sherman, *In Search of Purity*, 7.

¹⁴⁸ Thomas, *The American Negro*, 129.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 155.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 8.

¹⁵² Sherman, *In Search of Purity*, 160.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 158.

¹⁵⁴ Kelly Miller, "*The primary needs of the negro race*": an address delivered before the Alumni Association of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, (Washington, D.C: Howard University Press, 1899), 6 <https://www.loc.gov/item/12003483/>; Sherman, *In Search of Purity*, 157.

¹⁵⁵ Miller, *The Primary Needs of the Negro Race*, 7.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

The concepts of racial hygiene and eugenics were receiving scientific recognition from prestigious men of various fields. Black scholars acknowledged and rejected the overt racism ingrained in eugenics and adapted aspects of racial hygiene in an effort to further uplift the Black race.¹⁵⁸ African Americans had endured whites' oppression and abuse for centuries before 1900. However, in the early 20th century, ideas about Black Nationalism and racial purity were gaining popularity. The New Negro Movement was thriving, and Black people were determined to establish their strength and independence with a newfound assertiveness.

Racial purity, breeding practices, and nationalism were important concepts for both Black and white eugenicists. Nordicism was a crucial component of white eugenics. White eugenicists believed that the Teutonic race was superior and should maintain its power over every other race. In order to accomplish white supremacy, white eugenicists encouraged strategic breeding, racial purity, and forced sterilization. African Americans had difficulty unifying as a consequence of forced migration from various parts of Africa during the trans-Atlantic slave trade.¹⁵⁹ As a result, pan-Africanism became extremely important for Black people in the early 20th century. While Black scholars did not embrace sterilization, those who were interested in maintaining a pure Black African race advocated for racial consolidation through strategic breeding.

It is crucial to acknowledge the significant differences between white and Black eugenicists. Historically, white people have experienced prosperity and hegemony, while Black people have often been exploited and discriminated against. Eugenics was an offshoot of scientific racism, which had been established by white scholars who manipulated scientific research in order to accumulate support for white supremacy. Black scholars adopted the popular scientific ideologies of the day in an effort to further uplift and encourage the Black population. White eugenicists were focused on oppression and supremacy, while Black eugenicists were focused on facilitating progress among their race. During a time when racial superiority was being analyzed through a pseudoscientific lens, Black scholars were using the tools that were available to them in an effort to resist the white power doctrine that had been oppressing them for centuries.

In conclusion, scientific racism and eugenics had a profound impact on race relations during the 20th century and was embraced by both Black and white scholars. Despite the overt racism that was ingrained in eugenics, Black intellectuals such as W. E. B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, and Kelly Miller adapted eugenic ideology in an effort to further uplift the Black population in conjunction with the New Negro Movement.¹⁶⁰ Unfortunately, racism and white supremacy continues to be a problem in the United States, so it is crucial that we continue to shine a light on these parts of the nation's history in order to live compassionately and have a better understanding of the world around us.

¹⁵⁸ Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation*, 81.

¹⁵⁹ Sewell, *The Roots of the Universal Negro Convention*, 22.

¹⁶⁰ Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation*, 80, 230; Sherman, *In Search of Purity*, 3.

Bibliography

- “Alexander Graham Bell as Chairman of the Board of Scientific Directors of the Eugenics Record Office.” *Eugenical News*, August 1929.
http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=1440.
- “American Eugenics Party Platform.” *American Philosophical Society*, 1964.
http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=762
- Ayres, Leonard Porter. “The Binet-Simon Measuring Scale for Intelligence: Some Criticism and Suggestions” December 16, 1911.
http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=1440
- Baldwin, Davarian L. and Minkah Makalani. *Escape from New York: The New Negro Renaissance beyond Harlem*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Black, Edwin. *War Against the Weak: Eugenic and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race*. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2003.
- Currell, Susan and Christina Cogdell. *Popular Eugenics: National Efficiency and American Mass Culture in the 1930s*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006.
- Dennis, Rutledge M. “Social Darwinism, Scientific Racism, and the Metaphysics of Race.” *The Journal of Negro Education* 64, no. 3 (Summer 1995): 243-252.
- DuBois, W. E. B. *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1899.
- Garvey, Marcus. “What ‘Back to Africa’ Means [title for Marcus Garvey's letter appearing in the January 30, 1926 issue of the *Negro World*].” *Negro World*, January 30, 1926.
<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/8eab5ce5-8b54-7264-e040-e00a18067efa>.
- Grant, Madison. *The Passing of the Great Race: Or, The Racial Basis of European History*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1918.
- Grant, Madison. “Introduction” in *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1920.
- “General Questionnaire on the sterilization of ‘defectives.’” *American Philosophical Society*, 1912.
http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/image_header.pl?id=535&printable=1&detail=0
- “Greatest Fair in World’s History is Now but a Name.” *The St. Louis Republic*, December 02, 1904. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84020274/1904-12-02/ed-1/seq->

[1/#words=Purchase%2BFAIR%2BFair%2BPURCHASE%2BLOUISIANA%2BEXPOSITION%2BExposition%2BLouisiana](#)

“Great Fair Now But A Memory.” *The Times Dispatch*, December 02, 1904.
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038615/1904-12-02/ed-1/seq-1/#words=fair%2BPurchase%2BLouisiana%2BFair%2BExposition>

Haller, Mark H. *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963.

Huggins, Nathan Irvin and Arnold Rampersad. *Harlem Renaissance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Jackson Jr., John P. and Nadine M. Weidman. “The Origins of Scientific Racism.” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 50 (Winter 2005-6): 66-79.

Jensen, Arthur. “How Much Can We Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?” *Harvard Educational Review* 39, no. 1 (1968): 1-23.

Kevles, Daniel J. *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

Kranzler, John H. “Commentary on Some of the Empirical and Theoretical Support for The Bell Curve.” *School Psychology Review* 24, no. 1 (March 1995): 36.

"Legislative status of Eugenical sterilization in the several states of United States, January 1935." *The Harry H. Laughlin Papers*, 1935.
http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=949

Leonard, Thomas C. “‘More Merciful and Not Less Effective’: Eugenics and American Economics in the Progressive Era.” *History of Political Economy* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 687-712.

“Means Proposed For Cutting Off The Supply of Human Defectives and Degenerates,” *The Harry H. Laughlin Papers*,
http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=978

Miller, Kelly. *As to the Leopard’s Spots: an open letter to Thomas Dixon Jr.* Washington DC: Hayworth Publishing House, 1905.

Miller, Kelly. *Race Adjustment: Essays on the Negro in America*. New York & Washington: The Neale Publishing Company, 1908.

Miller, Kelly. “*The primary needs of the negro race*”: an address delivered before the Alumni Association of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. Washington, D.C: Howard University Press, 1899. <https://www.loc.gov/item/12003483/>

- Mitchell, Michele. *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Murray, Charles and Richard Herrnstein. *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*. New York: Free Press, 1994.
- Paul, Diane B. "Reflections on the Historiography of American Eugenics: Trends, Fractures, Tensions." *Journey of the History of Biology* 49, no. 4 (December 2016): 641-658.
- Plecker, W. A. "Amount of Negro and Other Colored Blood Illegal in Various States for Marriage to Whites: 1929." *Eugenical News*, 1929.
http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=1442
- "Schedule and Apparatus for the Binet Test." *The Harry H. Laughlin Papers*, 1921.
http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=1102
- Sherman, Shantella Y. "In Search of Race Purity: Popular Eugenics and Racial Uplift among New Negroes 1915-1935." PhD diss., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2014.
- Sewell, Ashton L. "The Roots of the Universal Negro Convention: An historical background and review of the causes leading up to the great Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World." Emory University, 1920. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100788180>.
- Sotiropoulos, Karen. "'Town of God': Ota Benga, the Batetela Boys, and the Promise of Black America." *Journal of World History* 26, no. 1 (March 2015): 41-76.
- "State Criteria For Eugenical Sterilization." *The Harry H. Laughlin Papers*, 1935.
http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/view_image.pl?id=948
- Taylor, Carol M. "W.E. B. DuBois's Challenge to Scientific Racism." *Journal of Black Studies* 11, no. 4 (June 1981): 449-460.
- Terrell, Robert H. *A Glance at the Past and Present of the Negro*. Washington: R. L. Pendelton, 1903.
- "The Fair Opening." *The Evening Bulletin*, April 30, 1904.
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87060190/1904-04-30/ed-1/seq-1/#words=Purchase%2Bfair%2BFAIR%2Bopening%2Bopen%2BFair%2Bopened%2BExposition%2BLouisiana%2BOpened>.
- Thomas, William Hannibal. *The American Negro: What He Was, what He Is, and what He May Become; a Critical and Practical Discussion*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908.

Research Notes

Icelandic Viking Literature: *Egil's Saga* Family Tree

Victoria Johnson (Preface by Professor Karen Oslund)

Preface

Since 2003, I have periodically taught a “History of the Vikings” class at a University of Maryland campus. It is easily the most popular of the classes I teach--some of the others deal in part with the history of quantum mechanics and with the material culture of the ancient world--and it always fills quickly. That these students get out of the class what they came in for is less obvious than the enrollment numbers suggest; we don't focus on Viking battles and raids, but rather on laws, poetry, and especially on the Icelandic sagas.

The Icelandic sagas is a corpus of literature written down in the thirteenth century. These sagas are composed, mostly anonymously, in several different genres and styles, but the most read and frequently translated of these are probably the “family sagas,” of which *Egil's Saga* is one. *Egil's Saga* is one of the four longest of the family sagas considered to be the “classics” of the genre (the others are *Njál's Saga*, *Laxdæla Saga*, and *Eyrbyggja Saga*) although there are more than 40 total family sagas in all. They deal with events which purport to have taken place in the settlement period of the country—870 CE to about 965—and were passed on by oral tradition until the thirteenth century. As we might expect, there is considerable debate among historians and literary scholars as to their accuracy in depictions of early medieval life.

As Victoria notes, the hero of *Egil's Saga*, Egill Skalla-Grimsson, can certainly be well-described as “interesting.” He was a dark, sullen, irascible man, who came from a family reported to be one of shapeshifters or werewolves—although the explanation for some of the behavior reported in the saga may also have been a genetic condition. He slashes his way through the saga in classic Viking fashion—defeating one of his enemies by vomiting into his face, another by biting out his windpipe. Despite these exploits, he is also a deeply sensitive man who mourns his son by composing a lengthy poem for him, and, on another occasion, saves his own life by composing a poem so beautiful that the Norwegian king—with whom he had the long-running feud discussed above—could not bring himself to execute Egill, but let him go free.

Egil's Saga, like most of the family sagas, is not an easy read, especially if you are not a medieval Icelander, who had intimate knowledge of these families and the landscape of the country, maintained by an Icelandic interest in genealogy and record keeping exceptional in the world. Towson students, however interested they might be, are therefore at a disadvantage when it comes to reading these sagas, as their authors assume a level of knowledge on the part of the

audience which we simply do not possess. The story begins three generations before the birth of the hero (this is typical) and winds its way through several countries and expects an intimate familiarity with Egil's second cousins—most of whom, as I point out in class, are unfortunately named something which begins with “Thor.”

Victoria's family tree is certainly the most remarkable one which I have seen in all the years of teaching this class, although I always recommend that students draw family trees when reading the sagas, and some of them actually do. This major accomplishment—which I certainly will use next time I teach the class—makes it clear that the family feud at the heart of *Egil's saga* was not between two families, but among distantly related branches of the same family. Egill was related to the Norwegian kings—with whom the family fought off and on since the time of his grandfather and the death of Egil's uncle at the conniving of the king—distantly and through marriage. Drawing the family tree pictorially in such detail as we see here changes our understanding of the story and makes it clearer why the families came into conflict: it is always challenging to get on with one's in-laws, particularly when they have more power than you do. I can only admire the impulse which led to such a complete rendering of the family history of the saga and hope that it did lead and will continue to lead to a better understanding and appreciation of the medieval histories themselves—as I am convinced that it will.

Egil's Saga Family Tree

In Fall 2018, I took “HIST 405: The History of the Vikings” under the guidance of Professor Karen Oslund at Towson University. During this course, the class read four different Viking sagas and we discussed the different genres of medieval sagas: kings' sagas, family sagas, legendary sagas, etc. Scholars understand the purpose of family sagas as assisting in the telling of stories about Viking families, one of which was *Egil's Saga*. In *Egil's Saga*, we are introduced to a very interesting character by the name of Egill Skalla-Grimsson and his off and on feud with the family of King Harald Finehair, the king of Norway. Reading this saga is quite entertaining and enjoyable; however, trying to follow the family feud was at times difficult because there were several Vikings who had the same name throughout the saga. At this moment, I decided to construct a family tree in order to help myself understand which Viking was which and how they related back to Egill Skalla-Grimsson and his complicated relationship with King Harald Finehair's family.

While constructing the family tree, I was quickly surprised at how interconnected everybody in the story was. In *Egil's Saga*, the family feud is first introduced prior to Egill's birth and is seen again throughout his life and even into his children's lives. When I first read about the relationship between these two families, my first thought was that there would be no familial connections, but my construction of the family tree revealed many closely related, interconnected relationships—more than I would have thought.

Throughout the process of making the family tree, I was asked quite often by other students why I would take the time to do something like that. I would simply respond with a few reasons. First, I found it necessary because while reading, as it was difficult to understand which Viking was being talked about. Second, I found that visual representation was helpful. The family tree made

it easier to understand who everybody was and how they were connected to each other. Ultimately, it helped me to better understand the saga.

By the end of the course, several students mentioned that they were impressed with my family tree and that it actually helped them better understand the saga. Personally, I also found that creating the family tree was a lot of fun because it allowed me to interact more with the story and was something different than just reading the saga and talking about it. My hope is that future readers of *Egill's Saga* will be able to use my family tree and that it will help them as it helped me and other students. In the future, I plan to create other family trees from other Viking sagas. In fact, I've already started family trees for other sagas we read in History 405, such as *The Saga of the Greenlanders* and *Eirik the Red's Saga*, the same story of the medieval discovery of North America told from different points of view. It should be interesting to see if the different perspectives affect the construction of the family trees.

To view the family tree for *Egil's Saga*, please visit the Towson Journal of Historical Studies Wordpress: <http://wp.towson.edu/tuhs/2020-edition/>

