Grand Valley Journal of History

Volume 8
Issue 2 *10 Year Anniversary Issue*

Article 1

2022

10 Year Anniversary Issue

Editor-in-Chief GVJH
Grand Valley State University, editorhistoryjournal@gmail.com

ZEITGEIST

"Spirit of The Times"

Grand Valley Journal of History

10th Year Anniversary Issue

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FORWARD

By Akshay Surathi

Being asked to write a preface for the anniversary edition of the Grand Valley Journal of History is an honor. I established the Journal in 2011 because I perceived a real need for a scholarly forum where student researchers could publish their work after it went through a rigorous process of peer review. During our long conversations about our vision for the journal, all of us agreed that we did not want to limit submissions to papers produced officially in history courses. Besides, "history" as it is understood in the United States is not how other countries understand it. So, we wanted to take a broader view of "history", making this journal from the outset cross-disciplinary and thus able to cast a wide net. We spent many hours hammering out our initial statement of purpose to best reflect this perspective. Even though I had big dreams for the journal, planning for it to be something to which students from around the world could submit their work, we had to limit ourselves to starting small. Our biggest problem was getting the word out and getting people to take us seriously. We faced skepticism about whether an undergraduate-run journal could truly be rigorous. So, our initial efforts were focused on PR and producing materials that explained just how lofty our scholarly ambitions were. We struggled to find submissions; envoys were sent to professors in multiple departments asking them to advertise the journal to their students. Eventually, we collected enough high-quality proposals for the production of our first issue late in 2011. It seems trite to say that I did not expect the journal to grow as it has, but I truly did not anticipate its success. I had hoped that it would one day become internationally significant, but that seemed so far away and so unrealistic in 2011 when we were struggling to fill our first issue. Further, our vision of history seemed too broad for some. If "anything" can be considered historical thinking, then how could the journal be a history-focused? This was the first serious matter the earliest workers on the journal were faced it. However, this resolved itself in the short term because the earliest submissions were fairly conventionally historical. We left it for future editors to tackle this issue. Setting down any definition of what "history" meant for the journal was deemed unwise, as it could conflict with the vision of future staffers. If the journal was to remain fresh and relevant, some things would just have to be left to the discretion of the editors in charge at any given time. I believe this model worked. My fervent hope is that the journal continues to grow and become more international in scope and character. This will allow it to make a difference in how history is taught and perceived around the world. I know the journal has hardly begun to meet its scholarly potential, and I look forward to future growth.

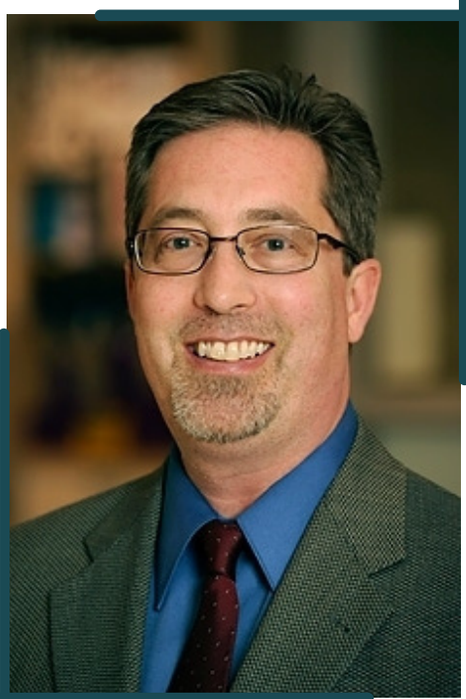
GVSU HISTORY DEPARTMENT FACULTY ADVISORS

William Morison

Faculty Advisor For the Grand Valley Journal of History

Associate Professor

Classical Greece & Roman history



Scott Lingenfelter

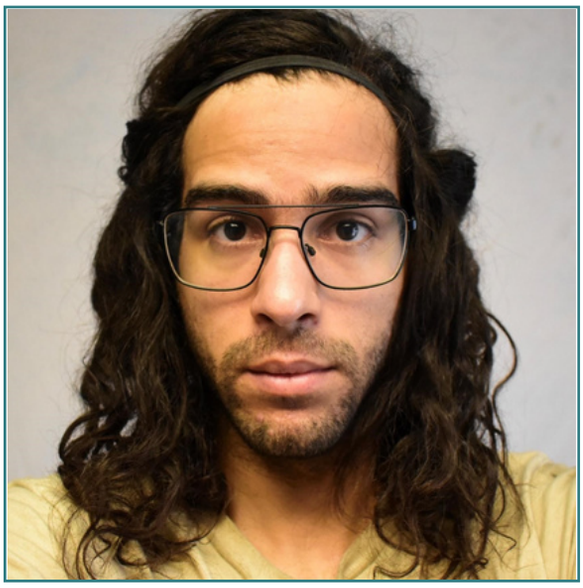
Member of Faculty Advisory Board for the Grand Valley Journal of History

Adjunct Professor

Early 20th century Russian history

GVJH EDITORS "OF THE TIMES"

Editor



Colin Blassingame is a Senior at Grand Valley State University. He is a Writing major and is currently studying Japanese in hopes of going to school abroad in Japan. He plans to focus on pursuing a degree in Physics with a concentration on Astronomy after graduating from GVSU. In his free time, Colin enjoys writing, playing Super Smash Bros, and stargazing.

Editor

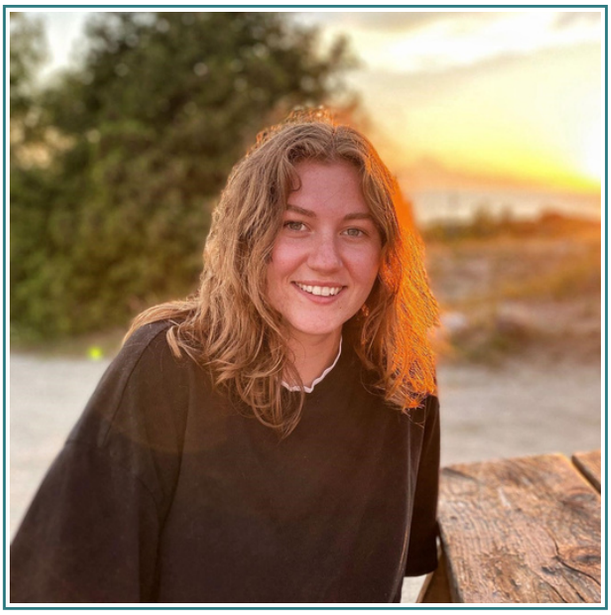
Daisy Soos is currently a sophomore at Grand Valley, double majoring in nursing and history. When she graduates, Daisy plans to work as an RN while analyzing contemporary issues in both of her disciplines by being involved in political organizations, health administration, and writing publications. This summer, she produced a youtube video series through the GVSU libraries instruction channel, discussing her research on the concept of "truth" in history and how to study history more objectively.

Editor

Jessica Barnard is a senior majoring in writing and minoring in anthropology. Academically, she enjoys reading cross-cultural ethnographies, and professionally, she is pursuing a career in editing and publishing. Jessica is also the president of Grand Valley State University's Organization for Professional Writers and she spends her free time writing science fantasy.

GVJH EDITORS "OF THE TIMES"

Editor-In-Chief



Marlaina Cole is a fifth-year at Grand Valley State University. She is a member of the Frederik Meijer College, majoring in International Relations with minors in Human Rights and History. At Grand Valley, Marlaina works at the Padnos International Center as a Student Peer Adviser who assists others in studying abroad. Marlaina herself has studied abroad in Ireland for a semester and in Japan for the academic year. In her personal life, Marlaina enjoys reading fiction and fantasy, playing volleyball, making candles, and practicing the tin whistle.

Assistant Editor-In-Chief

Nicole Hinman is a senior at GVSU majoring in Writing with a minor in English. Nicole has had a passion for writing since she was eight and considers herself very blessed to be able to pursue it as a career! She has also had an interest in history from a very young age as well! In her spare time, Nicole loves to listen to music, read, and take scenic walks in the Ravines. She also loves to travel and hopes to do a lot of traveling in the future after graduation.

ZEITGEIST

In celebration, this edition reminisces on the earlier works of the Grand Valley Journal of History, as this year marks the 10 year anniversary of the journal's inception. This special collection highlights the considerable growth of the journal over the past decade by compiling an article from volumes one through seven that best represents Zeitgeist, or the "spirit of the times." Our editors' notes have a common theme of noticing how some perspectives of historical events and cultural ideas have stayed the same, while others have shifted. By looking back into history, we can see that the spirit of the times may not be the same as it once was, or that the spirit itself is what has driven both material and ideological changes across time. We thank you for your readership and continued interest in the Grand Valley Journal of History.

VOLUME 1
ISSUE 1

Korean Perceptions of Chastity, Gender Roles, and Libido; From Kisaengs the Twenty First Century

Katrina Maynes

Editor's Note

Jessica Barnard

Capturing the Zeitgeist mood, “Korean Perceptions of Chastity, Gender Roles, and Libido: From Kisaengs to the Twenty First Century" comprehensively guides readers through Korean perceptions of gender roles as they have transformed across time. Author Katrina Maynes analyzes the political, philosophical, social, cultural, and chronological contexts spurring these shifts and how they have woven together to change perceptions. The article is comprehensive yet focused, carefully and respectfully written, and describes, in narrative and analytical form, the oppression faced by women and kisaengs especially. Of particular significance, the article provides a clear answer to why readers should care about Korean perceptions of chastity, gender roles, and libido, beyond a historian’s curiosity. This article puts faces to history. We readers see and feel the effects of sociohistorical change on human beings, and can understand, through the author’s powerful diction and through our own awareness of women’s rights movements around the world today, how gender roles have been determined and perceived by forces beyond the self.

Throughout Korean history, a woman's self-worth and honor were measured by her chastity and adherence to men. Females have consistently been expected to be obedient, fertile, impalpable, and above all, sexually abstinent. The kisaengs, however, contradicted Korean expectations for women; for hundreds of years, they served as sexually promiscuous performing artists who offered intelligent and charming company to wealthy and influential men. Due to the influx of foreigners in the twentieth century, kisaengs, whose colorful personalities and beauty set them apart for centuries, were reduced to the same status as common prostitutes. Unprecedented demand for sexual services caused the South Korean prostitution industry to expand, and despite the emphasis placed on sexual abstinence and chastity, millions of men frequented red-light districts while thousands of women found employment in sexually oriented establishments. Due to this, the role of kisaengs greatly decreased but the Korean fixation with sexual abstinence remained. Although the kisaengs contradicted traditional Korean expectations concerning females and chastity, their existence is indicative of the emotional and sexual oppression that has pervaded throughout Korean history, one of the ramifications of which has been a thriving contemporary prostitution industry.

Development of Women's History in Pre-Choson Korea

The Kingdom of Silla (57 BC – 935 AD) granted women considerable rights. [1] Females were not solely viewed as secondary citizens, and many women made considerable political and domestic contributions. Unlike later periods, Silla women were not confined to their homes; they largely contributed to the tax and labor force, and lower and middle class women, regardless of marital status, often worked in agriculture and assisted their male relatives in learning trades. As vital members of the workforce, both men and women were expected to pay taxes until aged sixty, and males and females shared the responsibility of financially supporting their families. Lower and middle class men were subject to military conscription, and the wife would serve as head of the household in her husband's absence, exerting considerable control over finances and the daily activities within the household.[2] Families subsequently traced both male and female lineage, and women could not be divorced for failing to produce a male heir.[3]

Silla noblewomen also enjoyed considerable influence. Their education and intelligence enabled them to be important members of court, and some gained

[1] John Lie, "The Transformation of Sexual Work in 20th-Century Korea," *Gender and Society* 9, no. 3 (June 1995): 312.
[2] Yung-Chung Kim, *Women of Korea: A History from Ancient Times to 1945*(Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1979), 37.
[3] Ibid

positions of political power. Three women served as rulers, while others achieved influence as royal consorts and concubines or through manipulating their male heirs. The first empress of the Silla Dynasty, Queen Sŏndŏk (r. 632-647), was revered as a just, virtuous ruler. She was not evaluated by her gender, but by the efficiency and success of her reign.[4] After the death of Sŏndŏk, the throne passed over male relatives and was given to her female cousin, Chindŏk. Similar to her cousin, Chindŏk received the loyalty of male generals, officials, and courtiers, and made substantial efforts to fight foreign invaders and improve the infrastructure of the country.[5] The last Silla queen, Chinsŏng, ruled more than two centuries later and inherited a bankrupt dynasty whose people were desperate and starving.[6]

Other Silla women ruled as official regents, representing their sons from behind a veiled curtain.[7] The significance of this practice indicates the respect held for the mother, and the responsibility bestowed upon her indicates the consensus that women were capable of making intelligent political decisions. Wives and concubines, who held the affection and ears of the ruler, were also able to influence politics and advocate for certain issues.[8] The vital presence of Silla women therefore indicates that during this period of Korean history, women were not seen as delicate, incapable beings, but dependable and important members of society.

The Koryŏ dynasty (918 AD – 1392 AD) initially took a fairly liberal stance on women, but the growing influence of Confucianism ultimately caused the status of women to increasingly decline.[9] According to the records of the Chinese traveler Xu Jing (1091-1153), men and women interacted freely, with no laws specifically prohibiting male and female social exchange.[10] Women could also inherit property, and inheritances were split equally between sons and daughters.[11] If a woman died without children, her possessions could be passed onto her siblings, as opposed to her husband.[12] The practice of allowing women to inherit is indicative of the relative respect females were regarded with; like men, they were endowed with enough trust to own property.

Marriage, however, was expected of all respectable Koryŏ females, and single women were generally looked down upon. While a dowry was desirable, young brides were not required to bring anything but a wardrobe and the

[4] Kim pg. 26 - 28.
[5] Ibid
[6] Ibid
[7] Kim pg. 30.
[8] Ibid
[9] Lie pg. 312.
[10] Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Korea: From the Neolithic Period throughout the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 92.
[11] Ibid
[12] Ibid

household supplies they would use.[13] Although the bride's family was expected to pay the substantial cost of the wedding feast and ceremonies, females were generally not regarded as burdens who robbed their families of wealth, but as vital members of their natal families. Ideally, widowed women remained chaste, but many remarried, and in some cases, a widow was permitted to bring her deceased husband's land and wealth as her dowry.[14] Accordingly, widows of soldiers who died in battle were given a government land grant that would support their family, but were expected to return it in the case of remarriage.[15]

The Silla and Koryŏ treatment of women should not be mistaken to signify that females enjoyed complete freedom or equality; women continued to be under the jurisdiction of men and subject to strict behavioral expectations. As time progressed, records show increasing numbers of women being confined to the home and restricted from outside labor. Wealthy women began to be raised upon the ideals of the *Yŏch'ik*, a Koryŏ book that taught women to uphold filial and submissive behavior.[16] Confucianism, which increased in popularity throughout the Koryŏ period, encouraged the strengthening of mutually exclusive gender roles, and the status of women subsequently declined throughout the dynasty.

Chosŏn Dynasty Perception of Women

These trends intensified during the Chosŏn dynasty (1392 AD – 1897 AD), which implemented widespread Confucianism and viewed women as weak burdens. Early Chosŏn emperors, such as Yi Song-gye (1335 – 1408), strengthened Chosŏn sovereignty by enforcing Confucian morals, such as the Mandate of Heaven and filial piety. Chosŏn rulers appointed Confucian officials and de-popularized Buddhism by confiscating the land on which temples were built.[17] Individuals who continued to practice Buddhism were chided from social circles, while monks were targeted for their Buddhist traditions. Chosŏn children were therefore raised on the principles of Confucianism, which highlighted the ineptitude of women and the importance of female submission and chastity. Girls were taught to revere their fathers, devote themselves to their husbands, and obey their sons; at each stage in her life, a woman belonged to a man. They were not trusted to dictate their own lives, and men made their decisions for them. Literature and Confucian books were also widely published in the Chosŏn, urging women to be loyal, chaste, submissive to husbands and in-laws, and filial.[18]

[13] Ki pg. 52.
[14] Kim pg. 48.
[15] Ibid
[16] Kim pg. 52.
[17] Seth pg. 122.
[18] Seth pg. 155

The Chosŏn Dynasty also implemented a legal system called the *kyongguk taejon*, which provided a written record of laws that enforced strict regulations on the activities of women by repressing physical freedom. Women were forbidden from horseback riding, playing games, and attending outdoor parties. The punishment for defying this standard was one hundred lashes, and the physical confinement placed on females signifies the complete jurisdiction and control Chosŏn men held over women's lives.[19]

Furthermore, the only acceptable aspiration of a Chosŏn woman was to marry and produce children. Daughters were referred to as *todungnyo*, or 'robber women', because their dowry took away from their family's wealth.[20] Married daughters became *ch'ulga oein*, meaning 'one who left the household and became a stranger'.[21] Once wedded, a woman was not only expected to be faithful, loving, and subservient to her husband, but she had to be fertile and bear male heirs. They were not valued for who they were, but for their ability to give birth and maintain a household. After marriage, a woman was referred to as 'the wife of…' or 'the mother of…', thereby losing her individual identity and becoming the full property of a man. As such, the Choson dynasty's poor regard for women infringed upon their right to possess independent names and personalities, viewing them as an extension of their husband or son. If a husband felt that his wife had committed one of the "seven evils", which included "disobedience to parents-in-law, failure to bear a son, adultery, jealousy, hereditary disease, talkativeness, and larceny", he could easily divorce her.[22] There was no due process or evidence; a man's word was powerful enough to ruin a woman, and once divorced, she was left to destitution or killing herself.

Marriage was therefore a respectable woman's only option, and widowhood was extremely unfavorable. Widows were treated with more disdain than unmarried daughters, who, unlike widows, still had the possibility of making an honorable match. If a widow chose to marry again, she held an unfavorable social stigma and was looked down upon by her peers. As an incentive to remain single, the government awarded chaste widows with land grants called *sushinjon*.[23] The Chosŏn also issued the Anti-Remarriage Law of 1477, which discouraged women from remarrying by restricting their sons from public service jobs.[24] Furthermore, widows were given a *p'aedo*, or suicide knife, and those who ended their lives were viewed as admirable; they were the epitome of filiality and

[19] Seth pg. 156
[20] Seth pg. 156.
[21] Ibid
[22] Ibid
[23] Cho Uhn, "The Invention of Chaste Motherhood: A Feminist Reading of the Remarriage Ban in the Chosun Era," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 5, no. 3 (September 1999): 46.
[24] Ibid

faithfulness, which were both important Confucian values. If a woman engaged in a relationship with another man, she not only violated her honor, but that of her family and ancestors. Chastity, then, was considered one of the most desirable female traits, and a woman's abstinence was looked upon as more valuable than her life.

The Ambiguous Lifestyles of Kisaengs

The kisaengs thus clearly contradicted Korean expectations for women. They embodied the opposite of a traditional Confucian woman; instead of being chaste, restrained, submissive, and meek, kisaengs were taught to be witty conversationalists, extravagant in their beauty, highly educated, and sexually promiscuous. Throughout their careers, they had sexual affairs with various yanbang, and cast a free-spirited, charming, and youthful façade. [25] They were not subject to the physical confinement that most women were held to, and they often traveled locally to entertain at various social gatherings.

At the height of their popularity, the Chosŏn dynasty recruited one hundred new kisaengs between the ages of six and ten every three years. In some instances, the daughters of kisaengs were selected, while others were sold into the profession by poverty-stricken families. The girls chosen, however, were the most beautiful and intelligent daughters of the lower class, and once recruited, they were immediately sorted into kisaeng houses to begin their training.[26] Each woman was placed in a sub-category according to her specialization and skills, and these classifications ranged from placements in the Royal Palace to border guard military posts.[27]

In addition to this, the late-Chosŏn established specific grades of kisaeng. The first grade, called *ilp'ae,* trained daily, and were expected to achieve an advanced level of performance.[28] They attended schooling at the *Kyobangwon*, or the 'Teaching College', which was a court-supported institution.[29] The *yegi* were the most elite *ilp'ae*. Talented in classical song and musical composition, they were revered as the most beautiful and alluring kisaengs and interacted exclusively with the yangban.[30] The second grade, the *ip'ae*, were retired kisaengs over the age of thirty who acted as entertainers at private parties.[31] The level was

[25] The Yangban consisted of the landowning men of noble families.
[26] Seth pg. 158
[27] David R. McCann, "Formal and Informal Korean Society: A Reading of Kisaeng Songs," in *Korean Women: View From The Inner Room,* ed. Laurel Kendall and Mark Peterson (New Haven: East Rock Press, 1983): 19.
[28] Insuk pg. 76
[29] Ibid
[30] Ibid
[31] Ibid

referred to as *samp'ae*. They served less affluent men and were thus forbidden from singing the songs and performing the dances of the ilp'ae.[32]

The extensive education of kisaengs also set them apart from most historical Korean women, who received little schooling. Their education was a strenuous process that began between the ages of six and ten and continued throughout their careers.[33] All kisaengs underwent extensive training in etiquette, conversation, prostitution, poetry, music, and dance.[34] Their education was meant to imitate the learning of the wealthy, with whom they spent the duration of their careers. Kisaengs with remarkable intelligence were also trained in medicine and provided treatment to women of noble families, who were generally not allowed to consult male physician. Artistically talented kisaeng occasionally served as seamstresses and sewed royal garments.[35]

While most Korean women could not read or write, the extensive schooling of the kisaeng endowed them with the ability to compose sijo poetry. These three-lined vernacular poems concentrate on heartache, loneliness, and feelings of powerlessness:[36]

Since love departed
not a word, not one.
Cherry tree by my window
many times had bloomed and faded.
Alone by the lamp at midnight
I sit, overwhelmed by tears.[37]

Kisaengs were able to express themselves through their work, and they often composed leisure poetry. In keeping with Confucian values, educating females was generally viewed as dangerous and impractical, and most females were only taught the household deeds required to be dutiful wives and mothers.[38] Since few women were literate, and the majority never received formal schooling, the kisaengs were perhaps the most holistically educated females in society.

But above all else, it was their lack of chastity that set kisaengs apart from other women. The essence of their careers was to be alluring and attractive, and a kisaeng's success was measured by her ability to enchant and seduce wealthy

[32] Insuk pg. 77
[33] Lee Insuk, "Convention and Innovation: The Lives and Cultural Legacy of the Kisaeng in Colonial Korea (1910-1945)," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 23, no. 1 (2010): 76.
[34] Suh Ji-young, "Women on the Borders of the Ladies' Quarters and the Ginyeo House: The Mixed Self Consciousness of the Ginyeo in Late Choson," *Korea Journal* 48, no.1 (2008): 144.

[35] Seth pg. 158.
[36]McCann pg. 129.
[37] David McCann, "Traditional World of Kisaeng," *Korea Journal* 12, no. 2 (1974): 41.
[38] Hyaeweol Choi, "Women's Literacy and New Womanhood in Late Choson Korea," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 6, no. 1 (2000): 89.

men. Chastity was not expected of them, and their virginity and sexuality was seen as a commodity to be sold and exploited. A kisaeng who refused to engage in the sexual aspect of their work would have been unsuccessful and dismissed in further disgrace. As such, promiscuity was a tactic of self-preservation. Respectable women, however, were expected to uphold their chastity at all times. Their virginity was their greatest asset and their key to an honorable marriage. They were instructed to guard their chastity with their life, and in the case of rape, women were taught that suicide was preferable.[39] Respectable women could prove their honor through demonstrating chastity and upholding their husbands in life and death, whereas a kisaeng's duty was to frequently engage in sexual activities.

Despite their promiscuity, kisaengs were often admired and loved by powerful men, presenting a unique type of company that neither filial wives nor common prostitutes could provide. The kisaengs offered romance and flirtation, which men could not have with their restrained, Confucian wives. They not only provided physical beauty, but their vast educations enabled them to offer intellectually stimulating company, thereby intriguing and alluring men. Their vivid, bright personas contrasted with other women, who were forced to mask their true personalities and remain quiet and obedient. Kisaengs thus appeared unique, exotic, and exciting to yangban men, who were accustomed to withdrawn and meek females. They not only attracted wealthy yangban lovers, but often became their exclusive concubines. Emperors, such as Yunsangun (1494-1506), officially assigned the most beautiful and charming kisaengs to his bedchamber, and the most politically desirable post a kisaeng could receive was the royal court.[40]

Since kisaengs were the only women with unrestricted access to public events, as well as the only females who freely interacted with men, they became characters in many works of literature. Although most historical women left few written records, kisaengs were documented in novels, folk tales, and poetry. The heroines in *Ch'unhyang-jon,* one of the most famous novels of the Chosŏn dynasty, were kisaengs whose loyalty and beauty caused aristocrats to marry and fall in love with them.[41]

---

[39] Jung Ji Young, "War and Death of a Kisaeng; The Construction of the Collective Memory of the 'Righteous Kisaeng Non'gae' in Late Choson," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 22, no. 2 (2009): 172.
[40] McCann pg. 19.
[41] Sung-Won Cho, "Renaissance Nun Vs. Korean Gisaeng: Chastity and Female Celibacy in 'Measure for Measure' and "Chun-hyang Jeon," *Comparative Literature Studies* 41, no. 4 (2004): 574.

Hwang Chini, a kisaeng who lived in the reign of Chungjong (1506 - 1544), is also famed for her exceptional beauty, determination, and irresistible flair. Her suitors were amongst the most influential men of the era, and she was universally admired for her simple beauty, charm, and musical ability.[42] She was also remembered as a great literary talent; six of her sijo poems and seven Chinese poems composed by her are well known.[43] She has since become a character in operas and fictions, and a recent television program has centered on her life.

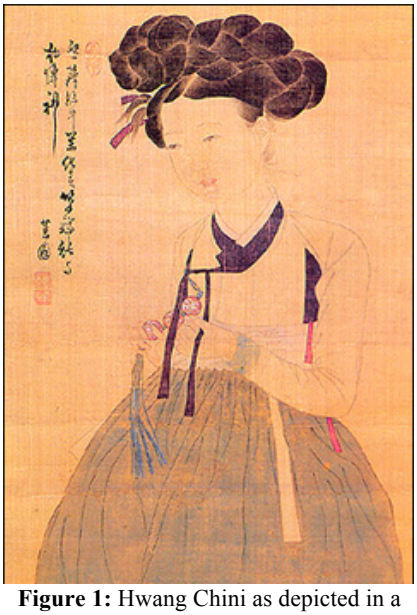


Figure 1: Hwang Chini as depicted in a 1910 textbook

Kisaengs, however, were not just famed for their beauty, and Non'gai, a sixteenth century kisaeng, has been remembered for her boldness and courage. Her enduring loyalty was proven during the Hideyoshi invasion of Korea (1592-1598), during which she enticed a Japanese general to come to her on a cliff. While embracing him, she plunged over the ledge, throwing herself and the general to their deaths in the river below.[44] In sacrificing herself, she is remembered as an admirable heroine whose filiality to the state was embodied in her self-sacrifice. As a kisaeng, it was not possible for her to demonstrate chastity, but she did embody Confucian loyalty. According to the records of Yu Kwanik (1713-1780), kisaengs continued to make spring and fall sacrifices to Non'gae long after her death.[45] The documentation of kisaengs in national memory, literature, and folk lore indicates that they have not only been valued as playthings of the wealthy, but that some have been respected and remembered.

Kisaengs and Prostitution in Colonial Korea

The social and political unrest of the late Choson ultimately caused its downfall in 1897, leading to the creation of the Korean Empire. The Korean Empire, which attempted to modernize but remained relatively weak, became increasingly submissive to the imperialistic power of Japan.

Korea was consequently annexed to Japan in 1910, and the Japanese thereafter attempted to destroy Korean culture. The traditional kisaengs were soon

[42] Kevin O'Rourke, "Demythologizing Hwang Chini" in *Creative Women of Korea*, ed. Young-Key Kim-Renaud (Armonk: M.E. Sharp, 2004), 99.
[43] Young Key Kim-Renaud, "Introduction" in *Creative Women of Korea*, ed. Young-Key Kim-Renaud (Armonk: M.E. Sharp, 2004), 13.
[44] Ji Young, pg. 162.
[45] Ji Young, pg. 169.

tainted and prostitution became increasingly widespread. During the colonization of Korea (1910-1945), the Japanese outlawed the use of the Korean language, forced people to adopt Japanese names, and treated Koreans with contempt and discrimination.[46] Young women were coerced into joining the 'Women's Volunteer Corps', and forced into military prostitution for Japanese soldiers. They were either drafted at gunpoint or lured under the false pretense that they would be awarded respectable and well-paid jobs. Out of all their colonial possessions, the Japanese specifically targeted Korean women due to their chastity and sexual abstinence; as virgins, they were free of venereal diseases. Conversely, at least one of every five Japanese soldiers needed treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, which they contracted during mass rapes in the Russo-Japanese War.[47]

The hierarchy of kisaengs also collapsed shortly after the imposition of Japanese imperial control, and the term kisaeng began to be used loosely amongst prostitutes and female entertainers. The status of kisaengs descended to that of a common prostitute, and the Japanese forced them to undergo mandatory health screenings to check for sexually transmitted diseases.[48] Not only was this representative of the control that the Japanese exerted over Korean citizens, but it is indicative of the initial Japanese viewpoint that they were not talented performers, but unclean prostitutes.

Despite this, traditional kisaengs continued operate, and multiple schools emerged to train young girls. In 1910, a male teacher opened a school called *kwonbon* to educate aspiring kisaengs.[49] By 1917, there were sixteen kwonbon schools, all of which were monitored by the Japanese police force.[50] Teachers expected students to be punctual and hard working, and unfocused pupils were severely punished or expelled. The high price of tuition caused many of the students to resort to serving at *yorijip* party houses, which provided amusement for colonial Japanese officers, wealthy Korean men, Japanese tourists, and occasionally, independence fighters.[51] Their entertainment venues accordingly began to vary, which led to the teaching of folk songs, solo instrumental music for the *kayagum sanjo*, and Japanese music.[52]

[46] Matsui Yayori and Lora Sharnoff, "Sexual Slavery in Korea," *University of Nebraska Press* 2, no. 1 (1977): 23.
[47] Yayori pg. 26.
[48] Insuk pg 77.
[49] Insuk pg. 78
[50] Insuk pg. 79
[51] Ibid
[52] Insuk pg. 81

Although kisaengs began to receive more holistic educations, the majority of colonial Korean women had only basic schooling, and educating women continued to be viewed as a threat to traditional Confucian values. Korean men were generally uncomfortable with the idea of females attaining higher education and entering the professional workforce. Education, however, was seen as a means to modernization, which also meant an end to Japanese occupation. The number of schools was subsequently increased, but the curriculum focused on teaching girls to be Confucian wives and mothers.[53]

During this time, kisaengs continued to defy the traditional standards for through advocating in the public sphere and establishing their own journal. Kisaengs from Hyeju and Suwon participated in movements to reduce the national debt, while others took part in the Korean Independence Movement of 1919.[54] Their continued freedom was also evident in the establishment of the *Changhan,* the kisaeng journal which translates into "eternal bitterness".[55] Originally published in 1927 by the *Kugilgwan*, a famous Seoul kisaeng house, only two volumes have been preserved. Many essays are passionate and heated, urging readers to fight for equality and respect. Pak Nokchu, a Seoul kisaeng, writes:

Figure 2: Kisaeng students at a Kwonbon.

"Gesang School" Cornell University Library, 1904.

> We kisaeng need to unify systematically in order to survive in this society […] Now we can raise our voice and thoughts to people who ignore us through this journal, which has become our 'mouthpiece.' Our social status is extremely miserable and marginalized. There is no social welfare system for us at all in our society. This means that we have not been treated equally with other ordinary people as human beings, and are always looked down on as

[53] Mary E. Connor, *Asia in Focus: The Koreas* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 200.
[54] Insuk pg. 90.
[55] Insuk pg. 90.

slaves. However, we shall not endure this anymore. […] We are human beings and we also have tears, blood, and sense.[56]

Kisaengs used the *Changhan* to take advantage of their relative freedom and attempted to rally to improve their social standing. The journal also featured literary prose, essays, short stories, and film and book reviews. The topics of their works varied from laments about their poor status to legal and social issues. The reaction to the publication of the *Changhan* was favorable, and many people believed the kisaengs were beautiful, well-spoken, and impassioned.[57]

Military Comfort Women and the Occupation of the US Military

The end of World War II signified the transfer of power from Japan to the United States. 70,000 American troops arrived in Korea, and although the kisaengs began to diminish in numbers, the Korean prostitution industry boomed.

American military officers, convinced that Asia was laden with infectious and venereal diseases, attempted to restrict American soldiers from consorting with prostitutes by threatening $1000 fines and one year of imprisonment.[58] Yet, men continued to seek Korean pleasure women, causing the military to establish the Venereal Disease Control Council. The VD control council examined the rates of soldiers with sexually transmitted diseases and discussed prevention methods.[59] Similar to the Japanese, the military insisted upon mandatory health examinations for kisaengs, dancers, bar girls, waitresses, and any woman associated with providing sexual services to soldiers. If diagnosed, a woman was forcibly treated, and the most severe cases were sent to a women's prison until cured. American officials were particularly concerned with US forces consorting with "unclean, non-American" women, and sent sanitary control officers to inspect bars, restaurants, and pleasure quarters.[60]

Despite these measures, the American demand for comfort women increased and the prostitution industry continued to thrive. It is estimated that at least 250,000 women became military prostitutes, while thousands more served as bartenders, dancers, and call girls.[61] Korean businessmen and pimps opened dance halls and brothels close to military bases, and both Seoul and Incheon had dance halls with 250 prostitutes each.[62] The efforts of US officials to prevent soldiers from visiting pleasure establishments was ultimately pointless; the presence of

[56] Ibid.
[57] Insuk pg. 91.
[58] Lee pg. 462.
[59] Lee pg. 463.
[60] Ibid
[61] Yayori pg. 27.
[62] Lee pg. 464.

American troops contributed nearly 25 percent of South Korea's gross national product, and the sex industry accounted for over half of the local economies surrounding military bases.[63] Aware of the economic benefits, the Korean government proposed to contribute fifty million yen to facilitate prostitution near military bases.[64] They also approved the supply of comfort women to Korean War troops, and officers could reward a soldier's valor with ticket for a visitation with a prostitute.[65] Soldiers, devoid of female company, inevitably turned to Korean women as an outlet for their psychological burdens, loneliness, and bridled libido.

The status of kisaengs, however, steadily declined during this period. For the most part, American soldiers did not take the time to understand their history and purpose. They were generally not interested in hearing the traditional songs, poetry, and music of the kisaengs and instead sought their sexual favors; they had wives and girlfriends on the home front, and many did not view Korean women as suitable partners for anything but sex. The lack of interest and the decreased appreciation of the traditional dances and music resulted in the skills of the kisaengs becoming a lost art. The American classification that labeled them equivalent to bar maids and common prostitutes further destroyed them; while they were once loved by wealthy noblemen as the most enchanting and attractive women in the country, they were now regarded as unsanitary and inferior vessels of disease and sexual crime.

The Rise of Prostitution in Contemporary Korea

Despite the fading of the traditional kisaeng, the economic prosperity of the last half of the twentieth century resulted in a thriving prostitution industry. The growth of the middle and upper class endowed millions of Koreans with disposable incomes, and men could increasingly afford to pay for sexual services. In response to the high demand, sexual services became available through additional channels of prostitution, such as sex tours, room salons, cabarets, nightclubs, bars, beer halls, coffee ships/tea houses, motels, hotels, saunas, bath houses, erotic barber ships, and massage parlors.[66]

As a result of the booming economy and the 1965 normalization treaty, Korean tourism also became an important source of economic wealth, and the idea of kisaeng tours was thereafter created. Although this was essentially a sex tour through the red-light districts of Korea, it was marketed as a high-class kisaeng tour due to the increasing cost of Japanese prostitutes and the decline of

[63] Lee pg. 454
[64] Yayori pg. 27.
[65] Soh pg. 173.
[66] Sea-ling pg. 48.

the geisha.[67] The kisaeng tours circulated around a party at a government mandated restaurant, where as many as two hundred tourists would mingle with prostitutes who also served as tour guides. After watching the women perform dances and songs, the men would be accompanied to their hotels.[68]

The Korean government regulated kisaeng tours by implementing mandatory standards for the prostitutes involved. They were required to possess a junior high school education, pass frequent health tests, and attend required lectures, which ranged from the economic necessity of sex tourism to how to act around clients.[69] The majority of customers were from Japan, and it was not uncommon for Japanese businesses to reward successful salesmen and managers with expense-paid trips to tour high-class Korean brothels.[70] This resulted in nationalistic, anti-Japanese feelings amongst Koreans, and the sex tour industry decreased in the 1980's after widespread protests. The tours did continue on a smaller scale, but most were moved to high-priced resort areas.[71]

In the 1960's, the Korean government began promoting industrialization, which caused thousands of young people to migrate to cities. There were, however, few opportunities for rural women in urban areas; most did not have the resources to pursue higher education that would lead to a career, and factories, shops, and businesses preferred to hire men. Those who were fortunate enough to find employment were paid less and had poor job security, which caused economically desperate women to resort to prostitution. Due to the high demand, their jobs were protected, and they were relatively well paid. In comparison with the average female worker, who grossed under 100,000 wŏn per month, a prostitute made more than 200,000 wŏn.[72] As of 2000, it was estimated that up to twenty percent of Korean women between the ages of 15 and 29 had been involved with jobs that served sexual purposes.[73]

[67] Lie pg. 319.
[68] Ibid
[69] Ibid
[70] Yayori pg. 23.
[71] Lie pg. 320.
[72] As of 2011, 200,000 won is approximately $176.00.
[73] Sea-ling pg. 41.

These massive urban migrations accordingly led to an increase in street prostitution. Street prostitutes lived in brothels that were run by a pimp or madam, and they were often beaten by their customers and their brothel-owner. These establishments ignored laws and human rights, and drug addiction was used as a means to weaken and placate the prostitutes; "'After having my body ravaged by several customers in a row I just get too tired to move my limbs. At times like that, I need a shot of heroin. […] I can't help but take the drug in order to keep myself in working condition'".[74] These young women, who were often coerced or kidnapped by pimps, primarily served lower class men who could not afford sex tours or expensive call girls. The average street prostitute charged approximately 50,000-100,000 won, or the equivalent of the cost of "a few beers".[75]

As the demand for sexual company steadily increased, high end "room salons" were also established to provide services for wealthy men. The Korean "room salons" offered private rooms in which groups of two to ten men would drink and be entertained by an equal number of young women.[76] The popularity of room salons has since grown, and by 1998, the number of room salons had increased by 112 percent.[77]

Figure 3: A red-light district in the Yongsan-gu district of Seoul, South Korea.

The traditional kisaengs, however, nearly disappeared. Due to the widespread availability of prostitutes and sexual entertainment services, the kisaengs were no longer revered as the most desirable and exotic women in society. Few kisaeng houses still operate, but many traditional dances and songs have been lost. Foreign businessmen are occasionally escorted to a kisaeng house, but these are weak modern interpretations compared to the esteem and reverence the kisaengs were once regarded with.

[74] Lie pg. 320.
[75] Sea-ling pg. 50.
[76] Ibid
[77] Cheng Sea-ling, "Assuming Manhood: Prostitution and Patriotic Passions in Korea," *East Asia* 18, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 50.

Relating Prostitution With Korean Perceptions of Chastity and Sexuality

The increasing prevalence of the prostitution industry has caused many Koreans to dehumanize sexual encounters with prostitutes while hypocritically upholding the significance of chastity for respectable men and women. Conservative interpretations of Confucianism have further fueled these beliefs while alternatively adding to the continued dominance of prostitution. While the importance of female sexual abstinence is highly stressed, male libido continues to be viewed as acceptable, and men who frequently visit prostitutes generally carry no social or cultural stigma. This implies that it is natural for men to have a strong sex drive, thus justifying both their masculinity and sexual dominance over women.

From a historical viewpoint, Confucianism has strongly discouraged interaction between men and women and implemented strict gender roles. Since the tenth century, males and females were separated at seven years of age, and remained segregated throughout their lives.[78] Nearly all marriages were arranged, and the betrothal was often completed while the bride and groom were young children. Wives were taught to refrain from speaking and moving during the ritualistic wedding night, and this practice was symbolic of the restraint, silence, and submission that they were expected to adhere to throughout their marriage. Displays of affection and romance were also labeled as unnatural and frivolous, and marriages were often loveless and unfulfilling. It was consequently recommended that sexual interaction between husbands and wives be limited to reproduction purposes, and physical desire was regarded as dishonorable. In the privacy of their homes, husbands and wives remained physically separated for the duration of their marriages. Houses were built with inner and outer sections, and the women were hidden in the innermost chambers. The role of an honorable, Confucian wife was thus to be an obliging and subservient shadow within her own home, and this lack of interaction caused men to seek sexual and psychological fulfillment outside their marriage, which was inevitably offered by kisaengs and prostitutes. Husbands were permitted to have numerous extramarital affairs and polygamous relations, while wives were expected to be unfailingly loyal.[79] Historical records of women emphasize chastity or her lack of it, indicating that it was her most important role in life and the only noteworthy aspect.

The Korean insistence on chastity, however, was most evident in the mistreatment of women who were trafficked into sex slavery for Japanese troops. Despite the suffering and psychological torment that comfort women were forced

[78] Kim pg. 57.
[79] Young-Hee Shim, "Feminism and the Discourse of Sexuality in Korea: Continuities and Changes," *Human Studies* 24, no. ½ (2001): 136.

to endure, those that returned home continued to be treated with abhorrence. Families refused to take their daughters back, and parents believed their honor would be tainted if they welcomed a spoiled daughter into their homes. If a former comfort woman married, she was often abandoned when her husband discovered her past. In addition to the disgrace of being unchaste and carrying venereal diseases, these women also carried the stigma of being divorced. As a survival mechanism, former comfort women thus had no choice but to hide their past. As Lee Young-Ok, a 73 year old survivor of Japanese sexual slavery, noted;

> At that time, a woman's chastity was considered to be more important than her life. How could I tell people I was daily raped by many soldiers. It would have been a great humiliation to my parents. Many times I regretted I came back home alive. It would have been better for me to die there… Yet, looking back I am angry at the fact that because of traditional Korean customs I had to hide my past without myself doing anything wrong.[80]

The stories and emotional trials of these women attest to the collective embarrassment and taboo, both nationally and on a personal level, to acknowledge libido and sex.

Furthermore, the Korean obsession with chastity arguably feeds the prostitution industry; even if a couple loves each other, they will not have sexual relations until marriage, and a young man will visit prostitutes in order to save the purity of their girlfriend.[81]According to an interview with five Korean men, they view their girlfriends and wives as too respectable and pure to be subject to unchecked sexuality, and in order to feel fully satisfied, they resort to prostitutes to fulfill their needs.[82] In a 2001 survey conducted by Gahyun Youn, about half of young men aged 15 to 22 stated that their friends had never visited a prostitute, which strongly implies that the other half of participants knew of peers who had paid for sex.[83] Conversely, nearly all the girls agreed that virginity was crucial to their self-worth and purity, and the sexual education they received focused on protecting their bodies from sexual aggression and maintaining their virginity.[84]

The dominance of the sex industry also continues to be influenced by the lack of freedom and choice that has governed Korean relationships. Until the 1960's, it was rare for a bride and groom to meet before the wedding ceremony, and marriages were almost completely arranged by their parents.[85] Even in the

---

[80] Pyong Gap Min, "Korean 'Comfort Women': The Intersection of Colonial Power, Gender, and Class*," Gender and Society* 17, no. 6 (Dec 2003): 950.
[81] Shim pg. 142.
[82] Sea-ling pg. 66.
[83] Youn pg. 356.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Gahyun Youn, "Perceptions of Peer Sexual Activities in Korean Adolescents," *The Journal of Sex Research* 38, no. 4 (November 2001): 352.

1990's, only half of all "mate selections" of men and women in their 20's were chosen by the couple rather than their family.[86] Because these arranged marriages were often loveless, spouses found fulfillment outside their marriages, often through prostitution or adultery.

Many arranged marriages also stem from the insistence upon chastity and the general mistrust of allowing children to interact with the opposite gender. Interactions between young men and women are linked to smoking, drinking, and above all, premarital sex. If young men and women are exposed to each other, many Korean parents believe that inappropriate coital relations will eventually ensue. Parents therefore keep their daughters from young men, believing that interaction leads to libido, which would be the epitome of dishonor and shame. Preventing dating and utilizing arranged marriages is thus a method to ensure a child's abstinence and future success; marital unions are arranged to the economic and social benefits of the couple and their families. Knowing that they could be destined for an arranged marriage, dating is sometimes deemed pointless by young people. There is also a general consensus that pre-marital relationships undermine a student's ability to concentrate on schooling and sabotages their ability to do well on college entrance exams. [87] Students who were devoid of mixed-gender relationships were viewed as being "of sound mind and body", and their chastity is invariably linked with academic success.[88]

Conclusion

The Korean insistence on sexual abstinence and the strict Confucian standards are the primary source of the dominance of the kisaengs and the growth of the sex industry. Despite the insistence on chastity and the prevalence of Confucianism, prostitution has had an extensive presence throughout Korean history. For over a thousand years, kisaengs were living contradictions of the expectations that women should be chaste and subordinate shadows within their homes and society, and their success was a testament to the unfulfilling marriages and restrictive roles that resulted from societal expectations. Although the traditional kisaengs have declined in number, the modern prostitution industry experienced unprecedented expansion in the mid to late twentieth century. While sexual interactions with prostitutes are dehumanized, coital relations between unmarried men and women are viewed as the epitome of dishonor, and the highest taboo continues to be placed on libido and sexuality. On both a historical and contemporary level, the lasting prevalence of the Korean prostitution industry is a product of the rigid standards placed on the people, resulting in the exploitation

[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Youn pg. 352.

and abuse of women throughout history. In turn, this has reduced millions to menial sexual creatures, or at best, subjected them to subservient and austere social and sexual standards. Both the dominance of the prostitution industry and the hypocritical insistence upon chastity has pervaded throughout history, and in the foreseeable future, will most likely continue to play a major role in Korean culture.

Bibliography

Cho, Sung-Won. "Renaissance Nun Vs. Korean Gisaeng: Chastity and Female Celibacy in 'Measure for Measure' and "Chun-hyang Jeon," *Comparative Literature Studies* 41, no. 4 (2004): 565-583.

Choi, Hyaeweol. "Women's Literacy and New Womanhood in Late Choson Korea," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 6, no. 1 (2000): 88-115.

Connor, Mary E., *Asia in Focus: The Koreas* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 200.

Insuk, Lee. "Convention and Innovation: The Lives and Cultural Legacy of the Kisaeng in Colonial Korea (1910-1945)," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 23, no. 1 (2010): 71-93.

Ji-young, Suh. "Women on the Borders of the Ladies' Quarters and the Ginyeo House: The Mixed Self-Consciousness of the Ginyeo in Late Choson," *Korea Journal* 48, no.1 (2008): 136-159.

Kendall, Laurel and Mark Peterson "Formal and Informal Korean Society: A Reading of Kisaeng Songs," in *Korean Women: View From The Inner Room,* (New Haven: East Rock Press, 1983

Lie, John. "The Transformation of Sexual Work in 20th Century Korea," *Gender and Society.* Vol. 9 (1995): 310-327.

Min, Pyong Gap. "Korean 'Comfort Women': The Intersection of Colonial Power, Gender, and Class*," Gender and Society* 17, no. 6 (Dec 2003): 938-957.

McCann, David. "Traditional World of Kisaeng," *Korea Journal* 12, no. 2 (1974): 40-43.

O'Rourke, Kevin. "Demythologizing Hwang Chini" in *Creative Women of Korea*, ed. Young-Key Kim-Renaud (Armonk: M.E. Sharp, 2004), 96-121.

Sea-ling, Cheng. "Assuming manhood: Prostitution and patriotic passions in Korea," *East Asia: An International Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (2000): 40-78.

Seth, Michael J. *A Concise History of Korea: From the Neolithic Period throughout the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

Shim, Young-Hee. "Feminism and the Discourse of Sexuality in Korea: Continuities and Changes," *Human Studies* 24, no. ½ (2001): 133-148.

Soh, Chunghee Sarah. "Women's Sexual Labor and State in Korean History," *Journal of Women's History* 15, no. 4 (2004): 170-177.

Uhn, Cho. "The Invention of Chaste Motherhood: A Feminist Reading of the Remarriage Ban in the Chosun Era," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 5, no. 3 (September 1999): 45-63.

Wok-Soon, Kim. *Songs of the Kisaeng: Courtesan Poetry of the Last Korean Dynasty.* Rochester: BOA Editions Ltd., 1997.

Yayori Matsui, and Lora Sharnoff. "Sexual Slavery in Korea," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 2, no. 1 (1977): 22-30

Youn, Gahyun. "Perceptions of Peer Sexual Activities in Korean Adolescents," *The Journal of Sex Research* 38, no. 4 (November 2001): 352-360.

Young, Jung Ji. "War and Death of a Kisaeng; The Construction of the Collective Memory of the 'Righteous Kisaeng Non'gae' in Late Choson," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 22, no. 2 (2009) 157-180.

Young-Key, Kim-Renaud. "Introduction" in *Creative Women of Korea*, ed. Young-Key Kim-Renaud (Armonk: M.E. Sharp, 2004).

Young, Na Lee. "The Construction of Military Prostitution in South Korea During US Military Rule, 1945-1948," *Feminist Studies* 33, no. 3 (2007): 453-483.

Yung-Chung, Kim. *Women of Korea: A History from Ancient Times to 1945.* Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1979.

VOLUME 2
ISSUE 1

Unity, Freedom and Socialism: The Assads, the Ba'ath and the Making of Modern Syria

Judson C. Moiles

Editor's Note

Daisy Soos

The spread of democracy and modernity has often been celebrated by westerners as a humanitarian intervention. What was thought of as intervention then, is better known as imperialism now. In “Unity, Freedom and Socialism: The Assads, the Ba’ath, and the Making of Modern Syria,” Judson C. Moiles discusses how France’s imperialistic endeavors in Syria set up an unstable and ill-representative democratic system, among other things. Yet, the Syrians eventually grew resistant to the western influence, feeling as if they did not recognize their own country. While there are many religious divisions within the Middle East that often fought for power and influence, in the case of the Assad family rule we can see that religion was not of the highest importance. This family was from a religious minority in the country, but were able to rule for several years. In this article, we are reminded of the complexity of other nations and the similarities between us and them. Above all, the Syrians wanted sovereignty and stability. This factor enabled them, despite religious differences, to unify and reclaim some of their own values. The article discusses the historical past of Syria and how it impacted the development of the modern Syrian government, attempting to answer why the ‘Alawi military rule was dominant for so long.

Introduction

In the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1993, Robert Kaplan wrote of what he saw as Syria's "…day of reckoning…" when Hafiz al-Assad would exit from Syria's political scene and the ramifications it would entail for the country's existence. Claiming that the country "…has yet to come to terms with the problems of [its] post-Ottoman boundaries…," Kaplan was sure that, once the late President Hafez al-Assad, the 'Alawi military strongman who "… has so far prevented the Balkanization of his country…" left Syria's political scene, Syria would collapse.[1] Yet more than ten years have passed since Assad died in 2000 and his son Bashar succeeded him, and Kaplan's belief that Ba'athist 'Alawite military rule in Syria would die with the elder Assad has not materialized. It must seem strange to Western observers of Syrian politics that, in a region so beset by religious and ethnic strife, a traditionally marginalized religious minority group such as the 'Alawi can exert control for so long over a majority Sunni Arab country. But the story of the Assads should not be surprising, for the elder Assad was not only President of Syria, but a leader of Arab resistance to perceived Western and Zionist aggression. Feeding off anger over the failure of the country's early democratic experiment and the belief that the dream of a "Great Syria" had been thwarted by Western machinations and neighboring "imperialist" Arab monarchies, Assad and the 'Alawi dominated military, formed during the French mandate, were eventually able to take complete control of the state.

A Single Country

One can only understand how an 'Alawi army colonel, born to peasants, could rule his country longer than all of his post-independence predecessors combined by understanding the unique concoction of ideological movements and ideals that led to the creation of the Syrian military state.[2] Even before Assad, Syrian politics had been defined by militaristic paternalism, secularism, and competition between the Damascene elite and the unheard "other," made up of rural farmers, religious and ethnic minorities and the urban poor. Cycles of ineffective civilian rule followed by military intervention, dressed up in populist language, gradually eroded the civilian base of power. If the Assads are unique, it is only in their longevity. Early dissatisfaction with the country's democratic leadership was only compounded by events abroad, such as the emergence of an

[1] Robert Kaplan, "Syria: Identity Crisis," *The Atlantic*, February 1993, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1993/02/syria-identity-crisis/303860/ (Accessed October 7th, 2012).
[2] Patrick Seale, *Asad: The Struggle for the Middle East*, rev. ed. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 5, 76 and 164.

independent Lebanon and military defeat after defeat at the hands of Israel. The a lack of faith in civilian leadership, which presided over these perceived disasters, created multiple opportunities for the military to seize power, which they gladly did whenever the opportunity presented itself. The Ba'ath Party, which was able to co-opt the nation's officer corps with its pan-Arab yet nationalistic, anti-Damascene yet economically progressive and anti-Western yet secular message, was able under Assad to create an efficient political machine, even though the operator was viewed by a substantial portion of his own population as a heretic.

For Syrians, 1946 seemed a welcoming, if uncertain, beginning. The last French troops had left Syrian soil on April 17, 1946, ending the French Mandate which had been established in 1920. Syria's government was the first true democratically elected one in the region and the first republic in the Arab world.[3] The ruling elite in Damascus had united under the banner of the *Kutla al-Wataniya*, or "National Bloc," a group of people of disparate backgrounds and ideals brought together under one goal, to create a democratic, secular Arab republic free of any foreign entanglements.[4]

The greatest challenge the leaders of the new nation faced was the question of Syria's place within the Middle East, and indeed, what is meant to be Syrian. The very question was inevitably irredentist in principle. To many Syrians, the greatest tragedy of the French occupation was that the *bilad al-Sham*, or "Land of Damascus," was split between several new nations in the region. Indeed, the provinces that comprised Ottoman Syria before World War I spread over 300,000 square miles, as compared to the Republic of Syria's 185,190 square miles. Most painful was the fact that the coastal cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Tripoli, Damascus' traditional sea ports and vital centers of Levantine culture, were detached from Syria and made part of the Republic of Lebanon. Most Syrians believed the new nation to be a completely ahistorical and artificial construct of colonial intrigue. These facts were an embarrassment to Syrians of all classes, ethnicities and faiths and would have great import for the region as a whole.[5] Neighboring Jordan, which gained its independence from Great Britain in March 1946, proclaimed in November of that year that one of the guiding principles of Jordanian foreign policy was the idea of a "Greater Syria," which would presumably be under Hashemite rule. In an interview with the Egyptian newspaper, *al-Ahram*, King Abdullah of Jordan laid down a formulation that would perhaps come to haunt him in later years. "There is neither great nor little Syria… [But] a single country bounded to the west by the sea, to the north by Turkey, to the east by Iraq, and to the south by the Hejaz – which constitutes

[3] Seale, *Asad*, 33.
[4] Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, 2nd ed. (London: I.B.Tauris & Co., 1986), 24-25.
[5] Seale, *Asad*, 15-16.

Syria."[6] No country emerging from the shadow of colonialism could ignore such a poignant issue, particularly one with as ancient and rich a history as Syria, even if the cautious politicians in Damascus wished to do so.

"The Land Belongs To Him Who Works It"

By 1949, the country's experiment with democracy had already come to a tragic end. On December 19, 1949, Colonel Abid al-Shishakli carried out the third and final coup Syria was to experience that year.[7] Obstinately trying to prevent Syria's merger with Hashemite Iraq, Shishakli sounded what was perhaps the first shot of the countryside's rebellion against the Damascene elite. In his first address to the nation, Syria's new leader proclaimed that the coup had been necessary because "…professional politicians…" were threatening "…the security of the army, the structure of the state and the republican army." By framing his actions in the language of national sovereignty, Shishakli gave voice to a current within the army and within a large part of the population. They believed that popular sovereignty is not synonymous with Western style liberalism and that many of the elite in Damascus were strangers within their own land, holdovers from the French occupation.[8] Hence came the second challenge that would bedevil all future Syrian rulers; Syria is a culturally, geographically, religiously and ethnically heterogeneous country, and any attempt by one faction to centralize power will inevitably result in a backlash from the others. As the socialist agitator, Akram al-Hawrani said, "…the land belongs to him who works it," a sentiment that Syrians of all classes would echo when faced with perceived encroachment on "their" rights.[9] However, as a new state desperately in need of economic reform and modernization, the necessity of the centralization of political and economic power in Syria was apparent to all. Shishakli paved the way for future military officers to intervene in Syrian politics, which they would henceforth do regularly. However, it was not be until the elder Assad ascended to power that the country came to possess the political stability so lacking since independence. The structures which allowed him to exercise control had been put in place by the French, the country's last true rulers.

Under the French Mandate, Syria experienced a degree of centralized control unknown during Ottoman times. However, the bifurcated nature of the French administrative authority, and their policy regarding the treatment of minorities within the mandates would greatly affect Syria's future. The chief

[6] Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, 13.
[7] Seale, *Asad*, 46.
[8] Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, 86.
[9] Seale, *Asad*, 42.

colonial officer for both Syria and Lebanon was a French Foreign Service bureaucrat called the "High Commissioner for Syria and Lebanon" stationed in Beirut, who exercised two important powers which gave him almost unlimited control over the two Mandates. He enjoyed veto powers over anything that the Secretary-General, or governor of Syria, did, the most important being the appointment of provincial governors. Secondly, he controlled the administration of the services called the Common Interests, such as Customs and the Postal and Telegraph services, which were extremely important for revenue and patronage. Therefore, even though the Mandate governments, whose chief officials were chosen by the civilian government in France, theoretically exercised internal control, the French Foreign Service had final say over matters within Syria.[10] This system of highly arbitrary shared powers would carry on into the independent republic and heighten the likelihood for conflict between the country's executive and legislative branches.

For the legislative branch in most countries, patronage becomes a standard part of electoral politics and coalition and party building. Yet in a country like Syria, where political parties existed as little more than vehicles for an individual's ambitions, political leaders enjoyed little popular legitimacy and support. When Syria had its first general election in July 1947, the two main political parties, both breakaway factions of the National Bloc, were made up of religious and economic interests in Damascus, who differed on only one issue; *al-Hizb al-Watani*, or "The Party of the Nation," sought to ensure the reelection of President Shukri al-Quwatli, and the *Hizb al-Sha'b*, or "Party of the People," sought to ensure that the president would not be reelected. The National Party was also seen, to a certain extent, as a front for business leaders in Damascus and central Syria, while the People's Party gained more support from business leaders in smaller cities such as Aleppo and Hama in northern Syria.[11] With such inconclusive platforms came inconclusive results; the People's Party, along with a smattering of small parties and independents allied with them, won a plurality in parliament, but the National Party controlled the presidency. al-Quwatli would be reelected a year later. With a series of minority governments or coalitions aligned with the People's Party in parliament, it fell to the president to exercise strong leadership.[12]

Whether al-Quwatli could have risen to the task, became a merely hypothetical question after Syria experienced a crushing defeat in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. With no deep reservoir of popular support for the civilian

[10] Philip Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 77 and 78.
[11] Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, 28.
[12] Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, 31.

government, it was relatively easy for the military, as the only institution which came out of the war not looking ineffectual, to seize power. It was the only force within the country which could move without fear of popular reaction. Being able to couple coercive force with blood-and-soil patriotism, it railed against the discredited national government of al-Quwatli and the National Party and the opposition People's Party, of which a not insignificant number had backed union with Iraq.[13] It was the failure of civil government in these early years of the republic which allowed the Ba'ath Party to later consolidate so much control over the various institutions such as the military and impose one-party rule over the country.

An Arab Renaissance

Ba'athism, more than merely the political ideology of a single party, began as a worldview and a perceived system of values that, after adopting pan-Arabism early on, was able to win the loyalty of many in the Syrian army. The word *ba'ath* in Arabic loosely means "renaissance," and was adopted by two Syrian radicals, the Greek Orthodox Christian Michel 'Aflaq and the Sunni Muslim, Salah al-Din Bitar, both Sorbonne-educated schoolteachers in Damascus, to describe their vision of a *haraka*, or movement. Proclaiming that their fellow Arabs had been repressed first by the Ottomans, then by the French, and in modern times by Arab monarchists and Zionists, 'Aflaq and Bitar both hoped to ignite a spark in Syria which would eventually engulf the whole of the Arab world.[14] However, the concept of an Arab renaissance had originated with Zaki al-Arzusi, a Francophile 'Alawite who, like 'Aflaq and Bitar, was a schoolteacher educated in the Sorbonne. He became an avid Syrian-Arab nationalist after he saw his native Antioch province detached from Syria by the Turkish military in 1939 with no objections from the French.[15] Arsuzi's idea of Arab exceptionalism remained a key Ba'ath principle, but 'Aflaq introduced several ideas that made Ba'athism a more expansive ideology. To 'Aflaq, the problems that bedeviled the Arabs, such as tribalism, sectarianism, and the oppression of women, were introduced by the chaos following the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258), and were propagated first by the Ottoman Turks and then by European colonialists. The solution, as 'Aflaq put it, could be summed up in three words: "Unity, Freedom, [and] Socialism."[16] The Arabs, in 'Aflaq's view, are one ancient nation, not separated by state or religion with one "eternal message." Though

[13] Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, 86.
[14] Seale, *Asad*, 24 and 34.
[15] Seale, *Asad*, 27-28.
[16] Seale, *Asad*, 30 and 31.

'Aflaq was a Christian, he believed that the essence of Arabism was expressed in Islam, which, as a special Arab religion revealed in Arabic to the Arabs, lifted the Arab people from their previously insignificant place in history to conquer the Middle East.[17]

Ba'athism, however, should not be seen as mere Arab chauvinism; otherwise, it would not have attracted so much support from minority groups such as the 'Alawi, who were suspicious of movements that might infringe upon their traditional culture. It is not hard to understand why ideologies such as pan-Arabism or socialism could hold such appeal to Syria's Arab religious minorities, particularly the 'Alawi. If, in the eyes of your Syrian brothers, everyone is an Arab and all Arabs share essentially one common culture and philosophy, then the accusation of being a heretic loses its poignancy. It was a fortuitous intersection of the legacy of French colonial policy, the failure of the civilian government and the military's subsequent intervention in the country's politics which allowed the 'Alawis to gain an unprecedented degree of power not only within their country's political system, but also within its society generally.

In many developing countries, the military often has served as one of the only institutions through which the poorest, most persecuted, and most heterodox elements of society can gain power and influence. This trend could be seen at work in Syria, for, once a well-to-do male citizen served out his two years of service, he would be able to make a comfortable living outside of military service. This left the military as an institution made up of the country's poorest members, the majority of whom, including its officers, came from the country's ethnic and religious minorities. It is not unsurprising, therefore, that it would have much different economic and ideological interests than a government dominated by educated professionals and Sunni and Christian Arabs from the country's urban centers.[18] When the French took possession of Syria from the Ottomans, they found a complacent Arab aristocracy that was not willing to enforce French imperial control over the "provinces," nor subvert their own economic interests to that of their new masters. This meant the French could not rely on the majority population of the Mandates to rule themselves. Therefore, in those early years, the main French military presence in Syria and Lebanon was the *Armee du Levant*, or "The Army of the Levant," mostly made up of French Foreign Legionnaires from North Africa, Madagascar, and Senegal, veterans of the trench warfare of World War I, who were not welcomed by the locals and who were seen by Arabs as an affront to their dignity. They also brought the additional problem of excessive cost. By 1927, the budget of the Mandate of Syria committed 27 percent of its total annual budget to the home government's military presence in the Levant, an

[17] Seale, *Asad*, 30-31.
[18] Seale, *Asad*, 39.

amount that became intolerable when the Great Depression made its entrance two years later. Financial concerns were the primary reason why, in 1936, French Premier Leon Blum negotiated with the Syrians to set the time and conditions for Syria's independence.

To escape this financial burden, the French realized that they would need to raise an indigenous force among the Syrians, one that would be completely loyal and dependent to their imperial interests.[19] The forces of this new *Troupes Speciales du Levant*, or the "Syrian Legion," were raised almost entirely from rural and poor Sunni Arabs and religious and ethnic minorities such as the Ismai'lis, 'Alawis, Circassians, Armenians, Kurds and Druze. Entrance into the Legion was by examination and both the rank-and-file and officers were trained by French instructors. As in Ottoman times, the French exempted Arab land owners from military service. This meant that when Syria became independent, the new country already had a professional, Westernized military infrastructure, but one drawn entirely from the country's lower classes.[20]

For groups such as the 'Alawis, the benefits of French rule became apparent immediately, and not just within the military. French colonial policy in general was to carve out administrative jurisdictions and districts by religious and ethnic affiliation. The 'Alawis, living in the mountainous Jabal Ansariyya region around the port of Latakia, made up 62 percent of Latakia province, but the land they lived on was owned mostly by rich merchants in the city of Latakia itself, which was then 80 percent Sunni, with small minorities of Orthodox Christians and 'Alawis. In Ottoman times, as a way to soften their resistance to Turkish rule, the Sunni and Christian Arabs had been left free to govern the area, including regulating commerce in the mountains, as long as Turks had the exclusive right to taxation among the 'Alawi mountaineers. Sunnis had to promises that the local *'ulama* would not incite violence against or tamper with the heterodox religious beliefs of the peasantry. The French, however, favored the more loyal 'Alawis over the aloof Sunni Muslim and Christian residents.[21] All across Syria, minority groups, formerly content to stay out of the attention of the government to avoid scrutiny or retribution, now were being integrated into the state's apparatus. Though there were initially suspicions from Sunni and Christian Arabs that these groups might now represent an anti-nationalist "third rail" in Syrian society, these fears quickly faded with the departing French.[22]

The lingering influence of the Syrian Legion was noticeable in the post-independence military. Though Shishakli and other generals who carried out the

[19] Khoury, 79-80.
[20] Khoury, 80-81.
[21] Khoury, 154.
[22] Seale, *Asad*, 23.

earliest coups were Sunni Muslims, it is notable that all had served as soldiers first in the Syrian Legion and that Shishakli himself spoke the language of the countryside, not of the landed elite in Damascus or the north.[23] When Assad and his fellow 'Alawi officers brought the country under Ba'ath rule in 1963, it was merely the logical conclusion to forty years of history.

On September 28, 1961, a right-wing coup carried out by Lieutenant Colonel 'Abd al-Karim Nahlawi ended the United Arab Republic, Syria's short-lived union with Egypt, and supposedly returned the government to civilian control. Many young minority and pan-Arab officers within the military, several of whom had trained in Egypt and hoped for the union to bring the Ba'ath, as Nasser's main supporters in Syria, to a place of higher authority, were forced out of the military for their "radical" sympathies. Though enraged at Nahlawi's "reactionary" coup, Ba'ath officers like Assad, however, were also bitter was that 'Aflaq, as *'amid*, or secretary general of the international Ba'ath council, did not protest the coup or push for reunion with Egypt. Instead, he choose to compromise with the new government.[24] Assad, along with two fellow 'Alawi and two Ismai'li Ba'ath colonels, had formed a "Military Committee" in 1960 as a possible arm of Ba'ath power in the military. But after Assad had been temporarily relieved from his post in the Syrian Air Force for suspected pan-Arab leanings, he and five officers turned the Committee into what became an official opposition group within the Ba'ath.[25] When the five members carried out a coup on March 8, 1963, the newly renamed "Regional Ba'ath Council" now controlled Syria, and though by 1970 only Assad remained, he never let go of power.[26] Though a non-Sunni Muslim had not previously assumed the august title of President of the Syrian Arab Republic, Assad did so in 1970. Only then did the disengaged Sunni majority awaken to the fact that they did not completely control "their" country. [27]

Islands Left By the Tide

To conservatives, this "arrogation" of power by an obscure Shi'a group that was thought of by many of the Muslim *'ulama* as pagans, seemed to be a well-orchestrated conspiracy against the outwitted majority. Historian Martin Kramer posed it as a class issue, though in a way that would give succor to the most paranoid in Syria's Sunni population: "Once poor peasants, they beat their

[23] Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, 86.
[24] Seale, *Asad*, 34 and 67.
[25] Seale, *Asad*, 70-72.
[26] Seale, *Asad*, 76.
[27] Seale, *Asad*, 164.

ploughshares into swords, first becoming military officers, then using instruments of war to seize the state." [28] The irony of this statement is not that, chronologically, it is incorrect, but that it credits 'Alawis with ambitions of which few of them ever dreamed. In September 1920, the French required the people of the Jabal Ansariyya to classify themselves as *'Alawiyyun*, or "followers of Ali," on their census form to distinguish themselves from other Shi'a Muslim sects living within the region.[29] The 'Alawis had learned long before that to bring attention to oneself was to bring scrutiny, and until the French came they generally managed to avoid confrontation with their neighbors. Thus, much of our knowledge of their history and beliefs is fragmentary.

Before 1920, the 'Alawites were most often referred to as Nusayrites, after their mysterious "founder," Ibn Nusayr, a supposed 9th century courtier of the Buyid emirs in Baghad and pupil of the eleventh Shi'a imam, al-Hasan al-'Askari, who 'Alawis claim imparted supposed esoteric knowledge to him. However, the real founder of 'Alawism was most likely Ibn Nusayr's pupil, al-Khasibi, believed to have lived between the late 9th and mid-10th centuries, who began his career by propagating Twelver Shi'ism in the suburbs of Baghdad and was tasked by the Buyids, who were Ismai'li Shi'a, to convert the inhabitants of Byzantine Latakia to Shi'ism.[30] Though the French authorities treated the 'Alawis as Muslims, the question for many Shi'a theologians on this issue had been clear for centuries. They were so despised by many within the Syrian *'ulama* that the prominent 13-14th century Syrian theologian, Ibn Taymiyyah, proclaimed them to be more of a threat to the sanctity of the Islamic faith then the Christians or Tatars and that it was every pious Muslim's duty to wage *jihad* on them.[31] The first real historical record of the 'Alawis is by Ibn Battuta, who, while traveling through the Jabal Ansariyya in the 14th century, noticed that the local people, despite appearing to be Muslim, did not build mosques. In the 19th century, this fact was so uncomfortable for the Ottoman authorities that, after the 'Alawis began to draw attention from French missionaries in Lebanon, who thought the 'Alawis might be "lost" or "degenerate" Christians, they began to pressure them to build mosques, even if they did not use them.[32] It was not until 1936 that the 'Alawi *shaykhs*, or chiefs of the clans, proclaimed that no 'Alawi could claim to be a true 'Alawi unless they proclaimed the *shahadah*, or declaration of faith, along with the other four Islamic pillars of faith. In other words, no one could be an 'Alawi and not be

[28] Martin Kramer, "Syria's Alawis and Shi'ism," in *Shi'ism, Resistance, and Revolution*, ed. Martin Kramer, 237-254 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press Inc., 1987), 237.
[29] Kramer, 241.
[30] Heinz Halm, *Shiism*, trans. Janet Wilson. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 159.
[31] Seale, *Asad*, 10.
[32] Seale, *Asad*, 10 and Kramer, 239.

a Muslim.[33] The Sunni grand mufti of Jerusalem, Amin al-Husayni, recognized the proclamation as binding. [34]

However, it was not until 1973 that a Shi'a religious figure recognized the 'Alawis as Muslims, when the Lebanese Imam Musa al-Sadr recognized the 'Alawis as Twelvers after the 'Alawi *shayks* agreed to abide by the Jafari school of Islamic jurisprudence.[35] No members of the Twelver *'ulama* from Qom, Kufa, or Najaf, however, have done so.[36] This is because, in mainstream Twelver Shi'as eyes, the 'Alawis are *ghulat*, or "exaggerators" of the Prophet Muhammad and members of the *ahl al-Bayt*, or family of the Prophet. In turn, 'Alawis consider other Shi'a to be *muqassira*, or "those who fall short" by denying the divine status of Ali and other members of the *ahl-al-bayt*.[37] 'Alawis believe in four tenets which mainstream Sunni and Shi'a believe to be acts of *shirk*, or idolatry, i.e. "associating things with god." These are *hulul*, the belief that God can become incarnate within the bodies of the imams; *tanasukh*, belief in metempsychosis, or the transmigration and reincarnation of the soul; *ibaha*, or antinomianism, the belief that only faith is necessary for salvation; and a belief in a divine triad with 'Ali as the incarnation of God on earth, Muhammad as his "veil," or prophet, and the companion Salman al-Farisi as his "mirror," or proselytizer.

Other unorthodox beliefs 'Alawis hold include that the imams of Twelver Shi'ism, along with Muhammad, Fatima, and other important members of the *ahl al-bayt* are also "veils," that triads similar to the one consisting of 'Ali, Muhammad and al-Farisi appear regularly in human history, that souls are imprisoned in human bodies and will not be released until judgment day, that only the *shaykh*s are initiated into the esoteric secrets supposedly imparted by the imams, so prayer is not obligatory, and is in fact discouraged by some 'Alawi officials except in cases of holidays or festivals and a form of Docetism in which the Battle of Karbala in 680 was a mirage of God and Husayn's martyrdom was an illusion.[38] 'Alawis, along with the *Ahl-i Haqq* in modern Luristan in Iran, are the only two known *ghulat* sects that exist today, remnants of a vigorous tradition stretching back to the time of the caliphate of Ali (656-661), or as journalist Patrick Seale wrote, "…islands left by a tide that had receded."[39]

---

[33] Kramer, 241.
[34] Kramer, 242 and 244-247.
[35] Kramer, 239. This anachronism was a remnant from the Ottoman period, when the courts used the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, the dominant Sunni school utilized in the Ottoman Empire.
[36] Kramer, 244.
[37] Kramer, 238.
[38] Halm, 156-157 and Kramer, 238.
[39] Halm, 156 and Seale, *Asad*, 8.

Tanks Speak

As established before, it is not hard to see why the military and the Ba'ath Party would be such appealing institutions to 'Alawites such as Assad. However, in power, they differed little from previous Syrian military regimes, particularly that of Shishakli, who had already shown that a determined military leader, using the language of national unity, could stay in power by pursuing a radical and ambitious agenda. Assad and the Regional Council used this template to maintain total control over Syria. Assad himself remarked that "Never in my life have I been for anarchy, nor will I ever be." Anarchy, as defined by Assad, was any attempt to destabilize or delegitimize the national authority of the ruling power. To Assad, the experience of civilian rule between 1946-1949 and 1961-1963 proved that only absolute military power and one-party rule, as exemplified by Shishakli, was sufficient to maintain peace.[40] Shishakli responded to the opposition of the landed gentry by redistributing state lands, settling Bedouin and making them register for identity cards and giving literate women the suffrage.[41] In a similar vein, The Regional Council responded to the 1964 riots by taking over the collection and distribution of funds for religious property, cutting out a major source of income that conservative religious families used to support the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic organizations in Syria. In addition, they extended state ownership over power plants, oil distribution, and cotton ginneries.[42] Though Assad would not hesitate to use lethal force against the civilian population when his rule was threatened, as he did in 1982 against the city of Hama, he made sure to respond in kind to the elites opposing him. In the case of 1982, he responded to the opposition of Sunni business owners and *'ulama* in the northeast to his regime by imposing tight price controls on business and reducing the amount of land individuals and corporations could own.[43] No matter how deep the hatred of the ruler in Damascus, as long as that ruler was able to harness the even deeper mistrust of the aristocracy and use the powers of the state to combat it, the military state would not be subverted.

Based on our popular preconceptions of the Middle East as a hotbed of militant religious fundamentalist, theocratic governments and constant internal strife, one would think that it would be unacceptable to the Syrian population to be ruled by a family hailing from a historically marginalized religious minority group heading a party that preaches a socialist, secularist, and pan-Arab ideology as its creed. Though it is true that the Middle East can be a harsh and unforgiving

[40] Seale, *Asad*, 157.
[41] Seale, *Asad*, 47.
[42] Seale, *Asad*, 92.
[43] Seale, *Asad*, 338.

battleground of ideologies, it is also true that in the contest of ideas, over the last half century Syrians have, as a whole, seemed to prefer the comfort of Ba'athist nationalism to chaos and constant internal instability. Though it would be an obvious disservice to the complexities of Syrian history to say that the country's politics is completely based on a sense of victimization and historical grievance, it does a greater disservice to ignore the legacy of Ottoman and French imperialism and the failure of democracy and republicanism to benefit the average Syrian. To deny the allure of stability and order to a nation residing in a region where such elements can be fleeting, is to deny not only any real attempt to come to terms with the reality of the contemporary Middle East, but a great deal of the West's own past. As Seale wrote, "Tanks speak a language more forceful than parliamentarians."[44]

Conclusion

But recent events in Syria and the Middle East as a whole raise the question of whether stability and order are enough for the average Syrian anymore. More than a year ago today, the city of Deraa in southern Syria rose in revolt, and since then the protestors of Syria's Arab Spring have seen some of the most bloody and violent retaliation of any within the region, and have responded in kind. The insurgency within Syria has seen large numbers of Syrian military officers defect to its cause – almost all of them Sunni Arabs – and revolts have erupted within cities such as Damascus and Homs, where Ba'athist nationalism has never taken hold. As one Lebanese politician broadly sympathetic towards Assad noted, "… Syria is heading for civil war, sectarian war… [And the] Alawites see it as a battle for survival." Many who support the regime like to compare the situation to the one the elder Assad faced in Hama thirty years ago, and Westerners would be wise to take the fears of the regime and its supporters seriously. Having come to power after the country's failed democratic experiment, weakened by decades of colonial rule and multiple coups, the 'Alawis in Syria are under no illusions about their fate should their protector fall.[45]

[44] Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, 88.
[45] Miriam Karouny. "Insight: Syria's Assad Set For Long Conflict," *Reuters*, February 3rd, 2012, http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/03/us-syria-assad-idUSTRE81219220120203 (Accessed October 7th, 2012).

Bibliography

Halm, Heinz. *Shiism*. Translated by Janet Wilson. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991.

Kaplan, Robert. "Syria: Identity Crisis." *The Atlantic*. February 1993. http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1993/02/syria-identity-crisis/303860/ (Accessed October 7th, 2012).

Karouny, Miriam. "Insight: Syria's Assad Set For Long Conflict." *Reuters*. February 3rd, 2012. http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/03/us-syria-assad-idUSTRE81219220120203 (Accessed October 7th, 2012).

Khoury, Philip. *Syria and the French Mandate*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Kramer, Martin. "Syria's Alawis and Shi'ism." In *Shi'ism, Resistance, and Revolution*, edited by Martin Kramer, 237-254. Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1987.

Seale, Patrick. *Asad: The Struggle for the Middle East*. Revised ed. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988.

---. *The Struggle for Syria*. 2nd ed. London: I.B.Tauris & Co., 1986.

VOLUME 3
ISSUE 1

Medicine and Doctoring in Ancient Mesopotamia

Emily K. Teall

Editor's Note

Nicole Hinman

Medicine and Doctoring in Ancient Mesopotamia by Emily Teall first appeared in Volume 3, Issue 1 of the Journal of History. This article describes in detail the various medicinal practices of ancient Mesopotamia, specifically the training techniques of *asu* physicians, as well as pharmaceutical practices and surgical procedures for treating and binding up wounds. The article was published in 2013.

Since its original publication, the article has become one of the most downloaded pieces features in the journal. This fact is understandable, due to infectious diseases such as HIV, being frequently in the news at that time. A baby with HIV in Mississippi made headlines, as did the CDC's concern over HIV-infected adults being at greater risk of contracting MRSA. The content in the news is very likely to have increased traffic on this particular article, to see how humans who lived thousands of years earlier, dealt with contemporary health issues such as disease.

Likewise, this article seems especially fitting in eight years after its publication, with the COVID-19 pandemic still being predominant both in the United States and around the world. With regards to the pandemic, the sections of the article that discuss disease and pharmaceutical treatments are both insightlul and interesting.

Teall's article highlights not only the spirit of 2013, but also the spirit of 2021, furthering the notion that history is all too often recursive, and that its impact can be shaped by the individuals it reaches.

Medicine and Doctoring in Ancient Mesopotamia

Medicine in the ancient Near East prior to 1000 BCE was a well-developed profession by the time the Old Babylonian and Old Assyrian periods arrived (c. 2100-1500 BCE) and was more refined by the time of the Bronze Age collapse (c. 1200 BCE) and the subsequent rise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, which continued past the temporal bounds of this study. This may appear to be too broad a subject and period of time to thoroughly investigate in one attempt, but ancient medical practices in this geographic area are mostly known through cuneiform tablets, few of which involve medicine or survive at all. In addition, only some of the extant scholarship on the subject is in English: two of the most important corpuses of medical cuneiform texts from Ashurbanipal's library have only been translated into German and French.[1] Majno notes that there are approximately a thousand tablets and fragments pertaining to Mesopotamian medicine for the entire span of 3000 BCE to the Common Era (1975, 36). The limited textual and supplementary archaeological materials allow the extant evidence for medical practice in ancient Mesopotamia to be explored summarily. There was little in the way of explicit medical theory recorded in cuneiform texts, so medical theory and anatomy will not be treated.[2] The types and practices of medical practitioners will first be explained, and then pharmaceutical medicine and surgery will be elaborated on. While the most common methods of healing involved both religious ritual and the utilization of physical treatments, the physical treatments and those who delivered them will be primarily addressed. Some scholars posit that when placed in their cultural contexts, Mesopotamian pharmaceutical and surgical treatments were inextricable from religious treatments such as divination and healing ritual; however, when examined separately from the religious aspects of medicine, physical treatments were more widespread, advanced, and effective than many give the ancient Mesopotamians credit for.

When speaking of the Babylonian practice of medicine, the Greek historian Herodotus said, "They bring out all their sick into the streets, for they have no regular doctors. People that come along offer the sick man advice, either from what they personally have found to cure such a complaint, or what they have

[1] Salim Mujais, "The Future of the Realm: Medicine and Divination in Ancient Syro-Mesopotamia," *American Journal of Nephrology* 19 (1999): 133-134.
[2] Guido Majno, *The Healing Hand: Man and Wound in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 53.

known someone else to be cured by. No one is allowed to pass by a sick person without asking him what ails him."[3] This description of Old Babylonian medical practice is categorically untrue based on the culture's own texts.[4] Ill people may have very well discussed their ailments with neighbors on the street, but doctoring and places of recovery were far from non-existent even excluding healing temples. Herodotus had the mindset of a medical tourist, and was likely more interested in exalting his own Greek culture than in taking an emic point of view. Even modern texts, such as Barber's paper from 2001, claim that in the Middle East and Egypt prior to the first century BCE "these civilizations did not establish any facilities for medical care or treatment" (132). Despite the limited textual evidence, close inspection reveals that practicing doctors kept cots in their places of business for the treatment and recovery of patients, though there were no large facilities that could be termed hospitals.[5] A categorized list of physician's equipment from Ugarit details a bed and coverlet, among surgical instruments and other medical trappings; the interpreter notes that "seriously afflicted patients were examined and treated in bed, which in this instance was also the operating-table. A coverlet could well be utilized in post-operative recovery." [6] The personal inventory of this particular medical practitioner demonstrates that treatment and care facilities did exist outside of healing temples, and other texts including law codes further demonstrate that physicians had an established profession.

Besides having offices, beds for patients, and surgical and pharmacological equipment, Mesopotamian doctors had a professional name: *asu* or *azu*, were those who practiced therapeutic medicine, composed of surgical and herbal treatments; the counterpart of the *asu* were the *asipu* or *ashipu*, who practiced divinatory and religious medicine.[7] The text of the Code of Hammurabi (c. 1700 BCE) differentiates religious healers in two classes: diviners, *baru*, who practiced hepatoscopy and made prognoses, and exorcists, *ashipu*, who determined what offense to gods or demons had brought about the disease.[8] Both types of religious healers gave physical examinations to look for telling symptoms and omens, and both will henceforth be referred to as *ashipu*.[9] The *asu* physicians

[3] Paul Kriwaczek, *Babylon: Mesopotamia and the Birth of Civilization* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2010), 198.
[4] Kriwaczek, *Birth of Civilization*, 198.
[5] Robert R. Stieglitz, "A Physician's Equipment List from Ugarit," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 33 (1981): 54.
[6] Stieglitz, "Equipment List," 54.
[7] Allen D. Spiegel and Christopher R. Springer, "Babylonian Medicine, Managed Care and Codex Hammurabi, circa 1700 B.C.," *Journal of Community Health* 22 (1997): 73-74; Kriwaczek, *Birth of Civilization*, 198; Mujais, "Medicine and Divination," 134.
[8] Spiegel and Springer, "Codex Hammurabi," 73; Majno, *The Healing Hand*, 43.
[9] Spiegel and Springer, "Codex Hammurabi," 73.

were trained in schools associated with temples of the goddess of medicine and healing, Gula, and were educated using a combination of clay tablet textbooks, the equivalent of rounds, and practical experience; *asu* focused more on the patients' accounts of their illnesses than on physical examination like the *ashipu*.[10] *Asu* and *ashipu* were more likely to have worked in peaceful coexistence than to have competed, considering that there are records of the same individuals, including kings, consulting both types of healers.[11] A parallel could be drawn between the coexistence of *asu* and *ashipu* in ancient Mesopotamia and the much later, but similar, relationship between Hippocratic healers and the attendants of the god Asclepius in ancient Greece.[12] The practices of *asu* physicians and their more religious counterparts were so widespread and commonplace that their services and fees were regulated by law: the Code of Hammurabi states that medical fees were on a sliding scale dependent on one's social class (*awelum* were elites, *mushkenum* were commoners, and *wardum* were slaves), that the Babylonian government had the right to inspect a physician's work, and that errors of omission or commission were corporally punishable, among other detailed rules.[13] As evidenced by contemporary texts, the physicians of ancient Mesopotamia were methodically trained, had facilities and tools to treat patients with both pharmaceutical medicine and surgery, and were an integrated and regulated part of society.

Herbal medicine and other pharmaceuticals were ubiquitously used tools of *asu* physicians in ancient Mesopotamia. Some treatments were likely based on empirically discovered characteristics of the ingredients used, while others were less based in effectiveness and more based in the attribution of superstitious or symbolic qualities. A Sumerian cuneiform tablet from c. 3000 BCE details fifteen pharmaceutical prescriptions, though it lacks the context that would be provided by the names of the associated diseases or the amounts of the ingredients.[14] The elements of the treatments are faunal, botanic, and mineral: sodium chloride (salt), potassium nitrate (saltpeter), milk, snakeskin, turtle shell, cassia, myrtle, asafetida, thyme, willow, pear, fig, fir, and date.[15] All parts of plant anatomy were utilized: branches, roots, seeds, bark, sap, and branches.[16] These essential components

[10] Spiegel and Springer, "Codex Hammurabi," 73-74.
[11] Majno, *The Healing Hand*, 40.
[12] Spyros G. Marketos, "The Parallels Between Asclepian and Hippocratic Medicine on the Island of Kos," *American Journal of Nephrology* 17 (1997): 205.
[13] Spiegel and Springer, "Codex Hammurabi," 70-72.
[14] Frank J. Anderson, *An Illustrated History of the Herbals* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977) 2; R.R. Inskeep, "Health Hazards and Healing in Antiquity," *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 24 (1969): 26.
[15] Inskeep, "Health Hazards and Healing in Antiquity," 26.
[16] Ibid.

were administered in vehicles of honey, water, beer, wine, and bitumen, as poultices and internal medicine.[17] While this is only one text of few that survived, it offers insight to a more versatile pharmaceutical tradition than might be expected; the few ingredients named on the tablet were recombined into laxatives, detergents, antiseptics, salves, filtrates, and astringents.[18] Opiates were another class of botanical medicine that was utilized by the ancient Mesopotamians: narcotics were derived from *Cannabis sativa* (hemp), *Mandragora spp.* (mandrake), *Lolium temulentum* (darnel), and *Papaver somniferum* (opium).[19] There is evidence that opium poppies were definitely present in Sumeria by 3000 BCE, but they were probably reserved for use by *ashipu* and priests in healing temples, and they were used in conjunction with hemlock as euthanasia.[20] Clearly the pharmacopeia of Mesopotamia was elaborate even in Sumerian times, and the unnamed writer of the prescription tablet knew the correlation between illnesses and prescriptions without having to name the illnesses.

The Sumerian epic mythic narrative known to modern scholars as 'Enki and Ninhursag' details a micro-creation-story having to do with medicinal plants, illnesses, and gods; Enki (also known later as Ea) is the god of the first city Eridu, water, and mischief; Ninhursag is the goddess of the earth and Enki's consort.[21] In the tale, Enki both determines the essence and the destiny of each of eight plants by ingesting them, names the body part that each plant is associated with, and gives birth to the gods that are each associated with a plant and a body part.[22] The mythical eight trifectas of plant, anatomical location, and deity illustrate how pharmaceutical treatments of physical afflictions may have been formulated based on the symbolic attributes of plants, as well as the empirical observation of ameliorative effects. In a list of Babylonian healing rituals, pharmaceutical components such as cress, mint, extract of cedar, and date palm, are used in conjunction with invocations.[23] An example of a Babylonian prescription for an injury to the face illustrates the specificity of ingredients, but not of measures, that is typical of a Mesopotamian pharmaceutical text: "If a man is sick with a blow on the cheek: pound together fir-turpentine, pine-turpentine, tamarisk, daisy, flour of *Ininnu*; mix in milk and beer in a small copper pan; spread on skin, bind on

[17] Ibid.
[18] Anderson, "History of the Herbals," 2.
[19] Spiegel and Springer, "Codex Hammurabi," 74.
[20] Michael J. Brownstein, "A Brief History of Opiates, Opioid Peptides, and Opioid Receptors," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 90 (1993): 5391.
[21] Keith Dickson, "Enki and the Embodied World," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 125 (2005): 499-500.
[22] Dickson, "Enki," 506.
[23] Barbara Böck, "When You Perform the Ritual of 'Rubbing': On Medicine and Magic in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 62 (2003): 7-8.

him, and he shall recover." [24] Spiegel and Springer provide a detailed summary of components of Babylonian remedies, based on inventory tablets from a c. 1000 BCE pharmacy: "More than 250 medicinal plants, 120 mineral substances, and 180 other drugs were used in combination with alcoholic beverages, bouillon, fats, honey, milk in various forms, oils, wax, and parts and products of animals" (1997, 74).[25] The components of an *asu*'s medical preparations were evidently hugely varied and numerous.

Pharmaceutical prescriptions were prepared in an *asu* physician's place of business, if the previously mentioned list of physician's equipment from Ugarit is a typical example: the list includes items for the storage, weighing, preparation, and administration of medicines, such as scales, strainers, mixing bowls, and possibly forceps for holding ingredients in heat.[26] The thousands of treatments that could be created by combining available materials was most likely based on both religious reasoning and trial and error; as Majno says of wounds in the course of human history, "…in the long run the better dressings stood out. In this permanent battle between man and bacteria, it is thrilling to watch the birth of the first antiseptics…" such as alcohol, honey, and myrrh (1975, viii). Mesopotamian cuneiform texts of myths, prescriptions, and business inventories combine to create a picture of a *materia medica* that was elaborate and highly specific to the affliction being treated; the sophistication of Mesopotamian pharmaceuticals speaks of a long history (and pre-history) of experimentation with treatment using plant, animal, and mineral remedies.

While surgery was far from what people experience in modern developed nations, surgery in ancient Mesopotamia was more advanced than some scholars, like Herodotus, would give them credit for. The Code of Hammurabi is once again a source of information on medical practices—this time because it details the punishments for surgeries gone awry: bones were set, brands were applied or removed from slaves, and surgeries were performed with bronze lancets on wounds and on the eyes by physicians (Spiegel and Springer 1997, 70-74). Surface sores and snakebites were also treated by physicians and, based on inference from the presence of eunuchs in court records and art, castration was performed as well.[27] Majno is careful to point out that surgical treatments were definitely subject to the laws set down by Hammurabi, but other medical treatments such as prescriptions or healing rituals were never mentioned in the Code. This is a reflection of the Mesopotamian conception of disease causation: if

[24] Majno, *The Healing Hand*, 38.
[25] Majno, *The Healing Hand*, 48.
[26] Stieglitz, "Equipment List," 54-55.
[27] Spiegel and Springer, "Codex Hammurabi," 74; Majno, *The Healing Hand*, 46.

someone became ill with something other than a wound, it was because of divine retaliation for a personal transgression or the fault of supernatural influences, and therefore the bad outcome of a treatment could not be considered the *asu*'s fault (1975, 43). However, wounds had a visible and unmistakably mundane cause, and therefore a physician should be able to treat it with mundane means like a scalpel; if the physician only worsened the wound, it was considered just as blame-worthy as the perpetration of the original injury.[28]

In the treatment of all wounds, there are three critical steps: washing, applying a plaster, and binding the wound.[29] The ancient Mesopotamians understood and practiced at least the first two of these three steps, extrapolating from the same c. 3000 BCE prescription tablet discussed earlier in the context of pharmaceuticals.[30] Eight of the fifteen prescriptions are for the preparation of externally applied plasters, possibly for wounds or sores.[31] One prescription details the washing of "the diseased part" (there is no specific Sumerian word for 'wound') with beer and hot water, of which Majno assures the reader, "A Sumerian could scarcely have chosen a better wound-wash, though a kind of liquid soap was already available" (1975, 48). Plasters were rather unsophisticated compared to other elaborate prescriptions, consisting of the application of mineral oil and then river mud to the wound.[32] Sutures, ligatures of ruptured vessels, and cauterization were apparently unknown to the *asu*.[33] However, they did have the technologies of soap-making and distillation, as illustrated by prescriptions that detail the combination of resin or fat with an alkali, which would result in a soapy detergent, and by the presence of 'essence' of cedar, which would have been accomplished by distillation.[34] While some aspects of ancient Mesopotamian wound dressing are completely lacking as seen through the lens of modern biomedical practices, such as the binding and closing of wounds, others were surprisingly advanced, such as the washing and the preparation of poultices for wounds. Other texts give detailed instructions for surgery with a scalpel, including post-operative care such as the dressing of operations sites with oil-soaked linen bandages.[35] One scantily described operation is the cutting between the third and fourth ribs, counting from inferior to superior, to relieve pus collection in the pleura or liver.[36] One operation described in the medical text

[28] Majno, *The Healing Hand*, 43.
[29] Majno, *The Healing Hand*, 46.
[30] Majno, *The Healing Hand*, 46-51.
[31] Majno, *The Healing Hand*, 48.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Majno, *The Healing Hand*, 50.
[35] Majno, *The Healing Hand*, 52.
[36] Ibid.

"Prescriptions for Diseases of the Head" involves operating on an abscess beneath the scalp, and scraping away sick bone if the infection has affected the skull.[37] These surgical texts make it definitively clear that the *asu* were knowledgeable about the third step of wound treatment: bandaging. The interpretation of these three Mesopotamian medical texts elucidates the knowledge of the *asu* of the three critical steps of wound treatment, the theory of causation that differentiates wounds from other illnesses, and the utilization of cutting instruments and pharmaceutical preparations to treat wounds prior to 1000 BCE.

More than a thousand years prior to the lifetime and teachings of Hippocrates (called the father of Western medicine), prior to the description of the acquisition and treatment of wounds in the Iliad, and contemporaneous with the Edwin Smith and Ebers papyri of Egypt, medicine in pre-1000 BCE Mesopotamia was a well-established profession that included diagnosis, pharmaceutical applications, and the proper treatment of wounds.[38] Provided that human anatomy was only known from extrapolation from divinations using animal carcasses, microbiology was a concept of the vastly distant future, and the theoretical punishment for a failed surgery was the loss of one's hands, medicine and doctoring were remarkably advanced. When one considers the practical approach of *asu* physicians, who operated only based on their text-based educations and personal experience without personally falling back on a perhaps less experimental concept of disease causation such as the later humoral model (at least when it came to justification for treatment), it appears likely that that this type of empiricism-utilizing medical practice had developed alongside religious healing for many centuries before. Inskeep posits that Mesopotamian medicine was much older than the third millennium BCE because of the origin of the word *asu*: "That medicine was old in Babylonia is shown . . . by the fact that the Babylonian word for physician, *asu*, derives from the Sumerian *a-zu* or *ia'-zu*, meaning 'the man who knows water (or oil)'; presumably relating to divination by water with the aid of the water God Ea [Enki]" (1969, 25). Though the profession of the *asu* may have had even more ancient roots in the art of divination, by 3000 BCE there were relatively sophisticated medical alternatives to religious healing, as exemplified by contemporary texts that detail pharmaceutical prescriptions and surgeries.

[37] Ibid.
[38] Spiegel and Springer, "Codex Hammurabi," 71-88.

Works Cited

Anderson, Frank J. *An Illustrated History of the Herbals*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.

Barber, Kenneth E. "Hospitals and Treatment Facilities in the Ancient World." In *Science and Its Times*, vol. 1, edited by Neil Schlager and Josh Lauer, 131-134. Detroit: Gale, 2001.

Böck, Barbara. "When You Perform the Ritual of 'Rubbing': On Medicine and Magic in Ancient Mesopotamia." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 62 (2003): 1-16.

Brownstein, Michael J. "A Brief History of Opiates, Opioid Peptides, and Opioid Receptors." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 90 (1993): 5391-5393.

Dickson, Keith. "Enki and the Embodied World." *Journal of the American Oriental Society 125* (2005): 499-515.

Inskeep, R.R. "Health Hazards and Healing in Antiquity." *South African Archaeological Bulletin*

24 (1969): 21-29.

Kriwaczek, Paul. *Babylon: Mesopotamia and the Birth of Civilization*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2010.

Majno, Guido. *The Healing Hand: Man and Wound in the Ancient World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975.

Marketos, Spyros G. "The Parallels Between Asclepian and Hippocratic Medicine on the Island of Kos." *American Journal of Nephrology* 17 (1997): 205-208.

Mujais, Salim. "The Future of the Realm: Medicine and Divination in Ancient Syro-Mesopotamia." *American Journal of Nephrology* 19 (1999): 133-139.

Spiegel, Allen D., and Christopher R. Springer. "Babylonian Medicine, Managed Care and Codex Hammurabi, circa 1700 B.C." *Journal of Community Health* 22 (1997): 69-89.

Stieglitz, Robert R. "A Physician's Equipment List from Ugarit." *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 33 (1981): 52-55.

VOLUME 4
ISSUE 2

Frankenstein and "The Labours of Men of Genius": Science and Medical Ethics in the Early 19th Century

Allison Lemley

Editor's Note

Colin Blassingame

Following the waves of change after the publication of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein this article explores the evolution of the science fiction genre and the burgeoning discourse around the fields of science known as mesmerism, galvanism, and vitalism, as science manifests from the natural philosophy of the ancient world to modern science as we know today. As people grappled with the discoveries and the revelations in the natural world, their very understanding of it changed, shedding light on the conventions of the period and the ethicality of scientific practices. In this era is where we see the spirit of modern observational science expand to influencing our art of storytelling until ultimately we see the reverse happen today where works of science fiction often give ideas to the fields of modern science.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, first published in 1818, used a sprawling network of allusions to contemporary literary and scientific works which strongly reflected Romantic scientific and literary ideology. The robust connections between Romantic artistic and scientific circles in the late Enlightenment and early Romantic period included personal and professional relationships, scientists writing literary works, and authors discussing scientific advances. The closely linked scientific and artistic community helped define science and the nature of life in the new Romantic era. *Frankenstein* is a conscious example of a writer critiquing prevailing scientific views of the day, namely, the materialist and vitalist debates. Materialism understood life as inherent to organisms and a mechanical function that could be scientifically explained. Vitalism formed a cohesive view of the world as one living organism in which the property of life was present in all living things, but not inherent. The ideological differences between materialists and vitalists led to heated disputes, often riddled with religious tensions. *Frankenstein* is written and published in the midst of a period of transition, approximately 1780 to 1830, between visions of science. Shelley provides insight into this period through the critiques of scientific debates presented in *Frankenstein*.

The debates that are most pertinent to this research are the ones concerning the nature of life, exemplified through the materialist and vitalist split that occurred in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Shelley incorporates work from

several figures in the debate: leading chemist Humphry Davy; the famous experimenter Giovanni Aldini; and physicians William Lawrence and John Abernethy. Medical historians have not fully discussed the debate in this period. Enlightenment and early Romantic medical ethics was concerned with hierarchies within the medical community; ethics defined the ways the various medical professionals interacted with each other to demonstrate clear divisions between traditional, established, and approved medicine and those outside of the medical community proper. Medical historians have also discussed later Romantic era medical developments as they more closely resemble modern scientific ethics which are concerned with doctor and patient relationships. The transition period discussed in this essay has no set beginning and end, but gaps in research specific to developing medical ethics tend to occur from approximately the early 1780s to the late 1820s. The transition period is not defined by either Enlightenment or Romantic thinking, but rather by the tension between scientists professing either materialist or vitalist ideologies. This tension is shown through their interpretations of galvanism, the movement of muscles when stimulated by electricity, and their efforts to develop new concepts of science and the scientist. In particular, as scientists struggled to define the nature of life, they questioned their place in relation to this study: the way science, or natural philosophy, had been defined in the past was changing. Several factors influenced this period: the professionalization of science; questions surrounding religion and spirituality's

place in science; and delineating science and metaphysics into separate fields of inquiry.[1]

In *Frankenstein*, Shelley references literary and scientific works that comment on both perspectives in order to reveal gaps in the development of medical ethics. Victor Frankenstein's conduct as a scientist and his reaction to his creation critiques the secular and spiritual aspects of materialism and vitalism. This includes the ethical dilemmas with secular and spiritual science. By portraying this debate in *Frankenstein*, Shelley sought to comment on the rift in the scientific community and focus the debate on ethics, rather than vitalist and materialist definitions of life. Shelley's comments on the debate do not offer a resolution to the scientific differences between the materialists and vitalists. Instead, Shelley demonstrates through Victor Frankenstein's extreme scientific objectivity and his later extreme spiritual beliefs the potential damage to science and humanity. Shelley generalizes this message with the frame for her story told by her fictional explorer, Robert Walton, who encounters his own scientific ethical dilemma with different results. Walton's story offers a counterpoint to the warning embedded in Frankenstein's. While literary critics have discussed many significant contributions *Frankenstein* has made to their field of study, many have focused on how the novel represents the first—or among the first—work of

[1] Stephen J. Wykstra, "Religious Beliefs, Metaphysical Beliefs, and Historiography of Science," *Osiris* 16 (2001): 29-46; Ivan Waddington, "The Development of Medical Ethics—A Sociological Analysis," *Medical History* 19 (1975), 36-51.

science fiction. This offers a unique question to historians of this period: what factors in the development of science during this time helped inspire the first work of science fiction? Literary critics and historians alike have often recognized the relationship between events and ideas influencing authors' works; *Frankenstein* is no different in this regard. It grapples with many scientific debates and fears of its time, offering a view of extreme views without defined ethical boundaries.

One of the central themes in *Frankenstein* also reflects a major debate in the scientific community at the time: how separate religion and science can or should be. As Victor Frankenstein swings from scientific objectivity to religious revulsion towards his creation, Shelley demonstrates the possibilities that this debate could bring about. There is a myth that the Scientific Revolution removed religion from science and created the modern perception that they occupy very difference spheres. This "separation" does not reflect historical understandings of the influence of religion in science, as the definitions of "religion" and "science" have changed.[2] "Science" as it is now understood would be unrecognizable in the 18th century. Science was known in this time as "natural philosophy," a field of study that dealt with questions surrounding the soul and divine providence as

[2] Margaret J. Osler. "Myth 10: That the Scientific Revolution Liberated Science from Religion," in *Galileo Goes to Jail: And Other Myths About Science and Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 90-98.

much as it did the study of plants and animals.[3] Religion refers to doctrines and practices, often associated with institutions, i.e., the Roman Catholic Church.[4] Theology is the explanation of religious doctrines and practices.[5] In order to better understand the changes that Romanticism made to science, Enlightenment science's close ties to religion must be stressed:

> The debates about the new heliocentric astronomy, the arguments for a new philosophy of nature to replace medieval Aristotelianism, the development of a new concept of the laws of nature, and discussions of the scope and limits of human knowledge were all infused with religious commitments and theological presupposition.[6]

The concern with the "scope and limits of human knowledge" can be found in several significant places in the development of science. The late Renaissance and early Enlightenment debates concerning blood transfusions, both against and for the practice were often based on theological arguments.[7] The earliest blood transfusions, for example, were animal-to-human: lambs were often used because they symbolized Jesus Christ. The theological implications were thought to bring

[3] Margaret J. Osler. "Myth 10: That the Scientific Revolution Liberated Science from Religion," in *Galileo Goes to Jail: And Other Myths About Science and Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 91-92.
[4] Margaret J. Osler. "Myth 10: That the Scientific Revolution Liberated Science from Religion," in *Galileo Goes to Jail: And Other Myths About Science and Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 93.
[5] Margaret J. Osler. "Myth 10: That the Scientific Revolution Liberated Science from Religion," in *Galileo Goes to Jail: And Other Myths About Science and Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 93.
[6] Margaret J. Osler. "Myth 10: That the Scientific Revolution Liberated Science from Religion," in *Galileo Goes to Jail: And Other Myths About Science and Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 93.
[7] Holly Tucker, *Blood Work: A Tale of Medicine and Murder in the Scientific Revolution* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc, 2011).

a positive scientific result. Scientific practices were informed and limited by theology and often regulated by religious bodies, such as the Catholic Church. Over time, tracing back further through the Renaissance, religious power and political power became increasingly separated, creating a domino effect to the early Romantic period which continued this long-term trend. By the early 1800s, the emerging figure of the scientist was still concerned with finding limits, but relied less on traditional religious authority and theology to inform or regulate practices. While science had been acquiring a new definition, it had also lost some of the ethical boundaries inherent in natural philosophy because of its inclusion of theology. The tension lies in the struggle the shifting definition of science had in redefining new limits.

Shelley subtitled *Frankenstein* as a "modern Prometheus:" the Titan from Greek mythology who gave humanity fire. The gods considered fire a tool beyond humanity's knowledge. For literary critics, there are also strong connections to the Faust story: the themes incorporated in *Frankenstein* are commonly found in Romantic works. The famous Romantic writer, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, had published the first part of his retelling of the Faust story in 1805. Like Victor Frankenstein, Faust longs for knowledge and power through any means, including alchemy. He makes a deal with Mephisto, a demon, in order to gain unlimited access to knowledge and power outside of the reach of humanity. Frankenstein's scientific experiments to create life use earlier

and contemporary understandings of the Prometheus and Faust myths within a scientific framework to illustrate the struggle between old and new ideas of science. These stories also demonstrate the struggle with religious and theological issues that were deeply entrenched in the era's scientific thinking as scientists tried to define science and ethics in more secular terms.

Frankenstein was as much a commentary on the nature of life as it was a critique of how the emerging figure of scientists in the early Romantic period treated life. Shelley demonstrates this through Victor Frankenstein's method of building his creature and his subsequent treatment of his creation. In constructing his experiment, Frankenstein describes his work as "dabbl[ing] in the unhallowed damps of the grave [and] tortur[ing] the living animal to animate the lifeless clay."[8] His work is solitary and he spends more time collecting the raw materials for his creation from "the dissecting room and the slaughter-house" than he does with others. Frankenstein is both passionately focused on his task of creating life, to the exclusion of all other activities, while simultaneously being clinically detached from the harsh reality of using corpses to continue his work.[9] In Frankenstein's physical creation of the monster, Shelley critiqued materialist views of life and experiments with galvanism. Materialists believed that life

[8] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 33.
[9] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 34; Frankenstein's isolation is also a critique of William Godwin's belief that scientific progress with make human interaction and collaboration less necessary.

could be explained mechanically: the components of "life" could be broken down. Echoing materialist's view of objective science, Frankenstein dehumanizes the bodies he uses to craft his new being.

While Shelley critiques the detached, objective materialist, Shelley's critique of vitalism begins with this "spark," and continues with Frankenstein's reaction to his own creation. He is racked with horror at his creation's first movements and sounds; he refers to it as a "miserable monster," a "demoniacal corpse," and more horrifying than a "mummy again endued with animation."[10] Frankenstein worked hard to give life to a new creature, but only after the creature is alive does he consider life beyond a materialist, mechanic perspective. He understands his creation in terms of an animated or possessed cadaver. As the story progresses, Frankenstein's creation demonstrates his ability to learn and to empathize with humans, especially the family he observes. Frankenstein conceptualizes the creature's life as unnatural and outside of the natural world. In a scene where Frankenstein observes the creature in a storm, he notes how easily "its gigantic stature, and the deformity of its aspect… instantly informed [him] that it was the wretch."[11] Frankenstein's intentional design of an eight foot tall man composed of cadavers demonstrates mechanical skill, ambition, and

[10] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 36.
[11] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 50.

scientific power, but it also marks his creation as one outside of the natural world. Against the background of the power of a lightning storm, part of Frankenstein's original inspiration, he is repulsed by his unnatural creature. In Romantic scientific philosophy, grappling with conceptions of a universal world soul, Frankenstein's created chimera has no place in the cohesive world-organism theorized by vitalists.

Yet Frankenstein's success in "infus[ing] the spark of being" into his creation represents a scientific coup, and one that materialists and vitalists alike would envy: he has found the source of life, a scientific miracle.[12] Frankenstein, however, refuses to tell Robert Walton, the explorer traveling to the North Pole who transcribes Frankenstein's story, how he achieved his goal:

> I see by your eagerness… that you expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted; that cannot be… Learn from me… by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is who believes his native town is the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow.[13]

Frankenstein's mistake, as he sees it, is the knowledge he has, more than how he mishandled his knowledge. In saying that knowledge makes man "greater than his nature will allow," Frankenstein reinforces earlier ideas of a natural hierarchy, found in works such Agrippa, an early alchemist. Frankenstein withholds his

[12] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 35.
[13] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 32.

knowledge from Walton, believing it to be somehow above humanity's reach, yet on his deathbed, Frankenstein both admonishes Walton to "avoid ambition" and still hopes that "another may succeed."[14] Shelley effectively demonstrates the kind of split personality developing in science at the time: both the desire to reach for new and greater achievements and the metaphysical concerns of overreaching humanity's place.

Shelley's use of Walton introduces another branch of science into the novel and a foil for Frankenstein. Walton's desire for scientific achievement—and glory—run parallel to Frankenstein's, but their scientific endeavors have very different results. Walton writes to his sister before embarking to rationalize his reason behind his exploration to the North Pole:

> …you cannot contest the inestimable benefit which I shall confer on all mankind… by discovering a passage near the pole… or by ascertaining the secret of the magnet, which, if at all possible, can only be effected by an undertaking such as mine.[15]

Walton's single-minded dedication to his task and grandiose ideas of what his discoveries will bring to the scientific world and humanity are similar to Frankenstein's ideas about his own creation. Walton's wish to discover the secrets behind magnetism, a related field to galvanism, furthers the connection between the two stories. His belief that he would provide significant knowledge

[14] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 157.
[15] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 8.

with his expedition also reflects Frankenstein's selfish motives. After experimenting on dead bodies and forming his plan to create life, Frankenstein "was surprised that among so many men of genius, who directed their inquiries towards the same science, that I alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret."[16] Both Frankenstein and Walton believe that they are uniquely able to give their knowledge to the scientific community and the world.

Neither Frankenstein nor Walton's dreams go as planned. Frankenstein succeeds in giving life to his creation, but he is horrified by what he has done, and "unable to endure the aspect of the being [he] had created," he abandons his creation. The creature's appearance already prevented him from acceptance into the world, and Frankenstein's spurning guarantees the creature's ostracism.[17] Walton's own situation is troubled as well. As his ship progresses northward, it encounters more and more danger; the ship is trapped by ice, which "threaten every moment to crush [the] vessel" and only Frankenstein's "eloquence… rouses their [the crew's] energies."[18] Walton is afraid of a mutiny and when his men do finally demand to return home once the ship has been freed from the ice, Walton feels that "in justice, I could not refuse."[19] Walton understands that his desire for

[16] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 31-32.
[17] Edward T. Oakes, "Lab Life, Promethean Science, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*" *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 16 (2013): 59.
[18] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 153, 154.
[19] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 154.

scientific glory put others into danger, and chooses to give up his goal because of this. Frankenstein, however, is enraged that the sailors would demand to return, and tries to move them with the promise of glory: "your name[s] adored, as belonging to brave men who encountered death for honour and the benefit of mankind."[20] To Frankenstein, to turn back, even when confronted with circumstances that ensure the loss of human life, the possible glory overrules everything else. Walton expresses his frustration at having to turn back, but acknowledges that he "cannot lead them unwillingly to danger."[21] The cost to his men does not justify the potential gain.

In these short scenes presented in Walton's final few letters, Shelley makes her culminating statement about scientific ethics: Frankenstein's single-minded search for power and glory was removed from any consideration of the ethical ramifications of his actions. Walton is also motivated by glory through scientific discovery, but in the end, his desires are overridden by his obligation to lead his men out of danger. Shelley uses Frankenstein and Walton to generalize scientific ethics as well as provide contrast between the differences in ethics that they demonstrate. As the leader or creator in both their scientific endeavors,

[20] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 155.
[21] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 156.

Shelley establishes that Walton and Frankenstein have an obligation to those influenced by their experiment for their safety and well-being.

Walton and his men break free from the ice to return home. The image of the ice breaking and forming a passage to freedom is not one Shelley leaves with her readers. The final scenes are, instead, Frankenstein's death and his creature's self-banishment to the North Pole in order to die. This reinforced the consequences of neglecting ethics in science: a loss of values and self. While scientific debates at the time concerned whether forces such as galvanism were the force of life and could, therefore create it, few were asking whether scientists should attempt to or to what extent they should.

The critiques that Shelley weaves into her story are due to her immersion from a young age in the literary and scientific movements of the time. Mary Shelley was born Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, the daughter of two philosophers and writers. Her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, famous for her work *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, died eleven days after giving birth to her daughter. Shelley's father, William Godwin, was a significant influence on Shelley. Her father's work can be seen in the way Victor Frankenstein understands science and morality.[22] Shelley uses *Frankenstein* to critique

[22] D.L. MacDonald and Kathleen Scherf, *Frankenstein: The Original 1818 Text, 2nd Edition* (Peterborough: Broadview Literary Texts, 2000), 14; Shelley also dedicated *Frankenstein* to Godwin, who, after her elopement with Percy Shelley at the age of 16, had cut off contact with her.

Godwin's ideas, especially his belief that science will make human interaction less necessary; this is demonstrated through Victor Frankenstein's isolation throughout his experiments and the natural comparison to Robert Walton, the explorer who records Frankenstein's story.[23]

Her father also provided access to important literary and scientific minds in England. As a child, she heard Samuel Coleridge, a friend of her father, recite his poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," which is referenced throughout *Frankenstein* and provides allusions to mesmerism. She also attended lectures on chemistry given by Humphry Davy, a leading chemist of the day and also a friend of Coleridge's.[24] Davy's ideals and reflections on science's place in the world are echoed in *Frankenstein* through the titular character's university mentor. It was also through her father that she met her husband, Percy Shelley. She eloped with Percy Shelley in 1814, and while her father virtually disowned her, Shelley continued to read her father's work.[25] Percy Shelley also influenced her reading

[23] D.L. MacDonald and Kathleen Scherf, *Frankenstein: The Original 1818 Text, 2nd Edition* (Peterborough: Broadview Literary Texts, 2000), 14.
[24] J. Paul Hunter, ed, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), footnote 7; Richard Holmes, "The Power of Contemporary Science," in *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 183-194; Humphry Davy was also one of Godwin's friends; For further details on the extent of Shelley's inclusion and critique of Wollstonecraft's and Godwin's works, see D.L. MacDonald's and Kathleen Scherf's introduction to the Broadview edition of *Frankenstein*.
Walter D. Wetzels, "Aspects of Natural Science in German Romanticism," *Studies in Romanticism* 10 (1971): 44-59; Jennifer J. Baker, "Natural Science and the Romantics," *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 53 (2007): 387-412.
[25] D.L. MacDonald and Kathleen Scherf, *Frankenstein: The Original 1818 Text, 2nd Edition* (Peterborough: Broadview Literary Texts, 2000), 14.

practices throughout their married life, until his death in 1822. The Shelleys had an extensive library and actively discussed literary and scientific achievements of the day; Mary Shelley recorded their conversations in her journal.[26]

After eloping with Percy Shelley, Mary Shelley continued to be surrounded by people who intensely studied artistic and scientific works. One important connection was Percy Shelley's personal physician was Dr. William Lawrence, whom Percy Shelley was visiting before he and Mary Shelley left England in 1814.[27] The Shelley's connection with Lawrence is a significant direct link to the materialist and vitalist debates of the time. Lawrence was vocal materialist, while his mentor at the Royal College of Physicians in England, Dr. John Abernethy, was a staunch vitalist.[28]

This split between mentor and protégé led to one of the most infamous feuds of this debate, which took place in very public forums. Abernethy subscribed to the vitalist proposal of a "mysterious but palpable life force that is the source of animation in living things;" German Romanticists had explained this as "*geist*"—the spirit of life within each person, as well as in nature.[29] The

[26]Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert, eds, "The Shelley's Reading List," in *The Journals of Mary Shelley, Electronic Edition, Vol. 2* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
[27] D.L. MacDonald and Kathleen Scherf, *Frankenstein: The Original 1818 Text, 2nd Edition* (Peterborough: Broadview Literary Texts, 2000), 43.
[28] Edward T. Oakes, "Lab Life, Promethean Science, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*" *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 16 (2013): 61-62.
[29] Edward T. Oakes, "Lab Life, Promethean Science, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*" *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 16 (2013): 61; Walter D. Wetzels, "Aspects of Natural Science in German Romanticism," *Studies in Romanticism* 10 (1971): 45-46; F.W.J. Shelling defines *geist* in *Naturphilosophie*, which is a cornerstone of German Romantic thinking; Edward

spiritual components of vitalist science were incompatible, in Lawrence's view, with true, objective science: "An immaterial soul and spiritual being could not have been discovered amid the blood and filth of the dissecting room."[30] Besides their philosophical differences, Lawrence had not followed proper scientific ethics: after Abernethy had helped develop Lawrence's career, Lawrence, in a series of lectures, had not given Abernethy his due respect and derisively attacked the vitalist viewpoint.[31] Particularly, Lawrence criticized Romantic scientists' connection of electricity and magnetism to the soul. Lawrence and other materialists viewed this as mixing of metaphors, where neither phenomenon could fully articulate *geist*.[32] As vitalists struggled to scientifically define *geist*, Lawrence critiqued their lack of scientific objectivity.

The materialist and vitalist debate began earlier than the Lawrence/Abernethy feud in the 1810s. Luigi Galvani, an Italian scientist, began experiments with electricity in the 1780s. Electricity, as the force Frankenstein uses to give life to his creation, was at the center of the real-life debate concerning the nature of life. Galvani noticed muscle contractions in frogs when electrical currents were passed through their limbs; the scientific world erupted into fierce

---

T. Oakes, "Lab Life, Promethean Science, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*" *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 16 (2013): 61.

[30] William Lawrence, in Edward T. Oakes, "Lab Life, Promethean Science, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*" *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 16 (2013): 65.

[31] Edward T. Oakes, "Lab Life, Promethean Science, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*" *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 16 (2013): 64.

[32] Edward T. Oakes, "Lab Life, Promethean Science, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*" *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 16 (2013): 61.

debate over the implications in defining life. Galvani, the original observer of the phenomenon, posited that galvanism existed because animals had innate electricity; the contractions caused when nerves were stimulated with electricity occurred because of innate electricity stored in the muscles.[33] Scientists were unconvinced this was the case, and further experiments with variations on Galvani's method were undertaken. These experiments, however, could not prove the existence of Galvani's elusive "animal electricity" or define the underlying cause of the muscle contractions.[34] As scientists sought answers to Galvani's discovery in the 1780s, the dividing point became where scientists believed the source of life originated: innate or external. Galvani and other materialists proposed an innate animal electricity, while vitalists believed this force was a part of all nature, flowing through everyone and everything in the universe, uniting it as one complete organism. Romantic scientists believed that galvanism and in the case of vitalists, magnetism, were the forces behind life.

This debate is carried throughout *Frankenstein*, as Victor Frankenstein uses electricity to give life to his creation—a fear many who observed galvanic experiments had, especially considering that the human cadavers used in demonstrations were recently executed criminals. Johann Wilhelm Ritter (1776-

[33] Maria Trumpler, "Verification and Variation: Patterns of Experimentation in Investigations of Galvanism in Germany, 1790-1800," *Philosophy of Science* 64 (1997), S77.
[34] Maria Trumpler, "Verification and Variation: Patterns of Experimentation in Investigations of Galvanism in Germany, 1790-1800," *Philosophy of Science* 64 (1997), S81.

1810), a German Romantic scientist who found a great deal of acceptance within Romantic literary circles, experimented with electricity as the source of all life in nature.[35] His, and others, experiments with galvanism yielded little provable evidence for electricity as the source of life. In fact, scientists had as much difficulty determining the reason behind muscle contractions as finding the elusive force behind life.[36] Because of the unresolved debate, the fear surrounding galvanism and its unknown potential continued.

Romantic perceptions of *geist* flowing in nature also informed Frankenstein's creation of the monster. Frankenstein was first inspired by seeing lightning strike a tree; he used electricity to give life to his creation, not innately, but externally.[37] The idea of a pervasive force throughout nature had an earlier precedent in Isaac Newton's theory of aether in the 17th century. Aether was explained as a fluid material found throughout the universe that explained how light travelled through space and the movement of the planets, as many scientists did not believe that a vacuum could exist. Romantic era scientists reconfigured aether into a medium through which the forces of magnetism, electricity, and *geist*

[35] Walter D. Wetzels, "Aspects of Natural Science in German Romanticism," *Studies in Romanticism* 10 (1971): 53. Ritter was also a favorite of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who used him as one of his advisors in the scientific field. Ritter was not just a fashionable favorite of Romantic authors, but as a result of his experiments he is also known as the father of electrochemistry.

[36] Maria Trumpler, "Verification and Variation: Patterns of Experimentation in Investigations of Galvanism in Germany, 1790-1800," *Philosophy of Science* 64 (1997).

[37] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 23.

could flow.[38] The connection to Newton's aether is evident in scientists' explanation of both electricity and its movement through nerves. Experiments by John Hunter, a highly respected English surgeon, on what he termed "torpedo and gymnotus fish," or electric rays and zebra knifefish, revealed the organs which generated their electricity, transmitted through their nerves. These specialized organs used water as a medium to transmit electricity into another animal's nervous system. The experiments on electricity transmitting fish, *geist*, and galvanism seemed to fit into scientists' hypotheses about the nature of life. A young Humphry Davy, a rising star in the field of chemistry, was an early supporter of galvanism. He believed that electricity was simply "condensed light" and the nervous system was "light in an ethereal gaseous form."[39]

In contrast to scientists such as Hunter and Davy, who worked in long-established scientific communities which often functioned as an extension of political power, undercurrents of antiestablishment feelings began to develop in the medical community and the public. This resulted in unconventional methods of practicing medicine. *Frankenstein* critiqued of the materialist and vitalist debate and the tensions within both officially sanctioned and alternative scientific

[38] Tim Fulford, "Conducting the Vital Fluid: The Politics and Poetics of Mesmerism in the 1790s," *Studies in Romanticism* 43 (2004): 63.
[39] Iwan Rhys Morus, "Radicals, Romantics, and Electrical Showmen: Placing Galvanism at the End of the English Enlightenment," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 63 (2009): 267-268; Tim Fulford, "Conducting the Vital Fluid: The Politics and Poetics of Mesmerism in the 1790s," *Studies in Romanticism* 43 (2004): 59-60.

communities. While the official scientific community disputed, factions who sought to define science in non-standardized ways also began to engage in the debate. The ideas fostered by Hunter and Davy would inspire a number of quasi-scientific doctors, claiming that electricity conducted through human bodies had healing powers which standard medicine could not offer. Many used machines, such as Leyden jars, to provide electricity, but the most notable, and most influential, practitioner was Franz Anton Mesmer. By the 1770s, Mesmer was channeling "animal magnetism" from his own body to his patients.[40]

Mesmer claimed he had tapped into the "universal fluid that flowed throughout the world" and could channel it by laying his hands on his patients or by giving them his signature "mesmerizing" stare.[41] Robert Darnton's book *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* claims that Franz Anton Mesmer's theory signals the end of the Enlightenment.[42] Mesmer's work with his "universal fluid" was an important part of the early beginnings of the Romantic movement, born from the early materialist and vitalist debate concerning galvanism. Mesmer stood as an antagonist to conventional medical science. The tension between Enlightenment and Romantic ideas, materialists and vitalists, and

[40] Tim Fulford, "Conducting the Vital Fluid: The Politics and Poetics of Mesmerism in the 1790s," *Studies in Romanticism* 43 (2004): 62.
[41] Tim Fulford, "Conducting the Vital Fluid: The Politics and Poetics of Mesmerism in the 1790s," *Studies in Romanticism* 43 (2004): 62.
[42] Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).

establishment and antiestablishment scientific communities is represented in *Frankenstein*. By portraying further schisms, Shelley continued to demonstrate the gap created as religion was increasingly distanced from science and new definitions of science lagged in defining new borders.

Mesmer's influence in *Frankenstein* is tied to its connections to experiments with electricity and mesmerism's place in the scientific community as a whole. It is demonstrated through Shelley's references to Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, which characterizes the Mariner as having a "glittering eye" that holds men at "his will," common phases used to describe Mesmer.[43] Galvani's idea of innate animal electricity, and the theories scientists developed to explain electric currents, added the "scientific" elements of Mesmer's philosophy of animal magnetism. As scientists quibbled amongst themselves about the source of life, Mesmer used their work to promote his principle of animal magnetism: the theory that a person's will, or magnetism, could influence others.[44] His use of scientific premises made the experiments of those like Galvani a part of broader public consciousness.[45] Shelley's direct references to galvanism and her more oblique references to mesmerism use the public's

[43] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, 1834, accessed December 1, 2014, http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173253; Tim Fulford, "Conducting the Vital Fluid: The Politics and Poetics of Mesmerism in the 1790s," *Studies in Romanticism* 43 (2004).
[44] Tim Fulford, "Conducting the Vital Fluid: The Politics and Poetics of Mesmerism in the 1790s," *Studies in Romanticism* 43 (2004): 57-78.
[45] Tim Fulford, "Conducting the Vital Fluid: The Politics and Poetics of Mesmerism in the 1790s," *Studies in Romanticism* 43 (2004): 62, 66-70.

knowledge to make the scientific critiques clear to her audience. The "universal fluid" that connected all living organisms appealed to Romantic ideals and those with antiestablishment leanings.

While Mesmer's work brought both mesmerism and galvanism to a wider audience, Mesmerism was rejected by many in the scientific community, notably doctors in Austria, the Academy of Sciences in France, and the Royal Society in Britain.[46] The official snubbing of mesmerism contrasts the recognition given to galvanism. The bodies of executed criminals were donated to science by the state, with or without the permission of the deceased or their families. From trial, sentencing, execution, to experiment: galvanism became a part of the official process. Despite the differences between establishment-approved experiments and Mesmer's unsanctioned practices, both instilled fear in the public. Mesmerism was feared because of its unconventionality and its implications of absolute control using the theorized "universal fluid." Shelley uses Coleridge's *Rime* to connect fears surrounding mesmerism to galvanism: galvanism had the potential to give the "spark" of life, while mesmerism could potentially control the life that was created.

One aspect of mesmerism that many critiqued was its theatrical approach to healing that made it distinctly different from the idea of scientific objectivity

[46] Tim Fulford, "Conducting the Vital Fluid: The Politics and Poetics of Mesmerism in the 1790s," *Studies in Romanticism* 43 (2004): 64-65.

which many Romantic-era scientists believed was a key component. As described by Tim Fulford in his article on mesmerism, treatment included being led into a "lavishly decorated room, filled with fragrance and with the eerie music of Mesmer's glass harmonica" where they were then seated "around special tubs… filled with water that Mesmer had 'magnetized.'"[47] Mesmer's own entrance would rival any seen onstage: he was "clad in opulent robes, and like a wizard, [would] touch them with his hand or wand."[48] Both mesmerism and the public experiments done with galvanism are defined by a kind of showmanship: science was used to shock and awe. Yet mesmerism was marginalized by many established scientific communities, while galvanism had the support of both amateurs dabbling in experiments, educated professionals, such as Humphry Davy, and even those with political power.

This kind of sensationalism was not unknown in the scientific world. Galvanic experiments were scientifically interesting, but also spectacular, public events: Giovanni Aldini, Galvani's nephew and a scientist as well, traveled throughout Europe promoting his uncle's ideas and conducting experiments in front of audiences. These experiments were typically done on animals specifically dissected for galvanic experiments, but when a human body—often

[47] Tim Fulford, "Conducting the Vital Fluid: The Politics and Poetics of Mesmerism in the 1790s," *Studies in Romanticism* 43 (2004): 62.
[48] Tim Fulford, "Conducting the Vital Fluid: The Politics and Poetics of Mesmerism in the 1790s," *Studies in Romanticism* 43 (2004): 62.

an executed criminal—was available, the results were even more sensational and publicized among both scientists and the larger community, even attracting members of the British royal family.[49] Aldini's experiments in the early 1800s continued the scientific bickering over the implications of galvanism and they also demonstrate the views favored by those who held political power.

Tim Fulford has pointed out in his article "Conducting the Vital Fluid: The Politics and Poetics of Mesmerism in the 1790s" that mesmerism, and other similar treatments, often had an undercurrent of antiestablishment feelings. Conversely, the galvanic experiments done on executed criminals represented an extension of state power into the scientific realm. These examples reveal the struggle during this period to define science—and the scientist—in more concrete terms: who had official state sanction. Science became increasingly defined as an empirical, objective process and way of gaining factual information, as opposed to the varied practices and beliefs encompassed by natural philosophy. The changes occurring in science at the time, particularly changes in the definition of science and its relationship to theology, and would now be called metaphysics, are exemplified in Davy's beliefs about science as a process of gaining knowledge.

As the looming scientific influence over *Frankenstein*, Humphry Davy informs Victor Frankenstein's concept of science. Shelley clearly draws on one

[49] Iwan Rhys Morus, "Radicals, Romantics, and Electrical Showmen: Placing Galvanism at the End of the English Enlightenment," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 63 (2009): 268-270.

of Davy's introductory lectures which she attended—"A discourse, introductory to a course of lectures on chemistry, delivered in the theatre of the Royal Institution on the 21st of January, 1802"—to inform Frankenstein's perception and eventual conflation of knowledge and power. While Davy's lecture is focused on explaining how chemistry is influential in other branches of science rather than explaining chemistry itself, he also spends a great deal of time exploring how scientific knowledge has given humanity power and influence over nature. Davy views chemistry, and by extension, science, as a means that humanity has used "for the purpose of allaying the restlessness of his desires, or of extending and increasing his power." [50] Davy explicitly equates scientific knowledge with power, often in terms of how the scientist can influence nature.

This sentiment is reflected in Frankenstein's single-minded pursuit of the creation of the creature the God-creation relationship he envisions, connected with Davy's discussion of science.[51] Davy reinforces how science:

> enabled him [scientists] to modify and change the beings surrounding him, and by his experiments to interrogate nature with power, and not simply as a scholar, passive… but rather as a master, active with his own instruments.[52]

[50] Humphry Davy, "A discourse, introductory to a course of lectures on chemistry, delivered in the theatre of the Royal Institution on the 21st of January, 1802." London: J. Johnson, 1802, 14-15.
[51] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 33.
[52] Humphry Davy, "A discourse, introductory to a course of lectures on chemistry, delivered in the theatre of the Royal Institution on the 21st of January, 1802." London: J. Johnson, 1802, 16.

Frankenstein personifies Davy's ideal master scientist, actively seeking knowledge and applying it to influence natural forces, such as life.

Davy offers few warnings about the misuse of scientific knowledge, but they apply to past scientific efforts. In his longest warning about scientific pursuits, the problems that Davy does voice apply not the newly-emerging scientist, but to alchemists: "[they were] influenced by their dearest passions and interests by ambition, or the love of money."[53] Davy claims "these views have passed away, and a new science had gradually arisen. The dim and uncertain twilight of discovery… has been succeeded by the steady light of truth."[54] While "old science," alchemy, was directly concerned with personal greed, Davy argues that his vision of science provides clear answers in nature's "true relations to human powers," which, according to Davy, can be put into terms of a servant and master dynamic: nature is subject to humanity.

Davy also articulated, as many were attempting at this time, a definition of science further separated from earlier Enlightenment views of science—which included alchemy—and other issues that would be considered religious, theology, or metaphysical topics as modern science emerged in the mid and late 1800s. Science, over the course of the late Enlightenment to early Romantic periods, was

[53] Humphry Davy, "A discourse, introductory to a course of lectures on chemistry, delivered in the theatre of the Royal Institution on the 21st of January, 1802." London: J. Johnson, 1802, 18-19.
[54] Humphry Davy, "A discourse, introductory to a course of lectures on chemistry, delivered in the theatre of the Royal Institution on the 21st of January, 1802." London: J. Johnson, 1802, 18-19.

concerned with sorting "science" from "other." In Davy's case, alchemy is the "other." The old desires which Davy associates with alchemy, namely self-interested ambition, were problems brought out in Goethe's recently published *Faust, Part One*. While Goethe used a literal alchemist to critique unbridled ambition, Shelley applied it to the new scientist and demonstrated how Davy's dismissal of the alchemist was premature.

Davy could not completely separate his definition of science from earlier definitions. He showed derision for alchemists, yet his rhetoric emphasizes the power and influence scientists have over nature; alchemists claimed that their knowledge also gave them similar abilities to manipulate the world. The early stages of the Romantic period was still explicitly concerned with achieving knowledge that was, in some sense, above humanity's reach. The change occurred in what was considered "scientific." Shelley emphasizes this idea explicitly: "my [Frankenstein's] father had taken the pains to explain to me, that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded, and that a modern system of science had been introduced…"[55] Davy's rhetoric from his 1802 lecture is particularly evident through Shelley's character M. Waldman, a university professor who inspires Victor Frankenstein. Waldman, unlike Frankenstein's father, used Frankenstein's early respect for alchemists. Just as Davy dismissed

[55] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 22.

the alchemist and earlier definitions of science only to affirm their goals and ideologies, Shelley uses Waldman to echo these ideas, particularly his conflation of scientific knowledge and power. Waldman embraces the alchemists' efforts; he praises them and their intellectual ancestors as "men of genius."[56] Davy's concept of science as a benefit to mankind and the scientist as an integral part of subjugating nature for humanity's advantage is reflected in Waldman's speech further: "The labours of men of genius, however erroneously directed, scarcely ever fail in ultimately turning to the solid advantage of mankind."[57] Using Davy's language, Shelley revealed the kinship between Davy's power-centered vision of science and alchemy. This kinship resonated with scientific Romantic ideals of pushing the boundaries of human knowledge. The desire to go beyond what had been previously restricted by religion and the changing definition of what was or was not scientific also created questions about what was scientifically ethical treatment of those under science's influence. Where religion had supplied the answers in the past, the new boundaries of science had not yet been clearly defined.

As Davy illustrated in his lecture, concepts about scientists and science were influenced by earlier ideas about science. Both Frankenstein and his

[56] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 29.
[57] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 29.

creature live in the shadow of Frankenstein's earliest scientific readings, especially Cornelius Agrippa, an Early Modern alchemist and advocate of high magic. Alchemy holds an important place in *Frankenstein* as Victor Frankenstein's original inspiration and its place in the beginnings of science. The scientist in the transition period is the new magician, able to understand and manipulate the world. Scientific knowledge, such as galvanism and mesmerism, are the new alchemy. Waldman channeled much of Davy's rhetoric about the power of science, without his contempt for alchemy. Instead, Waldman, speaking about "these philosophers," claims that they "performed miracles," which modern scientists can no longer do:

> They [alchemists] penetrate into the recesses of nature, they shew how she works in her hiding places… They ascend into the heavens… They have acquired new and almost unlimited powers; they can command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake, and even mock the invisible world with its own shadows.[58]

Instead of dismissing alchemy, Waldman gives these men a permanent and venerated place in the modern scientific community. Despite differing in their treatment of alchemy, the rhetoric that Davy and Waldman use to discuss science reveals their conflation of science and power, most significantly power over nature. These ideas are similarly reflected in earlier works, such as Agrippa's, in dealing with high magic. High magic had its roots in Christian theology and its

[58] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 28-29.

own history with religion is complex, but ultimately defined and limited by its Christian beginnings. High magic included alchemy, but also the summoning of angels. Both of these goals required knowledge in order to gain power over nature and achieve feats that transcended humanity's place in the world—an important component of Davy's, and by extension, Waldman and Frankenstein's, view of science.

Shelley uses the desire for power as the connection to weave together past influences on changing scientific borders, materialism, vitalism, and mesmerism. Practitioners of alchemy sought power over nature through their knowledge how to transmute metals into gold; Romantic scientists were searching for power over life through their experiments with electricity. Society at large sought the power that mesmerism promised—over each other and the healing powers that were promised.[59] In itself, electricity was a powerful force, and by extension the scientists that understood it were powerful in that knowledge. The experiments with galvanism and the fascination with mesmerism were redefining science and humanity's place in relation to this knowledge. Mary Shelley uses the idea of scientific knowledge conferring power in *Frankenstein*, explicitly pulling them from both scientific minds of the day and broader cultural understandings of electricity and its popular culture cousin, mesmerism. Her critique of this

[59] Tim Fulford, "Conducting the Vital Fluid: The Politics and Poetics of Mesmerism in the 1790s," *Studies in Romanticism* 43 (2004): 57-78.

material also includes questions concerning how scientific knowledge should be handled and under what sort of authority it should be regulated. While the traditional scientific community would claim that political sanction gave it authority, antiestablishment practitioners would offer a variety of different authorities.

Victor Frankenstein's interest in Agrippa strengthens the parallels between science and religion, or in the case of Romantic scientist, the creation of a new "unifying mythology," "including a fusion of poetry and physics."[60] In the past, religion had provided a boundary and regulations for ethics, but as Romanticism and its looser ideals of spirituality emerged, religion's place in science became tenuous. Ideas of a new "unifying mythology" of science and art would provide a spiritual component with scientific evidence for the Romantic ideology. Primarily, spirituality was understood through science. The questions that many Romantic scientists sought to answer with their experiments concerned the nature and forces behind life; as society shifted towards secular thinking, both writers and scientists attempted to define "life" in non-religious ways while simultaneously reframing spirituality with scientific evidence. *Geist*, while a philosophical concept of the force behind life, was also believed to be a

[60] Walter D. Wetzels, "Aspects of Natural Science in German Romanticism," *Studies in Romanticism* 10 (1971); 44, 51; Wetzels' article discusses the Jena Romantics, a group of philosophers, writers, poets, scientists, and other intellectuals at the University of Jena. While German, British, and American Romanticism all had differences, the influences on *Frankenstein* are drawn from a variety of sources within the Romantic movement worldwide.

scientifically provable phenomenon. The idea of *geist* is a Romantic concept, but Agrippa also conceptualized a similar idea: "the Soul of the World is diffused through all things by the quintessence; For there is nothing found in the whole world that hath not a spark of the virtue thereof."[61] The spiritual connection that is inherent throughout alchemy experienced a resurgence of interest in the Romantic period; Agrippa describes the "Soul of the World," and the Romantics latched onto the idea of *geist* to describe the world-organism and the force behind life.

Agrippa, in his introduction to his book on high magic, says that "magic is a faculty of wonderful virtue… containing the most profound contemplation of most secret things… as also the knowledge of whole Nature."[62] Magic and alchemy provide both insight into nature and unite "the virtues of things" through the scientists' knowledge.[63] High magic sought to achieve certain actions, but the larger goal was the elevation of humanity's place. In the Medieval and Early Modern periods, religion limited the knowledge that humans could have: God, as the supreme omniscient being, placed his created beings on different levels with limitations on their powers. Angels and demons are above humans in this

[61] Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *The Philosophy of Natural Magic* (Chicago: The deLaurence Company, 1913), 41.
[62] Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *The Philosophy of Natural Magic* (Chicago: The deLaurence Company, 1913), 16.
[63] Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *The Philosophy of Natural Magic* (Chicago: The deLaurence Company, 1913), 16.

hierarchy, and humans have dominion over animals. High magic was revolutionary in seeking knowledge beyond human's limitations. This same theme is explored in many Romantic literary works besides *Frankenstein*, such as Goethe's *Faust*.

Unseating religion and theology from their former place in the scientific world, experimental attempts to understand and articulate life, even redefining "science" around new ideologies meant that ethical considerations had to change. During the period in which Shelley writes *Frankenstein*, medical ethics was one of many components of science in transition. Ivan Waddington's assessment of British medical ethics from the end of the 18th century to the end of the 19th century is significant in focusing on the reason behind the changes in ethics: the professionalization of medicine.[64] Waddington defines the development of medical ethics around the change from a patronage system of medicine to one dominated by colleague relations. Medical professionals during the transition period were concerned with these colleague relationships as well as the philosophical redefining of spirituality and the nature of life. How medical professionals should treat life, however, was an ethical concern that was not the primary question in the medical community. Religious boundaries still provided a

[64] Ivan Waddington, "The Development of Medical Ethics—A Sociological Analysis," *Medical History* 19 (1975), 36-51.

framework for scientists' treatment of life, as well as public expectations of medical professionals and scientists.

Waddington's work provides a timeline for the discussion surrounding ethics and science as a whole. Shelley's novel was introduced during the early period of the professionalization of medicine and reflected on many of the questions that both the public and medical professionals were struggling to articulate. *Frankenstein*'s affect in the literary community was mixed. In book reviews from the time of its release, *Frankenstein* did not garner high praise. Many at the time felt it was beyond question that scientists would treat human life with respect, given that the strong religious ideals still held sway. The consensus amongst several of the prominent reviews was that the writing itself was often excellent, even poetic, but the plot itself was absurd. The reviews that view the story as one trying to make a social or political statement, as it was doing, either relegate its message to the background or outright condemn it: its moral was irrelevant at best, and insulting at worst.[65] As a result, some felt that Shelley questioning the status quo was absurd and something of a non-sequitur.[66] While

[65] Croker, John Wilson. "*Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus,*" *The Quarterly Review*, 36 (1818): 379-385. Accessed August 2, 2017. http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Reviews/quarter.html; "*Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus,*" *The British Critic*, 9 (1818): 432-438. Accessed August 2, 2017. http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Reviews/britcrit.html; "*Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus,*" *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 88 (1818): 334-335. Accessed August 2, 2017. http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Reviews/gentmag.html; *The Edinburgh Scots Magazine, and Literary Miscellany*, 2 (1818): 249-253. Accessed August 2, 2017. http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Reviews/edinmag.html.

[66] "*Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus,*" *The British Critic*, 9 (1818): 432-438. Accessed August 2, 2017. http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Reviews/britcrit.html

the scientific ideas were viewed in 1818 as outlandish, its publication helped to add and reinforce the struggle for scientific identity during this time period. The affect of Shelley's novel within the circles of literary criticism were not as strongly positive as its current reputation would suggest, but in looking at more modern discussions of science, Shelley's work has fundamentally shaped the ways that scientists and medical professionals are expected to treat the people under their influence and care.

Frankenstein has long acted as a cautionary tale of science—and the scientist—overstepping ethical borders. It is telling that William Whewell, an English scientist, when defining the term "scientist" for the first time laid out a scientist as not only someone who looks for knowledge and systematically organizes it, but applies it to a "useful purpose."[67] While anecdotal evidence is often suspect, the sheer number of references to *Frankenstein* that are made when discussing new scientific discoveries by the public, the press, or even scientists themselves demonstrates how clearly this novel has become a part of the continuing evolution of scientific ethics. Shelley's novel helped to add further to the discussion in the 1800s and as a part of these tentative, formative years in the development of modern science has remained a part of it since.

[67] Allen, Glen Scott. Master mechanics & evil wizards: Science and the American imagination from Frankenstein to Sputnik. Massachusetts Review. Winter92/93, Vol. 33 Issue 4, p505. 54p. Accessed September 10, 2017.

Shelley's work provides insight into the struggle define the scientific process concretely, both in terms of what "science" was or was not and who was qualified to participate. She does not offer a resolution to the materialist and vitalist debate, or resolve the tensions between the disparate factions of the traditional and antiestablishment scientific communities. To expect that she would offer solutions would be to miss the larger point of her work. Her culminating statement ultimately concerns the larger, ethical questions that scientists left unanswered during this transition period. Shelley's work is significant, not only in a literary sense as both a complex novel and the first in the science fiction genre, but to historians seeking to better understand how modern science developed in the 1800s. The overlooked transition period represented in *Frankenstein* brings to life the origins of many of the concerns that were addressed later with the eventual formation of professional organizations with ethics committees. *Frankenstein* refocused discussions within the scientific community by questioning what the goal and ramifications of scientific discovery would be to individuals and society. Shelley sought to further this goal by revealing the close ties that new definitions of science still had to earlier interpretations of science, especially alchemy's place in the scientific world.

Works Cited

Agrippa, Henry Cornelius. *The Philosophy of Natural Magic.* Chicago: The deLaurence Company, 1913.

Allen, Glen Scott. Master mechanics & evil wizards: Science and the American imagination from Frankenstein to Sputnik. Massachusetts Review. Winter92/93, Vol. 33 Issue 4, p505. 54p. Accessed September 10, 2017.

Baker, Jennifer J. "Natural Science and the Romantics," *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* 53 (2007): 387-412.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, 1834, accessed December 1, 2014, http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173253.

Croker, John Wilson. "*Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus,*" *The Quarterly Review*, 36 (1818): 379-385. Accessed August 2, 2017. http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Reviews/quarter.html

Darnton, Robert. *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).

Davy, Humphry, "A discourse, introductory to a course of lectures on chemistry, delivered in the theatre of the Royal Institution on the 21st of January, 1802." London: J. Johnson, 1802.

The Edinburgh Scots Magazine, and Literary Miscellany, 2 (1818): 249-253. Accessed August 2, 2017. http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Reviews/edinmag.html.

Feldman, Paula R. and Diana Scott-Kilvert, eds, "The Shelley's Reading List," in *The Journals of Mary Shelley, Electronic Edition, Vol. 2.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Fulford, Tim, "Conducting the Vital Fluid: The Politics and Poetics of Mesmerism in the 1790s," *Studies in Romanticism* 43 (2004): 57-78.

"*Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus,*" *The British Critic*, 9 (1818): 432-438. Accessed August 2, 2017. http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Reviews/britcrit.html

"*Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus,*" *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 88 (1818): 334-335. Accessed August 2, 2017. http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Reviews/gentmag.html

Hunter, J. Paul ed, *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012.

Holmes, Richard, "The Power of Contemporary Science," in *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 183-194.

MacDonald, D.L. and Kathleen Scherf, eds, *Frankenstein: The Original 1818 Text, 2nd Edition* Peterborough: Broadview Literary Texts, 2000.

Morus, Iwan Rhys, "Radicals, Romantics, and Electrical Showmen: Placing Galvanism at the End of the English Enlightenment," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 63 (2009): 263-275.

Oakes, Edward T., "Lab Life, Promethean Science, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*" *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 16 (2013): 56-77.

Osler, Margaret J. "Myth 10: That the Scientific Revolution Liberated Science from Religion," in *Galileo Goes to Jail: And Other Myths About Science and Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 90-98.

Trumpler, Maria, "Verification and Variation: Patterns of Experimentation in Investigations of Galvanism in Germany, 1790-1800," *Philosophy of Science* 64 (1997): S75-S84.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012).

Waddington, Ivan, "The Development of Medical Ethics—A Sociological Analysis," *Medical History* 19 (1975): 36-51.

Wetzels, Walter D, "Aspects of Natural Science in German Romanticism," *Studies in Romanticism* 10 (1971): 44-59.

Wykstra, Stephen J. "Religious Beliefs, Metaphysical Beliefs, and Historiography of Science," *Osiris* 16 (2001): 29-46.

VOLUME 5
ISSUE 1

The Tet Offensive: Are We Mired in a Stalemate?

Colin A. Sawyer

Editor's Note

Marlaina Cole

In a time that is defined as the era of counterculture in the United States, Colin A. Sawyer's article, "The Tet Offensive: Are We Mired in a Stalemate?" considers the spirit and drive of the North Vietnamese, a community driven by the same values of freedom and revolution as the U.S. dissidents of the sixties. Sawyer explores the North Vietnamese's intent behind their shift in military strategy, known as the Tet Offensive, in the late nineteen sixties during the Vietnam War. Struggling to free themselves from a history of foreign domination, the North Vietnamese's decision to execute the Tet Offensive reflects a deeper generational commitment to gaining independence. Although this strategy may have ultimately been a failure for the North Vietnamese army, it embodies a population's determination to achieve national sovereignty at all costs. While the tone of the Vietnam war will always be saturated with needless death and destruction, its spirit will always be one of independence, national reunification, and ultimately, peace for the Vietnamese.

The Tet Offensive: Are We Mired in a Stalemate?

"To say that we are mired in stalemate seems the only realistic, yet unsatisfactory, conclusion" were the now famous words of Walter Cronkite when describing the Tet Offensive in his February 27, 1968 news broadcast.[1] After three years of being told they were winning the Vietnam War—since the Battle of Ia Drang—the American public found the North Vietnamese offensive shocking. As a result, public support began to rapidly decline.

The effects of the Tet Offensive on the "home" support for, and interpretations of, the American war in Vietnam have long been studied. The vocal anti-war movement used the Tet Offensive as validation to their argument that the American intervention in Vietnam was a lost cause. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the American military and its South Vietnamese allies saw the Tet Offensive as an unsuccessful tactical gamble on the part of the North Vietnamese that would have no impact on the long term. In this paper, I will present the "turning point" of the Vietnam War from the point of view of those fighting, with a focus on the opening months of this complex event.

The Tet Offensive represented a dramatic shift in the strategy of the North Vietnamese forces. Very soon after the official entrance of the United States as a combatant in the conflict between North and South Vietnam, the North Vietnamese learned that they could not defeat the Americans as they had the French in 1954 at Dien Bien Phu. The larger Battle of Pleime in 1965, particularly the subsequent Battle of Ia Drang in November of that year, made the North Vietnamese commanders realize that they could not combat the mobility and firepower of the Americans in large confrontations.[2] Reverting to guerilla strikes and small-scale raids, the North

[1] Walter Cronkite, "Report from Vietnam (1968)," YouTube Video, 0:53, posted by "tpleines," May 22, 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn4w-ud-TyE.
[2] Col. Hoang Ngoc Lung, *The General Offensives of 1968-69*, (Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, 1981): 15.

Vietnamese had to focus on a conservative and defensive strategy in order to cope with the increasing number of soldiers from America and their allies.[3] By late 1965, plans of a "decisive offensive" were being discussed in the upper echelons of the Communist Government in Hanoi.[4] General Nguyen Chi Thanh, the commander of Communist forces in the south, called for a "big unit" conventional war, which would destroy large American units and installations, while General Vo Nguyen Giap argued for the continued guerilla campaign to wear down the Americans over time.[5] However, both strategies would fail to reduce the amount of North Vietnamese losses: the conventional war would place the majority of the losses on the North Vietnamese Army whereas the guerilla war would place the losses on the Viet Cong.[6] Not sitting idle while their enemy deliberated on how to counter, the U.S. forces launched into their "search-and-destroy" operations as implemented by General William Westmoreland, the head of the American Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). General Thanh studied the American's strategy in South Vietnam and concluded that their military effort had five main goals, which were described by ARVN Colonel Hoang Ngoc Lung:

1. To disperse Viet Cong and NVA units, thereby forcing the Communists to revert to guerrilla warfare. This clearly was the goal of the large-scale search-and-destroy operations of the U.S. forces.
2. To spread Viet Cong and NVA forces thin over the entire territory of South Vietnam and destroy them piecemeal with superior firepower. This effectively amounted to forcing the Communists to fight the war on U.S. terms, while making the guerrilla forces more vulnerable.
3. To expand the RVN (Republic of Vietnam) rear areas through pacification, consolidate territorial control, and use these pacified areas as platforms from which to launch attacks against Communist-controlled areas.

[3] Liên-Hang T. Nguyen, "The War Politburo: North Vietnam's Diplomatic and Political Road to the Têt Offensive," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 1, no. 1–2 (2006): 4–58.
[4] T. L. Cubbage II, "Strategy and Rationality in the Vietnam War: Hanoi's Decision making and the Tet Offensive," (U.S. Army War College, February 1991): 13.
[5] Ibid.
[6] For the sake of consistency with American military sources from the time, North Vietnamese Army, or NVA, will be used to refer to the standing military forces of North Vietnam, and Viet Cong will be used to refer to the insurgent forces within South Vietnam, regardless of their actual affiliation.

4. To mop up and protect strategic lines of communication, especially vital links between bases in order to facilitate troop movement and ensure the effectiveness of offensive operations.
5. To isolate North Vietnam from the South and seek ways to cut off North Vietnamese military assistance for the South.[7]

To counter the efforts of the American forces, while keeping in mind their advantages in firepower and mobility, General Thanh determined that the best course of action was to "conduct determined and continuous offensive operations throughout South Vietnam."[8] This plan of offensive operations would remain in limbo until the members of the 13th Plenum of the North Vietnamese Government were tasked with devising a military strategy that would return offensive initiative.[9] The Plenum came to the agreement that a military offensive, followed up by simultaneous attacks on all the major cities of the South and a popular uprising, would be a reasonable "gamble" in order to "snatch victory from defeat".[10]

To achieve strategic surprise, the North Vietnamese chose to officially launch the attack on the morning of January 31, 1968, during the Vietnamese holiday of Tet and breaking the usual mutual ceasefire.[11] To keep the Americans pre-occupied, as they remained on alert throughout the holiday, the NVA attacked and laid siege to the U.S. Marine Khe Sanh Combat Base on January 21, 1968.[12] The offensive had three primary objectives, as provided by historian James H. Willbanks:

1. To break down and destroy the bulk of the puppet troops [AVRN], topple the puppet administration [RVN] at all levels, and take power into the hands of the people.
2. To destroy the major part of the U.S. forces and their war materiel and render them unable to fulfill their political and military duties in Vietnam.
3. On this basis, to break the U.S. will of aggression, force it to accept defeat in the South, and put an end to all acts of war against the North. With this, we will achieve the

[7] Lung, *General Offensives*, 14-15.
[8] Cubbage II, "Strategy and Rationality in the Vietnam War," 16.
[9] Ibid., 19.
[10] Ibid.
[11] James H. Willbanks, *The Tet Offensive: A Concise History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007): 26.
[12] Ibid., 25.

> immediate objectives of our revolution—independence, democracy, peace, and neutrality for the South—and we can proceed to national reunification.[13]

The North Vietnamese objectives were founded on a large number of assumptions made by General Giap: (1) that the North Vietnamese forces would be strong enough to accomplish their mission; (2) that the South Vietnamese government had no public support and would collapse if pressured; (3) the people of South Vietnam would rise against their government if given the chance; (4) that the people of South Vietnam would support the invading forces; (5) that the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) would not fight back if hit hard enough; (6) the people of south Vietnam would turn against the American and South Vietnamese forces; (7) that the firepower and mobility of the Americans could be countered by having multiple large attacks happen simultaneously; and (8) that Khe Sanh was a similar situation to Dien Bien Phu.[14]

These assumptions were ultimately proven as false, which was detrimental for the North Vietnamese forces. NVA General Tran Van Tra put it as such: "We [the North Vietnamese] did not correctly evaluate the specific balance of forces between ourselves and the enemy, did not fully realize that the enemy still had considerable capabilities and that our capabilities were limited, and set requirements that were beyond our actual strength."[15] Of the three objectives that had been laid for the offensive, only one could possibly be claimed as partially completed. The South Vietnamese government and Army had not been broken, and the American Forces had not been crippled in personnel or material. However, the offensive did have an effect on the American "will of aggression" in the long run. On February 8, 1968, General Westmoreland noted in his situation report to President Lyndon B. Johnson that the "enemy had scored a

[13] Ibid., 90-91.
[14] Cubbage II, "Strategy and Rationality in the Vietnam War," 50-51.
[15] Willbanks, *The Tet Offensive*, 81.

psychological blow, possibly greater in Washington than in South Vietnam."[16] American military records put the North Vietnamese losses between 40,000 and 72,000 out of a total force of 80,000, which is a massive cost to pay for an offensive that did not bear fruit until almost five years later.[17]

Due to the sudden outbreak of fighting within the major population centers of South Vietnam, there was unprecedented and uncensored access to the brutal conflict for the members of the media. The U.S. military immediately lost the ability to control, censor, and prepare the narrative for members of the media due to the immediate proximity of the fighting. Daniel C. Hallin describes the effects of the coverage during the Tet Offensive as such:

> A faithful television viewer, watching the evening news five nights a week, would have seen film of civilian casualties and urban destruction in South Vietnam an average of 3.9 times a week during the Tet period (January 31 to March 31), more than four times the overall average of 0.85 times a week. Film of military casualties jumped from 2.4 to 6.8 times a week. Tet was the first sustained period during which it could be said that the war appeared on television as a really brutal affair…[18]

Amongst the chaotic reporting, the attack on the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, the Saigon execution, and the attack on Ben Tre became lasting examples of the brutality of the Vietnam War that the American people could not ignore. The Saigon execution saw Brigadier General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, a South Vietnamese police chief, executing a captured Viet Cong guerrilla on the streets of Saigon with his service pistol, becoming a symbol of the "frontier justice" and extreme measures being used to try to control the situation in Vietnam. The Ben Tre incident is epitomized by the words of the American officer in charge of the attack, who said, "It became necessary to destroy

[16] Gen. William C. Westmoreland and W. W. Rostow, "Memo To President Lyndon B. Johnson From W. W. Rostow: General Westmoreland's Assessment Of Enemy Activity And Strategy," (LBJ Library, November 30, 1983): 2.
[17] Willbanks, *The Tet Offensive*, 81.
[18] Daniel C. Hallin, *The "Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986): 171.

the town in order to save it."[19] These captured incidents conflicted with the public reports that the situation in South Vietnam was under control and that victory was well in hand. Although the brutality of the conflict was well known within the country, the Tet Offensive brought images of the fighting home to the American public in an unprecedented manner.

For the American and South Vietnamese troops on the receiving end of the North Vietnamese attack, the Tet Offensive was an almost total surprise. Throughout 1967 and early January of 1968, American and South Vietnamese intelligence had picked up indications of a change in the North Vietnamese strategy. Rumors and rough guesses at this change could be based on gathered information as early as March of 1967, when rudimentary plans for attacking Saigon were found in a Viet Cong headquarters that was raided by ARVN units.[20] However, more substantial evidence of a change did not start appearing until the final months of 1967. On October 25, 1967, a Viet Cong document was found that detailed "the strategy of 'three-pronged offensive' designed to: (1) defeat the RVNAF; (2) destroy U.S. political and military institutions, and; (3) instigate a country-wide insurrection of the popular masses."[21] The rate of this incoming information and evidence increased as the Tet holiday drew nearer.

If all this information suggesting a massive general offensive was gathered, some may ask how the Americans and South Vietnamese failed to see the Tet Offensive coming. Colonel Lung summarizes this best:

> From hindsight, it appears that our failure began with a wrong estimate of the enemy, and intelligence methodology may have been to some extent responsible for it. Our intelligence theory taught us that in estimating the enemy's probable course of action we should be primarily concerned with his capabilities and not his intentions… Understandably, they [the ARVN intelligence analysists] were primarily interested to know whether the enemy had the capabilities for it.[22]

[19] Ibid.
[20] Lung, *General Offensives*, 32.
[21] Ibid., 33.
[22] Ibid., 38.

The intent of a countrywide attack on South Vietnam conflicted with the more concrete intelligence that the North Vietnamese lacked the capabilities to mount such an offensive effectively; therefore, the idea of a "Tet Offensive" was deemed a low probability and then dismissed.[23]

The CIA fell into the same methodological trap that Colonel Lung outlines. Analysts at the Saigon Station, the CIA's office in Saigon, published a report on December 8, 1967 highlighting that the North Vietnamese would "unleash a large offensive in an attempt to achieve decisive victory" and that the "…communist strategy sought to draw American forces to the border areas and away from the urban locations."[24] On December 10, a memorandum was released by the Saigon Station that "reiterated warnings expressed in the previous reports, but… that the enemy had misread the military situation in South Vietnam in believing it could defeat American forces in a country-wide show of force."[25] These warnings would then be dismissed when George Carver, Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs (SAVA) to the Director of Central Intelligence, asked for opinions on Saigon Station's assessment, to which the OCI, the Office of Current Intelligence, responded to by saying that the "analysts in Saigon had overreacted to the captured documents, adding that they did not have clear evidence suggesting that the communists actually believed that they could mount a decisive campaign against American forces."[26] Some basic precautions were taken for an enemy offensive during the Tet Holiday based on elements of the available intelligence reports, but most were either too late to be effective or were done on the judgement of individual unit commanders.

[23] Ibid., 39.
[24] Alexander Ovodenko, "Visions of the Enemy from the Field and from Abroad: Revisiting CIA and Military Expectations of the Tet Offensive," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 34, no. 1 (February 2011): 119–44.
[25] Ibid., 127.
[26] Ibid.

The Tet Offensive achieved its goal of strategic surprise against the American and South Vietnamese forces. Even those that had tried to prepare were surprised by the size and scope of the North Vietnamese attack. General Westmoreland's preliminary report to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Earle Wheeler on January 31, 1968 reveals his initial thoughts on the matter: "Enemy attacks during the Tet Holidays reveal an emphasis on dramatic results in heavily populated areas and damage to friendly air installation… The enemy attempts have this far produced no significant military results and have cost the enemy heavily."[27] Westmoreland maintains that the purpose of the offensive was to act as a diversionary action for a follow up attack on the de-militarized zone, particularly the Khe Sanh combat base.[28] Westmoreland's insistence on the Viet Cong's attacks being the diversion shows his misread of the situation and the North Vietnamese plans. The next day, February 1, 1968, Westmoreland sent a complete report on the situation to General Wheeler, stating,

> The enemy conducted simultaneous attacks against major cities and air facilities south of the DMZ area during the Tet holidays… to divert attention from what I believe will be his main effort, the Khe Sanh/DMZ area. Certainly he hoped to secure and hold a major city at least for awhile[sic]. He sought to also obtain a favourable psychological effect on the SVN [South Vietnamese] (and probably U.S.) populace. … His results were pyrrhic…[29]

While Westmoreland may have had an incorrect read on the order of the importance of the objectives, he was correctly able to generalize the situation. Of the three main objectives for the Tet Offensive, none were able to be counted as accomplished by the North Vietnamese. The attack failed to "break down and destroy the bulk of the puppet troops," to which Westmoreland notes that "the ARVN has demonstrated that it can and will fight valiantly to stem this enemy

[27] Gen. William C. Westmoreland, "Situation Report to Gen. Wheeler Feb 1, 1968," (LBJ Library, December 16, 1983): 2.
[28] Ibid., 1.
[29] Ibid.

surge."[30] The reports do admit that "a tremendous challenge had been posed to the GVN to restore stability and to aid the people who have suffered." However, this is far from "toppling" the South Vietnamese government.[31] Through his reports, Westmoreland conveys that the situation in Vietnam after the Tet Offensive was "bad but could be worse." The North Vietnamese were able to strike South Vietnam and inflict casualties on both civilians and those fighting, but this came at a higher cost for the North. In the end, the North Vietnamese failed all of their objectives and suffered far more losses.

Initially, the Tet Offensive did catch the Americans and South Vietnamese off guard, but they were able to regroup quickly and counter the North Vietnamese. By February 8, 1968, General Westmoreland was able to compile a complete report on the North Vietnamese strategy. To gauge the accuracy of the report, the first two principle objectives of the offensive will be compared directly to Westmoreland's assessment. The first North Vietnamese objective was "to break down and destroy the bulk of the puppet troops, topple the puppet administration at all levels, and take power into the hands of the people."[32] Westmoreland's report says, "The enemy sought first, to destroy the Government of Vietnamese governmental apparatus, second, to intimidate the people, and third, to bring about large scale defections from ARVN. All of these would add up to a 'general uprising' in which the citizens would join the Viet Cong ranks and thus permit the enemy to take over the control of major cities and areas."[33] The second objective of the Tet Offensive was "to destroy the major part of the U.S. Forces and their war materiel and render them unable to fulfill their political and military duties in Vietnam."[34] Westmoreland

[30] Gen. William C. Westmoreland, "Message From General Westmoreland To General Wheeler: Situation In South Vietnam Feb 4 1968," (LBJ Library): 2.
[31] Ibid., 1.
[32] Willbanks, *The Tet Offensive*, 90-91, 122.
[33] Gen. William C. Westmoreland and W. W. Rostow, "Memo To President Lyndon B Johnson," 1.
[34] Willbanks, *The Tet Offensive*, 90-91.

assesses that "the military objectives of this phase appear to be secondary. Here the attacks were directed primarily against Headquarters, air installations and aircraft with the view of injuring our control and our air power so as to hamper reinforcement and air support."[35] Westmoreland does not make mention of a third objective directly but does state that there was a psychological aspect and impact to the attacks.[36] The third objective, which was "to break the U.S. will of aggression, force it to accept defeat in the South, and put an end to all acts of war against the North," is a largely abstract and political objective that could not be deciphered from the opening moves of a failed offensive.[37]

General Westmoreland's February 8, 1968 report on the situation in Vietnam ends with an assessment of which areas were still under threat of North Vietnamese attack. He writes that "the enemy poses serious threats" at Saigon, Hue and Khe Sanh.[38] Saigon was the then capital of South Vietnam, to which an attack could be both psychological and strategic, and Hue was the old imperial capital of Vietnam, which was important to South Vietnamese history. Khe Sanh was a U.S. Marine Firebase near the Laos border just south of the de-militarized zone (DMZ). Constructed in 1966, the Khe Sanh base allowed the Americans to monitor and stop NVA movement into the two northernmost provinces of South Vietnam and to strike the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos.[39] A January 18, 1968 memo to the President contains General Westmoreland's and CJCS General Wheeler's thoughts on withdrawing from the Khe Sanh region and base, to which Westmoreland says,

> Regarding a withdrawal from Khe Sanh, I consider this area critical to us from a tactical standpoint as a launch base for Special Operations Group teams and as flank security for the strong point obstacle system; it is even more critical from a psychological viewpoint.

[35] Gen. William C. Westmoreland and W. W. Rostow, "Memo To President Lyndon B Johnson," 1.
[36] Ibid., 2.
[37] Willbanks, *The Tet Offensive*, 90-91.
[38] Gen. William C. Westmoreland and W. W. Rostow, "Memo To President Lyndon B Johnson," 1.
[39] Moyers S. Shore II, *The Battle for Khe Sanh*, (Washington, D.C: USMC Histoical Branch, 1969): 10.

> To relinquish this area would be a major propaganda victory for the enemy. Its loss would seriously affect Vietnamese and U.S. morale. In short, withdrawal would be a tremendous step backwards.[40]

The base at Khe Sanh was important to American war planning for both the offensive and defensive against the North Vietnamese. General Giap recognized the threat of the Khe Sanh base as a launching point for American offensives into both Laos and North Vietnam. In planning the Tet Offensive, Giap looked at the Khe Sanh base like the French base at Dien Bien Phu.[41] The attack on the base would remove the strategic threat it posed to the North Vietnamese war effort and would serve as a huge blow to the American's morale and war support. This "American Dien Bien Phu" became central to Giap's plan, as the forces committed to take the Khe Sanh base would then march south to assist taking Hue and Da Nang.[42] It must be said that there were some similarities between the two battles: the Khe Sanh base was isolated amongst a series of hills, the American forces were outnumbered, and the North Vietnamese forces surrounded the base just as they had at Dien Bien Phu.[43] With that said, there were major differences between Khe Sanh and Dien Bien Phu, the most striking of which was the amount of firepower that the Americans could utilize against the North Vietnamese. For example, at the time of Dien Bien Phu, the French used the B-26 bomber to support their forces, which could carry a maximum bomb load of 5,000 pounds. In contrast, the Americans used the B-52 bomber at Khe Sanh, which could carry a bomb load of 27,000 pounds.[44] By the end of Operation Niagra, the air operation to support and supply the Khe Sanh base, there had been 2,500 B-52

[40] Gen. William C. Westmoreland and W. W. Rostow, "General Westmoreland's Comments on Khe Sanh Operation Jan 13 1968," (LBJ Library): 3-4.
[41] Cubbage II, "Strategy and Rationality in the Vietnam War," 50-51.
[42] Ibid., 40.
[43] Maj. Gregory C. Kane, "Air Power and Its Role in the Battles of Khe Sanh and Dien Bien Phu," (Air Command and Staff College Maxwell AFB, 1997): 3-6, 15-16, 19-24.
[44] "Historical Snapshot: A-26/B-26 Invader Light Bomber," Boeing, http://www.boeing.com/history/products/a26-b26-invader-light-bomber.page (accessed March 28, 2018).

sorties in support of the base in addition to the 24,400 sorties conducted by various other aircrafts.[45] Giap's incorrect assessment that Khe Sanh was similar to Dien Bien Phu—and that the Americans would fight as the French had—led to the failure of the North Vietnamese in achieving one of the major objectives of the Tet Offensive, rendering them ultimately incapable of implementing the rest of the plan.

The situation in South Vietnam after the Tet Offensive was far more optimistic than the American media or the anti-war movement portrayed it. The Tet Offensive was a resounding defeat for the North Vietnamese, as they never captured a city or town entirely, were driven out of any holdings they did have, and suffered great losses in both manpower and material.[46] For the South Vietnamese, the victory expanded past the front lines. ARVN Colonel Lung best describes this when he writes,

> In addition to military victory, the RVN also achieved other gains which, though less visible, were perhaps far more important for its long-term survival. First and foremost, the RVNAF had gained self-assurance; they were confident they could defeat the North Vietnamese Army… The South Vietnamese people, at the most critical moment of the situation when the enemy was at their very doorsteps, had made a clear-cut decision as to their political inclination. They had unwaveringly opted for the regime of South Vietnam and declined the invitation to join the Communists, although this invitation was wrapped under such appealing concepts as Neutrality, Democracy and Peace… But the South Vietnamese people did not only vote by their feet; they also voted by their hands which picked up weapons and by their will which told them to use these weapons for defense… Without being told, they voluntarily co-operated with the government in organizing themselves for defense, protecting their households, their communities against the VCI [Viet Cong Insurgents] whose members they tracked down and eliminated. The surprising fact about it all was that never before had the rapport between the people and the armed forces and between the people and the government been so close. Without much effort, the GVN had thus definitely won the battle of the hearts and the minds.[47]

[45] Warren A. Trest, *Khe Sanh (Operation Niagra) 22 January - 31 March*, (Christiansburg, Va.: U.S. CHECO Division, 1989): 1, 5.
[46] Lung, *General Offensives*, 150.
[47] Ibid., 150-151.

In the aftermath of the offensive, the South Vietnamese government introduced a new mobilization law, which would bring the RVNAF an additional 268,000 men by December of 1968.[48] Colonel Lung points out that

> The popular response to mobilization was unprecendented [sic], and it overwhelmed the RVNAF processing and training capabilities. By September, 240,000 draftees had beaten the deadline by volunteering or reporting to draft centers ahead of time; among them, 161,000 were volunteers who enlisted in combat arms or service branches of their choice. Most remarkable was the fact that about half of that manpower consisted of urban youths, again an unprecedented record. … It simply stemmed from a sincere desire to serve, to contribute something at a time when the nation's survival was at stake. And in their decision to join the military services, these youths had unquestionably expressed an un-flinching faith in the future of South Vietnam, which they felt they had a duty to defend and believed that it was defensible.[49]

For the American Military in Vietnam, there was an opportunity to counter attack after the Tet Offensive; however, this was coupled with a request for an additional 200,000 U.S. soldiers from General Westmoreland.[50] This request was interpreted by the anti-war movement as a requirement to repel the North Vietnamese in the aftermath of the Tet Offensive. While the American and South Vietnamese ground soldiers held a position of strength, the American public and government lacked the will for approval.

To reiterate the words of Walter Cronkite, the belief that the U.S. was "mired in stalemate" was the only "realistic, yet unsatisfactory, conclusion." [51] However, his claim was wrong. The Tet Offensive was a complete military failure for the North Vietnamese. The only claim to success could be that the attack had enough of a psychological impact on the American public to stop an immediate counter-attack, which was used by the anti-war movement to delegitimize the war effort. Despite being caught off-guard by an attack that was deemed

[48] Ibid., 135.
[49] Ibid., 135-136.
[50] Ibid., 151.
[51] Cronkite, "Report from Vietnam (1968)."

improbable, the Americans and the South Vietnamese reacted successfully, repelling a major offensive and inflicting considerable damage to the North Vietnamese Military. Although in hindsight it may appear as the "turning point" of the Vietnam War, the Tet Offensive was just another strategic move on the chessboard rather than the start of a stalemate or the beginning of the end for the South Vietnamese.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Lung, Col. Hoang Ngoc. *The General Offensives of 1968-69*. Washington, D.C: Department of the Army, 1981.

Westmoreland, Gen. William C. "Message From General Westmoreland To General Wheeler: Situation In South Vietnam." LBJ Library, n.d.

Westmoreland, Gen. William C. "Situation Report to Gen. Wheeler Feb 1 1968." LBJ Library, December 16, 1983.

Westmoreland, Gen. William C., and W. W. Rostow. "General Westmoreland's Comments on Khe Sanh Operation Jan 13 1968." LBJ Library, n.d.

Westmoreland, Gen. William C., and W.W. Rostow. "Memo To President Lyndon B. Johnson From W. W. Rostow: General Westmoreland's Assessment Of Enemy Activity And Strategy." LBJ Library, November 30, 1983.

Wheeler, Gen. "Memo from Gen. Wheeler to Admiral Sharp." LBJ Library, February 1, 1968.

Secondary Sources

Cole, Bernard D. "A Noglow in Vietnam, 1968: Air Power at the Battle of Khe Sanh." *The Journal of Military History* 64, no. 1 (January 1, 2000): 141–58.

Cronkite, Walter. "Report from Vietnam (1968)." Commentary. Accessed March 28, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn4w-ud-TyE.

Cubbage II, T. L. "Strategy and Rationality in the Vietnam War: Hanoi's Decision Making and the Tet Offensive." U.S Army War College, February 1991.

Guan, Ang Cheng. “Decision-Making Leading to the Tet Offensive (1968): The Vietnamese Communist Perspective.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, no. 3 (1998): 341–353.

Hallin, Daniel C. *The “Uncensored War”: The Media and Vietnam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

“Historical Snapshot: A-26/B-26 Invader Light Bomber.” Accessed March 28, 2018. http://www.boeing.com/history/products/a26-b26-invader-light-bomber.page.

Kane, Maj. Gregory C. “Air Power and Its Role in the Battles of Khe Sanh and Dien Bien Phu.” Air Command and Staff College Maxwell AFB, 1997.

Nguyen, Liên-Hang T. “The War Politburo: North Vietnam’s Diplomatic and Political Road to the Têt Offensive.” *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 1, no. 1–2 (2006): 4–58.

Ovodenko, Alexander. “Visions of the Enemy from the Field and from Abroad: Revisiting CIA and Military Expectations of the Tet Offensive.” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 34, no. 1 (February 2011): 119–44.

Pohle, Victoria. “The Viet Cong in Siagon: Tactics and Objectives During the Tet Offensive.” Department of Defense, January 1969.

Pribbenow, Merle L. “General Võ Nguyên Giáp and the Mysterious Evolution of the Plan for the 1968 Tết Offensive.” *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 3, no. 2 (June 2008): 1–33.

Shore II, Moyers S. *The Battle for Khe Sanh*. Washington, D.C: USMC Histoical Branch, 1969.

Simmons, Edwin H. “Strategic Importance of Khe Sanh.” USMC Histoical Branch, December 1984.

Staaveren, Jacob Van. “The Air Force in Southeast Asia: Towards a Bombing Halt 1968.” Office of Air Force History, September 1970.

Thompson, Maj. A. W. “The Defense of Siagon.” Dalley Book Service, December 14, 1968.

Trest, Warren A. *Khe Sanh (Operation Niagra) 22 January - 31 March*. Christiansburg, Va.: U.S CHECO Division, 1989.

Villard, Erik. *The 1968 Tet Offensive Battles Of Quang Tri City And Hue [Illustrated Edition]*. Pickle Partners Publishing, 2014.

Willbanks, James H. *The Tet Offensive: A Concise History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

VOLUME 6
ISSUE 1

Ike's Constitutional Venturing: The Institutionalization of the CIA, Covert Action, and American Interventionism

Jacob A. Bruggeman

Editor's Note

William Morison

Every new American president redefines the role of the office, sometimes in ways that are only apparent many years later. In his article, “Ike’s Constitutional Venturing: The Institutionalization of the CIA, Covert Action, and American Interventionism,” Jacob Bruggeman explores President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s (Ike, as he was commonly called) use of his powers as commander in chief to expand the power of the CIA to engage in the overthrow of a foreign government without consultation of Congress. Using Barilleaux’s term, “venture constitutionalism,” Bruggeman examines how Eisenhower’s use of the CIA in the overthrow of the Iranian government of Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953 greatly expanded the powers of the presidency without consultation of Congress or change in the constitution itself. Those actions also set in motion historical events that would lead to the current animosity between the United States and Iran.

U.S. covert action from the 1950s onward was shaped, in part, by the success of a coup d'état orchestrated by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in which the United States deposed the popular Iranian nationalist Prime Minister, Mohammed Mossadegh. The overthrow occurred in 1953, and replaced Mossadegh, who valued many American ideals, with Mohammed Reza Shah, "a tyrant who despised much of what the United States stands for."[1] Ordered by President Eisenhower, the coup in Iran set the precedent for utilizing covert action as a means of achieving the United States' goals. In so doing, President Eisenhower overturned the precedent set by his immediate predecessor, President Truman, that is, the precedent of using the Central Intelligence Agency in its intended function, gathering and evaluating intelligence. As will be shown and defined below, the coup is an exemplary case of venture constitutionalism. In ordering the coup, Eisenhower extended his authority as President by setting a new precedent of intervention without consulting Congress or the public. From here venture constitutionalism will be defined, the history of the CIA and its organizational context will be written, the coup will briefly be discussed, and then an explication of the constitutional venturing that took place therein will be provided.

[1] Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken, NJ, Wiley, 2008), X.

Defining Venture Constitutionalism in the Context of a Coup

Before any meaningful search for venture constitutionalism in President Eisenhower's coup d'état in Iran, venture constitutionalism itself must be defined. Venture constitutionalism is what political scientist Ryan Barilleaux felicitously defines as "an assertion of constitutional legitimacy that does not conform to settled understandings of the president's constitutional authority."[2] It is a form of constitutional risk taking. This assertion of constitutional authority manifests in three principle ways: first, venture constitutionalism to protect the institutional interests of the presidency; second, venture constitutionalism to promote U.S. security and pursue national interests; and third, venture constitutionalism to augment the president's role in policy making. The second form of venture constitutionalism is the form on which this paper's analysis is based. Now, prior to any application of the abovementioned form of venture constitutionalism to President Eisenhower's coup, it is necessary to look at the history of the CIA. In so doing, the coup can be contextualized and better understood as an act of venture constitutionalism. This will logically be followed by an abbreviated account of the coup itself, and then the principal reasoning behind the coup's classification as an act of second-form venture constitutionalism.

[2] Christopher S. Kelley and Ryan J. Barilleaux, *Executing the Constitution: Putting the President Back into the Constitution*, (New York, State University of New York Press, 2006), 42-45.

The Birth and Development of the CIA

In late 1944 President Franklin Roosevelt sent a note to General William J. Donovan of the wartime Office of Strategic Services (OSS), soliciting the General's opinions on postwar intelligence operations. Donovan replied that the demand for intelligence would be "equally pressing" and that "solving the problems of peace" would be contingent on intelligence, and general Donovan proposed to refashion the OSS into a "central intelligence service."[3] The Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), J. Edgar Hoover, had fought with the OSS throughout the Second World War over the right to collect and analyze intelligence on a worldwide basis. This led to Hoover's own act of espionage in late 1944 when he obtained a copy of General Donovan's advice to President Roosevelt and leaked it to the *Chicago Tribune,* which then decried General Donovan as spewing machinations for a "super-spy system" in the postwar world.[4]

President Truman was also no friend of Donovan's. On September 20, 1945, Truman issued an executive order terminating the OSS, claiming that the United States had no use for a peacetime "Gestapo."[5] Truman quickly discovered that he was wrong in this termination. Truman's disbanding of the OSS is best

[3] Harris R. Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972), 363.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid., 364.

interpreted as the result of a hope for a future in which the United States would see, as Warren Harding famously stated, a "return to normalcy."[6] Yet the United States sat at the penultimate position of power in the postwar world, and, as such, the U.S. would need a centralized intelligence service. In January 1946, Truman established the Central Intelligence Group (CIG), which served at the behest of the president and was responsible for the "coordination, planning, evaluation, and dissemination of intelligence."[7]

In July 1947, the National Security Act was passed, which provided the President with the National Security Council (NSC), renamed the CIG to the Central Intelligence Agency, and made the CIA an independent department.[8] A short year later, Congress passed the Central Intelligence Agency Act, which exempted the CIA from all federal laws requiring the disclosure of Agency functions while also giving the Agency the power to spend money without regard to federal law, thereby allowing for a free-for-all subsidization of governments and organizations across the globe.[9] The CIA was assigned five essential tasks: first, to advise the NSC on matters pertinent to national security; second, to recommend to the NSC efforts in the coordination of intelligence activities in all

[6] Warren G. Harding, "Return to Normalcy," Teaching American History.
[7] United States, United States Senate, Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, 1975-76 (Church Committee), Final Report, S. Rep. No. 94-755 (1976), 6-9.
[8] Ibid., 12.
[9] Stephen E. Ambrose and Richard H. Immerman, *Ike's Spies: Eisenhower and the Espionage Establishment* (New York, Anchor Books, 2012), 168.

departments; third, to accumulate, analyze, and appropriately disseminate intelligence; fourth, to carry out "service of common concern"; and fifth, to perform "other functions and duties" related to intelligence affecting national security.[10]

The Eisenhower Administration used the CIA's fifth function as a ballast as they sailed into the uncharted waters of coups and covert action. Indeed, in recounting the rise of CIA covert action of the magnitude observed in the Mossadegh's overthrow, the State Department's George Kennan described the CIA's mysterious fifth function, its charge to carry out 'other functions and duties', as "one example" of "why we thought that we ought to have some facility for covert operations."[11] Here one can easily see the foundation for the constitutional venturing that was taking place during the Eisenhower Administration.

The CIA engaged in a few carefully-selected covert operations prior to the Eisenhower Administration, the first of which was an intervention in the Italian elections in April of 1948, in which, out of a fear that Italy was about to turn Red by way of a popular vote, the U.S. interjected campaign funds into Italy's Christian Democratic Party (CDP). The CDP won, and the CIA took this as

[10] Ambrose and Immerman, *Ike's Spies*, 13.
[11] Ibid., 31.

further licensure to intervene across the globe.[12] One might conceive of this covert action in Italy as constitutional venturing, and it is. However, the CIA's use of the United States' coffers to garner influence and achieve agency goals is incomparable with conceiving of and executing a coup d'état, an extreme form of espionage intended to topple governments.

Walter Bedell Smith was appointed as the CIA's director in 1950, and another year later, he recruited Allen Dulles as his deputy director. Under the leadership of these two men the capacity for covert action in the CIA swelled even more: the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC), charged with covert operations, saw an increase in personnel from 302 in 1949 to 2,812 in 1952; the OPC's budget grew from a meagre $4.7 million in 1949 to $82 million in 1952; and the number of foreign stations grew from seven in 1949 to forty-seven in 1952.[13] This swelling of the CIA laid the foundation for the coup in Iran, and "by 1953 the agency had achieved the basic structure and scale it retained for the next twenty years."[14] When Eisenhower entered the Oval Office, the CIA had become, as Allen Dulles described it, "the State Department for unfriendly countries," and Ike would use the Agency as such.[15]

---

[12] Harry A. Rositzke, *The CIA's Secret Operations: Espionage, Counterespionage, and Covert Action* (New York, Reader's Digest, 1977), 186-187.
[13] United States, United States Senate, Senate Select Committee, 31-32.
[14] Ibid., 49.
[15] Ambrose and Immerman. *Ike's Spies,* 178.

President Eisenhower Confronts the Communist Menace—Mossadegh

Ike was elected with the determination to fight the Communists as he fought the Nazis: everywhere and with every available means. When Ike entered the White House at the start of 1953, as Stephen Kinzer puts it, "the main fact of international political life was the spread of Communism," and so evident was this fact that the United States was convulsed by a fear of Communist encirclement, "a terrible sense that [the U.S.] was losing the postwar battle of ideologies."[16] In the face of this threat, Eisenhower intended to use the CIA much more aggressively than Truman in fighting the spread of Communism. Under Truman, the Agency focused on its first responsibility of collecting intelligence, whereas Eisenhower saw in the CIA the potential to become one of America's chief weapons in the Cold War. After all, Ike thought that nuclear war was unfathomable, conventional war impractical and unwinnable, and trench-warfare-like deadlock unacceptable.[17] And so, as Stephen Ambrose wrote in his renowned *Eisenhower: Soldier and President,* when it came time to give the order to overthrow Mossadegh in Iran, Ike ordered the CIA to "Do it […] and don't bother me with any details."[18]

---

[16] Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*, (New York, Times Books/Henry Holt, 2007), 117.
[17] Stephen E Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President*, (Riverside, Simon & Schuster, 2014), 333.
[18] Ibid.

The plan to overthrow Mossadegh, codenamed operation AJAX, emerged in the summer of 1953 and was planned by the Dulles brothers, Allen and John Foster Dulles, the former the Director of the CIA and the latter the Secretary of State under Eisenhower. For the sake of brevity, the coup's causal factors cannot be discussed at length here. Factors such as British involvement—including that of Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Foreign Secretary Hebert Morrison, and intelligence expert Christopher Montague Woodhouse—will have to be truncated. Suffice it to say that a British company, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), perfidiously cheated Iran out of money it earned from selling the country's oil, such that, in 1950 alone, the AIOC collected more profits than it had paid Iran in royalties over the previous 50 years.[19]

Riding the tide of nationalism following the close of World War II, Mohammad Mossadegh came to power as Iran's Prime Minister in early 1951 and entered an international fracas by revealing the AIOC's avarice. Mossadegh's criticism of the AIOC was anathema to Iran's Shah, Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi, who had allied himself with the AIOC and Londoners who controlled it in an effort to preserve his position and power in Iran, both of which were called into dispute by Prime Minister Mossadegh.[20] Mossadegh continued, though, and

[19] Kinzer, *Overthrow,* 118-119.
[20] The relationship between the Shah and Mossadegh was far more complex than can be revealed in this essay. For a fuller picture of their disagreements, consult James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989.

in 1951 led both houses of the Iranian Parliament to a unanimous vote to nationalize the oil industry.[21] This resulted in *Time* naming Mossadegh man of the year in 1952 and entitling him "the Iranian George Washington."[22] Then, in October of 1952, Mossadegh broke off all diplomatic relations with Britain. Churchill, at this point Prime Minister, and Eisenhower, at this point president-elect, could now work together to vanquish "old Mossy" in Iran.

Much to Britain's dismay, the outgoing Truman Administration had been unwaveringly opposed to any form of intervention in Iran, and had, in fact, never engaged in covert activities aimed at toppling a government. Indeed, Sir John Cochran, a mouthpiece for Churchill, proposed that the British Secret Service join arms with the CIA to overthrow Mossadegh; the CIA's Kim Roosevelt later wrote, remembering what he told Cochran, "we had, I felt sure, no chance to win approval from the outgoing administration of Truman and Acheson. The new Republicans, however, might be quite different."[23] The Eisenhower Administration seemed to be much more amendable with America's need to be ever-vigilant in the world of the Cold War, so much so that, upon Eisenhower's transition into the white House, the *New York Times* wrote "The day of sleep-walking is over. It passed with the exodus of Truman and Achesonism, and the

[21] Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 117.
[22] Ibid., 120.
[23] Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran*, (New York, McGraw, 1979, 107.

policy of vigilance replacing Pollyanna diplomacy is evident."[24] It helps, too, that the British, as Christopher Montague Woodhouse wrote, "emphasize[d] the Communist threat to Iran rather than the [British] need to recover control of the [Iranian] oil industry."[25]

What followed was the planning and execution of the coup against Mossadegh, who was unseated on August 19, 1953, despite numerous reports that Mossadegh was not, in fact, a Communist. Thousands of protestors, all paid off by the CIA, took to the streets on that fateful day, 200 of whom were Zurkhaneh Giants, essentially gargantuan weight lifters.[26] Mossadegh's home was stormed and then, on August 20, he surrendered. Thereafter, on August 22, the Shah returned from Italy, where he had fled after a failed attempt to dismiss Mossadegh on August 15, a mere five days before the Prime Minister's surrender. Upon his return from exile, the Shah spoke of Mossadegh's removal from power and exclaimed "It shows how the people stand. Ninety-nine per cent of the population is for me. I knew it all the time."[27]

Eisenhower's Iranian Coup and Consequent Constitutional Venturing

[24] *New York Times,* February 25, 1953; Nashville *Banner,* May 21, 1954. Online.
[25] Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*, (New York, Doubleday, 2007), 85.
[26] Roosevelt, *Countercoup,* 166.
[27] Ambrose and Immerman, *Ike's Spies,* 212.

In his *Memoirs,* Eisenhower would commend the coup as a natural uprising of the Shah's followers against Mossadegh—no mention being made of the CIA's involvement. Yet in October of 1953, in a secret ceremony, Eisenhower awarded the National Security Medal to Kermit Roosevelt, the chief architect of the coup, thereby validating his work in operation AJAX.[28] In Ike's eyes, as was the case with the Dulles brothers and many others in the United States' foreign policy establishment, "the CIA offered the President a quick fix for his foreign problems,"[29] and, consequently, freed Eisenhower "from having to persuade Congress, or the parties, or the public"[30] of the validity—or even the legality—of his actions.

Eisenhower was—despite apparent influences from the Dulles brothers and the British—the principle agent in carrying-out the coup. After all, as George W. Bush would later posit, the President is "the decider."[31] Indeed, in giving the thumbs-up for the coup in Iran, Eisenhower embarked on one of the greatest instances of type-two venture constitutionalism in the history of the United States. To clarify, the second type of venture constitutionalism occurs when the President is "promoting U.S. security and advancing national interests."[32] The coup in Iran

[28] Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower: In War and Peace*, (New York, Random House, 2012), 626.
[29] Ambrose, *Eisenhower,* 333.
[30] Ibid., 333-334.
[31] "Bush: 'I'm the Decider' on Rumsfeld." CNN. April 18, 2006. Accessed May 29, 2018.
[32] Kelley and Barilleaux, *Executing the Constitution,* 44.

is undeniably an act of this type, for the coup involved the President's foreign policy power and his emergency powers. In the case of the emergency powers, remember for a moment the urgency with which the Eisenhower Administration acted. Iran had an extensive thousand-mile border with the Soviet Union, was possessed of the world's greatest oil reserves, and had an active Communist Party.[33] Unsurprisingly, then, Ike was "concerned primarily, and almost solely, [with] some scheme or plan that will keep [Iran's] oil flowing westward."[34]

Given the aforementioned 'fear of encirclement' that convulsed America and Ike's determination to beat-back Communism, an inexpensive and British-backed coup in Iran was an apodictically justifiable action. It helped, too, that the Dulles brothers unreservedly believed that the U.S. should obliterate any regime not overtly allied with the west.[35] Eisenhower's appraisal of the Communist threat is evidenced by his decision in the Rosenberg case, in which he allowed, much to his cabinet members' shock, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, each of whom were charged with giving atomic secrets to the Soviets, to be executed.[36]

Moreover, Eisenhower subscribed to the line in the Doolittle Report, a 1954 report on the CIA's covert activities, that read, in speaking of the Cold War

[33] Smith, *Eisenhower,* 620.
[34] Ibid., 621.
[35] Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes,* 87.
[36] Ambrose and Immerman, *Ike's Spies,* 180-182.

as a game, that "there are no rules in such a game."[37] So important was the fight against the Soviet Union that Eisenhower was willing to do anything to beat the Soviets, "even if the result was to change the American way of life."[38] This is not to say that Ike was unjustified in his venture constitutionalism. Rather, the preceding text is intended to inform and contextualize the reasoning for the coup in Iran, and thus also the constitutional venturing that allowed for it.

As has been discussed, Ike's coup was an act of second-type constitutional venturing, the type aimed at promoting the Union's security and furthering national interests. Eisenhower—indeed, nearly everyone in the Administration—saw the situation in Iran as one that, depending on the outcome, could profoundly impact the Cold War struggle between the U.S. and the Soviets. The importance of the Cold War context in which Eisenhower's constitutional venturing took place cannot be understated. In fact, when refracted through the trials and tribulations of the Cold War, Eisenhower's transformation of the CIA into an arm for executive action appears less like constitutional venturing and more like a savvy geopolitical maneuver amid a struggle of global, titanic consequence.

Therefore, despite a lack of precedent for using the CIA to intervene and topple a foreign government, the Administration moved forward, and Ike

[37] Ibid., 188.
[38] Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes*, 86.

ultimately gave the go-ahead. As a result, the CIA became a tool for Ike and the Administration to, as Evan Thomas has contended, "stop the Red stain from spreading on the map." In assigning this responsibility to the CIA, Ike refashioned the Agency into "his personal action arm."[39] From 1953 and through the hottest decades of the Cold War close relationships developed between the White House and the agencies and sectors within the United States' government that were tasked with engaging in international affairs, the CIA being the first and most formative example.

The appeal of the CIA as an 'action arm' of the Administration precipitated from several causal factors. First, as historian Arthur Schlesinger notes, "Eisenhower didn't trust the military […] He knew too much about it," and so the appeal of the CIA as an alternative is partially resultant from this distrust.[40] Of note, too, is the fact the Ike saw the CIA as an inexpensive option for action when compared with the strategies proposed by the military-industrial establishment. Second, there was simply no option of overt military action, such as placing boots on the ground—a move of that kind would surely set ablaze the third World War Eisenhower was so assiduously avoiding. Third, the Dulles brothers were the heads of both the State Department and the CIA, and the

[39] Evan Thomas, *The Very Best Men: Four Who Dared: The Early Years of the CIA*, (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1995), 110.
[40] Ibid.

brothers thus ran, as Stephen Kirzner has said, "the overt and covert arms of foreign policy" seamlessly throughout their time together under Ike.[41] Finally, making use of the CIA freed Ike from the tedium of persuading Congress and the public of the need to act in Iran.

This use of the CIA was, as Stephen Ambrose noted, likely illegal. President Truman would later comment that "For some time I have been disturbed by the way the CIA has been diverted from its original assignment. It has become an operational and at times a policy-making arm of the government."[42] To Truman's point, as the coup played out in Iran, CIA veteran Frank Wisner remarked that the "CIA makes policy by default."[43] Therefore, Eisenhower directed the CIA in a way that resulted in a venturing away from its initial purpose—and therein second-type venture constitutionalism is evident.

It should also be noted that the second type of venture constitutionalism has roots that reach into many presidencies preceding Ike's stretch in the White House, thus forming a historical method of exercising presidential power. Indeed, as Ryan Barilleaux wrote, "Presidents have long asserted the authority to initiate military actions abroad without prior authorization by Congress," which, of course, constitutes second-type venture constitutionalism.[44] To further

[41] Kinzer, *Overthrow,* 122.
[42] Ambrose and Immerman, *Ike's Spies,*167.
[43] Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes,* 95.
[44] Kelley and Barilleaux, *Executing the Constitution,* 45.

demonstrate that Eisenhower's use of the CIA in Iran falls into this historical type of constitutional venturing, one needs only to read the noteworthy literature surrounding the Iranian coup's consequences, which are best summarized by Ambrose in *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* when he writes on the coup:

> The methods used were immoral, if not illegal, and a dangerous precedent had been set. The CIA offered the President a quick fix for his foreign problems. It was there to do his bidding; it freed him from having to persuade Congress, or the parties, or the public. The asset of the CIA greatly extended the President's powers—at the expense of greatly extending the risks of getting in trouble.[45]

The above-selected passage makes evident all the signs of second-type venture constitutionalism: quasi-illegal presidential action, resetting of precedents, lack of Congressional and public authorization, a measurable extension of the President's powers, and a high level of risk taking.

Yet Ike avoided criticism of his constitutional venturing for at least 20 years. This was made possible by the Acts mentioned earlier, which shrouded the CIA in secrecy. Only recently have scholars begun to consider the Iranian coup with a critical eye. Ike's Iranian coup has passed into historical memory, and so the coup's subsequent expansion of presidential power has been institutionalized.

[45] Ambrose, *Eisenhower,* 333.

In fact, the success of Eisenhower's use of the CIA in Operation AJAX encouraged the Eisenhower Administration to intervene elsewhere. Under Eisenhower, the CIA undertook 170 major covert actions in 48 different nations.[46] Unsurprisingly, given the threat of the Cold War, Eisenhower's commandeering of the CIA was acquiesced to, and, as has been made clear, is only now being subjected to criticism of any weight.

[46] Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes*, 87.

Bibliography

Ambrose, Stephen E., and Richard H. Immerman. *Ike's Spies: Eisenhower and the Espionage Establishment*. New York: Anchor Books, 2012.

Ambrose, Stephen E. *Eisenhower: Soldier and President*. Riverside: Simon & Schuster, 2014.

"Bush: 'I'm the Decider' on Rumsfeld." CNN. April 18, 2006. Accessed May 29, 2018. http://www.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/04/18/rumsfeld/.

Campbell, Thomas J. "An Understanding of the Constitution's Foreign Affairs Power." The Heritage Foundation. http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/an-understanding-of-the-constitutions-foreign-affairs-power.

Christopher, Kelley S., and Ryan J. Barilleaux. *Executing the Constitution: Putting the President Back into the Constitution*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2006.

Harding, Warren G. "Return to Normalcy." Teaching American History. http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/return-to-normalcy/.

Kinzer, Stephen. *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008.

Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. New York: Times Books/Henry Holt, 2007.

Roosevelt, Kermit. *Countercoup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran*. New York: McGraw, 1979.

Rositzke, Harry A. *The CIA's Secret Operations: Espionage, Counterespionage, and Covert Action*. New York: Reader's Digest, 1977.

Smith, Jean Edward. *Eisenhower: In War and Peace*. New York: Random House, 2012.

Smith, R. Harris. *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972.

Thomas, Evan. *The Very Best Men: Four Who Dared: The Early Years of the CIA*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.

"The United States Constitution - The U.S. Constitution Online - USConstitution.net." U.s. Constitution. http://www.usconstitution.net+/const.html.

United States. United States Senate. Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, 1975-76

(Church Committee). *Final Report, S. Rep. No. 94-755 (1976)*.https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/resources/intelligence-related-commissions.

Weiner, Tim. *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*. New York: Doubleday, 2007.

VOLUME 7
ISSUE 1

The Russian Revolution

Chang-Dae Hyun

Editor's Note

Scott Lingenfelter

In this nicely conceptualized article, Chang-Dae Hyun focuses our attention on the role of the Bolshevik Party in the Russian Revolution. This may seem like a given, but because of the tumultuous events of 1917, Hyun's piece (submitted at the time of the Revolution's centenary) is a useful reminder that history is driven by actors seizing the moment – for good or ill. There were a number of preconditions for revolution – economic collapse, political fragmentation, and a weak Provisional government – all a result of the stresses and strains of war on the Russian Empire. Hyun takes us to a moment in the summer of 1917, the so-called Kornilov Affair (when a military takeover appeared imminent) and demonstrates that this was the turning point in Bolshevik fortunes. As Trotsky put it "the army that rose against Kornilov was the army-to-be of the October Revolution." Support for the now well-armed Bolsheviks grew apace, as elections to local soviet committees indicate. The coup that followed reflects the spirit of the times, then and now: then, because the Bolsheviks seized power in the vacuum produced by WWI's cataclysm, now because Russia's ship of state still sails under a banner of ruthless self-interest in the absence of a countervailing force with, as Hyun reminds us, global implications.

Introduction

The Russian Revolution was caused by the consequences of World War I: economic crises, and demotivated soldiers. In both cases, governments – the Romanov Dynasty and the Provisional Government that first seized power from the Tsar – were unable to resolve these problems. But these factors alone were not sufficient enough to cause the Russian Revolution, rather they should be understood as preconditions. What was also needed was a strong party – the Bolshevik Party – willing and able to capitalize on such preconditions. First, this paper will argue that economic crises such as food shortages, inflation, and poor working conditions triggered mass discontent with the Tsar and the Provisional Government. Second, soldiers who were demotivated by war weariness, were disinclined to protect the political order during the February Revolution and the October Revolution. Finally, in the midst of crises, Kornilov Affair led to the defeat of elites – former members of zemstvo, bourgeois professionals, and military officers – by proletariat and peasants. The Bolshevik Party positioned itself to build on these preconditions and turned them into revolution.

Economic Crises

Economic anxiety greatly undermined public faith in the Tsar and then the Provisional Government. World War I stagnated Russia's economy, which influenced mass population to mobilize and participate in the Russian Revolution. In prior to World War I, Russia was one of Europe's fastest growing economies with economic activity expanding at a rate of four percent annually.[1] Industrial sectors were growing, social welfare budgets– health care and education – were expanding, while the debt-to-GDP ratio was declining.[2] However, the peasants grew weary of the Tsarist government after the government failed to manage the famine of 1891. By the autumn,

[1] Mark Harrison, and Andrei Markevich, "Russia's Home Front, 1914-1922: The Economy" (University of Warwick, 2012), 1.
[2] Ibid, 3-4.

famine spread to seventeen provinces with a total population of thirty-six million people. [3] Peasants "lived on 'famine bread' made from rye husks mixed with the weed goosefoot, moss and tree bark, which made the loaves turn yellow and bitter."[4] Outbreaks of Cholera and typhus resulted in killing half a million people by the 1892, but the Tsarist government was too slow to respond, and the transportation system was unable to cope.[5] Furthermore, the government banned using a word famine from newspapers which fueled public anger.[6] In the midst of peasant misery, aristocrats enjoyed huge estates with well-furnished manors, and its banquets and concerts were carried on as usual.[7]

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 further contributed to peasants' despair. Between 1913 to 1917, Russia's average income per person, reduced by eighteen percent while the inflation rate increased significantly.[8] By March 1917, the price level of 1913 had multiplied by a factor of 3.15.[9] But by November 1917, the price level of 1913 had multiplied by a factor of 10.2.[10] This significant inflation rate reflected Russia's continued war effort: industries prioritizing producing war products over manufactured goods increased the price of commodities, and it depleted resources such as raw materials and fuel. Consequently, cost of production increased, and they were losing trade partners due to the continental war.

Food shortages were one the biggest economic challenges during the Russian Revolution when the war directly undermined Russian agricultural industries by reducing the supply and increasing the demand of grain. Military mobilizations disturbed the supply chain of agricultural

[3] Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924* (London: Pimlico, 1996), 157.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid, 160.
[8] Andrei Markevich, and Mark Harrison, "Great War, Civil War, and recovery: Russia's national income, 1913 to 1928," *Journal of Economic History* 71, no. 3 (2011): 680.
[9] Mark Harrison, and Andrei Markevich, "Russia's Home Front, 1914-1922: The Economy" (University of Warwick, 2012), 28.
[10] Ibid.

production because most of the fifteen million men and millions of horses joined from the countryside that was previously in charge of grain production.[11] Furthermore, by the end of 1915, Russian agricultural production decreased by nearly six percent, due to conceding large farmlands of Poland, Ukraine, Belorussia, and the Baltic to the Germans.[12] Meanwhile, demand significantly increased because fifteen million soldiers who joined the war, needed food supplies. Moreover, refugees who fled conceded Russian territories also put significant pressures on the food demand. The poor transportation system made food shortages even worse. The already poor railway system, due to Russia's slow industrialization, was further disturbed by the military transports taking priority over the commercial traffic.[13] Foods produced in the countryside could not reach cities, which created further shortages.

In addition, governments were unable to resolve food shortages. Even after the February Revolution that started after large demonstrations demanding bread, the newly created Provisional Government exacerbated the problem. On March 1917, the Provisional Government introduced the food procurement plan, which imposed fixed prices of grain with state's monopoly over agricultural products.[14] Under the food procurement plan, the government attempted to take control of supplying cheap agricultural products to the urban population and possibly resolve food crises. However, peasants disagreed with such a policy because the food procurement plan required their sacrifice. Peasants could not afford to sell grains at a low and fixed price because the cost of living was increasing. At the time, most industries prioritized war products over manufactured goods, which inevitably increased the price of commodities. Not only did the fixed prices not include the

[11] Ibid, 6.
[12] Andrei Markevich, and Mark Harrison, "Great War, Civil War, and recovery: Russia's national income, 1913 to 1928," *Journal of Economic History* 71, no. 3 (2011): 680.
[13] Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *The Politics of Industrial Mobilization in Russia, 1914-17* (London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1983), 87-96.
[14] Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 131.

inflation rate of the living cost, but also peasants believed the food procurement plan served the interest of the urban population and state bureaucrats.[15]

The peasants became further discontented with the state and resisted when the State Committee on Food Supply tried to carry out the food procurement plan. For example, at one village in Samara province, peasants mobilized whenever supply officials and soldiers came to the village to collect grains.[16] Peasants claimed grain would be taken only over their dead bodies and officials ended up leaving the village without any collections.[17] Furthermore, in Bolshiye Sundyri of Kazan province, the villagers protested against the grain monopoly by torturing chairman of the district supply committee, Zapolsky, who was roasted on a bonfire and then killed.[18] Peasants also turned against landlords who were viewed as state representatives. A zemstvo, a local government during the Imperial Russia, leader named Ushakov was attacked by the mobs who broke into the house, dragged the furniture into the garden, and burned stocks of rye.[19]

Food shortages and other economic crises eventually led to social mobilization. On January of 1917, nearly 140,000 workers who constituted forty percent of industrial workers of Petrograd, demonstrated their frustration.[20] Shortly after, on February 22, 30,000 workers from the Putilov factory – Russia's largest war plant – went on strike.[21] A day after, they were joined by 78,000 to 128,000 workers from Petrograd, which officially started the February Revolution.[22] The number of participants doubled by the next day to two hundred thousand workers, which led to the collapse of the Romanov Dynasty and establishment of the Provisional Government.[23] When such economic

[15] Ibid: 132.
[16] John L.H. Keep, *The Russian Revolution: a study in mass mobilization* (New York: Norton, 1976), 179.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid, 179.
[19] Ibid, 210.
[20] Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 29.
[21] John Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe, Volume II* (New York: W.W Norton, 2010), 932.
[22] Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *The February Revolution, Petrograd, 1917* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 221-22.
[23] Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 34.

crises persisted under the newly created Provisional Government, the Bolshevik Party led the October Revolution.

Military Dissidents

An even more significant cause of the Russian Revolution was that the Romanov dynasty did not have the capacity to control large demonstrations because large numbers of soldiers sided with rebels. In the wake of the Russian Revolution, Russian soldiers were becoming demoralized by the constant defeats by the German army and questioned the legitimacy of the Romanov Dynasty. Russian soldiers could not wage a war against Germany on the Eastern front because Russia lacked weapons such as machine-guns and artillery shells, had a weak industrial base to supply the war, and had untrained military officials.[24] Although the Tsar ordered industrialists to expedite wartime production by expanding production of war materials, metal, textile, and chemicals, it was insufficient.[25] Shortages of rifles were common, which could be inferred from a comment from a British military attaché, General Alfred Knox. General Knox stated that "unarmed men had to be sent into the trenches to wait till their comrades were killed or wounded and their rifles became available."[26] Shortages in guns and shells meant that Russians could not defend themselves against German heavy artillery bombardments, which buried Russian armies before they ever saw an enemy.[27] Moreover, lack of command and communication structures exacerbated shortages of artilleries where artillery officers hesitated to take orders from superiors in the infantry or the cavalry because of their sentiments of arrogance over other divisions of the army.[28] Furthermore, Russian military officials were inexperienced and poorly trained. British General Knox added that during the battle of Tannenberg, Russian Commanders Rennenkampf and Samsonov, who had a

[24] John Merriman, "A History of Modern Europe, Volume II." *W.W Norton:* New York (2010), 929.
[25] Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 19.
[26] Alfred Knox, *With the Russian Army, 1914-1917* (London: Hutchinson, 1921), 270.
[27] Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 18.
[28] Dennis E. Showalter, *Tannenberg: Clash of Empires* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1991), 136.

background leading the cavalry division in Machuria, did not know how to wage a modern warfare.[29] Consequently, Russia suffered significant casualties in the Eastern Front. By the end of 1916, Russia lost nearly 5.7 million soldiers, 3.6 million dead or seriously wounded, and 2.1 million as prisoners of war.[30] Many soldiers were demoralized by war weariness and started to blame the Tsar Nicholas II who personally led the Russian army.

The Tsar compounded his mismanagement of the war effort by using his oppressive orders during an initial stage of the February Revolution, thus pushing soldiers to side with the rebels. When the February Revolution started on the 23rd of February, the Russian Duma wanted a peaceful resolution with protestors. The Duma chairman, M.V. Rodzianko, sent a telegram to Nicholas II asking for the approval of reforming the government into one that enjoyed public confidence.[31] However, the Tsar dismissed the request by replying: "again this fat Rodzianko has written me lots of nonsense, to which I shall not even deign to reply."[32] The Tsar who was at the military headquarters during the revolt, completely miscalculated the scale of demonstrators demanding for reforms while showing complete mistrust of his senior policy adviser. When the Tsar ordered garrison reserves to take control over large demonstrations, the military commander, General S.S. Khabalov, took a passive approach.[33] He attempted to let the demonstrators run until they became exhausted without exerting force.[34] However, when he sent a telegram to the Tsar on the 25th of February detailing the disturbances, the Tsar ordered aggressive efforts to oppress demonstrators. The Tsar replied: "I order you to bring all of these disorders in the Capital to a halt as of tomorrow. These cannot be permitted in this difficult time of war with Germany and Austria. Nicholas."[35] The

[29] Prit Buttar, *Collision of Empires: The War on the Eastern Front in 1914* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2014), 201.
[30] Allan K. Wildman, *The end of Russian Imperial Army.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 95.
[31] Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 37.
[32] Bruce W. Lincoln, *Passage through Armageddon* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 333.
[33] Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 37.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Bruce W. Lincoln, *Passage through Armageddon* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 327.

next morning, the military commander ordered soldiers to fire into the crowds. Suppression included using sabers and whips, and firing machine-guns, and firing from rooftops to break up crowds, which killed hundreds of people by the end of the day.[3637]

Brutal oppression had a severe consequence, which turned many soldiers toward mutiny. Most garrison reserves were newly recruited soldiers, mainly from the Petrograd region.[38] Not only were soldiers personally related to demonstrators, who were their families and friends, but also soldiers and protestors shared common interests: inefficacy of the government in resolving economic crises; food shortages and inflation, and the hopes of ending the war.[39] On the night of killing protestors, non-commissioned officers and soldiers each gathered to discuss over discontent with the order.[40] The next morning, the Volynsky Guard Regiment mutinied and killed the commanding officer, who ordered them to fire at protestors.[41] After significant number of soldiers joining the protest, the Romanov Dynasty collapsed, and shortly after, the new leadership was established under the Provisional Government.

Bolsheviks as Alternative

In addition to all of these causes, the Russian Revolution would not have occurred had not the Bolshevik Party seized the opportunity created by social instability and inability of government to resolve crises brought on by the war. Vladmir Lenin and the Bolshevik Party emphasized the need for class based socialist revolution since the early 1900s. In Lenin's book *What is to be done?* of 1902, he writes "The fulfillment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark, not only of European, but of Asiatic reaction, would place the Russian Proletariat in the vanguard of the

[36] Allan K. Wildman, *The end of Russian Imperial Army* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 95.
[37] Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *The February Revolution, Petrograd, 1917* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 268-70.
[38] Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 39.
[39] John Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe, Volume II* (New York: W.W Norton, 2010), 932-33.
[40] Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 39.
[41] Ibid, 39-40.

international revolutionary proletariat."[42] He argues that the Russian proletariat need to replace the capitalistic system and to establish a socialist society. He uses a word 'destruction' in achieving this goal, because without a complete destruction of the existing system, proletariats cannot have entire political control. However, the Bolsheviks' influence weakened after the split in the Russian Social Democrat Labor Party in 1903.

The split occurred because two prominent leaders of the Russian Social Democrat Labor Party, Vladmir Lenin and Julius Martov, had an ideological feud over the definition of party membership. Lenin argued only highly trained professional revolutionaries could be party members, but Martov contended anybody could be a party member simply by agreeing to the party's manifesto. [43] The underlying assumption was that Lenin sought military-revolutionary vanguard with strong leadership whereas Martov advocated broad-based party in the Western parliamentary style with a looser style of leadership.[44] Lenin's view gained slender majority during the vote on this issue, and those who agreed with his view were called Bolsheviks, which means majoritarians.[45] Martov became the leader of the other faction who were called Mensheviks, which means minoritarians. A well-known British historian, Orlando Figes, argues that this naming disadvantaged Mensheviks over their rivalry with Bolsheviks, because Mensheviks had a permanent image of minority party even though at some point its membership far surpassed those of the Bolsheviks.[46]

The split did not help neither Bolsheviks nor Mensheviks, because weakened party could not resist the Tsar who had a strong control over the country. Although Bolsheviks successfully

[42] Henry M. Christman, *Essential Works of Lenin: What is to be done? And other writings* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 72.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Orlando Figes, *Revolutionary Russia 1891-1991* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014), 23.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

participated during the 1905 Revolution which forced the Tsar to adopt liberal reforms, the political power still remained in the hands of the Tsar.[48] It did not succeed in completely re-structuring the political system in the hands of proletariat, which Bolsheviks had been planning. When the Tsar began suppressing his political opponents, Lenin fled Russia on December 1907. While in exile, the Bolsheviks' influence in Russia was getting weaker. The Brussel Conference of 1914 further caused difficulty for Bolsheviks because non-Bolsheviks and international socialist parties pressured Bolsheviks to re- unite with Mensheviks.[49] Re-unification would have benefited Mensheviks at this point because its membership outnumbered Bolsheviks.[50] But Bolsheviks did not have enough rationale to resist the demand nor resources to manage its own party.

On the verge of assimilation with the non-Bolsheviks socialist party, outbreak of World War I saved the Bolshevik Party. Since the war began, socialist allies shifted their attention from Bolsheviks unification to more important issues of accommodating their proletariat supporters who are weary of the effects of the war (as described earlier). Socialist revolutionaries mobilized workers and soldiers in carrying out the February Revolution, which ended up establishing the Provisional Government.

Lenin who was in Switzerland at the time heard the news of Revolution from his comrade, M. G. Bronski. He immediately started to seek ways to return to Russia by discussing the issue with the German consul, Gisbert von Romberg, in Bern, Switzerland. The German government approved Lenin to travel across Germany in a sealed train, because Lenin advocated withdrawal of Soviet troops from the war and that would relieve Germany's Eastern Front. By the time Lenin returned on April 1917, the newly created government had a significant problem, which was the power-sharing between the Provisional Government and Socialist revolutionaries. Although bourgeois elites and

[48] Ibid, 104.
[49] Ibid, 141-2.
[50] Ibid.

liberals led by Kerensky governed the Provisional Government, de-facto power lied on Socialist revolutionaries – Petrograd Soviet including soldiers, workers, leftist socialists, Mensheviks, and tiny numbers of Bolsheviks.[51]

The Bolshevik Party grew in numbers after Lenin's return. The Party became largely popular because the Provisional Government could not solve problems of the war, and the Bolsheviks offered a solution that people wanted to hear – equal redistribution of wealth and ending a war. Bolsheviks used radical propaganda claiming that some industries made huge profits during the war years, but those profits were not shared equally among workers.[52] Although the truth may be debatable, the conspiracy theory earned popular support. More importantly, Bolsheviks earned wider support by advocating to end the war. When the Provisional Government decided to launch military offensive on June, massive resentment occurred among Soviets.[53] Many anti-government protestors joined Bolsheviks who planned armed demonstrations against the government.[54] However, Bolsheviks' attempt did not succeed because Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks urged its supporters to side the Provisional Government while concerned about Bolsheviks' violent measures.[55]

It was the Kornilov Affair that finally united Soviets together under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. The Kornilov Affair started when the Provisional Government collaborated with General Kornilov to reduce the power and authority of Soviets, and restore order amongst soldiers.[56] However, the affair gave an opportunity for Bolsheviks to mobilize large troops because Kornilov launched a coup against the Petrograd, after his miscommunications with Kerensky. In

[51] James Mavor, *The Russian Revolution* (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1928), 82.
[52] Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 187.
[53] John Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe, Volume II* (New York: W.W Norton, 2010), 939-940.
[54] James Mavor, *The Russian Revolution* (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1928), 89.
[55] Ibid: 90.
[56] Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 202.

order to defend against the Kornilov mutiny, the Provisional Government permitted arming of workers.[57] Consequently, Bolsheviks armed the Red Guard whose membership reached twenty-five thousand within few weeks.[58] Even after the rebel was suppressed, the Red Guard kept their weapons and played a significant role in the upcoming Revolution. The leader of the Red Guard, Trotsky has noted that "the army that rose against Kornilov, was the army-to-be of the October Revolution.[59] Eventually, the Red Guards and Soviets stopped Kornilov's troop marching forward, and Kornilov was arrested by soldiers of his own battalion.[60]

After the Kornilov Affair, the Bolshevik Party has gained wider popularity than ever before because the affair significantly undermined the legitimacy of the Provisional Government, and moderate socialist who collaborated with the Provisional Government, and the military high command who attempted to violently overtake the capital. On September 1917, the Bolshevik Party had won the majority of votes in Petrograd and Moscow for the first time.[61] The Bolshevik party did not wait too long in utilizing the opportunity. Not everybody, including Lev Kamenev and Grigory Zinoviev, agreed to the armed revolt. [62] However, Lenin and other Central Committee members decided that it was necessary to overthrow corrupt and ineffective Provisional Government. On the evening of October 24, Lenin sent final written instructions to the Central Committee. "Comrades, … we must at all costs, this very evening, this very night, arrest the government, having first disarmed the military cadets, and so on… to delay action is fatal."[63] Lenin's instructions, led Bolshevik leaders to mobilize the Red Guard who began taking over

[57] Abraham Ascher, "The Kornilov Affair," *The Russian Review* 12, no. 14 (1953): 251.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 204.
[61] Abraham Ascher, "The Kornilov Affair," *The Russian Review* 12, no. 14 (1953): 252.
[62] V. I. Lenin, "Collected Works," *Progress Publishers* 26 (1964): 216.
[63] Saul N. Silverman, *Lenin* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1972), 73-74.

government buildings. By the next day, the Winter Palace (the seat of the Provisional Government) was occupied by the Bolshevik party and successfully ended the Russian Revolution.

After the revolution, the Russian Constituent Assembly election was held in November 1917. Under the first free elections in Russian history, Socialist Revolutionaries (SR) won the most votes while Bolsheviks only winning quarter of the votes.[64] However, the Bolsheviks were unwilling to concede their power. Bolsheviks collaborated with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries (LSR) who split from the SR and nullified the election.[65] Both argued that the elections, which were remnants of the Provisional Government, put them at disadvantage, because peasants who supported the LSR could not vote for the LSR whose list had been halted before the split with SR.[66] Consequently, Lenin destroyed Constitutional Assembly election and formed Sovnarkom, a centralized autocracy with commissariats playing key roles, as the government of the new revolutionary regime.[67]

Conclusion

Russian Revolution was one of the most important events that occurred in the early 1900s. It marked the beginning of the communist Soviet Union, and its fundamental ideology – Marxist-Leninist thought – significantly influenced other revolutionaries around the world. Lenin re-interpreted the Marxism and carried out successful revolution in a peasant-based society facilitated by few professional revolutionaries. It strongly influenced Mao Zedong in establishing the People's Republic of China, and Lenin's legacy still remains today.

The Russian Revolution happened because there were both necessary preconditions, economic crises and military dissidents, and a movement – the Bolsheviks – willing to capitalize on

[64] Robert Service, *Lenin: A Biography* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 331.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid, 332-333.

them. Since the beginning of World War I, the Romanov Dynasty failed to accommodate food shortages and military defeats, which catalyzed workers' protest. The Tsar's violent oppression further created military dissidents who joined demonstrators to overthrow the monarchy. But economic and military problems persisted even after the Provisional Government came to a power. The Provisional Government's June Offensive and involvement with the Kornilov Affair created many anti-government dissidents, which was utilized by the Bolshevik Party under the strong leadership of Lenin. In midst of crises, Bolsheviks could grasp the minds of Soviets with their revolutionary ideology and eventually led to the successful Revolution in Russia.

Bibliography

Ascher, Abraham. “The Kornilov Affair.” *The Russian Review* 12, no. 14 (1953): 235-252.

Buttar, Prit. *Collision of Empires: The War on the Eastern Front in 1914*. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2014.

Christman, Henry M. *Essential Works of Lenin: What is to be done? And other writings.* New York: Dover Publications, 1966.

Figes, Orlando. *A People’s Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924*. London: Pimlico, 1996.

Figes, Orlando. *Revolutionary Russia 1891-1991*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014.

Harrison, Mark and Andrei Markevich. “Russia’s Home Front, 1914-1922: The Economy” University of Warwick, 2012.

Hasegawa, Tsuyoshi. *The February Revolution, Petrograd, 1917*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981.

Keep, John L.H. Keep. *The Russian Revolution: a study in mass mobilization.* New York: Norton, 1976.

Knox, Alfred. *With the Russian Army, 1914-1917*. London: Hutchinson, 1921.

Lenin, V. I. “Collected Works.” *Progress Publishers* 26 (1964): 216-19.

Lincoln, Bruce W. *Passage through Armageddon.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986.

Markevich, Andrei and Mark Harrison. “Great War, Civil War, and recovery: Russia’s national income, 1913 to 1928.” *Journal of Economic History* 71, no. 3 (2011): 672-703

Mavor, James. *The Russian Revolution.* London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1928.

Merriman, John. *A History of Modern Europe, Volume II.* New York: W.W Norton, 2010.

Schapiro, Leonard. *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union.* New York: Random House, 1970.

Service, Robert. *Lenin: A Biography.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Showalter, Dennis E. *Tannenberg: Clash of Empires.* Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1991.

Siegelbaum, Lewis H. *The Politics of Industrial Mobilization in Russia. 1914-17.* London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1983.

Silverman, Saul N. *Lenin.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1972.

Wade, Rex A. *The Russian Revolution, 1917.* Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Wildman, Allan K. *The end of Russian Imperial Army.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.