

# qmhj

Winter Issue,  
Vol. 3 Issue. 1



**Queen Mary University of London  
Undergraduate History Journal**

## Editors' welcome

Hello, and a warm welcome to the Queen Mary History Journal's Winter Issue, our first print edition of 2013/14. We have received an unprecedented number of submissions for this edition, far eclipsing the number received for any other issue so far; whittling it down to only 6 essays was incredibly difficult! The committee and editorial team have been working hard to review all of the essays submitted, with each essay being read by multiple editors to ensure only the best are selected to be published. Of course it is inevitable that some great essays have had to be left out, so if this applies to you we forbid you to become downhearted and strongly encourage you to continue to submit your essays for our summer published edition as well as our future online editions.

The essays selected for this issue cover a wide range of topics and modules, from pop art history to the Eastern Front during the Second World War, to Medieval sexual transgression. We are proud to present such a spectrum of historical thought. Our published edition provides the perfect platform on which to celebrate not only the great diversity of topics available at Queen Mary, but also to show off the talent, hard work and individuality of the students that make the journal possible. We wish to thank not just those who have submitted essays, but also the many students who help produce the journal, from peer reviewing to editing to design and formatting. A special mention should go to Sandip Kana and Christopher Brownlee; without their attention to detail and quiet hard work this issue could not have been made.

With regards to the future, our Summer print edition shall be dedicated to the centenary of the First World War, and as such we request only essays that fit into this theme. Additionally, March sees the journal release its 'Boom and Bust' online edition, and we are currently accepting all essays from you keen economic historians. We shall then have our final online edition in April, and we'd like you to suggest a theme for this month. Simply email us at [qmulhistoryjournal@outlook.com](mailto:qmulhistoryjournal@outlook.com) with your suggestion, and if it's chosen you'll get a special mention in the editors welcome!

All of us at the History Journal hope you enjoy reading this as much as we have enjoyed the challenge of putting it together, and we hope you continue to submit to and read the QMHJ in future.

All the best,

Sam Winton and Ruth Irwin

Editor-in-Chief and Commissioning-Editor

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## Discuss the impact of the Westernizer-Slavophile controversy upon the subsequent development of social and political thought in Russia.

*Abigail Hayton*

The Westernizer-Slavophile controversy was a phenomenon primarily of the 1840s. It was essentially a series of polemics between the Westernizers, who wanted Russia to develop along Western lines and the Slavophiles, who stressed Russia's particular unique national characteristics. This controversy came to an end following the accession of the so-called "Tsar Liberator"<sup>1</sup>, Alexander II in 1855, however, its legacy continued up to and following the Revolution in a wide range of ideologies such as Pan-Slavism, Populism, Liberalism, Gentry Liberalism, Anarchism and Russian Symbolism. The key impact however of the Westernizer-Slavophile controversy was that it caused an intellectual awakening in Russia, which stimulated a sense of public duty amongst the intelligentsia. These debates initiated an era of 'Big Ideas' in Russia, which lasted up until the turn of the century. The resultant movements are in most cases, influenced by both Westernism and Slavophilism, which is emblematic of the ambiguous and often shifting nature of these worldviews, and the manner in which they came into being.

The original controversy began with the first of Pyotr Chaadaev's *Philosophical Letters* in 1836, which harshly criticised Russia and contrasted it unfavourably with the Western world, a world he believed Russia should imitate.<sup>2</sup> He expressed such sentiments in dramatic language, stating that, "Not one useful thought has sprouted in the sterile soil of our country".<sup>3</sup> The Slavophiles were those who responded defensively to Chaadaev's attacks. They argued, that far from being inferior to the West, Russia was privileged to be uncorrupted by Western rationalism. The first major exponent of this viewpoint within the Westernizer-Slavophile controversy was Kireevski, who wrote in 1845 that Russia "did not become bemused by the one sidedness of syllogistic constructions but constantly adhered to that fullness and wholeness of outlook which constituted the distinctive feature of Christian philosophy."<sup>4</sup>

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The Slavophile ideology had its roots in Eastern Orthodox Christianity, which they believed was the one true church. Portrayed as such, one could see the Westernizers as Enlightened thinkers and the Slavophiles as Romantics. However, the complex components of both ideologies are not sufficiently explained by such simplistic interpretations.

The diverse array of movements, which sprang from both Westernizer and Slavophile thought, provide evidence of how varied both worldviews were in themselves. The reason for this diversity, according to Daniel Fielding, is that it took a long time for a dividing line to be drawn between Westernizers and Slavophiles, and even when it existed it did not demarcate between left and right.<sup>5</sup> One cannot, in fact, understand the context of these debates of the 1840s without first looking to the 1830s, in which we see further complications in drawing the dividing line between Westernizers and Slavophiles, with regards their respective intellectual biographies. Leonard Schapiro locates the intellectual origins of Slavophilism in the Stankevich circle, the literary and philosophical circle surrounding poet and philosopher, Nikolai Stankevich. Stankevich himself was a rationalist who attacked all nationalisms, going as far as to say that “to invent or think up a character for a nation out of its old customs, its ancient activities is to wish to prolong for it the period of its childhood”. These were the views of even the most extreme future Slavophiles in the 1830s.<sup>6</sup> With such diverse ideological origins, the long-term implications of Slavophile ideology would inevitably be different from the original Slavophilism, the precise definition of which is quite elusive.

As previously mentioned, the Slavophile ideology, as far as it can be called an ideology, was rooted in Eastern Orthodox Christianity. One could trace Russia’s separation from Western Europe to the mutual excommunications of the Eastern and Western churches in 1054. The key concepts of their Christianity were ‘sobornost’ and ‘samobytnost’, which loosely translated mean unity and individuality, respectively. “Samobytnost”, was understood to be a kind of national cultural autonomy, which was unmoved by outside influences, whereas “sobornost”, could be understood as a religious community, a unity which came from shared Eastern Orthodox beliefs and practices. The combination of these two features, was what they felt distinguished them from the Protestant and Catholic churches of the West. The Catholics being united, but not free and the Protestants being free, but not united.

Ironically, however, the Holy Synod did not allow Khomyakov, the key exponent of these ideas, to publish them in Russia, because they were deemed to be dangerously anti-institutional and anti-authoritarian.<sup>7</sup> The implications of these religious ideas are to be found in the Russian Symbolist movement, which rose to prominence at the turn of the century<sup>8</sup> and the secular Populist movement of the 1870s.<sup>9</sup> The Westernizer-Slavophile controversy brought both a socially conscious and philosophical way of thinking into the heart of the Russian intelligentsia, though this way of thinking clearly manifested itself in different guises.

One could therefore think, that the Slavophiles were religious and the Westernizers, secular. Though this may be true on some level in that the Westernisers did not base their ideas in religious teachings, they too, included religious thinkers. The original Westernizer, Chaadaev, was a deeply religious man, however, unlike the Slavophiles, he was a Catholic. This gave him an automatic connection with Western Europe. He believed that it was Russia's unique religion, which had fatally removed it linguistically and culturally from Western European civilisation.<sup>10</sup>

A clear point of difference between Westernizers and Slavophiles are their views of Peter the Great. Whereas the Westernizers deeply admired him, the Slavophiles saw him as a sort of national traitor. Chaadaev described Peter I as "The greatest of our kings, our glory, our demigod, who began a new era for us."<sup>11</sup> Conversely, K.S. Aksakov, a Slavophile writer, accused him of attempting to destroy, "every manifestation of Russian life, everything Russian."<sup>12</sup> This could lead one to believe that the Slavophiles were reactionary in contrast with the progressive Westernizers, however, that too, would not be a fair assessment, as has already been demonstrated, the religious beliefs of the Slavophiles had revolutionary potential, which would later be actualised.

The similarities between Westernizers and Slavophiles can be explained by their shared social and intellectual backgrounds. Their arguments emerged in discussions, which took place in the literary salons of Moscow.<sup>13</sup> The character they took on was almost dialectical, with individuals from both sides periodically agreeing with their so-called opponents. This goes further to explain how ideologies such as Russian Populism or even, Pan-Slavism were inspired both by Westernizers and Slavophiles, in the intellectual awakening which was caused by the controversy.

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A key figure in the development of both Westernizer and Slavophile ideology is Alexander Herzen. He started out as a Westernizer, but his travels in Europe post 1847 caused him to question his previous idealisation of Western thought. He came to adopt a position similar to Slavophilism, a synthesis of sorts. He started to see the instinctive Socialism of the Russian peasantry, laying the intellectual groundwork for what would become the Populist movement.<sup>14</sup> Herzen is sometimes presented as a convert to Slavophilism, though given that he was always an atheist<sup>15</sup> and an admirer of Peter I, this is not an accurate description.

A controversy, which was foundational within the wider Westernizer-Slavophile controversy, was that over the history of the peasant commune. In Slavophile thinking, this institution was sacrosanct. They viewed the *Mir* as the embodiment of the peasantry's distinctive Russian character. However, for the Westernizers, such as Chicherin who first raised the issue in the Westernizer journal, *Russian Messenger*, the commune was a product of government centralisation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which sought to simplify the collection of taxes.<sup>16</sup> In a similar vein to the debate about Peter the Great, these historical controversies are vital in clarifying the ideological boundaries between Slavophiles and Westernizers. The relevance of this discussion is highlighted by the Populist attempts to "go to the people", based on an understanding of peasant life which owed a lot to Slavophile ideology.<sup>17</sup>

A notion, which runs through Westernizer thought, which partly plays into the Slavophile *Weltanschauung*, is that of Russia's skipping the bourgeois-capitalist stage of development, which Marxist philosophy would suggest was essential. This idea was initially developed by Chaadaev in his *Apology of a Madmen*, where he tries to stress the advantages of Russia's "lack of History", which he so derided in his *Philosophical Letters*. His argument is that Russia was a "tabula rasa", which could absorb the lessons of the West, without having to experience it first-hand. In Walicki's view, this position was taken up in order to make Chaadaev's Westernism more palatable to nationalists.<sup>18</sup> Herzen later developed this reasoning following his disillusionment with the West.<sup>19</sup> It was this perspective which motivated the Populists to try and create a uniquely Russian Socialism based on the peasants and their supposedly instinctively socialist institutions.<sup>20</sup> In explaining this doctrine, which became foundational to Populism, Mikhailovsky wrote, "We must thank fate that we have not lived the life of Europe. It's misfortunes and its hopeless situation are a lesson for us."<sup>21</sup>

Mikhailovsky turned his back so firmly on the Western ideas, which had influenced him that he deliberately chose not to follow what was by then the classical radical pattern of leaving Russia and directing activity from abroad.<sup>22</sup> Here we have a clear example of a way of thinking about Russia's future, which can be traced from the early years of the controversy, through to the Populists of the 1870s and 1880s.

The Populists derived much of their ideology from Westernism. They attempted to create a Socialism which was uniquely Russian, without being backward looking.<sup>23</sup> However, they also imbibed much of Slavophile ideology. Janko Lavrin has gone as far as to call *Narodnichestvo*, the key idea behind Populism, "a secularised Slavophism".<sup>24</sup> However, the extent to which Populism was a secular ideology is disputed. According to G.P. Fedotov, its founders, though not explicitly religious, had "a religious attitude", which was a product of their upbringings and which meant that subconsciously, Populism was in many ways a religious movement. He sights as evidence for this the numerous examples of Populists such as Catherine Breshko-Breshkovskaya, who underwent religious conversions as well as the ideological similarities between Populism and Slavophilism.<sup>25</sup> The Westernizer-Slavophile controversy laid the groundwork for philosophical and religious thinking which would later form the foundations of practical political programs.

Slavophilism is also credited with laying the foundations of popular Pan-Slavism. However, this is quite strange as the two ideologies are very different in a number of ways. Firstly, Pan-Slavism was aggressive; it advocated conquest and the formation of an economic and military Slavonic federation under Russian rule, which is at odds with the peaceful nature of Slavophilism. Secondly, whereas Slavophilism was rooted in religious beliefs, Pan-Slavism was primarily a secular worldview. Thirdly, whereas Slavophilism aimed to become a universal value system, Pan-Slavism did not. It advocated a cynical self-serving foreign policy without reference to Christian morality.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the process by which Slavophilism becomes Pan-Slavism is slow and complex. Andrzej Walicki plots a three-stage process by which the two ideologies amalgamate. The first stage, takes place during the reign of Nicholas I, when Slavophilism could still be characterised by classical Utopian Socialism. The second, during the years 1853-1861, following the Crimean War and the accession of Alexander III, a period known as the "thaw"<sup>27</sup>, which E. Lampert has described as being a moment, "more pregnant with possibilities of development" than any other period from the reign of Peter the Great until Lenin.<sup>28</sup>

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During the "Thaw", Walicki argues Pan-Slavism became a widespread ideology, spurred on by the writings of Aksakov. The third period, which completes this transition, takes place in the late 1870s, when Aksakov becomes chairman of the Slavophile Welfare Society, which grew to be an influential force in government.<sup>29</sup> What is shown here is that though Slavophilism may have had specific doctrines as an abstract ideology, most of these were not practically applicable, and therefore, when Slavophilism was translated into a political program, it bore little relation to the original ideology.

In the case of the transition from Slavophilism to Panslavism, we don't only see a fusion of Slavophile and Western ideas, but also, a weakening of the Slavophile ideology. This was the view of E. Mamonov, who had once been a Slavophile. He saw the second-generation of Slavophilism, which followed the deaths of Aksakov, Khomyakov and Kireevski, as "a trivial, formal and decrepit catechism of clerico-punitive maxims."<sup>30</sup> Koshevlev, another Slavophile author, expressed a different view. For him, the widespread acceptance of Slavophile ideas had brought it into the mainstream, meaning it no longer represented a specific Weltanschauung. His examples of popularised Slavophile ideas are the unity of the Slavic peoples, the study of Russian history and Russian nationalism.<sup>31</sup> This position is well supported, but is very broad, as it would seem to be associating all Russian nationalism with Slavophile thought. Like much of the rhetoric in this era of socio-political thought, such statements can sound hyperbolic, however, both Koshevlev and Mamonov highlight important points about the continuity of Slavophile ideology. Though the influence of much of Slavophile thought lasted until and beyond the turn of the century, it did not survive in tact as a singular ideology, but it served to awaken a sense of political mission amongst Russia's intelligentsia who interpreted it in a variety of ways.

The Populists are probably the best example of a group who took the intellectual output of the Westerniser-Slavophile controversy and created from it a practical political program, albeit a very unsuccessful one. However, the Populist movement provides a real insight into the intellectual foundations of both Westerniser and Slavophile ideology and the practical adaptability, or lack thereof, of their ideas to 1870s Russian society. The essential idea of these Narodniki was that a new Socialist society could be founded in Russia from peasant institutions. This would be achieved by sending groups of mainly undergraduate students "into the people", to create this new society.<sup>32</sup>

The problem with this idealistic movement, was that, like its Slavophile predecessor, it was based upon a conception of the peasantry gleaned from books, rather than personal experience and therefore the instinctive socialism, which these intellectuals had attributed to the peasantry turned out not to exist at all. In fact, the peasantry collaborated in the arrests of their would-be saviours.<sup>33</sup> This demonstrates how removed these epigones of both Westernizer and Slavophile ideas were from rural life in Russia, which is unsurprising given that both of these ideologies were developed in Moscow literary salons. They succeeded in providing the intelligentsia with a sense of social responsibility; however, this responsibility was based on unfounded premises about the society that they hoped to transform.

The open-endedness of the debates between Westernizers and Slavophiles provided a diverse range of concepts, which could, in turn, be applied to a variety of worldviews. One former Westernizer, Bakunin, adapted both Westernizer and Slavophile ideas to form the first exposition of anarchism as a political philosophy in Russia. He ultimately advocated a Slavic federation, which would be based upon peasant communes, however, not the *Mir*, which the Slavophiles had idealised but secular institutions of free association. Bakunin retained an essentially Western idea of freedom and therefore aimed to create this federation without any coercion.<sup>34</sup> Though this ideology is called “anarchism”, it clearly has much in common with Pan-Slavism and Populism. This example shows, that despite the diversity of the worldviews, which were influenced by various aspects of the Westernizer-Slavophile controversy, there were a number of particular ideas, which it popularised. These were, as Koshelev said, Slavic unity and Russian nationalism<sup>35</sup>, but in addition to this, the Westernizer-Slavophile controversy awakened a desire among the intelligentsia to be involved with and advocate on behalf of the masses. There is a clear intellectual link between the views of both Westernizers and Slavophiles and later Russian social movements including Socialism.

The Utopian ideas of both Westernizers and Slavophiles would have to be adapted in order to be practically applicable. It is in the attempts to apply these ideas that we see a tremendous diversity and an unprecedented intellectual creativity. In the Populists, one sees the endurance of Utopian thinking, however, in other contemporary political movements, influenced by Westernizers and Slavophiles, pragmatism was definitely more in evidence than idealism.

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A key example of this is the Gentry Liberalism of former Slavophiles such as Koshelev and Cherkasky. This liberalism was really a reactionary force, which sought to protect landowners' power in light of government reforms. Many of these so-called gentry liberals, such as Pavel Miliukov (later Kadet leader) wanted a constitution, however, only one that would be heavily biased toward the gentry.<sup>36</sup> The diversity of views, which come out of the Westernizer-Slavophile controversy give it a power to inspire both rightward and leftward shifts in epigones of both ideologies. The Westernizer-Slavophile dichotomy, as it existed in the 1840s, could not continue following the accession of Alexander II, because many of the key issues it set out, such as the emancipation of the serfs, were resolved.

The impact of the Westernizer-Slavophile controversy on the subsequent development of Social and Political thought in Russia is both broad and deep. The discussions it germinated about Russian culture, nationalism and future development gave rise to a tremendous diversity of ideas. It both stimulated a need amongst the intelligentsia to engage with social and political questions and gave them a framework with which to address these concerns. Following the accession of Alexander II and the end of the political isolation of the intellectual, it was the legacy of the Westernizer-Slavophile controversy, which provided both the ideas and the enthusiasm, which would result in numerous concerted efforts to remake Russian society and politics along a wide range of ideological lines. The controversy initiated a period of 'Big Ideas' in Russian intellectual history, founded upon a conviction that the intelligentsia should and could take responsibility for the masses.

## Notes

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2. Leonard Schapiro, *Rationalism and Nationalism in Russian Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, (Yale University Press, 1967), p. 59.
3. Peter Yakovlevich Chaadaev, *Philosophical Letters and Apology of a Madman*, (The University of Tennessee Press, 1969), p. 241.
4. Leonard Schapiro, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 64- 65.
5. Daniel Field, 'Kavelin and Russian Liberalism', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (March, 1973), p. 77.
6. Leonard Schapiro, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 60- 61.

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7. Andrzej Walicki, 'Russian social Thought: An Introduction to the Intellectual History of Nineteenth-Century Russia', *Russian Review*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Jan, 1977), p. 9.
8. D.S. von Mohrenschildt, 'The Russian Symbolist', *PMLA*, Vol. 53, NO. 4 (Dec, 1938), p. 1200.
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11. Raymond T. McNally, *The Major Works of Peter Chaadaev*, (Notre Dame and London, 1969), pp. 23-51. Cited by Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *The Image of Peter the Great in Russian History and Thought*, (Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 99.
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22. James H. Billington, *Mikhailovsky and Russian Populism*, (Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 70.

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23. Martin A. Miller, 'Ideological Conflicts in Russian Populism: The Revolutionary Manifestos of the Chaikovsky Circle, 1869-1874', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (March, 1970), pp. 1-21, (p. 3).
24. Janko Lavrin, *Op. Cit.*, p. 307.
25. G.P. Fedotov, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 32-33.
26. Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought*, pp. 503-506.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 459.
28. E. Lampert, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 1-2.
29. Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*, pp. 495-508.
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31. Alexander Koshelev, *Zapiski*, pp. 77-78. Cited in Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*, pp. 470-471.
32. G.P. Fedotov, *Op. Cit.*, p. 28.
33. Daniel Fielding, 'Peasants and Propagandists in the Russian Movement to the People of 1874', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (Sep, 1987), pp 415-438.
34. Thornton Anderson, *Russian Political Thought: An Introduction*, (Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 234-237.
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## 'To what extent did medieval society develop consistent attitudes in its treatment of sexual transgression?'

*Kloe Flower*

There is much evidence to support the given view that medieval society did develop consistent attitudes towards sexual transgression. However it is important to emphasise that this was a process of development which culminated in a consistent attitude by the high Middle Ages. This is a development which Mark Jordan calls 'the invention of sodomy'.<sup>1</sup> Medieval society witnessed the formulation of comprehensive secular and ecclesiastical law concerning sexual deviation. Boswell notes that before the 'sodomy delusion,' the middle ages was not a time of constant oppression for minorities. However by the fifteenth century there is a clear consensus of intolerance towards sexual misconduct, consolidated by a comprehensive web of jurisdiction and procedures to combat it.<sup>2</sup>

There have been various explanations for the development of such attitudes. Boswell suggests that the rise of early bureaucracy and absolute government in the twelfth century certainly contributed to the 'increasing sexual intolerance' shared by society,<sup>3</sup> adding that the average number of edicts concerning intercourse increased from one hundred to four thousand per kingdom between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. It is also plausible that the renewed interest in Roman law and Classical texts which occurred during the 'Renaissance of the Twelfth Century' played a fundamental role in the development of society's intolerant attitudes.<sup>4</sup>

The medieval definition of a sexual transgressor would have encompassed a large proportion of society. Ecclesiastical law decreed that no husband shall have intercourse with his wife on Holy Days or in daylight, amongst many other forbidden times, places and circumstances.<sup>5</sup> It therefore seems appropriate to concentrate the contents of this essay on only the most extreme transgressions.

These transgressions are categorised most coherently in Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*. The transgressions, in order of severity, are as follows; bestiality,

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same-sex intercourse, intercourse in unnatural positions and masturbation.<sup>6</sup> He deems them 'Sins Against Nature', basing his writings on Classical texts and early clerical writers such as St Peter Damien and Gratian.

The first of Aquinas's listed transgressions is bestiality. Whilst it is hard to determine how prominent this crime was in the middle ages, there is speculation that it was common due to the living arrangements of people and their livestock.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless Podberscek describes a hardening anti-bestiality doctrine which moved around Europe in the form of penitential books and sermons. Professor Tracy agrees that by the thirteenth century, the animal world looked more threatening than in previous centuries.<sup>8</sup>

Evidence for lessening tolerance is also present in other forms. Jaeger asserts that before this time, love between men may be depicted in literature and art 'without awkwardness or embarrassment'.<sup>9</sup> The manuscript illumination 'Le Manuel des Péchés' by William de Waddington and Robert of Gretham supports this view.<sup>10</sup> Attitudes develop so that, from the late twelfth century onwards, all penitential books have at least one canon dedicated to transgressors and some have extensive treatment of the subject.<sup>11</sup> However it has to be noted that early penitentials, such as the Cummean Penitential, appear to treat sodomy mildly in comparison to those of the high middle ages, further demonstrating the development of attitudes.<sup>12</sup> The term 'homosexuality' must be used with caution in a medieval context. It is more fitting to use the term 'sodomy', derived from Latin 'sodomia' which appeared in Christian texts on the Iberian Peninsula, circa 1175. The term appears to be in frequent use from this point forth.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, during the early thirteenth century, terms such as 'bulgarian' and 'bugger' appear in Western texts, suggesting that local derogatory language emerged as a result the 'sodomy delusion'.<sup>14</sup> Same-sex relations between women are documented and addressed less frequently. However, there are scraps of evidence which can be pieced together. An early manuscript condemning female sexual relations in 1178 seems to set a precedent for subsequent attacks on lesbianism.<sup>15</sup>

Even within marriage there was room for transgression. Intercourse in any other manner than the traditional missionary position was deemed a sin against nature and God, the author of nature.<sup>16</sup> Evidence supporting the notion that this intolerant attitude developed in the middle ages is embodied in the liberal document by St John of Damascene, written in 675AD, which declares that 'each one should

enjoy their wife'.<sup>17</sup> The transition from the liberal stance of antiquity to the intolerance of the Middle Ages is shown in the penitentials. Late medieval examples describe two sexual deviations within the Sins Against Nature. 'Tergo' describes anal intercourse or any penetration which is not vaginal, including the 'spilling of seed outside the proper vessel'. 'Retro' describes vaginal penetration with the female on all fours and male kneeling, also known as the 'knee-chest position'. Both deviations are assigned harsh punishments.<sup>18</sup> Last of Aquinas's sins is masturbation. Deemed the least serious, masturbation was not punishable by death in most regions, however in some places the given punishment was equivalent to rape and adultery offences.<sup>19</sup> Aquinas's writings are somewhat incomprehensive and fail to touch on the other transgressions of the time, such as rape, incest and adultery.

Now we must turn to the ecclesiastical legislation which developed during the period. Passages in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 and Dueteronomy 22:5 and 23:18 were interpreted to forbid sexual misdemeanours from the onset of the middle ages.<sup>20</sup> The story of Sodom and Gamorrah featured two cities which were struck by a flood on account of the deviant sexual acts practised by their inhabitants. This passage was particularly influential in Venice, where the city's Council of Ten feared that if sodomy was not combated, their realm would meet the same fate as Sodom.<sup>21</sup> The rulers of other places were concerned too; in the Courts of Avignon the proof required for convicting sodomites was lessened so that a public accuser was no longer necessary.<sup>22</sup> Penitential books are indispensable to the study of this topic. The variety of behaviours mentioned in the penitentials is striking.<sup>23</sup> In most books written after the late twelfth century, the most common penance given for sodomy was death by burning, this being the ultimate attempt at cleansing and purifying the offender.<sup>24</sup> From the thirteenth century onwards, these punishments entered secular law. Monarchs such as Edward I of England, Louis IX of France and Alphonse of Castile proclaimed sodomy to be punishable by death.<sup>25</sup> The first documented execution in Western Europe appears in 1277 under King Rudolf I of Habsburg who sentenced Dominus de Haspisperch to be burned at the stake.<sup>26</sup> It was also not uncommon for the offender's family to be made to watch the execution until the flames died. Sexual activity was a matter of shame and pride, it is therefore unsurprising that sex and fidelity was a big issue for slander victims.<sup>27</sup> By 1432, Florence had created a special magistrate, the Office of the Curfew and Convents, which dealt specifically with accusations of sodomy, implying that the attitude of intolerance had not subsided by the end of the medieval period.<sup>28</sup>

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Some minorities of the middle ages were more likely to be associated with sodomy. This particular vice was thought to be rampant among the supposedly celibate clergy and other occupations which prevented a virtuous marriage, such as merchants and students. Other groups who were already marginalised, like the Lollards, Foreigners and Jews, also came to be associated with sodomy.<sup>29</sup> Kuefler summarises that from the twelfth to the thirteenth century, Jews, heretics, lepers and male homosexuals were victims of a rearrangement which classified them as enemies of society'.<sup>30</sup>

Having said all of the above, some inconsistencies in society's attitude can be highlighted. Firstly, some historians argue that sexual intolerance was not unique to the medieval period. Paul Veyne and Michael Foucault both argue that tolerance had been lessening since the Roman and Hellenistic periods. However, Bailey argues that any discussion of Ancient Greek and Roman texts is irrelevant in an early Christian context.<sup>31</sup> There is also a discussion of heightened intolerance following the Black Death and subsequent population disasters. Tom Betteridge looks at the concern surrounding heterosexual anal intercourse in the late fifteenth century; one document pleads for women not to allow their husbands to 'use them sexually as if they were men'.<sup>32</sup> However, manipulation of the Sacrament of Confession in 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council suggests religious intolerance long before the fifteenth century.<sup>33</sup>

There are also inconsistencies in the attitudes of contemporaries. Some medical scholars insisted that passive sodomy was 'natural' for men who had 'biological peculiarities' which caused them to enjoy anal friction.<sup>34</sup> Hippocratic writing, which experienced a revival in the twelfth century, also implied that the expelling of semen was necessary on occasion to prevent a build-up of undesirable humours.<sup>35</sup> It also seems that circumstances in which the sexual sin was committed affected people's attitudes towards the offender. Factors such as region, class, age and the nature of the act played a part in the way that society reacted to the transgression. Regional inconsistencies are important to consider first. In Burgundian Bruges around fifteen per cent of all persecutions between 1385 and 1515 concerned sodomy. However, sodomy cases are almost entirely absent in medieval English records.<sup>36</sup> Despite this, Boswell rejects any notion of regional variation.<sup>37</sup> Whilst these statistics may be seen as evidence of inconsistency, it is possible that they are only a reflection of successful persecutions, rather than society's attitude.

The social standing of those participating in deviant activity also affected society's opinion. For example, fornication between nuns and clergymen was met with stricter punishment than those of a lower or non-religious social position. In one book, the given penance for common women 'practising the vice' is three years, but if the women were nuns, the penance would be seven years.<sup>38</sup> Considering this, it is easy to see how medieval 'sodomy paranoia' even resulted in the death of two monarchs, Edward II of England and Henry III of France, for committing such sins.<sup>39</sup> There also appears to be some consideration of age and the role played by the individuals when assessing offender's guilt. One case in Avignon shows a thirteen year old boy who escaped being burnt at the stake on account of his age and the passive role he played. His partner, being older, was not so fortunate.<sup>40</sup> Whilst these factors do suggest some inconsistencies, there is limited evidence to suggest that attitudes of intolerance chronologically peaked and then subsided throughout the middle ages, as some have argued. There is even less evidence to suggest that those who were excused for their behaviours escaped without encountering any repercussions. The medieval period did see consistent attitudes towards sexual transgression. However this was certainly a process of development, which culminated in consistent attitudes by the thirteenth century. This thesis is supported by the multitude of canons and secular legislation which appeared from the twelfth century onwards. The development of language, legal procedures and religious theology also bolstered a consistent attitude of intolerance by the late middle ages. The details of slander cases, Office of the Night, executions and a sea of legislation is proof that intolerance towards sexual transgression developed into a consistent attitude from the twelfth century onwards.

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# When Hell came to the steppes: Why did warfare on the Eastern front become so barbaric following the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941?

*Michael Zámečník*

*Death is a master from Germany  
His eyes are blue  
He strikes you with leaden bullets  
His aim is true*

*Paul Celan, Todesfuge<sup>1</sup>*

At 3:15 am on June 22 1941, Russian border guards at Kolden, on the River Bug, were summoned by their German counterparts ‘to discuss important matters’; they were immediately machine-gunned as they approached.<sup>2</sup> Moments later, the thunder of thousands of artillery guns cut through the early morning as the German invasion of the Soviet Union, code-named Operation Barbarossa, had begun. Over 3.6 million men together with 4,300 tanks and 46,000 artillery pieces, shadowed by 2,770 aircraft, began their advance across a 900-mile wide front into the USSR.<sup>3</sup> The Russian poet David Samoilov wrote later, ‘We were all expecting war. But we were not expecting *such* a war.’<sup>4</sup> Divisions and soon entire Soviet armies were annihilated in a tempest of steel and fire. A Soviet officer wrote of an exchange with a comrade: ‘Kuznetsov informed me, with a tremble in his throat, that the only thing left of the 56<sup>th</sup> Rifle Division was its number.’<sup>5</sup> And this was merely one among thousands of such disasters. Beyond the rapid advance of the Wehrmacht, a far darker affair was in the making. Aiming for the systematic annihilation of so-called ‘Jewish-Bolshevism’ and the Slavic *Untermenschen*, Hitler’s invasion unleashed a savage genocidal war to create his *Lebensraum* for the German race, by forging a slave empire in Eastern Europe. Over the ensuing several years, Operation Barbarossa became the most terrifying war of conquest, enslavement, devastation and mass extermination in modern times. However, why did the warfare become so barbaric? In order to approach this question, it is necessary to evaluate the factors that were responsible

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for the downward spiral leading to this form of barbarization. These factors include the nature of combat along with the conditions on the front, the ideological indoctrination of military personnel and lastly, the policy and orders that directly contributed to such barbaric conduct. Each of these factors shall be evaluated alongside primary sources, producing a conclusion as to why warfare had become so abhorrently vicious and barbaric on the Eastern front.

By the time Operation Barbarossa was launched in June 1941, Germany had been at war for nearly three years. Following the spectacular victories of the Wehrmacht over Poland in 1939 and France in 1940, German efforts to invade the British Isles failed, and Hitler focused his attention towards the Soviet Union as the next strategic and ideological target.<sup>6</sup> Prior to the invasion, there was a widespread feeling of optimism within the German high command. Stalin's Red Army was considered an inferior and obsolete force. Having experienced training exercises with the Red Army in the 1930s, German commanders knew the major deficiencies of the Soviet military.<sup>7</sup> Also, the German military intelligence gathered detailed reports of the decimation to which Red Army's leadership had been subjected as a part of Stalin's Great Purge in 1937, which severely impaired the ability to effectively conduct military operations.<sup>8</sup> Combined with the dismal performance of the Red Army during the Winter War of 1939-40, this firmly cemented the Wehrmacht's conviction that the conflict would be short-lived and the Soviet Union would quickly crumble under the onslaught of the *Blitzkrieg*.<sup>9</sup> However, the war in the East rapidly turned into an immense war of attrition, reducing both sides to the most vile and barbaric behaviour while desperately attempting to emerge victorious.<sup>10</sup>

The first of the main factors responsible for this barbarization had been the military aspects of the conflict involving the numbers of casualties, nature of combat or the many impacts this had on the state of the German manpower. In order to illustrate these conditions, two divisions of the Wehrmacht are used as examples: the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and the 18<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division.<sup>11</sup> The war on the Eastern front against the Red Army presented entirely new levels of combat intensity and casualty numbers. During the campaigns against Poland in 1939 and France in 1940, the Wehrmacht suffered relatively light losses, totalling 50,000<sup>12</sup> and 160,000<sup>13</sup>, respectively. In a significant contrast, the six months of Operation Barbarossa produced an overwhelming amount of 830,000 casualties, estimated at over 25.96 per cent of the invasion force.<sup>14</sup> The impacts of heavy losses and the resulting

chronic lack of manpower on the state of the soldiers who survived the onslaught were significant. For example, in less than two years of fighting on the Eastern Front, the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division lost over 118 per cent of its initial number of combat soldiers, and over 156 per cent of its combat officers, leaving the division so depleted it had to be completely reformed. Similarly, the 18<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division lost over 4000 men in little over a month, between June 22 and August 2 1941, representing 30 per cent of the division's total manpower.<sup>15</sup> In the summer of 1942, Guy Sajer, a soldier on the Eastern Front, wrote in his memoir: 'For two days we had practically no sleep. The dance of death continued. We were carrying endless numbers of wounded to shelters already overflowing with casualties. I saw horrifying things at these collection points – vaguely human trunks which seemed to be made of blood and mud.'<sup>16</sup> Such high casualty rates and worsening conditions of manpower kept the units at the front in a state of permanent crisis which had a severe effect on their physical and mental condition. Also, it often prompted them to seek revenge for their fallen *Kamaraden*, which perpetuated further violence and brutality against both Russian soldiers and civilians.

Another important brutalizing military aspect was the physical hardship endured by the German military. The size of Russia and the extent of Germany's strategic objectives compelled the army to cover enormous distances. However, the Wehrmacht lacked major motorization and as such these extreme distances had to be covered by the men on foot. The following long weeks and months of forced marches resulted in the soldiers experiencing severe fatigue upon reaching their distant objectives. For example, between June 22 and July 28 1941, some of the combat elements of the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division marched over 900 km on foot, averaging over 25 km per day.<sup>17</sup> The rapid advance of the German armoured formations, which often simply bypassed Russian infantry, meant that the German infantry had to constantly march in order to keep pace and 'mop up' numerous enemy units which were left encircled behind the line of advance. This culminated in a growing stream of casualties, forcing surviving soldiers to fight and perform duties for longer hours, denying them time to rest and sleep. When allowed respite in the rear, the living conditions presented another physical hardship. Infestation with parasites, infections, frostbite and diseases quickly exacted its toll. In his account of the Eastern Front, *Generaloberst* Erhard Rauss stated that the cold weather, combined with a lack of food and winter equipment, presented an additional challenge for the Wehrmacht.<sup>18</sup> During the *Rasputitsa*<sup>19</sup> muds of autumn or the

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blizzards of winter, the near absence of navigable roads caused severe delays in the overstretched network supplying the German army.<sup>20</sup> Ammunition, fuel or spare vehicle parts were often valued over food or winter supplies for the soldiers at the front. This led to a policy adopted by the German high command actively encouraging units to mercilessly loot food and winter clothing such as suitable shoes from the civilian population, who in effect starved and perished in thousands.<sup>21</sup> Finally, battle fatigue also had a considerable impact on the behaviour of the soldiers and subsequent barbarization of warfare. In the memoirs, Gottlob Biedermann, a German soldier, described the Eastern front as: 'A vision of living hell. Behind us the artillery...Above us Stukas...It smells of fire, gun-powder, oil, blood and death...Man becomes an animal in this endless, charred wasteland.'<sup>22</sup> Soviet soldiers would often pretend to be dead or surrendering, only to open fire at the unsuspecting German soldiers at point blank range. Countless mutilations and torture would occur on both sides.<sup>23</sup> This resulting strain from the constant violence and combat often triggered nervous breakdowns. For most soldiers however, it only further contributed to the complete mental disintegration of any remaining moral convictions, remorse or pity against what had been deemed a racially inferior and insidious enemy. Hence, the terrifying casualties, the viciousness of the combat and the hardships all played an important role in brutalizing the individual soldier and blunting his sensitivity to moral and ethical issues. However, in order to deal with the barbarization of warfare more fully, it is necessary to also examine the methods, nature and extent of the ideological indoctrination of the German military. As noted by General Franz Halder at an army high command meeting, the war against the Soviet Union was described by Adolf Hitler as a 'Clash between two ideologies, this is a fight to the finish. (...) We do not wage war to preserve the enemy...Extermination of Bolshevik Commissars and of the Communist intelligentsia is necessary. Commissars...are criminals and must be treated as such. This is no job for military courts. This war will be very different from that in the west. In the east harshness today means lenience in the future.'<sup>24</sup> This ideological stance created one of the major factors responsible for the barbarization of warfare and entered history as the *Weltanschauungskrieg*, literally 'a war of ideologies', pitting National Socialism against Bolshevism in a deadly wrestle for survival. For the purpose of this ideological war, the Nazis had been very enterprising at indoctrinating the military. Using various methods such as radio or printed propaganda, they were capable of effectively using these methods to their advantage and with it impact the barbarization of warfare through their ideology. In particular,

the combination of radio and printed propaganda was a potent means of indoctrination, frequently being the only source of information for a soldier at the front. To illustrate, the 18<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division had at least 134 radio receivers at the beginning of Operation Barbarossa, and their number grew over time.<sup>25</sup> In a similar manner, dozens of various front newspapers were daily supplied to the troops, including the *Völkischer Beobachter* or the virulently racist *Der Stürmer*. Written propaganda was especially important, as it was used to disseminate the various criminal orders among the military, and in this respect fuelled the barbaric behaviour of the soldiers.

Moving to the aspects of the ideology driving the barbarism, Nazism was, in the words of historian Omer Bertov, 'essentially different from the traditional patriotic and nationalistic rhetoric common in other European armies, as well as in the German army of the First World War.'<sup>26</sup> The Nazi ideology was well defined regarding the invasion of the Soviet Union, composed of racial and political enemies of the German *Herrenvolk*. From the start, the Russians were seen as Jewish-Bolshevik *Untermenschen* and 'Asiatic-Mongol hordes'. In this respect, Nazism strove to achieve a complete dehumanisation of the peoples of the East, in order to effectively apply its policies against the local population and perceived enemies. The first major military setbacks on the Eastern front during the winter of 1941-42 further justified the Nazi ideology. The bitterness of the prolonged and increasingly costly war, the ideological convictions and the historically ingrained hatred towards the Slavic population made it easier for the military to adopt the Nazi view of the war. As argued by historian Bertov, 'during the war in Russia the process of dehumanization of the enemy was probably more successful than in any other war in modern history.'<sup>27</sup> This notion of dehumanization is exemplified by a passage from *Mitteilungen für die Truppen* (Announcements for the Troops), as seen in General Franz Halder's diary, stating: 'Anyone who has ever looked at the face of a red commissar knows what the Bolsheviks are like. (...) We would be insulting the animals if we were to describe these men, mostly Jewish, as beasts. They are the embodiment of the Satanic and insane hatred against the whole of humanity. The shape of these commissars reveals to us the rebellion of the *Untermenschen* against noble blood.'<sup>28</sup> Serving as another example, is the infamous 'Reichenau Order', written by Field Marshal Walter von Reichenau, which described the aims behind Operation Barbarossa: 'The essential goal of the campaign against the Jewish-Bolshevik system is the complete destruction of the sources of power and the

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eradication of the Asian influence on the European cultural sphere...to liberate the German people for once and for all from the Asiatic-Jewish danger.<sup>29</sup> These orders were distributed en masse to the Wehrmacht in October 1941 after over three months of vicious fighting, which not only saw immense casualty rates and hardships, but also various acts of atrocities committed by both sides, including many mutilations of captive German soldiers. Therefore, the enemy was not to be treated according to any accepted rules of military conduct. They were viewed as having lost their right to such a treatment due to their racial and cultural inferiority, the perceived history of opposition against Germany, and the immense violence that took place during the campaign. The ferocity with which these orders were followed and conducted, as historian Bertov concludes, suggest that the war in the East was in a way becoming a religious war, reminiscent of the Thirty Years War both in its brutality and fanaticism. However, the two 'religions' facing each other were Nazism and Bolshevism, engaging in a conflict far more barbarous and nihilistic.<sup>30</sup>

The barbarization of warfare on the Eastern Front was undoubtedly a combination of interlinked factors such as the brutality of the conflict, the physical hardships sustained by the men and the constant indoctrination of the military. However, the most direct cause for the spread of barbarism across the German army was the number of criminal orders that in effect legalized such behaviour. During the first months following the invasion of the Soviet Union, the German military executed a number of very successful encirclement battles, which trapped large formations of the Red Army. These battles, such as the battle of Smolensk or Kiev, resulted in vast numbers of Soviet soldiers surrendering and becoming prisoners of war (POWs). In the case of the battle of Kiev, the total number exceeded 650,000 captives.<sup>31</sup> The Wehrmacht made no arrangements for feeding or clothing such a huge number of prisoners. As a result, the Russian POWs were herded in enormous open-air barbed wire-fenced fields known as *dulags* and died in terrifying numbers out of starvation, disease or mass shootings from the guards who had an essentially unlimited power to kill. By February 1 1942, almost 60 per cent of 3.35 million Soviet POWs had perished; by 1945, 3.3 million died out of 5.7 million taken captive.<sup>32</sup> This tragedy has been attributed to both the ideological concepts of the Nazi regime, striving to physically eliminate the Bolshevik *Untermenschen*, as well as to the barbaric nature of the war which often made it easier for the German soldiers to simply shoot rather than process the surrendering enemy. For these reasons, the indiscriminate shooting of Russian POWs began during the very first days of the

campaign. Historian Geoffrey Megargee argues that this barbarism was the direct result of ceaseless indoctrination; together with criminal orders that specifically stressed the war in the East should be viewed as a war of annihilation between two ideological and racial groups, rather than an ordinary military confrontation.<sup>33</sup> Besides the POWs, the complex of criminal orders also provided the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front with justification for the mass murder of civilians. This had been committed as preventive measures, out of simple racial hatred or especially at the slightest suspicion of belonging to the partisan resistance. After the invasion, various partisan groups began activity behind the German lines.<sup>34</sup> On June 29 1941, only a week after the invasion, Stalin announced the need for the formation of 'Partisan and Diversionary Groups to wage a pitiless war...to the last drop of blood.'<sup>35</sup> As concluded by historian Richard Overy, this resulted in carnage of unprecedented proportions; essentially becoming a civil war beyond the frontline as it involved the German Wehrmacht, Soviet-led partisans, roaming bandits, and ultra-nationalists (especially in Nazi-occupied Ukraine) all performing the worst acts of barbarism against each other and civilians alike.<sup>36</sup> Caught in this vicious circle of death, the Wehrmacht was given further impetus for barbarism through the frustration from failing to successfully pacify the population, the increasingly fierce resistance of the Russians, growing casualties and the intensification of the indoctrination. This produced harsher treatment of the enemy, regardless of whether a prisoner, partisan or a civilian.

In conclusion, the barbarization of warfare resulted from an intricate weave of interlinked factors, involving the impact of the military conditions, ideology and the criminal frontline orders. Throughout the invasion of the Soviet Union, the Nazi regime displayed barbarism on an unprecedented scale with a declared intention for extermination and enslavement. The three years of fighting on Russian soil left behind a land of misery, famine and death. This terrifying level of barbarization resulted from a combination of criminal Nazi policies implemented by the hateful, brutalized and heavily indoctrinated troops at the front.

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32. Max Hastings, *Op. Cit.*, p. 488.
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## What did John Stuart Mill think should be done with Ireland?

*Jemimah Hudson*

John Stuart Mill was a firm advocate of a continued union between England and Ireland, but only on the condition that English rule continued on a much improved basis. At the heart of this improved rule was solving the Irish land question, which Mill saw as the root of Irish misery and inextricably linked to the Great Famine. Mill's proposal was to reclaim waste-lands in Ireland and transfer them to the ownership of the peasantry, granting them fixity of tenure. However, Mill was not always entirely consistent with his recommendations, leading some historians to challenge his ostensible 'radicalness' and true intentions. Mill altered his recommendations slightly with the changing situation in Ireland, following the course of the famine, and the rise of Irish Fenianism in the 1860s. Despite Mill's vacillation, it is evident that his proposals for Ireland were grounded in his belief in moral improvement, which would lead to a higher state of civilization and progress. Mill's belief in 'social utilitarianism' was consistent; that solving the land question and keeping Ireland in the Union would ultimately provide the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

To understand Mill's proposals for Ireland, the problems and conflicts that existed in Ireland in the nineteenth century must first be understood. The greatest and most threatening problem to progress was the land situation. Ireland's dependence on agriculture made the ownership and cultivation of land the most pressing economic issue of the day. Mill explained the problem of 'cottier tenancy' in his 1848 work *Principles of Political Economy*. According to Mill, this system of tenure was absent of any capitalist farming customs and the conditions of the contract, especially the amount of rent, were determined not by custom but by competition.<sup>1</sup> Rent was dependent upon the relation between the demand for land and the supply of it; i.e dependent on the proportion between population and land.<sup>2</sup> The competition for land would force rent up "to the highest point consistent with keeping the population alive."<sup>3</sup>

This also meant that however hard the cottier worked, however much he improved the land and produced, he would not gain more; he would simply “raise the rent against himself”.<sup>4</sup> Landlords could raise the rent whenever and to whatever value they liked, and could turn the peasant away if they were unable to pay it. Mill declared it unacceptable that a landowner should have the right to turn laborers “out by the hundreds and make them perish on the high road, as had been done before now by Irish landlords.”<sup>5</sup>

This situation was intensified by the Great Famine of the 1840s. Hundreds of thousands of peasants died of starvation or disease, and those who survived did so by emigrating or by receiving charity from elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> Irish landlords were condemned for failing in their duty to their dependents.<sup>7</sup> Many in England began to view the famine as an inevitable breakdown of an unsustainable and fundamentally flawed system.<sup>8</sup> These situations led Mill to claim that: “the grand economical evil of Ireland is the cottier-tenant system. We were on the point of calling it the grand moral evil also. Neither the economical nor the moral evils admit of any considerable alleviation while that baneful system continues.”<sup>9</sup>

Mill placed the blame for this situation not just in the hands of the abusive, absentee, aristocratic landlords of Ireland, but also in the hands of the English government. For Mill, the problem of ‘Irish backwardness’, a common viewpoint of the day, had nothing to do with the wretchedness of their situation. As Mill claimed in his essay of 1868 *England and Ireland*: “Irish disaffection, assuredly, is a familiar fact; and there have always been those among us who liked to explain it by a special taint or infirmity in the Irish character.”<sup>10</sup> Mill completely rejected this; he was keen to disprove racial theories in all his works and to assert the idea of ‘mind over matter’ in terms of how national characters could be improved.<sup>11</sup>

Rather, Mill argued that specific environmental and historical causes should be examined, and any deficiencies could easily be corrected with the right education and institutions.<sup>12</sup> Irish peasants were less civilized than other Europeans because they were hindered by institutional structures, such as the form of land ownership. In 1846 Mill argued that the English had ‘barbarized’ the Irish (for the benefit of an imported aristocracy) by allowing the cottier system to prevail, and in 1868 he saw agrarian violence as the result of England’s refusal to grant the desired system of tenure.<sup>13</sup>

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His writings on England and Ireland in 1848 confirm this: “they [Ireland’s wretchedness and degradation] are the work of England’s ignorance, of England’s prejudice, of England’s indifference; they are the effect of a vicious social system, upheld by England. They result from a radically wrong state of the most important social relation which exists in the country, that between the cultivators of the soil and the owners of it; that vicious state having been protected and perpetuated by a wrong and superstitious English notion of property in land.”<sup>14</sup>

Thus if English misgovernment was to blame for this state of affairs, only improved English government and direct, firm legislative measures could remedy it, according to Mill. The past five centuries exemplified English misgovernment of Ireland, and now England had the opportunity of making permanent compensation.<sup>15</sup> Not only did Mill think England had to carry out specific, radical land reform, but also resist the separation of the two nations. These two recommendations were inextricably linked. Mill came to believe that only by implementing radical land reform could England prevent separation. However, whilst Mill was always in favour of land reform and a continued union, he did not completely equate one with the other until the 1860s and the rise of Fenianism. By the 1860s, Mill was arguing that only radical measures with regard to land could prevent separation. However, in the 1840s and 50s, the nationalist threat was not so large, and the measures which Mill advocated were thus not as radical.

Mill’s proposals for Ireland in the 1840s were documented mostly in his articles for *The Morning Chronicle* and *Principles of Political Economy*. His main recommendation was the conversion of waste-lands, handing them over to the peasants, who would then be guaranteed fixity of tenure upon them. Those who did not partake in this scheme could be integrated into the capitalist mode of farming. “The residuary population would not be too numerous to be supported...and English capital and English farming might then be introduced with advantage to all, because the cottier population would no longer exceed the numbers who could, with benefit to the farmer, be retained on the land as labourers. Then, and then only, would English capital find its way to Ireland, for then, and only then, would its owner have nothing to fear from the “wild justice” of an ejected tenantry. That tenantry would exist no more as tenantry, but they would exist as farm labourers.”<sup>16</sup>

Thus what Mill envisaged was actually a mixed form of agriculture. By granting some fixity of tenure on previous wastelands “it would give to Ireland the inestimable blessing of a peasant proprietary. Give them fixity of tenure, and they would thenceforth work and save for themselves alone. Their industry would be their own profit; their idleness would be their own loss”.<sup>17</sup> Mill explained in *Principles of Political Economy* why this measure was important alongside the introduction of capitalist forms of agriculture. Alone, the transformation of the cottiers into hired labourers would only improve Irish agriculture, rather than the actual condition of the Irish people, which Mill so desired.<sup>18</sup>

For Mill, the point was to establish a hierarchy of labourers, in which “the day labourer aspires to be a proprietor; the man of five acres should aspire to be the proprietor of ten, the man of ten to fifteen or more.”<sup>19</sup> The peasant proprietors would be near the top of this hierarchy, providing a strong example to the lower classes and thus helping to regenerate the economy.<sup>20</sup> Mill claimed that Ireland was “a *tabula rasa*, on which we might have inscribed what we pleased.”<sup>21</sup> This can be linked to Mill’s belief that by changing the institutions of a country, national character could be forged. Evidently, Mill saw this type of land reform as “a means of social reform and moral regeneration.”<sup>22</sup>

In the same work, Mill raised the possibility of making the whole land of Ireland the property of the tenants, at a fixed rent, by an outright act of Parliament.<sup>23</sup> However, he claimed that “much milder measures” were possible: “to enact that whoever reclaims waste land becomes the owner of it, at a fixed quit-rent equal to a moderate interest on its mere value as waste. It would of course be a necessary part of this measure, to make compulsory on landlords the surrender of waste lands whenever required for reclamation.”<sup>24</sup> In advocating these “milder measures”, Mill clearly sought a compromise between alleviating the condition of the Irish poor, and attracting parliament or more moderate elements in England to reform in Ireland. He further moderated his proposal by claiming that it entailed nothing beyond what already occurred for the construction of canals, railways or turnpike roads; his means were already current practice.<sup>25</sup> However, Mill arguably advocated these milder measures due to an analysis of Ireland’s current state of progress and civilization, rather than due to the fear of alienating moderate reforming elements.

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Mill perhaps felt that universal fixity of tenure was unnecessary for Ireland at that time, and the mixed economy discussed above would best assure progress.

Throughout his articles and *Principles of Political Economy*, Mill also explained why other measures, both proposed and even implemented at the time, could and would not work. When the government chose to implement the Poor Law in Ireland, Mill attacked this on the grounds that it would destroy productivity when the peasantry realized that they would receive money whether they worked or not, and that it was hugely demoralizing for the peasants.<sup>26</sup> In an article for *The Morning Chronicle* Mill stated that: "all other schemes for the improvement of Ireland are schemes for getting rid of the people. The very best is a gigantic plan of emigration, impracticably costly, yet, if executed, having no guarantee in the altered relations of society that those left behind would not soon be as miserable as ever."<sup>27</sup>

However, during the 1850s, Mill's views of land reform underwent change. The huge decrease in cottier population, due to emigration and death, altered Irish conditions, making the type of reform Mill had advocated in the 1840s no longer as suitable. Ireland appeared to be following the British economic system and progressing towards a higher state of civilization on its own.<sup>28</sup> Mill became more strongly convinced that the country should be left to evolve slowly under the existing law of tenure, only slightly amended.<sup>29</sup> During the 1850s, Mill spoke optimistically of the progress of the Irish farmer, claiming that drastic land reform was no longer needed.<sup>30</sup>

Such changes to Mill's views on Ireland has led historians such as E. D. Steele to conclude that "Mill was less libertarian but less radical than is often supposed: because he very largely shared the complacency, if that is the right word, of his contemporaries about English political and social institutions."<sup>31</sup> Historian Bruce Kinzer provides a more favorable explanation of Mill's behaviour; he claims that Mill was reluctant to advocate a massive violation of established property rights, due to his appreciation of "the fundamental importance of security in the creation and maintenance of a stable and rational society."<sup>32</sup> Arguably, Mill was pragmatic in coming to the conclusion that there was little point in violently disrupting the foundations of society if Ireland seemed to be able to progress on its own. Accusing Mill of complacency seems unfair; he was above all concerned with Ireland's moral progression, with the *telos* of a civilized society. In the 1850s, he thought this was possible through a move away from radical land reform.

Furthermore, Mill was certainly not complacent with English institutions by the 1860s, when he again altered his position on Ireland, due to the rise of Fenianism. Alongside this growing nationalist sentiment, the strength of the Irish demand for fixity of tenure grew and was supported vigorously by Mill among others.<sup>33</sup> In *England and Ireland*, Mill clearly stated that the Irish nationalist rebellion could have been, and even could still be, averted by significant land reform. "They [Englishmen] know not that the disaffection which neither has nor needs any other motive than aversion to the rulers, is the climax to a long growth of disaffection arising from causes that might have been removed."<sup>34</sup> He stressed that the rebellion could still be averted by granting the Irish their desired form of land tenure as "rebellions are never really unconquerable until they have become rebellions for an idea."<sup>35</sup>

Mill explicitly stated what was now necessary: "a few years ago...the distribution of the waste land in peasant properties might then have sufficed...the Irish are no longer reduced to take anything they can get... no accommodation is henceforth possible which does not give the Irish peasant all that he could gain by a revolution—permanent possession of the land, subject to fixed burthens. Such a change may be revolutionary; but revolutionary measures are the thing now required."<sup>36</sup> However, Mill was keen to stress that such change did not need to be violent or unjust. Mill proposed a statutory commission with compulsory powers, able to set rents at a fair and fixed level and bestow every tenant with a permanent right of occupancy.<sup>37</sup> Landlords would receive rent directly from the tenant or in the form of interest on government bonds.<sup>38</sup>

If England were willing to carry out such measures, they would not only succeed in averting rebellion and eventual separation, but also be justified in ruling Ireland: "the rule of Ireland now rightfully belongs to those who, by means consistent with justice, will make the cultivators of the soil of Ireland the owners of it; and the English nation has got to decide whether it will be that just ruler or not."<sup>39</sup> The rise in nationalist feeling meant that "to hold Ireland permanently by the old bad means is simply impossible."<sup>40</sup> For Mill, "the only Union worth having was one in which England demonstrated a capacity for upright, responsible leadership."<sup>41</sup>

Thus Mill clearly saw his two recommendations, that land reform be carried out, and separation prevented, as inextricably linked. By the 1860s, only radical land reform could prevent separation.

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Mill rejected separation on a number of grounds. As early as 1834 Mill stated that: "we have been far too guilty in our treatment of Ireland, to be entitled to shake her off, and let alone abide the consequences of our misconduct. We are bound to not renounce the government of Ireland, but to govern her well."<sup>42</sup> It seems that Mill felt the English had a moral duty to undo centuries of misgovernment of Ireland.<sup>43</sup> "Only complete justice to Ireland could expiate English sins and save England from the humiliation and futility of a struggle to hold a people bent upon independence."<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, England had a duty to continue governing Ireland, as, in Mill's eyes, Ireland was not yet ready for self government. This was also the rationale Mill gave for British rule in India; that it was essentially for their own good, and they must be prepared for self government as they were not yet ready to do it themselves. The ultimate goal of this profoundly developmental theory was civilization. As historian Alan Ryan claims: "Mill believed in progress, and although he did not believe that we have a natural right to go around civilizing people against their will, he had no particular qualms about taking advantage of situations in which we can improve other people."<sup>45</sup> A continued union between Ireland and England therefore provided the situation in which the condition of the Irish people could be improved. This would not be the case forever: "Mill envisaged self-abolishing imperialism; if it was justified it was as an educative enterprise, and if successful its conclusion was the creation of independent liberal-democratic societies everywhere, at which point there would be no further imperial powers."<sup>46</sup>

Allowing Ireland immediate self government would not have been the most conducive path to happiness, in Mill's eyes. Historian Don Habibi sums it up thus: "the key to understanding Mill lies in recognizing the value he places on human growth...he accepted the consequentialist justification that a well-administered colonial system would ultimately maximize happiness."<sup>47</sup> This can be easily applied to the case of Ireland. Mill thought that Ireland should continue to be governed by England, but well governed; this would ultimately succeed in creating the greatest happiness for the greatest number. This was because it would enable moral progression, based on agrarian reform.

It is true that Mill wanted a continued union because he wanted to uphold the empire, but he wanted to uphold the empire largely out of this fixation on progress and civilization, a process which he believed would maximize happiness.

Mill believed that England was qualified in holding Ireland above any other power; he raised the possibility that an independent Ireland could become “a province of France.”<sup>48</sup> This echoes claims Mill made in *Considerations on Representative Government*: an argument against granting colonies immediate independence was the threat of them being “absorbed into a foreign state, and becoming a source of additional aggressive strength to some rival power, either more despotic or closer at hand, which might not always be so unambitious or so pacific as Great Britain.”<sup>49</sup> This clearly shows Mill’s belief that as the only liberal power in Europe, and head of a voluntary empire (as far as the settler colonies were concerned), Britain had a duty to protect her dependencies from despotic powers. However paternalistic, and even imperialist, this sounds, it was evidently linked to Mill’s civilizing concerns; as a liberal power, only England was truly fit to govern other nations and help them progress, as in the case of Ireland.

Having analysed Mill’s thoughts on Ireland, it is evident that his two main proposals were a continued, but much improved union, and radical land reform that created peasant proprietors and ensured fixity of tenure. Mill’s insistence on a continued union was unwavering. Whilst his recommendations for land reform fluctuated in their ‘radicalness’ and strength of conviction, he eventually came to advocate universal fixity of tenure. Mill’s belief that different institutions were needed for different nations, based on their state of civilization, convinced him that forcing English institutions upon Ireland was not the answer. Ireland’s rapidly changing domestic situation, revolving around the famine, meant that the land question could never be straightforward; the solution would depend on how events in Ireland unfolded. Furthermore, whilst his proposals may not have always been consistent, the motives behind them were. Mill’s unwavering aim was to kickstart moral progression in Ireland, through some form of agrarian reform, which would ensure its development towards a higher state of civilization and happiness for the greatest number of people.

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## To what extent was 'race' used to categorise people as 'other' in early modern England?

*Joanna Hill*

The concept of 'race' – understood as the categorisation of people based on physical characteristics – was used significantly in classifying 'others'. In the early modern era, English society conceived distinct physical characteristics as a determinate of a person's origin. Greater numbers of 'others', who were people of unknown origin, came into England under the reign of Elizabeth I. Physical attributes of 'others' were judged to determine where these people fitted within the English social hierarchy. The concept of 'race' became increasingly prevalent in early modern Europe as people began to consider united identities within their society. A sense of 'Englishness' developed as a significant proportion of the English population believed that they had originated in England. People who came into England from elsewhere were subsequently labeled as 'others' or 'strangers'.

This essay will discuss the scientific definition of race that emerged in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century and how this is no longer compatible due to recent studies into the variations of genes across humankind. The social definition of 'race', which is generally used today, will be discussed in relation to the English early modern definition of race. The social hierarchy that existed within early modern England will be considered and how, due to the visual nature of English culture, people's identities were determined by their physical appearance. English society judged the skin colour of 'others'. People who had come from Africa, usually having a different skin colour to those who considered themselves to be 'English', were not favoured within the existing social hierarchy. Judgments about 'others' based on the shape and size of their facial features was another indicator that English society did not consider as being agreeable, common amongst the people from Africa. Finally, the essay will examine how English society reacted to the increasing presence of 'others' in Early modern England and how discrimination manifested itself in a 'racial' manner.

Biological justification for categorizing people by 'race' has been disproved. In the nineteenth century, attempts were made to 'systemize racial division'.<sup>1</sup> An extreme case of systematic racial division is exemplified through the aim for the 'consolidation of the Aryan race' by the National Socialist German Workers' Party in the 1920's.<sup>2</sup> The party manipulated the reasoning Charles Darwin gave to try and find a biological reason for differences between humans.<sup>3</sup> From the findings of Darwin, a scientific definition of 'race' developed. The Human Genome Project disproved the scientific reasoning behind racial division stating that "although frequencies for different states of a gene [alleles] differ among races, we have no 'race gene'- that is state's fixed in certain races and absent from others."<sup>4</sup> It has also been argued that genetic differences between two individuals from one country may display greater variation than between two individuals from different countries and such a distinction does not seem to correlate with skin pigmentation.<sup>5</sup> The biological argument for genetic differentiation between races within humankind has been disputed. However, the definition of 'race' remains a method to socially categorize people due to "distinct physical characteristics."<sup>6</sup> Anu Korhonen suggested that, 'in everyday life, blackness was of course primarily visual: the 'racialising' gaze directed at black Africans was a process of giving meaning to perception and direct observation, to the sight of blackness.'<sup>7</sup> English people tried to make sense of 'others' they came across in England and, subsequently, different 'races' were categorised within the existing social hierarchy.

Within modern England, the use of the term 'race' was a way of categorizing people to fit into the existing social hierarchy. In the early sixteenth-century, the Italian word "Razzá" meant 'of unknown ultimate origin'.<sup>8</sup> In Florio's 1611 Italian-English Dictionary "Razzá" meant "a race, a kind, a broode, a flocke, a descent, a pedigree."<sup>9</sup> In light of this, it could be argued that 'race' in England in the early seventeenth century followed this definition. People were categorised into different races based on where they were perceived to be 'from', both geographically and ancestrally. The use of the word "pedigree" also suggests that there was an element of hierarchy involved in describing a person's 'race'; which suggests connotations of 'good' and 'bad' breeding. This implies that 'race' featured as a factor in the social categorization of humankind in England. The concept of 'race' existed long before the scientific definition, which developed in the nineteenth century, and this concept was a social construct as it is today.

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English visual culture perceived the 'outer' appearance to be a reflection of the 'inner' self. People from sub-Saharan Africa that came into England were judged on their physical attributes in order to determine their place within the existing social hierarchy. The social structure within England was ordered around 'divinely ordained' hierarchical relationships.<sup>10</sup> The natural order principle, developed by humanist ideology perceived humankind to be on a 'chain of being', sandwiched between angels and beasts. This social structure developed during the medieval era but continued to influence society's understanding of divinely ordained hierarchy in England. Sujata Iyengar suggests that 'the dominant structure of feeling is always tempered by residual structures from the previous generation, and emergent ones from the one ahead.'<sup>11</sup> The social hierarchy in England had developed from past generations who had not had contact with people who looked different to themselves. A sense of English identity developed alongside determining a person's place in society based on their visual identity. As people from Africa came into England their appearance was judged and they were usually categorised as low beings in society. The physical characteristics of people of African origin were deemed to be unfavourable in the existing social hierarchy.

Early modern English society was obsessed with lineage and establishing an identity within the social order. During the reign of Elizabeth I, people who came from Africa to England were of 'unknown ultimate origin'. The origin or lineage of 'others' did not fit with the perceived English identity. This was due to the difference in the physical appearance between sub-Saharan Africans and the stereotypical 'Englishness'. It could be suggested that the 'origin' and civilization that 'others' had previously belonged to was imagined. The people who had come from Africa may have had similar physical attributes to what English people had seen or heard about when Africa was depicted.

On this map (Fig. 1) an area on the African continent has been labelled as 'barbaria.' Alden and Virginia Vaughnan propose that the map 'locates Guinea and associates blackness with sub-Saharan Africa.'<sup>13</sup> This image suggests that Africa may have been perceived as a barbaric society and, if people are black in Africa, 'others' who were black may also be barbaric. From this conception black 'others' would be considered to have a low status in a 'civilized' society. Michel de Montaigne observes that 'we all call barbarians anything that is contrary to our own habits.'<sup>14</sup>

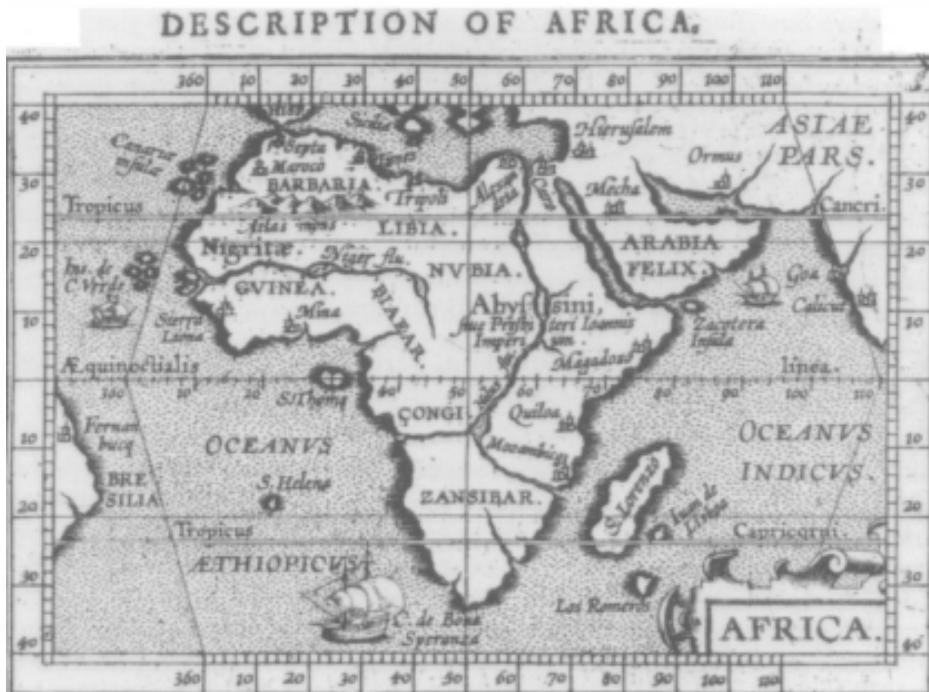


Fig. 1.<sup>12</sup>

The *Queen Mary Atlas* (Fig. 2) depicts primitive beings. The people that are painted on the land mass of Africa are holding spears and wearing loin cloths which may seem barbaric from the perspective of an English person living in ‘civilized’ society. Maps in renaissance Europe used images to depict things which you may find in that place. Most maps in early modern Europe depicted African people with black skin, which they did have, alongside all sorts of strange features that they did not have, such as three heads. This suggests people who came into contact with images like this, without ever having seen people with such extreme features before may have considered these ‘others’ as a different ‘kind’ of being to them, from a far off land with different manners and customs.

Stories retold from travel narratives may have influenced people’s perceptions of ‘others’ before people from Africa had even come to England. Mandeville, who was English born, wrote about Africa and its people in his *Travels of John Mandeville*. This work influenced European perceptions of African society such as Leonardo Da Vinci, whose library itinerary of 1499 contained a copy of the *Travels*.



Fig. 2.<sup>15</sup>

In 1576 Frobisher was thought to have had as copy with him as he sailed into Boffin Bay. A copy of *Travels* was available in the English vernacular in 1496. In 1605 Bishop Joseph Hall said 'Whetstone leasings (lies) of old Mandeville.'<sup>16</sup> Even though Hall speaks of Mandeville's 'lies', the stories still circulated and many elements of his writings were believed causing the the narrative, on the whole, to be influential. Mandeville reported on what he called Ethiopie and wrote:

Such men that have but one foote, and they go so fast that it is a great mervaille, and that is a large foot that the shadow thereof covereth the body from the Sun or raine when they lye upon their backs, and when their children are first borne they looke like russet, and when they wax old then they bee all black.<sup>17</sup>

Mandeville emphasizes that African people were of different shapes to European people and, as he was probably the most widely read authority on places outside of Europe, his descriptions were greatly influential in England on English imaginings of Africa. The descriptions of African people, by those who travelled from

England to Africa in 1554, suggest how English people saw Africa through the restrictions of their own concept of what an ideal society was. Here Guinea is discussed whereby "negroes [are] a people of beastly living, without a God, lawe, religion, or common wealth, and so scorched and vexed with the heat of the sunne, that in many places they curse it when it riseth."<sup>18</sup> The narrative continues later describing "a rough and savage region, whose inhabitants are wilde and wandering people."<sup>19</sup> These people do not conform to their idea of English 'civilized' society and the people who are coming into England are viewed as being from an 'uncivilized' society. English people came into contact more with 'others' during the reign of Elizabeth I and 'others' did not look like anyone they had seen before. The origin of these people was invariably unknown and for those who had come into contact with stories of the African continent would probably have imagined these people to have been from uncivilized society and socially beneath their own.

In early modern English society, ideas about skin colour existed long before the presence of black African people. Skin colour became a visible indicator of where a person was from in early modern England. Knowledge about the culture of Africa, whether reliable or not, had been available to literate English men and women through the translation of ancient texts. Ancient works such as that of Pliny the Elder, Strabo and Herodotus were translated from Latin and Greek to English during the sixteenth century. Herodotus wrote that the African people were "in countenance a like black, in hayre a like fryzled."<sup>20</sup> This statement suggests that Herodotus perceived that black people had a certain type of 'countenance'. Frank Snowden argued that within ancient culture 'race' and cultural differences were segregated within society; however in his argument physical features and skin pigmentation convey aspects of ethnicity, without any implied suggestions of inferiority or superiority.<sup>21</sup> While this may have been the case in ancient Europe, during early modern England a whiter complexion was more preferential to a darker one. 'Beauty' was a sign of 'goodness' and the colour of a person's skin was crucial when considering if a person was 'beautiful' and therefore 'good' or not. 'Goodness' showed where a person stood within the 'chain of being' and this was a determinant for status in English society showing people are closer to angels or closer to beasts.

As greater numbers of people from sub-Saharan Africa came into England, they were judged through the existing social hierarchy, and their skin colour was a visual indicator for their place. Kim Hall has suggested that 'black' was not always

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the opposite of 'white' but instead the opposite of 'fair' or 'beautiful.'<sup>22</sup> People from Africa were often the darkest skin colour seen in England at the time and therefore possibly perceived to be the least 'fair'. In a conduct book, Thomas Becon argued that silent and chaste women were always fair, even if they looked like an Ethiopian.<sup>23</sup> Becon appears to be against the common judgement in his suggestion that outward appearance may not always be a reflection of a person's character. Thomas Hall saw 'blackness' as a punishment from God, arguing that vain women should be burned for their sins and forced to scorch their skin in the sun until they acquired the 'hue of the black-moores'. He suggests that 'blackness' as a result of sin was inferior to being the colour they had previously been.<sup>24</sup> This may indicate that having black skin would make you into an outsider in English society or place a person lower down on the social scale. Although a white woman who had been blackened would not be perceived as being from a different 'race', she would lose her previous identity. Her standing in society would be wiped out as black skin was burnt and she would become like the 'black-moore' without an origin, her perceived 'goodness' lost. As blackness was related to inner 'badness', black people coming from Africa were automatically seen as inferior to white English people as their soul was judged on the gradation of their skin colour.

Between the fifteenth and seventeenth century, English society perceived the 'outer' to be a reflection of the 'inner'. The early modern idea of 'beauty' in England followed 'the premise that bodily attractiveness consists in harmonious proportion to all bodily parts and features, and the Petrarchist convention of seeing, enumerating and describing those bodily parts as linked together by a sweeping gaze that travels over the body.'<sup>25</sup> In saying this Anu Korhonen suggested that good looks meant that bodily features had to be balanced with each other in the English sense of balanced. This idea is especially important when considering English people coming into contact with sub-Saharan African people who had different facial features to them. The stereotype of Africans as having thick lips, flat noses and black curly hair was not deemed to be beautiful within the English frame work. In William Dunbar's poem 'Of ane blak-moir', the 'beautiful' black woman is likened to apes and cats on the basis of her facial features.<sup>26</sup> This concept, presented by Dunbar, suggests that the shape and balance of facial features brings with it ideas of where the person originated, perhaps suggesting that this woman may be 'beautiful' but she is like certain animals. On the 'chain of being' this comparison would imply that this woman had a low

status within the English hierarchy. This idea of the balance of facial features in determining 'beauty' was also a marker of a person's intelligence. Korhonen asserted that there was a conceptual tradition in Europe which linked lack of intelligence and stereotypical African features.<sup>27</sup> Juliana Schiesari also suggested that in this tradition, big lips and large noses signified stupidity.<sup>28</sup> Accounts from the time, such as Camões's in the sixteenth-century of a 'black skinned stranger' that was 'a savage, more uncouth than Polyphemus, he could not understand us'; Polyphemus is a savage that Homer wrote about. Camões goes on to explain that the 'savage' did not care about the gold that they showed him.<sup>29</sup> Walter Lim argued that these people accounts about 'savages' show that along with the 'inability to engage in intelligible discourse, the Negro also lacks the basic ability to recognise things of value.'<sup>30</sup> African society was usually envisioned in the English mind as been undeveloped and lacking in the things that made English society 'civilized'. As people from Africa were coming into England, features which defined them as having originated from Africa, this savage society, meant that their intelligence was judged to be inferior to that of an English person. The intelligence of the person was not being judged but the black person's imagined intelligence, based on their facial features.

People in Elizabethan England were discriminated against on the basis of their perceived origin due to physical features which indicated them as 'other'. In the early modern world, the English began, as Hall states, to 'formulate the notions of "self" and "other."<sup>31</sup> The increasing presence of 'others' encouraged the strengthening of the meaning of Englishness and a specifically English identity. Tensions between 'other' and 'English' were exacerbated by economic and political problems in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century. 'Strangers' were attacked in riots in London, indicated in the manuscript by Thomas More, between 1601 and 1604. A play was also created by Shakespeare which included this manuscript but was never shown due to the fear of public reaction. It has been argued that Elizabeth I herself, around the same time, discriminated against different types of people that specifically had black skin. 1596 Elizabeth wrote an "open letter to lord Maiour of London" and complained that "there are of late divers blackmoores brought into this realm, of which kinde of people there are already here to manie."<sup>32</sup> Later in the same month Elizabeth I issued "an open warrant" to help Lubeck Senden "to take up blackamoores here in this realme and to transport them into Spaine and Portugall."<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth I forcibly expelled people who had black skin and were from Africa. The word 'moore' was used in relation to both northern and sub-Saharan

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Africans. Elizabeth wanted to retain a sense of Englishness and a specific identity during the war against Spain. Iyengar suggested that it was the union of the opposite of black and fair, fair related to an English identity, which allowed the Elizabethan society to flourish.<sup>34</sup> In Britain, Elizabeth used the Coverdale version of the *Great Bible* that had been authorized by Henry VIII and in the *Song* a woman stated "I am blacke but ye fayre and well favoured... marvaile not at mee that I am so blacke, for why? The Sunne hath shined upon me: my mother's children have evill will at me."<sup>35</sup> The "Black but..." formulation, considered by Kate Lowe, was adopted in England and exceptions to the imagined origin and countenance of people from Africa enabled the concept of 'race' to be a justification for judging 'others' as not belonging and being lower on the social scale in England.<sup>36</sup>

The social definition that is used to describe 'race' was the idea that was used to define people as 'other' early modern England. Social hierarchy that existed within early modern England was used to determine the identity of a person. Physical appearance was judged and subsequently a person's place in English society was determined. English society judged the skin colour of 'others' who had come from Africa and, because of the existing social hierarchy, 'black' skin was not favoured in English culture. The judgments that were made about 'others' based on the shape and size of their facial features caused some English people to believe that these the 'others' were ugly and unintelligent. The existing social hierarchy in early modern England perceived 'black' skin to be the opposite to 'fair' and unbalanced facial features to be an indicator of a person's low intellect. People also judged these features to be of different origin to the English and discrimination during Elizabeth I's reign was manifested along 'racial' lines due to the perceived origin of 'others'. Further research into the relationship between 'other' and those who considered themselves to be 'English' may show how much of the English population worked within the social hierarchy to categorise people according to their perceived origin.

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## How are consumerist ideals represented through the Pop Art works of Claes Oldenburg, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg?

*Neha Patel*

American Pop Art capitalised on the optimism and consumer boom of the 1950s, a period where increasing numbers of products were mass marketed and advertised. "Untouched by the physical destruction of the war, industry was expanding rapidly."<sup>1</sup> The growth of wealth in the United States fuelled a technologically advanced popular culture which was displayed in colourful and glossy American magazines and films. The 1960s witnessed a steady increase in consumption of factory-produced durable goods rather than the handmade products of an earlier age. "The American Dream was no longer defined by political freedom, but instead was measured by the number of commodities citizens could acquire."<sup>2</sup> American consumerism exploded in the 1960s with purchases of cars, houses, televisions, furniture, and modern appliances. Three American artists, Oldenburg, Johns and Rauschenberg all use aspects of consumerist ideals in their works to show the impact it had on society.

Claes Oldenburg opened a shop, *The Store* (1961)<sup>3</sup>, in his workshop in New York's Lower East Side with the idea of creating a functional equivalent to a store which echoed the environment of discount stores in the area which had once been common.<sup>4</sup> "Oldenburg crammed it with papier-mâché sculptures of ordinary consumer products: hamburger, slices of pie, shoes, sewing machines and underwear."<sup>5</sup> Everything was made from the same material - plaster-covered muslin which Oldenburg painted in strong colours. The effect of having the works piled high, hanging off walls and the ceiling recreated the atmosphere of an 'Everything must go' sale. The chaotic, unstructured atmosphere of *The Store* "was a deliberate parody of Manhattan's chic, modernist art galleries."<sup>6</sup>

However the shop was "not only the point of sale, but also the place of production."<sup>7</sup> Everything sold in *The Store* in practice could have been produced by craftsmen in the pre-capitalist economy of the American society. Oldenburg highlights how the capitalist state has bought about a collapse in the non-alienated

division of labour yet "Oldenburg, despite his Swedish origins (or perhaps because of them) was a fervent believer in the American dream."<sup>8</sup> He acknowledged the demand for machine-produced goods to be designed to fit the new urban landscape which "comprised of blaring billboards, frenetic neon signs, and garish neon posters designed by Madison Avenue."<sup>9</sup>

Oldenburg at the same time believed in a reconciliation between art and everyday life. Oldenburg criticised the alienation of everyday life in general just as much as the specific alienation of art from everyday life.<sup>10</sup> *The Store* related to everyday objects by allowing Oldenburg to be a pastry-cook, butcher and shoemaker whilst also distributing what he had produced himself. "By equating the public life of the artist with that of a shopkeeper, *The Store* was a particularly acknowledgement that, by 1961, commercial spaces had become the pre-eminent public spaces of the United States."<sup>11</sup> As a result citizens were typically considered consumers.

Food and drink are recurring themes in Pop Art, for example in Jasper Johns' *Painted Bronze* (1960)<sup>12</sup> and Oldenburg's soft food sculptures in *The Store*, because the post-war era emphasised "the culinary products of American mass culture – the hot dog, Coco Cola and the hamburger."<sup>13</sup> In 1960 Johns made two sculptures, both entitled *Painted Bronze*; one was a pair of Ballantine Ale cans and the other a Savarin coffee tin full of used brushes. McCarthy has argued that Johns' use of commercial design for the sculptures would be instrumental in Andy Warhol's emphasis on brand-name products which "implicitly derives from Johns' centralised, emblematic flat imagery."<sup>14</sup> Ballantine Ale was one of the American's best-known labels, a favourite among American writers. It was endorsed by well-known personalities of the day, from Ernest Hemingway and Marilyn Monroe to Joe DiMaggio and Frank Sinatra, some of whom featured in adverts for the brand.

Johns' *Painted Bronze* like "Oldenburg's inflated representation of American fast food was more than a simple joke... he engaged directly with products of the post-war consumer boom."<sup>15</sup> Ballantine were among the first breweries to sell canned beer in six packs for home consumption. Oldenburg's soft food sculptures can be read as a parody of "the expansion of fast-food outlets in the 1950s and early 1960s, the era of the first drive-in burger bars and the expansion of franchised companies like McDonald's, Burger King and Wendy's."<sup>16</sup> Advertising campaigns often focused on competing claims for the largest bun and Oldenburg's *Floor Burger*

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(1962) was a tongue-in-cheek answer. *The Store*, as a celebration of mass-market consumerism “established Oldenburg’s reputation with the New York avant-garde.”<sup>17</sup> Together with other prominent Pop artists Oldenburg participated in a New York gallery project, *The American Supermarket* (1964) which like *The Store* brought art and commodities closer together and celebrated consumption by blurring the lines between distribution of art and goods.

“Pop Art is painting and sculpture which borrows its imagery from the mass culture – high art mimicking low art.”<sup>18</sup> As a result commercial products, advertisements and newspaper clippings feature heavily as examples of crude materials which the artists elevate to a high-brow status through art. In *Painted Bronze* the beer cans appear to us as literal representation of this cultural divide. Johns’ “bronze reproductions of beer cans or cans with paint brushes in them are so carefully sculptured and painted that it is sometimes difficult to tell them from the originals, though they provide a highly ambiguous substitute.”<sup>19</sup> Johns was influenced by Dada ideas, in particular the readymades by Duchamp which challenged the definition of the art object. However, rather than introduce found objects Johns found images as the subjects of his paintings in the form of flags, targets, letters and numbers. This iconography of familiar and recognisable brand labels became associated with Pop Art as reproducible elements to the consumer. As Oldenburg highlighted with *The Store*, the purpose of making goods for marketing purposes was to increase their saleability.

Unlike Oldenburg who was concerned with the relationship between art and everyday life, “Johns focuses his attention on the painting as an object, a thing in its own right, rather than a representation.”<sup>20</sup> The cans raise the question of what is real and what is fiction, where reality ends and art begins. The explanation of *Painted Bronze* is well documented as a private joke to John’s reply to de Kooning’s quip that Leo Castelli could sell anything – even two beer cans.<sup>21</sup> Whilst it easy to find a meaning as a representation of American lifestyle based on consumerist ideals, it is noticeable that the ale cans are clearly hand-painted and were not meant as an exact replica in shape or size, nor did Johns reproduce the commercial labels exactly. Johns does not distinguish between subject and object, or art and life, in his work. In his eyes they are both the same thing, which personifies the ideals of a consumerist society by bridging the gap between high and low art. Johns believes that we should not look upon a painting as a representation or illusion but as an object with its own

reality.<sup>22</sup>

During the late 1950s Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns were involved in a relationship both personally and artistically which produced some intense private experimentation. Many of the ideas they used were borrowed from the Dada movement, particularly Duchamp. Their use of popular American imagery in a way foreshadowed Pop Art and they took collage and assemblage to a new level technically. "The ambitious scale of much of their work is characteristic of one aspect of the post-war American scene."<sup>23</sup> Rauschenberg was interested in the iconography of American popular culture and he expanded his collages by incorporating three-dimensional objects, which he referred to as 'combines'.<sup>24</sup>

Unlike Johns, Rauschenberg's use of found images combined with each other or real objects. His 'combines' incorporated elements such as magazine pages, photographs, scrap metal and objects from his studio, junk shops or the streets – all layered with paint. "For Rauschenberg, the early 1960s were a period of technical experiment. He used large-scale silk-screen to produce images in his paintings and began making prints."<sup>25</sup> His works were deliberately messy and fragmented and can be seen as the antithesis to slick American post-war consumerism, while incorporating its mass-produced discards.<sup>26</sup> The "1960s saw an explosion of new printing techniques that not only enabled artists to produce cheap multiples ... [but] to lose the impact of the outdated human hand by submitting to the mass production of the machine."<sup>27</sup> This incorporation of commercial imagery and industrial modes of mechanical reproduction collapsed high art into low art in a similar way to Johns.

"Ellen Johnson has written that these contemporary artists are captives of the printed image."<sup>28</sup> Since they are constantly exposed to man-made images they mimic the techniques used in the process and thereby appearing to embrace the materialism of affluent America.

Rauschenberg's *Retroactive I* (1963) is an example of him using images of current events gathered from magazines and newspapers to mirror our experience of mass media. In 1962, President John F. Kennedy introduced the Consumer Bill of Rights, which stated that the public had a right to be safe, to be informed, to choose, and to be heard. For the first time, icons from popular culture seemed to have gained a power in society that rivalled that of politicians and businessmen."<sup>29</sup> A large

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press photograph of President John F. Kennedy speaking at a televised news conference was juxtaposed with another photo silkscreen of a parachuting astronaut. The overlap can be seen as a parody of the media-saturated culture struggling to come to grips with the television era. "Kennedy had been credited as recognising the power of television."<sup>30</sup> His assassination in November 1963 proved just how powerful the new medium had become, as all normal programming was suspended as the horrific event was repeated continuously on American televisions nationwide.

Rauschenberg's response was to incorporate the image of the president in to a series of collage works which juxtaposed Kennedy's image with other photographs. Collage was Rauschenberg's natural language and he added to its vocabulary by developing a method of combining oil painting with photographic silkscreen.<sup>31</sup> "The stark juxtaposition of images alludes to the collage of ever-changing images typical of 1960s' new broadcasts, or of the visual experience of constantly changing television channels."<sup>32</sup> The images are deliberately grainy to replicate the shocking experience of watching the assassination unfold on television continuously. Rauschenberg's overwhelming approach to collage is similar to Oldenburg's with *The Store* in that *Retroactive I* gives the viewer too much information instantly without a guide on how to digest it and make sense of the confusion. This speaks of a wider issue of a consumer society constantly bombarded with visual images yet most are instantly disregarded. Only very few stay with us and those that do are usually retained through some personal and individual experience consciously or subconsciously.<sup>33</sup>

Consumerism suggested that happiness could be achieved through the purchase of goods and services but Rauschenberg's paintings suggest some kind of ironic allegory. *Retroactive I* evokes images of environmentalism, Vietnam and the space race set against the backdrop the consumerist American society. The single apple is a metaphor for Original Sin in Renaissance paintings of Adam and Eve, in *Retroactive I* an astronaut parachutes back to earth only to land in an upturned box of the forbidden fruit. The astronaut represents American wealth and superiority in the arms race against the Soviets in the Cold War, yet it also symbolises how man's potential for evil has multiplied in the nuclear world and even moral men can be corrupted by the lure of materialism. There is a similar representation in Johns' *Painted Bronze* where one of the ale cans is opened and the other is closed, representing virginity and purity in its untouched state. "The theme of illusion versus

reality and the constant questioning of reality and identity are basic to his sculptures.”<sup>34</sup> Rauschenberg extends his metaphor by illustrating in the top right of the painting what the astronaut is returning to, Eden after the Fall - a world polluted by industrialisation.

The consumerist ideals of Pop Art are shown in the works of Oldenburg, Johns and Rauschenberg in the way they represent the effect the economic boom of the 1950s had people’s lives. The high and low aspects of art are brought together through the mass reproduction techniques which were made possible by technological advancements in the 1960s. Repetition of images and vibrant bright colours made the image the focus of attention in all three artists’ works. It has been argued by Mike O’Mahony that Oldenburg was the epitome “of the Neo-Dada trend established by Johns and Rauschenberg in the mid-1950s that fed in so successfully to Pop Art. Like Rauschenberg, Oldenburg embraced and celebrated urban junk.”<sup>35</sup>

## Notes

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12. J. Johns, *Painted Bronze*, 1960; oil on bronze, Cologne, Museum Ludwig
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22. D. McCarthy, *Op. Cit.*, p. 19.
23. E. Lucie-Smith, *Op. Cit.*, p. 294.
24. D. McCarthy, *Op. Cit.*, p. 22.
25. E. Lucie-Smith, *Op. Cit.*, p. 298.
26. L. R. Lipard, *Op. Cit.*, p. 86.
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28. H. Davies, *Op. Cit.*, p. 24.
29. J. James, *Op. Cit.*, p. 6.
30. M. O'Mahony, *Op. Cit.*, p. 140.
31. S. Pendergast & T. Pendergast (eds.), *Volume 2: L-Z, Op. Cit.*, p. 1371.
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### **Artwork**

Oldenburg, C., *The Store*, 1961, New York, Museum of Modern Art.

Johns, J., *Painted Bronze*, 1960; oil on bronze, Cologne, Museum Ludwig.

Rauschenberg, R., *Retroactive I*, 1964; oil and silkscreen ink on canvas, Connecticut, The Wadsworth Athenaeum

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ISSN 2049-3134