

ISSN: 2151-7967

The Atlanta Review of Journalism History

A Refereed Annual Journal published by the Journalism History
Society of Georgia State University

**Georgia State
University**

Volume 9 - Number 1
Fall 2010

The Atlanta Review of Journalism History
Volume 9 Fall 2010



Farooq Kperogi	Managing Editor
Kiana Nicholas	Associate Editor
Emma Harger	Assistant Editor
Madeline Grayson	Assistant Editor
Leonard Ray Teel	Faculty Advisor and General Editor

Cover Design by John Daigle

Printed by Printed Communications, Inc.
Tucker, GA

All correspondence should be directed to:
The Atlanta Review of Journalism History
Attention: Farooq Kperogi, Managing Editor
Department of Communication
Georgia State University
One Park Place, South, Suite 630
Atlanta, GA 30303
fkperogil@gsu.edu

IN MEMORIAM: BARBARA CLOUD (1938-2009)



Barbara Cloud will be greatly missed. During her career as an historian, Dr. Cloud made an immense contribution to the field of American journalism history, as a teacher and researcher and as the editor of *Journalism History*. She put her stamp of excellence on the journal, retaining and enhancing its reputation as the premier historical journal in our field. What she did with the journal showed her real commitment to serving the field and doing it well, no matter how much effort it took. Together with authors, she worked to improve manuscripts so they would merit publication.

On the faculty of the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, her own scholarship created new knowledge about journalism in the American West. Dr. Cloud showed the relationship between journalism and community-building, a pivotal development that had been overlooked. She also contributed to the early development of the American Journalism Historians Association, serving as president and the host of a successful convention in Las Vegas that enabled that organization to thrive.

Beyond these contributions, Dr. Cloud reached out to colleagues on widely-scattered campuses with a helping hand, never too busy to offer advice and counsel when sought. As noted by a fellow historian and friend, Maurine H. Beasley, professor emeriti of the University of Maryland College Park, "Barbara personified friendship, mentoring and high standards of scholarship to journalism historians across the United States and Canada. She will be greatly missed."

Dr. Cloud died on December 24, 2009. This issue is dedicated to her memory.

EDITORIAL BOARD

The Atlanta Review of Journalism History is particularly thankful for the expertise of the scholars of American media history listed below. Their devotion to the field of study and their generous donation of time and talent have been essential contributions to the quality of the essays in the *Review*.

James Aucoin, University of South Alabama
Ross Collins, North Dakota State University
John Coward, University of Tulsa
Patrick Cox, University of Texas-Austin
David R. Davies, University of Southern Mississippi
Wallace Eberhard, University of Georgia, Emeritus
Giovanna Dell’Orto, University of Minnesota
Mark Edge, Sam Houston State University
Fred Fedler, University of Central Florida
Frank Fee, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Kathy Fuller-Seeley, Georgia State University
Karla K. Gower, University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa
William Huntzicker, St. Cloud State University
Paulette Kilmer, University of Toledo
Meg Lamme, University of Florida
Terry Leuck, University of Akron
Lisa Parcell, Wichita State University
Kittrell Rushing, University of Tennessee-Chattanooga
Reed Smith, Georgia Southern University
David Spencer, University of Western Ontario
Bernell Tripp, University of Florida
Debbie van Tuyll, Augusta State University
Patrick Washburn, Ohio University

CONTENTS

Editorial Board	vii
An Editorial Comment	viii
Acknowledgements	xi
Shuhua Dai America’s Appetite for Chinese Goods: Origins of the Trade Deficit with Chins, 1850 to 1858	1
Joceyln Mitchell Women’s Suffrage in Wyoming in 1869: The Uproar Against Female Jurors	15
Hillary Merritt “Who Killa De Chief?": How American Newspapers Encouraged the Largest Mass Lynching in U.S. History, October 1890 – March 1891	31
Jin Zhao Talking Was Golden: Actors and the First Talkies in America: 1927-1930	46
Matthew J. Duffy Code Orange: How the Internet, Cell Phones and New Technologies Helped Shape the Ukrainian Revolution of 2004	69

AN EDITORIAL COMMENT

The five well-researched historical essays in this issue are from students and scholars who previously presented their papers at competitive and prestigious academic conferences before submitting them to the editorial board of the *Atlanta Review of Journalism History* for a rigorous review by some of America's leading scholars in journalism history.

Given their admirable depth, insight, and originality, the essays enrich our understanding of historical and contemporary phenomena that have enduring relevance in our search for meaning and perspective to the chaos of occurrences that have defined our past and present. Using primary sources—newspaper articles, magazines, letters, documents, speeches, posters, photographs, blog posts, and personal interviews—the essays dig into the distant and immediate past to provide original insights to advance ongoing scholarly conversations in journalism history.

This Fall 2010 issue is particularly unique because it has taken a broader, more encompassing view of journalism history than previous issues have. In this issue, contemporary history, or what Michel Foucault famously characterized as “the history of the present,” has been regarded as a legitimate subject of inquiry in journalism history. Matthew J. Duffy's “Code Orange: How the Internet, Cell Phones and New Technologies Helped Shape the Ukrainian Revolution,” which was initially presented at the Conference on Media, War and Conflict Resolution at Bowling Green University in 2008, meets this criterion. It is a perceptive chronicle of the rise and fall of the Ukrainian revolution and the roles played by both new and traditional media in this process. Although it is about a relatively recent event, the essay is nonetheless a timely historical reconstruction of the fascinating ways that old and new media collided to effect change in a authoritarian regime. Duffy, a recent Ph.D. graduate from Georgia State University, is Assistant Professor of Journalism at Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates.

The four other essays in this issue exemplify traditional historical research in journalism. The lead article by Shuhua Dai, a graduate student of communication at Georgia State University, analyzes U.S. newspaper coverage of America's beginning trade – and trade deficit -- with China in the 1850s. Jocelyn Mitchell's essay is a fascinating excursion into the push and pull of viewpoints in newspapers regarding Wyoming's 1869 decision to grant women the right to vote and to serve on juries. Hillary Merritt's essay exposes how newspapers in 1890s News

Orleans became complicit in the largest mass lynching in American history. And, finally, Jin Zhao's essay explores an important moment in American film history: the transition from silent to talking films. Using primary data, it reveals the stories of the major actors associated with the historically momentous transition from silent movies to talking movies. Zhao, a former M.A. student in communication, is a Ph.D. candidate in Rhetoric and Composition at Georgia State University's Department of English. Ms. Dai and Ms. Mitchell presented their essays at the Symposium on the 19th Century Press, the Civil War and Free Expression at the University of Tennessee- Chattanooga; Ms. Merritt and Ms. Zhao presented at the Southeast Colloquium of the American Journalism Historians Association.

These essays collectively and individually make original contributions to journalism history. The *Atlanta Review of Journalism History* is proud to be the forum for the dissemination of these important scholarly historical investigations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As with any refereed national journal, *The Atlanta Review of Journalism History*, has many people to thank for its existence and for its reputation. The journal is indebted to the willing cooperation of numerous professors and students joined in the effort to expand our knowledge of the role of journalism in American history.

We are pleased to announce the news that its authors' contributions are now available not only in print but also online and in libraries worldwide through EBSCO host's Communication and Mass Media Complete database. For this development, we acknowledge especially the efforts of the managing editor, Farooq Kperogi, a Ph.D. candidate in Public Communication, who was determined that the authors' work be shared more widely.

This issue also represents a growing sophistication in design. The dimensions of the journal have been increased. For readability, we have chosen a new Cochin typeface and increased the margins around the copy. For this design, planning and execution, we credit especially our staff team of graduate and undergraduate students, notably Jin Zhao, Kiana Nicholas, Madeline Grayson, Oriana Gatta, and Jennifer Rankin. They and others participated in other aspects of production. For the diligent management of the manuscripts that traveled from authors to readers and back to the authors, we thank Emma Harger, who also joined the others in careful proofreading of the essays, as did Shuhua Dai and Jelena Kelava.

As a refereed journal, the *Atlanta Review* naturally relies on the talent and expertise of its Editorial Board, all of whom are published media historians and members of the prestigious American Journalism Historians Association. For this issue, we especially thank David Spencer of the University of Western Ontario, Canada, Ross Collins of the North Dakota State University, Wallace Eberhard, professor emeritus of the University of Georgia, James Aucoin of the University of South Alabama, Pat Washburn of Ohio University, Marc Edge of Sam Houston State University, Paulette Kilmer of the University of Toledo, Debra van Tuyl of Augusta State University, Bill Huntzicker of St. Cloud State University, Reed Smith of Georgia Southern University, and Bernell Tripp of the University of Florida. #

America's Appetite for Chinese Goods: Origins of the Trade Deficit with China, 1850 to 1858

Shuhua Dai

Between 1850 and 1858 Americans' love of China's tea, tea plants, ginger, salt, fur, iron, and porcelain tableware resulted in the beginning of the monumental trade deficit with China. Trade with China opened officially in 1850, and American attitudes toward the trade went through two distinct periods, as reflected in the U.S. press. From 1850 to 1855 when shipping was converting from sail to steam power, American traders imagined great potential wealth. But by 1855 traders realized that China, by contrast, imported very little from the American market. The new awareness of the deficit was widely discussed in the U.S. press in the second half of 1850s in newspapers in Washington, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Savannah, Natchez, and even in Mark Twain's hometown of Hannibal, MO.

American trade with China has been discussed in a multitude of articles and books, many of which focus on America's economic motivations and the opium trade at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Yet, very little research has paid close attention to the American-Chinese trade in 1850s, a period which marked the end of the Old China Trade. The reason for such neglect is the fact that America did not directly take part in the Second Opium War (1856-1860); as a result this war influenced American-Chinese trade only faintly. Because American trade policy shifted considerably during the decade of 1850s, this paper divides the decade into two periods. The first period from 1850 to 1855 precedes the Second Opium War. Trade in the second period from 1856 to 1858 occurred during the war. This paper studies the coverage on following aspects in each year to illustrate those changes: China's major export trades, America's minimal exports to China, America's policy on the China trade, important ports and American technological improvements in shipping, and America's relationship with Britain.

In 1850, with Britain's nullification of its old Navigation Acts, American ships were permitted for the first time to engage in the duty-free tea trade, on terms of equality with the British. Thus 1850 was the beginning of an optimistic and imaginative entrepreneurial period in the tea trade between America and China, which rapidly arose in two coastal trade centers in China, Foochow and Shanghai. Besides, 1850 was the starting point for America to import tea seeds (called tea nuts) and begin cultivating China tea. A letter from a farmer-

correspondent, Dr. Junius Smith, indicated the prevalence of tea experiments in South Carolina:

Tea Nuts received from China in May and planted on the 5th of June, are now, many of them, from one to three inches in height – strong, healthy, beautiful plants from the original China seed. They will grow as well as in China.¹

As an authority on tea planting, Smith provided several reports to different newspapers. In another letter, he not only gave an optimistic prospect for tea experiments in America, but also gave lessons about the cultivation of tea. He insisted that “if we do not cultivate our own tea, then I think we ought to be tributary to those who call us barbarians.”

Understand the tea culture: I can now understand why we cannot obtain the first quality of tea from China. The first growth of the leaf is so delicate. I can now understand why it is that a Chinese official of wealth and dignity will pay a hundred dollars a pound for tea grown in his own country. The quantity of buds and early leaves is small and the value enhanced to the scarcity.²

Besides tea seeds, America in 1850 for the first time imported iron from China. In January, 9,000 quintals (900 tons) of Chinese iron from Hong Kong were shipped via Liverpool to America. Americans regarded this metal as a new and important trade with China because it was now widely used in America's new Industrial Revolution. In Savannah, news of the Chinese iron trade inspired visions for constructing a trans-continental railroad:

Numerous trials have been made of this iron. This article will doubtless before long become an object of important trade with China. It may be great California Railroad. The iron rails of England and China may be made to meet half way in spanning the American Continent.³

Americans also valued various China trees. Cabinetmakers desired the wood, which was “recommended by its beauty, and the remarkable quality.” Druggists expected their stores would be filled with “vermifuges and panaceas

made from the roots, leaves and its flowers; preparations would be made from the leaves and berries.”⁴

Even during this era of sailing ships, the import of Chinese fabrics into California was becoming increasingly frequent. Americans expected that when regular steam transport was established, the trade with China would increase even more rapidly. In San Francisco, on September 17, 1850, an American correspondent reported to a Boston newspaper about the “immense” trade.

The amount of remittances to China from this port is beginning to be a very important item. Vessels depart weekly, and the consumption of China fabrics used here is immense. And this way silver currency is becoming more and more difficult to obtain for the ordinary transactions of the city.⁵

These aspects indicated that California had opened a new era of American trade. Moreover, the correspondent pointed out that the new sea traffic from America to China was being established from California, replacing the old eastbound Atlantic sea route to China that passed around Africa's Cape of Good Hope.

Vessels now rarely proceed to China direct, but take in a cargo for San Francisco, and hence run across. When the Panama railroad is completed, the trade between China and the Atlantic ports will probably be sent over the railroad, instead of being brought home round the Cape of Good Hope. This will open new tracks for our clippers to compete on.⁶

By 1850, California had become the most active port for the China trade. American traders were already busy importing large amounts of tea, free of duty, as well as tea trees for planting in America as well as fabric, trees for furniture, and tons of iron.

In the next year, Americans took several measures to speed trade to China from the eastern Atlantic ports. With the tea trade maintaining first place, Americans established new lines of Clipper ships that sailed from the Atlantic coast via Africa. The Clipper ship was a new kind of merchant vessel with three masts on which sat a large expanse of square sails. It was designed to carry a small, highly profitable cargo over long distances at high speeds. Speed was important because speed meant big profits for the owners and captains. Clippers traveled approximately 250 miles a day, and best of them could cover more than

¹ Junius Smith. “Tea cultivation in South Carolina.” *North American and United States Gazette* [Philadelphia], September 20, 1850, 41.

² Junius Smith. “Progress of tea culture in the United States.” *Vermont Watchman and State Journal* [Montpelier], June 06, 1850, 1.

³ “Iron from China.” *Daily Morning News* [Savannah], January 28, 1850, 1.

⁴ “The China tree,” *The Natchez Courier*, October 08, 1850, 1.

⁵ “The staghound,” *The Boston Daily Atlas*, August 26, 1850, 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*

400 miles a day, compared to the old ships' 150 miles a day.

In America, the tea business was expanding. California aspired to become the point of supply to the whole Pacific coast. The A.H. Donaldson establishment built a tea warehouse, and filled it with direct importations of the finest quality tea ever brought from China. Meanwhile, in South Carolina, Junius Smith continued experiments with planting Chinese tea trees in America. The press chronicled Smith's experiments, announcing how his project was progressing. In one letter, Smith suggested that the tea plant of China was doing well in America's soil and climate.

The tea plant of China is congenial to our climate; that the tea is pure American growth, and is in every respect the genuine tea of China tea plants. If the United States can produce one good quality of tea from the China plant, the various kinds of soil, the diversity of climate and location will produce every kind that grows in China.⁷

By 1851, Americans had become eager to promote steam power for shipping. The press reported that the new British steam ships outraced America's Clippers in international trade. The U.S. press, coast to coast, discussed the feasibility of a line of steam ships between California and China. People believed that it would be "entirely successful and pay well, if carried out with prudence".⁸ A traveler, having lived three years in China and knowing the position of affairs in that country, suggested solutions on the difficulties to establish a steam line, including the supply of coal and the establishment of depots. "There is abundance of coal in Australia – freights cheap and labor reasonable – and this great necessity for steamers will in close proximity to the line of depots which may be established."⁹

The press hailed news of the discovery of vast coal deposits throughout China. Some newspapers reacted immediately and acclaimed that it was of much value to America because plans for steam shipping were already matured. However, some newspapers noted problems with getting coal from China.

Coal deposits exist throughout the different mountain ranges. The most productive are in the middle and Southern parts of the empire; but unskillful mining and the absence of suitable means of transport much enhance the cost of the mineral, and limit its consumption.¹⁰

Based on this frequent and constant intercourse between these two countries, Americans' interest on the trade with China intensified. The short route to and from China, a business article published in *The Alta California* in May, 1851, even stated that China was "our other home, with an unbroken highway between it and us."¹¹

Americans had hoped that the China trade would help improve the nation's trade deficit. Already in 1849, before the China trade opened, the deficit had been enormous. In 1849, a financial report noted that American imports totaled \$11,704,754 – nine times larger than exports of \$1,490,945 – a deficit of \$10,443,811. However, by 1854, after five years of the China trade, U.S. imports increased fully 60 per cent, and exports did not increase over 12 per cent. Discussion in the press focused on the causes. Some critics blamed the deficit on England's continued monopoly on manufacturing which caused misuse of American labor. A report on the Tennessee cotton and tea trade stated that a great deal of labor was wasted by using it for transporting rather than manufacturing.

Instead of converting the cotton into cloth.....she sends it to Manchester, that the one may be eaten while the other is spun and woven. That done, the cloth goes to China to pay for tea to be transported to the banks of the Tennessee – the labor expended in carrying the cotton back and forth being ten times more than would have been required to spin and weave it on the ground.¹²

The most important report on American-Chinese trade in 1851 was the article analyzing the trade deficit. It was the first time the United States analyzed and highlighted the deficit. The problem with the imbalance in the Old China trade would continuously bother Americans. In 1852, tea planters, who gained much attention, faced difficulties. Though farmers still believed that various experiments proved that the China tea plants could grow and flourish in America, reports were no longer filled with positive news. An article in the *Missouri Courier* documented one failure: "Mr. White's importation of tea plants this year terminated in a total failure. Two cases of China plants shipped from Calcutta for New York are said to have perished."¹³

In California, however, prospects were optimistic. The mining of gold since 1848, two years after the acquisition of California, continued to boost American commerce and shipping such that American ships dominated the eastern Pacific Ocean, allowing the tea trade to remain active and steady.

There are 20,000,000 lbs annually consumed, and the

⁷ Smith, J. "Growth and manufacture of tea in the United States." *Daily National Intelligencer* [Washington,], July 19, 1851, 976.

⁸ "Steam communication with China." *The Alta California*, April 14, 1851, 1.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "The short route to and from China." *The Alta California*, May 15, 1851, 1.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Tea plant in South Carolina." *Missouri Courier* [Hannibal], May 27, 1852, 52.

quantity exported from China by sea, to all places, can not fall short of 100,000,000 lbs. Tea trade accounted for 60-80 percent of the total in 1852, and the increase in the quantity of tea is fairly steady.¹⁴

By 1852, America had acquired an importance in trade with China second only to Great Britain. American traders began to challenge England on the sea. As noted in the press, the main advantage for the United States in the China trade was the preference for America's faster ships, "even from British merchants, owing to their surpassing speed."¹⁵

Though American-Chinese trade developed along a natural and positive course, the Americans provided only a part of China's foreign market. The competition was stiff, which was documented in a report in 1853 about an official government mission to China. When their departure aboard a British vessel was delayed, critics, perhaps exaggerating, worried that America would lose the China market. "The delay of departure might cost America a century of exclusion for the China trade. They should take an American vessel instead of a British one."¹⁶ This report also offered another message that American steam navigation to China had by 1852 become the most active in the world.

Another article stressed that the acquisition of California, and the remarkable development of its mineral wealth, had been a vital impulse to the business of America. Americans fully realized it, by claiming that "the position of the United States is now such as to require the most active measures to secure such commercial connection with China as shall bring about an exchange of the commodities of the two countries."¹⁷

By 1853, Chinese wood, furniture and tableware were already popular among Americans. One Ohio newspaper reported that China tableware was introduced into the White House. "A firm in New York is preparing by order of President [Franklin] Pierce, China table ware for the White House, consisting of 450 pieces together with 55 dozens of glass – cost seven thousand five hundred dollars."¹⁸

In 1853, the most important development was the tobacco trade. Because the British excluded America from the India-China opium trade, Americans they did less well in supplying opium to China, a fact which ironically enhanced Americans' sense of moral superiority over the British. As a result, Americans exported a much less poisonous product, tobacco. They

expected with enthusiasm that the introduction of American tobacco would be welcomed as a "boon" by the Chinese, and might supersede the lower classes' use of opium. They also made investigation and drew a conclusion that "native Chinese tobacco is very weak, poor stuff."¹⁹ Based on such analysis, America now considered tobacco as the key to the enormous China market:

We shall suppose that our tobacco will be generally received there as a substitute for that poisonous drug. The tobacco, now so abundantly produced in our states, will become the pioneer of our trade, and open the way for our manufactures of cotton, wool, cutlery, and iron²⁰

This first period for American-Chinese trade, from 1850 to 1853, was somewhat romantic because of the dreamy nature of prospering traders. First, tea trade presented a steady uptrend, occupying the main aspect of the trade. At the same time, America's native tea growing experiments also progressed. Even though some of the projects failed, tea culture had become an important part of American everyday life. Second, California, a latercomer to ocean trading, surpassed the former leaders on the Atlantic coast, largely because its discoveries of gold and silver played the most important role in American-Chinese trade in the first half of 1850s. The steam ships, high-quality clippers and efficient navigations were all originated in the development of California. Third, besides tea, America imported various Chinese iron, coal, lumber, and tableware.

By 1853, Americans began to export tobacco to China, and pin their hopes on it for addressing the trade imbalance. There were always entirely optimistic opinions and claims in reports. At bottom, the American enthusiasm for trade and investment in China seemed rooted not in concrete reality, but in the American imagination.

During the next two years, 1854 and 1855, unsettled situations in China and a possible war with England and France caused a low ebb of American-Chinese trade. Meanwhile, a series of incidents increased friction between America and England. Traditionally, America had usually played a subordinate role to England in the China trade. However, in 1853, Americans began to blame England for their trade imbalance. Based on America's increasing economic and technological strength, its traders required more recognition and began to make demands. In 1854, one report described the banking interaction between America and England in China trade to imply America's discontentment with the requirement to use English banks:

Most American purchases were paid by bills of exchange

¹⁹ "Steam navigation to China." *North American and United States Gazette*.

²⁰ "China ware for the White House." *Fayetteville Observer*. July 18, 1853, 885.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ "Trade of China with the United States." *The Hindu County Gazette* [Raymond], November 18, 1852, 1.

¹⁶ "The mission to China." *New York Daily Times*, August 2, 1853, 4.

¹⁷ "Steam navigation to China." *North American and United States Gazette* [Philadelphia], March 01, 1853, 703.

¹⁸ "Steamers to China: prospects of the Chinese trade." *The New York Herald*, March 05, 1853, 10.

on England. Williams Sturgis. Before 1850, \$7,000,000 in specie was carried from the United States to China to pay for the importations from that country every year. From 1854, most purchases were paid by bills of exchange on England.²¹

In 1855, U.S. newspapers carried fewer reports on American-Chinese trade, focusing instead on the looming war in China. While England was projecting to enlarge its interest in China by means of war, Americans expressed opposition and for the first time stressed the inequity in the China trade, implying the America would stop following England and exploit the China market independently. One article in New York about the “rupture with England” severely criticized the injury that English banking caused American merchants:

The [English] bank Maury was the prime cause for the rupture with England, which was built for the China Trade. But it resulted in much injury to American owners of vessels and left an unjust imputation on the commercial community.²²

The imbalance of trade was documented in data compiled in 1856, proving that the criticism was reasonable. A business report showed that, in 1855, the imports in Shanghai amounted to £1,602,840, of which England supplied £1,122,241, America, £272,708, and £802,084 to other countries. Opium and silver were almost discharged. However, at the same time, the imports of American goods were only £272,708. Moreover, England acted as the banking agent, “a large proportion of the remittances brought by each New York packet being to meet the draughts from China on American account made payable in London.”²³

In 1856, the press coverage of American-Chinese trade focused on complaints against England. By now the trade deficit had become huge, the cause of much discontentment. The press had noticed the problem since 1851, but had paid little attention to it. In the early 1850s, Americans ascribed this depressing situation to the British monopoly. By 1856, however, they began to stress the peculiar and contradictory customs of China and America. Analysts suggested that the Chinese were self-sufficient and wanted very little from America, apart from silver, while Americans had strong demands for several Chinese exports, especially tea, which caused the trade deficit. A Philadelphia

newspaper published such an analysis of the two different cultures:

The Chinese are a self-customing people. Whatever they require, they make or raise themselves. Their food, dress, dwellings, vessels, everything they need, differ so entirely from ours, that we can supply them with little or nothing. But the article of tea, which we can get from them alone, has become to us a prime necessity. There is no equality in the trade. We must buy the tea and pay for it in silver.²⁴

Very likely, other unrecognized factors were at play. The imbalance could also be traced to Chinese trading policies and internal problems in the first half of 1800s. Chinese rulers of the Qing Dynasty placed strict limits on foreign traders. Even after the Opium War in 1842, China opened only five ports to foreign trade and British citizens. Meanwhile, China had internal problems. Irrigation systems and canals poorly maintained led to massive flooding of the populous Huang He valley near Beijing. A population explosion, an extravagant royal court, tax evasion by the rich, and widespread official corruption created terrible hardships for China's peasants. Besides, in the Taiping Rebellion from 1850 to 1864, peasants held on to large areas and killed 20 to 30 million Chinese. All these elements contributed to diminish the Chinese ability to buy foreign goods.²⁵

Before 1856, American traders expressed positive opinions about the Chinese-American trade based on their imagination of the Chinese market. Three reasons caused such optimism. First, the opening of the tea trade with America in 1850 had led to a tea “boom.” Second, the development of the faster ships helped build confidence. And third, and most important, they knew little about Chinese society except that the population was large; they assumed the Chinese would consume plenty of goods. However, that assumption proved wrong, as American traders gradually realized, leading them to analyze the problem. In fact, data showed that in 1855-1856, the export of tea from Shanghai reached “the enormous figure of eighty millions of pounds” which greatly enlarged the deficit.²⁶ According to published statistics, America's imports from China in 1856 amounted to nearly \$150 million, but its exports to only \$25 million²⁷

²⁴ “The trade of China.” *North American and United States Gazette* [Philadelphia], October 23, 1856, 847.

²⁵ Kang Liu, “The analysis of the trade imbalance between China and America.” *The Forum of Economics*, v.1,1.

²⁶ “Commercial troubles in China—trade with eastern nations.” *The New York Herald*, December 28, 1856, 4.

²⁷ “The Chinese empire opened to the trade of the world.” *New York Herald*, August 28, 1858, 4.

²¹ “The manner of carrying on trade with China.” *The Ohio Observer*, January 25, 1854, 19.

²² “What are the causes for a rupture with England?” *New York Daily Times*, Nov 20, 1855, 1.

²³ “The New Treaty with China—Importance of the Event.” *The New York Herald*. August 30, 1855, 4.

Facing reality, American traders finally conceded that, despite their pride in competing for the China trade, England had the advantage in China because of its monopoly in the Asian opium trade. Some American traders, depressed about prospects in China, then imagined selling American goods to the "large population" of Chinese immigrants in California:

Her (England) possession of India is an advantage. We have no such basis for a trade, unless we can find it in California. The long voyage from Atlantic ports to China and the cost bar our achieving a successful traffic. With California the case is different: much shorter, a large population composed of Chinese emigrants to build up a considerable Asian trade.²⁸

Some Americans favored stronger action in seeking a balance of trade. The American government made an effort to force the Chinese to adjust their revenue policy. However, the revenue system made by England after the First Opium War was against the interests of American merchants, who increasingly complained to the United States Commissioner that the business at the port had sustained great deterioration:

There is a great deal of dissatisfaction and mutual ill-will growing up between the American and British merchants in the ports of Shanghai and Fuchau. The Americans refused to pay export duties, but the British merchants conceived that they should be forced to [pay] duties. Meanwhile, America was enlarging its influence in the East by making contract with Japan and Siam. They thought there was destined to spring up a trade which would far outstrip that which they carried on with the nations of Europe.²⁹

The above report implied that even though America would not join the Second Opium War, the American traders were eager to take some advantage of it: They hoped that at the war's end they might gain a prominent position in China trade and also reduce the trade deficit.³⁰ They made further efforts to diversify both import and export products. The imports from China now had included tea, raw silk, silk goods, opium, shawl, sugar, matting, and cassia. The main sales to China included cotton, fabrics and ginseng. The direct remittances were paid by silver, gold, and foreign coin.³¹

By 1858, press coverage focused on predictions of business after the war. In 1860, after the English and the French defeated the Chinese, the

government of the Qing Dynasty accepted the new trade terms and opened its whole market to the world. This outcome raised American traders' enthusiasm anew. Now they imagined getting access to China's inland markets, still hoping to reduce the huge trade deficit:

Dense population, so many noble rivers, water economics, there is a greater trade carried on between the coasts and the centre of China than between all Europe and the rest of the world. In the port of Shanghai there have been as many as four thousand large junks at one time. There is a larger population than all Europe. They are a commercial and a trafficking race.³²

In the same article, the author stressed that American should not try to colonize China. He asserted that America must "deprive of all motives either for territorial aggrandizement or acquisition of political power in China, without forgetting that commerce was one of the most powerful means of civilization and national improvement." In fact, American interests in China continued to be focused mainly on peaceful contact and a steady Chinese-American trade.

In summary, the press coverage from 1850 to 1858 reflected the changes of American traders' attitudes towards the Chinese-American trade: from optimistic imagination to increasing concern about the trade deficit. In 1850, they were confident that the trade would be entirely successful. In 1851, they called China as "our other home, with an unbroken highway between it and us."³³ However, by 1856, for the first time, they realized that they had misunderstood the fundamental truths of Chinese society and that the imbalance of trade had become a chronic reality. From 1852 to 1858, they blamed the trade deficit on several factors, and made efforts to reduce it, including developing tobacco business and competing with England to amend Chinese trading policies, but all efforts failed.

²⁸ "The trade of China."

²⁹ "Commercial troubles in China."

³⁰ "The War in China—its effects on trade and government." *The New York Herald*, June 27, 1857, 2.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² "The Chinese empire opened to the trade of the world."

³³ "Speculations on the future trade of China." *New York Herald*, November 7, 1858, 8.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

- "A New Era in Shipping", *New York Daily Times*, June 24, 1857, 4.
- "Affairs in China", *Harper's Weekly*, Jun 26, 1858, 1.
- "Affairs in China: unpromising condition of business – Chinese hostility to Americans", *New York Times*, Oct. 22, 1857, 5.
- "American Trade with China", *Daily National Intelligencer* [Washington], Nov. 11, 1850; 763.
- "American Trade with China", *New York Times*, Oct. 23, 1858, 4.
- "An Item of China Trade", *North American and United States Gazette* [Philadelphia], Nov. 9, 1858; 976.
- "The approach to Canton", *Harper's Weekly*, Mar. 13, 1858, 1.
- "The attack on the Pei-Ho forts in China", *Harper's Weekly*, Aug. 14, 1858, 1.
- "The British Opium Trade in China", *Daily National Intelligencer* [Washington], May 19, 1853; 553.
- "The California and China Trade", *The Cleveland Herald*, Sep. 2, 1850, 1.
- "Canton and the boat girls", *Harper's Weekly*, Mar. 20, 1858, 1.
- "China Trade", *The Sacramento Union Saturday*, May 1, 1852, 1.
- "The China Tea Trade", *The Alta California* [San Francisco], Apr. 16, 1853, 1.
- "The China tree", *The Natchez Courier*, Oct. 8, 1850, 1.
- "China ware for the White House", *Fayetteville Observer*, July 18, 1853, 885.
- "The China Slave Trade", *Daily Morning News* [Savannah], Feb. 28, 1853; 1.
- "The Chinese empire opened to the trade of the world", *New York Herald*, Aug. 28, 1858, 4.
- "Coal in China", *North American and United States Gazette* [Philadelphia]. Mar. 29, 1851, 101.
- "Commercial affairs: sales at the stock exchange", *New York Times*, Apr 21, 1858, 8.
- "Commercial troubles in China—trade with eastern nations", *The New York Herald*, Dec. 28, 1856, 4.
- "The commissioner to China – the Chinese trade", *The Weekly Herald* [New York], Oct. 2, 1852, 317.
- "The East India and China Trade", *North American and United States Gazette* [Philadelphia, PA], Nov. 11, 1852; 610.
- "Flag of America Hauled down at Amoy—Trade", *The Weekly Herald* [New York], Oct. 8, 1853; 322.
- "From Utah: general intelligence – arrival of senator Broderick", *New York Times*, Nov. 23, 1858, 1.
- "Ginseng", *Harper's Weekly*, June 18, 1859, 1.
- "The great Chinese puzzle", *Harper's Weekly*, Feb. 7, 1857, 1.
- "How we pay for tea", *The Cleveland Herald*, May 23, 1851, 122.
- "Interesting from China", *The New York Herald*, Apr. 3, 1857, 1.
- "Is our tea poisoned?" *Harper's Weekly*, Apr. 11, 1857, 1.
- "Iron from China", *Daily Morning News* [Savannah], Jan. 28, 1850, 1.
- "Lord palmerston's government and the Chinese question", *Harper's Weekly*, Apr. 4, 1857, 1.
- "The manner of carrying on trade with China", *The Ohio Observer*, Jan. 25, 1854, 19.
- "Marine intelligence", *New York Times*, Apr. 2, 1859, 8.
- "The mission to China", *New York Daily Times*, Aug. 2, 1853, 4.
- "Mr. Reed in China", *Harper's Weekly*, Nov. 13, 1858, 1.
- "Nearest approach to a railway in China", *Harper's Weekly*, Feb. 7, 1857, 1.
- "The new Chinese question", *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 8, 1859, 1.
- "The New Treaty with China—Importance of the Event", *The New York Herald*, Aug. 30, 1855, 4.
- "The new commissioners to China", *Harper's Weekly*, June 6, 1857, 1.
- "Opening of the Salt Trade of China", *North American and United States Gazette* [Philadelphia], Sep. 17, 1851, 249.
- "The Opening Trade with China", *North American and United States Gazette* [Philadelphia] Oct. 29, 1858; 967.
- "The opening of China to the world", *Harper's Weekly*, Sep. 4, 1858, 1.
- "Our merchant navy – its present and future", *New York Times*, May 7, 1859, 4.
- "Our Trade with China" *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*. Aug. 18, 1857; 1.
- "Our treaty with China", *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 12, 1859, 1.
- "The ourbreak in India", *Harper's Weekly*, July 18, 1857, 1.
- "Pekin, the capital of China", *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 16, 1858, 1.
- "Position of the English in Asia", *Harper's Weekly*, Sep. 12, 1857, 1.
- "Protection to American Trade in China", *New York Herald*, July 4, 1857, 2.
- "Twenty-five per cent discount for cash", *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 31, 1857, 1.
- Smith, J. "Growth and manufacture of tea in the United States", *Daily National Intelligencer* [Washington], July 19, 1851, 976.
- Smith, J. "Progress of tea culture in the United States", *Vermont Watchman and State Journal* [Montpelier], June 6, 1850, 1.
- Smith, J. "Tea cultivation in South Carolina", *North American and United States Gazette* [Philadelphia], Sep. 20, 1850, 41.
- "The short route to and from China", *The Alta California*, May 15, 1851, 1.
- "Speculations on the future trade of China", *New York Herald*, Nov. 7, 1858, 8.
- "Some celestial paradoxes", *Harper's Weekly*, Apr. 25, 1857, 1.
- "The staghound", *The Boston Daily Atla*, Aug. 26, 1850, 1.
- "Steam communication with China", *The Alta California*, Apr. 14, 1851, 1.
- "Steam navigation to China", *North American and United States Gazette* [Philadelphia], Mar. 1, 1853, 703.
- "Steamers to China: prospects of the Chinese trade", *The New York Herald*, Mar. 05, 1853, 10.
- "Tea plant in South Carolina", *Missouri Courier* [Hannibal], May 27, 1852, 52.
- "The War in China—its effects on trade and government", *The New York Herald*, June 27, 1857, 2.
- "Trade of China with the United States", *The Hinds County Gazette* [Raymond], Nov. 18, 1852, 1.
- "The trade of China", *North American and United States Gazette* [Philadelphia], Oct. 23, 1856, 847.
- "Trade of China with the West Letter from an Amsterdam Firm", *The New York Herald* June 25, 1858; 3.
- "Trade with Cuba and China", *The Charleston Mercury*, Jan. 6, 1857, 1.
- "The United States and China", *New York Times*, Apr. 2, 1858, 4.
- "United States interests in China", *Harper's Weekly*, Apr. 10, 1858, 1.
- "The War in China", *Harper's Weekly*, Jan. 31, 1857, 1.

- "What are the causes for a rupture with England?" *New York Daily Times*, Nov. 20, 1855, 1.
 "What cotton is doing for us", *Harper's Weekly*, Nov. 13, 1858, 1.
 "What has been done in the last six months", *New York Daily Times*, July 22, 1857, 3.
 "Weekly market summary", *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 30, 1858, 1.

Secondary Sources

- Beeching, Jack. (1975). *The Chinese Opium Wars*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
 Christman, Margaret. (1984). *Adventurous pursuits: Americans and the China trade, 1784-1844*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
 Dudden, P. (1992). *The American Pacific: from the old China trade to the present*. New York: Oxford University Press.
 Goldstein, Jonathan. (1978). *Philadelphia and the China trade, 1682-1846: commercial, cultural, and attitudinal effects*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
 Holbrooke, Richard. (1980). *China and the U.S.: into the 1980s*. Washington: Office of Public Communication, Editorial Division.
 Jefferson, Hunt. (1999). *The India-China opium trade in the nineteenth century*. N.C.: McFarland.
 Kang Liu. (2007) "The analysis of the trade imbalance between China and America." *The Forum of Economics*, v.1. P1.
 May, Ernest & Fairbank, J. (1986). *America's China trade in historical perspective*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
 Stockwell, M. (2003). *Westerners in China: a history of exploration and trade, ancient times through the present*. N.C.: McFarland.

Women's Suffrage in Wyoming in 1869: The Uproar Against Female Jurors

Jocelyn Mitchell

This paper analyzes the press coverage surrounding the territory of Wyoming's women's suffrage clause in 1869. Wyoming was the first territory to grant women's suffrage in America. The women's suffrage statute allowed women to perform a multitude of civic duties, including the ability to run or achieve public office and to serve on jury panels. The press largely believed that women would abandon their domestic duties with their new roles as active political citizens. Women of Wyoming faced accusations by the press that they had achieved very little to improve their lives since their inclusion in the political arena. This paper analyzes the claims made by opponents and proponents regarding female suffrage in the territory.

Hopes within the territory of Wyoming that women's roles would change once women had the right to vote failed to come true during the late 19th century. Throughout the remainder of the 19th century, the overwhelming nationwide press coverage pertaining to the territory's women did not adequately paint a picture of their new status. Rather, juxtaposing positions in the press of the 19th century made clear the public's role in maintaining the status of women as second-class to men, especially as legislators and jurors.

The territory of Wyoming, established July 1868, was the first region in America to enfranchise women. Women's suffrage in Wyoming did not generate a great deal of publicity or support nationwide, as one would imagine. Rather, it appeared in many papers as a short paragraph or blurb located at the bottom of the pages where coverage of issues of little importance might appear. Many criticized the rapid acceptance in Wyoming's democratic First Legislature of the bill for women's suffrage, which was signed into law by the first Governor John A. Campbell in December 1869.¹ Opponents of the passage of the bill claimed that the main goal was to generate an increase in the population of women in Wyoming and in doing so, lead to increased revenues. The general response nationwide greatly criticized Wyoming's hasty recognition of women's rights.²

Wyoming had so rushed to enfranchise women that the legislation had not publicized the bill among its residents. According to *The Wisconsin State Register*, the Wyoming Statute stressed a legal responsibility for women 21 and over:

¹ "Current events: Where the women can vote." *New York Evangelist* [New York], 51: 8. (23 Dec. 1869): 40.

² "The great joke of Wyoming." *New York Evangelist* [New York], 42: 41. (12 Oct. 1871): 3.

That every woman of the age of 21 years, residing in this Territory, may at every election be holden under the laws thereof, cast her vote. And her rights to the elective franchise and to hold office shall be under the election laws of the Territory as those of electors.³

Two months later, in February 1870, when Utah enacted a similar statute granting its female citizens suffrage, it received more publicity than Wyoming. Because of the lack of news coverage immediately following female enfranchisement in Wyoming, some citizens in the East believed that Utah remained at the forefront of women's suffrage.⁴

The idea to enfranchise women in Wyoming had gained momentum quickly. Some claimed that Esther Morris, now known as the "Mother of Suffrage," presented the idea to several key figures in the town of Sweetwater, the territory's first major mining town. Morris pleaded with the candidates running for council president and territorial governor to grant female suffrage in return for their election.⁵ This pact occurred during a supposed "tea party" at Morris' home. Governor Campbell and a Colonel Bright, President of the First Council, did live up to their promise to Morris shortly after taking office.⁶

After the passage of women's suffrage, Morris served as the first female Justice of the Peace in Sweetwater.⁷ During her short time of service, she made an impact on her community, demonstrating the capability of women in public office. Morris effectively rid the streets of Sweetwater of public drunkenness and promoted order and respect in the atmosphere of the courtroom.⁸ According to *Harper's Bazaar*, Morris showed little sympathy for drunkenness and even when defendants broke down in sobs in an attempt to gain her sympathy, she applied the fullest punishment of the law for their wrongdoings, remaining unsympathetic to criminals.⁹

Morris served as a forerunner for women's rights in the territory. The developing West in this era became a widespread interest of the democratic East. Frederick Davenport of *The Outlook* covered an Easterner named Hughes as he journeyed across the West. Davenport gives a detailed description of Hughes's attempt to pinpoint women's suffrage in the territory. Hughes spoke

with well-known Republicans on the matter, only to discover that according to these residents, Esther Morris initially spread the idea of suffrage because it was seen as a "naturally human" right that all people should enjoy.¹⁰ According to Hughes' account about the new West, the territories had developed into an area of greater equality for all people than had the Eastern states.¹¹

After Wyoming passed the suffrage bill, many journalists argued about where the idea of female suffrage originated. According to Victoria Lamont, while some linked the idea to the party by Esther Morris, others traced it to what was believed to be a joke of a proposal by Governor Campbell.¹² Some even argued that the territory's leaders passed the clause mainly to attract women.¹³ Lamont calls into question Morris's role in promoting the enfranchisement of women. Lamont proposes that Esther Morris' service as the first female Justice of Peace occurred during a shortage of upright citizens.¹⁴ She purports that Morris happily went back to the private sphere of her home after serving only one term.¹⁵ This argument surrounding suffrage greatly questions the intentions of the early pioneers involved in the formation of Wyoming.

Lamont presents the reluctance of women to run or achieve public office. For the most part, according to Lamont, women did not want to become involved for fear of appearing "mannish and self-serving."¹⁶ According to Lamont, women in politics faced accusations of prostitution. The label "public women," a common reference to prostitutes, was adopted by anti-suffragists in referring to women in politics.¹⁷ Anti-suffragists further described them as women "...burdened with the responsibility of full citizenship."¹⁸

Many opponents of suffrage believed that Wyoming passed the statute as a ploy to attract people and wealth to the developing territory. Much of the press accused the First Legislature of adopting women's suffrage to its Constitution in order to spur female migration to the territory, thus increasing Wyoming's revenue as women across America took on new roles as primary consumers of the family. *The Galaxy's* Edward Lee claimed that Wyoming used

³ "Female suffrage in Wyoming." *The Wisconsin State Register* [Portage], 42. (25 Dec. 1869): col. D.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "Women's suffrage is 75 years old today; Idea started at a tea party in Wyoming." *New York Times*. (10 Dec. 1944): 48.

⁶ Ibid. "The Wyoming birth of suffrage resulted from a tea party given by a determined pioneer woman, Mrs. Esther Morris, a former New York State milliner, who emigrated in 1869 to South Pass City, a gold-mining boom town atop the Wind River Mountains."

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ "Mrs. Justice Morris." *Harper's Bazaar* [New York], 3:21. (21 May 1870): 332.

¹⁰ Frederick M. Davenport. "Hughes and the people of the west." *The Outlook* [New York]. (20 Sept. 1919): 141.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Victoria Lamont. "More than she deserves: Woman suffrage memorials in the 'equality state.'" *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 26 no. 1. (2006): 27-28.

¹³ Ibid. Victoria Lamont is an associate professor at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada. Lamont's area of research focuses on 18th and 19th century western society, specifically the women.

¹⁴ Victoria Lamont. p. 27.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Victoria Lamont. p. 24.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Victoria Lamont. p. 28.

suffrage as a “first-class advertisement.”¹⁹ However, the population of women in Wyoming remained far less than that of men following their 1869 inclusion in the legislative and judicial processes. According to an 1875 edition of the *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, this scheme did not create the intended population growth results as the territory only had an estimated 1,500 eligible female voters at the time, as compared to “...14,500 male voters.”²⁰

In contrast, proponents of enfranchisement touted the expanded rights and privileges that came with women's suffrage, rights that women had not previously enjoyed. These new rights included property ownership and the power to control their own bodies. According to *The Ladies' Repository*, “Now, she can legally buy and sell, earn and own, will, deed, and contract; can be guardian of her children; can vote in Utah and Wyoming...”²¹ Women could also run for office or own a business if they pleased. Prior to female suffrage, men maintained women, their bodies, and all the assets women might have before marrying as their property upon marriage.²² These shifting roles were viewed as a vital step toward liberation and equal status with men.

Following enfranchisement, women began pursuing leading roles in political offices, regardless of the negative responses they faced. The increased activity of women in the political ring showed the seriousness that women placed on their enfranchisement.²³ Suffrage provided women an opportunity to escape longtime lower, second-class status when compared to men. In time, women gained confidence and support of both political parties within the territory. In an 1883 *New York Times* article, Mrs. Durway of Wyoming had politicians of her party petitioning for her as governor, a petition demonstrating the considerably progressive changes for women in those times.²⁴

Understanding the process of the new political system in Wyoming became of interest to other states. One correspondent from *Detroit Free Press* and member of the Woman's Rights Club recounts her experience to the *Galveston Daily* after witnessing firsthand the election process in Wyoming, where her female cousin ran for office. She describes her cousin's encounters with female constituents in the area and their unfavorable responses to her as a female candidate for public office.²⁵ Despite spending a great deal of time campaigning for the votes of newly enfranchised women, the correspondent's cousin still lost

¹⁹ Edward M. Lee. “The woman movement in Wyoming.” *The Galaxy. A Magazine of Entertaining Reading* [New York], 13: 6. (June 1872): 755.

²⁰ “Woman-suffrage in Wyoming.” *Daily Rocky Mountain News* [Denver]. (26 Aug. 1875): col. C.

²¹ “Women's record at home.” *The Ladies Repository; a Monthly Periodical, Devoted to Literature, Art and Religion* [Cincinnati], 35. (March 1875): 266.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ “A woman for governor.” *New York Times*. (18 Dec. 1883): 1.

²⁵ “Suffrage in Wyoming: An election with women candidates.” *Galveston Daily* [Houston], 126. (29 Aug. 1886): 8.

the election to a male candidate. This election exposed the relentless efforts of politicians to obtain votes, including the practice of dispatching carriages to fetch female voters and take them to the polls in return for their votes.²⁶ The election outcome caused turmoil within her cousin's immediate family because the cousin believed her husband betrayed her by casting his vote in favor of the male candidate.²⁷ Obviously, women and men did not allow familial obligations to interfere with the electoral process.

Suffrage in Wyoming spurred confusion and controversy throughout the United States. The *Saturday Evening Post* went so far as to declare that it disgusts men to see women work outside of the home, which they defined as woman's sphere according to nature. They complained that female reformers, striving for the enfranchisement of all women, actually hurt the situation of women by worsening the workload of the home through their contempt for their husbands.²⁸

As the suffrage debate grew and spread across America, women in the press began speaking out in opposition. According to an article by E. A. Bloodgood, appearing in *Lippincott's Magazine*, “There exists another and an immense body of women who do not wish to vote, but whose voices are seldom heard...”²⁹ Bloodgood expounds her idea that female suffrage would grant even the worst woman a vote that could be manipulated, bought, or traded for favors by politicians or spouses. In this instance, the vote may even erase a well-informed vote, according to Bloodgood's claim that women are likely to vote for a candidate based on his or her appearance rather than political ideals or platforms. Bloodgood contends that, “...we shall see the peculiar failings and faults of which women have their full share made the medium of inevitable public disaster.”³⁰ Overall, Bloodgood maintained that the benefits of female suffrage do not outweigh its detriments and that women prefer not to have such obligations thrust upon them.

Another aspect of female enfranchisement, which created much controversy in the press, was the inclusion of women in the judicial process. Female jurors produced vast improvements in the court system to the dismay of many anti-suffragists. Women created more reform than many outside the territory, at the time, were willing to accredit them. While helping to rid the territory of wrongdoers, women helped create a more respectful and attentive atmosphere in the courtroom.³¹ The courts welcomed women as jurors, recognizing with appreciation their abilities to abide by their civic duty, acting

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ “Woman's rights.” *Saturday Evening Post* [Philadelphia]. (19 March 1870): 2.

²⁹ E. A. Bloodgood. “A word for a woman against female suffrage.” *Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science* [Philadelphia]. (Aug. 1884): 169.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Susan B. Anthony & Ida Husted Harper, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage, volume 4: 1885-1900* (New York: Privately published, 1902): 1008-1009.

as impartial yet fully focused members in determining their own decisions based on the evidence and arguments presented during court. Chief Justice J. H. Howe, the presiding judge over the first female grand jury in the world, informed the women that they should not let any outside parties interfere with them and that they were under full protection of the law.³²

Judges quickly noted differences in their courtrooms after having experienced mixed juries comprised of equal proportions of men and women. Women acted as impartial and moral jurors and created a more just atmosphere in the courtroom. Judges claimed that it greatly improved their once flawed jury system, in which criminals often escaped charges by their male peers for punishable offenses. According to the *Daily Evening Bulletin*, "The bar, the bench, and the intelligent men of the country had long felt that something was needed to improve and justify our jury system, something to lift it above prejudice and passion; and imbue it with a higher regard for law, justice, oath, and conscience."³³

The court's positive attitude toward female jurors contributed to other improvements in the courtroom atmosphere. According to Judge J.W. Kingman, appearing in *Shaker and Shakeress Monthly*, "The spectators come [to court] better dressed, chew less tobacco, and spit less, sit more quietly in their seats, walk more carefully over the floor, talk and whisper less; and in all respects the courtroom assumes a more dignified and business-like air."³⁴ Judge Kingman noted the presence of women in the courtroom had a "...purifying and beneficial effect in practice."³⁵ Furthermore, Judge Kingman states that although women of the time greatly depended on their husbands for support, they did not allow their dependence to sway their decisions or activity when performing their civic duties.³⁶ Having morally sound women serving as jurors resulted in increased enforcement of the territory's laws prohibiting gambling, public intoxication, and other crimes. Female jurors obtained the respect of their male counterparts, evident in the overall improved environment of the courtroom.

Through their participation as jurors, women shaped and influenced their communities throughout Wyoming. Appearing in *Arthur's Home Magazine*, a letter by Chief Justice Howe to Chicago's *Legal News* claims that female jurors helped rid the towns of evildoers and that the experiment of having female jurors proved successful. Chief Justice Howe insists that in his 25 years of

³² "Women jurymen the first female grand jury in the world in session at Laramie City, Wyoming territory—Judge Howe's charge." *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 57. (10 March 1870): col. D.

³³ "Mixed juries of men and women in Wyoming." *Daily Evening Bulletin* [San Francisco], 147. (29 March 1871): col. F.

³⁴ "Woman suffrage a success." *Shaker and Shakeress Monthly* [Ann Arbor], 3: 7. (July 1893): 52.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

presiding over the courts, he had not witnessed such rapid changes as he had since women became active jury members.³⁷

Some churches spoke out in defense of women as jurors. The *Zion's Herald* describes an instance where women serving as jurors separated themselves in categories of "good and evil."³⁸ Reverend L. Hartsough defended female jurors of Wyoming, pronouncing that "...as a consequence the evil women are fleeing from Cheyenne; the very thing some feared as the result of this privilege is the very opposite of the facts—bad women flee from good women on the jury, as they do from good women everywhere else."³⁹

Some women better understood the need for change and the importance of education once they performed as jurors. Published in *Georgia Weekly Telegraph and Georgia Journal & Messenger*, a letter from Sally Sprout, whose aunt had served on the first grand jury, described her aunt's change in attitude after jury duty. Her aunt now wanted to attend school and wished to have the respect of her husband, things she had not realized she wanted or even lacked prior to serving on the first grand jury.⁴⁰ Women's involvement in politics not only bettered their social positions, but also opened up new avenues, such as education, that had often been disregarded in order to tend to households and start families in 19th century America.

The newly achieved role of women in Wyoming caused great uproar across the country from both men and women. The inclusion of female jurors was touted in the press as an "experiment."⁴¹ Anti-suffragists often linked female suffrage with promiscuity. According to Lamont, jury duty often exposed women to "unseemly testimony."⁴² Furthermore, Lamont contends that the controversy involving female jurors revolved around their absence from their domesticated roles and the uncomfortable proximity in which women jurors would find themselves with men jurors.⁴³ Anti-suffragists believed that by practicing suffrage, women abandoned their domestic lives for selfish or individualistic reasons and as a way to protest patriarchy. According to Lisa Cochran Higgins, such selfish reasons that women would want or partake in suffrage included defying their spouses, mocking the institution of marriage, or even escaping submissive positions within their naturally identified domain.⁴⁴

³⁷ "Editor's Department: What women are doing." *Arthur's Home Magazine* [Philadelphia], 36. (July 1870): 60.

³⁸ "The women jurors of Wyoming." *Zion's Herald* [Boston], 47:15. (14 Apr. 1870): 176.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Sally Sprout. "The woman's jury: A Wyoming young lady tells all about it—A spicy letter." *Georgia Weekly Telegraph and Georgia Journal & Messenger* [Macon], 40. (24 May 1870): F.

⁴¹ "Mixed juries of men and women in Wyoming." *Daily Evening Bulletin* [San Francisco].

⁴² Victoria Lamont. p. 26.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Lisa Cochran Higgins. "Adulterous individualism, socialism, and free love in nineteenth century anti-suffrage writing." *Legacy*, 21. (Nebraska: University of

Proponents of suffrage were often depicted as degenerates and lower class, lacking the ability to make morally sound decisions in the courts and at the polls.

According to the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, little change had occurred in the territory of Wyoming despite women's participation in the political arena.⁴⁵ When women first served on grand juries in Wyoming, the court relieved many men of their civic duty due to population differences between genders. This could explain the rising number of women that attempted to be excused from jury duty later in the 19th century. The leaders of the territory wanted women to get involved in government, but they overexerted it by requiring that so many women serve on grand juries regardless of population differences between the sexes. According to *Bangor Daily Whig & Courier*, the first grand jury, comprised of eleven women, only had one man on the jury panel.⁴⁶

However, both sexes found their roles as jurors tedious and bothersome, especially women. For women the reasons for not serving on jury panels centered on conflicts related to their domestic roles. They often faced difficulty with husbands, who sometimes could not, but more often would not perform their wife's daily tasks in their absence. According to the *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, the excuses women could use to be relieved of jury duty included:

All nursing mothers, all approaching a condition of maternity, all the delicate, nervous or hysterical, all who from temporary physical condition are not fit for sitting on a long trial, all of notoriously bad character, and all who are exempt from the same causes men would be. These classes include nine-tenths of the whole sex.⁴⁷

These legitimate excuses seemed easily accessible to women, who found themselves pressured by husbands to refuse serving in order to complete daily domestic activities. One woman serving on the first female grand jury explained the dilemmas within the home that accompanied her legislative duties to her niece. In her account, Sprout insists that her uncle moaned and groaned about her aunt's absence and eventually sent Sprout with her infant cousin to the courtroom because he did not want to tend to the needs of the baby.⁴⁸

On top of conflicts with their domestic lives, the exhaustion of spending tireless nights to arrive at a unanimous decision with male counterparts, who often wanted their exclusion contributed to women's loss of enthusiasm to serve as jurors. In cases involving women, judges preferred female jurors to ensure

Nebraska, 2004). Pp.193-194.

⁴⁵ "Woman suffrage in Wyoming: Effects of the system on the morals of the territory — Women as jurors." *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 53. (1 Sept. 1875): col. F.

⁴⁶ "Wyoming Territory, as is well known, has given the ballot to women." *Bangor Daily Whig & Courier*, 58. (9 March 1870): col. A.

⁴⁷ "Woman-suffrage in Wyoming." *Daily Rocky Mountain News* [Denver].

⁴⁸ Sally Sprout. "The woman's jury: A Wyoming young lady tells all about it — A spicy letter."

that the defendant or plaintiff faced a decision comprised by their peers. Even though women had a moral obligation to the courtroom after having completely revamped the overall atmosphere, the pressure of their familial obligations and the unrelenting anti-suffragist sentiment led to their ultimate elimination from jury duty.⁴⁹

In addition, according to Governor Edward M. Lee, no laws existed that outlawed female participation on jury panels.⁵⁰ According to Susan B. Anthony & Ida Husted Harper, editors of the *History of Woman Suffrage, volume 4: 1885-1900*, Chief Justice Howe's successor did not call upon women during his term and few men believed that jury duty by women was acceptable. Eventually the appearance of women on the juries mostly dissolved, with a few exceptions for special cases.⁵¹

Proponents of suffrage in Wyoming argued that women act as major contributors to the lives of men, so it did not make sense to leave them out of the decision making process. According to judges' arguments in the *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, there had not been an instance in Wyoming since women's enfranchisement that deemed them unfit or harmful to the public, as so many opponents claimed.⁵²

The influence of religion on territories allowing female enfranchisement also became a hot topic in the suffrage debate. According to a *New York Times* article by Frederick Wood, only those women with invested interests in the Mormon Church voted in the states allowing female suffrage. Wood claimed that women only exercised their right to vote when the Mormon Church called upon them to do so and, even still, women had not brought about any major reforms.⁵³

Wood also claimed that women did not often participate in elections and had done little to improve their own lives though they maintained enfranchisement for nearly 20 years in some of the states mentioned. Many women who exercised their right to vote came from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. According to Wood, these women voters did little to improve standards of living for women even at the community level.⁵⁴

In 1872, the Wyoming Legislature attempted to repeal women's suffrage. An outspoken opponent to suffrage, Mr. Nuckolls of the *Laramie*

⁴⁹ "In the earlier days of woman suffrage in Wyoming it was quite usual to require jury duty of women." *Morning Oregonian* [Portland], 9611: C. (23 July 1891): 4.

⁵⁰ Susan B. Anthony & Ida Husted Harper, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage, volume 4: 1885-1900*. p. 1008-1009.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² "Women in Wyoming practical working of the right of suffrage in that territory--- Judge Kingman's address at the Tabernacle." *Daily Rocky Mountain News* [Denver]. (19 Sept. 1877): col. C.

⁵³ Frederick Wood. "Women's suffrage a failure, he says: Investigator tells of Conditions found in Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and Colorado." *New York Times*, (17 Jan. 1909): C0.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Sentinel, told the *Massachusetts Ploughman and New England Journal of Agriculture* of his belief that women exist merely to serve men and that the territory should adopt a new marriage ceremony if suffrage remains intact, otherwise they should repeal female suffrage.⁵⁵ This battle between traditional views and newly liberated roles of women in society spread across the territory, greatly dividing its citizens by both social status and gender. The fight to repeal enfranchisement by the Second Territorial Legislature of Wyoming failed due to Governor Campbell's veto of the repeal act.

In defense of women, following the attempt by the Second Legislature to repeal the bill granting women's suffrage, Governor Campbell explained the benefits enjoyed by the territory since enfranchisement. Women were instrumental in alleviating the distresses of the legislative and judicial systems and therefore should not face exclusion considering their contributions. Governor Campbell declared that women have exercised their rights to the fullest without compromising their obligations to maintain law and order at the feet of their opponents.⁵⁶ *The Yankton Press* published Governor Campbell's response to the attempted repeal: "All these—better conscience, the exalted sense of justice, and the abiding love of order—have been made by the enfranchisement of women to contribute to the good government and well-being of our Territory."⁵⁷

Other reporters believed that women should have the fullest rights of their male counterparts, whether they wanted these rights or not. A few discussed the possibility that women would be obligated by law to physically fight to protect their rights as active members in the armed forces. However, even fewer actually expected women to fulfill the role as members of Wyoming's militia because of the traditional view of women as primary caregivers within the home. The *Morning Republican* featured an article by a Western editor informing women that they had the ability to serve on the state's militia and that Wyoming would soon need to create one after establishing itself as a territory.⁵⁸

In surveys of polls to determine the public opinion of suffrage, newspaper reporters found differing viewpoints between the sexes. Although many men did not want to accept female voters and their role in the decision making process, the polls' positive changes were too apparent to disregard. These changes produced a civilized attitude by men toward women, even if they did not approve of their presence at the polls or in the courtrooms. Appearing in the *Denver Mirror*, reprinted in the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, Matilda Hurdman

gave an account of her visit to the polls of Cheyenne in 1878 and unveiled public opinion in favor of female suffrage.⁵⁹ Hurdman discovered from her interviews that seven out of eight people found that the inclusion of women in politics improved the territory.⁶⁰ According to an opponent of female suffrage with whom Hurdman spoke, women had accomplished two things within the territory: "... both political parties had been compelled to nominate better men for office... The other good spoken of was the protection of property-owners in their right."⁶¹

The women of Wyoming actively participated in the election process and their presence contributed to a respectful atmosphere at the polls and in the courtrooms.

Suffragists regarded the territory of Wyoming with much respect for their active stance in the progression of equality. E.A. Thomas of *Potter's American Monthly* reported that female voters in Wyoming attended the polls in large quantities.⁶² However, according to Thomas, because the female population remained just a fragment of the overall population of the territory, men had greater force. Thomas explained that "While the female voters exert a large influence, they have not yet acquired sufficient strength to mold the local government very much in accordance with their own views."⁶³

Thomas also explained that women's roles within the home have not altogether vanished. Women did not neglect their household duties, but continued tending to the needs of the family, primarily cooking, sewing, and cleaning, even though they attained suffrage. Women did not attempt to abandon their roles as mothers and wives. They returned home from the polls as though nothing had changed in their lives.⁶⁴

Furthermore, Thomas contended that many women once disliked the idea of suffrage, primarily because of the fear that people might coerce them to vote on matters on which they had no opinion. However, now that many women maintained their rights to property ownership, once denied to them for so long, and paid taxes to their governments, they preferred to participate in the election of representatives and in decisions regarding allocation of tax money.⁶⁵

Thomas also argued against claims of religious influence over women's voting habits. Thomas explained that women of Wyoming make rational, intelligent decisions in casting ballots. He stated, "They do think for themselves

⁵⁹ "Woman suffrage in Wyoming: How the women voted in Cheyenne—Scenes about the polls." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 206: G. (13 Dec. 1878): 2.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² E. A. Thomas. "Female suffrage in Wyoming." *Potter's American Monthly* [Philadelphia], 18. (May 1882): 492.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁵ "A specimen opponent of female suffrage." *Massachusetts Ploughman and New England Journal of Agriculture*, 23: 4. (2 March 1872): 31.

⁵⁶ "The legislature of Wyoming recently repealed the law granting suffrage to women, but Governor Campbell vetoed and killed the repealing bill." *The Yankton Press*, 26: 53. (31 Jan. 1872): col. F.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ "A savage Western editor reminds the women of Wyoming of two facts." *Morning Republican* [Little Rock], 293. (13 April 1870): col. A.

and vote independently.⁶⁶ On the other hand, the women of Utah merely had to reach the age of 14 and join the Mormon Church to have total enfranchisement. In doing so, Utah disregarded the naturalization process by granting immigrant women ages 14 and up the right to vote so long as their vote favored the intentions of the Mormon Church.⁶⁷

Before the territory of Wyoming joined the Union, another debate sparked across America as to whether women should continue utilizing their rights granted by Wyoming after it became a state. In response to nationwide debate over the issue, Wyoming women held a meeting. As reported in the *Rocky Mountain News*, 700 women attended this meeting and urged leaders of the new constitutional convention to consider maintaining their previously granted rights.⁶⁸ The federal government conceded to this demand upon Wyoming's entry into the Union in 1890, far before all women in America were enfranchised.⁶⁹

Once admitted as a state, Wyoming came under fire by the rest of the nation because of its progressive stance on women and its women's suffrage clause. Even though Wyoming had allowed suffrage for nearly 20 years, politicians in other states resisted, contending that they should analyze how women have exercised their rights before allowing it themselves. A key question concerned whether Wyoming women who moved to another state could vote if that state denied women's suffrage. The states wanted to make it clear that though women may vote in Wyoming, they did not deserve that right in states that had not adopted woman's suffrage. If female citizens of Wyoming chose to relocate to another state, they would sacrifice this right.⁷⁰ Some politicians did not want Wyoming to keep its women's suffrage act in its state constitution.⁷¹ According to the *Morning Oregonian*, Republicans feared that by granting Wyoming's admission with women's suffrage intact, they might lose support of their party outside of Wyoming, since many of Wyoming's female citizens aligned themselves with the Republican Party.⁷²

This tug of war between forces inside and outside of Wyoming appeared abundantly clear. As noted in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, two men, Professor James Bryce and Horace Plunkett, wrote a book about the United States after

Wyoming became a state.⁷³ They claimed that because of the inclusion of women in the political process, Wyoming experienced a decrease in crimes against women and decreased divorce rates.⁷⁴

The state committee of Wyoming believed otherwise. Although women had full authority to exercise legislative duties just as their male counterparts, they mostly remained overshadowed. In this selection, the state committee contests those claims by Bryce and Plunkett, stating that men continued to have little respect for women in their new roles as active citizens and that the law had thus failed to protect the rights of women.⁷⁵

For the most part, the American press played a vital role in shaping public opinion pertaining to women's suffrage and its successes or lack thereof within the territory of Wyoming. Female jurors remained key players in molding the courtroom atmosphere and procedures that continue today, such as a collected body of jurors that deliberate until reaching a decision that does not result from fear of the accused. Furthermore, the women of Wyoming may have had a greater effect on their own lives if their population remained equally substantial to that of men in the territory. The results of Wyoming's immediate inclusion of women into its politics proved to generate more success than failure, though the disparate coverage by newspapers across America during the 19th century might lead one to believe otherwise.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ "Wyoming's women a demand made that their right to vote be recognized by the new Constitution." *Rocky Mountain News* [Denver]. (16 June 1889): col. C.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ "It has been claimed that Wyoming women, now being full suffrage citizens of the Union, are entitled to vote anywhere." *The Atchison Daily Globe*, 954: 3. (7 Aug. 1890): col. E.

⁷¹ "Women of Wyoming: Democrats strongly oppose to granting them suffrage." *Morning Oregonian* [Portland], 9198. (27 March 1890): col. C.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ "Women's reply to Bryce: They assert that things in Wyoming are going bravely under woman suffrage." *Boston Daily Advertiser*. (3 Nov. 1890): col. F.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

- "A savage Western editor reminds the women of Wyoming of two facts." *Morning Republican* [Little Rock], 293 (13 April 1870): col. A.
- "A specimen opponent of female suffrage." *Massachusetts Ploughman and New England Journal of Agriculture*, 23: 4. (2 March 1872): 31.
- "A woman for governor." *New York Times*. (18 Dec. 1883): 1.
- Bloodgood, E. A. "A word for a woman against female suffrage." *Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science* [Philadelphia]. (Aug. 1884): 169.
- "Current events: Where the women can vote." *New York Evangelist* [New York], 51: 8. (23 Dec. 1869): 40.
- "Editor's Department: What women are doing." *Arthur's Home Magazine* [Philadelphia], 36. (July 1870): 60.
- "Female suffrage in Wyoming." *The Wisconsin State Register* [Portage], 42. (25 Dec. 1869): col. D.
- "The great joke of Wyoming." *New York Evangelist* [New York], 42: 41. (12 Oct. 1871): 3.
- "In the earlier days of woman suffrage in Wyoming it was quite usual to require jury duty of women." *Morning Oregonian* [Portland], 9611: C. (23 July 1891): 4.
- "It has been claimed that Wyoming women, now being full suffrage citizens of the Union, are entitled to vote anywhere." *The Atchison Daily Globe* [Atchison], 954: 3. (7 Aug. 1890): col. E.
- Lee, Edward M. "The woman movement in Wyoming." *The Galaxy. A Magazine of Entertaining Reading* [New York], 13: 6. (June 1872): 755.
- "The legislature of Wyoming recently repealed the law granting suffrage to women, but Governor Campbell vetoed and killed the repealing bill." *The Yankton Press*, 26: 53. (31 Jan. 1872): col. F.
- "Mixed juries of men and women in Wyoming." *Daily Evening Bulletin* [San Francisco], 147. (29 March 1871): col. F.
- "Mrs. Justice Morris." *Harper's Bazaar* [New York], 3:21. (21 May 1870): 332.
- "Poor Jane. How she became a victim to a woman suffrage in Wyoming." *Daily Rocky Mountain News* [Denver]. (05 April 1877): col. D.
- Sprout, Sally. "The woman's jury: A Wyoming young lady tells all about it—A spicy letter." *Georgia Weekly Telegraph and Georgia Journal & Messenger* [Macon], 40. (24 May 1870): col. F.
- "Suffrage in Wyoming: An election with women candidates." *The Galveston Daily News* [Houston], 126. (29 Aug. 1886): 8.
- Thomas, E. A. "Female suffrage in Wyoming." *Potter's American Monthly* [Philadelphia], 18. (May 1882): 492.
- "Woman suffrage a success." *Shaker and Shakeress Monthly* [Ann Arbor], 3: 7. (July 1893): 52.
- "Woman-suffrage in Wyoming." *Daily Rocky Mountain News* [Denver]. (26 Aug. 1875): col. C.
- "Woman suffrage in Wyoming: Effects of the system on the morals of the territory—Women as jurors." *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 53. (1 Sept. 1875): col. F.
- "Woman suffrage in Wyoming: How the women voted in Cheyenne—Scenes about the polls." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 206: G. (13 Dec. 1878): 2.
- "Woman's rights." *Saturday Evening Post* [Philadelphia]. (19 March 1870): 2.

- "Woman's world." *Maine Farmer* [Augusta], 64. (20 Aug. 1896): 3.
- "Women in Wyoming practical working of the right of suffrage in that territory---Judge Kingman's address at the Tabernacle." *Daily Rocky Mountain News* [Denver]. (19 Sept. 1877): col. C.
- "The women jurors of Wyoming." *Zion's Herald* [Boston], 47:15. (14 Apr. 1870): 176.
- "Women jurymen the first female grand jury in the world in session at Laramie City, Wyoming territory—Judge Howe's charge." *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 57. (10 March 1870): col. D.
- "Women of Wyoming: Democrats strongly oppose to granting them suffrage." *Morning Oregonian* [Portland], 9198. (27 March 1890): col. C.
- "Women's record at home." *The Ladies Repository; a Monthly Periodical, Devoted to Literature, Art and Religion* [Cincinnati], 35. (March 1875): 266.
- "Women's reply to Bryce: They assert that things in Wyoming are going bravely under woman suffrage." *Boston Daily Advertiser*. (3 Nov. 1890): col. F.
- "Wyoming Territory, as is well known, has given the ballot to women." *Bangor Daily Whig & Courier*, 58. (9 March 1870), col. A.
- "Wyoming women voters. Female suffrage aptly described." *The Galveston Daily News* [Houston], 346. (06 April 1886): 6.
- "Wyoming's women a demand made that their right to vote be recognized by the new Constitution." *Rocky Mountain News* [Denver]. (16 June 1889): col. C.

Secondary Sources

- Anthony, Susan B. & Ida Husted Harper eds. *History of Woman Suffrage, volume 4: 1883-1900* (New York: Privately published, 1902), 1008-1009.
- Chapman, Mary & Angela Mills. "Eighty years and more: Looking back at the Nineteenth Amendment." *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 36 no. 1. (2006): 1-15.
- Crocco, Margaret Smith. "Wyoming wasn't first to grant suffrage." *New York Times*. (3 Sept. 1995): E10.
- Davenport, Frederick M. "Hughes and the people of the west." *The Outlook* [New York]. (20 Sept. 1919): 141.
- Hagan, Martha. "The antisuffragists' rhetorical dilemma: Reconciling the private and public spheres." *Communication Reports*, 5 no. 2. (Summer 1992): 73-81, *Communication and Mass Media Complete* (accessed July 17, 2009).
- Higgins, Lisa Cochran. "Adulterous individualism, socialism, and free love in nineteenth century anti-suffrage writing." *Legacy*, 21 no. 2. (Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 2004): 193-209.
- Jones, Gilbert F. "The position of anti-suffragists." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 35. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc., May 1910): 16-22.
- Jones, Gilbert F. "Some Impediments to Women Suffrage." *The North American Review*, 190 no. 645. (Iowa: University of Northern Iowa, Aug. 1909): 158-169.

- Lamont, Victoria. "More than she deserves: Woman suffrage memorials in the 'equality state.'" *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 26 no. 1. (2006): 17-43.
- Masel-Walters, Lynne. "Their rights and nothing more: A history of the revolution, 1868-70." *Journalism Quarterly* 53 no. 2. (Summer 1976): 242-251.
- McCammon, Holly J. "'Out of the parlor and into the streets': The changing tactical repertoire of the U.S. women's suffrage movement." *Social Forces*, 81 no. 3. (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, March 2003): 787-818.
- Rodriguez, Cristina M. "Clearing the smoke-filled room: Women jurors and the disruption of an old-boys' network in nineteenth-century America." *The Yale Law Journal*, 108 no. 7. (New Haven: Yale Law Journal Company, Inc., May 1999): 1805-1844.
- "Women's suffrage is 75 years old today; Idea started at a tea party in Wyoming." *New York Times*. (10 Dec. 1944), 48.
- Wood, Frederick. "Women's suffrage a failure, he says: Investigator tells of Conditions found in Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and Colorado." *New York Times*, (17 Jan. 1909), C0.

"Who Killa De Chief?": How American Newspapers Encouraged the Largest Mass Lynching in U.S. History, October 1890 – March 1891

Hillary Merritt

"All good citizens are invited to attend a mass meeting on Saturday March 14 at 10 o'clock A.M., at Clay Statue, to take steps to remedy the failure of justice in the Hennessy case. Come prepared for action." –Notice placed in New Orleans newspapers following the acquittal of the Italians accused of New Orleans Chief of Police David C. Hennessy's assassination.¹

On October 16, 1890, New Orleans Chief of Police David C. Hennessy walked home from work with fellow police officer William O'Connor, not knowing that this walk would be his last. On the way, he and O'Connor stopped in at Dominic Virget's Oyster Saloon and each enjoyed half a dozen oysters, Hennessy washing his down with a glass of milk. They then proceeded on their journey, separating a block before Hennessy would be gunned down by men in dark suits. As the chief neared the home he shared with his mother, men armed with shotguns and pistols shot him multiple times. As the men ran, O'Connor, hearing the shots, ran quickly back and found Hennessy lying on the ground. O'Connor asked him who did this to him, and according to O'Connor, Hennessy whispered firmly, "Dagos," a then commonly used racial slur for Italians.²

The Daily Picayune, the largest and most widely read newspaper in New Orleans at that time, told this story, and it was retold across the country as news of the assassination of the chief spread. The front page of *The Daily Picayune* the following day declared Hennessy a "victim of vendetta" who was murdered by "Italians of the criminal class." The headline in the *Atchison Champion* of Kansas read "Killed by Italians." The *Los Angeles Times* reported that the assassination was "the work of Italians, whom the chief has recently pushed pretty hard, with a view of suppressing their vendettas." The *St. Paul Daily News* of Minnesota reported that Hennessy's "avowed determination to break up the Mafia were without doubt the causes that led to his murder." Within days, these and many other newspapers reported that Hennessy had been shot and that Italians, specifically those involved with the Mafia, were the murderers.³

Hennessy was said to be investigating the Mafia at the time of his murder and was scheduled to testify against a group of Sicilians accused of

¹ Richard Gambino. *Vendetta: The True Story of the Largest Lynching in U.S. History*. 2 ed. Buffalo, NY: Guernica Editions Inc., 1998, 77.

² "Assassinated," *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], October 16, 1890, 1.

³ "Assassinated," 1; "Blood of Italians," *The St. Paul Daily News*, October 18, 1890, 1; "Shot on his Doorstep," *The Los Angeles Times*, October 17, 1890, 4; "Killed By Italians," *The Atchison Champion* [Atchison, KS], October 17, 1890, 8.

racketeering later in the week. According to historians, the “precise information Hennessy obtained in his investigation has been lost to history.” Hennessy, recognizing the sensitivity of the information he was gathering, “was very concerned that his contacts might be intimidated or killed,” and therefore “went to great lengths to keep sources confidential and evidence private.” Still, despite the ambiguity of his investigation, newspapers reported that it was this investigation that may have led to his assassination.⁴

Furthermore, at that time, prejudice against Italians was widespread. In the 19th century, Italians were the second most likely group to be lynched, after blacks. Between 1885 and 1915, it was estimated that about 50 Italians were lynched. In Louisiana in 1899, an argument over a goat resulted in the killing of five Italians, while two others were forced from their homes. These kinds of attacks were more common in the South, where Italians were taking jobs by working for less.⁵

These fears and prejudices climaxed with the assassination of Chief Hennessy. On October 18, two days after Hennessy had been murdered, the *St. Paul Daily News* reported that New Orleans was “on the eve of a bloody race riot,” as “public feeling is strongly aroused against the Italian colony.” Furthermore, “Twenty thousand men [were] crying ‘Down with the Dagoes!’” That same day, the *Galveston Daily News* reported that a man entered the prison under the pretense of visiting a friend and shot Antonio Scaffidi, a “Dago... being held for the assassination” in the neck. The newspaper further reported that over 50 Italians had been arrested in connection to the murder. One suspect had already been murdered; many others who had been arrested feared for their lives in the wake of such sentiments against their people.⁶

According to historians, newspapers reflected the local bias in their coverage. They reported the events with unyielding condemnation of the Mafia and the Italians they believed responsible, while they portrayed Hennessy as a crusader of justice and praised his sacrifice. After several Italians were indicted, tried, and acquitted, newspapers were outraged and called for vengeance. “Notices were placed in ‘every paper’ in New Orleans ‘to take steps to remedy the failure of justice’ in this case, and a ‘mass meeting’ was announced” according to historian Matthew Wilson in his essay “A History of Forgetting.” The mass meeting drew thousands of citizens, who stormed the prison and lynched 11 Italians, while eight others managed to escape the mob. This event is the largest mass lynching on record in U.S. history. Of particular interest to this paper, however, is the role that newspapers played in encouraging the lynching.

⁴ Thomas Hunt, and Martha Sheldon, *Deep Water: Joseph P. Macbeca and the Birth of the American Mafia*, illustrated ed. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2007, 225.

⁵ Jerre Mangione, *La Storia: Five Centuries of the Italian American Experience*, 138; Heather M. Hartley, “Linciati: Lynchings of Italians in America.” 51 minutes. United States: National Film Network, 2004.

⁶ Hartley, *Linciati*; “Blood of Italians,” 1; “Poor Dave Hennessy,” *The Galveston Daily News*, October 18, 1890, 2.

This paper will illustrate how the fear and the anxiety surrounding the secret society now termed the American Mafia as well as a deep-seated racism against Italian immigrants enabled American newspapers to report the chief Hennessy assassination and the events that followed in ways that were acutely prejudiced against Italians.⁷

As the Italian population grew in New Orleans and the rest of the country, xenophobia and prejudice became a common reaction among the settled populations. In 1838, an article in New York City’s *Morning Herald*, titled “Modern Italians,” detailed the characteristics of Italians, commenting on their “remarkable” appearance and their lazy and “cowardly” nature. Italians will “stab behind the back and murder at midnight,” and “follow the instincts of nature and the lust of hot blood” according to the article. In addition, when Italians were involved in criminal behavior, they were nearly always identified by their ethnicity, unlike other white criminals. In Chicago in 1882, an article in *The Daily Inter Ocean* detailed a barroom brawl, wherein “several Italians” allegedly attacked two other men, identified by name, with knives. This served to link Italians’ ethnic heritage to their behavior.⁸

This prejudice was further exacerbated by the press coverage of a small secret society which would later be termed the American Mafia, named after the Sicilian Mafia, a group infamous throughout Europe. Some newspapers made no distinction between law-abiding Italian-Americans, using Italians, Sicilians, and Mafia interchangeably. In 1888, the *News and Observer* in Raleigh referred to the Mafia as “an Italian assassination society.” *The Daily Picayune* called it “organized Italian criminals and assassins—the bloody Mafia.” Others accused non-Mafia Italians of protecting Mafia members. In Chicago in 1890, a writer for the *Daily Inter Ocean* argued that “Whatever crime [the Mafia member] will commit, his countrymen will shield and protect him without question.” While some made efforts to distinguish “local law-abiding Italians” from the criminal Mafia members, already-present stereotypes of Italians propelled the linkage.⁹

In the years leading up to the assassination of Chief Hennessy, newspaper reports of the Mafia were often apprehensive and speculative. A Chicago newspaper reported that part of the Mafia’s code of ethics is “omerta,” which translates to manliness and means “an utter scorn, abjuration, and disregard of all the established forms of law.” The article further contended that Mafioso is an “apotheosis of bullying and audacity. It is a concrete expression of the belief ‘might makes right.’” San Francisco’s *Daily Evening Bulletin* described the Mafia as an organization with “immense power” and deemed the “extent

⁷ Matthew Wilson, “A History of Forgetting, and The “Awful Problem” Of “Race”: A New Historical Note.” *Southern Literary Journal* 41, no. 1 (2008): 20-31.

⁸ “The Modern Italians,” *Morning Herald* [Hagerstown, MD], March 14, 1838, 1; “A Dago Den,” *The Daily Inter Ocean* [Chicago], March 20, 1882, 5.

⁹ “The Mafia,” *News and Observer* [Raleigh], October 26, 1888, 1; “Gotham Gossip,” *The Daily Picayune*, October 27, 1888, 6; “Marked for Assassination,” *The Daily Inter Ocean*, August 15, 1890, 12.

of its operations and the solidarity of its members” to be enormous. The article asked, “Can we afford to lie back and let it have full play now? Is not the danger eminent enough already?”¹⁰

Similar newspaper reports were published in New Orleans. In 1888, two years before Hennessy’s murder, the *Daily Picayune* published an article on the origin of the Mafia in a gossip column. According to the article, Mafia members “regard themselves as superior to other Italians” and are “more numerous in New York and New Orleans than in other American cities.” The article goes on to tell a story of a Mafia member traveling from New Orleans all the way to Sicily to exact revenge, ending with “Time and distance are not allowed to interfere with the revenges of the Mafias.” Another article in New Orleans commented on the high population of Italians, arguing that not only is New Orleans’ Italian population “considerably older than in other cities,” but it is also “said to possess a shady knowledge of the Mafia.” According to historians referenced in the documentary film *Linciati*, these reports were “groundless.” There is no evidence that “any large or powerful Italian criminal association existed there at that time.” Though New Orleans had Italians who were “rough and unsavory people,” these were no more rough or unsavory than other typical criminals of other ethnicities; further, petty crime by Italians was considered to be Mafia-related, while petty crime by others was not. Yet, these stories about the Mafia persisted and they were generally believed. These reports on the high Mafia presence in New Orleans compounded with the reports about Mafia behaviors and criminal activity contributed to the fear and anxiety people in New Orleans had about the Mafia and Italians. They saw Chief Hennessy as the solution to this issue.¹¹

Chief Hennessy was considered by newspapers to be a major crusader against this kind of organized crime. This reputation was particularly considered true locally. He “always [wore] a uniform,” and was “determined to suppress lawlessness,” the *Daily Picayune* reported. Hennessy’s capture of Esposito, an infamous Italian murderer and thief, led people to believe he was an arbiter on the Mafia and its dealings. According to news reports, at the time of his assassination, Chief Hennessy was supposed to testify in a trial on behalf of The Provenzanos later in the week. The Provenzanos were believed to be principal in the New Orleans faction of the American Mafia struggling for power against another group, the Matranga gang. Hennessy was recognized nationally as well. The *New York Times* reported when Hennessy first assumed his position, “They will be under the immediate command of David Hennessy, a bright young officer” and so were expected to be “far superior to the regular city force.” So by the time of his assassination, Hennessy’s reputation was established as a just

¹⁰ “Marked for Assassination,” 12; “Our Mafia,” *Daily Evening Bulletin* [Philadelphia], August 5, 1875, 1.

¹¹ Gotham Gossip,” *The Daily Picayune*, October 29, 1888, 3; “Since the Murder of Chief of Police Honnessy,” *The Daily Picayune*, Nov. 28, 1890, 7; Gambino, 60, 46.

lawman determined to expunge the Mafia from New Orleans.¹²

The day following the assassination, newspapers in New Orleans reacted with shock and outrage. The *Daily Picayune* called the murderers “cowardly” and “treacherous assassins.” An editorial in the paper read, “This atrocity is so shocking, so bloody, so outrageous, that it will stand as a disgrace to the people of this good city until the assassins shall be hunted down and full justice down upon them.” Furthermore, the newspaper reprinted letters from top merchants and citizens of New Orleans and elsewhere to express similar feelings. One such letter was by W. A. Pinkerton of the famed Pinkerton Detective Agency in which he described Hennessy as a “brave” man who acted with “sterling integrity and honesty of purpose,” and regarded the assassins as “cowardly” men who had caused the city a “loss that it will take years to recover from.”¹³

National press soon caught on to the story and expressed similar sentiments. The *Galveston Daily News* called it a “cold-blooded deed” and referred to it as “one of the most startling episodes of crime” in New Orleans history. The *New York Times* called it a “brutal murder” committed by “vengeful Sicilians.” The paper said the assassination created “a feeling of horror and indignation such as has not been manifested here for many years.” The *Times* called Hennessy “naturally intrepid, courageous, and sagacious.” Other newspapers repeated this reaction as the people all over the country learned of the murder.¹⁴

Also repeated were the supposed words that Hennessy had spoken to his friend as he lay dying: that “dagoes” were responsible. Newspapers did not explore other possibilities or potential culprits, and many stated as fact that Italians were responsible. A headline in the *Atchison Champion* read, “Killed by Italians.” The *New York Times* referred to the event as “the assassination of Chief of Police David C. Hennessy by a gang of Sicilians.” The *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported “The attempted assassination, it is supposed, was the work of Italians, whose vendettas the chief expressed his determination to suppress.” So not only were the newspapers shocked and outraged, but they were also naming the guilty parties.¹⁵

As a result, hundreds of Italians in New Orleans faced arrest and physical injury. While Chief Hennessy lay dying in the hospital, Mayor of New Orleans Joseph A. Shakspeare gathered police officers from all over southern Louisiana and instructed them to “Scour the whole neighborhood. Arrest every

¹² “The police chief Hennessy takes hold with a Firm Grip,” *The Daily Picayune*, May 18, 1888, 3; “Police Transfers,” *The Daily Picayune*, May 31, 1890, 2; “The Italian Trouble,” *The Daily Picayune*, September 4, 1889, 8; Hunt and Sheldon, 225, 180.

¹³ “Assassinated,” 1; “Assassination of the Chief of Police,” *The Daily Picayune*, October 16, 1890, 4; “The Slain Chieftain,” *The Daily Picayune*, October 17 1890, 1.

¹⁴ “A Cold Blooded Deed,” *The Galveston Daily News*, October 17, 1890, 1; “Shot Down at his Door,” *The New York Times*, October 17, 1890, 1.

¹⁵ “Killed by Italians,” 8; “Shot Down at His Door,” 1; “A Chief of Police Shot,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, October 16, 1890, 1.

Italian you come across, if necessary, and scour it again tomorrow morning as soon as there is daylight enough. Get all the men you need." One of the arrested men had been shot in prison. Newspapers quoted the gunman saying that he "wished there were about seventy-five more like him to do similar deeds." Others were being beaten and neglected in their prison cells. In all, over two hundred Italians would be arrested, including men, women and children.¹⁶

Many of the arrests were unwarranted and prejudicial. For example, police arrested one man, a 44-year-old Italian for carrying a loaded revolver, in spite of the fact that in New Orleans at the time, most men carried revolvers and no evidence existed connecting him to any underground criminal networks nor was he in the vicinity of the crime. Similarly, police arrested a 14-year-old Italian boy for aiding and abetting when he could give an alibi for his father's whereabouts in the hours before because he could not speak English. Furthermore, would-be witnesses pointed out a number of men, all Italian, that they had supposedly seen at the scene of the crime though they had no further evidence that they were anywhere in the vicinity when Chief Hennessy was murdered.¹⁷

However, newspapers did not report these events in this way, instead opting to report those arrested as if they were already proven guilty. Consider, for example, that the *Daily Picayune* reported the man previously mentioned as arrested for carrying a loaded revolver and quoted the police saying that this gun was a "favorite of Italians." However, such rifles were "widely in use in New Orleans and the rest of the South at the time." The boy who was arrested was described as assisting the murderers in their escape and they reported his inability to speak English as "he claimed" he could not speak English, implying deceit. Many of those arrested were described as murderers, and words like "alleged" and "suspected" were less common than not. The newspapers were convicting the accused in the city's printed papers before a trial happened where evidence could be demonstrated.¹⁸

The Mayor made an appeal to the City Council before thousands of citizens of New Orleans, which was reprinted word for word in newspapers all over the country, in which he blasted the assassination and the assassins and called for swift vengeance. In the speech, Mayor Shakspeare made official what the newspapers had already been reporting: "The circumstances of the cowardly deed, the arrests made, and the evidence collected by the police department show beyond doubt that he was the victim of Sicilian vengeance." Also in this speech, the Mayor was the first to openly say that justice should be served in the case, at all costs: "We owe it to ourselves and to everything we hold sacred in this life to see to it that this blow is the last. We must teach these people a lesson

that they will not forget for all time. What the means are to reach this end, I leave to the wisdom of the council to devise."¹⁹

The Mayor himself made no secret of his own prejudice against Italians. In a letter to an Ohio man inquiring about the nature of Italians eight months after Hennessy was assassinated, Shakspeare classified Italians as "emigrants from the worst classes of Europe." He wrote that New Orleans has an "unusually large proportion" of Italians, and they are the most "idle, vicious and worthless people among us." Shakspeare told the man that Italians "rarely acquire homes, always band together, do not acquire our language and have neither respect for its government or obedience to its laws." He also characterized them as "filthy in their persons and homes" and "without courage, honor, truth, pride, religion, or any quality that goes to make the good citizen." The mayor's prejudice surely played a role in his pursuit of Hennessy's murderers and in his speech to the City Council.²⁰

Following the Mayor's appeal, the City Council called for a committee of fifty to investigate the existence of a secret society in New Orleans. The committee was made up of the "political and labor powers, the wealthy commercial establishment, and the social elite of the city." No blacks or Italians were on the committee. The committee chairman was the editor of New Orleans newspaper, *New Delta*. The committee's first order of business was a letter to the Italian community of New Orleans, wherein they encouraged Italians to come forward, anonymously or not, with any kind of information regarding the existence of the Mafia and/or its members: "Send us the names and history... of every bad man, every criminal, and every suspected person of your race." This was reprinted in all New Orleans newspapers. The notice ended with a warning that they intended to finally put an end to vendettas, "peaceably and lawfully if we can, violently and summarily if we must."²¹

Eventually, the state settled on nineteen individuals they believed were involved in the assassination of Chief Hennessy. The arrested were all Italians, made up of men who mostly belonged to the Macheca organization, a small group of loosely organized Italians suspected of being involved in racketeering, thievery, and murder, headed by Macheca, who himself was also arrested. Over three hundred witnesses were summoned for the proceedings. During the trial, hardly any standing room was available as spectators packed the courthouse to see the proceedings.²²

Newspapers repeated the evidence against the individuals as if they were already guilty. Many of the reports were mostly concerned about personal character as people who had known the accused talked about their "shady nature" or their association with people who were known to be "of a criminal

¹⁶ "Assassinated," 1; "Self-Constituted Avenger," *Morning Oregonian* [Portland], October 18, 1890, 4; Gambino, 8, 68.

¹⁷ Gambino, 13-17.

¹⁸ "Assassinated," 1; "The Slain Chieftain," 1; "Killed by Italians," 8; Gambino, 15.

¹⁹ "To Hunt the Assassins," *The New York Times*, October 18, 1890, 1.

²⁰ Gambino, 18; Tom Smith, *The Crescent City Lynchings*, Lyons Press Series, Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot, 2007.

²¹ Gambino, 20-22; Smith, 99.

²² "Chief Hennessy's Slayers," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, February 17, 1891, 5.

nature." Newspapers also recounted the various witnesses who had pointed out the accused, such as Officer Lanagan's account: "I saw him running toward the docks directly after the killing," he said. Readers were assured that he was positive that the man he saw was the one who stood trial. The *Daily Inter Ocean* reported that the accused had been "recognized as the slayers of Chief Hennessy" and there was an "abundance of circumstantial evidence produced" to show that the accused were guilty. Newspapers also attacked the character of the defense attorneys, for example, citing rumors that they had been hired by "Mafia money." So, these newspapers led people to believe that the accused were in fact the murderers.²³

Newspapers accused the jury and the witnesses of corruption. A writer for the *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported during jury selection that "talesmen were approached with money to render a verdict of acquittal in case they were accepted as jurors." This fact was also printed in many New Orleans papers. Ironically, while the press gave these suspicions some coverage during the trial, newspapers gave prominent coverage to these claims following the lynching. The day after the lynching, a writer for the *North American of Philadelphia* lamented the mob's actions, but maintained the accused's guilt, blaming bribing and jury tampering for the acquittal. Considering this reversal of coverage, the newspapers seem to justify the actions after the fact rather than give an excuse for it to happen before the fact.²⁴

The *Daily Picayune* dismissed claims made by the defense and by some national and international observers that the coverage and the people of New Orleans were prejudiced against Italians. An editorial in the paper said, "When counsel for the defense in the Hennessy case yesterday charged that the Italian citizens and residents of New Orleans are the objects of wholesale race and class prejudice, a most unjust and justifiable assault was made upon the character of the good people of this city." The article argues that there was no prejudice in New Orleans before the assassination, and that that single event has not changed anything. The editorial asks, "Have people ceased to eat bananas or oranges because the trade in these fruits is almost wholly in the hands of the Italians?" It concludes with a statement that the ethnicity of the accused "cuts no figure in the case and modifies in no possible way the supreme demand for justice." This directly contradicts what many citizens in New Orleans admitted during jury selection for the trial, when the defense dismissed a number of people because "admitted they were prejudiced against Italians or would not give credence to Italian witnesses."²⁵

To the shock and dismay of newspapers and New Orleanians, the

Italians were acquitted. "NONE GUILTY!" proclaimed the large bold print on the front page of the *Daily Picayune*. The *New York Times* declared, "The verdict of the jury in the Hennessy case has startled and angered everybody. The statements of the jury bore out the suspicion that the members had been purchased." As national newspapers repeated similar stories of the shocking acquittal and jury tampering, the press in New Orleans was calling the city's citizens to action.²⁶

A notice was placed in all New Orleans newspapers calling for a mass meeting. The notice said, "All good citizens are invited to attend a mass meeting on Saturday March 14 at 10 o'clock A.M., at Clay Statue, to take steps to remedy the failure of justice in the Hennessy case. Come prepared for action," followed by a list of names of people who endorsed the notice, including a man prominent in Mayor Shakspeare's office and many members of the Committee of Fifty. The location of the meeting was at a statue on Canal and Royal streets, blocks away from the prison that held the accused. By ten o'clock, between six and eight thousand people had gathered at the statue, and the crowd continued to grow as time went on. One man got the attention of the crowd, asking them to follow him to "see the murder of D. C. Hennessy vindicated," the crowd's reply was a chanting "Yes, yes, hang the dagoes!" and they marched on to the prison.²⁷

The newspapers reported the events that followed in vivid detail. Once the crowd reached the prison, they stormed the prison and easily overtook the guards. The sheriff and guards had anticipated the mob and so had attempted to hide the Italian prisoners in the women's prison. However, the crowd soon learned of the location of the Italians and broke the door down and pulled out the accused from their hiding places, chanting "Who killa da chief?" in a mock Italian accent. "In fear and trembling, they screamed for mercy," but "the avengers were merciless," according to the *Daily Picayune*. The *New York Times* reported what happened next with dramatic detail:

The doors [of the prison] were flung open and one of the avengers, taking aim, shot [a prisoner] through the body. He was not killed outright and in order to satisfy the people on the outside who were crazy to know what was going on within, he was dragged down the stairs and through the door way by which the crowd had entered. A rope was provided and tied around his neck and the people pulled him up to the crossbars. Not satisfied that he was dead, a score of men took aim and poured a volley of shot into him, and for several hours the body was left dangling in the air.

²³ "The Hennessy Case on Trial," *The Daily Picayune*, November 30, 1890, 4; "Assassins Identified," *Daily Inter Ocean*, March 4, 1891, 1; Gambino, 72.

²⁴ "Italians Make Threats," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, 8 March 1891, 2; "Death to the Mafia," 15 March 1891.; "The Prey of the Mob," *The North American* [Philadelphia], 16 March 1891, 1.

²⁵ "Prejudice Against the Italians," *Daily Picayune*, March 12, 1891, 4; Gambino, 72.

²⁶ "None Guilty," *The Daily Picayune*, March 14, 1891, 1; "Chief Hennessy Avenged," *New York Times*, March 15, 1891, 1.

²⁷ Gambino, 77, 79; "Death to the Mafia," *Bismarck Daily Tribune*, March 15, 1891, 1.

In all, over a hundred rifle shots and shotgun blasts were fired at the Italians followed by cheers from the crowd. Three of the Italians who were still alive were dragged out of the prison and hanged in nearby trees to the satisfaction of the crowd. The *Daily Picayune* reported, "The crowd went mad at the sight of the semi-conscious Italian, his long black hair disheveled, his naturally idiotic look intensified by the fear he had experienced." Of the nineteen accused, only eight managed to escape the fury of the mob.²⁸

Despite the acquittal, newspapers remained positive that the accused were guilty and the mob had not lynched innocent men. A headline in the *Bismarck Daily Tribune* read "Death to the Mafia," though the connection between the accused and the Mafia had never been concretely drawn. The article said that the accused had been "acquitted by a bribed jury," ignoring the possibility that they could have been acquitted for reasons such as lack of evidence. Several newspapers referred to the guilty as the murderers and the mob that had killed them as avengers, offering little doubt that the accused may have indeed been innocent.²⁹

Newspapers were careful to characterize the mob as anything but an angry mob. They were repeatedly referred to as "avengers" in several newspapers, including the *Daily Picayune*. The *Bismarck Daily Tribune* called it a gathering of "3,000 citizens, including some of the most prominent residents of the city." The article said that justice had been served "without unnecessary disorder, without rioting, without pillaging, and without inflicting suffering upon any innocent man." The *New York Times* called it "an uprising of indignant citizens."³⁰

Many newspapers praised the events and argued that Hennessy's murderers had finally been brought to justice. Professor of Italian American studies Richard Gambino calculated that of all the major American newspapers nationwide that reported the events, which was nearly all of them, as high as 50 percent were in favor of the mob's actions, including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. The *New York Times* summed up the prevailing attitudes of these papers:

There was evidently a prevailing conviction in New Orleans that justice had failed in this case. It was believed that the murderers of Hennessy had been found and their crime was proved upon them, but through corruption or fear the jury failed to convict. There was but one result to be look for in the case of those who were acquitted, for they could not be tried again on the same charge—they must be allowed to go free to the great comfort and encouragement of the

²⁸ "Retribution," *The Daily Picayune*, March 15, 1891, 1; "Avenged," *The Atchison Champion*, March 15, 1891, 1; Gambino, 83; Wilson, 22.

²⁹ "Death to the Mafia," 1; "Assassins Identified," 1; "Italians Make Threats," 2.

³⁰ "Death to the Mafia," 1; "Chief Hennessy Avenged," *The New York Times*, March 15, 1891, 1; "Retribution," 1.

confraternities of Sicilian assassins... a result the populace refused to tolerate.

Furthermore, all of the New Orleans papers endorsed the mob's actions, including the *Daily Picayune*, the *Times-Democrat*, the *New Delta*, the *Daily Democrat*, and other smaller papers.³¹

However, not all newspapers endorsed the actions. *The Weekly Sentinel and Wisconsin Farm Journal* condemned the mob's actions, and said, "the best citizens' of New Orleans are a bad lot if they did, in fact, take any part in the pitiless slaughter of the unarmed Italians." The *North American* of Philadelphia said the Italians were "hunted like rats," and was one of the few papers to use the word "lynch" to describe the actions of the mob. Even still, both papers and many others maintained that the accused had been guilty, disagreeing only with the way justice had been carried out.³²

Newspapers all over the country also reported on the reactions of Italians in their particular cities. One Chicago newspaper reported "local Italians indignant," and that a banquet honoring the birthday of King Humbert of Italy had been cancelled because the Italians felt "it would be wrong to indulge in festivities due to the day's events." The newspaper quoted the Italians as calling it "the massacre of our brethren in New Orleans." Italians nationwide organized mass meetings to discuss the events. In Chicago, the Italian community leaders told the newspapers, "We demand energetic intervention and protection from the government of the fatherhood." The *Milwaukee Journal* reported that Italians in Milwaukee were "excited," despite the fact that "no innocent bystander was injured." A meeting of Italians in New York was broken up by a mob when the Italians were "pelted with cobblestones." Reporters wrote that the New York Italians were "intensely excited" and continually denounced "the actions of the New Orleans mob as atrocious murder."³³

Newspapers treated the reactions of the Italians across the nation as stereotypical Italian behavior and portrayed the Italians' outrage as threatening. The *Daily Inter Ocean* reported that the Italians were "howling for revenge," citing the speeches that were made at various mass meetings across the country. The article further contended that the "savage passions" of the Italians were "aroused by slaughter of the Mafia" and warned that "Italians are revengeful when angered," and are "presently terribly angered." Another article described the Italian newspapers as reporting on the event in a "most sensational nature," and said that the Italian newspaper newsrooms were filled with "indignant Italians." The *Milwaukee Journal* prominently featured a thinly-veiled threat from

³¹ Gambino, 96; "Blaine Acts," *The Daily Picayune*, March 16, 1891, 1.

³² "The Best Citizens of New Orleans," *The Weekly Sentinel and Wisconsin Farm Journal*, March 19, 1891, 4; "The Prey of the Mob," *The North American*, March 16, 1891, 1.

³³ "Local Italians Indignant," *Daily Inter Ocean*, March 15, 1891, 1; "The Italians Excited," *The Milwaukee Journal*, March 16 1891, 2; "New York Italians Excited," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, March 16, 1891, 1.

one Italian citizen, "If the government does not act in the matter, there are one million Italians in the United States who will know what to do." The *Morning Oregonian* called the Italians "wrathful," and said they were reacting with "more indignation than judgment" over the "lynching of their lawless countrymen." In an earlier article, the *Oregonian* had characterized the New Orleans Italians as different from the Italians in California, Oregon, and Washington, calling the Sicilians in New Orleans "cold-blooded" and "treacherous." The *Boston Daily Advertiser* took it a step further, stating that of all the Italians who had "sought asylum" in the United States, a "very large proportion are illiterate and unskilled... Are these desirable immigrants and shall the ports of the United States always remain open to such comers?"³⁴

National newspapers also gave prominent coverage to the federal government's and the Italian consul's reaction. The Italian consul called on Louisiana governor Francis T. Nicholls as well as Mayor Shakspeare, asking each to protect the New Orleans Italians. Secretary of State James Blaine sent a letter to the Italian consul and to the governor, which was reprinted in many newspapers, in which he said the President found the actions of the mob "appalling" and also called for the governor to protect the New Orleans Italians.³⁵

Because the event had attracted the attention of the President and officials in Italy, newspapers speculated that international complications were likely to arise with the Italian government. The *Milwaukee Journal* said, "It is feared that international complications with Italy may be the outcome of Saturday's occurrences." Denver's *Rocky Mountain News* quotes the third assistant to Secretary of State Blaine saying, "So far as I know, this case is without precedent in the diplomatic history of the country." He said he could not "discuss it in the newspapers," but "it is not easy to predict what will be the course of procedure." Other newspapers expressed similar feelings.³⁶

The *Daily Picayune* and other New Orleans papers, however, rebuffed these fears. The *Picayune* reported, "Among Congressmen and diplomats who have given such matters some attention, it is not thought that the massacre of the several Italian subjects can become a matter for international consideration or complication between the United States and Italy." The newspaper claimed that the only people who could legally seek reparations were the wives and relatives of "aliens who at the time they met their deaths were... in the custody of the municipal authorities" of New Orleans. The paper further claimed that

"naturalized citizens of Italian blood have no call and no right to appeal to the Italian government to interfere in this matter."³⁷

The *Daily Picayune* also refuted claims that prejudice played a role in the lynching. The paper argued that "it is difficult to see why naturalized Italian citizens of the United States have been led to engage in the outcry that the violent outbreak of popular justice in this city was an act of race war, of hostility to the Italians as a people." As to the Italians who were killed who were not connected to the murder, the editorial offered that "in the confusion of the moment the number of victims was unintentionally increased." The paper argued that the numbers would have undoubtedly been higher had there "been a crusade against Italians." They did not report that the number, at present, was the largest number of people at that time to be lynched at one time, and would become the largest mass lynching in American history. New Orleans Italians certainly remember the event, as the words "Who Killa De Chief?" spoken to an Italian New Orleanian are fighting words. In fact, several Italian cotton mill workers quit their jobs after being taunted by the phrase by other workers.³⁸

In conclusion, the coverage of Chief Hennessy's assassination and the events that followed were extremely prejudicial against Italians in three major ways: its characterization of the Mafia, and by extension, Italians; its presumption of guilt concerning the arrested Italians as well as the indicted Italians; and its endorsement of the lynching that killed 11 Italian men. The newspapers' coverage established Italians as separate from whites ethnically, physically and mentally. They reported the events of the assassination and the trial in such a way that left no doubt in the minds of readers that the accused were in fact the murderers. And when that prejudice culminated with the acquittal of the accused, New Orleans newspapers printed notices which alerted citizens to a mass meeting where they should come prepared for action. For these reasons, it is reasonable to conclude that newspaper coverage played a vital role in the prejudice against Italians and the largest mass lynching in U.S. history.

³⁴ "Howling for Revenge," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, March 16, 1891, 1; "New York Italians Excited," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, March 16, 1891, 1; "The Italians Excited," *The Milwaukee Journal*, March 16, 1891, 2; "Wrathful Italians," *Morning Oregonian*, March 23, 1891, 4; "Italians in America," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, March 23, 1891, 4; "Temperate Talks," *Morning Oregonian* [Portland], March 17, 1891, 1.

³⁵ "A Bloody Requittal," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, March 16, 1891, 1.

³⁶ "The Italians Excited," 2; "New Orleans Quiet," *Rocky Mountain News*, March 16, 1891, 1.

³⁷ "Blaine Acts," 1.

³⁸ "Not a Race War," *Daily Picayune*, March 20, 1891, 4; Smith, 138.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

- “A Bloody Requitall,” *Boston Daily Advertiser* [Boston], March 16, 1891, 1.
 “A Chief of Police Shot,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel* [Milwaukee], October 16, 1890, 1.
 “A Cold Blooded Deed,” *The Galveston Daily News* [Galveston], October 17, 1890, 1.
 “A Dago Den,” *The Daily Inter Ocean* [Chicago], March 20, 1882, 5.
 “Assassinated,” *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], October 16, 1890, 1.
 “Assassination of the Chief of Police,” *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], October 16, 1890, 4.
 “Assassins Identified,” *Daily Inter Ocean* [Chicago], March 4, 1891, 1.
 “Avenged,” *The Atchison Champion* [Atchison], March 15, 1891, 1; Gambino, 83; Wilson, 22.
 “Blaine Acts,” *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], March 16, 1891, 1.
 “Blood of Italians,” *The St. Paul Daily News* [St. Paul], October 18, 1890, 1.
 “Chief Hennessy Avenged,” *New York Times* [New York City], March 15, 1891, 1.
 “Chief Hennessy Avenged,” *The New York Times* [New York City], March 15, 1891, 1;
 “Chief Hennessy’s Slayers,” *The Daily Inter Ocean* [Chicago], February 17, 1891, 5.
 “Death to the Mafia,” *Bismarck Daily Tribune* [Bismarck], March 15, 1891, 1.
 “Gotham Gossip,” *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], October 27, 1888, 6.
 “Gotham Gossip,” *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], October 29, 1888, 3.
 “Howling for Revenge,” *Daily Inter Ocean* [Chicago], March 16, 1891, 1.
 “Italians in America,” *Boston Daily Advertiser* [Boston], March 23, 1891, 4.
 “Killed By Italians,” *The Atchison Champion* [Atchison], October 17, 1890, 8.
 “Local Italians Indignant,” *Daily Inter Ocean* [Chicago], March 15, 1891, 1.
 “Marked for Assassination,” *Daily Inter Ocean* [Chicago], August 15, 1890, 12.
 “New Orleans Quiet,” *Rocky Mountain News* [Denver], March 16, 1891, 1.
 “New York Italians Excited,” *Daily Inter Ocean* [Chicago], March 16, 1891, 1.
 “New York Italians Excited,” *Daily Inter Ocean* [Chicago], March 16, 1891, 1.
 “None Guilty,” *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], March 14, 1891, 1.
 “Not a Race War,” *Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], March 20, 1891, 4.
 “Our Mafia,” *Daily Evening Bulletin* [Philadelphia], August 5, 1875, 1.
 “Police Transfers,” *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], May 31, 1890, 2.
 “Poor Dave Hennessy,” *The Galveston Daily News* [Galveston], October 18, 1890, 2.
 “Prejudice Against the Italians,” *Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], March 12, 1891, 4;
 “Retribution,” *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], March 15, 1891, 1.
 “Self-Constituted Avenger,” *Morning Oregonian* [Portland], October 18, 1890, 4.
 “Shot Down at his Door,” *The New York Times* [New York City], October 17, 1890, 1.
 “Shot on his Doorstep,” *The Los Angeles Times* [Los Angeles], October 17, 1890, 4.
 “Since the Murder of Chief of Police Honnessy,” *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], Nov. 28, 1890, 7.
 “Temperate Talks,” *Morning Oregonian* [Portland], March 17, 1891, 1.
 “The Best Citizens of New Orleans,” *The Weekly Sentinel and Wisconsin Farm Journal* [Milwaukee], March 19, 1891, 4.
 “The Hennessy Case on Trial,” *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], November 30, 1890, 4.
 “The Italian Trouble,” *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], September 4, 1889, 8.
 “The Italians Excited,” *The Milwaukee Journal* [Milwaukee], March 16 1891, 2.

- “The Italians Excited,” *The Milwaukee Journal* [Milwaukee], March 16, 1891, 2.
 “The Mafia,” *News and Observer* [Raleigh], October 26, 1888, 1.
 “The Modern Italians,” *Morning Herald* [Hagerstown], March 14, 1838, 1.
 “The police chief Hennessy takes hold with a Firm Grip,” *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], May 18, 1888, 3.
 “The Prey of the Mob,” *The North American* [Philadelphia], March 16, 1891, 1.
 “The Slain Chieftain,” *The Daily Picayune* [New Orleans], October 17 1890, 1.
 “To Hunt the Assassins,” *The New York Times* [New York City], October 18, 1890, 1.
 “Wrathful Italians,” *Morning Oregonian* [Portland], March 23, 1891, 4.

Secondary Sources

- Gambino, Richard. *Vendetta: The True Story of the Largest Lynching in U.S. History*. 2 ed. Buffalo, NY: Guernica Editions Inc., 1998.
 Hartley, Heather M., *Linciati: Lynchings of Italians in America*. 51 minutes. United States: National Film Network, 2004.
 Hunt, Thomas and Martha Sheldon, *Deep Water: Joseph P. Macheca and the Birth of the American Mafia*, illustrated ed. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2007.
 Mangione Jerre, *La Storia: Five Centuries of the Italian American Experience*, 138.
 Smith, Tom, *The Crescent City Lynchings*, Lyons Press Series, Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot, 2007.
 Wilson, Matthew, “A History of Forgetting, and The “Awful Problem” Of “Race”: A New Historical Note.” *Southern Literary Journal* 41, no. 1 (2008): 20-31.

Talking Was Golden: Actors and the First Talkies in America: 1927-1930

by Jin Zhao

During 1927-1930, the transitional period from silent to talking movies, movies stars in Hollywood were faced with different fates. Some of them survived the changes and the other unfortunate ones failed. This paper reveals the stories of Mary Pickford, Greta Garbo, John Gilbert, and Charlie Chaplin during this transitional period in the history of American cinema, and discusses the great impact of the innovation of the medium on the careers of the individuals involved as well as on the film industry in general.

To Al Jolson's audience in New York on the night of October 6, 1927, *The Jazz Singer* was nothing less than a surreal experience. This was the opening night of the production by Warner Brothers. For the first time in their lives, the audience heard the dialogue and music while watching the images on the big screen, laughing, crying, applauding and shouting with the characters in the story as if they were real. As Mordaunt Hall, the chief critic of the *New York Times*, wrote later, "one almost forgot that the real Jolson was sitting in a box listening to his own songs, for it seemed as though in the darkness Mr. Jolson had crept behind the screen and was rendering the songs for his black-and-white image."¹

Warner Brothers was not the only studio that had been experimenting with sound film during the latter half of the 1920s. On January 21, 1927, Fox presented its sound-on-film process in public for the first time, *What Price Glory*, whose silent version had opened the previous November.² To catch up with Fox, on February 17, 1927, Paramount, MGM, First National, Universal, and Producer's Distributing Corporation signed an agreement to take a year to study the competing sound systems, then to select jointly a single system that would avoid the disastrous consequences of incompatibility.³

Although *The Jazz Singer* is generally regarded as the first sound movie, before it was made, Warner Brothers already had several pioneering Vitaphone films playing in Manhattan in early 1927. These included *Don Juan*, *The Better 'Ole*, and *When a Man Loves*, all successful releases.⁴ In these films, however, Vitaphone, the technology that was used in early sound films, was only utilized in presenting short musical numbers and in furnishing the musical score

accompanying the action of a film. In *The Jazz Singer*, however, as the *New York Times* reported, "Viaphone for the first time actively enters into the unfolding of the story of a motion picture by giving all of its incidental music in addition to the musical score accompanying the action."⁵ In other words, *The Jazz Singer* first synchronized featured music between dialogue and accompanying, or background, musical score throughout the movie.

In the making of *The Jazz Singer*, due to its higher technical requirement at the time, the process was extremely complex and time consuming, which became a bottleneck. Alan Crosland, director of *The Jazz Singer*, explained to the *New York Times* when he was shooting the film the details of the method by which full Vitaphone vocal numbers could be introduced into the action of a film: "First, all those portions of the reel which do not call for singing will be filmed. Then the reel will be assembled and cut, titles and all."⁶ Before filming the singing scenes, they would "have been carefully rehearsed and timed to the second, and in the places in the reel where these are to go, blank film of an equivalent length will be placed."⁷ After that, several microphones had to be set for all scenes and the orchestra respectively. When all the procedures were ready, the actual "synchronizing" would take place:

... the projection of the incomplete reel will start with the leader conducting the orchestra in the synchronized score which will be picked up by the first microphone. At the instant where the blank film flashes on the screen indicating the place for the first singing scene the orchestra will stop, and the microphone on the first set will be switched on while the first scene is recorded. As it comes to an end, one of the scenes previously filmed will flash on the orchestra's screen and the orchestra will resume the score. This process will be repeated for the second and third vocal numbers. All three sets must be lighted and ready, the timing must be perfect, and the players must be ready to make quick changes while the orchestra scores intervening scenes.⁸

This complex process rendered *The Jazz Singer* a costly production, with costs totaling \$422,000.⁹ Yet, the investment turned out to be a worthy one, for the film made Warner Brother a gross of \$2.6 million, strongly indicating that they were on the right track.¹⁰

However, to Jack Warner, what *The Jazz Singer* cost was not only dollars, but also the life of his brother. Sam Warner, vice president of Warner

¹ Mordaunt Hall, "Degrees of Violence in Comedies," *New York Times*, 16 October 1927, x7.

² Scott Eyman, *The Speed of Sound: Hollywood and the Talkie Revolution 1926-1930* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 112-3.

³ Ibid, 115.

⁴ Ibid, 117.

⁵ "Project Jotting," *New York Times*, 18 September 1927, x5.

⁶ "How the Vitaphone Enters in," *New York Times*, 28 August 1927, x4.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Eyman, *The Speed of Sound*, 145.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Brothers, died on October 5, 1927, one day before *The Jazz Singer's* premiere in New York. Although the death was reported as "caused by pneumonia, which followed an acute attack of sinus trouble,"¹¹ the grieving brother believed that "there is no doubt that *Jazz Singer* killed him." Although the Jolson's debut was warmly welcome by the viewers, to Jack, because of the death of his brother, it was "empty."¹²

Jack Warner was not the only one who felt bitter about *The Jazz Singer*. Actor George Jessel might have felt as bitter, although for a different reason. Jessel was the leading actor who starred in Samson Raphaelson's play *Jazz Singer*, from which the screen version was adopted.¹³ Originally, Al Jolson, the playwright's favorite actor and singer, was the one who inspired Raphaelson to write the play. The producer of the play, however, cast the then vaudeville headliner George Jessel in the part of the leading character, Jack Robin.¹⁴ When Warner Brothers bought the movie rights, Jessel was to star in the film. During the play's tour in the east and west coast in April 1927, the *New York Times* announced more than once that after his Los Angeles tour, "Mr. Jessel... will appear in two films for Warner Brothers. One of these will be a picture version of *Jazz Singer*."¹⁵ The new audio technology was also advertised: "the mammy songs sung by Jessel as well as the synagogue service will be recorded by the new sound-screen device."¹⁶ When Jessel was back to New York from the tour, however, he read this announcement on the *New York Times* on May 26:

Al Jolson is to make his career debut in the film version of the play "The Jazz Singer," in which George Jessel appeared on the stage, Warner Brothers announced yesterday. In "The Jazz Singer" Mr. Jolson will be both seen and heard in several specially selected songs, it is set forth.¹⁷

Many believed that Jessel was double-crossed. However, Jessel's article in the June issue of *Variety* gave an absurd explanation. He claimed that he wanted a Jewish director to direct the movie, so when Alan Crosland was to direct, Jessel walked.¹⁸ Others had different explanations. Jack Warner said that Jessel only accepted checks, but the Warner Brothers offered stock in the company. Jessel did not want the stock, and Jolson took a chance.¹⁹ Some also

believed that Warner Brothers finally decided to sign Jolson because he was far more famous than Jessel in Broadway. Whatever the real reason was, Jessel would spend the next fifty-four years of his life brooding over this opportunity to fame and glory that he had somehow missed.²⁰

Jolson signed his contract on May 26, 1927. He did not disappoint his boss. The film turned out to be a huge success both in box office and criticism. The day after its premiere, Hall praised Jolson's skills of singing and acting in his review in the *New York Times*:

... few men could have approached the task of singing and acting so well as he does in this photoplay. His "voice with a tear" compelled silence, and possibly all that disappointed the people in the packed theater was the fact that they could not call upon him or his image at least for an encore. They had to content themselves with clapping and whistling after Mr. Jolson's shadow finished a realistic song. It was also the voice of Jolson, with its dramatic sweep, its pathos, and soft slurring tones.²¹

Hall also attributed the success to the Vitaphone that had introduced the songs and dialogue "most adroitly", saying that "in the expression of song the Vitaphone vitalizes the production enormously."²²

Compared to the praise, the criticism from Hall was minor. Technically, "the dialogue is not so effective, for it does not always catch the nuances of speech or inflections of the voice so that one is not aware of the mechanical features." As to production, "there are quite a few moments when the picture drags," and "there are also times when one would expect the Vitaphoned portions to be either more subdued or stopped as the camera swings to other scenes. The voice is usually just the same whether the image of the singer is close to the camera or quite far away."²³

After the premiere of *The Jazz Singer*, *Time* magazine immediately recognized the importance of the movie and attributed its great success to the new sound production:

It is Mr. Jolson's first picture and as such of great import to the history of the current theatre. In no other way but pictures can his genius be preserved; and in this he is favored with the double preservative of picture and mechanical voice reproduction. The Vitaphone permits him to talk and sing his way through the sentimental mazes of the movie adaptation.²⁴

²⁰ Jessel died in 1980.

²¹ Hall, "In Screen," *New York Times*, 7 October 1927, 24.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "The New Pictures," *Time*, 17 October 1927, 59.

¹¹ "Sam L. Warner Dies; Was Movie Pioneer," *New York Times*, 6 October 1927, 25.

¹² Eyman, *The Speed of Sound*, 142.

¹³ Mordaunt Hall, "In Screen," *New York Times*, 7 October 1927, 24.

¹⁴ Eyman, *The Speed of Sound*, 129-30.

¹⁵ "Jazz Singer Returning," *New York Times*, 6 April 1927, 25.

¹⁶ "Miscellaneous," *New York Times*, 17 April 1927, x1.

¹⁷ "Jolson to Start on Film," *New York Times*, 26 May 1927, 23.

¹⁸ Scott Eyman, *The Speed of Sound: Hollywood and the Talkie Revolution 1926-1950*, 134.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Time also saw the rising of Al Jolson as a new movie star in a new era of sound movies. As it commented, “[h]e is a good actor; but he is a very great singer of popular songs. In cities where the Vitaphone can be installed and reproduce his voice this picture will eminently repay attendance.” However, *Time* also predicted that “[i]t is doubtful if the straight picture version in smaller theatres will carry much interest down the byways where they crave Bebe Daniels²⁵ but never heard the name of Jolson.”²⁶ The concern was not ungrounded, because by 1927 there were only a few movie theatres in America that were equipped with sound systems for talkies.

Despite of the lack of such theatres, *The Jazz Singer* still marked a new chapter of the film industry, and the birth of the talking film would change many aspects of films and the entertainment industry. For one thing, the structure of movies would never be the same:

Many of the devices now used in the treatment of a motion-picture story... were evolved to make up for the deficiency. Now that the deficiency has been supplied, it is no wonder that the structure seems about to tumble down.²⁷

The requirement of synchronized sound in a movie also complicated the whole movie-making process. Comedies, for instance, would never be as easy to make as before. In the old days, as the father of the American comedy screen Mack Sennett explained, “we would get an idea for a ‘beach’ story, or a ‘park’ story, scratch a few words of the plot on a piece of paper, go to the chosen location, and make up our comedy as we went along.”²⁸ Now, the procedure would be impossible with talking pictures:

A staff of writers is regularly employed at the Mack Sennett Studios. Their sole business is to write comedy stories. After a plot is finally selected, dialogue must be written. This is far from a simple task, for the dialogue must be “measured” so that there is not too much nor too little for the footage desired in the finished picture, because of the difficulty in cutting a modern talking picture.²⁹

Accordingly, the vocabulary used by cinematographers also changed. They would say less “close-up,” “fade-in,” “long shots,” “continuity,” “back-

²⁵ Movie star from the 1910s to 1950s.

²⁶ “The New Picture,” *Time*, 17 October 1927, 59.

²⁷ James O. Spearing, “Now the Movies Go Back to Their School Days,” *New York Times Magazine*, 19 August 1928, 12.

²⁸ “Sound and Comedies,” *New York Times*, 30 March 1930, x6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

lighting” and dissolve”, and instead, more new terms like “cine-motors,” “synchronizing vibrators,” “sound projectors,” “monitoring loud-speakers” and “radiotrones.”³⁰

Talking movies also posed a threat to other entertainment businesses, namely theatres, because with sound, “shadows” were almost as realistic as real actors and actress on the stage. Very much concerned, New York theatrical producers began to discuss the formation of film corporations to make talkies.³¹

However, it was film professionals that were faced with the greatest challenge that talking films brought about. As the *New York Times* reported:

Hollywood is panicky. Nobody seems to know what is going to happen, and everybody, it seems, is more or less perturbed. Directors, scenarists and title writers are trying to adjust themselves to new conditions; for although relatively few vocalized pictures have been made so far, the producing companies are announcing plans for their production on a large scale.³²

Actors and actresses, of course, were among those who were faced with the biggest challenge in their careers. Many movie actors and actresses took voice classes to prepare themselves for talkies, and “voice culture” became the most popular exercise in Hollywood. According to the *New York Times*, “vocal instructors have sprung up like flowers in the sun shine, or weeds in the rain, as the case may be.”³³

No one really knew if these classes worked. Nevertheless, the careers of the movie actors and actresses in Hollywood were about to diverge. Some of them, with talent and personality, and maybe a little bit of luck, made the transition from silent to sound film. To some others, unfortunately, the advent of sound to the moving picture was nothing but a catastrophe.

Among those who made the transition was the Canadian born American “sweetheart” Mary Pickford.³⁴ When she was a little girl, Mary Pickford appeared on stage including Broadway. She began her career in one-reelers in 1909, and by the 1910’s, she had become one of the premiere stars in films. Among her early features from 1913 were *In the Bishop’s Carriage*, *Cinderella*, *A Good Little Devil* and *Rags*. Other popular films of hers include *Poor Little Rich Girl*, *Suds*, *Stella Maris*, *Tess of the Storm Country* (two versions), *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (a dual role), *Daddy Long Legs*, *Rebecca of Sunny brook Farm* and *Sparrows*.³⁵ Her

³⁰ John C. Flinn, “Talking Shadows Talk,” *New York Times*, 2 September 1928, x5.

³¹ “Talkie Concern Discussed,” *New York Times*, 18 April 1929, 32.

³² Spearing, “Movies Go back.”

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Roy Liebman, *From Silents to Sound: A Biographical Encyclopedia of Performers Who Made the Transition to Talking Pictures* (Jefferson, NC: McFarlan & Company, 1998), 235.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

success was reported in *Time* magazine in 1929:

From \$40 per week in one-reel Biograph features, she advanced, first under Griffith, then with other companies, to \$2,000 a week in 1915, when she was called the highest salaried woman in the world. Now, married to Douglas Fairbanks, she makes over \$1,000,000 per annum and makes special trips to Washington about her income tax.³⁶

Pickford's marriage to Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., who starred in a number of unforgettable movies including *Stella Dallas* and *Jump for Glory*, made her even more of a cultural icon. They were dubbed the King and Queen of Hollywood³⁷. In April of 1919, Pickford founded the United Artists Corporation with Douglas Fairbanks, Charles Chaplin, D. W. Griffith and William S. Hart, and established herself as a distributor as well as a producer.³⁸

Warner Brother's 1927 production, *The Jazz Singer*, "sounded the silent movies' death knell."³⁹ Even top actress Pickford had to adapt to this unstoppable new trend in the movie industry. In 1927, Pickford shot her last silent *My Best Girl*, a major success, co-starring her second-husband-to-be, Buddy Rogers.⁴⁰ The film was a perfect closure to her silent career, and two years later, Pickford set out to work on her first sound film, *Coquette*.

The film, adapted from the play *Coquette* produced by Jed Harris in 1927, starred Helen Hayes⁴¹ whose performance "set a high standard of vocal expression in reading the lines," according to *Time*.⁴² The film was directed by Sam Taylor, who also directed *My Best Girl* and Pickford's second talkie *The Taming of the Shrew*, and co-starred John Mack Brown as Michael.⁴³

Although vocal performing was not new to Pickford, because she started her performance on stage at as early as four years old and her 1913 play *A Good Little Devil* was a hit, she did not make it easy to be in her first talkie. According to the *New York Times*, every member of the cast was required to take a number of tests of both voice and photography before being chosen by her. Before the film was placed in production at the Pickford studios in Hollywood, the crew rehearsed for three weeks.⁴⁴ In addition to acting in a talkie, which few people had tried and succeeded, Pickford's age was another challenge to her. She was

known to be 36 and generally believed to be 39 at that time, but the girl in the film was only 18 years old.⁴⁵ This age different would put a great amount of pressure on her even as the "American Sweetheart."

In spite of all the concerns, *Coquette* turned out to be a success. On April 12, 1929, *Coquette* had its premiere at New York's Rialto. The beginning of the show itself was dramatic, as described in *Variety*: "Feature got a terrible opening night break when a fuse blew. After a two-minute start it had to be shut off for a second beginning. And even then the amplification didn't sound right."⁴⁶ After the premiere on April 12, 1929 at New York's Rialto, *Coquette*, or more precisely, Pickford, received mixed but mostly positive criticism.

Variety's review was mixed with praise and criticism. According to the review, "Miss Pickford gives an excellent performance of the little southern flirt who throws her home into a turmoil which ends in tragedy," and "Miss Pickford is an ideal screen *Coquette* both playing and looking the role for full screen worth."⁴⁷

The film was criticized in the review, nevertheless, of being "just strong enough to arouse femme witnesses to the verge of tears," but "without the pathos strength to make the emotions spill over." *Variety* also criticized the leading actor, Johnny Mack Brown, as lacking maturity, power and unction.⁴⁸ Pickford's performance was also criticized for lacking "the depth and understanding which Helen Hayes gave the role on the stage," but the critic immediately attributed this defect to the direction and "a limitation in story for this medium," meaning that the story was censored.⁴⁹

In spite of these drawbacks, *Variety* still gave Pickford tremendous personal praise and admiration. Her screen career was said to stand "without parallel, in any way, in every way. For longevity, for stardom, for cleanliness and for the promotion of the American film industry." Interestingly, *Variety* gave more merit to her performance in silent films than her first talking film. Her status in silent films was said to compare to that of Al Jolson in talkies: "What Jolson did for the talkers, Miss Pickford did for the pioneer silents."⁵⁰

The review in *Time* shared the similar view with *Variety*, which criticized the movie but praised Mary Pickford for her performance. "Her script was hurt when its sex morality was cut over for film use and a windy, incredible courtroom scene introduced. Her cast is bad and her director no genius."⁵¹ Nevertheless, despite that Pickford had not performed vocally before on the screen, "as though to prove to the world which has called her 'America's Sweetheart' that her talent does not share the tawdriness of the phrase, she

³⁶ "The New Picture," *Time*, Apr. 22, 1929, ##.

³⁷ Liebman, *From Silents to Sound*, 235.

³⁸ "Mary Pickford Breaks Silence after 14 Years," *New York Times*, 6 January 1929, x5.

³⁹ Eileen Whitfield, *Pickford: the Woman Who Made Hollywood*, Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997.

⁴⁰ Liebman, *From Silents to Sound*, 235.

⁴¹ "And so She Became a Star," *New York Times*, 4 December 1927, x4.

⁴² "The New Pictures," *Time*, 22 April, 62.

⁴³ "Mary Pickford Breaks Silence".

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ "The New Picture," *Time*, 22 April 1929, 62.

⁴⁶ "Coquette," *Variety*, 10 April 1929, 25.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ "The New Picture," *Time*, Apr. 22, 1929, 62.

turns her difficulties to assets, brings vividly to life the southern small town coquette who liked one fellow too well to suit her father."⁵²

Hall from the *New York Times* criticized the direction, but was generous on Pickford's performance, saying that "Miss Pickford saves the picture by her earnest efforts in the role of Norma Beasant."⁵³ However, he did indicate that Pickford "looks a trifle too mature and too wise for the part of a young impetuous girl."⁵⁴ He also pointed out that the court scene at the end of the film made the film's narrative "hopelessly unconvincing."⁵⁵

Harrison's Reports viewed the movie as too gloomy. The review of the film found "the plot has been constructed well" and "the recording of the sound has been done pretty well," but "the picture is not an entertainment" because "it is too morbid." The critic did not appreciate picture's dark theme and its tragic ending, and (s)he was devastated when "the father of the heroine shoots and kills the hero, whom his daughter loved with all her heart." The review also found it unpleasant to see "the gentle daughter of a gentle Southerner be put into a position where she refuses to go to the aid of her father, who was on trial for his life, saying that she did not care if he hanged." The feeling after seeing the film was described in the review "as if one had attended ten funerals on the same day." For all the negative feelings (s)he had about the film, however, the critic highly praised Pickford's performance, saying that she "does the best dramatic acting in her career," and her performance "is truly a marvelous piece of work."⁵⁶

The box office revenues of *Coquette* were a huge success: a total gross of \$1.4 million.⁵⁷ Even better for Mary Pickford, the movie won her an Academy Award for best female actor for 1929.⁵⁸

Shortly after *Coquette*, Pickford acted in her second talkie, "William Shakespeare's broiling farce,"⁵⁹ as Hall put it, *The Taming of the Shrew* (1929). Sam Taylor directed the film and Pickford's husband Douglas Fairbanks costarred with her in this film.⁶⁰ This was the first time the husband and wife appeared together on the screen. When asked why he and his wife planned to make a cinema of any classic "as frankly boisterous as *The Taming of the Shrew*" in an interview with *Time*, Fairbanks said, "So much has been written about the

romance and marriage of Mary Pickford and myself, and so much of it has been oversweet, that to have filmed a romantic love story would have been, to say the least, bad taste."⁶¹

Critics received the move with generosity and light-hearted warmth. Hall on the next day after the premiere in New York,⁶² wrote that "[i]t is a film that makes for a thoroughly happy evening or afternoon." He recommended the film to viewers seeking a laugh and some fun:

... if it be that one desires merriment to help the digestion, one cannot do better than he himself with his company to look at and listen to these voluble shadows, who mix it up occasionally in a way that is like modern slapstickers.⁶³

Similar commentary could be found in *Time*:

They have created no pedantic replica of Elizabethan comedy, but a vivid, hilarious farce. They have paid Shakespeare the double compliment of using hardly a word that he did not write and of brightening his meaning with new pieces of pantomime that are exactly Elizabethan because they are slapstick.⁶⁴

Variety recognized the movie's box office success, with a little bit of sarcasm: "Of course, Bill will never know what the talkers have done to and maybe for him. This is apt to make the Bard more popular than he has been of late at \$2, up. Which gives the Pickford-Fairbanks combo the edge, without royalty."⁶⁵

Unlike *Variety*, *Harrison's Report* did not intend to make fun of the movie. Instead, it gave the movie pure complement: "Picture-goers will, no doubt, enjoy this comedy immensely... The sound production is fairly good. It should take well everywhere."⁶⁶

Critics praised Pickford's performance in the film. Hall wrote that "Miss Pickford is delightful in her fits of fury and also in those moments when she hankers after food and trembles at Petruchio's wrath."⁶⁷ *Variety* commented that "Fairbanks and Pickford, slapstick artists, give it another bang. They go to it

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen," *New York Times*, 6 April 1929, 14.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Mordaunt Hall, "Errors Made in Screen Court Trials," *New York Times*, 1 September 1929, x4.

⁵⁶ "Coquette," *Harrison's Reports and Film Reviews 1929-1951*, Vol. 4, edit. by D. Richard Baer (Hollywood, CA: Hollywood Film Archive), 13 April 1929, 59.

⁵⁷ Whitfield, *Pickford: the Woman Who Made Hollywood*, 262.

⁵⁸ "Awarded," *Time*, 21 April 1930, 57.

⁵⁹ Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen," *New York Times*, 30 November 1929, 26.

⁶⁰ "The Taming of the Shrew (1929)." July 20, 2005. The Internet Movie Database, July 20, 2005, <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0020479/>>.

⁶¹ "Variations," *Time*, Jun. 17, 1929, 64.

⁶² The world's premiere of the film was in London.

⁶³ Hall, "The Screen," *New York Times*, 30 November 1929, 26.

⁶⁴ "The New Pictures," *Time*, 9 December 1929, 60.

⁶⁵ "Taming of the Shrew," *Variety*, 30 November, 34.

⁶⁶ "The Taming of the Shrew," *Harrison's Reports and Film Reviews 1929-1951*, Vol. 4, edit. by D. Richard Baer (Hollywood, CA: Hollywood Film Archive), 7 December 1929, 195.

⁶⁷ Hall, "The Screen," *New York Times*, 30 November 1929, 26.

knockabout. And Miss Pickford takes the pratfalls. Two and each good.”⁶⁸

After the first two talkies, Mary Pickford made the transition to sound films. She continued her career into the 1940s. Among other films, the ones that are best known are *Kiki* (1931) and *Secrets* (1933), the latter of which is now considered the best sound film that Pickford made even though the public did not respond and it was a box office disappointment.⁶⁹ However, partly because of her incomparable success and popularity in the times of silents, and partly because of aging, Pickford’s career in the era of talkies was declining despite all the achievements she made. She had had her time, and the new era was for a new star to shine. Her name was Greta Garbo.

Greta Garbo’s journey to her stardom was not long, for she could not hide her dazzling charm. Born in Stockholm, Sweden, Garbo made her first brief film appearance in the Swedish comedy *Peter the Tramp* in 1922. But it was her first major role in *The Atonement of Gosta Berling* that caught the eye of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer General Manager chief Louis B. Mayer, who offered her and her mentor, director Mauritz Stiller, a contract. Garbo came to America in 1925 and a year later, she made her first American debut, *The Torrent*. This would be the last time that she was not top-billed.⁷⁰

Before she talked on the screen, Garbo was already among the leading ladies in Hollywood. Her most famous silents include *Flesh and the Devil* (1927), *Love, A Woman of Affairs*, *The Mysterious Lady*, and the last silent *The Kiss* (1929).⁷¹ In 1928, before Garbo’s first appearance in a sound movie, independent theatre owners voted on box office appeal of cinema stars, and Garbo ranked the twelfth of the women, while Clara Bow ranked the best, and Mary Pickford the sixth.⁷²

In 1930, Garbo would be on her way to becoming the mysterious goddess on the big screen when her first talkie *Anna Christie* was shown and became an instant success in cinema. *Anna Christie* was directed by Clarence Brown, with Greta Garbo, Charles Bickford, George F. Marion, and Marie Dressler.⁷³ The screen version was adopted from the play by Eugene O’Neill, the latter ran in the Vanderbilt Theatre, New York, from November 2, 1921, to April 15, 1922⁷⁴. The play was produced by Arthur Hopkins with Pauline Lord and George F. Marion in the leading roles.⁷⁵

Garbo’s talking project had been in the spotlight long before she started making *Anna Christie*. On July 28, 1929, Hall interviewed Garbo at the MGM studio and revealed that “Miss Garbo is not opposed to talking pictures, for one

day last week she said that she was looking forward to her next production, which is to be a dialogue pictorial version of *Anna Christie*.”⁷⁶ Later, another of Hall’s interviews with Garbo was printed in *The New York Times* on March 24, 1929. When asked about talking films, Garbo said, “If they want me to talk I’ll talk. I’d love to act in a talking picture when they are better, but the ones I have seen are awful. It’s not fun to look at a shadow and somewhere out of the theatre a voice if coming.”⁷⁷

MGM was also dubious about her ability before the microphone. This mystery was given a glimpse when *Variety* announced on October 22, 1929, that “Garbo Talks O. K.,” claiming that “doubt dispelled when she clicked with her first scene, running continuous nine minutes and using 850 feet of film.”⁷⁸ On January 26, 1930, the *New York Times* writer Donald Henderson Clarke wrote a feature story on Garbo’s new sound production, announcing that “search for a suitable vehicle for Greta Garbo to make her first appearance in an all-talking film was ended with the selection of Eugene O’Neill’s stage play, ‘Anna Christie.’”⁷⁹ According to Clarke, Garbo was the only one who did not show anxiety over her official introduction to the microphones at MGM.⁸⁰ He described her composure and excellent performance of very first scene at the set in his article:

While the sets... were being built, Miss Garbo was learning her lines. And when the day came for Miss Garbo to walk in and speak the lines for the microphones she didn’t rehearse a sentence, or even a syllable, to discover how she and the synchronized apparatus got along together. She merely walked into the saloon set, through a door marked “Family Entrances,” sat down at a table and said to Lee Phelps, who plays Larry, the waiter:

“Gimme a whisky-ginger ale on the side.”

Then as Phelps turned to go, according to direction from Clarence Brown, she adopted what was indicated in the script as a “winning smile” and added:

“And don’t be stingy, Baby.”⁸¹

In his article, Clarke also revealed that *Anne Christie* was considered

⁶⁸ “*Taming of the Shrew*,” *Variety*, 30 November, 34.

⁶⁹ Liebman, *From Silents to Sound*, 236-7.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² “*Variations*,” *Time*, 28 January 1928, 64.

⁷³ Mordaunt Hall, “The Screen,” *New York Times*, 15 March 1930, 25.

⁷⁴ Donald Henderson Clarke, “Greta Garbo Talks,” *New York Times*, 26 January 1930, x6.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Mordaunt Hall, “On the West Coast,” *New York Times*, 28 July 1929, x5.

⁷⁷ *The Norton Book of Interviews: an Anthology from 1859 to the Present Day*, edited by Christopher Silvester (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 262.

⁷⁸ “Garbo Talks O. K.,” *Variety*, 23 October 1929, 7.

⁷⁹ Clarke, “Greta Garbo Talks.”

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

as an ideal vehicle for Garbo to make her transition, because “in it her slight Swedish accent would be entirely in keeping with the character she was called upon to portray.”⁸²

The new movie had been in the spotlight long before it was released. It was so much talked about as the premiere in New York was coming that on March 9, one week before the film’s premiere, another article about Garbo’s voice was printed in the *New York Times*. This time, the headline was simply “Greta Garbo’s Voice.” The article covered detailed stories at the set, and further increased the suspension of Garbo’s first talking picture.⁸³ One week later on March 14, while looking at Garbo’s beautiful face on the screen, New York audience at the Capital Theatre heard this very first sexy hunky spoken line of the mysterious Miss Garbo.⁸⁴

The movie was undoubtedly a huge success. As Hall wrote in his review in the *New York Times* the next day of the premiere, “the immensely popular Greta Garbo is even more interesting through being heard than she was in her mute portrayals.”⁸⁵ *Variety*’s review praised the movie as being “great artistically and tremendous commercially,” and “in all departments a wow picture.”⁸⁶

Understandably, Garbo’s voice was also the focus of all the reviews. Hall described Garbo’s voice with tremendous admiration in his review:

Miss Garbo’s voice from the screen is deep toned, somewhat deeper than when one hears her in real life. The low enunciation of her initial lines, with a packed theater waiting expectantly to hear her first utterance, came somewhat as a surprise yesterday afternoon in the Capitol, for her delivery is almost masculine. And although the low-toned voice is not what is expected from the alluring actress, one becomes accustomed to it, for it is a voice undeniably suited to the unfortunate Anna.⁸⁷

Variety, like the *New York Times*, affirmed Garbo’s ability in front of the mike:

“Garbo talks” is, beyond quarrel, an event of major box office significance. La Garbo’s accent is nicely edged with a Norse “yeh,” but once the ear gets the pitch it’s okay and the spectator is under the spell of her performance. She can read lines, but she is not less glamorous thereby.⁸⁸

⁸³ “Greta Garbo’s Voice,” *New York Times*, 9 March 1930. p. x6.

⁸⁴ Clarke, “Greta Garbo Talks.”

⁸⁵ Mordaunt Hall, “The Screen” *New York Times*, 15 March, 1930, 25.

⁸⁶ “*Anna Christie*,” *Variety*, 19 March 1930, 34.

⁸⁷ Mordaunt Hall, “In Screen,” *New York Times*, 15 March 1930, 25.

⁸⁸ “*Anna Christie*,” *Variety*.

The love of Garbo and her voice was also shared by *Harrison’s Reports*, in which a critic wrote that “Miss Garbo, whose mother tongue is not English, and who has not been very many years in America, speaks her lines with surprising clearness and with imperceptible foreign accent.”⁸⁹ It even predicted that “if Miss Garbo should continue taking English lessons she will in a very short time be able to speak English flawlessly and without any accent whatever,”⁹⁰ although the necessity of getting rid of her accent was doubtful in the first place, because Garbo’s Swedish accent only seemed to add more attraction to her low sexy voice.

Talking films did not hurt Garbo’s career. In a sense, she became even more of a cinema goddess in the times of talkies. After *Anna Christie*, she made another fourteen movies, including *Inspiration* (1931), *Queen Christina* (1933), *Anna Karenina* (1935), and *Camille* (1936). Always wanting to be left alone, however, Garbo retired young, after she shot her last film *Two-Faced Woman* (1941).⁹¹

Although many established movie stars such as Mary Pickford made the transition from silents to sound, and some other stars such as Greta Gabo became even more dazzling in Hollywood after their appearance in talkies, others were not as lucky as them. John Gilbert, unfortunately, was one of those who did not make a successful transition to talkies.

Before the talkies, John Gilbert was “the fabled great lover of the 1920s.” He was considered the only real rival to the more exotic Italian born Rudolph Valentino⁹². Starting from 1915, he acted in about seventy silent films for Triangle and Fox, including *The White Circle*, *While Paris Sleeps*, *Romance Ranch*, *Man, Woman and Sin*, *Heart o’ the Hills*, *Bardelys the Magnificent* and *The Show*. In 1924, Gilbert went to MGM for *His Hour* and there he reached superstardom, particularly after *The Merry Widow* with Mae Murray and *The Big Parade*, both in 1925. His popularity was further scaled after he co-starred

⁸⁹ “*Anna Christie*,” *Harrison Reports*, 22 March 1930, 46.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Barry Paris, *Garbo: a Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), 567-573.

⁹² Valentino immigrated to the United States in 1913 and worked for a time as a gardener, a dishwasher, and later as a dancer in vaudeville. In 1918 he went to Hollywood, where he played small parts in films until he was given the role of Julio in *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921). He immediately became a star, his popularity being managed by skillful Hollywood press agents. Valentino’s films, which were usually romantic dramas, include *The Sheik* (1921), *Blood and Sand* (1922), *The Eagle* (1925), and *The Son of the Sheik* (1926). Valentino’s sudden death from a ruptured ulcer at age 31 caused worldwide hysteria, several suicides, and riots at his lying in state, which attracted a crowd that stretched for 11 blocks. Each year after his death a mysterious “Woman in Black,” sometimes several “Women in Black,” appeared at his tomb.

with Greta Garbo in *Flesh and the Devil*, *Love* and *A Woman of Affairs*.⁹³ He was considered among a limited number of leading men co-starring with Garbo comparable to her superstardom status. In 1928, he was voted by independent theatre owners as the third best box office appeal of men.⁹⁴

If it were not for talkies, John Gilbert might have been able to continue enjoying the pinnacle of his career for a longer time. The first two talkies Gilbert made, *His Glorious Night* (1929) and *Redemption* (1930), were total failures.

His Glorious Night was generally considered Gilbert's first talking movie, but in fact, *Redemption* was made before it in 1929, but was released one year later in 1930.⁹⁵ *His Glorious Night* was adapted from Fereno Molnar's play *Olympia*, a love story between a princess and a captain. Lionel Barrymore directed the movie, and Catherine Dale Owen, formerly of the New York stage, co-starred with Gilbert.⁹⁶ The movie premiered at the Capitol in New York on October 4, 1929.

In an interview with the *New York Times*, Gilbert still showed great interest in talking pictures. It was reported that "He likes talking pictures. Once he argued for three hours with Charles Chaplin on talking picture, at which time Mr. Chaplin told Mr. Gilbert that he (Gilbert) would lose his charm with sound. Mr. Gilbert couldn't see that."⁹⁷

However, the fact that he was approached by the publicity men with clippings of his part in *His Glorious Night* in Europe convinced Gilbert that "Those press notices were like a slap in the face." He told the reporter that he "had really enjoyed doing the role of Kovacs in the Molnar play *Olympia*," and "looked forward to seeing it well received."⁹⁸

Sadly, *His Glorious Night* was not "well received" like Gilbert had expected. Immediately after its premiere, *His Glorious Night* and Gilbert received relentless criticism. Among them, the critic of *Variety* was the fiercest one, who ridiculing that "A few more talker productions like this and John Gilbert will be able to change places with Harry Langdon."⁹⁹ Gilbert's acting was unreal and laughable:

His prowess at love making, which has held the stenos breathless, takes on a comedy aspect in "His Glorious Night" that gets the gum chewers tittering at first and then laughing outright at the very false ring of the couple of dozen "I love you" phrases designed to climax,

⁹³ Roy Liebman, *From Silents to Sound*, 123.

⁹⁴ "Variations," *Time*, 28 January 1928, 64.

⁹⁵ "Project Jottings," *New York Times*, 15 May 1929, x5. "Project Jottings," *New York Times*, 29 May 1929, x5.

⁹⁶ "The New Films," *New York Times*, 6 October 1929, x8.

⁹⁷ "The Gilberts at Home," *New York Times*, 20 October 1929, x8.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ "*His Glorious Night*," *Variety*, 9 October 1929, 41. Harry Langdon was a comedian.

ante and post, the thrill in the Gilbert lines.¹⁰⁰

In addition, the critic believed that his character was pretentious and unnatural:

Captain Krovaes for Gilbert means chiefly wearing a wardrobe of uniforms. Always on parade and aware of the attention of women young and old at the continental resort, Gilbert presents a voice passable when it does not have to work into a crescendo. The love lines, about pulsating blood, hearts and dandelions read far better than they sound from under the dainty Gilbertian mustach [sic].¹⁰¹

Harrison's Reports, which was usually mild in criticism, also giped at the movie, claiming that "the most interesting part of this picture is the opening, where a horse race is shown." As to the remainder, "The characters talk unceasingly, tiring one. The action is slow and not over-interesting, except to such cultured picture goers as admire high comedy."¹⁰² The review did give some credit to the sound production, but "the actors talk in a theatrical tone of voice," and "spectators laughed in two or three places... because of this defect."¹⁰³

Hall would be the most lenient critic to this film. In fact, he even called this film a "success," complimenting Barrymore's "intelligent direction" and Gilbert and Dale's "competent performance."¹⁰⁴ However, he did say that Gilbert's performance "would benefit by the suggestion of a little more wit."¹⁰⁵

One year later, *Redemption* was released. The movie was adapted from Leo Tolstol's play *The Living Corpse*, and was directed by Fred Niblo. It was made one year ago before *His Glorious Night*, and premiered at Capital in New York on May 2, 1930.¹⁰⁶ Sadly, it had the same fate as the first one.

The criticism was disastrous. "Mr. Gilbert is called upon to act anything but as a regular human being," according to *Harrison's Report*.¹⁰⁷ The critic did not blame the poor quality on the voice of John Gilbert. Rather, (s)he believed that "the fault lies, not in the voice of Mr. Gilbert, which is not bad, but in the poor quality of the screen story. The most melodius [sic] voice could not have made it more interesting."¹⁰⁸

Similarly, *Variety* was ruthless: "Dull, sluggish, agonizing. Hardly a

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² "*His Glorious Night*," *Harrison's Reports*, 12 October 1929, 163.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen," *New York Times*, 5 October 1929, 22.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ "Screen Notes," *New York Times*, 2 May 1930, 19.

¹⁰⁷ "*Redemption*," *Harrison's Reports*, 10 May 1930, 74.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

redeeming aspect."¹⁰⁹ The critic was pretty insightful by saying that,

Indeed it may fairly be advanced as a trade angle that the more first runs this film plays the greater the injury will be done to the very thing which is its one selling point, namely, Gilbert's star rating. Wisdom would indicate a quiet forgetfulness so far as important spots are concerned.¹¹⁰

Indeed, as *Variety* observed, "Gilbert will be the chief sufferer and Fred Niblo will not go unharmed in reputation."¹¹¹

Hall from the *New York Times* was not as lenient as he was with *His Glorious Night*. He commented that "It is hardly a successful venture, for much of the time Mr. Gilbert and the other players are given to declaiming their lines."¹¹² He also pointed out that "the characters are seldom real, and added to this coincidences occur in a surprising fashion."¹¹³ As to Gilbert, Hall commented that "Mr. Gilbert's cheerfulness is not natural and his habit of smiling and laughing strikes me as though he did so to conceal his own nervousness."¹¹⁴

After these two talkies, Gilbert's popularity declined dramatically. Although he made more talkies afterwards, among them *Queen Christina* (1934) with Greta Garbo and *The Captain Hates the Sea* (1934), that were received well, his career never re-bounced back to that in the silent era.

Most film makers, actors and actresses embraced talking films in the late 1920s, but many were skeptical. As Major Albert Warner wrote, "[t]he silent film is too firm of foundation, too staunchly embedded in the esteem of patrons, to be even remotely disturbed by the first tremors and upheaval swept up by the popularity of the new medium."¹¹⁵

Many still believed that films were charming because of silence, just as Arturo S. Mom from the *New York Times*:

... the animated shadows, transformed by the subtle art of the camera men into beings of illusion and mystery, were marvelous precisely because of their silence, the profound silence of their language, that allowed and almost compelled the imagination to clothe them with a fantastic vitality of vague, emotional and poetic beauty, a dreamy beauty of shifting, extra-worldly and spectral quality.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁹ "Redemption," *Variety*, 7 October 1930, 39.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen," *New York Times*, 3 May 1930, 23.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Major Albert Warner, "Sound vs. Silence," *New York Times*, 10 February 1929, 8.

¹¹⁶ Arturo S. Mom, "Charm of Silent Screen," *New York Times*, 24 March 1929, x8.

To Mom and many others, talkies would spoil the charm of films:

Speech breaks, with a blow, the fantasy and the suggestive beauty of the beings of the shadow because it suddenly hurls them into reality, because it materializes them, and in so doing reduces them to their ordinary real proportions.¹¹⁷

This view was shared by Charlie Chaplin, the greatest of all pantomimists. He was one of those who felt that sound will kill the artistic values of the screen, that talking pictures would develop into little more than photographed plays. In his own words, "the silence of a love scene is far more stirring than to hear the players say 'I love you.'"¹¹⁸

Chaplin was one of the most influential persons in Hollywood in the 1920s. He started his stage performance at the Coliseum Theatre in London at the tender age of nine in 1908.¹¹⁹ Years later he came to the United States as a comedian, and acted in his first movie *Making a Living* in 1914.¹²⁰ In 1919, he co-founded the United Artists with several prestigious film makers. By 1927, he was the most famous comedian in the country.

Chaplin's aversion to talking movies was proverbial. When talking films began to gain popularity and film makers flocked to make sound movies, "he is virtually the last of the believers in the silent screen," as the *New York Times* reported.¹²¹ According to Mom from *New York Times*, "Mr. Chaplin was the only person in Hollywood..., who gave me a categorical and sincere opinion about talking pictures. Mr. Chaplin..., laughed boisterously at this new form of the cinematograph."¹²²

Unlike many other artists at the time who were more enthusiastic about making the transition to talking movies, Chaplin continued to make silent movies after the introduction of synchronized sound to films by *The Jazz Singer* in 1927. Between 1927 and 1940, he only made three movies, *The Circus* (1928), *City Lights* (1931), and *Modern Times* (1936), all silent.¹²³

The Circus made in 1928 was a success, although it was not considered as a masterpiece like *The Gold Rush* (1925) was. Hall made an analogy of Chaplin's movie and whisky in the *New York Times* on the next day of the premiere of *The Circus*. He wrote that "Chaplin's pictures bring to mind the Scotsman who said that all whisky was good but that some brands were better than others,"

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Mordaunt Hall, "Hollywood and Sound," *New York Times*, 22 July 1928, x3.

¹¹⁹ John McCabe, *Charlie Chaplin* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1978), 30.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 261.

¹²¹ "A Chat with Chaplin," *New York Times*, 14 July 1929, x4.

¹²² Mom, "Charm of Silent Screen".

¹²³ John McCabe, *Charlie Chaplin* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1978), 275-276.

alluding to the idea that *The Circus* was not as good a *The Gold Rush*, but still a decent one.¹²⁴ He highly praised Chaplin's performance in the movie:

When in *The Circus* he looks hungry it is so infectious that he makes you want a piece of his roll. When he is only a farce, and you are sad with him. When he is in danger, you hope for his rescue. He makes you forget his queer mustache, his absurd clothes and his waggle, by his clever pantomime. A movement here gives you a paragraph, and another action, flashed without the need of a title, informs you of a portent or a hope. It is done so glibly that there is never the slightest doubt as to the meaning Chaplin wishes to convey.¹²⁵

The Circus topped Hall's list of the best ten movies of 1928. Hall commented that while it was "not as charming a piece of work as his *Gold Rush*, it was a feature which once again revealed Chaplin's skill and appealing artistry."¹²⁶ Interestingly, all ten movies on the list were silents, of which some were synchronized with sound effects. However, Hall insisted that "those... synchronized with sound effects cannot be said to have gained anything by the new device,"¹²⁷ revealing the critic's reserved attitude towards the new vogue of talking movies.

After *The Circus*, Chaplin set out to work on his next silent film, *City Lights*, in which he still rejected too much sound effects and talking at all. In this new movie, he remained adamant in his attitude towards sound.¹²⁸ According to a report in the *New York Times* shortly after he started making the movie,

The only concessions he will make to sound in his *City Lights* will be to have an incidental song, the patter of dancing feet, now and again the tones of a trombone or a cornet that are seen in the picture and the inevitable synchronized music score. He is, however, strongly averse to sound effects, as they are. He won't have in his film any applause or even the sound of a closing door.¹²⁹

His aversion to talking films came from his lack of confidence in the quality of talking films at that time, according to the same source:

... he considered that the producers at the present time do not know where to end their pendant for sound. There has been so much sobbing on the screen that people do not want to hear it. It is noise

¹²⁴ Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen," *New York Times*, 9 January 1928, 20.

¹²⁵ Hall, "The Screen," *New York Times*, 9 January 1928, 20.

¹²⁶ Mordaunt Hall, "Annual Film Survey," *New York Times*, 3 October 1929, x7.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ "In Chaplin's Studio," *New York Times*, 12 January 1930, x5.

¹²⁹ "A Chat with Chaplin," *New York Times*, 14 July 1929, x4.

and never stirring!¹³⁰

In fact, although Chaplin insisted on making silent movies during the 1920's and 1930's, his voice was not as big a mystery as that of Garbo's before she spoke her first line in *Anna Christie*. On March 29, 1928, as one of the events in the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the founding of the United Arts, Chaplin spoke on five radio stations across the country. Along with him were two other founders of the United Artists, Douglas Fairbanks and David Wark Griffith.¹³¹ This was not even his first appearance on the radio. According to Alfred J. McCosker, director of WOR, a radio station that Chaplin had been on, Chaplin said "that he was sure he had lost nine pounds during the broadcast and would sign a statement to that effect."¹³² This reaction to the microphone was typical of most movie people, according to Mr. McCosker.¹³³ Very possibly, being uncomfortable with the microphone could be another reason why Chaplin waited years before he made his first talkie.

About Chaplin's rejection to talking movies, people held different views. Most of them showed respect to his adamant belief in silent movies as an art. Quoting an Austrian composer Oscar Straus, who had been an acquaintance of his, "He was right not to make talking pictures. He is the great silent comedian."¹³⁴ Others like Mom, who was sure that "on the day his character pronounces four words on the screen it will die for half the world, and perhaps for the whole world,"¹³⁵ had even stronger feelings about Chaplin's silent films.

However, there were people who thought that Chaplin would miss great opportunities to advance his art of film-making if he did not embrace the new medium. Alexander Moissi, a German actor, was one of these people. When commenting on silents and talkies, he complimented Chaplin's genius in comedy:

Any one who has ever seen Chaplin know that one can speak to the poor, "uneducated" persons in the cheaper seats, to the Chinese coolie and to the American hobo, in a silent language that warms the heart through the gift of artistic humanness. The opportunity was there, the possibility of making the connection between the artist and man in the mass was there – but the silent films, aside from a very few exceptions, didn't know how to take advantage of it.¹³⁶

Meanwhile, he questioned Chaplin's stubbornness in silents and

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ "Decade of United Arts," *New York Times*, 15 April 1928, x5. "Movie Stars on Radio in National Hook-up," *New York Times*, 18 March 1928, xx17.

¹³² "Radio Frightens Most Initiates," *New York Times*, 25 November 1928, xx22.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ "Oscar Straus – and Hollywood," *New York Times*, 23 November 1930, x7.

¹³⁵ Mom, "Charm of Silent Screen."

¹³⁶ "Moissi on Dialogue Film," *New York Times*, 25 August 1929, x6.

predicted the value that sound movies would bring to the art of film-making:

And now, will the sound film only make its appeal to all kinds of sensation-lovers, to the hysterical and sentimental, to the convulsive and the unsatisfied, to the sensualist and the joker? Or will it talk to mankind in a human way?¹³⁷

Eleven years later, Chaplin answered Moissi's question with action in favor of the latter option. In 1940, Chaplin made his first sound film *The Great Dictator*, in which he, as the great dictator, gave a long speech. This scene was specially designed by Chaplin to show the dictator's blood-thirst craziness. Ironically, however, it was considered a flaw in the movie. The best scene, not surprisingly for the greatest pantomimist of all time, was the dictator playing with a globe to the music, which revealed his ambition of conquering the world.

The utilization of sound technology in films changed the outlook of the film industry, as well as actors and actresses' careers in the late 1920s and the early 1930s. What was required in a good actor or actress was never the same. Some of those who embraced the new trend made the transition, like Mary Pickford and Greta Garbo, and some, such as John Gilbert did not. Some, like Charlie Chaplin, were conservative about the new medium at first and then was forced to accept it. No matter what these players' individual choices were, this force of the evolvement in the film industry was irresistible. Unlike what was portrayed in an old cartoon of the late 1890s, which showed a terrified horse running from an automobile, with a farmer, straining at the lines, shouting: "Whoa! Doggone you! The goldern [*sic*] thing ain't goin' to exterminate you yet!"¹³⁸ the golden talking film was bound to exterminate the silence.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Spearing, "Movies Go back."

Works Cited

Primary Sources

- "A Chat with Chaplin," *New York Times*, 14 July 1929, x4.
 "And So She Became A Star," *New York Times*, 4 December 1927, x4.
 "Anna Christie," *Harrison's Reports and Film Reviews 1929-1951, Vol. 4*, edit. by D. Richard Baer (Hollywood, CA: Hollywood Film Archive), 23 March 1930, 46.
 "Anna Christie," *Variety*, 19 March 1930, 34.
 "Awarded," *Time*, 21 April 1930, 57.
 Clarke, Donald Henderson, "Greta Garbo Talks," *New York Times*, 26 January 1930, x6.
 "Coquette," *Variety*, 10 April 1929, 25.
 "Coquette," *Harrison's Reports and Film Reviews 1929-1951, Vol. 4*, edit. by D. Richard Baer (Hollywood, CA: Hollywood Film Archive), 13 April 1929, 59.
 "Decade of United Arts," *New York Times*, 15 April 1928, x5.
 Flinn, John C., "Talking Shadows Talk," *New York Times*, 2 September 1928, x5.
 "Garbo Talks O. K.," *Variety*, 23 October 1929, 7.
 "Glimpses of Chaplin's Comedy," *New York Times*, 11 August 1929, x3.
 "Greta Garbo's Voice," *New York Times*, 9 March 1930, x6.
 Hall, Mordaunt, "Annual Film Survey," *New York Times*, 3 October 1929, x7.
 ---- "Degrees of Violence in Comedies," *New York Times*, 16 October 1927.
 ---- "Errors Made in Screen Court Trials," *New York Times*, 1 September 1929, x4.
 ---- "Hollywood and Sound," *New York Times*, 22 July 1928, x3.
 ---- "The Screen," *New York Times*, 7 October 1927, 24.
 ---- "The Screen," *New York Times*, 9 January 1928, 20.
 ---- "The Screen," *New York Times*, 6 April 1929, 14.
 ---- "The Screen," *New York Times*, 5 October 1929, 22.
 ---- "The Screen," *New York Times*, 15 March 1930, 25.
 ---- "The Screen," *New York Times*, 3 May 1930, 23.
 "His Glorious Night," *Harrison's Reports and Film Reviews 1929-1951, Vol. 4*, edit. by D. Richard Baer (Hollywood, CA: Hollywood Film Archive), 12 October 1929, 163.
 "His Glorious Night," *Variety*, 9 October 1929, 41.
 "How the Vitaphone Enters in," *New York Times*, 28 August, 1927, x4.
 "In Chaplin's Studio," *New York Times*, 12 January 1930, x5.
 "Jazz Singer Returning," *New York Times*, 7 October 1927, 25.
 "Jolson to Start on Film," *New York Times*, 26 May 1927, 23.
 "Mary Pickford Breaks Silence after 14 Years," *New York Times*, 6 January 1929, x5.
 "Miscellaneous," *New York Times*, 6 April 1927, x1.
 "Moissi on Dialogue Film," *New York Times*, 25 August 1929, x6.
 Mom, Arturo S., "Charm of Silent Screen," *New York Times*, 24 March 1929, x8.
 "Movie Stars on Radio in National Hook-up," *New York Times*, 18 March 1928, xx17.
 "Oscar Straus – and Hollywood," *New York Times*, 23 November 1930, x7.
 "Project Jotting," *New York Times*, 18 September 1927, x7.
 "Project Jottings," *New York Times*, 15 May 1929, x5.
 "Project Jottings," *New York Times*, 29 May 1929, x5.
 "Radio Frightens Most Initiates," *New York Times*, 25 November 1928, xx22.
 "Redemption," *Harrison's Reports and Film Reviews 1929-1951, Vol. 4*, edit. by D. Richard Baer (Hollywood, CA: Hollywood Film Archive), 10 May 1930, 74.
 "Redemption," *Variety*, 7 October 1930, 39.

- "Sam L. Warner Dies; Was Movie Pioneer," *New York Times*, 6 October, 1927, 25.
- "Screen Notes," *New York Times*, 2 May 1930, 19.
- "Sound and Comedies," *New York Times*, 30 March 1930, x6.
- Spearing, James O., "Now the Movies Go back to Their School Days," *New York Times Magazine*, 19 August 1928, 12.
- "Talkie Concern Discussed," *New York Times*, 18 April 1929, 32.
- "The Gilberts at Home," *New York Times*, 20 October 1929, x8.
- "The New Films," *New York Times*, 6 October 1929, x8.
- "The New Pictures," *Time*, 17 October 1927, 59.
- "The New Pictures," *Time*, 22 April 1929, 62.
- "The New Pictures," *Time*, 9 December 1929, 60.
- "*The Taming of the Shrew*", *Harrison's Reports and Film Reviews 1929-1951, Vol. 4*, edit. by D. Richard Baer (Hollywood, CA: Hollywood Film Archive), 7 December 1929, 195.
- "*Taming of the Shrew*," *New York Times*, 8 December 1929, x5.
- "*Taming of the Shrew*," *Variety*, 30 November, 34.
- "Variation," *Time*, 28 January 1928, 64.

Secondary Sources

- Eyman, Scott, *The Speed of Sound: Hollywood and the Talkie Revolution 1926-1950* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997).
- Liebman, Roy, *From Silent to Sound: A Biographical Encyclopedia of Performers Who Made the Transition to Talking Pictures* (Jefferson, NC: McFarlan & Company, 1998).
- McCabe, John, *Charlie Chaplin* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1978)
- Paris, Barry, *Garbo: a Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), 567-573.
- The Norton Book of Interviews: an Anthology from 1859 to the Present Day*, edited by Christopher Silvester (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996).
- "*The Taming of the Shrew* (1929)". 20 July 2005. The Internet Movie Database. 20 July 2005. <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0020479/>>.
- Warner, Major Albert, "Sound vs. Silence," *New York Times*, 10 February 1929, 8.
- Whitfield, Eileen, *Pickford: the Woman Who Made Hollywood* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997).

Code Orange:

How the Internet, cell phones and new technologies helped shape the Ukrainian Revolution of 2004

Matthew J. Duffy

This paper examines the impact of websites, blogs, cell phones, and new technologies on Ukraine's Orange Revolution of 2004. Using a variety of primary sources including blogs, Ukrainian newspaper articles, and interviews with participants, the author documents the impact of non-traditional media on the 12 days of protests following the fraudulent election results in November 2004. Particular attention is paid to how protesters and other Ukrainians spread the word and took advantage of new communication tools. The interaction of a global audience with English-language bloggers taking part in the revolution appears unprecedented. The event is viewed through various theoretical lenses including McLuhan's "global village" and Appurdarai's concept of the "mediascape." The author concludes that while new media played a robust role in the events, the effect of traditionally media (notably Kiev's Channel 5) should not be understated.

Introduction

A variety of factors influenced the people of Ukraine to reject the elections of November 2004 and manifest what would be called the "Orange Revolution." Determined leaders, an authoritarian-weary electorate, and a high-tech communication system all worked to circumvent the government control on information and force new elections. Many observers saw the 2004 Ukraine election as a demonstration of how communication could be used to combat authoritarian rule. "Communications technologies," one U.S. columnist wrote, "...have finally begun to affect an historic shift in the relationship between governments and the governed. The governed are starting to win."¹ The Orange Revolution may represent a shift in the familiar paradigm that state control of media can protect powerful incumbents indefinitely. Ukraine's authoritarian regime controlled most of the media and backed incumbent Prime Minister Victor Yanukovich. But, the opposition – led by Victor Yushenko and symbolized by his party's bright orange campaign color – still managed to prevail.

Technology played a major role in the events that led to a new election. Internet newspapers, smart cell phones, e-mail, blogs, RSS feeds, and communication satellites all disseminated information and helped organize protests. In the new-media environment, the autocratic Ukrainian government

¹ Daniel Henninger, "Here's one use of U.S. power Jacques can't stop," December 17, 2004, 3, <http://www.opinionjournal.com/columnists/dhenninger/?id=110006042>.

found it difficult to control the media flow. Because of technology, the world participated in the events the Orange Revolution in an unprecedented fashion. Mainstream news outlets linked to blogs written by active participants in the protests. With the click of a button, people from around the world could even donate money to the protesters.

This paper will document the events that led to the Orange Revolution including the use of new media and new technologies. The paper is grounded in a variety of primary and secondary sources including interviews with a Ukrainian journalist and an Orange Revolution blogger, a review of the local *Kiev Post* and international news sources, and archives from blogs. The hypothesis is that new media and new technologies including websites and cell phones played an essential role in the demand for new elections. The paper will explore the flow of information into and out of the country and its effects. The author will argue that protesters and global audiences interacted within a mediascape, as defined by theorist Arjun Appurdarai. This interaction appears to support McLuhan's optimistic prediction that the advances in technology would create a "global village" for the benefit of humankind. The paper may shed light on the way in which new media is changing the communications paradigm and may prove useful for future attempts to circumvent state-controlled media messages.

Ukrainian media landscape

In the 1990s, Ukrainian journalism enjoyed great freedom after the fall of the Soviet Union. Ukrainians launched many private newspapers and television channels. Young news anchors appeared on many Ukrainian broadcasts, perhaps reflecting the inability of old-guard journalists to embrace their newfound freedom. By 1994, the honeymoon for reporters started to end. President Leonid Kravchuk attempted to shut down a television station that had supported his electoral rival, Leonid Kuchma. The move may have helped Kuchma look like a victim of censorship and convinced journalists to side with him. In the election of 1994, Kuchma beat Kravchuk, but his presidency was marked for its attempt to control the press as well.

In 2000, a Ukrainian journalist who had been fired from a privately-owned news station because of his aggressive reporting of official corruption started an online newspaper. Journalist Heorhiy Gongadze launched *Ukrainska Pravda*² and immediately began criticizing the government. Later that year, Gongadze's body was found, decayed and decapitated, in a shallow grave about 75 miles from Kiev. The murder of their fellow journalist proved a turning point for some reporters. They insisted on covering the case without influence from state control or their superiors' desire to self-censor.

Evidence was later presented that showed Kuchma was involved in the journalist's death. A bodyguard had taped Kuchma in his presidential office

² "Ukrainian Truth"

indicating that he was irritated with the reporter and "asked that his middlemen get rid of him."³ Protests and a "Ukraine without Kuchma" campaign emerged. But, "in early 2001, the opposition campaigns came to naught owing to disunity and weakness. Apathy and mistrust returned to Ukrainian society."⁴ Despite evidence that a sitting president was involved in the murder of a journalist, Ukrainians couldn't rally the will to oust Kuchma. The heavily controlled media system that rarely criticized the authoritarian government likely influenced the apathetic public. The media landscape may have contributed to the public's apathy.

In the early 2000s, the incumbent administration enjoyed the support of most television broadcasters. Five of the six major television stations were either directly owned by the state, by the government's political party, or by financial or political groups that depended on the incumbent administration.⁵ National outlets, particularly Inter TV and Studio 1+1, controlled the lion's share of advertising and audience.⁶ Yanukovych was often presented as a "prime minister in tune with and responsive to voter concerns."⁷ One observer estimates that 80 percent of television time was devoted giving the incumbent Prime Minister a positive image.⁸ Two smaller stations, Channel 5 and TRK Ukraine, appeared in 2002, but they had small audiences.⁹

In 2002, Kuchma's administration began intensifying its interference with broadcasters, a practice for which his administration would gain infamy. After airing critical reports about the administration, the president's office began calling news station to complain. Broadcasters grew nervous and downplayed their news coverage of the government to avoid the wrath of Kuchma and his aides. Journalists and owners self-censored reports they felt would offend the president. Although the government wasn't officially prosecuting newspapers or broadcast outlets, the effects of their intimidation managed to keep unfavorable news out the press.¹⁰

When a Kuchma ally, Victor Yushchenko, was elected as prime minister in 2002, this relatively subtle censorship became even more overt. The

³ Olena Prytula, "The Ukrainian Media Rebellion," in *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough*, ed. Anders Åslund and Michael McFaul (Carnegie Endowment, 2006), 105.

⁴ Ibid., 106.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "Country profile: Ukraine," *BBC*, February 15, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1102303.stm.

⁷ Taras Kuzio, "From Kuchma to Yushchenko: Ukraine's 2004 Presidential Elections and the Orange Revolution," *Problems of Post-Communism* 52, no. 2 (April 2005): 9.

⁸ Kuzio, "From Kuchma to Yushchenko."

⁹ Prytula, "Revolution in Orange."

¹⁰ Olena Prytula, "The Ukrainian Media Rebellion," in *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough*, ed. Anders Åslund and Michael McFaul (Carnegie Endowment, 2006), 216.

government dictated *tymnyky* [themes] that would provide journalists with an outline of what they expected in the news coverage. The president's office sent these instructions to both state-controlled and private media outlets. Because of the *tymnyky*, many opposition events would receive no coverage and often news programs would vary little in content. In 2003, the system was exposed through parliamentary hearings and a resolution described future *tymnyky* as a form of political censorship. Despite the action, the government still held sway with most broadcast outlets and some newspapers.¹¹

Only Channel 5 presented a different point of view. Its broadcasts reached only about 30 percent of the Ukrainian population¹² when it debuted in 2002, but it gained popularity for its differing coverage. The channel would air live political talk shows and refused to air image-boosting events staged by the government. The station was owned by Petro Poroshenko, a deputy in the parliament and a member of Yushchenko's Our Ukraine Party. The owners of the station publicly signed an agreement with Channel 5's journalists that promised no interference with the news-gathering process. Poroshenko, a multimillionaire businessman, served as one of the opposition's largest financial backers.¹³ The station quickly gained acclaim for its objective – or at least not pro-government – point of view.¹⁴

The print media in Ukraine tended to be highly partisan. Many papers openly sided with the government, only covering negative news about the opposition. Other papers remained independent or represented the opposition viewpoint. As Prytula put it, one had to read several newspapers “to find out what was really happening in the country.”¹⁵

Several online news outlets existed in the early part of the millennium, but only 3 to 4 percent of the population could access the Internet. However, many of the articles from websites were printed and shared. Regional papers outside of Kiev also printed articles from online news sites. As with television and print, Internet news sites presented views from government and opposition viewpoints, but the latter received much more traffic.¹⁶

Given the severely limited, but somewhat existent, press freedom in the country, categorizing Ukraine's media system proves difficult. Due to the heavy-handed tactics practiced by the government, one couldn't call Ukraine a free democracy. But, a purely authoritarian media system fails to accurately describe the country as well. The increasingly maligned Four Theories of the Press model (i.e., Communist, Authoritarian, Libertarian and Social Responsibility) doesn't

seem to hold a category for the Ukrainian system.¹⁷ Ukrainian scholar Paul D'Anieri dealt with the overall classification of the country in the pre-Orange Revolution era by noting that observers characterized Ukraine as a “delegative democracy” or as “competitive authoritarianism.”¹⁸ Perhaps a new category of press freedom – “competitive authoritarianism” – would best describe pre-Orange Revolution Ukraine.¹⁹ Barring the invention of a new term, Merrill and Lowenstein's model could also prove useful. The communication scholars argued that that all media systems simply fall somewhere between libertarian and authoritarian. Early 2000s Ukraine would sit near the authoritarian end of the scale, but not at the far end of the spectrum.

Disputed election

In the run-up to the 2004 election, President Leonid Kuchma's administration kept a tight control of the media, both public and private. Ten days before the election, the government attempted to shutter Channel 5, the one station that would air opposition positions. The station chose to fight back. They pre-empted their normal programming and made a dramatic live announcement about the attempts to close down the station by freezing the assets of its owner. “The attempt to try to close the channel 10 days before the election is an attempt to deprive viewers of an objective view about what is happening in Ukraine,” the anchor warned viewers.²⁰ The station remained on the air, but authorities did limit Channel 5's reach by closing down various regional broadcasts. Other government tactics to squash press freedom included taking independent Radio Liberty off the FM dial, prosecuting a cable company that carried Channel 5, and refusing to allow a regional opposition newspaper to be printed.²¹

On the day of the elections, November 21, 2004, exit polls conducted by foreign observers showed that Yushchenko was leading by a relatively large margin. But at the end of the night, the head of the Central Electoral Commission announced that incumbent Yanukovich led Yushchenko by three percent. “Almost immediately,” Oksana Tsisyk wrote in *Kiev Post*, “buses and cars from across [Ukraine] began heading to Kiev to join in demonstrations that began in Maidan Nezalezhnosti [Independence Square.]”²²

The next day, protesters arrived from pro-Yushchenko parts of the

¹⁷ Fred Seaton Siebert et al., *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social* (University of Illinois Press, 1963)

¹⁸ D'Anieri, *Understanding Ukrainian Politics*, 4

¹⁹ D'Anieri, *Understanding Ukrainian Politics*, 4

²⁰ “Ukraine: TV Channel Finds Itself Under Hostile Fire In Fight For Country's Presidency,” 5.

²¹ Prytula, “Revolution in Orange.”

²² Oksana Tsisyk, “Regional cities reject Central Election Commission rulings,” *Kyiv Post*, November 25, 2004, para. 3, <http://www.kyivpost.com/nation/21892/>.

¹¹ Prytula, “Revolution in Orange.”

¹² Via its broadcast signal in Kiev and sporadic cable access throughout the country.

¹³ “Ukraine: TV Channel Finds Itself Under Hostile Fire In Fight For Country's Presidency,” *News, RadioFreeEurope*, October 22, 2004, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2004/10/790dcfb1-4279-4c90-9145-357970930849.html>.

¹⁴ Prytula, “Revolution in Orange.”

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁶ Prytula, “Revolution in Orange.”

country²³ and helped create a tent city on the square. Protests erupted in other parts of the country, including roughly 200,000 Yushchenko supporters who gathered outside the Regional State Administration in Lviv, a large city 50 miles from the border of Poland in the west. The Lviv City Council declared Yushchenko as the legitimate president. Other city councils followed Lviv's move and protests sprang up in other cities as well as Kiev. Many businesses and universities declared general strikes and threw their support behind Yushchenko. Intimidating Yanukovich supporters described as "black-jacketed men" poured into Kiev. The *Kiev Post* implied that the men were likely government sponsored and they were shipped in from cities in the eastern part of Ukraine, which tended to side more with Yanukovich and Russia.²⁴

International reaction helped shape events too. Russia welcomed the results of the election and publicly congratulated Yanukovich on his "victory." Meanwhile, the United States and Europe refused to recognize the election results because of the widespread claims of fraud and intimidation.²⁵

Despite freezing temperatures and heavy, late-November snowfall, protesters refused to leave the Maidin. Featuring a ubiquitous bright orange glow, the tent city soon claimed a population of 200,000, with its own ad hoc self-government. Unarmed guards secured the perimeter, a medical center helped care for the sick and cooks provided food.²⁶ In a sign of support, the mayor of Kiev granted the protesters access to the bottom floor of City Hall.²⁷ Older residents brought food and supplies to help the mostly young protestors. According to the *Kiev Post*, support for the "protestors has grown since the first day of civil disobedience."²⁸ After 12 days of protests, the Supreme Court invalidated the government's election results and called for a new election.²⁹ A month later, Yushchenko was declared the winner. "For 14 years," Yushchenko declared after winning, "we were independent, and now we are a free nation."³⁰ The Orange Revolution was complete.

²³ Although an overly simplistic explanation, the western part of Ukraine generally aligns with Yushchenko and the West; the eastern part of the country tends to support Yanukovich and ties to Russia.

²⁴ Oksana Tsiyuk, "Regional cities reject Central Election Commission rulings," *Kyiv Post*, November 25, 2004, <http://www.kyivpost.com/nation/21892/>.

²⁵ Kuzio, "From Kuchma to Yushchenko."

²⁶ Dima Kozmin, "Too much love," *Kyiv Post*, December 2, 2004, <http://www.kyivpost.com/nation/21975/>.

²⁷ Roman Olearchyk, "Kyiv mayor opens doors to demonstrators," *Kyiv Post*, November 26, 2006, <http://www.kyivpost.com/top/21918/>.

²⁸ Kozmin, "Too much love," 10.

²⁹ "Supreme Court rules election void; revote by Dec. 26," December 3, 2004, <http://www.kyivpost.com/top/21991/>.

³⁰ "An orange victory; Ukraine's presidential election," *The Economist*, January 1, 2005, sec. EUROPE, 2, http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/lnacademic/frame.do?tokenKey=rsh-20.695559.5835095448&target=results_listview_resultsNav&reloadEntirePage=true&rand=1206899115128&returnToKey=20_T3386267761&parent=docview.

Blogs and Channel 5 provide non-government perspective

Two English-language blogs from Kiev, *La Sabot Post-Moderne* and *Neeka's Backlog*, sent out a steady stream of reports on events as they were unfolding. Relatively obscure before the events of late 2004, the blogs found a much wider audience after other bloggers and mainstream news sources began linking to them.

John Bush, an American in Ukraine helping build a church, published *La Sabot Post-Moderne*.³¹ The blog detailed life in the tent city and events in central Kiev during the revolution. His blog gained fame for its eyewitness, ground-level accounts of the revolution including an impressive array of pictures that captured the spirit of the events. In an interview for this paper, Bush said that he mostly blogged using Internet cafes that were located around the square. At times, he would use a cell phone to call in reports to his wife³² who stayed at their home in Kiev during the revolution. She would then update the blog from their home computer.³³ Although never detailed fully on the blog for fear of government retribution, Bush also worked with PORA,³⁴ the official protest movement. He often acted as their foreign press liaison and helped with organizational tasks as well.³⁵

Veronica Khokhlova, an Ukrainian journalist with training in the United States,³⁶ published *Neeka's Backlog*. The blog detailed her view of the revolution while living in Kiev.³⁷ Her site also featured a wide assortment of photos from the protest center at Maidan Nezalezhnosti. She would return to her home in Kiev throughout the revolution (she once noted that she felt guilty for being warm and indoors), so her posts add more insight into the media accounts on television and on the Web. *The New York Times* published her op/ed piece in the middle of the protests.³⁸

Both blogs stressed that Channel 5 was a primary source for information during much of the Orange Revolution. *La Sabot* referred to Channel 5 as "the good guys" and reported the channel was "on all the time in the organizational

³¹ Bush explained the blog title on his site: "French workers tossed their sabots [shoes] into the machinery of those great symbols of modernity – the factory. Whence the word "sabotage." We at *Le Sabot Post-Moderne* do our humble best to toss clogs into the grinding maw of postmodernity."

³² Observations posted on her blog, Tulipgirl, also gained fame during the revolution.

³³ John Bush, "Le Sabot Post-Moderne," *Le Sabot Post-Moderne*, <http://www.postmodernnclog.com/>.

³⁴ Ukrainian for "It's Time."

³⁵ John Bush, "Personal Interview," email, March 17, 2008.

³⁶ She earned a M.A. in journalism from the University of Iowa.

³⁷ Veronica Khokhlova, "Neeka's Backlog: November 2004," http://vkhokhl.blogspot.com/2004_11_01_archive.html.

³⁸ Veronica Khokhlova, "New Kids on the Bloc," *The New York Times*, November 26, 2004, sec. Opinion, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/26/opinion/26khokhlova.html?_r=1&oref=slogin.

office.”³⁹ The day after the elections, Neeka’s Backlog reported in stilted English that “some 40,000 people at the Independence Square – Channel 5 is showing it live. (I’m on my way there...).”⁴⁰

While the other stations ignored the mounting protests, Channel 5 showed live pictures. The station featured marathon coverage featuring interviews, spot news and “without comment” feeds of the live events on a giant stage on the Maidan square. The first week after the elections focused on electoral violations and the next week on the actions of protesters. “Lately the television is switched to Channel 5 from morning till night,” a Kiev student told the *Kiev Post*. “Whoever is at home watches it constantly.”⁴¹

In an interview, Khokhlova said that the station served as more than just a news station. “They weren’t just a source of information, but also a huge source of inspiration,” she said.⁴² With all the other government-allied channels neglecting to cover the events, Channel 5 came to symbolize the pro-Yushchenko movement. The coverage stood in stark contrast to the other channels, but that would change before the end of the revolution.

Mainstream outlets change their coverage

The sign language interpreter for the state-controlled channel First National was one of the first mainstream journalists to take a stand. Natalya Dmitruk first signed the official results of the November 2004 election. Then the 47-year-old mother of two signed the following message: “Do not trust the results that you see on the screen. Do not trust the results, because they are lies. Yushchenko is your president.”⁴³ She pulled up her sleeve and allowed viewers to glimpse an orange ribbon that symbolized Yushchenko’s campaign. Dmitruk closed with the following: “Maybe I’ll see you tomorrow.”⁴⁴ She would say later that she was sure she’d be fired. The interpreter didn’t lose her job but instead found herself honored several months later in Washington, D.C., as one of the heroes who helped provoke the Orange Revolution.⁴⁵ Other media outlets began to follow Dmitruk’s lead.

After days of protests, the journalists and management of privately held channel 1+1 announced that they would start reporting the news without bias. “Since inception in 1995, 1+1 has been a popular channel that became

notorious for its biased news coverage a few years ago,” the *Kiev Post* reported.⁴⁶ Khokhlova said that 1+1 and the other media “changed their approach five minutes before the victory. When it was all too clear which side was winning.”⁴⁷ She said that the other television channels had “very little” to do with helping the revolution succeed.⁴⁸

Bloggers accused the television stations outside Kiev of being biased for the government, spreading anti-Yushchenko propaganda. *Neeka’s Backlog* said that television stations in Odessa (in eastern Ukraine, closer to Russia) had claimed that pro-Yushchenko protesters were “zombies funded by the United States.” Khokhlova wrote that her mother “said that perhaps it’s time for the wonderful Kiev crowd to get on the trains and go to Odessa and Kharkiv, to show them we aren’t zombies.”⁴⁹ *La Sabot* stated that an “independent” Russian television channel told viewers that Yushchenko’s scarred face was the cause of a bad reaction to Botox injections used commonly to eliminate wrinkles.⁵⁰ The cause of Yushchenko’s blemished face was widely recognized as a botched attempt at poisoning. The traditional media systems were entrenched with a pro-government, anti-Yushchenko slant.

Technologies help spread news

Participants also received news from other sources on the Internet. Bush said he checked a few English-language Ukrainian websites that were offering regular updates. “They tipped me to events I’d missed,” he said. “And also let me know when something important was upcoming.”⁵¹ *Neeka’s Backlog* cited the Web-only news outlet *Ukrainska Pravda* one of her sources of for reliable information.⁵² Through email, blogs and websites, Ukrainians exchanged funny messages, jokes, and even protest songs. Prytula noted that “websites that provided free access to revolutionary songs and jokes about the government-backed candidate became extremely popular.”⁵³ A previously obscure hip-hop band saw their song, “Razom Nas Bahato” [“Together We Are Many”], turn into the unofficial anthem of the revolution. The song circulated on radio and in digital format, downloaded onto music players. “I can’t say it adds much to advancement of rap, but it has heart,” one blogger noted.⁵⁴

Cell phone technology also played a role in the events, both with voice

⁴⁶ Vlad Lavrov, “1+1 playing it straight,” December 2004, 2, <http://www.kyivpost.com/business/general/21982/>.

⁴⁷ Khokhlova, “Personal Interview.”

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Khokhlova, “Neeka’s Backlog: November 2004.”

⁵⁰ Bush, “Le Sabot Post-Moderne.”

⁵¹ Bush, “Personal Interview.”

⁵² Khokhlova, “Neeka’s Backlog: November 2004.”

⁵³ Prytula, “Revolution in Orange,” 121.

⁵⁴ “Orange Ukraine,” *Razom Nas Bahato*, 1, <http://orangeukraine.squarespace.com/journal/2004/11/29/razom-nas-bahato.html>

³⁹ Veronica Khokhlova, “Neeka’s Backlog: November 2004,” http://vkhokhl.blogspot.com/2004_11_01_archive.html.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Anna Kozmina, “Channel 5 sees an orange-colored protest spike,” *2004, December 2, 4*, <http://www.kyivpost.com/nation/21974/>.

⁴² Veronica Khokhlova, “Personal Interview,” March 28, 2008.

⁴³ These quotes represent one version of her statement. Several media accounts differ on her exact phrases, but all descriptions share the same meaning.

⁴⁴

⁴⁵ Davies, “I risked jail to expose my country’s crooked election on National TV.”

calls and with text messaging. Khokhlova called texting “a crucial medium to communicate the news.”⁵⁵ She said that oftentimes cellular phones wouldn’t work in the middle of the square because of all the demand on the network. But, protesters could walk a few blocks away to use their service.

The news received from text messaging wasn’t always reliable. Khokhlova’s husband was in St. Petersburg, Russia, during the revolution. He would read unverified information about dangerous developments and attempt to warn Khokhlova via text messages: “[He would hear of] crowds of thugs moving towards Maidan or troops on their way to Kiev – info that he kept running into on forums and news sites. He was worried for me and he was trying to help ... because when I was out in the street [and] I could not access the web for the latest news.” The reports never turned out to be true. Khokhlova said she never worried for her safety since there were “about a hundred thousand non-thugs out here.” She said that even when “people were getting false or exaggerated info about some alarming developments, it wasn’t likely to send them to hide at home.”⁵⁶ Cell phones and text messages appear to have given Ukrainians a “safety net,” a feeling that they were not alone. Twenty years earlier, the protesters on the Square would have been all alone, isolated from the greater world. But with text messages coming in from, for example, St. Petersburg, the protesters perhaps felt connected and supported in a unique way. Cell phones also provided the ability to stay easily connected to friends and family while living in the tent city on Maidan.

Inside the tent city, thousands received news from announcements on a center stage, word of mouth, cell phones, and a one-page newspaper printed for protesters.⁵⁷ Bush said that the protesters ran their operations from the basement of a nearby building “with a large bank of computers there. This enabled them to coordinate activities around the country, keep provincial activists informed, and also keep up a stream of desktop publishing.”⁵⁸ The use of technology helped the protesters keep the flow of information open. Bush said that the government did try some “old school measures, such as preventing trains from bringing Orange protesters to Kiev.” But, the state simply couldn’t stop the flow of information.

Connected to the world

The use of new media and new technologies soon involved the outside world. As the protests continued, Bush’s *La Sabot* blog began getting links from mainstream sources such as *The New York Post* and popular bloggers such as Glenn Reynolds and Andrew Sullivan.⁵⁹ Global readers offered their comments

⁵⁵ Khokhlova, “Personal Interview.”

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ “Yushchenko, rallying crowd of 200,000, claims victory; asks for international recognition,” *Kyiv Post*, November 23, 2004, <http://www.kyivpost.com/top/21850/>.

⁵⁸ Bush, “Personal Interview.”

⁵⁹ Who remarked that the “revolution would be blogged.”

on the *La Sabot* blog. He responded to the comments by noting their impact:

Thank you all for the encouraging words in the comment section. Keep them coming! I showed them to folks at the organization office today, and it was very encouraging ... We know the world is watching. It’s one thing to hear [U.S. Secretary of State] Colin Powell or [Italian Prime Minister] Berlusconi make a statement, and quite another to know that millions of individuals around the world are praying and hoping the best for us.⁶⁰

This type of global feedback was unprecedented. Supportive people from all over the world offered words of encouragement to protesters in the middle of an ongoing political revolution. The audience could also offer money – through the PORA website – to help fund the protesters living in the tent city and other efforts. In global struggles of the past, viewers at home could only watch as oppressed citizens fought for freedom. But, audiences could actively communicate and support the protesters of the Orange Revolution.

The global participation in Ukraine’s internal politics appears to be further evidence supporting Marshall McLuhan’s theoretical construct of the “global village.” In 1962, McLuhan already saw technology making the world a smaller place. “The new electronic interdependence,” he wrote, “recreates the world in the image of a global village”⁶¹ He noted that the electronic age had sealed the “entire human family into a single global tribe.”⁶² Although scholars differ over how optimistic McLuhan saw this electronic world, words such as “tribe” and “village” imply a communal existence in which participants care about each other. Long before the advent of the Internet, McLuhan seemed to argue that electronic advancements could potentially lead to a problem-solving global forum creating a new sense of world community.⁶³

More recently however, theorist Arjun Appadurai dismissed McLuhan saying that he “overestimated the communitarian implications of the new media order.”⁶⁴ Appadurai argued that media create communities without any sense of place. Observing both “fantasies” and “nightmares” predicting electronic equality, Appadurai sees the new media order “requiring theories of rootlessness, alienation, and psychological distance between individuals and

⁶⁰ Bush, “Le Sabot Post-Moderne.”

⁶¹ “The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of ... - Google Book Search,” 31, <http://www.google.com/books?id=y4C644zHCWgC>.

⁶² Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg galaxy the making of typographic man.* ([Toronto]: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 8.

⁶³ Marshall McLuhan and Bruce R. Powers, *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century (Communication and Society)* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1992).

⁶⁴ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (U of Minnesota Press, 1996), 29.

groups.”⁶⁵ Appadurai and McLuhan offer competing views on how to embrace technological advances. McLuhan sees a “global village” whereas Appadurai sees participants separated by psychological distance.

The followers of the Orange Revolution appear to exist in the more optimistic “global village” camp. The audience indeed created a “sense of place” and cared about the outcome of events, actively supporting the participants. The Internet’s ability to communicate over vast distances and across cultural barriers actually did some good in the case of Ukraine. Perhaps the Internet is making people in some parts of the world rootless and alienated, but not in the case of the Orange Revolution. In this case, the “global village” lived up to McLuhan’s prediction.

The “global village” created by the interaction between the audience and the Orange protesters appears to be a fruition of one of Appadurai’s definitions – the concept of a mediascape. Appadurai proposed the mediascape as part of an elementary framework for exploring “disjunctures” caused by modern communication. He created five categories: ethnoscapings, mediascapings, technoscapings, financescapings and ideascapings. The terms all end with “-scape” to indicate their “fluid, irregular shapes” and lack of “objective given relationships.”⁶⁶ Appadurai writes that mediascapings “refer both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information ... which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests through the world, and to the images of the world created by these media.”⁶⁷ The world in which the bloggers and the audience interacted can be best understood as a mediascape, an area where both sides co-existed through a media-created reality. Despite thousands of miles separating them, audiences shared in the revolution in virtual real-time through this mediascape. Before blogs and the interactivity they afford, this mediascape wouldn’t have existed.

From within the constructed mediascape, *La Sabot* encouraged readers to contact their public officials to pressure the Ukrainian regime to act with restraint toward the protesters. Bush said that the blog’s exposure led to many interviews with foreign media outlets including *The London Independent*, *Radio Free Europe* and *Radio Radicale*. Thousands of viewers read *Neeka’s Backlog* and countless others read her op/ed in *The New York Times*. Of course, plenty of old-media reporters had converged on Kiev as well, so credit for publicity of the revolution cannot rest with new media and new technology alone. On her blog, Khokhlova mentioned that she worked during the revolution as a translator for some of the press that had arrived in the country. Ukrainian officials reported handing out 1,700 foreign press credentials.⁶⁸ At the end of the email interview with Khokhlova, she mentioned that “those crowds of foreign reporters (and

observers) – they were a nice presence.”⁶⁹ Khokhlova’s implication is clear – new media and new technologies helped, but the presence from old-school international media outlets cannot be overlooked.

As the plight of the protesters gained more notice, foreign governments did act to pressure Ukraine to hold new elections. Three days after the election, Secretary of State Colin Powell told Ukraine that the United States did not recognize the elections as valid. The European Union followed suit shortly thereafter meaning that the Ukrainian leaders wouldn’t be recognized in any Atlantic-European country. Ukrainian scholar Taras Kuzio notes that “in the two days following Powell’s statement, Ukrainian officials sitting on the fence began to wholesale defect to the Yushchenko camp. Three days later parliament denounced the results. Powell could very well be written up by future historians as the one of the unlikely heroes of the Orange Revolution.”⁷⁰

The global attention to the plight of the Ukrainians may have helped prevent the government from cracking down on the protesters in a brutal fashion. In interviews with both bloggers, the possibility of such a crackdown was a constant worry among all the protesters. Bush elaborated:

It was a really scary time for all of us. The military and internal security forces that Kuchma⁷¹ had in his hands were frightening, and we had no way of knowing we’d win in the end. OMON [special forces] troops were in Kiev. Also, *Jane’s Defense Weekly* had reported that Putin had flown in shock troops to back Kuchma. Even before the [Orange Revolution] began, *militsiya* types were ubiquitous in Ukraine, in uniforms little changed from Soviet times.⁷²

Bush credits new media with “preventing what *could* have happened.”⁷³ He noted that Yanukovich and Kuchma were both aligned with Russia. Given President Vladimir Putin’s authoritarian leanings, Bush worried that Russia would help quash the protests with military intervention. “Twenty years ago, they could easily have evicted Western journalists, cracked down, and then presented the West with a *fait accompli*,” Bush said. “Thanks to new media, this was no longer possible. Handicams, cell phones, [and the] Internet ... make even the most determined censorship permeable.”⁷⁴ The ability of many protesters to help create the mediascape in an unfiltered, instantaneous manner helped prohibit the authorities from dealing with the protesters with force. The audience’s participation in the mediascape also helped solidify the protester’s

⁶⁹ Khokhlova, “Personal Interview.”

⁷⁰ Taras Kuzio, “Ukraine’s Orange Revolution: Causes and Consequences,” *Academic, The Ukraine List*, April 28, 2005, 31. file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Administrator/Application%20Data/Mozilla/Firefox/Profiles/2fr64xrf.default/zotero/storage/15082/ukl346_13.html.

⁷¹ Kuchma was still in office as Ukraine’s president.

⁷² Bush, “Personal Interview.”

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 33.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 35.

⁶⁸ “Neeka’s Backlog: December 2004,” http://vkhokhl.blogspot.com/2004_12_01_archive.html.

position.

Conclusion

The new media and new technologies created a steady, instantaneous media flow out of the country. As sociologist Manuel Castells noted, flows of all types dominate our lives. He stated that society appears to be constructed around flows of capital, organizational interactions, technology, images, sound and symbols.⁷⁵ Communication theorist Daya Kishan Thussu noted that these flows have grown in “direction, volume and velocity” in our increasingly networked global society.⁷⁶ Thussu sees the media flows consisting of a dominant flow (usually from the government or corporate world) and a contra-flow which resists or creates an alternative to the dominant flow. Thussu’s theory sees the United States as the dominant flow and peripheral countries creating a contra-flow.

But, a parallel can be drawn to the situation. The Ukrainian government and its media allies represented the dominant media flow. The attention brought directly to the Ukrainian’s plight via Channel 5, online papers, and blogs represent a contra flow. The contra flow of information circulating around and out of the country – that the elections were rigged – differed from the “dominant flow” from the Ukrainian government – that Yanukovich had won. And the flows were operating on a multi-directional basis – both leaving the country in the form of blog postings and returning in the form of comments. The existence of these contra-flows allowed both protesters inside the country and global observers in the mediascape to dismiss the dominant flow of information.

New media and new technologies did indeed play an essential role in the call for new elections in Ukraine. Although old media, mostly in the form of Channel 5, reported on events in Kiev, the new media and other methods of communications actively augmented that limited form of communication. For example, hundreds of thousands of protesters couldn’t watch Channel 5 because they were living in tents. They relied upon news from the protest organizers and from their cell phones. Many others throughout the country weren’t receiving Channel 5 because of government interference, so they had to rely upon other sources of news.

The other sources of news created a contra-flow of information that successfully withstood the dominant flow. These new flows could not have occurred in an old-media environment. The return flows from outside of the country helped create a shared mediascape that should not be understated. The Internet allowed the worldwide audience to actively encourage and support a political struggle – all from within a constructed reality. The result shows that a “global village” can exist, has a sense of place, and shouldn’t be dismissed as optimistic drivel.

⁷⁵ Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age*, 2 (Wiley-Blackwell, 2000).

⁷⁶ Daya Thussu, *Media on the Move: Global Flow and Contra-Flow*, 1 (Routledge, 2006), 11.

Works Cited

- “An orange victory; Ukraine’s presidential election.” *The Economist*, January 1, 2005.
- Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- Bush, John. “Le Sabot Post-Moderne.” *Le Sabot Post-Moderne*. <http://www.postmodernlog.com/>. [Individual blog published by John Bush recounting his experiences while taking part in the protests of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine.]
- Bush, John. Interview by email, March 17, 2008.
- Castells, Manuel. *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age*. Volume 2. Ames, Iowa. Wiley-Blackwell, 2000.
- “Country profile: Ukraine.” *BBC*, February 15, 2008. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1102303.stm.
- Henninger, Daniel. “Here’s one use of U.S. power Jacques can’t stop,” *The Wall Street Journal*, December 17, 2004.
- Khokhlova, Veronica. “New Kids on the Bloc.” *The New York Times*, November 26, 2004.
- Khokhlova, Veronica. “Neeka’s Backlog: November 2004.” http://vkhokhl.blogspot.com/2004_11_01_archive.html. [Individual blog published by Ukrainian-based reporter Veronica Khokholova. Described her experience as the events surrounding the Orange Revolution unfolded.]
- Khokhlova, Veronica. “Neeka’s Backlog: December 2004.” http://vkhokhl.blogspot.com/2004_12_01_archive.html.
- Khokhlova, Veronica. Interview by email. March 28, 2008.
- Kozmin, Dima. “Too much love.” *Kiev Post*, December 2, 2004. <http://www.kyivpost.com/nation/21975/>.
- Kozmina, Anna. “Channel 5 sees an orange-colored protest spike.” *Kiev Post*, December 2, 2004.
- Kuzio, Taras. “From Kuchma to Yushchenko: Ukraine’s 2004 Presidential Elections and the Orange Revolution.” *Problems of Post-Communism* 52, no. 2 (April 2005): 29-44.
- Kuzio, Taras. “Ukraine’s Orange Revolution: Causes and Consequences.” *The Ukraine List*, April 28, 2005. http://www.ukrainianstudies.uottawa.ca/ukraine_list/ukl346_13.html [Transcript of speech that Ukrainian scholar Kuzio delivered to University of Ottawa audience.]
- Lavrov, Vlad. “1+1 playing it straight,” *Kiev Post*, December 2004.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *The Gutenberg galaxy. The making of typographic man*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962.
- McLuhan, Marshall, and Bruce R. Powers. *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century Communication and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 1992.
- Olearchyk, Roman. “Kyiv mayor opens doors to demonstrators.” *Kiev Post*, November 26, 2006.
- Prytula, Olena. “The Ukrainian Media Rebellion.” In *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine’s Democratic Breakthrough*, edited by Anders Åslund and Michael McFaul. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment, 2006.
- “Supreme Court rules election void; revote by Dec. 26,” *Kiev Post*. December 3, 2004.

Thussu, Daya. "Mapping Global Media Flow and Contra-Flow," in *Media on the Move: Global Flow and Contra-Flow*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Tsisyk, Oksana. "Regional cities reject Central Election Commission rulings." *Kiev Post*, November 25, 2004.

"Ukraine: TV Channel Finds Itself Under Hostile Fire In Fight For Country's Presidency." *RadioFreeEurope*, October 22, 2004.

"Yushchenko, rallying crowd of 200,000, claims victory; asks for international recognition." *Kiev Post*, November 23, 2004.