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# Duty, Imperialism and Militarism in the British Public School, 1850-1918

Claire Louise Frances Adams

## Abstract

Within this thesis, I investigate the ways in which British public schools, from 1850 to 1918, interacted with wider society on the themes of duty, imperial and militarism. Hierarchical systems of authority within the schools, and an emphasis on developing manly character through sport, were used to prepare boys for a leadership role within military or civic life. At the same time, a Socratic movement formed in opposition to the cult of athleticism, emphasising friendship and the arts. The entry of alumni into perceived duty-bound careers, such as the military and the civil service, were found to be driven by social advantage, as well as a sense of duty. Juvenile literature and textbooks from the period were found to encourage imperialist ideology amongst their readership, and promote moral justifications of imperialism, labelling it 'the white man's burden'. Investigation of middle-class girls' schools during the same period revealed that duty was central to middle-class female identity and rigorous education and employment were believed by some to hinder a woman's ability to perform her primary duties as wife and mother.

Duty, Imperialism and Militarism in the British Public School

1850-1918

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Master of Arts by Research in Education

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Beginning the research for this thesis, I started with the broad aim of investigating duty, militarism and imperialism in nineteenth century boys' public schools. It soon became clear that the public school of the late nineteenth century was almost unrecognisable from the public school of the beginning of the nineteenth century. From 1780 to 1850, Harold Perkin argues that the English went from being "one of the most aggressive, brutal, rowdy, outspoken, riotous, cruel and bloodthirsty nations in the world... [to] one of the most inhibited, polite, orderly, tender minded, prudish and hypocritical" (p.10, Richards, 1988). As such, I felt it best to concentrate on a smaller study period, enabling me to focus on the key themes of duty and imperialism. Given that the First World War was such a momentous event in the history of both public schools and British society, it seemed appropriate to shift the study period to also include the commencement of the Great War.

I have attempted to provide background to the study period. In the case of boys' education, this involved discussing how the public schools had developed from the brutal and hedonistic schools of the Early Modern period to the comparative order of the mid-Victorian public school. As part of this, I have considered the changing definition of what constituted 'gentlemanly' behaviour. The systems of punishment and self-governance within the schools are discussed as evidence of military-like hierarchical structures and conditioning to respect authority. Likewise, the emphasis on 'hardening' is discussed, with reference to preparation for entry into military life. I have also considered how innovation within public schools interacted with their veneration of tradition.

I believe that a key measure of a school's ideology is what kind of life-path it prepared its pupils for. As such, I considered the entry of boys into the military, the public service and private enterprise. Both the military and the public service were respected as appropriate, dutiful professions and I investigated whether duty was the driving force behind their popularity.

Mangan promotes the cult of athleticism as being central to both imperialism and public school life during the later decades of the nineteenth century. Given the large body of work that Mangan has produced on the topic, and the limited availability of other sources, I

decided to limit my discussion of the cult of athleticism. Within chapter 6, I have provided an overview of the state of athleticism, as well as discussing how it was linked to ideas of battle-readiness and the development of character. In response to the increasing emphasis on sport in public schools, a reactionary movement was founded: the self-named 'Socratic movement'. I have attempted to provide an indication of the relative dominance of the two movements.

Despite my initial intention to focus upon the public schools themselves, the ideology of militarism and imperialism cannot be confined to the public school sphere. As Steiner and Neilson argue, "schoolbooks and speech-day orations, rifle corps and cadet groups, newspaper leaders and popular novels..." (p.2, 1977) all contributed to the swift and enthusiastic response of young British men at the outbreak of the First World War. These different sources of ideology did not function in isolation. The stories that public schoolboys read in their spare time may have made them more receptive to the ideology being promoted within the school, while their hardship on the games field might have made them feel more connected to the heroes in their adventure stories.

While public schools might have been centres of imperialistic fervour (Mangan, 2012), aspects of imperialism could be found and fostered in all aspects of life, affected by parental views, juvenile literature and popular culture. Within this thesis, I could not hope to produce an exhaustive account of the factors affecting imperialism however I endeavoured to provide an overview of several key contributors to the development of the New Imperialism. I have looked into the changing nature of imperialism over the study, both from the perspective of attitudes at home and the nature of intervention in India. I have considered how imperialism was increasingly represented as a duty: 'the white man's burden'.

Within chapters 8 and 9, I have considered the ways in which the ideology of imperialism, and its associated duties, were expressed to, and nurtured in, young readers. The representation of racial differences as justification of imperial intervention is discussed across textbooks, literature and wider society.

Despite not being of Quaker faith, throughout my school years, I attended Ackworth School, a private Quaker boarding school, founded in 1779. The Religious Society of Friends, commonly referred to as Quakers, maintain a strong pacifist streak, working towards conflict resolution and campaigning against the arms trade, from their permanent offices at the United Nations offices in New York and Geneva. Despite their pacifism, as is common in schools from the period, the names of those who lost their lives in the First World War are etched into a memorial at the school. While many schools had brought their pupils up to relish the opportunity to fight for one's country, Ackworth School had not. Yet with the outbreak of war, some old scholars felt compelled to sign up and I hoped to find material in the school archives to indicating how the school responded to its old scholars' choices.

My research into girls' public schools had originally been intended to simply provide a contrast with boys' education; however, it became clear that duty played as significant a role in girls' education as in boys' education. While boys' public schools had existed for many centuries, the mid-nineteenth century saw the introduction of the first girls' schools that might warrant the term 'public school'. During the second half of the nineteenth century, both traditional private schools and reformed (public) schools served the daughters of the middle and upper classes, revealing that there was a continued demand for both types of education. Consideration of girls' education within the Taunton Commission provides insight into what contemporary experts believed to be the purpose of girls' education. Within this chapter, I investigated the expected futures of middle-class girls, and the duties associated with them. The competing priorities in female education and life are considered through the concept of 'double conformity'. By analysis of Gordon and Nair's investigation into the economic position of the middle class women of Glasgow, I have attempted to assess the extent to which the ideology around a woman's place in society was reflected in reality.

The areas of study in this thesis might at first seem to be only loosely connected, however therein lies the value of the thesis. The relationship between public schools and imperialism is well-trodden ground, as is that between the cult of athleticism and militarism. The emphasis on athleticism, and the critical representations of other races in textbooks and juvenile literature, is understood better when considered alongside the fear of 'national

degeneracy'. Likewise, the inclusion of girls' education highlights the many interpretations of duty and 'doing you bit' for the country.

## Chapter 2: Background

*“The rich man in his castle,  
The poor man at his gate,  
GOD made them, high or lowly,  
And ordered their estate.”*

(p.27, C.F. Alexander, 1852)

This, the third verse of *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, from the extremely popular *Hymns for Little Children* by Cecil Frances Alexander, reflects an ideology still present in the nineteenth century. While not without its critics, the belief that social inequality was “in accord with the laws of nature” (p.19, Wilkinson, 1963) was central to the public school ideology and the assumption that its pupils were destined for greatness.

Despite this apparent confidence in the natural order of things, the research period begins at a time of social tension. 1848 was known as the Year of Revolution, with a series of (failed) republican revolts across mainland Europe (Hobsbawn, 2010). The second half of the nineteenth century was characterised by social unrest amongst the working-class population, with fears over employment, increasing occupational ill-health and continued high infant mortality (Watson et al., 2005). From 1873, through the following two decades, Britain was blighted by the Long Depression. This combined with increased worker activism lead to concern over class antagonism, which was tackled by attempting to create a shared British identity. Through school books and fiction, the lower classes, as well as their public school-attending counterparts, were well-versed in the popular misconception of the white man’s superiority and their associated responsibilities to the Empire<sup>1</sup>.

Laver asserts that “[e]ach age seems, on retrospect, to be dominated by one particular class, the features of whose life we regard as characteristic of the whole epoch. In this sense, the

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<sup>1</sup> Cain (2012) claims that there was a firm belief amongst the imperial elite that Britain was morally compelled to civilise Asia and Africa, termed ‘the white man’s burden’. Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India around the turn of the nineteenth century, asserted that “Providence has before all the world laid a solemn duty on our shoulders... [to bring] justice, righteousness and goodwill” to the Indian people (cited on p563, Cain, 2012). The formation of the British Empire was presented as a “natural and national growth” (p235) and “the part which has been assigned to... [England] in the evolution of the world” (p235, Lucas, 1915).

Victorian era was essentially middle class” (cited on p.52, Girouard, 1992). This view is supported by the fact that, while at the beginning of the study period, the greatest concentrations of wealth were still held by the peerage, their income was increasingly dependent on the middle-class fields of property, stocks and shares, and industry (Hobsbawn, 2010).

The Victorians had a great love of amateurism, which can be seen across public school curricula, sport, the army and literature. While amateurism was associated with fair-play and gentlemanly behaviour, professionalism was considered vulgar and associated with, at best, the profit-driven middle classes, and at worst, foreigners. While the British Army took pride in ‘muddling through’, the Prussian army was an early adopter of professionalism (p.478, Harries-Jenkins, 1975).

While public schools and the middle classes extolled the virtues of sport, they did so with the assumption that they were referring to a ‘gentleman amateur’. In contrast to the modern-day obsession with highly-paid footballers, in the nineteenth century, respect for sportsmen rested upon their amateurism, as displayed by the public schoolboy and the army officer. Within some sports, regulations to exclude professionals also served to exclude the lower classes: within rowing and athletics, the ‘mechanics clause’ excluded those who made a living as a mechanic, artisan or labourer, on the grounds that their work would provide them with an unfair physical advantage (Halladay, 2004).

Amateurism was presented as a virtue in literature, with the most famous of fictional Victorians, Sherlock Holmes, being an amateur detective (Redmond, 2009). Likewise, in E.W. Hornung’s tales about A.J. Raffles, the title identifies him as an ‘Amateur Cracksman’. Despite the tales following two old public school chums committing crimes, Raffles’ status as a *gentleman* thief and an *amateur* grants him respect and a degree of immunity (Hornung, 2003).

Even in the mid-nineteenth century, public schools were starting to be put under pressure to produce measurable results. In 1854, the Northcote-Trevelyan Report began the process

of reforming the Civil Service, seeking to replace appointment and promotion by patronage with a system based upon merit. In 1858, in response to pressure from parents, teachers and potential employers, to assess the effectiveness of schooling and the competency of individuals, Oxford and Cambridge established their lower examinations.

During the eighteenth century, the Grand Tour of Europe had been the centrepiece of the extensive socialization process undertaken by the upper classes, prior to taking on their responsibilities to their estates or within the House of Lords. During the Victorian period, this emphasis on arts and culture was supplemented or replaced by a short period of service in the military (Harries-Jenkins, 1973). While this shift in the socialization process might reflect an increasing importance given to duty and military ethos, it might also relate to the fact that improvements in transport were opening up the Continent to a wider proportion of society. While the Continent was beginning to lose its exclusivity, certain regiments in the army had not (Razzell, 1963).

Duty might take many forms and while women's duties as mothers are discussed in some depth, men's duty to the home is not. In the debate over the purpose of girls' education, the duties of women within the home come to the fore but the same is not true of boys' education. While discussion of financial matters might have been taboo in certain social circles, the Victorian husband had a duty to provide for his wife and children. In the case of the landed gentry, a gentleman's duty extended beyond his family, to the preservation of his house and land, and a wider responsibility towards his tenants and the local community. For the elite, "Parliamentary work was looked upon as a family duty. Often, it was an irksome duty, but like other elitist responsibilities it was a duty which had to be accepted" (p.283, Harries-Jenkins, 1973).

The term 'Victorian values' is often used in discussion of public schools and wider Victorian society, however no single group of values defined the Victorian era. Values did not remain static over the study period and values were not universally held across, or within, social groups.

Girouard (1992) picks out three dominant groups within Victorian society, with their own mores and values: earnest Victorians, Victorian swells and Victorian gentlemen.

Membership of a group was not always absolute, and there was possibility of a degree of overlap, however this categorisation highlights that different value systems existed concurrently in Victorian society. These groupings are not restricted to any particular social class, though the manifestation of the values varied according to one's privilege.

Girouard applies the term 'Earnest Victorians' to those for whom religion played a central role in their beliefs and actions. This group was defined by duty. Within the home, this took the form of duty and loyalty to one's spouse. This group emphasised the belief that talents were gifts from God, and that it was their duty to cultivate them for the benefit of others, rather than personal gain. This attitude is expressed in *Tom Brown at Oxford*, with Hughes arguing that Muscular Christians trained their bodies out of respect for God and in order to protect the weak.

Within working class communities, this took the form of temperance, chapel attendance and betterment through evening lectures, and the wider Co-operative movement.

Earnestness has traditionally been associated with the Victorian middle class, with claims that public schools' religious aspects, especially visible in Arnold's Rugby, were in part a response to the increased intake of earnest middle class boys.

While the early nineteenth century upper class was associated with hedonism (Mangan, 1996), Charles Kingsley claimed that during the mid-nineteenth century the British upper class had undergone "a noble change" and "cheerfully asked what its duty was" (Kingsley, cited on p.51, Girouard, 1992).

The 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Shaftesbury embodied upper class earnestness. Lord Shaftesbury involved himself in a great range of social concerns, from insane asylums, to child labour and ragged schools. In a discussion of public schools in 1844, he approved of the values fostered at Rugby, while condemning those found at Eton, arguing that "[w]e must have nobler, deeper, and sterner stuff" (p.51). He encouraged "more of the inward... gentleman", focusing on duty and honour, rather than outward signs of refinement and rank. He called

for boys to recognise that rank and property were gifts from God, and brought with them great responsibility. He believed that the public schools needed to foster “a desire and a courage to live for the service of God and the best interests of mankind” (Lord Shaftesbury, cited on p.51, Girouard, 1992).

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were themselves high status earnest Victorians, setting “the supreme example of domesticity, purity, religious seriousness and devotion to duty” (p.52, Girouard, 1992). The monarchy’s way of life did not receive universal admiration, with much of the upper class unwilling to relinquish their hedonism for a life of domesticity and godliness. Despite this, Victoria and Albert did receive the admiration and devotion of many, across all social classes. Victoria cultivated values typically associated with the Victorian middle class, thereby lending a degree of credibility to this increasingly prominent class and *some* of its values. It is important to recognise that not all members of the Victorian middle class held these earnest Victorian values but it was a value system that became associated with the middle class.

The Victorian ‘swells’ valued style and extravagance, Sitwell applying the term to “a person of extreme elegance and splendour” (cited on p.53, Girouard, 1992). Swells took great pains with their attire, and were associated with extravagant parties, high-stakes gambling and the theatre. Swell lifestyle came at a hefty financial cost; it was not uncommon for gentlemen to bankrupt themselves, or to have to sell off significant proportions of their estates to maintain their lavish lifestyles. In contrast to the earnest Victorians commitment to their marriage vows, affairs and the keeping of mistresses were accepted and even admired within swell society.

While Victoria and Albert embodied earnest Victorian values, their eldest son, the future Edward VII, fully embraced the swell lifestyle. To his mother’s chagrin, Bertie kept a string of mistresses, earning the sobriquet Edward the Caresser, and was well known for his fondness for parties and horseracing (Griffith, 1997).

While the upper class might have had greater funds at their disposal, enabling them to produce great displays of excess, the hedonistic swell ideal, emphasizing style and a careless

attitude towards money, was present throughout the class system. The term 'Champagne Charlie', taken from a music-hall hit of 1868, was usually applied to middle or working class swells. In some cases, middle class swells did have significant funds: H.E.S. Benzon, an iron-master's son, managed to bet, socialise and wear his way through his money, but far from being ashamed of his excesses, in 1889, he releasing a book *How I Lost £250,000 in Two Years*.

Girouard claims that the concept of the gentleman formed during the nineteenth century "made serious things glamorous, and glamorous things serious" (p.57, 1992). The concept of chivalry was revived, in an adapted form. These modern knights could come to the rescue of the oppressed through philanthropy and social reform and prepare their bodies for feats of heroism on the battlefield through 'manly' sports. Unlike the womanizing swells, these gentlemen cared for the good opinion of their wives and were courteous to all classes of society.

As was the case with the earnest Victorians, the Christian gentleman felt a strong sense of duty, however he was also driven by the belief that his noble actions set him apart from others. Public schools perpetuated this belief that their pupils were elevated, both by birth and actions. In the extreme, Mangan (1995) argues that this ideology produced a 'self-sacrificial warriorhood' within the upper-middle class. Juvenile literature also encouraged this ideal, with noble deeds within the Empire transforming protagonists into heroes. These ideas will be expanded on in their relevant chapters.

In the case of completely opposing ideologies, namely the earnest Victorians and the swells, the presence of the other appears to have redoubled individual's commitment to their own cause. For example, the immorality and vulgarity the earnest Victorians witnessed amongst the swells lead them to attack the other group, and reaffirm their commitment to their own cause.

Girouard argues that, while not universally held, one belief was present across all classes and value groups: a belief in social hierarchy, resulting in deference to one's superiors from those lower down the hierarchy, and an assumption of authority from those at the top.

While the value sets described above were not gender-specific, the prevalence and manifestation of each value set would have differed significantly between men and women. For women, as for men, while such values were found across all social classes, duty was associated with the middle classes. Within the developing middle class culture, an ideal emerged of women serving as “bearer[s] of civic virtue and duty” within the public sphere (p.183, Morgan, 2004). While women only had restricted access to public life, they were encouraged to take on roles which made the most of their ‘feminine’ abilities and virtues, whether charity work or by sitting in on political debates and so ensuring the behaviour of the menfolk.

From the late eighteenth century into the nineteenth century, there was a surge in the publication of conduct literature aimed at middle-class women (Sutherland, 2000). ‘Conduct literature’ is a modern umbrella term for a range of material promoting self-discipline and self-improvement, such as devotional works, marriage manuals<sup>2</sup> and guides to household economy. Beginning with *The Women of England, their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* (1839), Sarah Stickney Ellis was the most popular author of conduct literature during the Victorian era (Austin-Bolt, 2015). These texts typically focused on women’s domestic virtues but also emphasized the positive social and moral influence women could exert over public life, through their duties as daughter, wife and mother.

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<sup>2</sup> The feminine ideal extolled was domestic and devoid of sexual desires. Conduct literature reflected medical opinions of the time, with William Acton, a famous mid-nineteenth century gynaecological doctor, declaring that “the majority of women (happily for society) are not very much troubled with sexual feelings of any kind” (p212) and that for the best wives, mothers and homemakers, “[I]ove of home, of children, and of domestic duties are the only passions they feel” (p213, Acton, 1875). While it might appear counterintuitive to a modern audience, sexual desires were presented as detrimental to the performance of one’s duties as a wife and mother, and were associated with the perceived lax morals of the lower classes and prostitutes.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

Attempting to uncover pupils' lived experience of their time at school is, as acknowledged by Digby (1982), fraught with methodological difficulties: the samples are typically small and self-selecting, and subject to selective recall, self-contradiction and tinged with nostalgia. Despite this, impressionistic surveys can be illuminating, especially when taken alongside more systematic research. Individual accounts provide readers with a personal insight typically absent in discussions of wider trends.

During the nineteenth century, education was far from standardised and there was significant variation between public schools. While some authors might have limited their study one or two of the top public schools, such as Eton or Harrow, others may have stretched their definition to include newly established and minor public schools. Within my thesis, I have attempted to focus upon the major public schools<sup>3</sup> however exceptions have been made: Ackworth School provides an example of Victorian Quaker boarding school but does not constitute a traditional public school.

Even within a single school, experiences varied significantly; housemasters' involvement in their school houses varied dramatically and the prevalence of bullying and internalising of school ethos might even differ dormitory by dormitory. Individuals' status and temperament would also have affected boys' experiences; authors of a book charting the history of Marlborough College acknowledged that for "the weak, the sensitive or the studious [during the mid-nineteenth century, the school] must have been a terrible place" (cited on p.44, Mangan, 2014). Given that public schools educated large numbers of middle class pupils, while being critical of certain aspects of middle class identity, such as regional accents and entrepreneurship, it is also to be assumed that middle and upper class pupils

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<sup>3</sup> There is no universally-agreed definition of the term "public school", or the schools that warrant such a title. Within this thesis, the term "major public school" may be taken to refer to the nine leading schools investigated by the Clarendon Commission: Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Charterhouse, Shrewsbury, Westminster, Winchester, St Paul's and Merchant Taylors'. Depending upon the relative importance given to different factors, such as the gaining of scholarships for Oxford and Cambridge universities, entry into the Army or Civil Services, or inter-school sporting fixtures, some historians further limit the number of schools they consider true public schools, while others include schools not recognised in the Clarendon Report. For in-depth discussion, see Leinster-Mackay (1981).

had different perspectives on school life, and what they sought to achieve from their time at the school.

Public school attendance was believed to provide sons of the middle classes with social status and opportunities to increase their fortune through the cultivation of advantageous contacts. Literature from the turn of the nineteenth century, such as Maria Edgeworth's 1814 novel *Patronage*, reveals a distaste for middle-class sons' active pursuit of advancement through the development of connections at public school (Musgrove, 1959). In reality, the sons of the upper classes also used their school years as time to develop and strengthen social ties, and while Shrewsbury's middle-class associations might have limited their appeal to the landed classes, Eton's pre-eminence was not shaken by the admission of poor scholarship boys or the sons of the middle classes. It is also worth noting that Rugby survived and flourished, despite Arnold's decision to actively favour the sons of the middle classes and refuse admittance to the sons of aristocrats during his headmastership (English, 1991).

It is also worth noting that while social and economic factors influenced boys' experiences, their sporting prowess and ability to take a beating stoically were likely to count for more amongst their peers. By contrast, girls' schools catered to narrower sections of society; material wealth had a far greater effect upon popularity and the admission of girls from a lower social class could cause outrage amongst parents (see chapter 10).

I have included a wide range of sources in my research, from those written during the study period, to recent publications. Sources from different time periods have varying advantages and disadvantages. Textbooks written during the nineteenth century enable us to see 'facts' as they were presented at the time, even if my analysis of the texts is (subconsciously) coloured by modern perspectives. Authors of texts published during the nineteenth century are likely to have had first-hand knowledge of their subject but may lack the criticality of modern researchers. Even some books written after the event, such as Edward C. Mack's 1941 *Public schools and British opinion since 1860*, were able to draw upon resources that are no longer available to us. Mack would have had the opportunity to question those who

attended public school in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, as well as personal experience of the views of older generations.

Beyond a certain criticality coming with distance, conflicts are likely to have a significant impact on the interpretation of past events. For example, while Castle (1993) found that some textbooks from the nineteenth century showed a clear preference for the 'Aryan' inhabitants of India, over their dark-skinned compatriots, it is likely that in the years following the Second World War, having witnessed the horrors of the 'ethnic cleansing' perpetrated by the Nazi regime, writers would have been reluctant to admit to Victorian Britain's ethnic teachings. Likewise, considering the extent to which British public schools prepared their pupils for war, opinions expressed after the First World war are likely to differ from those expressed prior to the conflict. Within the main body of the thesis, I will discuss the way in which attitudes towards China changed in response to the First Opium War of 1839 to 1842.

Where texts have quoted other sources, attempts have been made to locate the original source however this is not always possible. It is important to recognise that taking quotations taken out of context can result in misinterpretation or subtle changes in meaning. For example, Aldrich quotes Sir Charles Lucas, chairman of the Royal Colonial Institute during the First World War, as having stated in 1922 that Europeans should be "trustees of the black men until in some distant future (if ever) the black men have become able to stand by themselves" (p.28, 2012). This quote is used to emphasise the European role as trustees and might be taken to indicate a belief, by Lucas, that the Europeans were infallible and unquestionably working for the good of the African people. While I was unable to source the original 1922 text, *The Partition and Colonization of Africa*, a more complete copy of the quotation was available in the notes section of Mark Lee's 2004 article and shed new light on the quote. In the more complete quote, Lucas is shown to be arguing that the Europeans should "deplore that, having come in[to Africa], they were guilty of so many abuses instead of shouldering their rightful job" as trustees (p.141, Lee, 2004). While both quotes reveal a belief that the African people were not able to rule themselves, independent of European involvement, the truncated quote does not acknowledge Lucas' disappointment in the behaviour of some Europeans.

Most of the texts available on athleticism in the Victorian public school are written or edited by a single author: J.A. Mangan. While Mangan provides a wealth of material on the connections between public schools, athleticism, masculinity and imperialism, it is worth recognising that Mangan has built a career as a researcher of athleticism and so might be particularly keen to stress such links. As with all topics, attempts are made to not rely too heavily upon a single text, or author, however in some cases access to other sources are limited.

While Arnold's headship of Rugby is not discussed in any detail in the thesis, it provides a useful example of the pitfalls one can easily fall into. While some hold him up as the key figure in the reform of Victorian public schools, others speak of "the myth of Arnoldian purification" (Chandos, cited on p.304, Neddham, 2004). In raising up Arnold, other reformers are eclipsed and it is possible for a focus on the work of Arnold to mask wider 'organic' changes in public schools and wider society.

## Chapter 4: Boys' Public Schools

Within this chapter, I will provide a picture of boys' public schools during the study period. I will consider what kind of man the schools sought to produce, both in terms of character and career, and the means by which they went about it.

In contrast to girls' public schools, which only came into being during the study period, the customs and values of many of the boys' public schools had been allowed to develop over the course of several hundred years. The public schools of the Victorian and Edwardian period cannot be discussed without reference to the public schools of the Early Modern period. Many of the features which characterised the Victorian public school, such as the prefectorial system, were developed during earlier periods, and consideration of how public schools had changed since the Early Modern period allows trends and changes in ideology and practise to be identified and discussed.

Likewise, Thomas Arnold's time as headmaster of Rugby School, from 1828 to 1842, slightly predates the period under investigation. As such, detailed consideration of his reforms is not within the remit of this thesis however, as many credit him with providing the blueprint for subsequent public school reforms, he cannot be ignored completely. Arnold spelled out the qualities he sought to incubate in his boys: foremost, he wished to nurture their "religious and moral principles" and secondly "gentlemanly conduct", while "intellectual ability" took third place (Arnold, cited on p.308, Neddham, 2004). Arnold's blueprint was still relevant in the study period however emphasis on religious appeared to decline and a focus on athleticism emerged.

In the Early Modern public school, schoolmasters typically ruled as 'absolute monarchs', constrained only by the school governors, with the rod acting as a symbol of their authority, even appearing on school seals. While a 'firm hand' was expected, the severity of punishment found in many schools went far beyond acceptable limits. In cases of extreme cruelty, governors were forced to intervene and masters were subject to cautions or even dismissal. During this time, verbal, legal or physical retaliation by parents following punishment of their child was not uncommon and some schools put legislation in place, requiring the expulsion of the child if such action was taken (Thomas, 1976).

While the extent and severity of corporal punishment during the study period pales in comparison to the brutalism found during the Early Modern period, it still remained a significant part of some schoolboys' public school experience. It should be recognized that physical punishment in the home was far more common, and accepted, during the study period than it is today, and corporal punishment was also used in other institutions, such as the military and the judicial system; however Mangan (2014) argues that its use in public schools lent a certain prestige to the practice. Despite the fact that most fathers had suffered at the hands of the rod during their own school days, many still subscribed to the belief that "severe discipline" bred "a greater courage and constancy" (p.10, Thomas, 1976).

Corporal punishment could take a number of forms, from classroom beatings to ritualised ceremonies, carried out by the headmaster. The nature and setting of the punishment was sometimes woven into the 'tradition' of the school, however recently created: at Eton, crowds of up to a 100 would gather to watch beatings by the headmaster, while at Marlborough, birching would occur behind closed doors, though boys would still gather outside to listen (Mangan, 2014).

Though floggings were ostensibly for the administering of justice, having attended Eton during the 1890s, the historian, Esmé Wingfield-Stratford, claimed that masters administered beatings with little or no justification. Arbitrary beatings, while not common, had a long history in public schools: Thomas (1976) found cases of the drawing of lots being used to assign beatings in the Early Modern public school. Some accused masters of taking sexual pleasure in the administering of punishment, a belief which featured in poetry and memoirs; *The Rodiad*, of contested authorship, was a poem describing, at length, the flagellation of boys, and the pleasure masters derived from it (Cooper, 1869). In his book, *The Whip and the Rod*, R.G. Van Yelyr supported these claims and argued that the administering and observations of beatings bred sadism in both master and boy (Mangan, 2014).

Boys utilized the beatings as a test of character, former schoolboys claiming that if a boy "never flinched or uttered cry, we regarded him as a hero who had scored one against the

redoubtable wielder of the rod of justice” (Thomas, cited on p.37, Mangan, 2014). Likewise, masters expected their pupils to remain composed during their beatings, and failure to do so could result in further punishment (Mangan, 2014). In early periods, it was also not uncommon for boys to be expressly forbidden from discussing their treatment with those outside of the school (Thomas, 1976).

As with many things, one must be cautious about making sweeping assumptions about punishment in public schools; the nature of punishment depended upon the school, the period and the individual schoolmaster. The religious convictions of the ‘great public school reformer’, Arnold, did not prevent him employing corporal punishment, though he believed that maturity or the display of “manly conduct and a manly sense of duty”, earned some boys the “immunities of manhood” (Arnold, cited on p.307, Neddham, 2004). Even during the ‘brutal’ Early Modern period, some masters favoured denial of privileges over corporal punishment. Likewise, while the trend across the study period was for punishment to become more restrained, with Warre arguing that “[p]ains should be taken... to reduce punishment to the minimum compatible with good discipline and industry” (p.23, Warre, 1884), individual masters were still able to administer cruel punishments.

Beyond punishment by masters, pupils’ behaviour was also checked by pupil self-government. The prefect system and the use of fagging, strongly associated with the Victorian public school, developed during the Early Modern period. It was argued that the boys were destined to rule and so schoolboy government enabled boys to experience both receiving orders and being in a position of power. Parallels are drawn between the hierarchical nature of the British Army and that of the boys’ self-government. While it was claimed that this system prepared boys for a life within the ruling élite, Thomas (1976) argued that pupil participation in discipline provided opportunities for favouritism, abuse of power and paranoia, especially as clandestine monitors were sometimes appointed to report on both the main student body and the other monitors. Over time, prefects within large boarding schools gained significant power, typically receiving little supervision and becoming a “ruling oligarchy” (p.13, Thomas, 1976). In the Early Modern period, there were even cases of prefects gaining so much influence in the school that attempts by masters to curb their power resulted in rebellions.

The presence of an official fagging system might have a number of effects. Some writers defended the system, believing that it conferred authority and privilege to the most mature boys, where in its absence, power would go to the physically strong, who might rule through fear and abuse. On the other hand, fagging might also serve to legitimise abuse but Neddham's research indicated that boys were bullied by their peers, rather than those with official positions of authority in the school; the pious, hard-working or physically weak boys suffered at the hands of the athletic but non-academic boys. In the *Raffles* stories, the Uppingham School alumnus, E.W. Hornung, presents fagging as a potentially mutually beneficial system, with the protagonist's kindness to his fag being rewarded with loyalty and respect (Hornung, 2003).

The 'hardening' effects of school were not limited to bullying and strict discipline, with public schools traditionally being associated with basic living conditions and gruelling hours of Latin grammar, believed to develop "personal endurance, self-reliance, an unquestioned devotion to 'duty', ... the ability to administer justice, or punishment [and] the fundamental notion... of hierarchy" (p.305, Neddham, 2004). This long-standing belief that hardship builds character continued throughout the study period, through with some revisions: some of the new school houses being built provided some degree of comfort, the severity of physical punishment was scaled back and the games field was increasingly seen as fundamental to this 'hardening' process.

This 'toughening up' was part of the process of *scolarisation*, developed in the Early Modern public school, and still very much in evidence in the nineteenth century public school. It was believed that segregation from the 'softening' influences of the home and women, and from the bad influences of the lower classes, was required for the boys to be "broken and bridled" (p.5, Thomas, 1976). However, while earlier schools had been able to isolate their pupils from the outside world, the technological advances of the nineteenth century prevented such total isolation. The reduction in the cost of printing had increased the range and accessibility of newspapers and journals, and the introduction of mail trains and the Penny Black during the first half of the nineteenth century had made it easier for boys to communicate with their families.

Technology was also serving to significantly reduce travel times during the nineteenth century, thereby making it more feasible for boys to visit their family home during (previously non-existent) school vacations. The fact that some boys did not visit their parents during their entire school career was not purely due to the difficulty of travel however, as shown by the debate over granting leave at Ackworth School during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In 1780, Ackworth School prohibited parents from taking their children off the school premises during visits and the following year, visits home were banned, other than in extraordinary cases. Even in 1826, a proposition that children expecting to remain at the school for three years or more should be allowed to visit their parents during that time was overruled and it was not until 1847 that Ackworth School introduced its first annual vacation (Thompson, 1879).

Despite the increasing competition from outside influences, headmasters were still able to spread their own ideology through sermons, the teaching of senior classes and informal interactions with pupils. While the pupil revolts of the Early Modern period had died out by the Victorian era, headmasters could still face opposition from both pupils and other masters. For example, Warre's commitment to the Cult of Athleticism at Eton was challenged by some of his masters, who favoured Socratic methods; this conflict is discussed in depth in chapter 6.

A number of factors influenced how well headmasters were able to implement their vision. Especially as public schools tended to respond negatively to sudden changes, longer periods of service allowed more significant changes to be introduced gradually and, given masters were typically drawn from the mass of old scholars, provided the possibility of a head's pupils becoming his assistants. Length of headship also acts as a crude indicator of success: those unable to garner approval risked being forced to resign. A headmaster's physical presence and personality affected his influence. Warre of Eton was, in his prime, a physically impressive leader. Being tall and well-built, and a successful oarsman, he was an inspiring physical manifestation of the cult of athleticism. By that same token, Warre's haggard appearance in his later years hampered his ability to transmit his ideology.

Despite Arnold being recognised as a great reformer of the public school, his vision of Rugby as “a place of Christian education” (Stanley, cited on p.306, Neddham, 2004) was not fully realised; religion was not popular amongst the boys and those displaying earnest faith were typically subject to ridicule. Likewise, despite Arnold’s strong stance against bullying, various forms of peer mistreatment, such as ‘smoking out’, ‘tossing’ and ‘roasting’, appear to have been fairly widespread (Neddham, 2004).

It is also important to recognise that headmasters did not secure their appointments by chance; an individual’s character and ideology would no doubt have been taken into account and sympathy with the school’s existing ethos and the aims of the board would have favoured appointment. Long-established public schools were not blank canvases onto which headmasters could simply project their vision. Headmasters had to work within the environment they inherited and those attempting radical change risked losing the support of the other masters and the respect of their pupils (Mangan, 1998).

Though public schools are typically associated with complacency and an unyielding commitment to tradition, this thesis will demonstrate that public schools were far from static. Great care did have to be taken when introducing change however. Innovators needed to recognise the community’s veneration of tradition, introducing changes gradually and “invest[ing] new institutions with a false aura of antiquity” (p.325, Wilkinson, 1962). The cult of athleticism illustrates how innovation could effectively be incorporated into the customs and traditions of a school. Likewise, the seemingly timeless ideals of ‘gentlemanly’ behaviour and ‘fair play’ were largely the product of the Victorian age.

While the pace of change at public schools was typically slow, Hely Hutchinson Almond’s headmastership of Loretto School demonstrates that there were always exceptions to the rule. Perhaps in part due to the school’s relative obscurity when he took it on in 1862, Almond was able to revolutionise Loretto. Many of Almond’s ideals contrasted sharply with those of the traditional Victorian public school, with him referring comfort to hardship and prioritising efficiency over tradition. Almond sought to “disyoke... necks from custom”

(Mackenzie, cited on p.24, Mangan, 1998), yet in many ways he reflected traditional public school values, favouring patronage over equality, having little interest in intellectualism and aiming to produce a *certain kind* of young gentleman, ready to govern.

Within most public schools however there was a certain distain for efficiency and common sense. Things were done a certain way because that was 'how things had always been done', disregarding the reality that many 'traditions' were in fact comparatively recent developments. Efficiency seems to have been snubbed as a middle-class trait, suggesting a lack of ease.

Public schools had a complicated relationship with the middle classes. From their foundation, public schools provided a number of scholarships for studious sons of the lower classes, such as King's Scholars at Eton, and the expansion of public schools during the nineteenth century depended upon the aspirations of the middle classes. Public schools are traditionally associated with the landed classes, yet into the nineteenth century, it was not uncommon for sons of the upper classes to be educated by private tutors, or at a small private school. While Eton attracted the wealthiest, titled landowners, in most public schools, the sons of the middle class vastly outnumbered those of the upper classes (English, 1991).

These schools attracted middle-class families wishing to elevate themselves socially; and so Berghoff argues that most public schools might be more accurately described as "instruments of social climbing within the middle classes" (p. 155, 1990). Through their time there, it was hoped that such pupils would be granted 'gentleman' status and, to varying degrees, assimilated attitudes held by the gentry, thereby gaining what Wingfield-Stratford termed "synthetic gentility" (cited on p.10, Wilkinson, 1963).

One of the most striking ways in which public schools altered the identity of their pupils was in the development of a distinctive 'public school' accent. This way of speaking, now referred to as Received Pronunciation, was termed 'Public School Pronunciation' by Daniel Jones in 1917, and even to this day, Received Pronunciation is associated with those of

middle and upper class origin, who have been privately educated (Roach, 2004). This transformation of boys' speech involved doing away with accents and manners of speech which might indicate a boy's lower class or regional origins, to be replaced with a 'refined' Southern accent, befitting a gentleman. Berghoff (1990) argues that the adoption of Received Pronunciation distanced individuals from their cultural origins and middle-class background, and so encouraged the belief that such characteristics were innately inferior.

While public schools had always sought to produce 'gentlemen', the interpretation of the gentleman ideal shifted over the course of the nineteenth century. During the latter part of the eighteenth century, a gentleman was marked out by indulgence and skill in fist fights and in the early decades of the nineteenth century, great emphasis was placed upon fox-hunting as a means of developing hardiness and nerve, as well as retaining "the moral influence of the higher over the lower classes of society" (Eardley-Wilmot cited p.29 Mangan, 1996). While the upper echelons of society might have expected to gain easy access to any institution, Merivale claims that "aristocrats tried, and tried in vain, to make [Arnold] open [Rugby's] doors for the admission of pupils from the higher classes" (cited on p.257, Razzell, 1963). Arnold was said to consider the habits of the aristocracy at that time 'barbarous' and so excluded them in an attempt to protect the religious seriousness of the landed gentry, and his other charges. While reforms did take place during the early to mid-nineteenth century, many schools retained features characterising the eighteenth-century public school well into the nineteenth century: a hedonistic focus on heavy drinking and blood sports, combined with brutalism at the hands of both masters and peers (Mangan, 1996).

By contrast, Wilkinson argues that the Victorian gentleman ideal was defined by three core characteristics: moral superiority, classical learning and possession of leisure. These three characteristics did not function in isolation and were all promoted by the public-school system. The generation of such an ideal was of great importance, with Edward Thring, headmaster of Uppingham between 1853 and 1857, asserted that "the whole efforts of a school ought to be directed to making boys manly, earnest and true" (Thring, cited on p.486-7, Newsome, 1961). Likewise, William Johnson Cory, assistant master at Eton from 1845 to 1872, claimed that boys were sent to public school "not so much for knowledge as

for arts and habits” (Cory, cited on p. 391, Gowler, 1995). These ‘arts and habits’ included the ability to understand another’s perspective, to appreciate minutiae, as well as to assess the practicalities of a course of action, and to express oneself clearly and in an appropriate manner.

Classical learning had long been central to public school education and was believed to provide selective access to past wisdom, which conferred a moral advantage. While the study of vocational subjects was associated with the need to earn a living, Classics was associated with the leisured classes, and the pursuit of wisdom, culture and beauty (Wilkinson, 1963). The elegance of speech conferred by a classical education, combined with ‘beautiful’ manners, were taken as indication of superior morals (Wilkinson, 1963).

The public school’s relationship with money, much like that of the upper class, was complicated. While educating many of the wealthiest families in the country, ‘gentlemen’ were said to view money “as a mere provider, guarantee of leisure, culture and ‘the good life’” (p.153, Berghoff, 1990). Likewise, while many pupils’ families would have funded their place through business and trade, such ‘humble’ origins would not have been acknowledged (Mangan, 1998).

The relationship with money was also presented as an issue of moral superiority and duty, with private enterprise being contrasted with the honour of community leadership. This apparent distaste for profit-driven employment was reflected in the status conferred by different types of work and the careers that public schools sought to prepare their pupils for.

Unremunerative work gained status within the public-school community precisely because it offered little in the way of financial reward and so marked individuals out as belonging to the leisured classes. Beyond indicating gentlemen’s membership of the leisured classes, such jobs conferred moral superiority, as it suggested that they were acting out of a sense of duty. It should be recognised however that such men were typically not sacrificing their lifestyle in the call of duty, still being able to draw from significant private incomes (Wilkinson, 1963).

The public service and the military provided public school alumni with just such low paid, but status-conferring, work. Public schools fed the idea that public service provided moral prestige, as well as political power. The upper classes perceived themselves to be providing a moral example to the lower classes through their 'Good Works', a concept also applied to middle and upper class women's charity work. Despite the moral prestige associated with such positions, individuals' commitment to their role could be fairly limited; a point which is discussed at length further on in the chapter.

Several key aspects of the Victorian public school can be seen to prepare boys for service, whether at home or in the Empire. The presence of a strongly hierarchical structure within the public school, with its prefectorial and fagging systems, provided boys with experience of both giving and receiving orders. The prefectorial system evolved over time; by 1880, prefects could be involved in administration, punishment, and the development of legislature; obvious preparation for leadership positions within military or civilian life (Wilkinson, 1962).

Public schools sought to imbue boys with a sense of 'house spirit', with inter-house matches intensifying group loyalties. While also promoting loyalty to the school, school houses could produce a stronger sense of group identity and of working as a collective, both of which were also central to military life. Boys' loyalty to their house and school were encouraged through an emphasis on folklore and customs unique to the school; tradition was venerated in the public school, even if some of the 'traditions' were comparatively recent additions. These systems and ideals remained, for the most part, unchallenged. Within an ever-present and closely associated group, resistance to a school's mores and ideals, however absurd traditions might be, were likely to be poorly received by a boy's peers, being viewed as showing bad taste and lack of school loyalty. In this way, boys were guardians of their school's customs and perpetuated ideologies (Wilkinson, 1962).

The hardships of boarding school life were claimed to acclimatize young gentlemen to the "physical discomfort of the military officer" (p.321, Wilkinson, 1962). The extent to which this is an accurate reflection of officer life might depend upon an officer's position within

the middle or upper class and the military's activities at the time. Those without the means to purchase their way into another regiment were more likely to face appointment to colonial postings, involving basic living conditions and physical hardship, and those serving during the 1850s might have suffered under the terrible condition of the Crimea. Despite some instances of hardship, officer-life was often regarded by the upper classes as a leisure activity, with accusations of a culture of excess within the officers' mess and a lack of diligence regarding drill (Erickson, 1959).

Consideration of the curricula offered at public schools provides insight as to the perceived purpose of education and to the preparation schools provided for pupils' entry into a range of careers.

From their earliest incarnations, public schools had placed great emphasis upon Latin. The emphasis on memory and repetition in the study of Latin grammar was considered particularly useful as a means of suppressing youthful spontaneity: the long school days, typically from six or seven in the morning until five in the evening in Early Modern schools, were believed to promote application and self-control (Thomas, 1976). The idea of 'idle hands being the devil's workshop' and the need to keep boys occupied continued into the nineteenth century; though during the second half of the nineteenth century, there was increasing emphasis on the role of sport in preventing idleness.

The schools of the mid-nineteenth century did not display the level of obsession with Classics found in the Early Modern public school, where in extreme cases, pupils were expected to speak only in Latin, both in and out of school; however, the continued emphasis on classical education during the nineteenth century is illustrated by Eton's staff on 1884: twenty-eight classics teachers, six mathematicians and one historian. While some public schools were slightly more progressive, it is worth highlighting that Eton did not employ any science or modern languages teachers in the mid-1880s. Such narrow curricula were not limited to public schools however, with grammar schools following the example of the public schools with a strong classics focus (Berghoff, 1990; Thomas, 1976).

The general, 'non-vocational', classics heavy education was justified on numerous grounds. It was argued that the rigours of translation were believed to provide general 'training of the mind': parsing requires disciplined, logical and analytical thought and the vast amount of rote learning required was believed to improve memory power. Even in the 1860s, there was still a prevalent belief that "work was work, and the duller and more unintelligible it was the more merit you [acquired]" (Wingfield-Stratford, cited on p. 19, Dewey, 1995, part 2). This system was defined by boredom and frequent punishment and, according to Dewey, was intended to break the boys' spirit. While uninspiring, it is worth recognising that this system might have owed as much to the continued large class sizes and the view of what was considered educationally valuable at the time, as to any apathy on the part of the masters.

The great value placed upon a classical education was shared by the professions into which public schools sought to send their old boys: Civil Service and Sandhurst examinations required competence in Latin, and a career in the Church, Law or Medicine involved the use of classical languages. The study of classics was also believed to provide pupils with an elegant turn of phrase, acting as a marker of class and, combined with received pronunciation and school debates, prepared pupils for public speaking. The Socratic teachers approach to Classics also expanded its utility, by treating it as literature and encouraging the boys to interact with, and judge, the texts and their authors (Dewey, 1995, part 2).

While there are arguments that the classical education did not prepare boys for a wide range of careers, it is worth noting that alumni did succeed in a variety of fields: despite science not featuring on many curricula, public schools still produced scientists and inventors and despite the prioritizing of collectivism over independent thought, pupils still went on to become artists and reformers (Berghoff, 1990).

There appears to be a contradiction in public school treatment of 'flexible thinking'. On the one hand, public schools promoted the belief that successful leadership depended primarily upon 'general qualities of mind', providing such 'well-educated' individuals with great versatility. Positions within government did require significant versatility, with cabinet

positions changing on a regular basis and, for most branches, the army shared the belief that there was little need for specialized training and theorising. On the other hand, schools did not encourage the development of an inquiring mind or imaginative thought, with scientific thought not being encouraged and the curriculum being based largely around the memorisation of facts and rules. Likewise, the emphasis on customs and tradition at public schools encouraged boys to distrust innovation and independent thought (Wilkinson, 1962). While lacking the imaginative foresight to pre-empt crises, Wilkinson argues that their education provided them with the mental flexibility needed to 'muddle through'.

G. Kendall, headmaster at University College School during the early part of the twentieth century, stated that public schools claimed responsibility for the maintenance and administration of the Empire. Public schools bought into the moral justification of imperialism, promoting the idea of the 'white man's burden' and its associated duties (Mangan, 1998). Some public schools were explicit in their mission to serve the nation and the Empire, with Wellington College considering the production of "a handy and dashing breed of young officers" to be its *raison d'être* (Berkeley, cited on p.33, Mangan, 1996).

Despite public schools' emphasis on imperialist values and the responsibility of Britain's ruling elite to govern the colonies, accusations were brought against the schools that they failed to provide sufficient preparation for boys destined for military careers. In some cases, due to restrictive or poorly taught curricula, boys would resort to private tutors, nicknamed 'crammers', to tutor them to pass military or civil service admissions tests. Likewise, schools' general disdain for the sciences and technical subjects (Stephens, 1998) resulted in their pupils being unsuitable for the more technical regiments of the British Army, such as the Royal Artillery. In some schools, attempts were made to tackle these deficiencies, with Warre funding a school of 'practical mechanics' at Eton and cadet corps becoming increasingly common (Mangan, 1998).

Discussions of what kind of future public schools were preparing their pupils for repeatedly emphasised that boys' careers were driven by duty and that they were destined to sit in a position of authority. In 1861, George Moberly, long-serving headmaster of Winchester, claimed that Winchester offered the best training for "high after-duties", developing "self-

control, careful judgement, and the habit of self-relying command of others” (Moberly, cited on p.305, Neddham, 2004). Likewise, the Clarendon Commission claimed that the primary aim of the public school was to foster “the capacity to govern others and control themselves” (Clarendon Commission, cited p.148, Berghoff, 1990). The public schools were seen as providing training for the nation’s and Empire’s political, administrative and military élite; and within this section I will consider to what extent this belief was justified and whether such career paths were driven by a sense of duty.

Public schools had a long but unofficial relationship with the public service. In 1821, Samuel Butler, headmaster of Shrewsbury, defined public schools as institutions in which “boys are educated in the higher department of literature, with a view to their entrance into public life” (cited on p.320, Wilkinson, 1962). Wilkinson (1962) argues that a public-school education provided boys with the ‘dignified’ air of a leader. This appearance was formed in part from boys’ development of a distinctive ‘public school’ accent and their bank of Latin phrases. Boys were brought up to believe that they were destined for greatness, which gave them a self-assurance and a commanding tone.

The dominance of former public school boys in certain occupations is striking: over 60% of cabinet ministers holding office between 1886 and 1916 attended a public school, over a third (34.7%) having attended Eton. Likewise, in 1880, 71% of top civil servants and 69% of newly created peers attended one of the major public schools, the vast majority hailing from either Eton or Harrow. There appear to be some cases in which schools had a near monopoly on certain posts: between 1908 and 1913, 67% of all new foreign office attachés were old Etonians. While Eton and Harrow clearly had a strong connection to public office, not all public schools acted as ‘production factories’ for public servants (Berghoff, 1990).

While entry into the Civil Service had previously depended largely upon having attended a ‘respectable’ school and having the right contacts, the Northcote-Trevelyan Report of 1854, and the introduction of open competitive examinations for the Administrative Class in 1870, ensured that recruitment was based upon ability and that promotion was based upon merit, rather than “preferment, patronage or purchase” (Northcote-Trevelyan, cited on p.6,

civilservant.org.uk, 2005). In response to these reforms, public schools were forced to adjust their curricula to meet the additional requirements, with crammers brought in to meet any short-fall (Wilkinson, 1962).

While entry into public office or the military might be seen as a duty-driven life choice, such careers were not necessarily as all-consuming or selfless as they might appear. It was not uncommon for gentlemen to involve themselves in both civic and military leadership: during the second half of the nineteenth century percentage of members of the House of Lords who were also members of the officer corps increased from 15% in 1853 to 35% in 1898 (Harries-Jenkins, 1973). For many members of the ruling elite, 'service' within politics and the military appears to have been more about socialization than duty: a brief stint within a fashionable regiment, such as the Household Cavalry, was seen as an appropriate prelude to taking on the management of a country estate, and serving as an MP in the House of Commons prepared heirs to the family title for entry into the House of Lords.

For gentlemen of the minor landed or professional classes, entry into both the Officer corps and the House of Commons was considered a means of gaining individual social advantage. Putting forward his son as a candidate for election, one father stated that entry to the Commons would "introduce him to the country and place him in a situation of high respectability in future life" (cited on p.284, Harries-Jenkins, 1973).

This presents a perhaps an unfairly cynical assessment of the public school-attending population. While many individuals gave little time or energy to their appointments, other members of the gentry committed much of their lives to politics or the military, with General Earl Howe, Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire, serving for over forty years (Harries-Jenkins, 1973).

Public schools' attitudes towards careers were said to reflect the prejudices of the landed gentry, despite taking on increasing numbers of sons of the middle classes. Service within the Church, armed forces and public administration were viewed to be the most appropriate career options, with 'private professions' offering a degree of prestige, while trade was considered a vulgar necessity (Wilkinson, 1962). Despite these claims, even within

the prestigious institutions of Eton and Harrow, from 1830 to 1880, alumni engaged in the duty-bound fields of church, armed forces and public administration declined from 70.3% to 36.4% (Berghoff, 1990).

Especially given the apparent decline of duty-driven careers during the study period, it is worth considering the extent to which public schools prepared their pupils for careers *outside* of the military and civil service; careers that emphasized profit and innovation over duty and tradition.

A conflict can be seen between values that public schools sought to instil and those associated with business. The values promoted by public schools show great overlap with those central to the military, with an emphasis on collectivism, tradition, etiquette and ceremony. By contrast, success in business depended upon individualism, innovation, efficiency, competitiveness and profit maximisation (Berghoff, 1990).

Some scholars, such as G.C. Allen and M.J. Weiner, claim that public schools' emphasis on antiquated values and their disdain for academia and industry were responsible for the decline in the British economy from 1870 to the outbreak of the First World War. They claimed that the public schools attacked profit-orientated middle class identity and 'civilized' the business classes, thereby turning them away from trade and industry, and led them to perform poorly, having been stripped of their 'vulgar' single-minded pursuit of profit (Berghoff, 1990).

Berghoff's (1990) analysis of the late Victorian business community revealed that only 18% of all entrepreneurs (whose school career could be traced) attended a public school, with most attending a grammar school (30.4%) and the cover-all category of 'other schools and private tuition' (35.3%). Of the four business types listed (big industry, other industry, finance, and trade and transport), only finance had a sizeable minority of public school old boys: 18% from Clarendon Commission schools and 29.8% from all public schools.

While the percentages of entrepreneurs attending public school are not especially high, nor are they particularly low. These figures do not support the argument that public schools turned potential entrepreneurs against a career in business or failed to provide them with the skills and attitude needed to succeed. In fact, within the more specific sector of 'City bankers', 63% of those operating between 1890 and 1914 had attended a public school, and a huge 45% of these had attended Eton. While only a small proportion of Eton alumni will have gone into 'City banking', for those who did, their education provided them with several advantages: pupils were able to make life-long contacts with powerful individuals and so gain a leg up through personal connections or old boys' networks. Likewise, attending a prestigious school would have improved an individual's ability to build rapport with wealthy clients and potential backers (Berghoff, 1990).

Berghoff also offers additional figures on the proportion of businessmen attending public schools, based upon individuals' date of birth. These figures show that the educational background of businessmen changed significantly over the Victorian era: businessmen born after 1861 were three times more likely to have attended public school than those born before 1830. Of businessmen born after 1861, 44.1% attended public school (Berghoff, 1990). These two sets of figures provide different impressions as to the percentage of businessmen attending public school. The smaller proportion of public school-educated entrepreneurs in the late Victorian business community might reflect the fact that many members of the business community might have been reasonably old, and so have been educated in an earlier period, during which public school attendance was lower. As such, the first figures might mask changes occurring in late Victorian education and society.

Apparent differences might also result from differences in categorising 'entrepreneurs' and 'businessmen'. Berghoff claims that the vast majority of public school old boys who became businessmen were entering into the family business, and so might not be counted as 'entrepreneurs', as they did not start their own business. The older and more established a family business was, the more likely sons were to attend public school. Far from public schools convincing boys to turn their backs on their business background, data from the mid-nineteenth century showed that Winchester old boys were more likely to go into

business than their fathers, perhaps reflecting business' increasing share of the employment market.

In most cases, boys' time at public school appears to have not caused them to deviate far from the careers of their fathers, whether in business, or in military, the civil service, or other traditional middle class occupations (Berghoff, 1990). While public school attendance had a powerful impact on many pupils, it must be acknowledged that many other factors played a part in pupils' futures; such as pupils' family background and any businesses they might own and wider changes in society and the employment market.

Investigating the careers of boys entering Harrow and Rugby from 1830 to 1880, Berghoff found significant trends over the period. For those entering from 1830 to 1840, the Church was the primary source of employment, accounting for 29.4% of old scholars' careers; yet by the 1865 to 1880 period, its share had fallen to only 6.5%. Entry into the military sat at around 20% for most of the period, peaking at 31.2% during the middle (1845-60) period. Occupations within public administration were common for the cohorts entering from 1830 to 1860, but almost halved to 10.5% during the last period. By contrast, the proportion of alumni entering into business started off at only 5.5% but increased to over 20% for the 1865 to 1880 cohort. The percentage of Harrow and Eton old boys entering into medicine, science and engineering remained very low throughout the study period but did show growth, from 1% to 5.4%

A fundamental question arises, in relation to the involvement of public school alumni in the army or in other 'services to the nation': to what extent were these appointments sought due to a sense of duty, or for personal gain? This question will be investigated through in-depth study of the officer corps during the study period.

## Chapter 5: Public Schools and the Military

According to the Clarendon Commission, the military, as well as the Home and Indian Civil Services, sought candidates bearing “the qualities of gentlemen with their capacity to govern others and control themselves... [and] their love of healthy sports and exercises” (cited on p.481, Harries-Jenkins, 1975): the qualities honed through years of public school education. In order to be eligible for a commission, candidates had to prove that they had received “the education of a gentleman” (p.65, Erickson, 1959), including military drawing, algebra and competence in a continental language. It is worth noting that while Eton, as late as 1884, employed six mathematics masters, they did not employ any modern languages masters (Berghoff, 1990). As such, it appears that public schools did not always provide boys with all the requirements for admissions examinations; a ‘cultured upbringing’ might be assumed to provide entrants with the necessary skills however some had to resort to crammers.

The army, like the public schools, was committed the ideal of amateurism. For those officers from the leisured upper class, “professionalism was synonymous with vulgar careerism” (p.478, Harries-Jenkins, 1975). There was a reluctance to embrace technological developments and the civil authority’s drive for increased military ‘effectiveness’, both of which went against the officers’ “traditionalist, elitist heroic self-image” (p.472, Harries-Jenkins, 1975). As in public schools, there was a great belief in tradition for tradition’s sake and a belief that ‘efficiency’ was a distinctly middle class trait.

The Victorian army clung to the belief that an amateur force of gentlemen had achieved victory in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 and held it up as proof that the army was fit-for-purpose. The British Army, much like the public schools, was reluctant to introduce reforms, unless defeat proved the system unfit. Small colonial battles, gaining easy victories with few casualties, enabled the British Army to continue with limited use of technology and tactics drawn from the previous century into the middle part of the nineteenth century. The Crimean War of 1853 to 1856 drew attention to the deficiencies in command; the war becoming associated with high casualties and incompetence. The disaster of the charge of the Light Brigade during the Battle of Balaclava brought the issue firmly into the public

conscience (Ponting, 2011). In response to this, and the increasing Prussian might, the British Army reluctantly started to acknowledge that, 'the playing fields of Eton' were no longer sufficient preparation for battle (Erickson, 1959; Harries-Jenkins, 1975). Confidence was once again shaken during the First Boer War, 1880-81, during which Britain suffered significantly higher casualties than their enemy, and had to concede much of its control over the Transvaal in the peace treaty (Searle, 2004). Despite this signs of weakness, reform and innovation were adopted reluctantly.

While also having to submit to external pressures to increase technical expertise, the army developed its own understanding of 'professionalism'. Rather than long periods of formal training, the army argued that excellence resulted from their code of ethic and *esprit de corps*, which they claimed resulted from socialization within their regiment and years of public school education (Harries-Jenkins, 1975).

When researching the extent of militarism in the Victorian and Edwardian public school, it is important to consider the composition of the British Army at that time. In the nineteenth century, public schools and universities held a near monopoly on Sandhurst commissions: in 1891, *all* 373 Sandhurst cadets entered from one of 55 well-known public schools and universities. While their monopoly has been lost, in the 1950s, 80% of their cadets attended public school (Razzell, 1963). Even in 2012, almost half of Sandhurst cadets were privately educated (Massie, 2013).

The aristocracy always made up a disproportionately large proportion of the higher ranks, however their dominance declined, with the number of generals belonging to the aristocracy falling from 70% to 30% between 1830 and 1912. Likewise, the total percentage of officers from the aristocracy decreased over the nineteenth century, falling to 9% by 1912. By contrast, the landed gentry maintained their 32% presence and the middle class continued to increase their share, being the single largest provider of army officers throughout the period. The middle classes' representation amongst the higher ranks also increased significantly, producing 48% of all generals by 1912. These trends were traditionally assumed to result from the introduction of examination requirements in 1849,

and the abolition of the purchase system in 1871, however it appears that even before these reforms, the social base of the army was beginning to broaden (Razzell, 1963).

Razzell (1963) argues that as the upper classes began to lose their total dominance of the higher ranks of the army, they became increasingly concerned about maintaining their status by excluding 'outsiders' from certain 'élite' regiments. Between 1810 and 1912, the percentage of officers with inherited titles in the 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards and Royal Horse Guards increased from 4% to 42%, and from 3% to 33%, respectively (Razzell, 1963).

While certain regiments gained fashionable status, the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers regiments were generally considered unattractive to the upper classes. These branches of the army did not allow the purchase of commission and required technical training, with promotion being by merit. Beyond the inability to quickly buy one's way to a high rank, the science and technical training, largely avoided at public schools, was considered to be beneath the dignity of a gentleman (Erickson, 1959).

Until 1871, entry into the officer corps typically involved the purchase of a commission. On top of the initial commission purchase, in order to be promoted to a higher rank, an officer had to pay an additional, larger sum to the officer whose place he was taking, and in turn sell his old rank on. While the regimental commander had to certify that a gentleman was fit for the promotion, this was typically just a formality. In this way, wealthy, young gentlemen could advance ahead of more competent officers. While ranks above Lieutenant-Colonel were not available for purchase, the system allowed the first four or five promotions to be achieved by purchase, rather than seniority or competence (Erickson, 1959).

Prior to the Cardwell Reforms, officers' pay at home was still similar to that a hundred years previous, and the cost of each promotion (by purchase) was huge: a cavalry lieutenant-colonelcy during the 1860s cost £14,000. As such, for the non-technical regiments, only the wealthy could afford a career as an officer. The Duke of Wellington had argued that this prevented the British army from being sullied by characteristics of a mercenary army as

“[t]hree-fourths of the officers receive but little for their service besides the honour of serving the King” (Wellington, cited on p.258, Razzell, 1963).

Despite being the kind of unremunerative work favoured by public schools, it must be questioned whether such careers were as selfless as they first appear. In 1857, a commission into the purchase system concluded that the officer corps attracted “idle young men, who, having money at their disposal, regard the Army as a fashionable pastime for a few years of leisure, and bring with them habits of expense and dissipation” (cited on p.68, Erickson, 1959). Likewise, the Royal Commission of the previous year unexpectedly denounced the purchase of commissions as “repugnant to the public sentiment... [and] inconsistent with the honour of the military profession... and irreconcilable with justice” (cited on p.679 Woodall, 1979). Despite this condemnation, most officers supported the status quo, having a class interest and a financial stake in the system, and so the system remained in place for a further fifteen years. Its eventual abolition, in 1871, was a hard-won battle; having been obtained by Royal Warrant, as the bill was almost certain to have been defeated in the House of Lords (Erickson, 1959).

While the strict discipline and hierarchy structure of public school was argued to condition boys to respect authority, Erickson argues that, having *purchased* their commissions, officers felt that they were under little obligation to the army, and so could decide how much, or how little, time and effort they put into their role. In the absence of ‘consequences’, there was little respect for one’s superiors. A career in the army was considered “a leisurely avocation” (p.259, Razzell, 1963): a gentlemanly occupation including plenty of sport and country pursuits. In some cases, this was taken in its most leisurely and indulgent interpretation, with drills falling by the wayside, as officers spent increasing amounts of time in their gentlemen’s clubs. The concentration of these wealthy young officers in the messes further encouraged this hedonistic culture (Erickson, 1959).

Despite public school teachings regarding duty and strength of character, within the Victorian officer class, there was little in the way of professional commitment, or vocation.

Harries-Jenkins argues that, for many officers, army service was just part of a complex socialization process to fit gentlemen for their positions as members of a ruling élite.

The upper classes' dim view of service in India contrasts with the focus on duty and service to the empire promoted at public schools. While it might be argued that objection to serving in India resulted from a reluctance to association with the East India Company regiments, whose mercenary aspects were held in distain by the upper class, it appears that the upper classes were primarily concerned with avoiding hardship: postings in hot and humid climates were considered unnecessarily uncomfortable. The élite were often able to evade undesirable postings, either by going on half pay, i.e. (temporary) retirement, or by paying to transfer into a different regiment for the duration of the overseas tour (Razzell, 1963).

While public schools took pride in hardship as a means of developing character, the deliberate avoidance of active military service suggests that some officers felt no sense of duty, and lacked enthusiasm for the heroic deeds and foreign adventures advertised in boys' stories of the period (Harries-Jenkins, 1975). This system enabled wealthy young officers to promote over long-serving, experienced senior officers, reducing the moral worth of the career (Razzell, 1963).

For the wealthy middle classes, entry into the army was a means to advance one's standing in society. Beyond the honour associated with such a 'duty-bound' career, a commission proved that one could afford to have a career as an officer. Likewise, while the middle class were the largest single provider of army officers, the profession was still associated with the landed gentry, especially within the more fashionable regiments (Razzell, 1963).

Despite the presence of individuals who saw a career in the army purely as a means of social advancement or a light-hearted pastime, there was significant variation in motivation. Much like the public school focus on school houses as a source of identity and tradition, officers identified with their regiment far more than the British Army as a whole. Regiments reinforced group identity by celebration of mores, uniforms and histories unique to the regiment. An officer's ideology and action was largely determined by the norms of the

regiment. It is likely that élite regiments, such as 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards, with their 34% inherited titled officers in 1875 (Razzell, 1963), did embody some of the norms previously described, with a distain for professionalism, and a tendency to view military service as a leisurely occupation. For other branches of the army however, attitude and norms are likely to have differed significantly. During the same period, the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers could claim only 1% of officers bore an inherited title. Due to the technical nature of their work, specific training was essential and promotion was based upon ability; while 'gentlemanly conduct' will still have been prized, such branches could not place faith in the ideal of the 'gifted amateur' (Harries-Jenkins, 1975).

Likewise, while the composition of the army did not change dramatically in response to the abolition of purchase, the reformed system did enable any man of good character and exceptional gift, to rise through the ranks of the British Army, regardless of wealth. While certain educational backgrounds, such as a public school or university education, might have supported individuals' entry, *most* candidates were required to take part in competitive physical and mental examinations before appointment. Once commissioned, promotion was to be judged solely on merit, and while 'character' was still valued within the selection process, efficiency and attainment were also taken into account (Erickson, 1959).

Despite the changes made to the British Army over the study period, officers sought to maintain the "romance, tradition, and ceremony associated with military life" (p.487, Harries-Jenkins, 1975) and believed that any reform should continue to emphasise the role of honour, bravery and group identity in institution.

## Chapter 6: The Cult of Athleticism and the Socratic Counter-Movement

While competitive sport is now considered a mainstay of public school life, this was not always the case. Reports from the first half of the nineteenth century reveal little in the way of organised sport, yet during the latter part of the nineteenth century, many public schools subscribed to the 'cult of athleticism'. According to Mangan, games acted as a vehicle for the dissemination of a "hugely influential moralistic ideology" (p.17, 1998). Athleticism, Christianity and morality, and militarism were intertwined during the second half of the nineteenth century and in the lead up to the First World War. In this chapter, I will provide an overview of sport during the study period, then investigate how athleticism was linked to character and to the concept of Muscular Christianity and will conclude by considering the relationship between the games field and the battlefield.

The adoption of organised sport occurred at different times within different schools. In the case of Eton, change occurred comparatively quickly: during the 1850s, there was little focus on games, yet within a decade there was an active boatclub and house cricket trophies, as well as a substantial rifle corps. The dominance of athletics continued to increase through the remainder of the nineteenth century, with the number of fives courts rocketing from one to fifty and compulsory rugby football taking place four or five times a week (Mangan, 1996).

In contrast to later periods, during the seventeenth century, public schoolboys were relatively inactive, being kept at their desks through long, tedious schooldays. The English physician and reformer, John Bulwer, claimed that this inactivity was leading public schoolboys to be stunted, poor specimens of manhood, compared to their un-schooled country-bred counterparts (Thomas, 1976).

According to Mangan (1996), compulsory team games, and the development of the code of 'fair play', were introduced to counter the anarchy and rebellions found in public schools of the period. Far from being a long enshrined code of ethics, the concept of 'fair play' was actively introduced and enforced by the newly appointed games masters. Over time however, a mythology developed around the idea that 'fair play' was, and ever had been,

central to the gentleman ideal, with games fostering “the chivalrous and generous element in humanity” (p.5, Warre, 1884). Beyond the playing fields, fair play became a key theme in literature; even in Hornung’s tales of the ‘gentleman thief’, Raffles, the reputation of the protagonist is upheld by his treatment of crime as a sport, with its associated gentlemanly code of honour.

Organised games were also encouraged as a means of counteracting idleness, and the sins associated with it. Dobbs argued that vigorous exertion guarded against ‘inappropriate’ sexual desires, “exhaust[ing] boys before they could fall victims to vice and idleness” (Dobbs, cited on p.7, Watson et al., 2005). Interest in games was also driven by concerns over physical fitness and the emergence of the field of physiological psychology, which emphasised the connection between mind and body. Warre argued that the aim of education must be “*mens sana in corpore sano*” (p.17, Warre, 1884): ‘a healthy mind in a healthy body’. A belief that rest on the idea that physical health promotes mental and psychological well-being.

The poor fitness of recruits for the Boer War, and the army’s less than stellar performance in the conflict, led to public anxiety about the physical state of the nation’s menfolk. This anxiety had been felt in military circles since at least the 1870s and some people, including the novelist and social critic, George Orwell, believing that the process of national physical decline had begun with the advent of urban industrialisation. The army of the 1870s lamented that the standard of recruits had declined steeply since the Crimean War but it is important to recognise that military leaders had always had a tendency to romanticize the past and develop an idealized image of previous generations. Following Prussia’s defeat of the French in 1870-71, commentators in Britain believed that the equilibrium of power in Europe had shifted, one stating that “others have outstripped us... and taken from us that place of honour taught as a Briton’s birthright” (cited on p.5, Brown, 2017).

At first glance, anxiety over racial decline existing concurrently with Britain’s frequent victories in colonial conflicts seems incongruous, however these colonial conflicts were typically won by superior technology, rather than physical superiority. When British forces were humiliated in conflicts, accounts of the physique of their ‘primitive’ opponents could

serve as 'proof' of the British decline: A Royal Artillery officer described the Zulu men as "the perfection of manly strength and symmetry. Tall, muscular and well-knit" (cited on p.10, Brown, 2017).

The fear that the nation was falling behind in Europe, and that they were no match for the 'savages' in hand-to-hand combat, impacted upon the education of both sexes. For girls, it was believed that pursuit of academia might make women poorer mothers or prevent them from passing on their good 'blood' altogether. For boys, schools could offer a more direct remedy to the perceived decline of the British race: athleticism provided a means of improving boys' physique, as well as their character.

For the Victorians and Edwardians, sport's ability to develop character was of equal, if not greater importance than its ability to improve physique, providing "lessons of patience and endurance" and exercising "a moral influence upon the character, teaching patience and perseverance, self-control and self-restraint" (p.5-6, Warre, 1884). Within the cult of athleticism, not all sports were created equal: while cricket drew some admiration for providing a new concept of chivalry, rugby football received the greatest respect. Rugby was praised for its abilities to foster the 'manly virtues' of "courage, loyalty and discipline", "absorbing and inflicting pain in about equal proportions" and placing the needs of the team above those of the individual (Dobbs, cited on p.7, Watson et al., 2005). Norwood explicitly set out its role in preparing boys for their duties within the empire, claiming that rugby "promoted the cardinal virtues appropriate to the imperialist: unselfishness, fearlessness and self-control" (Norwood, cited on p.23, Mangan, 1998).

Dangerous games of rugby, combined with harsh living conditions and corporal punishment served to 'toughen up' the public schoolboy. In preparation for a life of duty, E.B. Osborn claimed that the team sports of the English public school were the modern equivalent of the medieval knights' training, providing "hard, exhilarating discipline". Osborn warns that there can be no shortcuts however, as "if either the hardness or the chivalry goes out of them, then they cease to provide the training in *moral* which is the most vital part of true education" (cited on p.22, Mangan, 1995).

Some Christians recognised the virtues of sport and placed them within the framework of Christian duty. While abhorring the term 'Muscular Christianity', Kingsley is credited with providing the movement with "a cohesive and conscious philosophy, consisting equally of athleticism, patriotism, and religion" (Putney, cited on p. 7, Watson et al., 2005). Kingsley claimed that through competitive games "boys acquire virtues which no books can give them" and while acknowledging more 'manly' virtues, he was more concerned with the explicitly moral virtues: "temper, self-restraint, fairness, hono[u]r, [and] unenvious approbation of another's success" (Kingsley, quoted on p.2 Watson et al., 2005).

Thomas Hughes promoted the ideal of Muscular Christianity in his novels, *Tom Brown's School Days* and *Tom Brown at Oxford*. Within the sequel's 'Muscular Christianity' chapter, Hughes emphasises the differing motives of muscular Christians and 'musclemen'. While musclemen develop their bodies for the selfish purposes of "belabouring men and captivating women for [their] benefit or pleasure" (p.176), Muscular Christians were said to hold an "old chivalrous and Christian belief" that man's body was given to him by God and that it is his responsibility to train his body, to be used for "the protection of the weak, [and] the advancement of all righteous causes" (p.177, Hughes, 2011).

It should be acknowledged that Muscular Christianity was not the preserve of the public school, with the concept gaining increasingly prominence in the British Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), a working class institution, throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Likewise the Boys' Brigade, founded in 1883, sought to build Christian manly character by means of drill and sports.

Such ideologies were not universally adopted. While Muscular Christianity had some fervent supporters, Mangan (1996) argues that the moral, muscular manliness that prevailed owed more to ideals of gentlemanly fair play and bravery than to Christian conscience.

Respect is a powerful motivator and the success of strong, fearless youths on the playing fields could gain them 'Homeric hero' status. Their "courage, stoicism, stamina and determination" earned them the admiration of not only their peers but also many masters. It was believed that these muscular, moral virtues prepared boys for a future within the Empire, whether within the military, administration or education; Francis Duckworth claimed that their "magnificent sporting instinct... is the real foundation of our great Empire" and that "higher imperial efficiency" resulted from their efficiency in games (Duckworth, cited on p.36, Mangan, 1996).

It is hard to discuss the virtues of games without referencing how these virtues were believed to prepare boys for work within the empire, and for battle. Games were argued to nurture "a spirit of absolute obedience to the authorities set over us" and a determination "to go on if we can till we drop dead", both qualities demanded of an army officer (Sclater, cited on p.52, Mangan, 1996).

Popular culture strengthened these associations, with pieces such as Henry Newbolt's *Vitai Lampada* drawing analogies between the games field and the battlefield, and adventure stories charting public schoolboys' transitions from school hero to battlefield hero. In *The Hill*, a famous public school novel, before his glorious death in battle, the protagonist heroically runs to capture the enemy position "as if her were racing for a goal" (Vachell, cited on p.176, Mangan, 1989). Likewise, literature helped to promote the association between 'fair play' and moral manliness, Newbolt claiming that the English public schoolboy "preferred death, and even defeat to the deliberate use of foul means" (cited on p.22, Mangan, 1995). Literature had a powerful effect upon boys' perception of both games and battles and "created the aura of heroism" (p.70, Lowerson, 1995).

Brown claims that the young men heading over to France in the early years of the First World War carried with them a romanticised image of war, supported by the “ethos of the competitive game, with its overtones of manliness, rules and discipline, and clearly delineated teams” (p.248, Brown, 1990). A subaltern wrote from the western front in 1916, prior to his first major action, that even as a young child, he had enjoyed playing at ‘fighting the Boers’ and that faced with a real battle “no more afraid than if it were a game... This was as good fun as playing soldiers in the garden at home” (Edmonds, cited on p.248, Brown, 1990). It is worth recognising however that the jocund letters sent home during the war might have downplayed the misery and promoted the sportsmanship aspect for the benefit of those at home.

E.S. Turner admitted that some criticised the British officer for his obsession with games, and his tendency to view battles as if a house match but argued that such people failed to recognise the *esprit de corps*, stamina and pluck that such an upbringing had nurtured. There appears to have been a pride in Britain’s association of war with sport, and in its commitment to athleticism generally. The pride was all the greater for it being considered a peculiarly *British* phenomenon, the Eton headmaster, Warre, claiming that “[t]here is no particular in which the English race exhibits so strong a contrast to foreign races, as in its ardent love for games of which violent bodily exercise is the characteristic” (p.33, 1884).

Through all the ideology, with ‘fair play’ demanding integrity in the face of death and muscular Christianity calling for an “unselfish, active, honourable, useful and good” life, it is important to remember that these inspired youths were not without fault. While Warre argued that boys played for “the honour and glory of school, ...without any possible admixture of sordid or selfish motives” (p.48, 1884), admiration within school and glorification in popular culture risked the ideals being marred by “ruthlessness, arrogance, lack of sympathy and perhaps an undue emphasis on the virtues of success” (Newsome, cited on p.36, Mangan, 1996). Likewise, while the cult of athleticism claimed to foster team spirit, Dewey claimed that it instead “inculcated ruthless egotism” (p.52, 1995, part 1), with individual glory taking precedence over team performance.

It should be recognised that the athleticism movement manifested itself in different ways at different schools. While Dewey claims that the cult of athleticism encouraged boys to prize “action above thought, conformity above creativity, [and] character above cleverness” (p.51, 1995, part 1), priorities were not always so clear-cut. While at schools such as Wellington College, academic learning was seen as the antithesis of athleticism and so was held in disdain, Warre valued intellectual performance as well as athletic and military activities. Given that prior to Warre’s introduction of internal examinations, the sons of the wealthy had taken little interest in academic success and scorned those that did, Warre was responsible for driving forward not only sport but academia (Dewey, 1995, part 1). Likewise, despite its emphasis on cricket, and having schooled one of the great ambassadors for public school games, Henry Newbolt, Clifton College’s ethos centred around “freedom and curiosity of mind tempered by a severe conscience in all matters of service and duty” (p.62, Quiller-Couch & Roberts, 1944).

While some historians, such as Mangan, present the cult of athleticism as having become an all-consuming way of life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century public school, Dewey argues that in reaction to the cult of athletics’ contempt for the arts and intellectualism, a competing ideology appeared, driven by the self-styled ‘Socratic teachers’. This movement emphasised “love, truth and beauty” (p.51., Dewey, 1995, part 1), seen through its emphasis on passionate friendship between men, discussion of serious issues and aesthetic appreciation.

In the case of Eton College, the majority of masters rallied behind the headmaster’s (Edmund Warre) cult of athletics, which had explicit military links, aiming to produce physically fit, obedient, empire-defending subalterns. A small number of masters, however, sought to subvert this militaristic ethos, producing cultivated, open-minded individuals with interests in “politics, religions, science, history, [and] literature” (p.52, Dewey, 1995, part 1). Recognising that they existed within a conservative, tradition-loving institution, these masters did not market themselves as revolutionaries, instead claiming that the cult of athleticism was a fleeting obsession, while they served as defenders of Eton’s scholar-gentleman tradition (Dewey, 1995, part 2).

Public schools typically held the view that boys should not be encouraged to develop opinions of their own, or to challenge the established wisdom and tradition. Such schooling aimed to instil particular ideologies and glorified tradition. By contrast, the Socratic teachers sought to encourage boys to think for themselves. William Johnson Cory, assistant master at Eton College from 1845 to 1872, addressed *Hints for Eton Masters* to those who had “no wish to force their dogmas on defenceless boys” (Cory, cited on p.53, Dewey, 1995, part 1).

In contrast to the dull and fear-driven classes often associated with nineteenth century public schools, Socratic teachers sought to build a positive relationship with each of their pupils and to retain the attention of their boys by delivering engaging lessons. Many of the techniques recommended and applied by the Socratic teachers resemble modern ideas on education: using variety to combat short attention spans, peppering up necessarily dry material with interesting anecdotes and offering small prizes for good work (Dewey, 1995, part 2).

Despite their use of innovative educational techniques and care for their pupils, Socratic teachers struggled to fully implement their ideology in the classroom. Large class sizes, and the need to maintain authority in the face of such a large mass of boys, limited the teachers’ ability to focus on individual attention and developing personal relationships. By contrast, the pupil-room provided a safe space in which the Socratic teachers could practise their beliefs: tutors were able to build up meaningful relationships with their tutees and to take an active interest in their ‘prep’. ‘Private business’ was a period during the week in which teachers had greater freedom as to content and manner of teaching, and this enabled the Socratic teachers to follow their great passions and instil their ideology (Dewey, 1995, part 2).

The involvement of masters in the lives of the boys outside the classroom had changed dramatically over the course of the nineteenth century. Where once boys had been left entirely to their own devices after teaching hours had finished, during the study period, Arnold’s system of school houses with associated housemasters spread to other schools. The extent of housemasters’ involvement varied significantly and Socratic teachers were particularly keen to engage with their pupils outside of classes. Socratic masters appear to

have been largely successful in keeping their house in order by means of developing respect and affection (Dewey, 1995, part 2).

Socratic teachers made a point of making themselves known to the boys: eating with their boys, taking them on excursions and encouraging their pastimes. Oscar Browning's 'Sunday at Home's were apparently famous during their time: a select few being welcomed into his drawing room, where he would lecture on a wide range of subjects or else flit between groups holding intellectual discussions. Likewise, during the latter part of the study period, Francis Warre-Cornish, Vice-Provost of Eton from 1893 to 1916, and his wife took over the mantle for drawing room gatherings, nurturing boys' interests in literature and aesthetic matters. (Dewey, 1995, part 2).

As with many features of public school, success of the Socratic movement relied upon aligning itself with 'school tradition', whether real or invented. They claimed that Eton's historic mission was "the transmission of a high literary culture to an aristocratic elite" and that its primary duty was 'the training of taste' (p.28, Dewey, 1995, part 2). According to this interpretation of Eton's history, the pursuit of 'manliness' and the cult of athleticism had no legitimate claim to tradition and the Socratics claimed to be defending the institution against an invasion by bourgeois philistines.

The Socratics worked with the collective memory of the 'old Eton intellectualism', with tales of fist-fights being enriched with quotes from Homer. They supported this image with examples of admirable individuals being borne of the 'old Eton', including statesmen, authors and poets. These old boys were held up as superior to the old boys of the latter part of the century: clergymen of little note, army officers with brief, uneventful careers and civil servants with no ambition. These attacks seem somewhat against the grain of public school values, suggesting that artists were more worthy of admiration than those in positions of duty; this contradiction might be explained by the fact that the representative old boys appear to lack a sense of vocation, a kind of apathetic conformity the Socratics claimed resulted from the Warre's cult of athleticism (Dewey, 1995, part 2).

Masters' Socratic leanings did not prevent them from achieving positions of authority within the school, including vice-provosts and provost. The Socratic masters' typically long periods of service, many staying on at Eton after retirement or dying in office, helped create an image of them as an integral part of the school. (Dewey, 1995, part 2).

While their vocation encouraged many Socratics into a lifetime of teaching, they were also obvious targets for dismissal: between 1872 and 1884, the then headmaster, James Hornby, dismissed four members of the Socratic party. While reason for dismissal varied, there were accusations of 'inappropriate relations' with pupils. Given the behind-closed-doors policy for dealing with unsavoury matters, and the absence of the modern day's public awareness of child abuse, it is impossible to determine how widespread pederasty was. It is known that some teachers had favourites, with even Cory being recognised by his fellow Socratics to lack discretion, unwisely providing physical evidence in the form of *billets-doux*, and it is extremely likely that some masters went beyond mere flirtation. While tainted by his conspicuous favouritism, by the time that Cory was forced to resign in 1872, he had been a master for 27 years and enjoyed loyal support from both tutees and staff, three of whom offered to resign in protest (Dewey, 1995, part 2).

The balance of power varied between schools, however the cult of athleticism and reactionary Socratic movement could be seen in most public schools during the latter part of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. Even at Marlborough, the school credited with the creation of the cult of athleticism, those with intellectual interests gathered with their own and masters with Socratic leanings rallied against the obsession. Perhaps the most challenging environment for Socratics was Wellington College: catering for the sons of army officers and those destined for the army, emphasis was placed upon the ability to follow orders; independent thought and the arts were not to be encouraged. In an environment in which games ruled, intellectual development was retarded and bullying was endemic, the small band of Socratic masters faced strong opposition from the establishment, resulting in the dismissal of their figurehead and the eventual suicide of Dr Saunders, following a smear campaign (Dewey, 1995, part 2).

Much as the gap year has served modern-day teenagers desire to 'discover themselves', Socratic masters provided reassurance to uncertain youths and helped them to develop their own identity. Of course, this role also enabled masters to influence boys' perception of themselves and the traits they cultivated. On the subject of 'attachments' between boys, Socratics tended to hold far more liberal views than those supporting the cult of athleticism. Warre spoke passionately against "the abomination in our midst" (McCarthy, cited on p.40, Dewey, 1995, part 2). While causing confusion and misunderstanding amongst some of the less worldly boys, by avoiding direct reference to that which he considered evil and shameful, Warre made it clear that 'inappropriate' relationships between boys were immoral and would not be tolerated at Eton. While the athletic movement labelled close friendships as effeminate, Socratic masters encouraged their pupils to not feel guilt, reassuring them that their feelings were justified and supporting this view with material from classical texts.

Shane Leslie, first cousin of Sir Winston Churchill, suggests that around the turn of the twentieth century, the athletic and Socratic movements had softened towards each other. Leslie had few friends but was given the opportunity to excel academically and believing that "Eton left [him] ready to appreciate the world of books." (cited on p. 21, Dewey, 1995, part 2). Leslie was not forced to play games, yet the Socratic masters were loosening their hard line against them, with the inspiring Classics master, Macnaghten, enthusiastic supporter of the lower forms' sporting endeavours. In *The Oppidan*, Leslie's roman-à-clef, he argues that "Jenkinson [later acknowledged as representing Macnaghten] stood for the spirit, and his influence unseen was stronger in the school than even the visible power of Dr. Warre" (p.56, Leslie, 1922). While it must be recognised that this is not an historical account, it does suggest that Eton's path was not driven solely by its headmaster. It would appear that a place had been secured at Eton for the studious boys, as well as the athletic boys.

While it is easy to assume that, given athleticism was associated with battle-readiness, the Socratic masters had no interest in promoting militarism to their bookish followers, this was not always the case. Cory spoke with reverence of those engaged in defence and empire-building and inspired his pupils with heroic tales of "high courage and noble self-sacrifice"

(p.22, Dewey, 1995, part 2). His greatest wish for his pupils was that their lives should centre around duty to country: “that a man should have served his country, striven to enhance her greatness, extended her empire, and safely guarded her liberty.” (Benson, cited on p.22, Dewey, 1995, part 2). Despite the enthusiasm of some Socratic masters, it must be acknowledged that the cult of athleticism offered more appropriate preparation for service within the Empire: the development of bodies for battle and conditioning to accept orders without question generally serving an officer better than intellectual and independent thought. That being said, the open-mindedness promoted by the Socratic movement might have benefitted individuals dealing with the rapid advances in technology and tactics during the First World War (Brown, 2017).

While the Socratic movement may have started out as a reaction against the cult of athleticism in the late nineteenth century public school, it has far greater significance. The Socratics were not only going against the perceived over-emphasis on sport but trying to introduce an education system that resembles modern day educational values: encouraging joy in learning and a pastoral approach to schooling.

## Chapter 7: Imperialism

It is argued that the Late-Victorian public school boy was immersed in imperialist indoctrination from “the patriotic verse of Robert Southey and Thomas Campbell” in the nursery to the “robust and simple-minded patriotism” of their masters at school (Howard, cited on p.18, Mangan, 1995). As discussed in chapter 9, chivalric imagery permeated late Victorian culture from all sides, and imbued colonial exploits with a romanticism. This obsession is illustrated in the fact that Baden Powell had originally planned to call the Scouts ‘The Young Knights of the Empire’ (Mangan, 1995). Even the economist and critic of imperialism acknowledged that imperialist fervour was generated by a “gospel of arduous chivalry” (p.463, Hobson, 1902).

From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, there was a shift from imperialism being based around trade, with little territorial intervention, to a more involved, militaristic imperialism (Mangan, 1995). Instances of unrest across Britain’s possessions during the 1850s and 1860s, such as the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58 and Jamaica’s Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865, helped bring about this shift in policy. In the face of rebellion, Britain was forced to decide whether to relinquish control of certain possessions, with the fear that the appearance of weakness would lead to a domino effect, or to assert their authority in the area, by a show of military might.

Beyond changes to official imperial policy, there were shifts in wider society. Aldrich (2012) argues that J.R. Seeley assisted in the legitimisation and popularisation of British imperialism from an intellectual perspective: he delivered lectures on the Empire and reached a wider audience through the publication of *The Expansion of England* in 1883, which sold 80,000 copies in the first two years and remained in print until 1956. Despite preferring to refer to ‘Greater Britain’ than ‘imperialism’, Aldrich argues that Seeley’s interpretation of the British Empire informed the opinions of all, from statesmen down to schoolboys.

Seeley promoted expansion into foreign lands as Britain’s natural destiny, as if it were a God given right, or indeed a duty. This ideal of empire was supported by the relative lack of active conquest or domination required in the sparsely populated lands of Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Seeley also argued against the British as conquerors, claiming that

the empire was mutually beneficial, enabling the modernisation of backwards societies and the spreading of Christianity. This idea was expanded upon by Lord Lugard in his *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, first published in 1922, which provides an in-depth explanation of the concept of reciprocal benefit.

This idea of imperialism as a moral imperative became increasingly widespread, both within politics and wider society. Politicians and colonial administrators developed and articulated this 'moral imperialism', emphasising destiny, duty and service. Curzon, Tory MP from 1886 and Viceroy of India from 1899, described the Empire as "not merely the key to glory and wealth but the call to duty and the means of service to mankind" (p.85, Richards, 1992). Beyond there being a moral imperative for British intervention, Ruskin extolled the moral *benefits* of war, claiming that it was the source of all virtues, nourishing and training great nations, while peace was the source of selfishness and led to the decline of nations (Mangan, 1995).

Schools and churches endorsed this view, claiming that conquest enabled the word of God to be spread and the savages to be civilized. It is worth noting however, that the religious endorsement of warfare was not a new phenomenon: from the eleventh to thirteenth century, England's involvement in the Crusades was justified by the need to reclaim the Holy Lands. Likewise, the 'just' nature of the Crimean War, 1853-1856, served as evidence of soldiers acting as 'good Christians' (Cuthbertson, 1985).

These interpretations were met with cynicism by some, with John Hobson arguing that Christianity had long been used to paint imperial conflicts as 'sacred wars'. He claimed that Christianity was employed to present war as "a sacred duty to risk life in trying to punish other people who are either heathen or wicked peoples, who have deserved to die, and whose land and other property by right belong to us" (p.47, Hobson, 1901). It is worth noting that Hobson was an anti-war activist, and so his statements of 'fact' are no doubt loaded with personal conviction.

Hobson's reference to land and property relates to the fact that whatever the moral justifications of imperialism, there were also several tangible advantages of empire: "trade,

security, emigration and prestige” (p.21, Mangan, 1998). Hobson talked of the “sordid and calculating motives which direct the imperialistic movement” (p.463) and accused the empire of “economic parasitism” (p.488, Hobson, 1902). Others vehemently opposed such a suggestion, with J.A. Cramb, a Scottish historian and novelist, asserting that the British would be disgusted at the idea that conflict in South Africa was being fought over the control of diamond mines (Mangan, 1995).

When discussing ‘the Church’, it is important to recognise that a great many sects of Christianity exist and that they did not always promote the same ideology. Many Quakers and other nonconformists were part of the peace movement, formed in 1816. Between 1860 and 1890 however, most nonconformists shifted from an anti-imperialist stance to being active supporters of empire.

Cuthbertson (1985) claims that the Second Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902, should have rallied the nonconformist pacifist cause, in outrage at the killing of fellow (Calvinist) Christians in South Africa, but it did not. While some nonconformist groups, such as the Quakers and the Unitarians, supported the anti-war lobby in the face of conflict in South Africa, there had been a general shift in the nonconformist communities. As in wider society, nonconformists were moving away from evangelism and purposeful maintenance of peace, and towards the imperialist cause, requiring allegiance to the state and its military.

Cuthbertson argues that support and active promotion of ideology by the clergy served to legitimise aggressive imperialism in the latter part of the nineteenth century, acting as independent testimony as to the legitimacy of the British cause. As a minister and leader of evangelical dissenters during the 1870s and 1880s, R.W. Dale reflected the move away from pacifism and towards interventionism within the Church, stating “I believe in peace - true peace - at any price... even at the price of war” (p.141, Dale, 1902).

Even amongst non-conformist groups that continue to lobby for peace, some individuals were drawn towards more imperialistic and militaristic organisations. Ernest and Aubrey Westlake, both of whom were Quakers, wounded the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry in 1916. This youth organisation asserted that war played a role in one’s personal and spiritual self-

discovery, and that the First World War had triggered selfless, noble-minded actions. This group had seemingly contradictory ideas, with its younger members (under 18s) received training focusing on 'military virtues', while the older members were discouraged from militarism, encouraged to focus on higher, spiritual matters. Many of the values that they encouraged resemble those promoted by public schools: "orderliness, punctuality, [and] prompt obedience to approved authority" (Edgell, cited in Freeman, p. 643). It should be acknowledged however that the views of the Westlakes did not resemble those held by the majority of Quakers.

Study of material from Ackworth School, a Quaker boarding school in Yorkshire, provides a more representative view of the Quaker response to the First World War. From the outbreak of war, the headmaster, Frederick Andrews, started receiving letters from old boys who had joined up and wished to explain their choice, or from old boys asking for his guidance. While himself remaining committed to his pacifist beliefs, Andrews responded that "[i]f a man has no conscientious convictions against war, I honour him for enlisting" (p.280, Wallis, 1924) and that if they felt that it was their duty to fight, then they should do so. Andrews did not see it as his duty to tell his pupils how they should respond to the conflict, instead arguing that it was a headmaster's duty to train the character and conscience of his scholars, so that they might be driven by their own conscience.

The Ackworth Old Scholars' Association Annual Report of 1918-1919 supports the evidence above, in confirming that there no uniform response to the war amongst Ackworth Old Scholars; while there were several demands for recognition of those held as prisoners of conscience, there were similar demands for recognition of those engaged in War Services. The strength of feeling on both sides resulted in the editor clarifying AOSA's position: "It should be remembered that the Association is composed of members whose views differ widely on the vexed question of War and Peace... It would be folly for us to attempt to take sides in these problems, or to give prominence to any one branch of service" (p14., AOSA, 1919). Mirroring Andrews' position, the association did not believe that it was their place to encourage any particular course of action.

Regardless of their chosen response to the war, the characteristics which the association wished their reader to display reflects those promoted throughout the Victorian public school: “faith, courage, and steadfastness” (p.20, 1919). Likewise, the association’s president emphasised that education should “inspire with ideals of duty and conduct” (p.22, 1919).

The 1917-1918 AOSA report provides statistics on Ackworth’s male old scholars, aged 18 to 41. Of the 675 on the Service List, 422 were serving in the Army, 38 in the Navy, 199 in the F.A.U. or the F.W.V.R.C. and 16 were imprisoned. As shown by the figures, only 2% of old scholars were imprisoned as conscientious objectors however almost 30% took on non-combat roles as part of the Friends War Victims Relief Committee (F.W.V.R.C.), alleviating civilian distress, or the Friends’ Ambulance Unit (F.A.U.). Quakers served within the army at many levels, with the Service List including 3 Lieutenant-Colonels, 1 Major and 39 Captains. As the ‘jewel in the crown’ of the British Empire, the development of Britain’s relationship with India is central to the understanding of imperialism. In this section, I will focus upon how Britain’s relationship with India changed over time and how the ‘moral imperative’ played out in India.

Suresh Chandra Ghosh (1993) claims that the dynamic between India and the British changed between the eighteenth and nineteenth century: during the early part of the eighteenth century, substantial British presence was confined to four areas (Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and Surat), and the Indian government held significant power, with many European powers competing for their favour and trade opportunities. Ghosh claims that during this period, despite little social interaction between Company servants and the Indians, racial issues did not feature and the local customs and political authorities were respected. By contrast, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, he claims that Britain’s imperial ambitions had soured the relationship.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the Company developed good relations with Muslim and Hindu princes. In 1781, Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of Bengal, established the Calcutta Madrassa, on the request of Muslims. This centre for Islamic teaching had the explicit aim of preparing Muslim gentlemen for “responsible and

lucrative offices in the state” (cited on p.176, Ghosh, 1993). During this early period, there was considerable interest and respect for Indo-Persian culture and orientalism, with Asia being extolled as “the nurse of science, the inventress of delightful and useful arts, the scene of glorious action, fertile in the production of human genius, abounding in natural wonders, and infinitely diversified in the forms of religion and government...” (Jones, cited on p.177, Ghosh, 1993).

In 1800, the Fort William College at Calcutta was set up to train British civilians as administrators. The curriculum covered indicates that at that time, understanding the Indian people was considered essential for good governance. Likewise, the Company was keen to not show favouritism to one religious community over the other, and so supported the foundation of a Sanskrit college, to function alongside the Muslim Calcutta Madrassa. By the turn of the nineteenth century, following on from the Battles of Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764), the Company had gained significant territorial interests in Bengal. Wishing to limit the power of Indian rulers and protect their gains against European rivals, the size and quality of the Company’s military force increased dramatically (Ghosh, 1993).

Ghosh argues that, while servants of the Company might have expected to remain in India for extended periods of time, and so came to respect its people, the British Army did not. Following the passing of the East India Company Act of 1784<sup>4</sup>, the crown became increasingly involved in the Company. British Army regiments tended to only be posted to India for a few years and Ghosh claims that they brought with them “a maximum of national pride and a minimum desire to understand the country” (p.178, Ghosh, 1993). Likewise, while in earlier periods the Company administrators were brought up through the ranks and so were knowledgeable of the country and its people, by the nineteenth century, senior posts were increasingly filled by gentlemen brought across from England, resulting in the

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<sup>4</sup> The East India Company Act of 1784, also known as Pitt’s India Act, was passed as it was felt within parliament that North’s Regulating Act of 1773 did not go far enough in tackling corruption within the British East India Company. Lord North’s Regulating Act had been the first major step towards parliamentary regulation of the empire in India, recognising in law the right of the British Crown to supervise, and have ultimate control over, the British East India Company (Murray, 2007). Pitt saw the 1784 act as a means of giving the Crown “the power of guiding the politics of India, with as little means of corrupt influence as possible” (cited on p14, Philips, 2001). While the Court of Directors, elected by shareholders, continued to wield great power, nominations for senior posts, such as Governor-Generalship, were increasingly influenced by the State.

administration becoming “more imperial and its attitude more haughty and aloof” (p.178, Ghosh, 1993). Where once interest in the history and philosophy of these exotic cultures had tempered the Englishman’s distain for certain aspects of the Indians’ religions and customs, opinions on the natives increasingly resembled those found in Victorian textbooks and wider society.

Even before the turn of the nineteenth century, Charles Grant, a Company official, explicitly condemned Indian society. Published in 1797, his book, *Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects to Great Britain, particularly with respect to morals, and on the means of improving it* described Hindus as dishonest and depraved. As was to become increasingly common when justifying the Empire, Grant infantilizes the Indians, suggesting that Europeans might view the behaviour of the Hindus “with feelings analogous to those which the petty malignity of children, or of beings of a diminutive species, might excite” (p.54, Grant, 1797). He argued that the Company should not consider itself under any obligation to protect the immoral Hindu creed and that the official language of India should be changed to English, to enable the natives to be cured of their ignorance. It should be noted that despite some of his recommendations being discussed by the Company, he represented a particularly radical opinion.

While mid to late nineteenth century imperialism was justified, in part, on the grounds of spreading the word of God, in the early nineteenth century, the Company was cautious about pressing conversion to Christianity, due to the fear that it would provoke political unrest. Missionary societies did have some influence with the Company however, pressuring the Company into assuming responsibility for the education of the people of India in 1813 (Ghosh, 1993).

In the 1820s, there were competing attitudes regarding the value of native learning and tradition: while some sought to conserve indigenous traditions, there was a shift towards more imperialistic aims of governing and ‘civilizing’ the colonies. Those sitting on the education committee with a passion for Oriental learning managed to direct funds towards the revival of Sanskrit and Arabic literature during the early 1820s, however in 1824, James Mills, an influential member of the Company’s HQ in London, wrote a dispatch to India,

condemned the committee's decisions for focusing on 'frivolous' material. While infighting within the committee continued for many years, by the 1830s, the teaching of English was becoming increasingly widespread (Ghosh, 1993).

The appointment of Thomas Babington Macaulay as President of the General Committee of Public Instruction in 1834 brought about significant change in both Indian education and the perception of the Indian. Macaulay claimed that the government held 'paternal feelings' towards the people of India and was anxious to act in the public good. He clearly saw Westernization as an improving process, claiming that "the morality, the philosophy, [and] the taste of Europe [were] beginning to produce a salutary effect on the hearts and understandings of our subjects": the public conscience was opening itself up to "just and noble views" and people were awakening to "the social duties of man" (p.185, Macaulay, 1874). Macaulay believed that the basis of the British Empire was the dissemination of British civility by means of 'English' education.

Both Macaulay and Grant appear to consider duty and character to be primarily European/British traits. Grant, in his observations on Britain's Asiatic subjects, claimed that, in Europe, truth, honesty, and good-faith were "the standard of character and credit" (p.44, Grant, 1797). By contrast, he believed that these virtues held little value in India, with "cheating, pilfering, tricking, and imposing" (p.44) being extremely common and having little effect upon one's standing. Grant forcefully asserted that "Patriotism is absolutely unknown in Hindostan" (p.50, Grant, 1797) and that they display no signs of duty or charity to those beyond their immediate social group. Macaulay appears to be suggesting that instances of poor behaviour by Company servants was the result of their virtuous English character being worn down and polluted by the immorality of the natives; this explanation was employed in Victorian textbooks to excuse poor behaviour by the British.

Macaulay reflected, and assisted in the development of the rhetoric of nineteenth-century British imperialism. This rhetoric centred upon the altruism, chivalry and assumed superiority of the British. He claimed that the British saved the people from the corrupt, Islamic dynasties and the predatory tribes, the wrongdoers quaking "before the valour of a braver and sterner race" (p.183, Macaulay, 1874). While acknowledging the necessity of

conflict, Macaulay believed that the damage caused by war was “mitigated by the chivalrous and Christian spirit of Europe” (p.184, Macaulay, 1874).

In 1835, Macaulay drew up a minute, championing the virtues of English education in India. He sought to reinterpret the Charter Act of 1813 and, if needs be, rescind clauses, to re-orientate the Company’s commitment to the education of the Indians. The Company had originally funded institutions of Oriental learning but Macaulay argued for their closure. Macaulay argued that English should be adopted as the language of instruction as the local dialects were too primitive to allow for explanation of complex and scientific ideas. Likewise, Macaulay who showed a complete disregard for Oriental learning, argued against the use of Sanskrit and Arabic on the grounds that “a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia” (Macaulay, cited on p.184, Ghosh, 1993).

When considering the development of imperialism during the mid-nineteenth century, the prominent nineteenth century philosopher and Liberal politician, John Stuart Mill, serves as a particularly useful case study. Mill had first-hand experience of East India Company rule, having served as a colonial administrator for the Company during his younger years. Being an academic and a politician, Mill articulated and developed his beliefs in writing, so providing a more complete picture of an ideology than is usually found. Lastly, while his ideas might seem extreme to modern audiences, his position would have been considered fairly moderate for the time, and so his views are likely to be somewhat representative of the majority view.

Mill argued for what he termed ‘tolerant imperialism’, seeking to ‘civilize’ India but not to force assimilation. Tunick (2006) argues that Mill genuinely believed in a benevolent imperialism, with the only true justification for the Britain’s presence in India being the responsibility of ‘civilized’ peoples to promote the moral improvement of ‘uncivilized’ peoples. He also passionately believed that the Company’s introduction of European technologies to India had revolutionized their healthcare system, educational institutions and infrastructure.

Like many politicians from the period, he has been accused of having infantilized the Indians and considering them in need of correction by enlightened, *European* guides. He believed that “the rules of ordinary international morality” did not apply when dealing with peoples “of a lower degree of civilization”. He sets out the justification for British intervention explicitly, arguing that “[t]heir minds are not capable” of observing rules and so it is “for their benefit that they should be conquered and held in subjection by foreigners” (Mill, cited on p.595, Tunick, 2006).

During the later decades of the nineteenth century, Britain was regularly engaged in some form of military action in the colonies. Given these conflicts occurred in far off lands, and typically resulted in fairly low numbers of British casualties, they helped to bolster support for imperial expansion, providing “the image of war, without its guilt and only five-and-twenty per cent of the danger” (Surtees, cited on p.3, MacKenzie, 1992\*). The Battle of Omdurman in 1898 perfectly illustrates this, with 11,000 Dervish warriors being killed, while the empire lost only 28 British and 20 Egyptian soldiers (Brown, 2017).

There were however exceptions: when British forces ended Zululand in 1879, they were expecting an easy victory and instead suffered a devastating defeat. Facing an opponent armed with little more than cows-hide shields and short spears, the British lost over 1,800 men soon after crossing into Zululand. The British media sought to salvage what they could from the disaster, focusing on the honour of individuals and when a force of around 150 British and colonial troops held Rorke’s Drift against around 3,000 Zulus, they attempted to draw onto the subsequent victories.

The Anglo-Zulu War illustrates the extent to which the mainstream British media manipulated events to paint the British in a good light and promote national pride. Prior to the war, the media had presented the Zulus as an inferior race, in keeping with the ideology of white superiority. Following the Zulu defeat of British forces, this image no longer served the national interest and the Zulu was instead portrayed as a ‘noble savage’, with an admirable warrior culture. Even at the time, this U-turn was satirized in adult comic, *Funny Folks*, contrasting earlier presentations of Zulus as having an “intellect considerably below that of a chimpanzee” and being “the scum of the African continent”, with the events of the

Anglo-Zulu War resulting in Zulu culture being admired and their men described as “models of manly beauty” (cited on p.10, Brown, 2017).

From a modern perspective, it is easy to take a cynical view of empire and those promoting it. While the desire to suppress and exploit will no doubt have driven some imperialists, others did have a genuine belief that their actions were for the good of the natives. Koebner and Schmidt claim that by the 1870s, the Empire had become a symbol of a “belief in the providential destiny of the English race to bring civilization to backward peoples outside Europe” (cited on p. 65, Hannabuss, 1989). It is also important to recognise that while imperialistic expansionism was supported by many, the ideology was not universally adopted: within the House of Commons, Liberals would attack the Tories over their militarism and be criticized in return.

## Chapter 8: Imperialism and Race in Victorian and Edwardian Textbooks

While modern education systems recognise the teaching of History as a fundamental aspect of education (e.g. Crabtree, 1992), Richard Aldrich (2012) claims that History had not featured heavily in earlier period of public school education, but that it received increased recognition from the mid to late nineteenth century. During the 1870s, separate honours degrees in History were established at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, implying an increased focus upon the subject in middle and upper class education. However, the emphasis on history was also found in schools for the lower classes, with the Code of 1875 making History a grant-earning 'Class' subject in elementary schools.

*Classical* History had played a prominent role in public school education for centuries however the inclusion of more recent history likely resulted from a desire to increase children's awareness of the Empire and to encourage imperialism with tales of Britain's 'good works' out in the colonies. As part of this promotion of imperialism, Aldrich (2012) argues that the teaching of History also aimed to socialise children in the belief that non-Europeans were inherently inferior and the study of textbook material in this thesis supports that claim. Within this chapter, I will examine the way in which imperialism was dealt with in textbooks during the study period, with particular emphasis on imperialism in India. I will then look at the presentation of race in two nineteenth century textbooks.

Even after the turn of the twentieth century, the Board of Education believed that an awareness of Britain's (imperial) history played an important part in character building, enabling children to "feel the splendour of heroism, [and] the worth of unselfishness and loyalty to an ideal" (cited on p.24, Castle, 1993). Textbooks were selective in their virtues however, typically encouraging little sympathy, tolerance or understanding of the diverse range of peoples who made up the colonies.

Given the fact that textbooks and examinations could not cover all material, it is telling what they chose to include. Even in the later period, from 1890 to 1914, the Oxford, Cambridge and London examining boards placed emphasis upon Britain's power and successes in India. Despite the fact that significant abuses of power by the East India Company had been

acknowledged decades earlier, schools and examination boards encouraged pupils to take pride in the East India Company's decisive victory over the Nawab of Bengal in 1757, in the Battle of Plassey.

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, India was presented to school children and the wider population as a fascinating and exotic land. With Britain's increasing involvement in the area however, this romantic image no longer served Britain's imperial aims. Tradition could not be allowed to stand in the way of progress; and respect for the old order could not be allowed to weaken British authority. This shift is discussed in greater depth in the chapter 7.

Castle (1993) asserts that the racial images in late nineteenth and early twentieth century textbooks served to promote a nationalist mind set and develop racial myths and stereotypes. This racial agenda was not limited to textbooks, with advertising and fiction books supporting these ideas, however the presentation in textbooks gave the ideas legitimacy.

It is important to recognise that these textbooks were not produced purely for the public schools' market. The Earl of Meath asserted, in *Essays on Duty and Discipline* (1910), that the burden of Empire had shifted from falling upon 'the few', who would have likely passed through the public-school system, to being the future responsibility of all English children, whatever their class. As literacy increased, such material was seen as beneficial to all, and indeed reports from the school inspectorate indicate that these kinds of texts were widely used and were often recommended by the Board of Education.

The influential historian, S.R. Gardiner, in *A Students History of England* (1892), claimed to avoid personal bias in his book, particularly important given their impressionable age and the fact that the children might not have access to multiple accounts. Despite these voiced intentions, Gardiner speaks of the British bringing peace and civilization to India. While claiming disinterested inquiry, textbooks of the period reinforced a hegemonic view of race and the Empire, non-Anglo-Saxon ethnicity referred to as if a disease and the British race

described as inherently superior, though their physical attributes, character and achievements (Castle, 1993).

Even in 1900, York-Powell and Tout's textbook described the non-Aryan Indians as "flat-nosed savages" (cited on p.27, Castle, 1993). York-Powell and Tout considered racial characteristics in relation to an Anglo-Saxon ideal and emphasised the similarities between the Aryans and the West, with their fair skin and proto-Indo-European language. They show clear preference for these Aryan invaders (originally from Iran) and, despite chasing out and enslaving the original inhabitants of India, appear to legitimise their actions on the grounds that they had a 'civilising' effect.

Textbooks tended to consider India's history as beginning at its acknowledgement by the West, and that prior to British intervention, India was in a state of anarchy, warring amongst itself. The expression of this belief is unsurprising, given that the same arguments were being presented in the House of Commons, to justify British intervention; in 1833, Macaulay delivered a speech claiming that before British involvement, Indians were "ground down to the dust by the oppressor without and the oppressor within" and that they suffered constantly under despotism and anarchy (p.181, Macaulay, 1874). Textbooks argued that the vast range of languages, races and faiths in India meant internal unity was impossible, and so concluded that British involvement was the only means of attaining stability and progress.

Beyond exploiting their people, native leadership was also attacked on the grounds of doubtful legitimacy, gaining their position by force and so having "no established dynastic rights" (cited on p.29, Castle, 1993). These leaders were accused of having no interest in peace and stability and were contrasted with the pacified princes "working well for their people" (cited on p.33) under the guidance of British officials, and "trust[ing] the British government as an impartial protector" (Hawke, cited on p.33, Castle, 1993).

Castle highlights the fact that some respect was shown to pre-mutiny native rulers who followed a recognizable code of conduct. Some figures, gaining epithets such as 'Master of Mysore' and 'Lion of the Punjab', were respected as formidable opponents. The Sikhs as a

whole received a degree of approval for their warlike qualities and steadfastness. Despite previously fighting against the British, during the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the Sikhs did not join the mutineers. While a less favourable view of the Sikhs is likely to have been given during the earlier Anglo-Sikh Wars, the loyalty of the Sikh and Gurkha regiments under the Raj was seen as proof of the positive changes Britain was making in the region.

It should be recognised that the histories provided to the lower forms differed significantly from that provided to the older boys. The Board of Education in 1914 recommended that while the best qualities of the nation's heroes such be emphasised, their shortcomings should also be acknowledged. Even in a speech to the House of Commons in 1833, Macaulay acknowledged that "some instances of odious perfidy and avarice stain the annals of our Eastern empire" and that "the early history of this great revolution is chequered with guilt and shame" (p.182-183, Macaulay, 1874). Despite this acknowledgement, while upper forms covered events in depth, and so might have developed a slightly more balanced and critical picture of events, teaching of the events to lower forms typically involved vast simplifications of complex situations, emphasising British heroism.

Despite upper forms' education recognising faults of the British 'heroes' such as Clive and Hastings, blame for their indiscretions was often deflected onto others, with Hastings' misconduct being said to have resulted from the corrupting influence of the Indian princes. Textbooks from the latter part of the nineteenth century reported that the methods of oriental warfare and oriental courts were "thoroughly repugnant to European ideas" and claimed that Hastings' errors were cautionary lesson that "the white man must hold to the white standard" (Innes, cited on p. 30, Castle, 1993).

Through their work in the Empire, textbooks warned that the character of the otherwise noble and pure Englishman was being compromised through their contact with natives' falsehood and corruption. Even into the early twentieth century, in *A History of England and the British Empire*, Arthur Innes states that previous generations of Englishmen had had to learn that they were "dealing with peoples whose moral standards are different from those of Europe" (cited on p.30, Castle, 1993). Despite using a somewhat diplomatic "different", it is clearly understood that Europe was morally superior to the people of the colonies.

Even within a comparatively short study period, from 1890 to 1914, Castle found that there was a shift away from attempting to provide a balanced account of Britain's intervention in India. The shortcomings of 'heroes' were increasingly omitted, or blamed on the corrupting influence of the natives.

In schools, study of British involvement in India would emphasise the 'outrages' perpetrated by the Indians against the British, such as the 'Black Hole of Calcutta' and the massacre at Cawnpore. In both cases, textbooks used emotive language to stir the emotions of their young readers and failed to provide a counterbalance, in the form of 'good Indians' or context.

In 1756, the garrison of Fort William was captured by the troops of the Nawab of Bengal. The 146 captives were held overnight in a small guardroom in Fort William, referred to as the 'Black Hole'. By the time they were let out of the room in the morning, 123 individuals had died, primarily from suffocation through crushing and heat-stroke. This event was seen as an act of cruelty and revenge by the Nawab. The event drew particular outrage due to the fact that a small number of women were present in the guardroom and some reports claimed that a ten-year-old girl was amongst the dead. Likewise, the dumping of the bodies of the deceased into a ditch further enraged the British public (Bayon, 1944). Despite having occurred in the previous century, the horror of the 'Black Hole' was kept alive in popular culture and continued to "ignite generations of British schoolboys with passionate indignation and outrage against the "uncivilized natives" of India" (cited on p.31, Castle, 1993).

The massacre at Cawnpore occurred a century after the Black Hole atrocity, during the Indian Mutiny of 1857 to 1858. Prior to the mutiny, the cantonments of Cawnpore were described as an idyll, with carefully maintained gardens and an active British social life of balls and dinners. Following the mutiny of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry regiment however, the British population came under siege and, despite agreeing terms of release guaranteed safe passage, the majority of the population was killed immediately after the surrender. While such an action alone would have served as proof that the Indians could not be trusted, of

greatest significance for British opinion was the fact that the remaining 210 women and children, who were held prisoner following the surrender, were killed as the British Army approached (Blunt, 2000).

Besides justifying British intervention, these 'atrocities' were used to drive home the importance and superiority of 'British character', by contrasting it with the "cruelty, emotional and moral laxity, [and]... lack of manliness" (p.32, Castle, 1993) of the Indians.

While many of the actions taken by the natives were universally damned, such as the massacre at Cawnpore, attitudes towards the munity expressed in textbooks changed over the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. Pearce and Hague's *Analysis of English History: a Text-book for Colleges and Schools* uses emotive language to describe the events at Cawnpore, stating that "women and children were butchered and mutilated in the most frightful manner" (p.168, Pearce & Hague), but otherwise does not appear to be attempting to stoke outrage. The book also provides a partial explanation for the Indian discontent, arguing that the Muslims and Hindus were offended by the use of pig fat in the newly introduced 'greased cartridges'.

This explanation highlights the difficulties of using textbooks from the period to form an opinion on the attitudes towards race, religion and the empire in schools. Many of the textbooks I have studied appear to be geared towards rote learning, covering a large number of topics but with little or no explanation. As such, pupils' interpretations of events are likely to have been determined by the individual master. The inclusion of the greased cartridges argument might have been used to illustrate how unreasonable the actions of the mutineers were, with their 'ridiculous' superstitions, and to draw attention away from the question of self-rule, however it might have been used to acknowledge British mistakes. As Harris (2001) reveals, the use of these cartridges *did* cause anger and distress and some British generals called for their men to be able to use an alternative source of grease. They were overruled however, with a belief that 'concession is weakness' and attempts to force to sepoys to use the offending cartridges sparked underlying issues.

J.F. Bright's *History of England* textbooks, published during the 1880s, show sympathy for the different forces acting upon native soldiers, recognising that they might have been driven by a desire for 'national liberty' or by their religious devotion. He also accused the British of being merciless in their retaliation, demonstrating their "incapacity for understanding the rights or feelings of those opposed to them" (cited on p.34, Castle, 1993). Likewise, in 1890s, Yonge's textbook pointed out that through their lack of courtesy towards even high-ranking Hindus, the British had built up resentment. These textbooks, admitting to a degree of wrongdoing on the part of Britain, were not isolated texts by obscure authors, several being written by historians at the forefront of their field, such as S.R. Gardiner, or prolific, well-regarded writers, such as Charlotte Yonge.

In contrast to the comparatively balanced reports of the Indian Mutiny during the latter part of the nineteenth century, texts produced during the early 1900s showed little sympathy for the mutineers and were reluctant to allow even the slightest blame to fall upon the British. Where older textbooks had charged the British with lack of respect for other cultures, the textbooks of the 1900s focused on the intolerance of the Muslims and suggested that the sepoys had been "pampered and spoiled by foolish indulgences" (York-Powell and Tout, cited on p.34, Castle, 1993) and that the idea of greased cartridges causing genuine distress was ridiculous. Likewise, while writers only years before had acknowledged causes for growing resentment, in 1904, Oman stated in a textbook aimed at younger pupils that "a foolish rumour set the army in a flame" (cited on p.34, Castle, 1993). Even in textbooks for senior years, it was suggested that the natives had simply 'misunderstood' the good intentions of the British and that their primitive society meant that they were unsettled by the progress being brought about by British intervention. As any British responsibility for the mutiny was erased, so were reports of the merciless British reprisals sanitized.

This change in representation of the Indian population and the Indian Mutiny around the turn of the century reflects increased uncertainty about the Empire. With the Boer War of 1899 to 1902, with its associated concerns over the physical fitness of the British male and its hard-won victory, Britain needed to remind its schoolchildren, its wider population, and the world of the glory of its Empire. It did not serve the British interest to tarnish the

Empire's reputation or to have the legitimacy of their rule in India questioned in the face of stirrings of nationalism.

The purpose of the study of Britain's involvement in India changed over time. During the earlier periods, history textbooks appeared keen to prevent British subjects set for the colonies from repeating their forefathers' mistakes. By contrast, around the turn of the century, greater emphasis was placed upon legitimising British rule and encouraging enthusiasm for Empire, through tales of heroism.

Textbooks were keen to emphasise the ways in which Britain improved the lives of the natives through investment in infrastructure such as roads, railways and hospitals, as well as the provision of (Western) education. While taking pride in the 'progress' Britain had gifted to the natives, authors were reluctant to discuss the economic relationship which often drove these developments. Despite their unwillingness to acknowledge economic benefits during the time of the Raj, authors were fairly critical of the formerly all-powerful East India Company's mixing of profit and governance. While the British Crown had played a part in the Company since the enacting of The East India Company Act of 1784, the Government of India Act of 1858 passed responsibility for administration to the Crown (Blunt, 2000). It appears that this transition was a useful means of placing responsibility for past misjudgements onto a defunct body (the East India Company), enabling Crown rule in India to start with a clean slate. Textbooks gave children the impression that the profits of colonial trade were of little concern to the British and that the 'greatness' of the Empire depended upon the spread of superior ideology. Textbooks cast Raj-era Britain in a benevolent, parental role, with the majority of Indians being ascribed childlike status. Such images reflected those portrayed in wider society, with Curzon, as Governor-General of India, writing in 1900, admitting that he talks "rather like a schoolmaster; but after all the millions I have to manage are less than school children" (cited on p.724, Moore, 1993).

While other authors will have researched a far wider selection of nineteenth and early twentieth century textbooks and so are better positioned to identify general trends,

accessing original textbooks enables me to consider whether my sample of textbooks<sup>5</sup> support the proposed trends and to pick up on aspects that are particularly relevant to my research. Old textbooks afford a glance into schooling during the study period, providing contemporary perspectives on historic events, and allowing analysis of tone and use of emotive language in the texts.

Given the broad focus of the thesis, it is impossible to provide an in-depth study of all subjects and ideas taught at school and so I have chosen to focus on how different races are portrayed in textbooks from the period. This topic is of particular relevance, as imperial activities were often justified on the grounds the superiority of the British 'race' and the claim that other races were incapable of self-rule. Passing on these beliefs and the idea of the 'white man's burden' suggests that children were being encouraged to support the imperial ideal and were potentially being primed for work, whether military, missionary, administrative or trade, out in the Empire.

The copy of William Chambers' *Miscellaneous Questions in Science, Literature, Arts, &c. With Answers* used was dated from 1899, however earlier editions date back to at least 1878. Likewise, while the copy of A. Picquot's *Elements of Universal Geography, Ancient and Modern* used was a second edition, dating from 1817, there were at least two additional print runs, suggesting that the text was both widely used and continued to be considered relevant into the study period. A third nineteenth century textbook, written by Pearce and Hague, has been used within the above discussion of British intervention in India.

Chambers' book includes a section on ethnology, though devotes far less time to the subject than Picquot. As appears to be a universal feature of these books, Chambers views Caucasians as superior, stating that they were "the most improvable of all the races" (p.66). Another feature common to these books was the association of race with not only physical

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<sup>5</sup> The selection of old textbooks was driven in part by practicalities. Many of the textbooks available did not include publishing information and so the period during which the text was written or used in schools could not be determined. For some texts, entering limited information into online databases allowed year of publishing and number of editions to be identified. In addition, the selection was limited to the humanities, in order to allow for more meaningful comparison of similar texts. These sources were supplemented with material from a range of well-known texts from the period.

characteristics but also temperament and morality, for example, Chambers labels the Malaysians as “fierce and often treacherous” (p.67, Chambers, 1899).

Elsewhere in the textbook, Chambers covers the terms ‘slave’, ‘civil rights’ and ‘serfdom’ but only briefly, and lacking emotive language. While this might be explained in part by the question-answer nature of the book, other topics receive more discussion and are treated with greater respect. While not expressly supporting slavery, the description of the Negroes as “docile, and disposed to submit to a state of servitude” (p.67) implies that the ‘natural order’ justifies the use of black people as, if not slaves, at least subordinates. It is perhaps surprising that a harder line was not taken against slavery in this textbook, given that the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 had been in place for more than six decades when this edition of Chambers’ textbook was published.

In keeping with his fairly critical assessment of other races, Chambers’ report on ‘the state of mankind’ provides a Eurocentric assessment of culture and morality: “a large number are in the condition of heathens and savages; others are in a half-civilised state, and in the way of improvement; and lastly, there are nations, such as those of Europe generally, in an advanced state of civilisation and refinement” (p.68, 1899).

In his *Elements of Universal Geography, Ancient and Modern*, Picquot discusses race in far greater detail than Chambers. Despite his commitment to presenting “necessarily dry” (preface, 1817) facts, even at a glance, Picquot’s examination of the peoples of the world reveals a strong bias. He describes Europe as “the least in extent, but the most civilized portion of the globe. Its inhabitants have white complexions, and are an active and intelligent race” (p.8, 1817).

Picquot provides a flattering description of the physical attributes of the English: “generally fair, regularly featured, and florid; and the beauty of the English ladies is deservedly celebrated” (p.48). It is his description of their character and morality however that mark them out as truly superior, being “active, courageous, thoughtful, generous, charitable, and fair in their dealings” (p. 48). Such a description might well describe the English *ideal* but the presentation of it as a reality suggests that Picquot chose to overlook the more shameful

aspects of empire-building. Picquot's assessment of the Scottish is likewise complimentary, describing them as "inured to hardship, brave, sober, ...and possessed of a sound judgement" (p.59). Of the Irish, Picquot paints a more variable picture, stating that while industrious and brave, they were "uncivilized, and ignorant" (p.69, 1817).

Picquot's descriptions of the peoples of Europe are largely complimentary and show common themes, describing them as strong, industrious, brave and just, if sometimes also referred to as vengeful. The change in character description can be seen upon reaching Turkey: despite being "extremely clean, [and] charitable", they were accused of being lazy, "cruel, ignorant, and vain" (p.145). Beyond Europe's boundaries to the East, these accusations of cruelty and ignorance were applied repeatedly, with the people of Siberia being "mostly ignorant, barbarous, and superstitious" (p.150), while those of 'Turkey-in-Asia', including modern-day Syria and Iraq, spent their lives "in ignorance and apathy" (p.153). By contrast, their neighbours, the Persians, were assigned characteristics previously applied to the Europeans: "hospitable, lively, polite, brave, and generous" (p.158, 1817).

Despite these accusations, it is surprising to see Picquot complimenting the physical appearance of peoples with non-Caucasian figures, with the Iraqis and Syrians being considered good-looking and the Persians being "handsome and well made" (p.158). Moving from the Middle East to South Asia, while describing the Hindus of India as being "black" (p.179, 1817), he views them as having a pleasing countenance.

Perhaps the harshest criticism is laid upon the North Africans. The Copts of Egypt were described as "not a handsome race; they are filthy, ignorant, and indolent" (p.190). Likewise, the Moroccans, Nubians and Algerians received similar accusations of cruelty and lack of honour. The Tunisians received the, perhaps limited, compliment of being "considered as the most polite and civilized people among the Mahomedans of Africa" (p.187, 1817).

The descriptions of the Abyssinians and the Hottentots might be taken as justification for British involvement in Africa. According to Picquot, the people of Abyssinia, modern-day Ethiopia, were "little civilized, and are said to take a delight in feasting in the raw flesh cut

from the live oxen” (p.193). Given the author explicitly states that he intended to provide dry facts, the inclusion of this cultural practice seems rather sensationalist, intended to highlight the need for British involvement, to civilise the savages. The description of the Hottentots (Khoikhoi people) appears to set them up as appropriate for, and improved by, a life of servitude, on the one hand, being in need of saving from their “superstitious, and ignorant” culture but also bearing the pleasing characteristics of being “hospitable, ... and faithful” (p.196, 1817).

Picquot’s assessment of a nation’s civility appears to be linked to religion. Picquot is dismissive of the worship of multiple deities and animals, reducing many beliefs to ‘superstition’ and linking them to ignorance. By contrast, those whose faith bore similarities with Christianity were typically praised and considered more civilized. An illustration of Picquot’s handling of faith is his description of Lower Guinea: “The inhabitants are more civilized and more industrious than the greater part of their neighbours”, who include Muslims and those whom worship multiple deities or animals, and “acknowledge a Supreme Being”, even if they also pray to “inferior deities” (p.199, 1817).

In contrast to the modern teachings of respect and tolerance for other religions, narrating the birth of Islam, Picquot refers to Mohammed as an “imposter” (p.155), and the founding of the religion as an act of ambition and pride, rather than holiness. Despite later providing a more balanced view of the people, he asserted that the tenets of the faith “were suited to the gross ideas of the Arabs” (p.155).

Picquot’s attitude towards race is not consistent throughout the text. At times, he expresses some surprisingly positive opinions, showing admiration for non-Caucasian features and recognises that, even within a country, populations varied in terms of character and civility. By contrast, in an earlier part of the text, Picquot groups all Asians together, labelling them as an “indolent, luxurious, and effeminate race” (p.18, 1817).

Despite these sweeping statements about the ‘Asian race’, Picquot shows a degree of respect for the Chinese and Japanese, stating that China was “more civilized than some of its neighbours” (p.166-7) and that the Japanese were “highly civilized”, as well as “well

made, strong, and active,... mild, and fond of learning” (p.169). It is worth noting however that Picquot’s book was written prior to the First Opium War of 1839 to 1842, which significantly altered the British perspective on China, from respect for their wisdom to mockery.

It is worth noting how out-of-date and limited much of the knowledge about foreign lands was, found both in textbooks and general publications. According to Pagani, Jan Nieuhof’s account of the Dutch embassy to China in 1665 remained the authority on China into the mid-nineteenth century. Likewise, Picquot acknowledges that information regarding the interior of Africa is very limited, and may be subject to inaccuracies. He admits that accounts of some peoples came from a single individual’s travel writings. He rarely made comment on the reliability of the information, beyond this acknowledgement, but the occasional use of ‘it is said’ might indicate situations of which he had no direct experience and where there was not a large body of evidence to back up the statements.

Admitting that all knowledge of Darfur was acquired from the travels of one man, Picquot offers a varied picture of Ethiopia, from the more civilized inhabitants of Nimeamay, to the immodest women of Darfur and the barbarous, warlike tribes of the Gallas and Jagas, who are accused of cannibalism. It is not unreasonable to believe that different peoples within a country did indeed have dramatically different ways of life; however, it is also possible that some customs were exaggerated or misunderstood and that wider discussions of countries’ civility and character might be effected by reporters’ varying degrees of openness and ethnocentrism.

It is interesting to note how much attention is given to different countries. While Picquot discusses areas of East Asia at length, little attention is paid to either North or South America. In line with the eurocentrism of the time, America is described as having been *discovered* in 1492. The only reference to the native Americans is in the ‘religion’ section, where it is mentioned in passing that “[m]ost of the Indians are idolaters” (p.31). As might be expected, there is no mention of their treatment or any rights to the land.

## Chapter 9: Imperialism and Schoolboy Literature

With the decreasing cost of printing, there was an explosion in juvenile literature during the study period, from weeklies and magazines, to annuals and novels. From the 1860s onwards, magazines and weeklies provided middle and upper middle class boys with tales of war, sport and adventure from around the Empire. From the late 1870s, boys also had access to *The Boys' Own Paper*, described as "the most important and influential children's periodical ever to have appeared in Britain" (Dunae, cited on p.24, Mangan, 1995). From the off, B.O.P. included public school stories, emphasising codes of behaviour and the importance of character. B.O.P. was followed by the creation of other boys' papers with a strong Empire focus.

Whitehead asserts that "If we hope to discover the inward thoughts of a generation, it is to literature that we must look" (p.1, Richards, 1988) and in the burgeoning juvenile literature market of late Victorian and Edwardian Britain, imperialism was a central theme, "romanticising and glorifying the exploits of the British empire builders" (Dunae, cited on p.23, Mangan, 1995).

Literature interacted with the influences of home and school to develop boys' identity and their perspectives on Empire. Richards (1989) argues that, by feeding children's imaginations, fiction was better able to nurture ideology than the preaching of parents, clergy or headmasters. For the most part however, juvenile literature sought to promote the same ideology as public schools and wider society, perpetuating British imperialism.

School stories were published in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century; however, the publication of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* in 1857 set the template for the period, the school story genre coming to illustrate school life as a process of moral maturation. These stories, usually set in British public schools, focused on the transformation of boys into morally strong, clean-living young gentlemen. Likewise, the adventure genre typically focused on former public school boys' early adulthood and the application of their public school training in the expansion and glorification of the Empire (Mangan, 1989).

A wide range of evidence can be drawn from public school stories and tales of adventure out in the colonies. On the most basic level, stories can provide insight into school customs; however, despite many stories being semi-autobiographical, they make no claim to provide a full and accurate reflection of reality. Despite the tendency of these books to romanticise school-life, for the increasing numbers of aspiring middle-class families sending their sons to public school for the first time, these books are likely to have served as a guide, introducing those without a family history of public school-attendance to their sometimes bizarre mores and ideals.

While the price of bound novels did restrict their readership, public school stories and adventure stories were not marketed solely to the middle and upper classes. Holt (2008) argues that the values that such stories sought to instil differed depending upon the background of their readership. For those attending or destined for public school, stories might seek to inspire feats of daring on the games field, or assure them that a future within imperial administration was both morally sound and exciting. By contrast, Holt argues that juvenile literature aimed at the lower classes placed greater emphasis on extolling the public school virtues of duty and obedience. The production of affordable literature for the lower classes was enabled in part by Christian societies, such as the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK). This supports Holt's assertion regarding literature for different class featuring different aims, as the SPCK focused on providing 'suitable' role models and developing Christian virtues: "obedience, duty, piety and hard work" (p.3, Richards, 1989).

The version of reality provided in juvenile literature could be influenced by a great many factors. Many authors held strong convictions and wished to instil their ideology in their young readership. For example, *Tom Brown's Schooldays'* clear Christian message owed more to the conviction of its author, Thomas Hughes, than to the state of 'muscular Christianity' in Rugby. Most authors and publishers were also concerned with achieving commercial success, by including a measure of excitement to attract juveniles or a sound moral message to recommend the books to parents.

As Joan Rockwell argues, fiction is “a social product, but it also ‘produces’ society” (cited on p.2, Richards, 1988). Not only did authors write their books with conviction but their readership took their messages to heart. The influence that books wielded varied greatly and can never be precisely measured. While some men recalled the adventure stories of their youth in their memoirs, many more would have been immersed in an ideology throughout their childhood and never appreciated their significance. While commercial success does not guarantee that a book has successfully passed its message on to its audience, considering how many books an author published and how many print runs their books received can provide a crude guide as to how well an author’s message chimed with its readership. W.H.G. Kingston, G.A. Henty and R.M. Ballantyne gained great followings and are acknowledged as great players on the Victorian boys’ fiction scene. All three produced vast quantities of material, with Kingston penning over one hundred books for boys between 1850 and 1880 (Hannabuss, 1989).

The most successful authors could have a significant impact upon boys’ perception of the Empire and their duties towards it, but while a common thread of ‘imperialism’ bound together many of the juvenile writers of the period, the motivation behind conquest varied, as did their treatment of mortality.

Kingston, like many authors, encouraged his readership to consider imperialism to be a moral imperative. Bound within his stories, Britain’s imperial gains were justified on the basis of her superior development and Christian faith. Kingston did not simply provide narrative stories in the hope that boys would take some shed of morality from them; he called upon his readership to develop ‘character’ and to demonstrate it to the world (Mangan, 1989).

Likewise, Ballantyne, writing from the 1840s to 1880s, had a strong Christian conscience. Being a Presbyterian Elder, and having served as a clerk in the Hudson’s Bay Company as a young man, Ballantyne was a living example of the colonialist ideal: “courage with conscience and Christianity with commerce” (p.57, Hannabuss, 1989). Ballantyne’s many stories combined Christian courage with acts of heroism, which he wrote with an earnest desire to ‘inform and convert’. For example, while *Ungava* is primarily focused on the

exciting, challenging life of fur traders in remote areas of Canada, a chapter is devoted to conscience: he asserts that trade divorced from Christianity is mere exploitation and emphasises that these colonial adventurers were also Christians, committing to their duty to spread the word of God to the Eskimo tribes (Hannabuss, 1989).

As was typical of Victorian adventure stories, Ballantyne's tales typically involved a young hero, armed with manly courage and good morals, going on adventures in far off lands and getting the better of villains. In these tales, there was no dubious morality: villains were clearly identified and those assisting the protagonist, such as missionaries, were morally sound. Despite his moralising priorities, Ballantyne still sought to construct an exciting world for his readers, involving hunting bears and canoeing down fast-flowing rivers.

For some authors, morality was less concerned with religion as with duty and honour. Chivalric imagery was central to many adventure tales; a theme Mangan associated with his "self-sacrificial warriorhood" ideal (p.10, Mangan, 1995). This ideal associated manliness with martial martyrdom and centred on the concept that certain elite groups were conditioned from childhood for acts of great selflessness.

While Mangan's concept of a 'self-sacrificial warriorhood' is tied to the upper-middle class, the wider concept of martyrdom and a 'good death' was not. The ideal of dying in an act of heroism on the battlefield was celebrated in the public school, with memorials on the school grounds and tales of old boys killed in action, however the concept of the 'good death' also entered into juvenile literature and wider society.

In the promotion of imperialism, MacKenzie argues that "the most potent hero is the dead hero" (p.112, 1992). There is a striking difference in the way different authors approached mortality. G.A. Henty, "a publicist for the British Empire, [and] recruitment officer for a generation of schoolboys" (Turnbaugh, cited on p.25, Mangan, 1995), never allowed his heroes to die. Within Henty's many stories, imperial wars were treated as a rite of passage, much like school. While savages were killed off in a casual manner, his heroes always returned safely to England, after their adventures in the colonies.

By contrast, the prominent poet, Sir Henry Newbolt, depicted school heroes as sacrificial warriors, with a brave death in battle forming the pinnacle of a hero's existence. Likewise, in Vachell's *The Hill*, a novel charting a schoolboy friendship at Harrow at the turn of the twentieth century, the protagonist, Harry Desmond, achieving a 'good death' in an offensive during the Boer War. This novel provides a perfect example of juvenile literature which promoted the ideal of the self-sacrificial warriorhood. In reading an epitaph to Desmond, the headmaster glorifies in his death, claiming that "the shadow of our loss, dark as it seemed to us at first, is already melting in the radiance of his gain". Far from Desmond's tender years being a source of sorrow, the headmaster claimed that to "die young, clean, ardent; to die swiftly, in perfect health; to die and to carry with you into the fuller ampler life beyond, untainted hopes and aspirations, unembittered memories, all the freshness and gladness of May" was a reason for joy (cited on p.176, Mangan, 1989).

Glorification of death in battle was not limited to the pages of fictional adventure stories however. In *Reflections on the Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain* (1900), a vehement defence of imperialism, J.A. Cramb expresses a strongly moralistic view of empire and utilizes Norse mythology, painting a glorious scene of the young men who died during the Boer War entering Valhalla: "phantoms of the mighty heroes of all ages rise to greet these English youths who enter smiling, the blood yet trickling from their wounds!" (cited on p.21, Mangan, 1995).

There appears to be a slight tension between the apparent solemnity of the "worship of war as a sacred path to moral purity" (p.13, Mangan, 1995) and the almost jovial reference to soldiering as "the hobby of the aristocracy and gentry" (Best, cited on p.13, Mangan, 1995). Imperial intervention was portrayed both as a noble act of duty and, as described repeatedly in juvenile adventure stories, something to be relished.

While juvenile literature was a primary source of imperial doctrine, imperialism was reflected in all aspects of culture. The portrayal of imperialism as both duty and adventure was reflected in the substantial quantity of art depicting battles during the last quarter of the nineteenth century: some artists represented the young officers as Arthurian knights, while others featured sporting equipment in the image. In the press, despite the availability

of photography, newspapers continued to use illustrations, enabling them to glaze over the suffering and present the dead as if sleeping. Across literature, art and the press, there was consistency in the sanitization of war and death.

As well as, and indeed as part of, justifying and celebrating colonialism, juvenile literature encouraged the belief in white superiority. The term 'savages' was applied to many ethnicities, from the natives of Africa, to the 'primitive' Southeast Asians and the Native Americans, and these 'savages' were typically cast as villains, living in squalor. Ballantyne makes it clear in his stories that it is the duty of the Europeans to save the savages from their pitiful state by bringing them to Christ and introducing them to (Western) civility. In doing so, the readers are reminded of the superiority of European intellect, religion, and commercial and military power (Hannabuss, 1989).

Ballantyne speaks in patronising tones about other ethnicities, informing his young readers that the British had a duty to treat 'Kaffirs' (black Africans) "kindly, justly, considerately, [and] lovingly" and to bring them to Christianity but that "to trust him is no part of our duty", with him comparing it to trusting a thief, liar or murderer (cited on p.59, Hannabuss, 1989). The kaffir man is referred to as a child and Ballantyne warns that he should be "wisely restrained, until he has become a man of principle" (cited on p.60, Hannabuss, 1989). This presentation of savages as naughty children was common within adventure stories, and recalls Curzon's comment about the Indians under his administration being "less than school children" (p.724, Moore, 1993).

During the Victorian era, Britain took a position of moral superiority on the slave trade, despite having only legislated against it earlier in the same century. While showing little respect for other races, authors made a point of reminding the readership that the savages were still men and did not deserve to be slaves. In the mid-nineteenth century, the trade carried out by the Portuguese and Arab traders in Zanzibar came under attack from British foreign policy makers, as well as the general public. Ballantyne's *Black Ivory* (1873) raised awareness of the trade amongst young readers and includes sensationalist accounts of the cruelty of the traders. Ballantyne also guided his readers' responses by showing how the

hero's "native sense of freedom, justice, and fair-play" (cited on p.63, Hannabuss, 1989) were offended by the trade.

What is perhaps surprising in Ballantyne's handling of the slave trade is that he acknowledges both past and present failings by the British. He acknowledged that "we, as a nation, are far from blameless" for the "vast river of blood which is drained annually from poor Africa's veins" (cited on p.64, Hannabuss, 1989). Ballantyne also criticized the British Navy for their inadequate policing of East African waters, to prevent the Zanzibar slave trade.

While written before the Boer Wars, books like Ballantyne's *The Settler and the Savage: a Tale of Peace and War in South Africa* (1877) will have planted ideas in young minds about the legitimacy of Britain's claims in South Africa. The story tells of British settlers coming ashore in the 1820s and, through excellent husbandry, prospering on land "recently overrun by Kafir hordes", and living a good Christian life, despite the "thievish propensities of their ungrateful black neighbours" (cited on p.67, Hannabuss, 1989). The language used is emotive, with the black populations discussed as if they were a plague of locusts and the description of the white man's use of the land suggesting that the black Africans' previous use of the land was less 'worthy'. Ballantyne claims that the black South Africans were killing British settlers in "the mistaken notion that their country was being taken from them", when in truth there was plenty of land for all, and the white people were bringing the Kafirs "the comforts of civilised life" (cited on p. 67, Hannabuss, 1989). These situations draw parallels with the British response to Indian unrest, in which the Indians were accused of having misunderstood Britain's benevolent actions.

In this same story, Ballantyne berates the British government for indulging in "this silly, costly, murderous, brutal, and accursed game of war" (cited on p.68, Hannabuss, 1989). This harsh criticism of the British government, and what some might consider a central feature of the expansion and maintenance of the Empire, seems at odds with Ballantyne's apparent mission to extol the virtues of British intervention within the Empire. This conflict of ideas might be partially resolved in recognising that the Empire Ballantyne glorified was one built upon peace, brotherhood and the advancement of righteousness, rather than for military

and economic gains. In *In the Track of the Troops* (1878), one of Ballantyne's heroes recognises that there is "much that is glorious in the conduct of many warriors, but there is no glory whatever in the war itself" (cited on p.68, Hannabuss, 1989). While recognising the distinction that Ballantyne drew between the two, it is unclear whether his young readers would have truly comprehended his meaning.

Imperialism remained a strong theme in juvenile literature throughout the study period and will no doubt have informed schoolboys' understanding of other races and the slave trade, as well as reassuring them as to the morality of imperialism. As imperialist fervour reached new heights, many authors capitalized on the jingoism, while others' consciences drove them to place greater emphasis upon Britain as a moral guardian.

## Chapter 10: Middle-Class Girls' Education

Study of middle-class girls' schooling enables consideration of the purpose of education during the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century, and helps to build an image of the forms 'duty' took in the lives of middle-class girls and women. Reform of girls' education, and the potential widening of opportunities outside of the home associated with it, brought out strong emotions. In 1859, in response to an article calling for girls' education to better prepare them for employment, an anonymous writer in the *Saturday Review* claimed that "married life is a woman's profession; and to this life her training – that of dependence – is modelled" and that to provide training for employment would be detrimental to all parties and risk producing an "androgynous" being (cited on p.26, Worsnop, 1990). Within this chapter, the role and duties of the middle-class female will be discussed and the concern over 'over-education' will be considered. An overview of the different educational institutions open to middle-class girls will be provided and the reforms taking place in the new girls' public schools will be investigated in greater depth. The opportunities for women outside of the home will also be investigated.

Categorising the schools serving Victorian middle-class girls is an almost impossible task. Even if one were to reach a definition, there's no guarantee that other researchers interpret terms in the same way. For the purposes of this research, 'private girls' school' is used to indicate the plethora of (usually) small, private venture schools, common in the first half of the nineteenth century, that continued without dramatic alteration during the second half of the century.

When discussing the more progressive schools formed during the second half of the nineteenth century, researchers have used a variety of terms: 'reformed', 'endowed', 'proprietary', 'high' and 'public'. While some differences can be identified between some of these school types, the term 'public school' will be used when discussing general trends in the larger, more progressive schools of the period, with other terms being used if applicable to a specific case.

Even the term 'middle-class girls' education' is subject to interpretation. Many occupations came under the umbrella of 'middle class', representing a great range of incomes and

lifestyles in this growing social class of mid- to late Victorian Britain. As well as those in professions, such as teachers, doctors and lawyers, clerical workers, military officers, farmers and those engaged in banking were included; and R.D. Baxter's 1867 definition included a quarter of all families in Britain, and divided them into three income groups, ranging from those earning less than £100 a year, up to those earning ten times as much. Given their annual fees and the largely professional and business family backgrounds of their girls, Digby estimates that proprietary high schools catered for around 10% of the population (Digby, 1982).

Digby claims that Miss Buss' North London Collegiate School, founded in 1850, acted as a blueprint for the creation of schools for middle class daughters during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. She states that these 'proprietary' schools fell into one of two categories: 38 non-denominational schools, under the Girls' Public Day School Company, and a further 33 Anglican schools, under the Church Schools Company. These schools were not the only ones to serve the middle classes however, with Cheltenham Ladies' College and other reformed boarding schools falling outside of this classification but still catering to the middle and upper classes (Digby, 1982).

The challenges of this vague categorising of schools is illustrated by Digby's (1982) claim that, by the beginning of the twentieth century, nearly a third of middle class girls attended a 'public high school'. While these schools had certainly made significant gains in the market over the second half of the nineteenth century, it is unclear what this statistic means for the other two thirds of middle class girls. If this is based upon a broad definition of 'public high school', the statistic might reflect poorly upon the state of girls' education, indicating that the majority of girls still attended unreformed schools, were educated by a governess or simply remained at home. If 'public high school' was taken to mean a specific type of reformed school however, the remaining two thirds might cover a range of fairly progressive schools, as well as traditional private schools and home education.

Prior to the creation of girls' public schools, middle and upper class girls who weren't educated at home might attend private girls' schools. These schools were tiny, numerous, and each served a small section of the social classes. Pedersen claims that the Taunton

Commission provides the only systematic evidence about private girls' schools. At one extreme, a clerk's daughter might attend a poorly provisioned day school for as little as three pounds, whereas the daughters of the gentry and wealthy professionals might pay up to one hundred and fifty guineas, to reside in an elegant manor or townhouse, in a fashionable location, and be instructed in 'the elements' in a range of more intellectual subjects, alongside the primary focus on 'the accomplishments'<sup>6</sup>. Even within the school, financial outlay could vary significantly, as services were typically charged on a piecemeal basis: instruction in 'the accomplishments' were charged as extras to the basic instruction fee and would vary according to whether the instruction was provided by the school governesses, or a visiting master (Pedersen, 1979).

Within private schools, the money spent on a girl affected virtually every aspect of her schooling: the 'accomplishments' she was instructed in, her treatment by the adults and the comfort in which she boarded. While boys' schools might deliberately deprive their pupils of comforts to build character, within girls' schools, luxury could be bought. The lack of uniform made differences in financial provision visually evident: with close attention being paid to the prevailing fashions, old-fashioned garb and less luxuriant fabrics would be picked out by the other girls. Schools would often pride themselves on tailoring their treatment to each child's disposition. While such an approach might indicate a more modern, holistic, approach to teaching, pupils complained to the Taunton Commission of favouritism (Pedersen, 1979).

Traditional, unreformed schools did not die out with the creation of public schools. In many cases, 'accomplishments' remained the mainstay of middle-class girls' schooling, an 1873 advertisement for Halifax School emphasizing their provision of the traditional accomplishments such as singing, painting and fancy work. Likewise, Alice Ottley,

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<sup>6</sup> For centuries, 'accomplishments' were synonymous with the education of the daughters of the upper-classes. A range of skills might be considered accomplishments, including singing, the playing of musical instruments, painting and needlework. While daughters of the lower classes also spent many hours at their needlework, they learned practical skills to prepare them for a life of domestic service. By contrast, needlework produced by the daughters of the upper classes was highly ornamental and, like all accomplishments, never intended to provide an income. In mastering accomplishments, young ladies sought to improve their marriage prospects by demonstration of their feminine grace and refinement. In-depth discussion of accomplishments may be found in Vickery's *Behind Closed Doors* (2009).

headmistress of Worcester High School for Girls from 1883, while claiming to distance her school from the affected manners of the eighteenth century, was at pains to point out their disdain for the “romping vulgarity” of the ‘modern girl’. Ottley’s ideal appears to go against the evolution of schools at the time, wishing girls to set aside women’s cricket, in favour of delicacy and “dignified bearing”. The continued desire to promote “womanly refinement, a high-toned courtesy, [and] gentle manners” (cited on p.17, Digby, 1982) suggests that these ideals still held in some circles, and that there was still a market for this kind of education. Such schools did however also allow time for English and arithmetic, and in some cases humanities, and claimed to pay close attention to the girls’ moral development. By way of compromise, academic classes were taught in compulsory morning school, while afternoons were left available for instruction in accomplishments (Digby, 1982).

An advertisement in *York Courant* from 1783 reveals similar types of education were available ninety years earlier: the advertisement begins with references to fancy work and other largely decorative crafts but also promises that “Proper Masters attend to English grammatically, Writing, Arithmetic, [and] Geography” and reassures the reader of the great emphasis placed upon the girls’ morals (cited on p.1, Digby, 1982). While Digby suggests that the advertisement reflects the poorly balanced and superficial girls’ education of the period, the range of academic subjects seems broader than that offered by many boys’ schools of the period, and no more restricted than many of the traditional private schools of the Victorian period.

Traditional girls’ schools were typically small - the Taunton Commission reported that girls’ schools tended to serve around twenty pupils. In sharp contrast to boys’ education, these schools had high teacher-pupil ratios, the Commission finding that ratios in Norfolk ranged from 1:10, all the way down to 1:2 (Pedersen, 1979).

Many private schools actively sought to create a family-like environment. Lacking the modern idea of academic progression and age-specific schools, private schools often featured a large age range, with the youngest being only five or six years old, while the oldest girls might be ten or more years their senior. This sibling-like composition was

considered desirable, with the older girls mothering the younger ones and so developing their nurturing tendencies.

In contrast to the hands-off approach and pupil self-governance of boys' schools, girls were often kept under almost constant supervision, with it not being uncommon for governesses to even sleep in the same room as their pupils. The creation of a family-environment sometimes extended to pupils' relationships with their teachers: at the Sewell sisters' school, mistresses were addressed as 'aunt', and at another, pupils were described as being managed "by love and confidence" (Taunton (1867-68) cited on p.70 Pedersen, 1979).

During the mid to late nineteenth century, the living standards of middle class families improved dramatically, with depressed prices and rising incomes (Gordan & Nair, 2000). The increasing level of comfort enjoyed by the Victorian middle classes helped to enable increased provision a 'luxury': the schooling of daughters. While parents might have more free capital, for many girls' education was still a fairly low priority, and given middle-class families' expectations often rose to meet their increased income; when family finances came under pressure, daughters' education might come under fire (Digby, 1982). Though boys' education might also have been sensitive to families' financial circumstances, the purpose of girls' education was less clearly defined, and was viewed to produce "less immediate and tangible" (p.546, Taunton Commission, 1867-68), making it an obvious target for cut-backs.

For most middle-class parents, especially during mid-Victorian period, the justification for the expense of a daughter's schooling was the belief that it would improve her marriage prospects. In this model, gentle graces and superficial attractiveness served to achieve a good marriage, with intellectual exertion and financial support of the family being a husband's responsibility. 'Accomplishments' were believed to increase a girl's probability of making a good match, while the Taunton Commission ventured that society considered "more solid attainments... actually disadvantageous" (p.547, Taunton Commission, 1867-68) to a woman's marriage prospects. Consideration of girls' schooling, especially of the traditional mid-nineteenth century private girls' schools, must recognise the desires of the parents, and the power they wielded.

Unlike the boys' public schools, which deliberately deprived their pupils of comforts to build character, the level of comfort and luxury enjoyed at girls' schools was usually dependent upon how much parents were willing to pay. The Taunton Commission's investigation of fees in Lancashire revealed that boarding school fees ranged from 31 pounds to 112 pounds, relating to the level of comfort the pupils enjoyed and the instruction provided in 'accomplishments' (Taunton, 1867-68).

While private schools were entirely dependent upon fees from pupils, the new girls' public schools, created during the mid and late Victorian period, were subsidised by endowments and subscriptions. Despite this, fees at these new public schools were still a significant burden, with the subscriptions and endowments tending to be spent on the premises and the provision of a few scholarships, while pupil fees needed to cover the school's operating expenses. Fees were higher than those paid by lower middle class parents at day schools, however they enabled a higher standard of instruction and lower fees than those paid for a more fashionable private school by upper middle class families (Pedersen, 1979).

The changes to schools' financial situation had a greater impact upon power dynamics than upon the fees parents paid, with the balance of power being shifted away from the parents. At small private schools, the loss of a single pupil could land a significant blow to the school's finances, placing teachers in a weak position, in which they had to submit to the desires of parents, tolerating sporadic attendance and the like. By the end of the nineteenth century, girls' public schools typically ranged in size from around one to three hundred pupils, their larger size reducing the power of individual patrons. Within this new system, schools were able to introduce rules requiring regular attendance and set minimum entry requirements. Such rules not only illustrate a shift of power but enabled more efficient schooling and higher academic attainment. In some cases, day schools' influence would even encroach upon home life, with parents being expected to provide a report on their daughter's study time and being admonished if the girl's homework was insufficient (Pedersen, 1979).

Even with the support of endowments and subscriptions, and larger pupil numbers, financial constraints were keenly felt at girls' institutions. Regarding the division of endowments between the two sexes, Emily Shirreff, a pioneer of women's higher education, claimed in 1875 Endowed Schools Commissioners' report that "the feast is still liberally prepared for boys and the crumbs grudgingly dropped to the girls" (cited on p.102, Fletcher, 1980). In addition to the limited endowments provided, schools were under pressure to keep fees *comparatively* low, in recognition of the fact that parents assigned greater importance to the education of their sons than their daughters (Digby, 1982).

In discussion of the rights of girls to a share of endowments, the greater proportion of the money being allocated to the education of boys is justified by males' (perceived) greater ability to "turn their education to account in the world, especially in the service of the State, or of the Church" (p.567, Taunton, 1867-68). The argument follows that the primary purpose of education is to prepare the country's subjects to 'do their duty': for men, in prominent roles within the Church, the civil service, or the military, while for women, 'duty' consisted of humble service within the home.

Families' socio-economic background had a more pronounced effect in girls' middle and upper class schooling than in the education of boys of the same class. The Taunton Commission recognised that social background was a far greater concern in girls' schools than in boys' schools and appeared to support parental concerns, stating that mixing was considered unfavourably "from general reasons and observation" (p. 560, 1867-68).

Unlike boys' education, in which the teaching of Latin and Grammar marked out secondary education, and *some* schools prepared the boys for entry into university, there were no such defining subject in girls' education, and limited opportunities of progression (Taunton Commission, 1867-68). With little distinction between different levels of instruction, private schools' relative prestige was determined primarily by the social origins of their girls. A member of the Taunton Commission stated that "the social motive... practically controls the education of the girls" (cited on p.64 Pedersen, 1979) and other members made report of parents wishing for their daughters to attend a school *exclusively* serving their own rank (Pedersen, 1979).

The emphasis on the social capital conferred by a given school gave rise to the trend for girls to attend three or more schools during their school careers. The logic behind girls' progressing through a series of schools was that each was slightly more socially exclusive, and expensive, than the previous one. The last school in a girl's progression would be considered *her* 'finishing school', providing her with the highest level of refinement (her situation allowed) and the 'best' social circle (Pedersen, 1979).

This system adds a layer of difficulty to any attempt to classify a school as serving a narrow section of society, as a school might be used by *slightly* different social groups, at different points along their 'progression': one girl's first rung being another's finishing school. Even with the system of progression, girls' private schools remained largely socially homogeneous. A member of the Taunton Commission reported that parents would prefer to educate their daughters at home than have them associate with daughters of "somewhat inferior grade of society" (p.65, Pedersen, 1979). While little systematic evidence of precise parental origins survives, it is clear that no one school served the entirety of the middle class; such mixing would not be tolerated by parents. In extreme cases, schools only took their girls from fairly specific social backgrounds: some endowed schools admitted only clergymen's daughters or their orphans, Isleworth's Royal Naval School admitted the daughters of officers'; and the Royal Asylum of St. Anne's in Streatham Hill, took on "daughters of persons once in superior station in life" (p.565, Taunton, 1867-68).

Even at traditional private schools, 'inferior birth' might be *partially* offset by wealth, as in the case of successful businessmen. The admission of a girl of lower social rank was, however, a calculated risk, as the parents of the other girls might threaten to leave, and the prestige of the school might fall. In the Misses' Sewell's boarding school, for example, in the 1860's they admitted an extremely wealthy businessman's daughter, having first consulted the other girls' parents. Following a slight transgression, the girl was dismissed, her moral failings being announced as resulting from her lower social status (Pedersen, 1979).

Within public schools, the provision of scholarships enabled a small number of girls from lower middle and working class families to attend. In 1902, for example, at Brighton and

Hove High School, 15 of the 200 girls at the school received a scholarship, many of them tradesmen's daughters. Attitudes towards the inclusion of girls from lower classes varied, even amongst school authorities: while the headmistress of Brighton and Hove High School complimented the scholarship girls' appearance, academic performance and manners, the Council of the Girls' Public Day School Company warned their members against admitting girls' who other parents might object to. Towards the end of the century however, the latter attitude became less prevalent and social barriers became *somewhat* more relaxed (Digby, 1982).

In Contrast to the Cult of Athleticism in boys' public schools, competitive games were virtually unknown in traditional private girls' schools, exercise usually being limited to walking and recreation taking sedentary forms: needlework and reading (Pedersen, 1979). In endowed schools, during the time of the Taunton Commission in the 1860s, exercise was often neglected, to the detriment of physical health and effective study (Taunton Commission, 1867-68).

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, there was increasing concern for girls' health and physical development, with medical inspections of girls' health beginning to appear in the 1880s. While boys' games sought to develop attitudes that would serve boys on the battlefield, as well as glorifying athleticism, the aims of girls' exercise were fairly conservative. Until the 1880s, callisthenics, a gentle form of gymnastics, and walking were the primary modes of exercise, hoped to encourage healthier growth. From the 1880s, there was a shift towards more vigorous gymnastics and, having first gained popularity in women's colleges, the introduction of competitive, strenuous games, the likes of which are found in modern day schools: lacrosse, netball, athletics, *etc.* (Digby, 1982; Pedersen, 1979).

Games at girls' schools, however, remained a contentious issue: in some cases, girls' 'delicate' constitutions justified their exclusion from the kinds of hearty games that might have improved their general health, and girls' exercise clothing, typically a tunic worn over baggy bloomers, was labelled immodest by some. On top of these objections, schools had to deal with practical difficulties: few schools possessed a gymnasium, or sufficient playing fields and playgrounds (Digby, 1982).

Despite opposition, some schools remained committed to the benefits of games. Roedean School, from its creation in 1885, emphasised the importance of games, its first prospectus claiming that “two to three hours daily will be allocated to out-door exercise or games” (cited p.5, Digby, 1982), in part to guard against ‘over-work’. As in boys’ public schools, headmistresses came around to the moral argument that games helped to foster “the corporate values essential for future citizens” (p.5, Digby, 1982). Lucy Soulsby, headmistress of Oxford High School from 1879 to 1889, was a strong advocate of competitive games. She believed that it helped to develop girls’ faculties, such as organisational skills and quick thinking, as well as developing a girls’ character: courage, determination, unselfishness and a desire to work together for the common good (Digby, 1982).

During the mid-nineteenth century, there was increasing interest in reform of female education, towards greater emphasis upon academic achievement and less upon social origin. The generation of wealth through industry and a growing professional sector during the nineteenth century created new social groups, who sought to acquire an elite status, but could not acquire it through the traditional aristocratic system. The creation of girls’ public schools was, in part, a reaction against these social restrictions and the snobbery of traditional private schools (Pedersen, 1979).

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, over two hundred endowed and proprietary schools for girls were founded, most originating after 1870. These new girls’ public schools differed significantly from the traditional private girls’ schools in a range of fundamental aspects: “funding and legal ownership, their patterns of authority ..., in the size, age-structure, and social composition of their populations” (p.62, Pedersen, 1979). The two school types promoted different behavioural norms and social values. Whereas private schools encouraged the development of family-like dynamics and domestic values, public schools had a more institutional feel and sought to develop skills of use outside the home (Pedersen, 1979).

The creation of these public schools was, in part, a reaction against the exclusive and socially driven politics of traditional private schools and the schools sought to reward girls

according to their own industry and achievements, rather than their birth and wealth. *Within* the school, the intention was that all sections of the middle class could meet on equal terms and be judged based upon their “character, knowledge and ability” (Fitch cited in p.79, Pedersen, 1979).

It is important to realise, however, that these institutions were far from socially comprehensive. Aside from the provision of a few scholarships, fees were a limiting factor, even within the middle class, resulting in most schools catering for the upper middle class professionals’ and businessmen’s daughters. In a few cases, there was even a social bar, Cheltenham Ladies’ College limiting admission to “the daughters of independent gentlemen or professional men” (Taunton, cited in p.77, Pedersen, 1979). Despite these restrictions, the institutions were considered socially diverse for the time and headmistresses prided themselves on their impartiality and the fact that privileges were bestowed based upon achievement, not social status. Personal recollections support this claim, praising the schools for playing down class and financial differences (Digby, 1982).

Changes to clothing restrictions helped to prevent girls’ socio-economic status being publicised, as did the replacement of the piecemeal purchase of ‘extras’ with an inclusive fee. While wearing of fashionable clothing at private schools had highlighted girls’ differing financial provision, at the public schools, girls were expected to wear simple, practical clothes. Schools usually had dress codes, stipulating sensible, unostentatious clothing and forbidding ornamentation such as jewellery and fine lace, but it was only towards the end of the nineteenth century that school uniforms became commonplace (Pedersen, 1979).

The girls’ public schools sought to avoid following the example of the boys’ schools, regarding their apparent obsession with athleticism and classicism. These schools set out to provide a balanced curriculum, including a variety of intellectually demanding subjects and apportioning time more evenly between literature, modern and ancient languages, the humanities, mathematics and science. While schools had to combat some prejudice against girls studying ‘masculine’ subjects, with their perceived ‘hardening’ effects upon femininity, they enjoyed a much wider curriculum than traditional girls’ schools (Digby, 1982).

Involvement of universities helped to encourage the development of a broader curriculum. Within this new education system, girls started to gain admittance to the university-administered Local Examinations, for which school curricula had to adapt. This external involvement helped schools to gain prestige based upon academic performance, rather than the social status of their clientele (Pedersen, 1979). Molly Sturt, observed of her days at Oxford High School at they were “taught plain, straightforward academic matters over a comparatively wide field, and we received a training in mental work.” (p.69, Stack, 1963). While the increased focus on academic subjects might be seen as progress, they suffered from the same issues as boys’ schools in terms of often providing uninspiring lessons and emphasizing rote learning. For those who reached sixth form however, they might be rewarded with greater freedom and genuine intellectualism (Digby, 1982).

It is worth acknowledging that the development of girls’ education was not a linear progression from focusing on accomplishment, and girls’ futures as wives and mothers, to academic subjects, and the potential of a career. By the turn of the century, there was a reaction against the narrow academic focus of the ‘bluestockings’, and a resurgence of interest in housewifery (Digby, 1982).

These girls’ public schools appear to have taken on many features of boys’ public school in a comparatively short period of time. From the indulgent, personal treatment of the traditional girls’ private schools, there was a movement towards a regimented, impersonal environment in public schools: even outside the classroom, girls were often subject to rules as to when they might speak, and how they should walk. Relationships between pupils and teachers altered, with girls being passed from one teacher to the next, and so forming brief, purposeful relationships and there being an active desire to train girls out of dependency (Pedersen, 1979). Despite these changes, girls still spoke of coming to regard some teachers with affection and the headmistresses of some public schools still viewed ‘motherliness’ as an essential quality for the post (Digby, 1982).

At times, schools appear to have been trying to introduce character-building activities from the boys’ system wholesale: student governments were introduced to encourage the

development of leadership traits, while charitable societies encouraged girls to develop a sense of duty (Pedersen, 1979).

This rapid, and somewhat contrived, development of schools' ethos highlights the fact that girls' schools were attempting to achieve in years and decades what the boys' public school system had developed over many centuries. By the turn of the century, schools were increasingly seeking to promote more balanced development: girls being healthy and athletic, and seeking out opportunities for self-improvement, while maintaining self-restraint, and being "ready to devote themselves to the duties which offer" (Beale, cited on p.8, Digby, 1982), whether in the home or in the wider community.

There are differences of opinion as to systems of discipline and maintenance of good behaviour in girls' public schools however they appear to have little in common with boys' public schools. Dorothea Beale, Principal of Cheltenham Ladies' College, claimed that maintenance of good conduct involved "hardly more than personal influence" and others stated that "admonition is generally sufficient" (p.558, Taunton, 1867-68). The use of fines and confinement, as found in boys' schools, indicate that gentle remonstrance was not always sufficient; however, corporal punishment appears to have been virtually unknown in girls' schools.

The new girls' public schools often had to employ different systems of discipline to their smaller, more traditional predecessors. Entering uncharted territory, these teachers tended to rely upon strictness, to compensate for individuals' lack of confidence in their own authority and fear of the school's reputation being tarnished. While Digby claims that girls submitted to the strict regulation of their lives, Pedersen (1979) highlights cases in which rules were broken. These infringements however, do appear to have been comparatively minor, and the girls appear to have shied away from open acts of defiance, as sometimes observed in boys' schools. Attitudes towards discipline varied: some, with the passage of time, came to appreciate the role that discipline played in their personal development, while others only remembered it with dread (Digby, 1982).

While peer influence played a major role in large boys' public schools, with a military-like hierarchy of pupil self-government, monitors and fagging, private girls' schools had maintained a distrust of peer group influence. This distrust continued into the early years of girls' public schools, with teachers attempting to reduce peer group influences, which they believed would threaten their authority: girls' contact with one another was limited and restrictions were placed on communication.

This attitude was at odds with the introduction of games and extracurricular activities and so, through the 1880s, it gave way to the idea that discipline would actually be *supported* by a girl's sense of belonging and that the community would develop a strong sense of right and wrong and react to suppress anything ignoble. It was believed that conformity and good behaviour could be secured by voluntary individual compliance and peer group pressure. This system of self-regulation was supported by the introduction of a prefect system at many schools. The success of self-regulation depended upon the girls' pride in their sense of honour and fair play (Pedersen, 1979).

The Royal Commission to Inquire into Education in Schools in England and Wales, from the 1867 to 1868 parliamentary session, better known as the Taunton Commission, included a chapter on girls' schools. Despite only being a 25-page chapter in an 863-page volume, the inclusion of an investigation into the state of girls' education was considered progressive. The report is of interest both for the information it can provide as to the state of girls' education and for revealing the views of contemporary experts as to the importance and purpose of girls' education.

The Commissioner puts forward two arguments for the importance of middle class girls' education, the first focusing on motherhood: that an educated mother was essential for family wellbeing. The second argument focused on the need to enable women to support themselves financially; *however* there was no suggestion that employment would continue beyond marriage. Far from being a sign of independence or of a desirable alternative life course, the "enormous number" (p.546, 1867-68) of middle-class women who marrying later in life or not at all were considered victims of a situation in which large numbers of

eligible bachelors were occupied in the army or in the colonies. This issue is discussed in more detail in the sub-chapter on the 'redundant woman'.

While praising those holding "far-sighted and enlightened views" (p.547), the report recognises a long-established, and firmly held, prejudice that "girls are less capable of mental cultivation, and less in need of it, than boys" (p.546). They state that their recommendations for girls' education would not be affected by the prejudiced societal attitude towards female education, but recognise that such views were likely to continue to have a significant impact upon reality well into the future. Some respondents claimed that "The ideal presented to a young girl... is to be amiable, inoffensive, always ready to give pleasure and to be pleased" (p.547, 1867-68).

The Taunton Commission's assessment of girls' performance, often given in comparison to boys, appears reasonably balanced and free of prejudice. The Commission reported that academic performance varied significantly between schools, as might be expected in such a diverse and unregulated system, but acknowledges areas in which girls perform better than boys, as well as areas of weakness. The Commission does go beyond a superficial assessment of performance, recognising that girls' performance in arithmetic, Latin and French was often hindered by difficulties sourcing capable instructors.

The Report recognised that some of the strategies used to increase schools' desirability to parents could have detrimental effects upon the education the girls received. Many schools' emphasis on accomplishments was criticised: needlework was said to be of an overly ornamental nature, and to occupy too much time, while the long hours committed to instrumental music appear to have disregarded girls' interest or aptitude for the subject. The priority given to music instruction was a primary factor in parents' school selection, and so encouraged this imbalance in the curriculum; however, schools were also accused of promoting "a very false estimate of the relative value of the several kinds of acquirement, a reference to effect rather than to solid worth, [and] a tendency to fill or adorn rather than to strengthen the mind." (p.552, 1867-68).

The inclusion of a table giving information as to the 'leading subjects of instruction' of fourteen endowed schools for secondary instruction of girls, revealed that French, music and 'English subjects' dominated but that curricula varied: Godolphin Ladies' School in Salisbury only references traditional accomplishments (French, music and drawing), whereas Milldown School in Blandford offers physiology and economic science, alongside English subjects. The Report gives little time to this table, which is surprising given that schools offered such different educations and, one could infer, held different opinions as to the purpose of education and the expected life-path of their girls.

The Commission also questioned the selection and weighting of other subjects. While provision of a wide range of subjects might be assumed to provide a more balanced curriculum, investigators reported that it was common for schools to attempt to provide an impressive range of subjects, without first laying solid foundations, resulting in poor performances. On the other hand, the Commission called for more schools to introduce Latin "as a means of mental culture and strengthening of the intellect" (p.551, Taunton, 1867-68). Unlike in the equivalent boys' schools, Classics was typically neglected in the Taunton Commission's girls' school sample.

The Taunton Commission considered fundamental questions: do girls have a similar capacity for intellectual attainment as boys; and if so, should they receive the same training as boys? The Report states that there is strong evidence that their "essential capacity for learning is the same" (p.553, 1867-68) and calls for the most able and willing girls to be enabled to pursue studies at a higher level.

The Commission argued that the two sexes display equal intellectual capacity but that their strengths lie in different areas: boys were found to cope better with abstract principles, and wrote with "precision", whereas girls were more eager to learn and wrote with "ease and vivacity" (p.555, 1867-68). Cambridge University's decision to begin admitting female candidates to their system of Local Examinations for the first time in 1865 provided a means to assess the question of female intellectual capacity. Early findings concluded that "the inferiority of female education may be owing to the want of due method and stimulus, and

to no natural causes”; and the results of testing in 1867 found that “[i]n almost every respect it is more satisfactory as regards the girls than as regards the boys” (p.554, 1867-68). It is worth noting that a comparatively small number of girls were entered for these examinations and so the results were not reflective of girls’ attainment generally.

It is interesting to note the Commission’s view on the comparatively low uptake of local examinations and more advanced classes by girls: they report as a *positive* that girls “seem[ed] better aware of the range of their own abilities, than the boys” (p.555, Taunton, 1867-68) and were not tempted to strive for a place in Honour Classes or choose to be examined in a large number of subjects. This cautious, conservative view of their own abilities may have been seen as an indication of good sense and want of arrogance to their contemporaries. From a modern perspective however, it suggests poor belief in one’s own abilities and a barrier to girls achieving their full potential.

Likewise, it is worth considering their response to the widely-held fear of the over-education of females. While acknowledging that girls had a similar intellectual capacity to boys, the Commission believed that the education model needed to be adjusted for the different “physical and moral character of the female sex” (p.556).

The Commission did not present a clear position in relation to question of examination of girls: on the one hand, they can be seen recommending that the most able girls should be able to pursue more higher study; but, on the other hand, they presented, but did not challenge, the conservative views of some prominent authorities, such as the Archbishop of York. These conservative views on the examination of girls ranged from beliefs that safeguards needed to be placed upon examinations, with results and rankings not being published and individual competition being discouraged, to those who believed that girls should not be allowed to take examinations, due to their “more excitable and sensitive constitutions” (p.556, 1867-68).

Within the Taunton Report, discussion of girls’ schooling repeatedly returns to women’s place within the home. This focus on more traditional feminine roles was seen in both parental attitudes and in the recommendations of the committee. Parents were said to

prefer smaller schools for their daughters as they were able to achieve a more home-like, family environment, enabling “more personal influence, and tend[ing] more to the production and confirmation of gentle and feminine characters” (p.560, 1867-68). Likewise, the Commission recommended that that day schools are more appropriate for girls, as they allow for “the combination of school teaching with home influence” (p.559, Taunton, 1867-68).

The Report claims that many parents were indifferent to girls’ education, especially as their education was said to lead to “less immediate and tangible” (p.546, 1867-68) results. It stated that ‘accomplishments’ were considered more important, in particular in relation to the probability of marriage. Beyond questioning girls’ ability and the importance of their education, the Report ventured that society considered a more rigorous education to be detrimental to a woman’s marriage prospects. In this model, gentle graces and superficial attractiveness served to achieve a good marriage, with intellectual exertion and financial support of the family being a husband’s responsibility.

The Taunton Commission’s examination of girls’ schools involved questioning the headmistresses of girls’ schools, and some gentlemen associated with the schools, as well as accessing girls’ performance. The Report claims a “great concurrence of opinion” on middle-class girls’ education, finding many general deficiencies: “Want of thoroughness and foundation; want of system; slovenliness and showy superficiality; inattention to rudiments; undue time given to accomplishments... [and] want of organization” (p.548-9, Taunton, 1867-68). The Report acknowledges that many of these deficiencies are also to be found in boys’ schools, though claims that the situation is worse within girls’ schools.

Many of the areas of contention around girls’ education during the second half of the nineteenth century were unique to *girls’* education. One of the greatest challenges was what Sara Delamont termed ‘double conformity’: the desire for academic excellence and employment opportunities being constrained by conventional feminine expectations and ideals (Digby, 1982). Linked to this was the diverging potential life paths of the women, into either a career or marriage and motherhood. For middle class women during the Victorian period, employment, and marriage and motherhood, were considered mutually exclusive,

even if the reality was somewhat different (Gordan & Nair, 2000). Whereas men's marital status was not expected to impact upon their career progression, it was argued that if middle-class women attempted to pursue employment, they would be neglecting their true calling within the home (Burstyn, 1973). The question is then raised: should schooling be preparing girls for a career or motherhood.

During the Victorian period, domestic life was considered a middle-class women's vocation and traditional justifications for their education were based upon this expectation: Dorothea Beale, headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies College, claimed that a good education would lessen the chance of a sensible woman making a "foolish, an inconsiderate marriage" and that being accustomed to having to analyse and make considered decisions would guard against extravagance and lead to "homes better ordered, servants more honest and contented, children happier" (Beale cited on p.3 Digby, 1982).

Schools' ideas about the roles of middle-class women remained incredibly varied. Even after the turn of the century, Margaret Gilliland, headmistress of Haberdasher's Aske School from 1904 to 1919, stressed that their pupils' roles as dutiful daughters and wise mothers must take precedence over their role as scholars. While woman's place within the home remained a focus, in some mid- to late nineteenth century girls' schools, headmistresses were not content to simply provide needlework and arithmetic provision *just sufficient* for household accounts. Schools were diversifying the content studied, and providing girls with skills that would benefit them in a range of life paths, even if not openly challenging the traditional social objectives (Digby, 1982).

Objections to an academic or employment-focused education extended beyond concerns over girls' attention being diverted from domestic matters, into fears that 'over-education' had detrimental effects upon the person.

Pseudoscience bred panic and opposition to 'over-education' and the study of what were traditionally considered 'masculine' subjects. There was a belief, widespread in the Victorian era, that humans had a fixed fund of energy at their disposal and that 'over-education' and pressure caused physiological damage to the female sex. A string of doctors and professors

warned that education could cause everything from stunted growth and masculinity of mind, to infertility and insanity (Digby, 1982).

'Experts' had grave concerns over various aspects of girls' 'femininity'. Even into the twentieth century, some headmistresses kept study of mathematics to a minimum, for fear of its 'hardening influence' upon femininity. Others believed that 'over-education' and institutionalised schooling at public schools 'defeminised' girls, resulting in what Miss Sewell described as "a monster in creation" (cited on p.5, Digby, 1982), being neither a woman nor a man. In a society which placed such great emphasis upon women's domestic vocation, perceived risk of infertility or impaired motherhood lead to continued opposition to girls' schooling being modelled upon that of boys (Dyhouse, 1977).

It should be recognised that during the Victorian period the hormonal basis of sexual differentiation was unknown. In the absence of this knowledge, doctors assumed that one's behaviour during puberty defined one's sex characteristics. Similar erroneous 'scientific facts' are exemplified in the argument that females were not physiologically capable of the physical activity necessary to counterbalance intellectually strenuous work. It was argued that without a suitable counterbalance, girls risked mental breakdown from academic work. Over time this argument was eroded by the successful introduction of games into girls' schooling and suggestions that the unintellectual nature of accomplishments fulfilled the same counterbalancing role as games (Burstyn, 1973).

While the impact of mental strain on females had been alluded to previously, during the 1870s, opponents of the higher education of females spoke explicitly of its gynaecological dangers. Burstyn argues that the strong objection to the 'over-education' of females from the medical profession was due to fear of competition. Medicine was an early target for women's attempts to enter the professions, with many already having medical experience through nursing. Some believed that female doctors would have an advantage over their male counterparts in the fields of gynaecology and obstetrics, as it was felt that a female patient would feel more comfortable discussing her symptoms with, and being treated by, another woman. This fear was stoked in the 1870s by the high demand for Elizabeth Garret

Anderson, the first woman to qualify as a doctor in Britain, to attend to the gynaecological needs of the women of London.

Claims as to the danger of mental fatigue on women's reproductive health came from the highest levels of gynaecological and obstetric health: presidents of the British Gynaecological Society and of the British Medical Association. As such, contemporaries would not have viewed these ideas as the ramblings of extremists, but expert medical guidance, and both sides of the argument were expressed within *The Lancet*. While battles ranged between professionals, the general population would be influenced by publications in general interest magazines such as the *Fortnightly Review* which, in 1874, gave a platform to Henry Maudsley, M.D., who warned of the dangers of over-education (Burstyn, 1973).

Some of the warnings against over-education focus not only on the potential loss to the woman but also on the damaging effects such actions could have on the race. Within a society emphasising duty, the idea that women were being selfish in their pursuit of education might have been intended to result in guilt and a return to women's dutiful positions as wives and mothers. It was assumed that the most (innately) intelligent women would produce the most capable sons. Withers Moore, in his presidential address to the 54<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the British Medical Association in 1886, warned that intelligent women must be guided away from injurious scholastic ambitions and, for the good of the human race, must be kept from entering into intellectual competition with men. He believed that while such mothers had much to give by producing the finest of sons, and encouraging their mental development "no training [would] enable themselves to do what their sons might have done" (Moore, cited on p.87 of Burstyn, 1973).

It was reported in *The Lancet* that overpressure in education *frequently* resulted in extreme nervousness and an absence of menstruation. It was claimed that 'serious study' robbed the body of the energy needed to develop reproductive organs, resulting in hardworking scholars being sterile (Burstyn, 1973). During the Victorian era, there was a belief that "the period of menstruation should be a period of comparative repose, mental and bodily, but especially mental", with scare stories of young women left irreversibly broken by "a few days of hard mental strain during a menstrual period (Thorburn, cited on p.86 of Burstyn,

1973). Based upon this belief, Thorburn argued that girls' schools, and provision for higher study, should alter their arrangements, to allow girls to be excused schoolwork, on an individual basis, during their time of heightened 'nervous instability'. This belief in the need for females to rest during menstruation was also used as an argument against women undertaking formal employment, and especially against their entry into the professions.

Concerns over pressured, academic environments on the delicate female constitution contributed to resistance to innovation and to many schools continuing to offer a conservative curriculum. However, despite these objections, girls' public schools could be found offering a rigorous academic education. While there was significant objection to the admittance of girls to public examinations, campaigns succeeded in granting girls access to Oxford and Cambridge's lower examinations, beginning in 1863. Given that these examinations had only been established for boys in 1858, girls' inclusion only five years later suggests a fairly progressive mindset (Burstyn, 1973). Despite concerns continuing to be voiced well into the first decade of the twentieth century, it is heartening to find that they did not quell all enthusiasm for academic excellence. The examinations allowed girls to compare themselves to others and the celebration of individuals' achievements at annual prize giving ceremonies encouraged academic success to be held in high regard within some schools (Pedersen, 1979).

The notion of duty applied to the Victorian wife, as well as her husband. Amongst the working class, wives were encouraged to become 'handmaids to temperance', with the claim that the maintenance of a good home and the provision of appetizing meals would discourage husbands from frequenting the public house (Dyhouse, 1977). Likewise within the middle class home, wives were held up as the moral guardians of the home: the 'angel of the house' (Digby, 1982). *The Young Woman's Companion or Female Instructor*, published in 1861, illustrates the middle-class woman's ideal: "a pleasing companion, respectable mother, [and] useful member of society" (Shailer, cited p.6 Digby 1982). Much of the debate surrounding girls' education centred around whether education would assist a woman in her duties, or divert her attention away from her primary role as wife and mother.

Interpretations of the duties and responsibilities of females fed into concerns over their (over)education. For the lower classes, blame for high infant mortality and the 'physical deterioration' of the British man was placed upon their wives and mothers. Far from viewing education as a means of improving the situation, (over)education was claimed to promote ignorance of domestic matters and to encourage women to prize employment over their responsibilities within the home. The 1904 Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration appears to lend support to the claim that female employment "form[ed] bad wives and mothers" (p.40) with one of their observers declaring that "married women's labour was really the root of all the mischief" (p.47, Fitzroy, 1904).

The view that the employment of married women, and their subsequent carelessness and ignorance of domestic matters, was a primary cause of infant mortality remained prevalent throughout the nineteenth century and into the first decade of the twentieth century. By 1914, there was some recognition that education of mothers would in fact serve to help reduce infant mortality, but calls for female education to focus on developing maternal instincts and their 'responsibility to the British race' continued (Dyhouse, 1977).

The 1904 report into 'physical deterioration' was critical of women's character, claiming that "a large proportion of British housewives are tainted with incurable laziness and a distaste for the obligations of domestic life" (p.40, Fitzroy, 1904). While acknowledging that financial pressures were a driving force behind many wives' employment, the report appears extremely critical of women's sense of duty and suggests that working outside the home was a selfish act.

While the criticisms levelled against different social classes might vary, the central importance of a woman's duty within the home, and to the race as a whole, can be found at all levels of society. This is not to say that attitudes towards domesticity were static or indeed showed a consistent trend throughout the study period.

During the Victorian period, women were typically referred to in relation to others, rather than as an individual in her own right. This attitude is even reflected in schools' expressed

aims: to fit girls to be companions to their brothers, aides to their husbands and guardians of their children (Digby, 1982).

Women's attempts at independence produced a strong negative reaction. In 1868, Eliza Lynn Linton accused those of her own sex of casting aside traditional womanly attributes of affection and domesticity and becoming masculine, hedonistic and indifferent to duty. Some viewed women's desire for employment as evidence of this selfishness.

Despite such attacks, throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century, there was a *gradual* transition away from the meek, dependent woman, encouraged by traditional private girls' schools, towards a more self-reliant, independent woman, more likely to develop out of the reformed school system. The Notting Hill High School *Magazine's* 1885 article, "The Ideal Girl", gives an indication of the characteristics being encouraged, and assimilated, in girls' public schools of the period. The girl they described balances self-reliance *and* duty: cultivating her intellectual, physical, and social faculties, while maintaining her obligations to herself, her family, and society (Pedersen, 1979).

During the earlier part of the study period, Miss Buss' address to school leavers recognised that her girls might need to find paid employment out of necessity but emphasised that a woman's primary duty was domestic work. Even in the newly formed high schools, the assumption that educated girls would take on a life of humble duty and service remained (Digby, 1982).

While the emphasis on motherhood and associated duties never fell by the wayside, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, schools appeared to recognise the (limited) increase in opportunities for middle class women and made some adjustments to the curriculum to reflect this.

During the Edwardian era however, there appears to have been a backlash against the perceived diminishing importance given to womanly nature and duties. There was a renaissance of the ideal of the gentle, domestic woman, with her special capacities, and duties, to care for the family, home, *and* the community. This renewed focus suppressed

ideas of self-reliance and careers, education instead being marketed as a means of developing girls' intellectual and moral capacities to better execute their duties to the community and to the home (Digby, 1982).

The new girls' public schools were typically characterised by plain living and an active concern for the moral wellbeing of their charges. The post of schoolmistress required pastoral vocation and moral earnestness, and was likened to that of a clergyman (Digby, 1982). Frances Dove, headmistress at St. Leonard's School, called upon her girls, at a prizegiving in 1877, to work diligently; that "by humble, continuous, earnest effort [each girl] must be the architect of her own character" (cited p.8, Digby, 1982). St. Leonard's school song reflected their fundamental commitment to duty and service: "Even onward we're striving for Duty and Right[,] Our spirits are keen and our hearts free and light" (cited p.8, Digby, 1982).

As was claimed of boys' public schools, the training of character and development of morals were central to girls' public school identity: Dorothea Beale took on the headship of Cheltenham Ladies' College in 1858, with the belief that "moral training is the end, education the means" (cited p.8, Digby, 1982). Likewise, Frances Buss founded the North London Collegiate School for Ladies in 1850, driven by a conviction that a woman's character had far-reaching influences upon her family and society as a whole, so aimed to provide a solid, liberal, Christian education (Digby, 1982).

In earlier periods, the purpose of schooling was fairly straight forward: to achieve a better marriage. In the early to mid-nineteenth century, paid work was considered "unnatural for middle-class women" (Holloway, cited on p. 2, [civilservant.org.uk](http://civilservant.org.uk), 2005), to be undertaken only as a last resort. During the study period, employment of middle-class women was still a contentious issue. In this section, the opportunities open to such women will be considered. As part of this, the efforts of those pushing to increase opportunities will be discussed, as well as those wishing to keep middle-class women within the domestic sphere.

Despite resistance to progress, from 1850 to the end of Victoria's reign in 1901, the number of women in Britain in professional employment quadrupled, from 106,000 to 429,000. The limited range of female employment opportunities resulted in an over-supply of qualified female teachers; even with attempts to lessen this overs-supply, teachers still accounted for 40% of female professionals in 1901; the other main areas being clerical work and nursing. The narrow range of employment types resulted in part from several fields being hostile to the admission of women, such as the medical profession; or formally barring them, as was the case for law. Even as small numbers of individuals began to break into new fields, many schools were still preparing girls for traditional female roles, in the caring occupations of teaching, nursing or charity work, where their good education might enable them to take on positions of greater responsibility (Digby, 1982).

Even in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, females' duties as companions was still central to middle and upper class ideology. Until a suitable match was made, daughters would assist their mothers in light domestic duties and visiting, before taking on the role of wife and mother. Manchester High School for Girls opened its doors in 1874 with the founding aim of preparing girls for a life as a companion, as "helpmeets and counsellors for their husbands, and wise guides and trainers for the minds of their children" (cited on p.13, Digby, 1982).

For the middle and upper class woman, charity work was considered an appropriate form of 'work'. Unpaid charity work provided a means for women to express the moral earnestness and sense of duty, being an extension of the 'angel of the house' ideal (Digby, 1982). Schools certainly sought to encourage such activities, North London Collegiate School being said to foster girls' sense of responsibility to the wider community; while they might come to appreciate 'honour in work', they were instilled with the belief that true fulfilment came through duty to others. In some schools, a sense of duty to the wider community and greater awareness of social problems were developed through voluntary work, often taking the form of fundraising or making clothes for the local poor (Digby, 1982).

While charity work was a mainstay of middle and upper class women's lives, there are differences of opinion as to how different types of girls' education prepared them for such

work. Pedersen claims that the more institutional environment of the new public schools better prepared women for the increasingly bureaucratic and institutionalised philanthropy of mid and late Victorian Britain. By contrast, Digby claims that charity work in late Victorian Britain was still imbued with an *amateur* ethos and that the ideals of duty and service fostered during girls' schooldays equipped them for such work. She claims that women's empathy as wives and mothers was still considered of greater value to the poor than professionalism. This difference may reflect Pedersen's interest in the trends developing up to the turn of the century, while Digby's primary sources on the amateur nature of charity work date from the 1870s, and she does acknowledge that different streams of charity work were immersing; the result of "the extension of Victorian state activity" (p.13, Digby, 1982). It would appear that while small-scale, traditional charity work allowed women to develop and express their nurturing sympathies, other women might develop a significant public presence through their philanthropic work (Gordon & Nair, 2000).

The fields in which women might strive for the ideal of duty and service were expanded in 1869, with the growing Civil Service beginning to recruit women. While top posts were not open to women, many schools were keen to promote entry into clerical positions, with Miss Buss noted for taking pride in some of her old girls entering the Post Office (Digby, 1982).

As in boys' public schools, the 1854 Northcote-Trevelyan Report's transformation of the Civil Service recruitment system, away from patronage and towards merit, encouraged girls' schools to place greater emphasis upon academic subjects, but this led to tensions. For those seeking secretarial work, shorthand and typing classes became a point of contention, as schools catering for the middle classes typically held vocational training in disdain. Some schools, seeing pupils leave prematurely to access training elsewhere, introduced appropriate training, but pains were taken to assert that such education was intended to develop character and habits of mind, rather than to directly prepare girls for employment (Digby, 1982).

The admittance of women to the Civil Service resulted, in a roundabout way, from Queen Victoria's interest in women's employment. In 1843, Queen Victoria, and her daughters, were claimed to have expressed an interest in sources of paid work for middle-class women

to a director of the Electric Telegraph Company, General Wylde, who had connections to the family. It is said that the Telegraph Company's decision to begin employing the unmarried daughters of professional men, their numbers increasing to over two hundred by 1870, was "to demonstrate their loyalty [to the crown] rather than their faith in women" (Martindale, cited on p.3, [civilservant.org.uk](http://civilservant.org.uk), 2005). When the Postmaster General was granted a monopoly in the Telegraph Act of 1869, the female employees of the Electric Telegraph Company became servants of the Post Office and in so doing became the first female civil servants.

While the Postmaster General stated in his report to The Playfair Commission of 1874-5 that "we do not punish marriage by dismissal" (Martindale, cited on p.4, [civilservant.org.uk](http://civilservant.org.uk), 2005), the reality was that women did not have a place in the Civil Service after marriage. There had previously been an 'understanding' that women would 'choose' to retire upon marriage; however the following year, in 1875, the rules on marriage were clarified: "A married women (*sic*), who is not a widow is not eligible for any appointment in the General Post Office" (Martindale, cited on p.5, [civilservant.org.uk](http://civilservant.org.uk), 2005) and women who married while employed by the Post Office were required to resign. Within government departments, despite taking on increasing numbers of female employees during the latter part of the century, attitudes towards the employment of married women did not improve. While it has been a general rule since the introduction of female employees, in 1895 the rule requiring resignation upon marriage was formalized. However, there was a glimmer of hope in that there were a small number of instances of resignation not being enforced, enabling women to continue in their post.

Despite taking on female workers, the Post Office did not have a high opinion of their capacities, only suggesting them for clerical work "of a less important character" and claiming that they were "not prepared to recommend the employment of women unless they [could] be placed in separate rooms, under proper female supervision" (Playfair Commission, cited on p.8, [civilservant.org.uk](http://civilservant.org.uk), 2005). Even when forty young women were taken on in the new Daily Balance section of the Post Office's Savings Bank, in 1875, it was assumed that such work was beyond women's capacities. Even when the women proved capable of the work, the Post Office journal printed objections, including warnings of the

moral dangers of employing women. Despite these objections, under the supervision of a Lady Superintendent, the number of women employed by the Post Office grew to 900, by 1896 (civilservant.org.uk, 2005).

Even towards the end of the century, the *Ridley Commission* of 1886-90, found a range of attitudes towards female employment. While the Inland Revenue acknowledging that women made quick and accurate typists, other departments still focused on the moral dangers of employing women and kept their female typists locked in a female-only room, with meals being served to them through a hatch.

One of the greatest moments in the employment of women during the study period was the appointment of four female Insurance Commissioners, during the formation of the National Health Insurance Commission in 1911, on *equal pay* with their male colleagues. The Royal Commission of the following year however, appears to be a setback, stating that women should be on a lower pay scale to men, despite the majority of the Commission calling for an enquiry into removing the pay inequality. Likewise, the Commission continued the argument that the responsibilities of married life were normally incompatible with civil service employment.

The Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, bearing the unfortunate acronym SPEW, bears witness to the drive to increase employment opportunities for women during the study period. SPEW was founded in 1859, by the educated daughter of an old landed family, in response to Harriet Martineau's 1859 *Edinburgh Review* article on 'the redundant woman' (Tusan, 2000).

The society assisted both working and middle class women in the labour market, with a particular focus on opening up 'non-traditional' types of employment. Run and largely funded by women, they provided financial backing through interest-free loans and supported employment training programmes. SPEW provided classes in bookkeeping, law copying and printing, as well as classes to prepare women for administrative work: typewriting and shorthand. The success of their system is reflected in the fact that it was very rare for women to fail to repay the money loaned to them (Tusan, 2000).

SPEW immediately encountered resistance, with working men believing that the introduction of women into industries would lower men's wages. Likewise, some felt that certain types of work were 'unsuitable' for women, due to the physically demanding nature of the work or resulting from conservative ideas about appropriate roles for women. The society combatted hostility by producing literature explaining their cause, and by securing the patronage of respected individuals (Tusan, 2000). It is interesting to note that the society was sufficiently successful and adaptable to keep supporting women far beyond the nineteenth century, continuing to this day as *Futures for Women*.

1851 Census data showed women to outnumber men and it was suggested that more than half-a-million women in Britain were left to provide for themselves. It was believed that much of the surplus consisted of unmarried, middle-class women, resulting in the 'plight of middle class spinsters' becoming a societal concern. While relatively young working class women could usually find employment, lone middle class women were subject to more societal restrictions and so were faced with fewer 'acceptable' employment options. While there was societal unease around the suffering of 'respectable' women and pleas on behalf of the "large army of... practically destitute" "decayed gentlewomen" (A. Moore, cited on p.806, Gordon & Nair, 2000), their numbers were comparatively small in comparison to the number of lone working class women. This surplus was of sufficient concern for the Taunton Commission to consider it a primary argument for the importance of middle-class girls' education.

The debate of the 'surplus' women is relevant in that it demonstrates differing views over the place of (middle class) women in society, resulting in opposing views as to the education of girls, and to the question of their employment. Worsnop (1990) uses the terms 'conservatives' and 'radicals' to describe the two opposing groups. The conservatives viewed marriage and domesticity as the culmination of a woman's life. An anonymous conservative wrote a piece in the *Saturday Review* in 1859, arguing that "married life is a woman's profession; and to this life her training – that of dependence – is modelled" and "by not getting a husband, or losing him, ... she has failed in business". He claims that "it is better for all parties – men and women, for the State and for society – that women should

not, as a rule, be taught some useful art, and so be rendered independent of the chances of life. We do not want our women to be androgynous..." (cited on p.26, Worsnop, 1990).

While this author expresses particularly conservative views, the article reflects opinions and concerns found more widely in Victorian society: some viewed employment of women as unnatural and believed that entry of women into the workforce would weaken male earning potential. It was believed that expending energy on practical training or work would distract women from their primary goal of matrimony and have a detrimental effect upon their 'prospects'. The suggestion that women risked androgyny by pursuing paid employment echoes the warnings over the de-feminising influence of over-education (Worsnop, 1990).

As might be expected, there was something of a gender divide in opinions; with middle-class women tending to support the radical view, while middle-class men favoured the status quo. It is important to recognise however that views did not run strictly along gender lines: some prominent gentlemen, such as the Liberal Party MP and later Postmaster-General, Henry Fawcett, were vocal in their support of widening opportunities for women. Likewise, the conservative cause included women horrified by the idea of women taking on *unnatural roles*, and in the process neglecting their rightful duty, such as Sarah Stickney Ellis, the widely-read author of numerous books on moral education and women's duty in society (Worsnop, 1990). The disagreements were played out in a series of publications and stooped to ridicule and personal attacks, seeking to harm the credibility of their opponents. The conservatives were at pains to devalue the role of single women, claiming that few 'normal' women would *choose* such a life and summoning an image that no-one would aspire to (Worsnop, 1990).

The radicals claimed that the problem lay not in the surplus itself but in the limited opportunities for middle class women outside of marriage. They called for reform of girls' education and for a wider range of occupations to be opened up to middle class women. They also called for pay rises in more traditional middle class women's occupations: wages for governesses were widely regarded as pitiful. By contrast, the conservatives focused on marriage as the only agreeable solution: they called for the surplus women to be encouraged to emigrate to the Colonies, to marry British men working within the Empire. It

is interesting to note that the Middle Class Women's Emigration Association, founded in 1862, was run out of the same Langham Place premises as SPEW (Worsnop, 1990).

Data from Jordon and Nair's study of Glasgow provides an insight into the lives of these 'surplus' middle-class women. While the popular view of middle-class spinsters was one of 'genteel poverty', worsening with age, and dependence upon the charity of relatives, data from Jordon and Nair's study area offers some cause for optimism. Within the study area, even older spinsters appeared able to live independently and in comfort: in 1881, 21 of the 27 unmarried women aged sixty and over lived in households headed by women and were able to maintain an average of 1.4 resident servants per household (Jordon & Nair, 2000). It is possible that some impoverished spinsters moved out of the study area and so this cannot be taken as proof of absence of spinster hardship; however, it demonstrates that destitution was not *necessarily* the fate of the unmarried middle-class woman.

Despite evidence of spinsters living independently, census returns for single women reveal fairly low numbers reporting formal occupation: percentage employment stood at 13.1% in 1851 and rose steadily up to 24% in 1881, before a substantial jump up to 37.2% in 1891 (Jordon & Nair, 2000). These low levels of employment recorded might be explained in a number of ways: they might reflect the limited employment opportunities open to 'respectable' women; and that, through choice or necessity, these women were dependent upon male relatives for financial support. An alternative hypothesis is that the census returns were simply failing to report forms of income generation.

While suggesting that spinsters were in a better financial position than widely assumed, the majority of spinsters in Jordon and Nair's study appear to remain in fairly traditional areas of employment: within the first four returns (1851 to 1881), governess, teacher and 'dressmaker etc.' were the main sources of employment. Such employment is generally considered to have barely provided a living wage, however; even the ageing spinsters of the lower middle class areas appear to have lived on around five pounds a week, while many working class families had to survive on a pound a week. For those with a degree of business acumen and the necessary start-up capital, running a boarding school could be an 'acceptable' and potentially fairly lucrative occupation.

By the 1891 Census, a far greater range of occupations were recorded; however the range of occupations in the lower middle class areas differed significantly from those in the upper middle class areas. Within Jordon and Nair's study area, while the major sources of income for women in the lower middle class areas in 1851 were annuities and 'house duties etc.', by 1891 the number of sources of income recorded had trebled and included a range of technical and administration jobs, such as telegraphist, typist and commercial clerk. By contrast, on an upper middle class street, formal occupation of lone women remained rare throughout the study period, with only a small number of governesses and two dressmakers featuring over the five census returns (Jordon & Nair, 2000).

I have chosen to examine in depth a study undertaken by Gordon and Nair into the economic role of middle-class women in Victorian Glasgow. With heated debates over what place, if any, employment had in the lives of middle-class women and whether their education should support them to pursue such activity, Gordon and Nair's study provides an insight into lived experiences of Victorian middle-class women.

While Taunton claims that the education of middle class daughters is important, in part, for its ability to enable the women to support themselves financially, the Commissioners do so inferring that this argument only applies to *unmarried* women. During the nineteenth century, a 'separate spheres' ideology was dominant in the middle class, placing men within the public sphere of work and women within the private sphere of home. Within this ideology, women were not expected to work, being provided for by their husband if married and by a male relative if single (Gordon & Nair, 2000). While such an arrangement was unattainable for most working-class families, Davidoff claims that this ideology intensified within the middle classes during the second half of the nineteenth century; women being increasingly dependent upon male relatives and confined to a life of domesticity. Despite this apparent shift, and arguments over middle-class girls' education tending to assume that middle class women would marry and enter motherhood, in all of Jordon and Nair's census returns, *lone* women, whether widows or spinsters, outnumbered married women.

This period reveals a conflict between an ideological drive towards women being defined by their duties within the home, with its associated (apparent) narrowing of opportunities outside the home, and the recognition of the 'surplus' of women, with its associated calls for widening of employment opportunities. Despite opposition, there were examples of women pushing to enter professions, with varying degrees of success: Elizabeth Garrett became the first woman to qualify as a doctor in Britain in 1865 (Burstyn, 1973).

Gordon and Nair's research looked into a middle class area of Glasgow from 1850 to 1914. During this period, Glasgow was regarded as the 'second city of the Empire', with a thriving economy based upon heavy industry and export trade. The middle class in the city was particularly occupationally diverse, with backgrounds in industry and trade, as well as the more traditionally 'middle class' occupations in finance and the professions. The eleven streets in the research area varied in social composition, with large townhouses accommodating many of the commercial, industrial and professional elite of Glasgow, while the smaller terraced houses served the lower end of the middle-class spectrum.

Gordon and Nair gained much of their information from census returns from 1851 to 1891, as well as a range of other sources such as written testaments and marriage contracts. The wide range of sources allowed the inadequacies of certain sources to be identified and somewhat ameliorated with information from another source.

Census data supports the conventional view that Victorian middle class women remained within the home and were economically dependent: from the 1851 to 1881 census, within the research area, the percentage of married women recorded as having any source of income remained at 3 to 4%, rising to only 6.2% in 1891. Caution should be taken if basing conclusions upon census data alone, however. There was a reluctance amongst enumerators to record female work and the guidance given to them also led to underestimation: in 1861, they were instructed to disregard occasional work, placing such situations under the 'domestic' category; and in 1871, the practise of recording the wives of small businessmen under the working category, with the prefix of their husband's occupation, such as 'shopkeeper's wife', ceased. While such a classification does not provide information as to the level of involvement a woman had in her husband's business, it has

been suggested that this practise allowed for implicit recognition of the fact that these women usually undertook a variety of tasks within the business. The change in practise might reflect a withdrawal of such women from the family business; however, it is speculated that wives continued to play a role within their husbands' businesses and the change was more the result of an increased tendency to define women in relation to the home (Gordon & Nair, 2000).

While the census data certainly underestimated women's involvement in income generation, the omissions are likely to have been more significant for the lower end of the middle-class spectrum, especially when the common lower middle-class practise of taking in boarders and lodgers was not recorded as an occupation on the census. It is generally understood that the larger and wealthier a business, the more divorced it was from the home, and the less likely it was that the women of the household would play a role in its running. As a result, in addition to the cultural preference for women to focus on domestic life, the upper middle class wives of professional men and substantial business owners would be less likely to participate in their husbands' enterprises.

While those at the upper end of the middle-class spectrum were generally less likely to be involved in their husbands' businesses than those at the lower end, there are always exceptions. During this period, it was still common for some professions to be conducted from home, such as teaching and medicine. Within such set-ups, it is likely that wives had some involvement; and in the case of ministers' wives and daughters, they played a central role in church life: organising Sunday Schools and philanthropic activities. Although not common practise, there are occasional instances of wives being formally acknowledged in the census as 'assistants'. There are also exceptional cases of women maintaining their own substantial business after marriage, such as the successful restaurateur, Miss Cranston.

The evidence of the census, taken alone, supports the long-held belief that Victorian middle class women were not engaged in work. However, while employment of married women was reported to be below 4% for most of the study period, it appears that economic activity was often concealed, in part because it went against the Victorian ideal of income generation being a man's responsibility, while a woman's place was within the home.

Within Gordon and Nair's research area, formal participation of married women in income generation was rare but not unknown, and assistance of husbands in their enterprise is believed to have been more widespread than indicated by census data.

Census returns for widows reveal low levels of employment, the percentage with formal occupation never rising above 10%. While many widows did not provide information, for those that did, annuities, and later private means, were the most common sources of income. As in the case of married women, it was common for spinsters and widows to take in lodgers or boarders, which is not reflected in the census.

Within the west of Glasgow, Jordon and Nair found that women's widowed situations varied dramatically. While some widows might have had to move in with male relatives, being unable to support themselves, others were left with significant wealth. Jordon and Nair looked into the moveable property (not including property or land) left by individuals upon their death as a means of determining their wealth. Women, either widowed or unmarried, accounted for a quarter of the very wealthy estates (leaving more than £20,000 in moveable property) and for over half of the still substantial £5,000 to £20,000 estates. Of the widows with formal occupations, their estates varied significantly but were typically comparable to male testators with middle class occupations, such as physicians and insurance brokers. Many of these women had long widowhoods and it is clear that they often successfully took on their husband's business and were capable of both running a business and managing their finances.

Jordon and Nair employed a range of other sources of evidence to supplement and challenge the data provided by the census. The Post Office Directories and Valuation Rolls provided data on the value and ownership of property. This data revealed that a sizable minority of retail businesses were owned by women, the figure sitting at around 22-23% on Sauchiehall Street. Despite entering the public sphere of employment, shops run by women tended to provide services for the home: clothes, groceries and home interiors. There were exceptions, with some women working in roles that would have required significant specific training or a strong mastery of arithmetic, not usually encouraged by girls' schools.

Examination of the Directories alongside Valuation Rolls allow inaccuracies to be identified. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, it became increasingly common for the sex of the owner of a business to not be available in the Directory. Also, entry into the Directory involved payment of a fee and so smaller businesses are likely to have gone unrepresented. These weaknesses can lead to erroneous conclusions: while the Directory figures indicate that the number of women owning coffee houses, eating houses and restaurants fell from 23 to 7, between 1861 and 1881, data from the Valuation Rolls shows the number increasing from 36 to 45. Contrary to the idea that women were increasingly excluded from the world of work, between 1861 and 1881, Valuation Rolls show that the number of women in business increased from 600 to 1500. It must be acknowledged that the majority of these businesses would have been small-scale and the property of lower middle or even working women. Within the more prosperous areas however, the businesses were typically substantial concerns and some of the owners were firmly upper middle class.

Under common law, until the Married Women's Property Acts of 1881 (Scotland) and 1882 (United Kingdom), married women were placed in coverture, a legal status in which the wife was considered a dependent and under the protection and authority of her husband. Under common law, possession and control of a woman's property transferred to her husband upon marriage, and he also had the right to any money she earned during their marriage. On the face of it, this legal situation supports the idea that women, especially when married, should not engage in matters of finance and property, and should play a meek and dutiful role within the home.

While the wives of the working class lived subject to the formal legal position of married women set out by common law, Jordon and Nair discovered that, at least in Scotland, middle class women were often able to negotiate a better situation for themselves. Marriage settlements and exclusion clauses in wills could enable women to maintain control of money and property. The fact that many middle-class husbands consented to these terms suggests that these women were in a fairly strong negotiating position. It is worth noting however that the woman's family might also have played a part in negotiations and so settlements might be about protecting family money, as well as providing financial autonomy.

## Chapter 11: Conclusion

During the second half of the nineteenth century, schools became better able to instil their ideology. Where once boys and masters had been sworn enemies, they appeared to be increasingly working towards a common goal. Glamourised by juvenile literature, a manly sense of duty, combined with a code of fair play, was encouraged by games masters and enthusiastically taken up.

The British ideal of the 'gentleman amateur' persisted into the twentieth century, despite being threatened by the increasingly technical nature of war and the introduction of admission examinations to institutions such as the army and the civil service. Inspired by literature, and demonstrated on the field, boys continued to believe that solid character would carry one through any situation.

While public schools and the military placed great emphasis upon tradition and were typically suspicious of innovation, the evolving nature of warfare forced change upon them. During the Crimean War (1853-56), the British were using tactics largely unchanged since the Napoleonic Wars of the 1800s; firing 3 aimed shots a minute from static formations. By the 1880s, the Maxim Gun could fire up to 500 rounds a minute, and demanded a change in tactics (Brown, 2017). The continued public school distrust of technology and innovation fed into the military command of the First World War, with mortars, tanks and convoy systems all introduced *against* the advice of senior officials (Wilkinson, 1962).

The British Army appears to have served the needs of a great range of individuals, from the hedonistic 'swells', to the pious, duty-driven 'earnest' Victorians. For the Victorian 'swells', a commission in the British Army provided them with the means to engage in the pomp and pageantry, while enjoying an excessive, almost private club-like atmosphere within the Officers' Mess (Erickson, 1959). For 'earnest Victorians' and 'Victorian Gentlemen', military service provided an opportunity to 'do one's duty', battling against 'evil' and converting the heathens. Beyond these drivers, the military helped elevate the status of the Victorian Gentleman and provided him with the chance to become a hero.

The relationship between schools and pupils' parents differed significantly between boys' and girls' schools. Many boys' public schools were large, long-established and had built up solid reputations. As such, they had a degree of immunity against shifting parental opinion. For example, "[o]nce Eton had established its pre-eminence, its lead became self-renewing for more than a century; up to 1914 and perhaps longer" (p.20, English, 1991). Therefore, while parents might not have agreed with ideologies promoted by the school, the advantage gained by attending would soon have quietened any doubts. By contrast, especially in traditional private girls' schools, small pupil numbers and their often transient nature meant that parents wielded significant power. As such, while authors might attack these schools for their over-emphasis on accomplishments, they were likely responding to the wishes of parents. Nevertheless, even with the introduction of larger, reformed girls' institutions, they still lacked the confidence of the boys' public schools.

The period covered in this thesis was significant in the development of women's identity and rights. From the 1850s, educated women of the middle and upper classes began gathering together to debate the 'Woman Question' and associations representing the 'advancement of women' appeared. These groups strived to improve the social, political, economic and *educational* situation for women. Significant political gains were achieved in the years following the study period, with the Representation of the People Act of 1918 giving the vote to women over the age of thirty and meeting property qualifications, and the 1928 Equal Franchise Act giving women equal voting rights to men. Likewise, women's legal identity and right to possession of property was improved by the passing of the 1870 and 1882 Married Women's Property Acts (Combs, 2005).

A central question remained within girls' education: should schools be preparing girls for employment or motherhood? Given the fear that over-education affected fertility and worsened girls' marriage prospects, many felt that it was not possible for education to achieve both. While claims about the medical dangers of over-educating females may seem ridiculous now, it can be more fully understood when considered alongside wider concerns over 'national degeneration'. Just as men had their duty to expand British influence across the globe, so women had a duty to produce the finest sons they could. There is a slight contradiction however, in that while being 'sent away to school' was argued to enable boys'

character development, by removing them from the 'softening' influences of their mothers, debates on female education focussed on a woman's vital role in developing their sons' moral character.

While many of the views expressed in the chapter on girls' education may seem antiquated, the centre concept of 'double conformity' remains relevant today. The 1990s might have promised women that they could 'have it all', however Genz argues that this requires "walking a tightrope between professional success and personal failure" (p.99, 2010). While modern women undoubtedly have more opportunities to pursue a career while having a family life, this tightrope situation recalls the argument in girls' chapter that women were hindering their marriage prospects through over-education and wishing to work. The debate around the roles and duties of women is still ongoing, reflected in the fact that women are shamed on social media and in the press, whether they choose to stay-at-home mothers (Phillips, 2015) or go back to work after childbirth (Toynbee, 2015).

The study of girls' education benefits from being viewed alongside boys' education, and other contemporary issues. The topic of girls' education is often viewed from a feminist perspective, and the limited and sometimes frivolous nature of the curriculum receives heavy criticism. While there is no doubt cause for criticism, it should be recognised that boys' curricula at the time could also be extremely narrow.

To this day, there is taboo around suggestions that colonies benefited from British intervention. From juvenile literature and textbooks to speeches by colonial administrators and the clergy, during the second half of the nineteenth century, the party line was that British intervention was in the best interests of less developed nations. It is important to recognise, however, that the apparent increase in arrogance around the turn of the twentieth century owes a great deal to insecurity. At the time, Britain's position within Europe was threatened and there were murmurings of nationalism in India. Certainly, during the time of the Raj, the British developed a huge amount of infrastructure in India, from roads and railways, to hospitals, sanitation, and Western ideas of education (Castle, 1993). As impressionable youths, it is likely that public school boys would have taken this

interpretation of imperialism as fact. From my research, it is impossible to draw conclusions as to whether those in power had also taken this ideology to heart, or whether they simply viewed it as a convenient device for justifying conquest.

While justifications for imperial rule in the colonies based upon the innate 'superiority' of white Europeans would widely be considered an antiquated and ridiculous concept, recent events in the United States reveal that the issue of racial 'superiority' has not been consigned to the history books. Huber (2016) argues that within the United States, a racial hierarchy still exists, based upon the perceived superiority of whites over people of colour. Following the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, white supremacists have become increasingly visible in America. While attitudes and agendas based on race persist, it is always instructive to note the lessons that history can teach us, lest we repeat its mistakes.

## Chapter 12: Bibliography

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