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Empire Between the Lines: Constructions of Empire in British and French Trench Newspapers of the Great War

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An abstract of
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Abstract

Empire Between the Lines: Constructions of Empire in British and French Trench Newspapers of the Great War
By Elizabeth Stice

The First World War spanned continents, mobilized vast resources and populations, and initiated new modes of contact within and among empires. For the British and the French the war brought colonial troops and supplies to Europe, involved fighting for colonies in Africa and Asia, and brought about changes in imperial policies. This dissertation is fundamentally concerned with British and French soldiers' discourses of empire during the war. Specifically, this project examines trench newspapers for representations of colonial troops, depictions of non-European campaigns, and descriptions of the German enemy, to identify ways in which British and French soldiers experienced and envisioned empires through the war and the war through empire. Trench newspapers were informal papers created by and for soldiers and circulated at or near the front. The papers were transitory products of a collective endeavor that forged a community for readers and helped re-order the world in the disorder of war. This dissertation argues that soldiers' discourses in trench newspapers demonstrate that the war was an imperial event for British and French soldiers and that empire cannot be disentangled from the experience of the war. Descriptions of colonial troops, and their reasons for fighting, revealed ways in which British and French soldiers understood and imagined their own respective empires. Depictions of German wartime activity show that empire was an interpretive lens for many soldiers seeking to make sense of the conflict. Coverage of the Ottoman campaigns made explicit that for some soldiers the war challenged orientalist and colonialist tropes, which had been thoroughly internalized. The focus on trench newspapers illuminates the common soldier's experience of the war and the nature of imperial cultures.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The "fog of war" is a term used to describe the confusion of the experience of war and the limitations of awareness and memory, even for participants. A man may be haunted by a battle for the rest of his life, but forget seemingly crucial details or misremember the order of events. The practice of history, too, has its own fog. Though nearly a century has passed since the beginning of the Great War—and there has been a century's worth of books—there remain aspects of soldiers' experiences and the nature of the war which deserve a closer look. This dissertation is fundamentally concerned with British and French soldiers' discourses of empire during the war. Specifically, this project examines trench newspapers for representations of colonial troops, depictions of non-European campaigns, and descriptions of the German enemy, to identify ways in which British and French soldiers experienced and envisioned empires through the war and the war through empire. The investigation of the imperial experience of the Great War is necessary because empire is irreducible to a set of policies or a structure of rule. Empire was not a reified organization, but a shifting set of relations. In the words of Frederick Cooper, colonialism was "a series of hegemonic projects."[1] As such, empire was a series of constraints and possibilities which influenced lives and perceptions in Europe and in the colonies; empire was experienced. This study seeks to peer into the fog of war and imperial experience.

[1] Frederick Cooper, "The Dialectics of Decolonization," *Tensions of Empire*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 409.

The focus on the relationship between empire and the war in trench newspapers is a new angle on the relationship between World War I and empire that makes this study well positioned among histories of the war and scholarly engagements with empire. It takes its place in the established, but still growing, field of books exploring race and colonial troops within the war, with increased attention to writing and texts. As an Anglo-French study, it allows examination of the "civilization" which British and French soldiers claimed to share and defend. This work also explores the Great War as an imperial event, following in the line of works on imperialism related to Frederick Cooper's and Ann Stoler's *Tensions of Empire*, which examine broader "imperial cultures" and consider the histories of "metropole" and "periphery" to be mutually influential and shaped by the structures of imperialism.

Rupert Brooke's famous poem "The Soldier" linked sacrifice in war to England, but on entering the war England was part of the British Empire, with vast territorial holdings amounting to 12.7 million square miles.[2] France was likewise enveloped by an empire. The British and the French empire relied on people and materials from around the world during the Great War. British and French colonial holdings in India and within Africa each contributed over a million combatants, many of whom served in Europe. British and French forces also fought for control of colonies in Africa, in the Pacific, and in the territory of the Ottoman Empire. While an increasing number of books have examined the experiences of colonial troops and battles outside of Europe, fewer connect those stories to the experiences of European soldiers within Europe or consider soldiers' perceptions of Europe's and the war's colonial dimensions. Those texts which center on the experience and events of war in Europe often neglect colonial contributions and

[2] John Morrow, *The Great War* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 2.

imperial context altogether. Yet maintaining a predominantly Eurocentric view of the war limits understanding of the war's significance and allows us to see little more in the war than a defensive struggle in Belgium and France. Just as Britain and France were inseparable from their empires, empire was inseparable from the wartime experience of British and French soldiers. This study explores the ways in which the war was an imperial experience for British and French soldiers and the ways in which empire provided an interpretive lens for viewing the war.

Trench newspapers provide a unique source for accessing British and French soldiers' public discourses of empire. These informal newspapers were created by and for soldiers and circulated at or near the front lines. The papers were distinct from official materials and were edited by men of all ranks. Most importantly, they were published during the war and are not part of the postwar narrative tradition which has cast a long, often anachronistic, shadow on the study of the First World War. During the war, too, soldiers wrote about their experiences. In the March 20, 1916, *Wipers Times*, a "Notice" read:

> We regret to announce that an insidious disease is affecting the Division, and the result is a hurricane of poetry. Subalterns have been seen with a notebook in one hand, and bombs in the other absently walking near the wire in deep communion with the muse. Even Quartermasters with books, note, one, and pencil, copying, break into song while arguing the point re boots gum, thigh.[3]

The hurricane of poetry was accompanied by a monsoon of prose. While many issues of trench newspapers have been lost, others preserve much of the content which originated in soldiers' notebooks. Often circulated at the level of company or battalion, trench newspapers were the product of communal endeavors and represented the collective voice of soldiers in the trenches.

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[3] *Wipers Times* (London: P. Davies, 1973), 45.

The papers were an important diversionary outlet for creativity at the front and were primarily intended to entertain, amuse, and distract the specific soldiers within their readership at the front. For example, *Le Poilu St-Émilionnais* specified that the paper was reserved exclusively for its soldiers; it could be sent to the families of dead comrades only if they expressly requested it to preserve the memory of their soldiers.[4] Trench newspapers were the voice of the fraternity of the trenches, but surprisingly few historical works have attempted to probe the depths of British or French trench newspapers. The exceptions are J.G. Fuller's *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918* (1990), Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau's *Men at War 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War* (1992), and Robert Nelson's *German Soldier Newspapers of the First World War* (2011), which has a comparative aspect that includes British and French papers. This dissertation examines these books and shares their interest in the study of Great War trench newspapers. It advances that study by using trench newspapers to analyze British and French soldiers' wartime discourses of empire and by bringing together two dynamic threads in the study of the Great War: empire and soldiers' writings.

This study breaks additional new ground by considering British and French trench newspapers together. In 1916, E.B. Osborn suggested in the *Times Literary Supplement* that "there is a family likeness between all trench journals, whether they be of British or of French origin. One and all of them convey a vivid impression of humour and high spirits."[5] The shared humor was partnered with a shared format among British and French trench newspapers, closely modeled on satirical papers and magazines like *Le*

[4] *Le Poilu St-Émilionnais*, No.9 (December 2, 1915), 8. UPENN
[5] E.B. Osborn, "Trench Journals," *Times Literary Supplement* (October 12, 1916), 481.

Rire and *Punch*. More importantly, British and French trench newspapers shared the most salient aspects of production: they were by and for troops.[6] British and French trench authors also knew of each other's trench newspapers. The British and French empires entered the war alongside many other empires—the Austro-Hungarian, the German, the Ottoman, and the Russian—but exited the war practically "just we two." This study is concerned with the discourses of empire among soldiers within the two dominant empires that survived the war. Distinctions between British and French trench newspapers are noted when significant and appropriate, but this is not a "comparative" project as such.

It is certainly not new to consider an Anglo-French approach to a World War I topic. Britain and France were both members of the Entente fighting against the Central Powers and fought the war together from beginning to end. Not only did the British and French share multiple fronts, they shared rhetorically similar goals. Comparing the British and French is also made possible in the same way that Jay Winter suggested capital cities were comparable in *Capital Cities at War*:

> …comparisons are rarely possible on the basis of identical sources, and metropolitan history ran along similar lines in wartime. Finding enough coal for Parisians in the winter of 1916-17 was not very different from the same task faced by administrators in London and Berlin. Who had the responsibility to do so varied, as did the degree to which they succeeded. But the choices they faced were much the same.[7]

The British and French faced many of the same challenges and choices in the war. Specifically relevant to my project is the fact that both sides used colonial troops in Europe and engaged in warfare outside of Europe. In *Women's Identities at War* Susan Grayzel pairs England and France because they were "two of the most significant

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[6] German papers were more propagandistic and more often initiated from above, with less room for grousing. Robert Nelson, "German Comrades—Slavic Whores," *Home/Front, The Military, War and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York: Berg, 2002), 69, 81.

[7] Jay Winter, "Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919: capital cities at war," *Capital Cities at War* (Cambridge: 1997), 9.

participant nations in order to chart more effectively the resilience of Western gender systems."[8] Like Grayzel's work, this study brings together England and France as significant participant nations, tied in this case to empire and constructions of race. Examining Britain and France separately does not do justice to the idea of "civilization" that they, and the Germans (proponents themselves of a distinctive *Kultur*), considered the British and French to constitute and represent together.

British and French trench newspapers are suited not only for a possible pairing but also for an interesting one. The British and French empires both saw themselves as bearers of "civilization" but there were significant differences between them. As Timothy Baycroft has noted, "France's position as a republic, and Republican attitudes towards the Enlightenment permeate French colonial discourse in such a way as to distinguish it from other European nations."[9] Rivalry also existed between the empires and, as Hew Strachan has pointed out, remained active during the war despite the British and French alliance. The British and the French pursued separate interests in the Ottoman Empire, and "beneath the public rhetoric of unity, each member of the Entente was pursuing a different agenda for the post-war world."[10] The British and French had distinct, if allied, visions of modernity opposed to German imperialism and the other members of the Central Powers. Following the fall of the Russian, German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires, Britain and France came to represent *the* dominant possibilities of European empire.

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[8] Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War* (Chapel Hill: 1999), 3.
[9] Timothy Baycroft, "The Empire and the Nation: The Place of Colonial Images in the Republican Visions of the French Nation," in *Empire and Culture*, ed. Martin Evans (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 149.
[10] David French, "The Strategy of the Entente Powers, 1914-1917," *World War I: A History* (Oxford: 1998), 56.

From the second half of the twentieth century into the present, scholars, policy makers, aid organizations and concerned individuals have struggled to understand the position of the "postcolonial" and the political and economic world created in the wake of European empires. The Great War involved empires and was tied to the rise of nations in Europe and the rise of nationalism in the British and the French empires. A better conception of the British and the French imperial visions for the twentieth century forged in the war will help us to grasp the predicaments of colonies as they became recognized nations. Even countries that never had or never were colonial holdings are affected by the legacy of imperialism and its influence on today's economic system and issues of global security. The interdependencies created by empires remain today and we can benefit from understanding how Europeans constructed non-European places within empire and the relationships among different parts of the world. The demographics of today's postcolonies and the politics of present European immigration are also closely linked to the British and French empires. A fresh approach to how soldiers constructed non-European people within empire will provide us with a deeper history of the dynamics of immigration and security in Europe today and an understanding of how perceptions of others can be altered. Approaching these subjects through the lens of the media gives the project additional relevance to the predicaments of the present.

In attempting a study with both the British and the French empire, I am attentive to the warnings of Ann Stoler in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*. She asks:

> What could be more reassuring than the argument on which comparative studies of colonialism have thrived; namely, that differences in colonial policies derive from European distinctions of national character. In such a model, some country's legacy was always more benevolent, another's violences were truly

> atrocious, and yet another's integrative efforts were more effective or more benign.[11]

I have no intention of using trench newspapers to declare one empire more or less oppressive and one vision of the future more or less integrated. Soldiers' constructions of empire in trench newspapers were more than reflections of national character or constitutional traditions. I am interested in the ways that empire provided a lens for soldiers' views of the war and shaped their war experiences.

The traces of empire are in both trench newspapers and personal accounts of the war. While personal accounts provide a valuable, often detailed, perspective on the war, they are often written with someone else in mind. These accounts outline how a particular soldier wished to communicate something, often to a later generation or a family member. While some famous postwar narratives entered the literary canon, most personal accounts are ultimately a form of private discourse. This study utilizes personal narratives, but privileges the public discourse of soldiers within trench newspapers. Trench newspapers were written by and for soldiers; thus the discourse is that of the trenches. Exploring public discourse among soldiers highlights the distinctions between the reasons for war as told in the official press and propaganda posters and the justifications used in the trenches.

Within trench newspapers British and French soldiers saw connections between war objectives and empire, especially what they perceived to be Germany's imperial ambitions. In an illustration from *Le Petit Echo* Wilhelm awakes from a nightmare about losing Baghdad to the English.[12] He is in a room decorated with Iron Cross curtains and bedding. The longed-for "Berlin to Baghdad" rail line juts forth from the crescent,

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[11] Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (Berkeley: 2002), 141.
[12] *Le Petit Echo*, No. 122 (March 11, 1917), 1. UPENN

minaret, and fairytale palace-bestrewn Baghdad in a painting on the wall while a copy of *1001 Arabian Nights* lies open on the bed.[13] Stereotypes of German militarism and of Orientalism combine to comic and propagandistic effect in this illustration from the pen of a soldier, not of an official or newspaperman back in Paris. The artist connected Wilhelm's ambitions in the war, and particularly in the Near East, to a larger imperial German strategy. The notion that Baghdad would go either to the English or to the Germans reinforces an image of the Ottoman lands as potential colonial possessions. This drawing suggests that at least some French soldiers saw the war as more than a struggle to defend France and Belgium—they recognized the global and imperial context of the war and operated with the requisite tropes to understand it and to comment on it.

While Audoin-Rouzeau's *Men at War* argues that trench journals reveal that national sentiment helped French *poilus* endure four years of war, this study aims to establish that trench journals also reveal that national sentiment was inseparable from empire. Soldiers' writings in trench papers highlight the ways in which the nation was an "imperial social formation" in the terms of Mrinalini Sinha.[14] Looking at colonial masculinity, Sinha argues that British masculinity and Bengali effeminacy were built together. Sinha emphasizes "the prior significance of imperialism in the construction of both 'national' British and 'colonial' Indian politics of masculinity in the late nineteenth century."[15] That the interdependencies and interconnections of modern societies were partially constituted through empire is strikingly evident in the Great War. The British and French relied on colonies and dominions to supply men and material, fought outside of Europe for colonial possessions, and first fought within Europe with armies and

[13] The "Berlin to Baghdad" railway was a German objective before the war.
[14] Mrinalini Sinha, *Specters of Mother India* (Durham, NC: 2006), 17-18.
[15] Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 7.

generals proven in colonial settings. Empire affected wartime reality at and away from the front. *Capital Cities at War,* though not focused on empire and in many ways employing a microhistorical approach, argues:

> the boundaries between city, nation, and empire, in cultural terms, were porous in wartime. In other ways, these metropolitan centers were imperial meeting grounds. Men and women from virtually every corner of the world met not only in high office, but in cabarets, cinemas, pubs, and clubs.[16]

British and French soldiers lived in worlds and experienced a war shaped by empires.

During and immediately after the Great War, a number of books came out which considered the extra-national context of the war or the involvement of colonial troops. Several of those books were produced by governments, with the use of official documents, or by men who had some relationship to the war.[17] Recent scholarship affirms the centrality of empire to the Great War. Many historians have explored the ways in which the war contributed to nationalism in the colonies and dominions within the British Empire.[18] The war outside of Europe has particularly received renewed attention of late.[19] Some historians have also attempted to present an overarching view of the war with attention to empire. Hew Strachan's *The First World War: Volume One: To Arms* is a particularly rich example.[20]

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[16] Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, "Conclusions," *Capital Cities at War* (Cambridge: 1997), 549-550.
[17] Titles include *Ten Days With the Indian Army Corps at the Front*, by Eyre Chatterton, the Bishop of Nagpur; *India's Contribution to the Great War,* published by the Authority of the Government of India in 1923; and Alphonse Séché's *Les Noirs, D'après des documents officiels*, 1919.
[18] DeWitt C Ellinwood and S.D. Pradhan, *India and World War I* (Columbia, MO: South Asia Books, 1978). Upendra Narayan Chakravorty, *Indian Nationalism and the First World War, 1914-1918* (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1997). Bill Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007).
[19] Examples are Paul Davis, *Ends and means: The British Mesopotamian campaign and commission* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994). Roger Ford, *Eden to Armageddon: The First World War in the Middle East* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2009). Wilfred Nunn, *Tigris Gunboats: the forgotten war in Iraq1914-1917* (London: Chatham, 2007). Rémy Porte, *Du Caire À Damas* (Paris : Soteca, 2008).
[20] John Morrow's *The Great War, An Imperial History* (2004) makes a similar effort.

A strong trend in the scholarship on the Great War and empire has been to supplement and/or decenter the European narratives with the war experiences of citizens and subjects from outside of Europe. Just as Dipesh Chakrabarty called for scholars to "provincialize Europe," historians have turned to previously neglected voices and stories from the war with the result of provocative and informative histories which significantly enrich our understanding of the experience of the war. Among those works which stand out are Joe Lunn's *Memoirs of the Maelstrom, A Senegalese Oral History of the First World War* (1999) and David Omissi's *Indian Voices of the Great War, soldiers' letters 1914-1918* (1999).[21] This trend continued into the new century, with works like Richard Fogarty's *Race & War in France, Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914-1918* (2008); *The World in World Wars, Experiences, Perceptions and Perspectives from Africa and Asia*, edited by Heike Liebau, Katrin Bromber, Katharina Lange, Dyala Hamzah and Ravi Ahuja (2010); and *Race, Empire and First World War Writing*, edited by Santanu Das (2011). As we near the hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the war, the public school boys who have long dominated the telling of the war are facing increasing competition.

This dissertation seeks to decenter Europe in a different but related way, by refusing to consider the experiences of the British and French in the Great War as separable from empire. Soldiers from India and Africa were not the only ones who experienced empire during the war. In this way, this project is in keeping with some of the essays in *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* and the work of Tyler Stovall.[22]

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[21] Myron Echenberg's *Colonial Conscripts* (1991) used a longer timeline but also contributed to knowledge of the *tirailleurs sénégalais* in the Great War.

[22] Including Tyler Stovall, "The Color Line Behind the Lines: Racial Violence in France During the Great War," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 103, No. 3 (Jun., 1998), pp. 737-769.

It “brings empire home” in a way that the war did. Wartime experiences provoked fresh thought for many soldiers about the world and the ways it worked. Rather than focus on the narratives of colonial soldiers or the grand scale image of the war and empire with regard to battles and materials everywhere, this study attempts to understand how British and French soldiers in Europe saw that “big picture.” Trench newspapers have not yet been considered for the light they shed on soldiers’ constructions of empire; looking at trench newspapers includes more of the common soldiers’ perspectives. Trench newspapers also bring print culture from beyond the civilian realm into the discussion of the war and empire.

This project makes use of British and French trench newspapers and other sources in collections at the University of Pennsylvania, the Imperial War Museum in London, the Cambridge University Library, the Historial de la Grande Guerre in Péronne, France, and the trench newspaper collections at the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (BDIC) in Nanterre and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) in Paris, now hosted online through the BDIC. This project centers on the discourses of British and French soldiers, from and within Europe, about empire during the war. Trench newspapers are the dominant sources, supplemented by personal accounts of the war. Within trench newspapers, and soldiers’ letters and diaries, empire was not the dominant theme, but it was a consistent narrative thread. In every possible case, priority has been given to accounts written during the war. One reason for the focus on trench newspapers is to step out from beneath the shadow of postwar narratives, which were inevitably colored by events and experiences that happened after the war. Colonial and Dominion trench newspapers have been omitted from this project, in order to control

its scope. British and French trench newspapers from the Ottoman campaigns receive some attention in one chapter, but are otherwise excluded for the same reason.

Chapter by Chapter

Holism suggests that a working system cannot be reduced to or explained by its parts. The same ought to be true of a dissertation. Still, there are parts in a dissertation, and each chapter should have its own purpose and internal coherence. This dissertation has five chapters before the conclusion, each related to the main themes of the dissertation and to the other chapters, but establishing distinct conclusions.

The first chapter is "The Great War in Imperial Context." This chapter uses mostly secondary sources to provide background on the imperial context of the war. The fighting on non-European fronts, the use of colonial troops, the necessity of supplies from outside Europe, and the role of the dominions in the war effort are all discussed. This chapter shows the ways in which the British and French empires mobilized resources during the war and created new networks of exchange and interaction. This information also puts the other chapters of the dissertation in context, by showing the ways in which British and French soldiers in the trenches of Europe were connected to their empires by and during the war. It is soldiers' discourses about these relationships with the other people and the other places within their empires that this dissertation seeks to interrogate.

The second chapter, "Who *is* Christopher of Whisky Fame?," is a detailed look at trench newspapers. While Great War poetry and memoirs are widely known and appreciated, the trench newspapers of the Great War are seldom discussed or utilized as sources. Trench newspapers provide unique access to soldiers' public discourses during

the war and are among the few wartime documents, from any war, composed by multiple service members and intended for circulation among soldiers. Trench newspapers also played a role in reflecting and shaping opinions at the front lines. Those opinions, of soldiers during the war, have too often been buried under postwar reflections. This chapter familiarizes readers with the trench newspaper genre, including its satire and humor, literary content, and relationship to readers.

The third chapter, "Men on the Margins," examines representations of colonial troops within British and French trench newspapers. Though a minority on the Western Front and within trench newspapers colonial troops had a place in both locations. British and French soldiers' references to and depictions of colonial troops provide insight into those soldiers' views of the relationship between their empires and those empires' subjects. The writings of British and French soldiers show the racial stereotypes and hierarchies generated within the imperial culture of their respective empires. These beliefs, however, were at times complicated by the experience of the war and the imperial interdependency that made victory possible. Colonial troops, in particular, prompted thinking about empires and the geographies of their populations because the involvement of colonial troops brought colonial subjects to the heart of Europe, initiating new contact and consideration. According to *Les Noirs*, seemingly every small village hospital eventually had a Senegalese soldier and his arrival was inevitably a sensation.[23] The war did not reverse stereotypes but it challenged many and weakened the myth of European superiority. Just as notes in the margins highlight a text, depictions of the men from the margins in trench newspapers speak to larger issues surrounding the public and at the heart of the war. These included the influence of the prewar media on understanding

[23] Séché, 235.

empires, the ways in which soldiers established the "us" and "them" of the trenches, and soldiers' justifications for fighting in the war. This chapter also identifies some of the key differences between the British and the French with regard to their colonies and the war.

The fourth chapter, "Why War?," takes a close look at descriptions of Germany in British and French trench newspapers. Like the Entente powers after the war, Entente soldiers during the war considered Germany to be the cause of the war and the chief opponent. Within trench papers the other Central Powers merited less attention and consideration. British and French descriptions of Germany are quite revealing in terms of the connections between the war and empire. The Great War has often been explained as a European civil war, but it was deeply connected to colonial violence. Germany was alternately described comparably with rebelling "subject races" in overseas territories and accused of bringing the brutal methods of imperialism home. Denigration of Germany relied on similar tropes to justification for British and French colonization, such as dismissing *Kultur* in contrast to Anglo-French civilization and suggesting German racial inferiority. Accusations of German imperialism repackaged images from the prewar media and scandals like Leopold's Congo. These descriptions suggest that despite belief in imperial hierarchies, there was an awareness of the evils of imperialism and the presence of a subtle anti-colonialism in soldiers' discourse, also shown in the devaluation of fighting outside of Europe and the Entente wartime colonial acquisitions. The existence of a widespread feeling that empire—as opposed to one's homeland—was not worth dying for becomes clear. Such attitudes have to be examined in the context of precursors or foreshadowing of later discourses of decolonization. This chapter explores

the extent to which the violence of the Great War was interpreted through the lens of colonial violence.

The fifth chapter, "Other Fronts, Other Wars?," analyzes depictions of the fighting outside of Europe, in the African and the Ottoman campaigns. This chapter demonstrates that even while soldiers continued to place priority on fighting in and for European territory, there was interest in news of the other fronts and some awareness of the fighting elsewhere. That interest and awareness was tied almost exclusively to the Ottoman campaigns. Representations of the Ottomans and of the fighting against them relied on orientalist tropes common in Britain and France before the war and, again, demonstrate soldiers' familiarity with literature and the press. Unlike other chapters, "Other Fronts, Other Wars?" examines some British and French papers from the Ottoman campaigns. Soldiers in the Ottoman campaigns were also prone to orientalism and the same hierarchy of geography, but their papers also demonstrate an awareness of the gap between the tropes they knew and used and the world they encountered through the war and their actual experiences in the Near East.

Together the chapters seek to illuminate the intertwining threads of war and empire. The third chapter begins with one of the most obvious connections between the war and imperial experience in Europe, the use of colonial troops. The chapter explores much of the explicit discourse about empires and the ways in which it related to the wider formation of the community of the trenches. The fourth chapter explores both the explicit discourse about Germany's empire and the implicit discourse about the nature of imperialism within trench newspapers, which related back to soldiers' own empires. The fifth chapter looks at depictions of the Ottoman campaigns for the ways in which

orientalism was employed and geography evaluated, finding the ways in which the war tested the logic and fantasy of empire. Thus the dissertation looks at the "us," the "them" and the "where," interrogating topics relevant in any war and to any soldier while looking at the explicit and implicit constructions of empire within trench newspapers. The conclusion of this dissertation provides some preliminary thoughts on the ways in which this study can be relevant to scholars of various fields and the future areas of research suggested by the findings.

This study contributes to a richer understanding of the ways in which the Great War was grounded in empire. Yet this project also breaks new ground. It explores the ways in which the war was an imperial experience for British and French soldiers, decentering the national European experience while remaining grounded in European history. This study also examines ways in which empire provided an interpretive lens for viewing the war, demonstrating that what has often described as a "European civil war" was often seen by soldiers through the images and tropes of colonial warfare. This dissertation also advances the study of trench newspapers, by considering British and French sources together and by exploring the role of empire within them. This is a necessary step to begin to understand, from within, the wartime cultures of imperialism and the visions of European empire and "civilization" that emerged from and survived the war, especially as they were understood within the public.

Chapter One

The Great War in Imperial Context

The Great War in history is like an old photo album full of evocative images. The first pages are the familiar black and white photographs of trench warfare in Europe. Pale faces peer out of the French mud and stare bleakly into the camera. Then there are photos of machine guns, tanks, poison gas and aerial combat. In the margins beside the photos are poems and scraps of novels, and the occasional pasted news clipping. Yet there are also a great many photos hidden away in shoe boxes that were never included in the photo album. These photos show the training and combat of colonial troops. There are also images of Africa, Palestine and Mesopotamia. There are sands, jungles, the Tigris River, and a notable lack of trenches.

For all its power to evoke memories and thought, the Great War rarely evokes the grip of empire. The voices we imagine in the trenches are nearly all speaking European languages. However, the British and the French both utilized their colonies, dominions, and protectorates for men and material to strengthen their war efforts. These soldiers and supplies played distinct roles in the fighting of the war that affected the functioning of empires after the war. Not only did soldiers and supplies come to Europe from all corners of the globe, but a significant amount of fighting took place outside of Europe. The nature and aims of the African and Ottoman campaigns reveal aspects of the war's meaning and significance often forgotten. A broader view of the war reveals the ways in which the British and French armed forces, and many of their aims in the war, were imperially constituted.

A body of literature on the war outside of Europe and on colonial combatants does exist and has been growing in recent years. There are excellent studies of colonial contributions and the experiences of non-European soldiers. However, studies of colonial contributions typically focus on the rise of nationalism in colonial possessions or the colonial experience of the war and do little to connect those stories to the experiences of European soldiers. Those texts which center on the experience and events of war in Europe often neglect colonial contributions and imperial context altogether. Few works tie together these stories, too often considered supplementary, with the overall meaning and experience of the Great War. Yet maintaining a predominantly Eurocentric view of the war limits understanding of the war's significance and allows us to see little more in the war than a defensive struggle in France for Anglo-French "civilization." This chapter provides consideration of the role of the British and the French empires in the Great War, and the non-European components of armies, strategies, and supply, in order to enable better evaluation of the place of empire in trench newspapers and in soldiers' perspectives on the war in the chapters to follow.

The Reach of Empire: men and material from outside Europe

Though primarily associated with Europe, the Great War flexed the tendons of empires and affected the lives of millions around the world. To fight the Central Powers the British and the French drew on global resources. Colonial soldiers and supplies affected the course of the war and created their own legacies. Entente fighting forces were sustained by men and material from around the world.

India quickly joined the imperial war effort when the war began in 1914. Bhupendra Nath Basu, president of the Indian National Congress, suggested that for Indians the war was "an opportunity of showing that, as equal subjects of His Majesty, they are prepared to fight shoulder to shoulder with the people of the other parts of the Empire in defence of rights and justice, and the cause of the Empire, we must present to the World the spectacle of a united Empire."[24] That spectacle was significant; by the war's end India contributed 1,362,394 soldiers and non-combatants, 172,815 animals, and 3,691,836 tons of stores and supplies. 132,496 Indian troops were sent to France, 46,906 to East Africa, 588,717 to Mesopotamia, 116,159 to Egypt, 9,366 to Gallipoli and Salonika and 49,700 to Aden and the Persian Gulf.[25] Lord Hardinge, Viceroy of India, said:

> The fact that the Government of India are in a position to help the mother country by the despatch of such a large proportion of our armed forces is a supreme mark of my absolute confidence in the fidelity of our troops and in the loyalty of the Indian people. I trust that this may be fully recognised in England and abroad.[26]

At the outbreak of the war, the faithful troops of the Indian Army numbered 155,423 men, including about 15,000 British Officers and 45,660 non-combatants.[27] These Indian troops were recruited according to the theory of "martial races"—which suggested some people groups were naturally more suited to war, hence the prominent imagery of Sikhs and Gurkhas.[28] Though some Indians served as officers, most officers were European. The need for troops during the war exceeded the old numbers and the old theories and brought the end of recruiting according to "martial races." Yet expanding

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[24] Chakravorty, 8.
[25] Ibid, 11.
[26] *India's Contribution to the Great War*, published by the Authority of the Government of India (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1923), 69.
[27] DeWitt and Pradhan, 51.
[28] Heather Streets, *Martial races* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2004).

the army was a struggle against general reluctance to enlist for war among Indians. Recruiting measures were often extremely coercive, especially in rural areas, and the Labour Corps met quotas by recruiting as many as 15,000 convicts through sentence completion in exchange for wartime service.[29] Within the Indian Army, many of those who served outside India gained a sense of empowerment, and Indians who served in Europe often returned with anti-British sentiments after experiencing better treatment at the hands of the French.[30]

A primary motivation for India's participation in the global war effort was the hope for greater rights within the empire. Indian officials expected to reach Dominion status as a result of India's support.[31] *India's Contribution to the Great War*, published in 1923, pointed out that following the war, India's Red Cross was "brought within the International League of Red Cross Societies and [now] enjoys the same status as has been granted to British Dominions."[32] Yet despite the prospect of gains, the war had its costs. India's financial contributions to the war effort caused the population to suffer under price and tax increases. India had shortages of all types, food riots and 40 cases of looting in the final year of the war.[33] Unsurprisingly, the war provoked a spike in the Home Rule movement and more extreme nationalist groups.

Even if India had not contributed men and material on a significant level, India was a significant chess piece in global war strategies. Many suspected that the seizure of India was a German objective. The Germans certainly hoped to provoke trouble for the empire through Indian dissent. In addition to the *jihad* against the British, Germany

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[29] Chakravorty, 15.
[30] David Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).
[31] Mancherjee Bhownaggree, *The Verdict of India* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1916), 39.
[32] *India's Contribution to the Great War*, 175.
[33] Chakravorty, 239.

connected with and supported some of the growing Indian nationalist movements. The German Union of Friendly India trained and armed Indian nationals abroad and took propaganda to Indian POWs.[34] According to Mancherjee Bhownaggree, the second Asian to serve in the House of Commons, India had become the jury hearing the case for empire by Germany or Britain.[35] Even the engagements in German East Africa were partially motivated by the need to protect the route to India. As the jewel in the imperial crown, India and its fate were on many minds during the course of the war.

While India's contribution to the Great War may be largely unfamiliar in the West, the participation of the Dominions of Canada, Australia and New Zealand is the stuff of legend. The parliaments of these Dominions responded immediately to the outbreak of war by placing their navies under British command. They also "recruited and financed large expeditionary forces to ease the burden of the main British war effort in France," which was hardly new because "Australia and New Zealand both had an expeditionary military culture of war service for the British empire" and had sent troops to the Boer War, as had Canada.[36] For many in these Dominions, the sound of war was synonymous with the "call of empire."

In the war from the beginning, Canadians experienced it in full. "In Flanders Fields," possibly the most famous English-language poem of the war, was written by a Canadian—Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae. Canadians assumed their place in the war as participants in the British Empire. An anonymous contributor to *The Dead Horse Corner Gazette*, a Canadian trench newspaper, explained in 1915 that:

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[34] Chakravorty, 109.
[35] Bhownaggree, 12.
[36] Nasson, 5.

> Imperialism is at last beginning to be understood. It is not a mere incident engendered by excessive flag-flapping, but is born of national exigencies demanding sacrifices by and for the people. True imperialism is too broad a thing to be hurt by petty jealousies and intrigues, too vital a state to allow the incursion of politics. Imperialism has ceased to be an empty phrase; it has become an actuality revitalised by national sacrifice.[37]

That national sacrifice included sending 485,000 men and women overseas and losing 60,000 to war wounds, from a population of merely eight million. In terms of supplies, in the final two years of the war, Canada manufactured one third of the British Expeditionary Force's munitions. Canada also supplied wheat, oats, beef, and draft animals to the Entente forces, and in 1915 alone spent "half a million dollars per day on the war."[38]

For many in Canada, the Great War was a defining moment. The heroism at Vimy Ridge was associated with stereotyped "Western" lumberjacks, men of great strength, valor, and rural ways.[39] The shock troops of the empire, these men were also the shock troops of the nation. For participants and historians, the Great War has been viewed as a turning point in Canadian nationalism—ushering in a sense of identity independent of the empire. Even skeptical historians cannot deny the actions of the Imperial War Cabinet in 1917, "classifying Canada and the other self-governing Dominions as autonomous members of the Empire with a right to ongoing consultation."[40]

The role of the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) in the Great War was even more closely associated with nation building. Though Australia and New

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[37] *Dead Horse Corner Gazette*, (October 1915), 4. CUL
[38] Len Shurtleff, "Foreword," *Canada and the Great War* (Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), x-xi.
[39] Tim Cook, "Immortalizing the Canadian Soldier," *Canada and the Great War*, 48.
[40] Jeff Keshen, "The Great War Soldier as Nation Builder in Canada and Australia," *Canada and the Great War*, 4.

Zealand worked with Japan to take the German colonies in the Pacific and sent men to the Western Front, stories of ANZAC participation in the war typically center on the fighting against the Ottomans, specifically in the Dardanelles campaign. This campaign has its own canon of film and literature in Australia and New Zealand. An early role that helped launch actor Mel Gibson's career was in the film *Gallipoli*, which tells the tale of the ANZAC troops in the failed campaign. Heavily deployed to non-European campaigns and experiencing high losses, ANZAC troops made a name for themselves, and their experiences were seen as distinctive. Though soldiers for empire, ANZAC troops fit least with the authoritarian structure of the British military system and had high rates of disciplinary issues as well as more camaraderie between officers and the lower ranks.[41] ANZAC soldiers were portrayed as "successful because their civilian, primarily bush, background fitted them for their role as soldiers."[42]

ANZAC soldiers were portrayed as successful in terms of military service ideals but were also portrayed as youth wasted in battle by foolhardy old generals. The massive bloodshed sustained in the campaigns against the Ottomans bred resentment toward the British Empire. The dramatic losses of ANZAC troops were not forgotten but were actively remembered. In 1928, Australia celebrated its first "Anzac Day," with a service at 4:30 am, "the time when the first troops landed at Gallipoli," and by 1939 there were 30,000 participants.[43] Not only did ANZAC participation in the war directly lead to greater legal autonomy for the Dominions in the empire, but the traditions that emerged around commemoration of ANZAC troops fostered nationalism in Australia and New Zealand.

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[41] Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture*.
[42] David Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism* (New York: Berg, 1998), 214.
[43] Lloyd, 191.

Compared to the other British Dominions, South Africa's government was perhaps the most reluctant to participate in the First World War. The embrace of the British Empire was none too warm for those South Africans who had opposed the British in the Boer War. However, at the outbreak of war, South Africa immediately released 6,000 imperial troops and promised to provide for its own defense.[44] Soon South Africa became more involved in the war efforts in Africa and Europe, despite the 1914-1915 Afrikaner Rebellion.

South African involvement was by no means negligible. By the end of the war, 146,000 white men and 400 white nurses volunteered, 45,000 Africans served as labor auxiliaries, 15,000 "Coloured" troops and non-combatants served, and 12,500 South Africans were killed in action or "died as a direct consequence of active service."[45] Those who served were recruited for specific campaigns: to German Southwest Africa, German East Africa, and Europe (with some diverted to Mesopotamia). Due to the 1912 Defence Act, the South African military was limited to white South Africans, and Africans were never welcomed as combatants. "Coloured" troops, however, were able to serve in the Cape Corps, and some were combatants. Not only did they serve in Mesopotamia, but the Cape Corps was viewed by many as a means of achieving greater rights within the empire, and within South Africa specifically.[46]

Though most South African soldiers and non-combatants were active in Africa, they also made an impact in Europe. Approximately 21,000 Africans in the South African Native Labour Contingent went to France between 1916 and 1918.[47] White

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[44] Nasson, 35.
[45] Ibid, 244.
[46] Ibid, 157.
[47] Ibid, 160.

South African soldiers in Europe were a trench spectacle, imitating Zulu war cries, and intriguing British journalists, who regarded them as a "colonial ace in the pack."[48] Though South African soldiers were ultimately unprepared for trench warfare and by no means exceptional combatants, to some European observers these veterans of colonial policing and warfare were living characters from a Rider Haggard novel.

Like the British, the French had overseas resources to draw upon when the war began. The French empire was the second largest in the world, with a population of 44 million that spanned the globe.[49] Unlike the British, the French did not have white dominions and had more limited European settlement in their colonies. However, the French empire had a long tradition of recruiting colonial subjects for military and labor services. The French colonies and protectorates were a natural source of support when the Great War began.

The French began recruiting indigenous troops, known as *troupes indigènes*, as early as the seventeenth century in India. In the nineteenth century, African recruits were used in the conquest of French West Africa, and Algerians were also deployed in Crimea, Italy and France.[50] Recruiting *troupes indigènes*, before and during the Great War, involved conscription and coercion.[51] The French took over earlier conscription services in conquered territories and often instituted their own, with quotas for regions and people groups, which were understood as a "blood tax." As with British colonial soldiers, distinctions were made regarding martial races—*races guerrières* and *races non-guerrières*. The famous *tirailleurs sénégalais*, in reality from all of French West Africa,

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[48] Ibid, 129.
[49] Jacques Frémeaux, *Les Colonies Dans La Grande Guerre* (Soteca, 2006), 11.
[50] Richard Fogarty, *Race & War in France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 17. Martin Klein, *Slavery and colonial rule in French West Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[51] Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts*.

were considered natural warriors while others, such as the Indochinese, were considered better suited to labor and supply work. Colonial troops had some of their own officers but were largely under the direction of French officers, and during the Great War their battalions would often be mixed with the metropolitan French. This was due to belief in their need for European intellect and guidance in western combat. When the war began, there were already approximately 90,000 *troupes indigènes* ready for deployment.[52] In the course of the war an additional 500,000 were recruited, from West Africa, Madagascar, Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos), Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco.[53]

French overseas possessions also made substantial material contributions to the war effort. To fight the war, France had to import much of the material needed to fuel its battle technology, including coal and oil, as well as tons of cotton and raffia, most of it coming from the colonies. Many of the statistics regarding colonial supplies were not kept until 1916, but from then until the end of the war metropolitan France imported millions of tons of supplies of all sorts from its colonies. These contributions included 200,000 tons of rice from Indochina, 560,000 tons of oil from Senegal, and 240,000 tons of sugar from the Antilles and Réunion. North Africa provided 1.5 million tons of cereal, 3.5 million tons of mutton, 27.5 million hectoliters of wine, and also helped supply campaigns outside of Europe.[54] The availability of these overseas resources and the sacrifices of colonial subjects and citizens helped France to endure invasion and made possible struggle against Germany that might otherwise have been undersupplied.

Though in many ways the British and the French both hoped to use the colonies to offset costs of the war to Europe, the French had a somewhat different relationship with

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[52] Fogarty, 24.
[53] Ibid, 27.
[54] Frémeaux, 79, 83, 84.

their colonial troops. In a 1904-1905 French military publication regarding the role of officers in colonial armies, it was suggested that while the English avoided the indigenous populations of their colonies, sipping cocktails in the most comfortable hotels in the European quarter, the French mingled with their subjects, enjoying the native quarters and throwing the idea of European prestige to the wind.[55] That was as it should be for the authors, who advised officers to respect their indigenous charges and learn their ways in a mission of love; indigenous troops were excellent when understood and well-commanded.[56] Though colonial troops were often coerced to serve, believers in assimilation suggested that soldiers were benefiting from the civilizing mission of the French and making cultural advances through service. Military service was considered part of the adoption of French culture.[57] It was a tradition launched in France with the Revolution itself, during the *levée en masse*.

French colonial troops were more directly tied to France proper than their British counterparts were. In 1910, the French general Charles Mangin published a famous book, *La force noire*, which advocated African soldiers as a remedy for France's demographic problems and military needs. This suggests somewhat permeable boundaries within empire, with populations able to substitute for each other. In contrast, the British were reluctant to use Africans as combatants of any kind and unwilling to assign black soldiers to combat in Europe. Even the Indian Army was removed from Europe in 1916. In France during the war, Senator Henry Bérenger claimed that

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[55] *Role de l'officier dans la nation armée* (Versailles : Ecole Militaire de L'Artillerie et du Genie, 1904-1905), 160.
[56] Ibid, 163.
[57] Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

European France was no longer separated from colonial France.[58] This may have been an exaggeration, but the competing colonial ideals of assimilation and association gave colonial troops more opportunity to participate widely in empire. While everyone in the British Empire was a subject, as many as 875,000 colonial French, of non-European descent, were citizens like their metropolitan counterparts.[59] Through the efforts of Blaise Diagne, a parliamentary representative from Senegal, Senegalese participation in the war became effectively a war for rights within empire—especially citizenship.[60] The contributions of colonies brought their people closer to the status of metropolitan French.

The experiences of *troupes indigènes* in the Great War were varied. Colonial troops were deployed to Europe, the Dardanelles and Macedonia. Those who were believed to lack the martial spirit saw little combat, while more martial recruits were often used as shock troops—the *tirailleurs sénégalais* were 2.5 times more likely to be killed than their metropolitan French counterparts.[61] Considerations of race and climate also affected wartime experiences. Those believed to be especially vulnerable to the cold were removed from the front lines to spend the winters in southern France.[62] Colonial troops, especially Muslims, were also subjected to more direct German propaganda—appealing to their faith and decrying French imperialism in their homelands. While most colonial troops remained loyal, the war considerably changed colonial expectations of empire, and *troupes indigènes* returned home consistently more resistant to arbitrary rule and seeking more tangible benefits from French presence, including citizenship.[63]

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[58] Fogarty, 1.
[59] Frémeaux, 15.
[60] Lunn, 59.
[61] Ibid, 145.
[62] Ibid, 145.
[63] Klein, 217-218.

The participation of colonies, dominions and protectorates in the Entente war efforts ranged the spectrum from voluntary to coerced. Yet almost no part of the British and the French empires remained completely untouched by the Great War. The contributions of British and French imperial subjects and citizens were laden with symbolism but by no means primarily symbolic and often came at great cost to the giver. Aiding the war effort was seen as confirming and strengthening the bonds within empire, but political advocacy accompanied troops going to and returning from fronts abroad. Colonies and dominions leveraged their participation with their place in empires, assuming greater responsibility within and independence from their empires. Respect shown to the empire often became respect gained within the empire.

The War Beyond Europe: The African and Ottoman Campaigns

The fronts outside of Europe are often unknown, obscured by grainy images of the trenches in France. Though significantly different from European fighting, the campaigns in Africa and against the Ottomans were allocated significant imperial resources and gave vent to the colonial ambitions of the Great War. While not the center of historical imagination, these fronts were not peripheral to the Entente aims in the war. In fact, the first and last shots fired in the Great War took place in Africa.

The aims of the African campaigns were relatively simple. Entente forces wanted to take the German colonies. German forces hoped to use fighting in Africa to distract from fighting in Europe and to drain resources from the British and French empires. In 1914-1915, the British and French together captured the German colonies of Togo and Cameroon, with the help of the Belgians in Cameroon, and with the French providing the

bulk of the troops and receiving the bulk of the partitioned colonies.[64] The same years German Southwest Africa was taken, primarily by troops from South Africa accompanied by over 35,000 African auxiliaries.[65] From 1915 to 1918 fighting in German East Africa took place between German and British forces, with the British able to take significant territory but with German forces eluding capture and surrendering only after the armistice in Europe.

One of the most significant differences between the campaigns in Europe and Africa was the composition of the military forces. According to Hew Strachan, "somewhere over 2 million Africans served in the First World War as soldiers or labourers, and upwards of 200,000 of them died or were killed in action."[66] The majority of these soldiers and laborers served in Africa, where they sometimes provided the majority of combatants and always the non-combatants. In the West African campaigns, the French utilized African soldiers and porters, drawing on their long tradition of *troupes indigènes*. The government of India was given the primary responsibility for conquering German East Africa, and the Indian Expeditionary Force provided the bulk of British soldiers there. [67] In addition to the IEF, the British campaigns in Africa were staffed by South African soldiers and African auxiliaries—unlike the French, the British were reluctant to use African combatants even in Africa. German forces were directed by German officers but consisted primarily of African soldiers, known as *askaris*. The

[64] Brian Digre, *Imperialism's New Clothes* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 22.
[65] Nasson, 162.
[66] Hew Strachan, *The First World War*; *To Arms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 497.
[67]S.D. Pradhan, *Indian Army In East Africa, 1914-1918* (India: National Book Organisation, 1991).

campaigns in Africa utilized vast numbers of men, with the British using as many as 160,000 soldiers and one million porters in German East Africa alone.[68]

The nature of fighting in Africa was as dramatically different from fighting in Europe as the composition of its forces. Artillery was limited and armies kept vast numbers of porters and auxiliaries to carry and move supplies. In the case of the German Army, entire families sometimes accompanied African soldiers.[69] Terrain was difficult and there was even at least one incident of an attack foiled by bees.[70] Disease and injury were significant hazards and created a near constant turnover among soldiers and porters. The legendary Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck also contributed to differences in fighting style. Commander of the German troops in East Africa, von Lettow-Vorbeck eluded capture by the British when they were as many as seventeen times his force's number, finally surrendering only on November 12, 1918, the day after the armistice in Europe.[71] He led his men into Portuguese East Africa and also utilized what were considered guerrilla tactics. Von Lettow-Vorbeck "had had experience of native and bush warfare gained in the Herero and Hottentot Campaigns of 1904-1906 in which he was wounded. He served during the above mentioned campaign as a Company and Detachment Commander."[72] Histories of the campaigns in East Africa often read like narratives of his personal exploits.

The fighting in Africa was also tempered by the imperial ambitions of the Entente forces. The French were eager to expand their holdings in West Africa and prepared to engage in fighting in East Africa, as well. The British declined this assistance and gave

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[68] Digre, 34.
[69] Strachan, *To Arms*, 503.
[70] Byron Farwell, *The Great War in Africa, 1914-1918* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986), 57.
[71] Pradhan, 146.
[72] Ibid, 32.

the French the lion's share of the partitioned German colonies in the west in hopes of gaining a free hand in the east.[73] The prospect of gaining German East Africa revived "Cape to Cairo" dreams for the British. Further, many British thought that German East Africa provided a perfect opportunity for Indian colonization. As early as 1916, a secret letter from the Government of India suggested that "no other territory is so suitable for Indian colonization, none other so convenient of access, and there is already a considerable Indian population settled in the vicinity."[74] In von Lettow-Vorbeck's memoirs he recorded that "an Englishman captured during the war at Mahenge remarked that it would be possible to make East Africa into a second India, and I think he was right."[75] Throughout the fighting in Africa, Entente forces measured collaboration against colonial competition, seeking to limit the territorial gains of their allies while harming their enemy. The British forces also balanced war aims with management of India and South Africa, and with their ambitions on the continent.

Apart from the futility of Gallipoli, the campaigns against the Ottomans often seem shrouded in Lawrence of Arabia's robes. Entente fighting against the Ottoman Empire was more extensive than many realize. The Russians met the Ottomans in the Caucasus. Together the British and French suffered through the Dardanelles/Gallipoli campaign. The British, with some help from the French, also defended their interests in Egypt and launched offensive campaigns into Mesopotamia and Palestine. Simultaneously, the British worked to encourage Arab revolt against Ottoman rule. By the end of the war, the Ottoman Empire was effectively dismantled.

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[73] Strachan, *To Arms*, 584.
[74] Digre, 88.
[75] Pradhan, 51.

Objectives in the Ottoman campaigns were very similar to the war aims in Africa. The Ottomans and Germans hoped that having another front would divert troops and resources from Europe, giving the Germans relief in France and against the Russians.[76] Initially, the Ottomans hoped to retake Egypt, but soon "focused on maintaining control of the imperial provinces of Palestine and Syria as an integral part of the empire."[77] While the British and French began merely intending to protect the Suez Canal and India, their campaigns became more offensive and imperial-minded.[78] Planners of the Dardanelles campaign hoped to take Constantinople. The British also hoped to secure their interests in the Middle East, which included oil, by marching to Baghdad ahead of the Russians and taking Jerusalem. Though thwarted by the League of Nations after the war, the Sykes-Picot Agreement demonstrates the extent of French and British territorial lust:

> The Agreement gave Britain direct control over Lower Mesopotamia and the western/southern Persian Gulf littoral, and 'influence' over a swathe of territory to the west (but not as far as the Mediterranean coast save at the ports of Haifa and Acre), while the French got direct control over the southern coast of Anatolia and the coastal region of Syria, including the Lebanon, and of a large portion of south-eastern Anatolia, and 'influence' over the remainder of Syria and northern Mesopotamia.[79]

The composition of troops in the Ottoman campaigns was significantly different from that on the Western Front. Most of the Entente fighting in Mesopotamia and Palestine utilized the Indian Expeditionary Force. As in East Africa, India was responsible for the administration of the Mesopotamian campaign. The French contributed ships and air support to various campaigns but were primarily a ground force in the Dardanelles. At Gallipoli, too, troops were often from the reaches of the empire—

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[76] Davis, 18.
[77] Anthony Bruce, *The Last Crusade* (London: John Murray, 2002), 3.
[78] Roger Ford, 299.
[79] Ibid, 399.

with significant Indian and ANZAC presence and French *troupes indigènes*. Gallipoli is an almost exclusively ANZAC narrative in popular historical memory, but in reality it involved a very diverse Entente fighting force.

The fighting on the Ottoman fronts differed from that in Europe in many ways. While there were trenches at Gallipoli, most fighting against the Ottomans took place without trenches. Navies and armies worked together in Egypt and in Mesopotamia. Weather extremes ranged from over 100 degrees Fahrenheit to below freezing. Irregular troops, such as Arab groups, were a feature of fighting in the Ottoman territories. The Ottoman campaigns also featured some of the most memorable British defeats. The Mesopotamian campaign experienced a massive defeat in a siege at Kut-al-Amara and a poor showing marching to Baghdad which "cost 40,000 casualties, including nearly 12,000 captured at Kut, 4,000 of whom then died in captivity."[80] The Mesopotamia Commission, created later, found that the advance toward Baghdad lacked sufficient preparation and stated of the campaign in general that "no overall strategy or definite goals were ever formulated."[81] The Dardanelles campaign was a spectacular failure that led to a lull in Winston Churchill's career. All told, in the Dardanelles campaign the British lost 37,000 dead and 83,000 wounded: 25,200 from Great Britain and Ireland, 7,300 from Australia, 2,400 from New Zealand, 1,700 from India and 22 from New Foundland.[82] Though their participation is often overshadowed in the English-speaking world, the French lost 47,000 killed and wounded.[83] The failure of the Dardanelles

[80] Nunn, 6.
[81] Davis, 208.
[82] Field Marshal Lord Carver, *The Turkish Front 1914-1918* (London: Pan Macmillan Ltd, 2003), 101.
[83] Ibid, 101.

campaign led to the appointment of a British commission to investigate, as was done for the Mesopotamian campaign.

Despite the costs and poor administration, the Entente forces triumphed against the Ottomans. Turkey surrendered on October 31, 1918.[84] Though often depicted as a sideshow to the fighting in Europe, the Ottoman campaigns set the tone for the twentieth century for many of the nations involved. In addition to playing a role in the birth of Australian and New Zealand nationalism, the campaigns against the Ottomans changed the power structure of the Middle East. When the smoke cleared from the war, much of the Ottoman Empire was on the path to independence, the Balfour Declaration was issued, and Wahhabi political forces were on the rise in Saudi Arabia.

Imperial Armies? Military experience within empire prior to 1914

While colonial soldiers and the African and Ottoman fronts were substantial parts of the Great War efforts, the focus of the war was in Europe and the vast majority of its soldiers were European. Yet even these forces were in many ways imperially constituted. When the war began, the first troops to respond were expeditionary forces, organized for use in imperial campaigns. Within military leadership, many generals had risen to power and to prominence in imperial contexts. For example, the French general Joseph Joffre made his career in the colonies before the war.[85] General Herbert Kitchener entered World War I already famous in Britain for his activities in Egypt, Sudan, and the Boer War. Even those soldiers not part of expeditionary forces were in some ways shaped by

[84] Nunn, 279.
[85] Fogarty, 13.

the realities of empire. The soldierly ideal itself at the outbreak of the war was dominated by the idea of the imperial soldier.

A number of European soldiers had military experience outside of Europe prior to the Great War. Like many other young men of his generation, Paul Pireaud, the subject of Martha Hanna's book on communication between the frontlines and homefront, *Your Death Would Be Mine*, had served in Morocco during his mandatory years of military service before the war.[86] Under French military service requirements at least 60% of each age cohort was deemed fit to serve.[87] Considering early twentieth-century French involvement in Morocco, Madagascar, Tunisia, Algeria, and French West Africa, in addition to the Far East, some percentage of French soldiers in Europe had imperial military training and experiences to draw on in European combat. Their first taste of warfare and of the military was closely connected to the colonies and protectorates. According to Robert Gildea, "officers who saw action in the colonies and indigenous troops recruited into French units played a significant role in the war effort of 1914-1918."[88]

Trench newspapers also make clear the prior military service and colonial experiences many soldiers had. Two of the killed officers mentioned in the June 1917 *Fifth Glo'ster Gazette* had imperial experience. Second Lieutenant HE Hawkins was "a rubber planter in the Malay Straits" who "immediately came to England and enlisted in the London regiment" when the war began. Major George Ward "served throughout the South African war as an expert on machine guns," and later settled in Johannesburg. He came to London on holiday and joined up when war broke out. The Gloucestershire

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[86] Martha Hanna, *Your Death Would Be Mine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).
[87] Elizabeth Greenhalgh, *Victory through Coalition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 8.
[88] Robert Gildea, *Children of the Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 443.

Regiment itself was part of the British Expeditionary Force, associated with non-European combat, and had battle honors in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from Egypt, Italy, India, Crimea, and South Africa. Even trench newspapers not connected to the British Expeditionary Force indicate that many soldiers had imperial military experiences. The Christmas 1915 *Lead-Swinger* included a memoriam for Colonel Wright, which featured this poem:

> Fearless and without reproach, his life;
> Gallant and without a stain, his death.
> A noble English gentleman, whose breath
> Was drawn from childhood 'mid the sound of strife
> In India, with the Pathans, first he came
> To know the "zipp" of bullets, and the need
> Of courage, manliness and simple creed;
> To give English rule a noble name.
> Worshipped by all the men in his care,
> Well-loved by every officer apart.
> Brave to the point of folly, in his heart.
> With every hero—honour be his share.[89]

According to the poem, Colonel Wright was a "noble English gentleman" but he was knowledgeable about the "zipp" of bullets from his time in India fighting colonial people, while striving "to give English rule a noble name." In the poem, Wright's Englishness and nobility are intrinsically related to his time in colonial military service. Wright was one of many in the British military with experience of the Empire. The *Wipers Times*, the most famous trench newspaper of the First World War, was edited by Lieutenant Colonel F.J. Roberts. Before he returned to England and volunteered for the war, the Lieutenant Colonel was Fred Roberts, a mining engineer and prospector in Kimberley, South Africa.[90] Even among men who did not live in South Africa, a number of British soldiers

[89] *The Lead-Swinger*, Vol.1, No.6 (Christmas Number 1915), 5. CUL
[90] Nasson, 12.

had experienced the Boer War, as had troops from other dominions, including McRae, author of "In Flanders Fields."

Even those with no experience of the colonies or the military before the war would have been familiar with a connection between empire and military service. Between 1896 and 1914 British officers read *Small Wars*, a best-selling book about colonial campaigns.[91] More significantly, British and French civilians were widely exposed to colonial narratives involving military heroes. Edward Berenson's recent book, *Heroes of Empire*, looks at the media attention given to charismatic men in the conquest of Africa, covering the careers and fame of Jean-Baptiste Marchand, Charles Gordon, HM Stanley, Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, and Hubert Lyautey. Stories about these men appeared in the penny press, boys' magazines and illustrated periodicals.[92] Men like Brazza were the inspiration for memorabilia and kitsch including papers, pens, medals, and book. He also had a bust in the Musée Grevin.[93] Marchand, who went on to be a general in the First World War, was used by the media to attempt to unify France after the divisions created by the Dreyfus Affair.[94] As Berenson writes, the French army was

> a colonial army, an army of imperial heroes like Marchand, Gallieni, and Lyautey. The leaders of this more activist army, one that worked for the prestige and glory of France, had all cut their teeth fighting the endless and often brutal colonial war of the past decade and a half. They would lead French forces in the Great War to come.[95]

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[91] John MacKenzie, "Introduction," *Popular imperialism and the military, 1850-1950* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 7.
[92] Edward Berenson, *Heroes of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 10, 20, 54.
[93] Ibid, 79.
[94] Ibid, 172, 169.
[95] Ibid, 192-193.

Civilians and soldiers alike connected the colonial exploits with the Great War as it began. France had tension with Germany over Morocco up to the eve of the war, and according to Berenson, many believed that

> if Lyautey could defeat Moroccan barbarism with the promise of a humane, French peace, there was reason for confidence that other French generals—or perhaps Lyautey himself—would overcome German barbarism as well.[96]

British and French civilians and soldiers alike had long been conditioned to understand their military in terms of imperial exploits. From music halls to magazines, the soldier of the imagination fought in colonial struggles. As men enlisted and were drafted for the Great War, their entry to the military was shaped by this imperial context, even if they fought only within Europe.

Though many soldiers on the Western Front served only in Europe and had limited exposure to soldiers from outside Europe, it can be argued then that the armed forces in general were in many ways imperially constituted. The armies that began the war, particularly the expeditionary forces, were shaped by earlier imperial action. Soldiers with prior military experience were likely to have gained it within their empires. Apart from the Crimean War, all British wars between 1815 and 1914 were colonial.[97] As the glimpses of personal lives and regimental histories in trench newspapers make clear, many soldiers were shaped in an imperial context—suggesting that even the fighting in Europe could have colonial flavor. Those with no prior military experience were still influenced by the ideal of the colonial soldier and their knowledge of the imperial context of the army. Whether or not British and French soldiers envisioned the

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[96] Ibid, 262.
[97] John MacKenzie, "Introduction," *Popular imperialism and the military, 1850-1950* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 3.

Great War taking them to the colonies, the colonies were behind their understanding of traditional military life.

Conclusion

A closer look at the relationship between empire and the Great War will provide new captions for some of the familiar photos in the photo album of the war and transfer other photos from the attic to the album. The scale of colonial contributions, the non-defensive aims of the non-European fronts, and the imperial experiences of European troops force us to recognize that empire was not a footnote in the Great War. Though the Great War has been understood as a spike in nationalism, recognizing the fundamental role of imperialism in the war forces us to reevaluate the relationship between nation and empire, especially as it functioned during the war. Gary Wilder has "tried to approach France as an imperial nation-state in which a parliamentary republic is articulated with its administrative empire to compose a single, albeit fractured, political formation that has exceeded supposedly national boundaries since its inception."[98] This type of approach to Britain and France, especially during the war, can be helpful.

The Great War brought a significant number of colonial subjects and citizens to Europe in a variety of roles, initiating new contacts among populations and representing a short-term immigration challenge. It also moved colonial subjects and citizens within empires. These population movements took place within a context of imperial hierarchies and citizenship potentialities. Soldiers' experiences and perspectives were tied to postwar legislation and immigration struggles. The non-European fronts, and perceptions of their significance, were also connected to geographic hierarchies within

[98] Gary Wilder, "Panafricanism and the Republican Political Sphere," *The Color of Liberty*, 251.

empires. The valuation of Europe relative to other locales was not disconnected from the sacrifice of soldiers' lives and the perceived benefits of colonial possessions. A broader view of the constitution of armies and the locations of fighting will expand our evaluation of the war's effects beyond the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany.

The men of the trenches were participants in empires with surprising reach and ideological ambition. Though it may not have been their primary focus, many soldiers wrote about their relationship with empire in trench newspapers. Trench newspapers provide a location to explore soldiers' shifting perceptions of empire and hierarchies within and among empires during and through the prism of the war. Looking at British and French soldiers' constructions of empires and the people and places that comprised them during the war will help us understand the lived experience of European empires during the war and the two allied, yet competing, visions of European empire that survived the war.

The war experience of British and French soldiers cannot be disentangled from empire. In a 1915 letter to his wife, A.J. Sansom, with the 5th Royal Sussex Regiment, wrote about "Blighty," the soldiers' nickname for England. According to Sansom, Blighty "they say is really a corruption of a Hindustani word, 'Balati,' meaning the 'beautiful country.'"[99] Even those wanting to be invalided home to England were aware, to some extent, of the wider context of the war and the relationship of England to empire. The "they say" in Sansom's letter is where this study begins, by exploring soldiers' public discourse within the pages of trench newspapers. What is it "they say" regarding empire?

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[99] A.J. Sansom, edited by Ivy Sansom, *Letters from France* (London: Andrew Melrose Ltd, 1921), 111-112.

Chapter Two

"Who *is* Christopher of whisky fame?"

This provocative question was posed in a "Things We Want to Know" column of the April 1917 *Fifth Glo'ster Gazette*. "Things We Want to Know" columns featured questions which were wanting answers. The questions were typically gossipy and light-hearted. The February 12, 1916, *Wipers Times* asked "Why the dug-out of a certain Big Man is so much affected by subalterns of tender years, and if this has anything to do with the decorations on his walls."[100] The September 18, 1915, *Lead-Swinger* wanted to know "Why Sgt C…s looks so pale, and if unreciprocated affection is the cause."[101] The *Glo'ster*, the *Pulham Patrol* and the *Lead-Swinger* were among many British and French trench newspapers created by and for soldiers during the Great War and circulated at the front. Headquarters may have encouraged some trench newspapers, but almost all were initiated from below and were the products of intense work during free time.[102] Trench newspapers circulated on the company, battalion, brigade, and occasionally the division level. They were also sometimes known as "trench magazines" or "trench journals." While some titles lasted only a few issues, others spanned nearly the duration of the war. Trench newspapers solicited contributions from all readers, and issues appeared from weekly to monthly. Though soldiers had regular access to a variety of reading material, including letters, civilian periodicals, and books, these sources did not always contain what soldiers wanted to know. We can assume Christopher of whisky fame was a reader of the *Glo'ster*, but the paper does not tell us more about his exploits or his association

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[100] *Wipers Times*, 5.
[101] *The Lead-Swinger* (September 18, 1915), 2. CUL
[102] Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War 1914-1918*, trans. Helen McPhail (Providence: Berg, 1992), 21.

with whisky. In fact, "Things We Want to Know" columns never provided answers for any of the questions asked. However, the *Glo'ster* and other trench newspapers of the Western Front can tell us a great many things we want to know about the experiences of men like Christopher and the ways in which they constructed understandings of themselves and their place in wider political contexts during the war. In so doing, this chapter, and the wider project, contributes to the history of the common soldier during the war. This cultural and discursive history of soldiers' ideas and attitudes can be set alongside existing studies of intellectuals, press, and propaganda during the war.

In 1917, *Le Poilu* endeavored to explain the phenomenon of trench newspapers in a special English-language "Sammies" edition for the American troops joining the war. Though somewhat lengthy, the explanation is worth quoting in detail:

> This life in the trenches is hard. The spirit of sacrifice, the denying oneself all that helps to make life pleasant is one's daily task. Yet out of the surroundings of this fearful drama, which no language can depict, has spring up a literature which is amusing, humorous and known the world over. We refer to the French Newspapers more familiarly known as the «Canards » or «Ducks » of the trenches. The ducks are not journalistic eagles, and do not try to soar, but if these ducks do not fly very high, they know how to keep going, and exist a long time. At the end of November 1914, there were rarely three or four. Now there are more than hundred [sic].
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> Sammies, «Le Poilu» is contributed only by officers as well as soldiers. It is the work of all who are in the trenches and at the camps. It is a round robin letter where in each who writes may give his pen full liberty. It is a chronicle of human living and interesting military doings, all in a humorous, jolly and amusing strain, with no allusion to war, religion or politics. Sammies you are part of a great nation which understands and appreciates humor. Why do you not help us to do for you what we have done for our «poilus»? Little by little thus, the bond of understanding and sympathy will be strengthened. We shall print bright and witty stories coming from America and from France. Thus will you boys, far from home, be diverted and amused. Do not think for a minute that laughter or smile is forbidden in this living drama on the front, in these circumstances, laughter is courageous, more than courageous. It is the best way to mock, to despise, to endure this sad war, as it reaps our comrades one by one.[103]

[103] *Le Poilu*, 38 (November 1917). HIST

Le Poilu, like many other canards, claimed to be the first at the front. [104] While the claim to primacy was debatable, the understanding of the role of trench newspapers was more reflective of consensus. Full of literary references and local gossip, trench newspapers also endeavored to bring a smile to war-weary comrades. Editors, British and French, continually encouraged their peers to "mock, to despise, to endure this sad war" and saw trench newspapers as a way of making this possible.

The mockery strengthened men in the face of adversity and did more to enable soldiers to survive the front, as well. Trench newspapers forged and strengthened bonds among readers. Their pages created space for the emergence of new identities on the part of readers and authors, both soldierly and literary. The product of a group endeavor, trench newspapers allowed soldiers to write new scripts for themselves and their communities. Masculinity, the soldierly ideal and the place of self in relation to others not in the military, were all examined in trench newspapers. An alternative to the civilian press for their readers, trench newspapers also represent an alternative point of entry for historians into soldiers' discourses during the war.

The Thing Itself

Trench newspapers were in many cases a testament to soldiers' ingenuity. The *Wipers Times* staff used an abandoned printing press discovered in a barn and *L'Echo du boqueteau*'s editors built a rotary press using umbrella handles, while other newspapers used gelatin mixes, roneo printing and the services of printers away from the fighting to

[104] "Canard" was a common nickname for a newspaper, though in its literal translation it means a duck and in other colloquial usage it indicates a falsehood. *Le canard enchainé* is the most well-known civilian example.

create copy.[105] Very early in the war, both Britain and France experienced paper shortages. The continuing appearance of trench newspapers demonstrates their importance and soldiers' perseverance. While some titles had only two pages per issue, others had as many as sixteen, and some reprinted many issues together in book form during or soon after the war. The physical size of trench newspapers also varied. In the Cambridge University Library War Reserve Collection items vary in size from 10 centimeters in height to 27. French papers similarly varied, with some looking very like their civilian journalistic counterparts and others resembling homemade newsletters. Some papers were even hand-written. Nearly all papers contained some drawings, but French papers often had more drawings than the British papers. The physical papers speak to soldiers' sometimes limited access to materials as well as the scope of their imaginations.

While war poetry and postwar memoirs and novels have long fascinated historians and amateurs alike, the trench newspapers of the Great War have remained largely unexamined.[106] Two works represent most of what has been done in studying the hundreds of British and French trench newspapers: J.G. Fuller's *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918* and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau's *Men at War 1914-1918; National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War*. These texts explore the phenomenon of trench newspapers in detail and lay out their value as sources for historians. Both Fuller and Audoin-

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[105] Audoin-Rouzeau, 19.

[106] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975). Robert Graves, *Good-bye to All That* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1957, 1998). Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined; The First World War and English Culture* (New York: Atheneum, 1991). Dan Todman, *The Great War; Myth and Memory* (New York: Hambledon and London, 2005). JM Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Rouzeau focus their studies on identifying what motivated soldiers to continue fighting as the war continued. Taking into account roughly 500 trench newspapers between their studies, Fuller's and Audoin-Rouzeau's works provide valuable information on the production of trench newspapers. Despite the public school boy image now associated with wartime writings, British trench newspapers were edited by both officers and enlisted men, separately and together.[107] One-third of the French journalists came from the ranks, lower ranks such as corporals were half the staff, and non-commissioned officers and subalterns each supplied only a quarter of the editorial teams.[108] Higher-ranking officers represent less than two percent of the identified editorial staff.[109] Trench newspapers are especially but not exclusively reflective of the efforts of lower-ranking officers, but even when officers comprised the editorial board, papers accepted submissions from soldiers of all stripes.

Robert Nelson's recent work, *German Soldier Newspapers of the First World War*, is explicitly informed by the work of Fuller and Audoin-Rouzeau and its aims are very similar to theirs. Nelson's work provides useful insight into German trench newspapers and also attempts to provide some comparative insights regarding British and French trench newspapers in relation to German papers. He suggests that German papers had less of a focus on entertainment and that Germans had less shared popular culture to make use of than the British or French.[110] Some of my conclusions regarding Entente papers differ from Nelson's.[111] While "rescue stories" may have been less present in

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[107] Fuller, 11.
[108] Audoin-Rouzeau, 9.
[109] Ibid, 9.
[110] Robert Nelson, *German Soldier Newspapers of the First World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 27, 13.
[111] In many cases he cites Audoin-Rouzeau and Fuller rather than making his own analysis or selecting his own sources among French and British papers.

Entente journals, "the concepts of duty and loyalty" certainly were not largely absent, as he claims.[112] Nelson also suggests that French trench papers were not very humorous.[113] While perhaps papers relied more on "satire" than "humor," most French papers explicitly aimed for levity. For example, *La Bourguignotte* advertised itself as an "organe humoristique" and *La Fusée à Retards* reminded readers it would accept from them "artistic, literary and humorous pieces."[114] The front page of *Le Camouflet* included a drawing with the sign "Bien Dire Pour Faire Rire" drawn above a soldier reading the sheet.[115] *Grenadia* was a "journal gai" and *Marmita* proclaimed itself "anecdotique, humoristique, and fantaisiste."[116] Despite differences in sources and interpretation, both Nelson's project and my own represent growing interest in the trench newspapers of the Great War.

My project is certainly indebted to the work of Fuller and Audoin-Rouzeau. Their books have provided valuable information about the circumstances surrounding the creation and circulation of trench newspapers. Their insights into the nature of trench newspapers have also benefited my work. Unlike Fuller and Audoin-Rouzeau, however, my work considers British and French trench newspapers together. And because their works have fully explored the phenomenon of trench newspapers, my work is able to explore trench newspapers more thematically, examining traces of empire.

British and French trench newspapers shared a template, based partially on civilian satirical journals such as *Le Rire* and *Punch*. The shared template incorporated length, frequency of publication, inclusion of drawings, patterns of anonymity, article

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[112] Ibid, 94.
[113] Ibid, 71-72.
[114] *La Bourguignotte*, No. 2 (October 1915), 1. BDIC *La Fusée à Retards* (No. 3), 1. BDIC
[115] *Le Camouflet*, No.7 (October 15, 1916), 1. UPENN
[116] *Grenadia*, No.6 (November 17, 1916), 1. UPENN *Marmita*, No.25 (December 15, 1915), 1. UPENN

type, and use of humor and satire. Typical papers included poetry, play parodies, serialized stories, illustrations, humorous correspondence, sporting columns, alphabets and dictionaries, and columns like "Things We Want to Know," which was an outlet for gossip. The references to satirical papers were implicit in format and often explicit, as well. *Brise d'Entonnoirs* commonly featured a humorous advertisement which mimicked a well-known regular advertisement in *Le Rire*.[117] Below the title of *Trot Talk* every issue offered "apologies to 'Punch' and 'Dicky' Doyle."[118] The *"P.P."* referenced *Tit-Bits* as "our famous contemporary" and used its format in its column "TALES THAT ARE TOLD/ Bagged Bits from Everywhere."[119] The *Lead-Swinger* also regularly featured a section titled "Tit-Bits Culled from the Stew.[120] From the 1880s, the highly popular *Tit-Bits* "marketed short, miscellaneous, entertaining snippets of information and opinion" to a lower-class audience at a penny an issue.[121] The *Fifth Glo'ster Gazette* used the same format in its regular "Bricks from the Editor's Pack" section.[122] Poetry and prose in trench newspapers frequently imitated famous works and/or writers. The shared template demonstrates editors' awareness of civilian papers, and also of other trench newspapers within their own armies and among their allies. The resemblance to satirical publications also signals a rejection of the daily press, which was often made explicit.

Soldiers placed a fairly high value on trench newspapers during the war. One way this is evident is through the disdain soldiers expressed for more traditional media. On July 3, 1916, the *Wipers Times* wanted to know: "Whether the London papers are

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[117] *Brise d'Entonnoirs*, No.15 (October 15, 1917), 4. BDIC
[118] *Trot Talk*, Vol.1 No.2 (April 1, 1918), 1. CUL
[119] *"P.P."*, No.11, Vol.1 (November 10, 1916), 3. CUL *"P.P."* No.12, Vol.1 (November 17, 1916), 12. CUL
[120] *The Lead-Swinger*, No. 5 (November 27, 1915), 20. CUL
[121] Gerry Beegan, *The Mass Image* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 5, 39.
[122] *The Fifth Glo'ster Gazette*, No.15 (October 1916), 9. CUL

aware there are a few BRITISH troops on the western front." For many combatants, the civilian papers rendered their struggles and identities invisible. The stream of war news that the British called "eye-wash" the French called "skull-stuffing." Trench newspapers suggested that skull-stuffing spread lies and misinformed the public, making it difficult for civilians to understand the war.[123] Trench newspapers represented an alternative. Under its masthead *Le Filon* promised it did not practice skull-stuffing.[124] According to some soldiers, nature itself rejected the war news in civilian papers. A November 6, 1915, *Lead-Swinger* "Natural History" column related:

> I myself have seen a Flemish cow attempt to eat a copy of the 'Daily Mail'; it managed the advertisement columns quite well, but when it came to the page of war news, the poor thing choked. There were statements there that even a Flemish cow couldn't swallow.[125]

The Flemish cow was in good company. Trench newspapers frequently took aim at specific civilian periodicals and famous war journalists. The French had *La Guerre Joviale,* a paper whose title mocked Gustave Hervé's paper *La Guerre sociale*. Puns on the names of well-known war correspondents were common. A July 1916 *Glo'ster* article entitled "Startling Truth Discovery; From Phillip Fibs—Revelations of a Journalist" informed readers that "journalism is the stepping stone which leads across the flood of current affairs to Sensationalism. Sensationalism is Fame." For one interested in journalistic sensationalism there were five items of advice:

> (1)Never stir from safety. An O.P. in Fleet Street is best.
> (2)Write most of what you know least. This is an unfailing maxim. It appeals to the general public who will believe you implicitly.
> (3)Remember there are only four kinds of soldiers in the British Army—Scotchmen, Londoners, Lads and Fellows.
> (4)Cultivate the use of adjectives. 'Brawny' is particularly popular. On an average at least every third word should be an adjective.

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[123] Audoin-Rouzeau, 95.
[124] *Le Filon* (March 1, 1917), 1. BDIC « ne bourrant pas le crâne »
[125] *Lead-Swinger*, No.4 (November 6, 1915), 17. CUL

(5)WRITE FOR FULL PARTICULARS OF MY SCHEME TO-DAY.[126]

At the outset of the war, Captain E.D. Ridley of the Grenadier Guards told his mother:

> You will not get the true story of each action, step by step, the moment they occur. You must absolutely disregard all news not published as official. The vast majority of official news will probably be all right, but it is very likely that even official news will be untrue in many important details, such as place, numbers engaged and even units engaged. You see such news must never reach the enemy even a week old.[127]

This letter suggests that while the news could not be trusted, newspapermen themselves were not necessarily to blame. Ridley regularly received *The Daily Mail*, *The Morning Post* and *Land & Water* in the trenches. However, as the war progressed, he became more strident in his criticism of newspapers and in a later letter he suggested that "if those damned fool newspaper men knew what we thought of them, they would hang themselves quick."[128] Men in the trenches often lost faith in the civilian press. In an anecdote from *Le rire aux eclats*, one soldier received a daily newspaper saying "here is the news" while another soldier sarcastically responded, "the news is what we make it."[129]

In a Mirror Dimly

In 1916, A.J. Sansom, then a lieutenant with the 5th Royal Sussex Regiment, wrote to his wife about beginning a trench newspaper. "We are going to start a magazine. They are becoming fashionable for Battalions at the front, and some of them

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[126] *The Fifth Glo'ster Gazette*, No. 18 (April 1917), 14. CUL
[127] Letter from E.D. Ridley, August 5, 1914, 7065, E.D. Ridley papers. CUL
[128] Letter from E.D. Ridley, November 2, 1915, 7066, E.D. Ridley papers. CUL
[129] *Le rire aux eclats* (January 1917), 3. UPENN

are awfully good."[130] Trench publications were "fashionable" among Entente and Central Powers forces for many reasons. Just as Sansom writes "we," trench newspapers were never individual endeavors; they were the product of a group experience and shared among men who not only had a war in common, but shared assignments and associations. Most importantly, trench newspapers allowed space for soldiers to reflect on their experiences and to reflect themselves as they changed during the war.

Trench newspapers were inseparable from their audiences. The *Fifth Glo'ster Gazette* billed itself as "a chronicle, serious and humorous, of the battalion."[131] Many papers were named after their readership, such as *The 79th News*, *Pulham Patrol*, and *Pennington Press* among the British and *Le 120 Court*, *La Voix du 75*, and *Les Boyaux du 95 ème* among the French. Content linked readers to each other and their context. Some newspaper titles, such as *Poison Gas*, *The Salient* and *Le Schrapnell*, reinforced the relationship between readers and the struggles at the front. In this way, readers were distinguished from other patrons of the civilian press and from the loathed *embusqués* and shirkers.[132]

Trench newspapers are unique among other sources written during the war for their transcendence of individual authorship and their ties to specific moments in time. Available wartime officers' diaries are often dominated by accounts of the day's events, listing the wounded or sick among the men, and keeping track of supplies, but lacking personal reflections or responses. In contrast, trench newspapers were intended for immediate circulation at the front, providing a way for soldiers to address each other.

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[130] Sansom, 195.
[131] *Fifth Glo'ster Gazette*, 13 (July 1916), 1. CUL
[132] *Embusqués* were shirkers who were not in the army and/or the men in "softer" positions in the military, away from the front and presumably safe from danger.

Their limited audience and their commitment to diversion meant they could express perspectives that are lacking or minimal in other contemporary accounts. Unlike letters and diaries, they were composed by and for groups, and leadership was often anonymous. As Fuller suggests, "they deliberately set out, in many cases, to capture the spirit of the army" and "addressed themselves directly and continuously to a task which letters and diaries tackle only peripherally and randomly."[133] Considering that at least one trench newspaper sold more than 20,000 copies and several as many as 5,000, they must have hit their mark to some degree.[134]

According to Fuller and Audoin-Rouzeau, trench newspapers are an unparalleled source for accessing what might be called "war culture." Fuller writes:

> The journals were themselves an expression of the collective culture… They served, moreover, as a means of intra-unit communication, with the result that there lodge in their pages not only essential details of unit administration, but also many details of the jealousies and feelings otherwise perhaps too trivial to be generally recorded, but important to the historian none the less.[135]

In its first issue *Brise d'Entonnoirs* described a trench newspaper as an organ which permitted all the *poilus* of a regiment to communicate with each other, "rubbing elbows" about shared views via the paper.[136] The very creation of the papers suggests a desire to share information and to communicate extensively and creatively within the limited circulation—the men of the battalion or company, etc. Articles and columns, from satirical to serious, show evidence of familiarity and strong bonds among readers. The "collective culture" of individual trench newspapers is apparent in many ways. For

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[133] Fuller, 4.
[134] Ibid, 9.
[135] Ibid, 4.
[136] "Un journal de tranchées, et c'est notre cas, est un organe permettant à tous les poilus d'un meme regiment de communier dans la meme pensée, de se sentir les coudes, dirions nous dans notre langage, mais pour mener à bien la tâche est rude." *Brise D'Entonnoirs*, No.1 (July 1916), 2. BDIC *Poilu*, "hairy one," was a nickname for a French soldier.

example, *Brise d'Entonnoirs* wrote regularly about a benevolent fund established by its readers to send financial assistance to French families in need. The first 1,705 francs raised were distributed among 74 families.[137] The men of *Brise d'Entonnoirs* also opened a company library, which contained over 200 volumes in September 1917, and put on artists' exhibitions.[138]

Going a step beyond "collective culture" among trench newspaper readers and authors, Audoin-Rouzeau asserts:

> The men who edited the papers did not reflect the composition of the army as a whole. We feel, however, that they knew how to capture its aspirations and how to speak in its name, for the war provoked a genuine osmosis between combatants from all backgrounds: a two-way blending of social categories, cultural levels, and even between soldiers in the ranks and junior officers, whose living conditions and state of mind could not be totally separated from those of their men. This osmosis obviously had its limits, but there is no doubt that it existed. It is a matter of what might be called 'a war culture': all these men shared a certain number of mental attitudes, of reflexes born of the harshness of their living conditions, of immersion in battle and confrontation with death. It is from this war culture that the army of 1914-18 drew some of its homogeneity. The trench newspapers, moreover, were aware of being the mouthpiece of this common culture.[139]

This "war culture" is also evidenced in trench newspapers. Recurring themes across titles, including shirkers, mud, alcohol, orders, loss, and shared perspectives on the Germans indicate that despite variances, men on the Western Front had a considerable number of shared experiences. On many topics, there seemed to be some consensus in the trenches. The views of individual authors may be difficult to disentangle from their pages, but the jokes, stories and opinions circulating among the newspaper's audience are apparent. While trench newspapers were subject to some censorship it was generally benign because military authorities recognized that the papers aided morale.

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[137] *Brise d'Entonnoirs*, No.12 (August 1917), 1-2. BDIC

[138] *Brise d'Entonnoirs*, No.13 (September 1917), 3. BDIC *Brise d'Entonnoirs*, No.15 (October 15, 1917), 4. BDIC

[139] Audoin-Rouzeau, 34.

Between the shared "war culture" in the trenches and the relatively loose censorship, British and French trench newspapers provide a unique access point to public discourse among soldiers during the war. In a 1973 audio interview with the Imperial War Museum, Patrick Beaver, editor of the complete *Wipers Times*, asserted that *Wipers* had historical significance

> because it is spontaneous and it preserved for us the thing itself, the very nature of life in the trenches, the slang, the jargon, the character of the conversation, and all the depressing surroundings and above all it gives us the resolution and the humanity shown by these men in the face of violent death.[140]

That public discourse among soldiers during the war was not just the circulation of a set of received and preformed opinions. Trench newspapers also played a crucial role in shaping and directing public discourse, just as they guided individuals through the process of changes initiated by the war.

Reading, and especially of newspapers, played a major role in the lives of the men who participated in the Great War. At the outbreak of the war, male literacy in France stood at 98% and some individual newspapers had circulations of over a million copies.[141] Educational practices had prepared readers for close reading, and texts were part of growing into adulthood and sexual and professional maturation.[142] Newspapers not only defined the contours of opinion, but increasingly, of life. In England, they were part of the lives of all classes.[143] According to Peter Fritzsche in *Reading Berlin 1900*, newspapers were like maps for urban settings, and the "word city" suggested to readers how they ought to read the "lived city." Fritzsche asserts that "the city as place and the city as text defined each other in mutually constitutive ways," and reading and writing

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[140] Patrick Beaver BBC interview, 1973, 73. IWM
[141] James Smith Allen, *In the Public Eye* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 59, 43.
[142] Allen, 135, 185, 192.
[143] Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 273.

"constructed a second-hand metropolis which gave a narrative to the concrete one and choreographed its encounters."[144] Urban dwellers especially were accustomed to utilizing the paper to navigate their city by locating events of interest, safe and unsafe areas, and job opportunities. Soldiers in the city of trenches likewise utilized trench newspapers to find their way.

As their lives entered new chapters, soldiers relied on reading and writing to create new narratives. Fussell suggests that

> with all this reading going on and with all this consciousness of the world of letters adjacent to the actual world—even louse-hunting was called 'reading one's shirt'—it is to be expected that one's reports on experience will to an extraordinary degree lean on literature or recognize its presence and authority.[145]

Reading and writing in trench newspapers provided context for interpreting the war experience and the new selves emerging from it. Civilian identities no longer encapsulated soldiers, and familial reminiscences no longer seemed accurate. They were now men in the army, subject to a peculiar mass society with regulated clothing, food, sleep, and habits, and frequently exposed to danger. A special issue Canadian trench magazine, *Another Garland From the Front*, featured a poem called "The Disc Identity" (Disc Identities were precursors of military dog tags) that exemplifies the situation. It begins:

> When I was born I got the name
> Of Smith, Augustus John,
> And when a soldier I became
> And put my khaki on,
> I felt as proud as Punch could be
> When some old Sergeant said to me,
> "You're now a separate entity,
> And here's your DISC-identity."
>
> When on a list he entered me,

[144] Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, MA: 1996), 1.
[145] Fussell, 164.

> My bosom swelled with pride.
> "You're twenty-two, six, seven three,"
> "Yes, Sergeant," I replied[146]

The subject's civilian identity has been swallowed up in the Army. The poem ends in a striking fashion, pitying the "chaps at home" and reminding readers that "A fellow's a nonentity/ Without a DISC-identity." Trench newspapers allowed soldiers to narrate their transformations and simultaneously provided a script for transformation. Reading trench newspapers was not just recreation, but also re-creation.

In *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya*, Derek Peterson found that people in colonial Kenya used all types of writing to construct identities and, in a sense, to write scripts for the future. Identity cards, plays, and record books all provided ways of being in the world. In the same way, trench newspaper stories about romantic relationships, the fraternity of the trenches, and alcohol, provided scripts that readers could recognize and choose among. The themes and morals of serialized stories, poetry and cartoons also provided ways for soldiers to sort out meaning in their experiences of war. Soldiers were not just reading and writing trench newspapers; they were being written by them.

British and French trench newspapers were explicit in how soldiers' discourse was redefining existence. Trench newspapers commonly redefined terms and experiences with "dictionaries" and "alphabets." While often written very tongue-in-cheek and sometimes clearly intended to explain trench slang, dictionaries and alphabets also suggested new meanings. Words like "peace" and "home" appeared with definitions radically different from those of an official (or civilian) dictionary. A "Mesopotamian

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[146] *Another Garland From the Front*, (London: George Pullman & Sons Ltd, The Cranford Press, 1916), 107.

Alphabet" from *The Wipers Times*, on January 20, 1917, referenced not just Quinine and Rations but also Harems and suggests "I is the Indian Government but/ About this I'm told I must keep my mouth shut,/ For it's all due to them that we failed to reach Kut-/ El-Amara in Mesopotamia."[147] This alphabet reflects on censorship, evaluates the Indian Government and the situation on the Mesopotamian front in contrast to the government position, all the while constructing an image of Mesopotamia for other soldiers to internalize. Outside of trench newspapers, books like *L'Argot des Tranchées*, which was published in 1915, explored soldiers' redefining of language. The sources were soldiers' letters and trench newspapers.[148] The obvious uniqueness of soldiers' language further emphasizes the value of soldiers' discourse for revealing wartime beliefs in the trenches. As an imperfect mirror trench newspapers reflected the men who read and wrote them.

Smile, boys, that's the style

In 1916, E.B. Osborn suggested in the *Times Literary Supplement* that "there is a family likeness between all trench journals, whether they be of British or of French origin. One and all of them convey a vivid impression of humour and high spirits."[149] In their own words, trench newspapers were humorous, literary and diversionary. The French *Face à l'est* called itself the "organe officiel hebdomadaire anecdotique, humoristique, fantaisiste du 91e Territ[ori]al."[150] *Le Mouchoir* advertised itself as "artistique, litteraire, humoristique," and the "seul remède contre le cafard."[151] On its anniversary, *The Dump* told readers that immediately after its birth it had given "proof of

[147] *Wipers Times*,161.
[148] E de Boccard, *L'Argot des Tranchées* (Paris: 1915), 6.
[149] Osborn, 481.
[150] *Face à l'est* (August 1, 1915), 1. BDIC
[151] *Le Mouchoir* (March 1, 1917), 3. HIST

its powers of eloquence and humor."[152] Other titles were themselves humorous, such as *La Saucisse* and the *Lead-Swinger*, which took its title from a slang term for an exaggerator. Unlike official gazettes, trench newspapers were committed to a sacred union of literary aspiration and humorous content to fight the dreaded *cafard*.[153]

Humor has often served as a form of resistance in the face of danger, and it was the weapon of choice in most trench newspapers. In his work on humor during the Holocaust, Steve Lipman explained that humor "means more than jokes or funny dialogue;" it is "a liberating sense of perspective" that includes "irony, parody, sardonic exaggeration, situation reversals, morbid twists on reality."[154] During World War II, when the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia, one village protested by hanging a hen with a sign on her neck that read "I'd rather commit suicide than lay eggs for Hitler."[155] Events like this occurred widely and played a role in "strengthening the morale and spirit of resistance" of a people struggling for survival.[156] Soldiers during the Great War similarly used laughter to strengthen morale and acknowledge their situation without falling into despair. They faced the kind of "structural ambivalence" that sociologist Gary Alan Fine found in his study of amateur mushroomers.

> The desire to eat and the desire to be safe conflict with each other and must be repressed and dealt with through humor. Just as risk is a social construction, its resolution and control are created by people, who establish new meanings and rituals to deal with fear.[157]

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[152] *The Dump* (Christmas 1916), 1. CUL

[153] In her translation of Audoin-Rouzeau's work, Helen McPhail defined *cafard* as "a deep melancholy, an overwhelming sense of depression and misery which has no precise linguistic equivalent in the English vocabulary of the Great War," viii.

[154] Steve Lipman, *Laughter in Hell* (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc., 1991), 16.

[155] Antonin Obrdlik, "Gallows Humor—A Sociological Phenomenon," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.47, No. 5. (Mar., 1942), 715.

[156] Ibid, 716.

[157] Gary Alan Fine, "Dying for a Laugh: Negotiating Risk and Creating Personas in the Humor of Mushroom Collectors," *Western Folklore*, Vol. 47, No. 3. (Jul., 1988), 193.

Eating wild mushrooms makes finding them worthwhile but it also creates the risk of death. Individuals share jokes to acknowledge the risks and ambivalence, and when others laugh there "is a communal recognition that others have noticed the same dilemma—and that they haven't resolved the issue either. They respond through gallows humor directed at the potential of real danger."[158] Real danger was ever-present during the Great War. In trench newspapers soldiers commonly joked, and truly dreamed, of getting the injury grave enough to send them home permanently without causing death or serious disfigurement. The prospect of a viable peace was inseparable from the continuation of violence until victory, especially for the French who were committed to regaining lost territory. Humor helped soldiers to approach the structural ambivalence and absurdity of their situation in a socially acceptable way while developing "new meanings to deal with fear."

Under fire in the trenches, the *Wipers Times* asked its readers in the Wednesday, August 15, 1917, edition, "Can you sketch?" The advertisement for drawing lessons included a testimonial: "The other day by mischance I was left out in No Man's Land. I rapidly drew a picture with a piece of chalk of a tank going into action, and while the Huns were firing at this I succeeded in returning to the trenches unobserved. Could You Have Done This?"[159] Though soldiers were unable to escape the violence of the trenches bodily, the jokes in the *Wipers Times* sometimes allowed them to escape mentally. Many other trench newspapers provided the same relief.

Humor was particularly useful in this context because of its links to violence. While many recognize that laughter can defuse a potentially violent situation, few realize

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[158] Ibid, 187.
[159] *Wipers*, 215.

that laughter and violence are physiologically intertwined. As the theorist Anthony Ludovici pointed out, "when you have listed the significant aspects of the act of laughing (elevation of the head, baring of the teeth, emission of harsh guttural sounds), you have given the symptoms of an animal enraged."[160] Laughter is one way for the body to excise the symptoms of anger and rage. Laughter can also allow the release of tears. According to Havelock Ellis, the "most ticklish regions [of the body] correspond to the spots most vulnerable in a fight."[161] Thus the humor in trench newspapers should be seen in direct relationship with the violence soldiers were exposed to and committing. Humor may even have been a way of curbing excess and creating boundaries for violence.

David Denby has pointed out that the satirist "is enraged by what others accept," and many trench newspaper contributors no doubt were enraged by the conditions of their lives during the war. [162] Humor helped contributors to cloak that rage and avoid overly offending censors and catching military discipline, for as Freud suggested, jokes can offer the "protection of sequences of words and thoughts from criticism."[163] For example, the November 6, 1915, *Lead-Swinger* asked: "If the new 'position of attention' as exemplified by the hospital staff, necessitates retention of the hands in the pockets, and if certain N.C.O.'s do not set an excellent example." This was a direct critique of certain NCOs and their treatment of the wounded. It might not have been uttered in person without risk of serious reprisal. In July 1918, the *Glo'ster* asked: "Whether a certain Editor and Self-Advertiser now knows what under fire means?

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[160]Quoted in Norman Holland, *Laughing, A Psychology of Humor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 45.
[161] Quoted in Holland, 83.
[162] David Denby, *Snark* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 29.
[163] For example, the British still practiced "Field Punishment No. 1" which "consisted of being strapped or tied spread-eagled to some immobile object: a favorite was the large spoked wheel of a General Service Wagon." Fussell, 118. Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989), 160.

Whether he enjoyed the experience? And whether he now knows the meaning of 'Somewhere in Hell'?" Questions like these not only isolated individuals who might be failing in their duties, but also often questioned military policies and represented a challenge to the methods of Battalion Headquarters. Humor was an acceptable form of "friendly fire."

Perhaps most obviously, soldiers used humor in trench newspapers to build and sustain community. Jokes were more than individual expressions; they linked readers together. As Freud perceptively noted, a joke must be shared; it is necessarily social.[164] A successful joke requires an audience, and shared jokes further social bonds. With limited circulations and coded references, trench newspapers created a situation where sharing a laugh affirmed a connection based on shared experience. "Getting" the jokes in the trench newspapers indicated belonging in specific trench communities. The *Staff Herald*, a newspaper read by signalers, wondered "if our first issue was really a 'signal' success."[165] Other papers had more cryptic jokes and references to shared knowledge.

Humor also reinforced the boundaries of trench communities as well as the value of those within them. *Embusqués* were a constant target in trench newspapers. Meaning "shirker" or "slacker," the term *embusqué* was also occasionally used by the English. French papers made frequent reference to the *marraines*, "war godmothers," who corresponded with soldiers. In addition to distinguishing readers from the women left behind and the men who lurked behind them humor helped distinguish readers from other soldiers. *Le Poilu* sometimes featured jokes about Englishmen. In a short narrative, *Rigolboche* offered a scenario where a wounded Senegalese soldier fell in love with his

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[164] Ibid, 175.
[165] *Staff Herald* (May 29, 1916), 7. IWM

female attendant and proposed marriage to her—offering to buy her with three cows.[166] This "humorous" story was offered to a metropolitan French audience, distinguished from the soldier in question culturally, even while the story acknowledged the shared sacrifice at the front and the perils of falling in love with the women of the Red Cross. There were of course jokes about the Germans, distinguishing enemies. *Le Bochofage* advertised itself as an organ "Anticafardeux, Kaisericide et Embuscophobe," clearly identifying its three main enemies.[167] At times humor helped delineate group boundaries in terms of nation, race, and gender, among other characteristics. There were even jokes about other trench newspapers.

Humor was one of the most important features of trench newspapers and a key strategy for surviving the front lines. It helped soldiers address the dangers of their situation while excising physical symptoms of violence and fear to curb excesses. Jokes and satire protected written criticism. Shared humor forged social bonds, and jokes were used to police the boundaries of the social unit. The jokes themselves, so often based on the readers, also affirmed the continuing existence of the men in uniform. Humor helped trench newspapers bring the actual men in the trenches to the forefront, eschewing patriotic fervor, fighting the invisibility imposed by the mass media, and defying death.

Literature

When joking and when putting jokes aside, most trench newspapers showed literary aspirations. In *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Fussell commented on the

[166] *Rigolboche* (30 December 1917), 3. HIST
[167] *Le Bochofage* (1916), 1. HIST

"unparalleled literariness of all ranks who fought the Great War."[168] Many of the themes and tendencies Fussell described in his book, relating to war poetry, memoirs, and novels, are also applicable to British and French trench newspapers. The literariness of the soldiers may surprise us now, but we should remember that in 1914,

> except for sex and drinking, amusement was largely found in language formally arranged, either in books or periodicals or at the theater and music hall, or in one's own or one's friends' anecdotes, rumors, or clever structuring of words.[169]

The clever structuring of words took several forms. While contributors displayed their own styles and poetic aspirations, British poems and plays often imitated well-known works and authors, such as the *Rubaiyat*, the Old Testament, and works by Kipling and Shakespeare. Serialized stories were modeled on Sherlock Holmes and other famous narratives. The French produced feuilletons of the trenches and imitated Voltaire and Rabelais. During the war, British soldiers noticed the French reading *A la Manière de*, a "parody classic in France."[170] The book was in its third edition by the outbreak of the war and featured short parody pieces imitating Racine, Gabriele d'Annunzio, Paul Déroulède, Chateaubriand, Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, Rudyard Kipling, and Charles Péguy, among others. The piece in the style of Racine is about Cleopatra, and the Kipling piece is "La plus belle chanson de la Jungle."[171] The same type of writing made frequent appearances in trench newspapers, and parodies were common. In fact, *Le Klaxon* featured a column titled "À la Manière de…"[172]

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[168] Fussell, 156.
[169] Ibid, 158.
[170] Letter from W.L. Murphy to Francis Jenkinson, August 5, 1917, 6444/M/11, Francis Jenkinson papers. CUL
[171] Paul Reboux and Charles Muller, *A la Manière de…* (Paris : 1913), 3, 233.
[172] *Le Klaxon*, No.9 (September 1916), 4. BDIC

Military authorities tolerated, and sometimes encouraged, trench newspapers partially because they believed that "grousing" was good for soldiers.[173] Yet clearly, trench newspapers were also an outlet for literary aspirations. The poet Wilfred Owen edited *The Hydra*, a hospital paper, during the war.[174] R.C. Sheriff, who later wrote the famous play "Journey's End," was a contributor to the *Wipers Times*. Some of the contributors to the famous civilian satirical paper, *Le Canard Enchaîné,* had previously served in the military and are assumed to have contributed to trench newspapers. Many trench journalists continued to be known through their writings and drawings after the war ended. Trench journalism offered some men an opportunity to see their words in print, and appreciated, that would not have otherwise existed. For others, it was part of a journey to wider fame. Trench newspapers were more than an outlet for excess emotion or energy; they were also an opportunity for self-actualization and expression.

Gender

The fraternity of the trenches was in many ways just that, a fraternity. While men were at times in contact with civilian women and typically maintained contact with their families, within the trenches, life was homosocial. Soldiers' discourse in trench newspapers was, with very few exceptions, exclusively male. Women were, however, present in trench newspapers, as the product of soldiers' writings. Women appeared in poems, stories, and drawings, chiefly as objects of desire, anxiety, and security. In particular, *Marraines*, female penpals, captured the French imagination, as seen in a cover from an illustrated edition of *Rigoboche*, which had a drawing of a half dozen

[173] Fuller, 19.
[174] Fussell, 103.

marraines swirling around the page.[175] Soldiers fantasized about the appearance of their *marraines*. The possibilities were not endless, but they were varied. Many of the women on the cover are young and attractive, but one is older, and the one which lands on an unfortunate *poilu* is heavy-set.

Trench newspapers commonly reflected soldiers' longings for women. French newspapers often discussed visits home or correspondence with *marraines*, the female penpals many soldiers hoped were young and single, though as the cover of *Rigolboche* wryly suggested, some soldiers were destined for disappointment. British papers, too, discussed the women left behind, as well as the women men met at war. A poem in the Thursday November 1, 1917, *Wipers Times* entitled "To Marie" by R.M.O., is allegedly about meeting a French waitress, but its final lines run: "You know, how people meet in France--/ we meet, we pay, we part:/ But that day you stole my handkerchief,/ you stole into my heart."[176] This was a thinly veiled reference to a prostitute, even if the poet expressed a desire for something more long-term. Trench newspaper imagery sometimes conjured up women in response to desire. An issue of *Notre Rire* featured drawings of naked women and an issue of the *Lead-Swinger* included a drawing of a naked woman in a shallow bathtub, reaching for a bar of soap, with the inscription "She won't be happy till she gets it."[177] However, by and large, suggestive drawings of women in trench newspapers were not that common. Men may have had illicit images in the trenches, but they were primarily not from trench newspapers. Women were more commonly the sweethearts in stories, the mothers and wives in poems, and the imagined boon of victory in war.

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[175] *Rigolboche* (undated), 1. UPENN
[176] *Wipers Times*, 238.
[177] *Notre Rire*, 2. UPENN *The Lead-Swinger*, No. 4 (October 1915), 26. CUL

The men who read and wrote trench newspapers certainly thought about women while fighting the war. However, they understood trench newspapers to be a male voice. Women were ever-present in the pages of trench newspapers but they were never the chief actors or prime movers. Occasionally a paper would feature an article supposedly written by a woman, but in most cases, the author was not female. In other cases, jokes about the gender of an author surfaced only to be settled quickly. The *Lead-Swinger* author, the Scribe, wrote in "Our heart-to-heart talk" that

> 'Admirer' wishes to know if I am a lady, as he thinks my articles so kind and sweet. Ah! 'Admirer,' I fain would not shatter thy happy dream, but lo, I am but a mere man. But what matters is, open out thy heartburnings to me; I long to hear them, but not half as much as my readers.[178]

Women were the source of a "happy dream," but this trench author, like his readers, was "but a mere man." A mere man, he was challenged and redefined by the war and, with others, his notion of masculinity was also altered by the experience. Despite the presence of writings about women, trench newspapers are more interesting for the ways in which trench authors examined and redefined masculinity than femininity.

Jessica Meyer's recent book, *Men of War, Masculinity and the First World War in Britain*, examines the role of masculinity in the Great War. Meyer explores "the ways in which men used the written word to negotiate individual identities," demonstrating that the war "affected social and cultural understandings of what it was to be a man in the era of the First World War."[179] *Men of War* provides analysis of the differences between genres of soldiers' writings, specifically letters home, wartime diaries, and letters of condolence. According to Meyer, letters home "both presented and interrogated claims

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[178] *The Lead-Swinger*, No.2 (September 18, 1915), 6. CUL
[179] Jessica Meyer, *Men of War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 2.

to heroic masculinity" as well as asserted claims to domesticity.[180] Letters home kept home at the center of the war and expressed a range of sentiments about the experience of war. Diaries were not permitted to contain too much detailed information, but were the most personal expression for some soldiers and "expressed the ways in which men constructed martial identities, separate from their domestic identities, that differed significantly from cultural ideals of the soldier as courageous, enthusiastic and resourceful."[181] The toll of the food, elements, and personal losses was most apparent in diaries. Writing in his diary about orders received, Louis Barthas exclaimed "Oh! Patrie, que de crimes on a commis en ton nom!"[182] A similar expression is hard to imagine in another genre. Letters of condolence were not about the brotherhood of the trenches, but the community in mourning, and they perpetuated the heroism of the dead.[183] Great War soldiers had been raised with the figure of the imperial soldier hero, but the experience of the war brought about new understandings of the soldier and the establishment of different narratives in different genres of writing. In the postwar memoirs, only T.E. Lawrence's work would in any way remain consistent with the imperial hero narrative.

Meyer's work also provides another way of considering trench newspapers. Like letters home, the papers were communal and demonstrated both martial and domestic links, but like diaries, trench papers provided space for the newfound martial identities which had little to no connection with pre-war identities. As in the trench newspaper poem about the "disc identity," soldiers were reborn in the trenches and trench

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[180] Ibid, 46.
[181] Ibid, 48-49.
[182] Louis Barthas, *Les carnets de guerre de Louis Barthas* (Paris: La Découverte/Poche, 1997), 67.
[183] Ibid, 96.

newspapers documented their new identities. In *The Soldiers' Tale* Samuel Hynes suggests that war memoirs could be considered conversion literature.

> Most war stories begin with a nobody-in-particular young man, who lives through the experience of war, to emerge in the end defined by what has happened to him. Out of that nobody, war has forged a Self. Nobody, however young, returns from war still a boy, and in that sense, at least, war does make men.[184]

The new selves formed by war were inseparable from masculinity, because soldiering was an exclusively male occupation in the Great War. "Manhood" was also consistently invoked with regard to recruiting and enlistment. The martial selves created in the trenches were new but they were also in keeping with traditional understandings of male providers. Many questions about the new selves of the war circle around the degree of alienation between the home front and the trenches. Within trench newspapers, soldiers remained providers for their families and for the nation, with important and continuing connections to the civilian realm. An issue of *La Fusée à Retards* informed readers about a fund for war orphans created by the readers of *Le Tord-Boyau*. Soldiers were encouraged to write to the paper with the addresses of families whose head had died for France.[185] Even away from home, soldiers continued to perceive themselves in their traditional role as head of household, even as their understandings of the male soldier changed.

That soldiers could see themselves both in newly formed martial identities disconnected from home and entrenched within home and familial structures should not be surprising. Recent studies have demonstrated that the divide between the front lines and the homefront was not as sharp as previously thought. Closer examination of

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[184] Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 5.
[185] *La Fusée à Retards*, No. 2, 4. BDIC

soldiers' letters has shown that many soldiers were quite candid with their families and that civilians were not entirely ignorant of the nature of the war. Michael Roper's 2009 book *The secret battle, Emotional survival in the Great War* specifically examines the relationship between British soldiers and their families. Roper suggests that not only did soldiers maintain close ties with their families, specifically mothers, but that groups on the Western Front resembled families and men took cues from motherly behavior to find ways to care for each other through selflessness and service.[186] The homefront was another world, far away, but also indispensable to existence.[187] In this way, the war initiated new understandings of homosocial relationships and the masculinity of the soldier. About letter writing, Roper adds, "the problem with writing was that it encouraged introspection, while the ability *not* to dwell on disturbing events showed that they were in control."[188] The writing in trench newspapers, too, was related to introspection. However, the ability of trench newspapers, as public discourse, to establish and redefine narratives for living, allowed writing to demonstrate an amount of control, within community. Like other aspects of viewing the self, masculinity was scripted within trench newspapers.

Conclusion

Trench newspapers were valued by British and French soldiers during and after the war. The letters and diaries of Francis Jenkinson during the war show some of the regard British soldiers had for trench newspapers. Jenkinson was the librarian at Cambridge University who worked to compile what is now known as the War Reserve

[186] Michael Roper, *The secret battle* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), 167.
[187] Ibid, 72.
[188] Ibid, 66.

Collection. He collected hundreds of trench newspapers, along with diaries, letters, and wartime propaganda, from around the globe. Many items of correspondence in the Jenkinson papers relate to trench newspapers. In 1919, someone who sent Jenkinson copies of the *Strike Bulletin* wrote that "it is a capital idea making a point of collecting all these ephemeral publications. They can only be secured at the moment, and may be most valuable afterwards historically."[189] Writing about a Salonika paper, F.C. Burkitt told Jenkinson, "it is most entrancing here."[190] At least one letter suggested that if Jenkinson could not make use of the trench newspaper, the sender would very much like it returned. Some contributors related that they had preserved trench newspapers sent home by their now-deceased sons. Throughout the war, wounded soldiers and visiting officers toured the library, eager to see the war collection. Not all soldiers treasured copies of trench newspapers, but it is clear that many men placed a significant value on trench newspapers during the war and assumed they would hold worth after the war, as well.

The French possibly valued trench newspapers more than the British. *Le zouzou* advised readers to keep copies of the paper, which would be treasured by collectors after the war and would be good for soldiers looking back on their wartime experiences.[191] *Brise d'Entonnoirs* gave the same advice, suggesting it would be difficult to locate copies once the war was over.[192] As early as 1915, there were books published with lists of all known French trench newspapers and, as with the British, a number of trench newspapers were published as books around the end of the war. Men connected to French trench newspapers also formed associations during the war that continued after, like some trench

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[189] Letter from Bower to Jenkinson, May 4, 1919, 6444/B/13, Francis Jenkinson papers. CUL
[190] Letter from F.C. Burkitt to Jenkinson, 6444/B/20, Francis Jenkinson papers. CUL
[191] *Le zouzou*, No. 11 (June 1916), 4. BDIC
[192] *Brise D'Entonnoirs*, No.4 (October 1916), 1. BDIC

newspapers themselves. *Le Poilu*'s January 1, 1920, edition contained information about the emerging association "Amicale des Journaux du Front." The association's first statute suggested it would preserve the fraternal bonds born during the course of the Great War. It would preserve the smiling and optimistic character of the front and formally forbid political and religious discussions at reunions. It would also practice the cult of memory for comrades who died "pour la Patrie."[193] The "Amicale des Journaux du Front" grew out of wartime associations among trench journalists. Trench newspapers were also sometimes associated. French papers frequently contained encouraging references to other titles near them on the line, editors corresponded, and units sometimes exchanged issues.

Though historians and literary theorists have long overlooked trench newspapers, they clearly held a value for soldiers in the trenches. Some soldiers preserved papers during the war and were eager to contribute them to archives. Other soldiers no doubt kept copies in personal collections as war souvenirs. Some soldiers created or joined associations built around trench journalism, considering it an important part of the cult of the dead. Even before the war was over, trench journalism was tied to the fraternity of the trenches and the memory of combatants, many of whom did not survive the struggle, like the 13.2 percent of French editors who died.[194] Trench newspapers preserved some of the final expressions of combatants and showed a side of contributors that civilians would never see. They were the only periodicals wherein readers could reasonably expect to see references to themselves or pieces of their own writing; trench newspapers

[193] *Le Poilu* (January 1, 1920), 4. HIST
[194] Audoin-Rouzeau, 10.

held a special place among media for the readers and placed the readers within their pages in a way other periodicals did not.

In a 1986 interview for the Imperial War Museum, Colonel Harold Essex Lewis was asked about the *Wipers Times*: "Was it a good source of news and information?" Lewis responded, "No, it was quite light-hearted, parodies and that sort of thing. Very original stuff in there."[195] Though news sometimes made an appearance in trench newspapers, it was not the purpose of the sheets men circulated at the front. Trench newspapers, both British and French, were an alternative to civilian war news modeled on satirical papers. Through poems, plays, and stories, men established new narratives of the soldier. Humor and literature were the two most common tools soldiers used to build understandings of their places in the world and, as the war progressed, to write new selves in the pages of trench newspapers. As a form of public discourse exclusive to men, trench newspapers also displayed changing notions of masculinity. Trench newspapers are a unique point of access for the public discourses of soldiers during the war, and changing understandings of empire can be studied alongside the shifting sands of identity.

In the foreword to a published collection of *Wipers Times*, Henry Williamson, a Great War veteran only seventeen at the outbreak of hostilities, related that when he went home on leave he would spend much of his time crying alone in his bedroom. The questions people asked him were too much for him to handle. A trench newspaper was his solace and

> even fifty years later, I can feel myself to be surrounded by the spirit of the Western Front in the pages of *Wipers Times*, *accepted* as part of myself, for every item is gentle and kindly in attitude to what was hellish—and this attitude, its

[195] Colonel Harold Essex Lewis interview, 1986, 9388, IWM

> virtue, was extended towards the enemy. It is a charity which links those who have passed through the estranging remoteness of battle…men who were not broken, but reborn.[196]

Trench newspapers catalogued and empowered these rebirths. They sustained the men in the trenches with humor, linked readers together, provided a forum for expression and criticism, and warded off boredom. Most significantly, trench newspapers linked together the parts of men that could not leave the trenches and the parts that could never be confined to them.

Who, then, *was* Christopher of whisky fame? We cannot make any assumptions about his full name or whether he survived the war. He was likely a civilian before the Great War, transformed by the conflict into another man in uniform. Yet his identity transcended his regimented existence. Unknown to us, Christopher was certainly known to his peers. He came to the trenches as someone else, but was reborn into whisky fame through the *Fifth Glo'ster Gazette*. The *Fifth Glo'ster Gazette* was used by Christopher and his peers to establish new selves and stories; it can be used by us to explore the creation and content of the new narratives soldiers spun during the war.

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[196] *Wipers Times*, ix-x.

Chapter Three

Men on the Margins: Representations of Colonial Troops in British and French Trench Newspapers

In 1916, the British trench newspaper, the *"P.P."* offered its readers a reminder about the constitution of the Entente fighting forces:

> A contemporary obligingly reminds us that fully seventy-five separate races and peoples are now fighting in the greatest war of the world's history.
>
> Fighting under the British Flag are eleven distinct races—English, Scots, Irish, Welsh, Hindus, Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders, Boers, native Africans of various shades of colour. Red Indians, and in addition several indefinable small peoples from the South Sea Islands and elsewhere.
>
> Included in the French armies are no fewer than seventeen races, amongst them being Moors, Kabyles, Anamies, Senegal Negroes, Arabs, Turkos, Hovas, Dahomey Negroes, Congo Negroes, Cambodians, and Tunisians.
>
> On the side of Russia are fourteen races, the principal being Finns, Poles, Lithuanians, Kirghese, Kalmuks, Tungueses, Tartars, Turcomen, and Mongols.
>
> In addition are Japanese, Portuguese, Belgians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Rumanians, and Albanians.[197]

The readership of the *"P.P.,"* formerly known as the *Pennington Press*, may not have included colonial troops, but the "reminder" suggests readers already had some awareness of them. [198] While non-European soldiers were in the minority on the Western Front, they served alongside, marched past, relieved, and traveled with European troops.[199] Roughly over two million Africans served in the First World War in some capacity and India alone sent over a million men as soldiers and laborers.[200] Newsreels, newspaper articles and word of mouth spread information about colonial troops

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[197] *"P.P."* (November 24, 1916), 7. CUL

[198] The term "colonial troops" includes officers and soldiers of European descent who served with armies based in India and Africa. However, I think it is preferable to the alternative terms, such as "indigenous troops," which is no longer accurate when colonial armies serve outside of the colonies.

[199] More detailed information on the role of colonial troops and materiel in the war appears in Chapter One, "The Great War in Imperial Context."

[200] Strachan, *To Arms*, 497. Chakravorty, 11.

throughout the trenches, as well as through the rest of Europe. Numerous works have explored the realities surrounding the service of colonial troops and the significance of their contributions, especially with regard to imperial policies and rising nationalism.[201] However, few works consider the ways in which soldiers from England and France regarded colonial troops and understood the role of empires in the Great War.

In British and French trench newspapers, as in the Entente fighting forces, colonial troops did not make up the majority of the subject matter but, as in the fighting, that did not prevent them from having a presence and an impact. Colonial troops appear in articles, stories, poems, cartoons, and plays, both centrally and peripherally. A consistent presence in the margins of narratives, depictions of colonial troops in trench newspapers and other wartime writings can highlight major themes in soldiers' understandings of the war and their respective empires. Specifically, depictions of colonial troops demonstrate the influence of the media before the war, the ways in which soldiers constructed the "us" and "them" of the trenches, and the reasons Entente soldiers gave for fighting in the Great War.

Holding patterns

Within the prewar media, colonial subjects featured prominently. Beginning in the 1890s, articles about and images of Africa abounded in the popular press. In France, in particular, Africa was increasingly given a prominent place in newspapers. In the *Petit*

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[201] Chantal Antier-Renaud and Christian Le Corre, *Les soldats des colonies dans la Première Guerre mondiale* (Rennes : Ouest-France, 2008). Chakravorty, *Indian Nationalism and the First World War* (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1997). Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts; The Tirailleurs Senegalais in French West Africa, 1857-1960* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991). DeWitt Ellinwood and S.D. Pradhan, *India and World War 1* (Columbia, MO: South Asia Books, 1978). Richard Fogarty, *Race & War in France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008). Jacques Frémeaux, *Les Colonies Dans La Grande Guerre* (Paris : Soteca, 2006). Strachan, *To Arms*, 2001.

Journal, "a minimum of 20 percent and an average of 44.7 percent of all West African articles per year after 1880 appeared on the front page."[202] While news magazines had correspondents and more accurate images, satirical periodicals consumed by the middle class, such as *Le Rire* and *Punch*, primarily offered caricatures. As colonization became more firmly established, images shifted from representing Africans as savages to presenting them as overgrown children.[203] In the decade before the war, popular public exhibitions in European capitals featured colonial people on display.

Within European societies, colonial people were widely understood to be at the foot of a civilizational ladder. The legacy of slavery was still relatively recent, and belief in a strong hierarchy of civilizations with Europeans at the top had filtered through thinkers like Hegel and Darwin into both British and French society.[204] Within colonies racial hierarchies were supposed to be strictly observed. When the 1883 Ilbert Bill proposed giving authority to Bengali officers in India over British subjects in small towns, "planters suggested Indians wouldn't understand sporting Anglo-Indians and the 'thoughtless schoolboy spirit'."[205] That "thoughtless schoolboy spirit" was blamed for "accidental" shootings of Indians and excessive physical punishment of servants. However, even thoughtless, white schoolboys were entitled to privileges over Indian officers.

Exposure to colonial topics and to notions of European supremacy was long and sustained for most of the British and French men in the trenches. What the press continued to represent, children's literature provided first. From mid-nineteenth century

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[202] William Schneider, *An Empire for the Masses* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), 40.
[203] Pieterse, 77-78, 88.
[204] George Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1987).
[205] Ramamurthy, 105-106.

missionary tales for children to the adventures Rudyard Kipling set in India, the reaches of empire and the benefits of colonization were present in British children's reading material.[206] Boys, in particular, were the target audience of cheap novels and periodicals which consistently featured imperial heroes and stories from the colonies.[207] The same trends existed in French juvenile literature.[208] Considering the high literacy rates in Britain and France, it can be assumed that many of the men in the trenches were raised on stories of white men fighting and conquering non-Europeans in the far reaches of the world.

Trench newspaper representations of colonial troops, and soldiers' diary and epistolary accounts, do show a continuation of themes and depictions from pre-war press and literature. Colonial troops were often depicted as mentally inferior to Europeans, even if they were shown to be remarkable physical specimens. René Prud'homme served briefly alongside soldiers from Martinique, who he described as "de enfants, de plus beau noir."[209] Specific stereotypes also crossed into trench newspapers; the final page of an issue of *Le Mouchoir* featured a caricatured *tirailleur*, with the phrase "Y a bon," like the famous image for *Banania*, a chocolate drink.[210] *Banania* itself, as a brand, combined the appeals of exoticism and patriotism in their *tirailleur* image.[211] In "Sketches of a Poilu's World," James P. Daughton has suggested that cartoons in French trench newspapers simply carried over prewar stereotypes and exaggerated anxieties. He writes that within trench newspaper cartoons "the *poilu* is French and white. Black soldiers

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[206] M. Daphne Kutzer, *Empire's Children* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 1.
[207] Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and juvenile literature* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1989).
[208] Berenson, *Heroes of Empire.*
[209] René Prud'homme, *Le fusil et le pinceau* (Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire: A. Sutton, 2007), 132.
[210] *Le Mouchoir* (October 15, 1917). HIST
[211] Jean Garrigues, *Banania, Histoire d'une passion française* (Paris: Du May, 1991), 32.

from the French colonies are portrayed much like the enemy, as stupid and even savage."[212] He suggests that colonial soldiers were perceived as sexual rivals by French soldiers and that "portraying colonial soldiers as ape-like and physically inferior undermined the stereotype of presumed sexual potency."[213] White soldiers may have had many anxieties regarding colonial troops, including sexual anxieties. However, Daughton's article overlooks positive representations of non-white soldiers and the praise of their physical strength, which was valued during the war. *Tirailleurs* became popular figures during the war due to "tales of steadfastness," somewhat unlikely if they were truly understood as similar to the Germans.[214] Many negative depictions of colonial troops poked fun at them, unlike negative descriptions of Germans, which presented the "Boches" as more barbaric than savage.

Despite considerable carryover of stereotypes circulated prewar, and in the civilian press, it would be wrong to suggest that trench newspapers merely reiterated existing understandings and images of colonial peoples. Acknowledgement of colonial sacrifices and effort, if at times reluctant, tempered negative stereotypes. French trench newspapers, especially, also often normalized colonial troops in a European setting. A 1916 cover of *Rigolboche* showed two *tirailleurs* casually sitting and smoking, with a caption of "Embarking for…. hush."[215] In this illustration by P.J. Poitevin, the Senegalese troops are not caricatured and their pause en route to some point at the front is treated like that of anyone else. At the end of the day, they were French soldiers. Even

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[212] James P. Daughton, "Sketches of the *Poilu's* World, Trench Cartoons from the Great War," *World War I and the Cultures of Modernity* ed. Douglas Mackaman and Michael Mays (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), 47.
[213] Ibid, 49.
[214] Paul Landau and Deborah Kaspin, *Images and Empires* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 237.
[215] *Rigolboche* (August 10, 1916). HIST

beyond published images, European soldiers were, at times, able to experience contact that reached beyond prejudice. In a "Petit Dictionnaire," intended to explain terms in ways relevant to the war, *Face aux Boches* offered the definition of "Sénégalais" as "l'ami noir."[216] English soldier Joseph Murray, who served with the Royal Naval Division, remembered that his Division was briefly attached to some Senegalese during a battle, and that they were "greeted as pals" and given red wine and black bread.[217] Private Frank Lindley served on the Western Front and in Egypt, and ate meals with the Egyptian Labour Corps, making friends and teaching some English.[218]

Even if they didn't serve alongside them, many British and especially French soldiers served near men from outside Europe, and colonial troops often attracted a great deal of attention. Prud'homme, with the 124th infantry regiment, who had patronizing assessments of soldiers from Martinique was nonetheless attentive to their needs. He dressed the wound of one of the men injured by a grenade and comforted him. Exoticism often existed alongside a fair amount of honest appreciation. In his war notebooks Louis Barthas recorded numerous times when he observed colonial troops and he mused on the diversity of the Entente fighting forces. At one point quarantined with other sick men, Barthas observed that "all the parties of the world, all races, and all colors were represented. Moroccans, Annamites, white and black Americans, Italians, etc., and five or six French."[219] The ensuing conversations he described as a "pretty cacophony." Though not all soldiers felt that way, some did see the diverse fighting forces as in some way beautiful.

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[216] *Face aux Boches*, No.3 (October 1915), 2. BDIC
[217] Joseph Murray interview, 1984, Reel 7, 8201. IWM
[218] Frank Lindley interview, 1985, Reel 2, 26873. IWM
[219] Barthas, 528.

British and French soldiers had notions about colonial peoples and their value before colonial troops arrived in Europe. Usually those notions denied the possibility of equality and were patronizing at best. Yet the shared experience of war and the realities of co-dependence brought peoples from across the British and French empires into new contact and allowed space for the development of appreciation and evaluation that departed from pre-war stereotypes and prejudices, including exoticism. This transcendence was not always achieved, but it became a possibility in the war. The pages of trench newspapers demonstrate the pull of old ideas and the possibilities of new ones, framed by new realities of contact and exchange. Analyzing the themes in representations of colonial troops within trench newspapers will do more to show the significance of public discourse on colonial troops.

The Men from the Margins

Despite the fact that the *"P.P."* suggested there were eleven different "races" under the British flag and seventeen under the French, certain colonial soldiers overshadowed the rest. Gurkhas and Sikhs often stood in for all British colonial troops, and the *tirailleurs sénégalais* did the same for the French. [220] General Sir James Willcocks, who served with the Indian Army, wrote that "a great part of the public appeared to think that Indian brigades and divisions were composed of Sikhs and Gurkhas alone."[221] These men also stood out in soldiers' memories. In an oral interview kept at the Imperial War Museum, former soldier Eric Wolton, when asked about colonial troops, remembered seeing the "Sikhs and Gurkhas—lovely people; especially

[220] While *tirailleurs sénégalais* were typically all represented as Senegalese within trench newspapers, many members were from other parts of French West Africa.
[221] James Willcocks, *With the Indians in France* (London: Constable and Company, 1920), 2.

the Gurkhas. Sikhs very tall and dignified. I loved the Gurkhas."[222] In the official film reel produced by the government in 1916 and titled "With the Indian Troops at the Front," Sikhs and Gurkhas featured prominently and almost exclusively.[223] The fascination with Gurkhas possibly even extended to the Germans in the minds of some Brits, for according to the letters of SH Steven, a German spy disguised himself as a Gurkha officer, but was found out because he wore spurs.[224] The French certainly knew of the Gurkhas. In the special "Sammies" edition, published in English for American soldiers, the French editors of *Le Poilu* included a poem, "The Road to France," with the lines "To France—the trail the Gurkhas found/ To France—old England's rallying-ground!"[225]

The *tirailleurs sénégalais* were the most commonly referenced colonial troops among the French. In pre-war mass newspapers and illustrated magazines, news about French West Africa was frequently on the front page, and papers also featured articles about the role of the *tirailleurs sénégalais* in FWA.[226] Trench newspapers continued to give prominent space to West Africans, but the Senegalese were not the only colonial troops who appeared in trench newspapers. A description of a French officer serving with Arab cavalry and observing Ramadan with troops appeared in an article of *Le Poilu* titled, "Memory of Africa."[227] Zouaves and Spahis were both mentioned within trench papers. In another issue of *Le Poilu*, a story intended to be humorous describes a Chinese man selling a crate of oranges to a black man (and cheating him) while they are being

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[222] Eric Wolton interview, 1985, Reel 6, 9090. IWM
[223] British Topical Committee for War Films, January 17, 1916, 202-1. IWM
[224] Letter from S.H. Steven, December 2, 1915, 5525 96/29/1, private papers of S.H. Steven. IWM
[225] Daniel Henderson, "The Road to France," *Le Poilu* (November 1917) supplement. HIST
[226] Schneider, 40, 97.
[227] *Le Poilu* (January 1915), 3. HIST

engulfed by a flood.[228] Here, as elsewhere, the black man, typically Senegalese, was often assumed to be foolish or childlike and the Chinese man was depicted according to stereotype, as well.

At other times the colonial troops themselves were neither pictured nor discussed but images and stories which were evocative of colonial and race relations were present. *Trot Talk* regularly featured advertisements for "Belle of the Orient, Egyptian Blend Cigarettes."[229] The *AAC Journal* included advertisements for Lipton's tea, with a plantation scene and Ceylonese pickers. These advertisements, in trench newspapers, were typical of advertisements in the civilian press, which feminized colonial people and places and tied them to commodities. According to Anandi Ramamurthy's examination of illustrated newspapers in *Imperial persuaders*, "the image of the plantation labourer became one of the dominant representations of Indians in the commercial culture of the period," and it tied labor to racial hierarchy.[230] Minority individuals were often shown in a questionable light. In 1916, the *Pennington Press* ran a short article about a "coloured man styling himself 'Rajah'," arrested for telling fortunes privately.[231] And in 1917, the *"P.P."* described a night of music that included Rachmaninoff, Sinding and "a nigger sketch."[232] These stories and mentions represented non-white members of society as socially inferior and as objects of entertainment.

French trench newspapers, too, could evoke colonial peoples and questions without depicting non-European soldiers themselves. In a 1916 issue of *Rigolboche*, a cartoon depicted female counterparts of soldiers, including a topless Senegalese woman

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[228] *Le Poilu* (December 1921), 3. HIST
[229] *Trot Talk* (April 1, 1918), ix. CUL
[230] Ramamurthy, 93.
[231] *Pennington Press* (September 8, 1916), 6. CUL
[232] *"P.P."* (April 6, 1917), 3. CUL

with a baby on her back in a sling.[233] This cartoon was consistent with stereotypes of Africans being closer to nature and possibly sexually less inhibited.[234] At other times papers featured "Arab proverbs," which could easily be connected to French colonial possessions or the fighting in the Middle East.[235] French trench newspapers, however, had fewer real or satirical advertisements, which might feature products associated with colonies.

Off the page, European soldiers did not see colonial subjects in an exclusively martial light. Many British and French soldiers had exposure to, and contact with, men serving in labor positions with the military. During the Great War, France brought 300,000 men from the colonies to help with fields and factories.[236] While colonial soldiers had a positive image, foreign factory workers were perceived and portrayed as a threat by unions and the working class, and were at times subject to racially-based physical violence.[237] Yet, for soldiers, even seeing colonial men in menial positions within the military structure did not necessarily relegate them to exclusively subservient roles. In an interview kept at the IWM, A.B.W. Fletcher related some of his impressions of the Chinese Labour Corps. He described the men as "straight from the paddy fields" and speaking no English, but also suggested that they "would not stand bullying" by the British, and he seemed impressed at their one time strike that took them marching through surrounding villages. Ultimately, though, his impressions largely match the

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[233] *Rigolboche* (April 1916). HIST
[234] Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 11.
[235] *Bleutinet* (October 1, 1916), 2. UPENN
[236] Tyler Stovall, "The Color Line Behind the Lines: Racial Violence in France During the Great War," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 103, No. 3 (Jun., 1998), 741.
[237] Ibid, 767.

typical depictions in trench newspapers; to him the Chinese were "very simple, very strong, and very entertaining people."[238]

The Reasons Why

At a Narbonne train station, Louis Barthas saw the "famous Hindus" and wondered why they came so far to fight on French soil.[239] He watched them kill an animal for consumption, and pray, and smoke, and he considered the possibility of their dying in a corner of Flanders, never to return home.[240] In a later notebook Barthas wrote about the diversity of the group gathered to fight the Germans. There were "people from all corners of the universe; Australians, Canadians, Hindus, blacks, yellows, reds. It seemed like an exodus of peoples, tribes fleeing before a plague or departing for some distant crusade."[241] Precisely because colonial troops stood out in the trenches, and the train stations, they had the potential to raise questions about why one was willing to fight. According to the *Pennington Press*, "when a nation is at war (which fortunately isn't often) and all kinds of men are joining the Army, many are the reasons which induce them to do so."[242] European soldiers' speculations about the motivations of colonial troops speak volumes about what they considered appropriate and honorable to kill and die for. Writing on the motivations of colonial troops also suggests ways in which British and French soldiers understood their empires and the relationships of colonial peoples to the empires.

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[238] BBC recording, A.B.W. Fletcher, 1963, 4102. IWM
[239] Barthas, 22.
[240] Ibid, 24.
[241] Ibid, 393.
[242] *Pennington Press* (September 8, 1916), 10. CUL

When trench newspaper articles, poems, and stories spoke openly and struck a serious tone about the reasons for joining the war effort, the reasons were quite predictable. The British wrote about "king and country" and quaint England, the French about *la patrie* and "eternal France," and both British and French wrote about German aggression and inhumanity.[243] In a 1915 *Lead-Swinger*, the poem "To the 'Slackers' at home" included the following lines:

> But now we know, what we knew not then,
> That this war is not a joke;
> And that what we want is men—more men
> To throw off the Teuton yoke.
>
> The lads who have gladly given their all,
> In England's cause and name;
> Surely you hear their spirits call,
> And the call is a cry of shame.[244]

Men were fighting for England's "cause and name." The threat was the "Teuton yoke." Similarly, a song in *L'Artilleur Déchainé* described a review of troops in Paris. Each stanza featured a different type of soldier marching by the encouraging crowd. One of the stanzas was:

> Then our negroes
> All these valiant heroes
> Marching through the echoes (cries)
> Of the Marseillaise…
> Under the sacred flame
> The public was inspired
> Acclaiming: Long live the French Republic![245]

In the song, these colonial heroes marched to the Marseillaise and fought for the "French Republic," just like their brethren born in Europe. From the lyrics it can be deduced that colonial troops fought for the soil of France, and for liberty, equality and fraternity. Most

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[243] This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four, "Why War?"
[244] *The Lead-Swinger* (November 6, 1915), 2. CUL
[245] *L'Artilleur Déchainé* (August 15, 1916), 3. UPENN

of the time, colonial troops were shown to share the values of the home country. When it was acknowledged that colonial troops had often never seen France or England and spoke the local languages poorly, loyalty was given as the primary reason for fighting.

In reality, colonial troops were most often in Europe for reasons other than loyalty. While leaders may have volunteered their colonies' men and materiel to the war effort, the recruiting in Africa and in India was extremely coercive. [246] Men may have marched to the Marseillaise, but French colonial troops were most often not citizens. British and French colonial troops were still very much under imperial yokes themselves.

The emphasis on loyalty shows a great deal about British and French perceptions of their empires and their own relationships to the state. Soldiers from Europe likely knew very little about coercive recruiting methods in the colonies. The emphasis on loyalty suggests that many British and French soldiers considered their respective empires benevolent to the point that they engendered sacrifice on the part of subjects. The presence of the British and French outside of Europe was so beneficial that the colonies then were presented as perpetually in debt to England and France, as though the "white man's burden" had placed a reciprocal burden on the black man. Where the Europeans brought civilization, subjects should return bodies and labor, in service of European countries, even service unto death.

While the positive view of empire could be expected in the era, the emphasis on national loyalty in trench newspapers suggests it should be a primary motive of European soldiers as well. No man should consider not fighting for the country that gave him life. Trench newspapers very rarely referenced non-voluntary military service. While a joke might be made about seeking to impress a woman, the idea of disloyalty was not

[246] Chakravorty, *Indian Nationalism and the First World War*. Lunn, *Memoirs of the Maelstrom.*

presented, even humorously. Conscription was rarely discussed, though "shirking" obligation was a common topic. Indeed, loyalty may even be understood as one of the primary principles in Rupert Brooke's famous poem "The Soldier."

> If I should die, think only this of me:
> That there's some corner of a foreign field
> That is for ever England. There shall be
> In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
> A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
> Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
> A body of England's, breathing English air,
> Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
>
> And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
> A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
> Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
> Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
> And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
> In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

That same type of loyalty, motivated by appreciation and gratefulness, was seen as relevant to colonial troops within trench newspapers. Colonial troops were not "blest by suns of home" and were not "a dust whom England bore;" however, within soldiers' public discourse they probably could have been considered blessed by "thoughts by England given" and longing for her happy days.

Within trench newspapers loyalty was to "king and country," the *patrie*, and the Republic, and essentially never to the "empire." Germans were continuously represented as fighting for imperial ambition, but British and French trench newspapers portrayed their readers as fighting for much smaller political units, with more autochthonous overtones. There were young men "morts pour la patrie," but not for the empire.[247] Confronted by the presence of colonial troops, whose existence spoke to the imperial

[247] *Le Poilu du 6-9* (March 1917), 2. HIST

nature of their countries, European trench newspaper contributors continued to write of their native soil.

Us and Them

Through their particular positioning, colonial troops can identify the challenges and salient characteristics used to form the wartime "us" and "them" dichotomy in the trenches. Colonial troops were often represented as with, but not of, their European counterparts. In an article titled "Boots, Unlimited" in the *"P.P.,"* the incredible variety of military boots produced at a single factory is described. There are boots for men in trenches, men in planes, men in deserts, and for soldiers of different origins. According to the article, "some of the most remarkable boots turned out in this most gigantic factory are the tiny boots of the gallant Gurkhas and the enormous ones of the Russians."[248] Their boots are turned out at the same factory, and those boots stand in the same trenches, but the Gurkhas do not fade into the general population. In trench newspapers, the colonial soldier often seems normalized but not quite assimilated. The masthead of an issue of *La Première Ligne* featured two soldiers pointing at the newspaper's title, one a typical *poilu*, the other a caricatured *tirailleur*.[249] The presumably Senegalese soldier is across from the prototypical *poilu* and both are shown representing the military. Yet this inclusive gesture is minimized by the caricatured depiction of the *tirailleur*. The ways in which British and French soldiers distinguished themselves from colonial troops show how European soldiers constructed their identities in the trenches.

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[248] *"P.P."* (December 1, 1916), 7. CUL
[249] *La Première Ligne*, 1. UPENN

The "them" in the consciousness of British and French troops in World War I were primarily the Germans. At times called "Huns," at other times "Boches," the first more common among the British and the second more common among the French, the Germans were nonetheless Europeans. Accepting colonial troops as allies and empowering them to kill other Europeans challenged hierarchies and policies within empires, which relied heavily on doctrines of race and identified Europeans as superior. Some criticism of colonial troops and belittling of their capacities was no doubt compensation for acknowledging their ability to kill white men and serve alongside other white men. Their justification in doing so, for the cause of civilization, had the potential to cause considerable cognitive dissonance.

During and after the war, the Germans protested the use of colonial troops in Europe, especially Africans. While British and French soldiers saw themselves fighting barbarism, Germans made accusations of brutality, cannibalism, rape and miscegenation against colonial troops.[250] According to French historian Jean-Yves Le Naour, while the French saw African soldiers primarily as large children, the Germans considered them animalistic and sub-human.[251] German propaganda set forth "a deeply racist campaign that represented the non-white colonial soldiers as beasts," which many individual Germans seemed convinced by in their personal writings.[252] Germans almost seemed to hope as much as fear that colonial troops were full of primitive urges that could not be tamed. In 1914, Lieutenant Colonel J.W. Barnett observed, from a captured German airplane, "seditious pamphlets on board and immoral post-cards. Splendid fellows the

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[250] Le Naour, Jean-Yves, *La Honte noire*, Paris (Hachette littératures, 2003).
[251] Ibid, 28-29.
[252] Christian Koller, "Representing Otherness: African, Indian and European soldiers' letters and memoirs," *Race, Empire and First World War Writing*, ed. Santanu Das (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 128.

German staff—wish to excite the passions of the sepoy that he may assault the French women and thereby cause trouble between us and the French—an idea worthy of a Kaiser."[253] The Germans targeted propaganda toward British and French colonial troops to encourage desertion and promoted the Ottoman Empire's call to *jihad* on behalf of the Central Powers.

Colonial troops were often reputed to be particularly fearsome fighters. They were characterized by both bravery and bloodthirstiness. Both the British and the French recruited according to the theory of "martial races," which suggested that some tribes or groups were more naturally suited for warfare than others.[254] English officer E.D. Ridley served near the Indian Army for a time during the war. In his diary, Ridley commented one night, "hear the Indians have taken a trench and some prisoners. More trench than prisoners I expect."[255] The knives carried by Indian soldiers were rumored to be sometimes used for decapitation. Yet even when the Germans, and some civilian press, considered alleged colonial bloodthirstiness barbaric, trench authors were less likely to do so. Colonial troops were imagined terrorizing the enemy, as seen in an issue of *Le Ver Luisant*, where above the lyrics of a song, "My Bayonet," was a cartoon image of a Zouave threatening a German.[256] However, trench authors did not ascribe atrocities, or the tendency to commit them, to their colonial combatants. Within the pages of trench newspapers excessive violence was exclusively assigned to the enemy, even though some Entente soldiers seemed to have excessive zeal for violence. During the war, British Lieutenant F.B. Turner wrote to his father that about "slaughtering Huns… I revel in it,

[253] Diary entry, October 25, 1914, 666 90/37/1, private papers of J.W. Barnett. IWM
[254] Streets, *Martial races*.
[255] E.D. Ridley diary Dec 1914-March 1915, December 18, 1914, 7066, E.D. Ridley papers. CUL
[256] *Le Ver Luisant* (June 1916), 5. UPENN

every Hun I see I generally fire a salvo at him and if it doesn't kill or wound him probably gives him shell shock and makes him windy. The Major seems rather pleased with my bloodthirsty nature."[257] Within trench newspaper discourse, such behavior was not questioned or examined closely. Bloodthirstiness within the Entente camp was not equated with barbarism. Colonial "savages" were often seen as more noble than the Germans.

Colonial troops questioned more than continental divides. They also brought to the surface distinctions within nations and empires. Colonies and dominions pushed for greater autonomy and rights within empire as compensation for their wartime contributions. Within the French empire Blaise Diagne pushed to gain citizenship for colonial subjects as a result of their wartime service. India gained more leverage with the Raj, and Indian soldiers had increased opportunities to serve as officers, pensions for veterans, improved facilities and more education.[258] As early as 1917, Edwin Samuel Montagu, Secretary of State for India, promised the "development of responsible government by gradual stages."[259] The "us" within particular empires was being rearranged.

That rearrangement included a sexual component. Just as women seemed to be breaking free of patriarchy in new ways during the war, men from the edges of empire seemed to be breaking free of some sexual taboos. Colonial troops in France did have opportunities to engage in sex with white women, via prostitution and relationships. Colonial troops, and laborers, had contact with women across the spectrum of class backgrounds. These relationships caused anxiety, especially for those in power, because

[257] Letter from F.B. Turner to his father, June 19, 1918, 9588/9, F.B. Turner papers. CUL
[258] *India's Contribution to the Great War*, 236.
[259] Chakravorty, 283.

they challenged "sexual mores and racial and colonial hierarchies."[260] Censors checked mail dutifully for content about sexual relations with French women because "injuries to Frenchwomen and their prestige were equally injuries to France and to the white prestige that justified and supported European rule."[261] Yet the content of the mail, as well as historians' findings, suggest that many women were willing partners in relationships with colonial troops. This was less of an issue for the British, because the Indian Army served in France and did not have extended contact with British women, and wounded Indian patients in Britain were segregated.[262]

Within both the British and the French armies, a division existed between officers and enlisted men. In addition to the distinctions of rights and privileges within the military structure, officers tended to come from the upper classes. Officers were encouraged to take a paternalistic approach with their men, whose letters they typically censored and whose feet they even checked for infection. Officers often dined apart from the men, had more frequent leave, and even enjoyed separate brothels at the front. These distinctions were more apparent in the British than the French military.

Colonial troops in both the British and the French militaries had extremely limited opportunities to serve as officers and while they may not have easily blended into the lower ranks, they were lumped in when it came to regulations and respect. Official policies which infantilized enlisted men carried over to approaches to colonial troops. In *Le rôle social de l'officier*, published in 1891, Maréchal Lyautey suggested that officers

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[260] Fogarty, 203.
[261] Ibid, 222.
[262] Allison Fell, "Nursing the Other: the representation of colonial troops in French and British First World War nursing memoirs," in *Race, Empire and First World War Writing*, ed. Santanu Das (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 164.

had a moral imperative to instruct soldiers on essentially all aspects of life.[263] French officers often referred to their colonial troops as their children.[264] In *The secret battle, Emotional survival in the Great War*, Michael Roper argues that British lower-ranking officers were encouraged to take even a maternal role in caring for their men, which is consistent with *The Indian Corps in France*, which compared the typical officer with Indian troops to a mother and her children and suggested that "it is unnecessary to point out—for everyone knows it—how much the Indian troops owed to their British officers, and to the British regiments with which they were brigaded."[265] Colonial troops were officially considered helpless without their officers. In addition to the regulations and relations with officers, enlisted men were more likely to be overlooked by the press and by publications about the war. For example, in 1915 the Bishop of Nagpur visited the front to temporarily replace a chaplain on leave. He wrote a book from his experiences, titled *Ten Days With the Indian Army Corps at the Front*, in it he focused his account exclusively on the officers, all of European extraction. Colonial troops were at the bottom of the military hierarchy in every possible sense.

Despite many clear indications that colonial troops failed to become fully part of the "us" for many of their fellow combatants, there were nonetheless ways in which trench newspapers showed shared experiences, often tied to masculinity. This was primarily true in French trench newspapers. In a 1915 issue of *Rigolboche*, there was a humorous poem about a certain "Mamadou," a Senegalese soldier, who had comically

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[263] Maréchal Lyautey, *Le rôle social de l'officier* (Paris : Bartillat, 2003), 83, 78, 66.
[264] Fogarty, 100.
[265]Michael Roper, *The secret battle* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), 188. Lieutenant-Colonel JWB Merewether and Sir Frederick Smith, *The Indian Corps in France*, 2nd edition (London: John Murray, 1919), 481.

fallen in love with "Madame Croix Rouzé."[266] The nurse was a common figure for romantic intrigue for soldiers from France, as well. In other papers, colonial troops were shown to be just as susceptible to the allure of the ever-present *marraine*, the female penpal, as their European counterparts. Within French trench newspapers, soldiers were more likely to be described as falling in love with nurses or penpals than described as falling from enemy fire. The experience cut across all internal divisions in the military. Poems, stories, plays, and illustrations all suggested that the unseen writer of such sweet letters, the *marraine*, could be writing as many as seven men, or perhaps be about the age of seventy. Including colonial troops in narratives like these indicated a shared experience, an occasional place within the "us" of *men* at the front. As with white men, these stories and cartoons tended to mock romantic endeavors with women other than wives, while winking at conjugal relations. Colonial troops were shown to share an interest in women.

Most importantly, the colonial troops were troops. They were distinguishable from the *embusqués* and the shirkers. In *Le Feu*, the main character observes the Senegalese headed for the front line and knows that an attack is imminent, because the Senegalese always took the front line in an assault.[267] The "shock troops" of the war, colonial soldiers were associated with the violence of battle for their fellow combatants. When Barthas saw the "Hindus" in the trenches, he noticed their famous knives.[268] With identities now tied to combat against the Germans, the British and French colonial troops were part of the broader fraternity of the trenches. They became part of the "us" who had

[266] *Rigolboche* (October 20, 1915). HIST
[267] Henri Barbusse, *Le Feu* (Paris: Flammarion, 1965), 41.
[268] Barthas, 66.

experienced the war at the front lines, even if they were not afforded complete equality there or behind them.

Theirs Not to Make Reply

One of the chief markers of difference between European and colonial troops identified by European soldiers was language. Colonial troops were represented as ill-versed in English or French. An issue of *L'Horizon* illustrates the situation well. An article about the death of General Baratier, a hero in Africa, suggests that he got large smiles from African soldiers when he spoke to them in their language, clearly and strongly. He was remembered as well-loved by both his white and his black soldiers.[269] On the next page, the article "Gri-Gri" relates that the strong, childlike Senegalese soldiers do not speak French well, but do have interesting and musical accents.[270] It appears that within the *Rigolboche*, the linguistic gap can only be bridged by the Europeans, who speak "clearly and strongly" in foreign languages, while the Africans utilize interesting and "musical" accents. The Europeans are in the position to "speak to" colonial peoples, but the reverse is not true.

The letters of S.H. Steven, who served near the Indian Army, show many similar themes. Referring to the collection of rations, he described a scene in which "both native and European parties get together and the chattering is awful!"[271] Relating another incident in the trenches, Steven wrote:

> We were held up by a party of about 300 Indians going up with spades and sandbags over their shoulders. They are a funny looking lot of little beggars. They creep along, each one looking like the next and they are always smiling.

[269] *L'Horizon*, (undated), 1. UPENN
[270] Ibid, 2.
[271] Letter from S.H. Steven, July 1, 1915, 5525 96/29/1, private papers of S.H. Steven. IWM

> They whisper away to each other in their own musical tongue and occasionally come out with 'Teek, Johnnie, teek' to us which means I believe, that everything is fine, aright, good and going well. We shout to them 'Chell-on' or something like that and they put a spurt on and get going smartly. Physically they are a wonderful crew.[272]

The sounds of colonial soldiers are again "musical" and their mastery of English non-existent while they smile away. The bodies, but not the minds or words, of the colonial troops are valued, especially when they provide cheerful labor. Time and again, language, rather than race, occupation or loyalties, represents the chief barrier between colonial and European troops in many trench newspapers, diaries, and letters. Ironically, while colonial troops did frequently have limited knowledge of English and French, joining the military was little help. The pidgin French that *tirailleurs* were sometimes mocked for speaking was officially recommended for instruction due to belief in their limited linguistic capacity.[273] At times language threatened to make colonial troops indistinguishable from the enemy, as in another story shared by S.H. Steven:

> Another, more amusing incident happened that night, all through the grass cutting party running away. A corporal and two men were in a listening post in front of 'A' company's line. The corporal, when he heard the confusion amongst the grass cutting party went over to see what was wrong. While he was away an Indian patrol came in contact with our listening post with the two men still in it and fired on them. One of our fellows ran, the other lay still. The Indians came up and of course spoke to each other in their own lang. Our fellow thought it was German! They thought he was dead and they went back and reported to their officer that they had killed a German. He ordered them out again to bring him in. In the meantime our lad got up and looked around a bit but he had lost his sense of direction so he thought that he had better lie still until it got lighter. However, the supposed German patrol came back with a stretcher and he shammed dead and was carried back into our lines. As soon as he heard the British officer speaking he jumped off the stretcher and told his tale! This part of the line is all too full of grim excitement it is good to get a laugh occasionally.[274]

While language may have represented a more significant barrier for troops from outside Europe than for those from within, language was not uniquely a division for

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[272] Letter from S.H. Steven, July 11, 1915, 5525 96/29/1, private papers of S.H. Steven. IWM
[273] Fogarty, 156.
[274] Letter from S.H. Steven, July 14, 1915, 5525 96/29/1, private papers of S.H. Steven. IWM

them. An issue of *le dernier bateau* joked about Alsatian soldiers in Tonkin speaking patois and their general mistakenly thinking they had learned Chinese in two days.[275] Some issues of French trench newspapers had columns in patois/regional languages.[276] Though English troops were the majority in the British and Dominion armies, the *New Year Souvenir* of the Welsh Division featured poems in Welsh.[277] A 1917 issue of *Le Poilu* jokingly advertised for "20,000 nègres who speak a little bit of French to serve as interpreters for the first contingents of Americans."[278] Fluency and communication were complicating factors within the Entente camp even apart from colonial troops.

Language that was used to refer to colonial troops often placed limits on the bounds of inclusion. At times, British trench newspapers used terms like "Sambo" and "nigger," indicating the persistence of racial hierarchies. In French trench newspapers, Africans are variously referred to as "noirs" and "nègres," with the latter having chiefly negative connotations and pejorative uses and being tied to slavery. The variations in use show not just political sensitivity or its lack, but also indicate an ongoing struggle with the acceptance of colonial troops and the different ways newspaper contributors assigned status to colonial troops.

Differences between the British and the French

Despite many common themes, there were differences in representations of colonial troops within British and French trench newspapers. Colonial troops were much more prominent in French trench newspapers. And while British trench newspapers

[275] *Le dernier bateau* (1 Oct 1915), 14. BDIC
[276] This is discussed more fully in Chapter Four, "Why War?"
[277] Fuller, 160. *New Year Souvenir* (January 1917), 3. CUL
[278] *Le Poilu* (July 1917), 4. UPenn

commended colonial troops, those soldiers rarely reached the heights of "heroes," as they occasionally did in their French counterparts. Differences in representations were no doubt reflective of distinct approaches to colonial troops in Europe. While the French utilized troops from Africa in Europe, the British resisted the use of black troops, including West Indians, in Europe itself. After the first two years of war in Europe the British withdrew the Indian Army from Europe. The French kept their colonial troops in Europe until the end of the war, and even after, when they used them to help occupy the Rhineland. These differences were partially tied to the types and availability of colonial troops during the war. Yet there is also reason to believe that the British were more sympathetic to the protestations of the Germans against the use of non-European troops in Europe. While French society was certainly not colorblind, the British would not accept combatants from the West Indies and accepted Fijians only for the Labour Corps, largely due to skin color.[279]

Some British officers felt that Indian troops were undervalued by society during the war and that they had an unfair reputation for weakness. In a 1915 letter, Lieutenant Colonel H.F. Bateman-Champain spoke highly of his men in the Indian Corps and defended their conduct. He suggested his perspective

> represents the seasoned opinion of every officer serving with the Indian troops in France today—its co. of a lot of men who have no reason to be anything but loyal to the British Raj. I am in a position to know what I am talking about. The men themselves have had more than enough of it—and although perhaps that shouldn't count—everyone who knows anything about them is forced to admit that they have 'pulled their weight.' At the time they came here 9 months ago they were invaluable—they held their own (in spite of many rumours to the contrary) and the [?] would have been in a horrible plight today if not for them… But… another winter in this country would be [?] them too high…Most of us have been short—very short—for months and there doesn't seem much hope of

[279] Charles Lucas, *The Empire at War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), 394.

> bringing them to strength. I don't believe it is realized either that with the small population of officers allowed the men are fighting above their form.[280]

Bateman-Champain was no doubt responding to the kinds of mixed reviews in books like *The Indian Corps in France*, published in 1919 and co-authored by a Lieutenant-Colonel. Though the authors believed the Indian Corps saved the Empire "in their turn," they also affirmed that "at the end when, broken and bruised with fighting, they were carried (what was left of them) bleeding from Flanders, there were many who in perfect good faith said that the Indians had been failures."[281] When the Indian Corps was removed from Europe, winter was used as the primary reason. As more European soldiers became available Indian soldiers were rerouted back to the margins of empire. Lieutenant Colonel Woolrych, who was briefly attached to the Indian Corps, reflected on their departure:

> I was sorry to see the Indian Corps go. I had little contact with the Indian ranks, but their British officers always impressed me as being somehow more human than their regular equivalents in the British service. But this was not their kind of war. They were brave enough soldiers in a fight, and capable of putting up a good show against even the Germans, but sitting, or crouching for months on end in trenches, often in appalling conditions of wet and cold, was specially hard on men used to near-tropical climates. I am sure they did far better in Mesopotamia.[282]

Despite the benefits of colonial troops in the war, there was a strong discomfort within the British Empire with the movement of colonized people into Europe itself. The Indian Army was brought in as the only prepared army when more men were needed in Europe, but it was a temporary measure. Indians were considered more appropriate fighting in Africa or Mesopotamia, the periphery of empire, but not in its center. In the French case, discomfort certainly existed and differences were emphasized, but colonial troops were used in a more permanent way and outlasted the war. Ultimately, however,

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[280] Letter from Lieutenant Colonel H.F. Bateman-Champain to Sir Claude MacDonald, June 20, 1915, 11141 P265, private papers of Sir Claude MacDonald. IWM

[281] Merewether and Smith, xxi.

[282] Letter from Lt Col S.H.C. Woolrych, 7615 74/9/1, Reflections of WWI. IWM

for both British and French, Europe was still for the Europeans and colonized peoples who were present would likely be better suited elsewhere.

Conclusion

Colonial troops played a significant role in the winning of the war for the Entente forces. Over the course of the war, colonial troops also came into contact with men and women of European descent. Readers and writers of trench newspapers sometimes served alongside, ate with, marched past, and heard rumors of men from the reaches of empire. According to *The Indian Corps in France*, Europeans and Indians "were coadventurers and gallant comrades. They trod together the Valley of the Shadow of Death."[283]

Depictions of colonial troops in trench newspapers showed ways in which people constructed identities for colonial troops, understood hierarchies within empires, constructed the lines between "us" and "them" in wartime, and provided the reasons for fighting. Like diary entries and letters home, trench newspapers presented a range of opinions, and there were differences between the British and the French, yet the majority of impressions could be summed up in this description of the men of the Chinese labor corps: colonial troops were considered "very simple, very strong, and very entertaining people."[284]

This depiction of simplicity, strength and entertainment was meant as praise, and as such indicates some of the values of European soldiers. A good soldier could obey orders, accomplish tasks and sleep at night. The strength many believed colonial troops

[283] Ibid, 481.
[284] BBC interview with A.B.W. Fletcher, 1963, 4102. IWM

possessed was valued in the face of sometimes overwhelming physical hardship and in the context of combat. Being entertaining was also considered extremely valuable. Trench newspapers themselves were a testament to the value of entertainment and the necessity of smiling in the face of despair. These words of praise indicated values and characteristics that Europeans in some ways hoped to share and circumscribed how colonized people could hope to be appreciated.

As a description, the characteristics of simplicity, strength and entertainment also stood in contrast to ways in which European soldiers saw themselves. While simplicity might be viewed positively, it could also stand in contrast to the mental and emotional strain European soldiers felt themselves experiencing. While they worked through the experience of war, some may have been comforted by depictions of colonial troops as childlike and simplistic, believing that colonial soldiers were better suited to survive the tragedies of war. Earl Curzon wrote in 1919 that

> the letters of the Indian soldiers to their folk at home would stand comparison with any that the official post-bag has conveyed to England from our own heroes at the front, in their uncomplaining loyalty, their high enthusiasm, their philosophic endurance, and their tolerant acceptance of the privations and sufferings of war.[285]

Likewise, their strength could be viewed in contrast to a composition defined more by intelligence than by physical attributes. Just as officers suffered "shell shock" while enlisted men suffered "hysteria," colonial troops seem to have been understood to have different emotional capabilities.[286] Presumed strength could be used to mask the emotional and intellectual burdens placed on colonial troops. The entertaining aspects of

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[285] "Introduction," Merewether and Smith, xiii.

[286] T.G. Ashplant, *Fractured Loyalties* (Chicago: Rivers Oram Press, 2007), 80-81.

colonial troops often came from their perceived differences, indicating that while non-Europeans were fascinating, they were not familiar.

The war did not reverse European racial thinking. Pre-war racial stereotypes that upheld colonial hierarchies and exclusions were still prominent, echoed even in that very trope of European intellect and emotional complexity versus non-European physicality and emotional simplicity. Even the naming of "positive" traits by Europeans was often under the shadow of racism. However, contact with non-Europeans and new opportunities for respect did create space for new evaluations of colonized people and their value. According to Richard Fogarty, colonial troops in Europe challenged white superiority and "opened up many possibilities for the destabilization of hierarchies that were virtually immutable back in the colonies."[287] The war also gave some political leverage to colonies and dominions within the British and French empires.

In 1917 Sir Harry Johnson published *The Black Man's Part in the War, An Account of the Dark-Skinned Population of the British Empire; How It Is And Will Be Affected By the Great War; And The Share It Has Taken In Waging That War*. In it he wrote:

> It is the object of this little book to set forth to those who do not know, or are careless of the knowledge, the Black Man's loyalty to the British Empire in this dire struggle; the sympathy he has shown, the great services he has rendered already; and the much greater extent to which he might be employed as an adjunct to our White and Yellow manpower: but, *per contra*, the obligation that lies on us after the war to recognise and affirm his rights as a citizen of the Empire.[288]

Johnson's book described in detail colonial peoples' extensive loyalty to empire and the recognition they deserved, from African leaders cheering "God save the King!" during

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[287] Fogarty, 205.
[288] Harry Johnson, *The Black Man's Part in the War* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., Ltd., 1917), 9.

war fundraising efforts to first-hand observation of the "brave but not ferocious" Senegalese soldiers.[289] Johnson complained about prejudice against non-white soldiers and the use of "Sambo" and "nigger" within the British military, while insisting that many non-white soldiers were "pure-white inside."[290] In recognition of the contributions of non-whites and in opposition to German colonialism, Johnson suggested that the British give inalienable property rights to subjects, promote education, and give "natives" representation within the empire. His book he hoped would be read, "pending the distant day when the British Empire is fully organized, when the interests of all races are fully represented in all administrations; when the Black Man, having played his part in the Great War, is secure of reaping the benefits of the resultant Peace."[291] While Johnson's book demonstrates the possibilities of new thinking created by the war, it also demonstrates that despite their contributions colonial troops were not yet "secure of reaping the benefits" of the peace they helped win. These seemingly very simple, very strong, and very entertaining allies, while valued, were yet to reap the benefits of their actions in the war and were still perceived as having fought someone else's war.

[289] Ibid, 47.
[290] Ibid, 100, 66.
[291] Ibid, 128.

Chapter Four

Why War?: The Imperial Enemy and the Struggle for Civilization

In 1931 and 1932, Freud and Einstein carried on a correspondence later published as *Why War?* The luminaries could remember the First World War and were anxious about the storm clouds gathering in Europe, in what we now know as the "interwar period." Both Freud and Einstein were concerned with instinct, violence, and humanity's tendency toward aggression. Einstein wondered if sufficient supranational organizations could be created to control men's natures. *Why War?* suggested that many of the reasons for war came from within, emerging from the primal interior and difficult to comprehend. Yet the men who fought in the Great War for the most part did not consider their service a result of aggression impulses and the tendency of humanity toward violence, at least not during the war. Soldiers often gave specific, if inconsistent or idealistic, reasons for fighting, typically tied to culture, geography and political systems. Specifically, as seen in the previous chapter, British soldiers claimed to be fighting for "King and country," the French for France or the *patrie*, and both British and French for civilization. British and French soldiers believed these things had to be defended from Germany, and they largely ignored the other Central Powers. Freud and Einstein believed that the true reasons for war lay far beneath the public causes, within what went unsaid. This chapter explores the given reasons for war within the public discourse of trench newspapers and then examines descriptions of Germany and *Kultur* for the thoughts about imperialism that lay beneath, thoughts that were only whispered. In addition to uncovering thoughts about imperialism, this exploration reveals the extent to which trench newspapers, and wider discourses, were saturated with the rhetoric of empire.

Within trench newspapers, Entente soldiers disavowed the existence of any imperial motivations or ambitions on their part connected to the war. Yet the majority of men who fought in the Great War, the Entente powers included, *were* participants in sizable empires. The use of people and resources from around the world and the fighting outside Europe proved that the war was not a battle among small countries, but a struggle among empires. By the conclusion of the war, the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian empires had collapsed. The war brought the German Empire to an official end and Germany lost colonies in Togo, Cameroon, German East Africa, German Southwest Africa, Samoa, German New Guinea and territory in China, together over a million square miles. The British and French divided most of those German losses between themselves, with some land going to Belgium and some to South Africa. The British and French empires reemerged from the war, both territorially expanded if politically tending more toward decentralization. These two empires also significantly overshadowed the other surviving empires, the Belgian, Dutch, and Italian.[292] The results of the war outstripped the defense of "king and country" and *patrie*.

Empire did bubble up to the surface of public discourse within trench newspapers, largely related to Germany. Papers often framed the struggle of the war in terms of the imperial Kaiser, his "Hun Empire," and its threat of *Kultur*. Within trench newspapers, British and French soldiers adopted both colonialist and anti-imperialist stances against Germany. Descriptions of German behaviors alternate between colonial rebellion, which demanded a strong hand as in imperial consolidation, and imperial aggressor, which demanded a more civilized approach to government and the end of territorial expansion.

[292] The United States, which is sometimes considered an empire, also emerged from the war in an advantageous position.

Germany was either a dangerous imperialist force within Europe or home to a rebellious inferior race. Either way, the Germans lacked civilization and required pacification and eventual tutelage in the ways and means of civilized Europe. In this light, the "European Civil War" was one in which the problems were familiarly colonial, as were the solutions.

British and French soldiers critiqued imperialism on the German side, without seeing the similar motives and practices of their own governments. The dissonance was obscured by British and French soldiers' vision of themselves as defenders of home and country rather than empire. The charges of imperialism leveled at Germany and the descriptions of German wartime behavior reveal the extent to which viewing the war's violence was related to understandings of colonial violence. The public discourse within trench newspapers suggests that disenchantment with empire, or at least with the methods of imperialism, was possibly more significant than has previously been believed. Descriptions of German imperialism, if they do not amount to an indictment of imperialism itself, certainly suggest an awareness of its dangers and the possibility of brutality.

<u>In Defense Of</u>

In 1915, the *Lead-Swinger* published a story titled "The Autobiography of a Biscuit Tin." The biscuit tin in question was an obvious stand-in for a soldier, and the autobiography followed his military journeys. Upon reflection, the tin concluded that "life in the real sense—strangely enough, a destructive sense—does not commence until after mobilization," but even after rebirth, he was "still fired with a desire to serve my

King and Country."[293] The biscuit tin was not alone. "King and country" was a recurring theme in trench newspapers throughout the war when motivations for fighting were discussed. In 1914, *The 79th News* suggested that the war was for "King and country" and in 1915 echoed a presumed common sentiment with the phrase, "God Save the King and Constitution Amen."[294] A war song appearing in the *"P.P."* in 1916 began, "Now, Colin joined the A.S.C. to serve our gracious King."[295] In 1917 the *New Year Souvenir of The Welsh Division* listed in the Welsh Division Alphabet, "E—why England, for whom we are fighting./ Tho' its [sic] awfully boresome and rarely exciting."[296] From the early days until the end, the official reasons for fighting the war, within public discourse among soldiers, remained consistent: King and country.

The fight for king and country was understood to be defensive. If it was more specific, the country was typically England, often described as countryside, mythologized in a pastoral way. In *The Great War and Modern Memory,* Paul Fussell wrote about the elevation of the pastoral and the celebration of the country over the city among World War I soldiers as a continuation of the idea of imperialist exile from home, around since the 1880s.[297] In their letters and imaginings, soldiers fought to defend not factories but hillsides and family farms. Wartime enlistment posters also utilized the themes of "King and country," often with rural overtones. One British poster suggested, "Surely you will fight for your" with a picture of the King "and" with a map of Britain.[298] The pastoral

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[293] *The Lead-Swinger*, No. 4 (October 1915), 22-23. CUL
[294] *The 79th News* (October 1914), 118. *The 79th News* (January 1915), 2. CUL
[295] *The "P.P."* No.16, Vol.1 (December 15, 1916), 12. CUL
[296] *New Year Souvenir of The Welsh Division* (January 1917), 16. CUL
[297] Fussell, 232.
[298] Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, WWI Posters, [LC-USZC4-10903]

ideal was alive at the front. The December 25, 1917, *Wipers Times* advertised an edition of itself as a tonic equal to whisky:

> Its pages carefully avoid all reference to war, and recall the shaded peace of an English country lane, with the birds singing, and the cows plodding their serene way to the meadow where buttercups and daisies grow in rich profusion. Where ever and anon the old village church bell rings out its dulcet notes, and the little flying pigs—Oh Heavens! I knew it was going to creep in somewhere…"[299]

A satirical advertisement in another issue of the *Wipers Times* described "The Salient Estate," in terms that applied to the country estates in England; it was complete with good fishing and shooting.[300] Many soldiers participated in cross-country runs when away from the front line trenches. During one such outing that Lieutenant F.B. Turner participated in, there were as many as 400-500 runners for a five mile run.[301] A Christmas story supplement, "Mystery of the Manor House," to the *Lead-Swinger* in 1915 began with a narrator walking "the hills and peaks of Derbyshire, a joy to the eye" and describing the scenic countryside.[302] Longing for home within soldiers' public discourse apparently did not include slag heaps.

In the wider public, George V was a symbol of the country and understood in a personal or familial way. The famous Christmas gifts sent to soldiers from Princess Mary went out in 1914 and established a new feeling of intimacy with the royal family. One wartime enlistment poster told men, "Your King & Country Needs You," and had a drawing of a young soldier shaking hands with his older father in the city, "To Maintain the Honour and Glory of the British Empire."[303] The poster explicitly linked the king and

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[299] *Wipers Times*, 250.
[300] *Wipers Times* No.4, Vol.2 (March 20, 1916) 10 in *Wipers*, 46.
[301] Letter from Lieutenant F.B. Turner to his father, 9588, Turner correspondence. CUL
[302] *Lead-Swinger* (Christmas 1915), 1. UPENN
[303] Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, WWI Posters, [LC-USZC4-10880]

father. Of course, soldiers' own families were mostly in Britain, further reinforcing the bond with the country left behind.

As with the British, the French understood the war as a defensive effort on behalf of their country. When men died in the war they died for France. In 1915, *La Première Ligne* described soldiers as dead for France, with reference to the Republic.[304] In 1917 *Le Poilu du 6-9* included a poem dedicated to "young soldiers who died for the *patrie*."[305] These entries were typical; within French trench newspapers, soldiers fought and died for France, or the *patrie*. As Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker found in *1914-1918: Understanding the Great War*, men fought to defend the nation and civilization.[306] French wartime posters also emphasized the *patrie*; a poster with a bishop, nurses and members of the clergy welcoming wounded soldiers read "Pro Patria."[307] Though the rural ideal was less emphasized in French war literature, the *patrie* could also take the rural guise. An article about "La Tranchée" in *L'Echo des Marmites* described an ironically beautiful day, with a blue sky, birds out, and grass surrounding the trench, when it was too dangerous for one to show his face.[308] A 1916 poster for an exhibition to raise money showed a *poilu* looking on at a scene with a man plowing and led by a woman, possibly either Victory or Marianne or the Republic, carrying an olive branch.[309]

Patrie was a recurring concept in French trench newspapers. According to Eugen Weber, "the concept of the patrie, land of one's father, can mediate between private

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[304] *La Première Ligne*, No.9 (December 1, 1915), 1. UPENN
[305] *Le Poilu du 6-9*, No.8 (March 1917), 2. UPENN
[306] Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14-18, Understanding the Great War* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 97.
[307] Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, WWI Posters, [LC-USZC2-4005]
[308] *L'Echo des Marmites*, No. 19 (April 25, 1917), 5. UPENN
[309] Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, WWI Posters, [LC-USZC2-4082]

society (the family) and official society (the nation)."[310] Robert Gildea suggests that there were two *patries*, one petite and one grande.[311] Whether *patrie* as used within trench newspapers was intended to refer to the nation of France or to a more regional identity remains unclear. However, it is clear that *patrie* has connotations of autochthony that do not correlate to the empire. And in 1914 many French citizens certainly had very strong regional affiliations. As recently as the 1890s, decentralization had a fairly wide constituency, and Maurice Barrès' 1897 novel *Les Déracinés* was about a disconnection not just from the soil, but from particular provinces.[312] Caroline Ford's work *Creating the Nation in Provincial France* argues that in Brittany nationalism was not simply the ingestion of values from Paris and political unity, but rested on the assertion of religious and regional identities within larger France.[313] Not only did the residents of Brittany believe diversity and regional difference were part of nationalism, but many of their 300,000 conscripts in the Great War did not speak French.[314] Brittany may be an exceptional case, but as late as 1863, a quarter of the French population spoke no French, and it wasn't until the Great War that it could be assumed French had infiltrated all corners of the country.[315] Many soldiers were no doubt raised in bilingual households. In his war notebooks Louis Barthas commented on serving alongside Bretons who regarded him with suspicion because of his accent and because he was not of their race, as he wrote "je n'étais pas de leur race."[316] In another entry recording joyous

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[310] Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 96.
[311] Gildea, 305.
[312] Gildea, 299-300.
[313] Caroline Ford, *Creating the Nation in Provincial France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1993), 227, 230.
[314] Ibid, 195.
[315] Weber, 67, 78.
[316] Barthas, 495.

exclamations by his fellow soldiers, he included a phrase in Occitan about the Kronprinz.[317]

In *Nos Filleuls* an article refers to the "true fraternity" of the provinces and insists that in the war, it was not a matter of the southeast or the north or some other part of France fighting the Germans, but of the nation standing together.[318] While it suggests a regional *union sacrée*, it also suggests some continuing regional identifications. Indeed, even within some French-language trench newspapers, there are occasional columns in regional tongues or other signs of regional affiliation. An issue of *La Vie Poilusienne* had an article in Langue d'Oc.[319] *L'Echo des Gourbis* had at least one article in a regional language and *Le Filon* had such articles in more than one issue.[320] *Le Pastis* described itself as "essentially Marseillais." The editor claimed the journal was formed to counter jokes against the Marseillais, to strengthen the bonds among comrades from the mother-city, and "to propagate the culture and the Marseillais spirit among others, such as the Gascons, Vendéens, Bretons, etc etc" and "to teach them our customs and cuisine and by stories or figures of pronunciation, to inculcate in them, if possible, our accent."[321]

Like the French, the British held strong local affiliations. Kitchener's Army of volunteers contained the famous "Pals battalions." The Pals battalions allowed men who shared an occupation or interests and lived close to each other to enlist together and to serve alongside one another. This contributed to the regional and community-based feel of the Army. Even if theories suggesting soldiers largely fight for their peers have been

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[317] Ibid, 265.
[318] *Nos Filleuls*, No.2 (January 1917), 2. UPENN
[319] *La Vie Poilusienne*, No.4, 4. UPENN
[320] *L'Echo des Gourbis*, No.2 (April 12, 1915), 3. UPENN *Le Filon* (March 1, 1917), 4. BDIC *Le Filon* (March 20, 1917), 4,5. BDIC
[321] *Le Pastis*, No. 1 (June 25, 1916), 1. UPENN

challenged, the motivation to fight for peers in such battalions was no doubt connected more to prewar community and to shared, local bonds than to a shared national identity. English troops were the majority in the British Army, but British soldiers also hailed from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, all of which grew more distinct in the course of the twentieth century.[322] Invention or not, the Scottish Highland tradition and the distinctions of Welsh culture had both received considerable attention and research in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[323] Trench newspapers by Scots and Welsh soldiers do sometimes emphasize distinctions, and the *New Year Souvenir* of the Welsh Division included pieces in the Welsh language. The *Lead-Swinger*, which apparently had Scottish readers, published a serialized story titled "Private Macfadden in search of a fortune." Macfadden had a stereotypical accent and discussed many famous Scots, as seen in this excerpt of him arguing with "his girl" about getting a job:

> "No," said Sandy, "ye're wrang, ma girl, yer altaegither wrang! Carnegie did'na luk for a job at a', and Walter Scott never had a job at a', unless yer call talking to a typewriter gel a job which ud ne'er mak a man sweat even if he worked all day, which he might if t' gel wer decint luking."[324]

In the November 1, 1917, *Wipers Times* an item of correspondence from "Call Haine" of Bilge Villa, Bunkum, read:

> Sir,
> I wish to draw your attention to the shameful way in which no mention is made of the glorious Manxman in this war. We hear about the glorious Anzacs and Canadians—English county troops, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, and so on, but I have yet to see the gallant lads from the Isle of Man mentioned. Sir, they have done their bit with the best, and it is a very galling business for them to feel that their pluck is unnoticed. Trusting that the publicity given to the matter by means of your widely read paper will remove the injustice.[325]

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[322] Fuller, 160.
[323] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
[324] *The Lead-Swinger*, No.1 (September 4, 1915), 9. CUL
[325] *Wipers*, 246.

For some soldiers, loyalty to "country" may have been understood primarily in regional or local terms.

Within soldiers' discourse, the country left behind had largely two types of people: women and shirkers. Wartime recruitment posters threatened to identify readers as shirkers while they effectively gendered their countries by emphasizing the defense of women. One poster told men the "Women of Britain say-'Go!'"[326] On it two women hold each other and a small child clings to them as they watch soldiers march away. Another, featuring only text, reminded that "Britain is Fighting for the Freedom of Europe and to Defend Your Mothers Wives and Sisters From the Horrors of War Enlist Now."[327] A number of posters asked women if they were doing enough to encourage men to enlist.[328] The France that men fought to defend was even more explicitly endangered than Britain and was also more gendered. One French poster encouraged men to "Come to the aid of the soldiers of Alsace and Lorraine" and featured two soldiers waving to two girls (Alsace and Lorraine).[329] A war loan poster showed a French soldier holding a flag, standing close to two women, one from Alsace and one from Lorraine.[330] Women, representing Alsace and Lorraine, reinforced the notion that women were being defended and that the land itself was a woman to be defended.

The country, and women, being defended had little connection to empire within the pages of British trench newspapers. Though it seemed to feature no special references to empire, the May 29, 1916, *Wipers Times* was designated an "Empire Day"

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[326] Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, WWI Posters, [LC-USZC4-10915]
[327] Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, WWI Posters, [LC-USZC4-10902]
[328] Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, WWI Posters, [LC-USZC4-10912]
[329] Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, WWI Posters, [LC-USZC2-4016]
[330] Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, WWI Posters, [LC-USZC2-3908]

issue.[331] A poem "To the P.B.I." (Poor Bloody Infantry) in the December 1, 1916, *Wipers Times* concluded with "So here's to the lads who can live and can die,/ Backbone of the Empire, the old P.B.I."[332] In the *"P.P."* it was joked that Pte Jack Morrison, from the Alhambra Review, must now find it strange to "be working for the Empire."[333] The reference punned on the Empire Theatre in London, which was also referenced in the *Wipers Times*. [334] In another issue of the *"P.P."*, it was asserted after a death that "in losing Captain Salt the Empire is the poorer by a brave and clever officer."[335] "*P.P."* also contained one of the most overt references to the war and empire to be found within British trench newspapers. In "1917—The Year of Decision?" the author wrote:

> We are at last upon the threshold of a year which promises to be the most amazing and terrible in the history of the world. If we may judge from an almost universal opinion 1917 will witness the conclusion of a war so vast that all previous wars fade into comparative insignificance beside it. The future of the Great Empires and the fate of nations will be decided in the coming New Year, and probably there is not a man of the M.T. who does not already feel certain and assured in his own mind as to which of these Empires will emerge victorious from the gigantic struggle, and which will go under. When that day arrives—the day of the Triumph of the Allies—and nothing is more certain than the fact that it is well on the way, it will bring with it something which in the years to come, will last every man in khaki all his life and which, unlike most other things, will grow more wonderful with each succeeding year—and that will be the thrilling consciousness of having been one of those who helped contribute to the Triumph. There may not be any discernible glory in a man's allotted job, nor any apparent opportunity of gaining it—he may, indeed, be engaged in the humblest and most indistinguished work, but nevertheless, if he is obeying orders to the best of his ability, and making himself as good a soldier as he can, he "is doing his bit" as well as more brilliant men are doing their more brilliant bit. And a day will come when he will be able to say "*I* was one of those that helped the Old Country through!" It will mean more than, perhaps, most of us realize now. May this New Year bring that day.[336]

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[331] *Wipers*, 88.
[332] *Wipers*, 131.
[333] *The "P.P."* No.12, Vol.1 (November 17, 1916), 2. CUL
[334] *Wipers*, 79.
[335] *The "P.P."* No. 13, Vol.1 (November 24, 1916), 2. CUL
[336] *The "P.P."* No.18, Vol.1 (December 29, 1916), 2. CUL

Though the author suggests the war will determine the future of empires, he also concludes proudly that he is helping the "Old Country" through. That same issue later suggested that men could "bring vict'ry to our King," notably not to the empire.[337] The *"P.P."* notwithstanding, most British trench newspapers rarely used the term "empire" in describing the British. One might be forgiven for not knowing there was any connection between England and colonies overseas after reading the papers. Even references to ANZAC, Canadians, or Indian troops mentioned them without describing their relationship to the metropole. It was as if they were Highlanders, Welsh or any other group. Colonial and Dominion soldiers were distinguished and discussed, but the Empire was rarely directly brought into the conversation.

French trench newspapers did more to acknowledge the origins of colonial troops, but still chose not to identify most French soldiers as fighting on behalf of the empire. The cause often seemed to be the type of *patrie* recognized by Maurice Barrès rather than a "greater France." An issue of *Le Poilu* celebrated the Spahis for fighting for the benefit of the French *patrie*, while it emphasized that the North Africans had never before seen France.[338] As discussed in a previous chapter, the war created the possibility of new appreciation for colonial peoples, but did not entirely bridge the divide in rights and respect between those from *France d'Europe* and those from elsewhere. In a postwar issue of *Le Poilu*, a columnist wrote angrily of the Prix Goncourt being awarded to a black man, René Maran, for *Bataoula*.[339] Whether or not the column can be considered in line with public opinion, it indicates that for at least some former soldiers, the war was not fought to benefit and advance all the peoples toward equality within the empire.

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[337] Ibid, 7.
[338] *Le Poilu*, No.14 (September 1915), 1. HIST
[339] *Le Poilu* No.86 (January 1922), 2. HIST

Though France had an empire, before and during World War I national identity was constructed mostly around the ideals of 1789 and the premise of citizenship, even if those ideals were interpreted locally. While citizenship was celebrated, the French empire primarily contained subjects, with only a few people eligible for citizenship. In fact, the French empire had greatly expanded during the Third Republic, increasing from 1 to 9.5 million square miles just in the time between 1880 and 1895.[340] A number of books have explored the relationship between the Third Republic and empire. Works like Stuart Michael Persell's *The French Colonial Lobby, 1889-1938* and Henri Brunschwig's *French Colonialism 1871-1914* explore the origins of French colonial expansion. Martin Evans' *Empire and Culture, The French Experience*, Edward Berenson's *Heroes of Empire* and Alice Conklin's *A Mission to Civilize* address the cultural justifications and impact of empire. It is widely agreed that the expansion of empire between the Franco-Prussian War and the Great War was the result of a "colonial lobby," a coalition of business interests and some political figures.[341] The lobby forwarded the idea of expansion as a way of restoring French national prestige and spreading French values overseas, essentially a humanitarian endeavor. In 1885, Jules Ferry told the Chamber of Deputies that colonial expansion should be undertaken "to provide markets and raw materials to benefit the French economy, to increase the grandeur of the French nation, and for 'humanitarian' reasons, to help spread the French enlightenment throughout the world."[342]

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[340] Martin Evans, *Empire and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), vii.
[341] Henri Brunschwig, *French Colonialism 1871-1914* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1966), 97.
Stuart Michael Persell, *The French Colonial Lobby, 1889-1938* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), 3.
[342] Quoted in Timothy Baycroft, "The Empire and the Nation," in Evans, 149.

Though the "colonial lobby" had a relatively small membership, their publications received widespread reprinting in the daily papers.[343] Other forms of media also ensured the general public had some consciousness of empire. The affordable copies of novels by Jules Verne, Gustave Flaubert, Alphonse Daudet and Pierre Loti all made the colonial setting familiar and suggested that "the colonies were a seductive terrain of adventure where the French, by dint of their superior culture, had a right to be."[344] Colonial explorers and military figures were celebrated in the penny press, were sent letters by ordinary Frenchmen and women, and were also the inspiration behind memorabilia booms.[345]

The presence of colonial matters and individuals in the press and popular literature certainly suggests that the average soldier in World War I had some consciousness of empire. However, scholars are divided on whether the public supported empire or was indifferent to its expansion. According to Brunschwig, the public had some awareness that empire was not profitable on the whole and that only certain individuals benefited financially.[346] Whether the public was enthusiastic or indifferent, there was little opposition to empire. Timothy Baycroft writes that "colonial policy was far from receiving universal support among the political classes in France, not even among the Republicans whose policy it was. That being said, the criticism of France's colonial expansion was never particularly vehement, and neither was it ever the primary platform of those who opposed it."[347] Perhaps the lack of opposition grew from a refusal to see the French empire as a departure from republicanism. In *A Mission to Civilize*,

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[343] Persell, 3.
[344] Martin Evans, "Culture and Empire, 1830-1962," in Evans, 15.
[345] Berenson, 10, 79.
[346] Brunschwig, 103.
[347]Baycroft in Evans, 152-153.

Alice Conklin writes that "republican imperialism should have been a contradiction in terms—a nation of *citoyens* cannot by definition possess *sujets*."[348] However, the French understood their empire as a "civilizing mission" spreading republican values.[349] At times policy also reflected this position. There was an attempt to make French West Africa a supercolony, decentralized from the metropole and with its own decision-making ability.[350] Officially the French refused to see their relationship with their colonies as one of domination and resistance. During the war, Senator Bérenger even claimed that *La France coloniale* was no longer separate from *la France d'Europe* because of successful recruiting in Africa.[351] The empire had the potential to promote national prestige, but the extension of republicanism, in colonial rhetoric, likely failed to teach French citizens to see themselves as participants in an empire.

The relationship between Britons and empire has also been fruitfully explored by scholars in recent years. The "national turn" in British history began with Linda Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. Colley argued that Britishness grew more defined among Britons "not because of any political or cultural consensus at home, but rather in reaction to the Other beyond their shores."[352] In addition to Protestantism and rivalry with the French, the "acquisition of empire" played a role in shaping Britishness, which cannot be understood without reference to the rest of the world.[353] While empire certainly helped define Britishness, several recent books have explored the ways in which many British did not affirm imperialism around the beginning of the twentieth century,

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[348] Conklin, 75, 105.
[349] Conklin, 16.
[350] Conklin, 23.
[351] Fogarty, 53.
[352] Linda Colley, *Britons* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 6.
[353] Ibid, 8.

such as *Empire and Imperial Ambition* by Mira Matikkala and *Imperial Sceptics* by Gregory Claeys. Both books demonstrate the existence of anti-imperial sentiment in Britain before the war, related to economist John Hobson and to the Positivist philosophy which began with Auguste Comte. Matikkala's book is particularly useful for understanding British trench newspapers and their negative descriptions of Germany as "imperial." According to Matikkala, while many understood empire in purely geographic terms and even anti-imperialists supported the settler colonies, "imperialism" was understood by those opposed to it as "illiberal authoritarianism" that threatened liberalism and civic virtue at home.[354]

Certainly there were those in the decades before the Great War who believed patriotism could be linked to the empire and that imperialism was liberal and humanitarian, but it would be a mistake to suggest that such views were not contested.[355] Though "little England" activism had fallen on hard times by 1900, the idea remained. The little England ideal

> comprised a more self-sufficient, agriculturally independent, partly deindustrialized conception of the nation in which priority was given to domestic consumption over foreign trade, to bolstering home demand by promoting greater social equality, and to reducing bloated conurbations to entities where social bonds might still flourish. This 'civic' ideal, too, hostile to large states in principle, urging a commensurate stress upon duties rather than rights and upon the social rather than the individual nature of most forms of property, was shared by Positivists, some socialists, and by Hobson, and constitutes a core communitarian political assumption at the heart of much anti-imperialist thought.[356]

[354] Mira Matikkala, *Empire and Imperial Ambition* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 204.
[355] Matikkala, 4.
[356] Gregory Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 9.

This ideal was not upheld solely by Positivists and active political readers. Many Britons were concerned about the costs of imperialism, particularly in Egypt and India. And there was a perception that empire chiefly benefited the upper class.[357]

Trench newspapers, which utilize "imperialism" as an accusation, suggest that while the "little England" ideal may have been relatively unpopular, the anti-imperialist tradition had some solid place in popular consciousness. At no point did soldiers suggest that their own empires should be dismantled, and occasionally private correspondence proposed the Germans should have their colonies returned.[358] Yet "imperialism" was understood to be a Hobbesian approach to government at best. The distinction documented by Matikkala is crucial. Empire itself was not a dirty word, but to be the object of someone else's imperial ambition was horrible indeed. No wonder that, for the most part, British and French soldiers chose not to identify themselves with empire within trench newspapers.

The relationships and distinctions between nation and empire in Britain and France are certainly beyond the scope of this chapter. Yet it is clear that in describing what they were defending, neither British nor French soldiers chose to write "empire." "Imperialism" was an indictment of the enemy. The war was fought for Republican ideals, the King, the quaint countryside, the defense of women, civilization, territory that was violated and occupied, and to halt the spread of German aggression. French and British flags may have been planted around the world in 1914, but for the men in the trenches the war was to defend and perpetuate the soil from which they sprang.

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[357] Matikkala, 45.
[358] Letter from E.D. Ridley, August 17, 1917, 7066, E.D. Ridley papers. CUL

The Struggle for Civilization Against the Germans

The "Song of the Hun-Eagle" appeared in the British trench newspaper *Fifth Glo'ster Gazette* in September 1916. According to the song, the Hun-Eagle basks in Kultur's light and seeks to control all of the earth, ignoring nations' laws. The Eagle sings:

> I am the bird of birds. Of Night
> The symbol and the hope.
> Supreme, I bask in Kultur's light
> While men in darkness grope.
>
> My home upon Vainglory's peak
> O'erlooks the lordly Rhine:
> Yet still unsatisfied I seek
> The Earth—which should be mine.
>
> Contempt I hiss at people who
> Quote "Nations Law"—such stuff!
> My piercing eye sees clearly through
> Their sentimental bluff.
>
> 'Tis obvious that fair words conceal
> Mere rank hypocrisy.
> And so I answer each appeal
> With just ferocity.
>
> How righteously I strafe the foes!
> --It should be told in rhyme—
> And how my pent up hate o'erflows,
> Imperial, sublime!
>
> With what a grip my claws and beak
> Can fasten, clutch and tear!
> Yet 'gainst the British Lion meek,
> French Cock, and Russian Bear[359]

If British and French soldiers knew what they were defending, they also knew who they were defending it against, the Germans. The poem continues, to suggest that the Hun-Eagle's fame "as sprayed sea-foam will vanish."[360] While some space was devoted to the

[359] *Fifth Glo'ster Gazette*, No. 14 (September 1916), 6. CUL
[360] Ibid, 6.

other Central Powers, they were largely ignored within trench newspapers in comparison with Germany whose fame during the war was not like sea-foam.[361] British and French homes, women, and beliefs were being defended against the Germans. And if Germans were the threat, *Kultur* was the mark of the beast. In addition to generally negative descriptions of the Germans, two themes emerge, both tied to the struggle for civilization. In the first, Germany's actions in the war are comparable to a colonial rebellion. In the second, Germany is described as practicing imperialism in Europe. Both themes emphasize the battle among warring nations to claim the title of civilization and suggest beliefs held by soldiers about imperialism that possibly extended back to their own nations. Significantly, the themes also indicate the extent to which consciousness of empire and its attendant colonial violence became the lens through which the war's violence was viewed.

The British and French agreed upon their enemy, but there were distinctions in their depictions. For one thing, the British preferred "Hun" and the French "Boche" when selecting derogatory terms for the Germans. The "Boches" as described by the French were also barbaric on another scale. In *Le Cafard muselé*, the Germans were explicitly "barbarians."[362] While the British could, at times, describe the Germans almost as opponents as much as enemies, the French would not. Occasionally within British trench papers, the Germans are referred to casually as "Fritz." In a personal letter, E.D. Ridley wrote that "our gunners have been very rude to Fritz all day and were distinctly unkind yesterday. We are expecting some exceedingly unfriendly action on his part in

[361] The other Central Powers will be discussed in the next chapter, "Other Fronts, Other Wars?"
[362] *Le Cafard muselé*, No.2, (March 1, 1917), 3. BNF

the course of an hour or two."[363] Similar lines appeared in British trench newspapers but were extremely rare in the French equivalent. Germans were more likely to be mocked as animals within French papers. "Boches" were defined as a type of animal in the poilu dictionary provided by *Le Poilu.*[364] Sometimes monkeys, the Germans were often pigs, as within *La Première Ligne* where the types of pigs, Bavarian, Saxon, Prussian, etc., were listed in response to an alleged decree about exterminating pigs in Germany.[365] These views reflected beliefs from outside the trenches which circulated in wider society. In 1915 a pamphlet put out for the general public in France suggested that Germans could not control their impulses, had a particular smell, and urinated through their feet.[366] Such depictions were already common in Europe, when describing colonial peoples. The anatomy of Africans, and the "Hottentot Venus" in particular, had long fascinated Europeans. Now many of the same tropes used to exoticize and differentiate colonial peoples were being applied to European neighbors, the Germans.

Within French trench newspapers the Germans were also more commonly described as victimized by their own leadership. In 1916, *La Bourguignotte* claimed suicide was an epidemic in Germany that the "Imperial and Royal Majesty" foolishly threatened with the death penalty.[367] That same year *l'Anti-Cafard* included illustrations showing the mobilization of children in Germany, for the Kaiser's war machine, a veritable Moloch.[368] And *La Petite Marmite* assured readers the Kaiser could guarantee weight loss, because his soldiers were starving.[369] The joke was on the Germans. The

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[363] Letter from E.D. Ridley, 22 July 1917, 7066, E.D. Ridley papers. CUL
[364] *Le Poilu*, No. 10 (September 30, 1915), 8. UPENN
[365] *La Première Ligne* (undated), 4. UPENN
[366] Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, 104.
[367] *La Bourguignotte* No. 8 (April 1916), 5. UPENN
[368] *l'Anti-Cafard*, No. 27 (October 1916), 2. UPENN
[369] *La Petite Marmite* (25th month of the campaign), 3. UPENN

Kaiser was consistently portrayed as both maniacally warlike and unbelievably incapable of making good decisions. Likewise, the Iron Cross, a highly valued German award for military service, was portrayed as commonplace and cheap.

Another distinction between British and French trench newspaper descriptions of the Germans has to be the French obsession with German bread rations, specifically what the French called "bread KK." It seems nearly every French trench newspaper made mention of this bread and it appeared in most issues. In a single issue *Le Poilu Marmité* dwelt on the lack of food for children in Germany, the meaning of *Kultur*, the German empire, and bread KK.[370] The bread ranked among these arguably more significant topics in common ways of evaluating the Germans. In *Poilu-Noël*, a Christmas supplement to *Poilu Marmité*, a story describes a German, "Fritz," returning home to see his fiancée. She is horrified by his appearance and recoils, naturally, because his mouth is full of bread KK. It has rendered his teeth yellow and his breath very bad.[371] Stories like this are endless within French trench newspapers.

It should be remembered that there were, of course, differences between the public discourse of soldiers within trench newspapers and the more private discourse of diaries and personal letters. In a letter received by the Cambridge librarian Francis Jenkinson, T. Knox-Shaw described the deportation of girls from Lille and concluded with "God, How I hate the Boche."[372] Such frank hatred of the enemy was often absent in British trench newspapers. While "Boche" seemed the preferred term in French trench

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[370] *Le Poilu Marmité*, No.33 (November 20, 1916), 3. UPENN
[371] *Poilu-Noël*, supplement to *Poilu Marmité*, No.35 (December 25, 1916), 3. UPENN
[372] Letter from T. Knox-Shaw to Francis Jenkinson, November 3, 1918, 6444/K/5, Francis Jenkinson papers. CUL

newspapers, in many diaries and letters they were often just "Germans."[373] A character in Henri Barbusse's *Le Feu* claims he would rather skewer a German than a pig.[374] However, in his letters to his wife, Barbusse claims that while Germany attacked France and began the war, "the current crisis is the logical and fatal consequence of national vanities, and each takes part of the responsibility."[375] The hatred of the Germans and the criticisms of *Kultur* within trench newspapers reflected the general public discourse among soldiers, but were at times magnified or dampened according to personal taste.

Colonial Rebellion?

In a 1915 issue of *Les Quat'z'Arts du Front*, German soldiers were referred to as "savage hordes."[376] While the Germans were also called many other things in the pages of trench newspapers, opposition to Germany frequently utilized the rhetoric reminiscent of describing colonial rebellions. The Germans became prototypical heathens, with correspondence between Satan and Wilhelm appearing in a 1917 issue of *Bombes et Pétards*.[377] Like dangerous populations overseas, the Germans were uncivilized and violent. Many soldiers believed that Germans threatened to do to European tradition and civilization what they heard they did to books, artifacts, women and children in Belgium. In the oft-quoted *Goodbye to All That*, Robert Graves insisted that while he discounted twenty percent of the atrocity accounts, his disgust at the German violation of Belgian

[373] Barthas, *Les carnets de guerre de Louis Bartha*. Prud'homme, *Le fusil et le pinceau*.
[374] Barbusse, *Le Feu*, 32.
[375] Henri Barbusse, *Lettres À Sa Femme 1914-1917* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 2006), 250.
[376] *Les Quat'z'Arts du Front* (July 25, 1915), 2. UPENN
[377] *Bombes et Pétards* (March 14, 1917), 1. UPENN

neutrality prompted his enlistment.[378] Singled out for critique was the German idea of *Kultur*, which was described as a façade for barbarism and savagery.

Kultur was a recurring theme within trench newspapers, as commonly mentioned as the German pretension to be the nation chosen by God. The infamous "hymn of hate" itself was thought to spring from *Kultur* by many in the Entente camp. In the *Fifth Glo'ster Gazette* a poem recounted being kept awake nights by "Huns sending over their message of hate/In support of Kultur's rights."[379] A somewhat scattered three-act Burlesque in *The Gasper* titled "A Scrap of Paper" included these lines by the Kaiser:

> Kaiser: Ach! But victory is now mine! Shades of Thor shine now on thy son! Spirit of Allah! Der means of our By-Kultur-made-certain victory are now in the hands of thy Greater-than-Mahomet prophet. We shall sweep them into der sea, we will walk over their contemptible little Army, Calais is mine! Petrograd is mine! Paris is—[380]

According to *The Gasper*, in German eyes German victory came through *Kultur*. The same issue made reference to the German imperial seal and Germany aspiring to conquer the world and strafe England.[381]

Unlike some of the other topics discussed in British and French papers, *Kultur* was something Germans themselves discussed. In his pioneering work, *Rites of Spring, the Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*, Modris Eksteins devoted a significant amount of space to *Kultur*. According to Eksteins, *Kultur* was a matter of inner freedom and spiritual cultivation, which was contrasted with a concern with external form.[382] Many Germans themselves saw *Kultur* in opposition to dishonest, form-centered Anglo-

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[378] Graves, 67.
[379] *Fifth Glo'ster Gazette*, No. 14 (September 1916), 1. CUL
[380] *The Gasper*, No.15 (March 15, 1916), 4. CUL
[381] *The Gasper*, No.15 (March 15, 1916), 4. CUL
[382] Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring, the Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 67.

French civilization.[383] *Kultur* was intended for liberation, of the self, of the spiritual over the material, of the essence over externalities. Many Germans viewed the Great War as a European civil war, and when the Reichstag ruled on war credits, *Kultur* made an appearance.[384] *Kultur* represented a competing value system for "civilization," as defined by the British and French.

According to Eksteins,

> for the British this was a war not specifically to deny Germany a navy or colonies or even economic superiority, though German ambitions in these areas were clearly of grave concern. Nor was this a war simply to maintain a balance of power on the continent by not allowing any one power to gain inordinate strength, tough, again, this was a long-standing British interest. No, for the British this was a war with a much broader purpose. This was a war to preserve a system of British order, national and international, that was seen to be under attack by everything that Germany and its introverted *Kultur* represented. By the beginning of the twentieth century Germany had, in the eyes of the British, replaced France as the incarnation of flux and irresponsibility in the world. Britain, on the other hand, stood for the reverse: stability and responsibility. Germany threatened not only Britain's military and economic position in the world but the whole moral basis of the Pax Brittanica, which, as the British argued, had given the world a century of peace, a respite from general European war not enjoyed since the Rome of the Antonines.
>
> The British mission, whether in the wider world, the empire, or at home among her own populace, was principally one of extending the sense of civic virtue, of teaching both the foreigner and the uneducated Briton the rules of civilized social conduct, the rules for "playing the game." The British mission was to introduce "lesser breeds," to use Kipling's words, to "the law." Civilization and law, then, were virtually synonymous. Civilization was possible only if one played the game according to rules laid down by time, history, precedent, all of which amounted to the law. Civilization was a question of objective values, of external form, of behavior rather than sentiment, of duty rather than whim.[385]

As Eksteins suggests, what the Germans described as a civil war, the British and French implicitly described more like a colonial rebellion. *Kultur* was not a competing value within the pages of trench newspapers, but a mask for atavistic behavior.

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[383] Eksteins, 77.
[384] Eksteins, 94, 91.
[385] Eksteins, 116.

The accusations of atavism which linked Germans with colonial peoples were both explicit and implicit. In an issue of *The Dump*, an illustration showed a young girl with her mother looking at a monkey in a cage. The cage was labeled "Fritz, Almost Human." The young girl says to her mother: "Mummy Mummy you never told me they'd got a prisoner."[386] This illustration links Germans with primates as "almost human" in ways that imitate discourses on the humanity of colonial peoples and the practice of exhibiting colonial people in Europe. More implicit ways of linking German and colonial behavior did so by depicting the Germans as culturally and excessively prone toward violence. European discourses of colonial justification had long utilized accusations of culturally embedded violence. In India, practices like *sati* were used to justify colonial presence; *sati* was considered "emblematic of India as a land of a barbarous and blood-thirsty faith."[387] European conquest in Africa similarly used, often invented, spectacles of human sacrifice and cannibalism to suggest the necessity of a "civilizing mission." Within trench newspapers Germans were, like colonial peoples in imperialist rhetoric, part of a culture rife with violence.

Kultur, in particular, represented militarism and violence in trench newspapers demonstrating the thoroughness of German cultural corruption in the eyes of British and French trench authors. *La Bourguignotte* wrote in one article that the foreign press was getting excited about the "kolossal kanon de 606," developed by "Kultur," which the most illustrious scholars of the Empire were writing books about. At the same time another article warned that the German Emperor said the benefits of Kultur could be

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[386] *The Dump* (Christmas 1917), 15. CUL
[387] Barbara and Thomas Metcalf, *A Concise History of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 81.

universally appreciated.[388] It ought to be remembered that 606 is interchangeable with 666 in its cultural implications, being an alternative translation of the biblical passages relating to the "sign of the times." In the *Wipers Times* a "BEF Alphabet" suggested:

> K's for the KULTUR beneficent Huns
> Endeavor to force down our throats with big guns:
> They send shells in packets, they send them in ones:
> But Kultur's NAR-POO in the trenches.[389]

Within British and French trench newspapers, *Kultur* was often fuel to the German war machine. An issue of *The Dump*, a British trench newspaper, featured a cover wherein Victory, with an English bulldog by her side, defeats the gruesome skeleton of militarism, who is accompanied by a pint-sized devil Kaiser.[390]

While some trench authors derided *Kultur* for militarism and violence, others chose to empty it of value. In the *"P.P."* an article about Germany mentioned "a working knowledge of the language of Kultur, which as will be seen, is not really difficult to acquire."[391] Once again, as with colonial troops, the British soldier was considered capable of bridging cultural difference because the culture on the other end was understood as simplistic. *Le Ver Luisant* referred to *Kultur* as a "jewel" of Boche brutes.[392] In *Le Dernier Bateau*, an author mentioned that he doesn't like the Boches, but he is inspired by caricatures of the most beautiful specimens of *Kultur*.[393] For these French writers, *Kultur* could be appreciated only by inferior people. *La Marmite* advertised a new book on *Kultur* by John Grand-Carteret, "a volume of excellent satirical

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[388] *La Bourguignotte*, No. 8 (April 1916), 6. UPENN
[389] *Wipers Times* No.4, Vol.1 (March 5, 1917), 10 in *Wipers*, 178. "Narpoo" and "napoo" were English corruptions of the French "il n'y a plus" and were used to indicate there was no more of something or something was finished or over.
[390] *The Dump*, Vol.3 (1917), 1. CUL
[391] *The "P.P."* No.33, Vol.2 (April 13, 1917), 5. CUL
[392] *Le Ver Luisant*, No. 9 (June 1916), 3. UPENN
[393] *Le Dernier Bateau*, No. 11 (July-December 1916), 4. UPENN

drawings inspired by the idea of Kultur. Artists: French, allies, and even neutral. It's gay vengeance, also profound, and the images have some force."[394] Within trench newspapers the most common way to mock *Kultur*, and the Kaiser, was to begin almost everything with a "k" instead of a "c" when discussing Germany or putting words in the mouths of German characters in plays, poems, and stories. Wilhelm's "kolossal" dream of empire was behind the war.[395]

Against the hollowness of *Kultur*, a shell for atavistic violence, trench authors stressed their own role in bringing civilization and order. *The Gasper* reminded its readers that the war was for the "rule of Law and ideals."[396] In April 1917 *On les aura* compiled a list of countries who could claim the name of civilization and humanity. The deserving were England, Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Egypt, the US, France, India, Italy, Japan, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Russia, and Serbia.[397] A poem in *Le Poilu Marmité* titled "An Eye for an Eye" accused the Germans of killing women and infants with gas attacks in their attempt to build an empire.[398] Within trench newspapers, Germans were in need of pacification, a firm colonial hand. Like a rebellious subject population, the Germans refused to acknowledge the superiority of the British and French. An issue of *Le dernier bateau* argued that the edifice of *Kultur* rested on the Boche's belief in his own superiority as the most perfect of men and that the remaining structure was built by pride, brutality and hypocrisy.[399] In the *Wipers Times* a poem suggested:

Now we have arrived in pastures new,

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[394] *La Marmite*, No.11, (September 1916), 4. UPENN
[395] *La femme à barbe*, No.1 (Aug 1915), 1. BDIC
[396] *The Gasper*, No. 14 (February 28, 1916), 2. CUL
[397] *On les aura*, No.5 (April 15, 1917), 2. UPENN
[398] *Le Poilu Marmité*, No. 33 (November 20, 1916), 3. UPENN
[399] *Le dernier bateau*, No. 12 (January-July 1917), 1. BDIC

> Where the Hun's taking lessons that once he gave.
> Here's the best of good luck to all of you
> In the teaching of blackguards how to behave.[400]

"Teaching blackguards how to behave" was, of course, an aspect of the "white man's burden." The phrase implies that the burden was now also an obligation within Europe.

The views of *Kultur* in trench newspapers reflected the public opinions circulating in France and Britain. Martha Hanna's book, *The Mobilization of Intellect*, describes the mobilization of intellectuals in France during the Great War. One of the first public strikes of this loose coalition was against the German "Appeal to the Civilized World," also known as the "Manifesto of the 93." The Manifesto, signed by prominent German academics, denied German atrocities and suggested that Germany had become militarized only in order to defend itself. One thing French intellectuals agreed upon was that "*Kultur* with its pervasive amoral mechanism had perverted their [Germans'] judgment and had directed Germany along a path of aggression and atrocities."[401] The writings of public intellectuals in France during the war suggested that the German soldiers were "led by 'barbarians' whose indifference to culture was indisputable, German troops could just as easily have murdered civilians, burned villages, raped women, and brutalized children, as atrocity tales circulating in France alleged."[402] Similar views were held in Britain. Before the war Germany had become one of the strongest economies in Europe, advancing in manufacturing. Many British and French intellectuals had also begun to admire and embrace German educational methods in the years before the war.[403] Yet during the war British and French soldiers asserted that *Kultur* perverted science and

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[400] *Wipers Times*, No.1, Vol.1 (July 31, 1916), 5 in *Wipers*, 117.
[401] Martha Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), 104-105.
[402] Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect*, 86.
[403] Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect*, 22.

education by militarizing them, in total denial of the militaristic exporting of their own values overseas.

The print attack on Germany for lawlessness and lack of civilization mimicked pre-war justifications for empire. In his book on French colonialism Brunschwig suggested the colonizers kept clear consciences because they "became imbued with the prevalent nationalism and humanitarianism."[404] While the point is debatable, the same factors were in play for British and French soldiers during the war, especially with the invasion of Belgium. Edward Berenson's book, *Heroes of Empire,* chronicles five charismatic British and French colonial figures who gained hold in the public eye. According to Berenson, "to qualify as genuine national heroes in the second half of the nineteenth century, they had to be peaceful conquerors—or appear as such—capturing territory in a 'civilized,' humane way or defending civilization against barbarism with their heroic acts."[405] Casting the Germans as barbarians and themselves as defenders of civilization gave license to British and French soldiers to perpetrate violence within Europe. Justifications for colonial violence were now applicable for violence in Europe, as well. The suggestions that Germans were monkeys or pigs or otherwise inferior humans reinforced the role of colonial rhetoric in justifying the war in Europe.

Bringing Empire Home

Germans protested the British and French use of colonial troops within Europe but within trench newspapers British and French soldiers suggested that their resistance to German aggression was anti-imperial. Germans were described as attempting to

[404] Brunschwig, 179.
[405] Berenson, 12.

colonize their neighbors, and their methods and ambitions in the war were categorized as imperial. Accusations of imperialism leveled at Germans drew from the imagery and press of pre-war imperial activities outside of Europe, again emphasizing the way the language and images of empire saturated the war. Critiques of Germany also offered an indictment of precisely the same behaviors considered acceptable outside Europe when practiced by the British and French, suggesting that while the belief in British and French superiority remained strong, there was awareness of the injustices of empire.

In *Imperial Sceptics*: *British Critics of Empire, 1850-1920*, Gregory Claeys reminds:

> Through the great age of modern imperial expansion, from the late fifteenth to the mid-twentieth century, then, three main arguments underpinned European justifications for conquering the rest of the world: the superiority of Christianity; the supremacy of European civilization; and the greater economic efficiency of more 'advanced' peoples in developing the world's resources.[406]

In British and French soldiers' complaints, Germany was accused of making these very claims. British and French soldiers reacted negatively to stories of Germans preaching "Gott strafe England" and claiming "Gott mit uns," which suggested a privileged relationship between Germany and the Divine. Germany was also accused of attacking the map of Europe to spread *Kultur* and carry out economic exploitation. *The 79th News* related part of a "stirring address" given by Father Bernard Vaughan to the Cameron Highlanders entitled "For Honour, Truth, and Freedom." In it, Father Vaughan suggested:

> Germany was out to reset the map of Europe, and to reconstruct the nations of the earth. The war party was determined to justify to its people its vast armaments. It had sat on the safety valve long enough, and now it promised its teeming population nothing less than the French Colonies for its expansive interests and enterprise. The lust of power and the greed of gain had atrophied Germany's

[406] Claeys, 13.

> moral sense, so that in its intoxication it altogether forgot these principles upon which alone civilised nations can live and flourish.[407]

In Germany's behavior Father Vaughan read German "lust of power and the greed of gain" where, as Claeys has described, "greater economic efficiency of more 'advanced' peoples in developing the world's resources" may have been read if Germany had been acting outside the continent of Europe. Father Vaughan believed that Germany's behavior was an outrage and a threat to civilization. What Vaughan saw as Germany's unholy territorial ambition which threatened the map of Europe and thus, the entirety of nations on the earth, was in reality not unlike the Berlin Conference of 1885. The comments coming from "Father" Vaughan emphasized British and French rejection of the notion that Germans had a superior, and in some cases true, form of Christianity.

Within trench newspapers, Germany was an empire intent on conquering its neighbors. In *The Lead-Swinger* the poem "To the 'Slackers' at home" outlined the situation:

> But now we know, what we knew not then,
> That this war is not a joke;
> And that what we want is men—more men
> To throw off the Teuton yoke.
>
> The lads who have gladly given their all,
> In England's cause and name;
> Surely you hear their spirits call,
> And the call is a cry of shame.[408]

According to the authors, lads give their all for "England's cause and name" in desperate opposition to "the Teuton yoke." Given the opportunity, the Germans would oppress them all.

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[407] *The 79th News* (October 1914), 128. CUL
[408] *The Lead-Swinger*, No. 4 (November 6, 1915), 2. CUL

Le Poilu du 37 also accused the Boches of attempting to build an empire.[409] Within French trench newspapers Wilhelm was frequently referred to as "emperor" and Germany as an empire. While some papers did refer to Wilhelm and Germany without mentioning empire, "Imperial Germany" and the "imperial Kaiser" were common phrases. While Germany was, in fact, an empire, Britain and France could also have been identified as empires within trench newspapers yet almost never were. Of the empires in the war, only the Central Powers were consistently described as such.

If the British and French were empires, it was of a different sort. *L'Écho du Boqueteau* wrote about the "Central Empires" endangered by the coming "moment of advance by all the *poilus* of all the fronts of Europe and of the Orient, the liberating and glorious moment of definitive emancipation, in the same blow, of the people oppressed by Pangermanism and the troglodytes of the empire of the trenches… liberty!"[410] The so-called French empire of the trenches stood only to exterminate Pangermanism. The British referred to the "hut empire" on their lines which stood against the German tide. The larger geographical and political entities that enveloped, or extended from, England and France were rarely called by the name of empire.

Accusations of imperialism against Germany frequently utilized imagery and crimes from pre-war colonial scandals. As discussed in previous chapters, soldiers had extensive exposure to information about their empires through the media before the war. While much of that coverage was pro-empire, colonial scandals, such as "Leopold's Congo," were widely covered in the popular press. In fact, Leopold's Congo seems to have provided a great deal of material for the atrocity tales of the "Rape of Belgium."

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[409] *Le Poilu du 37*, No. 10 (undated), 4. UPENN
[410] *L'Écho du Boqueteau* (undated), 3. UPENN

Press coverage of Leopold's scandal consisted of photos of men, women, and children whose hands had been cut off in the pursuit of profit from rubber trees in the Congo. [411] The Belgians were accused of instituting slavery. Following Leopold's scandal was the French scandal in the Congo, also publicized in England, which "reproduced all the elements of a mainland crime story" with descriptions of mistreatment, murder, and disfigurement.[412] Within trench newspapers, the Germans in Europe took on the guise of Europeans in the Congo. In *Poil… et Plume* the "Huns" were described as Assyrians, intent on enslaving an entire people and hardly content with reducing the inhabitants of Lille to slavery.[413] More striking were images of Germans which directly evoked the Congo abuses. In a drawing from *Le Mouchoir* Wilhelm is at the Cathedral d'Angers, a murdered baby with missing hands and feet lies on the ground before him, and three handless children reach for him along with a retinue of skeletons, while he recoils in horror.[414] The only things missing are the rubber trees. An illustration in the French *Télé-Mail* depicted a German with an Iron Cross standing over hundreds of skulls.[415] In both of those trench paper illustrations, the military garb and medals stand out. These images bear strong resemblances to popular press images in *King Leopold's Ghost*, which Adam Hochschild took from coverage of Leopold's scandal in European newspapers. One drawing featured King Leopold, in full military dress, encircled by the decapitated heads of Africans. Another illustration showed a colonial planter, with arms crossed, standing over a kneeling African whose hand had been cut off. [416]

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[411] Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998).
[412] Berenson, 202, 197-198.
[413] *Poil… et Plume*, No.4 (October 1916), 1. UPENN
[414] *Le Mouchoir*, No. 41 (Christmas 1916), 8. UPENN
[415] *Télé-Mail*, No.7 (March 16, 1916), 4. UPENN
[416] Images appear in photo supplement (no page numbers) in Hochschild between 116 & 117.

The comparison with the scandals in Congo also suggests another perceived commonality. The crimes in the Congo were considered a result of Belgian King Leopold's greed for profit and territory. Brunschwig writes that Leopold "was seeking to create a new state in the heart of Africa, to become its head, to get it recognized by all governments, to exploit it (for his economic motives are now obvious), and by means of it to enrich himself and become powerful."[417] Within trench newspapers, Germans were shown to be interested chiefly in economic exploitation and power. It seemed the Germans had learned the lessons of colonialism in Africa and brought them back to haunt Europe. Even the French general Lyautey's "peaceful conquest" of Morocco had a long-term plan of military occupation and administration—very similar to the type of German occupation of northern France and Belgium that the French and British resented being imposed in Europe.[418]

British and French soldiers' views on these matters often overlapped with those of public figures and intellectuals. In 1915, Charles Andler published *Pan-Germanism: Its Plan for German Expansion in the World*, which argued that Germany was planning to expand for continental domination.[419] In 1916, Andler published a pamphlet, "Philosophical Origins of Pan-Germanism," which placed the blame for Pan-Germanism largely on Fichte. Andler believed the roots of the German problem ran deeper than the war itself. Ernest Lavisse's *The German Theory and Practice of War* blamed Luther and Fichte and found *Kultur* to be the source of German aggression.[420] In 1918, *The Blight of Kultur* by G. Hamilton MacLeod was published in London and Edinburgh. MacLeod

[417] Brunschwig, 43.
[418] Berenson, 230.
[419] Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect*, 87.
[420] Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect*, 88.

outlined his purpose as giving "reasoned arguments why we must not, during this generation—and better still, for one or two generations to come—allow the pernicious influence of the Germans to impose itself upon our imperial policy."[421] To MacLeod, the link between imperialism and Germany was self-evident.

MacLeod also employs the colonial and anti-imperial themes. In his colonialist interpretation of the German problem, he approvingly cited a sermon which declared Germans inhuman and proposed it was a British duty to "exterminate them as we would a pest of rats."[422] According to MacLeod, the Germans have no good qualities, do not make distinctions among grades or ranks, have no conception of comedy, have been trouble since Luther, caused Europe grief in 1848, and have threatened British prestige.[423] While some might call the Germans Boches, "*Hun* conveys just the proper amount of loathing with which we must regard for many a long day to come the apostles of arrogance, brutality and kultur."[424] In MacLeod's hands, the Hun practically cries out for British administration as much as "darkest Africa."

Yet *The Blight of Kultur* also presents Germany as an imperial threat, especially to the British colonies. According to MacLeod, Germans made designs on Australia and organized intrigue in India.[425] The latter was not an unfounded belief; the Germans did help finance some Indian radicals. The German allies were no better, neither the "monstrously compounded Austro-Hungarian Empire" nor the Turks, both of whom should free their subject races and the latter of whom should be forced from Europe.[426]

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[421] G. Hamilton MacLeod, *The Blight of Kultur* (London and Edinburgh: Sampson Low, Marston & Co, Ltd, 1918) ix.
[422] Ibid, xi.
[423] Ibid, xiii, 17, 168.
[424] Ibid, 8.
[425] Ibid, 38, 39.
[426] Ibid, 183.

The Blight of Kultur also critiques German colonization outside of Europe. MacLeod writes that German conduct with the Herero was typical.

> The outstanding truth is that Germany's methods of colonizing are a disgrace to civilization and a menace to the peace of the world. It knows nothing within its own confines of freedom, and what it transports beyond its borders is the tyranny of militarism. Where the teeth of kultur have been allowed to get a grip, we find nothing but cruelty, oppression and moral death.[427]

Pan-Germanism and *Kultur* were dangerous threats within Europe, but for MacLeod, also to the practice of empire outside of Europe. MacLeod believed that the Germans should not have their colonies returned after the war "solely from the standpoint of simple humanity and a desire to uphold the prestige of the white man."[428] His suggestion that the German "methods of colonizing are a disgrace" asserts that British, and possibly French, methods are superior. Here, too, MacLeod's views seem to coincide with trench authors. In 1916 *La vie poilusienne* suggested that after the war French colonies would become successful again and a new happiness would spring up in the old French soil, while the Central Powers, annihilated by a costly and difficult war, would see their hope to compete with the Britannic Lion crumble.[429] Within trench newspapers, the relationships between British and French colonies and metropoles were beneficent and mutually beneficial.

In *The Blight of Kultur*, the danger posed by Germany in the war was linked to the Herero genocide. Within the pages of trench newspapers, too, Germany's behavior was closely tied to events in the colonies. Germans were viewed in colonial terms as uncivilized people and yet resisted in an anti-imperial way. The anti-imperial images used against Germany in trench newspapers were not born with the war; they were culled

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[427] Ibid, 161.
[428] Ibid, 152.
[429] *La vie poilusienne*, No. 6 (1916), 1. BNF

from earlier perspectives and media accounts on what it meant to conquer and subjugate other people. It seems that part of the reason the Great War was viewed as a struggle for "civilization" was because colonial violence provided the lens for viewing the violence of the Great War.

Conclusion

Within trench newspapers, British and French soldiers largely viewed their participation in the war as a result of German territorial aggression in Europe and saw no connection with their own empires. The war was perceived as a threat to personal homes and a civilized way of life. The empires became involved, but men did not fight for or because of them. British and French soldiers also did not describe themselves as "imperial citizens" within trench newspapers and instead identified themselves with much smaller geographic spaces. Though authors existed within empires, the term "empire" was largely assigned to the Germans. There is a striking absence within trench newspapers of descriptions of British and French soldiers as killing and dying in the war for empire, paired with the insistence that imperialism motivated the German war effort. Quite obviously, then, soldiers thought empire was not worth dying for as much as was France or England.

Freud and Einstein were convinced that the individual countries men warred for were less a threat to peace than the human instinct for war. They thought that national affiliations allowed certain human tendencies to surface. Within trench newspapers, descriptions of Germany allowed certain interpretations of empire to surface. Whether or not empire was worth dying for, the rhetoric of justification for the war and descriptions

of Germany and *Kultur* demonstrate that consciousness of empire was an interpretive filter for many soldiers' understandings of the Great War. Germany and empire were closely linked within the public discourse of trench newspapers. "Civilization" rhetoric implied that Germans themselves were behaving like a rebellious population of subject races. Descriptions of the Germans included racial distinctions, denigration of their traditions and culture, and the devaluation of *Kultur*, which the Germans publicly championed. Berenson writes that in "the need to rescue innocents from subject peoples that no longer knew their place" was a key justification for colonial ventures.[430] It was practically the same argument which made the invasion of Belgium a cause for war. British and French publics commonly viewed Germans from a colonialist perspective.

British and French soldiers also portrayed themselves as anti-imperialist fighters. The Germans stood accused of bringing empire home and seeking to impose themselves as imperial overlords in Europe. Trench newspapers, as well as books and pamphlets from scholars, reinforced the notion that Germans believed they had superior technology and beliefs which should be spread. Rather than importing colonial troops, as did their opponents, the Germans had imported oppressive and brutal tactics from the colonies. They were also accused of seeking to dominate Europe solely for the purpose of economic exploitation, suggesting many thought that colonies had no other function.

Within trench newspapers, and wider publics, German imperialism was considered different from British and French. However, the public discourse suggests a crack in the façade. People were obviously aware that the methods of empire could be brutal and oppressive. The critiques of German imperialism also repurposed images and concepts from earlier colonial scandals and debates, suggesting a deeper hold in the

[430] Berenson, 88.

public consciousness of colonial violence. "Imperialism" was a charge leveled at the Germans, suggesting fairly widespread disenchantment with it, even if that did not entirely mean opposition to existing empires. As Claeys and Matikkala have persuasively argued, many people in Britain supported settler colonialism but not other forms of empire. The French were also more divided on empire than popular press content might suggest. While the Third Republic used empire to restore national prestige after 1870, the Moroccan crisis brought anti-colonial backlash.[431] What prestige was gained was accrued for the nation, not the empire, which did not bring an especially great sense of pride for many people. Warnings of "Pangermanism" coexisted beside assurances that the British and French empires were spreading their respective beliefs and ideals around the world. While soldiers and civilians may have felt their critiques of German imperialism were relevant only to Germany, it seems more likely that they were also the product of underlying unease with imperialism, and possibly, even empire.

At the very least, within trench newspapers "imperialism" seems to be a description for a tyrannical form of government, a very serious comment on the understanding of European expansion. When subjected themselves at home to the same type of behavior practiced overseas, many Entente soldiers found "imperial" practices objectionable and claims from one country about higher civilization or religious destiny to be offensive. While the war may not have turned a majority of soldiers against empire, it certainly initiated a new perspective on the experience of it. The text may be a critique of German empire, but the subtext laid the groundwork for a critique of imperialism itself.

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[431] Gildea, 443, 426.

Chapter Five

Other Fronts, Other Wars? Descriptions of the African and the Ottoman Campaigns in British and French Trench Newspapers

Though the "guns of August" fired in Western Europe, the Great War involved campaigns and battles as far away as the Pacific Ocean. The Ottoman and African campaigns were among those which took place away from Europe. As discussed in the earlier chapter, "The Great War in Imperial Context," these fronts became struggles for colonial possessions. The Entente sought to take away German colonies and eventually control most of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East.[432] Germany sought to incite colonial rebellions in British and French possessions, which would distract their leaders and reroute Entente soldiers from Europe.[433] Fighting in Africa relied heavily on African soldiers and the mobilization of hundreds of thousands of porters.[434] The British Indian Army played a dominant role in the East African campaigns and in the Ottoman campaigns. The Indian Army had been involved in earlier East African campaigns and was also utilized because threats in the regions were considered threats to India.[435] Though soldiers of European descent served in the African and Ottoman campaigns, especially as officers, the composition of the fighting forces outside Europe was quite different. The geography and battles were also distinct.

This chapter explores descriptions of the African and the Ottoman campaigns in British and French trench newspapers, beginning with papers based in Europe and then

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[432] Morrow, 53.
[433] Strachan, *To Arms*, 696.
[434] Ibid, 497.
[435] Pradhan, 22, x.

examining European papers from the Ottoman campaigns. From informative to humorous, references to the Ottoman campaigns, in particular, displayed an awareness of the war outside Europe and a desire for news of other fronts. A geography of value was also apparent, with the Ottoman campaigns garnering much more attention than the African campaigns. Fighting outside of Europe was valued according to its relevance to the war in Europe. Even if reference to fighting elsewhere was not as common as other content in trench newspapers, many soldiers were clearly aware of the "world" nature of the war, as seen in a cartoon map from *Le Dernier Bateau*, which blended geographical regions so that all fronts could be shown together.[436]

Within the trench newspapers of Europe and of the Ottoman campaigns runs a thread of representing the Ottomans and their lands as both familiar and exotic. The images used in trench papers drew on Romantic and travel literature running back centuries, as well as on the stories in *1001 Arabian Nights* and the poetry of Omar Khayyam. The tropes were well known to soldiers but the people and places were presumed exotic and romantic, like perfumed cigarettes and welcoming harems. Within European trench newspapers this thread is stable, but within the papers from the Ottoman campaigns this thread wore thin as soldiers experienced the distance between their representations and the reality of the region. Trench newspapers based outside of Europe are considered here in the section "On the Ground." The terminology utilized within trench newspapers is included in this chapter, such that "Orient," "Turks," and "Arabs" are all quoted from papers, with sometimes confusing effect. Trench newspapers did not use the same terms common in academic circles today. For example, Ottoman soldiers might be referred to broadly as "Turks" or "Arabs" though not all were in fact Turkish or

[436] *Le Dernier Bateau*, No.4 (November 1, 1915) 2. UPENN

Arab. The Ottoman Empire bridged East and West and included Turks and Arabs, but neither exclusively. Including soldiers' descriptions of the people and places they encountered is another way of showing how they understood and represented the Ottoman Empire, but is not meant as an acceptance of soldiers' informal ethnographies. This chapter allows a glimpse into the experience of empire during the war for those whose soldiering more clearly resembled the actions of "agents of empire" before the war.

News and Opinion

In the March 15, 1916, issue of *The Gasper* the so-called "Cockney Critic" asked for information from "noospapers" about the Dardanelles and the situation in Russia.[437] Though trench newspapers were often short of traditional "news," they still reflected soldiers' desires to be informed about other fronts involved in the war. Censorship may have prevented more detailed information about fighting in or outside Europe from appearing in the pages, but it did not prevent curiosity and speculation on the part of trench authors. The efforts against the Ottomans and by the Russians made somewhat frequent appearances in British and French trench newspapers. In particular, the fighting against the Ottomans seems to have been part of the public consciousness. In contrast, the fighting in Africa was mentioned extremely rarely.

The struggle against the Ottomans made its way into trench newspapers both explicitly and more subtly. An article by "Belary Helloc" in the March 6, 1916, *Wipers Times* went over the prospects for the Eastern theatre. Mocking civilian columnist Hillaire Belloc's frequent predictions and use of numbers, the article made outlandish

[437] *The Gasper*, No.15 (March 15, 1916), 3. CUL

claims about who held the front and found "by logical deduction we can prophecy that the Eastern Campaign must end disastrously to the Central Powers."[438] Of course, any prediction of Belloc's was taken to be false by most *Wipers* readers. The Ottoman campaigns also crept into other subjects. In the poem "The Left Barrel" in the May 1, 1916, *Wipers Times*, Gilbert Frankau describes himself as a poet known by girls "from Camberwell to Kut."[439] "Kut" was a reference to Kut-el-Amara, where the British were surrounded by the Ottoman Army and 12,000 men were captured by the Ottomans after a period of siege and starvation. Though chosen for the purposes of the rhyme, the reference to Kut demonstrates an awareness of the situation and the assumption that the reference will be understood by readers.

Many articles about the Ottoman campaigns seem intended to satisfy a desire for news of other fronts. Brief news reports about the war in Mesopotamia were fairly common in trench newspapers. The March 15, 1916, issue of *Le Plus-que-Torial* featured an article titled "The Situation In The Balkans." The article attempted to provide analysis of the political situation in Greece, including King Constantine's decision-making process and the influence of his royal, German relatives.[440] The March 1, 1916, *Le Canard Poilu* included news from Constantinople about the actions of the Russians in the Caucasus.[441] That issue also had news ostensibly from contributors in Sofia and Vienna. The December 2, 1915, *Le Poilu St-Émilionnais* featured a news column which included an update from Athens, discussed the Balkan campaigns, spoke of the Indian troops in the Dardanelles, and asserted that Turkish officials believed their

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[438] *Wipers*, 32.
[439] *Wipers*, 67.
[440] *Le Plus-que-Torial*, No. 3 (March 15, 1916), 3. UPENN
[441] *Le Canard Poilu*, No.54 (March 1, 1916), 1. UPENN

cause to be lost.[442] British and French soldiers were interested in the war outside of their own front. They recognized that the course of the war in other theaters affected the war for them as well.

The Ottoman campaigns, in particular, also figured in soldiers' consciousness because many soldiers from Europe served there. In an issue of *Le Paix-Père*, the third scene of a play includes soldiers sitting around, eating and arguing about where they will move next. Some thought they would move closer to the German border, to the Vosges, others thought they would move to Salonika, the launching pad for attacking the Ottomans in the Dardanelles, others elsewhere.[443] Many British and French soldiers fought in Europe and in the Dardanelles, which indicated they spent some time in Salonika, the Greek port where many operations were launched. In 1916, the editors of *Boum! Voilà!* wrote about the paper's connections with soldiers at other fronts, claiming the paper was not just "a paper of one part of the front, but of all fronts," because it had correspondents and subscribers elsewhere, in Alsace, Champagne, and Salonika.[444] Those correspondents and subscribers outside of Europe had been reassigned from the Western Front. A 1917 issue of *Taca Tac Teuf Teuf* informed readers that "we have dedicated many issues to relating the exploits of the auto machine gunners on our front and in the Orient."[445] The "Orient" referred to was in the Middle East. Of course, soldiers could also be reassigned to Europe from other campaigns. The *Mudhook* was a divisional magazine based in France whose predecessor was the *Dardanelles Driveller*, also called *Dardanelles Dug-Out Gossip*. Just as individual soldiers sometimes

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[442] *Le Poilu St-Émilionnais*, No. 9 (December 2, 1915), 11. UPENN
[443] *Le Paix-Père*, No. 40 (December 25, 1916), 2. UPENN
[444] *Boum! Voilà!* No. 2 (April 4, 1916), 2. UPENN
[445] *Taca Tac Teuf Teuf*, No.1 (January 15, 1917), 10. UPENN

maintained contact with those serving at other fronts, trench newspapers sometimes continued to publish pieces and information from soldiers reassigned to other divisions and battalions elsewhere.

Within soldiers' discourse specific campaigns and battles overshadowed others. The Dardanelles campaign was the most written about non-European campaign within trench newspapers. In a letter to his wife October 4, 1915, A.J. Sansom wrote:

> I am more anxious about the Dardanelles than any other part of our operations, as I should think it was almost impossible to hang on there through the winter, and the obstacles they have to encounter seem to be almost insurmountable at the present.[446]

Sansom's anxiety was shared by many trench authors. An article about the Dardanelles began on the front page of the August 1915 *La Guerre Joviale*. It suggested that the prize of Constantinople was only a matter of hours away.[447] *La Guerre Joviale* regularly made an effort to inform its readers about the other fronts, including Russia, Turkey, and Italy. In the September 1915 issue the paper acknowledged that the Dardanelles were often spoken of, and it provided information about the deployment of English troops to Gallipoli.[448] While after the war, the Dardanelles and Gallipoli became central to the national narratives of Australia and New Zealand, trench newspapers remind us of the centrality of the Dardanelles campaign to British and French soldiers during the war as well. In England, it was Churchill's disastrous handling of the campaign which led to his dismissal from the Admiralty.

Though not as prominent as the Dardanelles, the battle of Kut-el-Amara received considerable mention in British trench newspapers. Coverage of the events at Kut-el-

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[446] Sansom, 121-122.
[447] *La Guerre Joviale*, No. 1 (August 1915), 1-2. BDIC
[448] *La Guerre Joviale*, No. 2 (September 1915), 2. BDIC

Amara showcased the various ways in which such references could operate, chiefly humor, practical orientation, or gripping serial account. In *The Gasper* a small notice titled "Kutting" read:

> MINISTER: The Government has nothing further to communicate with reference to Kut.
> M.P.: We must assume, then, that it is a case of *cut communications*.[449]

Still in the crisis of the siege, *The Gasper*'s "cut communications" shared the gravity of the British soldiers' isolation in Kut with a tongue-in-cheek approach. Like most truly news-related items in trench papers, humor was used to mask the content. After the humiliating defeat, *Wipers* offered a not-so-veiled critical commentary, which is a good example of the satiric humor in trench newspapers. The *Wipers Times*' "Mesopotamian Alphabet" referenced Kut-el-Amara under I:

> I is for the Indian government, but
> About this I'm told I must keep my mouth shut,
> For it's all due to them that we failed to reach Kut-
> El-Amara in Mesopotamia [450]

The battle of Kut-el-Amara also provided the material for gripping news accounts similar to the colonial stories of the pre-war civilian press. Like "Chinese" Gordon, the British forces at Kut-el-Amara were surrounded. The siege of the city lasted 147 days.[451] During the siege at least a dozen men died per day of starvation.[452] Like Gallipoli, it was a major defeat outside of Europe that drew the attention of both soldiers and civilians.

While the African campaigns had a few of their own trench newspapers, such as *Doings in East Africa*, the campaigns were essentially absent from European trench newspapers. There are many possible explanations for this absence. It could reflect the

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[449] *The Gasper*, No. 18 (June 5, 1916), 8. CUL
[450] *The Wipers Times* (January 20, 1917) in *Wipers*, 160.
[451] Henry Hampton Rich, 1976 interview, 766 IWM
[452] R.G. Hockaday, 1963 BBC interview, 4123 IWM

lack of available news from the African campaigns. Or it could reflect disinterest. Soldiers from Europe had fewer personal connections to the fighting in Africa. Many of the white soldiers who served in Africa for the British were from South Africa. Relatively few soldiers from Europe were assigned to the African campaigns. European trench authors may also have been uninterested in fighting done primarily by non-white soldiers. While the armies in the African campaigns did include British and French soldiers of European descent, as mentioned, the armies were primarily composed of non-European soldiers.

Another way to consider the implications of the absence of the African campaigns is to look at the discussion of the Eastern Front. Unlike the African fighting forces, the Russian forces were commonly referenced in both British and French trench newspapers, quite apart from the Soviet Revolution. The July 1917 *Le tord boyau* featured a serious article titled "The Situation in Russia."[453] It outlined Russia's commitment to see the war through, an absence of fraternization with the Germans, and the presence of female fighters on the Eastern Front. In a lighter vein, the September 8, 1917, *Wipers Times* advertised a fictional Revue titled "Good-bye-ee-e, We Mos-cow" with the "Bally Russe."[454] In an issue of *Le Crapouillot* was a "small Russian story" about a group of Russian soldiers in the trenches. The slice of life story described the Russians as having "clear eyes, red skin, and blonde hair" and presented them as sympathetic and familiar as they sat in the trenches sharing stories.[455] Stories which emphasized the beauty and strength of the Russians were common in the civilian press at the time of the arrival of

[453] *Le tord boyau*, No. 11 (July 1917), 3. UPENN
[454] *Wipers*, 217.
[455] *Le Crapouillot*, No.1 (June 1917), 3. UPENN

the Russian Expeditionary Force in France.[456] Though Russians were not always considered white in the West, unlike most of the soldiers fighting against the Central Powers in Africa, the Russian forces could be considered white. The physical description within the *Crapouillot* story certainly suggests whiteness.

The Russians had a place in the consciousness of British and French soldiers, even though as in the African campaigns most British and French soldiers had little personal connection to the Russians or the places they fought; the Russian Expeditionary Force in France had only two brigades.[457] While their prominence was no doubt in part tied to perceived whiteness, the Russians were also discussed for other reasons. For most soldiers, the Eastern Front was directly related to the Western Front. The Russian threat on the Eastern Front prevented the Central Powers from attacking the Western Front with all of their resources. In fact, the Russians captured more German prisoners in the first two years of the war than did the British and French combined.[458] The Russians were essential to squeezing the Central Powers and defeating the Germans in Europe. Some trench newspapers acknowledged that the Russians played a valuable role against the Ottomans, as well. The March 1917 *Le Petit Echo* included news on the "oriental front" and informed readers that the English troops took Baghdad and were pursuing the Turks without ceasing while the Russians were coming in on the other side.[459] References to Russia in British and French trench newspapers were common throughout the war, and those before the Revolution in 1917 far outnumber those about the Revolution. Altogether, the lack of reference to Africa in most trench newspapers and the consistent

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[456] Jamie Cockfield, *With Snow on Their Boots* (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1998), 38-39.
[457] Cockfield, ix.
[458] Strachan, *To Arms*, 373.
[459] *Le Petit Echo*, No.122 (March 11, 1917), 1. UPENN

references to the Russians suggest that soldiers placed a higher priority on fighting within Europe and by white forces.

Hew Strachan has written that the African campaigns more closely resembled colonial campaigns than the Great War, even if they were fought for European objectives, and "in relation to the outcome of the war they were, as is too often remarked, sideshows."[460] That von Lettow-Vorbeck, in Africa, was the last German to surrender was insignificant to most in Europe. In their minds, the war was over. Within soldiers' public discourse in trench newspapers, fighting done outside Europe was ranked by proximity to Europe and by degree of involvement of white troops. Of course, the war at sea was also largely absent from trench newspapers, so the absence of the African campaigns cannot be attributed to a single factor.

In contrast, the Ottoman campaigns were the subject of a substantial number of news items, articles, and poems. On the border of Europe and with greater white involvement, the Ottoman campaigns interested the reading public of soldiers. Men also had potentially more personal connections with the Ottoman campaigns. And while both the African and the Ottoman campaigns were driven by empire-related objectives to seize new land and prevent the growth of other empires, the Ottoman lands were considered more valuable. The Ottoman Empire, and especially Baghdad, was also a region more contested with the Germans for control, even before the war. Yet, while realism may have motivated quite a bit of the interest in the Ottoman campaigns it did not drive representations of them.

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[460] Strachan, *To Arms*, 504. The resemblance was apparent in the absence of artillery, the prominence of disease, the difficulties of supply, and the number of local carriers involved.

Orientalism

For many British and French soldiers, the Ottoman Empire was both exotic and familiar. The English reading public had been exposed to Turkish histories and travel literature as early as the sixteenth century, and such books were widely disseminated in the seventeenth century.[461] In the nineteenth century, Shelley, Byron, and other Romantics utilized Orientalist themes while academic scholarship about the Middle East increased during "the period of unparalleled European expansion, from 1815-1914."[462] The Greek War of Independence and the Balkan Wars brought the Ottoman Empire into the newspapers of Europe. In *The Other Empire*, Filiz Turhan argues that

> during the years in which the British Empire was expanding its holdings in the East and defining its role as a world empire, the Ottoman Empire acted as a provocative counterpoint in a way that differed from other regions in the East or from other European nations. Turkey's position as a disintegrating, medieval empire that was both incredibly familiar (due to the exhaustive writing about it, as well as its physical proximity to Europe) and yet still foreign (unmistakably Muslim and Asiatic), established it for decades as a pliable trope for writers who sought to understand England's evolving policies in the global scene.[463]

Many trench newspaper inclusions about the Ottoman campaigns maintain the sense both of the foreign and of the familiar.

Many trench newspaper articles tried to call up the fantastical "Orient" known to readers from *1001 Nights* or the works of the Romantic poets. Poems especially utilized familiar themes and settings. A poem titled "Restrictions" in *The Gasper*, authored by "Twopence," reads:

> In far enchanted Orient lands,
> Where here and there amid the sands
> Are oases of palmy trees,
> And caravans, and nomad bands;

[461] Filiz Turhan, *The Other Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 9.
[462] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 41.
[463] Turhan, 162.

Where Grand Viziers have plotted since
They first salaamed Caliph or Prince,
And wise Cadis pronounce degrees,
Whose stoic victims never wince;

Where great Pasha make amorous raids
In quest of ever fairer maids,
And gather new if one's untrue,
Or as the earlier Queen-rose fades;

Where in the cities mosques lift high
Their minarets against the sky,
And all men pray at close of day
As peals the Muezzin's pious cry;

Where in bazaars they drink sherbet
And pull the perfumed cigarette,
And talk as men were talking when
The Prophet's beard was bristling jet;

Though spirits of a choicer wit
Have less regard for Holy Writ—
Though wine's taboo it's not na poo
To him who'll risk the burning pit!

They hold a fast in such domains,
A month of penalties and pains:
In Ramadan a greedy man,
His twelve Hours full hardly gains.

From sunrise to the day's eclipse
No bite of food his jawbone grips,
No cigarette in mouth is set,
No sup of liquor wets his lips.

But as the runner crouches low
At the sharp pistol's crack to throw
Him off the mark like spinning spark,
That bellows' breath may lift and blow.

So, while the sun swings slowly down,
A smell of cooking floods the town,
They spread the board, the drinks are poured,
The baccy waits, an odorous brown.

Thus have I watched on sultry days
Before the closed Estaminets
A queue that licks its lips till six—
Then drowns the memory of delays![464]

[464] *The Gasper*, No. 19 (June 26, 1916), 2. CUL

This poem contains many recurring themes in portrayals of the "Orient" within trench newspapers and literature. The "Orient lands" are immediately both far away and enchanted, full of sand, palm trees, oases, caravans and nomads. All of the stock characters have been conjured up in the second stanza: viziers, caliphs, princes, cadis. The Orient in this poem is at once familiar and fantastic to the readers. The Ottoman lands are those of fairy tales and adventure stories, with almost no relation to the trenches of Europe.

Many of the common negative tropes about the Ottomans are present. According to Turhan, there were three "primary ways in which the Ottoman Empire represented despotism: its treatment of the Greeks; the institution of the Harem; and the failure of the empire to modernize itself commercially and industrially."[465] In the third stanza the Pasha's quest for "ever fairer maids" is made known, a reference to the harem. The sherbet and smoking suggest lassitude and the bazaar a pre-capitalist society. Soon after, the men drinking sherbet and smoking perfumed cigarettes in bazaars are described as talking "as men were talking when/ the Prophet's beard was bristling jet." In effect, the style of conversation and/or the language of conversation have not altered since the time of Muhammad, in the seventh century, demonstrating a failure to modernize.

The poem also describes the practice of Islam. Readers are introduced to the sound of muezzins, the practice of prayer, and the fasting of Ramadan. The muezzin's cry is "pious" and even the "greedy man" is portrayed as observing the fasting of Ramadan, even disdaining to smoke a cigarette. The drinking of alcohol is also discussed. The author, "Twopence," suggests that while alcohol is forbidden, those

[465] Turhan, 3.

willing to risk eternal damnation can find it. One wonders if "Twopence" has read Omar Khayyam. Unlike some other poems in trench newspapers, on various topics, "Restrictions" attempts to present an objective account. The author neither mocks nor praises Islam, but takes faith practices seriously, if putting them in a mythic setting.

The poem also presents an interesting contrast in the opening and closing stanzas. The poem begins in "far enchanted Orient lands," with caravans, nomads, and sands—essentially the open space of the desert. The poem then moves into the city and closes with estaminets and queues, all of which the author claims to have witnessed firsthand. The "Restrictions" describes a land both familiar and exotic. Those "Orient lands" are familiar from legends and stories, their exoticism is expected and anticipated. However, the people within them sound familiar; they observe religious practices, they enjoy food, they have cities and restaurants and even "queue" like the English. The lands are both far away, as in the first stanza, and up close, personally witnessed, as in the last stanza. This combination of exoticism and familiarity runs through many trench newspaper references to the Ottomans, especially those which relied on Romantic images.

Many trench newspapers utilized shared tropes in portrayals of the Ottoman campaigns. The "Mesopotamian Alphabet" in the January 20, 1917, *Wipers Times* provides more examples. Of course

> H are the Harems, which it appears
> Have flourished in Baghdad for hundreds of years,
> We propose to annex all the destitute dears—
> When their husbands leave Mesopotamia.[466]

To repeat Turhan, the harem was one of the primary themes in portrayals of the Ottomans before the war, and such references continued to serve the interests of eroticized humor

[466] *Wipers*, 160.

and colonialist ventures during the conflict as well. The "Alphabet" conjures up other familiar images, as well. "A" brings a reference to the apple in the Garden of Eden, which was widely believed to be in Mesopotamia. "L" is for loot, "wives and wine and bags of rupees," the soldiers hope to receive in Baghdad.[467] Baghdad itself, then, is portrayed as a place of harems and riches, much as in the tales of Sinbad the sailor. The "loot" and the imminent departure and replacement of the harem owners suggest traces not only of Crusades era fantasies, but also of colonial practices.

The "Mesopotamian Alphabet" was sent to the *Wipers Times* by an "old divisional friend" reattached to the Indian Army, and it is ultimately more valuable for the ways it presents the experiences of European soldiers in Mesopotamia. Most of the letters are defined by the experiences of the soldiers, such as the "B is the Biscuit," which "breaks your teeth and bruises your belly,/ And grinds your intestines into jelly."[468] Many of the complaints would be familiar in any setting; the food, the work, the supplies, the censor. In that way, the alphabet demonstrates the shared experience of soldiers on all fronts with the discomforts of war and dissatisfaction with supplies. Other letters in the alphabet demonstrate how soldiers felt specifically about serving outside of Europe.

> C is the poor old Indian Corps,
> Which went to France and fought in the war,
> Now it gathers the crops and fights no more
> In the land of Mesopotamia.[469]

This entry suggests that many soldiers felt they were out of the war by being in Mesopotamia, critiquing the move out of Europe. The alphabet emphasizes the non-fighting aspects of life in Mesopotamia, but at every front of the war soldiers experienced

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[467] Indian rupees became currency in Iraq after the Indian Army began to take territory there. http://www.dinar2u.com/iraqidinar/history.php accessed 1/14/2012 *Wipers*, 160.
[468] Ibid, 160.
[469] Ibid, 160.

breaks in fighting, and even removal from the front trenches in France and Belgium. For the "old divisional friend," the important fighting was in Europe or done in the style of the fighting within Europe. Though leadership may also have been suspect on the Western Front, the alphabet indicates almost no confidence in the leadership in Mesopotamia. The author discusses the efforts of the staff and determines, "the net result was the Turks had a laugh."[470] About the orders from Corps, the alphabet concludes, "thank goodness by now we are perfectly sure/ If issued at three they'll be cancelled by four."[471]

The "Mesopotamian Alphabet" certainly presents a picture of discomfort for seemingly little purpose. However, it is no more extreme than some of the satirical poems about life in the trenches in France. Ultimately, its author has much in common with the British soldiers fighting elsewhere. He would rather be at home, where:

> K are the Kisses from lips sweet and fair,
> Waiting for us around Leicester Square,
> When we wend our way home, after wasting a year
> Or two in Mesopotamia.[472]

French trench newspapers also made references to the "Orient" that would be familiar to their audience. As in British papers, *1001 Arabian Nights* was referenced many times. Some trench newspapers occasionally included "Arab proverbs."[473] Like the British, the French had an "Orientalist" tradition within both academics and the arts. In a list of recently published books in *La Fusée à Retards* was a book of "Arab stories" alongside other titles that might interest readers.[474] A humorous article in *Le Marteau* presented columns with changes in Parisian entertainment from 1913 to 1915. While in

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[470] Ibid, 160.
[471] Ibid, 161.
[472] Ibid, 160.
[473] *Bleutinet*, No.24 (October 1, 1916), 2. UPENN
[474] *La Fusée à Retards*, No.4, 4. BDIC

1913 the Comédie Française would have featured "The bourgeois gentleman and the Turkish ceremony," in 1915 the ceremony would have been replaced with a scene from "Mlle Beulemans," a Belgian play. Other replaced events were Wagner's German opera "Siegfried" and the quintessential Viennese operetta "The Happy Widow" at the Apollo.[475] The people and lands of the Ottoman Empire figured within French popular culture long before the war. Another issue of *La Fusée à Retards* reminded readers that the practice of drinking coffee spread from the "Orient."[476] Whether or not soldiers had practical or personal experience with the Ottoman Empire, there were already many ideas and images about the Ottomans which were circulating among soldiers and which were apparent within trench newspapers.

Many references to the Ottomans in French trench newspapers also spoke to the relationship between the Germans and the Ottomans. A cartoon in the March 11, 1917, *Le Petit Echo* featured Wilhelm waking up in bed. Beside him is an open copy of *1001 Arabian Nights*. From his room he sees a train coming from Baghdad and, looking frightened, exclaims "Baghdad to the English, no! I was dreaming…"[477] This cartoon accurately depicts the importance of Baghdad in the Mesopotamian struggle and its then, and previous, significance as a railway hub for European imperial designs. Interestingly, it is the Germans who are seen as having control of the region to lose. Within trench newspapers, the words of Edward Said are quite relevant: "The other feature of Oriental-European relations was that Europe was always in a position of strength, not to say

[475] *Le Marteau*, No. 1 (September 1915), 4. BnF
[476] *La Fusée à Retards*, No. 2, 1. BDIC
[477] *Le Petit Echo*, No.122 (March 11, 1917), 1. UPENN

domination."[478] Though the Ottomans were, according to Strachan, "a worthy ally of the Central Powers," they were often portrayed as little more than puppets of the Germans.

In a cartoon from *L'Esprit du Cor*, titled "Les Allemands a Constantinople" a monocled German holds a miniature Turk, wearing a fez, in his lap, while the city of Constantinople sits in the background.[479] From the crescent moon over the domed buildings to the fez, everything in Constantinople is both clichéd and overshadowed by the German, who is larger than life in this cartoon. The image also continues the practice of infantilizing non-Europeans in advertising, where, for example, "African men were depicted as helpless babies."[480] The German here holds "the other" on his knee like a child. The words attributed to the German in the drawing suggest that the alliance may not even be in the best interest of the Turks. In this cartoon, and in other papers, the Germans are shown to overwhelm and to command their allies in an unequal partnership, the result of German will to power and Ottoman weakness and underdevelopment.

The October 1, 1916, *Bleutinet* featured a poem with the following second stanza:

> Y a des copains à Salonique
> Qui cont pour combattre le turc;
> Aux gros obus ils font la nique
> Et logent des call's dans les kul-turc.
> Les autres sont sur la Mer Noire,
> Ils torpillent avec brio.
> Moi, c'est toujours la même histoire,
> Je repére le crapouillot.[481]

The second stanza refers to friends in Salonika who fight against the Turks. Even here we see the presumed influence of the Germans, in the use of "kul-turc," yet another in the endless plays on "kultur." As discussed in the chapter "Why War?" German *kultur* was

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[478] Said, 40.
[479] Strachan, *To Arms*, 693. *L'Esprit du Cor*, No. 3 (July 10, 1917), 7. UPENN
[480] Ramamurthy, 60.
[481] *Bleutinet*, No.24 (October 1, 1916), 2. UPENN

a competing, modern system of values seen in opposition to Anglo-French civilization. This term, "kul-turc," also appeared in other trench newspapers. While it indicates the involvement of the Ottomans, it reinforces the idea that the Germans were the ones with objectives in the war and practically suggests that Ottoman involvement was the result of a bad influence. As with a cartoon showing Wilhelm losing Baghdad, the Ottomans were shown to have little at stake even in their own lands. What was gained or lost was gained or lost for Germany. In an issue of *Brise d'Entonnoirs* a German offensive in Egypt was discussed, without reference to the non-Germans who fought there for the Central Powers. It was Wilhelm who wanted to take Cairo.[482] The Ottomans were not taken seriously as an enemy, despite significant Entente military losses against the Ottomans at places like Gallipoli and Kut.

Like the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was typically overshadowed by the Germans within British and French trench newspapers. In a telling example, the first issue of *La Musette* published an "Austrian legend" supposedly found among the papers of Austrian prisoners and widespread within their army. In the story, the heads of the Great Powers, fatigued by war, send their ambassadors to heaven to find mediators for peace. They speak to Saint Peter, Moses, even Jesus Christ, but all decline their invitation. Finally the ambassadors speak to God himself, who says he cannot leave his throne for one moment because Emperor William would take possession of it.[483] For the author of this piece in *La Musette*, even the Austrians identify Wilhelm as the chief aggressor and consider Germany to be the greatest enemy of peace. Seldom discussed on their own and taken less seriously than the Germans, the Austro-Hungarians were

[482] *Brise d'Entonnoirs*, No.18 (January 1918), 4. BDIC
[483] *La Musette*, No.1 (undated), 2. UPENN

typically shown, like the Ottomans, to be subordinate to the Germans. *Le Poilu Sans Poil* acknowledged that Austrians were often considered negligible adversaries, while the paper referenced fighting in Italy.[484] That the Great War began with the affairs of Austria-Hungary was a forgotten aspect of the conflict for British and French trench authors. Like gas which occluded the trenches, within trench papers Germany hid the rest of the Central Powers or offered them tutelage in *Kultur*.

On the Ground

British and French soldiers who fought in the Ottoman campaigns also had trench newspapers. Some were founded there, such as *Le Bavardar de l'A.O*, which served the French Army of the Orient, or *The Gnome*, which served the British Royal Flying Corps in Egypt. Other trench newspapers migrated from Europe with their soldiers, such as *La Bourguignotte*. A look at some of these newspapers can provide further insight into orientalist themes in soldiers' discourse and the extent to which the Ottoman campaigns were "a sideshow" even for many of those in that particular show.

As in Europe, many trench newspapers for soldiers in the Ottoman campaigns provided some kind of news function. In many cases, that was more true outside of Europe than within. While the first issue of *Le Bavardar de L'A.O.* did describe Salonika as a "Babel" because of the diversity of current residents, nearly the entire two-page paper was devoted to the fire which had recently swept through the city.[485] *The Gnome* regularly provided descriptions of recent aerial battles and bombing runs. Its readers

[484] "Nous avons tort de considerer les Autrichiens comme des adversaires négligeables. Ce sont, au contraire, d'excellents soldats, et les Italiens doivent tous leurs success à ce seul fait qu'ils sont 200,000 contre Trente." *Le Poilu sans Poil*, No.15 (undated), 4. UPENN
[485] *Le Bavardar de L'A.O.*, No. 1 (August 20, 1917), 2. UPENN

included men studying at the School of Military Aeronautics, so it often contained long articles about flying and equipment. Those articles offered practical advice and covered differences in weather conditions, as well as what was different from flying in Europe. Trench newspapers outside of Europe also put forth an effort to inform readers about events in Europe.

British and French trench newspapers in the so-called "Orient" definitely made use of orientalist tropes in imagery. Based in Egypt, *The Gnome* included the requisite pyramids in its masthead. The last page of the May 1917 *Gnome* included this clichéd drawing of an Egyptian with a small boy.[486] The Egyptian is attempting to read *The Gnome*, but holds it upside down. Of course, the contents, like its European authors, are beyond his limited comprehension, in the mind of the artist. The artists of *La Bourguinotte* regularly drew the different "types" of people they came across, attempting to represent different ethnic groups. While often not as caricatured, they still showed the dominance of the European gaze.

The use of orientalist themes extended beyond images and into the text of Ottoman campaign newspapers. The May 26, 1916, *Le Clairon* included a poem set during an Oriental night, complete with perfumed wind, a mosque and minarets.[487] Nearly every paper included references to a muezzin, as did the September 1917 *Le Bavardar de l'A.O.*, in an article about the sun in Salonika.[488] The "oriental sun" was a trope in itself. In the mind of a *La Bourguignotte* author, the "oriental sun" was responsible for apathy and laziness in Macedonia because it annihilated energy and

[486] *The Gnome*, No. 4 (May 1917). CUL
[487] *Le Clairon*, No. 4 (May 26, 1916), 8. BDIC
[488] *Le Bavardar de l'A.O.*, No. 2, (September 20, 1917), 1. BDIC

created lethargy.[489] According to Turhan, if the Ottoman Empire was a pliable trope, it was also a consistent trope; the Turks were regularly portrayed as despotic and backward.[490] As Edward Said has written in *Orientalism*, recurring themes within European portrayals of the "Orient" were "backwardness, degeneracy, and inequality with the West."[491] Based in Palestine, the *Chronicles of the White Horse* included articles about the local ethnic groups which often demonstrated these themes. Writing about the Bedouins, the paper suggests that "the Beduin is thriftless and does not lay by against a bad season and in such a time the Egyptian Government has had to distribute great quantities of Barley to the poor to keep them from starving."[492] Later in the article the author claims that "their clothes and their wanderings show little change since the days of Abraham. It is a simple life."[493] In addition, "practically all the work is done by the women."[494] *La Bourguignotte* found the Albanians a "bizarre race" with a "foreign mentality."[495] The soldiers of *La Bourguignotte* passed through Greece, Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria and Serbia and liked little of what they saw. One author concluded that while perhaps those in Constantinople lived well, the Ottoman subjects in the isolated mountain villages were not well off. They had been closed to progress for centuries, living a simple and rustic existence, indolent by nature, passive slaves to a religion which annihilated all energy and initiative.[496] Like Orientalist academics in the preceding centuries, the trench authors found unchanging, backward and despotic traditions wherever they looked.

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[489] *La Bourguignotte*, No. 18 (1917), 3. BDIC
[490] Turhan, xi.
[491] Said, 206.
[492] *Chronicles of the White Horse*, No. 2 (April 1917), 6. CUL
[493] Ibid, 6.
[494] Ibid, 6.
[495] *La Bourguignotte*, No. 16 (1917), 2. BDIC
[496] *La Bourguignotte*, No. 19 (1917), 2. BDIC

Personal narratives from the Ottoman campaigns yield much the same impression. In his diary Lieutenant Colonel J.W. Barnett wrote positively of the Indian soldiers he served alongside but very negatively about the Arabs he encountered. He and his men requisitioned supplies from a village, which brought an encounter with locals. Barnett wrote:

> Large number of scoundrels in village so glad had big guard. Dislike Arab practice of trying to kiss hand & arm. Arab woman kissed my arm 4 times in vain attempt to save her favourite ram but as ram was very fat was unable to see my way to giving back.[497]

A few days later he wrote:

> Arabs have no modesty at all. Strip naked at any moment. One Arab captain says he had 20 wives, & only 5 survive. Evidently they take a wife & if she does not produce children after a reasonable interval she is kicked out & another wife taken. They are quite immoral & liars & thieves of the worst description.[498]

While Barnett clearly had a strong dislike of the men and women he met, he was nonetheless convinced that the area would be a great prize for the British in the war and could be well cultivated. His chief concern was that the Russians might reach Baghdad first.

There is some contrast between these opinions and those in the trench newspapers of Europe. The scathing assessments offered by Barnett, *The Chronicles of the White Horse*, and *La Bourguignotte* are significantly different from the tone of the poem "The Restrictions" in *The Gasper*, which was based in Europe. While "The Restrictions" also conjures an image of pre-industrial life and leisure-oriented people, it does not use terms like "thriftless" as in *Chronicles of the White Horse* or describe a "bizarre race," as in *La Bourguignotte*. Perhaps the encounter with the "other" was rendered more difficult outside of Europe for most Europeans. For example, while African troops could be

[497] Private papers of Lt Col J.W. Barnett, February 3, 1916, 666 90/37/1. IWM
[498] Private papers of Lt Col J.W. Barnett, February 8, 1916, 666 90/37/1. IWM

celebrated within European trench newspapers, in Africa, white settlers worried that whites fighting each other in Africa and/or Africans killing whites in Africa for the war effort would threaten white racial supremacy.[499] A certain amount of the disparity in descriptions was also no doubt tied to the surprise of the actual encounter with the "Orient" supposedly well-known from orientalist tropes.

British and French soldiers in the Ottoman campaigns were very clearly aware of the imagery associated with the "East" and made use of it within their papers. However, soldiers also became dissatisfied with the very tropes they knew and used. The 15th issue of *La Bourguignotte*, whose unit had recently been reassigned from Europe, had a large drawing on its front page of a naked woman fanning a heavy-set *poilu* who was sitting on a carpet and enjoying a hookah. The caption was "The Orient seen from France."[500] The very next page of the paper began with an article titled "The disenchanted impression of a poilu of the Orient," which was chiefly about being misled by "Orientalists." The Orient the author found was not the enchanted garden described by poets and romantics, with white minarets, palaces, and mysterious mosques.[501] No beautiful, lounging women awaited the French. He concludes that the Orient is "an idea so beautiful… and so false."[502] The disenchanted author does allow that the French might enjoy the scenery more if they weren't there to play a part in the unfolding drama of the war, but still maintains there is a large distance between the Orient he found and the one he read about within literature. These sentiments were quite common. An issue of *Chronicles of the White Horse* included a small section titled "Shattered Illusions:"

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[499] Strachan, *To Arms*, 496.
[500] *La Bourguignotte*, No. 15 (1917), 1. BDIC
[501] Ibid, 2.
[502] Ibid, 4.

(1) A land flowing with milk and honey.
(2) Open warfare is vastly more exciting than trench fighting.
(3) Turkey cannot hold out for more than another month. (November 1916)
(4) The plague of flies was removed in the reign of one of the Pharaohs.[503]

That same issue included a poem titled "A Sand Grouse" by C.G.B.

Oh! Sunny Land of Promise
Oh! flowery Palestine!
Oh! Land of corn and olive
The Fig-tree and the Vine.
The fruit we thought to gather
Seems always out of reach,
The flowers we heard so much of
Are only flowers of speech!

Jerusalem the Golden,
With milk and honey blest;
Where is that milk and honey?
It seems to have "gone West."
The honey that I've met here
Is Crosse and Blackwell's brand,
The only milk I've tasted
Has come from Switzerland.

I sometimes sit and wonder
If all we read is true,
And why these ancient Sheenies[504]
Thought such a lot of you!
Would I were back in London
In a cosy "Private Bar",
With a pint of foaming bitter
And a Sixpenny Cigar.[505]

"A Sand Grouse" lamented the lack of milk and honey and the presence of so many people who would be excluded from a "private bar" in London. Here the "land far away" is not exotic and exciting, as in Romantic literature, but repulsive and too proximate.

In Europe, British and French soldiers were familiar with Oriental themes in advertising. Certain products were related to the East to build market appeal. Trench newspapers, too, sometimes demonstrated this marketing ploy. *Trot-Talk*, for example,

[503] *Chronicles of the White Horse*, No. 3 (July 1917), 7. CUL
[504] There was a strain of anti-Semitism within a number of British trench newspapers.
[505] *Chronicles of the White Horse*, No. 3 (July 1917), 11. CUL

advertised "Belle of the Orient" Egyptian-blend cigarettes. Once in the legendary land of "perfumed cigarettes" and sumptuous tobacco, many soldiers reevaluated the advertisements they had known. Consider the following from *The Gnome*:

> A Cigarette Advertisement culled from an English contemporary reads: "especially such a 'smoke' as Ariston, the delightful cigarette with the full exotic aroma that one associates with the shadow-bound mosques, spice-laden breezes, strange priceless perfumes, and the alluring sweetness of the East."
>
> On the whole, Mr. Muratti, we do *not* think that *such* a cigarette *would* improve the mood, assist thought, or calm disquietude! ! ![506]

Instead, *The Gnome* advertised Johnnie Walker. Whether or not soldiers altered their biases about people in the Middle East based on their experiences in the Ottoman campaigns, they were made aware of the stereotypes and the fantasies which their culture had conditioned them to believe. Many who wrote in the trench newspapers of the Ottoman campaigns were unable to absorb literature and travel narratives about the region in the same way during the war.

The Ottoman campaigns presented European soldiers with new enemies and challenges. However, within their trench newspapers, British and French soldiers continued to emphasize the German threat just as had their counterparts back in Europe. The September 20, 1917, *Le Bavardar de l'A.O.* discussed the Kaiser and the "boches" rather than the Ottomans.[507] *Le Clairon* was based in Salonika but on May 26, 1916, it suggested "we knew boche brutality" and asserted "Kultur was judged and condemned from Belgium."[508] The Ottomans had nothing like *kultur* to be opposed.[509] As with the term "kul-turc," the Ottomans were represented as carrying foreign values and not forming their own. The next issue of *Le Clairon* included a review of Guglielmo

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[506] *The Gnome*, No. 4 (May 1917), 14. CUL
[507] *Le Bavardar de l'A.O.*, No. 2 (September 20, 1917), 2. BDIC
[508] *Le Clairon*, No. 4 (May 26, 1916), 1. BDIC
[509] It's possible that if the Ottomans had been the chief enemy of the Entente forces, a more coherent system of values to be opposed would have appeared in trench newspapers.

Ferrero's book, *La guerre européenne*.[510] Books about the Ottoman campaigns were not even suggested. *The Gnome* tried to inform its readers about all the fronts, but when it came to the enemy, the Germans had priority. In March 1917 *The Gnome* told readers that "Germany has put forward some suggestion anent peace."[511] There was seemingly no possibility that the Ottomans had decision-making power or would be involved in peace talks.

According to Edward Said, inequality with the West is one of the dominant themes in representation of the East.[512] Though the Ottoman Empire technically bridged the east and west, in trench newspapers portrayals it was distinctly eastern, for the papers written by troops in the theater as for those based in Europe. Trench authors extended that inequality to the partnership between the Germans and the Ottomans. The No.16 issue of *La Bourguignotte* included a poem about Wilhelm "emperor of the Boches" which claimed he had promised his people they would rule over a world of slaves and that he promised his subjects the Orient and mastery over Austria.[513] According to the poet, the Germans viewed their own allies as the spoils of war. Another issue of the same paper had an article claiming all was not well in the house of the "Boches." The Turks in

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[510] *Le Clairon*, No. 6 (June 11, 1916), 3. BDIC
[511] *The Gnome*, No.3 (March 1917), 1. CUL
[512] Said, 206.
[513] *La Bourguignotte*, No. 16 (1917), 3. BDIC Some of the lines of the poem include:
« Tu promis de toujours vivre
Ivre ;
Et d'avoir bonne et délectable
Table ;
De régner sur le monde esclave
Hâve ;
Tu lui promis aussi l'Orient
Riant
Et la maitrise sur l'Autriche
Riche. »

Bulgaria were shocked by German mistreatment, and the accompanying drawing showed Germany putting its allies to work at manual labor, running the German war machine.[514]

For trench authors in the Ottoman campaigns, equality with the West was not something that could be achieved by their local enemies. British and French soldiers were disappointed by the inaccuracies in the Oriental literature they had received, but they were not impressed by the people they met, either. Their papers continue to emphasize Germany as almost their only enemy. Articles and drawings which portrayed the alliance between the Germans and the Ottomans continually emphasized the inferior status of the Ottomans and suggested the Germans made all decisions regarding the war and used the Ottomans for labor.

Whether due to a belief in the German threat, a belief in the inferiority of the Ottomans, or the lack of personal imperial ambition, within their trench newspapers soldiers in the Ottoman campaigns often made it clear they would rather be fighting in Europe. In the second issue of *The Gnome* the editorial notes reviewed *The First Seven Divisions* by Lord Ernest Hamilton. The trench newspaper editor gave the book a positive review. He also offered thoughts for his readers. After discussing the zeal of new officers and soldiers on the Western Front, he asked:

> Are we, living in the Middle East—particularly those who are still in training almost out of range of the echo of war—keenly sharpening our wits, laboriously increasing our knowledge, making ourselves efficient for the action which will come presently to each of us?[515]

The author clearly doubts the severity, and also then the value, of the fighting outside Europe and questions whether soldiers outside of Europe are putting forth enough effort. Later in the article he praises the officers being produced by the School of Military

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[514] *La Bourguignotte*, No. 18 (1917), 5. BDIC
[515] *The Gnome*, No. 2 (January 1917), 1. CUL

Aeronautics in Egypt, writing that "we shall not fear when they, in their several capacities, have to dispute in the air the vital question of mastery with the Boche."[516] The aviators with the Royal Flying Corps in Egypt did certainly face German aviators, based behind the Turkish lines and using a Turkish aerodrome.[517] However, not all of the enemies they faced were German. Writing about the bombing of a Turkish aerodrome, *The Gnome* informed its readers that bombs "were labeled with some endearing comments on 'What happens to Turkey when peace is signed.'"[518] Here *The Gnome* hinted at the nature of the British and French ambitions in the Ottoman campaigns, which were largely imperial. The Ottomans were not another enemy to be challenged and defeated, but ultimately kept within their own boundaries. For the Entente powers, the Ottoman Empire was a pie awaiting division. For most Entente soldiers, the Ottoman campaigns were a second-class war.

This issue of *The Gnome* demonstrated that aviators in Egypt were facing Germans on a regular basis in the air. One aviator participated in an aerial fight at 6,000 feet and a raid within a 72-hr period. Yet confidentially, he asked, "can you tell me how to get back to France? This is a … country. There's no fun here nor any fighting."[519] The editor of *The Gnome* was surprised by the pilot's perspective on fighting in Mesopotamia. However, the belief that the fighting outside of Europe was less meaningful was fairly widespread. In another issue of *The Gnome* was this statement:

> A Correspondent reminds me that:--
>
> "The Aeroplanes of this Brigade, this Brigade alone, are flying over the mountains of Macedonia, the plains of Mesopotamia, the forest clad highlands of East Africa, and the deserts of Sinai and Makar."
>
> "Repeat this in a deep bass voice slowly! Try it!" he says.

[516] Ibid, 2.
[517] Ibid, 9.
[518] Ibid, 9.
[519] Ibid, 9.

> He might also have included the Kingdom of Babylon and the Land of the Children of Ham.[520]

The encouragement to repeat "in a deep bass voice slowly" suggests soldiers did not take these roles as seriously as perhaps their instructors and leaders would have liked. Based in Palestine, *Chronicles of the White Horse* mocked the war efforts where they were based with a drawing that distinguished between "What Mother Thinks He's Doing," which had a drawing of a pitched battle, and "What He IS Doing" which showed a soldier moving rocks and another supervising camel transport.[521] Though soldiers in Europe, too, were not in the front line trenches every minute of every day, soldiers in the Middle East seemed to find any lack of fighting frustrating. Henry Hampton Rich was an officer at Kut-el-Amara with the 120th Rajputana. In an IWM interview he suggested "it was a complete small sideshow. The campaign and Kut—it didn't matter, the objective was to beat Germany."[522] In his mind, the fighting was more reflective of the Indian than the British government. In another IWM interview, Leslie George Pollard, who went to Sandhurst and served in Mesopotamia, related that soldiers preferred to be in France. According to Pollard, the weather in Mesopotamia was hot and there was nothing around.[523]

Conclusion

In a letter to his father on October 4, 1918, Lieutenant F.B. Turner wrote that "the war seems to be going fairly well on all the fronts."[524] Lieutenant Turner was fighting in Western Europe, where most of the public's attention was focused. Yet, Turner had

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[520] *The Gnome*, No. 2 (January 1917), 2. CUL
[521] *Chronicles of the White Horse*, No. 2 (April 1917), 9. CUL
[522] Henry Hampton Rich, 1976 interview, 766 IWM
[523] Leslie George Pollard, 1982 interview, 6694 IWM
[524] Letter from Lieutenant F.B. Turner to his father, 9588, Turner correspondence. CUL

some curiosity about, and awareness of, fighting outside Europe. British and French trench newspapers demonstrate that the same traits were present within soldiers' public discourse. While trench newspapers were centered on the experiences and views of their readers, who were also their contributors, and understandably focused on the experiences of soldiers fighting within Europe, they did not neglect all parts of the wider war. Soldiers valued fighting elsewhere based on proximity and involvement of white troops. The war in Africa was absent from the pages of trench newspapers, but the Ottoman campaigns received substantial attention.

Writing about the diversity of Entente forces in the "Orient," the *Brise d'Entonnoirs* punned that it was a veritable "macédoine," a fruit salad.[525] There may have been a diverse Entente fighting force in the East, with Australians, English, French, and Serbians, but the descriptions of the Ottoman lands and its people were anything but. Orientalist tropes from literature and academia were common in trench newspaper depictions of the Ottomans. In the poems of trench papers, the Ottoman Empire was an enchanted land with backward people, a mosque every ten feet, and harems in every courtyard. The genre was so well defined it could be easily transported for any context. An issue of *The Lead-Swinger* included "The Belgian Nights," a spoof of *1001 Arabian Nights* with references to the "mighty Emperor of Ind, who strove against his potent foe, the Khizar-Wilhelm."[526]

British and French trench newspapers produced in the Ottoman campaigns continued to utilize Orientalist tropes, even while they acknowledged their disenchantment with the "real Orient." Papers based in Egypt, Palestine, and Salonika

[525] *Brise d'Entonnoirs*, No. 1 (July 1916), 4. BDIC
[526] *The Lead-Swinger*, No. 5 (November 27, 1915), 30. CUL

show that Entente soldiers did not consider the Ottomans an enemy on par with the Germans, despite some meaningful losses at their hands. Within soldiers' discourse, the Turks were little more than the lackeys of the Germans. British and French papers based outside of Europe also demonstrate the extent to which soldiers understood the value of their fighting and themselves almost exclusively within the context of Europe. In *La Bourguignotte*, a regular author began referring to himself as a *déraciné*.[527] One wonders if the *La Bourguignotte* author, referring to himself as "uprooted" like the characters in Maurice Barrès' 1897 novel, felt like Barrès that he was losing his connection with the nation through loss of connection with its physical territory.[528]

Though both the African and the Ottoman campaigns promised the gain of new territory to the British and French, most European soldiers seemed relatively uninterested in that prospect. In a 1915 letter from France which discussed the other fronts, E.D. Ridley wrote, "I see there has been a rumour about that the Huns were prepared to evacuate France and Belgium in exchange for all French Africa and the Congo. I expect they would be glad of the chance."[529] While Ridley meant that the Entente forces had the Germans on the run, his comment also suggests French Africa and the Congo were worth less to the Entente than France and Belgium. The colonies had less value. Admittedly, Ridley was British and less vested in those territories, but his perspective reflects the widely shared belief in the centrality of Europe among European soldiers. In a 1917 letter Ridley wrote:

> That we shall give back some of them, I do not doubt, but I think Togo Land should be given over to Belgium as part compensation, and I think we shall refuse to part with West Africa. East Africa we should, I think, give back after

[527] *La Bourguignotte*, No. 18 (1917), 2. BDIC
[528] Robert Wohl, *The Generation of 1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 39.
[529] Letter from E.D. Ridley, September 7, 1915, 7067, E.D. Ridley papers. CUL

> correcting the Portuguese frontier to its correct position before the Germans grabbed that bit. They ought to be allowed some colonies, because it would be fairer and more towards a peaceful settlement. We must avoid a mere armistice.[530]

The notion of returning land to Germany would seem inconceivable in any other part of the world. Ridley did not consider the future of Alsace and Lorraine in terms of what would be "fairer" and help avoid "mere armistice." Other parts of the world may have been at stake in the war but, for most trench authors, territory lost and gained outside Europe was collateral damage but for a few exceptions. As discussed in Chapter One, "The Great War in Imperial Context," Ottoman and African lands were "spoils of war" but not territory which could not be lost whatever the cost.

For soldiers fighting in Europe, the Ottoman campaigns were part of their consciousness of the wider war, but the historical significance of the region was not. Based in Egypt, *The Gnome* tried to make sense of the relationship between East and West. In an article on "Gaza and the Crusades," an author wrote that "centuries pass and in the eternal ebb and flow of Occident and Orient, again Gaza becomes prominent."[531] A brief history of the Crusades followed, with the conclusion that "the Crusaders left Palestine and all the land and its Arab civilization succumbed to Turkish barbarism. In those dark ages, which have endured up to the present day, Gaza is unheard of."[532] *The Gnome* also discussed the legacy of Napoleon and the French in the region. Within the article, the driver for historical development or significance in the region was consistently the involvement of Europeans. Trench newspapers in Europe also consistently demonstrate this value system. Soldiers rarely broke from this mold of thought, though

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[530] Letter from E.D. Ridley, August 17, 1917, 7068, E.D. Ridley papers. CUL
[531] *The Gnome*, No. 4 (May 1917), 10. CUL
[532] *The Gnome*, No. 4 (May 1917), 10. CUL

this citation from *The Egyptian Gazette* which appeared in *The Gnome* demonstrates that some were aware of the power of broader thinking.

> The gift of historical imagination is one of the rarest and most delicate ever vouchsafed to mortals, for it gives one the power to enter into the thoughts and feelings of men of other ages and of other countries, and doubtless it may be that there is some purpose in all this turmoil of history that breaks in ceaseless waves against the battered walls of Gaza.[533]

[533] Ibid, 10. from *"The Egyptian Gazette"* May 11, 1917.

Conclusion

In his article "The Empire and the Nation" Timothy Baycroft examines "the place of the French colonial empire in the images and identity of the French nation," and the paradox of empire's "omnipresence and marginality."[534] This dissertation has explored the omnipresence of empire in soldiers' discourse of the Great War despite its marginality. Never the central preoccupation of British and French trench newspapers, empire was also never absent. Each of the three main foci of this study—representations of colonial troops, depictions of Germany, and representations of other fronts—has illuminated some way in which empire was a factor in British and French soldiers' experience and perceptions of the war.

Commenting on the Great War, and the histories which would be written about it, Sir General James Willcocks, who served with the Indian Army, wrote: "What an opportunity for still closer welding together the divers races and peoples that combine to make the Empire of Great Britain."[535] Colonial troops prompted some of the most overt discourses of empire within trench newspapers. Descriptions of men from India and Africa, and their reasons for fighting, revealed ways in which British and French soldiers understood and imagined their own respective empires. The valuation of colonial troops, and the limits of that valuation, spoke to the ways in which the war was changing dynamics within the surviving combatant empires. The chapter "Men on the Margins," which examined soldiers' discourse about colonial troops, illustrated both the continuation of old stereotypes and the challenges to those stereotypes created by the war.

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[534] Timothy Baycroft, "The Empire and the Nation: The Place of Colonial Images in the Republican Visions of the French Nation," in *Empire and Culture*, ed. Martin Evans (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 148.
[535] Willcocks, 294.

Soldiers' depictions of Germany within trench newspapers may reveal most about the ties between nation and empire. As shown in the chapter "Why War?," British and French soldiers frequently related Germany's wartime actions with imperialism. Depictions of Germany alternated between Germany as imperial aggressor and Germany as rebellious colony. The association of Germany with imperial aggression extended to adopting the very imagery of pre-war colonial scandals in the Congo to describe German activities. The alternative narrative of Germany as rebellious colony included racialized insults and denigration of German culture, which was contrasted with Anglo-French "civilization." The alternating imagery may be interesting in itself, but more importantly, it emphasizes the extent to which military violence and global conflict had become associated with imperialism. Empire was an interpretive lens for many soldiers seeking to make sense of the conflict.

Early advertising in the age of mass culture that used colonial images relied on "allegorical signifiers" or tropes of representation to communicate products and images which had little relation to actual colonial people or places.[536] Tobacco images relied upon "a specific cluster of signs, whether bow or headdress, leaf or feather skirt, blackness or posture" to identify the "Tobacco Moor," who could invoke the "Orient" or American slaves.[537] The chapter "Other fronts, other wars?" demonstrated the extent to which soldiers relied upon orientalist tropes to represent the Ottoman Empire. That orientalism extended to seeing the Ottomans as weaker partners in the German project, with few or poorly identified goals of their own in the war. By engaging British and French papers from the Ottoman campaigns, the chapter also demonstrates that the war

[536] David Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), 75.
[537] Ibid, 73.

forced many soldiers to confront those stereotypes. British and French soldiers in Egypt and Mesopotamia found themselves far from the pages of *1001 Arabian Nights*. Though relatively few European soldiers served in the African and Ottoman campaigns, those who did were brought into new contact with the nature of their empires overseas because those campaigns were essentially struggles for colonies and strategic defense of India's position in the world.

Within trench newspapers, empire was in many ways a marginal presence. References to colonial troops were far outweighed by references to rum, mud, and leave. Colonial troops were also far less important to soldiers than the women of the homefront. In soldiers' public and private discourses, fighting outside Europe was always secondary to the war within Europe. Yet together the chapters of this dissertation reveal the extent to which soldiers were steeped in the rhetoric and imagery of their empires. New interactions between Europeans and colonial troops were analyzed with existing tropes from pre-war news, literature, and the arts. Experiences outside of Europe were shaped by orientalism, which had clearly been internalized by trench authors. In particular, the role of colonial imagery and rhetoric in defining and opposing Germany as a wartime enemy demonstrates the extent to which empire provided analytic tools for interpreting the war. While empire was not the reason most soldiers enlisted, it nonetheless shaped their experience of the war and the ways in which they interpreted that experience.

Soldiers' discourses reveal disparate experiences of empire. While new, more positive impressions of non-Europeans sometimes emerged from interactions between European and colonial soldiers within Europe, the same did not occur in the Ottoman campaigns. Outside of Europe, differences between orientalist fantasies and realities

resulted in disappointment and frustration. The devaluation of fighting outside Europe, even by participants, demonstrates the continuation of a colonial hierarchy of geography centered on Europe. In particular, the lack of reference to the African campaigns is striking in this regard. The descriptions of Germany which compare it to an imperial aggressor also show a new experience of empire for many trench authors—fear of colonization. That fear was accompanied by recognition of *Kultur* as a competing value to "civilization." While *Kultur* may have been held in disregard, it posed a threat to the arguments of cultural supremacy on which British and French imperialism relied.[538] The collective impression from trench newspapers, that empire was not worth dying for, also undermined the image of the "imperial hero," so prominent in pre-war music halls.

The focus on the relationship between empire and the war in trench newspapers is a new approach to the relationship between World War I and empire that can be informative for scholars in many areas. Despite the surge in books devoted to the Great War and empire, few studies are centered on the imperial experience of European soldiers. With diverse authorship, trench newspapers bring more "ordinary" voices into the historical record. This dissertation can be informative for scholars researching wartime public opinion among soldiers, as well as scholars exploring the contours of empire in early twentieth-century European public opinion. Again, because empire was not a simple, fixed structure or a codified set of relations, studying the imperial experience of European soldiers in the war enhances our understanding of both the nature of the British and the French empire before the conflict and the changes and tensions in those empires that the war helped generate.

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[538] This likely contributed, in no small part, to the venom used in denouncing *Kultur*.

This study also joins the body of work looking at cultures of imperialism and the role of colonial violence in modernity. Scholars have explored the ways in which the Herero genocide affected Germany policy and opinion, shaping understandings of violence and the role of the imperial state.[539] This project has begun to look at the ways in which colonial violence affected British and French perceptions of the violence in the Great War and shaped justifications for it. The dehumanizing rhetoric applied to colonial campaigns was clearly continued into the Great War, at times obviously employing its tropes, in order to justify violence on an unprecedented scale. The very same states and systems of power which described Africa as a power vacuum and empty land ready for the taking reduced stretches of Belgium and France, through a power struggle, into land inhospitable for living.

The relationship between British and French men and the press can be profitably explored with assistance from this study. The findings can help examine the influence of literature, the press, and popular culture in shaping constructions of race and empire and the extent to which soldiers had adopted and adapted tropes. The entire genre of trench newspapers speaks to the significance of the press in Europe at the time of the war. Soldiers' constructions of their own "news" media reflect which aspects of format, style, and tone, were most appealing to readers. Trench newspaper articles, poems, stories, and illustrations shed light on conventions of authorship in practice among soldiers, who were drawn from the general public. While this study takes a thematic look at trench newspapers, it nonetheless highlights conventions within them and brings forth the diversity of types of writing within them. While war memoirs and poetry have been

[539] For example: Isabel Hull, *Absolute destruction: military culture and the practices of war in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005). *German colonialism and national identity*, ed. Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer (New York: Routledge, 2011).

analyzed for decades and historians are increasingly studying illustrations, few have looked at some of the other genres within trench newspapers, such as one act plays, satirical advertisements, sporting columns, and correspondence sections.[540]

The focus on trench newspapers in this study centers soldiers' collective narratives. Multi-author works have often been overlooked by war historians, in preference for single-author narratives. Yet trench newspapers bring to light the community of the trenches and, in this study, the strong commonalities between the British and French trench communities. Within trench newspapers the "individual" as such is no longer of primary importance. In fact, the predominantly anonymous authorship and the "by us for us" ethic of trench newspapers may be seen to challenge the construct of the modern, rational, individual who operates as independently as Robinson Crusoe. The place of the individual in this war, harbinger of modernity that it was, ought to be more fully explored.

This study also has relevance for scholars interested in a transnational or broader "European" approach to history. This project is truly Anglo-French in approach. While some other books and articles have recently attempted a somewhat comparative approach with trench newspapers, they tend to rely heavily on secondary sources for half of the content.[541] In contrast, this dissertation has sought to consistently and equitably utilize both British and French primary sources. Bringing together British and French soldiers' discourses acknowledges that British and French soldiers fought within the Entente

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[540] For example: Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975). Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined* (New York: Atheneum, 1991).

[541] Christian Koller, "Enemy Images: Race and Gender Stereotypes in the Discussion on Colonial Troops. A Franco-German Comparison, 1914-1923," in *Home/Front, The Military, War and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, 139-157 (New York: Berg, 2002). Robert Nelson, *German Soldier Newspapers of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Powers, not exclusively for or with Britain or France. Trench authors suggested the war was in defense of a shared Anglo-French "civilization;" looking at British and French sources together allows examination of that shared culture.

This study also suggests areas of future research, particularly into the interwar period. How did later discourses of colonialism and decolonization relate to wartime discourses of empire? The convergence of the Great War with the decline of European empires deserves more attention with respect to discursive regimes and not only to geopolitical considerations. In *Imperial Connections,* Thomas Metcalf explores the role of India from 1860 to 1920, not as a periphery of England, but as a "nodal point from which peoples, ideas, goods, and institutions—everything that enables an empire to exist—radiated outward."[542] Though the British Empire did not too closely resemble the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, India contributed soldiers, police, indentured servants, and methods of rule crucial to the spread of the British Empire around the Indian Ocean and across Africa. During World War I, the British Empire made use of those existing tendons of imperial power, bringing India into the fray in Europe and the Middle East. Similarly, other British colonies and the dominions and the French colonies contributed men and material to the war effort. The war also brought French West Africa closer to actual integration with France than ever before, with serious negotiations about extending citizenship and with veteran soldiers able to make more claims on the state. In this way, the war seemed to make empires tighter than ever. Initially, in the war, there was even consideration of making Iraq an Indian colony. However, "loss of enthusiasm for the continued promotion of an India-centered imperial system was, by the end of the First World War, a nearly universal sentiment," and in 1920 the Indian rupee went out of

[542] Thomas R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 1.

circulation in British East Africa.[543] The other colonies and dominions of the British Empire experienced waves of nationalism directly related to the war, and the independent identities of Australia and New Zealand are still tied to the memory of Gallipoli today. The French Empire, too, experienced a decline of empire in the twentieth century, and the Great War gave birth to the French Communists, "the first major political movement strongly and consistently opposed to imperialism" in France.[544] In this way, the war seemed both the pinnacle and the last gasp of the British and the French empire. Yet the war brought the end of the German, Russian, Ottoman, and Austro-Hungarian empires, leaving the British and the French the two most viable remaining European imperial powers. Though this study intentionally does not examine the postwar period or imperial policy, it can be useful to scholars seeking to explore the relationship between the war and postwar discourses of empire.

In particular, postwar discourses of race could be compared to soldiers' constructions of race within trench newspapers. Of the competing wartime images of "l'ami noir" and colonial savagery, which gained more traction among the public after the war, and why? Though the war seemed to open new possibilities for citizenship in French West Africa, especially for veterans, access to citizenship actually declined. Only 88 Africans were granted citizenship in the decade following the war.[545] How did the struggle for greater rights within empire—in India, the Dominions, and French colonial possessions—affect the constitution of the memory of the war? While some scholars have

[543] Ibid, 204, 207.
[544] Jonathan Derrick, "The Dissenters: Anti-Colonialism in France, *c.* 1900-1940," in *Promoting the Colonial Idea*, ed. Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 56.
[545] Conklin, 166-167.

researched the relationship between empire and war memory, it might be interesting to follow up with postwar veterans' associations in Europe.[546]

The most obvious direction that this study suggests for additional research into trench newspapers themselves also involves the postwar period, above all the trench newspaper associations which outlasted the war. For example, *Le Poilu* had issues as late as 1920. The trench paper association, "Amicale des Journaux du Front," continued its activities through the 1920s. What role did this association play in the lives of its members and what were its chief activities? How did members make the ultimate decision to let the organization lapse? What was the status and position of the organization at the outbreak of World War II? How did trench newspapers serve as a *lieu de mémoire* for soldiers, in Britain and in France? Concerning the War Reserve Collection at Cambridge University, who made most use of it after the war? This dissertation has focused strictly on the lives of wartime trench newspapers, but their afterlives are also fruitful ground for historical inquiry.

The final direction of future research suggested by this study is into those areas presently omitted: Dominion and colonial trench newspapers, and POW and hospital papers. J.G. Fuller's *Troop Morale and Popular Culture* does analyze Dominion papers, but does not specifically interrogate the role of empire. Colonial trench newspapers existed, but their limited number may make them difficult to study conclusively. POW and hospital papers could be compared with trench journals from the front for a richer understanding of the war experience, including the broader spectrum of experience that included hospitalization and captivity. POW papers were also subject to different forms

[546] One example is William Kidd's article "Representation or Recuperation? The French Colonies and 1914-1918 War Memorials" in *Promoting the Colonial Idea*.

of censorship, which presents a useful case for comparison, and may represent an interesting intersection of German and Entente trench papers.

The Great War provided striking evidence that the interdependencies and interconnections of modern societies were partially constituted through empire. Soldiers fought the war on behalf of nations which were inseparable from empires. This study has shown the "omnipresence and the marginality" of empire in the discourse of British and French soldiers. Within trench newspapers, soldiers connected empire to perceptions of their allies, their enemies, the wartime objectives, and the geography of the war. A relationship between the war and empire is not just present in the work of recent historians, but also existed within soldiers' discourse during the war. Analyzing that relationship improves our understanding of empires, which cannot be considered apart from experience.

To return to the question posed in chapter two about a subject, and reader, of a trench newspaper: "Who *is* Christopher of whisky fame?" We are no closer to knowing Christopher's last name or his fate. However, hopefully, this study has given insight into the ways in which Christopher's war experience was shaped by the realities of empire, its networks of power and its mobilization of men and material from around the world. We also have a sense of the ways in which Christopher may have interpreted the war and his enemies through an awareness of empire culled from prewar media and colonial scandals. We can also speculate about the ways in which the war both mobilized his stereotypes regarding non-European people and places and challenged those very stereotypes, particularly if he served outside of Europe. We can now see more fully the ways in which the war could force on Christopher reevaluation of military objectives and the human cost

of violence tied to national defense and imperial expansion. Whatever Christopher's individual experiences in the war, we can now better understand the ways in which those experiences occurred in an environment shaped by empires.

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