South Atlantic Review

Winter 2021

Volume 86

Number 4

Journal of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association

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In Appreciation. South Atlantic Review wishes to acknowledge the generous contributions and support provided by Ashley Cowden Fisk, Michael LeMahieu, Cameron Bushnell, by the Clemson University Department of English chaired by Susanna Ashton, and by the College of Arts, Architecture, and the Humanities.

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Film Noir Begins: Some Thoughts

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For film historians looking backward since the 70s, the release in the US of *Stranger on the Third Floor* (Boris Ingster) in 1940 marked the beginning of the nexus of cycles that by the late 60s would be recognized as constituting the American film noir, whose classic period was fixed as spanning the 40s and 50s. This sixty-four minute "B" movie was startlingly innovative, most especially in featuring "a 'dark passage,' a self-reflexive turn toward a morally-vexed interiority away from the dramatically-oriented objectivism hitherto characteristic of the standard Hollywood product" (Palmer, "Stranger" 171). A young reporter inadvertently provides the evidence that results in an innocent man sentenced to death for murder, but then troubled by his outcome, he falls asleep and in the Expressionist-styled theater of his own unconscious, he is accused of getting it wrong and is himself brought to trial and convicted. Waking from this nightmare, he discovers that circumstances do point misleadingly toward his own guilt; in fact, only the heroic efforts of his fiancée, whom he enlists to fight the miscarriage of justice, along with a fortunate turn of events, leads to the identification of the actual culprit as well as to his own vindication and the release of the wrongly convicted man.

A complex meditation on the justice system as well as an exciting thriller, *Stranger*'s crossing of narrative and thematic borders, as well as its exploration of the complex relationship between unconscious and waking experiences, constitute aspects of the liminality that came to characterize noir film at many levels, from storytelling construction to generic hybridism (on noir liminality see Palmer "Lounge Time" and "The Divided Self"). Ingster's low-budget RKO production, not a box office success, inspired no cycle of imitations, but it proved to be the harbinger of a production trend, with reflexes in many other national cinemas, that would soon strengthen and endure for almost two decades. By the end of the 1960s, critics in the US had begun to recognize the film noir as an important postwar production series. What Anne-Françoise Lesuisse has suggested we call noir's *nomadisme* has made this trans-national phenomenon the most pervasive, perhaps most significant global cinematic development of the second half of the twentieth century (43-81). Noir's position of industrial and creative eminence was cemented when a revival, in the wake of the flourishing

of a nostalgia-obsessed American art cinema in the early 70s, came to dominate US screens once again in the 80s and 90s. The result is that noir narrative has become a standard production type for many national cinemas (see Pettey and Palmer on international noir; Klein on the nature of film cycles; Lennard/Palmer/Pomerance on film noir and 70s art cinema).

This essay comments on early stages of the emergence of noir filmmaking in the US and UK cinemas, but less from the point of view of the two industries than from that of its critical "discovery" in 1946 by French critics, including their affixing upon these films of an *appellation contrôlée* of sorts that has remained with them ever since. This is a story that requires more detailed and nuanced discussion than it has usually received in Anglophone criticism, and it can only be outlined here. However, even French critics, who have for obvious reasons been more disposed than their British and American colleagues to focus on the role played in this important moment by their national film culture, have neglected what seems an important, simultaneous British development: the emergence of what might be called an "infidelity cycle" of melodramas that are "almost noir." These films, three of which are discussed later in this essay, offer a revealing correlative to what was occurring at the same time in the American industry (see Esquenazi and Lesuisse on French developments; Spicer on British noir).

Critics in Paris in the summer of 1946 opined that the "dark cinema" that had emerged during wartime Hollywood production was a significant innovation connected to the earlier emergence of a new literary genre, the hard-boiled popular fiction published in France as the *série noire*. Like the fiction of Chandler, Woolrich, and Cain, which appealed to the French intelligentsia, these films were understood as challenging the narratives of self-congratulation that had long been a staple of a troubled American culture. There can be little doubt that a fundamental ground of the appearance of dark stories and pessimistic themes was the Second World War, which provided the worst kind of coda to a decade of deep social unrest and economic collapse that had already shaken confidence in the global political and economic order.

The war was now over, but the continent lay in ruin and in need of a thorough restoration. Given the failures of the pre-war established order, there could be no question of any return to the status quo ante. But what were the United States and the countries of a ruined Europe and Asia to make of themselves? This was a question that many in the United States, its stagnant post-New Deal economy re-invigorated only temporarily by a Keynesian infusion of government money during the conflict, were also now asking. For most, the end of the war meant radical readjustment; if in one sense it was an "American High," as histo-

rian William O'Neill suggested, it was also the "Age of Doubt," according to his colleague William Graebner. Noir films responded, within the expressive limits set by Hollywood, to this paradoxical structure of feeling by obliquely celebrating energy, initiative, and enterprise. In so doing they dramatized how protagonists of uncertain virtue almost always failed at the self-remaking, moral regeneration, sexual accommodation, and mission completion that were the usual tasks assigned main characters by Hollywood's screenwriters.

In representing the nation, these films foretold a bleak future in which contemporary America was depicted as a series of what Marc Auge has called non-places, sites of endless, usually unwelcoming transition in which the way ahead for individuals is always subject to disruption by an irrecuperable past (see Auge; Sobchack; Palmer "Lounge Time"). Only somewhat more positive is that sometimes these dark dramas can be staged in the after-scene of the deconstructing bourgeois home, with everyday interior spaces that chiaroscuro lighting readily transforms from bright familiarity to shadow-crossed alienation once the darker side of domestic relations reveals itself.

The doubt-ridden *mentalité* we can call noir was also prevalent in postwar British society, where the social and physical wreckage effected by the war was every bit as bad as what prevailed on the continent. Ironically, Britain, one of the "victors," could not enjoy the restorative benefits that followed in the wake of the liberating invasion force of American arms. It is not surprising, but less widely known, that while Hollywood filmmakers were becoming more fully engaged in making films of this type, a number of noir narratives had appeared from British filmmakers, with those made at the very end of the war and the first years of peace being in many ways the most interesting, especially those of the infidelity cycle. Discussion later in this essay will focus in particular on three of these: *Waterloo Road* (1945, Sidney Gilliat); *It Always Rains on Sunday* (1947, Robert Hamer); and *Brief Encounter* (1945, David Lean).

The most important point to make at this point is that the noir phenomenon, evidenced as much in critical discussion as in production series, was complexly trans-national even in its early stages, an essential fact of this moment of postwar cinema history whose full meaning has been obscured in what might be called the "noirist" position that was established in the initial discussion of the series by French journalists Nino Frank and Jean-Pierre Chartier, working independently, in 1946.

This is the view, dominating scholarly accounts from the outset, that film noir in its initial stages was a stand-alone US phenomenon, with its most important connection to European, particularly French,

film culture being mostly a matter of nomenclature. Despite much evidence to the contrary from postwar industrial practice and journalistic appreciation in the US, this position has wrongly assumed that a body of films that were self-evidently noir was always already there to be recognized, that noir was more than a category of appreciation that had been adopted by the Paris critics, to which they attached a corpus, giving shape and a nexus of ideas to a trend that responded to their own reading of the American cinematic and historical moment. Instead, as its *nomadisme* indicates, noir, according to Elizabeth A. Hatmaker and Christopher Breu, is better seen as "an affective disposition" not tied to one particular national experience. Noir, as they go on to point out, is then both a textual category and a trans-subjective cultural way of thinking/feeling that generates:

> narratives centered on loss, sadness, rage, shame, guilt, regret, anxiety, humiliation, resentment, resistance, and refusal. Moreover, noir often asks us to identify with those on the losing end of cultural narratives, especially the criminal, the lost, the compromised, the haunted, the unlucky, the cast-aside, and the erotically "perverse," including those whose greatest erotic attachment is to death (7).

The invention (if that is the right word) of noir in the cinematic sense was a matter of both production and reception, as was recognized at the time. As Raymond Borde and Étienne Chaumeton observed in 1964, "the film noir is *noir* for us, which is to say for the American and western public of the 1950s. It responds to a certain emotional resonance that is as particular in time as it is in space" (16, my translation). As it happens, that "emotional resonance" has proved to be both global and also enduring, making it more than an object of historical inquiry.

French intellectuals of the era, including Nino Frank and Jean-Pierre Chartier, found some Hollywood productions worthy of comment rather than beneath contempt—the standard view of the transatlantic intellectual class at the time and on into the 60s as well. It is usually forgotten that in 1946 Paris the young film enthusiasts working as critics in journals they had founded in their love for the seventh art inevitably understood the current American scene in ways that corresponded to their own French moment. Already ardent fans of Hollywood, Frank, Chartier, and others were intrigued by US productions that seemed consonant with a substantial trend within their own national cinema: the gloomy romanticism and poignant melancholia of 30s Poetic Realism. To these American films they applied the pessimistic label, *film noir*, that this earlier French movement had in-

spired (see O'Brien). This story of finding what they were pre-disposed to discover, however, is more complex than any simple account might suggest.

In fact, it was an intersection in Paris in the summer of 1946 of a number of trends that produced the film noir as a critical innovation. These trends include the screen adaptation of *série noire* fiction and screenplays written in the same vein as well as the ongoing tradition of French *réalisme poétique* and the developing fashion for dark melodramas in both British and the revived German cinemas as well as the sudden, and quite popular, release of a vast number of wartime Hollywood productions previously unavailable to a Nazi-occupied France. A major influence on the French view of the United States was the leading role played by the American military in the "liberation" (as some but not all of the population saw it) of the country.

The dominance of US forces forecast the dominant role that America would play in helping resolve the dire economic difficulties of a post-war France that could hardly feed itself. The leaders of a hastily re-assembled French national government were forced to go cap in hand to their erstwhile allies for assistance, entering in negotiations, as we will see in a moment, that had important implications for the emergence of film noir as a way of understanding a recent trend in Hollywood production.

The powerful position of the US meant than an enthusiasm for American popular culture came to co-exist with resentment at the role of this ostensible entertainment within what seemed an officially acknowledged form of imperialism. Certainly, the Truman administration openly attempted in part to re-make the old world in accord with free-market New Deal liberalism; pervasive (and largely justified) feelings among the French intelligentsia that their national culture (including a highly intellectualized cinephilia) was superior to what passed for culture in the US. American reviewers, it turned out, had missed an aesthetic innovation of some depth and import in their own cinema (for an important exception to this rule see Kracauer). Their French counterparts, it seems certain, were hardly surprised.

The French Saw What Americans Did Not

Authored by prominent film/culture critic Nino Frank, the first journalistic account of American film noir appeared in the August 28, 1946 issue of *L'Écran français*, a journal founded by pro-communist intellectuals who had been involved in the *résistance* and its aftermath (English text in Palmer *Perspectives*). The film noir, as Frank saw it,

involved the same kind of generic revision that had characterized "hard boiled" detective fiction during the last fifteen years. In fact, he reported that it was novels of this new type, published as the *série noire* by Marcel Duhamel and Gallimard in France, that had served as the source material for what the US industry was now bringing to the screen. And yet the films that the critic identified as noir, even if they limned a similar fictional world, were substantially different in style and structure from *Stranger*, which is only in the most minimal sense a *policier* (detective story). Films noirs, as it turned out, would be much more richly diverse than, to use Frank's term, the "criminal adventure stories" from Hollywood then playing on French screens.

Just a couple of months later, Frank's opinion was seconded by another notable journalist, Jean-Pierre Chartier, who, writing in the *La Révue du cinéma*, called attention to the fact that the Americans were *also* producing films noirs, his view being that the Hollywood series offered an even darker view of contemporary society than the chief works of 30s French Poetic Realism, which had been labeled by some as *noir* (English text in Palmer *Perspectives*). Chartier concluded that the American series was rightfully understood as a new trend, even if these films were somewhat similar in tone and visual style to what the French had begun turning out a decade earlier. Importantly, Chartier suggested that Billy Wilder's *Lost Weekend* (1945) also be considered noir though it does not dramatize a crime and its solution. Wilder's pathetic history of alcohol addiction centers on the plight of a man caught helplessly between his desire for a respectable life and the inner demons that drive him toward self-destruction. The film probes the discontents of the inner life in the unsettling manner inaugurated by *Stranger*. *Weekend* concludes, as the possibility of rehabilitation fades from view, with a surprising "happy ending" that is riven with bitter irony in what would become the classic noir fashion.

Fig. 1

Maltese Falcon: John Huston's version of *The Maltese Falcon* violates Hollywood convention in sending romantic lead Mary Astor off to prison at the end. Frame enlargement.

In any case, as Frank argued and Chartier for the most part concurred, Hollywood noir had been established by four "A" productions from major directors (all of them adaptations of *série noire* fiction): *The Maltese Falcon* (1941, John Huston), *Murder, My Sweet* (1944, Edward Dmytryk), *Double Indemnity* (1944, Billy Wilder), and *Laura* (1944, Otto Preminger). These films were

"black" in the sense that they, if only in part, deconstructed the moral universe that was fed by the powerful traditions of melodrama that had long been dominant in Hollywood product. Melodrama had been enshrined, with due pressure from segments of the national audience and a watchful Catholic establishment, in the institution of the Production Code Administration and its Production Code, which offers a powerful argument in favor of the moral uplift or "decency" that the movies might promote (see Leff and Simmons).

The noirs identified by Frank set themselves against these established protocols, negotiating, in order to receive the PCA's certificate of approval, an often strained and unstable compliance with the conservative, reformative social values mandated by the Code. Most important was the provision that films dealing with crime and social breakdown should offer compensating moral value, in order, or so the PCA hoped, to counter the at-times attractive presentation of immorality and crime. In the films discussed by Frank and Chartier, the detective descends into the dark underside of the "normal" in order to settle accounts (rescuing the innocent and punishing the guilty); but in this underworld he also seems very much at home and often relishes the breaking of norms that puts him in harm's way but permits him to resolve the case. In the end, however, he returns to his position just beyond the permeable border that separates those who are obedient to the law from those pursuing its violation. *Double Indemnity* follows this pattern, but reconfigures the formula with the result that the protagonists who resolve the crime are also those who committed it.

Fig. 2

Murder, My Sweet: Claire Trevor's scheming wife with a troubled past is the villain of the piece, foiling the efforts of her private detective (Dick Powell) to stop her from further murderousness. Frame enlargement.

The compensating moral value in such narratives might be the at-least partial reformation of the criminals (as in *Double Indemnity*) or the sudden exertion of the full power of the law (as in *Laura* and *The Maltese Falcon*) or the reassertion, in the face of social breakdown, of the basic elements of social order (the coupling that ends the action in *Murder, My Sweet* and, in a homosocial sense, *Double Indemnity*). What

Fig. 3

Double Indemnity: The illicit lovers, and partners in murder, in *Double Indemnity*, must hide their connection in order to avoid detection. Frame enlargement.

dominates the finales of these films, however, is not a social restoration, but the distressing failure of self-fashioning; of violent death endured, or barely escaped; of the flimsy contingency of relationships, communal values, and ostensible identity; of the grim realization that evil and perfidy entail their own punishment, requiring little from the seemingly weak official institutions of the law by way of regulation, restoration, or retribution.

As the run of the series would show, however, *Stranger* better exemplifies the principal qualities of noir, as these would a few years later be cataloged in France in 1955 by Raymond Borde and Étienne Chaumeton, a view shared by later taxonomists as well (see Borde/Chaumeton; Silver/Ward). Ingster's film, however, was not among the first batch of Hollywood productions (mostly "A" pictures) that were shown in France in 1946; it was in fact never publicly exhibited there. Private detective narratives constitute a sub-type of noir, and most noirs involve a public crime of some kind, but many are more concerned with malfeasance and the breaking of cultural norms. Because of its pessimistic engagement with that *sine qua non* of melodrama, the troubled conscience, *Stranger* was more broadly typical of what noir would become than the *policiers* that had aroused Frank's enthusiasm and Chartier's concurrence, for those films were focused instead on mysterious crime and its solution. Chartier would be proved right, in his analysis of *Weekend*, that an essential feature of the noir phenomenon would be its concern with *crises morales* that are deeply troubling and socially destructive, all the more so because they often prove insoluble.

So the moment of critical insight that Frank and Chartier had into what would later emerge as a considerable shift within Hollywood production not surprisingly entailed a certain blindness, in the sense that Paul de Man identifies as a characteristic of all such intellectual initiatives. The fact is that the two critics were so enthralled by what US filmmakers were doing that they paid no attention to how some wartime and early postwar British films were also turning darker, an early indication of the *nomadisme* that would become noir's most important feature.

The Critical Moment: America, For and Against

In a Paris still shaking off the effects of four years of German occupation, Frank had the chance to view (and review) a considerable number of wartime Hollywood films, not released in France after the 1940 surrender, in the course of just a few months. Like others active in the ciné-clubs and in film journalism in Paris, he enjoyed an unusually concentrated glimpse into industry trends; even so, his assessment was nonetheless limited. Hollywood releases had from the beginning of the sound era been subjected to a rather restrictive quota system in France that was designed to protect domestic producers. In 1946, with their economy in shambles and much of their industry and infrastructure wrecked by bombing and battle, the French were, so to speak, over a barrel, with the American liberators holding the upper hand. Irwin Wall characterizes their situation in bleak terms: "The United States alone could provide the imports France needed to maintain a minimum level of subsistence while attempting to reconstruct and modernize its economy" (35).

As soon as the Occupation ended, Hollywood moved successfully to take advantage of this leverage by negotiating better terms for the industry during the Blum-Byrnes trade negotiations that resulted in a pact between the two countries (signed on 18 May 1946) (on these negotiations, crucial to the postwar reconstruction of Europe, see Wall, esp. pp 49-62; on the general issue of "Americanization" and the details of the agreement see Kuisel). One of the results of that agreement was the relative flooding of the exhibition market with a considerable backlog of American product. There was enthusiasm on the part of many (including Frank and Chartier) within French film culture at the unexpected access to Hollywood releases, which had never before been available in such profusion as they were during 1946 and 1947.

There is a much less positive side, however, to what was seen by French cinephiles as a central cultural event. Washington's negotiators and those in the Truman administration more generally made no secret of their hopes that the films exhibited in France (and elsewhere in a continent on the brink of disaster) would promote a positive vision of American life. This thinly disguised cultural imperialism was resented most deeply in France, especially since during the German ascendancy, 1940-44, the French film industry, assimilated into the European system designed by Joseph Goebbels had thrived, though, by the end of the second battle for France, it had fallen on hard times that would not be alleviated by the domination of the nation's screens and exhibition schedules. With American distributors now enjoying a substantial relaxation of quota requirements, French films would face strict com-

petition from these fully amortized Hollywood releases (their negative costs having been paid off in domestic runs) that could be leased cheaply to French exhibitors. For the remainder of the decade, the French industry lobbied to weaken the American position, realizing that their own cinema could only recover if what was seen as an invasion was successfully repelled. Importantly, the US never gained its ultimate object, which was a removal of all protectionist regulations and the establishment of a free market that the considerable advantages of the American industry would inevitably dominate. As Lesuisse remarks, "Franco-American relations rested on an unstable mix of hope and fear, of confidence and resentment." Hollywood's films were seen by many in France as posing "ideological dangers" that were seen at the time as "diabolical," especially by those on the left (109, my translation).

Noir production in 40s France has received proper attention in the last two decades, but the mistaken critical commonplace endures that the dark productions of 30s *réalisme poétique* essentially ended following the Liberation and the collapse of the German-connected Vichy industry (see Vincendeau and Ehrlich for useful correctives). That the continuing run of French noir films served as a critical touchstone for evaluating the similar films now coming from Hollywood is evident in Chartier's title: "The Americans are *Also* Making Noir Films" (emphasis mine). As they came to critical grips with what American filmmakers had been doing during the war, Frank and his colleagues, in an atmosphere of bitter denunciations of collaboration and the artistically successful cooperation of the Vichy industry with the Germans, failed to track with precision the postwar continuation of the native noir series that had flourished in the so-called dark time, the *années noires* of the German occupation and *pétainisme*, the ultra-rightist totalitarianism named for Vichy's leader, General Philippe Pétain (see Ehrlich).

This period had seen the production, among other interesting noirs, of Henri-Georges Clouzot's *Le Corbeau* (1943), an early study of sorts for his more renowned *Les Diaboliques* (1955) (see Lloyd for relevant details of his career). It was among the most popular films released in the pre-invasion period. The film's anti-establishmentarianism (anticipating the social criticism of American film noir) was condemned after the liberation for its supposed anti-Frenchness. *Corbeau*'s focus on the dark side of life in a small village became something of a national scandal (see Ehrlich 176-88). Clouzot found himself when the war ended among a group of French cineastes active in the Vichy industry who were charged with collaboration and banned for a time from filmmaking.

What ties Clouzot's two films together is their exploration of a wifely infidelity; this turns out to be a false trail occulting the male violence

and psychopathology that actually motors the events in question. This focus links them interestingly to the British noirs discussed later in this essay. With its many connections to his 30s and Occupation era releases such as *Le Jour se léve* (1938) and *Les Visiteurs du soir* (1942), Marcel Carné's *Les Portes de la nuit*, one of the classics of French postwar noir, would begin its exhibition in the December after the publication of Frank's essay. Julien Duvivier's noirish *Panique* would premiere two months later at the Venice Film Festival. Thus the pre-war noir tradition remained a presence through the continuing success of its central figures. After being rehabilitated, Clouzot restarted his career in 1953 with the release of *Le Salaire de la peur*. The Paris critics knew these filmmakers and their interest in film noir very well. Both Frank and Chartier proved reluctant to understand these dark French productions in close context with this new Hollywood series. This was likely due, as Charles O'Brien has maintained, to either deliberate cultural amnesia (the French films recalled a period of the national experience many were trying to forget) or, reflecting their relatively impoverished production values, to a snobbery that favored the American glitz and glamour so prominent even in the thematically dark *policiers* Frank admired (see O'Brien).

In the US, film noir remains a term of taste and appreciation mainly deployed by the cognoscenti (those for whom motion pictures are films rather than movies), and it conceals a tension between enthusiasm for the accomplishments of the studio era and the penetrating criticism of the national culture and its pieties (including especially bourgeois notions of settled family life and the marital bond at its center) that these films regularly promoted. It is no coincidence, I would suggest, that this tension, exported to the US along with the notion of film noir itself, precisely reflects something of the collective *mentalité* of French intellectual circles during the summer of 1946. This was a time of great uncertainty and unrest, primarily because the form of government that the nation would adopt, feeling its way forward after the now discarded anti-republicanism of Vichy, was the object of bitter debate. Also at stake was the shape of the external relations that France would now pursue with its erstwhile allies and former enemy. Crucial to both these aspects of reconstitution was the inescapable fact of American power on the ground in Europe and the desire within official Washington that France conform to the role assigned it in a Europe now conceived as constituting the "West" opposing, in partnership with the US, the Soviet "East."

Admiration for many things American coexisted uneasily with fear that the United States was intent on dominating the politics, culture, and economy of the country it had so recently liberated after two inva-

sions (not to forget the landings in the south) that, contrary to now popular myth, were not universally seen as positive by a populace in which resentment still roiled over "preparatory" Allied bombing (which killed many thousands of French civilians and destroyed much of the country's transportation infrastructure). American influence and pressure could not be rejected out of hand, however, because France, at the nadir of its political influence and military power, was then dependent for its very survival on shipments of American wheat and—crucial to a national sense of well-being—tobacco.

The government would need substantial financial assistance in order to prevent civil breakdown, and the Americans were the only ones offering loans of sufficient size on favorable terms. The critical question of an official French return to its colonies, especially in Africa and Southeast Asia, was yet another terribly fraught issue that would dominate the relations between the two countries during the next decade, resulting in the now bitterly regretted American encouragement of the French return to Indochina late in 1946, resulting in the outbreak of the First Indochina War, which ended in 1954. This period was marked by internal discord that endured for more than a decade. Beginning in spring 1946, the provisional government that had led France since liberation in 1944 (the GPRF) was angrily dissolving, while a newly elected national assembly, dominated by centrists, was busily writing, under the leadership of Léon Blum, what would become the constitution for the Fourth Republic. Amid considerable rancor, the draft would be approved by referendum in October. This new formula for self-administration would last only a bit more than a decade when the Algerian crisis in 1958 forced a change, making possible the return of de Gaulle and presidential authoritarianism.

As mentioned earlier, film noir is dominated by transitional rather than domestic spaces, in which rootless characters find themselves on journeys whose goals they can barely imagine (see Sobchack; Auge). The temporal quality of this fictional universe is that its always already unstable present can be plunged into disorder by the sudden emergence of unresolved difficulties from the past (see Palmer "Lounge Time"). My point is that the noir universe, as delineated by French cinephiles at the time, bears more than a slight resemblance to a liberated France trying to find a political and economic way forward in 1946, avoiding threats from both the left (a popular Communist party) and right *(Gaullisme)*.

Frank and Chartier, fascinated by the dark tales emanating from Hollywood, but dubious about central aspects of Americanism, found themselves in something like the predicament of the desperate characters in the film noir, that is, as inhabiting a space and time "between."

Like their fellow countrymen, they found themselves in 1946 unstably poised between an unpromising future and a past stained by humiliating military defeat and collaboration, reasons for considerable collective shame that had not been expiated by the violent reprisals that had followed the departure of the Germans.

Within two years, the French would witness the return of the parliamentary deadlock that had weakened the Third Republic and would in little more than a decade doom the Fourth. Figures would arise "out of the past" like Blum (who had served two terms as prime minister in the 30s) and de Gaulle (its de facto wartime leader in exile), returning after disgrace to head the government in 1958 as the self-appointed savior of the country. Even before the end of the 40s, disastrous wars in Indochina and Algeria would break out and tear the French polity to pieces. And yet, economic recovery, with American help through the Marshall Plan (instituted 3 April 1948), would mean an unparalleled prosperity for the many in the three postwar decades, which are now known nostalgically as the *trente glorieuses*. The liminal moment of 1946 turned out to be as paradoxical and dangerous as that traversed by the anti-heroes of noir films produced in an America that was equally divided between "doubt" and the "high" that, to echo a title from the best loved Hollywood film of 1946, was the best years of the lives many were then living.

Invisible *Nomadisme*

If Hollywood's dark cinema fascinated many French cinephiles, they exhibited no corresponding recognition that a similar (but also intriguingly distinct) form of dark filmmaking by 1946 had been established as a trend in the British industry as well, with the major relevant releases all exhibited during the era in Frank's Paris (see Smoodin on Paris film culture). This critical deficit would not be made up in the years that followed when the notion of film noir became established in world film culture as a US development *tout court* by Borde and Chaumeton's rich and influential volume *Panorama du film noir américain*, published in 1955 and not widely read in America until more than a decade later.

To be sure, internationalism plays a limited role in this study since the two critics emphasize the resonances of these films with Surrealism (aligning it to that most French of modern art movements and thus to French culture). More interesting, the Paris critics also collectively missed that many of the films from a revived British industry, films that were then being screened in Paris, pointed toward a darkening trend

in that industry. The early postwar British noirs (as they would now be classified) constitute in their deep engagement with melodrama a substantially different corpus from the Hollywood *policiers*. Their shared concern with discontented married women (and thus the generally dissatisfying aspects of "everyday life") suggests that they should be recognized as a cycle, especially since a number of similar others focusing on women questions would be turned out by British filmmakers during the next several years (cf. for example, *Frieda* [1947, Basil Dearden], which focuses on the questionable loyalty of a German war bride to her English husband and newly adopted country, and most tellingly, the aptly titled *The Woman in Question* (1950, Anthony Asquith), which focuses on the murder of a single woman of dubious morals, living alone in an accessible apartment, who pursued liaisons with several quite different men. Interestingly, the themes and narrative patterns in the films of this infidelity cycle also point toward similarities with less celebrated entrants in the emerging Hollywood trend, and, as noted, with prominent French noirs from the era.

And yet, also, for obvious political reasons, the two French critics downplayed the influence of German Expressionism, despite its obvious formative influence on noir visual style and theme, the reflex of the participation of so many Weimar émigrés in the productions themselves. This production trend largely resulted from the Germanization of the US industry during the interwar period (see Bourget). It is a trans-national aspect of noir so pronounced and foundational that an argument could be made that the American film noir is properly understood as a redivivus form of Expressionism, in support of which films like *Stranger on the Third Floor* could be cited as evidence (see, among other studies, Bergstrom). In any case, there is little if any reference in Borde and Chaumeton's *Panorama* to films produced other than in Hollywood, or, indeed, in 40s French critical writing on noir more generally. The many stylistic and thematic connections between early postwar German productions, the so-called *Trümmerfilm* (rubble films) and the noir series in the US, UK, and France call out for further examination beyond the brief comment that can be offered here (see Shandley).

The most prominent of the rubble films was Wolfgang Staudte's *The Murderers are Among Us* (1946), which was screened in Paris and New York in 1948. As in the case of *Stranger on the Third Floor*, *The New York Times* reviewer (this time T.M.P.), judging this remarkable film, produced under the most unfavorable of conditions, by run-of-the mill Hollywood narrative assumptions, failed to appreciate Staudte's powerfully expressive use of real location as what he terms "symbolic" (a Berlin turned into a ghastly wasteland by Allied bombing and

Russian artillery) as well as the film's anti-naturalistic costuming and acting (see T.M.P.). Such philistinism even in the premier newspaper published in America's cultural capital now seems remarkable: for example, T.M.P complains that the main character, an army doctor just returned from the physical and spiritual horrors of the war against the Russians, makes "an unnecessarily disheveled appearance." With its dramatization of an anguished man's reckoning with his complicity in the casual homicide practiced by his fellow soldiers, *Murderers* is deeply noir, with its ethical climax his poignant decision to forego revenge against the officer who ordered the killing of helpless civilians, making the doctor complicit in their deaths.

In its engagement with the troubled conscience, Staudte's film resonates with several American noirs, especially Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *Somewhere in the Night* (1946), in which a shell-shocked veteran, suffering from amnesia, returns to New York to discover his true identity by seeking a petty criminal who was caught up in mob violence, only to find that he is in fact the despicable man he has been looking for, but, with the wiping out of his memories, in some sense is no longer, with the accidents of a war in which he fought honorably having transformed him. The all-enveloping noirness captured by Staudte is presented even more starkly in Roberto Rossellini's *Germany Year Zero* (1948), which Bosley Crowther correctly notes is pervaded by "a sense of bleak discomfort and despair." For him, however, a problem is that this emotional tone is "unrelieved by any purge of the emotions," as Rossellini in true noir fashion goes further than both Mankiewicz and Staudte in refusing the easy reassurances of cathartic Hollywood Aristotelianism (Crowther "Germany").

It might seem puzzling that Frank, Chartier, Borde, and Chaumeton, among others, promoted the aesthetic value of American dark films, even as they also emphasized, almost gleefully at times, how this production trend presented a negative view of an American society depicted as rife with homicidal immorality and boundless greed, populated by a lonely and restless urban crowd, and generally scornful of the conservative social values routinely exalted, if only in last reel, by most Hollywood narratives. Reading the accounts of film noir produced by these critics, it is difficult to remember that 1946 was the high-water mark of America's international influence, following an impressive victory in two global wars that had left the country unscathed and its economy booming. Paris had been liberated two years earlier by a joint Franco-American force, but the US 28th Infantry Division was given the rare honor (28 August) of parading through the Arc de Triomphe and down the Champs Elysées, with much of the city's population assembled as cheering bystanders. It was a signal event long remembered, a

riposte to the Wehrmacht's parade through those same streets (then mostly empty) following the surrender in 1940, but also the prelude to the liberation of the rest of northern France. It was also a well-publicized demonstration of American power, and it delivered a message meant to impress.

Of this there is no doubt. The summer of 1946 was a time of economic hardship as well as political uncertainty, with France's reputation at what was arguably its nadir. De Gaulle had resigned that spring in disgust as the leader of the Provisional Government (the GPRF), while the drafting of the constitution for a Fourth Republic proceeded under the leadership of his old opponent Blum, who had led the economic negotiations with the US, upon which the future of France very much depended. "Americanization" was the most contentious political topic in France, as it had been for some months as Blum negotiated a trade deal and financial aid with US Secretary of State James Byrnes.

In those negotiations, politics were heavily influenced by cultural values (see Wall). The Americans demanded, and received, an expanded quota of Hollywood films for French exhibition, even though these attractive releases would pose a threat to French producers, who were also eager for screen time and had long been accustomed to government protection. Blum and company, however, were able to resist US demands for favored treatment of Coca Cola, then attempting to capture the European beverage market. Both initiatives met angry opposition from those who saw the looming presence of the US as a threat to central values of French culture, cinematic art and *gastronomie*, not to mention the political independence France had surrendered to Hitler in 1940. After talks concluded with the Americans, France, as many of its citizens feared, seemed about to surrender again, this time to the country's erstwhile liberators, and without a shot being fired.

The details of the economic agreement were being finalized in the summer of 1946 as Frank was writing what would be his agenda-setting essay on the American film noir, which promoted a view of Hollywood production trends whose anti-establishmentarianism can be read as a kind of passive aggressive riposte to the related forms of US power and American culture then being pushed forcefully on a somewhat resentful populace. The French in the postwar era, as Richard Kuisel chronicles, viewed with alarm the "emerging power, prosperity, and prestige of the New World," which was seen as posing a threat to "Frenchness" (Kuisel xii). In those circumstances, it seems hardly coincidental that French intellectuals fixated on the dark films from Hollywood whose fictional versions of the country are populated by feckless losers, even though such narratives did not dominate the run of American productions then being screened in French cinemas. Far from promoting the

righteousness of American values, social arrangements, and economic prosperity, noir films were seen as effectively anatomizing the fault lines of an unstable society in transition that seemed, if one took the noir films as "reflection," to be enduring a series of overlapping crises. This fictional world was marked by spatial discontinuity and temporal contingency, meaning that it figured an America unsure of exactly where and when it was (see Palmer 2004). A similar form of uncertainty also marked the Paris that Frank and their colleagues cinephiles then inhabited.

The UK Postwar Infidelity Cycle

In the fevered French cultural atmosphere prevailing at the time, when Hollywood films were not just an artistic concern but a prominent political issue, it is certainly understandable that the noirish productions from the UK, dating from the middle-forties and now just being r eleased piecemeal in France, were more or less ignored. Since these films were not viewed by UK critics as substantially different from the ordinary offerings from the British industry, one of the considerable accomplishments of a revitalized postwar industry was long unappreciated, though this situation the last few years has shown signs of amelioration (see McFarlane; Spicer "British"). Frank and Chartier ignored that the British cinema had also taken a noir turn with such prominent productions as the costumers *The Man in Grey* (1943, Leslie Arliss; French release 1945), *Fanny by Gaslight* AKA *Man of Evil* (1944, Anthony Asquith; French release 1946), and then, several years later, the political thriller *Odd Man Out* (Carol Reed, 1947; French release 1948), with all three dominated by the appealing anti-heroics of James Mason in the lead roles.

Other notable productions such as Reed's *The Fallen Idol* (1948) and *The Third Man* (1949) (French release dates both 1949, with exhibition at the Venice and Cannes festivals respectively) were largely seen in Paris as Graham Greene adaptations or as *sui generis* works of cinematic excellence. However these two films, *policiers* only of a sort, are fully dark in the sense that would characterize British noir, which would be less preoccupied with exotic whodunits and more committed to the excavation of the moral blackness within everyday characters, the fictional territory that the novelist's critics have labeled "Greeneland," in the *OED* definition "a world of depressed seediness" that was the default landscape of all his fiction (qtd. Watts 134). *Idol* was originally titled *Lost Illusion*, and that would be a fitting description of the narrative goal these films shared: the sudden revelation to a naïve narrator

of a hitherto unsuspected darkness in those he loves and respects, the theme also of one of the era's most acclaimed novels, L.P. Hartley's *The Go-Between* (1953). Once shattered by the revelation that the man he idolized, the servant Baines (Ralph Richardson), has been conducting an illicit affair and seems to have murdered his betrayed wife (who had actually slipped to her death), the boy Philippe (Bobby Henrey), puzzled by adult behavior, fails to explain properly what he saw to the police. The likely outcome is that Baines, innocent of killing the woman but guilty of infidelity, will be accused of the crime. Revealingly, *Idol* was exhibited in France under the title *Première Désillusion*, an appropriate designation of the inner, moral movement toward a likely injustice that it traces.

Disillusionment and moral quandary also dominate *The Third Man*, providing the film with its exploration of the hopelessly muddled conflict between personal loyalty and a larger sense of moral responsibility. Holly Martins (Joseph Cotten), trusting to the goodness of his friend Harry Lime (Orson Welles), is drawn into a blackmarket scheme to dilute the limited supply of penicillin in occupied Vienna's western zone, dooming many children suffering from meningitis to horrible deaths. Visiting a hospital filled with these suffering children presents Holly with a gruesome tableau of Lime's crime. Martins narrates his growing loss of faith in his erstwhile friend as he comes to the anguished decision to aid the police in hunting him down; Martins himself is forced to shoot Lime dead to prevent the man's escape. Ridding the city of a deadly scourge can also be seen as yet another form of betrayal, a possible view of what Martins, the ostensible hero in spite of himself, has done. The film ends with Lime's burial service, and, at the cemetery, the focus is on the cold refusal of Lime's lover Anna (Valli) to even acknowledge the presence of Martins, even though he had tried desperately to prevent her likely fatal deportation back to the east. Pressed to give up Lime in order to stay in the west, she remained loyal and refused, knowing full well the consequences. It is thus from a position of moral superiority of a sort that she condemns Martins's decision to finger his former friend and then, fearful the man might escape, put a bullet into him.

In both these Reed/Greene noirs, the narratives turn on something like social primal scenes that feature the shocking and dispiriting visual display of the underlying immorality of those who had previously been loved and trusted, even as notions of justice and moral behavior are hopelessly problematized. Because this knowledge violates their deep sense of right and wrong, both Philippe and Martins cannot help but report those they love to the police, violating deep bonds of affection. Corresponding in a secular sense to Christian notions of utter deprav-

ity, noirness in these British films is an inner darkness rather than a nightmare vision of modernity, projected, as it is in most American noirs, across images of an unwelcoming city hostile to the values of communal life. The innerness of British noir contrasts with this central trope of American noir, which is transformed into a structural principle in the noir *policiers*: the at least apparently random encounter with strangers and the unpredictable grim and dangerous "adventures" that follow with increasing confusion, as episodes seem connected only by chance until a pattern emerges to reconstitute them as plot that speaks to moral clarity, at least of a sort.

The films of the infidelity cycle are not as dark as these "criminal adventures stories," as Frank calls them. They are, instead, essentially hybrid forms of melodrama, and they illustrate noir's penetration of genres beyond the *policier*: *Waterloo Road* (French release 1947), *Brief Encounter* (French release 1946 at Cannes) and *It Always Rains on Sunday* (French release 1949) (see Palmer "Dark Cinema" on noir hybridism). These films are all set in communities of settled life, not in some morally ambiguous "between" space like postwar Vienna, a city literally divided against itself where the law of red tooth and claw prevails, or the anomic nighttime American cities whose spaces, either transitional or institutional, seem hostile to domesticity.

The films of the infidelity cycle resonate with a number of noirs produced across the Atlantic also dominated by melodramatically-dramatized personal conflicts (*Unfaithful* [1947, Vincent Sherman], *Shadow on the Wall* [1950, Pat Jackson] and, most famously, *Mildred Pierce* [1946, Michael Curtiz]). Like their American counterparts, these British films, if in a less thoroughgoing fashion, embody the turn of the narrative toward an inner moral sensibility that is such an innovative feature of *Stranger*. All of them dramatize the complex interface of public and private selves, as characters confront in their own conscience the darker, irredeemable elements of human nature. This is where their liminality, their betweenness lies.

Though crime figures tangentially in two of them, the issue in the infidelity cycle productions is more properly malfeasance, the violation of important social and interpersonal norms in response to desires or impulses that cannot be repressed. These films perhaps constitute one element in what Brian McFarlane has aptly termed the "British films of postwar adjustment," though he focuses mainly on the "motif of a *man* lost in the postwar world" (emphasis mine) and has little to say about films in which women, also depicted as in some sense "lost," figure as the main characters. In the films of the infidelity cycle, the dissatisfaction that inspires the violation of social norms is quieted but not extinguished, producing only a sort of happy ending. To con-

tinue McFarlane's metaphor, these women may no longer be lost, but they have not yet quite found themselves, at least in terms of the social accommodation that was at the time as conventional in British as in Hollywood film.

The Hollywood noirs of this type, in which crime and its solution are not the main focus, display an intellectual and cinematic pedigree that is more European than American. Though Fritz Lang's 1945 release *The Woman in the Window* and Alfred Werker's 1947 *Repeat Performance*, just to take two notable examples, share much in common with the darker *policiers* (especially featuring plots that involve crime and punishment), they thematized moments of existential choice. In *Window*, Professor Wanley (Edward G. Robinson) only dreams that his involvement with a beautiful woman who lures him back to her apartment (Joan Bennett) leads him to murder; the police investigation, in which he unwillingly participates, leads to the discovery of his guilt; expecting arrest, he commits suicide. Ironically, this "death" is what saves him from being lost. Wanley is jolted awake by his own act of self-destruction to find himself in his club, where he had fallen asleep, as he realizes that this grim narrative is nothing but a dream that gave self-destructive shape to what was vaguely on his mind, including thoughts of sexual indulgence prompted by his wife's temporary absence.

In *Performance,* a noir view of morally-vexed experience is given expression but then disavowed as merely one destinal possibility. Sheila (Joan Leslie) discovers that she has apparently murdered her husband Barney (Louis Hayward), and asking for help from her friend William (Richard Basehart), she acts to cover up her involvement. Reviewing the events of the past year that led her to kill her husband, she wishes she could "do it all differently." Time mysteriously slips one year backward, giving her the chance to avoid what she sees as mistakes, knowing their tragic end. Made suspicious by what he interprets as her strange behavior, Barney determines that he must kill Sheila in self-defense, but is prevented from doing so by William, who shoots him dead. In these films, noirness is invoked under the unstable sign of "almost" (ironically in the case of *Performance*), as what would happen if a turn toward appealing or seemingly unavoidable malfeasance were not somehow resisted.

In so doing, such narratives interestingly mirror, but with an eminently noir twist, Hollywood's conditions of production, which were themselves deeply liminal in the sense of acknowledging the irresistible appeal of the illicit as a basis for narrative action and viewer identification (as admitted in the Code), but demanding in the end the rejection (at least perfunctory) of a grimmer view of human appetite and sensibility, as well as the social forms such aspects of human nature

might assume. The Code insisted that in the conclusion of every narrative "correct standards of life would prevail" with no "sympathy created for violations against the law" (Leff and Simmons 270-1; 286-7). These protocols permitted filmmakers to present a vision of self and society that is marked by anomie, self-destructive indulgence, and the conscienceless exploitation of others, while insisting that an optimistic view of human possibility, and in particular of American society, eventually be shown triumphant in ways that involve the expression of compensating moral value, which—to follow the logic of melodrama—was more tellingly expressed as the restoration of conservative social values than if an optimistic view of human nature was shown as prevailing from the outset (Black 40-41).

The narratives of the US "almost" noir films mentioned above hinge on moments of choice in which characters who are torn between competing versions of themselves are given the chance to embrace respectability and conformity, which they do—but reluctantly or partially. These films only gesture at reformation; even the second part of *Performance*, whose narrative entertains the fantasy of an exculpating re-do, demonstrates that in a larger sense not much can be changed, including the fact that Sheila's presence is truly *fatale*, inevitably resulting in the death of her husband. In the second running of these events, it is true, she does prove able to shift guilt to another, who is now more complicit than he was in the first version of the year's events, but even so only a lucky chance saves her from death. What has happened to her remains a matter of her inner awareness; the "repeat performance" is a drama that plays out only in her own mind. Wanley's experience is also private, a drama of which his unconscious is the playwright, and which he cannot communicate to anyone else. Waking and, in a sense, saved from an inner darkness, he is almost at once provided by chance with the opportunity to reject the kind of sexual temptation to which his dream self unhesitatingly surrenders. And yet his frenzied flight from the glamorous woman who accosts him as he seeks to re-occupy the waking world speaks not to some new insight about the immorality of adultery, but rather to a justified fear of his own weakness, which he has now thoroughly internalized.

What is noir about these films is that their conclusions feature a retreat into self that is still "morally-vexed." Nothing dulls the appeal of the illicit, which is not opposed by the power of moral virtue. The refusal to live within the ambit of consensus values is simply put under erasure, hidden from view, as characters, in a deeply noir sense, are not reformed but restrained. They continue to exist on the border between the respectable and the illicit, committed to the everyday presentation of a self never fully committed to the values that, in his passionate coda

to the Code, publisher and prominent lay Catholic Martin Quigley argued could be summed up in the term "decency" (see Quigley). The "almost" noirs restore only the outer form of decency, stranding their protagonists between a society firm in its sense of moral conduct and individual inner worlds where transgressiveness, never fully abjured, insures that their commitment is to silence rather than confession.

The infidelity cycle films are "almost" noir in this same sense. *Waterloo* belongs to an unofficial directorial triptych whose other two films are not at all noir and are often praised for their engagement with what Andrew Higson calls "the melodrama of everyday life" (see Higson). *Waterloo* finds itself on every list of British noir because of its troubling concern with wifely infidelity and with a local society "at war with itself," in the phrase of the film's folksy narrator and unofficial guardian of community morals, Dr. Montgomery (Alastair Sim). The narrative focuses on the attraction a pretty young woman Tillie (Joy Shelton), whose husband Jim (John Mills) is on active duty not far from home during the first year of the war, comes to feel for the local "spiv," Ted Purvis (Stewart Granger). Purvis is a handsome, calculating operator, dubiously exempt from service and living just on the other side of the law. He can offer Tillie glamour of a sort (an evening out dining and dancing), and indulgence (liquor and cigarettes at a time of official restraint that finds her living, in the most frugal and crowded circumstances, with her in-laws, including nights spent in a bomb shelter) (see Higson 176-271).

Tillie is distressed by Jim's absence, by the drabness of her life, and by his refusal to start a family, and her commitment to marriage is shown as weak. In a flashback, she relives the excitement of their wedding, which is soon dulled by disagreements. Ted finds it easy to sweet talk her into spending an afternoon with him drinking, dining, and dancing. Warned of his wife's indiscreet flirtation, Jim goes AWOL and arrives at Purvis's flat, as the conventional phrase has it, in the nick of time. There he finds Tillie in Purvis's arms and, as the viewer has been made well aware, perhaps at the point of surrendering to his romancing. A fistfight then settles the matter as Jim manages to beat the more imposing Purvis into submission. The victor then claims the unresisting and not particularly repentant Tillie as a kind of prize. The couple reconcile, but the issue of her unconsummated unfaithfulness is never discussed; Jim must think that had he arrived five minutes later, he might have found the two in bed.

In the film's frame, set years later after war's end, Jim and Tillie are pictured in their modest village home, now apparently happy along with their young baby. On-location shots of extensive bomb damage in buildings that are still standing as life goes on all around them re-

Fig. 4

Waterloo Bridge: In *Waterloo Road*, An army wife (Joy Shelton) almost succumbs to the charms of a well-heeled draft dodger (Stewart Granger). Frame enlargement.

inforce the film's emphasis: that in the more settled postwar era a similar kind of damage to the marital relationship can also be repaired. And yet, except for the desperate action of an aggrieved husband, Purvis has been informed by Dr. Montgomery that the heart defect that kept him from national service will probably kill him and soon. So a rough justice prevails—except that Tillie's easy flirtation with adultery is never explained away, just confined silently to a past that only Montgomery seems interested in remembering, for reasons that, promoting cheerfulness in a manner that might seem un-British, he keeps to himself.

Though this finale accords closely with industry formulae in its distribution of fates, it is otherwise strikingly unsatisfying in its failure to address in depth the reasons for the young woman's dissatisfaction with her domesticity, as well as the appeal of Ted as a handsome, ladies man whose flashy lifestyle is (comparatively) affluent, but tainted, dependent on money from various dimly depicted rackets (including an amusement arcade). Declared unfit for military service with, it is hinted, help from an unscrupulous doctor, Purvis is the very image of self-indulgent irresponsibility; that he is better looking than Jim, and more charming than his erstwhile rival, are factors that, if never discussed, seem to explain Tillie's interest in him, even as they adumbrate social values in conflict with respectable bourgeois norms—an issue that is raised only to be accorded little in the way or either dramatization or discussion.

Sunday also depicts a homely England (Higson's term), yet another urban village community in which legitimate business with considerable friction merges with various forms of mostly petty criminality, even as domesticity/monogamy is unstable, harboring substantial discontents that force their way, if somewhat unexpectedly, into the open. Here, once again, the unfaithfulness of a bored housewife, Rose (Googie Withers), provides the focus, as the relative strength of loyalties new and old is tested. Rose had married an older man after the handsome, charming petty criminal, Tommy (John McCallum), she had come to

Fig. 5

It Always Rains on Sunday: An archetypal noir image from *It Always Rains on Sunday*: A criminal on the run, lost in the chiaroscuro London nightscape. Frame enlargement.

love fell afoul of the law and was sent to prison. He escapes and returns to the old neighborhood, soon to be sheltered, fed, and eventually bedded by Rose, whose desire for him is undimmed by their changed circumstances. Side plots provide a sweeping portrait of a community poised unstably between impulses toward right and wrong, with criminal activity linking petty thievery and those running local businesses and a prominent community member caught out in serial adultery. In the end, the enduring temptations of illicit sex and money obtained by means other than legitimate work are by no means eliminated by the pursuit and capture of Tommy. Rose's betrayal becomes obvious to her husband, who forgives her without demanding an explanation. So she is left within herself, as it were, to contemplate what has happened and what kind of person she now realizes she truly is.

As in all three of these films, adultery in *Encounter* is seen from the view of the woman tempted to enjoy something that is forbidden her by the marriage contract, in this case an evident compatibility and physical "spark," as confirmed by the several "dates" of the couple *malgré eux*, which are filled with giggling banter, shared jokes, and the sort of small-scale romantic adventures that become "precious memories" and constitute a shared past belonging to the secret lovers alone. Crucial is the film's evocation of a place of indulgence and privacy away from the family home, where Celia functions as the caretaker for two young children and a devoted, if dullish, husband.

In the village where she lives, Laura (Celia Johnson) is known to all, but her weekly visits to the nearby city allow her the opportunity (if not the guarantee) of anonymity, as well as the chance for the random meeting, the encounter that brings her into at first accidental then planned contact with a handsome physician, Alec (Trevor Howard). She does not go to town with the explicit aim of finding a more attentive male friend and lover; but her weekly excursions away from family and from those in the village that know her provide her with precisely the kind of freedom that allows her to explore, if, as the narra-

tive strains to establish, "accidentally," a romantic alternative to her less than exciting everyday life. The connection between Alec and Laura quickly becomes an unconsummated passion, which they at first deny, but then only resisted in the most superficial sense when their planned tryst in the flat of Ales's friend is interrupted by the man's unexpected return. The would-be lovers feel deep shame for their intention to flaunt the rules that even they think should govern their lives. This mutual love and passion, they decide, cannot be extinguished by the sort of moral inventorying that melodrama promotes by way of a resolution to such threats against the social order. A more radical solution is required, one that measures accurately the depth of their emotional bond. Alec must uproot his family and move to South Africa so that he and Laura can keep their vows. In the film's final sequence, Laura is alone one evening with her husband, and their banal everydayness is interrupted by the sudden access afforded to her inner thoughts about the end of the affair, which center on what she sees as an endless source of pain that she can never communicate to anyone. Instead, she is trapped in that most noir of psychological states, between the need to "be" who she must be and an unquenchable, unignorable desire to be someone else somewhere else.

Fig. 6

Brief Encounter: Love in the Shadows. *Brief Encounter* features an unconsummated adulterous affair between a doctor (Trevor Howard) and a well-off housewife (Celia Johnson). Frame enlargement.

What is noir about all three of these films is their failure to do more than restore the outward, deceptive form of social normality. The narratives are very much structured around the woman question, in Kuhn's formulation "the tendency on the part of the classic Hollywood narrative to recuperate women . . . the trouble that sets the plot in motion." And the resolution of that plot is that the woman needs to be "returned to her place so that order is restored to the world" (Kuhn 3). To be sure, the women in these films are all restored to their places, which, in a sense, they never definitively abandon. The destinies of these round and often enigmatic protagonists move toward the rejection of conventionality but then retreat, if never completely, from it.

In that arc, what we might call the noir vision of the world and of self, defined by the tempting violation of legal and cultural norms, looms as an existential possibility that is explored and then internalized or, in the case of *Waterloo*, ignored as if it never happened. Textually, representations of the disturbing past of the war years is contained by a present frame in which victory has been achieved and the social order restored. But this sense of collective calm is undermined by the very force that generates the narrative. Memories of that past moment still live in and trouble the mind of Dr. Montgomery, self-appointed guardian spirit of this urban neighborhood, who walks familiar streets that lead him to remember the time when "we were fighting ourselves." The tale lends Tillie's dissatisfaction a voice in the flashback to her unspoken thoughts that is embedded within Montgomery's *madeleine* moment. In the frame, however, she is pictured as contained within the family home and given nothing to say.

The social order remains intact and outwardly unshaken. In *Encounter* the surface of ordinary life is not even rippled by a dissatisfaction whose tragedy plays out entirely in Laura's self-talk, revealing undetectable repression to be the unexpected underside of respectability. In this cinema of almost, the values of melodrama win out in conclusions that are outwardly restorative. However, instability and uncertainty—the symptoms of an underlying noirness—do not disappear, but, in the manner of modernism, come to occupy a troubled private space accessible only to inner monologue. In some Brit noirs, this liminality is resolved by the unambiguous revelation that the woman in question is conventionally villainous, e.g. *Bedelia* (1946, Lance Comfort), making the film thoroughly melodramatic.

By way of contrast, in the "almost" films, the fragile stasis of the concluding present continues to be threatened by the possibility of a sudden and disastrous intrusion into that present of an unfinished past. Noirness in the sense of that seedy depressed state of dissatisfaction is not extirpated, but simply put under erasure. Either explicitly or implicitly, it is shown to live on in the consciousness of the women who opt, at least conditionally, for respectability and thus also for concealment. Of these three films, *Encounter* details most precisely the precariousness of this deconstruction effected by the infidelity noirs of the "decency" usually promoted by screen melodrama. Only the viewer is afforded access to an interior roiled by memory, desire, regret, and guilt. The unheard confession of Laura's self-talk can never be shared with anyone in her world, including, as she admits, the husband who deserves to know the truth. She finds herself divided between the still vivid memories of a love affair she cannot forget and the all too solid

present moment of a marriage at which she cannot in all honesty do more than play.

How different the notion of film noir would have been had the Paris critics noted the sense of troubled innerness in these borderline British films, their poignant sense of hopeless liminality in a social order that promises but does not deliver happiness. A dark view of the human condition, so Frank and company might have seen, could be produced by a cinema that was the intriguing obverse of the Hollywood *policiers* that so captivated them. In those films, the darkness of the human heart finds itself exteriorized and expressed by the anomic urbanism of the modern city and its restlessly unhappy inhabitants, strangers all, sources of truths to be discovered by adventure and the purposeful purposelessness of the random encounter. Yet these grim narratives do not tell the whole story of the postwar noir moment, which also erupted within the only apparently secure emotional confines of the family home.

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The American Oriental Society and the Growth of U.S. Empire

William Tolbert

The opening issue of the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* explains that the society began in 1842 with an "informal meeting of a few gentlemen, interested in Oriental Literature" ("Extract" ii). Although this reads like a humble meeting among friends vaguely interested in a topic, it actually describes a society founded by a prestigious scholar from an eminently influential U.S. American family. The Society, by the time of its initial membership roll, would include world-renowned scholars, university presidents, politicians, explorers, writers, and leaders of the nation. This "meeting of a few gentlemen" would expand throughout the nineteenth century into a society that included hundreds[1] of members spread across the globe, a society that remains in existence to the present day, 179 years later. Yet scholars have written little about the American Oriental Society and its members, particularly in relation to nineteenth-century Orientalism in the United States. Certain methodological assumptions and a lack of original documents have mostly obscured this source of potentially field-redefining data.

In the beginning of Edward Said's groundbreaking work, *Orientalism* (1978), Said quickly separates U.S. Orientalism as something different from European Orientalism. On the first page of his introduction, Said claims that "Americans will not feel quite the same about the Orient [as Europeans]." "Unlike the Americans," he explains, "the French and the British—less so the Germans, Russians, Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, and Swiss—have had a long tradition of what I shall be calling *Orientalism*, a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience" (1). Said's differentiation between the U.S. and Europe is largely sustained by two factors. The first, one that scholars have since maintained, involves Orientalism's relationship with imperialism. The Orient, for Said, "is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies" (1). As Mishka Sinha argues, following Said and others, "American Orientalism does not provide a simple relation between colonial power and Oriental knowledge" (77). The second factor involves the diffusion of Orientalism into most aspects of European culture. Said argues

that U.S. Orientalism did not have this same kind of cultural recognition before World War II (290). While several scholars have already disputed this aspect of Said's argument, scholars have yet to discover the full extent to which Orientalism operated within various aspects of nineteenth-century U.S. culture.

This essay seeks to challenge the separation between U.S. and European Orientalisms, specifically in the nineteenth century, by expanding on past explorations of the American Oriental Society and tracing the history of the society's early members. Said recognizes that "during the nineteenth century the field [of Orientalism] increased enormously in prestige, as did also the reputation and influence of such institutions as the Société asiatique, the Royal Asiatic Society, the Deutsche Morgenländishe Gesellschaft, and the American Oriental Society" (43). He further recognizes that these societies played an important role in creating professorships in Oriental studies and disseminating Orientalism throughout Western culture. However, he never expands upon this observation in the U.S. American context. To the contrary, Said argues that nineteenth-century U.S. Orientalists were what he calls "cultural isolatos" (290). Yet the history of the AOS tells a different story. In looking to the literature produced by early members of the AOS, I hope to revise these two long-standing scholarly beliefs about U.S. Orientalism, that nineteenth-century U.S. Orientalists were "cultural isolatos," and, second, that early U.S. Orientalism was disassociated from U.S. imperialism.

I first analyze the history of John Pickering and other early AOS members who held prominent positions within the U.S. government and U.S. culture to explain nineteenth-century Orientalism in the U.S. as an institutionalized cultural phenomenon made up of professional, transnational scholars. I then examine texts produced by AOS members in coordination with the U.S. Navy—texts created with the explicit goal of aiding in the expansion of what Congress called the U.S. "empire of commerce"—to observe the integral connections between Orientalism and U.S. imperialism in the nineteenth century. Finally, I read select texts from one of the more famous members of the AOS, William Cullen Bryant, to suggest that the AOS intentionally sought to embed Orientalist research within U.S. popular culture and did so through the work of prominent literary members who had little to do with scholarly Orientalism. Bryant's *Letters from the East*, specifically, demonstrates how members of the AOS promoted each other's work outside the society's official meetings and outside the pages of the *Journal of the AOS*. Together, these texts suggest that scholars reevaluate our current understanding of the AOS and of U.S. Orientalism more generally. We might recognize a complex network of individuals

connected only by Orientalism who influenced U.S. culture and politics in numerous ways that scholars have yet to fully explore.

Early Members of the AOS: Leaders in Culture, Politics, and Empire

Through no fault of their own, the scholars of Orientalism who have mentioned the AOS have mostly mischaracterized the make-up of the society's early membership and the work that these members accomplished. David Weir, for instance, quotes historian Carl T. Jackson as writing that "the typical member [of the AOS] seems to have been a minister, theologian, or missionary" (qtd. in *American Orient* 76). While the AOS certainly included numerous prominent ministers, theologians, and missionaries, such a description only accounts for a portion of the society's membership. Like Jackson, Weir downplays the professional nature of the original group when he writes that "the early members of the Society were hardly orientalists in the same sense that, say, the first members of the British Asiatic Society were." He adds that John Pickering, the founding president of the Society, "did have some claim to philological knowledge, although he seems to have been more of an amateur than a scholar" (76). Similar to Jackson and Weir, Malini Johar Schueller links the AOS most prominently to missionary activity and philological research to support those activities, although she recognizes that the Society contained professional scholars who wrote about topics ranging from "Oriental religions to treatises on Oriental economies and medicine" (33, 42-4). While both Weir and Schueller are partially correct—the AOS was heavily influenced by missionary activities—neither scholar recognizes that most of the non-missionary, U.S. Americans whom they discuss within their own research were actually members of the AOS as well.[2]

Mishka Sinha gives the most accurate representation of the AOS thus far in scholarship when she recognizes that a few prominent members of the AOS were well-known, transnational scholars and that the AOS "offered a forum for scholars who could not have an academic career in Sanskrit to participate in scholarly exchanges and publish their research" (84). Sinha focuses mostly on non-religiously affiliated scholars and uses the AOS as evidence of the rapidly growing "institutionalization of Oriental studies" in the mid-nineteenth century, especially in the realm of higher education (73). Still, Sinha also overlooks a large number of AOS members who were neither missionaries nor scholars. One explanation is simply that the AOS included a diverse group of people that defies neat categorization. A second is that these

scholars may not have had access to the early membership rosters of the AOS which are now readily available online.

While Jackson, Weir, Schueller, and Sinha are not necessarily incorrect in their assessment of the AOS membership, they overlook a number of members who have the potential for drastically changing the current scholarly conceptualization of Orientalism in the United States. In its early years, the AOS included among its membership influential politicians and diplomats, presidents of the nation's top universities, world-renowned scholars, journalists, explorers, and some of the nineteenth century's leading writers and cultural figures. The society's founder, John Pickering, was also the president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Edward Everett, a founding member, was at different times the president of Harvard, a U.S. senator, and the U.S. Secretary of State that was responsible for sending the U.S. Navy to "open" Japan—by force—for commerce. The society included ambassadors and consuls spread across the world as well as leaders of U.S. Naval expeditions. From 1842 to the close of the century, members of the AOS were connected in various ways to virtually every aspect of U.S. foreign policy. These specific members might serve as the missing link that scholars have been looking for—or denying the existence of—to demonstrate the overt and intentional interconnectedness between U.S. Orientalism and U.S. imperialism in the nineteenth century.

Furthermore, the AOS included another group of often overlooked members. The Directors of the AOS intentionally sought to include cultural and literary figures as they understood these members to be the crucial link between the society's academic work and the U.S. American public. Some of the prominent cultural figures in the AOS were, among others, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Cullen Bryant, Bayard Taylor, James Russell Lowell, John William De Forest, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and William Rounseville Alger. Later, the society would include Edward Morse, William Bigelow, Ernest Fenollosa, Percival Lowell, each of whom Weir discusses as integral to the formation of modern U.S.-Japanese cultural and political relations and each of whom made indelible impacts on U.S. modernist art and poetry of the twentieth century. While these members did not all participate in scholarly Orientalism, they did publish popular literature about "the Orient," write newspaper articles and essays about "Oriental" topics, and give public lectures about their "Oriental" travels. These members helped to make Orientalism an integral part of U.S. popular culture in the nineteenth century.

When John Pickering became the president of the AOS, he was already the president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a position that he held from 1839 to his death in 1846. This was a position

with predecessors that included U.S. Presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams among other prominent U.S. intellectuals. Nor was this his only connection to the Adams family. John's father, Timothy Pickering, was the U.S. Secretary of State under both John Adams and George Washington. Pickering's uncle, a U.S. District Judge also named John, held the more dubious distinction of being the second person ever impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives and the first person ever convicted and removed from office by the U.S. Senate. Despite the elder John Pickering's political problems, the Pickerings remained a well-known and influential family with personal connections to the most powerful people in the nation.

Pickering was also a respected and nationally known politician and scholar himself. He was a representative in the Massachusetts legislature from 1812-13 and again in 1826, and a Massachusetts Senator from 1815-16 and again in 1829. Before his political career, though, he was so respected as a scholar that the president of Harvard offered him any amount of compensation that would convince him to take a position as a professor of Oriental languages and Greek literature at the college (White xxxiv). Pickering later earned a law degree from Harvard in 1835 and became a member of Harvard's Board of Overseers. His list of scholarly affiliations is immense and includes being president of both the American Orientalist Society and the aforementioned American Academy of Science and Arts, as well as being the Foreign Secretary of the American Antiquarian Society, a fellow of the American Ethnological Society and the American Philosophical Society, and a member in various historical and scientific societies all around the nation. He was also a corresponding member to numerous international historical societies including the Oriental Society at Paris (White lxvii). When he died in 1846, newspapers around the nation published his obituary. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences honored him with an expansive, eighty-three page eulogy in their journal. Pickering died as one of the leading scholars in the United States in respects to both jurisprudence and "Oriental" studies (White lxvii).[3]

Pickering's family history and his own personal achievements provided him with the most influential friends that one might have, and he used this advantage specifically to advance the field of Orientalism. Even before the founding of the AOS, he recognized that his scholarly Orientalism was dependent on the global mobility of the U.S. government and military. One of Pickering's eulogists, Daniel Appleton White, explains that "when the United States Exploring Expedition was in contemplation, Mr. Pickering exerted all his influence to draw the attention of the government, and those more immediately concerned in the undertaking, to 'the various native languages of the different

tribes of people that might be visited by the expedition'" (liv). Congress heeded his advice. When the U.S. Exploring Expedition began in 1838, Congress ordered the commanding officer, Charles Wilkes, to include a number of scholars, including several naturalists, philologists, and linguists who would become members of the AOS upon return to the United States (Wilkes viii). One was Pickering's nephew, Charles Pickering, and another was Horatio Hale, both of whom became prominent members of the AOS and published their own texts with information gathered during the expedition. Furthermore, Pickering surely must have been aware of the numerous members of the AOS who were already connected to U.S. culture, the U.S. government, and U.S. expansion.

The first membership of the AOS included numerous influential leaders in U.S. society, politics, and academia. Edward Robinson and Moses Stuart were both world-renowned scholars in Biblical history. Theodore D. Woolsey and Edward Everett were presidents of Yale and Harvard, respectively. Another Harvard president, Charles William Eliot, joined in 1860, as did Daniel Coit Gilman, the first president of Johns Hopkins. Elijah Cole Bridgman was the first American missionary to China. John Porter Brown was the Secretary of the U.S. Embassy in Constantinople. Elihu Burritt was the U.S. Diplomat to England. Alexander Cotheal was the founder of the American Geological Society, the President of the American Ethnological Society, and would become a Director of the AOS in 1866. In 1871, Cotheal became the U.S. Consul General of Nicaragua. James Jackson Jarves was an AOS member based in the Hawaiian islands. In 1844, Jarves became the director of the government press in Hawaii and later became the Hawaiian government's special commissioner to negotiate treaties on behalf of Hawaii with the U.S., France, and Great Britain. Caleb Cushing was President John Tyler's U.S. Minister to China. Cushing brokered the first treaty between China and the U.S. in 1844 ("Chinese Mission"). George Gliddon was a U.S. Consul in Cairo where he also assisted fellow AOS member Samuel George Morton in writing *Crania AEgyptica* (1844), which followed Morton's own *Crania Americana* (1839). Gliddon used his position as the U.S. Consul in Cairo to profit in numerous ways. Not only did he collect Egyptian skulls to send to Samuel Morton, but he also procured and shipped the first giraffe to the United States (Vivian 105).[4] These AOS members, among many others, used their background in Orientalist scholarship to earn political appointments, and, in turn, used their political appointments to produce Orientalist scholarship.

Still other early members, such as Horatio Hale and William Lynch, participated more directly in U.S. imperialism to gain notoriety as Orientalists. Each of these men joined U.S. naval expeditions to for-

eign lands and, afterward, produced texts at the behest of the U.S. government. William Lynch was himself a commanding officer in the U.S. Navy. He not only published an official report of his expedition to the Dead Sea, but also a personal narrative. Lynch's *Narrative of the U.S. Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea* (1849) received rave reviews and merited nine U.S. editions in less than four years and another English edition in 1855. Lynch's Orientalism earned transnational acclaim while it supported nationalist expansion.[5]

Horatio Hale was one of two future AOS members that Congress saw fit to include on the 1838 U.S. Exploring Expedition under Charles Wilkes of the U.S. Navy. The expedition was hardly the first of its kind as the U.S. government recognized the expansion of the U.S. Navy as a key component for the expansion of the U.S. economy into Asian markets, and, thus, as key to the growth and prosperity of the nation (see Williams 83-88).[6] Congress's instructions to Charles Wilkes echo this belief and reveal how U.S. lawmakers framed the expansion of U.S. empire. The instructions, printed in Wilkes's *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition* (1845), state that "the Expedition is not for conquest, but discovery. Its objects are all peaceful; they are to extend the empire of commerce and science; to diminish the hazards of the ocean, and point out to future navigators a course by which they may avoid dangers and find safety" (xxviii). Despite the congressional disavowal of conquest, U.S. lawmakers also stated a desire to have a permanent squadron of ships in the Pacific. Thus, they instructed Wilkes and his men to find a port near the Fiji Islands and, "use your endeavors to make such arrangements as will insure [*sic*] a supply of fruits, vegetables, and fresh provisions, to vessels visiting it hereafter, teaching the natives the modes of cultivation, and encouraging them to raise hogs in greater abundance" (xxvii). In other words, effect an indirect colonization: teach the natives to be friendly and teach them to feed U.S. sailors. Ultimately, Wilkes's preferred method for "teaching natives" seems to have been through numerous massacres and threats of future annihilation. Wilkes and his men burned three Fijian villages and killed scores of Fijians in retaliation for the theft of a small canoe and the accidental deaths of two U.S. sailors, one being Wilkes's nephew.

Horatio Hale helped Captain Wilkes achieve his goals through his ethnological and philological inquiries. In his various dealings with the Fijians, Wilkes mentions that he "had obtained sufficient knowledge of [Fijian] manners and customs" (279-80). Most important for Wilkes, he learns that the Fijians will not admit defeat without a specific, formal ceremony, a ceremony he likely learned about through Hale. It was other information that shaped Wilkes's views of the Fijians and shaped how he and his crew interacted with them, though. Hale likely

provided him with that information, and if we look to the text that Hale created after the expedition, we learn what some of that information was. We learn that "the Feejeeans are by nature and inclination a bloodthirsty, treacherous, and rapacious people" (Hale 50). We learn that "the Feejeean may be said to differ from the Polynesian as the wolf from the dog; both, when wild, are perhaps equally fierce, but the ferocity of the one may be easily subdued, while that of the other is deep-seated and untamable" (50). The Fijian is not only a dangerous animal, according to Hale, but one that is "untamable." These examples are crucial because they justify, for Wilkes, the imperial violence that the U.S. Exploring Expedition ultimately enacts on the Fijians.

As Lynch and Hale each took part in congressionally sanctioned and funded expeditions and published texts based on these travels, the connection between imperialism and Orientalism is especially explicit. Examples of AOS members intersecting with the U.S. government and U.S. foreign policy are common in the early days of the Society though, and this continued throughout the nineteenth century. The list of AOS members here is hardly comprehensive, and, equally as important, this list of members was not limited to the political and scholarly realms of society.

The "Author of America" and the AOS

The AOS also included numerous journalists, novelists, poets, and artists who had no relation to academic Orientalist studies but who still supported Orientalism in the United States. A study of the AOS must include these people because their inclusion within the society was intentional and powerful. Moreover, their cultural contributions were critical for the success of the scientific, political, and imperial contributions of the Society's other members. Said explains Orientalism as "a *distribution* of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts" and his attention to the "aesthetic" is one of the primary reasons why the study of Orientalism has become so relevant to the field of literary studies (*Orientalism* 12). Attention to the aesthetic is crucial for linking the actions of a military or a government to the culture that sustains such militaries and governments. But even more important than garnering social support, "the authority of the observer, and of European geographical centrality, is buttressed by a cultural discourse relegating and confining the non-European to a secondary racial, cultural, ontological status," Said adds later in *Culture and Imperialism* (59). Said argues, in theory, that texts circulating within popular culture primed

the consumers of these texts to accept the authority of "professional" Orientalists, and we might recognize this theory operating within the conscious practices of the AOS.

In the 1847 Annual Report of the Directors of the AOS, the Directors include a plea addressed specifically to "those members of the Society whose avocations do not permit them to engage directly in oriental studies" (see "Proceeding 1849"). The Report encourages these members to promote the Society through their individual interests and explains that "their cooperation is important to the prosperity of the Society, as they form a connecting link between the few in this country who give themselves to oriental researches, and the literary public of the country, at large, and may be expected to spread the interest in such pursuits, more widely, among our men of education." Thus, the professionally diverse membership of the AOS was an intentional design of the Society. Even more important, the Directors of the Society understood that their non-scholarly, non-missionary members were the crucial link between the Society's works and American culture. Each of these figures were, and still are, known much more for their literary influence than their Orientalism, but they were each crucial to the spread of Orientalism within the United States.

The most prominent and influential of these literary members in the early days of the Society was William Cullen Bryant, but Bryant was not what one would likely call an Orientalist. Scholars today typically think of Bryant as either one of the first great American poets or as the politically active and influential editor of the *New York Evening Post*. Gilbert Muller describes him as "arguably the country's foremost cultural authority," a "celebrity for almost seventy-five years," "America's premier poet," and "the nation's most respected newspaper editor" (1). Muller subtitles his biography of Bryant after a quote from James Fenimore Cooper, who declared, "We others get a little praise now and then, but Bryant is the author of America" (2). Few people in the U.S. were as widely-known and influential as William Cullen Bryant in the mid-nineteenth century. Still, few scholars have written about his travels to the "Orient" and fewer, if any, have mentioned his membership in the AOS. Yet, Bryant is precisely the kind of member the Directors of the AOS were speaking to in their 1847 report to promote Oriental studies in their connections with the different spheres of the U.S. public. Additionally, thinking of Bryant as someone interested in Orientalism may help scholars reframe Bryant's nationalist imagination and his frequent mentions of various non-European Others within his poetry.

Few of Bryant's texts respond more directly to the call from the Directors of the AOS than his *Letters from the East* (1869), mostly because Bryant actually mentions numerous members of the AOS within

his letters, typically professional Orientalists who did not likely enjoy the kind of access to an extensive, diverse, and popular audience like Bryant had as editor of the *Post*. *Letters from the East* consisted of collected letters that Bryant wrote to the *New York Evening Post* during his trip to "the Old World" in 1852-1853. Bryant's partners at the *Post* published many of these letters as they received them. Of course, Bryant wrote his letters to the *Post* in 1852-53 before joining the AOS in 1859, but he collected these letters and published them as a book ten years after joining the AOS. Bryant gives the only explanation for publishing these letters as a book in an introductory note. He writes that "the author has been induced to collect and present [these letters] in this form by the encouragement of the Publisher, who thought that the volume might be fortunate enough to find readers" (*Letters* 3). The publisher, G. P. Putnam & Sons, was, incidentally, also the original publisher for the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* until the sixth volume in 1858 when the Society began printing at Yale College. Bryant also happened to be close friends with the president of the AOS at the time, Edward Robinson, whose book, *Biblical Researches in Palestine* (1841), Bryant read on the steamer at the start of his journey (Muller 225). This is just to say, while few texts respond better to the Directors' call to promote the works of the Society, one cannot be sure that Bryant did so intentionally. His frequent references to fellow members of the AOS prove at least one of two things and possibly both: either the members of the AOS were so integral to U.S. Orientalism that Bryant could not avoid mentioning their names, or Bryant included their names purposefully to promote the interests of the Society.

Bryant never mentions the Society itself within *Letters from the East*, but his first reference of a fellow member suggests that Bryant did, in fact, include certain individuals with the unstated intention of promoting their work. In his opening chapter, Bryant writes, "among my fellow-passengers who left New York in the steamer Arctic, was Captain Lynch, the enterprising and successful explorer of the Dead Sea" (10). This is, of course, the same William Lynch of the AOS who lead a U.S. Naval Expedition to the Dead Sea. Bryant continues,

> he made, as you know, an official report of his expedition to the government, which has been printed by order of Congress. Besides this, he prepared a personal narrative of his expedition, a very interesting work, which was published at Philadelphia by Lea & Blanchard. Bentley, the London publisher, imported into England a number of copies of the work in sheets, procuring them to be bound; (10)

Bryant mentions Captain Lynch and his publishers to illustrate the complicated situation that occurs as a result of competing copyright claims in England and the U.S., but Bryant could have easily used himself or any other author. In fact, he mentions an unnamed second person who has his own books examined, but only Lynch receives this amount of detail and recognition. With Lynch, a fellow member of the AOS, Bryant not only praises his work but provides an advertisement for where people can find these books whether they live in the U.S. or in England.

Bryant similarly promotes the work of other AOS members. Bryant praises the work of George P. Marsh, the U.S. minister in Constantinople; he provides short profiles on a list of U.S. Americans working in Syria, including Dr. Eli Smith, Rev. Simeon Calhoun, and Dr. Henry DeForest; and he shares the cautionary tale of Mr. Van Lennep, "a respectable merchant of Smyrna" who was kidnapped "about two years ago" while "walking out with two of his children" (199-200, 207). Each of these men—Marsh, Smith, Calhoun, DeForest, and Van Lennep—were members of the AOS. In another fascinating passage, Bryant recounts the trial of AOS member Dr. Jonas King in Greece. King was convicted of countering the Greek church, put into a dungeon for a short period, and eventually faced banishment from Greece. The conflict, as Bryant tells it, comes to its crescendo when a mob of angry Greeks show up at King's house and "seemed ready to tear him in pieces" (225). Because the U.S. consul in Greece was absent from the country, King had just a few days previous been assigned as the acting replacement. With the mob at his door, King "bethought himself of the flag, and hastily unrolling it, let it stream from one of the windows" (227). The mob immediately hushed and dispersed. This final example speaks to a common theme within Bryant's *Letters*: the importance of the U.S. government and, specifically, the U.S. military in protecting U.S. citizens abroad. With the exception of references to President Millard Fillmore, Congressman Daniel Webster, U.S. Consul David Offley, and a few artists that Bryant encounters in Rome, every other U.S. American that Bryant mentions by name, which ends up being every U.S. American working in "the Orient," was a member of the AOS. Thus, regardless of Bryant's intentions, *Letters from the East* is at once both an Orientalist travel journal and a promotional tract for the AOS and their importance to the various U.S. missions abroad.

Letters from the East is also worthy of further analysis as a work of Orientalist literature for reasons that I will only summarize here. Bryant's representations of Arabs follow many of the same tropes one might expect in a work of Orientalist travel literature deeply informed by other works of Orientalist travel literature. He frequently character-

izes Arabs as dirty, thievish, hypocritical, corrupt, and lazy (60, 69, 72, 76-7, 118, 125, 143-5, 146-7, 168, 175-6, 184, 206). He continuously criticizes their architecture, peeking into mosques that look ornate on the outside but are "ill-built, ruinous, and ill-patched within" (72). He describes the houses in the region as mostly composed of "mud-cottages" that look "like the habitations of mud-wasps magnified" (63, 77, 141). The connection to mud-wasps is matched with other, less frequent, comparisons to animals. His most common description for Arab children is "creatures," for example. "Creatures" is also his word for describing a horse, a monkey, and a group of gazelles (20, 49, 64, 165, 173, 194, 221). Finally, Bryant connects his experiences in "the East" with U.S. imperialism by encouraging the U.S. Navy to position a fleet of "vessels of war" in the harbor at Smyrna in order to "inspire respect, by creating an impression of our power to assert our rights against encroachment" (186).

Still, *Letters from the East* breaks from the Orientalist travel journal genre in one important way. While Bryant's overall tone toward the people he encounters can best be described as a lackadaisical disdain, or at least an apathetic distance, rarely does he ever make the generalizing statements so common in Orientalist literature. In other words, Bryant often avoids what Said observes as the Orientalist's reliance on the copula *is* or what Albert Memmi describes as the "mark of the plural" (*Orientalism* 72; Memmi 85). Although the words "Arab" and its plural "Arabs" appear fifty times in Bryant's text, they are never preceded by the words "is" or "are," and instead are almost always preceded by a specifying qualifier: "the Arab," meaning one specifically, "an Arab," or "our Arabs," referring to those traveling with Bryant. Bryant's representations certainly create a cumulative image of Arab people and Arab spaces, but his treatment of individual people and individual events occasionally belies attempts to craft a single image of the "Orient." What readers are left with in Bryant's *Letters* are the subjective observations of an individual traveler with little pretense at expertise or comprehensive knowledge. However, these specific, subjective observations suggest that literary scholars might reevaluate Bryant's other works within the U.S.

One such work is Bryant's poem "The Song of the Sower," first published in an 1864 collection titled *Thirty Poems*. "The Song of the Sower" is a ten-part poem that describes the sowing of a wheat field and imagines the numerous lives that the wheat will someday support in some way or another. Each section of the poem catalogs the different types of people who either support the growth of the wheat or consume some wheat-based product after harvest. These various images ostensibly serve as inspiration to the sowers as they "fling wide the

golden shower" over the dark ground (61). Bryant thus imagines the nation through the simultaneous consumption of wheat. At the center of Bryant's nation, though, not surprisingly, is the farmer. As the poem progresses, the sower thinks of the "men who toil"—the quarry-worker, the lumberjack, the sailor—of the women who sew clothes "[i]n the long row of humming rooms," of the participants in a wedding ceremony, of ship-wrecked men and poor mothers and famished children in need of food, and religious communicants (62-67). While many of these images might reference any kind of people, Bryant's allusions to the timing of seasons, to certain architectural features, to a wedding ceremony, Christian communion, and the "roof-trees of our swarming race," all seem to indicate a setting in "the West," if not specifically in the United States.

This imagined boundary is solidified in the final section when Bryant looks outward. In the tenth and final section, the speaker thinks of the "blessed harvest yet to be" that will "fill thy spikes with living gold" (68-9). He then imagines a life for the coming wheat that extends past the nation, across the earth, and into the "Orient." The speaker imagines the wheat,

> Then, as thy garners give the forth,
> On what glad errands shalt thou go,
> Wherever, o'er the waiting earth,
> Roads wind and rivers flow.
> The ancient East shall welcome thee
> To mighty marts beyond the sea,
> And they who dwell where palm groves sound
> To summer winds the whole year round,
> Shall watch, in gladness, from the shore,
> The sails that bring thy glistening store. (69)

These are the final lines of the poem. Bryant's nation—"our swarming race"—expands outward. The images of the final section are markedly different from the images of laborers in the preceding sections. Where a theme of connection pervades the first nine sections, section ten initiates a theme of separation. Instead of a relationship of cooperation and multidirectional benefit—sowers feed sewers while sewers clothe sowers—section ten introduces a relationship of dependency and unidirectional globalization—from the U.S. "o'er the waiting earth."

This section only fits within "The Song of the Sower" if we understand the United States in 1864 as an already global, economic power, a nation continuing to build what the U.S. Congress named over thirty years previous their "empire of commerce." Not only is wheat at the

center of an imagined national unity, but it is also at the center of the imagined U.S. empire. Furthermore, Bryant's empire is built with Orientalist discourse. Both the term "ancient East" and the image of people who "dwell where palm groves sound / To summer winds the whole year round" touch on different aspects of Orientalist discourse and would likely elicit from the reader a range of associations: the "ancient East" reminding readers of stereotypes of a fallen, decrepit Orient; the palm groves reminding readers of climatic determinism or beliefs of stadial development that suggest that climate and environment heavily affect the development of human societies and cultures. Here also, Bryant imagines a "waiting" or passive earth and groups of people who "watch, in gladness" for the coming of U.S. ships. The U.S. is figured as a benevolent supplier of sustenance. Finally, Bryant connects U.S. agriculture, national unity, Orientalist discourse, and benevolent imperialism all to the economy with his image of "mighty marts beyond the sea" as he imagines an Orient ripe for economic development. Most important though, Bryant delivers these messages in the form of a poem. Bryant could reach an audience that Pickering, Hale, Lynch, and the other scholars of the AOS could never reach. Bryant could turn scholarship into song.

The Orientalist Network

"Song of the Sower" was likely the most popular poem from *Thirty Poems* as Bryant would later publish a stand-alone, illustrated edition in 1871 with forty-two illustrations and wood engravings. Seventeen different artists contributed to the project, most notably Winslow Homer, William John Hennessy, William James Linton, and Harry Fenn. Each of these artists were well-known for their landscape paintings and Fenn, in particular, was known for his Orientalist landscapes. He provided the illustrations for the final section of Bryant's poem. While none of these artists were members of the AOS, the illustrated editions of "Song of the Sower" demonstrate a network approach to artistic and scholarly creation that is just as evident in *Letters from the East* as well as in the work of Hale and Lynch and in the body of Orientalist scholarship more generally.

Further study of the AOS and its full range of members should, thus, help scholars reexamine two widely held beliefs that shape the study of nineteenth-century U.S. Orientalism. Both beliefs stem from two widely accepted statements from the foundational work of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979). The first is that "Americans will not feel quite the same about the Orient" as their European, and especially English

and French, counterparts (1). Said's nationalist separation appears on the first page and receives little explanation or supporting evidence, but Said's argument—as scholars of Orientalism since have understood it—is essentially that English and French Orientalists had direct links to English and French imperialism. This was not the case, Said asserts, for nineteenth-century U.S. Orientalists. Many scholars have since mostly accepted this statement as a starting point for studies of U.S. Orientalism.[7]

We might counter this belief by studying the texts of AOS members such as Hale and Lynch and others such as Charles Pickering who wrote his own ethnological text, *The Races of Man*, as a result of the Wilkes Expedition. These texts demonstrate that the U.S. government used Orientalist knowledge along with the U.S. military to force people of various foreign lands to change their cultural, agricultural, and economic practices. In effect, the U.S. government made these people subjects but not citizens, in that these people were subjected to U.S. rule without equal protection under U.S. law. This was the case throughout the Pacific islands, such as Fiji, not to mention large swaths of North America. Yet, as Gesa Mackenthun observes, "very few scholars associate [U.S.] territorial expansion of the early nineteenth century—which included the westward expansion of slavery, Indian dispossession, and 'civilizing' missions into the Pacific—with concurrent imperial ventures of France and Britain in the Middle East, India, or in Africa" (4-5). Scholars today must not conflate today's definition of "foreign lands" with the definition of the same, ever-evolving, concept from the 1800s. We might also recognize that nineteenth-century Orientalists were far more flexible in their application of the term "Oriental" than Orientalists might be today. If we look to texts from AOS members Bayard Taylor and John William De Forest, for instance, we might notice representations of Mexicans and Indigenous Americans as "those lank and skinny Arabs of the West" and as the "Bedouin of America" (Taylor 89; De Forest 51). In looking to the AOS, its early membership, and its connections to U.S. expansion within North America and elsewhere, we might reevaluate the connection between institutionalized Orientalism and U.S. imperialism in the nineteenth century.

The second belief that further study of the AOS and its diverse membership should counter was that nineteenth-century U.S. Orientalism was limited to what Said calls "cultural isolatos" (290). Said's general argument is that many U.S. Americans engaged with "the Orient" in a number of ways, but that Orientalism in the U.S. never became a cultural and scholarly institution in the way that it did in Europe before World War II. The existence of scholarly, professional Orientalists relies upon a culture-wide belief that Orientalism is worthy of serious schol-

arly attention and professional dedication. As Sinha has demonstrated, Orientalism reached its scientific, professional phase in the U.S. early in the nineteenth century as it became possible to build a career as a professor of Oriental literature, or as a naturalist or ethnologist publishing exclusively on Oriental people and cultures, or as a travel writer or journalist writing about visits to foreign places. She contends that "American Orientalism, in an academic sense, began more than a century before the Second World War" and adds that "Orientalism in America existed as a scholarly subject and a rudimentary disciplinary formation, as well as a means of organizing ideas, from as early as the 1830s" (74). Even before the founding of the AOS in 1842, Orientalists were publishing multiple editions of their works, were holding political positions around the nation, were advising Congress on various decisions, were leading U.S. Naval expeditions, and were editing some of the nation's leading periodicals. Orientalism in the U.S., then, was not only limited to people who Said calls "cultural isolatos." For proof of professional Orientalism in the U.S. as early as the 1840s, one need only to look at the early membership of the AOS and to the work of Bryant and his AOS counterparts.

Bryant himself never published in the *Journal of the AOS*, but he promoted the work of other Orientalists through his own independent publications. Bryant's work suggests that we might think of the AOS as a nexus for a network of individuals from numerous fields who were all interested in Orientalism. Thus, to understand the full impact of Orientalism within the U.S. in the nineteenth century, scholars should not only study the AOS or the *Journal of the AOS*. Scholars should also look to the individual ventures of AOS members. We might look to *The Atlantic* while James Russell Lowell was the editor, or to *The North American Review* whose editor was AOS member Charles Eliot Norton. We might look to the pages of Bryant's *New York Evening Post* or to Taylor's articles in the *New York Tribune*. We might look to Congressional and Senate debates in which AOS members participated. We might even notice moments in which these various textual realms collided, such as when Congressman Horace Page—who was not an AOS member—quoted Bayard Taylor's travel journal on the floor of the U.S. House as evidence that Chinese people should be banned from the United States (Page 796). The existence of the AOS alone demonstrates that nineteenth-century U.S. Orientalists were neither amateurs nor isolatos, and the texts that these people created demonstrate the full reach of Orientalist studies within U.S. politics and culture.

Notes

1. Three hundred and sixty members, to be exact (see "List of Members, 1899").

2. This certainly does not discount their work, though. Weir writes a chapter about Edward Morse, William Bigelow, Ernest Fenollosa, and Percival Lowell among other artists who lived in Japan and influenced U.S. American Modernism. All four were members of the AOS. He writes another chapter on Ralph Waldo Emerson's Orientalism; Emerson was also a member of the AOS. Schueller likewise overlooks Emerson's membership along with Samuel Morton, George Gliddon, John William De Forest, Bayard Taylor, and James Russell Lowell.

3. One might also look to his seventy-eight page opening address to the AOS, including over 121 additional footnotes, in which he provides a literature review of international Orientalist research. In the printed version in the *Journal of the AOS*, Pickering adds a lengthy appendix that lists texts by U.S. American Orientalists.

4. See also Schueller's discussion of Morton and Gliddon in *U.S. Orientalisms*: 34-5, 75-7, 107, 153.

5. See James Sheridan Knowles's preface in which he praises the importance of Lynch's work for Orientalists on both sides of the Atlantic in William Lynch's *Narrative of the U.S. Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea*, iii-iv.

6. As Williams recounts in *Empire as a Way of Life*, by 1821, the U.S. Government had established the South American Squadron, and by 1835 had ships stationed throughout Asia (81-2).

7. Sinha summarizes the scholarly consensus with some nuance when she writes that "American Orientalism does not provide a simple relation between colonial power and Oriental knowledge" (77). See also David Weir.

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Disjecta Membra: Severed History and Prosthetic Materiality in Virginia Woolf's *The Years*

M. Allison Wise

Body Language

Writing in her diary a few years after the end of the First World War, Virginia Woolf records what she sees as two "just perceptibl[e]" signs of peace: cheap goods and few soldiers—thus juxtaposing objects and bodies, specifically plentiful objects, absent bodies, in her description of a reconstructing England. But then she complicates her discussion. Speaking of the "very few wounded soldiers abroad in blue," she observes,

> though stiff legs, single legs, sticks shod with rubber, & empty sleeves are common enough. Also at Waterloo I sometimes see dreadful looking spiders propelling themselves along the platform—men all body—legs trimmed off close to the body. (*Diary* II, 93)

The bodies of these former soldiers bear visible signs of the past, of loss, and of attempts to reconstruct themselves: "sticks shod with rubber." Objects and bodies are juxtaposed again, but now more intimately: the object, as a prosthesis, is replacing the missing limb; the plentiful object is conjoined to the absent body—a sign perhaps of the return of peace, but also of the eternal return of rupture.[1] Woolf's own readings and writings about the war adopt this same recursiveness: years later, as she prepared to draft the "1917" section of *The Years*, she noted, "To freshen my memory of the war, I read some old diaries. How close the tears come, again & again. . . . The sense of all that floating away for ever down the stream, unknown for ever: queer sense of the past swallowing so much of oneself" (*Diary* IV, 193). The past simultaneously drifts away, consigned to oblivion, and is present, swallowing the living, the *Here and Now*, as Woolf originally titled *The Years* (Lee 629).

The past has the weight of a phantom limb, and at times, the uncanny force of a prosthesis.

Writing after one war in a landscape of corporeal lack and artificial surrogate, and composing proleptically in the shadow of an impending war and its physical devastations, Woolf projects images of fractured people and nations and spectral places and objects onto *The Years*, her ambitious text of 1937 that attempts to trace English history and culture from 1880 to the 1930s. The span of time encompassed in *The Years* was a period of enormous and irrevocable change in Britain. While some of these seismic changes were hailed as signs of progress, other developments elicited, at best, deep ambivalence, and at worst—as with WWI—an unshakable sense of loss and dread. As North declares near the end of the novel, "we are all deformed" (361)—crippled in a manner more vast and more profound than physical damage. The brokenness exposed in *The Years* is wide-ranging and systemic, a disability of the national and social body rather than the physical body: the novel outlines the depredations of war, empire, heteronormative male domination, and the class system on both the English nation and the English family. Though she reserves her more direct political content and polemical tone for *Three Guineas,* the essay that grew out of the novel, *The Years* remains Woolf's most unflinchingly ideological work of fiction, examining the splintered nature of English society and proposing, through "millions of ideas but no preaching" (*Diary* IV, 152), potentially better alternatives.

And yet *The Years* is not just a novel of ideas but also of "solid objects"—of a concrete physical world situated in real places and replete with distinctly described things. Woolf uses the material world of the novel to explore the historical realities of the characters and to convey what she called "the vision" of the text (*Diary* IV, 151-52). The troubled coupling of human and non-human, embodied in the figure of an amputee with an ill-fitting prosthetic limb, serves as a template for understanding Woolf's representation of the human subject's relationship to its material environment as English society confronts losses of the past and reckons with the possibility of future annihilation. Using the prosthesis[2] as a discursive framework, I will turn my discussion of *The Years* on the home and objects belonging to the Pargiter family, a representative upper middle-class, late-Victorian family who typify Britain's vexed relationship with its history. I will focus particularly on one central space and two objects in the novel. The space, the family home of Abel and Rose Pargiter, most comprehensively incarnates Woolf's troubled conception of the Victorian age and hence signifies the diseased limb that must be amputated as the family moves into the twentieth century. As this family home is lost, moved away from and sold,

various remaining objects from the home become figurative supports for the Pargiter family, helping them remember what is gone, negotiate a sense of emptiness in the present, and approach the uncertainty of the future. These prostheses, however, are ultimately as wounding and as inhibiting as the home itself, and the tensions underlying the possession of these objects contribute to some of the most significant personal crises of the novel. Woolf thus interrogates the conflicted essence of this prosthetic bond and ponders something beyond dependency or lack. In *The Years,* Woolf contends that even if the object can never be totally divested of its prosthetic function, individuals can learn to relate to their material environment in more productive ways, curbing the negative effects of their history and perhaps transitioning into a new way of life. The Victorian object thus provides a means of understanding not only the nineteenth century, but the twentieth: its realities as well as its possibilities. As Woolf seeks to subdue the past, her primary concern is the present and the immediate future and finding a way to reposition relics of the past so that they support the vision of "extraordinary beauty, simplicity, and peace" with which she closes the text.

Woolf's biographer Hermione Lee writes that *The Years* "is a kind of crippled text, which disables itself while writing about a disabled society" (665). Woolf struggled to compose *The Years* and often considered it, as many readers have since, a failure. As she neared the end of her rewriting of the text, she experienced a physical and emotional breakdown that hindered her from working for months. So Woolf emerged from writing *The Years* in a state of desolation, her life mirroring her text in an intricate layering of debilitation and collapse. A few years earlier, in *The Waves*, Woolf had written, "We must oppose the waste and deformity of the world, its crowds eddying round and round disgorged and trampling. . . . Everything must be done to rebuke the horror of deformity" (131). *The Years* may arguably break down under the strain of its subject matter, but in the novel's weakness it exposes other weaknesses, the individual and cultural failings that compose the waste and deformity of the world. And it still offers opportunities for change, possible responses to the "And now?" that ends the text. The material things in Woolf's novel are the unlikely emblems both for this devastation and this renewed afterlife.

A Haunted House

When Rose Pargiter visits her cousins in the "1910" section of *The Years*, she joins in with their reminiscences about Rose's childhood home

Abercorn Terrace, thinking, "Her past seemed to be rising above her present. And for some reason she wanted to talk about her past; to tell them something about herself that she had never told anybody—something hidden" (158). Rose feels divided, like she is two different people at the same time, "living at two different times at the same moment" (158-59). The scene captures the central tensions animating (and enervating) the Pargiter family's relationship with the family home: a place that they are all identified with, even after moving out; a place that connects them (and yet not quite) to each other and to earlier versions of themselves; and a place that signifies the past, with both its shared reassuring memories and its hidden traumatic episodes. After the family sells and moves away from Abercorn Terrace, attempting to shed the house as a parasitic organism, it continues to weigh on them and define them, even as something no longer quite real, a phantom limb. The family home in *The Years* is bound through multiple associations to all that Woolf found most crippling in the Victorian age—and these crippling associations threatened to live on well into the new century. Tracking the life of the house in nearly every section of the novel, a parallel to the life of the family and the life of the nation, Woolf first renders Abercorn Terrace as a type of diseased appendage, deadening the vitality of the family; as the years pass, she indicates how it begins to be gradually and painfully ablated, leaving the Pargiters with a sense of release but also a painful, disconcerting absence.

Mitchell Leaska speaks of the "1880" section of *The Years* (when Abercorn Terrace is introduced and given its fullest delineation) as "thinly veiled autobiography parading in the vestment of fiction" (177). It is well documented that the Pargiter family home is based on 22 Hyde Park Gate, where Woolf lived the first twenty-two years of her life. In her essays for the Memoir Club, "22 Hyde Park Gate" and "Old Bloomsbury" and her later memoir, "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf describes the material and phenomenological aspects of the house, noting that Bloomsbury "could never have meant what it did had not 22 Hyde Park Gate preceded it" ("Old Bloomsbury" 182). Although she had moved out of the house many years before, it thus continued to be a formative presence in her life—an experience that she writes into *The Years*.

Karen Chase and Michael Levenson argue that "The ambitions of the midcentury family . . . were performed in rooms, among objects, near streets . . . Victorian domesticity was as much a spatial as an affective obsession" (143). The Victorian domestic ambitions of the Stephen family were everywhere evident in the organization and decoration of 22 Hyde Park Gate, which Woolf called a "complete model of Victorian society" ("A Sketch" 147). Situated in Kensington and immersed in

the heart of nineteenth-century British monarchical and imperial structures and institutions (Kensington Palace, the South Kensington Museum, the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum, and the Albert Memorial, among others), the rowhouse looked out on a quiet street and was quiet within, all sounds muffled by the carpets and plush furniture. The house was also dark, in part because of the narrow street and in part because of Julia Stephen's taste, which led her to "cover[...] the furniture in red velvet and paint[...] the woodwork black with thin gold lines upon it" ("Old Bloomsbury" 183). This perpetually crepuscular atmosphere would have produced a feeling of retreat and insulation from the world but also of suffocation, and the oppressiveness of the décor was intensified by the crowdedness of the dwelling: ten family members plus servants living in small rooms whose ceilings, according to Victoria Rosner, were progressively lower on each succeeding story after the basement (72). Attempts were made to organize the spaces: the family had their drawing room on the first floor, the seven maids had their sitting room in the basement; moreover, Woolf noted the presence of black folding doors, a particularly Victorian endeavor toward what Levenson calls the "fantasy of spatial equilibrium and social articulation" (4). Woolf's house was dense with people and objects, and attempts at arrangement and distribution only amplified its atmosphere of confinement.

Woolf's slightly nostalgic, often uneasy reminiscences of 22 Hyde Park Gate find further expression in her depiction of the Pargiters' home in the first section of *The Years*. Abercorn Terrace, the "large, architecturally insignificant, but no doubt convenient family mansion" (140) is pictured as a place of darkness, silence, and confinement, choking with massive furnishings and heirlooms and littered with daily appurtenances. Many of these things are kept not because they are particularly useful in the present, but simply because they belonged to the past. When the first scene in the house begins, Milly and Delia are making tea with an old brass kettle, but are frustrated at the kettle's slowness in boiling. The object, the kettle, no longer works effectively, but has been kept, seemingly, for some kind of memory—the same sort of memory that prompts Colonel Pargiter to sip every day from a teacup that belonged to his father, even though he detests tea (12). Available surfaces are covered with pictures that beckon towards the past: a drawing of Mrs. Pargiter's grandfather, a photograph of her uncle in uniform, a miniature of her father, and a painting of the young Mrs. Pargiter herself (which I will discuss later). None of this surfeit of things seems to provide a sense of rich abundance or even comfort, and the physical restrictions of the rooms and the velvet-swathed windows and furniture do not produce a feeling of snugness

and warmth. Instead, the crowdedness is overpowering, the constrictions insufferable.

Inside this claustrophobic, shadowy home, the Pargiters live frustrated lives, bound to old ways of doing things and unable to find meaning or full expression. "Somewhere there's beauty," Delia thinks, "somewhere there's freedom" (11), but it is not inside Abercorn Terrace or indeed anywhere in their immediate environs. Abel Pargiter lives out his days in the club, surrounded by fellow soldiers and civil servants discussing the old days in the colonies. Though his eyes look as if "the glare of the East were still in them," he no longer finds interest in what the other men have to say: "He was out of it all . . . he had no longer any finger in that pie" (5). His mistress no longer gives him satisfaction, and yet he continues to visit her, feeling each time a sense of shame, of embarrassment, as he walks to her rooms and waits to be let in. He realizes "for him there was nothing to do" (5). His dying wife prevents him from moving out of London and into the country, and even if she were to die, "But then there was the house; then there were the children" (5).

These burdensome children living in this burdensome house are even more disappointed and restless than their father; Woolf presents them as models of frustrated activity: "Morris had a book in his hand but he was not reading; Milly had some stuff in her hand but she was not sewing; Delia was lying back in her chair, doing nothing whatever" (41). The sons, though able, unlike their sisters, to receive an education and pursue a profession, are emotionally stunted. The daughters, living with an ill mother, are forced to replicate their mother's role in the house. They have little to look forward to except a domestic inheritance—the oldest daughter Eleanor muses as she writes a letter on her mother's writing table, "It'll be my table now" (33). The most unsettling evidence of the young Pargiters' internalized restriction surfaces when Rose, sexually violated while running to a shop one evening, is too scared and ashamed to tell anyone what she saw, leaving Eleanor to wonder, "What had she seen? Something horrible, something hidden. But what? There it was, hidden behind her strained eyes" (40). Years later, in response to Martin remarking to her, "What awful lives children live!" Rose adds, "And they can't tell anybody" (151). Although her sexual trauma technically occurred outside the home, in the street, the stifled atmosphere and relationships within the home inhibited her disclosure. This untranslatable suffering and frustration lies at the heart of the children's experience of the home.

The central embodiment of this frustrated family is the figure of Mrs. Pargiter, perpetually dying, "look[ing] as if she might go on existing in this borderland between life and death for ever." Her daughter

Delia (and doubtless the rest of the family) longs for her to die, but still Mrs. Pargiter lies there, "soft, decayed, but everlasting . . . an obstacle, a prevention, an impediment to all life" (21). Mrs. Pargiter's half-life offers a summation of life at Abercorn Terrace, where the characters are longing but seemingly unable to slough off the old, are caught between the past and inchoate desires for something different. The house where they all live, in its confining jumble of old things, reflects and concretizes their sense of being weighed down and enclosed "in the midst of nothingness" (41).

But just as Mrs. Pargiter eventually dies, the house is also eventually shut up and then sold: the longed-for severing of this embodiment of the nineteenth century. However, the amputation of the house, the burdensome manifestation of the past, is excruciatingly slow. The slowness of this process is felt and represented most fully through Eleanor's experience. As her brothers and sisters move out of the house in the decades after their mother's death, Eleanor remains, caring for her father and watching her life slowly drain away. The constrictions of the Victorian home continue to press on her and negate her for much of her life. She lives with her father "like brother and sister" (87) and feels unable to marry or pursue a life of her own. The sameness of Eleanor's life over these years is reflected in the material things around her: in 1891, she is using the same writing table she had inherited in 1880; in 1908, when Martin and Rose visit her at Abercorn, she is still fumbling with the same ineffective brass tea kettle (143), and later holds up the china tea cup with roses—still her father's teacup after all these years. Even though she holds positions of responsibility outside the home, she is psychologically limited because of her inability to move out of Abercorn. Going to a committee meeting, she thinks, "She did not exist; she was not anybody at all" (90). Unable to escape the encumbrances of the family home by moving away, Eleanor continues to be crippled by it well into the twentieth century.

These restrictions on Eleanor's life do not lift until 1911, when her father dies and the family home can finally be relinquished. Although she does not sell the house until 1913, she shuts up the house immediately upon her father's death and moves away. After years of sameness, now "everything was different" (185). As she visits her brother Morris, she thinks to herself of all the possibilities her life offers now that she is not shackled by the house and its responsibilities: "Should she take another house? Should she travel? Should she go to India, at last? Sir William was getting into bed next door, his life was over; hers was beginning. No, I don't mean to take another house, not another house" (202). Her thoughts are hopeful, but also sobering, for she is now in her fifties and has lost over half of her life to the care of a father and a

house. Over the next twenty years she travels constantly, seeking to live as fully as possible in her remaining years, but she still "resent[s] the passage of time and the accidents of life which had swept her away—from all that" (283). In the last section of the novel she laments, "Pity one can't live again" (399), fully apprehending the magnitude of what she has lost.

But Woolf does not depict the sloughing off of the house and the past, for Eleanor or her siblings, as something that occurs as a clean break, wholly accomplished at once. Eleanor's brothers and sisters leave the house many years before she does, but they carry it with them, a burden and a shaping force. Although they have been given more opportunities than their sisters, the Pargiter sons seem unable to break out of the nineteenth-century matrices formed for them. The sons all choose the standard careers open to educated upper middle-class men and achieve some level of outward success, but they live out the remainder of their lives professionally and personally unhappy and inhibited: as Eleanor notes of Morris, "But once it's done there it is; he married; the children came; he had to go on, whether he wanted to or not. How irrevocable things are" (191). The daughters do not fare much better. Rebellious and politically-minded, with a passion for Parnell and Irish independence, Delia thinks she can leave behind her bourgeois English upbringing by marrying an Irishman—but her marriage returns her to the very life she is trying to abandon: "Thinking to marry a wild rebel, she had married the most King-respecting, Empire-admiring of country gentleman" (378). Milly is much more at ease living in nineteenth-century conventions, but these conventions negatively shape her; as a young woman, she "always bring[s] the conversation back to marriage" (30), and soon marries an English country gentleman and "br[eaks] off into innumerable babies" (356). When she appears in "Present Day," dull and smug, her conversation with her husband is described as the "half-articulate munchings of animals in a stall" (356). The vexations that began in Abercorn when they were children continue into adulthood as they feel the disjunction between their desires and their life and sense inarticulately the need for some reckoning. At the party in "Present Day," they discuss how much they hated Abercorn, Delia exclaiming, "It was Hell!" and insisting that when she goes to Paddington Station, she tells the driver to "Drive the other way round" so she does not have to pass by her childhood home (396). The house remains a specter in their lives long after they have moved away from it.

Only perhaps for Rose and Eleanor has the scission with the past been both initiated and executed, and through these women Woolf offers an alternative to Victorian conventions. Rose, a lesbian political activist, is profoundly and unmistakably shaped by the structure of the

Victorian home, which failed in its role to protect her and then which effectively silenced her revelation. Rather than uphold this structure when she gets older, she "thr[ows] a brick" at it (194). Eleanor's rupture with the past is less violent but no less sure. But at no point is this severing anesthetized. After an impassioned and courageous life as an activist, Rose, at the end of the text, still loses her words and has to sit down when she remembers the soiled pink frock she wore at Abercorn the night of her sexual violation and her mother's death (395). The pain of her experience at the house still haunts her fifty years later. Similarly, in 1913, when the house is finally sold, Eleanor is "glad to be quit of it all" (203) but fights back tears as she looks at the empty rooms and remembers their life there: "It was a dreadful moment; unhappy; muddled; altogether wrong. Crosby was so miserable; she was so glad. Yet as she held the door open her tears formed and fell. They had all lived here; she had stood here to wave Morris to school; there was the little garden in which they used to plant crocuses" (204). Years later, in "Present Day," when she drives by Abercorn with Morris's daughter Peggy, Eleanor relates, "'That's where we used to live,'" but adds, incompletely, "Abercorn Terrace . . . the pillar-box" (315). This pillar box, which stood outside the house, was for Eleanor connected with one of her happiest memories of Abercorn—sending Morris off to school every morning and watching him wave to her from the corner where the pillar box was situated (42). This memory is immediately complicated, however, for it recalls the disparities between Eleanor's life and opportunities and those of her brother. The pillar box is also the site of trauma for Rose, for it is the place where a man exposed himself to her. Thus, in Eleanor's elliptical remark, Woolf suggests to the reader both the divided nature of the home but also the ultimate reason why the home must be cast off—for though it provided some moments of genuine happiness, these moments cannot cancel out the means by which it stifled and damaged its inhabitants.

Lee writes that Woolf's "lifelong argument with the past took its central images from the leaving, and the memory, of the Victorian house." For Woolf, it was only when the "objects of the Victorian house . . . have been cleared out, leaving nothing but marks on the wall, and the big extended families which had grown up there die and move out and split up, it ought to be possible for something quite new to begin" (46). As Martin reflects in *The Years*, "It was an abominable system . . . family life; Abercorn Terrace . . . there all those different people had lived, boxed up together, telling lies" (211). Using an ordinary family whose life in the home is largely unremarkable, Woolf emphasizes how these "abominable" experiences were common, defining not just this

family but the age in which they lived. Discussing her own family and childhood home in *A Sketch of the Past*, she writes,

> Two different ages confronted each other in the drawing room at Hyde Park Gate. The Victorian age and the Edwardian age . . . But while we looked into the future, we were completely under the power of the past. . . . we lived under the sway of a society that was about fifty years too old for us. It was this curious fact that made our struggle so bitter and so violent. (147)

Woolf does not simplify the process of casting off the house and the antiquated system it represents, but rather depicts it as an extended and problematic undertaking that is no less painful because it is necessary. But as the home is being severed, a "feeling of something extinguished" (140) persists—there is release, but there is also an absence. Regardless of how unsound the Victorian home, its truncation leaves a phantom presence and a phantom pain, and the Pargiters seek surrogates to stand in its place, material things to remind them of their old life as they transition into the twentieth century. The second thread of Woolf's argument with the past pertains to the objects that survive as the home is abandoned: the things that become prostheses, "the echo or haunting of a lost origin" (Wills, "Two Words," note 9).

The Mark on the Wall

The objects that remain in *The Years* as the characters slowly dislocate the nineteenth-century home are constituted less by their material presence than by the absence they give form to. Filling in for the lost home, these prosthetic objects (like all prosthetics) turn on the problem of "wholeness"; their presence suggests an incomplete corpus, a deficiency requiring a supplement. In Woolf's novel, objects and humans do not together construct a whole, but only an uncanny whole, an illusion of continuity. For a time, the Pargiters rely on this conjunctive relationship to help them navigate greater losses and transitions. However, through several members of the family—but most prominently Eleanor—Woolf explores new ways of relating to the past and its material emblems, offering a vision for the future that liberates both humans and things from an ultimately unproductive hybridity.

One of the most significant prosthetic objects that we encounter in the text is the oil portrait of Mrs. Rose Pargiter. The portrait, of "a red-haired young woman in white muslin holding a basket of flowers on her lap smil[ing] down" (10), is given the focal position over the

fireplace in the drawing room. It is aesthetically conventional; Ruth Hoberman considers it kitsch, "clearly not meant to be great art" (80) (although the aesthete Martin does pronounce it "a nice picture" [150]). Beyond portraying Rose Pargiter as a young woman, the painting depicts the well-defined role of ideal Victorian womanhood: to be beautiful and pure with a promise of fertility (and the implied future of caregiving within the home). Diana Gillespie notes that the painting seems to be inspired by G.F. Watts's "Lilian" (209), another image of a red-haired woman dressed in white and holding a basket of flowers. Watts, a Symbolist who painted allegorical works that often captured essences of Victorian ideals, famously stated that he "paint[ed] ideas, not things" (qtd. in de la Sizeranne 86); the idea behind Mrs. Pargiter's portrait appears to be pristine womanhood.[3] By featuring a Watts-esque painting in the drawing-room of Abercorn, Woolf embeds the Pargiters firmly within both Victorian aesthetics and ideologies.

The portrait, however, is not simply a didactic decoration for the drawing room. It quickly assumes a more personal and affective significance. We learn that the original of the woman in the painting is on the verge of death, expiring upstairs while her portrait hangs downstairs. Mrs. Pargiter's hair is no longer red but white with "queer yellow patches in it" (20), her face no longer young but "pouched and heavy" (20), her smile not constant but "flicker[ing] and fad[ing]" (24), and her flowers not a cornucopia but a vase of lilies of the valley, brought by a relative to the sick room (21). The portrait becomes a supplemental presence not only for the youth and health of Mrs. Pargiter, but for the woman herself. On the night of her death, two of her daughters interact with the portrait as if it were their mother. Milly stands before the mantelpiece, staring at the portrait and crying; Delia speaks to the picture: "So you're not going to die, she said, looking at the girl balanced on the trunk of a tree . . . You're not going to die—never, never! She cried, clenching her hands together beneath her mother's picture" (37). While in her living presence, they hold back tears and rage in restrained politeness, "mechanical cheerfulness" (22), their true feelings get displaced on to her portrait. As Mrs. Pargiter dies, her children's relationship with her loses its vitality, leading them to seek ersatz versions, even in the "horrid daub" (249) of mediocre art.

Similar to how she deploys Lily Briscoe's painting of Mrs. Ramsay at the end of *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf uses the portrait of Rose Pargiter to express the particular power of the image to give shape to a lack. But in the same stroke she dismantles that power, stressing its inadequacy. The portrait of Mrs. Pargiter gains its primary meaning or force from making a woman who is absent through sickness and then death present in the drawing room, in the heart of family life. In a sense,

for her children, the portrait of Mrs. Pargiter *is* Mrs. Pargiter. And it is not. The portrait makes her present in the family even when she is gone, thus gaining a new force in its representational power. However, it makes her present in an inadequate, dissymmetric way, as an image that gazes back but no more. Similarly, the vision of ideal womanhood that the image represents maintains some authority within the home, but it is a weakened influence, tethered to the past and bound to grow weaker over time. Although Colonel Pargiter and the children remain in Abercorn Terrace for many years after her passing, the death of Mrs. Pargiter is the first step in the break-up of the family and the Victorian home. In this early loss we see the family using an object, the portrait, as a prosthesis, in this case an emotional apparatus that is ill-fitting, unsatisfactory, and yet that in part fills the gap left by death and upheaval.

The portrait continues to function as a prosthetic decades later, well after the initial grief for Mrs. Pargiter has subsided. It re-emerges in the text in 1908, when Martin and Rose visit Eleanor. At first it seems that the painting, temporally distanced from its original, has lost its personal significance and its aura, that it has shifted from its role as a prosthetic replacement for Mrs. Pargiter and the unspoiled, well-ordered domestic life she represented. When Martin walks in the drawing room, he looks at his mother's picture, reflecting, "In the course of the past few years it had ceased to be his mother; it had become a work of art" (141). His comment establishes it as a piece he can look on objectively: it no longer represents his mother, but is just a representational artwork.

But as Martin regards the portrait, remembering it to have a blue flower that is now obscured by dirt, he turns, and on observing Rose, immediately recalls a childhood memory. His mother's portrait, by prompting him to summon one memory, opens up his mind to other buried memories. Thus, although Martin thinks that the portrait has become just another work of art, it is functioning as a prop to his memory, specifically triggering reminiscences of his life around the time of his mother's death. If it has "ceased to be his mother," it is only because it is now representative of much more: his early life in Abercorn Terrace. As he reconnects with the portrait and the memories it conjures, he gains a sense of continuity with the past. Something disturbs this comfort, however: the memory the picture provokes is an unsettling one—of refusing to go with Rose to Lamley's on the night she was violated (although Martin never learns of her experience). Though Martin seeks to find some sort of wholeness, of stillness, in the portrait of his mother and these images of the past, a compensation

for his years of rootlessness and his empty prospects, he uncovers little more than fragmented, unhappy impressions.

Eleanor's relationship to the painting, however, appears to be constantly re-calibrated in the decades following her mother's death. When Martin visits her in 1908 and draws her attention to the portrait, she gazes on it anew: "She had not looked at it, so as to see it, for many years" (150). The painting has become so melded with her life in Abercorn Terrace (a life of Victorian womanhood, replicating her mother's role) that she is blind to it. But several years later, after the house is sold and the Pargiters divide up its furnishings, Eleanor elects to keep the portrait of her mother. Eleanor never explicitly comments on why she retains this picture, a remnant of her old life—she lived in the house and among its furnishings too long to idealize them, and therefore it seems unlikely that she keeps the portrait out of pure sentimentality. Perhaps in standing for the good and bad aspects of her domestic inheritance—of a mother whom she loved, but also a mother whose place she had to fill for so many years—it also stands for her own desires to change. While her mother remains forever locked into this literal and figurative image of Victorian womanhood, Eleanor herself does not remain imprisoned in the image, but is able to re-draw her own life. In this way, the portrait acts as a sort of talisman, possessing her with a sense of immunity against the depredations of the past.

But regardless of her initial reasons for keeping the portrait, it becomes apparent that over time Eleanor chooses to distance herself from the portrait as a prosthetic object; as she thinks when she visits Morris, "Things can't go on forever . . . Things pass, things change" (202). The portrait does not appear again until the last section of the book, some twenty years later, when it is hanging over the writing table in her new flat. Toward the beginning of "Present Day," Eleanor's niece Peggy visits her at her flat before they go to Delia's party, and while she's there, she tries to discuss the portrait of Mrs. Pargiter with Eleanor. While Peggy persistently tries to determine if the woman in the painting is an accurate depiction of her grandmother, Eleanor demurs, talking instead about the man she found to clean the picture. Peggy repeats her question, and Eleanor finally answers, "'Not as I remember her . . . When I was a child perhaps—no, I don't think even as a child'" (309), and then turns the conversation to the female aesthetic. Considering how female beauty is assessed, Eleanor objectifies her own mother in the painting in order to reflect on changing notions of beauty. Her life now many years removed from the way of life embodied in her mother's portrait, Eleanor can now take an analytical stance toward that life and that portrait. She no longer relates to the picture as to her mother and to the burdensome inheritance her mother left her: her concern with it

now is as an object, something to be cleaned and something to ponder, aesthetically and socially. The painting, for Eleanor, has become closer to what Martin claimed it was for him so many years before: a work of art. Her reliance on the portrait as a conflicted representation of her personal past has ended, but she has found a way to attenuate the past and re-purpose the object, by transforming it to art. As she later muses, "Directly something got together, it broke. She had a feeling of desolation. And then you have to pick up the pieces, and make something new, something different" (372-73). Woolf considers the power of the portrait of Mrs. Pargiter while she was still alive: a power to conjure not only the woman herself, but the way of life that she promoted within the home. But as time erodes the authority of the artwork, then its viewers are able to become critical commentators rather than participants in what the painting espouses. As the portrait loses its connection to her mother, Eleanor is able to appreciate the painting as an object as well as distance herself from the ideas of womanhood that it seeks to impose. In the end, Eleanor realizes that in order to relate to the present in a way that is non-destructive, then the relation to the past must be transformed. This re-orientation toward the past ultimately enables a re-evaluation and perhaps transformation of the present, a re-evaluation that starts with the open-ended questions, "what is this moment; and what are we?" (317).

Solid Objects

As Eleanor sits at her mother's writing table while her mother dies upstairs, she observes the objects resting on the table: a silver candlestick, a miniature of her grandfather, tradesman's books, and a walrus. The walrus is a pen-wipe, a small figurine with a brush on its back for wiping off ink, and Martin gave it to his mother on her birthday. The pen-wipe was a quintessentially nineteenth-century object, capturing the trace of the ink, the repeated pressure of the steel nib—a smudged record of daily activities in the household, the letter-writing, the account-keeping. The pen wipe, in gathering waste to itself—excess and leftover ink—lies in contrast to the productive act of writing (and its purposeful command of ink), becoming aligned instead with the by-products of inscription. And the walrus later becomes a waste product itself. And yet it is in all of this waste that traces of the dead and the absent live on. In *The Years*, the walrus acts as a prosthesis of the Pargiter family and the complex organism of the Victorian home, both of which were breaking up and passing away in the new century. As an object, the walrus does not repeat the same trajectory as the portrait,

however; rather, it follows two parallel lives over the years, one of burdened preservation, and in the other, of conscious relinquishment. It is in this second life, or afterlife, of the walrus that Woolf suggests the possibility of sacrificing, laying waste the prosthesis and what it stands for in order to move forward.

In the first of the walrus's alternate lives, Crosby, the Pargiters' maid, preserves the pen wipe. In 1901, Crosby finds the walrus in the waste-paper basket and salvages it. Years later, when Abercorn Terrace is sold and Crosby moves to her own room in Richmond, she takes the walrus with her. Her new home soon is transformed into an uncanny version of the family home, "ha[ving] a look of Abercorn Terrace," filled with the many odds and ends Crosby has hoarded over the years: "Indian elephants, silver vases, the walrus . . . there they all were. She ranged them askew on the mantelpiece, and when she had hung the portraits of the family . . . it was quite like home" (207). Arranged on the mantelpiece, the walrus is now entirely abstracted from any functional value. Its role as a fragment of the past now dominates exclusively.

The walrus, along with the other bric-a-brac collected by Crosby, allows her to form a prosthetic extension of the dispersed Pargiter family and their disposed home. For the Pargiters, the selling of the home was painful, but for Crosby, "it was the end of everything" (205). For forty years her life consisted of caring for the family and their material world, dusting and polishing "all the solid objects" (33) and knowing the house with the deepest of intimacies:

> She had known every cupboard, flagstone, chair and table in that large rambling house, not from five or six feet of distance as they had known it; but from her knees, as she scrubbed and polished; she had known every groove, stain, fork, knife, napkin and cupboard. They and their doings had made her entire world. (205)

After the family leaves and the house is cleared out, she "remember[s] everything" (205) and her own room is an attempt to recreate what she has lost in fact but not in memory. The sections of the novel focusing on Crosby after she has left Abercorn make it painfully evident that she has no life outside of the Pargiters; through her arrangement of objects on the mantelpiece, Crosby is trying to fill through external objects a sense of internal emptiness after leaving a position and a home that had constituted her entire being.

Of all the items Crosby keeps, the walrus is the most appropriate and the most poignant, for it represents not just Abercorn Terrace and the Pargiter family, but it stands, in a complex relation, for Crosby her-

self and for the dissolving nineteenth-century class system. In rescuing the figurine from the wastebasket, perhaps Crosby sees in it something of herself—both are products of an older system; both, above all, functional objects, but ones for whom their possessors felt some degree of affection; both physically degraded over the years, and both finally cast off. In rescuing the object she is akin to Walter Benjamin's ragpicker, going through refuse and collecting things that have been lost and scorned by the nineteenth-century capitalist system, identifying with and thus seeking to redeem the waste object. Through Crosby, Woolf indicates the inevitable collateral damage that resulted from the changes in the Victorian home and class system, for as live-in servants were phased out in the twentieth century, there were Crosbys who had "nowhere else . . . to go" (287). Crosby is mourning the loss of her old life and her old self, and by forming a prosthetic system in her new home with the walrus and other objects, she creates an illusion of continuity. But even she does not believe this illusion. When we last see her in "1918," hobbling through the streets, she laments that "It was no pleasure to her to live in the house [in Richmond] anymore" (287), in spite of her attempts to make it a miniature version of Abercorn Terrace.

In possessing the walrus and other things, Crosby is ultimately more dispossessed than if her mantelpiece had been empty. Crosby's prosthetics fail, and if anything, the continued presence of these objects seems calculated to give more pain, excrescences that are constant reminders of displacement and decline. Although Crosby is a sympathetic figure in *The Years*, Woolf uses the family servant to accent the untenability of a sustained reliance on the past, even as she herself is a type of appendage shed by the family. The walrus, however, has a second history outside of Crosby's mantelpiece, and it is through this history that Woolf offers another alternative to prosthesis.

Eleanor, of course, owns the walrus before Crosby. She holds on to it for twenty-one years after her mother's death, using it for a time as a pen-wipe, but primarily keeping it because of its personal associations. When the walrus is mentioned in 1891, she is no longer using it for its functional purpose—it sits on the desk while Eleanor uses blotting paper for the actual task of wiping her pen. (The walrus had become "ink-corroded" [404] and had a "worn patch in its bristles" [147] and had therefore become useless as a pen-wipe.) The walrus, which Eleanor retains because "it was a part of other things—her mother for example" (86), seems to stand for the family and the household in general, both of which were in the process of changing during these years, a reflection of re-orderings in English society at large. The walrus's sentimental provenance—bought by Martin, who gave it to his mother, who

posthumously left it to Eleanor—creates a network of associations that serve to remind Eleanor of familial bonds. In its functional capacities, the walrus was a tool involved in the daily running of the large household. Thus, as the family breaks up, the household becomes reduced to two members, and the house itself loses its primacy as the center of family activities, Eleanor uses the walrus as a prosthetic item, which simultaneously represents both the positive aspects of family life, a fuller and more vital home, and the less fulfilling facets—the drudgeries of managing a household. To Eleanor, the walrus is connected with the Victorian concept of the family, one which brought her some stability but also restriction and tedium.

But even during the years she retains it, Eleanor has misgivings about the proper relationship to these personal objects that link her to a life about which she feels so ambivalent. One day in 1891, sitting at her desk, she observes the walrus and reflects, "It's awfully queer, she thought . . . that *that* should have gone on all these years. That solid object might survive them all. If she threw it away it would still exist somewhere or other" (86). She has preserved the walrus because it is a reminder of a quickly-disappearing era, but its very permanence, or seeming permanence—its "solidity"—unnerves her: the prosthetic threatens to survive the body, the non-living to outlive the living, the past to subsume the present and the future. And so in 1901, Crosby finds the walrus in the wastepaper basket. The text leaves no doubt about the date—Crosby finds the walrus on the morning "the guns were firing for the old Queen's funeral" (207). The moment is symbolically loaded: the old system is passing away, a new era is beginning. Just as Mrs. Pargiter's death in 1880 ushered in a period of dependence on material reminders, the Queen's death performs another scission, prompting Eleanor to slough off the prosthesis as she prepares to inhabit a new century.

Discarding the walrus, however, does not, at the moment, change anything. Eleanor continues living in the same way for years more, in the same house, with the same dynamic with her father, still "behind the times" (147). And although the prosthetic item, the walrus, is gone, it is still psychologically present, an absent presence, a palpable void. Seven years after throwing away the walrus, Eleanor still glances at the writing table and notices that "The walrus, with a worn patch in its bristles, no longer stood there" (147). Although she apparently shed the object in an attempt to move forward, she still feels its loss, in much the same way that her family feels the loss of the house after selling it. Her relationship with the past cannot be re-defined as long as she still looks toward spectral space of the object.

In a sense, the walrus never goes away. But Eleanor's feelings of dependency on it fade. When she wakes up from a doze at the party in "Present Day" (around thirty years after throwing away the walrus), she is "suffused with a feeling of happiness" and asks herself, "Was it because this had survived—this keen sensation . . . and the other thing, the solid object—she saw an ink-corroded walrus—had vanished?" (404). Her earlier fears about the solidity of the object, that this representation of the past would determine her life and then outlive her, have now been nullified. They have been nullified by her life, which moved beyond reliance on nineteenth-century ideas of family: after leaving Abercorn, she chose not to marry and settle in one home, but to travel, making her home in numerous places around the world, living independently while still maintaining relationships with her family members. No longer limited by nineteenth-century understandings of what a home should look like, Eleanor creates her own versions of home and family life.

Eleanor's fears about the object are also nullified by focusing on what she calls "this keen sensation," powerful moments of feeling in the present rather than re-lived memories of happiness or pain. As she thinks about how life is "too short, too broken" (405), she is assured that it is not just the solid object, but also moments of intangible being that can endure. Eleanor, along with the other characters in *The Years*, is in conflict with the material world and with the past, is split between her desire to preserve and her desire to lose. And part of this conflict comes from the fact that what matters to her are not physical things, but experiences and moments that are ephemeral. At one point Eleanor thinks she does not have a life, because a life ought "to be something you could handle and produce . . . But [she has] only the present moment" (347-48). Eleanor throws away the walrus initially because its continued life is an assault on the present. Her frustration with the transience and the impalpability of human life is aggravated by the seeming immutability of physical objects. If the present moment, replete "with the past, the present, and the future" must disappear, leading to "the endless night, the endless dark" (406), then why should the object—heirloom or not—be preserved? Woolf's own lament on the survival of objects after the bombing of her house in London, "oh that Hitler had obliterated all our books tables carpets & pictures—oh that we were empty & bare & unpossessed" (*Letters* VI, 3670), adopts the same posture as her characters. She suggests in the play on words—"unpossessed" meaning both to be without possessions and to be freed from an overpowering, menacing influence—both the conflict with objects and a solution to this conflict. It is not, however, Eleanor's physical discarding of the walrus that ultimately leads to her release, although that acts as the

outward manifestation. Rather, she has learned how to let go of the past and re-orient herself toward the present. With the portrait of her mother, Eleanor learned to re-purpose the object and transform her relationship to it and what it stood for; with the walrus, she experiments with the possibility of moving beyond the past entirely, of releasing it to make room for new moments of being.

"Shut Off the Wireless and Listen to the Past"

In the last months of her life, Woolf witnessed the destruction of London through the air-raids of the Second World War, a repetition and intensification of the air war she had experienced over twenty years before. In the Autumn and Winter of 1940-1941, she and Leonard came up to London from their country house in Rodmell "every week or so to see more of Bloomsbury destroyed" (*Letters* VI 435). The Woolfs' two London homes, 52 Tavistock and 37 Mecklenburgh Square, were both demolished by bombs, personal losses that echoed the national losses. Woolf traveled throughout the city during this time and reflected on the ruins; the language she uses emphasizes the irrevocable violence done to the body of the city, an uncanny rendering of the damaged bodies she had seen after WWI: the corpus of buildings and squares and streets that had represented a type of wholeness ("all that completeness") were now "eaten out," "smashed," "gashed," "dismantled," "ravished," and "demolished" (*Diary* V, 353). Nearby, a bombed house is "Like a tooth knocked out—a clean cut" (*Diary* V, 316). The city had not been wiped away entirely, but remained, dismembered, spectral.

The broken society depicted in *The Years*, embodied in the figure of the WWI amputee, finds an even fuller expression in these war-torn images of London. Woolf's sketches from both the First and the Second World Wars are parerga to *The Years*, framing it, extending it, contributing toward it, as if they are prostheses themselves. Exerting pressure from outside the text, these letters and diary entries augment Woolf's figurative representation of fractured English society, but they also complicate this representation, tracing the outlines of disintegration but not of restoration. And if, as Wills proposes, a text *is* a prosthesis, then *The Years* itself might be considered a prosthetic to English culture in the 1930s, exposing its weaknesses but also seeking to rehabilitate it. In this novel, so often regarded as a disabled text, Woolf not only pictures how people in England are living "like cripples in a cave" (281), "sheltering under a leaf, which will be destroyed" (368), but scrutinizes how they choose to reckon with loss, and seeks to imagine something beyond lack or prosthesis. *The Years* is Woolf's attempt to

give shape to loss, but also to envision the contours of a new future, in which it will be possible to "live . . . wholly" (281), to form "new combinations" (280). She is not, as Renny accuses Eleanor, "Always talking of the other world," but like Eleanor, "mean[s] this world . . . happy in this world—happy with living people" (368).

The Years does not find Woolf fully articulating a systematic position toward materiality or toward history. She submits multiple suggestions for redeeming the materials of the past, without claiming totality or closure: there is "no peroration" (409). Woolf forces the reader to maintain these multiple possibilities simultaneously without presuming that they represent the final answer. Although *The Years* ends with questions, "And now? . . . And now?" and offers only ideas, no answers, Woolf presents the possibility that in such an economy, in such an ellipsis, the phantom space of dismembering, there might be a better articulation, a restored sense of wholeness. In *Orlando*, another novel concerned with the telling of history and with transformation, Woolf writes about language, noting the most poetic speech is "precisely that which cannot be written down." So in the middle of Orlando's story there is a blank space on the page, a void that does not indicate loss but an inexpressible presence: "For which reasons we leave a great blank here, which must be taken to indicate that the space is filled to repletion" (186).

Notes

1. Although Woolf would have encountered veterans from a variety of wars, most of her contact with amputees—and with prosthetics—would have come from WWI. The Great War, with its industrialized weaponry that tore bodies apart, left an unprecedented amount of bodily damage, and in addition to the 272,000 men who seriously injured their limbs in battle, an estimated 41,000 British soldiers had limbs surgically amputated, according to Bourke (33). As these military amputees returned home and joined the wider constituency of disabled people in Britain, limblessness became normalized (Bourke 60). But the demand for prosthetics after the war was higher than it had ever been; Guyatt records that the British government guaranteed a free artificial limb to all amputee ex-servicemen (312), and in consequence, WWI led to significant developments in the design and production of artificial limbs (310-11). This remembering of the body had ideological as well as practical dimensions: while amputees heroically bore on their bodies the sign of their valor and sacrifice, their missing limbs were, according to Guyatt, "one of the most visible remind-

ers of war," and it was only by concealing the loss could the country "begin to move forward seemingly cleansed and guilt-free" (14).

2. The word prosthesis first appeared in English in 1553, according to the *OED*. The word was initially used only in its grammatical sense, as the addition of a syllable or letter to the beginning of a word. By 1706, however, the word was also being employed as a medical term to mean "that which fills up what is wanting . . . Also the making of artificial Legs and Arms, when the natural ones are lost." As Smith and Morra note in their introduction to *The Prosthetic Impulse*, these two definitions of prosthetic, rhetorical and material, addition and replacement, have persisted to this day (2, 11). The prosthesis has always been metaphorical as much as it is literal. Jain describes it as "the joining of materials, naturalizations, excorporations, and semiotic transfer that also go far beyond the medical definition of 'replacement of a missing part'" (32).

3. Woolf's childhood home prominently featured paintings by Watts, a family friend of Leslie and Julie Stephen. His portrait of Leslie Stephen hung in their drawing-room, while his portrait of Leslie's first wife Harriet Thackeray hung in the study. Woolf herself, however, called his posthumous exhibition of 1905 "weak and worthless" (qtd. in Lee 216).

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Satirical Martyrdom in *Miss Lonelyhearts*: Unmaking the Earnest Loner who "Fought Himself Quiet"

Chris Bollini

In his 1933 novella, *Miss Lonelyhearts*, Nathanael West treats the theme of loneliness by magnifying the pathos in otherwise sardonic vignettes. Presented in a serialized format through fifteen short chapters, these individually titled episodes play out via a mix of tragicomic fumbling and outright antagonism. The episodic nature of this slim book seems to borrow from the comic strip, but the tenor of the narrative—satirizing a world gone mad, despite being earnest in its anxiety—feels indebted to hard-boiled fiction. The further readers enter the text, though, the more these harrowing experiences begin to register as the emotionally heightened impressions of a sick mind. Much like with German Expressionism, West imbues the world of his novella with a surreal sense of one man's discomfort at having to sustain the illusion that he accepts the social order as provided for him.

With little opportunity for escape afforded to us by West's unerring narrative efficiency, we become isolated from reality, inured to dream logic, and maybe even indifferent to the lonely nightmare displayed before us like a grotesque parody of Charlie Chaplin short films. Ultimately, the text reveals West as interested in exploring the cognitive framing of loneliness, in which the subjective experience of being alone can make a person feel at once exceptional and insignificant. In other words, West seems to understand how perpetual loneliness can become an experience hauntingly close to the sublime, once it is understood through the epiphany that humanity's inherent loneliness is the one true existential unifier. The irony that makes *Miss Lonelyhearts* endure, though, is that West also understands how distressingly mundane it is to feel lonely.

Against the backdrop of a darkly satirical version of Prohibition-era Manhattan, the novella's title character works as a newspaper advice columnist under his pen-name, a pseudonym employed by other characters in the book and by the text itself. Although a joke to some, Miss Lonelyhearts hopes to salvage dignity from his ironic mantle and do justice to his public platform, from which he offers solace and, on oc-

casion, solutions to his lonesome and desperate readers. However, Lonelyhearts exaggerates the responsibility of this position in his mind and grows self-important, even as he becomes distraught that he cannot confer real salvation. He may yearn to engage his readership in tangible ways, but his goal is simply to exert influence upon the weak-willed. Befitting the name others use to mock our ostensible hero, Lonelyhearts is a lonely man isolated at a spiritual and emotional remove from colleagues whose corrosive beliefs and behaviors he cannot help but emulate. Thus, Lonelyhearts fears himself a spiritual eunuch but also feels himself poised to affirm the nearly religious power and authority of mass media.[1] Embedded in a social position for which he is ill-suited and determined to fulfill a goal of which he is unworthy, Lonelyhearts instead can only enact solution after inept solution to his own loneliness.

West, in his unflinching way, works through the ironic implications of Lonelyhearts's self-righteousness and hypocrisy at nearly every turn of his brutishly concise narrative. We come to learn Lonelyhearts has the sincere desire to help his readers but not the sincere conviction that he can transcend his own grubby existence fueled by alcohol and misogyny. Despite the novella's definitively tragicomic outlines—an unremarkable protagonist experiencing a downfall right at the moment when he believes he has achieved apotheosis—it is still difficult to read West's own attitude about Lonelyhearts's prospects for redeeming himself. Writing amid the worst devastation caused by the Great Depression, West seems determined to explore both the source and limits of hope, and the enigma of his text resides in how this lowly man, Miss Lonelyhearts, can generate any hope for alleviating the world's pain when his most regular interactions are with his fellow newspapermen, all of whom appear to be proudly venal manipulators of public opinion and sardonic critics of each other. Lifting himself from this social morass will be the greatest test of Lonelyhearts's resolve, and a reader's interpretation of the character's success at becoming an agent of mercy—rather than a mouthpiece for empty platitudes—is what creates confusion about whether Lonelyhearts is failed more by a fallen world or by his own fallible humanity.

From my perspective, West commits so fully to satirizing the alienated and aloof Modernist outlook that his protagonist's attempt to sustain hope, sincere though it is, cannot help but become a childish whim. This is a text, after all, that takes seriously the Prufrockian quandary, "Do I dare / Disturb the universe?" (Eliot 45-46).[2] Indeed, West's satirical eye never fully alights upon this existential dilemma, leaving it instead to fester at the novella's margins. Although unspoken, this dilemma becomes the guiding conflict within Lonelyhearts, our would-

be hero; we could paraphrase it as: "How shall I dare disturb my bleak surroundings?" That he musters the confidence to dare at all should be regarded as its own humble accomplishment, but West makes sure that we never lose sight of the ugliness inherent in Lonelyhearts's efforts.

At the same time, the text revels in the absurdist moral confusion (verging on apathy) that marks Prufrockian navel-gazing, and West simply takes this solipsism to its terminus. What makes Eliot's speaker comically indecisive—as immortalized when he ponders, "Do I dare to eat a peach?"—also makes West's loner-protagonist dangerously persuasive to readers of his advice column (122). Both adopt the posture of brooding uncertainty in the face of the overwhelming prospect that their lives will remain fruitless and meaningless, but for Lonelyhearts this posturing is a crueler joke than it is for Prufrock; because Lonelyhearts has forced himself to inhabit a cheerily resigned persona that makes him uncomfortable, he must resolve the cognitive dissonance between his outward appearance (as a purveyor of pat solutions) and his underlying apathy (which he is trying to resist). The cruelty of this joke, then, is that he wants to escape his brooding as much as he wants to transcend his forced optimism, but he always reverts back to his doomsayer mentality as the more sincere of his personae. Ironically, this tension is what makes the ventriloquist act of his advice column charged with the passion of someone trying to convince himself (even more than his readers) that insincere faith could triumph over base nihilism. Prufrock, on the other hand, seems content to drown within the pleasant dream of an all-consuming mythos, which is more alluring than reality for him because only art and mythology can rise to the challenge of fulfilling his gloomy visions. Where Prufrock embraces delusion, Lonelyhearts fights it by daring to thread the needle of his good intentions through the narrow gap between his apathy, on one side, and his phony piety, on the other. Just as brooding can take many forms, from innocuous to suicidal, so too can solipsistic daring take a wrong turn into messianic self-aggrandizement and, finally, into the self-sabotaging impulse to become symbolic of the loneliness at the core of all existence. This, of course, is the path upon which Lonelyhearts unwittingly descends.

Inundated by a parade of the blasé, the feeble, the brokenhearted, and the naïve, readers of the novella are thrust into a similar position as our title character: we experience the steady distortion of reality, which eventually recedes entirely as the text collapses into a fever dream of spiritual transcendence. While the tone of these vignettes could be read as unrelentingly bleak or even cynical, there remains a mercurial tenderness to the narrative voice whenever it brings to light the earnest longing and solipsistic angst of Lonelyhearts. West uses these border-

line sympathetic moments to push against the unsettling viciousness and otherworldly blight that elsewhere shrouds the text in darkness. As a respite, though, this pathos is meager and unsatisfying, a halfhearted distraction from the text's caustic worldview. Sublime loneliness might unite us in our sorrow, West seems to say, but its overwhelming sweep and swell will still cause us to drown in our own suffering before we could ever hope to arrive as a beacon of light or love at the shore of another's lonely island.

From the opening of the novella, before we realize that our existential resolve might be tested by this book, readers can already sense how rundown and blithely submissive Lonelyhearts has become. He is numb due to the harrowing letters he receives as submissions for his advice column, and these letters have fed his masochism for too long. It seems he has forced himself to swallow others' grief and his own guilt without ever truly reckoning with either. As a result, instead of wallowing passively, Lonelyhearts begins to implicate himself in tangible violence, unleashing destructive tendencies at different turns in his seemingly bizarre, but ultimately drab, existence.

As we come to discover, these instances of violence externalize the spiritual dispossession that Lonelyhearts experiences at his job, where he has been laughing at "the same joke [. . .] thirty times a day for months on end" (West 1). This is a bitter joke about the inevitability of human suffering and the absurdity of asserting agency, and Lonelyhearts recognizes only now that his narrow life is indistinguishable from the punchline. This is also a joke that savors sardonic truths, such as the bitter irony of different individuals somehow managing to be so inarticulate as to stamp their laments with the same "heart-shaped cookie knife" from the "dough of suffering" (1). In response to his readers' homogenized pain, Lonelyhearts has either "fought himself quiet" or reached, while writing his column, for platitudes about life being "worth while" because it is "full of dreams and peace, gentleness and ecstasy" (3, 1). Still, Lonelyhearts knows this is inadequate. Because these intellectual responses take part in the distancing he so desperately wants to collapse, they are just defense mechanisms that fail to actually touch the lives of those in need. As we will see, casting aside the empty piety of his words in favor of touch—literal, physical touching—will become the fulcrum needed for our loner-protagonist to transcend his disgust with the world and enact his messianic potential (if only in his mind).

Ineffectual and increasingly perturbed about it, Lonelyhearts turns to "searching for some clue to a sincere answer" to his readers' loneliness and suffering, but for unspecified reasons (1). Even so, we can infer that Lonelyhearts challenges himself in this way because his conscience

has made it such that the letters are "no longer funny" to him (1). He callously dismisses all their letters as alike yet nonetheless wants to offer them hope. Although he sees himself as bestowing merciful comfort to his readers, Lonelyhearts is also sickened by them; his manner of pity is therefore closely aligned with misanthropy. He may share in his readers' yearning to fight feeling powerless, numb, and unknown, but their appeals to his exceptional status—a figure designed to convey bleeding-heart empathy—expose the gulf between his deficit of fellow feeling and their excessive need for it. Thus, he has grown skeptical of hope and haunted by his own privileged position in the world, which makes him distanced from his readers, a distance he reinforces by mocking their misfortune. As we can already tell, Lonelyhearts will prove quite unwilling to give up this entitled mindset, even as he craves some means, any means, of tending to his flock.

These conflicted attitudes about the efficacy of religion make Lonelyhearts continually test the limits of his faith. In a crucial early scene, he recalls how he could never give himself over to the supplication and self-disavowal of prayer, admitting that this vulnerable pose of placing himself subject to God's authority always felt like a form of hysteria: "He had played with this thing, but had never allowed it to come alive. [But Lonelyhearts] knew now what this thing was—hysteria, a snake whose scales are tiny mirrors in which the dead world takes on a semblance of life" (8-9). Although "capable of dreaming the Christ dream," Lonelyhearts falters trying to actualize it because he cannot ignore the absurdity of believing that he, of all people, could reawaken the dead world or that "the whole world would learn to love" due simply to his entreaties and rote proselytizing (39, 8). In contrast, Lonelyhearts takes seriously the task of locating the source of this personal failing, his crisis of faith. As the text establishes across a number of surrealist reveries, the hysteria of his self-abasement manifests through lacerating symbolism, which proliferates in key scenes.[3] The intensity of these projections underscores Lonelyhearts's fatalistic introspection, which seemingly cannot be silenced. As ballast, though, his lonely psyche can also call forth visions of a sublime destiny which, up to this point in his safe and sterile life, has remained just out of reach.

In a situation mirroring this inner conflict between selflessness and self-aggrandizement, Lonelyhearts must also contend with deterioration and entropy, or what he perceives to be the physical world's "tropism for disorder" (31). Just as it unsettles him to witness "no signs of spring" amid the "decay that cover[s] the surface of the mottled ground," moral decay unsettles Lonelyhearts because he recognizes in others his own tendency toward self-sabotage (4). Once he begins to view the world as disordered and impervious to his good intentions,

Lonelyhearts moves from being standoffish to being abusive. Either paralyzed or lashing out, he proves unable to understand himself fully. As a result, the text itself develops into a pathos-driven dark comedy the more he flounders.

With this emotional underpinning, we are not just saddened by Lonelyhearts's marginalization as a sensitive soul, but we also pity his status as a hopeless loser who becomes more and more willing to ingratiate himself into the broken social order. Ironically, these qualities allow West to buoy a feeling close to hope in his readers, as we recognize that Lonelyhearts tries to challenge in himself the callousness that others—especially his fellow newspapermen—wield against those who suffer. The fatalism of the text, though, makes it impossible to sustain any optimism about Lonelyhearts's efforts. Still, he is unique among his damaged, cynical colleagues who "revenge themselves" through "childishness" (14). Their manner of buffoonery relishes crass talk and savage apathy, as they have a cooler disposition than Lonelyhearts, who lashes out from a place of weakness or uncertainty, helplessness or defiance. As blasé as Lonelyhearts is earnestly concerned, these colleagues are "machines for making jokes" who heap further indignity on those already suffering due to sickness, heartbreak, or self-doubt (15). In a telling appraisal of masculine camaraderie, the indifference of Lonelyhearts's colleagues extends to those who are generally othered and dehumanized by society, as well as those actively being abused through verbal or even physical violence.

Seeing himself as different somehow, Lonelyhearts resists projecting an air of snide self-regard but is too manic in his introspection to be stoic, either. With an "almost insane sensitiveness to order," he pains himself to uphold his sense of integrity and, thus, deflects genuine self-critique (10). As a result, Lonelyhearts "revenges" himself, too; he can even do so callously and with precision, like his colleagues, but only ever in a defensive manner. For example, when his need to lash out overwhelms his conscious effort at moral superiority, he proves capable of becoming "so full of hatred that he himself [is] surprised" and so vicious that his gestures grow heated and "too appropriate, like those of an old-fashioned actor" (12). In these instances, Lonelyhearts rationalizes his absurd behavior and contorts his reality in the process.

Even when he makes his on-again, off-again fiancée, Betty, fear for her safety, Lonelyhearts dehumanizes her rather than casting blame on himself. She is "like a kitten whose soft helplessness makes one ache to hurt it," or so the mercurial narrative voice tells us (13). As we learn only a few pages prior in the novella, Lonelyhearts has acted on this rationale of putting an animal out of its misery in the past (or possibly just in a dream that draws from his college days).[4] Either way, we should

register his thought here as an instance of free indirect discourse giving a glimpse into Lonelyhearts's impulses, no matter how depraved. Elsewhere, though, the narration reports on Lonelyhearts's desperate mindset by winking at the reader. For example, we become privy to an odd manner of reflection, which manifests through another simile, as Lonelyhearts leaves Betty's apartment after "aching to hurt" her.

During this moment, an "excited" and "afraid" Lonelyhearts feels "as though his heart were a bomb, a complicated bomb that would result in a simple explosion, wrecking the world without rocking it" (13). This image suggests what a violent outburst from Lonelyhearts might look like: he could somehow make wreckage without first giving forewarning of his startling deed. This image also inverts what a reader might presume to occur, which would amount to Lonelyhearts lashing out in a way that could shock and rattle those involved without fundamentally ruining their lives. On the contrary, Lonelyhearts's self-interested and pathetic measures, which cause ruin without warning, have an outsized impact on whatever situation he tries to control. Epitomizing the absurdity of the text, these instances bring about irreparable damage disproportionate to both Lonelyhearts's floundering and his lagging sense of self.

Despite the damage he causes, Lonelyhearts proves too self-defeating to conceive of any reaction more constructive than impulsive violence. When he tries to fight back at disorder and "obtain control," he uses "too much violence" and is "decisively defeated" by the chaotic world, anyway (11). Attuned to life's terminal path, Lonelyhearts eventually concludes that exerting agency by shoring up his cultural capital is more meaningful than actually ameliorating the suffering of others; it seems he would rather be known than be accomplished. Still, when assessed with the benefit of hindsight, Lonelyhearts could be said to quest sincerely for the means to intercede in the suffering of others. However, his botched quest can only yield a self-serving delusion: in order to assume the mantle of messiah, he must first convince himself that the fake miracles of faith healing—the only kind he can provide—are to be his avenue for success. As we will see, Lonelyhearts foolishly comes to believe faith healing could confer more good than embodying hard-won virtues like self-love, acceptance of others, and benevolence.

In West's treatment of these themes, he dramatizes the truism that misery loves company, but without letting true companionship come to pass. In fact, West suggests that Lonelyhearts's good intentions merely reify his impulse toward othering, despite compassion and selflessness presumably being the very basis of those good intentions. Given these tensions, the line must be thin between West's suspicion of and admiration for those, like our title character, who set out to—who

dare to—improve the lot of others. As proof of this ambivalence, West allows nihilism to encroach upon the text, and so only a bastardized, insular form of redemption can vindicate Lonelyhearts in his search for meaning by the novella's end. As happens often in depictions of the loner-protagonist under duress, the reader is lured into feeling a certain measure of sympathy for Lonelyhearts, only to be thrown into contact with justifiable repulsion and, ultimately, into the confused and exhausted state of existential dread. After all, the terror of sublime loneliness is that we each might one day become willing to conduct ourselves as a proverbial Lonelyheart, flailing violently between visions of our exceptional future—resplendent with the grace ushered into the lives of the formerly sick and brokenhearted—and memories of our own insignificance.

Before arriving at his fullest commitment to healing the brokenhearted of the world, Lonelyhearts realizes he cannot respond with enough compassion to match his readers' vulnerability, and so he instead privileges mere escapism, no matter how easily thwarted. In his mind, "[m]en have always fought their misery with dreams. Although dreams were once powerful, they have been made puerile by the movies, radio and newspapers" (39). This defeated attitude represents an occupational and existential impasse that distresses Lonelyhearts. More importantly, it also exposes a conundrum about his tainted wisdom and advice, a dilemma that Robert Edenbaum articulates succinctly: "Miss Lonelyhearts may be a holy fool, but he is considerably less innocent than his correspondents" (64). Resigned to selling his seemingly naive readers on the dream that life can be "full of [. . .] peace, gentleness and ecstasy," Lonelyhearts knows he has compromised his integrity (West 1). Faith healing, on the other hand, soon emerges as a new calling for him, one which would require him to put aside dreaming in favor of action.

Another critic of the novella, Arthur Cohen, also invokes this concept of the holy fool when critiquing Lonelyhearts, but his analysis explores whether the sacrifices made by the holy fool should be considered profound or absurd. Cohen at first defines this concept as complicating simplistic notions of "the perfect sinner" in opposition to "the perfect saint" (46). In his reading, the holy fool recognizes the world's degradation and, thus, practices a heedless, potentially self-indulgent form of asceticism as a way to externalize how "the spirit of man records more quickly and sensitively what emerges but gradually in the social order" (Cohen 47). Once the saintly renunciation of worldly pleasure has been taken to its most extreme manifestation, though, the holy fool's hysterical and foolhardy behavior becomes exposed. Read generously, the holy fool can be said to act in this way to acknowledge that,

"long in advance of his destruction," he knows "he is being destroyed" by an unfeeling and unresponsive world (Cohen 47). However, when we return to Edenbaum's analysis, we can infer the damning point that Lonelyhearts's solipsism precludes his manner of self-destruction from taking on this same righteous cast. As Edenbaum explains, "If Miss Lonelyhearts submerges the world in his own ego, the letter-writers, nevertheless, are a constant which constitutes a very real world" (64). Accordingly, Lonelyhearts serves only himself when he enacts the absurd yet very real self-sacrifice at novella's end because none of his readers are saved as a result.

By this point, we can see Lonelyhearts envisions a form of self-actualization for himself that would establish inner peace through embodying Christ. This manner of apotheosis will not come to pass, though. Because he lacks true conviction, Lonelyhearts ends up imploding his world from within. However, he does so only after finding a way for his authority as a Christ figure to be affirmed by at least one person: Peter Doyle, a cowering, placating man who will prove crucial in both the unmaking of Lonelyhearts the man and the (ironic) making of Lonelyhearts the martyr.

As he becomes tortured by the inadequacy of his words, Lonelyhearts finds that his Christ complex can only manifest and be realized through what amounts to faith healing. These deeds nudge him out of his solipsistic isolation and bring him in closer contact with the embodiment of despair, represented in the text by Doyle, the crippled and cuckolded foil to our loner-protagonist. Thrust into the wider world of human struggle, Lonelyhearts becomes conscious of performing a role, which grows more grandiose in his mind once he meets Doyle. Physically touching this crippled man despite his revulsion becomes Lonelyhearts's unsettling way to transcend his earlier practice of imposing unbridgeable distances with his platitudes and halfhearted words. As we will soon see, this performative conversion ritual into a sort of revival tent preacher is self-serving and wholly ironic, a testament to the dark measures of the self-lacerating ego when grappling to escape loneliness and achieve a sense of integrity and worth.

Tracking regression rather than growth, the novella's satirical mode replaces one set of tropes with another. Instead of what we would expect from the *künstlerroman*—to experience both the artist's struggles while he develops a unique perspective and his eventual triumph upon refining a set of skills—we get uncomfortably familiar with what Daniel Aaron describes as Lonelyhearts's "self-loathing, extreme exasperation, self-mistrust, [and] self-despair" (65). These are qualities West derives, according to Aaron, from William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. This set of tropes pertains to the "conversion

experience," a revelatory process through which "the unregenerate man can attain saintliness" by enduring the manner of crucible that James defines (Aaron 64). Specifically, it is only through "brooding, depression, morbid introspection, and sense of sin" that one can touch bottom and thus fully sound the depths of man's depravity (James 199). However, by yoking to Lonelyhearts these signifiers of the "ordinary storm and stress and moulting-time of adolescence," West paints his protagonist as having never fully come of age (James 199). Locked in arrested development, Lonelyhearts exhibits the solipsism of one who has failed to pass "from the child's small universe to the wider intellectual and spiritual life of maturity" (James 199). Once he begins testing his abilities as a faith healer, Lonelyhearts tacitly understands that he is only realizing his potential as a con artist. Despite the underlying efficacy that West hints at, the power of touch merely extends our loner-protagonist's misanthropy into the life of a man, Doyle, who can hardly afford more despair.

While Aaron makes a sympathetic reading of Lonelyhearts consumed with the same "melancholia of Tolstoy overwhelmed by a heightened awareness of objective evil," I read alongside this condition a palpable measure of masochism in our loner-protagonist (65). He is the type, I argue, to savor as meaningful the way he "writhes in the presence of his own corruption and his inability to control it" (Aaron 65). Receiving pleasure from pain in this way enables Lonelyhearts to endure in solitude his all-consuming melancholy and to locate ecstasy in the terror of his sublime loneliness. However, once he finds he can no longer suppress his displeasure with others' needs encroaching upon him, he must inevitably turn outward and cast aside his solipsistic disregard of others. As a result, Lonelyhearts fetishizes the influence and power of his status, which enables him to pursue the unmaking of his weakest, most desperate adherents. Prone to brooding publicly, dreaming vividly, and investing life with symbolic fantasies and memories, Lonelyhearts eventually latches onto Doyle as his means to escape what James terms "morbid introspection."

Already empowered over those who have turned to him as they suffer in their loneliness and self-doubt, Lonelyhearts forces upon Doyle the visceral and ultimately destructive thrill of the deed: supposedly curing and absolving—but actually objectifying—through touch. While Doyle seems embarrassed yet heartened sitting at a bar "silently hand in hand" with Lonelyhearts, our messianic protagonist must force himself "to clasp the cripple's [hand]" in order to prove himself "triumphant" in his humility (West 47). This self-serving agenda, to which Doyle is oblivious, means that the novella's hallmark tragic irony must rear its ugly head soon afterward. Indeed, Lonelyhearts be-

trays both his revulsion for Doyle and the destructiveness of his touch when he later beats Doyle's wife, Fay, with whom he has been having an affair (50). Although initially a means of fending off Fay's advances, this beating quickly edges past mere self-defense and instead becomes an outlet for exerting control, albeit through the ironic measure of temporarily losing control over his actions.

In the vein of the *künstlerroman*'s purported self-discovery and self-creation, Lonelyhearts's shift toward the direct engagement of faith healing results from his earlier ennui when having to confront the notion of suffering in the abstract. Whereas he used to have to "[fight] himself quiet" to ignore the pleas of his letter-writers or masochistically "hurt the pain" by revisiting letters that continued to make him feel powerless, Lonelyhearts eventually claims agency by forcing himself into action, decisively anticlimactic though it may be (3, 39). Fending off the uncertainty and inadequacy that have haunted him up to this point, he compels a change. At the very end of the novella, as Lonelyhearts is confronted by Doyle after assaulting Fay, he thinks that "God had sent [Doyle] so that Miss Lonelyhearts could perform a miracle and be certain of his conversion. It was a sign. He would embrace the cripple and the cripple would be made whole again, even as [Lonelyhearts himself], a spiritual cripple, had been made whole" (57). This embrace, however, immediately proves to be deadly, as we will soon explore at length.

While there could be great benefit in privileging the recuperative power of actions over words, Lonelyhearts pursues this path not to recuperate the broken spirits of the suffering but to redeem his own sense of personal triumph and empowerment. This dynamic is especially evident once Lonelyhearts endures a psychological breakdown, via his twofold "conversion" process, during the novella's climax and right before Doyle's attempt at exacting revenge on Lonelyhearts, the man who has cuckolded him. Newly convinced after a dark night of the soul that "God approve[s] his every thought," Lonelyhearts finds himself "running to succor [those who suffer] with love" (57, 58). However, what the reader finds is a darker reality: we experience the absurdity of Lonelyhearts's final moments, rushing down a flight of stairs to embrace Doyle, who kills Lonelyhearts seemingly in panic or even as an accident, despite coming prepared with a concealed gun (58). Only capable of inducing trauma rather than recuperation, Lonelyhearts martyrs himself unknowingly, yet becomes the sole beneficiary of his death. In contrast, Doyle is hardly "made whole again," despite his success inflicting vengeance upon Lonelyhearts.

Stumbling as always through his life of awkward encounters, Lonelyhearts only manages to bring about his own murder in this an-

ticlimactic moment. In a caustically funny grace note, the text affirms that Lonelyhearts, even as he dies, cannot prevent himself from literally bringing others down with him. The final two sentences of the novella leave the reader with the pathetic image of Lonelyhearts "dragging [Doyle] with him" as they roll "part of the way down the stairs" together (58). This moment confirms that Lonelyhearts's actions are as ineffectual as his words. More importantly, it blurs the distinction between Doyle, a conflicted and broken man giving up on transcendence and now hoping for revenge, and Lonelyhearts, a delusional man collapsing back into the degeneracy he thought he had escaped. These brooding, defensive characters are two sides of the same coin, it seems.

From my perspective, once Lonelyhearts finds himself no longer invested in actualizing the recuperative power of his words, he becomes cynical enough that he starts performing a more invasive role in the lives of the suffering. In this reading, we can view Lonelyhearts unequivocally as a con artist redoubling his efforts after being stymied for so long due to a passively receptive—rather than ecstatically engaged—audience. Although the text takes seriously his compulsion to escape isolation and exert control over the seemingly disordered threads of his life, Lonelyhearts's effort to confront his disgust with the world by finally engaging with it only reveals his desperation for a revelatory conversion experience. As discussed earlier, this conversion does come to him, but the twofold process (enacted across the novella's climax) only leads to his abrupt death: after first journeying within himself to discover the eternal calm of a "reclining statue holding a stopped clock" and, as a result, to become "an ancient rock, smooth with experience" (during the chapter titled "Miss Lonelyhearts Attends a Party"), our loner-protagonist arrives a few days later at his feverish reverie, which represents some sort of "promise [. . .] fulfilled" (51, 56). At the oncoming of his "identification with God" (during the novella's final chapter, titled "Miss Lonelyhearts Has a Religious Experience"), this new "rock" of a man understands there to be grace and delight filling his room "like a gentle wind" (57). However, this identification—this approval from God and the resulting euphoria it brings him—in no way corresponds to the man who long ago foolishly accepted the mantle of "Miss Lonelyhearts." Rather, he affirms in this moment his supposed affinity with Christ, which is to say that he finally recognizes and lets go of his morbid fascination with humanity in favor of a serenity heretofore unknown. In reality, this just means he has finally learned how to ignore his inner nature as a fallible and corrupted man.

Accepting that there is at least one spark of "life and light" amid the "black world of things," Lonelyhearts now sees Christ as the "bright bait" to which all life should aspire (57). Although this image simply re-

inforces his earlier fatalism, it somehow inspires him to "immediately beg[in] to plan a new life and his future conduct as Miss Lonelyhearts" (57). Now oblivious to irony, Lonelyhearts casts himself into this image of Christ as a "bright fly, spinning with quick grace," and the dead world "as a fish," rising from the water with "a splash of music" (56-57). In this allegory of self-sacrifice, there is the strong possibility of being scapegoated for no greater purpose than bringing about ephemeral beauty, be it in the "splash of music" marking the occasion or in the glimpse of humanity's vulnerability, its "shining silver belly" (57). Nevertheless, Lonelyhearts envisions baiting humanity in precisely this way, except that his death drive ends up foreclosing the chance of even fleeting relief. Soon after professing, "I accept, I accept," Lonelyhearts rushes headlong into his self-sacrifice, martyring himself in the scrum with Doyle for no greater cause than achieving the only type of closure befitting of his fetishization of sublime loneliness (57).

The absurdity of this resolution, I argue, should shape our understanding of the entire novella. Once we concentrate on the catalyzing tensions and conflicts resolved by this mock martyrdom, we can better see how self-doubt motivates Lonelyhearts. Having failed to minister adequately to his flock, he becomes unsure of himself and grieves for the lost chance to access the exceptional power to which he feels entitled. As Arthur Cohen renders this inner conflict, it is Lonelyhearts's Christ complex that destroys him: "[it] destroys him, for it deludes him. He misrepresents the world and is martyr to his misrepresentation" (48). His chief transgression, then, is imposing onto others his misguided will to help and to heal.

If nothing else, Lonelyhearts is failed by a host of misrepresentations. During the climax of the novella, he misjudges his ability to work miracles and even his desire to live a "new life as Miss Lonelyhearts." In fact, it seems part of him knows his "future conduct" could never deviate from his previous destructive behavior, given how his last act of cognition is a dangerous distortion of reality. Immediately before being shot, Lonelyhearts misidentifies a desperate shout of warning as "a cry for help from Desperate, Harold S. Catholic-mother, Broken-hearted, Broad-shoulders, Sick-of-it-all, Disillusioned-with-tubercular-husband" (West 57-58). However, the merging of these identities, the pseudonyms for his letter-writers, obscures the real threat underlying the delusion: Doyle. In this final act of distortion, the fallible and corrupted man lurking beneath the guise of "Miss Lonelyhearts" asserts himself one last time.

With its abrupt end at the moment Doyle fumbles with his gun and Lonelyhearts stumbles into him, the novella confirms that it has been Lonelyhearts's false perceptions all along that have distorted his real-

ity. What Stanley Edgar Hyman describes as the text's "desperate and savage" tone, "rapid and hysterical" pace, and "garish, ugly, and compelling" imagery all originate through the narrative voice's tight focus on Lonelyhearts's point of view (24, 27, 26). This heightened tenor manifests through either narcotized or agitated passages of free indirect discourse and through deadpan reportage of even Lonelyhearts's most heinous deeds. The only vulnerability and raw emotions we experience are those of his readers (or, potentially, our very own); in contrast, Lonelyhearts himself lives in a post-traumatic daze. Surprisingly, even the text's conclusion sustains this perspective. We learn that Lonelyhearts, deep in delusion, cannot properly "understand [Doyle's] shout" and instead hears it as the cry for help from his letter-writers, as described above (West 57-58). In this moment, Lonelyhearts may have transcended his self-critical ennui, but his newfound conceitedness leaves Doyle obscured and purely an instrument for validating our self-styled messiah. For his part, Doyle is reduced to a proxy for those Lonelyhearts has previously failed.

To complicate our sense of Lonelyhearts's mundane evil and Doyle's hopeless anger, West embeds in this scene an alternative perspective. A third character, Betty (Lonelyhearts's love interest), enters the action to find that Lonelyhearts has "caught" and is struggling with Doyle (58). Betty functions as an audience surrogate here by virtue of being a helpless observer. However, she also affects the fatal outcome of their struggle by "call[ing] to them to stop and start[ing] up the stairs" (58). With her well-intentioned desire to intercede in the conflict, she inadvertently cuts off Doyle's escape, which prompts his attempt to "get rid of the package" concealing his gun (58). This violent series of whims and mishaps is a microcosm of the text as a whole, except the bleak irony is somehow darker given that it is now Betty, rather than Lonelyhearts, who must confront how easily we can become complicit in the suffering of others.

West's most fascinating accomplishment, then, is in eliciting sympathy—no matter how fitful it may be—for these characters. Given the satirical text, it is surprising that we are almost made to feel pity because Lonelyhearts cannot walk through the fire of self-disavowal to achieve transcendence. However, when we distance ourselves from our protagonist's pained brooding (which inevitably breeds sympathy), we can see that the dissonance between Lonelyhearts's messiah complex and the phoniness of his presentation to the world marks his search for meaning as absurd. Over the course of the novella, he comes closer to believing he can attain the placid enlightenment of his desired state, yet readers should ultimately recognize that Lonelyhearts seeks to become the unknowable force of spiritual renewal—as a messiah—

simply to obscure and erase the scarlet letter of his easily mocked pen-name. This means Lonelyhearts only sacrifices himself in order to be jolted out of his apathy. At its core, his thinking seems to be subsumed in the uncanny sense that *his* suffering will be meaningful even though the suffering of his readers strikes him as pitiful and absurd.

If the conclusion of the novella shows Lonelyhearts succeeding on his own terms, it also provides a troubling instance of an alienated man whose rite of passage into individuation is promptly followed by his death. In his uncanny approximation of a life, Lonelyhearts at first estranges himself from society due to his job and the way he dismissively treats the suffering as a joke. He then loses himself in the job of trying to correct his mindset and fix his misdeeds. Measuring himself against an impossible standard, Lonelyhearts finds himself wanting. As Hyman argues, Lonelyhearts is "clearly the prophet in the reluctance stage, when he denies the call and tells God that he stammers" (19). However, this reading should only apply to Lonelyhearts's ineffectual effort to use his advice column as a comforting respite for—yet also his own buffer against—the letter-writers. As we have seen, Lonelyhearts's stammering and silence recede once he contrives to embrace death as more meaningful than life.

Given how Lonelyhearts's outlook conflates the messiah complex and its grandiose sense of purpose with the victim complex and its nihilistic sense of defeat, his internal conversations warrant scrutiny. By offering this novella as what Robert A. Ferguson calls "a proving ground for the uses and even the dangers" of "internal conversation," West demonstrates that self-reflectiveness can either motivate us to weather our loneliness or, in fact, *exacerbate* it (2). While Lonelyhearts certainly offers a prime example of a character whom we can "learn to care about" due to his apparent "struggle to overcome the world rising against [him]," his status as someone "forced away from others or undone by them" grows thornier and more problematic as the narrative builds (Ferguson 3). Once we begin to note how the ambivalent narrative voice undercuts Lonelyhearts's perspective on his heroic "comeuppance endured," we must recognize the corollary that he earns this comeuppance by victimizing others, especially Betty (3). As an agent of chaos, he inflicts the type of pain that "cut[s] across everything [his victims might] want to do or become" (3). In achieving his own rebirth in the mold of a self-styled faith healer, Lonelyhearts deprives others of becoming anything other than pawns in his own tragic psychodrama. As a result, readers should be able to become more attuned to the suffering of those, like Lonelyhearts, who cannot find the necessary catharsis in sublime loneliness: unable to turn away from his knowledge that we each exist in a womb of lonesome yearning, Lonelyhearts

despairs over the state of the world but hates himself—and, eventually, others—for not knowing how to fix it.

In the end, this is a text devoted to testing the sympathy, maybe even the patience, of readers. As an instance of the literature of endurance, *Miss Lonelyhearts* refuses to blink as it casts a potentially noble person into the void, only to perversely suggest that his dark measures succeed at bringing a definable legacy into being whereas the cautious efforts of others (like Doyle) fail. Whether or not there is hope to be mined from such caustic themes would depend on how a reader chooses to interpret the aphoristic quote, "All order is doomed, yet the battle is worth while" (West 31). Any sensible reader should recognize this statement, in context of the cheekily wasted atmosphere of this novella, as hokey pablum; it is seemingly just the narrative voice venturing, quite dubiously, into a stoical tone that Lonelyhearts himself has yet to earn. The remainder of the text, of course, allows us to pity and fear Lonelyhearts due to how sincerely, hysterically, and desperately he battles to affirm the orderly and ordering self. Because of that, it seems his struggle would always be doomed from the beginning unless he were to first invest in sincere communication and connection.

Even if he were to feel disingenuous having to ignore the suffering in the world simply so that he could have a superficial connection with another, this minor sacrifice would prioritize the needs of the person before him over his need to address loneliness en masse. As it stands, this urge to fix others is, of course, paradoxical and unsustainable, yet Lonelyhearts's idea of "order" is one that pushes the limits of what is possible. The order he seeks, that he has always sought, is to order the needs of others subordinate to his own. The absurd tragedy of Lonelyhearts, the man, and *Lonelyhearts*, the text, is that this mistake is all too common among lonely men to this day.

Notes

1. As a colleague at Lonelyhearts's newspaper attests, "America has her own religions," and the evidence affirming this claim is quickly produced via the headline of a clipping stashed securely in the colleague's wallet: "ADDING MACHINE USED IN RITUAL OF WESTERN SECT" (West 6-7). The implication of this odd anecdote is that new technologies are often embraced in America as innovations capable of helping us achieve deliverance. Indeed, the

justification for this ritual provided in the Associated Press report makes a case for embracing any means of broadening a message's reach: "Numbers [. . .] constitute the only *universal* language" (7; emphasis added). In a metatextual comment on the normalizing power of mass media, the headline of this AP report emphasizes the novelty at play—via the use of the adding machine to compile and disseminate prayers—and fully ignores the archaic tradition also involved (via the "sack cloth and ashes" service incorporated into this ritual of mourning). This newspaper account allows West to subtly indicate the tool of discursive framing that would enable Miss Lonelyhearts to proselytize effectively to his readers. Despite this boon to our protagonist's efforts, Lonelyhearts is ambivalent about the power he wields. As Kevin Bell argues: "Lonelyhearts blinds himself to the paradox of identity that envelops him, failing to acknowledge that the only possible source of his would-be benediction is the same mass-mediated community that so nauseates him and that the recognition he so desires is located only within the province of the chaotically commercialized sociality he so desperately loathes" (135).

2. By turns mocking and despairing, West's treatment of the alienated subject places him in the company of other great authors of the Modernist vanguard. Moreover, West ensures this comparison by developing archetypes and themes commonly affiliated with T. S. Eliot, and he even parodies Eliot's most well-known work: the text offers shades of "Prufrock" through Lonelyhearts's confusion and indecision, and we get a note-for-note parody of *The Waste Land* through elegiac exposition (particularly in the chapter titled "Miss Lonelyhearts and the Dead Pan"). Although likewise consumed with "an overwhelming question" that rattles within him "like a tedious argument," Lonelyhearts is not so dumbstruck as Prufrock ("Prufrock" 10, 8). Whereas Prufrock must ponder if he would even "dare" to "[d]isturb the universe," Lonelyhearts has already resolved that particular dilemma (45-46). Still, both share in the knowledge that there will always be "time to murder and create," just as this rash decisiveness can be overturned in the time that yet remains: to the self-defeating mindset, there will always be "time yet for a hundred indecisions, / And for a hundred visions and revisions" ("Prufrock" 28, 32-33). Lonelyhearts, though, comes closer to breaking free of this mindset than does Prufrock. For example, he is not so self-effacing as to proclaim, "I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be" ("Prufrock" 111). Lonelyhearts may act demure in positioning himself, too, as just "an attendant lord" and "an easy tool," but his fealty is to God rather than to a monarch (112, 114). Thus, if Lonelyhearts understands himself to be "[a]t times, indeed, almost ridiculous," it is only because his messianic ambition manifests as buffoonery in the eyes of the cynical ("Prufrock" 118). Unlike Prufrock's cautious admission that he at times represents "the Fool" to Hamlet's wily and canny Prince, Lonelyhearts's introspection is murkier and, thus, more dangerous (119).

3. For a crucial example of this overabundance of symbolism, see the "paraphernalia of suffering" scene in the "Miss Lonelyhearts in the Dismal Swamp" chapter (West 30-31).

4. See the chapter titled "Miss Lonelyhearts and the Lamb" for an extended sequence (presented in context of a dream) during which a college-aged Lonelyhearts drunkenly partakes in a botched animal sacrifice. He is the one responsible for suggesting to his drinking buddies that, if they intend to roast a lamb "over a fire in the woods," they should first "sacrifice [the live animal] to God before barbecuing it" (West 9). Once their parody of a pagan ritual goes terribly awry—by imparting only a grievous "flesh wound" upon the frightened animal—it falls on Lonelyhearts to return to the scene to "put the lamb out of its misery" by "crush[ing] its head with a stone" (10).

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Glimpsing Ojibwa Youth and Justice Found in John Tanner's *The Falcon: A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner* in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, *The Round House*, and *LaRose*

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In *Love Medicine* (1983/94), *The Round House* (2012), and *LaRose* (2016), Louise Erdrich characterizes her dynamic child protagonists more by their maturity of thought and sentiment and less by the immaturity their age would seem to indicate. Erdrich's statement "I wish all children had the freedom I did" ("*LaRose*: An Evening") reveals her complex view of childhood, one that encompasses innocence and maturity and lends credibility to her abiding interest in John Tanner's autobiographically narrated text, the 1830 *The Falcon: A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner* (2003). With respect to Tanner's text that has achieved notability both for its historical veracity and the specific connections it reveals between indigenous peoples and early settlers/traders of both early eighteenth-century mid-Northerners and Southern Canadians, Louise Erdrich remarks, "I've read his narrative so often that it is a constant mental reference" (*Books* 43). As she states in her introductory words to Tanner's 2003 reprinted *Narrative,* "we passed around the Ross & Haines version until the binding broke and the pages had to be gathered in a heap, secured with rubber bands."[1] Embedded in Erdrich's depiction of the version dated 1830, owned by her Grandfather – *The Falcon*: *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner* by G. & G. & H. Carvil—that she and her sisters repeatedly enjoyed throughout their childhood, one locates her fondness for all things adventurous. Nine-year-old Tanner's recounted early reflection, "I wish I could go live among the Indians" (2) in fact resulted in his decision to leave home one day, resisting a father's command that his son stay indoors with his stepmother and baby sister. Tanner's narrated adventures illuminate much of the character, ethnography, and terrain of the people and land of the Mackinaw

region of Northern Michigan as Tanner describes how he became an Ojibwa, at first by necessity, and then by choice, for more than thirty years.[2] The day Tanner left home in the late 1700s, he was immediately snatched by a Sioux war party, and shortly afterwards, bartered to an Objiwa family headed by the matriarch Net-no-kwa who had recently lost a son about the young Tanner's age. Shifting family ties alongside shifting cultural realities inform the narrative tale of the adopted Objiwa John Tanner and many of the novels of Louise Erdrich, particularly in the lives of the fearless youth she features in *Love Medicine*, *The Round House* and *LaRose*.

Much has been written concerning the way Louise Erdrich blurs distinctions between history/fiction, indigenous/non-indigenous people, and innocence/maturity. For Hertha Sweet Wong, Erdrich's work displays "deftness in representing and respecting multiple, conflicting voices; her attentiveness to the complex interweaving of Native American and European American histories; and her articulation of a politics of thoughtful engagement" (5). More specifically, Louis Owen notes "Erdrich draws upon both her mother's Chippewa heritage and her experiences as the daughter of a Euramerican growing up in Middle America" for inspiration (54). Robert Silberman, too, credits Indian American writers as valid readers of history in that "their kinship [is] based on the assumption that history holds the key to understanding contemporary Native American life. Behind the immediate problems of home, family, paternity, (or maternity) stands the unanswerable past" (149). Erdrich's novels seamlessly weave past, present, and future time, representing the colloquially spoken "Indian time." William Gleason and others have compared Erdrich to "contemporary Indian novelists" who "have crafted their writing to reflect tribal concepts of time (timelessness) and space (multidimensionality)" (70). Known for expertly collapsing time, Erdrich's poetic voice "playfully and coherently blends Indian and American technique to produce a work of swirling, singing prose" (70). In Erdrich's prose, time is also equated to place, a quality she admits in "Where I Ought to Be," revealing that "where one place has been inhabited for generations, the landscape becomes enlivened by a sense of group and family history" (43). As Erdrich notes, native authors "tell the stories of contemporary survivors while protecting and celebrating the cores of cultures" left behind (48). Most tellingly, in the many voices of *Love Medicine*, Erdrich's groundbreaking first solo novel, many of the characters lose their innocence equally by prejudicial social realities, haphazard experience, and volatile mishap. Particularly in the characters' coalesced past, present, and future lives, one finds, as Catherine Rainwater believes, "narrative energy" to embrace and question "all preconceived frames of reference" (157). Many

of Erdrich's narrative strategies—multiple points of view, stories centered primarily on innocence lost and gained, and destabilized time—suggest that binary distinctions such as innocence/maturity and marginal/dominant are exposed and overturned. Anishinaabe writer Adam Spry believes Native writers are doing the important work of disrupting the colonial narratives of Indianness for a population most likely to embrace such narratives as truth (20).

In his narrated autobiography, Tanner relates his life-long proclivity to adventure as well as what it means to belong to an Objiwa community and family. In *Love Medicine*, *The Round House* and *LaRose*, Erdrich emphasizes close-extended Objiwa/Chippewa families who encourage a given child's agency. A remarkability of childhood is part and parcel of *The Falcon*, particularly where John Tanner recounts how at a young age his "expert . . . hunting and trapping skills" proved invaluable to his family and community (19). At the age of thirteen, the same age as Joe Coutts in *The Round House*, Tanner experienced a harrowing hunting trip while canoeing with his older Objiwa brother, who was seriously hurt when a heavy knot slipped down from the weight bearing load. Not only had their canoe load tipped into the river, the boys lost their entire vessel. Because word was brought to him that his Objiwa father was dying, Tanner and his brother sought to tackle the raging current to reach home. Referring to the extremity of winter, Tanner writes: "Owing to our hands being benumbed with the cold, it was long before we could extricate ourselves from our shoes, and we were no sooner out of the water than our moccasins and clothes were frozen so stiff that we could not travel. I began also to think that we must die. But I was not like my Indian brother, willing to sit down and wait patiently for death to come" (23). The determined Tanner found "dry rotten wood" enough to "raise a fire" (23). A day later they ran into their mother, Net-no-kwa, who brought them food and dry clothing because she had become "convinced they had fallen through the ice" (24). Flawed people such as Net-no-kwa pepper Erdrich's books, I think here especially of Marie Lazarre Kashpaw and Lulu Nanapush Lamartine in *Love Medicine*, whose personalities are defined more by self-determination and less by what is encountered. As Tanner recalls, "I have never met with an Indian, either man or woman, who had so much authority as Net-no-kwa. She could accomplish whatever she pleased, either with the traders or the Indians; probably, in some measure, because she never attempted to do anything which was not right and just" (27). In Tanner's narrative, one uncovers how the early American youth loses his birth mother to illness, rejects her replacement, and willingly accepts Net-no-kwa as his mother.

Having descended from mixed Objiwa heritage and having admittedly described herself and her writing as "on the edge," Erdrich readily admits to Tanner's influence both in her life and writing (Tanner xi, *Books* 43). For John Purdy, not only do Erdrich's novels "speak to readers in personal ways," they make us question our "immediate readings of events: is there such a thing as chance, coincidence, destiny? A contrived plot?" (8, 33). Although Purdy claims readers gravitate to Erdrich's works because of the haphazard nature of a given reality, he nonetheless wonders if "the continuation of colonial domination of Indigenous communities [is] inevitable" (33). Catherine Rainwater's view counters such pessimism; however, for by denying a mainstream reader accessibility to ethnic signs, Erdrich in fact problematizes "the Other" to lead readers toward interpretative possibility (145). By denying a reader "a comfortable interpretive position relative to the text" (145) Erdrich navigates the space located between native and mainstream cultures. Such mixed-cultural steering, I have found, occurs naturally in Tanner's *The Falcon*, where he notes diversity in thought and action not merely by tribe but more importantly from person to person within the variety of peoples he encounters, displaying a feature encountered in *Love Medicine*. As recounted in Tanner's depiction of the Sioux family with whom he initially lived, "I was beaten every day," but other members of the same community "would sometimes give me food, and take notice of me" (11).

Reading the fiction of Erdrich is reminiscent of taking a unique kind of journey, one where difference and delight playfully reside, where the experience of encountering diverse people remains par for the course.[3] It is not surprising that Erdrich spent much of her youth rereading Tanner's captivity narrative aloud, keen to gain insight to the vast array of characters—missionaries who proselytize; fair or fraudulent American and French traders; early American indigenous people described in terms of type, aptitude, or skill, including various members of the Assinneboins, the Omowhows, the Muskegoes, the Crees, the Sioux, and of course the Objiwa, in which Tanner became an adopted member—who are revealed. Of course, one finds in Erdrich's characters, too, an emphasis on diversity of type and tradition. As James Rupert insightfully pens in "Celebrating Culture," "Erdrich's achievement is to shift the paradigm of both implied readers' thoughts, to recharge implied Native readers and inspire implied non-native readers with an appreciation of Native American epistemology and worldview" (81). While many authors offer a blanketed conflict-driven plot that forces characters to adopt to circumstance, Erdrich instead offers an array of complexity in her character portrayals, notably the youth, who

rather than become defined by their circumstance, create the change they seek through determinative strength.

It is little wonder then that Erdrich compares her writing style to that of a "traditional Chippewa motif in storytelling" where one "incident . . . leads to another incident that leads to another" (qtd. in Jones 4).[4] Children in Erdrich's novels, unlike American mainstream offspring, tend to belong to an entire community, not to one or two parents. In *Walking in the Sacred Manner*, Mark St. Pierre and Tilda Long Soldier relate that "children are not as protected from the realities of life as are most European-American children. Knowledge of life on this earth and its temporary nature is made clear to them at an early age" (66). "Only the Earth lives forever!" is a commonly put refrain in many indigenous communities that speaks to not only the stabilizing presence of nature's bounty but also to the way children regard proselytizing respective to their future. Accordingly, certain older members of communities are well known for this talent and often share what they have "seen," even if it is negative (66). Because children are thought to be very intelligent, perhaps even ancient souls who have returned for more time on this earth, there seems to be no prescription for protecting children from bad news or critical observation by adults (66). In many indigenous communities, youth and adult members alike share communal fealty.

In *The Falcon,* the communal nature of Tanner's own family is made clear, particularly in one vignette in which he describes his skill as a provider: "Here, without the aid of my gun, I took one hundred large beavers in a single month, by trapping merely. My family was now ten in number, six of whom were orphan children, and although there was no one but myself to hunt or trap, I was able for some time to supply all their wants" (148). As an adult, Tanner repeatedly shares the products of his successful hunting trips with families in need. Initially, however, as a nine-year-old, the young Tanner was sought out to replace the son of Sioux parents who had died, and then traded to the Objiwa woman Net-no-kwa—whom he called "Mother" for many years until she died—who taught him the Objiwa custom of adoption as well as what it meant to live as an Objiwa. Not surprisingly, Louise Erdrich adopted the three adopted children of the late Michael Dorris when they married. Undoubtedly, for both Tanner who raised ten children and Erdrich who has raised eight children, the essence of a child is the essence of a family.

In many of Erdrich's novels, interesting displays of maternal power prevail with none (arguably) as striking as in the female characters' strength and chutzpah in *Love Medicine*, where time is collapsed, sometimes in a linear fashion, sometimes not, in the childhood and

adult adventures of Marie Lazaree Kashpaw and Lulu Nanapush Lamartine, who show Erdrich's knowledge of Tanner's Objiwa mother, Net-no-kwa. Throughout *Love Medicine*, Marie and Lulu's respective stories run adjacent until they reach old age, when the women are woven to an interesting alliance. Ironically, it is their mutual love of Hector Kashpaw that at first positions them as adversaries, but then after his death, unites them. The unique kinds of strength that inhere in Marie and Lulu make Hector, while he lives, unable to choose between the two.

Perhaps because Erdrich's tale accents both circularity at the expense of linearity and innocence above maturity, the multi-voiced narration itself suggests individuality is supported rather than thwarted, most particularly when considering Erdrich's *Love Medicine* youthful characters who appear quite mature. The young June Morrissey who asks Gordie and Aurelia to hang her with rope from a tree but who are stopped in time by their mother Marie, is not too different from the much older June, who opens *Love Medicine* as one of its many narrators. In the opening story, one uncovers how June's actions subject her to peril: she takes risks with unknown men and hikes without gear in a deadly snowstorm.

In another chapter, Lulu Nanapush relates, "I never grew from the curve of my mother's arms. I still wanted to anchor myself against her" (68) and who learns instead how to pay attention to her mother's "voice," one that "came from all directions, mysteriously keeping me from inner harm" (69). An adolescent Lulu Nanapush disobeys Grandmother Nanapush to visit old man Moses Pillager on his island to become schooled in the old ways, but remains for an extended visit—Moses fathers two or three of her eight children. Equally revealing, the resolve of Lulu to raise her eight boys as one unit and her early decision to live her life on her own terms remains constant in *Love Medicine*. As Lulu recalls in her later years, "No one ever understood my wild and secret ways. . . . I was in love with the whole world and all that lived in its rainy arms" (276).

One of my favorite characters, Marie—who takes in the young June while she raises many children of her own and several more from the community—is steadfast in her resolve, we are led to believe, because the fourteen-year-old Marie physically battles Sister Leopold at the Indian school—one that specializes in assimilating Indian children. In the chapter titled "Saint Marie," young Marie Lazarre takes on Sister Leopold who convinces Marie, at least in this moment, that "the Dark One wanted me most of all, and I believed this" (46). But unlucky for Marie, the Dark One "was afraid of her sharp pole," so Marie had to feel Leopold's "cold hook in [her] heart" alone (47). During the skir-

mish, Leopold lances Marie's hand with her long fork, but once she uncovers the truth of Leopold's sadistic love, Marie withdraws from the convent. More than any other strength of Marie's, including her resolve, kindness, and willingness to do anything to protect her family, her determination to command respect commends her. Marie specializes in conforming the will of others to her own.

Not surprisingly, in *Love Medicine*, one finds traces of John Tanner in the character known as Lipsha—Marie/Nector's informally adopted son and June/Gerry's biological son. Lipsha Morrisey Kashpaw and John Falcon Tanner share the traits of insider/outsider, survivor/thriver, trickster/hipster. Through her portrayal of Lipsha, Erdrich suggests nature surpasses nurture, a concept overridingly found in *The Falcon*. At the close of *The Falcon,* Tanner reveals his preference to live under the sky instead of a roof. Similarly, Erdrich portrays Lipsha at home in nature amid tame or chaotic circumstances, as Lipsha recounts in the chapter "Love Medicine,"

> Our Gods aren't perfect, . . . but at least they come around. They'll do a favor if you ask them right . . . . How else could I explain what all I had seen in my short life—King smashing his fist in things, Gordie drinking himself down to the Bismarck hospitals, or Aunt June left by a white man to wander off in the snow. How else to explain the times my touch don't work, and farther back, to . . . warfare and dirty-dog killing of the whites. In those times, us Indians was so much kindlier than now. We took them in. (236-37)

Lipsha and Tanner equally show resolve, capability, and connection to family/community—though more importantly, the two make the most of what life offers. As a youth, every member of the community—excepting Lipsha—knows his biological parentage. Similarly, Tanner's action, in running away from his father and stepmother's home, reveals a quest for a "Mother," who after a short time becomes Net-kwano, a strong formidable woman who shares qualities found in Lipsha's adoptive mother Marie. It is the straight-talking Marie who tells Lipsha as a child that she saved him from his biological mother who wanted to drown him in the river. Through Erdrich's portrayal of Lipsha and other informally adopted children, the author suggests that true family need not be closely related by blood, a feature commonly found in Indian American literature. In representing Marie and Nector's parentage of Lipsha, Erdrich relates a sentiment found in Allen's *The Sacred Hoop*, where American Indian "narratives . . . restore the estranged to his or her place within the cultural matrix" (127). One finds in both Tanner's

narrated text and Erdrich's characterizations of Lipsha and June the sentiment that communal/familial belonging is more important than original blood ties. Unquestionably, it is the shared responsibility of a community to care for its children. As noted in *The Falcon*, the question of John Tanner's biological parentage dissolves when he becomes a valued Objiwa family member who is trained by Net-no-kwa to become an expert trapper/hunter.

In *Love Medicine,* Lipsha is valued by his ability to heal others by the technique known as the laying of the hands, a well-known Judeo-Christian and Indigenous practice to heal both physical and spiritual ailments. Both the actual Tanner and the fictional Lipsha, though, share the experience of failure. Upon finding his ten children starving, Tanner reveals in one vignette, he must figure out how to feed them because he has returned from a hunting trip without meat. Similarly, after Lipsha tries to dissuade Nector from seeing Lulu, Lipsha tries to conjure "love medicine" to ensure Nector's faithfulness to Marie. Lipsha, however, failed to shoot a mated pair of geese, part of a plan to feed geese hearts to Nector and Marie. When Lipsha instead feeds the aging couple frozen turkey hearts from a nearby grocer, Nector immediately chokes and dies, resulting in Marie's decision to finally reveal to Lipsha that her adopted daughter/biological niece June is his biological mother. Often, when reading Erdrich's works that may or may not relate recurring characters, current/historical time or place, estrangement/connection to community, one is drawn to the overriding textual theme that "belonging was a matter of deciding to" (348).

In *The Round House*, Erdrich focuses the narrative through the eyes of a child, speaking in past tense, though, drawn from his very future adult self, to elaborate on the present time of the story's happening, a common feature found in the early pages of Tanner's *Falcon* and one that establishes the many paradoxical elements found in *The Round House*.[5] Through the perspective of thirteen-year-old Joe Coutts, Erdrich describes what life feels like from his vantage point. His mother is raped, yet, his father, a tribal judge, can do very little about the crime because its occurrence takes place slightly off tribal lands. Hence Joe and his friends decide they will find the guilty party. In so doing, the youths not only uncover immense governmental mishap, but equally important, they re-establish harmony in the community. To make that happen, the youths make the most of the available resources found on the reservation, a community that fosters its youthful members. Joe and his friends partake in Native American ceremonies with elder Objiwa, but also join a Catholic youth group so that, rather ironically, Joe could ask the parish priest to teach him to shoot.

Throughout *The Round House*, in which the plot centers on how Joe and his friends seek to avenge his mother's rape and where the details of her rape emerge throughout the book's duration, Erdrich reconciles the heart of a child into the soul of the Indigenous American tradition and integrates historical aspects of Indian culture with current spiritual practice. One night when sitting pondering how something so tragic could happen to his mother, Joe relates,

> my father remembered that of course an Ojibwe person's clan meant everything at one time and no one didn't have a clan, thus you knew your place in the world and your relationship to all other beings. . . . The clan system punished and rewarded; it . . . would carry messages up to the Creator over to the spirit world, down through the layers of the earth or across the lodge to a sleeping relative. (153-54)

Further, in this novel Erdrich shows the mainstream reader how the conflation of Catholicism and Objiwa medicine works for people for whom the acceptable religious practice is attending both church and sweat lodge ceremonies. The title is depicted in terms of a ceremonial/ritual space, a place of ceremony that is known to heal mind, soul, body, and spirit in a repeated practice of spiritual integration, what Paula Gunn Allen refers to as part of the Sacred Hoop, the "singular unity that is dynamic and encompassing, including all that is contained in its most essential aspect, that of life. . . . the essential harmony of all things" (56). Still, Erdrich's novel highlights the reality that the reservation exists not apart from mainstream American culture, but rather as a part of a living stream of one culture, integrated and moving alongside it. On this North Dakota Reservation, Erdrich discloses, one may tee-off at the golf course, shop at the convenience store, formally or informally adopt children, and commit murder, all taking place on tribal lands precisely because Indian culture is in fact American culture. Despite the hefty juxtaposition of the sacred and mundane, one locates Erdrich's firm belief that the strength of the Objiwa people lies in their lightness of being, particularly in her portrayal of "the elders, who have been through their own torments and sorrows, joke about everything, especially about sex. . . . They delight in embarrassing young people" (Erdrich qtd. in Mudge).

Erdrich's *The Round House* infuses mixed-culture juxtapositions—new/old ways and adopted/authentic blood lines. In one scene Joe spies on Father Travis, checking to see if the Hamms' Beer found at the crime scene matches the can he's drinking. Instead, they find Travis "sitting before the television in an easy chair [watching the film *Alien*]

and at his elbow there was a city beer, a Michelob," suggesting the continuing clash of traditions that exist on Indian Tribal lands (103). In another scene Joe relates "You're gonna see things sometimes, Mom told me once. Your soft spot stayed open longer than most babies. That's how spirits get in" (116). The novel is filled with tensions that equally showcase joy and tragedy: rich traditions that are kept alive in peoples' hearts and minds, symbolized by the Round House where young and old go for traditional ceremonies and rituals, as well as the sorrow one finds on a reservation, a place assembled to form people into a particular way of existence. The people's lives are remarkably rich, though, because of the communal fealty that is kept alive by the inclusion of ancient traditions. Aspects of Objiwa culture are spoken simply, without depth or detail, because the narrator reveals the truths both from the voice of a youth on his summer vacation, with plenty of time on his hands to escape alone and/or with friends, and from the future vantage point of someone wise, his older, legal self who shares much of his adult insight into the inspirational, past telling of the rape of his mother, the crime's repercussion and his efforts to expose both the culprit and government corruption. In much of its narrative style, tone, and message, *The Round House* resembles Tanner's *Falcon* in three key ways: 1) a mature man believes he has lived his best life in the telling of adventures from his youth; 2) traditional ways sustain the spirit of the community while innovative ways deplete its vibrancy; and 3) the narrator indicates a stark preference toward individuals who are honest, clear-sighted, and direct.

At its inception *The Round House* details the mysterious off-narrative rape of Geraldine Coutts, an Objiwa Social worker.[6] By its close, though, the novel depicts how mother/wife, husband/father, son, and community members become stronger despite the crime's severity. The tale further serves as an allegory for how mainstream culture continues to desecrate tribal culture. One comes to understand, for instance, how for centuries, the boundaries of Objiwa lands are rendered fluid, meaning taken away for arbitrary reasons, similar to a long-standing game of political ping pong. A golf course on the reservation for those not residing on tribal lands who can come and play golf might make one question why there is a golf course on tribal lands in the first place. Countering the nuance of continued pillage taking place on tribal lands is the round house itself, set up in response to the elder Mooshum's vision of "buffalo woman" to create a place that could bring ancient native ritual and ceremony to light, untouched from outside influences, it would seem (214). Sweat Lodges and other ceremonies used for healing purposes related in the story are only for insiders.[6] The fact that the Catholic Church has a parish replete with a Father Damien

living on the "Rez" further attests to this kind of in/out but all-apart-of modern reservation life. Not surprisingly, one finds in the *Round House* the elders' belief that "everything is connected," even crime.

Already mature for a youth attending his first day of primary school, Joe names himself after "his great grandfather Joseph" (4), has loving, caring parents—Geraldine and Basil—but is not sheltered from anything or anybody. Joe and his three besties, Zack, Angus, and Cappy, smoke, drink beer and anything else they can get their hands on, shoot guns, ride horses, drive cars, and share opinions about everything they know with one another but remain tight lipped with outsiders. The tale moves forward with both linearity and circularity in that the story is presented from an adult perspective—written in the past, not present, excepting dialogue used to show how past moments infuse present ones. For example, Joe's father, Basil, tells the family at dinner that he met with the governor of North Dakota to discuss the adoption of an Objiwa child from their reservation (the governor's offspring by way of his relationship with a missing teen who likely was murdered by the same man who raped Joe's mother, Geraldine, as she was trying to protect the teen and her family). This kind of corruption and crime goes unpunished because there are two sets of laws, one for the Objiwa community and one for non-Objiwa people. This moment of horror represents many larger historical incidents, suggesting, for one, that the early pattern of Indian exploitation continues within tribal lands, merely taking on a different hue. Larger societal interests continue to impinge on and exploit tribal community members as well as their lands to this day.[8] Consequently, it is only the children who can fly under the radar, one finds. Joe and his friend Cappy kill Linden Lark, the man who raped Joe's mother because she would not tell Linden where Mayla's file resided, but also because Linden killed the 17-year-old Mayla, stole her baby and delivered it to the North Dakota Governor who had employed Mayla. Not surprisingly, the community on the reservation learns of and supports the secret of Joe's crime. Linden Lark's twin sister, Linda, who is given up for dead at birth because of her odd facial features but then adopted by an Objiwa family on the reservation, disassembles and destroys the rifle Joe used but saved one bolt off the rifle, giving it to Joe as a keepsake for his valor, suggesting that justice must be restorative. The tribal community understands Joe's act of retribution is the only kind of justice that makes sense.

When a shockingly tragic incident happens at the onset of Erdrich's *LaRose*, it is five-year-old LaRose Iron who grows up with the responsibility of providing healing to two families' respective members, recalling the young Tanner's emphasis on choosing to act in ways that he calls "right and just" in *The Falcon* (27). In *LaRose*, Erdrich relies on

omniscient narration to reinforce an Objiwa rather than mainstream form of long-lasting, time-honored retribution. Here, too, one finds Erdrich's belief that in life one moves forward or backward, that it is not possible to retain a motionless course. As the young John Tanner recounts, "Among the Indians, I saw that those who were too young, or too weak to hunt for themselves, were sure to find someone to provide for them. I was also rising in the estimation of the Indian and becoming as one of them" (26). Excelling at hunting, Tanner provides moose, elk, bear, even beaver to his family and to others. Holding the mantle of an Objiwa centers on stepping in and taking charge, including in the matter of revenge, an accepted and expected way of life. In this vein Tanner recounts an incident after one of their party was found hung to death: "We were now on the path of the retiring war party which had killed our chief, and to which this man had belonged. The Ojibbeways threw down the body, beat, kicked, and scalped it" (127).

Similar in manner to *The Round House* and *Love Medicine*, *La Rose* pertains to a tragedy that organizes the structure of the remaining narrative. In all three Erdrich works, highly personal tragedies metonymically represent the continued difficulties existing on tribal lands. And though the three works thematically suggest atonement, *La Rose* alone offers restitution in the form of substitution. When five year old Dusty Ravich is killed, it falls on the shoulders of his best friend, similarly aged LaRose Iron, to atone for his father's hunting mishap by serving as Dusty's replacement in the Ravich family. Landreax Iron, described as a "devout catholic" and "devoted to his family and car[ing] to the point of obsession about his clients" (3, 6) works as a physical therapy assistant while training to become a dialysis technician at the Indian Health Service Hospital. In the good-living, fallen patriarch, Landreaux, one finds a modicum of resemblance to the biblical tale of Abraham/Isaac in that LaRose must sacrifice himself to atone for his father's sin. Erdrich's *La Rose* offers the reader a contrasting view. Neither community nor church can compete with this form of restitution. As a fifth generation LaRose, the five-year-old LaRose becomes an embodiment of ancient wisdom who mediates the way forward for both the living and those deceased.[9]

Maggie Ravich, La Rose's loosely adopted sister, also specializes in restitution, what John Tanner would likely call justifiable revenge. Maggie stands up for her new brother's cause when the class bully, Dougie Veddar, takes a pencil and stabs LaRose with it. In a later moment intended to avenge LaRose's injury, Maggie's friend Sarah pulls back Dougie's arms as Maggie "reared back and kicked him between the legs" with "her hard-soled shoes" (123). Maggie is punished by way of school suspension, but later that evening she further pun-

ishes herself in her attempt to mirror the painful injury LaRose had sustained. Maggie creates her own "tattoo" by first asking LaRose who was "almost six" to stick her the way "Veddar stuck you" (124). Because LaRose refuses,

> Maggie gripped the needle-sharp pencil like an ice pick. She peered at LaRose's tattoo and licked her lips. She made a light mark on her arm the same place as his. Then she lifted her hand, drove the pencil into her arm. The tip came off. She threw the pencil across the room and fell onto the bed, kicking, holding her arm, biting the pillow to smother her noises. (124)

Focused on vengence, Maggie confesses to LaRose she is glad Veddar almost died—"'He choked on that candy bar. I smashed it down his throat. . . . He turned blue as a dead person. Even maybe he was dead until Mr. Oberjerk lifted him up by the ankles and shook out Veddar's puke. You saw it all, right?' LaRose nodded. 'So now you know what revenge looks like'" (125). In *LaRose*, one observes the clash of violence and innocence, so much so, that Erdrich appears to be saying that restitution for injustice is not only often warranted, but encompasses many facets including intent, introspection, and expediency, one in keeping with John Tanner's narrated sentiment.

One uncovers in the 1956 printed U.S. version of Tanner's 1830 published *Narrative*, editor Noel M. Loomis's belief that "The *Narrative* has the full ring of truth and sincerity if one remembers that this was, to all effect, an Indian speaking." In the three introductory materials of the editions of the work found in this country, the editors remain convinced Tanner had retained his Indianness (xii).[10] Loomis also emphasizes the tenor one perceives in Erdrich's own introduction, that Tanner, intrinsically different from both societies to which one might say he had belonged, was basically a just person. As Loomis points out, "if anyone doubts Tanner's innate decency, he has only to read Tanner's matter-of-fact relation of homosexuality among the Ojibways to realize that here was a man truly sophisticated (in that he pointed no finger of reprehension) but also truly conventional, for while he did not cast aspersions on those who practiced it, neither did he want anything to do with it himself" (xii). In the matter-of-fact tone one finds in *LaRose*, particularly in the descriptions of Nola Ravich, one feels a similar lack of judgement more in keeping with the "stuck between a rock and hard place" in which Nola finds herself.

In a relevant scene from the novel in which Nola Ravich feels internal distress—she is unable to let go of her loss of son Dusty, so she clings to

his replacement—Nola perches outside the door to LaRose's bedroom as he plays action figures with Dusty (who died several years earlier). In her attempt to make actual yet symbolic meaning of what she hears, she comes to realize the error of her ways: "she heard everything." Not merely "an epic battle between light and darkness," past and present, what is and what could have been, passes through the mind of Nola, who continues her downward spiral until she stops resisting the possibility of a new present (271). Nola's predicament is loosely similar to Marie and Lulu's, whose continued strength depends on their ability to pass through time and space (the two unite as allies after Hector unexpectedly dies). Dusty's death is characterized as unspeakable at best. Nola, within this moment of heightened awareness, perceives that her inability to integrate her son's loss in her life is related to her resistance to the changing materiality of life. The words Nola hears LaRose utter, indicating the actual and symbolic presence of Dusty as one of the action figures, helps her to perceive that her loss of Dusty now explicitly signifies her loss of self because Dusty resides in the heart and mind of LaRose. In this moment, Nola understands LaRose's presence as Dusty's replacement is meant to help her see the truth of the situation, to not only heal from the loss of her son, but to move forward with the strength provided because of *her* love of Dusty. Plus, this is the moment in which Nola perceives that LaRose's presence in her family functions specifically as a healing agent, not a replacement. As most of Erdrich's novels are about the healing power of "love medicine," *LaRose* is no exception. In her omniscient narration, Erdrich characterizes Nola for much of the novel in terms of continued stasis, unable to live moment to moment, gathering and regathering who she is with what lies ahead, hence Nola has remained unable to coalesce what she knows with what she does not. That is, until the day she listens to the "two boys, playing," appearing to her like "shapes of beings unknown merging deeply with the known" – the one she has lost and the one she has gained, allowing Nola to uncover her true gain, the chance to cherish both her unique circumstance *and* self (272). The following day, Nola burns the green chair she keeps in the garage—symbolizing Dusty's continued presence—because she now understands that Dusty lives in her heart and mind.

Similar to *Love Medicine* and *The Round House*, *LaRose* offers readers the qualities that endeared Tanner to Erdrich in her youth and works. In *Love Medicine* June, Marie, Lulu, and Lipsha simply do not care for their birth mothers who have rejected them; instead, they draw on an inner strength derived from the ancestral community to which they become a part. The emphasis on communal support further is suggested by the multiple viewpoints displayed in alternating chapters

and the interweaving of lineages noted by the family tree that opens the book. In *The Round House*, Joe cannot wrap his head around why his mother will neither reveal who raped her nor give his father Mayla's file, so he seeks and finds answers inside and outside the bounds of family, home, and reservation. Finally, in *LaRose,* the sad Nola Iron is challenged to love her daughter Maggie because she lacks the ability to integrate the loss of her son Dusty. Erdrich describes LaRose in terms keeping with the persona of John Tanner who persistently helped his adopted Objiwa family and as an adult adopted several parentless children—LaRose and John Tanner possess Objiwa honor.

In Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, *The Round House*, and *LaRose*, compelling children such as Lulu and Marie, Joe Coutts and Cappy, LaRose and Maggie create change in their respective communities by their fearless actions, not so different from John Tanner who adapts to his changing environment, which endears him to his adopted Objiwa family/community in *The Falcon*. Quite similarly, Erdrich's dynamic children relentlessly pursue aims that border on the impossible: children who live by the code typified by John Tanner's recalled childhood words: "I kept moving about to the best of my power" (23). In a similar vein Erdrich sees the ins and outs of her life in ways that the countless readings of Tanner's *The Falcon* have provided, claiming, "living life on her own terms is 'how I got to be the way I am'" (Kirch 8). Through seeing the reality of life through the eyes of innocent yet maturely minded children who capably mete restorative justice, Erdrich's novels offer readers the medicine they seek, displayed particularly in the light-reaching-into-the-dark touch she aptly portrays in her characters' heady lives. In reaching back to John Tanner's narrated autobiography, *The Falcon: A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*, Louise Erdrich reaches beyond *Love Medicine*, *The Round House* and *LaRose* to show readers that through the hearts/hands and inspiration of children, restorative justice has little to do with morality and much more to do with what Erdrich terms "decency." [11]

Notes

1. Erdrich is a mixed-blood member of the Turtle Mountain Band of the Ojibwa. Her maternal grandparents lived on the Turtle Mountain reservation, near to the wooded land beyond, Erdrich notes in her introduction to *The Falcon*, "where Tanner once joined an ill-fated early nineteenth century Cree war Party" (xi). Ojibwa, also spelled Ojibwe or Ojibway, are also called

Chippewa, or by the name Anishinaabe. The Algonquian-speaking North American Indian tribe resided in what are now Ontario and Manitoba, Can., and Minnesota and North Dakota, U.S., from Lake Huron westward onto the Plains.

2. For Lydia A. Schultz, *Love Medicine* often "show[s] a world that often does seem disrupted and brutal," but I would maintain that *Love Medicine* is precisely part of Erdrich's continued fascination that began when she was a young girl. My own fascination with the *The Falcon* began when in graduate school I found a first copy in the archives of Chicago's Newberry library. I was struck by Tanner's quest to live authentically his entire life despite the hardships he endured, as well as his resolve to live as an Objiwa, first with an Objiwa family and then by his own parentage. See also Scott Richard Lyons's "X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent," in which Lyons shows how American Native communities have developed economically and ideologically through organizing themselves through the idea of nationhood despite America's sustained effort to inhibit the growth of tribal peoples.

3. See Louise Erdrich's "Rose Nights, Summer Storms, Lists of Spiders, and Literary Mothers," in which Erdrich discusses her writing process.

4. Louis Owens describes the beginning of *Love Medicine* as "an illumination of liminality—a conflation of Christian religion and Native American mythology, of linear/incremental time and cyclic/accretive time—on the 'morning before Easter Sunder'. . . [relating] June Kashpaw on the move. . . . like the [opening of a] traditional trickster narrative" (55-56).

5. I am compelled to admit to the investigative seed of this paper, in particular where in *The Round House* I heard in Erdrich's words the similar sentiment she has voiced in the forward of *The Falcon.* In the scene, Erdrich situates Joe "look[ing] from one of [his] parents to the other. Behind them in the next room the shelves of old books stood mellow in the dip of shadow at twilight. . . . was . . . *The Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*. . . ." (307).

6. For a thorough investigation of restorative justice found in Erdrich's *The Round House*, see Laura Castor's "Louise Erdrich's *The Round House*: Restorative Justice in a Coming of Age Thriller." See also Seema Krupp's "From Revenge to Restorative Justice in *The Plague of Dove*, *The Round House*, and *LaRose*," in which she outlines both current legal and historical implications to the novels Erdrich calls "The Justice Trilogy."

7. See Michael Anthony Hart's "Indigenous Worldviews, Knowledge, and Research: The Development of an Indigenous Research Paradigm," in which he describes the purpose of rituals and ceremonies – to promote subjective reflection through nuanced experience (8).

8. For most Indian nations, if they are federally recognized, there are degrees of recognized sovereignty, meaning in theory that "land grabs" are supposed to be negotiated fairly through arbitration between two sovereignties. In practice, however, there is little room for negotiation because the U.S. government, ultimately, may opt to use the land for purposes they deem appropriate and

necessary, including for reasons such as natural resources, economic development, and zoning property issues.

9. According to contextual information Erdrich provides in *LaRose*, the book takes place in 1999. Within the mention of previous time frames, the name LaRose spans across multiple generations, briefly accounting for other LaRoses, but *LaRose* mainly focuses on the current one, a fifth-generation name carrier. In *The Round House*, the father of Joe Coutts (Basil) mentions a friend of his wife's (Geraldine) named LaRose. The historical vignettes detailing previous LaRoses suggest both that knowledge and wisdom are brought forth to namesakes by way of lineage and that giving a child a family name infuses particular properties in that person. By way of his name, LaRose has been bequeathed medicine or healing power.

10. In the second U.S. edition (the complete version appeared over one hundred and twenty-six years after the first, in 1956), Noel M. Loomis writes in his introduction that Tanner's narrative

> is not a flowery and sensational tale of adventure, as were most Indian captivity stories of that time; it is rather a study of Indian life and customs, and would be much better known if it had been more readily available. But until 1956, the book did not exist except in more than the first edition and is classed as quite rare. It was printed in New York in 1830 by G. & C. & H. Carvill; in London also in 1830; in Paris (French translation) in 1835 without the vocabularies; in Leipzig (German translation) in 1840 without the vocabularies. A partial mimeographed edition was produced in this country in 1940, but otherwise this work, which in all respects is deserving of the term 'classic,' has been almost inaccessible to most persons. It would seem, therefore, that the present edition is a real service to students of the frontier. (xvi)

11. See Erdrich's videotaped appearance to enthusiastic readers in Chicago, Illinois at the Chicago Humanities Festival on May 24, 2016, titled "LaRose: An Evening with Louise Erdrich."

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From Saint John's Day to the Octave of the Feast of Mary Magdalene in the Prose *Lancelot*: The Hero Poisoned by Love

David S. King

In the thirteenth-century French Prose *Lancelot*, the eponymous hero, inspired by his love for King Arthur's wife, Guenevere, becomes the finest knight in the world. With that combination of prowess and inspiration, the text appears to celebrate that adulterous love, yet several episodes in the later stages of the romance prophesy the end of Lancelot's supremacy among knights. These adventures feature the Holy Grail or foretell the ascendancy of Lancelot's son, Galahad, the sinless knight. In that respect, the romance prepares readers for the austere values of the next installment of the *Lancelot-Grail* cycle, *La Queste del Saint Graal*. But to Carol Dover and David Hult, the prophetic episodes read like interpolations with no real connection to the romance's love story (67-68; 15, 62-63). Similarly, Fanni Bogdanow sees the romance as presenting separate worlds with mutually exclusive ideals, one realm in which Lancelot's love for the queen grants him victory and another where that love frustrates his prowess (3-4, 13-14). In the Prose *Lancelot*, however, these worlds are not entirely distinct from each other, particularly not if one considers the hero's adventures that take place between Saint John's Day and the octave of the feast of Mary Magdalene in the final third of the romance. Figurative elements of this interlude represent Lancelot's love for the queen as a source of harm rather than inspiration in adventures both prophetic and not.

In between the dates in question, Lancelot encounters a number of nameless maidens, including King Pelles's daughter with whom he conceives his son. Away from Pelles's kingdom, two maidens, analogs for Pelles's daughter, save Lancelot from poisoning by serpents. One maiden does so at a spring, and the other maiden at a well. The hero's adventures with these maidens identify his love for the queen as a venom, one that weakens his body and degrades the quality of his chivalry. Lancelot, who previously fought villains and enemies of King Arthur, kills instead those who merit his help or friendship. At the end of these adventures, chapter LXXXIV recapitulates his interactions with the maidens and his battles, in figurative terms, at two tournaments held on the octave of the feast of Mary Magdalene. At these

tournaments, following the queen's instruction, Lancelot fights against friends rather than enemies, and other elements of the chapter recall Lancelot's poisonings and his sexual congress with Pelles's daughter. Within the chapter and the adventures that it echoes, repeated references to Mary Magdalene recall for readers the licentious woman who repented of her sin. The reminder furthers the suggestion of chaste love or love of God as a salubrious alternative for the romance's adulterous couple. In short, the tournaments and the adventures they reference, both those overtly prophetic and those not clearly so, prepare readers for the austere values of *La Queste del Saint Graal*, where the sinless Galahad rises to the pinnacle of knighthood.

Thirty-three chapters before the tournaments, Lancelot crosses paths with an old woman whom he earlier promised to follow whenever she asked for his help. She obliges him to leave the queen's company "entor la Saint Johan" ("around the feast of St. John"; 2:228, 4:305).[1] The feast day recalls the day Lancelot was knighted. The Lady of Lake insists on that day because, as she says in words echoing Matthew 11:11, John the Baptist "fu li plus haus hons de gueredon et de merite qui onques en feme fu concheus par carnel assamblement" ("was the most laudable and meritorious man that a woman ever conceived through fleshly union"; 7:258, 3:116). According to Pauline Matarasso, the choice of June 24 for Lancelot's dubbing ceremony suggests that he was "conceived from the outset as a forerunner." Although Lancelot is a laudable and meritorious man, and some of his adventures announce the saintly knight to come, the author does not model Lancelot after John the prophet. Instead, Matarasso explains, "[i]f Galahad is a type of Christ, Lancelot, on the same level, is a figure of Adam," the man who ate of the forbidden fruit and then, filled with the knowledge of good and evil, covered his shameful parts with fig leaves, sinning first in pride then in lust (115).[2]

The first adventure to which the old woman leads Lancelot furthers the suggestion of the hero as just such a forerunner. She takes him to a picnic on the grass by a spring under the shade of two sycamores on a very hot day "conme a feste saint Jehan" ("as on the feast of St. John"; 4:133, 5:67). Unaware that snakes have poisoned the water, the hero, to slake his thirst, drinks from the spring. Having ingested the venom, Lancelot loses consciousness, and his body takes on the appearance of a corpse. Although the queen plays no explicit role in the scene, the text identifies her as the cause of the hero's misfortune. When Lancelot first sees and falls in love with Guenevere, the narrator compares her beauty to that of a spring (7:274, 3:123), and when the old woman tears Lancelot from the queen's company, she sits beside a spring under a sycamore (2:276, 4:328).[3] Earlier in the romance, the text also likens the

queen to a snake. A wiseman, citing Merlin's prophecy, tells the hero's friend, Galehaut, that he will die when deprived of Lancelot's company and "li serpens al chief d'or . . . qui le vos toldra, ce sera ma dame la roine" ("the golden-headed serpent . . . who will take him from you is the queen"; 1:57, 4:28).

That Lancelot's poisoning surprises the picknickers implies that water from the spring ordinarily poses no danger, yet in Lancelot's presence, the serpents and water cohabit. The creatures emerge from the spring, letting picnickers and readers know the source of the poison; the serpents then "si rantrent en la fontainne" ("slithered back into the spring"; 4:135, 5:68). As the infection progresses, Lancelot sheds his skin, nails, and hair, and his legs become swollen. Because the romance otherwise presents the physical beauty of knights in general (7:249, 3:112) and of Lancelot in particular (7:271-74, 3:122-23) as an emblem of their inner virtue, the hero's disfigurement at the spring must imply his moral degradation. Given that Lancelot's torment comes from the water and serpents identified with the queen, it seems the author would have readers understand the hero's love for the queen as corrupting Lancelot's body, and by extension, his soul. Guenevere thus represents the temptress Eve for the romance's figure of Adam.

A maiden at the spring ultimately provides the antidote to the hero's physical suffering, and her success implies a potential moral cure for the carnal passion he shares with the queen. Although the maiden of the spring's initial ministrations with herbs meet with some success, she develops an unrequited affection for Lancelot. Despairing that he could not love her, she becomes ill and bedridden, and, without her help, his condition worsens. Yet persuaded by Lancelot's cousin, Lionel, that Lancelot will return her love, she recovers and nurses the hero back to health. Her love for him initially appears to be unchaste, inspired as it is by the quality of his flesh, so Lionel seems to betray the maiden's trust as an expedient to save Lancelot's life because the hero has not, in fact, consented to love her as he loved the queen. However, when the hale Lancelot tells the maiden that he refuses to break faith with a lady whom he loves, no matter how unchaste the maiden's desire may have seemed, she expresses no disappointment. She instead tells Lancelot:"je vos aing en autre manniere que fame n'ama onques home, car amors d'ome et de fame vient par charnel atouchement dont il couvient que virginitez soit corrumpue" ("I love you differently than any woman ever loved a man, for love between man and woman comes from carnal knowledge that requires the corruption of virginity"; 4:157, 5:78). She promises to preserve her virtue out of devotion to him, provided that he serve as her platonic *ami* whenever fortune brings them together. In sum, their requited and chaste bond restores her health,

allowing her to cure him of the poison representative of his unchaste love for the queen.

On their parting ways, the maiden of the spring asks Lancelot for a gift that will symbolize their love. The item that Lancelot bestows upon her underscores the venomous nature of his bond with the queen. He offers the maiden a "ceinture a membres d'or . . . que la roine li avoit donnee" ("belt . . . with golden sections that the queen had given him"; 4:159, 5:79), thus a gift that recalls the queen as "li serpens al chief d'or" ("the golden-headed serpent"; 1:57, 4:28) of Merlin's prophecy. She wanted Lancelot to join King Arthur's forces in the battle at Saxon Rock. During a pause in that fight, Lancelot and Guenevere consummate their love, so the belt evokes that carnal union and the hero's sexual fidelity to her (8:444, 3:441). While representing the chaste bond between the maiden of the spring and Lancelot, the gift also foreshadows his infidelity to the queen in that he cedes the symbol to a young woman who resembles King Pelles's daughter. Additionally, the accessory wrapped around the maiden's waist foreshadows the lethal threat the queen will pose to her at the tournament when Guenevere fears her lover's infidelity.

The motivation for the tournaments arises from the same the libidinous love evoked by the spring and serpents. Longing for an absent Lancelot, Guenevere tells Lionel that "le voldroie veoir et avoir en tel maniere, s'il pooit estre, que li roi ne li baron nel seussent" ("I'd like to find some way to see and hold him, if possible, so that the king and barons will not know anything about it"). The choice of date further ties the tournaments to libidinousness. Knowing that Lancelot is ill, Lionel suggests that the queen encourage Arthur to announce a tournament to be held at Camelot, one delayed long enough to allow Lancelot to recover, so "as huitaves de la Magdelainne" ("on the octave of the feast of Mary Magdalene"; 4:147, 5:73). As will become apparent later, the Mary Magdalene celebrated is not the woman identified by that name in the Gospels, but the Mary Magdalene of hagiography, a blend of female figures found in the New Testament. According to Jean de Mailly's thirteenth-century legendary, *Abrégé des gestes et miracles des saints*, the woman was from "une illustre famille" ("an illustrious family") who, before repenting of her sins, "s'abaissait aux voluptés charnelles" ("abased herself in carnal pleasures"; my trans., 244).

Although the maiden of the spring cures the hero of the venom that symbolizes his adulterous love, she cannot rid him of the love itself. Just as the hero misdirects his affection, so he allows the misdirection of his prowess inspired by that love. In the adventure that immediately follows his departure from the spring, the old woman whom Lancelot met around St. John's Day draws him into a family feud. At

her behest, he sides with a group of brothers who have murdered their father, sister, and brother-in-law. In battle, Lancelot beheads the brother's uncle, the Duke Calles. The narrator, who ordinarily refrains from judging the hero's deeds, describes the result as a "granz domages" ("great pity"; 4:162, 5:80). Up to this point in the romance, Lancelot has slain no named characters other than those that the narrative identifies as cruel, treacherous, or enemies of King Arthur. In the battle with the duke, Lancelot's martial feats anticipate those at the tournaments where he fights against friends, for he nearly kills Gawain's brother, Gaheriet, who fights alongside the duke. After the battle, Lancelot wants to meet the valiant knights against whom he has fought, until he realizes that they include, in addition to Gaheriet, his brothers, Guerrehet and Agravain. Then "[s]i est tant dolanz de ce qu'il a esté contre els en ceste bataille que il ne set qu'il doie faire" ("he was so distressed at having fought against them that he did not know what he should do"; 4:163, 5:81) and hides himself from them. The text does not use the word *honte* (shame) to describe Lancelot's regret, but his hiding from Gawain's brothers puts the feeling on display. The battle has him playing the role of hero while acting on behalf of the parricidal and fratricidal knights.

Lancelot's entry into the grounds of the Grail Castle reprises the motifs of his poisoning at the spring, further underscoring the origin of his corruption. As he nears the main tower at Corbenic, a maiden in a basin implores him to remove her from "ceste eve qui m'art" ("this water that burns me"; 4:202, 5:99). When he succeeds in doing so, the spectators lead him to a cemetery below the tower. They show him a tombstone with an inscription that, in veiled terms, indicates that whoever lifts the stone will engender Galahad. Urged to lift the stone, Lancelot obliges and quickly dispatches the beast that flies from the grave, "le plus hideuz serpent" ("the most hideous serpent") that "li giete feu envenimé" ("spit poison fire"; 4:202-03, 5:100).[4] The text does not say what heats the water in this adventure, but the proximity of the basin and the fire-breathing serpent, both near the tower, suggests the serpent as the source of heat. The hero comes to the maiden's aid rather than the other way around. In that sense, the role reversal casts Lancelot as the virtuous party, yet whereas the maiden of the spring resolves an infection within the hero's body, at Corbenic, Lancelot liberates the maiden from an external torment. Freed from the water, she falls at Lancelot's feet "et li baise la jambe" ("and kissed his leg"; 4:202, 5:99), and the town's people then take her to a chapel. Her humility, the people's merciful treatment of her, and the inscription imply that she was imprisoned and tormented in the basin through no fault of her own. In that misfortune, she resembles the people of the Land

Beyond, a kingdom, in Pelles's words, "tant . . . deserté et essillié" ("so long destroyed and laid waste"; 4:204, 5:100). Just as Lancelot liberates the maiden from the basin, so will he free Pelles's kingdom from its torment by conceiving Galahad. Readers can, therefore, understand the serpent, the poison fire, and the burning water as representing Lancelot's sin with the queen for which his fatherhood provides a temporary antidote.

Lancelot's time within the castle also parallels his stay at the spring. Pelles presents him with an alternative to his love for the queen, asking the hero what he thinks of his daughter, to which Lancelot replies: "de damoisele ne vi je onques si bele; de dame ne di je mie" ("I've never seen such a beautiful maiden: I speak only of maidens, not ladies"; 4:206, 5:102). Pelles, and the reader, understand this response as a rejection of his daughter, despite her great appeal. The subterfuge that causes Lancelot to break faith with his lady recalls the slaking of the hero's thirst at the spring. He is given a "coupe" ("cup") filled with a "boivre . . . plus estoit clers que fontainne" ("potion . . . more sparkling than spring water"; 4:208, 5:103). The words describing his enjoyment of the potion also recall his reaction to the cool water from the poisoned spring. Lancelot "la boit toute plainne et troeve la poison bonne et douce" ("emptied it and found the potion sweet and good"; 4:209, 5:103).[5] The potion represents the same corrupting love as the venomous water at the spring, for rather than make him desire Pelles's daughter, the brew causes him to mistake her for the queen. Reminding readers of Lancelot's role as forerunner, the text indicates that the hero knew the maiden "com Adam fist sa fame" ("as Adam knew his wife"). Nonetheless, the narrative sees fit to distinguish Lancelot's desire from Adam's—who knew his wife "leaument" ("faithfully")—saying that Lancelot acted "en avoutire" ("in adultery"; 4:210, 5:104).

Their sexual congress means that, unlike the maiden of the spring, Pelles's daughter does not remain a maiden. The text, nevertheless, offers assurances that if Pelles's daughter does not remain a maiden in deed, she maintains her virginity in thought. The narrator tells us that she sleeps with Lancelot not out of "luxure ne por eschaufement de char come ele fait por le fruit recevoir dont toz li païs doit venir a sa premiere biauté" ("lust or bodily desire, but so as to receive the fruit that would restore that entire land to its original beauty"; 4:210, 5:103). When she can no longer participate in the Grail procession because of her lost virginity, she "ploroit tandrement" ("wept tenderly"; 4:271, 5:132) and reproaches her father for having deprived her of what she valued most.[6] The loss and the regret for that loss occur in the realm of the Grail, yet the parallel between the virtue of Pelles's daughter and

that of the maiden of the spring identifies chastity as a virtue even outside of that realm.

Adeline Richard and Anne Berthelot see the parallel between the maiden of the spring and Pelles's daughter without reading the maidens' resemblance or their roles in pious terms. To Richard and Berthelot, the maidens do not represent a different kind of love for Lancelot but are simply rivals for Guenevere—young women whose charm the hero cannot entirely resist (Richard 276; Berthelot 11). In their view, the romancer refrains from denigrating the hero's love for the queen. According to Richard, "la valeur exemplaire du couple adultère n'est pas tant remise en question qu'elle n'est nuancée" ("the exemplary value of the adulterous couple is not so much questioned as it is nuanced"; my trans., 267). Berthelot asserts that the maidens, along with "les coulisses de Corbenic se prêtent à l'expérimentation amoureuse plus qu'à l'expérience mystique" ("the halls of Corbenic lend themselves more to amorous experimentation than to mystical experience"; my trans., 14). But interpretations develop from what the critic chooses to examine. Berthelot devotes her attention exclusively to female characters interacting with Lancelot—the maidens and Guenevere. Richard reads the Prose *Lancelot* in tandem with the Prose *Tristan*, a thirteenth-century romance that borrows heavily from the *Lancelot-Grail* cycle but without the same interest in the moral implications of chivalry.

Richard takes note of the figure of Mary Magdalene in the *Lancelot*, though only of the saint as a feature of the liturgical calendar.[7] Because the text repeatedly mentions her feast day in conjunction with Lancelot and Guenevere, Richard sees the saint as representing the couple's "personnage émblématique" ("emblematic character"), one whom Richard identifies as "la femme luxurieuse puis repentie" ("the luxurious then repentant woman"; my trans., 188). Although a luxurious woman may serve as an emblem for the queen, the analog in Guenevere for the saint's repentance is less evident. Richard points to a temporary abstinence that the queen imposes upon herself and Lancelot when Arthur sends her into exile much earlier in the romance. Yet temporary abstinence does not constitute repentance, and the period of self-restraint indicated ends long before the tournaments on the octave of the feast of Mary Magdalene, a moment where the queen represents the luxurious woman. An explanation for the prevalence of the saint's name in the latter stages of the romance must lie somewhere other than in the romancer's desire to identify the queen with the repentant saint.

The scene in which Pelles's daughter evokes the saint in her prayer to Lancelot offers an explanation. When the potion he drinks at Case Castle has worn off, the hero understands that he has been deceived.

Enraged by his involuntary infidelity to the queen, he raises his sword above the head of the young woman whom he has known carnally, saying: "je ne voil que jamais decevoiz home en tel manniere com vos m'avez deceu" ("I don't want you to ever trick another man as you've tricked me"). He can imagine no explanation for the deception other than her dissoluteness, but her posture and plea identify her with a repentant sinner. The narrator tells us that she "est devant lui a genouz" ("was on her knees in front of him") and "li crie merci a jointes mains" ("pleaded with joined hands"), saying "Ha, frans chevaliers, ne m'oci mie por cele pitié que Diex out de Marie Madelainne!" ("Oh, noble knight, don't kill me! Have pity on me as God did on Mary Magdalene!"; 4:212, 5:105). The amalgam of Gospel figures alluded to in this prayer includes the sinful woman in Luke who bathes Christ's feet with her tears and then wipes his feet with her hair.[8] To her gesture of repentance and humility Christ responds by saying "remittuntur tibi peccata" ("your sins are forgiven"; *Vulgata* 7:48; *Revised Standard Version* 7:48). Although Lancelot stands in the place of Christ and Pelles's daughter kneels in that of Mary Magdalene, the romance inverts the moral character of the sinner and the redeemer. Pelles's daughter asks for pity rather than for forgiveness. She sacrifices her greatest virtue for the benefit of others, to restore her father's land "a sa premiere biauté" ("to its original beauty"; 4:210, 5:103). Lancelot, who knew Pelles's daughter "en avoutire et contre Deu et encontre Sainte Eglyse" ("in adultery and in opposition to God and Holy Church"; 4:210, 5:104), contemplates the murder of the mother of his future offspring. The author presents the allusion to hagiographic legend within the realm of Corbenic, but the tournaments at Camelot will produce a confrontation similar to that of the hero and Pelles's daughter in which the maiden of the spring assumes at once the posture of the repentant sinner and the role of redeemer.

Having linked the saint with Pelles's daughter, the romancer further intertwines the daughter's identity with that of the maiden of the spring. The narrative places the maiden of the spring on Lancelot's path immediately after he leaves Case Castle. Beside another spring, Lancelot happens upon the maiden of the spring and her abductors. One of them seeks her love, yet she insists that she has already promised her love to Lancelot. When the spurned suitor prepares to rape her, Lancelot dispatches him, preserving the virtue that the maiden of the spring dedicated to him, the very virtue that Pelles's daughter reluctantly sacrificed during her union with the hero (4:217-18, 5:106-07).

The romance then introduces another analog for Pelles's daughter and one for the maiden of the spring, a maiden connected to the family feud in which Lancelot has become embroiled. The adventure begins

with a reminder of the tournament scheduled for the "huitaves de la Magdelainne" ("octave of the feast of Mary Magdalene"; 4:297, 5:144). After revealing his name, Lancelot finds himself overpowered by thirty knights, all working for a nephew of the late Duke Calles. They throw Lancelot into a well where "les couluevres et l'autre vermine" ("snakes and other vermin"; 4:301, 5:146) attack him, so the venom of serpents once again swells his body and puts him in fear of death, and a maiden comes to his rescue. A niece of the duke extends a rope to the hero, allowing him to climb out of the well. Because the rescue occurs at night, she invites Lancelot to sleep in her bedroom within her father's castle. In extending the invitation, she resembles Pelles's daughter who welcomes the hero into her bedroom, motivated by charitable impulse rather by than libidinous desire. When the maiden of the well's family realizes that she has aided Lancelot, they set about punishing her until the hero rides to her rescue, much as he thwarts the rape of the maiden of the spring after leaving Case Castle.

The serpents and venom recall the corrupting influence of the queen's love on the hero, but the adventure at the well presents no alternative to that love. The maiden of the well voices no amorous interest in the hero or even casts an admiring glance his way. Similarly, in Richard's words, "la demoiselle au puits laisse Lancelot parfaitement indifférent" ("the maiden of the well leaves Lancelot perfectly indifferent"). Richard reads that indifference as a sign of Lancelot's success in resisting temptation and, therefore, erasing "l'échec initial" ("the initial failure"; my trans., 280) of his attraction to the maiden of the spring. However, if the romancer wished readers to understand Lancelot's indifference in that way, the text would likely indicate some temptation for the hero to resist. Whereas, independent of Lancelot's appreciation, the narrator highlights the beauty of the maiden of the spring (4:134, 5:67) and that of Pelles's daughter (4:205, 5:101), the text says nothing about the maiden of the well's appearance, other than to call her "tandre chose" ("a tender creature" 4:309, 5:148). The faint physical description coincides with the narrative's suggestion that she is not of the same moral fiber as her counterparts. Pelles's daughter gives birth to the peerless Galahad, and the maiden of the spring heals Lancelot of the venom he drinks from the spring. The duke's niece, by contrast, heals neither land nor body. Although she provides Lancelot with a means of escape from the well, the responsibility of caring for the hero's health falls instead on an older woman whom the narrative mentions in passing (4:331, 5:155-56).

That healing does not occur until after all the men in the maiden of the well's family have died fighting Lancelot. In other words, the hero kills or chases them to their deaths while still infected with the

venom representative of his love for the queen. The aftermath of those killings suggests that the maiden of the well bears a greater moral resemblance to Lancelot than to either Pelles's daughter or the maiden of the spring. Uncertain of her father's fate, the maiden of the well describes the man as "fel et cruex" ("cruel and evil"; 4:308-09, 5:148). The description appears to lessen the moral burden weighing on Lancelot's prowess or on the love that inspires it, but the narrative offers no support for the maiden's words, other than her family's treatment of the hero and of her after she intervenes on his behalf. Her family, on the other hand, knows Lancelot as the knight who sides with their fratricidal cousins and kills the duke. In fighting Lancelot and their cousins, the maiden of the well's brothers and father opposed cruelty and evil. In that battle, Lancelot becomes complicit in fratricide and parricide. After her rescue of the hero, she becomes culpable of the same offenses. Readers should perhaps then understand the maiden's description of her father as a sign either of her moral blindness or of the ease with which her virtue—like that of the hero—can be manipulated to reprehensible ends.

As the tournament on the octave of the feast of Mary Magdalene approaches, she assumes a role that again sets her apart from Pelles's daughter and the maiden of the spring. The maiden of the well serves as a messenger for Lancelot and the queen, and in that service, again shares blame for violence done to those whom the hero would ordinarily protect. First, Lancelot sends her with a letter to the queen, and then the queen sends her back to Lancelot with the instruction that he fight against the knights of the Round Table at the tournament. Because King Arthur expressed the fear that his side would lose the upcoming tournament without Lancelot's participation, the knights of the Round Table responded that, although Lancelot "est li mieldres chevaliers que nos conneussions onques" ("is the best knight we've ever known"; 4:349, 5:163), they could win without him or even against him, if he were to fight for the other side. To punish their presumption, the queen wants Lancelot to shame the knights of the Round Table so much that "il n'oseroient jamais les testes lever" ("they'll never dare raise their heads again" 4:350, 5:163). Lancelot complies with the queen's wishes, doing to the knights of the Round Table what he did to the men in the maiden's family. He "coupoit . . . testes et braz . . . . occiant ce qu'il ataint" ("cut off . . . heads and arms . . . . slaying all he encountered"; 4:359-60, 5:167–68).[9] Even in tournaments where Lancelot fights against strangers his blows are ordinarily not so drenched in blood.

Ordinarily, Lancelot would also carry the day, but at this tournament, love impedes more than it inspires his prowess. He catches sight of Guenevere and, "quant il l'a grant piece esgardee" ("after he had

gazed at her a long while"), grows so weak that King Bademagu must grab hold of Lancelot to keep him from falling. The hero then lies in the king's arms "comme se il fust morz" ("just as if he were dead"), words echoing those at the spring where he drinks the poisoned water.[10] The allusion to that earlier adventure becomes apparent when knights ease the hero to the ground and "le descendent desouz .II. siquamorz auques pres d'une fontainne" ("laid him down beneath two sycamores near a spring"; 4:363, 5:169). The tournament's participants and spectators wonder what affects the would-be champion, but readers understand the reference to Lancelot's poisoning at the spring "desouz l'ombre de .II. sicamors" ("beneath the shade of two sycamores"; 4:133, 5:67). In this instance, no snakes poison the water. The figurative venom comes instead from the lady represented elsewhere by a serpent. In the hero's absence, the knights whom he championed against the knights of the Round Table "furent desconfit" ("were defeated"; 4:364, 5:169). When King Arthur asks that the survivors choose the best knight of the tournament, they name Lancelot's cousin, Bors, who fought alongside the knights of the Round Table.

During a much earlier tournament at Pomeglai, Lancelot also experiences disgrace (2:96-101, 4:239-41). In that instance, however, Lancelot performs poorly because the queen demands that he do his worst. In doing so, she amuses herself and confuses the other knights about the identity of the one who until that moment has defeated all opponents. Having accomplished her goals, she allows Lancelot to reverse course and win the day. At the tournament at Camelot, on the other hand, Lancelot fails to carry out the queen's desire, and the text makes plain that he fails because of his love for her. The location and cause of this failure, taken together, imply that what debilitates the hero in Corbenic also weakens him the worldly realm.

Compounding the allusion to the poisoning at the spring beneath two sycamores, the narrative turns the reader's attention to the maiden who nursed Lancelot back to health. The queen, distressed at Lancelot's condition, notes the presence of "la damoisele qui la ceinture avoit ceinte qu'ele ot jadis donee a Lancelot" ("the maiden wearing the belt she had once given to Lancelot"; 4:364, 5:169). Although readers know the accessory as a symbol of the chaste love between the maiden and the hero, the queen reads the belt differently. She recognizes love as the culprit in Lancelot's collapse but fears that Lancelot swoons for the young woman. Summoning the maiden to her side, the queen pretends to speak on behalf of another lady and accuses the maiden of stealing Lancelot's heart, saying "c'est la corroie pour qui vos serez occise ainz que vos issiez de cest païs, veraiement le sachiez" ("it is the belt that will be the death of you before you leave this land, I assure you in all truth").

Thus, the narrative reinforces the notion of the queen as serpent and her love for the hero as a potentially lethal venom. In response to the queen's threat, the maiden "chiet aux piez la roine et li crie merci tout em plorant et li dist: 'Dame, por Dieu, aiez merci de moi'" ("fell at the queen's feet and tearfully begged her for mercy, saying 'My lady, for God's sake, have mercy on me'"; 4:368, 5:172). The queen's threat, the maiden's plea, and the posture of the two characters recall Lancelot's angry reaction to his involuntary, but real, infidelity to his beloved. As in that earlier moment, the pleader represents the virtuous figure, the chaste healer without whom there would be no more Lancelot and therefore, no Galahad. Guenevere, standing in the redeemer's place, resembles the woman in the prayer of Pelles's daughter, though not the saint, for the queen has yet to embrace repentance. At the tournaments on the octave of the feast of Mary Magdalene, she incarnates the proto-saint who abases herself "in carnal pleasures" (my trans.; Jean 244).

The narrative then underscores that very appetite, for satisfied that the maiden of spring represents no threat to the hero's love for her, Guenevere turns her attention to Lancelot. She sends word to him, asking that, recovery permitting, he make his way stealthily to her bedchamber within Arthur's castle. Lancelot complies, and the queen chases away her attendants and locks the doors. Alone with each other: "jurent toute la nuit ansamble et ot li uns de l'autre toute la joie qu'il avoient si longuement desirree" ("they lay together all night long and had all the pleasure in each other that they had hungered for so long"; 4:379, 5:176). Having satisfied one appetite, the queen seeks to sate another. She urges Arthur to call a second tournament. At this contest, Lancelot carries the day, a result that one might consider a return to form if not for his love's choice of opponents. At the queen's behest, Lancelot again fights the knights of the Round Table, wounding Gawain and slaying other would-be companions in arms. So although Lancelot's body recovers from the poisoning, the narrative suggests that the queen's venom continues its corrosive effect on the hero.

The chapter's coda, a recapitulation of his adventures beginning with his encounter with the old woman around Saint John's Day, underscores that suggestion and points to the allusive character of the tournaments on the octave of the feast of Mary Magdalene. Arthur asks Lancelot to recount all the adventures that he has known since he last left court, with the proviso that "vos jurerez sor sainz que vos chose ne direz ou il n'ait verité et que por honte qui soit ne celeroiz aventure qui vos avenist" ("you will swear on the holy relics that you will speak nothing but the truth and will hide no adventure you had, no matter how shameful"; 4:393, 5:182). Having so sworn, Lancelot tells of his adventures with the maiden of the spring, the maiden of the well, and his

killing of Duke Calles and his nephews. Lancelot, nonetheless, elides the night he spent with King Pelles's daughter, in the words of the narrator, "por sa dame la roine cui amor il cuidoit perdre, s'ele en seust la verité" ("for fear of losing the love of the queen, if she knew the truth"; 4:395, 5:183).[11] In an ironic turn, Arthur praises the perjurer and berates the tournaments' losers for their "orgueil" ("pride"; 4:398, 5:184). The king naively embraces the hero's triumphs, but readers may recognize pride as one of the hero's vices, not only in that moment but also in the quest for the Holy Grail, even after he repents of his love for the queen.[12]

From around St. John's Day to the tournaments on the octave of the feast of Mary Magdalene where the queen stands over the weeping maiden, the narrative revolves around Pelles's daughter, directly or allusively. The maiden of the spring and the maiden of the well rescue Lancelot from the venom of serpents, much as he liberates another maiden from water roiled by a serpent at Corbenic. Outside the Grail castle, the heat, water, and serpent suggest the hero's congress with Pelles's daughter as a figurative and transient inoculation against adulterous desire, poison that he imbibes from the lady whose beauty resembles that of a spring. Lancelot's body recovers from the poisonings, and he regains his ability to defeat opponents in battle, but the text suggests that a moral infection persists within him. Rather than champion the weak or the righteous, he fights alongside villains against the virtuous. Because the queen obliges him to reprise that incongruous role at the tournaments, to fight against his customary brothers in arms, readers may understand the hero's desire for her as the source of his corruption. The narrative underscores this notion at Camelot where the queen embodies the serpent, and her venom fells the hero. The maiden of the spring, echoing the attitude of Pelles's daughter menaced by Lancelot's sword, recalls the saint invoked in the mother-to-be's prayer, and in consequence, identifies Guenevere as a lady in need of contrition. The hero's love for her still guides his martial deeds, but to no good end. In this interlude, adventures both prophetic and those not explicitly so anticipate a world in which carnal passion enervates the hero, a world where his son, Galahad, assumes his place as the finest knight in *La Queste del Saint Graal*.

Notes

1. All quotations of the romance are from Micha's edition, indicated by volume and page. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are from Lacy's edition, indicated by volume and page. Translations are by Kreuger (volume 4), Kibler (volume 5), and Burns (volume 6).

2. See Genesis 3:1-7.

3. Kreuger translates "fontaine" as "fountain" because this particular spring is indicated within the same adventure as "la Fontaine as Fees" ("the Fairies' Fountain"; 2:276, 4:328).

4. Kibler translates "serpent" as "dragon."

5. At the poisoned spring, Lancelot "prant .I. coupe . . . l'amplist de la fontainne, si la boit toute plainne et la troeve bonne et froide" ("took a cup . . . filled it in the spring, and drank it down and found the water cool and good"; 4:134-35, 5:67).

6. Kibler gives the past progressive "was weeping tenderly."

7. Similarly, Walter considers mentions of the saint only as a "repère chronologique" ("chronological indicator"). In his estimation, episodes linked to July 22 "n'entretiennent intrinsèquement aucune relation soit avec le personnage même de la Madeleine soit avec le contexte religieux de la fête qui lui est attachée" ("maintain no intrinsic relation with either the character of Mary Magdalene nor with the context of the religious festival attached to her name"; my trans., 1445-46).

8. On the creation of the hagiographic myth of Mary Magdalene, see Anna Fedele, pp. 7-8.

9. Kibler translates "coupoit" as "split."

10. At that spring, Lancelot "gist em pasmoisons en autel manniere com s'il fust morz" ("lay in a faint just as if he were dead"; 4:135, 5:67).

11. Kibler translates the beginning of the same line: "because he was afraid of losing the love of his lady."

12. See pp. 138-45 and 253-56 in Pauphilet's edition or 6:86-90 and 6:155-56 in Lacy's edition.

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Emerson and Other Minds. Idealism and the Moral Self. Volume I. By Michael J. Colacurcio. Baylor University Press, 2020. xxix + 341 pp. $49.99 (paper). *Emerson and Other Minds. Idealism and the Lonely Subject*. Volume II. By Michael J. Colacurcio. Baylor University Press, 2020. xi + 482 pp. $62.60 (paper).

Becoming Ralph Waldo Emerson

Full disclosure: I once published an appreciation: "Michael Colacurcio is currently our premier stylist, which is saying a lot." I'm happy now to report that he hasn't lost a step, connecting "a village atheist like Paine" to Pound via Stein (I 43), dueling sermons by 1830s Unitarian co-pastors to Black sibling rivalry in 1970s sitcom ("What you mean, 'arguments?'" [I 62]), and tyro Emerson's pronouncement, "'the end of living is to know,'" to a model "Personal Statement of a would-be graduate student" (I 102). Maybe the most subtle play of all comes before any of these in Colacurcio's title; who among us is sufficiently erudite and interdisciplinary to recall theologian Alvin Plantinga's 1971 *God and Other Minds*? Thank Over-Soul our jobs allow some to improve with age.

An extremely ambitious couple of books, and two that advance the field in at least four ways:

1.) They confirm what by now may not have needed confirmation, which is that major Americanists—Barbara Packer, Sacvan Bercovitch, Lawrence Buell—have for at least a generation been claiming that Emerson is the inescapable first big man of Mattheissen's famous five—something the students Professor Colacurcio occasionally consults in both books might contest ("some neighboring sentences do not seem to know about one another. Indeed more than one student of mine has suspected that Emerson suffered from some higher form of ADD" [I ix]). Consult the popular culture, L.L. Bean catalogs or Don Henley, and the distinction would have gone to Thoreau; consult the last MLA survey of college and university American literature teachers and it would have gone to the cynosure of Professor Colacurcio's 1984 first major book-length intervention.

2.) They confirm Philip F. Gura's hailing Professor Colacurcio as one of at least two "prophets without honor in the field," this as much for Colacurcio's old-school insistence that morality remains central, not just for Hawthorne and Emerson back then but for us in latter days ("Would you really wish away your idea that right and wrong are different?"; "no part of man's religious instinct has ever been quite false" [II

379, 386]), as for his scrupulous insistence that the severities of Puritan piety seldom if ever betrayed a "crescive" (Colacurcio taught the word to this non-Latinist) anticipation of our latter-day indeterminacies.

3.) They establish, I'd guess for at least all foreseeable future, the organic wholeness of Emerson's career. That his writing evolved gradually from Unitarian preachments to "a-theistic theodicy" (II 390) is being argued in such voluminous and closely-read detail as may well pretermit any future claim—Stephen Whicher is the only fellow major Americanist with whom Colacurcio takes explicit, frequent, but characteristically gentle, issue throughout—that Emerson grew out of naive and sunny optimism into mature and gloomy skepticism.

4.) They imply a connection between the evolution of an individual talent and that of tradition in the US in ways that herald epochal change. It's not just Emerson who's heading inexorably toward the glories and tribulations of the andropocene but the national culture that Professor Colacurcio sees Emerson as epitomizing ("And forgive us, just a little, for a selfishness that is structural before it ever becomes a settled feature of anybody's personal will"; "Not object but subject is the point of departure"; "The Scandal of the Subject" [I xxviii, I 24, II 129]). And this not just Professor Colacurcio's contemporary insight, but even—clairvoyantly?—an early nineteenth-century insight of his subject, even as early as the sermons: "'There are truths now being revealed. There is a revolution of religious opinion taking effect around us, as it seems the greatest of all revolutions which have ever occurred'" (I 107).

There's a fifth, even more deeply implicit but to me even more encouraging achievement. Professor Colacurcio demonstrates once again, and at even greater length, how critique—I suspect he might gag at this characterization—can both celebrate (even worship, "worship" redefined by Emerson as "utterly intransitive—to the point where it lacks even an indirect object" [I 27-28]) its subject while also playfully indulging a stylistic and structural flair that often equals, even competes with, that of its subject. Thus "he was, among other things, the most gifted writer of prose alive in the mid-nineteenth century," having written "the most intellectually demanding and stylistically accomplished essays in any human language" (II 107, 353), but also these: "all psychoanalytic wiseass" (I 46); he takes his parishioners "on a sort of educational thrill ride" (I 52); "he had indeed learned to do all the voices: Frost, Ware, Channing, even Jesus" (I 274); "Love . . . such as 'Oz never gave the Tin Man'" (II 34); "such slogans of self-reliance as might script the acrid sweetness of a Nike commercial" (II 184-85). And, structurally, the occasional, casual, slip into life-writing: "As all of us who have studied Latin in High School surely know, namely: 'drill, the

power of routine'"; "Some dull days in what was otherwise a respectable Jesuit high school" (II 333, 395). Preceded in the first volume by fully four paragraphs relating painful departures from the UCLA English Department that conclude Chapter 3, "What Happened to Holiness?"

There remains, of course, the perennial need somehow to redeem—or repent, one of Professor Colacurcio's favorite words—Emerson's neglect of what we must now, after Cornell West, update as race matters, which I suspect is beyond the repair even of Professor Colacurcio's surpassing rhetorical skills. As way ahead of his time as Emerson may have been concerning subjectivity, there were some four million or so subjects in the US against whose atavistic, paleo-reactionary subjugation Emerson has seemed to many, including non-casual professional readers, to have been late to advocate. Yes, "prolepsis if not prediction: will they not be throwing things at the stage from which Emerson denounces all those who return with complacency some hapless fugitive from the American South?" (II 66), but if "somewhere, surely, somebody must really have cared about the Bodies of Black Folks" (II 299), it might only have been such minor, largely underpublished, underread, and underappreciated contemporary figures as Thaddeus Stevens, certainly not any of Matthiessen's five big men—although Hawthorne might have more 'splainin' to do than Emerson. To borrow one of Professor Colacurcio's phrasings, W.E.B. Du Bois was not yet. And this is to say nothing of that other, even longer neglected inequality: "Feminists would be better pleased had he said 'selfhood' instead of 'manhood'"; "Emerson is cogent just so long as gender is not a relevant consideration" (I 88, II 359). To borrow another, and how.

"Which is why Waldo Emerson is not the only writer we read" (II 351). Professor Colacurcio credits Emerson with having "read everything," with having "read just about everything" (II 268, 273), and he modestly predicts that more books will be forthcoming on the topic of "Emerson and Other Minds." I'd predict that anyone audacious enough to broach the topic in the future will have no choice but to focus on Professor Colacurcio's Emerson as much as on Emerson's Emerson, whoever that chimera might be, however that chimera might be fantasized. And I'd predict also that anyone who tries will have to endure the anxiety of the influence primarily not of Emerson but of Professor Colacurcio. (Early Harold Bloom is referenced several times in both volumes.) Emerson's reading list was relatively slight. Professor Colacurcio's, on the other hand . . .

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Consumption and the Literary Cookbook. Edited by Roxanne Harde and Janet Wesselius. Routledge, 2021. 254 pp. $160 (hardcover), $48.95 (ebook).

In the edited collection *Consumption and the Literary Cookbook*, Roxanne Harde and Janet Wesselius define literary cookbooks as books with cooking instructions that "blend generic conventions and plait gastronomy with narrative" (3). This broad definition includes a group of cookbooks that represent the foods of fictional worlds, such as *Alice Eats: A Wonderland Cookbook* and *The Anne of Green Gables Cookbook,* examined in Wesselius's contribution to the collection (15-26), and the cookbook based on the HBO series *Treme,* examined in Harde's essay (216-227). Literary cookbooks can also be conventional cookbooks with significant narrative elements, such as Ronni Lundy's *Victuals: An Appalachian Journey with Recipes*, published in 2016 (examined in Stacy Sivinski's essay, 190-202) just as easily as they can be unpublished nineteenth-century manuscript cookbooks (Avery Blankenship, 177-189). The term *literary cookbook* also applies to food memoirs, such as Pat Mora's *House of Houses* (Meline Kasparian, 41-51) and Michael Twitty's *The Cooking Gene* (Brita Thielen, 64-76), as well as novels such as Monique Truong's *Book of Salt* (Shuyin Yu, 52-63) and the Broadway musical *Waitress* (Allison Kellar, 149-60). What binds these primary texts together under the umbrella of *literary cookbook* is their ability to connect the imaginative world of narrative and text to the embodied experience of cooking and consumption. Readers can participate physically and intellectually in the stories they read through cooking and eating with the instructions literary cookbooks provide.

Consumption is a key unifying factor of the collection, encompassing the literal consumption of food, the economic consumption of texts as goods, the figurative consumption of story and information. The collection is divided into three parts: "Textual Consumption," "Consumption and Community," and "Cultural Consumption." All the essays in Part One are about cookbooks connected in some way to another narrative text like a novel or memoir, establishing the basic definition of the literary cookbook as intertextual, genre-bending, and

boundary-crossing. These essays question the utility of dividing texts that are easily categorized as "literary" from cookbooks, which some readers still resist classifying as literature. Each examines the implications of fictional worlds spreading beyond the pages of their original texts for readers to consume their favorite stories and characters in new ways that are not strictly possible without the interactive scripts provided by recipe text.

Part Two, "Consumption and Community," is less about the relationship between texts and more about the relationships between readers/users and texts/authors. The essays examine how the text of cookbooks gives evidence of the practices of communities or how cookbooks create imagined communities of readers. Interestingly, though–none of the cookbooks in this unit are what we call community cookbooks. They are all commercially published and canonical texts such as Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (Caroline Barta, 93-106) and Peg Bracken's classic *I Hate to Cook Book* (Katherine Kittredge 120-133). Barta argues that Child's cookbook hails an audience of "Servantless Cooks" who come to see themselves not as kitchen drudges but as a creative, cultured, and empowered community consuming the same book (105). The essays suggest that readers may consume cookbooks as imaginative literary texts while simultaneously consuming recipes as instructions for performing identity and community.

Part Three, "Consuming Culture," focuses on the potential for cookbooks and cooking narratives to make space for voices that might not make it into our history books or common knowledge—from nineteenth-century hired cooks (Blankenship) to the ancestors of slaves (Nicole Stamant's analysis of Edna Lewis's cookbooks, 203), New Orleans fusion chefs (Harde) to innovative residents of Appalachia (Sivinksi). These cookbooks represent cultural objects that can be consumed as economic goods in the marketplace or as cultural performances in the kitchen.

Harde and Wesselius–and the contributors in this volume–make a convincing argument that writers of literary cookbooks are self-consciously engaged in a kind of play. In *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*, Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman define play on its most basic level as "free movement within a more rigid structure" (304). The conventions of the cookbook genre may appear at first glance to be too rigid for much variation, but the expansive corpus of texts examined in *Consumption and the Literary Cookbook* shows that significant literary expression, creativity, artistry, and cultural work are being done in the choices that writers make as they subvert and conform to conventions of genre.

The diversity of the collection is perhaps best represented by Erin MacWilliam's essay, "Taste in Question: Recipes and Subjectivity in *Martha Stewart Living, goop,* and the Early Printed Cookbooks of Hannah Glasse and Ann Cook" (161-176). MacWilliam's analysis draws a historical connection between eighteenth-century household manuals with recipes and the twenty-first century lifestyle empires of Martha Stewart and Gwyneth Paltrow. The essay represents the genres of conventional cookbooks, magazines, television shows, and blogs to discuss the implications of making the domestic and private work of cultivating a "lifestyle" into a public action of exchanging the cultural capital of "taste." The breadth of time, geography, genre, and authorial identity covered in this collection is reminiscent of *Consumption and the Literary Cookbook*'s foremothers: Anne Bower's collection *Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1997) and Janet Floyd and Laurel Forster's *The Recipe Reader: Narratives, Contexts, Traditions* (University of Nebraska, 2003; Routledge, 2017). This new collection is a welcome addition to these oft-cited and groundbreaking texts.

Consumption and the Literary Cookbook contributes new insight into the intersection of literary studies and food studies. The collection is a wide-ranging meditation on the cookbook as an object for literary and cultural study. Each contributor brings a primary text for analysis that expands and complicates the understanding of what is *literary* and what is a *cookbook.* Together, they demonstrate a framework for applying recognizable literary theories and analytical methods to texts that have been on the margins of what is considered eligible for the status of literature. The essays are brief (most running ten to fifteen pages) and appropriate for both students and scholars. Perhaps the greatest contribution of the collection is simply more variations on the recipe for doing scholarship at the intersection of literary and food studies.

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Race & Nation in Puerto Rican Folklore: Franz Boas and John Alden Mason in Porto Rico. By Rafael Ocasio. Rutgers University Press, 2020. xv + 239 pp. $34.95 (paper).

Documenting the Documenters of Nation-Building Puerto Rican Oral Culture

One of the problems of being Puerto Rican is that the facts of your history are always open to interpretation and, thus, to argument, so that they end up weak, or as no facts at all. This is one of the reasons why a national of a country like Puerto Rico (sometimes a country, sometimes a territory, most days an idea) grapples constantly with the concept of national identity, sooner or later arriving at the ambiguous notion of the cultural country.

As Rafael Ocasio proposes in *Race & Nation in Puerto Rican Folklore: Franz Boas and John Alden Mason in Porto Rico,* a cultural country has no physical borders. Only emotional ones. Its citizens do not live "in" it or "outside" of it (*allá afuera*). Instead, what binds them together is the glue of recent memory, the things told and remembered and, at some point, lived in common. In other words, the living culture.

In the case of Puerto Rico, with its great influx of world-recognized artists—singers, writers, dancers, composers, playwrights, and more—the cultural offers a refuge for those exhausted of searching for concrete national connection in the political sphere. Like the chicken who searched for his mother in the classic children's tale, we spend lives asking, is Puerto Rico a country? Or does it belong to the United States? Are you the Puerto Rico I belong to? And does that mean I belong to the United States? Who are you really, and are you my country, *coño*?

These are some of the questions Ocasio's book (boldly) proposes through his analysis of the historical importance of Boas's trip to Puerto Rico in 1915, through them forcing us to go beyond what we know: that we are a country annexed. Owned by another. Given citizenship so our master (or to be more insulting, our "parent") country would not be embarrassed on the global stage. (The United States does not like to be labeled an empire. A ruler. A colonizer. It seems you cannot be that *and* be a beacon of democracy at the same time.)

And, let's be clear, these questions are still needed because, without great answers, the issue of Puerto Rican national existence continues unresolved well over a century later, and questions asked in the context we know so intimately, that of cultural creation, might be the most effective way to finally arrive at clear cut notions of Puerto Rico's ex-

istence as a *patria* to many more than the "one million two hundred thousand souls" who first dared ask in the early 1900s.

To that end, Ocasio cites political figure Luis Muñoz Rivera (in an incredible instance of foreshadowing the work and impact his son Luis Muñoz Marín would later go on to achieve with the establishment of the *Estado Libre Asociado*) as part of the background scene informing that phase of cultural intervention from which the canon of Puerto Rican folklore would later emerge. As Rivera said: "The Puerto Ricans, as all men on earth, love national independence. To all solutions they prefer that which would make them an independent and sovereign nation. But they are an intelligent people; they are thoroughly acquainted with the obstacles that would bar the success of their paramount ideal. Actuated by their patriotism, they are at present moved to fight for practical reforms that may allow them to insure their predominance in the affairs of their country" (qtd. in Ocasio 45).

Enter Franz Boas and John Alden Mason, whose field work in Puerto Rico (1914-1915) as part of the Scientific Survey of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands, ultimately produced one of the largest collections of oral folklore available today from a Spanish-speaking country or territory, providing crucial additional foundation to the cultural country that Puerto Rico still is.

Now, this is not to say their work was without fault. Boas (about whose whereabouts in Puerto Rico so little was known) and Alden Mason neglected to take into consideration the many political and power structures influencing the context of their work. And yet, by documenting the documenters in *Race & Nation in Puerto Rican Folklore*, scholar Ocasio preserves that important behind-the-scenes context of what made possible the rescue of this instance of the island's vital foundation. By making the texts more accessible to the citizens of the cultural country via the clear, compelling telling of the story surrounding them, he creates a space in which enduring identity might be found and claimed.

As might be evident by now, the importance of this last contribution cannot be overstated. Without it, we keep searching. We wonder if the cultural country that holds us is real, or if we imagined it. We try to prove (even to ourselves) that what we feel unequivocally, this love of our island, is based on concrete events or patterns. That our birth in this block of sun and salt makes us who we are, and that who we are is a particular subject not shaped by mere chance or the arbitrary thrusts of political winds.

Because Puerto Ricans struggle with even those basic terms: country, *patria*, citizenship, identity, belonging, they focus on what they know without doubt: they are Puerto Rican (here or on the moon, as

the song says) and that is not about to change. As proof, the number of plebiscites celebrated in Puerto Rico since 1967, the year I was born, over half a century ago. It is almost as if politicians need us to feel unsettled. To believe that we are not property, when we are. A territory of the United States passed on and passed around by Spain like a human trafficking victim with no rights other than those our master has deigned to "give" us while seeking to avoid being identified as a colonizing imperialist power.

This is why folklore (culture) is so powerful when it comes to Puerto Rico, and why the documenting of early, original, organic history — in this case the almost two dozen original tales recently made available on the web — of that culture is nothing less than revolutionary. There is no autonomy of soul or brain without identity. And there is no identity without history that can be trusted.

That's the landmark contribution of *Race & Nation in Puerto Rican Folklore:* tying the political notions of race and nation to culture, to the history made by Puerto Ricans about things political and not. Focusing on the manner and point of view of cultural expression instead of on the laws, covenants, and treaties governing the destiny of the political entity. Making the statement that Puerto Rico existed before, like a living child with customs and thoughts and art and music, literature, and a philosophy. The child, in other words, had been raised and had a language it knew how to use to create worthy works.

Thus, now, we can more clearly point to specific years of study, by people who were not Puerto Rican, finding culture created here before the United States ever set a figurative foot in the Caribbean. We can see their passion for what they thought "Porto Rico" could be, and their fear that it would all disappear soon if these oral histories were not preserved. We can point to the writings of American financial reporters and scholars and trace the efforts that turned our country into a business paradise ripe for takeover in the service of financial interests in "the mainland." We can listen to the short stories, recognize the fables told us as children and rejoice that nobody has to tell you who Juan Bobo was or was not. (If you know who Juan Bobo was, you are certainly Puerto Rican, a passport made of culture.) We can rationalize the failure of our early literature to ignite the imagination of regular Americans and celebrate the heroism of teachers of the early eighteenth century in serving as basic storytellers of island culture and literature.

And one aspect, in particular, suggests further work by scholars: the interesting role of editor Aurelio M. Espinosa, into which Ocasio delves insofar as he presents the reasons for his outsized impact on the stories he revised, with his animosity toward Mason, and his long working

relationship with Boas: "In spite of the fact that Juan Bobo was a distinctively jíbaro character immersed in geographical coordinates very similar to those of the Puerto Rican countryside, Espinosa classified him as a protagonist in the section of "cuentos picarescos" (picaresque stories). Indeed, like the traditional literary picaro (scoundrel), this Puerto Rican trickster often escapes trouble by means of ingenuity or a type of rural knack; however, most Juan Bobo stories are set in an unnamed tropical-like rural setting" (93).

These clarifying details are why documenting the documenters in context, with data, is so life-giving and identity affirming for Puerto Ricans, since, if a country is not recognized as its own, is it still a country? And if it isn't, what identity-less hell is visited on millions of talented, creative, loving, hard-working people the world over when they themselves do not know exactly what and who they are?

With *Race & Nation in Puerto Rican Folklore*, Ocasio, then, makes his impact on the future of his island, as well as on a future in which we study and document small, still colonized, nations, and by doing so state that they are not expendable. That no nation is.

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The Romantic Tavern: Literature and Conviviality in the Age of Revolution. By Ian Newman. Cambridge Studies in Romanticism 125. Cambridge University Press, 2019. xiii + 279 pages. $29.99 (paper)

Ian Newman's extensively researched account of the importance of the tavern to Romantic-era political and literary culture is essential reading for scholars and teachers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it will appeal to a broader readership with an interest in British cultural studies. In his introduction, Newman relates the late-eighteenth-century tavern to the Addisonian idea of the coffeehouse, pointing out that both cultural institutions serve as an ideal fantasy of sociability. While the coffeehouse figures as a place of polite sociabil-

ity and political progress (as in Habermas), the tavern is the nexus of "convivial sociability." Newman describes the "pillars of conviviality" as humor, sentiment, and mutuality (25). This "convivial sociability" is a mode of social interaction crucial to the formation of political and literary identities in the eighteenth century and beyond. In his review of previous scholarship on Romantic sociability, Newman credits Gillian Russell and others for examining the "literary" not as a static canon of texts but as a "dynamic process that is historically constituted" (5). He states his debt to Russell's account of how "feminized fashionable sociability" transformed Romantic culture, and declares his intention to follow these critics' lead in "looking anew at the institutions of the masculine associational world, with an expanded sense of their functions" (5).

The book is divided into two parts, "Tavern Space" and "Tavern Genres," and the first part examines two influential taverns, their physical spaces, and their representations in media, in order to make an argument about the taverns' political and social importance during the 1780s and 1790s. Chapter One, "The London Tavern: Edmund Burke, The East India Company, and Literary Men," uses Newman's groundwork from the introduction to portray the tavern as a more polite space than the early eighteenth-century tavern, with the newer version designed for its grandeur of accommodations and ability to host public assemblies. This incarnation of the tavern (now sharply distinguished from vulgar alehouses), was a center of commercial and political business in the city of London. From 1768 to 1876, the London Tavern was the home of East India Company dinners, but in his *Reflections* of 1790, Edmund Burke associates these commercial classes with what he sees as the seditious and socially destructive activities of the Revolution Society, which also met at the London Tavern. While Newman's focus on the tavern as a space of masculine sociability underpins this chapter, he mentions Gillian Russell's reading of the division between male and female sociability in the 1760s and 1770s, in order to add that the London Tavern's hosting of balls and other female-attended entertainments at this time could point to a less exclusively masculine representational identity for the Tavern than might be apparent to present-day scholars from historical newspaper reports.

The following chapter focuses upon the Crown and Anchor, as it was renovated in 1788, becoming a venue more open to women, catering "both to masculine convivial gathering and feminized fashionable sociability" in its hosting of both masculine meetings and social entertainments for women and men. However, because of the political power of its sociability, the tavern is regarded with suspicion by cultural critics as varied as the then-conservative-leaning cartoonist

James Gillray and the radical William Godwin and members of his circle. Godwin opposes this convivial version of the public sphere because of its mixing of irrational form of pleasure with the serious business of rational conversation (94). Newman reads the meetings of the mixed-gender Anacreontic Society (a group that included convivial singing in its polite sociable musical performances) as a progressive development in the inclusion of women in masculine tavern society, but he acknowledges that the Duchess of Devonshire's attendance at one of the masculine post-supper convivial (obscene) singing events was a gender scandal that resulted in the dissolving of the society in 1791 (105). Men's demand for "humor" at these convivial gatherings, he claims, was coded in the newspapers to imply the obscenity that excluded female attendees. Ultimately, then, masculine and feminine sociability began to interact with and shape each other (in productive tension) at the still largely gender-constrained gatherings at the Crown and Anchor in the 1790s.

In the second part of the book, "Tavern Genres," Newman moves from the actual tavern as cultural nexus to the literary and popular genres that tavern society shaped. Chapter Three, "Political Ballads: Captain Morris and the Convivial Whigs," delves into the fascinating life, artistic creations, and performances of Captain Charles Morris, an Irishman who rose to fame through his witty political ballads. Although his first famous effort was written in opposition to the Fox-North coalition, the prominent Whig Charles James Fox won Morris over to his side (apparently through convivial friendship), and Morris began writing for the Whigs. Reports indicate that Morris's songs had the power to produce a "zealous frenzy" through the humor and conviviality of his performances of his songs (119). Morris's performances for masculine tavern society included representations of fashionable female sociability as a significant political force in graphic obscene songs including "The Plenipotentiary" (about the social escapades of a foreigner with an enormous penis). However, there is a tension between Newman's insistence that these songs' humor, also enjoyed by women, aligned with Whig principles of including "the people" (131), and his analysis of the public denigrations of the political activist the Duchess of Devonshire due to her supposed enjoyment of Morris's obscene songs (121). The social example Newman gives of inclusion of women in the audience at a Morris performance specifically states that the song was not one of Morris's obscene compositions, but the anti-Pitt ballad "Baby and the Nurse" (123-124). Newman argues that the account of this performance suggests that "feminine 'fairness' might be harmoniously assimilated into masculine convivial ritual" and that "conviviality was by no means the exclusive domain of men" (124), but these claims are less well-sup-

ported than the larger frame of his argument, which posits the shaping of masculine conviviality by the co-presence of feminine sociability in tavern culture.

In the next two chapters, covering the genres of "Anacreontic odes" and "bawdy and lyrical ballads," Morris turns his attention to some literary figures of the traditional Romantic canon: Thomas Moore, John Keats, and William Wordsworth. The "Anacreontic odes" chapter is perhaps the most fascinating and innovative of the entire book, scrupulously detailing previous scholarship on the poetry of drinking in the Romantic period, and the convivial societies' embrace of the Anacreontic songs of Captain Morris, understood by their listeners not as obscene but as "expressions of a highly regulated and elegant civility" (157). Morris writes and performs these songs for the influential and long-lived Sublime Society of Beef Steaks. When Thomas Moore (known as Thomas "Anacreon" Moore because of his translation of the *Odes of Anacreon*) writes sentimental Anacreontic poetry for the *Irish Melodies*, he transforms masculine conviviality into a sentimental lyricism that rejects the possibility of conviviality, and expresses the Irish melancholy about imperial English rule. Keats's "Nightingale" completes the "lyricization" of Anacreontic verse by moving from convivial sociability to imaginative interiority (174). The next chapter on "Bawdy and Lyrical Ballads" shows Wordsworth performing a similar lyricization and moral regulation of the seditious popular ballad form. This chapter is essential reading for any teacher of Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*.

Newman's final chapter, "Toasting: Political Speech, Convivial Art," addresses some of the concepts mentioned in the introduction and not yet addressed in earlier chapters. Exploring how toasts reveal tensions between "community-oriented identities" from the eighteenth century and nineteenth-century individualistic beliefs, Newman discusses how toasts function to pair wine with generous "sentiments" (207). In his introduction, he has already described "sentiment" as one of the three pillars of conviviality, and a short passage from it serves to illustrate his practical distinction between the genre of "toasts and sentiments" and the much-discussed concept of eighteenth-century "sentiment." He writes: "Collections of toasts and sentiments were ubiquitous among convivial literature, appearing at the back of convivial songbooks and in guides to toasting protocols. [. . .] toasts reveal the public nature of sentiment, showing the social orientation of ideas and opinions that might otherwise be misunderstood as private feeling" (27). His reading of the toasts in Scott's *Waverley* uses this conception of the collective affective attachment to publicly proclaimed ideas in order to suggest

that Scott retains the toast as a unifying, sociable form, while depoliticizing it.

Newman's book has so much that is of value for Romantic studies that I have delayed mentioning a few limitations until the end of this review. There appears to be a major slipup by author and series editors in the early pages of the introduction, where a sentence reads: "An emphasis on humor, pleasure, and mutuality—the three pillars of conviviality—meant that the tavern's influence over political discourse could at times be more indirect [. . .]" (3). However, later in the introduction, Newman's middle pillar becomes not "pleasure" but "sentiment," and this expanded definition of sentiment is much more congruent with the book's argument than this earlier mention of "pleasure" as a pillar. Newman also underacknowledges his debt to Steven Earnshaw's *The Pub in Literature* (Manchester UP 2000). For instance, when Newman describes the history of the tavern and writes, "In the early modern period, a strict hierarchy existed between inns, taverns, and alehouses" (9), a footnote is badly needed to Earnshaw's chapter "The Falstaffian State," which both historicizes taverns as licensed wine-selling establishments (46) and clearly ranks inn, tavern, and alehouse as hierarchized social establishments (54).

Finally, one of the most convincing clarifications in the book of the difference in genders regarding participation in convivial tavern pleasure occurs at the end of Chapter Two, when Newman acknowledges how the masculinized and mixed-gender spaces of the Romantic tavern do not mean that women were given greater access to masculine sociability by the tavern as an institution. Here, Newman plainly acknowledges what is sometimes obscured by the readings of mixed-gender instances of tavern-associated conviviality: that masculine convivial pleasure could not be shared by women of this period. His compelling study of this often-bawdy form of sociability is transformative in its reading of the gendered political world and the literary and cultural significance of the conviviality of the late-eighteenth-century tavern.

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