The University of Southern Mississippi

The Aquila Digital Community

Dissertations

Spring 5-2008

Metoikos: Modernism's Resident Aliens

Justin Glen Williamson
University of Southern Mississippi

Recommended Citation

The University of Southern Mississippi

METOIKOS: MODERNISM'S RESIDENT ALIENS

by

Justin Glen Williamson

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

May 2008

The University of Southern Mississippi
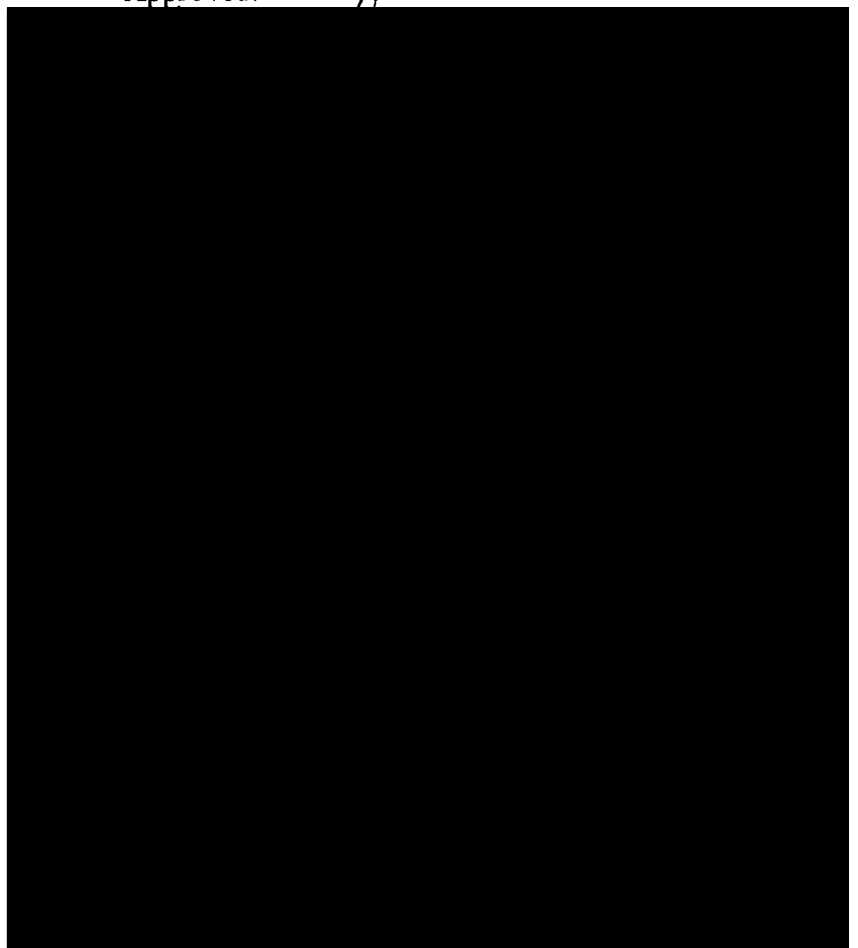
METOIKOS: MODERNISM'S RESIDENT ALIENS

by

Justin Glen Williamson

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2008

ABSTRACT

METOIKOS: MODERNISM'S RESIDENT ALIENS

by Justin Glen Williamson

May 2008

This dissertation examines why D.H. Lawrence, Joseph Conrad, T.S. Eliot,

Ezra Pound, and James Joyce all conceived of themselves as cultural outsiders and

how they used this ostensibly marginal social status to conceal a set of conservative

core values they sensed were eroding. This otherwise disparate group shared a sense

of cultural alienation, recognized the potentially powerful position of the exile, and

demonstrated a keen willingness to exploit its possibilities. Although these writers

have long been acknowledged and heralded for their experimentation, their technical

and formal innovation, much of their work springs from essentially conservative

impulses, beliefs, and values, aimed at combating powerful social forces they saw as

changing human consciousness, interaction, and society in many problematic ways.

Instead of embracing what we now consider central features of modern life such as

rapid technological advance, urban life, and secularism, the writers under

examination here register both ambivalence and deep suspicion toward these

phenomena.

In these writers' work, one of the most scrutinized and dubious aspects of

modernity is a kind of capitalistic, corporate paradigm modernists find extremely

objectionable because it threatens to restructure all social relations in terms of

artificial corporate interests such as speed, efficiency, organization, and exchange

value. In startling and complicated ways, the cultural anxieties manifested in the work

of these writers demonstrate keen discomfort with the rapidity and spectacle of the profound social changes to which they would bear witness. One of the primary strategies by which these writers coped with dizzying social change was through their collective disavowal of their society's participation in those changes. In both feeling like aliens and in consciously seeking exile, these writers occupied a powerful social position from which to make pronouncements and pass harsh judgments on cultures to which they claimed only a grudging connection. The modernist writers examined here demonstrate their penchant for assuming roles vastly at odds with their own experiences through their engagement in various forms of cultural ventriloquism, masquerade, and mimicry, a practice that allows them to critique the paradigms of modernity to which they object the most, while appearing to be outside the grip of those very influences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

        Metoikos: Modernism's Resident Aliens, Radical Conservatism, and

        the Performance of Exile

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Metoikos: Modernism's Resident Aliens, Revolutionary Conservatism and the

Performance of Exile

In March of 1945, during the waning days of World War II, T.S. Eliot wrote

and submitted his final column to the *Christian News Letter*. He signed the document

"Metoikos," Greek for "resident alien." Although Eliot was an alien in British society

in the sense that he was not born a subject of the crown, his wry nom de plume

suggests much more than just his immigrant status. Eliot was, after all, perhaps more

the reserved British aristocrat than any indigenous Englishman could claim to be.

Despite his apparent ability to blend into polite society, Eliot experienced a life-long

sense of not belonging even in his chosen country, surrounded by like-minded

intellectuals. This pervasive sense of rootlessness is paradigmatic for a host of

modernists. During his relatively short life, D. H. Lawrence spent most of his

adulthood abroad with his German wife. The polyglot Joseph Conrad embarked upon

a sailing career that carried him to far flung locales at a young age before he settled in

England, while both Pound and Eliot shook loose their American roots in favor of

European and English vistas. James Joyce famously abandoned Ireland for the

Continent as well. Moreover, it is not fortuitous that Eliot chose such a gravid epithet

or that the four other writers under consideration in this study, all consciously adopt

or create for themselves a version of this persona. This particular rhetorical position

boasts a long lineage in the history of Western intellectual development. According to

John Griffith, "the Greeks in the classical period distinguished between the *barbarous*

and the *metic,* the resident foreigner who despite residency possessed only a tenuous relationship to the Greek *polis"* (18). The figure of the resident alien is complicated not least because since the classical era those most keen to take up this role have actually been social elites masquerading as marginalized voices. The paradigmatic figure here is Homer's Odysseus, a keen-witted ruler pretending to be a lowly beggar in order to gain access to the inner halls of power so that he may then in turn show himself to be his peoples' savior. Clearly, none of the writers engaged in the present study could claim royal or noble lineage; however, they did manage to become highly influential through the contacts they made and by insinuating themselves into the highest ranks of the cultural elite. D.H. Lawrence was early introduced to the London literary scene, though he just as quickly repudiated it, by Ford Maddox Ford, who was also instrumental in Conrad's ascendancy. Similarly, both Eliot and Pound were associated with the Bloomsbury Group, a cadre of London intellectuals including Virginia and Leonard Woolf whose stamp of approval carried significant weight in cultural capital. Pound also attached himself to American poetry enthusiast and financier Amy Lowell, a collaboration which he would later repent. At the urging of Pound, James Joyce's patron Harriet Weaver provided him with generous sums. In each of these cases, modernist writers received the imprimatur of the literary and cultural establishment, but then went on throughout their respective careers to insist fervently on their opposition to these very structures. Modernists early recognized the power and resonance of the exile position both to gain access to socio-cultural strongholds and to critique them. This is not, however, to suggest that these writers were just interested in biting the hands that fed them, though they sometimes did.

Positioning oneself as a kind of outsider or exile allows one to at least understandably

unfamiliar with the codes and conventions of the adoptive society. If modernist

writers could through their writing, attitude, comportment, and behavior convince

others of their difference, then they could begin clearing the way for what they saw as

genuinely new artistic insights through their prose and poetry. However, although the

social critique was sometimes articulated in a radical or revolutionary form, much of

the underlying sentiment reveals a pronounced conservative impulse insofar as it

seems to advocate renewed attention to more communalism and reject some of the

most readily-identifiable features of modernity, including corporate enterprise and

technological progression.

"Modern Western culture," wrote Edward Said, "is in large part the work of

exiles, émigrés, and refugees" (*Reflections* 173), adding "our age . . . is indeed the age

of the refugee, the displaced person, mass migration" (174). In his sensitive and

suggestive, albeit brief, meditation on the influence and importance of the exile in

shaping the cultural trajectory of the West, Said poses a deliberately provocative

question:

> Is it not true that the views of exile in literature and, moreover, in
>
> religion obscure what is truly horrendous: that exile is irremediably
>
> secular and unbearably historical; that it is produced by human beings
>
> for other human beings; and that, like death but without death's
>
> ultimate mercy, it has torn millions of people from the nourishment of
>
> tradition, family, and geography? (174)

Said's critique provides a suggestive context or frame in which to view the work of modernist exiles and resident aliens. Although none of the writers under examination here, with the exception of Conrad, whose parents were exiles, were forcibly removed from their towns, cities, or countries of origin, they all experienced a form of self-imposed exile and determined this to be the most viable position from which to challenge the cultures they simultaneously embraced and repudiated. Although Said claims that "views of exile in literature . . . obscure what is truly horrendous" (174) about the condition itself, writers such as Conrad and Joyce, who Said cites, both conceive of themselves as exiles and perform that role, adopting the attitude and imaginatively identifying with the cultural outsider in order to illuminate the complex dynamics of this position and to re-assert a coherent notion of tradition cordial to, even constituted by, voices of multicultural heterogeneity.

Fortunately, for modernist writers, the very beginnings of the Western literary tradition may well be predicated on the archetypal cultural outsider who must make his way through daunting and perilous circumstances in order to return home, reclaim what is rightfully his, and shore up the foundations of a beleaguered tradition. In many surprising ways, Homer's *Odyssey* was itself a kind of guidebook for modernists. Joyce's use of the book in structuring his chapters in *Ulysses* is only the most obvious example of the phenomenon. Modernist writers find in Odysseus a kindred spirit not least because of his separation and alienation from his homeland and the larger society. Odysseus actually benefits in many ways from his travails during his long journey back home. He learns that in order to survive he must rely on his quick wit and cunning. This frequently involves concealing his true identity and

masquerading as someone else. Odysseus's facility in orchestrating convincing performances culminates in the production he puts on that rids Ithaka of its impertinent suitors. Odysseus both feels like and adopts the role of outsider to his own birth culture in order to effect change. In his absence, Odysseus's homeland has certainly taken a turn for the worse. His island home's once rich resources are being depleted at an alarming rate thanks to parasitic pursuers of Penelope's hand, and the younger generation represented by his son has been largely ineffectual, even helpless, in facing the formidable challenges of a besieged court. Odysseus's response to problematic social change—the lesson well learned and practiced by modernists—is to embrace the role of the outsider and exploit its insurrectionary possibilities. I find this a kind of seminal lesson for modernists because they also, like Odysseus, both genuinely feel themselves to be outsiders, and perform that role with gusto because of their shared recognition of its subversive potential. Homer taught modernist writers some very important lessons, indeed.

Odysseus has long been singled out as representative of a particular kind of hero—the sly trickster and wanderer who relies heavily on his intellectual acuity in order to extricate himself from dangerous situations and flourish in less than desirable circumstances. One of the primary strategies by which Odysseus accomplishes his ends is by adopting various personae and pretending to be other than he is. In Homer's epic, the eponymous hero shapes our view of each successive episode in which he finds himself embroiled by drawing attention to the apparent necessity of masquerade. Ostensibly, Odysseus must remain concealed in some fashion to protect himself from those who fail to adhere to codes of civilized behavior. Remaining

hidden also provides Odysseus with safety from Poseidon, who threatens to extend the hapless seafarer's wanderings indefinitely or drown him. Yet, Odysseus's frequent and enthusiastic adoption of various personae also functions as a manipulation of any critical perspective we might assume, allowing him the ability to be both inside and outside of the cultural attitudes, practices, and behaviors upon which he comments and passes judgment. This particular strategy provided an object lesson for modernists who mimic and emulate in order to manipulate and control perspective.

A particularly striking example of this technique occurs on the island of the Kyklopes. Odysseus and his men in need of rest and provisions scour an empty dwelling for supplies only to subsequently learn, much to their collective horror, that the cave's inhabitant is a man-eating giant who finds Odysseus and company an unwelcome intrusion. Of course, we are as horrified as Homer's original audience would have been when Polyphemous dines on Odysseus's unfortunate crew primarily because one of the narrative strategies of the text enjoins us to identify with a particular Greek system of values that precludes the eating of guests. A parallel of this episode occurs on the island of the Phaiakians in which Odysseus praises the Princess Nausikaa and her father King Alkinoos for their apparently limitless generosity toward forlorn travelers. In Odysseus's encounter with Polyphemous, we are positioned as readers in such a way as to applaud Odysseus's ingenuity and deception. Condemned by the prevailing ethos of the epic, Polyphemous's perspective is effectively silenced. He is foreign, exotic, and irremediably other, a mysterious and sinister brute beyond our comprehension.

However, the implicit values of the silenced voice are not at odds with those conventionally endorsed by Greek society. Polyphemous, like Odysseus when he finally returns to his island kingdom of Ithaka, finds his home invaded and overrun by strange men interested in taking what is his. Polyphemous reacts violently, as will Odysseus when he and Telemakhos rid Ithaka of its unwanted suitors. In *The Odyssey*, the effect of difference is created or manufactured through perspectival manipulation. Odysseus masquerades as a foreigner himself, a wandering nobody subject to the whim of the gods and the mortals he encounters. Although Odysseus consciously adopts the position of an outsider to the Kyklopean culture and the narrative explicitly emphasizes difference, the underlying points of convergence are undeniable. Odysseus shores up commonly-held attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions of the dominant Greek culture by masking himself, appropriating the experience of the outsider and creating artificial differences between himself and those with whom he disagrees or whose behavior he finds objectionable. Homer's Odysseus, an archetypal figure in the Western imagination, ushers in a tradition of radical or revolutionary conservatism, and modernists learn that lesson exceedingly well as they rehearse and recuperate disparate and unsettling cultural phenomena into a clear vision of modernity and their role in it. The first step along their path was to embrace the roles of exile, alien, and outsider.

One of the central claims of this study is that Anglo-American literary modernism, even of the highly experimental variety, never posed the kind of threat or danger to tradition that conventional wisdom on the subject would suggest. Since modernism has long been characterized in terms of assault, upheaval, and subversion,

five of the most celebrated among writers of the early twentieth century, D.H. Lawrence, Joseph Conrad, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Ezra Pound have consistently been cast in the role of radical. Because of their proclivities toward formal innovation and rhetorical experimentation, it has often been assumed that the content of their writing, whether prose or poetry, exhibited a similar kind of progressive exuberance, excited and prepared to engage the many possibilities of modernity. However, this is often not the case. In fact, their sometimes extreme stylistic experimentation may be said to at worst mask remarkably conservative or at least highly ambivalent attitudes toward the kinds of progress promised by industrial modernity.

Modernist writers' nomadic tendencies have long been recognized by critics such as Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton. An early work of Eagleton's bears the suggestive title *Exiles and Emigres: Studies in Modern Literature*. In his study, Eagleton maintains that "the unchallenged sway of non-English poets and novelists in contemporary English literature points to certain central flaws and impoverishments in conventional English culture itself . . . the outstanding art which it achieved has been, on the whole, the work of the exile and the alien" (9-10). These flaws, of course, have to do with class issues and relationships in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain. Eagleton goes as far as to characterize "modern English fiction [as] . . . the 'upper class' and 'lower middle-class' novel" (12). Instead of understanding the fiction of those years in light of what Eagleton and others have seen as a kind of cultural failure, I am interested in broadening the discussion out considerably by reading the writers here as producers of aesthetic artifacts pervasively inscribed with profound anxiety and ambivalence. It is through their

collective engagement with, and estrangement from salient forces of modernity, that these writers reveal surprisingly conservative and traditional attitudes masked by their masterful avant-garde technical innovation and experimentation. What complicates the scenario even further is that these writers often find their more conservative impulses deeply unsatisfying as well. Lawrence spent years looking for or attempting to establish a kind of utopian community based on a conservative, patriarchal schematic. He attempted to write these into existence in his later leadership novels set in Mexico and Australia, places that had not been as heavily modernized as the United States and Europe. For his efforts, Lawrence was rewarded with disappointment and frustration.

Major modernist writers in addition to Joyce and Conrad, including Lawrence, Pound, and Eliot all deliberately don the mantle of exile and alien in voices of dissent and cultural difference in order to challenge a modernity they find problematic and estranging. The notion of performance has been usefully theorized by Judith Butler who suggests, among other things, that rigid gender conceptualizations should be re-imagined in terms of performativity. To borrow an insight from Butler, exile became for modernists "an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts" (179). For Butler, "bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self" (179). For these writers publicly enacting various exilic behaviors became a vitally important mechanism for coping with the unprecedented changes that would come to constitute the twentieth century. These changes included the devastation wrought by the globe's first mechanized war, the ubiquity of new modes of scientific

and technological accomplishment, increased urbanization, and growing secularism. Modernists abandoned their birth countries, became proficient, even fluent, in tongues other than their native one, insisted upon their outsider status, and longed for a more cohesive society even as they grudgingly accepted the impossibility of their vision. Ezra Pound saw the possibility of a re-vivified form of social structure in fascism, though he was ultimately disappointed. T.S. Eliot chose a religious alternative rather than a political one, as he sought refuge in the Anglican Church.

The manifestations of an ethos of exile mark literary modernism as a type of refugee writing authored largely by dissidents as a complex and ambivalent constellation of responses to new cultural and technological realities. Interestingly, one of the primary strategies through which modernists "made sense of modernity and their place in it" (Berman 5) was by either appropriating the experience of the cultural outsider or completely manufacturing a version of what they imagined this experience to be. Consequently, major modernists' works are rife with cultural masquerade, mimicry, and ventriloquism which functions to hold in place a particular notion of tradition. Perhaps the most striking example of this occurs throughout *The Waste Land* as Eliot tries on voice after voice, foregrounding as he does multilingual modernity. In perhaps a more subtle manner, Conrad describes his protagonist Charlie Marlow as adopting "the pose of a Buddha preaching in European clothes and without a lotus-flower" (*Heart of Darkness* 131). The line emphasizes the disparity between Marlowe's attire and the manner in which he is perceived. He is every bit the European, yet he readily adopts the posture and comportment of the edified pilgrim capable and willing to enlighten others. Marlow assumes the habit of the religious

idol, hinting at the possibility of relating some profound truth. Similarly, Kurtz takes

on the customs, codes, and conventions of the Congo River indigenes to such an

exorbitant degree that he too is heralded as some sort of god. This is more than just a

nicely symmetrical parallel between characters; it demonstrates the power and

pervasiveness of modernist masquerade.

The center that according to Yeats could not hold was one modernists

formally challenged while consistently reaffirming and recuperating disparate new

cultural realities back into it. By employing a kind of discourse of difference, these

writers were able to create an effect that set their aesthetic visions apart from

contemporaries such as F.T. Marinetti who evinced unqualified celebration of the

new social and economic realities fostered by modernity. Certainly, modernists

envisioned themselves as poised on the cusp of a significant cultural moment and

critics have largely agreed with them, citing such telltale signs as increasingly rapid

urbanization, technological advance, and the First World War. However, the period

might well be understood as a series of responses to early signs of cultural

phenomena now most widely referred to as globalization. Although full-blown

globalization has been largely understood as a post-World War II phenomenon, the

"intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities" (Giddens

64) was clearly felt by writers in the early twentieth century and met with an uneasy

mix of excitement, apprehensiveness, and anxiety.

For Edward Said, "exiles feel, therefore, an urgent need to reconstitute their

broken lives" (*Reflections* 177) and "much of the exile's life is taken up with

compensating for disorienting loss by creating a new world to rule" (180).

Additionally, "exiles look at non-exiles with resentment" (180) and are in constant

danger of "mak[ing] a fetish of exile" (183). In each instance, Said might well be

describing the performance of exile practiced by each of the writers here under

examination. Perhaps no one spoke with as much urgency as Lawrence about the

desperate need to re-envision human relationships in the face of the rapidly

encroaching forces of modernity. Conrad, who, of all the writers treated here, actually

was exiled from his birthplace due to political turmoil, creates "a new world to rule"

(180) in his works, as do Joyce, Eliot, and Pound. In the chapters that follow, I

suggest that each of these writers felt a keen sense of his outsider status and exploited

this privileged cultural position by performing exile in order to more effectively cope

with specific aspects of modernity with which he felt increasingly ill at ease.

As Raymond Williams observed, the political impulses and thrusts of

modernism were always profoundly indeterminate. In "The Politics of the Avant-

Garde," Raymond Williams concludes that the political underpinnings and trajectory

of modernism was anything but clear-cut:

> We have then to recall that the politics of the avant-garde, from the
>
> beginning could go either way. The new art could find its place either
>
> in a new social order or in a culturally transformed but otherwise
>
> persistent and recuperated old order. All that was quite certain, from
>
> the first stirrings of Modernism through to the most extreme forms of
>
> the avant-garde, was that nothing could stay quite as it was. (62)

Williams' insight in the above passage is to foreground the radical uncertainty of

political disposition to which modernist artists, writers, and thinkers were given. They

often demonstrate markedly conservative responses and attitudes towards salient features of modern life. Despite their collective virtuosity, they sometimes suspect their abilities and the resources of their shared literary tradition are incommensurate to the task of adequately depicting the protean nature of human subjectivity as it alters in response to changing cultural values. In the face of unprecedented technological advance such as the phenomenon of mass transit, new cultural vistas such as the modern cityscape replete with transient and immigrant populations, and the increasingly unsettling consequences of imperialism and colonial expansionism, modernists both feel and embrace exile and demonstrate a keen willingness to aesthetically examine these experiences. In response to these and other modern realities, these writers retreated into a rich and malleable literary tradition that accommodated their desire for technical experimentation, particularly with regard to their representation of human consciousness and perception, while still providing a relatively fixed and stable point of reference with which to stem the tide of new and potentially discomfiting social phenomena we now understand as globalization.

One of the most conspicuous of new social realities was that vast numbers of people living in the modern world daily negotiated new circumstances, such as proximity to and interaction with representatives of other cultures with often vastly different beliefs, values, assumptions, habits, practices, and presuppositions. In terms of our collective evolutionary history, this has never been common. In fact, according to the very latest research into the deep human past spawned by rapid advances in the mapping of the human genome, scientists now believe that "the ancestral human population, the first to possess the power of fully articulate speech, may have

numbered only 5,000 people, confined to a homeland in northeast Africa" (Wade 8) [who were] "too aggressive to live in settled communities" (9). In fact, both genetic and anthropological evidence strongly suggest that "early human societies lived as small bands of hunter-gatherers, their existence dominated by incessant warfare. For 35,000 years after leaving the ancestral homeland, these nomads were unable to settle down. In the Near East, around 15,000 years ago, people at last accomplished a decisive social transition, the founding of the first settled communities" (9).

At least two important points can be gleaned from these provocative findings. First, we appear to be a group predisposed to travel and movement, no doubt early on inspired by the constant search for sustenance and the need to elude enemies. Second, we also appear to have preferred the company and social arrangement provided by the small group until such time as it became evolutionarily advantageous to form larger social units and form relationships with others outside one's immediate group. The vast majority of our evolutionary history taught us to be suspicious, wary, and mistrustful of those outside the clan. Indeed, as previously cited, we can genetically trace our provenance back to a tiny band of forebears whose DNA has given rise to all the world's current population. Based on these findings, it would seem that transience is in our blood, and getting along with others is most definitely not.

Modernists registered ambivalence toward urban life and demonstrated similarly complicated responses to the unprecedented technological advance of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. One particularly striking example of cultural perplexity in response to the new experiences of modernity crystallized just five years prior to the turn of the century. In 1895, "Auguste and Louis Lumiere, the

first Frenchmen to perfect the fascinating sequential picture-taking of Muybridge and

Marey" (Everdell 147), opened to public view their film short "A Train Entering the

Station," in which the audience's perspective is that provided by a camera affixed to a

speeding train's nose. Anecdotally, we are told that viewers unfamiliar with this new

marvel of cinematography recoiled from the screen and absconded en masse from the

viewing. Though the story may certainly have benefited from the inevitable

embellishments of time and retelling, it seems quite plausible to find earlier people

taken aback by modern achievements at such an extreme remove from their

experience ushering new paradigms that emphasize movement, mechanism, and

rapidity. What seems rather implausible is to imagine that those same people and,

perhaps, their children in the relatively historically short span of twenty years would

be completely at ease with the phenomenon of a speeding locomotive or all the

myriad other radical changes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In

the twenty years following 1895, the Wright brothers would successfully fly, Ford

would perfect assembly line manufacture, and the world would witness its first

mechanized war. In the two-decade span prior to the Lumiere brothers' screening,

Bell had given us the telephone, Edison the phonograph and light bulb, Daimler the

internal combustion engine, and London got its Tube. Technological invention at

such a dizzying pace is not without its consequences, and, in many ways, we are only

now beginning to come to terms with the concomitant cultural consequences. Each of

the writers under discussion here felt bewilderment and alienation at these features of

modern existence. They met these changes with profound ambivalence that led them

to adopt the position of cultural outsider, and formally and rhetorically experiment

with new modes of representation only to foreground the need for a stable notion of tradition. By turns celebrated and vilified for his unapologetic iconoclasm, D. H. Lawrence provides an instructive example of the modernist experimenting to reaffirm a sense of ourselves connected with others, rather than wildly speeding toward an uncertain future.

In the first chapter, I argue that D.H. Lawrence's wide-ranging travels and self-imposed exile afford him newfound freedom and insight into the problematic nature of interpersonal relationships in a modern society replete with new artificial and industrial paradigms. Lawrence is increasingly troubled by the attributes of England's emerging national identity in the early years of the twentieth century and expresses a fervent desire to change it for the better by providing vivid portraits of relationships in crisis as they respond to a shifting terrain of cultural values. The relationships depicted in both "Odour of Chrysanthemums" and *Women in Love* show Lawrence championing bygone, organic social values in the face of industrialism and mechanization. For Lawrence, as he demonstrates through his characters, it is both possible and desirable to recover a connection with each other and the natural world. Lawrence longs for a shared sense of communal tradition punctuated by cohesive social values including renewed attention to spirituality, agrarian roots, and meaningful human connection.

Chapter two picks up the thread of the importance and dangers of exile through an extended examination of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad, Lawrence's older contemporary, also manipulates his cultural insider/outsider position in order to demonstrate the necessity of more closely and rigorously

examining the efficacy and ethicality of modernity's cultural values, specifically the implications of a Western ethos of acquisition. Conrad brilliantly displays the modern fractured consciousness through his dual protagonists Marlow and Kurtz. I argue that Conrad, himself the product of complicated cultural mixing, sees alienation as inescapable to the modern human condition to which he expresses profound ambivalence. Like Lawrence, Conrad finds human subjectivity and consciousness under assault by forces largely beyond our control but wholly of our own making. In *Heart of Darkness,* Conrad depicts the modernist split or dual consciousness through his characterizations of Marlow and Kurtz, both of whom embody the alteration of human consciousness as it assimilates corporate and colonial paradigms and relinquishes more benevolent ideals. Instead of reading the novel as one that either condemns or endorses the imperial enterprise, as has so often been done, I suggest that Conrad's powers of representation allow him to render a remarkably proleptic and balanced portrait of capitalist ideology as it becomes a naturalized mode of thought and perception.

Through an extended discussion of *The Waste Land,* chapter three maintains that the poem is a kind of palimpsest of modernity that, though sphinx-like in its inscrutability, raises many of the same kinds of questions as those addressed in the work of Lawrence and Conrad. In *The Waste Land,* Eliot mimics the multicultural and polyphonic voices that constitute the modern world and renders modern human subjectivity as fragmented, diffuse, and polyglot. And, despite his apparent lack of affinity with Lawrence in almost every other respect, Eliot depicts interaction between men and women as almost stultifyingly fraught because it is increasingly

patterned after industrial and corporate paradigms. Eliot casts himself in the role of resident alien in order to argue for a kind of experimental conservatism capable of assimilating the myriad voices and experiences of modernity into the stable notion of tradition to which Eliot clings.

Chapter four focuses on Ezra Pound. As with all the writers here, Pound both felt himself an outsider and, at the same time, exploited that unique cultural position. I argue that Pound's uneasy relationship with modernity manifested itself in a profound ambivalence and suspicion of the potentially homogenizing effects of new realities such as modern metropolitan existence. For all Pound's insistence on creating genuinely unique and original aesthetic work, he is keenly aware of the difficulties inherent in these endeavors, so he opts for formal experimentation to mask essentially conservative impulses. Through an investigation of Pound's Imagist phase and poems either directly or indirectly addressing the modern city, I find Pound considerably less radical than many of his literary forbears. Pound, like all these other writers, laments the erosion of organic cultural paradigms and feels the only viable place for the artist in such a milieu is as an outsider capable of formal experimentation aimed at ultimately highlighting the degree to which we have collectively abandoned once important and sustaining kinds of communal values for much more dubious ones.

The final chapter focuses on Joyce and two of his protagonists, Gabriel Conroy in "The Dead" and Stephen Dedalus in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. I claim that Joyce found his own cultural hibridity as a product of Ireland, England, and Western Europe extraordinarily problematic and viewed himself as alien to all

three sets of influences. This leads him to embrace his status as a cultural outsider. Just as I suggest in chapter three that Conrad depicts his own bifurcated consciousness in the figures of Marlow and Kurtz, I hold here that Gabriel and Stephen function as Joycean alter egos, outsiders to their own cultures who seek reintegration with the traditions of their collective past even as they attempt to hold them at arm's length. Both characters yearn for knowledge, understanding, and insight, but, above even these goals, they desperately wish for a culture in which to feel at home. Both "The Dead" and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* suggest the difficulty of embracing traditional Irish cultural values and the dubious assumptions of modern secular paradigms. Both works explore the tension between these two ostensibly antithetical sets of codes and assumptions and problematize the possibility of transcending them.

Since the touchstones of modernism have historically included formally innovative features, experimentation, and an apparent rejection of prevailing aesthetic standards, it might also be reasonably assumed that the writers of such work espoused similarly progressive forms of socio-political thought. However, in many ways, modernists demonstrated an uneasy relationship to modernity itself. Matei Calinescu has framed this discussion in terms of modernity's competing impulses:

> It is impossible to say precisely when one can begin to speak of the existence of two distinct and bitterly conflicting modernities. What is certain is that at some point during the first half of the nineteenth century an irreversible split occurred between modernity as a stage in the history of Western civilization—a product of scientific and

technological progress, of the industrial revolution, of the sweeping

economic and social changes brought about by capitalism—and

modernity as an aesthetic concept. Since then, the relations between

the two modernities have been irreducibly hostile, but not without

allowing and even stimulating a variety of mutual influences in their

rage for each other's destruction. (41)

Although Calinescu may well be open to the charge of overstatement insofar as he

sees a "rage for each other's destruction," (41) the dialectic he outlines may be said to

account for much of the, almost palpable, tension that pervades the work here under

scrutiny. In stark and significant ways, modernity, in the form of rapid technological

advance and the wide dissemination of a corporate, capitalistic ethos provides the

subtext of modernism, understood as a constellation of aesthetic responses to these

new cultural realities. Yet, literary modernism is not simply a reactionary discursive

formation. For, as often and as soon as its purveyors invoke the perils inherent in an

industrial modernity and suggest the viability of older orders, their efficacy is thrown

into question as well. In the chapters that follow, I hope to disinter modernists'

conservative roots as they provide many of the foundational assumptions of the texts

under examination and demonstrate how these writers achieved a kind of effect of

subversion through their willingness to adopt the position of alien and outsider.

CHAPTER II

WHEN PARADIGMS COLLIDE: D.H. LAWRENCE'S RADICAL

TRADITIONALISM AND BOHEMIAN PROVINCIALISM

In a 1914 letter to his friend and publisher Edward Garnett, D.H. Lawrence insisted "I do write because I want folk—English folk—to alter, and have more sense" (*The Letters of D.H. Lawrence* 204). The characteristically acerbic comment came at a time of exasperation for Lawrence. Indeed, for much of that year he had been constantly writing "The Wedding Ring," a long novel that eventually turned into *The Rainbow* and also provided the basis for *Women in Love*, and responding to Garnett's sharp criticisms of his efforts. Lawrence was even flirting with the idea of shopping the book to other potential publishers. In fact, Lawrence believed that much of what Garnett objected to in the novel was Lawrence's rendering of character according to new principles that challenged novelistic fictions such as the stable ego. According to Mark Kinkead-Weekes, Lawrence "realized he was 'after' no less than a revolutionary break with the classical European novel; and that this meant inevitable difficulty, even for the most intelligent and sympathetic of readers whose sensibilities had been developed within nineteenth-century concepts of character and form" (125). So, the alterations Lawrence sought to render in English folk had to do with a complete re-envisioning of the manner in which character could be drawn in fiction to more closely approximate its real-life fluidity, indeterminacy, and capacity for change and growth.

The above epigrammatic declaration with which we began suggests a number of other interesting insights as well as raising some equally interesting questions. First

of all, Lawrence envisions his art serving an important social purpose, rather than just existing as an aesthetic artifact at which to marvel. He sees his work as a kind of conduit for social change. Secondly, Lawrence, ever the optimist despite the odd misanthropic diatribe, positively revels in the human capacity for change and personal growth. In fact, our seemingly endless malleability is perhaps what Lawrence relished most in our shared humanity. After all, Lawrence constantly re-invented himself, as he created fictional characters manifesting increasingly complicated psychological attitudes. In addition to these insights, other guiding questions for the chapter that follows may be extrapolated from the statement. What deficiencies might the "English folk" possess to which he objects? What precisely does he wish to change them into, and how will he demonstrate the necessity for a transformation of the national character? Although, his writing can lapse into well-intentioned didacticism and even vociferous dogmatism, much of Lawrence's best novelistic work, specifically his rendering of consciousness, can be understood as an attempt to aesthetically capture and accommodate the imagination's centrality to our own increasingly frenetic and complicated modern lives. Moreover, the work also hints at Lawrence's suspicion of his own artistic powers as unequal to this daunting task. Although Lawrence has long been critically conceived of in spectacular and sensationalistic terms as a kind of firebrand, shaman, and prophet, the following chapter focuses on his role as teacher. I suggest that the enduring value of Lawrence's work lies in its re-affirmation of core values that Lawrence saw as threatened by modernity. These values include home, family, and community. Lawrence sees himself as a kind of resident alien, a rebel standing outside modernity's shifting

cultural paradigms expressing ambivalence and trepidation over our modern abandonment of more communal values. So, despite his own remonstrations to the contrary and his admittedly bohemian lifestyle, Lawrence was, paradoxically, a kind of traditionalist.

What I term Lawrence's traditionalist impulses were fostered in his childhood and manifest themselves in various ways throughout his life and in his work. Lawrence's upbringing was rather conventionally working class and religious. Some of his earliest memories were of the congregationalist services and sermons of his youth, and, although Lawrence certainly grows to reject organized religion in favor of alternative forms of spirituality, he always seems to yearn for a kind of communal ideal structured around commonly held beliefs and practices, something earlier, more primal and untainted. Hence, Lawrence gravitates toward the largely unspoiled landscapes of Australia and New Mexico, where he constantly entertains the possibility of establishing a close knit society of believers and imagining those scenarios into being in his leadership novels. Indeed, he begins creating his imagined lives and those of his most challenging characters by leaving his country of origin.

In an epilogue to his insightful study of Lawrence, John Worthen observes that "the progress of his [Lawrence's] writing career also suggests . . . the process of his own alienation not only from the class from which he came, and from any of the classes into which he might have moved (including that of the London literary world), but from his own readers; it shows [Lawrence's] suffering isolation and exile" (166). What this otherwise perceptive remark obscures is the degree to which Lawrence freely chose the life of the exile, recognizing as he did this curious cultural position's

potential. In order to assuage or mitigate his pervasive, life-long sense of rootlessness, Lawrence created new fictional worlds to rule, a common thread of exile experience, according to Edward Said. Lawrence even entertained the notion of establishing a kind of utopian community called Rananim, his last attempt, albeit fanciful, to exist in a cohesive, organic community, enjoying connectedness with other people and the natural world. However, Lawrence's appropriation of an exile identity or assuming self-imposed exile may be understood as a response to socio-cultural conditions about which Lawrence experienced considerable ambivalence, not least owing to his difficulty in aesthetically addressing these emerging features of modernity and their impact, even transformation of human affairs, including the possibility of intensely close interpersonal human connection.

The features of early twentieth century life that Lawrence found most alienating included such ostensibly laudable advances as mechanized transit, urban living, and industrial development. While recognizing the value of these phenomena, Lawrence also raises important questions about how human subjectivity will change as a result of these powerful social forces. Lawrence's short story "Odour of Chrysanthemums" and his most celebrated novel, *Women in Love*, chart the complicated repercussions of modernity. Lawrence deploys signature exile strategies in forging his own various identities and voicing cultural critique as he tries to discover and render what modern human subjectivity might be like in light of rapid social change characterized by speed, convenience, and efficiency, all paradigms of a technologically advanced civilization rent from its simpler, spiritual roots.

As critics have observed, D. H. Lawrence had been deeply inculcated with religious thought since childhood. Both Vivian de Sola Pinto and, more recently, Margaret Masson have delineated Lawrence's close but deeply complex attitude toward what Masson terms the "chapel religion of his youth" (53). Although Lawrence eventually rejected the religion of his youth, one forced upon him by a domineering mother, Masson has cogently argued that its influence on Lawrence cannot be overestimated. In her study based largely on personal correspondence between Lawrence and his minister, she finds that the popular image of Lawrence as an iconoclastic mystic and purveyor of primitivism substantially undercut by his considerable engagement with traditional religion expressed in his letters. Although Lawrence's relationship with religion is certainly a nuanced and complicated one, T.S. Eliot once referred to him as "a man who, without being Christian, was primarily and always religious" (qtd. in Tiverton viii). Arguably, it was Lawrence's religious impulses that suggested our collective need for the stabilizing mechanism of a tradition and drove him around the world in search of one. According to a 1924 pronouncement, Lawrence felt an acute need for some structural principle around which to order the fragmentary and diffusive nature of modern life:

> If I had lived in the year 400, pray God, I should have been a true and passionate Christian. The adventurer. But now I live in 1924 and the Christian venture is done. The adventure is gone out of Christianity. We must start a new venture towards God. (*Phoenix* 734)

During the 1920's Lawrence had essentially abandoned England for good and would spend his remaining years traveling through and living in such disparate places

as the American Southwest, the Australian Outback, and various Italian ports where, according to Jeffrey Meyers, he was "transformed from Bert to Lorenzo, from young prig to bold exile, [which] . . . had a profound impact on his work" (2). In order to more adequately account for the appreciably, often radically, different manner in which people in the late years of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth century would live their lives and to foreground the degree to which one's imaginative faculties would play an extraordinarily crucial role in that process, Lawrence turned his attention toward representing the destabilization of human consciousness. Certainly, it is true that all modernists were interested in depicting human character in drastically different ways than their literary antecedents. This tendency is no where better crystallized than in Virginia Woolf's famous quip from "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" that "in or about December, 1910, human character changed" (*Collected Essays of Virginia Woolf* 320), implicitly suggesting that fictional representations of that character would also have to change ineluctably from the kinds of vast litanies of exterior physical description favored by Edwardian and Georgian novelists Woolf hastened to skewer in essays like "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown." As early as 1914, back in England, Lawrence had clearly been thinking along the same lines when he wrote to Edward Garnett:

> You mustn't look in my novel for the old stable ego of character.
> There is another ego, according to whose action the individual is
> unrecognizable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which
> it needs a deeper sense than any other we've been used to exercise, to
> discover are states of the same radically unchanged element. (Like as

diamond and coal are the same pure single element of carbon.) (*Letters*

of D.H. Lawrence 200)

Although Lawrence made specific pronouncements on the novel throughout his

career, this one passage has frequently been counted among his more revealing

statements on the subject. Perhaps the allure of this comparison lies both in what it

says about Lawrence's aesthetic and but also in the specific cultural processes that

inform it.

It is, perhaps, not fortuitous that Lawrence would choose to wax metaphorical

by invoking an element with which he was so intimately familiar, having spent an

uneasy childhood bound to the mines through his father who depended upon them for

his and his family's livelihood. Yet Lawrence, at his mother's direction, early abjured

the physically exhaustive life of the manual laborer (a dismissal he would repent of in

later years) in favor of literary pursuits. Lawrence's bleak Nottinghamshire childhood

forced him very early on to use his imagination in order to conjure an existence

practically diametrically opposed to that of his father or other early peers.

Nonetheless, the mines clearly left an indelible impression on Lawrence, using its

product, as he does, to describe an alternative means of rendering character in fiction.

By the time Lawrence comes to write his famous formulation, he, like other writers,

is well aware of the inevitability of actively fashioning alternative selves with which

to negotiate the changing cultural vistas of the twentieth century. Yet, he also seems

to posit a certain unitary, unchanging self that remains somehow inviolate though the

various states passed through might be as ostensibly divergent and antithetical as coal

and diamond. Or, perhaps Lawrence is attracted to the fact that elemental matter such

as coal has not yet become what it may well end up being. As Lawrence moves from place to place, he adopts the role of outsider in order to critique these various societies and that of his birthplace, while maintaining an insulated position both inside and outside the culture under scrutiny. Lawrence performs his alien status in hopes of hitting upon a new way in which to aesthetically represent human identity and consciousness as it responds and changes in relation to specific currents of modernity, including industrial mechanization, mobility, and urbanization. The degree to which Lawrence succeeded in his project is attested to by the course of his life.

Although Lawrence's books were never best sellers, his travels might well have sprung from the pages of an adventure tale. A collier's son from a rural mining village eight miles northwest of Nottingham, Lawrence felt an acute restlessness and spent many of the precious few years allotted him criss-crossing the globe in a kind of self-imposed exile from his homeland. The reasons for Lawrence's wild itinerancy are both complex and culturally instructive. From Europe to the Southwestern United States to the Australian Outback, Lawrence's travels fuelled his imagination. Back home, Lawrence's Eastwood was a place of sharp contrasts—rolling hillsides and grassy knolls juxtaposed against thunderous and oppressive coal-extracting machinery and squalid row houses. It was here amidst these incongruous realities that Lawrence, at the urging of a mother who defiantly considered herself above the social station of a miner's *hausfrau,* began imagining an existence profoundly at odds with his working class circumstances. Instead of dutifully following his father to the mine, the frail and bookish Lawrence read voraciously, attained a university degree, and

lived all over the world, while authoring works that all bear the indelible marks of his restless wanderings. However, before Lawrence's global meanderings, he began to develop a critical attitude toward his birthplace, particularly the colliery he sometimes characterized as a blight on the countryside. Nonetheless, to dismiss mechanization as simply one of Lawrence's chief bete-noires is to deny his much more balanced and ambivalent assessment of such social phenomena on human consciousness and subjectivity, a complex relationship Lawrence traces in one of his most accomplished stories.

"Odour of Chrysanthemums" reveals Lawrence's complicated and uncomfortable relationship with a defining feature of modernity—mechanically assisted labor and its social, economic, domestic psychological, and spiritual implications. Set in a small colliery town, not unlike Lawrence's own, the story begins with a description of a "small locomotive engine" (98). The steady movement of the machine through the rural landscape is set in stark contrast to both nature and humanity. In the space of a few sentences, Lawrence depicts the train as startling a horse, forcing a woman to seek safety "back into the hedge" (98), and sullying the land when "smoke from the engine sank and cleaved to the rough grass" (98). If these clues are not suggestive enough of a negative view of mechanical interference in the natural world, we soon learn that the locomotive's engineer brings Elizabeth Bates (the story's protagonist based loosely on Lawrence's own mother) unwelcome news. The engine's driver is Elizabeth's father, who has recently decided to remarry against Elizabeth's wishes. Despite the association of industrialism with threat, contamination and altered human relationships, it would be wrong to assume that this

completely sounds the depths or exhausts the possibilities of what the story has to offer on the subject. In fact, the tale's attitude is far less clear-cut than one might initially imagine. As distinct as the locomotive is from the natural landscape through which it runs, it serves important social functions such as conveying goods and people. Insular mining towns such as Lawrence's own depended upon trains for contact with the outside world and much-needed supplies. The locomotive engine makes it possible for Elizabeth to maintain what appears to be a relatively close relationship with her father. Elizabeth's dismay over his impending marriage notwithstanding, mechanized transit here is as much a facilitator of improved social interaction as anything else. The next image of modern mechanization is of the mine itself:

> The pit-bank loomed up beyond the pond, flames like red sores licking its ashy sides, in the afternoon's stagnant light. Just beyond rose the tapering chimneys and the clumsy black head-stocks of Brinsley Colliery. The two wheels were spinning fast up against the sky, and the winding—engine rapped out its little spasms. The miners were being turned up (98-99).

Like the initial description of the train, the mine and its mechanical accoutrements are simultaneously dangerous, yet sustaining, further underscoring Lawrence's ambivalent attitude toward these modern realities. In fact, the above passage resembles a kind of birth image in which modern men are thrust from womb-like darkness only to be born into a decidedly uncertain existence. According to the text,

"miners, single, trailing and in groups, passed like shadows diverging home" (99).
The colliery, certainly a multivalent symbol, gives and takes away.

One intriguing question posed by the story is whether the gains afforded by
such a life offset the costs. Lawrence may be teaching us to begin asking the right
kinds of questions. One such question might be what does modernity provide for us
and what does it subtract? The world into which we are now being born is one
increasingly characterized by concerted attempts at mastery over the circumstances of
the physical world through strides in mechanization. These material circumstances
into which we are cast provide the patterns by which lives will be lived. In "Odour of
Chrysanthemums" this situation is a grim one because the family depicted here as tied
to the mine and its machinery suffers not least from the physical loss of its father, but
also from a kind of spiritual stagnation and death represented by the story's main
structural symbol.

The notion that the exigencies of mechanized labor present us with new and
difficult challenges in relating to one another is dramatized sensitively in Lawrence's
characterization of Elizabeth and Walter's troubled marriage. When Walter fails to
return home from work at his regular hour, an angry Elizabeth dismisses his absence
by assuming he has stopped off at one of the local public houses for spirits and
revelry. This is, of course, not an unreasonable supposition given Walter's fondness
for drink. However, as the hours go by, Elizabeth's ire begins to give way to fear and
worry. Realizing the social uncertainty and precarious nature of working class
families that depend for their survival on the income provided through the colliery,
Elizabeth becomes more and more acutely aware of her vulnerability, living as she

does within an economic system in which a livelihood can only be wrested from society by her husband, who has a marked proclivity to shirk adult responsibility in favor of more (to her mind) frivolous pursuits. However, it is in the context of Elizabeth's ultimate reconciliation with her dead husband that we find Lawrence deftly working out of the necessary condition of ambivalence in the face of modern cultural realities such as industrial mechanization.

When Elizabeth learns that her husband has been killed in a mining accident, destroyed by the very mechanism that sustains, however tenuously, him and his family, she begins to reassess her relationship with her husband and family, in all its complexity. The grim finality of death allows Elizabeth new, albeit disturbing, insight into what had certainly evolved into an almost mechanical marriage held together by custom, convention, and economic necessity rather than the couple's intrinsic love and devotion to one another. In some of Lawrence's most breathlessly fluid prose, the recently-widowed young woman expresses extreme regret about the divide that separated her from Walter in life, even as they are forever separated in death:

> And she knew what a stranger he was to her. In her womb was ice of fear, because of this separate stranger with whom she had been living as one flesh . . . In fear and shame she looked at his naked body, that she had known falsely. And he was the father of her children. Her soul was torn from her body and stood apart. She looked at his body and was ashamed, as if she had denied it . . . and all the while her heart was bursting with grief and pity for him. (115)

That both Elizabeth Bates and her husband are not entirely responsible for the marital

discord they experience is one of the most important thematic thrusts of the story,

emphasizing, as it does, the inimical social conditions facing their union. Their

relationship has simply followed a "natural" progression that parallels and reflects a

new set of modern paradigms including disconnection, solipsism, and secularism. In

this early story, Lawrence explores these themes on a relatively small canvass.

However, Lawrence's mature novel *Women in Love* will consider them more broadly

and even more perceptively.

Lawrence's well-documented, self-proclaimed "savage pilgrimage" began in

an obscure English colliery town, spanned three continents, and concluded in the

south of France where, dreaming of returning to Italy, he succumbed to the disease

that had plagued him throughout his life. It is difficult to argue with Jeffrey Meyers'

estimation of Italy's importance to Lawrence's aesthetic development, particularly

when reminded that "after 1912, Lawrence spent one third of his life in Italy" (1),

"most of his writing life" (117), and the two novels typically regarded as his finest

achievements in the form were "begun at his first Italian domicile, in Gargnano in

1913" (Hobsbaum 52) and subsequently reworked from an extensive one-volume

opus tentatively titled *The Sisters* to the two individual works, *The Rainbow* and

Women in Love. In fact, after a brief residence in Germany upon Lawrence's

elopement with Frieda Weekely, the wife of his former German professor, Italy

seemed quite welcoming to the impecunious young writer and his lover primarily

because of the relatively minute living expenses the couple would incur there, so "on

5 August 1912, they set off with knapsacks on their backs to walk to Italy" (Worthen

26). It is while writing these works that Lawrence registers what is, in my view, a clear, though complicated, response to his own "experience of displacement" (Tomlinson 107).

Lawrence, characteristically proleptic and protean in vision, alters his notion of self in order to accommodate the new and unfamiliar. In becoming Lorenzo, Frieda's mildly derisive pet name for him, Lawrence signals his willingness, perhaps excitement, at the prospect of imagining and embracing other possible lives at quite a remove from the one into which he was born. "That is why I like to live in Italy. The people are so unconscious. They only feel and want: they don't know. We know too much. No, we only think we know such a lot" (*Letters of D. H. Lawrence* 96). To be sure, Lawrence's enthusiasm vis-à-vis new beginnings in exotic locales, or at least more southern climes, is not completely un-tinged with reluctance or hostility. Lawrence's letters from Italy are sometimes sprinkled with bitter opprobrium, at one point declaring "I loathe and detest the Italians. They never argue, they just get hold of a parrot phrase, shove up their shoulders and put their heads to one side and, and flap their arms" (*Letters of D. H. Lawrence* 164). His native mercurial temperament notwithstanding, Lawrence's occasional truculence amid largely rhapsodic descriptions of Italy's people, geography, and culture in his letters and travel writings parallel the dramatic tensions of Lawrence's own inward, personal upheavals and struggle to forge a new identity for himself and his fiction. According to Michael Bell, "the unconscious creation of worlds, or of different modes of being in the world, is Lawrence's primary subject in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*" (*Literature 94*).

This struggle to create, to forge anew reveals itself in the language Lawrence chose to use.

Two of Lawrence's favorite words, in terms of frequency of usage, may well be "nascent" and "inchoate." He might have found these terms particularly appealing because of their suggestion of new life, of any early stage of development just beginning to emerge and come into being. Indeed, Bell claims that Lawrence's two female protagonists in *Women in Love* Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen's "pauses, fears and uncertainties express very vividly some emotional undercurrent to which neither they, nor we . . . can get any further access" (*Language 98*). *Women in Love* presents us with a gallery of characters who embody Lawrence's attempt to represent the tentative, indecisive, and indeterminate realities of modern life that force us to imagine alternate selves and lives often profoundly at odds with one's earlier material circumstances and cultural expectations. Rupert Birkin, a character sometimes viewed as a thinly veiled mouthpiece for Lawrence himself, reluctantly acknowledges his desire to create meaningful relationships within what are, unfortunately, culturally stultifying social practices that make these relationships all but impossible. Birkin's capacity and willingness to imagine possibilities beyond the quotidian and socially sanctioned mark him out as iconoclastic from the very beginning. Birkin is joined in his heterodox rejection of convention by Ursula Brangwen. Lawrence delineates character in both these instances in such a way that these formidable adversaries and lovers must constantly adapt by fashioning self anew in response to shifting socio-cultural circumstances. In fact, Lawrence paradoxically characterizes the modern technological marvel of mass transit as a potential obstacle to connection with others

rather than a means of facilitating it. In order to stem the tide of modernity and effect

the kind of social change Lawrence had in mind, he casts a suspicious eye on modern

contrivances.

One of the most striking, if little discussed, elements of *Women in Love* is the

extraordinary amount of movement that takes place in it. Although much of the travel

that takes place is localized, in-country, transit, characters are constantly in motion

from one social gathering or appointment to another. Indeed, a late chapter of the

novel is appropriately entitled "Flitting," underscoring its characters' fidgety

mobility, which ultimately highlights a profound uneasiness with the unfamiliar and

rapidly encroaching nature of modernity itself. As Andrew Thacker has suggested

"movement between . . . various spaces, then, is a key feature of modernism"

(*Moving* 7) and "modernist writing can be located only within the movements

between and across multiple sorts of space" (8). However, in contradistinction to

continental avant-gardists such as Baudelaire in his "The Painter of Modern Life" and

Marinetti in his "Futurist Manifesto" who both celebrated the speed and spectacle of

modernity with its trains, automobiles, and teeming cities, Lawrence makes his

characters deeply suspicious of the new amenities of modern existence, certainly

closer to the manner in which real people might have responded to the incalculable

cultural shifts precipitated by modernity's new technologies, advancing far more

rapidly than could be easily assimilated.

Lawrence aesthetically dramatizes his ambivalence toward rapid change and

the strain it places on one's ability to initiate and maintain relationships with others

throughout *Women in Love*, particularly in Chapter V, "In the Train":

> One day at this time Birkin was called to London. He was not very
>
> fixed in his abode. He had rooms in Nottingham, because his work lay
>
> chiefly in that town. But often he was in London, or in Oxford. He
>
> moved about a great deal. His life seemed uncertain, without any
>
> definite rhythm, any organic meaning. (50)

Of course, the organicism that Birkin's life lacks stands in stark contrast to the

mechanical conveyance he is about to board. Thematically, Birkin searches for

"natural" connections in many wrong places, such as with the frigid and treacherous

Hermione Roddice, who, suggestively, lashes out at Birkin with an inert piece of

semi-precious stone when he fails to requite her affections. Not surprisingly, Gerald

Crich, heir to a prominent colliery owner, is about to embark on the same train:

> On the platform of the railway station, he saw Gerald Crich, reading a
>
> newspaper, and evidently waiting for a train. Birkin stood some
>
> distance off, among the people. It was against his instinct to approach
>
> anybody. (50)

In terms of Lawrence's symbolic, metonymic economy, characters typically represent

that with which they are closely associated. Hence, Crich, whose wealth flows from

the mines his family owns, is closely-aligned with what Lawrence considers some of

the more dubious aspects of modernity, including the rapacious acquisitiveness of

pastoral industrialization. In the symbolic terms upon which the novel insists it be

understood, Crich and the impressive, though parlous, locomotive are one in the

same, and Birkin would do well to trust his initial instincts. The fact that Crich is also

depicted as "reading a newspaper" (50) seems innocuous enough in its relative

commonplaceness, yet it represents another fact of the modern world. The dizzyingly enormous amounts of information, advertisements, and propaganda endlessly circulated throughout the world allow glimpses into other places and lives, perhaps even, as in Crich's case, treacherously suggesting the possibility of mastery over events, places, and people. This is the seduction of modernity that doomed characters such as Gerald and Hermione buy into—the myth that the progress of modernity secures for us the enviable position of being able to manipulate the world and others to our own ends. Indeed, in a later episode both Ursula and Gudrun witness Gerald heavy-handedly making his horse remain still in the face of an oncoming train. Ursula condemns what is in her view Gerald's unwarranted imperiousness:

> He made his lovely sensitive Arab horse stand with him at the railway-crossing whilst a horrible lot of trucks went by; and the poor thing, she was in a perfect frenzy, a perfect agony. It was the most horrible sight you can imagine. (141)

Gerald's uncomprehending rejoinder to Ursula's remonstrations is flat dismissal of the grounds of Ursula's criticism, namely, that horses as natural inhabitants of our world should be accorded at least some measure of respect and independence. For Gerald, "that mare is there for my use. It is more natural for a man to take a horse and use it as he likes, than for him to go down on his knees to it" (141). In Crich's binaristic world-view, there is no middle ground between domination and subservience; you are master, or you are mastered. The fact that Crich allows no room for mediation hints at the grim ending he will eventually meet.

In the earlier train episode, Birkin does, in fact, approach Crich and they share passage together to London. During transit, the two men engage each other in heated discussion and debate, sparked by the newspaper article Birkin observed Crich reading. According to Gerald, who seems astonished by the paper's content, a central contention of one of the pieces is that England will soon be in ruins if there does not "arise a man who will give new values to things, give us new truths, a new attitude to life" (51). Startlingly Nietzschean in tone, the article is dismissed by the two travelers as so much "newspaper cant" (51). Yet, it nonetheless gives rise to the centerpiece of the chapter—the sharp philosophical contrast between Rupert and Gerald spawned by another of modernity's dubious advances--global capitalism and its dismal legacy of disallowing a meaningful connection between people, while substituting fundamentally unsatisfying, surrogate relationships between people and things. With unabashed brio, Lawrence has his characters pursue impossibly daunting ontological questions as the English countryside whizzes by. First, Birkin attacks what he sees as Crich's crass materialism:

> And what's your work? Getting so many more thousands of tons of coal out of the earth everyday. And when we've got all the coal we want, and all the plush furniture, and pianofortes, and the rabbits are all stewed and eaten, and we're all warm and our bellies are filled and we're listening to the young lady performing on the pianoforte—what then? What then, when you've made a real fair start with your material things? (53)

Birkin's impassioned, satirical rant is typical of his lapel-shaking, confrontational style. Seizing the moral high ground, Birkin attempts to expose what he views as the ultimate meaninglessness and bankruptcy of an economic system based on promoting the desire to get and spend, yet Birkin's critique is diminished when we learn that he personally has no viable alternative in mind, besides a kind of affectation of misanthropic nihilism, and the fact that Gerald always appears amused and delighted by Birkin's crusading outbursts, rather than chastened and repentant. Just a bit later in the same conversation, Rupert, only half jokingly, acknowledges hating his friend, and Gerald, in turn admits to similar occasional feelings. Not only is it extremely difficult for the two men to meaningfully connect as friends, they also express arch pessimism at the prospect of successful relationships with women as well. Gerald says "I don't believe a woman, and nothing but a woman, will ever make my life" (55). Rupert, for his part, believes in "a sort of ultimate marriage" (55), but the possibility of finding the right woman is dubious.

So, the train itself, Lawrence's metonymical stand-in for the tumultuous cultural exchanges characterizing modernity itself, becomes a space of dispute, antagonism, confusion, and desire. The masses of people physically coming together, converging on the train, paradoxically, could not be further apart, as demonstrated in Birkin and Crich's complex exchange. This episode neither celebrates increasingly expeditious cultural flow via locomotive and newsprint, nor does it abjure these processes; rather, it registers decided ambivalence, suspicion, and pessimism without outright condemnation. At one point, as previously noted, Rupert tells Gerald he hates him and Gerald acknowledges occasional, similar feelings vis-à-vis Birkin, yet the

two continue on friendly terms after the train ride and indeed throughout the rest of novel, even when they attempt to break each others' necks in the infamous later chapter, "Gladiatorial" and, even later, amid the Swiss Alps where each character will, indeed, become who he or she is meant to be.

Finally, as the train draws nearer its destination, just before the imposing cityscape of London appears, Birkin gloomily renounces the metropolis he cannot escape:

> The evening was falling. They had passed Bedford. Birkin watched the country, and was filled with a sort of hopelessness. He always felt this, on approaching London. His dislike of mankind, of the mass of mankind, amounted almost to an illness. (58)

Birkin voices his thoughts to Crich, lamenting "I always feel doomed when the train is running into London. I feel such a despair, so helpless, as if it were the end of the world" (58). Birkin, and one suspects Lawrence as well, almost experiences physical distress upon approaching the city because the city, with its teeming multitudes crammed into a relatively small area, paradoxically, hinders personal contact and the formation and maintenance of relationships Lawrence held to be most vital. The city, like the conveyance Birkin and Crich use to get to it, is, for Lawrence, a mixed blessing that contributes to a form of abject social destabilization with which we are ill-prepared to deal, as is evidenced by his characters' ambivalent responses, ubiquitous confusion, problematic relationships, and meaningless movement. Lawrence's four main characters all have the sneaking suspicion that they are at or near "the end of the world" (58), but they persist in observing social forms that for

past generations have offered solace, support, comfort, meaning, and stability. By the end of the novel, "the end of the world" (58) is much closer than we might have imagined. For Gerald Crich, it is in Switzerland.

The last three chapters of *Women in Love* are essentially set pieces in which Ursula, Gudrun, Rupert, and Gerald go on a brief holiday to the Swiss Alps. Although the trip draws Ursula and Rupert closer together, Gudrun becomes fascinated by a mysterious and brooding artist and finds the once-flattering attentions of Gerald Crich rather tedious. The fateful trip to Switzerland that both couples embark upon and which serves as the novel's denouement further amplifies the novel's pervasive atmosphere of conflicted consciousness. The characters' fractured senses of self and personal identity stem from the onslaught of modernity, particularly in the degree to which characters either physically or metaphorically experience their daily lives as fundamentally unstable movement, flux, and flow. These effects require the heightened use of one's imagination, but it also creates an unsettling sense of being un-tethered, unmoored and aimlessly adrift, movement begins to be engaged in for its own sake, rather than out of pedestrian utility. In *Women in Love* the trope of transit ultimately forces characters to figure out who they really are or might become. Although earlier Lawrence critics have, somewhat reductively, seen him and his work as championing primitivist values and repudiating modern progressivism in toto, *Women in Love* certainly would seem to belie this essentialist reading, for Lawrence depicts character in such a way that each one must map out previously uncharted areas of their relationships with each other.

Moving back a bit, in the beginning of Chapter XXIX, entitled "Continental," Ursula and Birkin depart England on a ship bound for the Continent. Before her departure, we are told that Ursula "was not herself—she was not anything. She was something that is going to be –soon—soon—very soon. But as yet, she was only imminent" (403). Once on the ship with Birkin, "she felt her soul stirring to awake from its anesthetic sleep" (403). What follows, in what is surely among the most incantatory prose Lawrence ever penned, is a dreamily rendered set piece in which Ursula and Birkin "cre[pt] right into each other and [had] become one substance" (404). Although conditions aboard the ship are somewhat inimical, Lawrence tells us "it was very cold, and the darkness was palpable' (404), Ursula experiences a series of rapturous moments: In Ursula the sense of the unrealized world ahead triumphed over everything. In the midst of this profound darkness, there seemed to glow on her heart the effulgence of a paradise unknown and unrealized. Her heart was full of the most wonderful light" (404). To Birkin, "the wonder of this transit was overwhelming" (404), and, in typical Lawrentian fashion, the darkness, gentle movement, sea, and proximity suggest a womb image with Ursula and Birkin melding into one new being awaiting their moment to emerge from the darkness into the light of their new life together in what Birkin refers to earlier as a kind of star equilibrium.

Nonetheless, despite this largely celebratory leg of their voyage, Lawrence is quick to undercut rhapsodic images of birth, renewal, and nascent life with decidedly less pleasant imagery meant to suggest the vulnerability of relationships conceived and experienced in a largely secular and industrial modern era. When the ship docks, we are told that it is like "disembarking from the Styx into the desolated underworld"

(405). Not surprisingly, when faced with a decidedly modern phenomenon such as passengers getting off a ship, claiming their baggage, and beating hasty retreats to their holiday destinations, Lawrence resorts to the language of mythology and tradition. Because new paradigms like mechanization, convenience, and leisure travel have supplanted older, more organic values, like a shared sense of community and a spiritual if not religious sensibility, Lawrence here and elsewhere finds it necessary to attempt to understand uniquely modern developments in terms of a rich fictional past that could accommodate and even encourage mythological thinking. The underworld, or wasteland as Eliot would have it, that Birkin and Ursula enter is characterized by frenzied, though myopic, movement, darkness, and obscurity on an uninspiring, monochromatic canvas. "Everybody was hurrying with a blind, insect-like intentness through the dark grey air, porters were calling in un-English English, then trotting with heavy bags, their colourless bags looking ghostly as they disappeared" (405). Initially, the disembarking passengers are compared to insects, clearly no compliment, but still in the realm of living organisms. However, by the end, in a barbed, metonymic turn, Lawrence sees the denizens of modernity as tantamount to their luggage, "colourless bags," (405) a conflation that suggests a wealth of distinct interpretive possibilities including, but certainly not limited to, the homogenizing elements of the modern world that elide individuality, the essential banality and futility of all of our feverish travels, and the degree to which modern consumerism promotes conditions in which people can, rather easily, be mistaken for things.

It is as though Birkin and Ursula have been born only to die immediately postpartum. Both the docks and railway station are explicitly compared to the

classical land of shades, of death. Lawrence's point is well taken. Birkin and Ursula's

inchoate life is extremely fragile and in constant jeopardy of collapse if not

sufficiently nurtured and protected from encroaching threats represented here through

the depiction of the onslaught of modernity through the trope of travel. Relationships

can only be forged and preserved to the degree that we are aware and capable of

negotiating the treacherous modern landscape, so full of amenities, spectacles, and

advance, yet so equally rife with distractions, impediments, and obstacles. Indeed,

Christopher Lane has argued that the novel is so heavily steeped in ambivalence and

uncertainty that "the four protagonists in *Women in Love* can't decide, for instance,

whether the apocalyptic scenarios plaguing them herald their extinction or promise

tentative forms of renewal" (769) and "viewed overall, the novel appears

contradictory, the characters flailing as they try to specify what they think and want"

(769). This profound difficulty in clearly expressing themselves is precisely the

condition of modernity that Lawrence wishes to capture and investigate in order to

discover whether it is at all possible for human relationships to survive in the modern

world.

Although D.H. Lawrence's work has long been mined for biographical and

psychological insights that might serve as keys to unlock the mind of an artist often

mythologized as shaman or prophet, other potentially fruitful lines of inquiry remain

largely uncharted. In my view, Lawrence, like the other writers under consideration in

the present study, responded to rapid cultural change in a number of important and

influential ways. First, Lawrence embraced the position of cultural outsider with little

regard for the problematic consequences of such a move in order to discover new

means of rendering human subjectivity in a more recognizably modern fashion.

Indeed, Lawrence sought out his own alienation, suggesting in his lived experience

and writing what will, of course, become a primary mode of experience in the

twentieth century and beyond. For Lawrence, defining characteristics of modernity

include change, flux, impermanence, transience, and uncertainty in the face of

overwhelming cultural realities. In his best fiction, such as that found in stories like

"Odour of Chrysanthemums" and in novels such as *Women in Love*, Lawrence

dramatizes the supreme difficulty of establishing and maintaining meaningful bonds

with others in a post-Nietzschean world in which notions such as god and spirituality

appear obsolete.

In 1930, when D. H. Lawrence died at the relatively young age of 44, some

six months short of his 45th birthday, he had seen much of the world. He had, in fact,

held addresses on no fewer than three continents. Though somewhat under-

appreciated, this peripatetic lifestyle represented a kind of seismic historical shift in

cultural thinking about notions of place, home, and identity. As suggested already, the

motivations for Lawrence's tireless globetrotting remain elusive. Why would a man

of frail health and slim means, battling consumption, willingly install himself in

residences around the globe and create new lives for himself time and again? The

proposals have been various and not unreasonable, though vague. Lawrence was a

wanderer by nature, a visionary prophet who thrived on new experiences and required

constant intellectual and artistic stimulus that only frequent changes of venue could

provide. Many of Lawrence's travel decisions were made out of financial

considerations, so he would sometimes go where he could get by on the cheap.

However, the question still remains. What induces a collier's son from the Midlands to move about the globe with perfect equanimity and aplomb, as though it were second nature, when strikingly, no one in his family had ever imagined such a life?

Lawrence's itinerancy represents a deeply ambivalent response to a radical indeterminacy of cultural identity contributed to, if not created by, modernity. He adopted new personas and constructed fiction in which character came to be conceived as profoundly disconnected from any meaningful sense of originary and binding place, though he still longed for such a notion. The forces of modernity that Lawrence found most dubious were those that ostensibly brought us as a society much closer together. Lawrence largely rejects the urban metropolis and its burgeoning population for sparsely populated towns and villages. He also, as we have seen in "Odour of Chrysanthemums" and *Women in Love,* estimated the human toll exacted by a social and economic model bound to industrial mechanization and mass transit. In order to change, or at least throw into question, a largely unqualified or examined embrace of modernity by his countrymen and women, Lawrence dramatizes the ineluctable manner in which the technology of modernity becomes both its blessing and it curse. Although Lawrence frequently welcomes change and recognizes the potential for growth inherent in it, he fears the kinds of changes interpersonal human relationships will undergo as a result of new industrial paradigms supplanting older, more organic ones Lawrence is keen to recuperate. Arguably, much of Lawrence's work is an attempt to combat the rapid advance and encroachment of forces of modernity typically understood as positive and beneficial. Lawrence both genuinely feels like an outsider and adopts this ostensibly marginal

social position in order to foreground and emphasize the degree to which he felt it necessary to distance himself from the birth culture he so dearly wished to change. Although Lawrence performs the role of iconoclast with characteristic aplomb as he spans the globe, he is not at all interested in smashing the traditions of the past, but in re-inventing them.

CHAPTER III

INCOMPLETE CARTOGRAPHIES AND RESIDENT ALIENS:

CONRAD'S IDENTITY CRISIS IN HEART OF DARKNESS

In an early scene from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Charlie Marlow

recalls his youthful delight at examining maps of distant places he planned to visit:

> Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look
>
> for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in
>
> all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank
>
> spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly
>
> inviting on a map (but they all look that) I put my finger on it and say,
>
> When I grow up I will go there. (21-22)

Instead of expressing a healthy fear or respect for the vast continental unknowns,

Marlow, Conrad's "surrogate narrator," (Sayeau 337) revels in them, seeing the blank

places of the earth as tabula rasa awaiting an intrepid cartographer such as himself

capable of making sense of these exotic locales, committing them to memory, and

articulating their substance to others. Not only does Marlow wish to write these

mysterious places into being through his narrative and map-making prowess, he also

relishes, at least initially, the prospect of forging his own sense of self anew at every

port. *Heart of Darkness* is a tale of identities lost and found, of consciousness

ineluctably bifurcated.

Conrad's Charlie Marlow is drawn to documents that he imbues with

extraordinary, almost mystical, resonance. The protagonist of *Heart of Darkness*

believes the unfinished maps he pores over as a child will provide him with meaning

and purpose for his life, or, rather, afford him the opportunity of creating his own

where ostensibly none exists. Eventually, all of the incomplete maps will be filled in;

however, the price of this knowledge will be very dear indeed. Although this scene

might easily be written off as a bit of fanciful indulgence on Marlow's part, as he

wistfully longs for the simpler, and exuberant days of childhood, it actually points to

one of the most vital aspects of the narrative—the problematic consequences of a

prevailing capitalistic ethos, corporate hubris, and colonial rapacity colliding with

older forms and structures of social arrangement which, because pre-industrial,

operate according to vastly different paradigms. When Marlow refers to the "blank

spaces" (21) on the maps, he presupposes a kind of void or cultural vacuum, and he

sees himself or casts himself in the god-like role of grand meaning-maker. Marlow

undertakes to do no less than provide legitimate ontological status to abstract

geographical formations and the people who may be inhabiting them. The master

narrative Western cartographers invariably employ is that of capitalistic, corporate

interest. It is two potential, though arguably equally problematic, responses to this

narrative that Conrad charts in *Heart of Darkness*.

In a letter dated December 31, 1898, to his publisher William Blackwood,

Joseph Conrad described his latest project, a longish story to be added to a volume

titled *Youth*. "The title I am thinking of is 'The Heart of Darkness' but the narrative is

not gloomy. The criminality of inefficiency and pure selfishness when tackling the

civilizing work in Africa is a justifiable idea" (*The Collected Letters of Joseph

Conrad* 140). Conrad's concise statement of his theme suggests that any form of

beneficence that might be practiced in Africa has to contend with two intransigent

difficulties fostered by the imperialist enterprise itself: "inefficiency and pure selfishness" (140). Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* provides an ambivalent portrait of the consequences of imperialism on both subject and subjugated. He expresses the most anxiety over the degree to which emerging corporate, capitalist, and imperialistic paradigms have supplanted older, more communal and potentially life-sustaining social values. New priorities associated with empire include speed, efficiency, performance, and profit. Conrad illustrates with stunning clarity how the imperialist enterprise's capitalistic ethos has provided new kinds of models for human behavior and interaction based on concepts such as efficiency and profit maximization, both of which leave little room for benevolence, altruism, understanding, compassion, and connection. Conrad is interested in examining how these paradigms will impinge upon, shape, and change human subjectivity, and his fear of dubious values manifests itself aesthetically through his complex rendering of the shifting sands upon which our sense of self rests.

Since its publication in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in three successive issues including February, March, and April of 1899, *Heart of Darkness* has gone on to boast an extraordinarily rich critical legacy. So much has been written about the novella that commentators have recently busied themselves in a kind of shrewd-minded critiography or archeology of critical responses that some argue have actually served to move us much further away from a truly informed understanding of the text in favor of readings that ultimately tell us more about prevailing political attitudes and sensibilities than advance our knowledge of the resonant themes in the book proper. Both Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* and Patrick Brantlinger in *Rule*

of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914 tend to present the book itself as important, at least in part, for its faithful depiction of a particular historical moment, while they simultaneously repudiate imperialistic practices as unsavory and lamentable in the extreme. A newer approach attempts to avoid the pitfall of the anachronistic fallacy by attempting to recover what *Heart of Darkness* would have meant to its original *Blackwood's* audience, one that, as it turns out, had few qualms with imperialism as long as it was British. According to William Atkinson, in his thoughtfully-argued essay, if we pay close enough attention to the original context of the book, or rather its serialized premiere, its early audience, and the manner in which virtually all negative imperialistic practice is shown to be the work of the Europeans not the British, then *Heart of Darkness* represents "an attack on foreign imperialism and a defense of the British variety because the immediate context bends all the references to imperialism to such an effect" (379). However, instead of reading the novella as a pro-imperialist or anti-imperialist text, as has been the temptation since its debut and even to the present moment, I hope to offer an understanding of the text as it never clearly endorses or repudiates any side of that debate as such, but, rather, it attempts to show what precisely we stand to gain and lose as children of modernity weaned on the capitalistic imperative.

Heart of Darkness constitutes a conservative aesthetic response to Conrad's dawning realization that modernity in the form of Western colonialist expansionism would fundamentally alter social relations between individuals and nations in such a way that older, more communal kinds of values and ways of understanding begin to disappear and seem untenable. This collision of ideals results in an increasingly

fragmented sense of self. Conrad himself assumes various personas, but is left profoundly ambivalent toward these necessary fictions, constantly inventing new ones, yet always ultimately dissatisfied. Both Marlow and Kurtz represent Conrad's working out of alternative responses, and both characters attest to Conrad's suspicion of the nature and limits of consciousness itself as an essential, unitary, constitutive element of our psychological make-up capable and adequate to the task of assisting us in faithfully rendering perception. One of the insights one might glean from the enigmatic Kurtz has to do with the inadequacy of our very imagination itself to meet the increasingly exhaustive demands placed upon it by emerging conditions of modernity hastened by the onset of global cultural forces. As Griffiths suggests, although "critics have argued that Conrad understood little of the Congo in which he traveled [,] . . . we must question to what extent a clear understanding would have been possible" (15). Nonetheless, at least one commentator credits Conrad as extraordinarily proleptic.

According to Stephen Ross, Joseph Conrad "anticipated the twentieth century's violent transition to global capitalism . . . the diminishing importance of government in the face of ever-expanding capitalist imperialism, and (most shockingly) the dehumanization attendant upon the establishment of a capitalist global hegemony" (1). He further claims that in *Heart of Darkness* "Conrad both depicts and critiques the profit-driven arbitrariness of incipient Empire as it bears upon the individual subject" (31). In fact, not only did Conrad anticipate the complex modern phenomena Ross and others have pointed to, but, in the characters of both Marlow and Kurtz, he sensitively and compellingly dramatizes one of the more

insidious ways in which modernity becomes the subtext of modernism. In fact, so subtle is Conrad's critique of the kinds of values naturalized under the ideological rubric of capitalism that critics such as Ross find it necessary to rehearse the shopworn charge of "Conrad's failure to be sufficiently critical of imperialism" (5-6). Although Ross and others, including Christopher GoGwilt and Chris Bongie, have done much to reclaim Conrad criticism from the stubbornly rebarbative and reductive condemnation of Chinua Achebe, much might still be done in the way of illuminating just how inimical *Heart of Darkness* is to the ethos of exploitation promoted by and through capitalistic paradigms that place a Western will to power above all else. In order to make this point more explicitly, we may do well to briefly revisit Achebe and some latter-day incarnations of his critique.

Although according to J. Hillis Miller, "a canon of books and essays on Conrad that everyone needs to know and to refer to does not seem to exist" (3), Chinua Achebe's famous critique of the novel has proven influential despite its shortcomings. Achebe sees the novel as further, and even more damning evidence, of culturally entrenched European attitudes of patronization and condescension toward Africa and its people. His commentary focuses on the rather more politically-charged aspects of the narrative and largely faults Conrad for his insensitive or reductive and essentializing depiction. A newer version of this line of criticism can be found in John Hegglund's "Modernism, Africa and the Myth of Continents." He maintains that "by so completely separating the idea of 'Africa' from its material reality, Conrad . . . reduce[s] the diversity of a continent to a single abstraction . . . [and] by lending cultural authority to an idea of Africa as a purely aesthetic realm, both helped to

solidify an emerging metropolitan understanding of Africa as a singular,

homogeneous place that had meaning primarily through its contrast—favourable or

otherwise—with a modernity increasingly characterized as 'global'" (43-44).

Through a detailed analysis of travel narratives and competing cartographies,

Hegglund attempts to illustrate that "global modernity can only emerge through its

[constructed] difference from a place that is not yet global" (44), like Africa. In an

adaptation of Edward Said's classic argument that the West defines itself in positive

terms vis-à-vis an artificial, constructed depiction of non-Western peoples as

mysterious, exotic, irrational, and, hence, inferior, Hegglund sees *Heart of Darkness*

as among the texts that participate in and contribute to this phenomenon. Predictably,

Hegglund finds that "In *Heart of Darkness,* Africa is quickly turned into a cipher for a

philosophical 'darkness' within European culture, leaving no autonomy or agency to

indigenous peoples or spaces" (43). While Hegglund is certainly right to find literary

modernism engaging with complicated features of modernity such as the

repercussions of empire, his reading of *Heart of Darkness* comes perilously close to

committing the same reductionistic fallacy he suggests we would do well to avoid.

Much of this strain of Conrad criticism may, in fact, miss the forest for the

trees. After all, it seems virtually impossible to read the tale as devoid of criticism of

the altogether problematic, unsavory, grotesque, and absurd features of capitalistic

acquisitiveness. As Benita Parry observes, "*Heart of Darkness* casts a cold eye on

imperialism as a world system managed from the metropolitan centers in the interest

of these centers" (42). However, if, as Hegglund and others suggest, the inhabitants of

Africa are divested of individuality and represented as a kind of collective backdrop,

at least part of Conrad's point is that the imperialists fair little better in terms of autonomy, bound as they are to act and re-enact roles assigned to them by the prevailing economic model under which they are supposed to be flourishing. Surely, if Kurtz enjoyed a reasonable sense of autonomy, he would never have continued down the path that ultimately led to his madness and ignoble death. This is not to suggest that Kurtz and Marlow are reduced to mere functions of capitalistic enterprise; however, it is certainly part of Conrad's plan in the book to illuminate the disquieting consequences of laissez faire capitalism on all parties involved, and one of his primary strategies is to demonstrate the manner in which the system divests those under its purview of virtually all ability to act other than in accordance with the--often implicit--paradigms, values, and expectations of that system. The global modernity critics like Hegglund claim Conrad was involved in constructing through his narrative was not one with which Conrad himself was at all comfortable insofar as it favored and promoted conditions ripe for the homogenization of individual identity, the reduction of individuals to expedients and generic cogs in the machinery of capitalism, and gave rise to his own sense of himself as a kind of resident alien.

Jozef Teodor Konrad Nalecz Korzeniowski was a Polish exile who later became the thoroughly Anglicized, respected, and feted literary-lion Joseph Conrad. Conrad was a brilliant mimic, almost effortlessly adopting the life of a London literary doyen, marrying an English woman, rubbing elbows with established members of the literary elite such as Ford Madox Ford, and, reputedly, lapsing into decidedly (though clearly studied) mannered British affectation and speech. Yet, Conrad always remained keenly aware of and uneasy with his status as cultural

outsider. This discomfort manifests itself in his complicated attitudes towards identity and culture. The one critic who has provided the most insightful and sensitive treatment of Conrad as he approached issues of race and difference holds that Conrad himself closely identified with the position of cultural outsider due to the early instability of his own linguistic identity.

According to Michael North, Conrad's *Nigger of the Narcissus* shows the "threat posed to discursive meaning by racial and cultural difference" (*Dialect* 39). For North, race and culture both constitute and disrupt modern literature (40), and Conrad's role in this process was a unique one. A veritable polyglot, Conrad's native tongue was not English. Although this was a source of constant embarrassment for him throughout his life, it was also his precarious status as a linguistic outsider that accounted for his acute sensitivity to language. As North suggests, "Conrad celebrates a communal use of language the awareness of which he gained by being excluded from it" (57), thus paving the way for later modernists who would see their own need for a characteristic and unique idiom in terms of racial otherness.

Certainly, Conrad's ventriloquistic adroitness owes much to an unstable and peripatetic childhood, youth, and early adulthood. The omnipresent reality of Conrad's existence was movement, voluntary or otherwise, from and through unfamiliar territory that forced him to re-invent himself. This constant re-figuring of self in light of the strange, unfamiliar, and unknown Conrad took as an intrinsic feature of modernity and one that placed rigorous demands on the imagination. Whether in his own life or those of his fictional creations, Conrad was always navigating uncharted waters. The writer who changed his name to Joseph Conrad in

order to reflect his adoption of British culture and deeply felt need to belong was

intimately familiar with the vicissitudes of geopolitics before such concepts were

recognized as commonplace. His parents were Polish traditionalists exiled to northern

Russia because of loyalties to a homeland rife with internecine conflict and vivisected

by the dual ruling powers of Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Conrad, like

his fictional Marlow, grew up imagining himself in other places where he could

complete the map of his relatively uncertain and tumultuous life. As we will see,

Conrad finds modern cultural realities of imperialism underpinned by a conquest-bent

capitalistic value system deeply incommensurate with any notion of individuality and

personal autonomy.

If Africa and its inhabitants are ciphers, then so too is Charlie Marlow.

Alongside the thrill of the unknown as Marlow traverses distant lands, he also must

contend with the nightmarish consequences of the colonial project, living side by side

with other human beings at an antipodal cultural remove from him, and acclimate

himself to a modern corporate paradigm characterized by efficiency, image, and

performance, no matter how absurd or grotesque these values appear in light of real

human suffering. I suggest here that Conrad's critique of imperialism lies within his

rendering of the tormented and conflicted consciousnesses of Marlow and Kurtz as

they fall prey to capitalistic values that either severely compromise or destroy any

basic altruistic humanitarian impulse they might have once possessed.

In fact, Marlow and Kurtz are aesthetic representations of Conrad's own

deeply divided sense of his own hybrid identity and an attempt to suggest the very

uncertain, tentative, and indeterminate nature of human consciousness due, at least in

part, to the implications of new cultural realities including increasing engagement in global travel, exposure to diverse cultures, and dawning awareness of the consequences of European imperialism. Both Marlow and Kurtz, like Conrad himself, are types of resident aliens who respond to the pressures of modernity in antithetical ways. Throughout *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow insists on his alien status in relation to the African landscape and culture. Indeed, Marlow is so much the foreigner that he frequently finds it difficult to make any sense whatsoever of his surroundings and get his bearings. Certainly, the more frightening aspects of being an outsider to the culture in which one must work and live stem from one's inability to understand the language, customs, attitudes, and practices of that culture. In Charlie Marlow, Conrad dramatizes the absolute, and potentially paralyzing, and perhaps even life-threatening, confusion experienced by the resident alien.

Kurtz, however, is a different story. Astonishingly, Kurtz so successfully assimilates into the culture he encounters in Africa that he loses himself in it, or perhaps it might be more accurate to say he finds out who he really is. Through Kurtz, Conrad demonstrates in shockingly high relief the profound elasticity and alterability of our identities in response to new environments, circumstances, stimuli, and cultural paradigms. As Hawkins observes, "even from the start he placed himself metaphorically in the position of a god that he later was to assume literally" (82). Kurtz shows us what happens when one really succeeds and excels at one's chosen profession after having thoroughly imbibed and implemented its core principles. In this respect, Kurtz is the company man par excellence. The problem is Kurtz learns his corporate lessons too well, showing us how easily we might all metamorphose

into something barely recognizable the more we buy into a capitalistic, profit-driven vision for our lives. Conrad's critique is far more sensitive and nuanced than earlier commentators have allowed.

The scene with which *Heart of Darkness* begins alerts us to its interest in problematizing straightforward notions of consciousness and identity through its technique of narratorial distancing. Conrad himself cautions that "the subject is of our time distinc[t]ly—though not topically treated. It is a story as much as my *Outpost of Progress* was but, so to speak 'takes in' more—is a little wider—is less concentrated upon individuals" (*Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad* 140). One might expect that since one of Conrad's explicitly stated aesthetic aims of the novel is its movement away from the minute depiction of the individual this might have been enough to pre-emptively silence Achebe and his followers, yet such has not been the case. The real work that remains to be done involves understanding Conrad's aesthetic technique in light of the incisive critique it makes of a system whose most insidious and pernicious effects may well be its capacity to surreptitiously collectivize its participants as it inculcates a group identity that facilitates subservience. We can begin that work by taking a closer look at *Heart of Darkness.*

The tale's initial, unnamed narrator remains an anonymous shipmate of Charlie Marlow, who becomes a narrative voice, recounting his travels in Africa. So, we are never absolutely certain who is telling the story and for what reasons, perhaps suggesting the ease with which one voice might change or merge into another. Indeed, the mute auditors of Marlow's harrowing narrative are named only by profession, reducing them to social or corporate functions, rather than unique

individuals replete with their own consciousnesses and identities through which experiences might be meaningfully mediated. The anonymous narrator mentions the Director of Companies, the Lawyer, and the Accountant as constituting Marlow's coterie of listeners. Marlow himself attempts to disappear from his own narrative when he suggests to his shipmates "I don't want to bother you much with what happened to me personally" (*Heart of Darkness* 21) and fades into the background. The dispersed narrative seems highly desirable to Marlow, especially as exemplified by the manner in which we are told he spins yarns. "To him [Marlow] the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of sunshine" (18). For Marlow, the nature of meaning itself is dispersed and miasmic, un-tethered from a particular consciousness and only accessible by glimpses.

In addition to fundamental uncertainties regarding any "truths" *Heart of Darkness* might disclose, the novel characterizes both Marlow and Kurtz as registering opposite responses to their situations, yet both experience a failure of the imagination, insofar as nothing in their collective previous life experience can have adequately prepared them for the hellish enormities and dismal cultural reality of imperialism. Indeed, Conrad suggests through his deft rendering that this abhorrent, and ostensibly intransigent cultural milieu can only be got at through a kind of narrative depersonalization that demonstrates the inability of our imagination to process startlingly horrendous events. Marlow's naïve ebullience had, of course, already suffered, but will be damaged further upon his arrival in Africa, but he

remains undeterred because of the earlier imaginative life he had invented or taken

for his own, which tenaciously insists on the validity of its youthful musings. Hence,

although "it [Africa] had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery. . . there

was in it one river especially, a mighty big river, that you could see on the map,

resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest

curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land" (22).

However, when Marlow confesses, "the snake had charmed me" (22), the allure lies

within his own gravid imagination, not, as he initially supposes, in the African

darkness.

Conrad's narrative builds thematically through its suggestions of arch

absurdity, turned banal and quotidian. At one point, Marlow observes a ship

bombarding a deserted stretch of coastline. "There wasn't even a shed there (30) . .

[and] there was a touch of insanity in the proceeding" (31). A bit later, Marlow

arrives at "his Company's station" (32), not even his fertile imagination can have

prepared him for the macabre scenes upon which he stumbles. He first meets a chain-

gang consisting of what he essentially characterizes as walking corpses. "I could see

every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope" (33). Not failing to

recognize the absurdity now encompassing his every move, Marlow acknowledges "I

also was a part of the great cause of these high and just proceedings" (33). He then

discovers "a vast artificial hole somebody had been digging on the slope . . . [wryly

concluding that] it might have been connected with the philanthropic desire of giving

the criminals something to do" (34). The nonsensical, almost Kafkaesque, encounters

Marlow faces give way to a macabre scene that even Marlow's stentorian reserve

cannot glibly dismiss, yet he is also incapable of full assimilation as well:

> They were dying slowly—it was very clear. They were not enemies,
>
> they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now,--nothing but
>
> black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the
>
> greenish gloom. Brought from all the recesses of the coast in all the
>
> legality of time contracts, lost in uncongenial surroundings, fed on
>
> unfamiliar food, they sickened, became inefficient, and were then
>
> allowed to crawl away and rest. These moribund shapes were free as
>
> air—and nearly as thin. I began to notice the gleam of eyes under the
>
> trees. Then, glancing down, I saw a face near my hand. The black
>
> bones reclined at full length with one shoulder against the tree and
>
> slowly the eyelids rose and the sunken eyes looked up at me,
>
> enormous and vacant, a kind of blind, white flicker in the depths of the
>
> orbs, which died out slowly. (35)

Marlow's description seems hauntingly dispassionate, impersonal, unattached, and

objective, a kind of succinct reportage filed for the perusal of his superior. Personal

emotional response is carefully avoided and only the facts of the case are recorded: an

incident report. Perhaps the most telling line in the above description, and one that is

hauntingly reminiscent of Conrad's epistolary indictment of the imperialist project

with which we began, is Marlow's observation that the men "became inefficient"

(35). In the language of business, profit, and empire there can be no more damning

condition.

What is fascinating about this scene is the degree to which Marlow has been indoctrinated with the values of capitalism even in the face of their devastating consequences for terms of human life. When confronted with the kind of senseless barbarism and devastation typified by imperialistic endeavors, Marlow responds in a business-like fashion. Modern capitalistic paradigms have conditioned Marlow's response in such a way that both his rhetorical style and the content of his speech suggest depersonalization, detachment, and ephemerality. Instead of human beings, the people Marlow observes *in extremis* are "nothing earthly now . . . but black shadows of disease and starvation" (35). In characterizing them, Marlow avoids the intimate and personal by his recourse to the language of myth. He has entered a land of shades where "moribund shapes" (35) aimlessly flit about. Perhaps the only point of reference Marlow can conjure is of a mythological underworld where condemned souls, uncertain of the fate that has befallen them, confusedly and pointlessly meander. The fact that Marlow himself is essentially engaging in the same activity, though in extraordinarily better health, seems to escape his notice. Ironically, Marlow has come from a considerable distance and is certainly now amid unfamiliar and "uncongenial surroundings" (35). Yet, Marlow does resemble the tormented people he encounters.

In fact, Marlow is far closer in resemblance to the poor creatures facing imminent danger and even death than he is to the "Company's chief accountant" (36), who he ironically describes as "amazing" (36) because he is capable of completely ignoring the shockingly macabre scene around him, whereas Marlow is only able to distance himself from it somewhat, without complete disconnection. Marlow does, in

fact, provide one of the men with sustenance, signaling his acknowledgment of shared humanity. Yet, what Marlow perceives as inscrutable differences are repeatedly cited. The man to whom Marlow offers food has "a bit of white worsted round his neck" (35), which baffles Marlow and leads him to speculate wildly as to its purpose. "Was it a badge—an ornament—a charm—a propitiatory act" (35)? The length of yarn functions symbolically, of course, representing the yoke of European imperialism tied firmly around the necks of the colonized and exploited native population, a practice, this little episode dramatizes, Marlow finds highly disquieting.

The assumption of difference here is almost as startling as Marlow's concentration on the minute to the virtual exclusion of what one might well argue constitutes more pressing matters—the imminent deaths of all the men surrounding the station. Interestingly, when Marlow turns his attention to relative minutia, like the "bit of white thread from across the sea" (35), the whole scene comes into sharper focus (following Conrad's hints regarding the visual) then goes out again or becomes blurry when he attempts to describe the dying. Marlow observes "two more bundles of acute angles . . . with their legs drawn up" (35). In the space of the same passage, Marlow refers to them as "phantom[s]" and "creatures" (36), again signaling the distance he wishes really did exist between him and these men and his hope that this grisly situation will pass quickly away because it presents a vexing, perhaps insoluble, problem for the imagination. Not only do these neglected and abandoned victims of imperial efficiency represent a pervasive, morally reprehensible disregard for basic human rights, but they also parallel Conrad's and Marlow's own positions as simultaneous insiders/outsiders in British and European colonial culture. In fact,

much of the novel depicts Marlow attempting to come to terms with his increasing identification with the victims of the imperialist enterprise, his sneaking suspicion that he may, in fact, share much more in common with the oppressed than the oppressor.

That Conrad meant for us to find the imperialistic goings-on in the Congo morally reprehensible and absurd is perhaps nowhere better dramatized than in the scene in which Marlow encounters the fastidious chief accountant:

> When near the buildings I met a white man, in such an unexpected elegance of get-up that in the first moment I took him for a sort of vision. I saw a high starched collar, white cuffs, a light alpaca jacket, snowy trousers, a clear silk necktie, and varnished boots. No hat. Hair parted, brushed, oiled, under a green-lined parasol held in a big white hand. He was amazing, and had a penholder behind his ear. (36)

Marlow's feigned admiration for the sententious official is, of course, undercut by the abject absurdity of this man's ridiculously lavish and overly formal apparel and comportment, as though he were about to take toast and tea al fresco and feign blithe obliviousness to the horrors around him. Interestingly, the chief accountant represents as much of an abstraction as the men who perish in plain sight before him. He is described in terms of his clothing and accoutrements, suggesting a pleasing facade under which may lurk very unpleasant appetites, or, perhaps even more frighteningly, no substance at all. The accountant, yet another character conjured for us by his profession, believes that a particular notion of civilization can be held together through the observance of certain forms even, perhaps especially, in the face of utter

madness, which these formalities contribute to if not create. And, although Marlow

claims to have "respected the fellow" (37), and his ability to contrive such a

convincingly civilized appearance even after "nearly three years" (37), he knows that

it is ultimately a sham, and one he is incapable of assimilating. Nonetheless,

maintaining a pretense of normalcy in light of clear evidence to the contrary

represents one of capitalism's more ingenious strategies.

  Heart of Darkness rotates on an axis of uncertainty typified by the paradox

that the closer Marlow "penetrate[s] deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness"

(62), the further removed he is from any real semblance of understanding the

significance of the events that befall him. Steaming through the African night,

Marlow and his crew hear the rhythmic sound of drums, but "whether it meant war,

peace, or prayer we could not tell" (62). Even when Marlow actually boasts of the

limitless capacity of the "mind of man . . . capable of anything" (63), his sentiments

ring hollow because when faced with the prospect of actually engaging with the

presumed creators of the "wild and passionate uproar" (63), he declares "I had no

time" (63). Incidentally, the prudence of Marlow's decision becomes clear a bit later

when the ship is attacked, resulting in the death of one of his crew.

  Immediately preceding the infamous attack, it occurs to Marlow that the

majority of his crew, a band of cannibals, "must have been growing increasingly

hungry for at least this past month" (69). Deeply perplexed by the cannibals' apparent

restraint in not simply attacking and dining on Marlow and the rest of the steamer's

occupants, whom the cannibals substantially outnumber, Marlow wonders "why in

the name of all the gnawing devils of hunger they didn't go for us" (70). "What

possible restraint? Was it superstition, disgust, patience, fear – or some kind of primitive honour" (71). The cannibals' inexplicable behavior, unfathomable for Marlow, provides keenly ironic counterpoint to the kind of imperial practice and ethos with which Marlow is most familiar. Weaned on capitalistic notions of conquest, competition, and acquisition, Marlow cannot imagine other groups not taking by force that which they desire. Since cannibals feed on other human beings and the cannibals accompanying Marlow must have been famished, what prevented them from attacking? Although the cannibals actually ingest human flesh, one can hardly fail to appreciate the very similar manner in which the indigenous peoples of Africa are devoured by empire and hapless workers like Marlow and Kurtz are consumed by it. The emaciated and moribund figures Marlow encounters upon his arrival in Africa have been, in a sense, eaten alive by the imperial venture and discarded. By becoming a virtuoso of imperialist concerns and ideology, Kurtz is destroyed by those very principles. The real reason Marlow marvels at the cannibals' apparent restraint is because his own people have shown very little if any as they have exploited their way throughout the continent. So, the practice of cannibalism—humans feeding on other, typically weaker, humans--is both a reality and a metaphor for imperialistic practices in Africa. Marlow's curiosity can simply be viewed as a struggle to master a situation in which he is at a supreme disadvantage. However, this tendency has roots in a kind of capitalistic ethos as well.

What we may witness in Conrad's rendering of the character of Marlow is the confluence of two conflicting ambitions or drives with very deep evolutionary roots. Marlow's instinctive genetic programming suggests that all of the African people are

suspect, threatening, and potentially dangerous, while he simultaneously evinces a

genuine desire to understand. At one point, Marlow even says, during a particularly

animated show of strength by the natives that he finds both repulsive and strangely

alluring, "well, you know, that was the worst of it – this suspicion of their not being

inhuman . . . They howled, and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what

thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity – like yours – the thought of your

remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar" (62-3). Marlow's consistent

inability to make sense of his circumstances and the culture in which he finds himself

ensconced reveal both an all-consuming search for "universal understanding,

universal comprehension" (*Reading* 62) and the impossibility of this ambition.

Michael North has reminded us that the early twentieth century saw the

emergence of modern anthropology, alongside industrial capitalism, and with it a

desire to understand all cultures and a belief that such knowledge is attainable.

Ultimately, Conrad insists in *Heart of Darkness* that such grandiose notions are

always already framed, packaged, and contextualized vis-à-vis the observer's own

enculturation. A serviceable analogy might be a rather figurative use of the

Heisenberg Theory, which concerns the behavior of subatomic particles. The very act

of observing these particles alters their movement. In similar fashion, the observation

of members of other cultures unquestionably effects their behavior, and the observer's

perceptions of that behavior are unavoidably filtered through his or her own cultural

presuppositions, all of which places one at quite a remove from any "original" truth.

Conrad makes the point time and again that the kinds of cultural paradigms that

function as lenses through which we view others, particularly in a colonial context,

only serve Western imperialistic and corporate interests. Even if Marlow wanted to understand those around him, he could not because the values that he is encouraged to uphold and implement disallow the pursuit of such knowledge in favor of a type of performance, i.e. getting his job done at any cost.

Heart of Darkness consistently insists on the futility of truly knowing ourselves or others. It also hints that our very natures and basic means of perceiving the world are inadequate and preclude the possibility of authentic understanding of another culture, in part due to age-old survival mechanisms passed through our evolutionary heritage, but primarily because Western subjectivity is now ineluctably structured vis-à-vis modern capitalistic paradigms characterized by their promotion of business, not benevolence. Unfortunately, there are certain facets of culture for which Western business paradigms are wholly inadequate and downright useless. Conrad suggests as much when he depicts Marlow's series of reactions to an aerial assault on his steamer. Marlow initially fails to recognize the attack as such because it falls well outside his experience:

> Sticks, little sticks, were flying about – thick: they were whizzing before my nose, dropping below me, striking behind me against my pilot-house. All this time the river, the shore, the woods, were very quiet – perfectly quiet. I could only hear the heavy splashing thump of the stern-wheel and the patter of these things. We cleared the snag clumsily. Arrows, by Jove! We were being shot at. (75).

Of course, Marlow's attention has certainly been elsewhere as he attempts to navigate the Congo. As Marlow declares many times, the ubiquitous snags require his utmost

skill to navigate. The difficulty with which Marlow attempts to keep a steady, un-

snagged course on the river brilliantly parallels the specious reasoning of European

imperialists and their minions, such as Kurtz, who arrogantly imagine they possess

the ability, not to mention god-given right, to wend their way through this dangerous

land seeking treasure and self-aggrandizement, only to find madness and death.

Marlow is so quintessentially unequal to the task that he fails to recognize he is under

attack for some moments, despite his knowledge that natives have been following the

steamer for quite a while, adopting a range of menacing poses. In Marlow's world,

such a scenario is inconceivable, hence his initial difficulty in accurately assessing the

situation. The arch-absurdity of Marlow's predicament lies in his unfamiliarity and

unpreparedness for the Congo, for he has been trained as a merchant seaman, not as a

soldier or mercenary. The war zone into which Marlow has ventured is characterized

by imminent danger, mysterious enemies, mounting casualties, and sneak attacks. The

corporate, capitalistic lenses through which Marlow has been conditioned to view and

order the world fall short of explanatory force in the face of these extraordinary

circumstances. The fact that Marlow has difficulty detecting the danger that is

literally all around him suggests the abject naiveté with which many participants in

the imperial enterprise approach their duties. They only fully grasp the consequences

of their actions after it is too late; after they, like Kurtz, and to some degree Marlow,

have become casualties of empire.

The exceedingly high toll exacted by Kurtz's and Marlow's participation in

"the civilizing work in Africa" (*Collected Letters* 140) is demonstrated in Kurtz's

untimely demise and Marlow's bitter disappointment. When Marlow watches Kurtz

expire, Kurtz's dying gasp is "the horror, the horror" (*Heart of Darkness* 112).

Although this line is clearly ambiguous enough to accommodate myriad

interpretations, it seems at least plausible to believe that Kurtz is passing judgment on

his behavior and that of his employers for their roles in the "criminality of

inefficiency and pure selfishness" (*Collected Letters* 140) committed in the Belgian

Congo in the name of progress, advancement, and civilization. In the end, Kurtz has

become the perfect company man. So thoroughly has he imbibed principles of

corporate and imperial efficiency, he is almost inseparable from his function, just as

the ship's occupants with which *Heart of Darkness* begins are all known by their

occupations. The problem and Kurtz's undoing lie within the fact that he learns his

job too well, particularly lessons like dehumanization, exploitation, and acquisition.

Conrad's great insight is to demonstrate the incontrovertibly pernicious effects of

imperialism on all parties concerned. Kurtz shows us the frightening degree to which

the behaviors of which we are capable, andour very identities to a startlingly

significant degree are shaped by social and cultural paradigms over which we have

little, if any, control. In Kurtz, Conrad explores that part of himself, and perhaps all of

us, that is vulnerable or amenable to the some of the more alluring facets of a

capitalistic ethos of power and conquest. Unfortunately, these ideas mask shockingly

bitter realities. And, although critics such as Michael Lackey see Kurtz as a

"charismatic political figure" (22) and "an intelligent imperialist" (22), it might be

useful to question to what degree Conrad meant for us to consider Kurtz a completely

autonomous agent capable of acting outside corporate interests. Kurtz is not, as

Hannah Arendt suggested some years ago merely, "residue of the capitalist system"

(189). He has become the embodiment of that system.

However, in Marlow, we have a man of principles initially, at least, at odds

with those embraced by, or succumbed to, by Kurtz. One of the principles Marlow

holds most dear is veracity. So strong is his belief in the necessity of telling the truth,

Marlow almost always refuses to lie. In fact, Marlow, self-avowed hater of lies, feels

compelled to tell one to Kurtz's fiancé:

> "'The last word he pronounced was—your name."
>
> "I heard a light sigh, and then my heart stood still, stopped dead short
>
> by an exulting and terrible cry, by the cry of inconceivable triumph
>
> and unspeakable pain. 'I knew it—I was sure!'. . . She knew. She was
>
> sure. I heard her weeping: she had hidden her face in her hands. It
>
> seemed to me that the house would collapse before I could escape, that
>
> the heavens would fall upon my head. But nothing happened. The
>
> heavens do not fall for such a trifle. (123)

Clearly, Marlow's falsehood is good intentioned, offering, as it does, some bit of

solace to Kurtz's grieving fiancé. Nonetheless, his deception underscores the degree

to which Marlow has himself become complicit in a project that seeks to conceal its

shabbier aspects. The fact that Marlow buries Kurtz's story in the recesses of his own

memory suggests feelings of shame and a need to carefully file away the unsavory

activities in which he played a part. Indeed, the heavens will not fall over Charlie

Marlow's arguably benevolent untruth, but the consequences of a de facto code of

silence vis-à-vis imperialistic endeavors in Africa might certainly be enough to shake them.

Ultimately, both Kurtz and Marlow undergo identity crises that remain unresolved, perplexing, and problematic; however, the manifestations of those crises are certainly quite different. In his initial embracing and subsequent embodiment of the imperial enterprise, Kurtz represents a kind of worst-case scenario. He is the colonialist who so completely assimilates the corporate ethos of raising profit margins that he pushes the adherence to capitalistic principles to its conceivable, albeit horrifying, end. Marlow, on the other hand, though as enraptured by Kurtz's quasi-mythological status, is also manipulated by the structures that ensnared Kurtz, but he is, perhaps only accidentally, able to escape full assimilation—Marlow just was not the company man Kurtz was. At any rate, the reasons for their illness can be traced back to a kind of paradigm shift emerging in the late-twentieth century about which Conrad felt extremely uneasy. Modernity's progress and advancement came to be embodied in the imperial project that Conrad clearly recognized as increasingly absurd, grotesque, and untenable, not least because of the kinds of values it inculcated into its participants and the results of those values in action on the people of Africa. Although phrases like "identity crisis" and "identity theft" are ubiquitous in common parlance, the ease with which we invoke these terms obscures the presupposition that lies behind them—that such a thing as an identity is, more or less, a stable and fixed structural principle of human consciousness through which we experience and interact with the world. *Heart of Darkness* Conrad gives the lie to a frighteningly inadequate conception of ourselves as somehow fully knowable and explicable. One

of the potentially devastating consequences of modernity as envisioned in the novel is the relative ease with which any of us, even the best among us, may lose ourselves by unquestioningly assimilating capitalism's more specious ideals. One of the great ironies (among many) of the novel is that Kurtz metamorphoses into something terrifying and unrecognizable as a direct result of doing his job better than anyone else.

Heart of Darkness raises fundamental questions about the uncertainty, fragility, and malleability of consciousness and identity. Are we the people we think we are? What factors can change and alter irrevocably our sense of who we are? Might we even recognize what we may well turn into or what we have already been? Given the potential for both good and ill within us all, what dispositions and elements of consciousness will coalesce to give rise to who we are? Will we be prepared to face the perhaps unsettling prospect of who and what we really are? Conrad found the notion of identity and its seemingly endless malleability both fascinating and frightening, particularly the degree to which such a thing is inextricably tied to a given culture's economic model. In *Heart of Darkness* he offers two sides of the same coin, each demonstrating vastly different responses to empire and ethnicity, or, as Conrad himself put it, "the criminality of inefficiency and pure selfishness" (*Letters* 140). The strain placed on the modernist imagination by heretofore unencountered and unimaginable images at a profound disconnect from most of those writers' experience results in a kind of crisis of representation. This crisis is made manifest aesthetically in a fundamental sense of narrative indeterminacy through techniques of depersonalization and displacement. These techniques reflect the shifting paradigms

of modernity away from humanistic values to more dubious mechanical, industrial, and corporate ones. And, despite Charlie Marlow's overwhelming sensation that the whole works, i.e. a system of economic values providing conditions that give rise to the horrors of imperialism, should be on the imminent verge of crashing down and falling to pieces, "the heavens do not fall for such a trifle" (*Heart* 123).

CHAPTER IV

TRADITION AND THE INDIVIDUAL ALIEN: ELIOT'S "RHYTHMICAL

GRUMBLING"

In 1939 T. S. Eliot expressed his grave disappointment with the accord

reached by Chamberlain and Hitler at Munich in September 1938. "I felt a deep

personal guilt and shame for my country and for myself as part of that country . . .

Our whole national life seemed fraudulent" (*The Idea of a Christian Society* 65). In

addition to his disgust over Britain's abandonment of Czechoslovakia to the Third

Reich, Eliot also issued a challenge in the form of a provocative socio-political

question. Eliot wondered "was our society . . . assembled round anything more

permanent than a congeries of banks, insurance companies, and industries, and had it

any beliefs more essential than a belief in compound interest and the maintenance of

dividends" (*Idea* 65). Given the institutions Eliot's scathing diatribe targets, one

might argue that his real problem is with capitalism itself, its functions and

exponents, or a particular kind of ethos and paradigm shift associated with advanced

capitalism. Whatever England as a national was capable of being, in Eliot's view, it

had woefully fallen short due in large part to its fetishization of economic

advancement and prosperity and its apparent disregard for more noble and altruistic

values such as loyalty, honesty, and compassion. Interestingly, long before Eliot

publicly expressed his dissent vis-à-vis the manner in which he perceived culture

drifting, the primary work upon which his reputation now rests contained the seeds of

his radically conservative assault on capitalism—the new god of modernity.

Lawrence has, it is clear that Eliot was extraordinarily concerned with the trajectory of Western civilization and culture as it participated in and responded to global capitalism, technological developments and unprecedented social upheavals. *The Waste Land* takes issue with specific facets of modernity in order to suggest the degree to which the notion of modernity as categorically progressive and melioristic failed to adequately take into account its wide-reaching and problematic influence on human subjectivity, relationships, and social structures. Eliot conceived of the strain placed on our individual psyches by modernity as a kind of aesthetic crisis, insofar as it had become increasingly difficult to represent a normative vision of human consciousness with recourse to modernity's new paradigms. These new values included speed, efficiency, mechanization, profit, productivity, and multiculturalism.

Faced with an aesthetic crisis, T.S. Eliot became a radical conservative. On the one hand, with Pound's well-known assistance,[1] *The Waste Land* became recognized as extraordinarily experimental, both formally and technically, even as it drew on and reinforced the resources of a tradition Eliot finds under constant assault from modernity's new realities. To preserve a monolithic notion of the past with which we might make sense of the confusion of the present, not to speak of an increasingly uncertain future, Eliot assumes the persona of the alien, the outsider, and aesthetically captures and deploys culturally disparate voices in a way that foregrounds extremely vexing questions of modernity[2]. Among the myriad voices, which should we heed? What will it mean that the shifting cultural vistas of modernity will not necessarily be constituted according to Western ideas of order and uniformity? What are the implications of millions of people from vastly different

cultural backgrounds living side by side, riding the same trains and subways, sharing their seats and their lives? How will new modern paradigms such as speed, efficiency, and convenience[3] impinge upon the constitution of human relationships? In what specific ways might these relationships differ from previous incarnations? Can a notion of tradition such as Eliot's accommodate such change? *The Waste Land* registers a deep suspicion of modernity and the individual artist's ability to imaginatively cope with its onslaught. In adopting the persona of the alien, Eliot co-opted what he most feared, culturally marginalized social status, and ventriloquized the disparate and often incongruous voices of modernity in order to recuperate those very voices back into a recognizable version of human subjectivity capable of accommodating them. Not surprisingly, Eliot found cultural resonance in a character so deeply invested in cultivating the power of his role as alien and using it to his advantage that he loses himself in that very performance and registers perhaps the most ambiguous last words in modern literature:

> Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and
>
> surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He
>
> cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision, -- he cried out twice,
>
> a cry that was no more than a breath – the horror! The horror! (*Heart*
>
> *of Darkness* 112)

Thus did the most celebrated poem of the twentieth century begin, at least before Ezra Pound got hold of it. In fact, despite Pound's objection to this contemporary reference, epistolary evidence suggests that Eliot was keen to keep it. Although Pound got his way, as the well-documented editorial history of the poem suggests he

did many times, the thematic kinship of *Heart of Darkness* and *The Waste Land* is unmistakable even without this clear link. One might point to any number of reasons for Eliot's choice of Kurtz's last words as an epigraph to his poem, but the parallel I am most keen to tease out in this chapter involves the primary aesthetic strategy by which Eliot will both appear to re-conceive the Western literary tradition while simultaneously shoring up its foundations. Both Conrad and Eliot investigate, critique, and aesthetically render the complicated repercussions of modernity's shifting paradigms and their own profoundly ambivalent attitudes toward these changes. These writers, not unlike Kurtz ignominiously succumbing to his own mortality far away from home in tortured, febrile agony, acutely felt themselves outsiders to societies for which they held out little hope of redemption.

T.S. Eliot, by using the Greek term "metoikos," referring to himself as a "resident alien," meant to suggest his outsider status--real, perceived, and constructed. According to Richard Baudenhausen, "Eliot cultivated an amorphous identity through his refusal during his lifetime to become rooted, for he always kept on the move: born in St Louis, educated at Harvard, eventually settled in London, Eliot even tried late in his life to reclaim an American literary heritage" (28). As a result of penetrating biographies by Peter Akroyd and, later, Lyndall Gordon, we now have a much clearer picture of Eliot's lifelong sense of disconnection. Early on in his career, according to Gordon, Eliot had decreed that "there should be no biography [and] he urged those close to him to keep silence [sic]" (1). Although Eliot's quest to conceal the more private aspects of his life began rather successfully, allowing him to invent and disseminate within literary studies through his early criticism a kind of cult of

impersonality, typified by its diminution of the individual poet's personality and emotional response, deeper and more comprehensive examinations of Eliot tend to reveal the startling degree to which his very personal struggles provided the imaginative and emotional nexus from which both his most inventive poetry and his increasingly acute desire to distance himself from those sometimes overwhelming emotions sprang. According to Gordon, "Eliot's private paper tells posterity that out of the marriage to Vivienne came the state of mind that 'led to *The Waste Land*'" (119). Early critics of Eliot's work thoroughly took the poet up on the terms by which he wished to be judged (and by which others would be judged) as set forth in his influential essays that became New Critical doctrine. The inevitable backlash to Eliot's ascendancy and dominance was led by Terry Eagleton, whose scathing attack in the 1970's spawned a kind of bifurcation in the criticism, and commentators have largely fallen along distinct party lines since. Cultural materialists and post-structuralists castigate Eliot's work for its ideological complicity with the hegemony of the ruling class or the hollow grounds upon which Western metaphysics rests, while others celebrate its continuing capacity to baffle and bemuse, all the while consisting of a deep organic structure. Fortunately, critics such as Christopher Ricks, Michael North, and Louis Menand have provided provocative, new correctives to this trend toward polarization.

According to Nick Selby, Christopher Ricks' *T.S. Eliot and Prejudice* points to *The Waste Land's* "radical form as multicultural mosaic [that] speaks most clearly of the disruptions and confused hybridity of European culture in the early years of the century" (142). Ricks builds on the insightful work of theorist Homi Bhabha who

advances a trenchant argument against essentialist notions of the state and nation in his essay "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation." For Bhabha, essentialist thinking is dangerous because it tends to naturalize Third World societies by defining them in opposition to supposedly unified and whole First World nations. This problematizes their relationship by further serving to hold Third World nations in check near the bottom of the hierarchy with little or no chance of ever ascending. Bhabha further maintains that as long as we continue to view culture in very rigid and self-deceiving naturalized terms we can never hope for improvement. However, if we begin to view nations in terms of narrative, a narrative comprised of a multiplicity of voices and what Bhabha terms "hybrid" interaction, then we may begin to realize a far more potentially fruitful perspective. For, as Bhabha asserts, his "interstitial perspective" or liminal theory forces his reader to reexamine the ways by which national identity tends to be constructed. These critical insights highlight several other paradigms that have increasingly come to characterize and define modern urban experience Eliot clearly invokes in *The Waste* Land—confusion, uncertainty, and heteroglossia. The challenge of aesthetically rendering these attributes of modern life was one Eliot reluctantly accepted but struggled with daily, and it exacted an extraordinarily high cost on him. Indeed, after her husband's death in January of 1965 Valerie Eliot lamented "he felt he had paid too high a price to be a poet, that he had suffered too much" (Ackroyd 334). Throughout his career, however, Eliot became exceedingly adept at developing certain coping mechanisms.

One of the primary means through which Eliot coped with a cultural ethos increasingly at odds with his own was to hide from it behind a variety of masks. In his

perceptive study, *The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language and Twentieth-Century Literature,* Michael North points out that one such mask was that of race, citing an abundance of correspondence between Eliot and Pound in which they communicate in black English vernacular. For North, "dialect became . . . the private double of the modernist poetry they were jointly creating and publishing" (77). It is hardly surprising to find Eliot attracted to the vernacular voice because of his own experience as a kind of cultural outsider. In addition to the racial masquerade North suggests Eliot was engaged in performing, he also conceived of himself as an alien in the face of paradigm shifts toward which he felt extremely ambivalent, intrigued and excited, but also uncomfortable and cautious. This complicated attitude finds voice in *The Waste Land* in which technical innovation masks an essentially conservative political and religious response to modernity. Hardly the bohemian, Eliot was once accused by Virginia Woolf of wearing a four-piece suit. Indeed, Louis Menand has pointed out that "the nineteenth-century cultural values he made such a show of discrediting can be read, so to speak, beneath the modernist ones he made a show of declaring" (5). The role of alien that Eliot both felt and was keen to utilize to his advantage embodies the implicit aesthetic project of *The Waste Land,* which is to place modernity's new paradigms in sharp relief and force us to question their efficacy. One such paradigm precipitated by increasingly efficient means of travel and political upheaval is a pervasive sense of not belonging.

In *The Waste Land* Eliot examines notions of place, home, origins, beginnings, and belonging, suggesting that our once-stable ideas regarding these concepts require re-evaluation. Eliot's startling evocation of the emerging modern

sense of homelessness manifests itself in the fidgety, episodic, and disconnected non-linearity of *The Waste Land*. Each vignette, enunciated by a different voice often from a different culture, sometimes ancient, sometimes modern, functions as an attempt to establish a viable notion of home, but each attempt is abruptly aborted because any meaningfully authentic notion of home as such ceases to exist among the myriad competing versions of what such a thing could or might be. Indeed, the polyphony that threatens to collapse under its own weight into cacophony serves to foreground at least two abiding preoccupations—mobility and multiculturalism. Eliot's ambivalence toward and often implicit denunciations of these signature features of modernity signal to us the conservative impulse at the heart of his ostensibly avant-garde aesthetic. Although *The Waste Land* appears to shatter poetic convention and defy understanding at virtually every turn, particularly through the strategy of Eliot's adept mimicry of disparate cultural voices, these invocations of heteroglossia serve to shore up a decidedly conservative ethos which Eliot sensed was being eroded, not least as a result of Continental fervor over the new modern paradigms of speed and efficiency. At a time when extremely progressive, not to mention outspoken, thinkers are wholeheartedly embracing the possibilities afforded by specific features of modernity including urban vistas with throngs of people, many of whom from other towns, cities, or countries, Eliot registers deep suspicion about our social trajectory.

The paradox upon which *The Waste Land* finally rests is that the most heralded example of literary modernism in terms of the degree to which it is understood as representing a clear break with stagnant and ossifying values, customs,

conventions and traditions of the past reinforces rearguard conservative ideological

presuppositions and attitudes that dismiss and eschew much of what modernity has to

offer, albeit in such a startlingly new form that we might well find ourselves seduced

by artifice and less apt to question the premises underlying claims made by the poem.

In what follows, I hope to demonstrate that Eliot interrogates central features of

modernity, registers an ultimately conservative ambivalence at best and

condemnation at worst of those facets of modern life because of a perceived

imaginative inability to assimilate truly new lived experiences into a serviceable

paradigm. For Eliot, urban life, with its convenience, spectacle, and teeming hordes,

threatens to erase tradition and replace it with disconnected polymorphous human

interaction and experience. In short, *The Waste Land* finds much of modernity rather

distasteful and unsavory.

According to Raymond Williams, "it is a very striking feature of many

Modernist and avant-garde movements that they were not only located in the great

metropolitan centres but that so many of their members were immigrants into these

centres, where in some new ways all were strangers" (77). Implicit in this observation

is the suggestion that we might learn something of value about the nature of

modernist art by paying closer attention to its creators' rather ambiguous social status

and their predilections to itinerancy. Michael North, building on Williams' work,

provocatively raises the stakes by pointing out the needless restriction of Williams'

argument to physical movement, "missing the effects that global mobility had as they

percolated throughout anthropology, philosophy, psychology, and political science.

The multiplicity and incompatibility of human points of view were never more

unavoidably obvious than in the early twentieth century" (*Reading* 15) when these viewpoints were more widely disseminated through more mass mediated outlets than ever before. This inundation of word, image, and idea, contends Arjun Appadurai, has profoundly affected how we all think, work, and live:

> . . . there is a peculiar new force to the imagination in social life today. More persons in more parts of the world consider a wider set of possible lives than they ever did before. One important source of this change is the mass media, which present a rich, ever-changing store of possible lives some of which enter the lived imaginations of ordinary people more successfully than others . . . The importance of media is not so much as direct sources of new images and scenarios for life possibilities but as semiotic diacritics of great power, which also inflect social contact with the metropolitan world facilitated by other channels. (53)

In many ways, *The Waste Land* illustrates new difficulties facing the modern imagination in terms of challenging its reader to assimilate copious amounts of disconnected, disparate, and sometimes outright baffling or mystifying pieces of ideas, information, and imagery expressed or rendered in puzzlingly truncated iterations or foreign tongues. The many voices of the poem may be read as representing a host of "life possibilities" (53) now commonplace particularly in metropolitan centers such as London in which myriad cultures exist and engage one another. Difficulty itself is a kind of modern paradigm that Eliot traded on extensively. As Leonard Diepeveen reminds us, "during the years 1910 to 1950, years

that saw the formation of the Anglo-American modernist canon and the establishing of these texts and writers in the university curriculum, readers overwhelmingly sensed that difficulty was central to what was beginning to be called modernism. Difficulty was the most common frame for readers' discussions of what was different and new about modernism" (17) and continues to be primarily because Eliot said so.

Of the myriad cultural and personal inscriptions to be discovered in a text as palimpsestically suggestive as *The Waste Land*, one we might not expect is an abiding sense of nostalgia, particularly when we consider that modernism's public mantra is typically encapsulated in Pound's famous exhortation to "make it new." Tellingly, however, Pound appropriated this formulation from the tub of an ancient Chinese emperor. Eliot fetishizes systematic and coherent classical civilization and learning including religious, philosophical, political, and esoteric erudition, but he presents these bodies of knowledge as rent from any meaningful or meaning-making context, thus emphasizing the plight of the modern subject in relation to estranging cultural forces beyond his or her control. The conservative and, I think, nostalgic impulse at the heart of the poem is the hope that we will find its fragmentary and cryptic nature horrifyingly reminiscent of the conditions facing modernity's inhabitants, including problematic paradigm shifts which the poem itself reflects, and reach, as Eliot does himself, back into earlier stages in our collective past when more socially cohesive practices such as philosophical inquiry and religious belief were widely valued.

The Waste Land represents an aesthetic response to the new set of demands being placed upon the imagination in the twentieth century by participating in a discursive formation that consistently and explicitly insists upon the impossibility of

social cohesiveness in the face of history's chaos and the future's uncertainty, while covertly disavowing or negating this very premise, and all the while holding out a concealed, alluringly seductive endorsement, yet deeply ambivalent suspicion of this apparent chimera. When confronted with the onslaught of modernity and a crisis of the imagination that it spawned, Eliot turned to the past for comfort, solace, and instruction. However, Eliot's relationship with the past is a complex one.

We are always nostalgic for a past that never existed, so we invent a notion of the past for which we might yearn. The past Eliot invented is well documented in the canonical essays such as "Tradition and the Individual Talent," "Hamlet and His Problems," "Ulysses, Order and Myth," and "The Metaphysical Poets," among others, but also in the criticism over which he exercised publication control:

> The *Criterion* provided Eliot with a public forum from which he could participate in the general cultural conversation: mediating authors and ideas to a variegated field of periodicals and more broadly to highly differentiated organizations and institutions in modern society. More responsive than the printed book, the subtle and intricate reciprocity of literary journalism allowed Eliot to address and even, upon occasions, to shape the agenda of inter-war cultural criticism" (Harding 2).

Not only have Eliot's pronouncements loomed exceedingly large, the degree to which his own editorial judgments and influence have also contributed to making Eliot rather similar to the manner in which Auden eulogized Freud: "He was not just a man, but a whole climate of opinion."

The climate of opinion spawned by Eliot posited as its unifying principle a stable and unitary notion of the past reified by Eliot in such early criticism as "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in which he describes this monumental legacy and lays out what the unattainably lofty objectives of any poet worth his salt should be:

> It [tradition] cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must attain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional (*Selected Essays* 4).

While valuing individual talent, such as his own, Eliot clearly privileges the initial term in his binary construction, arguing a bit later that "no poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists" (4). Eliot essentially reifies the incongruous voices of thousands of years of Western literary history into one grand compendium capable of providing a real sense of continuity and comfort to its proselytes. In this way, the younger Eliot replaces religion with tradition.

The Waste Land pays homage to an illusory notion of tradition as stable, certain, and unchanging, even as it appears to challenge such assumptions. Since Sausurre characterized language as a system of differences, we know that concepts derive meaning only with reference to their opposites, so the ostensible disunity and fragmentary nature of the poem immediately suggests or conjures forth its antithesis—coherence and order. The poem hails or interpellates[5] its reader or subject by positioning him or her in a space of ostensible uncertainty and indeterminacy which requires the reader to counter interpretive difficulty with recourse to a nostalgia for some fixed, albeit imaginary, point in the past that Eliot willingly attempts to provide through the poem's heteroglossia. The myriad voices of *The Waste Land* represent a desperate kind of masquerade with Eliot trying on or ventriloquizing both imagined and imaginary lives and voices in hopes of hitting on the one that will provide that elusive point, like the notion of tradition he invokes, around which meaning might tidily materialize and cohere. Each aborted attempt by Eliot to adopt a meaning-making persona results in frustration and heightened anxiety regarding his own ability to do what he argues authentic poets of his day should be doing—writing poetry in such a way that a unified and unifying version of tradition is self-evident and apparent.

One of the poem's most unsettling and frustrating features is its disconnected assemblage of esoteric allusions and references. With few exceptions, Eliot's recondite fragments have, by turns, been dismissed as willfully obscure and lauded as proof of Eliot's exceeding erudition. Eliot himself seemed to provide a kind of rationale when he famously wrote in an essay on "The Metaphysical Poets" that "it

appears likely that poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be difficult. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results" (*Selected Essays* 248). Yet, he also dismissed critics who would tirelessly seek to explicate each reference, implying that, in his own view, becoming too deeply immersed in the esoterica in fact did serve to obscure the poem's overall impact and purpose, which Eliot, also famously, refused to candidly comment upon, calling it, "the relief of a personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life; it is just a piece of rhythmical grumbling" (*The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*). However, when we look more carefully at Eliot's life, it is actually difficult to imagine him writing something else, simply because the kind of learning and information deemed arcane by most was Eliot's stock in trade as a student of philosophy, both Western and Eastern traditions, at Harvard and as an editor in London. Both these lives required Eliot to read widely and to begin to experience the sensation of living in an era characterized by increasingly porous and ill-defined lines of demarcation between nations, groups, and people. It is this sensibility in *The Waste Land* that we find confusing and problematic. It has become increasingly difficult to maintain one's bearings in a world where myriad voices, many of which speak foreign tongues, compete against each other. Before we even get to the poem's opening section, epigraphs, in Latin and Italian respectively, blend a dead language with a living one derived from the former. This commingling will, of course, be characteristic of the poem's concern to juxtapose languages, cultures, and lives that contribute to, if not constitute, the difficulties inherent in negotiating a

modern existence, replete with imaginative possibilities, yet also, inescapably, characterized by disjuncture.

The vignette with which the poem commences in "The Burial of the Dead," insists that *The Waste Land* be understood as a palimpsest of imagined life possibilities. The opening stanza takes us to Munich where this particular voice declares in German "Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch" (12). The speaker claims to be a German speaking Lithuanian, not Russian. Among other possibilities, this cryptic line suggests confusion regarding identity, perhaps arising from ambiguous linguistic markers. The very manner in which the line is constructed seems to imply that the speaker may have been mistaken for something he is not— Russian. If the speaker were of Russian extract living in Munich, he would, of course, occupy the same status Eliot did when he first lived in England—a resident alien, someone both inside and outside of society, in some ways better equipped to discern that society's contradictions and complexities than those with more narrow, insular life experiences. However, certain characteristics would always mark the resident alien out as different and potentially suspect. In *The Waste Land* the marker of difference is language from which there is no escape. "I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter" (18). Here, the very mental processing of language required in reading seems to stimulate desire for movement. Hence, the first stanza closes by mixing thought, language, and movement in addition to "memory and desire" (3).

The Waste Land's emphasis on the tentative, disjointed, polyglot, and transitory nature of the imaginative life possibilities it conjures continues throughout the entire poem amid echoes and scraps of tradition that exist ostensibly to provide a

sense of terra firma on which to brace oneself against the barrage of voices, the onslaught of modernity. However, synecdochal representatives of tradition, whether they be prophetic biblical scripture, Elizabethan drama, or Wagnerian opera, rapidly reveal their own ephemerality by giving way to new vignettes, new voices and revealing to us "fear in a handful of dust" (30). One of the fears to which Eliot alludes is undoubtedly the kind of cultural homogenization to which the poem contributes yet simultaneously resists. Indeed, the blending of so-called high and low culture in *The Waste Land* has been the subject of much scrutiny. And, again, we find unsurprising partisan responses. Eliot must have felt an intense need to preserve tradition, its canonical glory intact, or Eliot the innovator and guru of the experimental blasts the conventional distinction between academic and popular forms. Whatever Eliot's rationale, the fact remains that he consciously chooses to juxtapose very different voices and cultures with an incongruous hodge-podge of aesthetic and popular artifacts.

In "The Burial of the Dead," Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* gives way to an occultist's tarot cards which jarringly lead to a description of London that echoes lines from Dante's *Inferno*. I want to suggest that this radical intermingling of seemingly disparate allusions specifically parallels the kind of mixing that Eliot daily witnessed and about which he felt deeply ambivalent. Widespread and frequent contact among multifarious cultures and social classes was, in the early twentieth century in large urban centers such as London, Paris, and New York, increasingly the rule. Eliot makes specific reference to London's vast population in the last vignette of "The Burial of the Dead":

> Unreal City,
>
> Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
>
> A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
>
> I had not thought death had undone so many. (60-63)

In Eliot's London, many of these undone would have been those occupying a marginal kind of cultural and social status, yet increasingly visible and important to the city's burgeoning economy. Suggestively, when the persona of this vignette attempts to communicate with someone he recognizes, the attempt first lapses into anachronism when the speaker claims "you were with me in the ships at Mylae" (70), a contest that occurred around 260 B.C. and then absurdity when he queries "that corpse you planted last year in your garden/ Has it begun to sprout" (71). One of the many paradoxes of the modern cityscape is that having more people in proximity to each other, instead of encouraging and facilitating communication, renders it increasingly difficult if not impossible, and, to the auditor's ear, results in disconnected gibberish, baffling fragments stripped from any meaningful context save the congeries of such pieces side by side throughout the work. Indeed, Eliot's grim evocation seems in diametrical opposition to the insouciant exuberance of Baudelaire's flaneur who finds the prospect of modern urban life intoxicating. In this deterritorialized world Eliot calls a wasteland, overheard bits and truncated portions of voices threaten to confuse and overwhelm. If the experience of modernity necessarily leads one to increased reliance on one's imagination, it can also, quite possibly lead to a kind of crisis of that faculty, a kind of sensory or imagination

overload flowing from constant bombardment of the new, new people, places, ideas, attitudes, and beliefs.

Later, in "The Fire Sermon," after the refrain of "unreal city," Eliot briefly introduces us to one of those new people:

> Under the brown fog of a winter noon
>
> Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant
>
> Unshaven, with a pocketful of currants
>
> C.i.f London: documents at sight,
>
> Asked me in demotic French
>
> To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel
>
> Followed by a weekend at the Metropole. (208-14)

This rich, albeit short, passage reaches back to the earlier description of the London cityscape for its context. The streets of London have become sites of fluid cultural encounter and exchange where shifting population typified by travelers and visitors like Mr. Eugenides peddle their wares and display as much knowledge of their presumably adopted city as residents, or, at least, resident aliens like Eliot. The cultural commingling in this brief scene is remarkable. A Smyrna merchant selling currants asks the voice of this vignette in "demotic French" (212) to accompany him to two of England's more fashionable hotels—establishments that owe their provenance and continued existence to the kinds of global cultural flows Eliot's poem documents and registers marked ambivalence about. With the advent of hotels, the whole concept of home undergoes an important shift, becoming more closely aligned than ever before with the temporary and tenuous.

Moving back to "A Game of Chess," Eliot continues to juxtapose ostensibly disparate cultural forms by placing references to Shakespeare and Ovid leading up to a ragtime ditty and a pub conversation, in which we overhear the lurid details of a barroom monologue sporadically interrupted by a bartender alerting patrons of the establishment's impending closing. What makes this scene disjunctive and thus reflective of modern experience is its random placement within the larger work, the jarring voice of the pub-keeper announcing last call, and the content of its recounted conversation. From the beginning, the poetic persona, presumably a woman, continues relating her narrative despite the evening's imminent end. However, the narrative thread of the story is fractured and cut off before it is finished, paralleling the lives it takes as its subject.

Eliot had, of course, initially titled the poem "He do the Police in Different Voices," and we might make a number of reasonable assumptions about the voice of Lil's friend. Based on her speech patterns and her narrative's content, she would have been immediately classifiable to Eliot's original audience as occupying a position of low social status. Since no explicit, editorial judgment exists (although we might view the pub keeper's persistent calls as metaphorical condemnations of the teller and tale), we might conclude that this vignette is yet another of Eliot's famous fragments, bits of half-heard conversations the poet assiduously collected and re-worked in his notebook, to more vividly illustrate modern urban life. Of course, Eliot's readership has rarely if ever consisted of the type of working class characters whose lives this particular episode conjures, so Eliot's very decision to include this episode carried with it an implicit evaluation, positioning his reader in opposition to the dubious

morality and crassness here portrayed as representative of a working class sensibility and culture. In a sense, the reader is interpellated as one who would readily recognize the seediness and impropriety of these tavern goings on, perhaps prompting one to retreat back to an older, more traditional notion of social decorum. However, Eliot's poem may "stray from [its] apparent intentions" (Lamos 110) as merely a representation of the squalid nature of modern relationships and suggest to us the degree to which Eliot was unwilling or incapable of rendering relationships between men and women in any other terms besides the deeply problematic.

This episode, striking in its degree of internal coherence particularly vis-à-vis other sections in which explicit narrative thread is abandoned, certainly bears comparison, or contrast, rather, with Eliot's earlier "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" in which he, much more coherently, chronicles the intense difficulties facing modern relationships. That poem's titular and unlikely suitor experiences intense anxiety and psychological and emotional stultification bordering on paralysis due to his rather rarefied sensibilities and heightened consciousness. The pub patron whose consciousness the Lil story is related through is, in many ways, quite different from Eliot's Prufrock, particularly in terms of perceived social standing, yet her narrative reveals the difficulty of sustaining a close, authentic bond and meaningful romantic attachment. The main difference here is class, but occupants of both stations essentially come to the same unenviable position, one by virtue of superior birth and education, the other from obscure origins and little education. Both Prufrock's and Lil's stories demonstrate Eliot's failure to imagine the possibility of genuine connections between men and women in the face of modernity. For Eliot, the

disjunctures of modern existence are simply too much for relationships to withstand.

In the pub episode, these dissonances manifest themselves in the nature of the

ideological assumptions of both Lil and the speaker.

The vignette begins with the speaker, presumably a female friend of both Lil

and her husband, who is soon to be home from a four-year stint in military service,

relating to others her chastisement of Lil for not taking better care of herself:

> Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart. / He'll want to
>
> know what you done with that money he gave you / To get yourself
>
> some teeth. He did, I was there / You have them all out, Lil, and get a
>
> nice set, / He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you (*The Waste Land*
>
> 142-46).

This ostensible show of concern quickly turns into a thinly veiled threat:

> And no more can't I, I said, and think of poor Albert, / He's been in
>
> the army four years, he wants a good time, / And if you don't give it
>
> him, there's others will, I said. / Oh is there, she said. Something o'
>
> that, I said. / Then I'll know who to thank, she said, and give me a
>
> straight / look (147-51).

This is immediately followed by a revelation that Lil has aborted at least one

pregnancy, and it is on the medication she took to "bring it off" (10) that she blames

her prematurely aged looks:

> I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face,

It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said. /(She's had five already,

and nearly died of young George.) / The chemist said it would be all

right, but I've never been the / same (158-61).

Then, after accusing her of being "a proper fool" (162), Lil's friend incredulously

asks "what you get married for if you don't want children" (164). If Prufrock's

overly-cerebralized existence disallows a viable relationship, then the overt

physicality of Lil's marriage to Albert similarly limits the possibility of their actually

knowing and understanding each other as people outside of social roles they have

been acculturated to fill. Lil, herself, is literally falling apart as a result of doing what

is expected of her, bearing and rearing children. Albert similarly conforms,

presumably supporting his family through his military service that requires his

extended absence, which leaves Lil to fend for herself. And the dutiful acceptance of

her lot nearly results in her death and, at minimum, has left irreparable physical and

emotional damage. According to the speaker, Lil's primary concerns should be

making sure she keeps her husband by looking smart and continuing to have his

children even at the risk of her own life. If this scene provides any indication, the

ubiquitous problems facing modern relationships may, in fact, be intractable.

Eliot's other extended representation of domesticity occurs in "The Fire

Sermon" and introduces us to the mythological narrative consciousness of Tiresias, a

figure many commentators including Eliot himself have suggested as the unifying

principle around which the two halves of the poem unfold. However, later critics have

tended not to view Tiresias as necessarily occupying a privileged position vis-à-vis

the poem's myriad other voices. Clearly, invoking a character of classical Greek

mythology, hence that ancient civilization's traditions and customs, is different from an unnamed pub patron spinning a yarn of domestic disquiet. Nonetheless, Eliot's technique of juxtaposing ostensibly incongruous cultural forms serves time and again to make the point that in the modern world the once clearly-delineated and acutely felt boundaries were undergoing a process of erosion.

Since Eliot is interested in charting this erosion, the cultural legacy of the West is placed side by side with the modern relationship in order to bring into even starker relief the disjunctures that have now become increasingly prevalent in constituting the modern imagination, such as the contradictory, yet omnipresent, experience of engaging in pleasurable activities but deriving little, if any, satisfaction from them. For, in Tiresias' vignette, amorous dalliance, typically regarded and engaged in because of the pleasure afforded its participants, becomes perfunctory at best and at worst an absolute mockery of the human capacity to feel anything at all. In one sense, the hapless Prufrock is much the better off for not having the courage to seek consummation of his unvoiced desires because he may never know the pain and disappointment of the emotionally disinvested modern affair. Ironically, neither does the couple in this morose episode because of their mutual emotional detachment. This disconnection, of which the couple is not even dimly aware, is naturalized behavior and experienced as normal.

According to Appadurai, "the disciplines of the industrial workplace create needs for the regimentation of labor by the prior restructuring of time itself. Extending the transformation of labor into a commodity, labor time becomes an abstract dimension of time experienced as fundamentally productive and industrial"

(79). While Appadurai goes on to suggest, provocatively, that "consumption is seen as the required interval between periods of production" (79), and those obligatory consumption intervals force the imagination to do new work, I would argue that Eliot's loveless pair provides us with other compelling insights into the manner in which modern men and women fill those "required intervals" (79). In Eliot's evocation, what one might refer to as a routinized and perfunctory workplace ethos has, perhaps inextricably, slipped into and become intertwined with leisure time:

> At the violet hour, when the eyes and back
>
> Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits / Like a taxi throbbing waiting,
>
> I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives, / Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see / At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives / Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea, / The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights / Her stove, and lays out food in tins. (215-23)

In the above passage, the human is indistinguishable from the machine, modernity's great fetish, and values of the industrial marketplace such as speed, efficiency, and convenience reign supreme. At close of business, "the violet hour" (215), the worker is metaphorically equated with a ubiquitous urban convenience, "a taxi throbbing waiting" (217). This striking conflation of man and machine encapsulates the startling disjunctures in modern life that are now inescapable. However, the image itself is neither condemnatory nor celebratory; it is subtler. Office workers are as much ubiquitous urban conveniences as the cabs to which they are compared. And, like the

"food in tins" (223) prepared and laid out by the typist, these workers are not only

convenient, but readily interchangeable and disposable.

Whether for good or ill, both cheap labor and mechanisms for the facilitation

of convenience occur with increasing frequency in metropolitan centers of industry.

Proliferating technology and the zeitgeist accompanied or created by it has and will

continue to have a tremendous impact upon our lives. In fact, one suggestion of this

section is that the values most commonly associated with modern industrial

capitalism might well lead to a withering or deadening of the imagination because of

its heavy reliance and investment in mechanized repetition, a fitting description for

the unsatisfying interlude chronicled below:

> . . . He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,
>
> A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare
>
> One of the low on whom assurance sits
>
> As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.
>
> The time is now propitious, as he guesses,
>
> The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,
>
> Endeavors to engage her in caresses
>
> Which still are unreproved, if undesired.
>
> Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;
>
> Exploring hands encounter no defence;
>
> His vanity requires no response,
>
> And makes a welcome of indifference. . .
>
> She turns and looks a moment in the glass,

> Hardly aware of her departed lover;
>
> Her brain allows one half-formed thought to
>
> pass: / "Well now that's done: and I'm glad its over." (231-52)

The disaffected young woman characterizes sex in terms that many might employ to describe a long day at the office or factory. Eliot even hints at the importance of understanding this vignette as a commentary on the vast influence of the corporate world on our subjectivity by referencing the phrase "Bradford millionaire" (234), a newly-wealthy industrialist. Indeed, the entire evening sketched out in these brief lines can be understood with reference to an industrial kind of paradigm that has inexorably seeped into and begun to structure our personal lives. Now that the sexual act itself has been recast in industrial terms, the objectives include speed, convenience, and efficiency. No longer an activity from which to derive pleasure or a deeper sense of human connection, sexual congress is now an obligatory routine, a task to be completed, after which we might heave a sigh of relief rather than satisfaction.

According to Colleen Lamos, "to judge *The Waste Land* as either 'conservative' or 'radical' is to miss the crucial point that his [Eliot's] works stray from their apparent intentions. Attending to their internal dehiscence may not avoid the critical projection of values onto Eliot's texts, but it may make one less hasty to conclude that they serve a definite political end" (110). Although Lamos' thesis—*The Waste Land* "depicts in painful and desperate ways the modern dilemma of masculine sexuality" (110)—is itself a "critical projection of values," her initial point cautioning us against polarizing views of a text as polymorphously complex as *The Waste Land*

is well taken. Nonetheless, the critical bifurcation among the poem's commentators boasts a long lineage back to the poem's debut, and is not easily set aside.

Eliot was both excited by modernity's prospects and scared to death by them. He assaulted tradition through formally innovative techniques like truncation, elision, montage, and stream of consciousness but still prized that very tradition for its ability to provide him with the raw materials and resources to make sense of and turn a critical eye on some of the more unsettling and problematic aspects of modern life. The earliest critics' antithetical responses have succeeded in framing the terms of discussion for over eighty years. The split between avant-garde exaltation and conservative condemnation, while critically debilitating, is perfectly understandable in light of the fact that neither camp had any clear idea of what it had on its hands. Eliot, with Pound's characteristically oracular editorial vision, had attempted to imagine potentially viable life possibilities in all the randomness and uncertainty of a fractured modern existence responding to emerging cultural conditions responsible for inculcating in modern men and women potentially overwhelming feelings of rootlessness and despair, the kind of despair recognized by Eliot as exemplary of the modern human predicament.

For better or worse, this predicament was becoming inextricably bound to a capitalistic economic model about which Eliot felt increasingly uncomfortable. His 1939 denunciation of Chamberlain and Hitler's accord at Munich demonstrates a kind of crystallization of Eliot's social thought, much of which informs *The Waste Land*. Eliot laments the loss of older, more communal and cohesive values to more questionable, artificial, and mercenary ones that readily lend themselves to individual

and societal isolation. According to Chamberlain, Czechoslovakia's imminent takeover by Nazi forces was "a quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing" (*Idea*). For Eliot, this kind of thinking was dangerously wrongheaded and sprang from our adoption of dubious corporate and industrial values that make us more inclined to follow a cost-benefit analysis report than more abstract ideals such as honor and compassion. *The Waste Land* contains the seeds of this critique, reminding us, as it does, of the connectedness of all individuals and societies, whether we like it or not.

Notes

1. Richard Baudenhausen claims in his *T.S. Eliot and the Art of Collaboration*
   that Eliot's lifelong practice of and ambivalence toward collaborative
   activities actually constitutes the one unchanging thread within a shifting
   aesthetic.

2. Ann Ardis in her *Modernism and Cultural Conflict, 1880-1922* has also
   problematized the notion of "modernism's radicalness" (7) by demonstrating
   its "conservative cultural and sexual politics" (7).

3. In exploring these questions, I join critics such as Andrew Thacker whose
   recent *Moving Through Modernity* theorizes British literary modernism in
   relation to the kinds of paradigm shifts this chapter investigates.

CHAPTER V

POUND AMONG THE ALIENS: A RADICAL CONSERVATIVE IN EXILE

In a notebook entry dated March 19, 1910, four years before she would marry

him, Dorothy Shakespear exclaimed "Ezra! Ezra! . . . you are strange – elusive – of

other habits of thought than I can understand" (*Letters 1909-1914*). Her utter

bafflement encapsulates the manner in which nearly a century later many of us view

Pound's complicated life, work, and achievement. Since Pound has become an

institution unto himself and the veritable embodiment of avant-garde aesthetics and

twentieth century radicalism, it might strike many as odd to find the following

discussion couched in terms of his conservative impulses. Obviously, Pound's

influence on the direction of Anglo-American literary modernism has been profound

and well-documented. His oft-repeated rallying cry of "make it new" has become

shorthand for the manner in which Pound proposed to do nothing less than

completely resuscitate what was in his view a moribund literature. Because of his

outspoken iconoclasm, unconventional comportment, and bohemian sensibility, it has

often been assumed, tacitly or explicitly, that Pound embraced all novel and unique

modes of literary representation. However, it is the argument of this chapter that

much of Pound's response to modernity's new cultural values was much more

ambivalent, guarded, and conservative than heretofore suggested. In fact, in terms of

the shifting values of modernity, Pound can rightly be called something of a social

conservative. If, by the early twentieth century, modernity had increasingly come to

mean quantum leaps in industrialization, urbanization, and technological advance,

then much of Pound's poetry takes a decidedly ambivalent stance to these

sociological phenomena and some of the corporate paradigms such as speed, efficiency, and productivity they may be said to promote. Although Pound saw himself as modernism's impresario and recognized the value of staying ahead of the curve, his sympathies often lie with the kind of traditional communal values in large part eroding in modernity. Even as Pound casts himself in the light of the new, particularly with regard to formal and technical experimentation, much of his verse that takes as its subject matter distinctly modern developments evinces a rather dubious attitude toward them.

Like Conrad, Lawrence, Joyce, and Eliot, Pound's exile and expatriation facilitated his roles as radical, revolutionary, and reformer by providing him with an almost archetypal, ostensibly socially-marginalized position. However, it is my contention that Pound's performances actually served to conceal many relatively conservative impulses, impulses which perhaps culminate in his championing of Italian fascism not least for the social cohesiveness Pound believed its strong authoritarianism fostered. Pound's attempts at forging a bold new aesthetic, one which springs from and reflects the ever-shifting social currents of the early twentieth century, stood in uneasy relation to those phenomena. While it has become axiomatic to refer to Pound as a social subversive, I will here be concerned with attempting to outline the contours of Pound's radical conservatism, an oxymoron denoting the formal revolution in poetics Pound hoped to inspire and spearhead and the conservative, authoritarian sensibilities that register distrust, anxiety, and ambivalence toward central features of modernity.

For all of Pound's chutzpah, swagger, and celebration of the new, he espoused some decidedly conservative ideas. Pound favored and championed a retreat to tradition, particularly his regard and resurrection of the Provencal troubadour poets. Far from an egalitarian, Pound always saw himself as running the show, ministering to his acolytes, even when these adherents were many years his senior and well established poets such as Yeats. He envisioned modernism as dynamic and disturbing of the status quo with himself at the wheel unchallenged. On the relatively few occasions that Pound's verse explicitly or implicitly takes up some of the more conspicuous features of modernity, such as the crowd, the city, or technology the poet's appraisal falls far short of the unabashed enthusiasm of contemporary celebrators like Marinetti, Appollinaire, or the earlier Baudelaire. Pound, like D.H. Lawrence, yearned for a more organic society in which he could promote and sustain communal values and sentiment. Although Pound thought he had found a felicitous venue for such a venture in London, where he could assemble around himself a coterie of like-minded, cutting edge aesthetes, each attempt, as Lawrence Rainey points out, failed.[1] Pound's ideals had been made untenable by the very modes and means of modernity itself.

According to Rainey, the "dialogue of actions that took place between Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and Ezra Pound between 1912 and 1914" (11) provides an instructive example of emerging market forces that began to shape the trajectory of modernism, forces that Pound both accepted and resisted. Rainey finds that critics have never really taken the connection seriously, primarily because of the type of rhetoric set in place by Pound himself and endlessly repeated by others. Marinetti

"may have stood behind two of the most significant turning points in Pound's career" (12). In fact, according to Rainey, "the effect of Futurism on Pound and the London avant-garde was to make the social space of cultural production into an urgent question, to problematize the settings in which the work . . . of modernism and the avant-garde might get done" (12). Drawing on original documents, Rainey pieces together the circumstances under which the avant-garde emerged. Rainey finds that, coincidentally, both Marinetti and Pound were giving lectures on March 19, 1912, on two very different subjects and at two very different venues. Pound would be holding forth on the Provencal poets in his aristocratic patrons' lavish home. It seems Pound had quickly learned the necessity of patronage to his own livelihood and the lectures he delivered "were plainly conceived to supplement his income" (15). "The strategy was clear: by presenting a series of lectures with limited admission and relatively high prices per ticket, he could maximize the returns from the small audience for poetry, capitalizing on its appeal as a marker of social distinction" (15). Pound's lecture passed largely unnoticed (his own fiancée opted to attend Marinetti's), while Marinetti's scathing excoriation, open to the public at Bechstein Hall, of everything English captured headlines. As modern as Pound thought he was or was attempting to be, it seemed figures like Marinetti, who enthusiastically embraced and celebrated new ideas and technology, had beaten him to the punch.

According to Rainey, the success of Marinetti's lecture could not have failed to seize Pound's attention, and this coupled with a number of misfortunes Pound experienced, including the loss of a patron, led Pound to take "steps toward art as public practice" (29). These, however, were not the only considerations Pound was

making. He also must have realized that any successful aesthetic venture would of necessity have to engage the central features of technological modernity Pound found disconcerting. This reaches fruition in Imagism. For Rainey, two important results issue from Pound's and Marinetti's odd connection:

> One was to provoke a reconfiguration of the relations among institutions in which the discourse of art and poetry had been produced until then, forcing intellectuals and artists to come to terms with the role of new institutions of mass culture and assess their bearings on the place of art in a cultural marketplace being radically transformed. The other, in so doing, was to precipitate a permanent collapse of all distinctions between art and commodity. (38)

I would also suggest this episode foregrounds certain of Pound's most characteristic underlying attitudes and assumptions toward his work and the public he envisioned consuming it. Pound viewed himself as a kind of philosopher-king whose responsibility it was to disseminate his vast erudition among like-minded individuals, i.e. the social elite. Knowing that his criticism, translations, and original work possessed but very limited appeal encouraged Pound to view and market his work in terms of its perceived social prestige, largely manufactured by the poet himself through a kind of aura of esotericism with which he invested his work. Although any writer who claims not to desire a wider audience can only be met with incredulity, when Pound famously quipped "as for the public damn their eyes" he was not merely being boastful and playing the role of provocateur. He had a genuine disdain for the untutored masses although he begrudgingly accepted he would need to temper this

view in order to gain wider publicity and recognition. Pound's very conservative

conception of the manner in which his work should be presented and consumed, i.e.

by a select few of the patrician class in their private drawing rooms, seems strikingly

at odds and even resistant to some of modernity's greatest inventions—advertising

and mass marketing.

In fact, Pound's attitude toward these newly emerging techniques was

decidedly ambivalent though recent critics have pointed out his participation in them.

Michael North claims the "conventional separation of literary modernism from its

popular analogues can . . . be challenged," (*Reading* 29) adding that "historical

criticism has been able to show . . . that these writers lived in the same world of film,

music, advertising, and promotion that is still around us, and that, like most denizens

of the twentieth century, they had various and not entirely negative reactions to it"

(29). Following the lead of contemporary anthropological and social theorists, North

maintains that modernist writers "were clearly subject to the process of global

migration that . . . has been an imaginative as well as political fact of great

importance to this century . . . [resulting in] the inevitable mediation of experience"

(29). While North's work provides a needed corrective to the reified high culture and

low culture split bequeathed us by Adorno and, later, Huyssen, we should be careful

not to disregard the fact that Pound did, in fact, have an extraordinarily strong sense

of what exactly constituted literary merit no matter how involved in the promotion

and exchange of cultural materials he was, and involved he most certainly was. "At

an extraordinary dinner held in Paris in the first days of 1922, [Horace Liveright] was

offered a virtual monopoly on [a] new growth stock by Ezra Pound, who hoped to

form a kind of consortium with his friends James Joyce and T.S. Eliot, with Liveright as their joint publisher" (77). Again, however, it bears reiterating that Pound saw himself at the helm of pitching this venture and viewed it as a kind of closed circuit in which fellow intellectual elitists would control the limited venue in which their work was disseminated. Pound feared that mass marketing might dispel the esoteric aura with which he had worked so diligently to imbue his work.

One of the primary strategies by which Pound was able to conceal his more authoritarian and conservative sensibilities was by exploiting the position of cultural outsider, a kind of alien occupying a unique status both inside and outside the culture he critiqued. Frank Lentricchia has reminded us that Pound "inaugurated his career with an act of expatriation," (180) referring to the magnanimous gesture of offering his apartment as warm refuge to a certain down-at-heel young woman. Pound was, of course, dismissed from Wabash College for this bit of generosity. Lentricchia further observes that Pound's quintessential iconoclasm attains no clearer expression than in "his primal act of criticism, the choice to live outside his country but not . . . outside his American identity" (182). Robert Langbaum maintains that between Pound and Eliot "Pound was the more 'American' of the two—the more democratic, individualistic, spontaneous, sincere, a radical at heart. Even as a famous old man Pound remained bohemian, dressed as he had been all his life in odd and striking ways" (168). However, one might well argue that Pound's blatant desire to be perceived as radical actually served to conceal much more muted ideological presuppositions. One very famous evening particularly illustrative of this point has gone down in modernist lore as "The Night Pound Ate the Tulips." At a dinner party

on or about December 1910, in response to the arrival of Amy Lowell and her new ideas regarding the direction of Pound's Imagist movement and her sizable financial contributions to it which Pound had initially solicited vigorously, a puckish Pound inexplicably overturned a planter of tulips, placed it on his head, began rhythmically banging it, and ingesting its former contents, much to the perplexity of the dinner guests there assembled. Pound's colorful rejection of Lowell and later complete disassociation from her and abandonment of "Amygism," his derisively mocking term for his movement in the hands of Ms. Lowell, may suggest the degree to which Pound always envisioned that modernism would be a male-driven enterprise, if he had anything to say about.

Since his arrival in London from Italy in 1908, Pound saw himself, and wished others to see him, as occupying a position at the forefront of artistic vision and innovation, for in London at that time "there was no dominant poet: Swinburne had done his best work years before and was soon to die" (Tytell 42). And, as Michael Levenson suggests, by 1913 Pound wielded enough influence over the literary scene in London that he "willed [Imagism] into being, wrote it into doctrine and publicized it into prominence" (137). Pound sensed that successfully revivifying poetry in the twentieth century would necessarily involve a deeper engagement with new cultural realities he and his contemporaries encountered daily on the streets, in the coffee shops, and parlors of London, which with a population in excess of five million was the largest industrialized urban center the world had yet seen. First of all, the cultural milieu into which Pound had thrust himself was a dizzyingly tumultuous one:

The Empire had extended itself to nearly thirteen million square miles

with 370 million subjects. Britain had tripled its military budget for the

sake of a few South African mine owners in the imperial adventure of

the Boer War . . . but there was still no decent plan for worker

pensions or health or unemployment insurance. The national average

income reached fifty-one pounds a year just before the beginning of

World War I, but the purchasing power of the pound was rapidly

shrinking, causing a real decline in workers' wages. As a result,

socialists, labor unions, and syndicalists who advocated power through

general strikes were gaining adherents. . . When Pound arrived in

London in 1908, a quarter of a million women had gathered in Hyde

Park to demand the vote. (Tytell 44)

Even in the rarified realm of the literary cognoscenti to which Pound aspired, the

impecunious young poet often found himself chronically under-funded and depending

on the magnanimity of affluent patrons with whom he rubbed elbows at the "literary

societies and private clubs" (44) in which he became a permanent fixture.

Nonetheless, Pound would continue to remain a kind of revolutionary traditionalist.

And, as one contemporary commentator has observed, "the disparity between the

aesthetics and the sociology of the modernists continues to define a riddle central to

their problematic achievement" (Sherry 3). These two acute critical insights point to

the kind of incongruity upon which Pound's life and work rests. He consistently

engages, and encourages others to engage, in radical technical and formal

experimentation while simultaneously reifying the notion of a stable tradition capable

of multicultural assimilation. Although much has been written about the cultural

scene of London's literary elite into which Pound thrust himself after his short, initial

Venetian apprenticeship, few critics have read Pound's aesthetic experiments with a

view toward the manner in which his aesthetic virtuosity has largely concealed more

conservative leanings. Recent scholarship suggests Pound, the consummate

performer, used the guise of dialect, particularly black English vernacular, as a

method of concealing less than progressive ideas toward race.

In his valuable study, Michael North argues that both Pound and Eliot, in their

private correspondence to each other, use dialect as an insurrectional strategy (78), a

means of assaulting and destabilizing traditional linguistic conventions. However, at

the same time, the dialect mask obscures the deeply ambivalent attitudes of both

toward issues of race. Paradoxically, for Pound and Eliot, the use of dialect came to

signify both a radical attack on and liberation of the language from the shackles of

ossifying standardization and a pervasive fear of destroying those very conventions.

Pound's use of dialect in order to pave the way for a new literature is more explicit

then Eliot's, according to North, and he continued to use it to insulate himself from

the very social transformations for which he agitated. Together, both writers

capitalized on the revolutionary possibilities of dialect, while also demonstrating its

extreme fragility. The fact that Pound effortlessly dons the dialect mask in his

correspondence with Eliot and in other situations suggests not only a private code

enjoyed by the two poets, but also demonstrates a willingness on their parts to adopt

or appropriate the voice and position of the dispossessed and socially marginalized,

while themselves remaining elite aesthetes. The mask of dialect, like the masks of

alien, exile, and outsider, provides Pound with another subversive strategy in his growing arsenal; however, it also serves to obscure or erase the fact that Pound does not invoke these voices in order to celebrate and champion the creative possibilities of multicultural diversity. Indeed, Pound was much more enamored of small, relatively homogeneous societies such as those of Provence and Venice. It is as though Pound recognizes that modernity means multiculturalism, and he attempts to reflect those realities in his work, but constantly yearns for a smaller, more communal and less complicated social structure or unit. An early manifestation of this desire is born and comes to fruition in his early years in London.

The first somewhat organized movement for which Pound was responsible provides a dramatic study in contradiction, as Pound attempts to allay and mitigate his fears and anxiety over the truly new while ostensibly embracing those paradigms. Imagism's few tenets embrace modern, technologically inspired ideals, yet simultaneously resist them. "In the spring of 1912 in a scene that has entered modernist legend, Pound turned to Hilda Doolittle and Richard Aldington 'in a tea-shop – in the Royal Burough of Kensington' and baptized them 'les imagistes'" (Levenson 69). Then, "in March of 1913, Pound published, in Harriet Monroe's *Poetry*, what quickly became the classic manifesto for a new ('imagist') poetics" (Lentricchia 190). Pound's doctrine of the image appeared deceptively simple. He referred to it as "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (*Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* 3). Imagism was further defined as follows:

> Direct treatment of the 'thing,' whether subjective or objective.
>
> To use absolutely no word that did not contribute to the presentation.

As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase,

not in the sequence of a metronome. *(4)*

Clearly, Pound foregrounds attributes such as immediacy, rapidity, and efficiency,

each one a modern corporate paradigm. Certainly, Pound would not have consciously

regarded himself as speaking the language of capitalism; he was in the throes of

inventing a new poetic aesthetic. However, the implicit values are unmistakable.

Pound seems to urge his executives to design plain-speaking, efficient, and polished

"presentations" which he can then unveil to prospective buyers. Pound's aesthetic

formula might easily be mistaken for a budding advertising executive's manual—

Marketing Made Easy: A Beginner's Guide to Perfect Presentations That Move

Merchandise.

In ushering Imagism into existence, Pound elects to privilege the visual,

certainly not an immediately obvious maneuver for a poet with an ear as keen as

Pound's. His acute sensitivity to the rhythms and cadences of the spoken word is

apparent in both his own work and his masterful editing of *The Waste Land.*

Nonetheless, Pound recognizes the necessity of linking his nascent aesthetic school to

a medium capable of attracting mass appeal. Londoners of the early twentieth century

were becoming increasingly inundated with images through such vehicles as print

media and promotional advertising. This particular cultural current will, of course,

culminate later in the century in an image-addicted society in which representations

(and even representations of representations) become naturalized substitutes for

"real" relations. Proleptically, Pound exploits the emerging cachet of a visually-

oriented poetics that, at least nominally, promises to provide a similar kind of ocular

effect and satisfaction as the highly successful popular forms of images marketed to mass culture. As previously noted, Pound could not possibly have failed to take note of Marinetti's sold out lecture that grabbed headlines, thus circulating throughout the culture via print media, while his own relatively esoteric disquisition fell on the ears of only the tiniest of coteries. Pound's decision to connect a new aesthetic programme explicitly to the idea of the image suggests the degree to which he understood the need to change his earlier marketing strategy by making use of the kinds of cultural materials receiving the most attention and in highest demand.

In addition to Pound's decision to present new poetry under the aegis of the image, he opts to, like Marinetti, emphasize speed, efficiency, and ephemerality, conditions with which twentieth century urban dwellers were becoming all too familiar. In order to produce a socially relevant poetics, Pound aimed at rendering verse that might successfully mirror the experience of metropolitan modernity. One fundamental part of this experience was the unprecedented rapidity with which it became requisite for large groups of people to process a remarkable amount of sensory input, hence Pound's definition of Imagism as "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (*Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* 4). Pound's concern that Imagism also capture qualities of economy and ephemerality suggests itself in the Imagist's valorization of brevity. "In a Station of the Metro" is a touchstone work insofar as all three of these thematics coalesce with another distinctly urban and modern phenomenon—the crowd. Simultaneously praised by earlier writers such as Baudelaire and derided by theorists such as Le Bon, the crowd is now inescapable, and, as Pound understood, any poetics with aspirations toward social relevance and

viability could not afford to ignore this new, though certainly as yet potentially

discomfiting, reality. The same crowd that afforded Baudelaire's furtive flaneur

thrilling anonymity, also might provide sanctuary for Le Bon's barbarians or

Nordau's degenerates. Pound's own attitude seems more mediated and ambivalent

than these rather extreme positions that sought to either celebrate or condemn the

phenomenon of the crowd.

Discussions of Imagism have long been couched in terms of literary lineage.

A number of critics have investigated the aesthetic reasons behind Pound's invention

of the movement. In his monumental study, Hugh Kenner claims "it was English

post-Symbolist verse that Pound's Imagism set out to reform, by deleting its self-

indulgences, intensifying its virtues, and elevating the glimpse into the vision" (183).

And, more recently, Peter Nicholls argues "Imagism is an attempt to recover a

stylistic purity . . . which Pound traces back to the 'plasticity' of Gautier's style and to

the realism of Stendhal and Flaubert" (170). Although these observations provide

insight, each formulation ignores the possibility, and likely certainty, that Pound's

aesthetic decisions were inextricably tied to the emergence of the modern corporate

paradigm, which informed and shaped Pound's thinking whether he was cognizant of

it or otherwise.

The tension between Pound's increasing assimilation of modern capitalistic,

corporate paradigms and his intense suspicion of and discomfort with those same

ideals is almost palpable in Imagism's paradigmatic poem, Pound's "In a Station of

the Metro":

> The apparition of these faces in the crowd;

Petals on a wet, black bough. (*Selected Poems*

of Ezra Pound 35)

"In a Station of the Metro" summons forth one of the central and most conspicuous

features of the modern cityscape without making any sweeping sociological

pronouncement; Pound's response is much more ambivalent than even his own rather

rhapsodic recollection of the incident recounted above that initially inspired the poem.

In a poem that "needs every one of its 20 words, including the six of its title,"

(Kenner 184) Pound creates a distillation of the primary disjunctures quickly

becoming constitutive of modern existence. Modern methods of transit characterized

by their rapidity and capacity to accommodate more and more people have been

theorized by Marc Auge, who understands modern spaces like train terminals as

examples of "nonplaces" (78):

> If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with
>
> identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational or
>
> historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place . . . A world
>
> where people are born in the clinic and die in the hospital, where
>
> transit points and temporary abodes are proliferating under luxurious
>
> or inhuman conditions (hotel chains and squats, holiday clubs and
>
> refugee camps, shantytowns . . .); where a dense network of means of
>
> transport which are also inhabited spaces is developing; where the
>
> habitué of supermarkets, slot machines and credit cards communicates
>
> wordlessly, through gestures, with an abstract, unmediated commerce;
>
> a world thus surrendered to solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the

temporary and ephemeral, offers the anthropologist (and others) a new

object. (78)

Additionally, John Tomlinson suggests that "non-places are . . . bleak locales of

contemporary modernity: places of solitude (even in the presence of others), silence,

anonymity, alienation and impermanence" (110). These contemporary

anthropological insights may help to explain the ambivalence Pound must have felt

toward modern urban experiences like that encapsulated in "In a Station of the

Metro" that thrust many people together only to foster a pervasive sense of

disconnection among them. In fact, Pound feels so distant from the people he

encounters that he conceives of them in terms of the phantasmagoric.

Indeed, Pound refers to the people he encounters as a kind of apparition, a

word that first suggests the appearance of something unexpected or unanticipated.

Additionally, another closely related sense of the term is that of a supernatural

manifestation. After all, following Tomlinson, it seems only fitting that Pound

populate this non-place with non-people. Perhaps, as Kenner contends, these

apparitions are similar to the shades of the underworld encountered by the likes of

Odysseus. However, this poem does not easily fit among Pound's many poems that

hearken back to the traditions of classical Greek and Roman antiquity. The frenetic

pace of modern existence is the more apparent analogue. In fact, the rapidity with

which Pound encounters people dashing about the station disallows any semblance of

close, personal contact or connections; indeed, the very faces of the travelers have

become disembodied and serve as synechdocal place keepers for real human lives,

lives loosed of their moorings and imaginatively refigured as ghostly manifestations that resist the possibility of meaningful connection.

The disjunctures fostered by modernity also suggest themselves by the very conceit upon which the poem derives dramatic tension. As Kenner points out, the poem "is not formally a sentence" (186) but a kind of elliptical metaphor or truncated conceit reminiscent, at least in its incongruous imagery, of the so-called metaphysical conceits of earlier poets such as Donne. Defined by Dr. Johnson as discordant concepts "by violence yoked together" (326) and championed by Eliot, the elaborate conceits of seventeenth century verse and the later nineteenth century emotional outpouring are aesthetic practices that for Pound and others increasingly lack viability in the face of startling new cultural realities. "In a Station of the Metro" finds Pound exploring one of the "bleak locales of contemporary modernity" (Tomlinson 110) and attempting to make sense of it in natural and organic terms. The disembodied, ghostly faces that he encounters are barely recognizable as actual people because they have become as generic as the non-places of modernity, such as the station where they are found. This mass cultural homogenization is further reinforced by Pound's comparison of his urban dwellers to "petals on a wet, black bough" (*Selected Poems* 35). Like the petals, Pound's travelers are almost indistinguishable from each other and from the mise-en-scene.

Interestingly enough, the idea for the poem evolved from a visit to Paris in 1911. Pound was awestruck and inspired upon emerging from the Metro at La Corde:

> I saw suddenly a beautiful face, and then another and another, and then
> a beautiful child's face, and then another beautiful woman, and I tried

all that day to find words for what they had meant to me, and I could

not find any words for what they had meant to me, and I could not find

any words that seemed worthy, or as lovely as that sudden emotion.

(qtd. in Kenner *The Pound Era* 184)

Strikingly, the exuberance with which Pound initially described the incident that gave

rise to "In a Station of the Metro" becomes, in this later much-revised incarnation, not

a paean to life, beauty, and vitality, but a rather melancholy and bleak kind of pensee,

more closely approximating requiem than encomium. Indeed, Kenner compares

Pound's presence in the station to Odysseus's visit to the underworld. How might we

reconcile Pound's first enthusiasm and perhaps even elation at his "marvelous

strange" encounter with the poem that eventually results. We may do well to follow

Lawrence's famous advice and "trust the tale," (*Studies in Classic American*

Literature 2) as it were, rather than the teller because clearly, by the time Pound had

distilled the essence of his experience into "an intellectual and emotional complex in

an instant of time" (*Literary Essays* 4) that experience had taken on a much darker,

more lugubrious hue in his imagination. "In a Station of the Metro" can be viewed as

paradigmatic of Pound's ambivalent response to encroaching modernity.

Much of Pound's evolving aesthetic and changing poetic vision during this

period can be read as a series of frustrated attempts to reconcile certain conservative

leanings, such as his ambivalence toward technology and urbanism, with his desire to

establish a relatively unified, cutting-edge artistic movement. The two pertinent

poetic cycles include *Ripostes* and *Lustra* in which each time Pound attempts to

return to an urban thematic the poetry exhibits keen emotional investment that is

ultimately unrequited and culminates in frustration and disappointment. As Peter

Brooker suggests, "we see early in the [twentieth] century . . . a disjunction between

an emerging modernist aesthetic and urban modernity. American artists were

motivated by a sense of the antagonism between artistic culture and advancing

modernization to shift to Europe, to London" (*Modernity and Metropolis* 30*)*.

However, Pound had at least attempted to meet urban modernity head on. In 1910,

Pound had wintered in New York and, so overwhelmed by the pace and sheer

spectacle of the modern cityscape, tried his hand at capturing the metropolis in verse:

> My City, my beloved, my white! Ah, slender,
>
> Listen! Listen to me, and I will breathe
>
> Into thee a soul.
>
> Delicately upon the reed, attend me!
>
>
> *Now do I know that I am mad,*
>
> *For here are a million people surly with traffic; / This is no maid.*
>
> *Neither could I play upon any reed if I had one.* / Thou art a maid with
>
> no breasts, / Thou art slender as a silver reed. / Listen to me, attend
>
> me! / And I will breathe into thee a soul, / And thou shalt live for ever.
>
> (*Personae* 62)

Though clearly a far cry from the hardness of the deftly delineated image

Pound strove for later, the poem trades on a curious blend of ebullient rhapsody a la

Whitman and a kind of disappointed nostalgia for the trappings of a bygone courtly

and chivalrous time. Pound's ambivalence toward his subject, though less pronounced

here than in "In a Station of the Metro," reveals itself nonetheless. The poem commences as an apostrophic celebration of the poet's ability to conjure the very metaphysical essence of life itself into the teeming and seductive urban landscape with which he finds himself perilously enamored. It is difficult to imagine more incongruous imagery and diction given the subject matter. New York, modern metropolitan city par excellence, personified by Pound, becomes an alluring young potential paramour in need of the poet's gift of eternal life. Hence, the poet proposes to immortalize his beloved by playing "delicately upon the reed" (62), singing her praises in his verse. However, the second stanza, italicized by Pound perhaps to suggest a moment of introspection and hesitation on the poet's part, reveals the idealistic young rhapsode coming to his senses.

Although he has definitely drunk in the very elixir of the city and has enjoyed a powerful flight of fancy, he takes stock of his orgiastic response by admitting his zeal. His unabashed enthusiasm is now tempered by the recognition that "here are a million people surly with traffic" (62). Pound's enticing would-be mistress into whom he hopes to breathe vital warmth is beyond his control, teeming masses of strangers moving in myriad different directions. The city "is no maid" (62) as conjured in Pound's idyllic opening formulation and is rather frightening to contemplate without aid of the older, chivalric forms Pound initially summons. The poet's final admission, perhaps his most revealing, is his inability to "play upon any reed if [he] had one" (62). The poet here, like Pound's celebrated Mauberley, is "out of key with his time" (187) and realizes the vast dissonance between his city and his ability to comprehend it through the forms with which he is equipped and most conversant. Nonetheless, the

third and final stanza finds the poet seemingly undaunted in his lofty aesthetic

ambition, resolving that his city is "a maid with no breasts" (62), an immature naif in

need not only of the artist's tutelage, but of his unique ability to bestow a particular

kind of life, the eternal life that can only come through immortalization in verse.

Thus, the closing stanza attempts to recuperate the entire poem into a kind of life

through art trope that may well suggest homage to the bard.

In Shakespeare's familiar sonnet, the closing couplet justifies the high purpose

for which the poem was intended and by which it justifies its own existence. "So long

as men can breathe, or eyes can see, / so long lives this, and this gives life to thee"

(qtd. in Vendler 119). However, the profound uncertainty of the second stanza belies

the poet's attempt to resolve the contradictions raised by falling back on traditional

poetic tropes. Indeed, the imperative iteration in the poem's penultimate line might

well signal intense frustration over his own impotence in the face of the city's

millions, rather than rapturous joy over his ability to bestow life everlasting, thus

making him, if not superior, then at least relevant to the city with which he is

enamored. Yet, the ominous possibility that the poet himself might easily be

assimilated into the crowd, the "million people surly with traffic" (*Personae* 62) is

ever-present in the city and suggests a kind of danger that Pound felt acutely.

In *The Consequences of Modernity* Anthony Giddens examines the

"discontinuities which separate modern social institutions from the traditional social

orders" (6). He identifies three characteristics that contribute to modern discontinuity,

including the "pace [and scope] of change" (6) and the very "nature of modern

institutions" (6). In fact, according to Giddens, the modern city occupies an

interesting cultural position, as it is perceived to be linked to older social orders yet not clearly so:

> Some modern social forms are simply not found in prior historical periods—such as the political system of the nation-state, the wholesale dependence of production upon inanimate power sources, or the thoroughgoing commodification of products and wage labour. Others only have a specious continuity with pre-existing social orders. An example is the city. Modern urban settlements often incorporate the sites of traditional cities, and may look as though they have merely spread out from them. In fact, modern urbanism is ordered according to quite different principles from those which set off the pre-modern city from the countryside in prior periods. (6).

In the early twentieth-century the physical and cultural space of cities were rife with contradictions and disparities that often provoked among writers antithetical responses. Pound's complex and mediated response to the experience of modern urban living can be read back into much of his poetry, some of which never explicitly invokes the city itself but continues to register Pound's deep anxiety over possibly becoming assimilated into the crowd, the great unwashed, and losing his fierce sense of individuality and commitment to his artistry. A case in point is Pound's "The Plunge":

> I would bathe myself in strangeness:
>
> These comforts heaped upon me, smother me!
>
> I burn, I scald so for the new,

New friends, new faces,

Places!

Oh to be out of this,

This that is all I wanted

    --save the new.

And you,

Love, you the much, the more desired!

Do I not loathe all walls, streets, stones,

All mire, mist, all fog,

All ways of traffic?

You, I would have flow over me like water,

Oh, but far out of this!

Grass, and low fields, and hills,

And sun,

Oh, sun enough!

Out, and alone, among some

Alien people! (*Personae* 70)

First published in *The Ripostes of Ezra Pound* circa 1912, the poem finds Pound

apparently bemoaning the fact that as a rising star on the London literary scene he had

gotten what he most fancied. The poet's restlessness and intensely felt need for new

vistas promising different experiences is evident, but the reasons for Pound's desire

for flight are less clear. "The Plunge" suggests, among other things, that, at least by

1912, Pound no longer uncritically embraced the particular crowd into whose ranks he had once coveted admission. In fact, the poem serves as further evidence of Pound's growing suspicion of the dangers to a receptive and fecund artistic imagination lurking in a bustling metropolitan city brimming with fetishists of high culture. This point is made in even more explicit fashion in "Portrait D'une Femme" in which Pound imaginatively projects his own anxieties onto a fictive doyenne who is now incapable of original thought due to her decades long tenure with London's intellectual elite.

Paradoxically, by achieving his youthful goal of immersion into London's vibrant literary milieu, Pound ran the risk and was in jeopardy of losing his own unique, creative identity, which he had been feverishly toiling to forge since his earlier days in Italy and the States. Pound's intimidation, of course, manifests itself in the veneer of his characteristic bravado, yet there is a real sense in which Pound feels a dire need to distance himself from the influences of literary London, not just the luminaries with which he was in constant contact but the hold and force of the city itself that, like New York, both provides an exquisitely congenial venue for the unfettered exchange of ideas, but also produces an undeniable homogenizing effect that Pound finds aesthetically ossifying. So, he sings of retreat into the vernal wood to cleanse his palette of the travails of urban life. Fittingly, Pound, another of London's resident aliens seeks to be "among some / Alien people" (*Personae* 70).

Given the fact that Pound was often baffling and confusing to those closest to him, it is hardly surprising that our contemporary experience of the man and his work is sometimes infused with similar inscrutability. It is my view that at least part of the

difficulty in getting at the poetry issues from the inherent tension between his simultaneous embrace and rejection of central features of modernity, including corporate capitalistic paradigms, in favor of older, more organic, communal and conservative values such as small society with strong central male leadership perhaps similar in kind to the Platonic ideal of the philosopher-king. Throughout his career, Pound donned masks such as that of the alien, exile, cultural outsider, aesthete, and iconoclast in order to conceal much deeper feelings of opposition to what we have come to understand as defining features of modernity. When Pound solicits the patronage of women like Amy Lowell, his enthusiasm stops short of really allowing her any say in its direction, thus attempting to ensure his reign. When Pound arrives in London, appearing to embrace the full panoply of the modern urban experience, he essentially forms one coterie group after another with himself the self-appointed leader. When Pound makes even an oblique reference in his work to any modern technological marvel, it is gravid with ambivalence, suggesting how much more comfortable Pound would have been in late twelfth century Provence than twentieth century London. Although Pound's name is now synonymous with the highly-experimental nature of works such as *The Waste Land* and his own *Cantos*, he remained, in many ways throughout his life, a kind of revolutionary or radical conservative.

Notes

1. In his important 1998 study, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture*, Lawrence Rainey provides an insightful corrective to much recent scholarship on literary modernism by closely examining high modernism's complex relationship with consumers and market forces. Although modernism's general disdain for mass culture–Rainey invokes the example of Poldy wiping himself with *Tit-Bits* in *Ulysses* and Pound's censorious pronouncement "as for the public, damn their eyes" is another perennially cited example—has been well documented, Rainey maintains that such a binaristic high and low distinction between literary modernism and everything else necessarily elides important points of convergence between the two. Such a line of demarcation, though fiercely insisted upon by numerous critics, is to oversimplify the facts of the case.

Reacting specifically to Andreas Huyssen's work in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, and Postmodernism*, Rainey argues that Huyssen's collection of essays essentially typify modernism as a kind of blithely self-unaware reactionary formation against which are set the liberating forces of postmodernism and the avant garde. Rainey urges that a closer inspection of literary modernism's relationship to popular culture is in order. Summarily, banishing the time-honored distinction between high and low, Rainey holds that modernism actually formed an "unstable synthesis" (*Institutions* 3) with the fact of its own commodification. Instead of subscribing to the old truism that literary modernism, by its very nature, resists loss of aesthetic autonomy, Rainey insists that "it may be that just the opposite would be a more accurate account: that modernism, among other things, is a strategy whereby the

work of art invites and solicits its commodification, but does so in such a way that it becomes a commodity of a special sort, one that is temporarily exempted from the exigencies of immediate consumption . . . [and] is integrated into a different economic circuit of patronage, collecting, speculation, and investment" (3).

Further into his introduction, Rainey claims that varied and diverse audiences required new forms of authorial self-construction. According to Rainey, this new repertoire of different authorial strategies must be clearly contextualized vis-à-vis the particular institutional field from which it emerged, not placed on an ideological pedestal and abstractly described as commentators such as both Huyssen and Peter Burger do. Rainey goes on to clarify key concepts in his investigation such as "public culture" and "institution." By "public culture" Rainey, following Habermas's formulation, means "a historically specific set of sites and institutions. . . as well as a practice of rational and critical discourse on affairs . . . a practice that institutionalizes a procedural ideal of unfettered critical exchange and a social one of inclusive participation" (5). By "institution" Rainey means "the structures that interpose themselves between the individual and society; they are both social subdivisions of human beings and the regulative principles that organize various zones of activity and behavior"(6). After setting forth the terms of his argument and also suggesting the potential of his observations for fruitful textual explication (he uses the example of wordplay in *Ulysses*), Rainey contends that his goal is to "suggest how deeply flawed is the common narrative that currently structures accounts of modernism and postmodernism" (7).

Chapter VI

PORTRAITS OF PERFORMANCE: JOYCEAN CONSERVATISM,

AMBIVALENCE AND EXILE IN "THE DEAD" AND *A PORTRAIT OF THE*

ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN

Near the end of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* amidst volleys of wry

musings, derisive mockery, and barbed quips, Stephen Dedalus famously vows to

Cranly, his school chum, the manner in which he plans to pursue his lofty aesthetic

ambitions:

> You have asked me what I would do and what I would not do. I will
>
> not serve that in which I no longer believe whether it call itself my
>
> home, my fatherland or my church: and I will try to express myself in
>
> some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using
>
> for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile,
>
> and cunning. (248)

Further on, Stephen's penultimate diary entry of April 26 sounds an even more

determined and rhapsodic note. "Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth

time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated

conscience of my race" (253). Although these and similar passages throughout

Portrait have been long understood in terms of Stephen's, and by extension Joyce's,

need and fervent desire to sever ties with the country of his birth, its traditions,

customs, and limitations in favor of a more cultivated, continental life, free of

potentially-ossifying influences, this view has come to obscure the profound

ambivalence and apprehensiveness Joyce actually felt about leaving Ireland behind

and the degree to which he celebrated as virtues many of the aspects of his

exceedingly rich cultural heritage that Stephen enthusiastically wishes to escape.

Similarly, the fact that Joyce's later work, including *Ulysses and Finnegans Wake*,

upon which his reputation now firmly rests, is so highly experimental, linguistically

playful, technically exuberant, and idiosyncratically obscure has been taken to reflect

clearly Joyce's unqualified repudiation of the trappings of conventional literary

aesthetics. So, it might be thought that since Joyce was able to put Ireland physically

behind him, this real and symbolic act also freed him artistically to shake off the

moorings of more realistic and naturalistic modes in order to break into completely

new territory of aesthetic representation. One of the problems with such a view has to

do with the degree to which Joyce could never completely sever ties with the world of

home and tradition as cavalierly as his protagonist Stephen fancied himself capable.

Joyce's complicated attitude toward the Ireland of provincial custom and the larger

world of more modern thinking and sensibilities constitutes the very subject matter of

Joyce's earlier works, including *Portrait* and "The Dead." Both works vividly

illustrate Joyce's extreme difficulty with and pronounced ambivalence toward the

past. This pervasive sense of inner conflict leads Joyce to both understand himself as

an outsider and populate his early work with these kinds of figures in order to more

deeply and imaginatively come to terms with the weight of the Irish past as it

impinges upon and exerts influence over the course of his own life and work.

Joyce is always announcing himself as an outsider, a kind of foreigner or alien

in his own land. Because Joyce recognizes the potential power of the alien or exile

position, he not only cultivates and integrates it into his own behavior and

comportment but also exploits it as a kind of structural narrative mechanism in his writing long before his explicit invocation of Homer's famous exile. In the chapter that follows, I suggest that in "The Dead" and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Joyce not only develops the position of the outsider. In the characterization of both Gabriel Conroy and Stephen Dedalus he also calls into question and radically challenges what he sees as a false opposition between Ireland's traditional provincialism and a more secularized liberalism as it runs headlong into modernity. Despite the later formal experimentation and pageantry of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, the extended short story "The Dead" and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* represent an important stage in Joyce's working out of his complicated attitude toward the land of his birth, its habits, attitudes, practices, and traditions. Although the Joycean trajectory is toward greater and more obscure technical and formal theatrics, what becomes a profound radicalism of form actually serves to conceal a kind of indigenous conservatism evidenced by Joyce's abiding belief that Irish culture, for all its faults, actually approaches a classical ideal whose allure he finds difficult to discount or resist.

Although the stories collected in *Dubliners* are customarily read in the context of Joyce's commentary on paralysis, and within other previously established frames including that early suggested by Eliot,[1] one might argue that the early Joyce himself experiences a kind of immobility that stems from his status as a curious sort of alien, ever unable to reconcile his own cultural hybridity with the chimera of a fully integrated ideal. In "The Dead" and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Gabriel and Stephen struggle with their inability to integrate the two disparate

factions of their warring alien identities. Joyce has certainly been read and understood in terms of his self-imposed exile; however, the present study focuses on his life of exile as a natural outgrowth of his increasing sense of himself as a cultural outsider or alien. In order to facilitate my discussion of Joyce in the context of his alien status, I want to propose some guiding questions and hypotheses to be borne out through a close examination of key scenes from both texts. First of all, what might make an alien nervous or anxiety-ridden enough to experience a sense of paralysis? Why might Joyce feel like a kind of alien in his own homeland? Aliens often feel their lack of facility with the language of the culture in which they have inserted themselves as cause for anxiety and concealment. But Joyce was a student of languages who prided himself on his adeptness. In fact, Joyce is a kind of reverse alien insofar as his genius with language makes him perhaps even more conspicuous than someone with little fluency. Joyce stood out based on his linguistic acumen and this gave rise to anxiety and the paradox that the more proficient he became with language the more difficult it became to communicate effectively, as suggested by Gabriel's brooding over the speech he will deliver. In addition, aliens might also fear being discovered and identified as such because of their lack of familiarity with the codes, customs, and conventions of the society into which they are attempting to assimilate. Again, no one could possibly be more cognizant of Irish customs than Joyce or his two protagonists, yet they seem profoundly uncomfortable with them, as though they were not born to them as other of their countrymen and women. Although Joyce ultimately abandoned Ireland, he aesthetically attempted to work through this painful split.

Both Gabriel Conroy and Stephen Dedalus share an extensive catalog of attributes with their creator. Gabriel and Stephen are intimately familiar with and, to varying degrees, fond of the customs, traditions, and cultural legacy of their home, yet both men also rail against the inherent limits of a tradition that has well-nourished their fecund imaginations. These are learned and articulate Irishmen who display marked ambivalence toward their birth culture and heritage. Perhaps the most significant single facet of these characters' resemblance to each other and Joyce is their status as outsiders to both Irish and European culture. Both Gabriel and Stephen represent Joycean alter egos through which the author dramatizes his own profound ambivalence over clashing cultural paradigms such as home, family, hospitality, and religion with secularism, cosmopolitanism, and intellectualism. In order to reintegrate an apparently hopelessly split or dual consciousness and recuperate Joyce's apprehensiveness at the prospect of cultural fragmentation into a more stable version of tradition expansive enough to accommodate values of the past, present, and future, Joyce adopts the position of the outsider and would appear to champion more modern cultural values, while still hearkening back to very traditionally conservative ideals imperiled and even suspect in contemporary society.

In "The Dead," Gabriel Conroy's exchanges with women chart a kind of progression toward keener understanding of the problems arising from new cultural paradigms, which he finds enticingly attractive at times, and the more traditional ideals on which he was weaned but now re-examines.[2] Each of the female characters in the story represent once vital aspects of Ireland or Irish tradition, custom, and identity from which Gabriel, the urbane intellectual, feels increasingly alienated due

to his embracing of more modern secular thinking.. His aunts dote on their nephew with unabashed vigor. Their observance of holiday festivities has become a kind of institution unto itself, suggesting the value of memory, kinship, family, and community. These attributes are juxtaposed with Gabriel's adoption of decidedly more modern practices such as Gabriel's keeping up with Continental fashions by insisting Gretta wear goloshes or his eschewing a walking tour of his native land in favor of a European holiday. The seeming incommensurability of these two competing sensibilities underscores the struggle within Joyce himself, caught as he was between cultures and traditions, scoffing at the past, yet still inexorably drawn to it, looking forward to a better future, yet uncertain about what the future might hold and what ideals might prevail in it.

Lilly, "the caretaker's daughter," embodies a kind of clumsy provinciality and ignorance, but also a fierce and plain-talking sense of working class independence. Because Gabriel's alien impulse is toward cultural assimilation within the larger and more sophisticated European society in order to avoid being viewed as an ignorant provincial, he finds Lilly's candor and clear sense of her own selfhood and identity intimidating. Gabriel is caught between two worlds, an alien to both his birth culture and a culture of high European intellectualism into which he seeks inclusion and acceptance. Lilly makes Gabriel profoundly uncomfortable, as do both Molly Ivors and Gretta, because of the degree to which they all present him with key aspects of the cultural traditions he questions and often dismisses. Why else would Gabriel respond so viscerally to Molly Ivors' jocular assault but that her line of interrogation makes him feel guilty over the fact that he is, at least in some sense,

shamming? Molly, in many ways opposite of Lilly, represents a kind of intellectualism directed more toward nationalistic ends, rather than abandonment and assimilation. Again, we have an example of someone who has not found it necessary to live in two worlds, but finds much to occupy and sustain in her own land, surrounded by her own people. Finally, in Gretta, Gabriel is confronted with the fervent desire, not only to hold onto the past at any cost, but also to reunite with and live with it daily, despite its many bitter and heartrending disappointments. Gabriel's progression leaves him at a loss, and the story ends with marked ambiguity, Gabriel still unsure what to make of his lessons.

In "The Dead" Gabriel Conroy speaks an alien tongue. During his exchanges with Lilly, Molly Ivors, Gretta, and his consternation over the opening waltz and the dinner speech, which is his annual duty, Gabriel is constantly reminded that his linguistic dexterity only serves to distance and further alienate him from his birth culture, its people, and heritage. Gabriel, like Stephen, experiences intense anxiety owing to the hybridity inducing effects of colonization. Gabriel occupies a kind of cultural limbo between English and Irish without clearly or comfortably existing in either. In fact, Gabriel's confused hibridity is nowhere more provocatively wrought than when he delivers his long-anticipated speech. Immediately after Gabriel and Lily's awkward tête-à-tête, Gabriel, "discomposed by the girl's bitter and sudden retort" (24), worries over the impression his much-anticipated dinner speech may make. The inexpertly performed waltz that Gabriel is reluctant to join reminds him of the intellectual gap separating him from his own friends and family. "The indelicate

clacking of the men's heels and the shuffling of their soles reminded him that their grade of culture differed from his" (24).

Gabriel's standing "outside the drawing-room door until the waltz should finish" (24) is emblematic of his own confusingly problematic social status as both an insider and an outsider to his heritage. The dance, Irish tradition, goes on in Gabriel's absence, and he is perpetually reluctant to join in, having assimilated a new set of urbane ideological presuppositions that preclude his involvement and participation. Ironically, Gabriel's superior education and studied refinement serve to inhibit his imagination and dampen his creativity. As each successive interaction demonstrates, culminating in his egregious misreading of his wife's own true feelings, Gabriel's ability to emotionally connect with and read other people is virtually nil, and his creative potential languishes due to his own intellectual preoccupations he assumes few could share or even understand. However, Gabriel's clash with Miss Ivors serves, among other things, to undercut the firm academic ground that Gabriel fancies he alone occupies because she demonstrates the possibility of advanced secular learning wed to an abiding interest in the land of her birth.

In "The Dead," tradition, custom, and convention come under incredibly close scrutiny and are found both limited and noble; moreover, the alternatives represented by Gabriel's learning, travel, and cultural exposure appear perhaps even less desirable. The occasion of "The Dead" is provided by the "Misses Morkan's annual dance" (21), a Christmas mainstay "for as long as anyone could remember" (21). This ostensible celebration of Irish tradition and hospitality rapidly reveals itself to be an interrogation of it when we learn that the event might "fall flat" this year as a result of

Freddy Malins' anticipated drunken behavior and Gabriel Conroy's failure to appear

despite the late hour. When his aunts' favorite nephew does finally arrive, Joyce hints

at the class distinctions of which Gabriel is all too aware and that severely diminish

and limit his ability to relate to others. After Lily helps Gabriel with his coat, he

"smiled at the three syllables she had given his surname and glanced at her" (23).

Gabriel's patronizing attitude toward Lily, who in many ways embodies the Irish

history and culture that Gabriel finds so problematic and from which he wishes to

insulate himself, is typical of the disconnection Gabriel experiences. Almost

immediately, he finds his well-intentioned attempts at convivial banter with Lily

rejected and misconstrued:

> Tell me, Lily, he said in a friendly tone, do you still go to school? O
>
> no, sir, she answered. I'm done schooling this year and more. O, then,
>
> said Gabriel gaily, I suppose we'll be going to your wedding one of
>
> these fine days with your young man, eh? The girl glanced back at him
>
> over her shoulder and said with great bitterness: The men that is now
>
> is only all palaver and what they can get out of you. ("The Dead" 23)

Gabriel makes assumptions based upon a set of preconceived ideological notions that

fix the past and its representatives in a condescending gaze. However, the past and

tradition refuse to be fitted neatly into a readily identifiable and easily shelved box,

which proves worrisome in the extreme for Professor Conroy. He fancies himself

conversant enough with convention to carry on a convincing display of

understanding—to fit in. Yet, it becomes apparent rather quickly that his attempts to

engage with his past in any meaningful way are doomed. Just as Lily had once been

known to Gabriel as a simple "child . . . sit[ing] on the lowest step nursing a rag doll" ("The Dead" 23), so had he too envisioned the customs, attitudes, and beliefs of his cultural heritage—unsophisticated, uncomplicated, and immature, hence not to be taken too seriously or dwelt upon. However, the epiphany that Gabriel will ultimately experience is his and his culture's profoundly complex and problematic relationship to a past that continues, in large part, to shape Gabriel's "thought-tormented" (43) present. Lily, like his country's past, has escaped his grasp and comprehension, even as, perhaps because, he has attempted to distill it into clichés and banal pleasantries such as the comment about "going to your [Lily's] wedding one of these fine days" (23), prompted by his mistaken presumption that any young woman possessed of no fortune must be in need of a husband.

Indeed, Lily shocks Gabriel's rarefied sensibilities by her bitter excoriation of the men of her generation, though we might well read this as Lily's, and by metonymical extension tradition's, judgment on Irishmen, who, like Gabriel, have essentially turned their backs on the fragile and beleaguered nation of their birth in favor of the kind of empty talk or idle, ineffectual academic chatter of modern men like Gabriel, who Miss Ivors will later jocularly condemn as a "West Briton" (31) for some of his more cosmopolitan views. Strikingly, and rather comically, Gabriel's response to Lily's acerbic pronouncement is to cast "off his goloshes" (23), which we later learn are fashionable on the Continent and thus represent Gabriel's desire to dissociate himself from his humble, colloquial Irish provenance and essentially adopt the persona of a generic European. When confronted with the past, embodied by Lily, he misunderstands, resists, and refuses it. Gabriel unconsciously seeks immediately to

distance himself from his newly adopted culture, represented metonymically by the goloshes, out of a burning sense of shame at having not taken part, arrived late as it were, and not remained true to his cultural legacy. Gabriel experiences a kind of rootlessness by virtue of his status as a kind of double alien caught between two cultures—one of birth and one of preference.

In "The Dead," each successive, forced collision with the past reveals Gabriel unequal to the task of recuperating an exceedingly rich Irish cultural legacy into his modern, refined, and secular world-view. Immediately on the heels of Lily's bitter recrimination, Gabriel further misreads the situation by offering the young girl money she has neither solicited nor expected out of his confusion and embarrassment over his initial gaffe. "Then he took a coin rapidly from his pocket. O Lily, he said, thrusting it into her hands, it's Christmas-time, isn't it? Just . . . here's a little . . . He walked rapidly towards the door. O no, sir! Cried the girl, following him. Really, sir, I wouldn't take it"(24). Here, Gabriel stumbles through an ill-conceived attempt to assuage his own feelings of inadequacy by attempting to make use of another time-honored custom—gift giving. The only problem is Gabriel's present to Lily is money and much more closely resembles a tip given in lieu of heartfelt appreciation of Lily's important role and relationship in the lives of his aunts. Indeed, David Higdon condemns Gabriel's ostensible attempt at magnanimity as a "gross violation of the etiquette of his class and period" (181). This scene suggests that Gabriel is paying off a painful reminder of his mediocre beginnings in the vain hope or belief that this will secure him from further obligation and silence the memory itself.

Gabriel's next difficult encounter cuts him to the quick at least in part because his playful nemesis has also attained enviable social status through educational advancement, yet she has also managed to preserve a deep respect for and connection to Irish culture. As one commentator points out, she "wears an Irish device . . . particularly favored by members of the Gaelic League" (Torchiana 232) and offers a "blessing in Irish" (232), signaling a connection to her cultural roots and desire to maintain and cultivate this connection. Because Miss Ivors places a high value on maintaining these ties and her work as an academic, she presents an extreme threat to Gabriel's cultural complacency, proving that it is both possible and desirable to strike a balance between the two. So, ironically, when Gabriel adds to his speech that "the generation which is now on the wane among us may have had its faults but for my part I think it had certain qualities of hospitality, of humour, of humanity, which the new and very serious and hypereducated generation that is growing up around us seems to lack" (34-35), he is authoring incisive critique of himself, not, as he would have it, "one for Miss Ivors" (35).

The specific hits that the formidable Miss Ivors scores to Gabriel's bemusement, chagrin, and embarrassment are almost enough to draw blood. First, she accuses him of being sympathetic to British rule and, then, berates him for planning to tour Europe rather than the hinterlands of his own country. In the face of Miss Ivors' impressive volley, Gabriel proves singularly inadequate. "It was true that he wrote a literary column every Wednesday in *The Daily Express*, for which he was paid fifteen shillings. But that did not make him a West Briton surely. . . He saw nothing political in writing reviews of books" (31). Gabriel's inadequacy manifests

itself in his lack of imaginative introspection, and failure to contemplate his own position and influence and possibly use it for purposes more favorable to Irish nationalistic interest. The fact that Miss Ivors' only half jesting charge so discombobulates Gabriel hints at an underlying sense of guilt or embarrassment over his own ostensible political apathy in the face of Miss Ivors' aggressive identification with and agenda to promote a sense of Irish nationalism. Gabriel's ambivalence here is almost palpable as he wishes to simply dismiss Miss Ivors' suit out of hand with a doctrinaire retreat behind the impervious walls of aestheticism, yet Gabriel stops short of his "grandiose phrase" (31) precisely because he suspects the inherent dangers and ultimate indefensibility of attempting to maintain that art exists in a kind of Platonic realm of eternal forms above and beyond such mundane and jejune affairs as politics.

Indeed, Gabriel's contribution of a "column every Wednesday" (31) does, indeed, function politically, even if only as an implicit endorsement of the publication itself as an intellectual vehicle to be taken notice of by sufficiently cultured people. His weak retort fails, as he fears his speech will later, because he is, in fact, intelligent and self-aware enough to suspect its falsity. In attempting to insulate himself from his culture, its tumultuous history, and recrudescent social upheavals, Gabriel has constructed for himself an illusory, purely aesthetic domain. Locked away in his ivory tower, Gabriel can issue pronouncements on poetry, condescend to the unwashed, and remain, so he thinks, politically disengaged. Miss Ivors' stinging remarks force him to see his little aesthetic sanctuary for what it is and places Gabriel in the uncomfortable position of accounting for the apparent rejection of his own country in favor of European culture implicit in his refusal to join Miss Ivors on a proposed

holiday to islands off the west coast of Ireland where residents spoke their native Irish

tongue, and then explicit in his agitated denunciation of his homeland as pathogenic:

> Well, we usually go to France or Belgium or perhaps Germany, said
>
> Gabriel awkwardly.
>
> And why do you go to France and Belgium, said Miss Ivors, instead of
>
> visiting your own land?
>
> Well, said Gabriel, it's partly to keep up with the languages and partly
>
> for a change. And haven't you your own language to keep in touch
>
> with—Irish? Asked Miss Ivors. Well, said Gabriel, if it comes to that,
>
> you know, Irish is not my language. . . And haven't you your own land
>
> to visit, continued Miss Ivors, that you know nothing of, your own
>
> people, your own country? O, to tell you the truth, retorted Gabriel
>
> suddenly, I'm sick of my own country, sick of it! Why? Asked Miss
>
> Ivors. . .Of course, you've no answer. (31-32)

Assuming that Miss Ivors has already fairly well sized up Gabriel as, at the

least, unsympathetic to a more nationalistic perspective, one might argue that she

merely baits him in this scene, aggressively drawing him out of his political torpor,

which Gabriel suspects an untenable position at any rate. Clearly, Gabriel wishes to

place real, physical and symbolic distance between himself and his wife and Ireland.

He almost seems to bristle at being reminded of his wife's humble origins in the

provincial hinterlands of Connacht and dismisses Miss Ivors' attempt to establish a

clear geographical link between Gabriel, Gretta, and their country of origin because

due to certain cultural shifts he no longer feels this connection. Certainly, Gabriel has,

to a certain degree, consciously distanced himself from traditional Irish culture. For example, one might reasonably assume he has studiedly divested himself of his own accent, having remarked condescendingly on Lily's, and he has certainly abandoned low-brow amusements such as Christmas waltzes in favor of continental walking expeditions, though he has deigned to participate in quadrilles, and indeed the whole event, out of a sense of noblesse oblige. However, one of the insights offered by contemporary cultural theory suggests that Gabriel's feelings of disconnectedness do not stem solely from his own cognizant devising of ways in which to sever cultural ties, but from the emerging trajectory of global modernity itself in which the naturalized link between people and place comes under increasing erosion.

Gabriel claims to be "sick of [his] own country" ("The Dead" 32), yet, when called to account for his disgust by his persistent cross-examiner, this distinguished young, cultured, and urbane professor is unable to articulate even the feeblest of rejoinders, signaling the complexity of his feelings and the difficulty involved in sorting them out into a coherent set of specific concerns and complaints. This episode might also suggest the degree to which Gabriel has refrained from investigating in any real depth his thoughts on the matter, as each query of Miss Ivors seems a crushing blow to Gabriel's characteristic reserve and sense of decorum. The tenacious Miss Ivors confronts Gabriel with the futility of his hope of living in a kind of rarefied aesthetic realm untouched by real social realities. One of the main strategies by which Gabriel distances himself and attempts to construct and shore up an alternative identity can be seen in his attitude toward language.

Miss Ivors' prodding of Gabriel reveals that one of his self-professed reasons for visiting the continent in lieu of exploring his own land is to "keep up with the languages" (32). He further, in an even more acerbic tone aroused by his auditor's relentless barrage of biting interrogation, declares that "Irish is not [his] language" (32). Gabriel, presumably a polyglot just as his creator was, demonstrates the extraordinary degree to which he not only identifies with foreign cultures, but renounces his own in favor of English, the colonizer's tongue and prestige language that will supplant Irish. Indeed, Gabriel's extreme ambivalence toward his homeland most acutely manifests itself in his radically polarized view of languages. He adopts a kind of wholesale valorization of the continental languages of Western Europe and English, yet a swift dismissal of his culture's native tongue. If language is one of the most powerful tools by which one distinct group might be assimilated into another, then the colonization effect on Gabriel is complete, yet the fact that he is so visibly disturbed by his responses to Miss Ivors as much as her impertinent questions suggests that his conscience is far from completely clear over the course of his assimilation. Gabriel still retains a degree of reluctance and hesitancy over his abandonment of traditional Irish forms, which consistently manifests itself in his confusion, awkwardness, and embarrassment over failing to relate meaningfully with anyone around him.

The answer to the question that Molly Ivors poses to which Gabriel can make no coherent response is that the "hypereducated" Gabriel Conroy finds his own homeland somewhat stultifying, so he seeks the variety and diversity offered by deep study and wide travel. Yet, he still remains bound to the people, traditions, and

customs of the past despite his ever-increasing disinclination and unfamiliarity with them. As Thomas Rice suggests, "Gabriel's solipsistic self-preoccupation and limited vision are repeatedly correlated through "The Dead" as we witness his several failures in communication. Gabriel is skilled at speaking at people, not communing [sic] with them" (46). This is exemplified in the speech Gabriel's adoring aunts request of him.

After a customarily suitable self-deprecatory beginning in which Gabriel bemoans his "poor powers as a speaker" (42), a pro forma yet disingenuous rhetorical maneuver in light of the fact that Gabriel undoubtedly fancies himself a talented writer and speaker, he launches into what turns out to be a highly successful speech, mainly owing to the lavish, albeit scantly understood, praise with which he speaks of his three hostesses. However, the most revealing aspect of his monologue is Gabriel's conscious juxtaposition of past and present, ostensibly lauding the former and critiquing the latter. Nonetheless, a closer look at two distinct movements of this, Gabriel's symphony, demonstrates his ineluctable ambivalence as a result of feeling himself caught between two different cultures from which he is both partially included and excluded:

> I feel more strongly with every recurring year that our country has no tradition which does it so much honour and which it should guard so jealously as that of its hospitality. It is a tradition that is unique as far as my experience goes (and I have visited not a few places abroad) among the modern nations. Some would say, perhaps, that with us it is rather a failing than anything to be boasted of. (43)

The tradition and hospitality about which Gabriel rhapsodizes here in his well-tuned panegyric are, of course, precisely the elements of the Irish culture and past he has found the most worrisome and embarrassing. From his ill-handled attempt at magnanimity with Lily to his adversarial dance with Molly Ivors in which he demurs from her company as well as the prospect of accompanying other presumably native-born Irish sons and daughters through the wilds of Connacht to his decision to wait until the waltz is over to join his less-cultured partygoers, Gabriel has proven himself singularly uninterested in the indigenous Irish virtues he ostensibly praises. Yet, Gabriel is somewhat capable of seeing the nobility in notions of tradition and hospitality in the abstract and as they have been practiced in other cultures, in other times.

In fact, Greek culture of classical antiquity, to which he alludes in reference to the evening's hostesses, placed an exceedingly high value on hospitality as a pre-eminent marker of civilization. As a society of seafarers, the Greeks would have had to rely on the kindness of strangers did the winds and currents occasionally happen not to be in their favor. The Greek condemnation of inhospitable behavior is, of course, exemplified in Homer's *Odyssey,* in which the titular hero and his crew find themselves on the island of the infamous Polyphemous, the Kyklopes who not only refuses to grant the long-lost crew temporary refuge and rudimentary care, but actually eats some of the men and threatens the same fate for the rest before they succeed in blinding the beast. Intimately acquainted with Greek culture and lore, Gabriel, like Joyce himself, would have been well familiar with the premium placed on hospitality and generosity by the ancients. However, in what Gabriel refers to as a

"thought-tormented age" ("The Dead" 43) notions and ideas that were once fully functional and integrated into the very fabric of society now seem only contemplated, alluded to, or discussed abstractly and rather disingenuously:

> A new generation is growing up in our midst, a generation actuated by new ideas and new principles. It is serious and enthusiastic for these new ideas and its enthusiasm, even when it is misdirected, is, I believe in the main sincere. But we are living in a skeptical and, if I may use the phrase, a thought-tormented age: and sometimes I fear that this new generation, educated or hypereducated as it is, will lack those qualities of humanity, of hospitality, of kindly humour which belonged to an older day. (43)

This portion of Gabriel's dramatic monologue, initially intended for the prematurely departed Molly Ivors, much more closely resembles a description of himself and his own foibles rather than hers. Can the rich irony here possibly be utterly lost on the deliverer of the address? Who among these festive congregants could possibly be more "thought-tormented" than Gabriel, pulled as he is between his own cultural inheritance and disavowal of it in favor of patrician intellectualism. Gabriel is, in fact, a sterling example of the generation of which he speaks dubiously. Already having largely lost the ability to meaningfully connect with his own people through the staid conventions of the past, Gabriel Conroy is the hapless hybrid he characterizes, though he is hardly aware of the parallels, preferring to project the more unpleasant aspects of himself onto the Miss Ivorses of the world.

The supreme failure of Gabriel to overcome his solipsism occurs only when he is made keenly aware that even those closest to him who he perfunctorily patronizes and presumes to understand better than they themselves possibly could also struggle with the burden of the past and its incongruity with present. For the ghosts of the past also exercise a powerful hold over Gretta, ghosts of which Gabriel had been gladly unaware. In fact, Gabriel is so oblivious to his own wife's intense engagement and connection with the past that he mistakes her meditative and dreamy whimsicality toward the end of their evening for amorous cues when Gretta has actually been brooding over a former lover, one against which Gabriel himself could never compare because, as we learn, Michael Furey is dead and thus forever preserved in Gretta's memory as her hopelessly romantic young suitor, gloriously forfeiting his life for her. In labored response to Gabriel's insistent prompts to tell him what she is thinking about because he assumes she is, like him, musing on the depth of their love for each other, Gretta vanquishes the illusory spiritual connection Gabriel has forged. "I am thinking about a person long ago who used to sing that song. And who was the person long ago? asked Gabriel, smiling. It was a person I used to know in Galway when I was living with my grandmother, she said" (55).

Gabriel further misreads Gretta by presuming that the nature of her relationship to the past consists of trivial extramarital dalliance, encapsulated in Gabriel's indignant remark "perhaps that is why you [Gretta] wanted to go to Galway . . . to see him perhaps" (56). The surmised rendezvous that Gabriel presumes must be at the core of Gretta's emotionally volatile state is, of course, an impossibility, and he has once again demonstrated an intense desire to diminish, eschew and invalidate

links to the past that those closest to him view as vital. "While he had been full of memories of their secret life together, full of tenderness and joy and desire, she had been comparing him in her mind to another. A shameful consciousness of his own person assailed him" (56). Gabriel begins passing judgment on himself. "He saw himself as a ludicrous figure, acting as a pennyboy for his aunts, a nervous well-meaning sentimentalist, orating to vulgarians and idealizing his own clownish lusts, the pitiable fatuous fellow he had caught a glimpse of in the mirror" (56). The passionate intensity and overwhelming devotion that kept Michael Furey "at the end of the garden, shivering" (57) and pining for his young love represents a degree of emotional investment almost completely beyond Gabriel's ability to understand or implement in his own relationships with others. Gabriel Conroy finds conflicted elements of his own fractured sense of self reflected back to him through his problematic attempts to reconcile more modern paradigms and ideals with traditional Irish values, customs, and attitudes toward which he feels profound ambivalence. Joyce explores the profound tensions of this same ambivalence through his development of Stephen Dedalus.

II

The protagonist of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, also progresses to new knowledge, understanding, and increasing awareness and anxiety over his difference, outsider status, and alienation. Stephen constantly wrestles with the possibility of transcending the traditional limitations imposed from without through the conventions of language and religion. For, art, as Joyce well knew, is a dangerous proposition, a fickle mistress. So, when he sets his mind to unknown arts in *Portrait*

he announces the potentially disastrous nature of his undertaking. The great craftsman

may well fashion a splendid labyrinth beyond compare only to be himself ensnared in

it. Or, he may build wings capable of aiding in breathtaking flight only to collapse,

fail, and destroy that which he holds most dear. According to Harry Levin, "except

for the thin incognito of its characters, the *Portrait of the Artist* is based on a literal

transcript of the first twenty years of Joyce's life" (12) and in Stephen, Joyce casts

himself as bitterly divided between Irish duty, custom, tradition and secular and

aesthetic liberation of a more continental variety. His dual consciousness manifests

itself in the almost paralytic alienation he feels. However, he also suggests the

possibility of moving beyond what he begins to perceive as its provincial limitations.

   A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man problematizes the notion of Joyce as a

thoroughly avant-garde artist who fully transcended his provincial limitations.

According to Charles Rossman, "for more than half a century, readers of *A Portrait of*

the Artist as a Young Man have wrestled with the problem of Stephen Dedalus" (19).

He goes on to succinctly state that problem. "Is Stephen a budding artist who survives

the philistine pressures of family, church, and country to be poised, at book's end, for

Daedalian flight? Or is he merely a self-infatuated aesthete whose flight will likely

end, as Icarus's flight ended, in failure?" (19). Earlier critics of the novel such as

Thomas Connolly found that "Stephen gradually rejects the religious, household, and

patriotic gods that have crowded in on him from infancy . . . and answers the call to

the priesthood of art," (4) thus suggesting a kind of unmitigated casting off of

inhibiting influences. However, more recent readers of *Portrait* have by and large

viewed this question much more cautiously. For example, Vicki Mahaffey finds the

prospect of Stephen's transcendence suspect:

> It is Stephen's desire for transcendence that makes him heroic in both
>
> a classical and a romantic sense, yet the continuity of life and narrative
>
> impedes any real transcendence, which would be possible only through
>
> death. Any reader of *Portrait* whose reading is impelled by a
>
> transcendent ideal, by a desire to escape the "nets" of language,
>
> religion and nationality and in so doing ascend into an esthetic ether,
>
> will experience the resistance the book offers to such flightiness. (96)

It is that very resistance the following section proposes to investigate, in an attempt to

suggest that at least part of Joyce's aim in the novel was not transcendence, but a kind

of aesthetic synthesis.

In each chapter, Joyce demonstrates the near-palpable tension between

traditional Irish ideals and modern secular sensibilities, but ultimately sees the

distinction itself as bogus insofar as Joyce's unique aesthetic perspective is forged

through the interplay on his consciousness of both. That Joyce is extremely concerned

with consciousness and the social influences shaping it can be gleaned from his

decision to begin the novel by narrating through the consciousness of a very young

Stephen. Heralded as technically innovative, the strategy provides the reader the

sensation of direct access to Stephen's thought processes and patterns as they develop

and mature in response to his environment. Perhaps the single most important factor

shaping Stephen's consciousness is his growing sense of himself as a cultural outsider

struggling to move beyond traditional strictures and social conformity though unsure

of how to go about that or even if he should. What Stephen would really like to do is reconcile the contradictions of his conflicted heritage, Ireland's colonial past. One of the most important questions *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* poses is whether or not Ireland can successfully assimilate the competing demands of a past characterized by unswerving conformity to traditional and, often oppressive, religious values and systems with more modern, secular, and individualistic thinking. In fact, much of the novel is concerned with depicting Stephen as confused, and even victimized, by both sets of ideals. Stephen Dedalus, like Gabriel Conroy, finds himself increasingly caught between duties that conflict and value systems that collide. *Portrait* charts in exacting detail the events, interactions, and exchanges that shaped the ambivalence he never relinquished.

The opening chapter of *Portrait* revolves around two of the most revered of Irish institutions—the church and the family. Viewed through Stephen's young eyes, both spheres of influences offer a wealth of contradiction, yet nourish his extraordinarily active and sensitive imagination. At Clongowes, Stephen learns of the fallibility of priestly authority. The tradition of Irish Catholicism is both embraced and seriously questioned by the precocious youth. A prime example occurs in the set piece with which the first chapter concludes. In this episode, Stephen finds himself unexpectedly disciplined by Father Dolan, the prefect of studies, due to a perceived offense of which the young man is guiltless. When the prefect discovers Stephen not writing his themes, he assumes the boy is willful or indolent. No idler, however, Stephen has been exempted from writing for the day because his glasses were accidentally broken, and he cannot see without them. Apparently already perturbed,

Father Dolan assumes Stephen's smashed glasses must be "an old schoolboy trick" (60) and makes an example of the terrified youth by smacking him mercilessly on both hands. The prefect of studies may be read as embodying the most debilitating of religious ideals, those Joyce found most backward and dangerous. First of all, Father Dolan assumes the worst despite evidence to the contrary offered by a fellow priest. His belief in the doctrine of original sin, which suggests that human beings as a result of being born into an iniquitous world are by their very natures unclean, sinful, and in need of redemption, has clearly reached the level of zealotry. The intensity with which the prefect insists upon and dispenses a kind of rough, misguided justice is both startling and unfair. The problematic tendency for those in positions of religious authority to abuse that power is clear in this scene. The priest requires Stephen to "kneel down" (61) and submit during what amounts to an unadulterated display of power. In three dense paragraphs of third person narration so deftly handled it might easily be mistaken for first person, Joyce renders Stephen's complicated and ambivalent response to a religious tradition capable of subjecting incredible pain and degradation on its adherents without regard for guilt or innocence:

> A hot burning stinging tingling blow like the loud crack of a broken stick made his trembling hand crumple together like a leaf in the fire: and at the sound and the pain scalding tears were driven into his eyes. His whole body was shaking with fright, his arm was shaking and his crumpled burning livid hand shook like a loose leaf in the air . . . The scalding water burst forth from his eyes and, burning with shame and

agony and fear, he drew back his shaking arm in terror and burst out

into a whine of pain. (60-61)

Although Suzette Henke claims Stephen "must learn to survive in a society that

protects bullies like Wells and sadists like Father Dolan, that condones brutality, and

that takes advantage of the weak and the helpless," (86) it might be overstating the

case to claim that Dolan is a sadist or that he is in some sense protected by society.

Dolan only represents one narrow aspect of Catholicism, as evidenced by the other

more positive facets embodied by Fathers Arnall and Conmee. Clearly, this utterly

terrifying series of moments in Stephen's formative years when he comes face to face

with religion's capacity for zealotry, inflexibility, error, and violence is nicely

counterbalanced by the descriptions of Father Arnall "helping the boys with gentle

words" (62). Though his beneficence did not extend to interposing between the

prefect and an innocent Stephen, Father Arnall is depicted as emblematic of a more

compassionate side of religion if only because Father Dolan's behavior is so obtuse

and ghastly.

Interestingly, we learn a bit later that the reason Stephen will not read is

because "the doctor had told him not to" (62), hinting that the young man's deference

to secular authority rather than clerical is what has really imperiled him. Embarrassed

and smarting from the pain, humiliation, and injustice of the episode, Stephen

challenges the legitimacy of the kind of religious authority that would mete out

indiscriminant punishment. Summoning all his courage, the young pupil informs the

rector of the matter and is happily surprised to find him gracious and accommodating.

"Very well, the rector said, it is a mistake and I shall speak to Father Dolan myself.

Will that do?" (67). Although Stephen is heartened by this rectification, his tears remain imminent, "Stephen felt the tears wetting his eyes" (67). In addition to depicting Father Conmee's willingness to validate Stephen's concerns and thus emphasizing Catholicism's capacity for self-correction and change, this scene also foreshadows Stephen's increasing need to exert his own individuality and question authority. Far from getting Stephen into deeper trouble, his penchant for questioning actually gains him at least some small degree of celebrity, however fleeting.

The chapter itself closes on a felicitous note with the triumphal Stephen feted by his schoolmates who "made a cradle of their locked hands and hoisted him up among them and carried him along" (68). Stephen is doubly rewarded for having withstood the wrath of flagrantly unfair handling by an officer of the church and for his bravery in apprising Father Dolan's superior of the injustice. Even at this early stage in Stephen's maturation and growth into an artist, he recognizes the singular importance of truth and the ease with which it can be overlooked, obscured, or trampled on particularly by the august representatives of esteemed institutions. He learns that challenging conventional wisdom and pieties is sometimes necessary, desirable, and liberating.

Besides Stephen's growing ambivalence toward church authority, the first chapter of *Portrait* offers a marvelous set piece in which family, politics, and religion converge to create explosive results. Home for Christmas break, Stephen witnesses first-hand the inseparability of these three pillars of Irish society. During the course of what initially promises to be an idyllic Christmas day meal, a heated argument erupts between Simon Dedalus and John Casey, both fervent Irish Nationalists and

supporters of the disgraced and deceased Charles Stewart Parnell, and Stephen's

governess, Dante Riordan, an outspoken supporter of the Catholic church's decision

to condemn Parnell for his extramarital affair. The crux of the debate hinges on the

elder Dedalus's contention that religion and politics should be mutually exclusive

spheres of thought and activity. Both Dedalus and Casey believe the Catholic

church's political stances as voiced from the pulpit have actually retarded or even

halted any politically progressive agenda. Implicit in Dante's fundamentalist

protestations is the belief that Ireland's religion and its politics are inextricable:

> --They have only themselves to blame, said Mr. Dedalus suavely. If
>
> they took a fool's advice they would confine themselves to religion.
>
> --It is religion, Dante said. They are doing their duty in warning the
>
> people.
>
> --We go to the house of God, Mr. Casey said, in all humility to pray to
>
> our Maker and not to hear election addresses.
>
> --It is religion, Dante said again. They are right. They must direct their
>
> flocks.
>
> --And preach politics from the altar, is it? Asked Mr. Dedalus.
>
> --Certainly, said Dante. It is a question of public morality. A priest
>
> would not be a priest if he did not tell his flock what is right and what
>
> is wrong. (42)

The argument falls into a familiar pattern pitting conventional morality, traditional

conservatism, and religious fundamentalism against a more secular-minded,

politically progressive, and questioning perspective. What makes the debacle

interesting is that Joyce himself refuses to choose sides in terms of privileging one narrative voice over another. By neither condoning nor condemning either perspective, Joyce reveals his own conflicted sympathies. From a strictly pious, perhaps narrowly moralistic point of view, Dante may have a point. Many would agree that the church does have a moral obligation to condemn aberrant behavior, particularly that of influential leaders. However, she couches her criticism in a kind of severe fundamentalist rhetoric that comes across as uncompromising, unforgiving, and sanctimonious, qualities that have won very few to the faith, and, in this instance, provoke the extreme ire of at least two of her auditors. A captivated, if somewhat confused, Stephen listens on in silence as his mother attempts to intercede and salvage the occasion:

--Really, Simon, said Mrs. Dedalus, you should not speak that way before Stephen. It's not right.

--O, he'll remember all this when he grows up, said Dante hotly—the language he heard against God and religion and priests in his own home.

--Let him remember too, cried Mr. Casey to her from across the table, the language with which the priests and the priests' pawns broke Parnell's heart and hounded him into his grave. Let him remember that too when he grows up.

--Sons of bitches! Cried Dedalus. When he was down they turned on him to betray him and rend him like rats in the sewer. Lowlived dogs! And they look it! By Christ, they look it!

--They behaved rightly, cried Dante. They obeyed their bishops and

their priests. Honour to them!

Although Dante ardently defends the actions of the church basically from the premise

of its moral authority and infallibility, a perspective that certainly resonates with the

young Stephen, Casey counters her unadulterated deference to religious

pronouncement with a stunning rejoinder in which he recites a veritable litany of

what he and Stephen's father consider Catholic sanctioned crimes against Ireland.

John Casey's disgust over the Catholic church's intercession in Irish political affairs

has reached a near-fever pitch. This scene nicely parallels Stephen's own questioning

of the wisdom and motivations of the church, though his youthful criticisms have had

far less time to develop and harden into such bitter vitriol. Obviously, the argument

has deteriorated and both parties have become less than reasonable. On the one hand,

John Casey is baiting Mrs. Riordan by speaking sacrilegiously, however, on the other

hand, both he and Simon Dedalus possess a clear conviction of not only

Catholicism's offenses, but those of organized religion generally. When John Casey

repudiates God, he is certainly expressing the view of many of his countrymen who

have come to associate religion with oppressive strictures, political backwardness,

and untenable precepts. That this emotionally-charged scene culminates with John

Casey and Simon Dedalus openly weeping for Parnell suggests the degree to which

Ireland's split down traditional versus progressive lines might in fact be irreparable,

so entrenched are both factions. These painful divisions drive Stephen into further

internal conflict and questioning. Perhaps Stephen's most blatant and frequent

challenges to the dictums of the church's teachings regarding moral purity occur when he as a relatively young man seeks the company of prostitutes.

The second chapter of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* ends with Stephen in the arms of a Dublin whore. The preface to this dalliance is rendered in terms of Stephen's internal struggle between the exacting standards of moral behavior inculcated in him through his religious upbringing, and his overwhelming desire to cast off those stale prohibitions "against the riot of his mind" (96) in the hope of gaining greater insight. "He wanted to sin with another of his kind, to force another being to sin with him and to exult with her in sin" (108). The kind of knowledge of human experience Stephen yearns for cannot be attained through the dutiful and pious recitation of prayers. In order "to forge . . . the uncreated conscience of [his] race," (253) Stephen recognizes the necessity of going beyond creativity inhibiting religious codes, and so he seeks liberation—transcendence through transgression. However, despite Stephen's ardent desire for some form of transcendence, and he will gladly opt for the physical when the spiritual is not forthcoming, he is, nevertheless, racked by guilt when he finally musters the nerve to consummate his illicit desires. Stephen's initial experience with the prostitute and her environs is rendered in compellingly physical terms, sometimes disgustingly so, but also functions metaphorically as Stephen's orgiastic embrace of the more alluring, though perhaps treacherous, aspects of the secular world. Because Stephen is incapable of separating the interests of modern secular life from firmly entrenched traditional values, the entire novel demonstrates his vacillation between the very extremes of attitude and sensibility exemplified earlier by John Casey and Dante Riordan. Although Stephen more

frequently indulges himself with prostitutes, thus thumbing his nose at religious authority and moral probity, he still experiences a guilt-ridden conscience, so much so that he becomes devoutly over-zealous after a series of particularly heated and cogent sermons delivered by Father Arnall and Stephen's confession of his not infrequent illicit liaisons. Stephen's religious training ostensibly provides a welcome solution to his oppressive feelings of guilt and shame. However, according to critics such as Michel Foucault, the institution of the confession itself in Western discourse became invested with a great deal more power than it was ever capable of sustaining:

> In his *History of Human Sexuality I*, Foucault writes:
>
>> In any case... the confession became one of the West's most highly valued techniques for producing truth. We have since become a singularly confessing society. The confession has spread its effects far and wide. It plays a part in justice, medicine, education, family relationships, and love relations, in the most ordinary affairs of everyday life, and in the most solemn rites. (Foucault 59)

He concludes this paragraph with the sweeping claim that "western man has become a confessing animal" (59). Central to Foucault's claim is the pernicious effect of all this alleged truth-talking. For Foucault, what is perceived as unfettered veracity by those engaging in such exercises is actually a means by which language further obfuscates any truth that may have existed while simultaneously leading the confessor to believe that he has expunged his woes forthwith. Foucault also addresses confession's intimate ties to literature:

> We have passed from a pleasure to be recounted and heard, centering
>
> on the heroic or marvelous narration of "trials" of bravery or
>
> sainthood, to a literature ordered according to the infinite task of
>
> extracting from the depths of oneself... a truth which the very form of
>
> the confession holds out like a shimmering mirage. (59)

Foucault ultimately maintains that we are always already bound up in a confessional

discourse believed to elicit truth but whose "production is thoroughly imbued with

relations of power" (60). Although Stephen is initially dazzled and heartened by the

"shimmering mirage" (59) of his confession, he ultimately accepts the unsatisfactory

and even delusory nature of the practice, bound up as it is in "relations of power" (60)

in which the dutiful penitent is essentially powerless. So, despite his initial state of

extirpative euphoria, Stephen soon returns to his more individualistic habits of mind:

> He would never swing the thurible before the tabernacle as a priest.
>
> His destiny was to be elusive of social or religious orders. The wisdom
>
> of the priest's appeal did not touch him to the quick. He was destined
>
> to learn his wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others
>
> himself wandering among the snares of the world. (*Portrait* 167)

Although one might view this decision as a repudiation of religion and applaud

Stephen's maturity for moving beyond what many in an increasingly secular age

might well consider superstitious nonsense or the last vestiges of some form of

primitive communalism, Stephen's newfound awareness of himself does not itself

represent an outright rejection of religion in favor of purely secular artistic pursuits.

Stephen is ever the "fabulous artificer" (173), as we may observe in his youthful dalliances.

Within the narrative economy of the coming-of-age novel, the protagonist's loss of virginity always represents a turning point and marker of maturation. And, at least since *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, initial sexual encounters with women have served to awaken, liberate, and even civilize. However, in *Portrait,* Stephen's nocturnal escapades through the dark streets of Dublin also serve subversive ends. His questioning of the supremacy of the church's precepts reaches its apogee in this section:

> He burned to appease the fierce longings of his heart before which
> everything else was idle and alien. He cared little that he was in mortal
> sin, that his life had grown to be a tissue of subterfuge and falsehood.
> Beside the savage desire within him to realize the enormities which he
> brooded on nothing was sacred . . . Only the morning pained him with
> its dim memory of dark orgiastic riot, its keen and humiliating sense of
> transgression" (107).

Stephen's carousing represents a burning desire for the kind of physical connection and intimacy absent from his religious training, founded as it is in ritual, asceticism, and spiritual and bodily purity. "He wanted to sin with another of his kind, to force another being to sin with him and to exult with her in sin" (108). Even in heeding the dictates of his erotic yearnings, Stephen can only cast his actions in the light of religious impiety because the very mechanisms of his thought process have been shaped according to these ideals, many of which run counter to his desire to cultivate

new experiences. The nameless women for whom Stephen imperils his immortal soul are described as inhabiting "another world" (108) into which "he had awakened from a slumber of centuries" (108).

The aching moments leading up to Stephen's consummation are cast as almost mystical:

> As he stood silent in the middle of the room she came over to him and embraced him gaily and gravely. Her round arms held him firmly to her and he, seeing her face lifted to him in serious calm and feeling the warm calm rise and fall of her breast, all but burst into hysterical weeping. Tears of joy and relief shone in his delighted eyes and his lips parted though they would not speak" (109).

Stephen's intense emotional response results in his apparently uncontrollable sobbing. This scene parallels and takes us back to Stephen's earlier moment of crisis presided over by Father Dolan. Despite the tremendous force and power of religious authority over Stephen, he managed to challenge it. He now draws upon the same rebellious spirit to help him lay aside any religious prohibitions standing between him and the intense physical connection he craves.

As important as Stephen's religious training has been in his development, he begins to suspect that blind adherence to its foundational tenets of austerity and self-denial may well lead to a kind of impoverishment of his imagination. The artist must expose himself to all of life's experiences, even, perhaps particularly, those deemed conventionally unsavory or morally reprehensible. How narrow the vision of the artist who has never known the pleasures of the flesh? In splendid counterpoint to

Stephen's traditional religious upbringing typified by rules, discipline, and authority, his secular training certainly begins as frighteningly uncertain as he "wandered into a maze of narrow and dirty streets" (108) but ends in lyrical exultation, again bringing to mind the triumph of his initial challenge to religion which results in praise from his peers and a sense of accomplishment and growth:

> With a sudden movement she bowed his head and joined her lips to his and he read the meaning of her movements in her frank uplifted eyes. It was too much for him. He closed his eyes, surrendering himself to her, body and mind, conscious of nothing in the world but the dark pressure of her softly paring lips. They pressed upon his brain as upon his lips as though they were the vehicle of vague speech; and between them he felt an unknown and timid pressure, darker than the swoon of sin, softer than sound or odour. (109).

Just as Father Dolan had forced a trembling Stephen to genuflect before him in order to show the young man's total subservience, obedience, and submission to the law or will of the father, no matter how unfair or erroneous, in order to reinforce his subjugation, Stephen's mistress of secular ministrations, the young prostitute, "bowed his head" (109) into the more deferential position of a young acolyte to whom she wordlessly promises darker knowledge than he has heretofore attained. In language often reserved for conversion narratives, Stephen "surrender[s] himself to her" (109), fully adopting the position of supplicant and yearning to drink deeply from her well of knowledge. And drink he does, though his newfound knowledge of pleasure, sensuality, and intimacy weighs heavily on his mind, standing, as it does, in

diametrical opposition to the teachings of the church. Stephen "felt now that his soul was festering in sin" (122).

Stephen is made even more keenly aware of his descent from righteousness during his next imaginative encounter:

> The image of Emma appeared before him and, under her eyes, the flood of shame rushed forth anew from his heart. If she knew to what his mind had subjected her or how his brutelike lust had torn and trampled upon her innocence! Was that boyish love? Was that chivalry? Was that poetry? The sordid details of his orgies stank under his very nostrils . . . But he imagined that he stood near Emma in a wide land and, humbly in tears, bent and kissed the elbow of her sleeve. (123).

In order to assuage his intense feelings of guilt and remorse, Stephen begins fashioning an aestheticized vision of a blessed union with an idealized girl in a mythological land. "In the wide land under a tender lucid evening sky, a cloud drifting westward amid a pale green sea of heaven, they stood together" (123). In fact, Stephen's imagination seems his only refuge from conventional social strictures that threaten to silence his creative impulses yet underpin his very thought process and that he is loath to abandon. On the one hand, Stephen is going through a very common and familiar rite of passage as he sexually matures. However, on the other hand, Joyce goes to pains to demonstrate just how intimately Stephen's intellectual and artistic development is inextricably bound up with his relationships, both real and imagined, with female figures that fuel his most aesthetically creative of impulses.

Stephen begins to turn his back on the religion of his youth precisely because it

ultimately fails to nourish and sustain his imagination. It is a system of pieties and

conventions that seems to pale in comparison to the wealth of vivifying experience it

denies. Time and again, the often-unnamed girls and women Stephen encounters

perform the function of conduits to heightened understanding of himself and the craft

he wishes to practice.

The close of chapter four again finds Stephen aesthetically communing with a

young girl:

> A girl stood before him in midstream, alone and still, gazing out to sea.
>
> She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a
>
> strange and beautiful seabird. Her long slender bare legs were delicate
>
> as a crane's and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had
>
> fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. . . He turned away from her
>
> suddenly and set off across the strand. His cheeks were aflame; his
>
> body was aglow; his limbs were trembling . . Her image had passed
>
> into his soul for ever and no word had broken the holy silence of his
>
> ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To
>
> live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life! A wild angel
>
> had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty. (176-77)

This extraordinarily well-crafted and lyrical description demonstrates the power of

the female principle to inspire rapture and awe. What Stephen, and perhaps Joyce

himself, finds most aesthetically appealing and exciting in these encounters is their

capacity to challenge and blend the most ostensibly antithetical of ideas—the sacred

and the profane, religious ecstasy with carnal pleasure. Stephen imagines the girl as already having undergone the kind of radical transformation he envisions for himself, namely a casting off of convention-bound priggishness and asceticism in favor of a kind of divine secularism in which boundaries of traditions and orthodoxies become permeable and fluid. The sea imagery and the girl, herself a creature of that element, suggest all manner of mythic significance in this scene. In a sense, she represents an aestheticized embodiment of what Stephen later claims to yearn for so badly in *Ulysses*—freedom from the nightmare of history, tradition, and the weight of the past.

In his influential essay "The Portrait in Perspective," Hugh Kenner maintains that "it is no exaggeration to say that every theme in the entire lifework of James Joyce is stated on the first two pages of the *Portrait*" (33). In equally glowing terms, Thomas Staley holds that "*A Portrait* is so central to our interpretation of Joyce's art that nearly every extended study undertaken, even those which concentrate on the later work, has compared some aspect of its meaning and design to his later artistic vision" (3). While these and other critical panegyrics may run the risk of over-estimating the importance of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the overwhelming scholarly consensus would seem to lend much support to this view. Among the multifarious themes Joyce appears interested in pursuing throughout *Portrait* and, it might well be added, "The Dead" one of the most important issues wrestled with throughout both texts is Joyce's ambivalence toward competing and conflicting value systems. His response to the pressures exerted by these ideals is to delineate character in terms of their facility with social masquerade and performance in order to reconcile ostensibly antithetical modes of being and behavior. Because of

their adroitness Gabriel Conroy can be both the loyal, doting nephew *and* cultured,

sophisticated professor, and Stephen can be, by turns, the dutiful son, the sinning

wretch, the pious penitent, the erudite metaphysician, *and,* every bit the great artificer

that his namesake implies, the exile. Both Gabriel Conroy and Stephen Dedalus

demonstrate a keen ability and willingness to assume the roles expected of them by

their family, religion, and country. This willingness to play a kind of part, which the

character ultimately feels is at some remove from himself, links Stephen to Gabriel

Conroy and both characters directly back to their creator. For, James Joyce remained

a citizen of Ireland if only in his mind and through his work. Imaginatively, he never

left the country of his birth, and, though his early fictions explicitly suggest a

trajectory of transcendence, they actually chart an increasing certainty that such a

state may not be completely desirable after all.

Notes

1. Joyce famously announced his design for the works collected in *Dubliners*.

"My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose

Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis. I have

tried to present it to the indifferent public under the four aspects: childhood,

adolescence, maturity and public life. The stories are arranged in this order. I have

written it for the most part in a style of scrupulous meanness and with the conviction

that he is a very bold man who dares to alter in the presentment, still more to deform,

whatever he has seen and heard" (*Selected Letters of James Joyce* 83). A bit later,

critics recognized certain structural affinities between Eliot's *The Waste Land* and

Joyce's *Ulysses*, an inescapable comparison given Eliot's early framing of the two in

his "*Ulysses*, Order and Myth." "In using . . . myth, in manipulating a continuous

parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method

which others must pursue after him. They will not be imitators any more than the

scientist who uses the discoveries of Einstein in pursuing his own independent,

further investigations. It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape

and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy that is

contemporary history. . . It is, I seriously believe, a step toward making the world

possible for art" (130). However, both *The Waste Land* and "The Dead" are also quite

similar in design, though certainly less obviously so. Formally, Eliot's magnum opus

is episodic, jarring, and cinematic, while Joyce's story is deceptively straightforward,

and linear. Yet, both works thematize conflict through the juxtaposition of an

embattled, fragile notion of the past and tradition alongside a wry, world-weary,

ironic and, hence, decidedly modern sensibility incapable of reconciling the two. For Joyce, the past is at least as much of a problem as the present, particularly if we are to credit Stephen's pronouncement that "history . . . is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" (*Ulysses* 28).

2. In surveying the considerable critical interest in Joyce's masterful story "The Dead," certain methods of inquiry have proven more attractive than others. According to Donald Torchiana, "most comments on 'The Dead' since the seminal essays by Ellman and Kelleher take their direction either by totally surveying the story or by elucidating a puzzling detail" (226) and David Higdon claims that "virtually every critical discussion of "The Dead" has taken place within the intellectual boundaries inscribed early by David Daiches and Brewster Ghiselin" (179). According to Higdon, Daiches inaugurates the critical move of focusing attention on "Gabriel Conroy's encounter with three women" (179) and Ghiselin elaborated on Daiches's work with his identification of "symbolic structure" (180) in the tale. Higdon broadens out his treatment of the story by focusing on what he considers male counterpoint to the encounter episodes in addition to the episodes themselves, ultimately arguing that Joyce's careful structuring of "The Dead" anticipates such meticulous formal attention to detail in the later novels. I also wish to extend the terms of debate by focusing attention on the moments when Gabriel feels it necessary to perform as a means of negotiating difficult situations in which paradigms clash, moments that do include but are not limited to the so-called encounter scenes.

WORKS CITED

Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness.*" *The Massachusetts Review.* 18 (1977): 782-94.

Ackroyd, Peter. *T.S. Eliot.* London: Hamish Hamilton, 1985.

Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996.

Ardis, Ann. *Modernism and Cultural Conflict 1880-1922.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* New York: Harcourt, 1951. 189.

Atkinson, William. "Bound in *Blackwood's:* The Imperialism of 'The Heart of Darkness' in Its Immediate Context. *Twentieth-Century Literature.* 50 (2004): 368-393.

Auge, Marc. *Non-places: Introduction to the Anthropology of Supermodernity.* London: Verso, 1995.

Baudelaire, Charles. *Baudelaire as Literary Critic.* Trans. Lois Boe Hyslop and Francis Hyslop. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1964.

Baudenhausen, Richard. *T.S. Eliot and the Art of Collaboration.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.

Bell, Michael. *D.H. Lawrence: Language and Being.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.

Berman, Marshall. *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982.

Bhabha, Homi. "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern

nation." *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 1990.

Bongie, Chris. *Exotic Memories: Literature, Colonialism, and the Fin de Siecle*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991.

Brantlinger, Patrick. *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism 1830-1914*. Cornell: Cornell UP, 1990.

Brooker, Peter. *Modernity and Metropolis: Writing, Film and Urban Formations*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Calinescu, Matei. *Faces of Modernity: Avant-Garde, Decadence, and Kitsch*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1977.

Cheng, Vincent. *Joyce, Race, and Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.

Conrad, Joseph. *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*. Ed. Frederick Karl. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983.

--. *Congo Diary and Other Uncollected Pieces*. Ed. Zdzislaw Najder. New York: Doubleday, 1972.

--. *Heart of Darkness*. New York: Penguin, 1995.

--. "The Nigger of the Narcissus." New York: Doubleday, 1925.

Diepeveen, Leonard. *The Difficulties of Modernism*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Eagleton, Terry. *Exiles and Emigres: Studies in Modern Literature*. New York: Schocken Books, 1970.

Eliot, T.S. *Christian News Letter*. Mar. 1945.

--. "Hamlet and His Problems." *Selected Essays: 1917-32*. New York: Harcourt,

Brace and Company, 1932.

--. *The Idea of a Christian Society.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940.

--. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." *The Waste Land and Other Poems.* New York: Penguin, 1998.

--. "The Metaphysical Poets." *Selected Essays 1917-1932.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932.

--. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." *Selected Essays 1917-1932.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932.

--. "Ulysses, Order and Myth." *Selected Essays 1917-1932.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932.

--. *'The Waste Land': A facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts including the Annotations of Ezra Pound.* Ed. Valerie Eliot. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1971.

--. *The Waste Land.* Ed. Michael North. New York: Norton, 2001.

The Epic of Gilgamesh: An English Version with an Introduction. Trans. N.K. Sandars. New York: Penguin, 1960.

Everdell, William. *The First Moderns: Profiles in the Origins of Twentieth-Century Thought.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1997.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction.* New York: Vintage, 1990.

Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity.* Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990.

GoGwilt, Christopher. *The Invention of the West: Joseph Conrad and the Double-Mapping of Europe and Empire.* Stanford: Stanford UP, 1995.

Gordon, Lyndall. *T.S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life.* New York: Norton, 1998.

Griffith, John. *Joseph Conrad and the Anthropological Dilemma 'Bewildered Traveler.'* Oxford: Clarendon P, 1995.

Harding, Jason. *The Criterion: Cultural Politics and Periodical Networks in Inter-War Britain.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.

Hawkins, Hunt. "Conrad and the Psychology of Colonialism." *Conrad Revisited: Essays for the Eighties.* Ed. Ross Murfin. Tuscaloosa, Al: U of Alabama P, 1985.

Hegglund, Jon. "Modernism, Africa and the myth of continents." Eds. Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker. *Geographies of Modernism: Literatures, Cultures, Spaces.* New York: Routledge, 2005.

Henke, Suzette. *Women in Joyce.* Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1982.

Hobsbaum, Philip. *A Reader's Guide to D. H. Lawrence.* London: Thames and Hudson, 1981.

Homer. *The Odyssey.* Trans. Edward McCrorie. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2004.

Huyssen, Andreas. *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism.* Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986.

Johnson, Samuel. *Selected Writings.* Ed. R.T. Davies. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1965. 326.

Joyce, James. *The Critical Writings of James Joyce.* Eds. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellman. New York: Viking, 1964. 167.

--. "The Dead." Ed. Daniel Schwarz. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

--. *Dubliners.* Eds. Robert Scholes and A. Walton Litz. New York: Penguin, 1996.

--. "Eveline." Eds. Robert Scholes and A. Walton Litz. New York: Penguin, 1996. 36-41.

--. *Finnegans Wake.* New York: Penguin, 2000.

--. *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* Eds. Hans Walter Gabler and Walter Hettche. New York: Garland, 1993.

--. *Selected Letters of James Joyce.* Ed. Richard Ellmann. New York: Viking, 1975.

--. *Ulysses.* New York: Vintage, 1986.

Kenner, Hugh. "The Portrait in Perspective." *Joyce's Portrait: Criticisms and Critiques.* Ed. Thomas Connolly. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962. 25-59.

--. *The Pound Era.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1971.

Kinkead-Weekes, Mark. *D.H. Lawrence, Triumph to Exile, 1912-1922.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Lackey, Michael. "The Moral Conditions for Genocide in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness. College Literature.* 24 (2005): 20-41.

Lamos, Colleen. *Deviant Modernism: Sexual and Textual Errancy in T.S. Eliot and James Joyce.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.

Lane, Christopher. "The Unrest Cure According to Lawrence, Saki, and Lewis." *Modernism/Modernity.* 11 (2004): 769-96.

Langbaum, Robert. "Pound and Eliot." *Ezra Pound Among the Poets.* Ed. George Bornstein. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985.

Lawrence, D.H. *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence.* Ed. Aldous Huxley. New York: Viking, 1932.

--. "Odour of Chrysanthemums." New York: Modern Library, 1999.

--. *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*. Ed. Edward McDonald.

London: Heinemann, 1961.

--. *The Rainbow*. New York: Penguin, 2007.

--. *Studies in Classic American Literature*. New York: Viking, 1964.

--. *Women in Love*. New York: Modern Library, 1999.

Lentricchia, Frank. *Modernist Quartet*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.

Levenson, Michael. *A Genealogy of Modernism: Study of English Literary Doctrine*

1908-22. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986.

Levin, Harry. "The Artist." *Joyce's Portrait: Criticisms and Critiques*. Ed. Thomas

Connolly. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962. 9-24.

Mahaffey, Vicki. *Reathorizing Joyce*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988.

Marinetti, F.T. *Marinetti: Selected Writings*. Trans. R.W. Flint and Arthur

Coppotelli. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1972.

Masson, Margaret. "D.H. Lawrence's Congregational Inheritance." *The D.H.*

Lawrence Review 22 (1990): 53-68.

Menand, Louis. *Discovering Modernism: T.S. Eliot and His Context*. Oxford:

Oxford UP, 1987.

Meyers, Jeffrey. *D.H. Lawrence: A Biography*. New York: Cooper Square Press,

2002.

--. *D. H. Lawrence and the Experience of Italy*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P,

1982.

Miller, J. Hillis. "Foreword." *Conrad in the Twenty-First Century: Contemporary*

Approaches and Perspectives. Ed. Carola Kaplan et al. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Nicholls, Peter. *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1995.

North, Michael. *The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language, and Twentieth Century Literature*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994.

--. *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.

Parry, Benita. "The Moment and Afterlife of *Heart of Darkness*." *Conrad in the Twenty-First Century: Contemporary Approaches and Perspectives*. Ed. Carola Kaplan et al. New York: Routledge, 2005. 37-53.

Pound, Ezra. *The Cantos of Ezra Pound*. New York: New Directions, 1972.

--. *Selected Poems*. New York: New Directions, 1957.

--. *Ezra Pound and Dorothy Shakespear, Their Letters 1909-14*. Eds. Omar Pound and A. Walton Litz. New York: New Directions, 1984.

--. *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*. New York: New Directions, 1968.

--. *Personae: The Collected Poems of Ezra Pound*. New York: New Directions, 1950.

--. *Ripostes of Ezra Pound*. New York: Kessinger, 2007.

Rado, Lisa. *The Modern Androgyne Imagination: A Failed Sublime*. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2000.

Rainey, Lawrence. *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture*. New Haven: Yale, 1999.

Ricks, Christopher. *T.S. Eliot and Prejudice*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988.

Riquelme, John Paul. "Joyce's 'The Dead': The Dissolution of the Self and the

Police." Bosinelli, Rosa M. Bollettieri and Harold Mosher. Eds. *ReJoycing: New Readings of Dubliners.* Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1998. 123-44.

Ross, Stephen. *Conrad and Empire.* Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2004.

Rossman, Charles. "The Reader's Role in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*" *James Joyce: An International Perspective.* Eds. Badi Bushrui and Bernard Benstock. Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble, 1982.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism.* New York: Knopf, 1993.

—. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient.* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995.

—. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2000.

Sausurre, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics.* Eds. Charles Bally and Albert Reidlinger. Trans. Wade Baskin. New York: Philosophical Library, 1959.

Sayeau, Michael. "Work, Unemployment, and the Exhaustion of Fiction in *Heart of Darkness.* Novel: A Forum on Fiction. 39 (2006): 337-0.

Selby, Nicholas. *T.S. Eliot: The Waste Land.* New York: Columbia UP, 1999.

Sherry, Vincent. *Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis and Radical Modernism.* New York: Oxford UP, 1993.

Staley, Thomas. "Strings in the Labyrinth: Sixty Years with Joyce's Portrait." *Approaches to Joyce's Portrait.* Ed. Thomas Staley. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1976. 3-24.

Thacker, Andrew. *Moving Through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism.* New York: Manchester UP, 2003.

Tiverton, William. *D.H. Lawrence and Human Existence.* London: Rockliff, 1951.

Tomlinson, John. *Globalization and Culture.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1999.

Torchiana, Donald. *Backgrounds for Joyce's Dubliners.* Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986.

Tytell, John. *Ezra Pound: The Solitary Volcano.* New York: Doubleday, 1987.

Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1997.

Wade, Nicholas. *Before the Dawn: Recovering the Lost History of Our Ancestors.* New York: Penguin, 2006.

Williams, Raymond. "The Politics of the Avant-Garde." *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists.* London: Verso, 1989. 49-63.

Woolf, Virginia. "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown." *Collected Essays of Virginia Woolf Volume I.* New York: Harcourt, 1967. 319-337.

Worthen, John. *D.H. Lawrence: A Literary Life.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.