# After Destiny: Conquest Narratives and the Closed Frontier

Laura Goldblatt
Princeton, NJ

B.A., Wesleyan University, 2006

A Dissertation Presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of English Language and Literature

University of Virginia
May 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I have spent the past several years thinking and writing about everything that is wrong with higher education. I am fortunate that my personal and academic contacts represent everything that the academy is doing right. It is with deep gratitude that I thank the Jefferson Scholars Foundation, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the Global Development Studies program, and the English Department at the University of Virginia for their financial support of this project in its various stages. Without Randy Swift, Pamela Marcantel, June Webb, and Sarah Colvin's careful and patient help, the many material needs that I had while writing this dissertation—photocopies, classes, keys, and reimbursements—would have gone unmet. Thank you to Andrew Jewell and the Special Collections librarians at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Tracy Tucker at the Willa Cather Foundation and Pioneer Memorial in Red Cloud, NE for their assistance with Cather's letters and the materials related to her life and legacy. Beverly Ewald, Charles R. Gamez, and Caitlin Donnelly showed me how to navigate the Alamo shrine and Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library. Without them, I would have been quite literally lost. Thank you, also, to the food service workers, janitors, grounds keepers, and support staff at the University of Virginia. Everything I have done at UVa over the past 7 years has been made possible because of their labor.

My greatest debt is to my dissertation committee: Eric Lott, Anna Brickhouse, Rita Felski, Marlon Ross, and Richard Handler. Collectively, they have provided me with a model not only of engaged, thoughtful, and responsible scholarship but also of kindness, caring, and compassion. Eric has been a sounding board for many of my anxieties, intellectual and otherwise, throughout this process and has never once betrayed a sense of exasperation or frustration. I am proud to call myself his student and his friend. When Eric left UVa, both

Richard and Anna stepped up, quickly reading drafts and meeting with me to discuss everything from critical interventions to funding. Anna is perhaps the most generous person I know who sees the best in everyone and in every act of scholarship. Richard took me on as a collaborator, rank and experience be damned, and always found some way to extract research funds from the University for my use. Marlon saw a reason to smile and take heart even in the most turgid and confused of drafts. I will never forget the sense of hope and relief I always felt after leaving his office. Rita consistently provided the most pointed and concrete of feedback and advice, seeing an argumentative thread in every draft. Whenever I was at a complete loss, her suggestions shed some light in the darkness. For all that you have given me, these thanks are almost embarrassing in their understatement.

Many of my peers, colleagues, and mentors at UVa and elsewhere read parts of this project as I wrote and revised it. Thank you to Jean Franzino, Anna Ioanes, Lindsay O'Connor, Jenny Braun, Jen Chang, Mai-Linh Hong, Anne Guarnera, Renee Hudson, Vicki Olwell, Austin Graham, Koritha Mitchell, Pranav Jani, Harilaos Stecopoulos, and Bryan Wagner for your feedback. Winfried Fluck and Colleen Boggs gave me timely suggestions and recommendations during our summer seminars at the Dartmouth Futures of American Studies Institute. Ruthie Wilson Gilmore and Werner Sollors provided insightful feedback at the Clinton Institute for American Studies in Dublin. Elizabeth Fowler and Victor Luftig invited me into their home for several summers while they were away. Much of this dissertation was written surrounded by the influence of their books and vivacious spirits. Thank you to Susan Fraiman for her tireless support of the Living Wage Campaign and related political activities. She is an ideal example of engaged scholarship.

To the members of the Living Wage Campaign at UVA and especially Erin Sutherland, Caitlin Levine, and Edel Tessema: I have learned so much about solidarity and change from your passion, commitment, and grace. I cannot wait to see how your lives unfold. I am grateful to have been a part of them.

Thank you to pizza aficionados Emily Filler and David Reinhard who never failed to leave me feeling over-stuffed and stimulated. Ajay Chandra has been a consistent bright spot for the past several years.

To Bennett Carpenter, Lenora Hanson, Karim Wissa, Andrew Yale, and Sean Kennedy, comrades, conspirators, collaborators, and co-organizers of the Subconference of the MLA: you are the shadow authors of this dissertation. Thank you for everything.

And to my parents, who continued to love me even though I kept them up every single night for three years straight. I guess I just had a lot that I wanted to say.

**Introduction: This Land is Your Land**

In 1944, Woodie Guthrie recorded "This Land is Your Land," a song that he had written as a critical response to the unbridled patriotism of Irving Berlin's "God Bless America." In addition to its initial popularity, the song has experienced an equally active afterlife. In the 1960s, musicians and groups such as Bob Dylan; Peter, Paul, and Mary; and The Kingston Trio all recorded their own versions as evidence of their participation in and commitment to the populist sentiments of leftist groups at the time. Later, Bruce Springsteen released his own cover of the song on his album *Live/1975-1985*, this time to signal his dissatisfaction with corporate culture, the immiseration of the working class, and the concentration of democratic power in increasingly fewer hands. While the groups and artists listed thus far might cast the ideological content of Guthrie's lyrics in unshakably leftist terms, "This Land is Your Land" has also been used as an anthem for anti-progressive causes: in 2010, the surviving members of Peter, Paul, and Mary requested that the National Organization for Marriage (a conservative advocacy group that opposes marriage equality) stop playing the group's version of the song at anti-gay marriage rallies.

"This Land is Your Land"'s lyrics, reception history, and rebirths distill the three main themes I consider in this dissertation: the use of the arrival of Europeans in the Americas for nationalist purposes in the U.S. in the twentieth-century; aesthetic transportability across time in the guise of state-funded and supported reprints and performative returns; and the role of disappointment or failure in what initially appear to be triumphant calls for nationalist unity and success. Why would the U.S. government, in a moment of unprecedented imperialist power and might, choose these particular artifacts as representatives of the nation? As Harilaos Stecopoulos asks, what are the programmatic aims of such foundational narratives and in what ways were

these same narratives used—or parodied—to build a sense of belonging in marginalized communities (Stecopoulos 14)?

On its surface, "This Land is Your Land" seems to celebrate a populist claim to property and rights. Though Guthrie revised the song's original lyrics in 1944, in both the original and altered versions his words build a nationalist ethos through a collective claim upon the land, which the speaker repeats at the end of each stanza: "This land was made for you and me." The claim to collective ownership brings with it a variety of rights and benefits: the ability to move freely by describing the land itself as "free," abundant resources, and, aesthetic appreciation of the natural world. We might see here a clear resonance with the virtues outlined in the opening preamble of the Declaration of Independence: life (resources), liberty (free movement and land), and the pursuit of happiness (aesthetic appreciation). Yet in its very appeal to a kind of naturalized ownership that hearkens back to the founding principles of U.S. nationhood, "This Land is Your Land" returns to the gestures and logic of European explorers in the New World. These settler-colonialists claimed dominion over all they could see and seized land that they chose to describe as "free" despite evidence to the contrary. In listing the many features of the U.S. landscape—the Redwood Forests, deserts, Gulf Stream, the island of Manhattan—"This Land is Your Land" enacts an imaginative journey across the nation that recapitulates Manifest Destiny in its heavy emphasis upon the nation's various coasts. On the one hand, then, the song insists upon a universalized version of national sovereignty based upon the land by repeating a history of dispossession. Yet, though he wanders across landscapes that should be heavily populated—the nation's highways, for instance—Guthrie's speaker encounters no other human beings. Like Charles Sheeler's hauntingly de-populated paintings of Ford's River Rouge factory plant, the image of the nation presented in Guthrie's ballad is eerily uninhabited.

The human emptiness at the heart of "This Land is Your Land" is supplemented by the angry evacuation of the promises of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" in the stanza that closed the original version of the song in 1940 before being rewritten later. Just after flagrantly ignoring a sign that warned "private property" and reveling in the open expanse of wheat fields, "in the shadow of the steeple/By the Relief Office I saw my people – /As they stood hungry, I stood there wondering if/This land was made for you and me." This final strophe indicts both religious and government institutions—the steeple and the Relief Office—for failing to furnish the hungry masses with the plenitude and fecundity implied by the wheat fields the speaker has just experienced. Moreover, in ending with a question rather than a declarative statement, the speaker interrogates the very basis of nationalist expansion by noting that its logical conclusion leads to a power structure concentrated in the hands of the few while the many starve. What begins as an ostensible celebration of all that the American landscape readily offers ends as a lamentation for the restrictions and deprivations those who inhabit the United States place upon their peers. The land as nationalist symbol ultimately divides rather than unifies.

I find a similar, and equally unexpected, tendency to lament, rather than celebrate, in the various works that comprise my study of post-frontier U.S. nationalism. Faced with a striated nationalist scene and the recurring question of the United States and its population's relationship to other national entities thrown into relief by a series of imperial conflicts—the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, Vietnam, and the Cold War, for instance—the works that comprise my archive return to the arrival of Europeans in the Americas as an attempt to negotiate and mediate the various meanings of U.S. belonging throughout the twentieth century. But like Guthrie's song, rather than solace, these artifacts find a series of defeats, displacements, and losses. What makes these texts' enumeration of disappointment so surprising is that each text,

object, mission, and museum I consider was tacitly or explicitly supported by the U.S. government. Indeed, state support is often the reason for their success as iconic narratives of twentieth-century U.S. nationalism. This shared sense of failure rooted in the arrival of Europeans in the New World has led me to designate these artifacts as part of a common genre that I call "conquest narratives" as a shorthand for the various expository accounts of New World exploration that they reprint, adapt, or return to. In considering conquest narratives as a specific genre that recurs across time, I follow Frederick Jameson's claim that genres encode within themselves the ideologies of the moments in which they were formed and redeployed. Jameson calls this process "formal sedimentation":

> What this model implies is that in its emergent, strong form a genre is essentially a socio-symbolic message, or in other terms, that form is immanently and intrinsically an ideology in its own right. When such forms are reappropriated and refashioned in quite different social and cultural contexts, this message persists and must be functionally reckoned into a new form. (*The Political Unconscious* 141)

In returning to the arrival of Europeans in the New World during the Renaissance and the accounts of intercultural contact and exploration these Europeans sent back to Europe, the works in my archive bring with them the specter of the ideologies of imperialism and nation building to which this genre initially contributed. Such resonances frequently belie the programmatic aims to which they were put by the state. The connections between the two periods and geographical areas—fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth-century Europe and the twentieth-century U.S.—do more than suggest a continuity or progress across time. Instead, I borrow the idea of "temporal

accumulation," an atavistic and non-linear version of history, from Ian Baucom.[1] In tracing the intensification of twentieth-century finance capital as an accumulation of tendencies that emerged two centuries earlier, Baucom argues against those who describe late-stage capitalism as qualitatively and quantitatively different from what has come before. Instead, he writes that the "historical peculiarity" of the present is "a moment of repetition, a moment in which the past returns to the present in expanded form, a moment in which present time finds stored and accumulated within itself a nonsynchronous array of past times" (29). Like Baucom's catalog of objects and texts that show the specular and spectacularized workings of finance capital as based in eighteenth-century slavery, I, too, allege that the texts I analyze are haunted by the gestures and features of early accounts of settler-colonialism in the New World, by primitive accumulation, in other words. These accounts cannot be disentangled or understood outside of the rise of capital in the Americas. *After Destiny* thus participates in the turn to regionalist policies as test cases for imperial ambitions (Stecopoulos 14–16) as well as the recent insistence on the part of postcolonial critics such as Baucom and Mahmood Mamdani as well as geographers such as Ruth Wilson Gilmore, David Harvey, and many others, on the inseparability of imperialism from the rise of global capital. The emergence and re-emergence of conquest narratives, though, also has a historical dimension: the use of movable type in the printing press, an invention that preceded Columbus's first voyage by only a few decades, parallels the development of facsimile technology. Rising literacy rates and methods of literary consumption serve as one pole that defines my recurring social situation, but so too does the building of empire, the financial ideologies that facilitate that empire, and the use of a variety of texts to support nascent imperial power.

[1] Baucom himself bases the concept upon Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* and Jameson's *The Political Unconscious*.

Instead of the narrative of progress so favored by official national institutions in the United States—one buttressed by the very concept of the frontier *line* itself—I find instead a compulsive recursivity, one that does not so much move forward as become compounded. I open my study in 1893 at the Columbian Quadricentennial festivities in the Chicago World's Fair and the site where Frederick Jackson Turner delivered his frontier thesis. I find here an uncanny doubling: the celebration of the mythological origin of a European presence in the New World at the same moment that very exploratory project is closed. The "historical crisis" that followed Turner's announcement (Slotkin 23) instigated a series of returns that reverberate throughout my project. These instances of nationalist renegotiation accumulate the tendencies of earlier times rather than resolving the questions of national cohesion at hand. Instead of new paradigms, then, I find a persistent attempt to posit the European conquest of the Americas as a foundational moment in the genealogy of the United States. The representations I study often turn to the more spectacular instances of this history: first contact, early glimpses of land, and the discovery of ancient cultures. In doing so, the project argues that these romantic returns to American occupation bite back. Rather than offering a resolution to fluctuations in the body politic, these prelapsarian retreats to the settler-colonial past give way to a version of U.S. state power forever dogged by the violences and valences that occurred at foundational moments of first contact. *After Destiny* shows that the ennui accompanying compulsive rehashings of settler-colonialist narratives and artifacts obfuscates and justifies the construction of a U.S. empire.

My decision to label an otherwise disparate set of texts "conquest narratives" has additional formal, historical, and ideological justifications. I base my definition of the genre upon a set of four facsimile reprints sold and distributed by the premier British antiquarian bookseller, Bernard Quaritch to which I return in my first chapter. Quaritch produced these facsimiles as

souvenirs for the 1893 Columbian Quadricentennial in Chicago and they include exact replications of the only extant copy of Christopher Columbus's Spanish letter back to Spain after his first voyage to the Americas (Columbus's "Spanish Letter"); the same letter written in Latin (the "Latin Letter"); a pamphlet that combined Amerigo Vespucci's various accounts of his trips to the New World (Vespucci's "First Four Voyages"); and Thomas Hariot's study of the peoples living in Virginia and its suitability for English colonization based upon his 1585 voyage to what became Roanoke, Virginia ("A Briefe and True Report"). Though in my first chapter I explore the facsimiles' place at the Chicago World's Fair and their relationship to Frederick Jackson Turner's delivery of his frontier thesis on the exposition grounds, here I will outline their contents and formal features as a way to further explicate the shared traits of the genre I call conquest narratives.[2] The popular and literary texts I consider all share three main traits: a conflation of the people living in the Americas with the land they inhabit, the dislocation of the Americas from linear Western time, and a haunting sense of loss.

**I. Genre**

In describing the indigenous groups living in the Americas, each of the four texts insist upon the natives' fundamental inability to mount a legitimate challenge to European land seizure. The three authors often assign this pugilistic naïveté to a perpetual state of infancy most commonly characterized by the natives' nudity and a related lack of understanding of the value of commodities. Columbus explains that the natives he meets in Guanahani wear no clothing at all, and perform their daily business "just as their mothers bring them forth." Indeed, Columbus goes to great pains in his Spanish letter to highlight the childish openness and ignorance of the

[2] In conducting my analysis, I have chosen to read the translation Quaritch provides for these texts, rather than seeking out other versions since these were the translations most easily available to the purchasers of these texts if they had chosen to read them. Since no translation was provided of the Latin letter, I have not included it in this section.

indigenous peoples in regards to their understanding of the relative value of commodities (Todorov 35). After noting that once they recovered from their timidity the natives were willing to give the Europeans any and all of their possessions, Columbus writes,

> it was the hap of a sailor to get, in exchange for a strap, gold to the weight of two and a half castellanos, and others much more for other things of far less value; while for new blancas they gave everything they had, even though it were [*the worth of*] two or three gold catellanos, or one or two arrobas of spun cotton. They took even pieces of broken barrel-hoops, and gave whatever they had, like senseless brutes; insomuch that it seemed to me ill. (13)

For Columbus, a lack of understanding of relative values marks the natives as bestial. Like animals or unschooled children, the natives are too simple-minded to mount a challenge to European settler-colonialism.

If indigenous groups play the infants to European adulthood, then the land follows a similar paradigm. Like the constantly unclothed natives, in all four of the texts the land is represented as endlessly pliant. This pliancy is often expressed in the land's fecundity, an aspect that contributes to the disordered temporality that three authors attribute to the Americas. Hariot claims that the plantation in Virginia yielded nearly three times as many bushels of wheat as the equivalent acreage would in England, and that the Carolina natives informed him that they sometimes made two, rather than one harvest, out of the same ground (24). Similarly, just before launching into his meditation upon indigenous behaviors and manners, Columbus writes, "Española is a marvel; the mountains and hills, and plains, and fields, and the soil, so beautiful and rich for planting and sowing, for breeding cattle of all sorts, for building of towns and villages. There could be no believing, without seeing, such harbors as are here, as well as the

many and great rivers, and excellent waters, most of which contain gold" (11). In shifting rapidly from an exegesis of the native landscape to the potential it holds for European settlement—the comment that the soil is good for the "building of towns and villages," for instance—Columbus suggests that the area lacks any manmade structures. Not only does this cast the soil as naked, like the people who inhabit it, it amplifies the notion that the islands boast no evidence of recognizable human civilization or culture. Columbus's movement back and forth from a description of the physical features of the islands he visited to the physical features and habits of the people inhabiting those islands, and back to the islands themselves, ties the people with the land itself, as though the two are coterminous (Jehlen 2–3).

Vespucci and Hariot prove even more insistent in this regard. Though Vespucci documents a great number of native settlements, like Columbus, he integrates his descriptions of the people with his description of the land such that the two bleed into one another. In addition, his emphasis upon the physical beauty and vigor of the indigenous peoples he encounters—he universally describes them as well-proportioned even if he dismisses their faces as unattractive, and says that the women are fertile, perform heavy labor even when pregnant, and easily give birth to multiple children without any change to their bodies—parallels his description of the land's agricultural plenitude and mineral deposits (10, 27). Indeed, Vespucci explicitly aligns native docility with the land's abundance when, after claiming that the natives traded 150 pearls for a small bell, he writes, "The soil abounds greatly with everything they need for subsistence, and the people [*were*] of polite behavior and the most pacific we had as yet met with" (27–28). Vespucci's phrasing here implies that the natives' "pacific" nature derives from the land's ample ability to meet their needs as much as it does upon their misunderstanding of relative value.

Similarly Hariot, the most scientific of the three authors, treats the natives in the same manner as the commodities he catalogues for his audience. Just as he taxonomizes the different flora, fauna, and animals in Virginia, remarking upon their traits, sizes, uses, and the different variations of each genus, so too, in his final section does he analyze the natives, breaking them down by position and gender, and detailing their appearance, behaviors, and role both pictorially and verbally. The similar treatment of the two entities thus suggests an allegiance between them and promises that a single governmental policy can effectively regulate both. Just as the natives will welcome European colonization, according to Hariot, so too will the land (Jehlen 3).

The insistence upon the land and people's mutual fertility contributes to the general sense of being outside of linear time that pervades the four narratives. In his account of his first voyage, Vespucci writes, "The land is very pleasant and fuitful [sic], full of immense woods and forests: and it is always green, for the foliage never drops off. The fruits are so many that they are numberless and entirely different from ours" (19). His claim, like Columbus's, that the flora and fauna appear unregulated by the seasons, constantly producing flowers and fruit, bolsters the notion that the Americas exist in a different temporality from Europe, failing to be regulated by the same seasons that afflict other countries. Likewise Hariot, though writing about North rather than South America, documents a similar immunity to the vicissitudes of seasonality, claiming that due to the temperate environment, colonists could arrive at any point in the year and still thrive (45). The Americas, then, according to these three authors proves Edenic not only because of its climate and beauty, but also because of its ability to escape the machinations of seasonality and temporality that govern European life.

Yet despite their various acts of possession—renaming the lands they inhabit, planting the Spanish or British standard—Hariot, Columbus, and Vespucci's behaviors all result in a

sense of physical absence or lack. Indeed as Kirsten Silva Gruesz writes, "[t]he tenor of New World writing is the language of loss" (6), and I follow her in suggesting that disappointment is these narratives' most salient generic trait. The explorers' apologies for failing to return to Europe with the copious gold, spices, and slaves they promised—indeed, with any material proof of the wonders they relate—is the most obvious manifestation of this sense of disappointment. For instance, in the final sentences of his Spanish letter, Columbus apologizes for not bringing back much of real value with him from the Americas by promising that he can do so on future voyages without incurring many costs for the Catholic sovereigns (17), promising to deliver upon goods he has not actually discovered in exchange for the "very little aid" he requires to retrieve them on future voyages. Through this locution, the letter itself comes to stand in for actual commodities and future expeditions. In this closing moment, Columbus exchanges a material failure for an epistemological gain: since he cannot furnish actual goods, he provides instead the knowledge he has acquired, contained in the letter itself, with the assurance that this knowledge will ultimately lead to great wealth. Emptiness comes to stand in here as promise with the letter as the true "treasure." Columbus's letter, in other words, transforms failure into a justification for future exploration and conquest.

The other two texts express a similar sense of disappointment, particularly in regards to a lack of material gains. Most explicitly, the volume dedicated to Vespucci ends with a failed voyage: though Vespucci's first three voyages are successful, his final one "was not carried out in accordance with the purpose I [*had*] formed, through a mishap which befel [sic] us in the gulf of the Atlantic Sea" (41). Though Vespucci claims to have seen many "marvellous" [sic] things, he does not specify whether he landed in the Americas or elsewhere: the most common

interpretation is that he briefly returned to lands near Bahia that he had already explored. Oddly, he concludes the narrative by refusing to elaborate on his discoveries:

> I saw so many things that I omit to tell them, reserving them for my 4 Giornate. This land lies 18 degrees south of the equinoctial line, and 37 degrees to the west of the longitude of Lisbon, as is demonstrated by our instruments. And all this being done, we took leave of the Christians and the land: and began our navigation to *nornodeste*, which is the wind between north and north-east, with the intention of making our navigation in a direct course to this city of Lisbon: and in 77 days, after so many travails and perils, we entered into this port on the 18 day of June 1504, God [*be*] praised. (44)

Vespucci's reluctance to provide any details from his journey proves the most poignant expression of his failed mission, for in doing so, he refrains even from claiming an epistemological victory. Indeed, the inclusion of this failed voyage in a volume with the other voyages, and in particular, its placement as the final statement upon Vespucci's travels, mars earlier promises of success, infusing the endeavor with the trace of infelicity.

The sense of ambivalence invoked by this ending also extends to the ways that Vespucci describes the outcomes of his battles with the natives. Though the most openly bellicose of the authors and the sole one willing to document his violent interactions, Vespucci's accounts of his skirmishes often include lamentations for the destruction he and his men have caused, as well as admissions of their own martial failings. During his first voyage, Vespucci explains that he and his men were deceived by a group of native women who pretended to be in mourning in order to distract the Europeans and open them to attack. In the battle that ensued,

> there were killed of them about 15 or 20, and many were left wounded: of ours 5 were wounded, and all, by the grace of God, escaped [*death*]: we captured two of the girls and two men: and we proceeded to their houses, and entered therein, and in them all we found nothing but two old women and a sick man: we took away from them many things, but of small value: and we would not burn their houses, because it seemed to us [as though that would be] a burden upon our conscience: and we returned to our boats with five prisoners: and betook ourselves to the ships, and put a pair of irons on the feet of each of the captives, except the girls: and when the night came on, the two girls and one of the men escaped in the most subtle manner possible. (15)

In addition to the sense of guilt manifest in Vespucci's admission that further acts of vengeance against the natives would weigh upon his conscience, the comment serves as a justification for his relatively empty-handed return to Spain.[3] Yet the very presence of this justification merely calls attention to Vespucci's uncorroborated claims of New World riches. The escape of his captives serves a similar purpose, undercutting the demonstration of military prowess and his insistence of European superiority.

Likewise, though Hariot seems to celebrate the Europeans' uncanny ability to leave a path of destruction in their wake, a sense of failure also haunts his narrative since his recommendations provided the basis for the failed Roanoke colony. Hariot's closing prediction proved an ominous one:

> If that those which shall thither trauaile to inhabite and plant bee but reasonably prouided for the first yere as those are which were transported the last, and beeing

[3] Though these lamentations are less extreme than the more famous ones of Bernal Díaz, they are nonetheless similar in kind, if not in intensity.

> there doe vse but that diligence and care as is requisite, and as they may with eease: There is no doubt but for the time following they have haue victuals that is excellent good and plentie enough; … And in short time also they may raise of those sortes of commodities which I haue spoken of as shall both enrich them selues, as also others that shall deale with them (45–46).

Instead of financial success, the colonists who left for Virginia to carry out Hariot's suggestions disappeared, presumably killed by the very "docile" natives Hariot describes in such detail.

These characteristics extend to the early-American texts reprinted in Quaritch's wake. Largely epistolary, these facsimiles and reprints almost universally describe Native Americans as passive and ripe for suppression, promise endless New World bounty, and apologize for the lack of material evidence, such as gold and slaves, to corroborate their grandiose claims. In those cases where authors report skirmishes, they often lament the destruction they have caused to indigenous peoples and their homes. In other words, in addition to the geographical and temporal dimensions of these texts, these narratives' plots are often built out of a series of losses, disappointments, or failures. Such representations of the European conquest of the Americas and the United States conquest of the continent smack of what anthropologist Renato Rosaldo has dubbed "imperialist nostalgia," a phenomenon whereby agents of colonialism such as governmental and religious officials, yearn for the very cultures they had a hand in destroying (107–108). The same can be said of Turner's essay, which announced the closing of the frontier only to memorialize it as the key crucible of United States identity. The recent results of wars between Native American groups and the U.S. government provided a material reminder of the dangers of U.S. settler-colonial expansion (Trachtenberg 12). The ethnographic displays of

Native Americans that populated the anthropological exhibits at the Fair thus served, ironically, as emblems of all that had been lost.

As I hope to show in the remainder of my dissertation, these three traits—the attribution of human characteristics to the physical landscape and vice-versa, the creation of non-linear temporalities to describe the workings of life in the Americas, and an unshakable sense of failure—recur throughout the works in my archive whenever these texts return to the presence of Europeans in the Americas as a way to build nationalist sentiment. These features, and the constant attribution of their genesis to the conquest of the Americas, serve to ground my archive as I explicate a version of nationalism that I see uniquely articulated in the texts that follow: a nationalism based in the land as a unifying gesture that, in dialectical fashion, ultimately undermines unity, rather than solidifying it. If the phrase "conquest of the Americas" itself is designed to indicate a certain amount of closure—the conquest is finished and resistance futile—then my dissertation testifies to the very porousness of such closed interpretations of the meaning of European settler-colonialism in the New World.

In its focus upon nostalgic conquest narratives rife with the language of loss, the project contends that anxieties about the sustainability of imperial expansion obtain throughout the century in the precise moments when the nation most asserts itself as a world power. In doing so, the project argues that these romantic returns to American occupation bite back. Rather than offering a resolution to fluctuations in the body politic, these prelapsarian retreats to the settler-colonial past give way to a version of U.S. state power forever dogged by the violences and valences that occurred at foundational moments of first contact. *After Destiny* shows that the ennui accompanying compulsive rehashings of settler-colonialist narratives and artifacts obfuscates and justifies the construction of a U.S. empire. By focusing upon iconic, often tragic

figures such as the American underdog or the self-made man whose fate is tethered to conquest as a national origin point, these melancholy tales naturalize pathos such that the production of an imperial nation comes to seem continuous with principles of U.S. democracy and nationhood. Failure in these instances proves multi-faceted: it registers persistent doubts about the foundations and future of the American experiment even as it provides a rallying call to recuperate that very experiment itself. Simultaneously utopian and fatalistic, sublime and banal, failure suggests itself both as the source of and resolution to crisis in the works that comprise my archive.

**II. Chapter breakdown**

In each chapter, *After Destiny* shows that the multivalent and widespread appeal of narratives of settler-colonialism in the twentieth century is articulated through their flaws. Chapter one, "The Republication of Letters: Consumer Nationalism in 1893," examines the first use of facsimile-reprinting technology for a mass audience in souvenir copies of conquest narratives produced for the 1893 World's Fair. As "exact" reproductions of materials owned by figures like J. Pierpont Morgan, the pamphlets maintain an aura that belies their mechanically reproduced nature. This first case study contends that the facsimiles and Turner's frontier thesis promote a version of U.S. nationalism grounded in the physical land of the United States that individuals could participate in by purchasing commodities. Yet the artifacts' mournful register as well as the participatory nature of consumer culture produces a double-edged democratic ethos. The documents task an increasingly diverse and distanced population with resolving the lapses of iconic explorers, positing collectivity as a solution to atomized failure. This stake in failure as an opportunity for cooperation, though, risks non-canonical reinterpretations and uses.

Failure thereby becomes both the justification for revisiting these foundational scenes and the greatest challenge to their continued consequence.

The second chapter continues the theme of sites of mass culture to examine the curatorial practices at play at the Alamo, which the Daughters of the Republic of Texas purchased in 1905 and subsequently converted into a museum. By exploring the roles of sacrifice and innocence dramatized in the space, I argue that the Alamo has become a fungible symbol of nationalist unity despite the exclusions at its core. These exclusions are particularly important in the Alamo shrine, the chapel on the Alamo plaza where the DRT (erroneously) suggests many of the soldiers fighting for Texas independence perished during the battle. A sense of sublimity within the mission building obtains through a vacillation between insuperable losses, including those to indigenous peoples, and the persistent evidence of these groups survival. Sublimity, in other words, in the Alamo shrine ultimately depends on its opposite.

The following three chapters return to the question of reprinting to ask why, at the precise moment when the United States had solidified its status as the world's last democratic superpower, did readers curl up with origin stories of defeat, displacement, and loss? The chapters draw upon the growing body of work investigating the covert CIA promotion of artistic culture during the Cold War to take up the state-sponsored republication of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*, and the essays collected in *In The American Grain* by William Carlos Williams. Chapter 3, "'Can't Repeat the Past?': *Gatsby* and the American Dream at Mid-Century" uses Ernst Bloch's theory of hope as a formation that depends upon crisis to analyze *The Great Gatsby*'s republication alongside the historical emergence of the term "American Dream" during the Great Depression. Within this context, the ideological concept of the American Dream responded to a sense of collective national failure

that could be traced back to the conquest of the Americas. Arguing that Cold War audiences frequently conflated this postlapsarian interpretation of the American Dream with the text itself, the chapter demonstrates that a version of the American Dream that embeds a sense of doubt catalyzed the novel's fame. As in the first chapter, that Gatsby's fatal end hastens the novel towards its recursive climax casts loss as egress, recuperation, and curse. Chapters 4 and 5 turn more definitively to issues of subterfuge by considering the covert CIA support of *In the American Grain* and *Absalom, Absalom!* during the Cold War. The chapters adopt the idea of literary ambassadorship to argue that the works' framing in the second half of the twentieth century creates a homology between cultural and economic imperialism that provided a literary corollary to CIA initiatives abroad. Yet the failures that haunt the texts disrupt these institutional aims even as the works' pathos solidified their place in the canon. If the texts' remediation successfully blurred the programmatic aspects of the CIA's aims, it also amplified their melancholic tenor to such a degree that they became unreliable American ambassadors.

The final chapter provides a punctuation mark, at least temporarily, on the question of failure and imperialist nationalism. "We Come in Peace" pairs the footage and documentation of the *Apollo 11* mission with the original *Star Trek* series (1966-1969) to suggest that the programs cast space flight, commonly read as triumphant, in bathetic terms. Despite claims that space exploration represents the ascendancy of American verve and intrepid machismo, the broadcasts sardonically duplicate the gestures of conquest established by Spanish conquistadors in the 15$^{th}$ and 16$^{th}$ centuries. In both cases, travel to the final frontier only yields what has already been discovered. Though pathos here presents American settler-colonialism and its future extensions as inevitably compulsive and sometimes buffoonish, the haunting presence of insuperable losses augments the programs' emotional salience even if it interrupts state ambitions.

Taken together, my dissertation traces an arc from the reanimation of the figure of the conqueror in 1893 to its collapse in 1969. I do so, though, not to suggest an inevitable decline, but rather to follow the compulsive repetitions that mark post-frontier U.S. nationalism.

## Chapter 1: The Republication of Letters: Consumer Nationalism in 1893

In 1893, the renowned London bookseller Bernard Quaritch produced a number of "cheap editions" of facsimiles of four early American texts followed by translations of the documents he commissioned at the suggestion of William Curtis, chief of the Government Department of the Columbian Exposition: Columbus's Spanish letter (1493); Columbus's Latin letter (1493); Vespucci's "First Four Voyages" (1505); and Theodor De Bry's 1590 version of "Hariot's Relation of the First Settlement in Virginia" ("Catalogue of Interesting Books Relating to Games, Sports, Music, Cookery, Exercises, Offered at the Net Prices Affixed - Google Books" x).[4] Though technically independent of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair itself, the books were likely sold alongside other souvenirs in the Midway Plaisance, a thoroughfare housed on the Fair grounds, included in all official guides to the Fair, and a favorite of visitors even if purportedly a space apart. Likewise, local and national newspapers and magazines touted the pamphlets before and after the Fair as a boon to visitors and "literary men" of all ilk ("Catalogue of Interesting Books Relating to Games, Sports, Music, Cookery, Exercises, Offered at the Net Prices Affixed - Google Books" x). For between thirty and seventy-five cents, the equivalent of about ten to twenty dollars in contemporary currency (Williamson 97, footnote), fair attendees could own mass-produced but nonetheless exact reproductions of the letters documenting what Tzvetan Todorov calls "the most astonishing encounter of our history" (4).[5]

---

[4] Advertisement from *Home Journal*, March 29th, 1893. These kinds of mass-produced souvenir attachments were a characteristic of the Chicago World's Fair as well as others. The Post Office, for instance, produced their first commemorative stamps for the occasion, a practice they repeated for subsequent Expositions. For more on the Post Office's relationship to the World's Fairs see Handler article. For the remainder of this chapter, I'll continue to use the relatively unconventional spelling of Hariot's name with one "r" since this is the way Quaritch spelled it.

[5] Around 1893, the average national income is estimated at $800. The sum would have been the equivalent of a little over $20,000 in contemporary currency and meant that the editions would have been an affordable luxury for many of the fair attendees.

Quaritch's editions capitalized on the visual qualities of the spectacle for which they were produced. Mimicking the act of display that structured the Fair itself, the editions nearly beg to be displayed by owners. Small quarto-sized, or about eight to ten inches in height, the pamphlets were larger than standard hardcovers: their dimensions, much like their ornate images and binding demanded an audience. The content of the series also distinguished them from more mundane mass-produced volumes. The editions included a facsimile of the only extant copy of the Spanish letter Christopher Columbus wrote to Luis de Santangel. Quaritch had discovered the epistle in a French library in 1889 and sold it to the Lenox library in New York City in 1892 amid much fanfare. The facsimile form, in its appeal to authenticity, traded upon the fame of this venture, luring in buyers with the promise of an exact replica of the very documents that announced European explorers arrival in the Americas in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Though such editions may initially seem inconsequential, rapidly rising literacy rates after the end of the Civil War meant that the written word, particularly in the guise of printed books, became a way to signal one's participation in a national project as well as one's membership in the professional classes (Radway and Kaestle 8). Quaritch's savvy business strategies paid off: those conquistadors whose legacy he curated quickly became canonical, often serving in collections as the sole representatives of their type.[6] Though they did not publish in facsimile, when Harvard University Professors of American History Albert Bushnell Hart and Edward Channing began publication of their "American History Leaflets" series, they drew largely upon Quaritch's translations of Columbus and Vespucci in the "Narratives of the Discoverers of America" series Quaritch produced for the 1893 World's Fair. Beginning in 1896 and continuing throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, Hart and Channing became

[6] Such examples of mass consumption were encouraged by the fairs themselves, and most likely contributed to Quaritch's influence (Rydell 2).

known as innovators in the realm of historical study by calling for a return to primary documents—that is *reprints* of primary documents. Like Quaritch, Hart and Channing produced their editions en masse and priced them for a broad audience. At only ten cents a copy, the equivalent of just under three dollars today, nearly anyone could own a piece of U.S. history. This publishing history suggests that Quaritch's project had broad implications beyond the World's Columbian Exposition itself and testifies to the canon's utility as a commodity form *and* a technology of national disciplining.

Frederick Jackson Turner also sold a version of American exploration as nation-building at the World's Fair. Turner first delivered his essay "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" on the Exposition grounds, publishing it the following year. In his paper, Turner presents an atavistic vision of the frontier, one that hearkens back to the very moment of conquest Quaritch's editions document. Like these predecessors, in his paper Turner aligns national character with the land itself and insists that the American frontier exists apart from linear Western time. Indeed, while Turner famously presents a progressive view of the frontier, and thus of U.S. history, he sees the frontier as a set of civilizing practices that recur with each movement beyond the current limit of U.S. and European exploration. New settlers constantly reenact previous actions, returning repeatedly to the condition of the "savage," wrestling with the elements before regaining their technological prowess in subsequent generations.[7] In a

[7] In regards to Quaritch's reprints, though Hariot's narrative takes place on land that would ultimately comprise a part of the continental United States, I'd like to suggest that the marketing of these facsimiles to a U.S. audience, as well as the setting of the World's Fair itself, makes the Americas and the United States coterminous in these instances. However, for the remainder of this chapter, I will use the term "Americas" and "American" to refer to movements and events in the Americas as a whole, and "United States" when specifically referring to that geo-political entity. In addition, I follow Pauline Turner Strong's terminological distinctions and her justification for it in regards to Native Americans: "As the Anishinaabe and 'crossblood' scholar Gerald Vizenor has pointed out, 'the *indian* is an occidental misnomer, an overseas enactment

Darwinian version of development also on display at the Fair itself, each group of pioneers, in other words, must first approximate the position of the native, working his way through the various stages of modernization before emerging as a modern, U.S. man. This process defines the American experience for Turner and distinguishes the U.S. from Europe. Like Quaritch's editions, Turner tracks this recursive development through a variety of *objects* and the commodification of natural resources and knowledge: the pioneer's essence is as much a function of his behaviors, beliefs, ethnic and national identity as the ways he exhibits this identity through his clothing and the technologies he uses to clear his land. Despite his ostensible dismissal of the race question, Turner's emphasis upon the frontier as a space whose amalgamating qualities can be traced through material objects distinguishes him from contemporaries like Theodore Roosevelt. Instead, they explicitly align him with the Exposition's guiding principles and Quaritch's manipulations of its consumerist tendencies.[8]

The Fair used artifacts like the ones considered to suggest that participation in a national project of expansion and civilization could be documented through the possession and exhibition of certain objects and commodities. This strategy was designed to pacify and contain an increasingly fractured and restless populace (Rydell 2; Trachtenberg). After all, Turner delivered his frontier thesis and Quaritch sold his facsimiles in the midst of a series of financial crises, labor uprisings, and widespread racial unrest. As meditations upon the historical inevitability of European domination of North America, Quaritch's reprints and Turner's frontier thesis participate in Fair organizers' attempt to "alleviate the intense and widespread anxiety that

---

that has no referent to dominance' (1999: viii). Accordingly, … [I] reserv[e] the term 'Indian' … for representations, and us[e] tribal designations or the collective terms 'Native' and 'Native American' to refer to indigenous people themselves." (Strong, "Representational Practices" 342)

[8] While it seems illogical, in this essay Turner did not see individualism and community as diametrically opposed. Instead, he envisioned the frontier as coalescing a community of individuals.

pervaded the United States" by "offer[ing] millions of fairgoers an opportunity to reaffirm their collective national identity" (Rydell 4). The key to this reaffirmation, according to Turner's paper and Quaritch's facsimiles, lies in the exhibition of objects that indicate one's connection and fealty to a *reproducible* national history that can be traced back to the origins of Europeans in the New World.

## I. Turn of the Century Consumerism and the Chicago World's Fair

### A. Book Collecting

As scholars from Allan Trachtenberg to Miles Orvell and Bill Brown have noted, the U.S. fin de siècle marked an acceleration in U.S. consumer society and in the desire for mass-produced consumer goods (Orvell; Brown). The construction of the text as a commodity that could signal a certain kind of cultural and national belonging was an integral part of this process. In some ways, these shifts were nothing new. By the time of the World's Fair in Chicago, narratives of America's discovery by Europeans and the United States' founding populate texts as diverse as the historical study and the emerging genre of science fiction. The writings of a small cast of characters including John Smith, Thomas Hariot, and Christopher Columbus, were popular throughout the nineteenth century, appearing in a number of edited volumes and early-American histories. Moreover, beginning in the 1860s, American book clubs reprinted, and when necessary translated, the works of figures as diverse as Thomas Morton, Samuel Champlain, and Sir Walter Raleigh, as well as excerpts from the Icelandic Sagas of Norsemen who travelled to Newfoundland beginning in the eighth century CE (Growoll). In addition to these more ubiquitous authors, in the wake of W. H. Prescott's publication of *The History of the Conquest of Mexico* in 1843, several publishers translated and reprinted Hernán Cortés and Bernal Díaz del Castillo's accounts of their battles with, and ultimate triumph over, the Aztecs, as well as the

letters of several other Spanish conquistadors such as Hernando de Soto.[9] Like Prescott's history, these narratives were reprinted again during and after the Mexican American War. Yet the circulation of such volumes remained relatively small, rarely comprising more than 250 volumes that were almost always pitched towards the highly educated and very wealthy.[10]

The thirst for the rare and authentic surged in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. American book collectors' clubs such as the Grolier Club and the Club of Odd Volumes sprang up during the 1880s, building vast networks of collectors with an appetite for rare books, especially Americana. In 1885, Quaritch himself translated and printed the text of Vespucci's letters describing his first four voyages to the Americas. In addition, in 1890 Bernard Alfred Quaritch, Bernard Quaritch's son, made his first trip to the United States during what Carl Cannon called the "golden age" of American book collecting, in the hopes of acquiring a stable U.S. market for the firm (L. A. Morris, "Bernard Alfred Quaritch in America" 180, note 1). As David McKitterick notes, during this period, the market for old volumes was decidedly historical and academic in character and linked to early accounts of European settler-colonialism in the New World (660).

Quaritch's use of facsimiles for popular consumption, though, alters the dynamics and cultural meanings of book collection. While advances in photographic technology in the late 1850s allowed publishers and printers to produce reliable facsimiles of notable manuscripts (McKitterick 648), Quaritch remains an early pioneer of the form. Unlike his American and

[9] See for instance Wiley and Putnam's 1843 translation and reprint of Cortés' letter to Charles V and Burt Franklin's reprints of several conquest narratives throughout the 1870s, 80s, and 90s in the "Old South Leaflets" series.

[10] (Growoll) My arrival at this figure is largely archival rather than scientific. I have seen no mention in Growoll's volume nor in any of the catalogues I have studied of more than 250 copies of any reprinted conquest narratives. Though it remains possible that a publisher did reprint conquest narratives en masse prior to Quaritch's facsimiles, I would expect there to be some evidence of such an endeavor.

British predecessors, who occasionally reprinted popular tales of intercultural contact (such as John Smith's treatises about his encounters with Pocahontas) and historical documents that related to United States warfare (like Cortés' accounts of the conquest of Mexico, which was reprinted during and after the Mexican-American War) Quaritch was the first to reprint such documents in facsimile for mass consumption.[11] Targeting a newly formed audience of middle-class collectors who could for the first time afford to accumulate what amounted to a private library (McKitterick 644), Quaritch produced both high-end and more mainstream versions of these editions, marketing them for an elite and popular audience, respectively.

The facsimile form as a mass-produced object, though, is distinct from other marketable commodities due to the ways the "exact copy" minimizes, and in some cases elides, the differences between the original and the reproduction. Such facsimile editions, in their appeal to authenticity and institutional authorization, provided owners with a way to display their knowledge of and connection to an early-American past while participating in the same official version of United States nationalism being writ large on the national sphere. Quaritch's particular methodology, and especially his fusion of aestheticism with mass marketing, set him apart from other booksellers. In contrast to those competitors and predecessors who also used the facsimile form, Quaritch distinguished himself by the number of facsimiles he produced as well as his target audience.[12] Unlike his high-end bookseller peers, with his 1893 facsimiles Quaritch

[11] With the exception of Thomas Hariot's "A Briefe and True Report" which the Holbein Society reprinted in facsimile in 1888 and a facsimile of Columbus's Latin letter by the Trustees of the Boston Public Library in 1891, I can find no other facsimile reprints of early American documents, whether for an elite or popular audience. Moreover, unlike his contemporaries, Quaritch not only produces the original letter in facsimile, but also provides a transcription of the facsimile *in the original language* while his peers merely provided translations of the facsimiles.
[12] While Quaritch's ledger during this period has apparently gone missing, circumstantial evidence suggests that Quaritch produced a great number of these editions. Many libraries in the United States and abroad have their own copies, and newspaper reports at the time attack a

appealed to a middle-class audience for the first time. Within months, Quaritch's facsimiles produced an explosion of copycats as United States publishers like Jordan Brothers located in Philadelphia, E. Brandus & Co. in New York, and W. H. Lowdermilk in Chicago rushed to produce their own facsimiles of early-American documents, reprinting from within Quaritch's corpus in nearly every case.[13]

**B. Window shopping at the World's Fair**

Quaritch's facsimiles' status as souvenirs highlights the volumes' commercial overtones, as well as their participation in a zeitgeist where commodity objects were used as a palliative for broader social concerns. National ills, after all, were myriad and pressing. By the time the Fair opened in May of 1893, the United States was in the midst of the most extreme financial panic of the young nation's history (Trachtenberg 211); Chicago was still reeling from the bombing and subsequent labor riots in Haymarket Square that left seven policemen and four workers dead seven years earlier (Foner and Paul Avrich Collection (Library of Congress) 29–30); and Pullman Workers were gearing to strike in 1894. Moreover, the official abolition of slavery during the Civil War and the end of the military occupation of the U.S. South due to the Compromise of 1877 led to a vigilante justice system that terrorized black Americans, most notably, but also a variety of white ethnic groups like peoples of Jewish, Italian, and Irish descent with the threat of lynching. Yet these dire events apparently did not deter the 27,529,400 adults and children who visited the Fair during the six months that it was open, a number that

---

variety of United States publishing houses for "stealing" Quaritch's facsimiles and reprinting them themselves. Due to their relatively affordable price, I assume that U.S. publishers would have little reason to produce their own editions of these facsimiles if they did not think there was a wide audience for them.

[13] The turnaround here is startling: this press trailed Quaritch by only a few months, an indication of the velocity with which ideas circulated in fin de siècle book publishing culture, particularly around the Chicago World's Fair.

correlates with nearly 44% of the total United States population according to the 1890 US census (Department of the Interior, Census office xi). Indeed the Fair was widely praised for its ability to mystify the cares outside its gates, thereby providing a refuge from the enervating pressures of industrialization and modernization. *Harper's* even called it "a work of surpassing grandeur which should not be permitted to pass away without having exerted to the widest extent its enlightening and elevating influences upon the living generation" (in (Rose "Reactions").

The intense promotion of consumerism at the Fair was intended to facilitate participants' ability to leave their cares at the Exposition gates. While earlier World's Fairs encouraged attendees to purchase souvenirs, the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago was unique in the degree to which consumerism and reproducibility was a structuring condition for the event.[14] In this context, souvenirs became a way to demonstrate presence at the Fair *and* participation in the narratives of national progress that the Fair organizers promoted (Trachtenberg 214). Keeping such a framework in the foreground provides new insight into the "ridiculous" choice of Chicago, a location thousands of miles from the site of Columbus's first landing, as the city chosen to commemorate the 400th anniversary of his landing (Rydell 41–42). Given the focus on a version of reproducibility indebted simultaneously to authenticity and interchangeability, Chicago is as good a location as any: just as the United States "claimed" Columbus in this moment, so too could visitors "claim" U.S. progress by purchasing those souvenir objects that represented technological and cultural advancement.

[14] The commodification of cultural objects was one of the main characteristics of the World's Fairs. As Rydell notes, "the promoters of these extravaganzas attempted to boost the economic development of the cities and regions in which they were held as well as to advance the material growth of the country at large. Fairs provided manufacturing and commercial interests with opportunities to promote the mass consumption of their products" (2).

The power of looking and of purchasing was, after all, one of the most important aspects of the Fair's design. The World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, like the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia before it, was indebted to the innovation of the department store in general and the window display in particular. John Wanamaker had founded Wanamaker's in Philadelphia in 1869 and, as one of the citizens responsible for bringing the Centennial celebrations to the city, he applied his merchandizing logic to that Exposition, converting a freight depot to the "Grand Depot," "a proto-department store larger than any store in the United States until that time, to which fair visitors flocked" (Handler 12). Just as the department store entices shoppers with clothing displays that encourage customers to equate clothing and accessories with a fantasy version of reality, so too did the Midway suggest that what one wears or how one styles oneself is largely compatible with who one is or what one does. This popular notion guided pedagogical principles as well as the logic of museums by the late-nineteenth century (Chicago Historical Society 62). To inhabit a different life, one only needed to purchase the right objects.

On the macro level, the intense focus on uniformity in terms of color and architectural style facilitated the conflation of external standardization with ideological and national progress. While Louis Sullivan might have bemoaned the Fair's traditional style, famously claiming that it set U.S. architecture back a generation, the Exposition's imperial register mediated the mechanized air uniformity lent to the White City, such that reproducibility was cast as a source of pride rather than anomie or cultural deliquescence and approximated the logic of the department store with its standardized displays and mass-produced abundance. The layout was, after all, entirely symmetrical and designed such that architectural style could unite buildings by location. This organizational schema, though, resulted in a geographical plotting whereby

external style had little to do with internal contents. Though in the Rand McNally *Handbook* to the Fair, Daniel Burnham explained that those buildings around the Grand Basin—which included the Art Building, but also the Machinery and Agricultural Buildings—were constructed in a "dignified" style, the buildings at the northern end of the grounds—the Horticultural, Transportation, and Fisheries—were "less formal" (Trachtenberg 213). There appears to be little obvious logic here in regards to style and commemoration: fishing, farming, and horticulture seem like a more obvious grouping, for instance. The Exposition's physical landscape maps style instead onto geographic placement, such that appearance locates a visitor in space rather than giving attendees a sense of what they will find inside the buildings themselves. When applied to Quaritch's facsimiles, this logic suggests that purchasing and then displaying certain souvenirs posits owners as participants in a project that grounds them within the landscape of the Americas itself, and more specifically, demonstrates their integration into the ideological modes promoted at the Fair.

Though described as a kind of fantasy space (Trachtenberg 213), the Midway Plaisance reflects this larger interest in external appearances. The site of the Fair's infamous ethnographic display as well as the Exposition's main commercial thoroughfare, the Midway performed the explicit conflation of cultural ownership with belonging that was obvious in the Fair itself. While walking through the Midway's ethnographic displays, fairgoers were encouraged to dabble in the kind of "objective" looking being professionalized by the nascent field of anthropology. In their emphasis upon what visitors could see, like the various buildings on the Fair grounds, the exhibits suggested that surface meanings either overlapped with deeper ones, or that the internal could be subordinated to the external. Moreover, like the Fair architecture, the exhibits themselves remained highly standardized. Though the societies and cultures represented differed

from display to display, the organization and logic of each remained hauntingly similar: non-Western groups from "exotic" locales performed rituals, wore their "traditional" clothing, and displayed various tools, objects, and wares, mostly for the production of an entertaining spectatorship rather than personal interaction. Cultural meanings were thereby cast as of primarily scopic value.

In addition to this intense emphasis upon the visual, the displays encouraged an evolutionary view of human culture and history that led visitors from images of savagery (represented mostly by indigenous and non-Western groups) to technological advancement (in the guise of Western nations, and the United States above all). Journalistic accounts, among others, encouraged just this trajectory through the Midway with reporter Denton Snider noting that "undoubtedly the best way of looking at these races is to behold them in ascending scale, in the progressive movement.... In that way we move in harmony with the thought of evolution" (Slotkin 64–65). The implication here is that visitors could watch human history unfold as a linear, and predictable, path that could easily be gleaned through the sheer act of looking. The presence of concession stands just alongside these displays suggested also that viewers could participate in this demonstration of U.S. progress by purchasing mass-produced objects, including medals and diplomas, along with other commodity objects that would serve to document one's understanding of the story of Columbus and the evolutionary process he apparently inaugurated (Handler 11).

**C. Souvenirs and Mechanical Reproduction**

The question of mechanical reproduction and authenticity lay at the heart of issues of consumerism, display, and national participation at the World's Columbian Exposition. The various souvenirs sold at and alongside the Fair were all "exact" copies of each other, and, as

was the case of Quaritch's facsimiles, periodically copies of other famous documents. Yet rather than initiating a process of devaluation conformity instead testified to technological, and specifically, mechanical advances. Those who purchased Quaritch's copy of Columbus's Spanish and Latin letters could bring their facsimiles with them to La Rabida on the Fair grounds where the *actual* letters were on exhibit. This process allowed for two distinct kinds of amazement. Those at the Fair who owned Quaritch's facsimiles or planned to own them could marvel first at the opportunity to possess an identical version of this culturally valuable text *and* at the technological feat that had made such fidelity to an original possible (Chicago Historical Society 66). In the context of the Fair, the endless parade of commodities, each item in a group of objects apparently indistinguishable from the others of its type, connoted not despair and ennui at the debasement of human ingenuity and individuality, but rather a kind of democratic participation in national events and evidence of the innate superiority of white society.

In their official connection to vaunted and totemized early-American texts, Quaritch's facsimiles thereby managed to maintain their aura in a Benjaminian sense despite being mechanically reproduced. While the facsimiles might have lacked the imprint of human touch, the notion of the art object as a unique creative act remains somewhat intact: after all, for the first time in human history, Quaritch had made identical reproductions of famous documents available to a broad audience. Though the facsimiles might have quickly lost this aura once brought home from the Fair itself—a process accelerated by the many copycats who imitated Quaritch's methods—there is much to suggest that aura nonetheless remained operative, if only for a short time. Indeed, in addition to emblematizing a feat of human innovation, in their connection to the World's Fair itself, the facsimiles maintain a sense of place that serves to suture these famous accounts of apparently heroic settler-colonialism in the New World to the

nation itself. The editions, even at home, retain the aura of the great Fair itself, an aura that survives as we now know, from the fact that such artifacts continue to have monetary value. Some of this aura, both now and at the time had to do with the volumes' connection to the rare and precious. After all, in the front matter to and advertisements for Columbus's Spanish Letter, Quaritch repeatedly referenced the fact that the only extant copy was held in the Lenox Library. These references not only locate Columbus and his legacy within the United Sates, they also mean that the history of ownership is never entirely erased by mechanical reproduction.

**II. Quaritch's facsimiles**

The maintenance of this aura has much to do with the way that the volumes look. The group's physical characteristics and their ornamentation establish them as collectible and commodity objects, designed to be viewed more so than read. Each volume of Quaritch's "Narratives of the Discoverers of America" is set almost identically, with various imprints, advertisements, and a standardized format that appear in the same order in each installation. The volumes are all bound in stiff paper, rather than leather, which doubles as the title page. On the backside of this title page, Quaritch prints a number of advertisements for books produced by William Morris's Kelmscott press and sold through Quaritch's shop. Morris, the father of the fin-de-siècle Arts and Crafts movement, an aesthetic philosophy guided by a return to traditional craftsmanship as well as folk and medieval forms, was closely linked to Quaritch, who was the primary seller of Kelmscott press books until the pair had a falling out in the late 1890s. Facing these advertisements, Quaritch reprints the title page, followed by a stand-in for the copyright page listing the London printer of the editions. The facsimile of the original text appears after the introduction, followed, in the case of Columbus's Spanish letter, by a roman-type transcription of the facsimile. Both Vespucci's text and Columbus's Spanish letter include a translation of the

original text. The volumes close with an advertisement for reproductions of two maps from Baron Nordenskjöld's "Great Atlas": one in facsimile, another a reprint using letterpress. This reference to the first explorer to travel by ship from Scandinavia to Alaska through the Northeast Passage in 1878 explicitly links early European exploration of the Americas to westward expansion and the frontier. Moreover, the presence of the advertisement at the volumes' conclusion aligns European exploration with its print documentation by suggesting that great acts become great only when codified by the printed word and distributed. Turner repeats this archival tendency when he implies that the significance of the frontier lies in its relationship to history as an academic subject, when, to put it differently, it is made an explicit rather than implicit narrative. Finally, the back covers all include a general advertisement for Quaritch's "Narratives of the Discoverers of America" series sold at the World's Fair, listing descriptions of each object and its price.

The editions' composition and paratexts bind them together as a group of objects that by their very physical characteristics testify to their owners' sense of evolutionary and racial national development and progress. Exploration and settler-colonialism catalyze this sense of progress. The volumes' identical size, front and back matter, format, and the materials used in their binding quickly establishes their common cause, just as the advertisement on the back page reminds potential purchasers that there are other parts to this series. The notion of the series itself "is constructed out of modern conceptions of homogenous time and space combined with the idea of a species, a set of objects which in their essence are of the same kind. A series is a sequence of like objects. Sequentiality can be imagined in time or in space, or in both at once. Temporal sequentiality implies (in the modern world view) progress, since enumerated time moves only in one direction, earlier to later or lower to higher" (Handler 14). In creating a series,

rather than a set of loosely connected souvenirs, Quaritch's editions have two simultaneous implications. First, they locate the arrival of Europeans in a New World as the first in a series of civilizing acts that ultimately led to U.S. nationhood. Second, and relatedly, they further note that the very notions of progress being celebrated at the Fair itself are both operative within the volumes themselves and the technology that produces them, and by extension, Western progress. Finally, each individual book within the group announces itself as a commodity object intended mostly for display. In advertising at the start and end of the texts—indeed, in advertising for the objects themselves *on* the objects themselves—Quaritch's shop reminds readers that in addition to the ideological and cultural work the books do, they are for sale in much the same way that other objects, such as household knickknacks, are for sale.

Though more oblique, the repeated references made to Morris amplify the designation of the facsimiles as public and visual objects first, and private, contemplative, written documents second. A devout socialist, Morris claimed that he founded the Kelmscott press in order to avoid the pressures of capitalism upon the publishing industry, positioning the market as antithetical to art. In an address to the Bibliographical Society of London in 1893, Morris opened by riffing upon the l'art pour art movement in his discussion of the "Ideal Book" as an object unconstrained by the forces of commercialism. Advocating for wide margins and broad typesetting, in his address as well as the other essays collected in *The Art and Craft of Printing*, Morris and his acolytes railed against the economic imperatives that led publishers to cram as much text as possible upon a single page without thought for readability or beauty. Despite these heady aims, Morris' devotion to books as art objects meant that he often prioritized ornamentation and aesthetics over content, thereby fueling the very commodity-driven market he claimed to disdain. His versions of medieval romances, for instance, are printed in a gothic

typeface so intricate as to render the words themselves almost unreadable (University of Missouri-Kansas City Libraries).

Indeed the question of readability dogs Quaritch's facsimiles, not only because of the typesetting—a medieval font that had largely been displaced by more legible styles—but also due to translation: of the facsimiles, only Hariot's text was originally written in English. Many of those who purchased Quaritch's series would therefore have been unable to read the *original* Spanish, Latin, and Italian texts, font and typesetting aside. Indeed, unlike any of the other editions, in his facsimile of Columbus's Spanish letter, Quaritch reproduces the facsimile and its translation along with a roman-type transcription of the letter *in Spanish*. In contrast, Quaritch's Latin letter contains only the facsimile of the Latin letter itself without any translation or transcription. Such formal decisions suggest that the objects' value lay primarily in their visual closeness to the original. Reproduction in this context therefore becomes an entirely literal, rather than figurative process, one that carries meaning scopically.

In addition to the visuality of the typesetting itself, both Vespucci's "Four Voyages" and Hariot's text are highly ornamental, complete with elaborate illustrations and medieval lettering (images 1 and 2). In addition to a decorative heading and ending for each section of Hariot's treatise, the work reproduces de Bry's twenty-eight full-page woodcuts of the Carolina Indians (47). Nearly all of these images show the natives from the front and behind, a pose that delivered the maximum amount of information to viewers (images 3 and 4). In this manner, the illustrations serve less as representations of individuals than of scientific specimens. The captions that accompany the woodcuts follow suit, referring to the models featured not by names, but rather by station and type. Hariot's "report" thus taxonomizes not just the flora and fauna found in Virginia, but the people who inhabit the land as well. This taxonomic gaze objectifies

native bodies in a way hauntingly similar to the kinds of "objective" and pseudo-scientific gaze on display at the Fair's ethnographic exhibits (Berkhofer 18).

In keeping with these displays, the scientific gaze domesticated native practices and populations and incorporated them into a Western narrative of progress. De Bry's engravers worked from a series of watercolors created by John White during his time in Virginia. In their translation from one medium to the other, the members of De Bry's shop altered the natives' poses and bodies to make them comply with classical proportions and standards of beauty (Berkhofer 18) such that the Carolina Indians became "unmistakably European, however strange their hair styles and painted ornaments" (Honour 70). Such gestures extend to the images of the natives themselves who are all perfectly proportioned and elaborately modeled—often with Grecian-style draped clothing. These images of the Carolina natives, then, are simultaneously familiar and different, presented as specimens, and yet depicted in a recognizable visual style that allowed for integration into pre-existing patterns, one largely repeated at the Fair. The book ends with a series of illustrations of the "Pictes," the early inhabitants of Britain prior to the Roman conquest. Though only presented from the front, the images of the Pictes are nonetheless similarly proportioned, and at one point, explicitly compared to the native Virginians (images 5 and 6). This strategy thus visually aligns the native Virginias with an earlier time in European history suggesting a shared genealogical lineage that casts Europeans as inheritors in blood—not just in fact—of the American landscape. Despite the objective gaze that the text purports to take, this affiliation between the Pictes and Native Americans recuperates Indians, if only by proxy, into the same ancestral line as Anglo-American citizens of the U.S. The section's closing thereby rhymes with its opening frontispiece of a highly classicized illustration of Adam and Eve tempted by the tree of the knowledge, an inclusion that integrates indigenous cultural patterns

with European cosmological history (Berkhofer 34–35). Similarly, the images in Vespucci's "Four Voyages" combine disparate iconographic styles and present scenes of native savagery such that Europeans are presented as simultaneously the inheritors of indigenous lands and representatives of human progress.

In providing a set of stable iconographic and ornamental gestures, Quaritch's facsimiles serve as repositories for many of the nationalists ideals promoted by the Exposition organizers. Like the various displays at the Fair—including, but not limited to the exhibitions in the Midway—the facsimiles' attention to ornamentation and surface externalizes cultural practices such that possession of certain objects becomes synonymous with participation in a particular national or social project. Moreover, due to their illustrations, Quaritch's pamphlets largely recapitulate the Exposition's implicit (and sometimes explicit) association of progress with peoples of European descent and settler-colonialism, both in the New World and elsewhere. Yet despite their mass-reproduced nature, these facsimiles manage to maintain some of their aura, value, and cultural status. References to Morris and Quaritch's other associates and clients helped to solidify this status, but so do the facsimiles' position as the "first" of their particular kind. More significantly, though, the four narratives build their aura by maintaining a degree of authenticity and relationship to the physical land of the United States and its pre-history that belies their mass-produced nature. In doing so, the editions promote the notion—a large part of the Exposition at large—that commodity culture is both a social good and a way to demonstrate one's fealty to the nationalist valorizing of constant and continual progress.

**B. Failure and Displays**

While these heady aims might imply a seamless and unwavering triumphalism, perhaps their most surprising quality is their persistent sense of loss. The notion that the facsimiles in

some way note an absence or failure stems from more than just the content I analyzed in the dissertation's introduction. In addition to their linguistic documentation of a variety of missed opportunities—lost battles, undiscovered riches, failed colonies—the volumes' physical characteristics similarly produce a sense of pathos. On the one hand, this occurs through a process of juxtaposition. After all, *actual* Native Americans were on hand at the Exposition both in the Midway and on the Fairgrounds proper: these displays challenge the copacetic vision of European and indigenous contact portrayed in the facsimiles illustrations, as well as the persistent iconographic suggestion that Europeans were destined to take over the American landscape and supersede its original inhabitants.

Though Exposition planners had other intentions, evidence of indigenous resistance proved a large part of the Fair experience and an explicit counterpoint to the Exposition's insistence upon Western progress (Rinehart 404). While the illustration that opens Vespucci's text depicts the natives as a group of indistinguishable naked women, all turned obediently to the left at the command of the monarch who points from the right-hand bottom corner (image 6), this kind of obedience was markedly absent from the Fair itself. These tactics took more and less-confrontational forms. For instance, two years before the Fair, Native American submitted a petition to the president of the World's Columbian Exposition Company demanding that indigenous advances be portrayed at the Fair and that their participation in the narrative of European settler-colonialism be faithfully represented (Rinehart 413). Though this group was ultimately unsuccessful, this was not always the case. Frustrated with their working conditions, withheld pay, and the fact that they were forced to wear traditional garb even during a sweltering Chicago summer, the Inuit tribe who inhabited the Eskimo Village at the Fair sought legal aid. They successfully negotiated the release of several Inuit performers who had been arrested for

refusing to wear their mandated costumes, as well as back pay and the threat of further injunctions against the World's Columbian Exposition Company (Rinehart 414–419).

Even the more theatrical, rather than ethnographic, performances challenged the image of the romantically and inevitably vanishing native, unable to defend him or herself in the face of the onward march of settler-colonies. Though the woodcuts included in Hariot's volume depict the Carolina Indians as stoic and placid, whether armed or not, actual "re-enactments" of indigenous rituals made such implications laughable at best, and violently inaccurate at worst. The controversial and widely discussed performance at the Kwakiutl Village ironizes just these domesticated scenes of indigenous ritual and life. In addition to flouting Exposition regulations in a perfect mimicry of the logic of capitalist accumulation by selling handcrafted items on the side at the Fair, the Kwakiutl villagers demonstrated their autonomy and resistance to Western domination in their performance of the *hamatsa* initial ritual they put on in August:

> For the hamatsa, Chief Twobites and Joe Strongback took to the stage and tore off their shirts as George Hunt followed behind them. Hunt, approaching Twobites and Strongback, proceeded to cut four slashes on their backs with a razor. The audience was aghast when they saw blood trickling down the performers' backs. Hunt then slid ropes beneath the flaps of skin, tying both ends together, and the performers began singing loudly while pulling on the ropes. Twobites and Strongback then paused and let the ropes bear all their weight until the ropes pulled away. Other Kwakiutl performers seized Twobites, and Hunt returned to the stage, offering his arm to Twobites to bite. Fairgoers were horrified. (Rinehart 409)

Whether decried or celebrated for its titillating nature, the event was widely chronicled in the media and this publicity only led to more attention and audiences for the venture.

African American audiences also pushed back against the Exposition's claims to progress and the kind of cultural harmony depicted in Quaritch's volumes. When Frederick Douglass was denied his bid to represent African American communities in the United States in a display at the Fair, he chose to go as part of the Haitian delegation instead. In contrast, Ida B. Wells encouraged black visitors to boycott the Exposition, producing a volume titled "The Reason Why the Colored American is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition." Though they disagreed about the best course of action to take in regards to African American exclusion at the Fair, particularly when it came to the "Negro Day" Fair organizers offered as a kind of consolation prize for the conspicuous absence, Douglass contributed to the volume and eventually supported Wells' efforts. In her preface, as well as in the various articles included in the pamphlet, Wells demonstrated the hypocrisy at the core of the Fair itself:

> At Jackson Park are displayed exhibits of her natural resources, and her progress in the arts and sciences, but that which would best illustrate her moral grandeur has been ignored.
>
> The exhibit of the progress made by a race in 25 years of freedom as against 250 years of slavery, would have been the greatest tribute to the greatness and progressiveness of American institutions which could have been shown the world. The colored people of this great Republic number eight millions – more than one-tenth the whole population of the United States. They were among the earliest settlers of this continent, landing at Jamestown, Virginia in 1619 in a slave ship, before the Puritans, who landed at Plymouth in 1620. They have

> contributed a large share to American prosperity and civilization. The labor of one-half of this country has always been, and is still being done by them. The first crédit this country had in its commerce with foreign nations was created by productions resulting from their labor. The wealth created by their industry has afforded to the white people of this country the leisure essential to their great progress in education, art, science, industry and invention. (http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/wells/exposition/exposition.html)

In crediting slaves and their descendants for the intellectual and material changes in the United States, Wells questions the very meaning of progress itself. She argues instead that greater rights, the exact thing the Fair lacked, are a better indicator of national growth than commodities and souvenirs.

These and other instances of resistance do not merely evidence a more sinister aspect of the Fair, the nefarious side of the Exposition's utopian aspirations. Rather, they demonstrate the inextricability of the concept of progress from that of violence and repression as well as defiance (Bank 591). If Quaritch's facsimiles and the ideological structures of the Fair itself suggest that who you are and where you belong can be externalized through objects as demonstrations of cultural authenticity, then instances of native and black irony and violence participate in this process of ideological mystification. In drawing attention to the gap between how those of European descent portray indigenous groups and peoples of color, and the actual lived experiences of these groups, these performances highlight the fantastical nature of narratives of progress. For the fantasy to have salience, to be a fantasy at all, it must define itself against a reality that constantly threatens. This is perhaps the facsimiles' greatest failure: though ostensibly exact copies of primary documents dedicated to early American history, the context of

the Fair ultimately makes clear that the transparency the facsimiles evince is nothing more than a farce. Though they promise pellucid and unmediated access to the experiences of settler-colonialism and first contact, what they actually deliver is much more opaque.

**II. Conquest in Practice in Turner's Frontier Thesis**

For the 32-year old Wisconsin upstart Frederick Jackson Turner, the Columbian Quadricentennial provided an opportunity for display of a different kind. With his recently minted PhD in hand, he first delivered his now famous paper "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" before an audience of nearly two-hundred historians at a meeting of the American Historical Association held in the Art Institute on the Exposition grounds (Faragher 1). In his essay, Turner portrayed the frontier as a constantly shifting primitive zone in which racial concerns were less important than the pursuit of individualism and personal sovereignty. Turner described "Americanization" as a process physically manifested through external objects, a notion that became an essential aspect of his ability to see a relentlessly expanding nation as nonetheless unified. Moreover, this object-driven vision of national expansion elucidates the ways that disenfranchised groups like African Americans and women were recruited into the United States' affective community in order to push borders outward in the drive towards imperialism even as these same groups were denied fundamental rights. Turner's essay suggests that at least part of the appeal of the myth of the frontier lay in its ability to abate class and racial violence by recasting it as a necessary part of a particular kind of national fusion (*Gunfighter Nation* 13).

Indeed, Turner's Darwinian-influenced evolutionary model for United States history, particularly his insistence upon the cyclical nature of frontier settlement and its relationship to the American spirit in the guise of farming and hunting instruments, casts his essay as a

refiguration of many of the same themes central to the facsimile reproductions of Columbus, Vespucci, and Hariot's texts Quaritch sold at the Fair. From this vantage point, Turner's essay places the settler-colonial enterprise as an act that can be studied and traced by turning to objects on display at the heart of American identity. Nationalism here is as much a commodity as it is an ideology: in fact, in this case, the two ideas are so interwoven as to be almost inextricable.

**A. Race, Space, and Development on Turner's Frontier**

Turner's thesis, like Quaritch's facsimiles, testifies to the superiority of European races based largely upon a narrative of white progress set in contrast to the perceived backwardness or stasis of communities and cultures of color. On several occasions, Turner suggests that the frontier encourages racial mixture, rather than racial purity, and that this mixture is responsible for the success of the United States as a nation. For instance, like Columbus, Vespucci, and Hariot, Turner views the frontier as an earlier time—"American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line" (32)— and thus as a space that forces the European explorer to "go native":

> The frontier is the most rapid and effective Americanization. The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. It puts him in the log cabin of the Cherokee and Iroquois and runs an Indian palisade around him. Before long he has gone to planting Indian corn and plowing with a sharp stick; he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion. In short, at the frontier the environment is at first too

> strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian clearings and follows the Indian trails. (33)

Turner here lists the very trappings that the authors of Quaritch's facsimiles saw as the markers of European superiority—clothing, technological prowess, and religious beliefs—and contends that the frontier divests the frontiersman of all these comforts. Though "little by little he transforms the wilderness," the frontiersman's rejection of the cultural markers of progress in favor of a "primal" existence initially return him to what Turner establishes as an earlier developmental state (33). This "recurrence of the process of evolution" bears two aspects: the frontiersman, in being "stripped" of the markers of his sophistication, approximates the position of a child. Second and concomitantly, in giving up technology, the frontiersman returns to an earlier period in the history of human progress, one that posits Native Americans as the ancestors of white United States citizens, much as Hariot's volume visually aligns the Carolina Indians with the Pictes. Most notably, though, Turner traces this internal transformation by way of external objects: clothing, hunting equipment, canoes, and so on. The position and identity of the frontiersman is thus manifested physically through a variety of objects in an uncanny parallel to the practices of souvenirship and display operative in the Exposition itself.

Turner sees this trajectory as inevitable despite its failure to follow a recognizable logic. Why must the frontiersman plow with a sharp stick rather than a plow? Why must he "shout the war cry" rather than threaten with a warning shot from his rifle, or scalp his enemies? In other words, why is it impossible for the European explorer to adapt his European mores and techniques to the American wilderness? The answer, apparently, is a failure of technological might in the face of the frontier environment. In Turner's essay, what distinguishes American institutions from European ones "is the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to

the changes of an expanding people—to the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life" (32). This transformation demands a return to the original state dictated by the soil itself and on display at the Fair: that of the Native American.[15] The frontiersman thus takes the place of the native, albeit a more "advanced" version. Turner tracks this advancement through a series of objects that represent a canny fusion of European ingenuity with indigenous practicality.

And yet, Turner refers only to *figurative* rather than literal racial mixture when it comes to groups of non-European descent, a distinction that the concretization of "American" tendencies through material objects facilitates.[16] He thus manages to preserve the purity of white men on the frontier, without sacrificing U.S. subjects' claim to the land. In addition to providing an autochthonous connection to the American past (Michaels, *Our America* 1–16), Turner's notion of familial legacy allows for an inclusive hybridity in regards to cultural descent that paradoxically depends upon the segregation of certain racial lines. Turner thus naturalizes the frontiersmen's place on the frontier without nativizing it. Unlike European land claims which rely upon a history of familial holdings, one's participation in a frontier ethos, and by extension, United States nationalism, depends upon certain performances, actions, and possessions: an inheritance of Native American attributes without Native American blood. Indeed, families

[15] This tendency to describe Native Americans as ancestors apparently characterized several of the events at the 1893 World's Fair. Though not officially sponsored by the Fair organizers themselves, a reporter for the Chicago *Inter-Ocean* said that Buffalo Bill's "Wild West" show—which occurred just outside the Fair gates—"made him aware of 'the aboriginal ancestor' that remains 'in us after all the long generations of attempted civilization and education' " (qtd. in Slotkin, "Buffalo Bill's 'Wild West' and the Mythologization of the American Empire" 174).

[16] I use the word "European" here without much specificity, though that is in part due to Turner's own muddled use of the term. Certain groups, like Jews, though hailing from Europe, were also distasteful mates for frontiersmen in Turner's mind.

clearly matter to Turner: "[Daniel Boone's] son was among the earliest trappers in the passes of the Rocky Mountains, and his party are said to have been the first to camp on the present site of Denver. His grandson, Col. A. J. Boone, of Colorado, was a power among the Indians of the Rocky Mountains, and was appointed an agent by the government. Kit Carson's mother was a Boone. Thus this family epitomizes the backwoodsman's advance across the continent" (44). In emblematizing the nomadic lifestyles of Western Native American tribes, Turner's iconic frontier family represents a genealogy that has "gone native" without sacrificing their racial purity. Turner's version of American identity thereby manages to balance a fin-de-siècle designation of the United States as a melting pot (Hollinger 1366) with the strictures of racial segregation. Racial mixture for Turner refers to objects and clothing—not semen. When Turner refers to amalgamation, he does so to segregate the body from its prostheses and avatars, rather than a literal swapping of blood.

Indeed, the dissociation of the image of the melting pot from sexual congress allows Turner to obviate post-Civil War national anxieties about miscegenation while demoting the significance of slavery in the United State's history. Despite his insistence that "[e]ven the slavery struggle, which is made so exclusive an object of attention by writers like Professor von Holst, occupies its important place in America history because of its relationship to westward expansion" (32), Turner inundates his essay with a vocabulary usually associated exclusively with the United State's "peculiar" institution. He repeatedly refers to the territory beyond the frontier line as "free land;" argues that the frontier offered "a gate of escape from the *bondage* of the past" (59); and claims that the fear of "Western *emancipation* from New England's political and economic control" led a variety of religious sects to establish missions and colleges along the frontier in order to recruit frontiersmen into the fold (58), a move that instantiated a

composite sense of religiosity—and Turner implies, a unique relationship to the U.S. polis—that he feels deserves further study.[17] Moreover, Turner recasts the various debates over whether or not newly acquired territory will be slave or free as a standoff between Eastern farming interests, and a Western desire for independence and democracy:

> The frontier States that came into the Union in the first quarter of a century of its existence came in with democratic suffrage provisions, and had reactive effects of the highest importance upon the older States whose people were being attracted there. An extension of the franchise became essential. It was *western* New York that forced an extension of suffrage in the constitutional convention of that State in 1821; and it was *western* Virginia that compelled the tide-water region to put a more liberal suffrage provision in the constitution framed in 1830, and to give to the frontier region a more nearly proportionate representation with the tide-water aristocracy. The rise of democracy as an effective force in the nation came in with western preponderance under Jackson and William Henry Harrison, and it meant the triumph of the frontier—with all of its good and with all of its evil elements.[18] (54)

In these passages, Turner appropriates the language of the abolitionist movement—freedom, bondage, emancipation, suffrage—as well as its goals, in order to divest the movement of its particularized political import. Instead, he argues that the push westward, and the kind of American identity it fostered, served as a hotbed of democracy and the occasion for the various slave compromises forged throughout U.S. history.

[17] Italics mine.
[18] Italics in original.

In evacuating slavery as a heuristic for U.S. history, Turner's essay seeks to suture the wounds of the Civil War and resolve the sectional differences that wrought havoc on a sense of national unity by substituting an outwardly manifested version of identity for an inwardly facing one. Turner restages national debates into a conflict between the East and the West, rather than one between the North and the South, thereby allowing for previously unimaginable allegiances and explanations for the shameful nature of the U.S. past: the South was not attached to slavery as a system, but rather it was bound to a plantation economy inimical to the movement that emblematizes the frontier and that necessitated broad consensus and community rather than pockets of individualism. This move binds the South to the North because, in Turner's view, both entities rely upon farms and settlements. Yet, the frontier, ultimately, holds the nation together: Turner calls the "Indian frontier" a "cord of union" (41). Turner here also prophesizes that the frontier's legacy of freedom and democracy will ultimately be recuperated back into a national system of harmony and exchange. Indeed, this is the very outcome of frontier development as Turner envisions it. Quoting Dr. Lyman Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe's father, Turner writes, "Let no man at the east quiet himself and dream of liberty, whatever may become of the West … Her destiny is our destiny" (Turner 58). Freedom and emancipation, in Turner's view, are about the frontier's ability to produce a new kind of being—or rather, a new set of objects.

**B. Land-bound identity and industrial capitalism on the frontier**

Yet Turner's focus on the frontier and its physical objects at slavery's expense has additional implications for his theory of the United States' economic development. In placing trade as the source of the frontier's amalgamating and modernizing powers, Turner promotes a version of national belonging dependent upon commerce and commercialism:

> It spite of this opposition of the interests of the trader and the farmer, the Indian trade pioneered the way for civilization. The buffalo trail became the Indian trail, and this became the trader's "trace"; the trails widened into roads, and the roads into turnpikes, and these in turn were transformed into railroads…. The trading posts reached by these trails were on the sites of Indian villages which had been placed in positions suggested by nature; and these trading posts, situated so as to command the water systems of the country, have grown into such cities as Albany, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Council Bluffs, and Kansas City. Thus civilization in America has followed the arteries made by geology, pouring an even richer tide through them, until at last the slender paths of aboriginal intercourse have been broadened and interwoven into the complex mazes of modern commercial lines. (40–41)

As in his discussion of farming and hunting habits, Turner describes the changes to the U.S. landscape in terms that recapitulate the evolutionary as the economic. Resource exploitation, in particular, rather than more ephemeral or noble aims, drove this process: "The exploitation of the beasts took hunter and trader to the west, the exploitation of the grasses took the rancher west, and the exploitation of the virgin soil of the river valleys and prairies attracted the farmer. Good soils have been the most continuous attraction to the farmer's frontier." (44) The land is a source of identity only to the degree that it can be commodified and reshaped in the image of technological progress made visible.

For Turner, one's position—literally and evolutionarily—along these trade routes determines the degree of one's "Americanness": "Thus the advance of the frontier has meant a steady movement away from the influence of Europe, a steady growth of independence on

American lines" (Turner 34). Forward movement along the frontier away from a land that Turner sees as representative of the past thus has both a geographic and existential register. As the authors of Quaritch's facsimiles suggested, identity in this new world comes from the fruits of the soil rather than upbringing, origin, or culture. Here, the evolution of the American land and its industrialization mirrors national and capitalist progress.

**C. Failure on the Frontier**

And yet, Turner writes this essay not to celebrate this endless place of renewal, but to lament its disappearance. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" begins and ends by reflecting upon the fact that the 1890 census, according to Turner's interpretation of it, "marks the closing of a great historic movement" (31). In his final paragraph, he delivers an impassioned panegyric about the frontier, comparing it to the importance of the Mediterranean Sea to the Greeks and claiming, even, that the frontier's powers extend to Europe, which it has similarly revolutionized. In calling the frontier "a new field of opportunity," Turner describes this ideological concept as a kind of commodity unto itself, one with the pre-eminent ability to define the nation and national character.

This moment of apotheosis, though, quickly turns to loss: "And now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history" (60). Turner's essay marks a crisis point, one that places the frontiersman in the position of the Native American, while also appropriating a native loss as an American one. The closing of the frontier, in Turner's estimation of it, marks the end of all future possibility for claiming new land, and thus, according to the logic of conquest, one's identity along with it. Frontier progress must eventually bring about its own end—what happens when there is no more land?—thereby

imbedding failure in every victory, indeed, in the very first steps Europeans took in the New World.

While this affective move provides his essay with a pathos that renders it poignant, such an identification would have been small comfort to the descendants of Native Americans who had lost their homes and their lives to U.S. westward expansion. Indeed, Turner's essay depends upon rendering this substitution such that U.S. development describes a universalist paradigm that must ignore what it excludes, destroys. The invisibility of structures of power here mirrors the workings of capitalism as Turner conceives of it, suggesting that his particular notion of nationalism and the growth of capitalism during this period are mutually constitutive. The blow to Native American sovereignty delivered by the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890 resonates, for Turner, as the loss of the frontier, a loss enabled by western migration, or the *jouissance* that accompanies catastrophe in Susan Stewart's phrasing. It is not simply that the native loss is erased, but rather that it is folded into the history of the frontier and objectified, such that when Turner examines it, he sees the recession of his own image gazing back.

**Conclusion: Nationalism and Conquest in the Age of Imperialism**

Though only two of the many cultural productions advertised by and at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, Quaritch's facsimiles and Turner's frontier thesis present a similar understanding of cultural belonging. Like the Fair itself, in both instances, cultural identity is presented as a process of possession and display. More specifically in terms of U.S. nationalism, Quaritch's facsimiles and Turner's thesis suggest that a primal connection to the U.S. landscape were forged during key moments of conquest and settler-colonialism is bound up with commodity ownership. If U.S. nationalism must be seen in order to be verified, then these two case studies show that a

process of externalization intimately linked to global capital, exchange, and most importantly, exhibition can be traced back to the arrival of Europeans in the New World.

Considering the World's Columbian Exposition along these lines bolsters Rydell's contention that the Fair "performed a hegemonic function" while revealing additional dimensions to U.S. nationalism that cast it as simultaneously invidious and welcoming (3). Seeing national belonging as a function of ownership and display is in part a move towards inclusion: anyone with money can purchase the "correct" set of objects, delight in their aura, and treat them as totems of U.S. nationalism. Items that point directly back to the origins of Europeans in the Americas prove particularly useful in this process, given their ability to tie in the Chicago Exposition's theme, but also to suggest an inevitable course of events unleashed by the first wave of European arrivals in the New World. Moreover, the notion of mechanical reproduction, in the case of Quaritch, and technological advance, in the case of Turner, mean that part of these objects' power lies in their ability to conflate progress with national expansion. Yet hegemony for Turner and Quaritch just as inevitably leads to its own unraveling: the path to success is also the path to defeat and loss. For Turner, nationalism rests upon the interchangeability of historical and cultural actors such that the victor, when it is convenient to do so, can inhabit the place of the defeated. Loss, in this moment, serves as a rallying cry, a way to mobilize a divided populace, and flee from a past whose violent debris, its reminders of injustice, and its memory of failure, always threaten. Turner provides an alternative tale of loss to that of the Lost Cause in the South, an apologist version of slavery and the Civil War that was being codified during this period by historians like Jubal Anderson Early and other "Lost Cause warriors" (Gallagher 45). This history of insecurity means that it remains possible, if only for a moment, that those who railed against the building of a U.S. empire, like Mark Twain, might not

have been forced to capitulate to the thirst for new territories. But this momentary stay against what increasingly seemed inevitable was all too brief: U.S. imperialism abroad followed quickly on the heels of the 1893 World's Fair when in the wake of the Spanish-American war in 1898, the United States acquired the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico as colonial possessions.

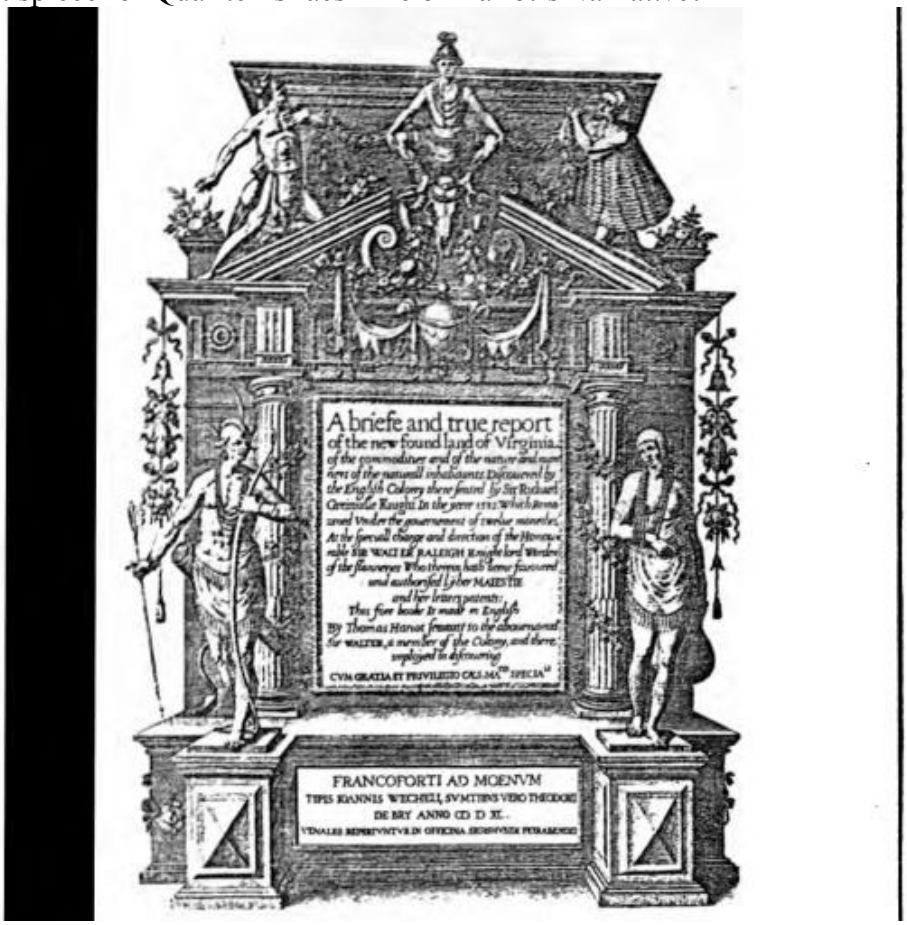
Beyond the military and pugilistic implications of conquest as a visual and ideological trope in 1893, this particular model of a consumer-based national belonging has one serious caveat. Despite its appeals to inclusiveness, this version of nationalism does not obviate distinctions. Quaritch's facsimiles, ultimately, are *not* the same as the original. Moreover, once the novelty of facsimile technology faded, these souvenir objects easily devolved into curiosities of an earlier time, at best, or kitsch, at worst. Likewise, while Turner's thesis argues for the constant forward momentum of progress as represented by both physical and technological advance, his understanding of the frontier means that earlier generations or those using older tools will constantly fall behind. National belonging thus becomes a process of compulsive and constant alienation that parallels the idea of capitalist accumulation itself: it is never enough.

From this perspective, failure and triumph, violence and nationalism, consumerism and belonging prove amorous bedfellows. Together, they work to assure processes of accumulation and progress so often seen as antithetical to defeat.

Figure 1, first page of Quaritch's facsimile of Vespucci's *Four Voyages*:

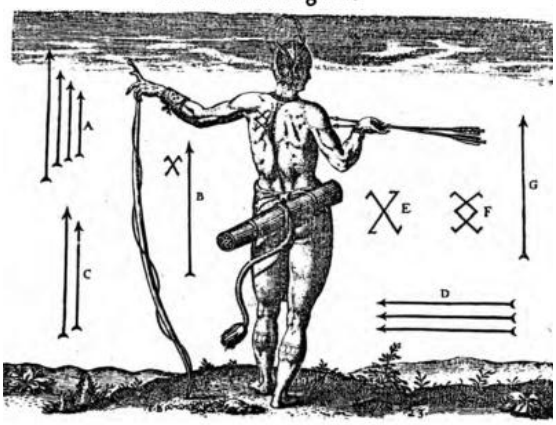
MAGNIFICe do
mine. Dipoi del
la humile reue-
rentia & debite recõmenda
tioni &c. Potra essere che
uostra Magnificentia simara
uigliera della mia temerita/
et usada uostra sauidoria/ch̃
tãto absurdamẽte io mimuo
ua a scriuere a uostra Mag.
la pṡente lettera tãto plissa:
sappiendo che di cõtinuo uo
stra Mag. sta occupata nelli
alti consigli & negotii sopra
elbuon reggimẽto di cotesta
excelsa Repub. Et mi terra nõ solo presumptuoso / sed etiam
perotioso / in pormi a scriuere cose nõ conuenienti a uostro
stato / ne dilecteuoli /& cõ barbaro stilo scripte / & fuora do-
gni ordine di humanita: ma la cõfidentia mia che tengho nel

Figure 2, frontispiece for Quaritch's facsimile of Hariot's *Narrative*:



Figures 3 and 4, fac

Figures 5 and 6, facsimiles from de Bry's engravings of the Pictes:




## Chapter 2: Sacrifice and Nationalist Wonder at the Alamo

In keeping with the strictures of mainstream Christian decorum, men must remove their hats and the signs leading up to the Alamo chapel note that cell phones, photography, smoking, and even refreshments are prohibited within this "worldwide … symbol of patriotism and the shrine of Texas liberty" where "heroes died to blaze a trail for other men." The remainder of the Alamo complex echoes these reverential and doctrinaire prompts, repeatedly reminding visitors of the religious and nationalist significance of the site, inviting us "to remember the Alamo" and relive the events that transpired there.[19] The combination of such regulatory as well as gestural encouragements—the cool hush of the chapel, the bronze plaques, the manicured grounds—minimize the chance that even the uninformed visitor could experience the Alamo as anything short of the "sacred memorial" to patriotism and U.S. nationalism the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT), the site's curators, intend. All this despite the fact that the thirteen-day battle that culminated on March 6, 1836 with the death and later immolation of the "defenders" of the Alamo was waged for *Texas*, not the United States', independence. If, as Edward Tabor Linenthal contends, "[b]attle sites, like all sacred sites, are subject to veneration and defilement, and their lessons are subject to revision" then even the most cursory examination of the events that led to the Alamo's purchase by the Texas State legislature and the naming of the DRT as its guardian, reveal the radical lacunae and revisions involved in the site's construction as a museum and shrine (510).

The remainder of the Alamo complex including the gardens, exhibits, and DRT Library housed on the Plaza grounds builds a sense of sacralism through an appeal to a regionalist

[19] For more on the religious overtones of the Alamo shrine see Edward Tabor Linenthal, " 'A Reservoir of Spiritual Power': Patriotic Faith at the Alamo in the Twentieth-Century"; Gregg Cantrell, "The Bones of Stephen F. Austin: History and Memory in Progressive-Era Texas"; and Richard Flores, "Private Visions, Public Culture: The Making of the Alamo."

nationalism that depends equally on the fantastical threat of reconquest in the guise of insuperable losses and the unabashed seizure of foreign lands. The Alamo purchases its sanctity at the expense of the Alamo defender's lives, a persistent reminder of the menace at the United States' southern border. Likewise, the Library painstakingly attempts to reconstruct the details of the Alamo's existence across the decades as a bulwark against the obsolescence that touristic and national trends death threaten: in the perpetual "now" of letters and articles written long ago and the beckoning finger of scholarly reinterpretation, the archive remains a space positioned alongside, but nonetheless distinct from, the forward march of history. Loss here serves as the occasion for reverence and a reflection on the nature of an American spirit that finds its justification for U.S. expansionism in the European conquest of the New World.[20]

In this chapter, I argue that the Alamo shrine produces a sublime experience of nationalism by foregrounding violent losses, and particularly, losses constantly under threat of reinterpretation and rupture. Sublimity in the instance I analyze, though, has a purpose beyond the aesthetic. In this case of national purpose manifested in a physical space, the sublime obviates questions of difference, namely those of ethnicity and gender, even as the very sublimity these shrine cultivates depends upon the looming presence of the cultural boogeymen it supposedly brushes aside. Nationalist sublimity thus stems from significant omissions as well as reversals—and re-reversals—of the position of aggressor and conquered, particularly in regards to those "native" to the locations involved. I arrive at this conclusion by adopting René Girard's analysis of sacrifice in his work *Violence and the Sacred* to contend that the Alamo

[20] In this chapter, I will refrain from providing a more "correct" version of historical or biographical events. My analysis hinges upon the narrative propagated by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, popularized by films like John Wayne's The Alamo, and codified in the Alamo shrine and the DRT Library, a narrative that excludes any mention of slavery, and insists the heroes of the Alamo were white and American.

shrine—supported by the other exhibitions that make up the Alamo complex— compulsively repurposes the sacrificial object in order to produce a nationalist sublime.[21]

**I: Massacre and Melodrama**

The primary method through which the Alamo shrine produces a sense of nationalist transcendence is by distinguishing itself from the more domestic and tawdry elements that surround the chapel and populate the complex itself. These exclusions, though, must navigate the universalizing ethos that the site inculcates. After all, the Alamo complex is a popular tourist destination, one free to visitors, and a frequent touchstone in popular culture.[22] In balancing these energies, the exclusions at the Alamo's core produce a sense of atemporal authenticity, one that memorializes settler-colonialism as a masculinist venture, a kind of egress from a stultifying domesticity, femininity, and so-called "foreignness" that perpetually threatens to encroach upon it. The very deliberate crafting of this particular identity by the DRT during the early-twentieth century is a result, in part, of privileging certain lacuna while resolving others. The lost battle of the Alamo in an ultimately successful war famously resulted in the annihilation of every soldier fighting for the cause of Texan independence bulwarked within the complex's walls. The massacre conveniently left few eye witnesses and discredited, by fiat, the accounts of Mexican soldiers who fought against the Alamo defenders: surely, the enemy cannot be trusted. Survivors largely included women and children, the former prone, according to the gender dictates of the nineteenth century U.S., to sentimentalism, the latter to exaggeration.

[21] For a map of the Alamo complex, see http://www.thealamo.org/plan-a-visit/interactive-map/index.html.
[22] To date, there have been at least thirteen feature films made about the battle of the Alamo in addition to many television, radio, and made-for-TV-movie slots. Similarly, the structure has been a fixture of Texas historicism since the turn of the twentieth-century.

No wonder, then, that even the earliest accounts of the battle of the Alamo read like the script from a John Wayne movie: realizing that they were hopelessly outnumbered by the Mexican forces that had arrived thirteen days earlier on February 22, 1836 Lieutenant Colonel William Barrett Travis offered a choice to his small group of about 150 largely untrained Texans, Tejanos, and Anglo-American transplants sequestered in the Alamo complex: stay and fight against the Mexican army despite certain death or leave. As legend has it, to illustrate this choice he drew a line in the sand and instructed those willing to give their lives in order to slow Santa Anna's progress to cross to his side. Apparently all but one man complied.[23] In the early daylight hours of March 6, Santa Anna sounded the bugle call announcing, "that no prisoners will be taken, no quarter will be given." The Alamo defenders fought valiantly, repulsing two assaults against their stronghold before the third attempt broke through their forces. Unfazed and brazen even in the face of imminent death, the Texans continued to defend their territory bravely. In this version of the tale, the celebrated three responsible for orchestrating the Alamo battle fell in the most dramatic fashion: Travis was killed while still clutching his sword, Mexican soldiers slaughtered Crockett in the Alamo plaza, and Colonel Jim Bowie, bedridden due to illness, fought from his sickbed, perishing with a firm grip upon his pistol and knife. But famous and unknown alike ultimately met the same fate. Every one of the Alamo defenders succumbed, 187 in all. By 6:30 am, the whole thing was over.

[23] This sole defector has been the source of his own set of mythologies. John Stroud has been alternatively portrayed as the traitor par excellence, a coward among a band of heroes, and as a protector of the innocent whose actions have been misconstrued. Though most frequently vilified, Stroud was portrayed in a 1953 film called *The Man From the Alamo* as yet another hero devoted to a process of self-sacrifice different in nature, though not in kind, from the famous martyrdom of the Alamo defenders. The film claimed that Stroud had been selected to warn neighboring towns of Santa Anna's approach, thereby saving countless innocent lives. Stroud bravely and stoically shouldered his ignominy when the Battle of the Alamo left no survivors to corroborate his story, thereby becoming yet another of the Alamo's heroic victims.

Yet as Richard R. Flores, Don Graham, and others note, this history of the battle, one popularized by movies like *The Alamo* and propagated by videos, literature, and plaques at the Alamo itself in its current incarnation as a tourist destination conveniently leaves out significant details, details that question the angelic and courageous portrait painted above. Though I will refrain from detailing the complex and myriad reasons for the tensions between the citizens living in Tejas and the Mexican government, a more thorough investigation into the circumstances that led Anglo-American settlers to move to Mexico in search of cheap land in the decade before the battle of the Alamo shows that these newcomers were not an innocent party. By 1827, Anglo-American immigrants to the province of Coahuila-Tejas outnumbered the Mexican population in the area by 5,000 people, a factor that worried local officials. In an attempt to stem the growing tide of transplants, in 1829, the government outlawed slavery. This proclamation was aimed directly at Anglo-Americans living in Coahuila-Tejas since otherwise, the law would have been unnecessary: by the 1820s, slavery was not practiced in Mexico (Flores, "The Alamo" 94–95). Like *Absalom, Absalom!,* a novel I turn to in chapter five, settler-colonialism as an extension of the conquest of the Americas becomes a kind of precondition for the practice of slavery and therefore inseparable from it. These details challenge the portrayal of the Alamo defenders as freedom fighters. Instead, a fuller historical account demonstrates the degree to which Anglo-Americans living in Texas served as an invading force hoping to preserve a brutal hegemonic system for their own personal gain. When U.S. transplants to the region broke from the Mexican state in 1836 they did so as much to escape Santa Anna's tyranny as to safeguard a tyrannical institution of their own. Moreover, in contrast to the portrayal of the Alamo battle as a largely Anglo-American led fight, Mexican protest against Santa Anna's annulment of the Mexican Constitution was the event that catalyzed the fight for Texas

liberation. In this more accurate version of historical events, Mexicans fought alongside their Anglo-American counterparts, but did so for a cause more in keeping with the ideals of liberty and justice for which the Alamo purportedly stands (Bost 500).

The romanticized and sanitized view of the battle presented at the Alamo complex is largely a result of efforts by the DRT, who were named the guardians of the Alamo in 1905 after a protracted fight for the property. The group continues as its conservators to this day. This coalition of women intervened in the traditionally masculine realm of war craft to control and direct the Alamo's meanings. In doing so, they participated in a broad national movement that began around the turn of the century in which similar all-female groups such as the Daughters of the Confederacy raised funds to erect monuments to the Lost Cause.[24] While this relationship to history and historical sites may be one stereotypical of women, the unique dynamic attending this site and the DRT's crucial role in shaping official accounts of the battle of the Alamo have

[24] The memorializing strategies of these two endeavors eerily parallel one another. In the case of Confederate memorials, Gary W. Gallagher claims that the Southern historian Jubal Anderson Early and other "Lost Cause warriors" "helped create an interpretive framework within which military elements of the Confederate war would receive far more attention than any nonmilitary dimension. This proved immensely useful in *presenting* the white South's wartime experience *in the best possible light*" (45). Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson contend that in this figuration, the Civil War became a war about resistance to industrialization and commercialism and not a defense of slavery (xviii) and thus not only the South, but the entire United States, could lament the latter's triumph. Thereby circumventing the blight of slavery, Confederate military characters could feature as honorable soldiers, the last guardians of a fading moral order. Indeed, as J. Michael Martinez and Robert M. Harris document, in certain instances blacks provided financial and sympathetic support for Confederate statues, so convincing was the declaration that the monuments mourned a lost age, and not emancipated slaves (134). From this perspective, as W. Scott Poole contends,

> [t]he Lost Cause may have begun as a statement of gemeinschaft longing for cultural independence, but over time it has been transformed into a tool of the "progressive" bourgeois elites and, more recently, has come to express a sense of marginalization from the larger project of American democracy and nationalism. (122)

As Confederate memorials became the last repository of an eviscerated order, they concomitantly were incorporated into the Southern landscape as repositories of nostalgia.

been relatively-less commented upon. The DRT can claim responsibility for the institutionalization of the battle of the Alamo as a significant skirmish in Texas's fight for independence and its status as a symbol of patriotic virtues like freedom and democracy that gave the battle broader national significance. This narrative depends, though, upon the Alamo complex as the site of failure. Loss in this instance allowed the DRT to redirect attention away from U.S. aggression. This averted gaze in Laura Wexler's phrasing transforms the Alamo shrine into a site that capitalizes on anxieties about reconquest to allow for an experience of sublimity while visiting the space. Moreover, this act of playing the victim represents a kind of reversal, one that maintains its position of dominance even while undermining it. In the Alamo shrine, the sense of being threatened is produced through a strategic withholding of information in the shrine itself in order to inculcate a sense of sublime nationalism in the visitor.

This framing of violent loss, the relinquishing of one's life for the greater good, aligns with René Girard's contention that within such social contexts, sacrifice works to "unite society and establish order." Girard contends that despite the violence of the act, sacrifice projects internal pressures upon a sacrificial victim necessarily external to the society itself, thereby displacing fears of dissolution upon an outside menace in an act of spiritual catharsis (1–8). Sacrifice thus proves effective due to its ability to substitute a surrogate victim for an actual threat. Though this act of substitution necessarily entails a loss of verisimilitude,

> [i]ts vitality as an institution depends on its ability to conceal the displacement upon which the rite is based. It must never lose sight entirely, however of the original object, or cease to be aware of the act of transference from that object to the surrogate victim; without that awareness no substitution can take place and the sacrifice loses all efficacy. (5)

Like the sublime, then, sacrifice entails the creation of a fiction that necessarily hovers in the periphery. But for sacrifice to function as a phenomenon that helps societies order and purify themselves, the sacrificial victim must maintain a delicate resemblance to the society for which it was substituted. Too distant, and sacrifice comes to seem arbitrary, thereby losing its symbolic efficacy. Too close, and sacrifice tacitly authorizes wanton violence (39). The Alamo complex thus has a tall task: it must cast the defenders of the Alamo as like the U.S. body politic and yet not entirely identical to it.

That the story of the Alamo complex's conversion into a museum and historic landmark reads more like melodrama than martyrdom underscores the degree to which this sense of transcendence is purchased through a very particular, and highly exclusionary, framing of the site's history. Prior to its purchase by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the Alamo was primarily a commercial space. In 1886, the Hugo-Schmeltzer Company purchased the property, using it both as a storage and mercantile facility (Flores, "Private Visions, Public Culture: The Making of the Alamo" 101). By the time that De Zavala Chapter was admitted to the DRT, itself an organization that had formed only two years earlier, Adina De Zavala, the granddaughter of the chapter's eponymous namesake had already reached an important agreement with Gustav Schmeltzer of the Hugo Schmeltzer Company: Schmeltzer had promised De Zavala that before putting the Alamo property up for sale or selling it to the highest bidder, he would first give the De Zavala Chapter the opportunity to purchase the complex (Flores, "Private Visions, Public Culture: The Making of the Alamo" 101).[25] Soon after reaching this agreement, though, De Zavala received word that a business in the eastern U.S. was hoping to buy the property, giving

[25] The De Zavala Chapter was named after Lorenzo de Zavala "a Mexican statesman and first vice-president of the Republic of Texas" (Flores, "Private Visions, Public Culture: The Making of the Alamo" 101).

the DRT little time to raise the agreed upon price of $75,000. The group's savior appeared in the guise of Clara Driscoll, the daughter of a wealthy and prominent family based near Corpus Christi, Texas. Driscoll was an early proponent of the Alamo's sanctity, having written a letter in 1899 to the *San Antonio Express* bemoaning the fact that the Alamo was surrounded by what she considered to be unappealing buildings, buildings that obscured the Alamo's historical and spiritual importance (Flores, "Private Visions, Public Culture: The Making of the Alamo" 102). Initially, the collaboration seemed like a serendipitous one. Driscoll advanced the bulk of the funds needed to secure and then purchase the complex with the Chapter campaigning to raise the remaining monies.

The troubles began once the sale had been completed and the DRT had been named the Alamo's guardian. Though the DRT had operated under the assumption that, in recognition of De Zavala's efforts to acquire the property, the De Zavala Chapter would become custodians of the complex, once the state of Texas formally transferred custodianship to the DRT, the organization named Driscoll the custodian in recognition of her financial contributions to the project. In addition to feeling slighted by the DRT's decision, De Zavala also took issue with Driscoll's apparent collusion with business interests and, in particular, Driscoll's plan to reconfigure the Alamo complex such that the chapel would be the site's main focus. De Zavala countered, instead, that the chapel was in ruins at the time of the Battle and that the majority of the fighting would have taken place in the Long Barracks. Driscoll, on the other hand, "believed the *convento* building was ugly and wanted to level it to highlight the church and to create gardens to enhance the tourist site" (Bost 499). De Zavala considered these plans historically unfounded and politically suspicious, especially given a hotel company's similar desire to remove the *convento* building in order to construct a hotel that would have uninterrupted access

to the Alamo Plaza (Bost 499). The dispute culminated in De Zavala barring herself within the Alamo complex walls for three days and nights, apparently refusing all sustenance except coffee, which was delivered to her through a pipe lodged beneath a window. Contemporary newspaper reports dubbed De Zavala the "defender of the Alamo" and treated her actions as an extension of the sacrifices made during the 1836 battle:

> For three days and nights, Miss De Zavala remained on post, in the Alamo, alone. Those in intrigue against her, she says, prevented her watchmen and friends from bringing her food. A sister patriot, Miss Lytle, poured coffee through a pipe which she slipped under a window, and in this way the young woman sustained strength to resist the invaders until Governor Campbell took a hand. During the siege all means of communication, telephone wires, etc., were cut off. At night Miss De Zavala was in darkness, for the electric light wires were also cut.
>
> The girl certainly displayed the fighting spirit born in her. De Zavalas fought for the liberty of the people in Spain, Portugal, Ecuador, Bolivia, Mexico, Texas! It is no wonder that she is courageous. ("Defender of the Alamo: Miss De Zavala, of Texas, Who Is Fighting to Keep the Famous Old Mission Intact")

Deprived of electricity and modern communication, De Zavala's actions transported her heroism to an earlier time, one uncannily similar to the circumstances in which the first Alamo fighters waged war. The story printed in *Human Life*, moreover, underscores a significant aspect of the nature of sacrifice at the Alamo and that has become a pivotal part of its affective power: the death of the Alamo fighters makes the site itself fungible and open to occupation by a variety of historically dislocated actors. These new subjects inherit the cultural meanings bestowed upon the Alamo fighters without having to sacrifice themselves to do so. Yet despite De Zavala's

efforts, the upper story of the *convento* was destroyed in 1913, a step that solidified the Alamo's current incarnation as a site of nationalist sacrifice.

If the sensationalist aspects of this history have been entirely erased from the Alamo shrine, then so too have the ethnic and regionalist nuances of the meaning of the 1836 Battle of the Alamo. In addition to her desire to maintain the complex's architectural fidelity to the Alamo Plaza as it existed in 1836, De Zavala also pursued a more accurate version of the events and their aftermath, one that included the participation of those of Mexican descent in the battle and in the story of Texas's founding as an independent nation. Though John Wayne's 1960 film immortalized the myth that the only people who survived the battle were a white woman, Susannah Dickinson, and her young daughter, a position echoed by the DRT's official literature and multiple articles written throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century, De Zavala countered this misperception. She interviewed don Enrique Esparza who explained that he, his mother, and three of his siblings had been sheltered in the chapel and lived to tell the tale. As Suzanne Bost notes, "Had De Zavala won her battle for custodianship of the Alamo, we might remember it relative to Mexican liberalism—in honor of De Zavala's grandfather, Lorenzo, perhaps, the first Vice President of the Republic of Texas and an author of Mexico's 1824 constitution" (500). As the articles about De Zavala's failed fight for control over the Alamo Plaza make clear, De Zavala's ethnicity remains the most salient indicators of her courage. To deny the story of the Alamo's founding as a museum is thus to deny its ethnic history, as well. Gender and race in the story of the Alamo's purchase by the DRT and its current incarnation as a national museum interact to produce a complex nexus. While both are pushed to the margins of the experience in the Alamo shrine—quite literally as we will see in the analysis of the space of the chapel in relationship to the Alamo complex as a whole that follows—they

nonetheless provide the precondition for the site itself. The visible, in other words, is constantly undergirded and prompted by the invisible. This vacillation between an image of the Alamo shrine as evacuated of all resonances inconvenient to its programmatic purpose and the subjective experience of visiting the site in the presence of bodies that provide a persistent reminder of the space's multicultural and violent history produces a subjective experience of the site that is both universalizing and alienating.

From this perspective, the Alamo's transformation into the symbol of patriotism and nationalism that the DRT describe it as today was the result of shifts as much as elision. The traces of such shifts can be tracked linguistically and subjectively. Starting around 1908, official DRT materials begin to make a distinction between legal descriptions of the Alamo property and a more reverential semiotic code. For instance, in the 1908 DRT pamphlet *Control of the Alamo*, Elizabeth Strong-Tracy, the text's author, moves between these two registers, referring to the Alamo as the "Alamo church and Alamo mission property" when discussing the legal aspects of the sale and custodianships. When discussing the site's symbolic meaning, though, the pamphlets consistently use the language of reverence and the word "shrine" in particular (Strong-Tracy). In their letters, Driscoll and other members repeat this tendency, calling the items associated with the Alamo or that reside within the complex itself and can be traced back to the 1836 battle "relics" and describing the chapel as a "shrine to Texas Liberty" (H.P Drought & Co.; Driscoll, "Clara Driscoll to Rebecca Fisher"). This change in diction mirrors the permutation of the site's symbolic transformation over the first decades of the twentieth century. As part of the celebrations for the Texas Centennial in 1936, members of the DRT decided to erect a monument to the Alamo within the Plaza itself. The group selected Italian-born San Antonio sculptor Pompeo Coppini, a local artist responsible for creating several Confederate memorials, to design

the Alamo Heroes Cenotaph. The project broke ground in 1939. The completed monument featured a naked male figure engulfed in flames and called "The Spirit of Sacrifice" (Linenthal 521–522). When Driscoll spoke at the Cenotaph's dedication in 1940, she mourned the rise of fascism as akin to the tyranny Santa Anna represented and urged current soldiers to be courageous like the Alamo fighters were ("Newspaper Clipping from Album"). If De Zavala insisted that the buildings making up the Alamo complex were "all that are left to remind us of the sublime sacrifice of the men of the Alamo" in order to galvanize public figures into saving and restoring the Alamo Plaza, then by World War II, the Alamo was firmly imbedded in a set of ideological meanings which coded the lost battle as fodder for memorialization and future wars (Bost 499). Driscoll's comments imply that within the context of World War II (and to this day) the lost lives of those fighting for Texas independence during the Battle of the Alamo have become a fungible symbol of national unity and reverence against a shifting enemy. This violent loss set against a successful war come to stand in for the threat that a variety of outside forces pose to the nation's security and dominance: the Axis powers, in particular at this moment, but also Mexicans to the South and even racialized groups from within.[26] Indeed, the Battle of the Alamo was a frequent reference point for racial segregation throughout the first half of the

[26] During the annual meeting in 1950, held from May 11-13 in Dallas, the DRT voted to change their bylaws such that membership would only be open to white women ("1950 Annual Meeting Notes, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Held in Dallas, TX" 125–126). This new rule seems to have been deliberately created to exclude black women and Chicanas as greater historical evidence mounted for the Mexican presence in the fight for Texas independence and the presence of slaves at the Alamo complex at the time of the battle. In their inaugural meeting, the DRT had a much broader statement of members laid out in Article VI, section I: "Any woman may be eligible for membership who is of the age of eighteen years, and whose ancestors were of the Old Three Hundred, or were soldiers, seamen or civil officers of the State of Coahuila and Texas, or served the Republic of Texas in maintaining its independence up to its annexation the United States, February 19th, 1846. Widows and wives of men who rendered such services are also eligible to membership" ("Annual Proceedings, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Annual Convention, 1891" 7). The more restrictive rule remained on the books until 1986.

twentieth century in Texas. The statements made in a 1936 *San Antonio Light* article are typical in this regard: "To this day many a Mexican will tell you that while he does not think it would be difficult to overcome *the rest* of the United States, it would be impossible **TO CONQUER TEXAS**" [emphasis in original] ("Remember the Alamo!"). The sacrifice of the Alamo fighters provides a bulwark against threats to the sovereignty of various national and state borders, a sign of social strength and cohesion, and a justification for settler-colonialism.

Though Girard refrains from discussing the temporal dimensions of sacrifice, his theoretical schema nonetheless implies a kind of temporal disarray, whereby a past harm can be remedied and order restored by a future action. Such a process does not necessarily erase prior events, though it does suggest that time can loop back on itself in order to return to a sense of harmony and unity, rather than relentlessly moving forward. The lost Battle of the Alamo here serves as a rallying call for present violence. Driscoll and De Zavala's words suggest that actions temporally dislocated from the sacrificial event can remedy an earlier and historic loss, such that failure at the battle of the Alamo comes to justify and indeed necessitate later wars.

**II: Domesticity at the Alamo Complex**

The Alamo complex participates in this symbolic fungibility by concentrating patriotic wonder on the part of the visitor into a few specific locations. Specifically, in their creation of the Alamo as a museum, the DRT established the shrine itself as a space apart from the more family-oriented remainder of the complex, yet nonetheless rooted in the U.S. soil. While the exhibits in the gift shop and Long Barracks, as well as the plaques and memorials scattered throughout the grounds remind visitors of the Alamo's history and its legacy, the chapel resists these contextual flags, urging the visitor instead to immerse him or herself in the moment and re-imagine the terrible loss of the battle itself. This act of imagination is a highly specific one:

though memorials to Texans who lost their lives fighting other wars are scattered throughout the Alamo complex, the shrine itself ostensibly contains only items directly related to the 1836 battle (though, as we'll see, that relationality is stretched in certain cases) (Woolford and Woolford Section VII: Suggested New Features). While everything outside of the chapel—the immaculate gardens with their pastoral touches like ponds, pedestrian bridges, and lawns—comforts and domesticates, lending the site an air of innocence, the chapel, with its stone and brick interior, its cavernous acoustics, and its sparse lighting inspires reverence and a tinge of fear. Similarly, the exhibits outside the shrine mark the Alamo complex as a familial space, casting the chapel itself, in contrast, as an atomized experience. Before entering the church, tourists can have a photograph taken in front of the main gates, but only if in a group of two or more. The site insists, then, upon the familial and heteronormative injunction in the act of remembering outside of the church building. Like the displays in the Long Barracks that describe family life in pre-Independence Texas or the many appeals made to capture children's interest, the spaces outside of the chapel focus on the family unit as a metonym for the act of remembrance writ large in the complex as a whole.

This austere, reverential, and atomized specificity of the chapel arises in part through the logic of contrast. In addition to the lush gardens, the remaining buildings are crammed with objects, displays, films, and monuments. There is little space to be quiet or reflective once outside of the mission building. It is here, and here alone, that any mention of life in San Antonio prior to Texas' independence, or even the arrival of Europeans in the Americas is made. The wall of history located just at the shrine's exit presents a timeline of significant events in the area and in the United States and the world. This timeline begins with the arrival of the Spanish in the

New World, thereby obviating any indigenous "before" to the site. A note at the conclusion of the timeline reads

> THE DAUGHTERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATE THIS WALL OF HISTORY TO THE NATIVE PEOPLES WHO BUILT MISSION SAN ANTONIO DE VALERO AND TO THE SUCCESSIVE CUSTODIANS OF THIS SITE: FRANCISCAN FRIARS, SPANISH AND MEXICAN SOLDIERS, TEXIANS AND TEJANOS, MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CONFEDERATE ARMIES, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, ENTREPRENEURS, HISTORIANS, AND DEDICATED PRESERVATIONISTS. EACH HAS CONTRIBUTED TO A HISTORY THAT WILL ENSURE THAT THE ALAMO WILL ENDURE AS A PATRIOTIC SYMBOL FOR ALL TIMES.

This passing reference to "native peoples" suggests that indigenous history begins with the arrival of Europeans. The mention of the Battle of Wounded Knee in 1890 on the wall is the only sign of U.S. and European aggression against Native Americans. Such a framing groups indigenous peoples with those of European descent, as though the two have a commensurate relationship to the Texas landscape. The note denies any history of resistance on the part of native peoples while enshrining white resistance as justified violence par excellance. This justification points back to the events memorialized within the shrine and makes use of the reversal of victim and victimizer so crucial to the Alamo's symbolic resonance.

Indeed, when violence is represented, it is done in such a way as to keep the focus firmly upon Mexican "aggression" rather than the other atrocities that occurred in the area. An exhibit within the Long Barracks titled "Frontier Technology" displays arrowheads, a flint knife, and

other "indigenous" tools and explains "Native American life changed after contact with the Spanish as the Comanche and other tribes began to make tools and weapons from iron instead of stone." This account of intercultural contact suggests that the European colonialists merely had an ameliorative impact upon native life, teaching them to produce stronger and more enduring objects. This Disney-land version of events stands in stark contrast the emphasis upon death and "Americanism" within the shrine and in the signs that point back to the chapel. Plaque after plaque and sign after sign notes that the Alamo is a site of sacrifice and patriotism whose meaning has become universal. The monuments to the dead, many dedicated to those who fought in subsequent U.S. military interventions like World War II, solidifies the notion that only the lives of U.S. citizens, and specifically, those U.S. citizens of European descent are included in this "universalism." Indeed, the supposed place where Travis drew his line in the sand and made his famous show of patriotism in front of the mission building has been reenacted and filled with metal to preserve it for perpetuity.

These gestures result in a site that compulsively points to the mission building itself as the location of patriotic reverence. It does so by strategically repressing certain details. These repressions cast the death of the Alamo defenders as a decontextualized sacrifice for members of democracies everywhere. Yet despite the supposedly universal significance of this sacrifice, the repeated mentions in signs, plaques, displays, and promotional videos of Mexican forces encourage visitors when they "remember the Alamo" to remember it as an emblem of the indomitable nature of the U.S. love of freedom and democracy. If this gesture embraces white U.S. subjects with one arm, it pushes away those of different ethnic and racial backgrounds with the other. The relentless focus on Europe and U.S. states heavily populated by those of European descent—most notably Davy Crockett's band of Tennessee mountain men—illustrates the limits

of the Alamo's vision of unity. As Girard notes, the sacrifice of the (white) Alamo fighters, though tragic, unifies one culture even as it rejects another. Though the Alamo embraces defeat in order to become sublime, it does so at the expense of inclusion.

**III. Lost Battles, Lost Races: Nationalism and Reverence at the Alamo Shrine**

More so than any other feature, the chapel is thereby set apart due to its asceticism and its resistance to the domestic and familial. After all, the shrine is of the same style as the remainder of the complex—the Long Barracks, for instance, are also made of stone—and as visitors frequently note, the chapel is much smaller than its reputation might lead them to expect. To set the building apart, the DRT has taken great pains to preserve what they call its authenticity, though authenticity serves as a kind of code word for the stark and severe. In document after document across the years, DRT members insist that "nothing is needed to embellish the chapel" [emphasis in original] (Woolford and Woolford Section VI: The Chapel). This kind of dislocation from explanatory narratives and other contextual markers is a hallmark of what Stephen Greenblatt defines as aesthetic wonder. In the essay "Resonance and Wonder" Greenblatt analyzes the visual logics of the State Jewish Museum in Prague, the late-Classic Mayan site Coba in the Yucatan, and the Musée d'Orsay in Paris in order to critique the New Historicist move that casts the scholar/curator as the guardian of cultural treasures and which erases or mitigates the violent circumstances that led to museums' acquisition of certain objects or the production of particular sites as of cultural interest. According to Greenblatt, this position compels one to play the role of the good steward and thus to recreate each object's conditions of production for the museum's audience, thereby facilitating viewers' ability to forge connections between these eclipsed cultures and their own. Such attention to what Greenblatt calls resonance sacrifices the "visual wonder centered on the aesthetic masterpiece" as "[a]ttention is dispersed

among a wide range of lesser objects [and explanatory plaques] that collectively articulate the impressive creative achievement" of the culture the object now represents (42, 56). Though this synecdochic notion of objects' relationships to the societies that produced them "restore[s] the … permeability of boundaries that enabled the objects to come into being in the first place" (43), it also produces a curatorial tendency where "the violence of history [and] … marks of the human touch," are mediated either by explanatory texts or materials and images related to the work. As a result, the "supposedly contextual objects take on a life of their own" thereby depriving the art object of its singularity and hence its ability to inspire wonder (44). Crucially, for Greenblatt, wonder and violence prove inextricable.

Greenblatt contrasts this impulse to historicize and to tell a teleologically-driven story in places like the State Jewish Museum in Prague and the Musée d'Orsay in Paris with the foregrounding of wonder in sites like the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan. Unlike its more contextual competitors,

> MOMA is one of the great contemporary places not for the hearing of intertwining voices, not for historical memory, not for ethnographic thickness, but for intense, indeed enchanted looking. Looking may be called enchanted when the act of attention draws a circle around itself from which everything but the object is excluded, when intensity of regard blocks out all circumambient images, stills all murmuring voices. (49)

In contrast to his other examples, for Greenblatt, some museums, especially those dedicated to the exhibition of art objects typically considered beyond explanation—and particularly beyond explanation for the lay viewer—foreground the affective response itself and thereby silence the exegetical whispers that deprive the viewer of his or her singularity. Greenblatt's privileging of

the art museum over the anthropological one stages a conflict at the heart of the Alamo complex: that between singularity and aesthetic-political. And yet, in spite of his own emphasis upon the violence of history, Greenblatt's account of enchanted looking at MOMA sidesteps this very issue, a point to which I will return later.

In particular, the stricture towards silence within the shrine and the restrictions against photography mark the chapel as a non-tourist destination housed within a tourist site, thereby shielding it from the commercial apparatuses that provide financial support for the complex as a whole. Though visitors can theoretically begin their explorations of the Alamo complex anywhere they choose, the audio tour begins inside the Mission building itself. These paratextual markers suggest that the chapel starts the tour; it becomes the origin of the experience itself.[27] This inaugural experience, then, invites the visitor to imagine him or herself into a space of bravery and death, before leading viewers into the comfort of the gardens and other buildings. The DRT have maintained the shrine as a relatively sparse building, one dedicated to a reverential and atomized attitude towards death built through an awesome, authentic, and haunted withholding of information. Despite its relatively small size, the Alamo mission building boasts cavernous ceilings that cause even the smallest noise to echo throughout the structure. A glass case along the left-most wall displays various "relics" including one of Davy Crockett's vests, a watch belonging to Alamo courier James Allen, Davy Crockett's rifle, the rifle made by Jacob Dickert, Davy Crockett's hunting bag, Daniel Searls' Bowie knife, and a whetstone belonging to Benjamin Franklin Highsmith. Unlike the artifacts on show in the Long Barracks which are used to illustrate what life would have been like in pre-Independence Texas, but which, a plaque tells visitors, cannot be confirmed as actually having belonged to the Alamo

[27] This positioning occurs despite the fact that little fighting occurred in the chapel itself and the Long Barracks are actually the more historically significant location.

fighters, the artifacts within the mission building are presented as authentic. All handmade, irreplaceable, and unique, these relics maintain their aura since they ostensibly were actually handled by the heroes of the Alamo themselves. In addition, the display lacks any mention of how these items might have been used or what their purpose would have been. Instead, visitors are coached to imagine the various uses for the objects, as well as what they would have felt like to hold.

The glass barrier between the tourist and the items themselves, though, maintains the objects as distinct from those that clutter daily life, casting them as sacred, rather than quotidian, despite their explicit banality: Crockett's vest and hunting bag, as well as Highsmith's whetstone are otherwise unimpressive objects. Their presence within the case and the insistence that they belonged to the Alamo defenders, though, transforms them into objects of wonder.

These objects, which only elliptically relate to the kind of worship that would have taken place within the chapel and, more saliently, to the battle of the Alamo, are part of a larger pattern of carefully selected inclusion, one that serves to disorient the tourist and contributes to the timelessness of the mission building. Along the far war in the place where the church altar once stood, the DRT have transported the heavy, wooden doors of the Veramendi Palace. A plaque beside the doors explains that Benjamin Millam, one of the authors of the Texas Revolution, was killed in the Veramendi Palace by Mexican forces on December 7, 1835. The doors, though, prove doubly significant. Bowie married Ursula Veramendi, the daughter of the Juan Martin de Veramendi, the Mexican vice-governor of the province in 1831. Before the doors, the DRT have arranged a series of bronze plaques titled "Heroes of the Alamo" that list the names of all the men who died during the battle along with where they were from. Though these names are listed alphabetically, the commanders, William Barret Travis, James Bowie, David Crockett, and

James Butler Bonham, receive their own plaque. The final plaque stands for all the unknown soldiers and reads "In honor of those Alamo heroes whose names history did not record." The presence of these doors, chosen apparently only due to their relationship to Bowie and official channels of power in San Antonio, disorder both time and space within the shrine. They bear little significance to the moment of the battle itself even if worthy of note for other reasons. Their presence within the mission building thereby dislocates the space from linear temporality. Furthermore, the doors' placement suggests a kind of geographic cyclone that gathers all of San Antonio to this one spot.

In terms of that geography, the constant allusions to the dead men's homes on the plaques and elsewhere solidify the sense of the Alamo as a predominantly U.S. space, rather than a Mexican or simply Texan one. None of the commanders hailed from Texas, and the vast majority of the listed dead are from the continental United States or Western Europe. As though to underscore this very point, a separate plaque nearby enumerates the dead by state and by country: only eleven were from what the sign describes as "Texas/Mexico." The decision to place "Texas" before Mexico is a revealing one, especially since the DRT have chosen not to use the Spanish name, Tejas, for the nascent state. Prior to Independence, Texas, as an entity distinct from Mexico did not exist. The anachronism thus implies that Texas was always already a modern U.S. state with an Anglicized name. This decision amplifies the sense that the Mexicans encroached upon U.S. territory, rather than the other way around. Though the sheer number of soldiers from outside Texas should demonstrate the degree to which the war for Texas' independence was an imperial U.S. venture, the naming here neutralizes this aspect of aggression. It is not that it disappears, but that it seems somehow unnecessary, as though the

Alamo defenders were protecting a homeland to which they could lay claim even without an ancestral heritage there. One has to wonder how many of the "unrecorded" dead were Mexican. The decision not to discuss the indigenous or Spanish history of the site prior to the battle within the mission building serves to erase these earlier histories and plays upon fears of a "Mexican menace," as though the Alamo came into existence during the battle and not before.

For instance, the DRT have marked off the room to the right of the Veramendi doors where women and children were protected during the battle with a plaque, playing upon the ostensible innocence and vulnerability of this group to conjure up the specter of an encroaching force. Yet the plaque fails to note that Mexican soldiers invaded the Alamo complex to take by force a structure that legally belonged to their home country. By calling attention only to the group sheltered within the room, the plaque strategically withholds information that would potentially reconfigure the occupants' relationship to their supposed foes as well as the sense of their ostensible innocence. The bronze sign on the back of the main doors leading to the shrine that reads '"BE SILENT, FRIEND HERE HEROES DIED TO BLAZE A TRAIL FOR OTHER MEN" further bolsters the experience of decontextualized mourning and patriotism within the chapel. Here men fought and died to protect those more vulnerable, women and children, and to stand for the very freedom and democracy that the U.S. emblematizes. Bereft of any other information, the Alamo shrine presents itself as a location-specific site of reverence. It builds this sense by making the threat of aggression continuously palpable, and of course, through a strategic exclusion that builds a sense of universality by pushing away those who threaten the mono-cultural experience of U.S. nationalism fostered by the building.

Silence here works to create a highly particularized soundscape within the shrine. Given its stone construction and high ceiling, visitors' steps echo throughout the space without any

other aural markers of human presence. The shrine, put otherwise, allows for human contact but not community: there is sound without voice. While mandates to be silent in this way might approximate religious ceremonies, it differs from these rituals in that *no one* speaks within the Alamo shrine, not even at prescribed moments. Instead, silence here becomes ghostly, uncanny. Even if one experiences the chapel in a group, the collective processing of that experience can only occur outside its walls. The lack of sounds associated with human activities typically associated with tourism—laughter, speech, eating, shouting—serve to distinguish the chapel from the complex that surrounds it and to decontextualize the space. While hearing-impaired visitors might not have access to this aspect of the chapel, they, too, must wait until they exit to discuss their impressions with other tourists. Blocked from the act of conversation, the subjective experience of the Alamo shrine occurs within the body of the individual tourist, oddly surrounded by and yet separated from those surrounding her. Not only does this schema suggest on a bodily knowledge in contrast to a solely intellectual one, it also imposes a highly personal sense of time and temporality on the space, one concentrated inside the body of the atomized spectator.

The actual bodies moving through the space of the Alamo mission building, though, challenge these signs, suggesting that the Alamo's affective and symbolic resonance obtains through a disjunction between the shrine's framing as a space of white male sacrifice and the actual bodies who occupy that space. Given its geographic location and its fame, visitors to the Alamo frequently include those of Mexican descent, tourists from other nations, and the women and families implicitly portrayed as anathema to the space of the chapel itself. Indeed, even during the most intense moments of their whitewashing of the Alamo complex, DRT members lamented the concomitant whitewashing of San Antonio. In an article she published in the *San*

*Antonio Express* in 1900, Driscoll herself argued instead for the preservation of the city's diverse influences and peoples:

> All this improvement has modernized San Antonio, and made it the beautiful city that it is, and while I was glad to see that the place had gone so far ahead in every way, I could not help but feel that it was a great pity to let all this advancement crowd and push out the really unique features about the Alamo City, and the one that is of the greatest interest to strangers, and that is the foreign—the Mexican—element, that has come to the place for so many years. It saddened me to find the old atmosphere of the place changed. ("A Plea for the Old Land Marks")

Despite Driscoll's erroneous labeling of San Antonio's Mexican influences as "foreign" rather than "indigenous," her comments draw attention to the significance of the city's history and culture to the Alamo's meanings. As the article continues, Driscoll juxtaposes San Antonio's modernization—code, apparently, for the destruction of its non-Anglo buildings—with the state of disrepair that she claims characterizes the Alamo complex and other mission buildings. Driscoll closes,

> Remember, while all your modern improvements may make San Antonio more comfortable to live in, it is the Alamo, the Missions, and the foreign element that have made it famous. Pave your streets and beautify your parks, put up fine buildings and improve to the utmost this fair city of ours, but while doing all this, make some effort to keep up the old traditions of the place that are slipping away from it; preserve and care for the Missions, and above all—"Remember the Alamo!" ("A Plea for the Old Land Marks")

Marking comfort as apposite to fame, Driscoll suggests that the presence of the Mexican is central to the Alamo's significance and memorialization.

This very vacillation between exclusion and presence is borne out inside the shrine itself. As visitors peruse the Alamo relics or peer into the one room labeled as the shelter for women and children during the battle, they are surrounded by descendants of the very groups posited, explicitly and implicitly, as enemies to U.S. expansion.[28] This basic understanding of the internal dynamics of the chapel means that the production of affect within the Alamo shrine draws from a particularly complex interaction between the visitor, the space, and the space's features. On the one hand, the austere nature of the chapel and its former life as a religious site encourages tourists to respond in a manner akin to how they move through churches. In order to take in the shrine in its full dimensions, these subjects must turn their heads towards the ceiling and lean back to catch a glimpse of the ceiling, a physical posture that approximates bodily positions associated with the demonstration of awe. While within the religious context of churches that awe is often expressed as both gratitude and trembling over Jesus Christ's sacrifice for all of mankind, a sacrifice that unites all penitents as Christians, so too in the Alamo awe is transformed as gratitude and trembling over the soldiers who died in the 1836 battle, soldiers constantly reproduced throughout the complex as Anglo-American. If the presence of woman and Mexican fighters for Texan independence are made *invisible* by the Alamo's various paratexts, though, then by contrast the diversity of visitors to the Alamo Shrine makes the presence of women and those of Mexican descent particularly *visible* within the tourist experience of the shrine. These figures prove central to and yet inoperable within the space; the

[28] For a particularly moving example of the discomfort this position breeds, see the introduction to Richard R. Flores' *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity and the Master Symbol* (*Remembering the Alamo* xiii–xiv).

production of the sublime within the chapel depends upon their presence even as non-white and female bodies challenge the very limits of the sublime. Transcendence inside the shrine itself, and patriotic wonder in particular, is thus produced through the clash of sacrifice and survival, a clash borne out again and again within the space.

**IV: Sublimity and Survival**

For the Alamo complex to achieve its twinned goals of emblematizing U.S. nationalism and sublimity, it must exist in a complex relationship to the 1836 battle. Throughout the site, references to a more historically accurate and therefore diverse representation of the events that unfolded during the war for Texas Independence must be suppressed in order for the complex's nationalist meanings to be preserved. Moreover, in order for the chapel to accrue its transcendent register, it must seem distinct from the energies of the site as a whole. DRT planners facilitate this process by casting the exhibits, buildings, and gardens that surround the shrine as educational and domestic—sites of reverence, rather than wonder in Greenblatt's terms. Within this schema, the soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the cause of independence unite visitors, even if only momentarily. Yet for this sense of collective purpose to feel sublime, the notion of sacrifice must be concentrated in the shrine itself, which becomes a location distinct from the remainder of the complex. There, sublimity arises through a religious-inspired framing of the space in juxtaposition to the other visitors within the space.

This path to wonder sheds new light on Greenblatt's assessment of the State Jewish Museum in Prague as a space that enshrines resonance at the expense of wonder. In the closing paragraph of this section, Greenblatt writes:

> In 1949 the Jewish Community Council offered as a gift to the Czechoslovak government both the synagogues and their contents. These became the resonant,

> impure 'memorial complex' they are—a cultural machine that generates an uncontrollable oscillation between homage and desecration, longing and hopelessness, the voices of the dead and silenced. (48)

Despite his protestations to the contrary, this passage sounds like a description of wonder, one predicated upon mourning the loss of an authentic Eastern European Jewish identity that can never return. Simultaneously, though, the display places the viewer in the position of the conqueror, both in terms of the control of the gaze, and the fact that the Nazis originally created the Museum. This oscillation, the movement between a horrific identification with exterminationist rhetoric and a sympathetic association with the liquidated Jewish population of Prague, allows the objects inside to accrue meaning despite their aesthetic qualities. Instead, the artifacts prove sublime, threatening the viewer with the inescapable fact of his or her survival, and the concomitant fear that he or she, too, may one day fade into obscurity. Sublimity here, due to its focus upon the event rather than the process, produces a radical intervention into the kind of historicism that provides no egress. From this perspective, then, museums, those mausoleums to authentic cultural disappearance, only allow for wonder if one can sympathetically and empathetically put oneself in two subject positions at once, can let go of a sense of time that posits survival as the necessary opposite of conquest.

## Chapter 3: "Can't Repeat the Past?": *Gatsby* and the American Dream at Mid-Century

When F. Scott Fitzgerald suffered his fatal heart attack in 1940, the *New York Times*, then as now a bellwether for the literary sentiments of the U.S. professional classes, summed up his career by echoing H.L. Mencken's searing take on *The Great Gatsby* in 1925: "This story [*Gatsby*] is obviously unimportant" ("Scott Fitzgerald, Author, Dies at 44"; 211).[29] Despite his early literary fame, then, the Fitzgerald mania that engulfed the U.S. cultural scene in the wake of World War II was anything but inevitable. Rescued from obscurity largely through the rise of New Criticism, but also via active government intervention, *The Great Gatsby* was a bestseller throughout the 1950s and 60s while Fitzgerald competed against the likes of Henry James and Edith Wharton to be crowned the best American author of the time (Poore, "Books of The Times," 116; Rosenthal, "Poets Reappraised").[30] So complete and swift was *The Great Gatsby*'s ascent to the status of Great American Novel that by 1950 Lionel Trilling in *The Liberal Imagination* could claim that Gatsby "stand[s] for America itself" (251). The historical context at mid-century, though, makes this rise puzzling: why, at the moment that the United States had established itself as a democratic superpower, did U.S. readers curl up with this particular American tragedy, one that culminates in defeat, displacement, and loss?

While the bulk of academic criticism of the novel has seen it as a window into 1920s U.S. society, turning from a focus on *Gatsby*'s initial publication in 1925 to its first years as a bestseller in the late 1940s provides one way to understand the links between the novel's

[29] Despite his scathing review, Mencken expressed great admiration for the quality of Fitzgerald's writing.

[30] The posthumous publication of Fitzgerald's letters and essay in the volume *The Crack Up*, also a bestseller, similarly facilitated Fitzgerald's Cold War rise to fame. However, these bestseller lists should not be seen as a definitive index of a work's popularity. At least in certain cases, the FBI manipulated such lists by buying certain editions in bulk in order to boost their sales and make them seem more popular (Robins 17).

canonization and its ongoing appeal in the second half of the twentieth century. Reading *The Great Gatsby* as Cold War readers did raises alternative questions about the novel and its relationship to U.S. culture. If, as scholars such as Stuart Hall, Raymond Williams, Wolfgang Iser, and Janice Radway, among others, contend, textual meanings are constantly remade in different times and for different audiences, there is no reason to privilege the moment of origin over the moment of reception. Such a temporal shift provides new insight into *Gatsby*'s complex utopianism as suggested by postwar critics' use of the term "American Dream" and the role this utopianism played in the novel's aesthetic transportability.[31] Though from our vantage point "American Dream" and "The Great Gatsby" seem inherently linked, this language was unavailable to audiences in 1925.[32] The phrase, as we understand it, did not exist until 1931, half a decade after the text's publication. While *Gatsby* may have participated in the zeitgeist that led James Truslow Adams to coin the term in his study *The Epic of America*, Adams' definition was largely impacted by the stock market crash of 1929, a calamity *Gatsby* might have predicted but in which it did not participate.

This is not to say, however, that the *idea* of the American Dream did not predate its coining. The notion of the Americas as a site of possibility and hope—as *Gatsby*'s engagement with fantasies about the conquest of the Americas makes clear—has a long genealogy.[33] Nonetheless, the term "American Dream" provides a shorthand for aspirations that include the

[31] In addition to its relationship to futurity, the term "utopia" also has geographic implications that bear upon the novel. Coined by Thomas More and literally translating as "no place," the concept of utopia has always been intimately bound to the landscape and encoded an element of impossibility.

[32] For the sake of convention, I have adopted the colloquial "American" in my discussion of the American Dream. Otherwise, I employ the phrase "United States" and "U.S." unless I use the term to imply a hemispheric sense of Americanism indebted to New World exploration.

[33] Jeffrey Louis Decker's *Made in America: Self-Styled Success from Horatio Alger to Oprah Winfrey* is one comprehensive and excellent source for the various applications and understandings of the idea of American possibility.

desire for social mobility, the ideals of freedom, and a non-hierarchical, or less-hierarchically rigid society. This neat packaging of a host of interconnected ideologies into a single phrase facilitated the widespread use of the term in the decades after World War II. Moreover, the context of the Great Depression as a national—rather than regional—failure that must be overcome *and* as an even that led to widespread concerns about the viability of the aspirations included within the term “American Dream” proves an important aspect of the way the phrase was used during the Cold War. This particular critical history distinguishes the phrase from earlier approximations of it.

Juxtaposing Cold War responses to the novel with those of the 1920s demonstrates that mid-century critics’ use of the motif of the American Dream transformed *The Great Gatsby* into a tragedy of social exclusion and class desire—one predestined from the instant Europeans first glimpsed the Americas. While at first glance utopianism may seem at odds with an insistence upon the American Dream’s fundamental flaws, this view of utopia largely corresponds to the writings of the Frankfurt School philosopher Ernst Bloch. Bloch argues that utopia can only be imagined in the negative, as that which it is not. Utopia, by this definition, depends upon and is constituted by disappointment, rather than serving as its opposite. The inescapability of death therefore provides utopia’s absolute horizon in that it marks the limits of the ontological (“Something’s Missing: A Discussion between Ernst Block and Theodor W. Adorno on the Contradictions of Utopian Longing” 12–16).

Focusing upon the American Dream in this way—not to understand the novel’s relationship to the 1920s, but rather to explicate its postwar rise—reveals the degree to which Cold War readers’ conflation of *The Great Gatsby* with the American Dream facilitated the novel’s later success. Yet it is not, as more recent critics often contend, that *Gatsby* lays bare an

American Dream sullied by inequality and injustice, a perverted mirror of its idealistic incarnation. Rather, following Bloch's parameters, reading the representation of the American Dream in *Gatsby* as hollow to its core, a core that the novel traces to the origins of Europeans on the American soil, actually bolsters the Dream's utopian potential. This view of the American Dream as a particular kind of utopia helps us to understand its transhistorical power and appeal to the diverse and broad audiences responsible for *The Great Gatsby*'s continued fame. The dream, in other words, is transposable and its openness to reinterpretation serves as one vector for understanding its ability to seduce.

In what follows, I track this less sanguine definition of the American Dream in order to demonstrate how framing the American Dream's workings in the novel as dependent upon lapses and failures makes the Dream utopian. While this might not explain the indifference many felt towards *Gatsby* in 1925, it does provide one avenue to exploring its unprecedented fame and the potential political import of the American Dream.[34]

**I: The American Dream and Cold War Readership**

Since the 1970s, scholars have generally emphasized the role of ideological formation and the influence of popular culture upon *The Great Gatsby*, a trend that has carried over to this day. In an essay from 2009, T. Austin Graham, for instance, examines *Gatsby*'s phonic valence to argue that Fitzgerald frequently referenced popular rather than more high-brow songs, an insight that highlights the ephemeral and fleeting quality of many of the novel's most famously emotional scenes (537–539). Those scholars most interested in analyzing *The Great Gatsby*'s representation of the American Dream have, likewise, applied a cultural lens, tending to focus

[34] In what follows, I track mostly professional responses to the novel in the Cold War years. There remains further work to be done, though, on the ways that the lay reading public conceived of the novel during this time period.

upon race and, to a lesser degree, class in the novel as a way to clarify the social scene in the U.S. of the 1920s. In this vein, Meredith Goldsmith compares *Gatsby* to narratives of passing emerging from the Harlem Renaissance and concludes that, though the novel appropriates black cultural forms for its own ends, it does so to refute the notion of authenticity in regards to identity categories (443–444).

Others, though, have drawn upon the novel's representation of race and ethnicity to complicate its ideological investments. In dazzling readings of *The Great Gatsby* critics such as Walter Benn Michaels have cast the novel as a complicated and contradictory but ultimately racist and nativist text, one that participates in the wider outcry over immigration in the 1920s, the changing rights of African Americans after the end of radical reconstruction, and the fluctuating status of indigenous groups within the continental U.S. (Michaels, "The Vanishing American"; Decker, "Gatsby's Pristine Dream: The Diminishment of the Self-Made Man in the Tribal Twenties"; Decker, *Made in America: Self-Styled Success from Horatio Alger to Oprah Winfrey*).[35] Similarly, Jeffrey Louis Decker exposes the xenophobic and ethnically exclusionary currents that run through the novel's pages as a way to describe the juridical and social scene of the United States in the 1920s. These and likeminded appraisals call attention to the American Dream to demonstrate its misleading nature: in titling his essay "Gatsby's Pristine Dream," Decker highlights the genocidal implications of racial purity in the novel by playing off the dual meanings of the word "pristine" as untarnished but also racially pure. This method of analysis hearkens back to an earlier critical moment: throughout the 1970s, critics returned to Leslie Fiedler's 1964 work *Waiting for the End* to investigate *Gatsby*'s anti-Semitic portrayal of the

[35] As Ira Katznelson's study of the boom in college admissions during the Cold War *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality* remind us, in the context of the U.S., discussions of race are almost always one of class, and vice versa.

gangster Meyer Wolfsheim, often impugning Fitzgerald in the process. Similarly, in 1980, Richard Lehan re-ignited the debate over *The Great Gatsby*'s take on the possibilities of upward mobility by tracing Gatsby's resemblance to the writings of Oswald Spengler, a German philosopher credited with publishing the most famous philosophical-historical treatise on the eventual obsolescence of high, and by extension, European culture in his work *The Decline of the West* (1918).[36]

This tendency persists even when race is used as a way to analyze *Gatsby*'s relationship to nationalism. When Peter Mallios compares *The Great Gatsby* to James Conrad's *Nostromo*, he argues that Nick's narcissistic projections into Gatsby's past and psyche cast this eponymous character as a fictitious and empty signifier that ultimately codifies a variety of national narratives into a coherent whole (384). Richard Godden applies a more classical Marxist heuristic to arrive at a similar argument when he contends that Gatsby is "the tool of capital (or capitals)—an object lesson to himself in the making and remaking of reality" ("'The Great Gatsby': Glamor on the Turn" 360). Even the most recent scholarship in this vein, such as Barbara Will's excellent "*The Great Gatsby* and The Obscene Word" from 2005, eventually conclude that the novel's final transcendent scene depends upon forgetting Gatsby's earlier missteps and failures (127). These accounts cast the American Dream in the novel as a kind of false consciousness. It ultimately breaks its promise of upward mobility by reverting to a genetic rather than cultural designation of identity. While, in Werner Sollors' terms, *The Great Gatsby* might present U.S. identity as a matter of *consent*—various characters can choose to embrace the

[36] Lehan's essay links the failure of Gatsby's American Dream to European conquerors' epistolary reports of the New World as an edenic landscape ripe with possibility. Yet the wanton violence and greed that attended the colonization of this idyllic imaginary led to its unraveling. In keeping with the title of the collection, Lehan thus creates a distinction between a pure, theoretical version of the American Dream and its material implementation as a nightmare (12).

intrepid spirit that Gatsby, and to a lesser degree Nick, represent—access to U.S. society's upper echelons is very much a matter of *descent* (151).[37] The novel thereby condemns its dreamers to lives of fruitless toil that inevitably devolve into disappointment or worse.

Yet scholarly accounts that make use of the American Dream in this way conflate the values assigned the novel in the moment of its canonization with the text of *The Great Gatsby* itself. By ignoring the history of *Gatsby*'s Cold War reception, they fail to distinguish between *Gatsby*'s representation of 1920s society and the construction of the American Dream as a distinct postwar historical formation that was largely inflected by the audiences that consumed the novel. Further, they can tell us little about *Gatsby*'s later and continued appeal. While Baz Luhrmann's recent cinematic version of the novel might have flopped at the box office, its release prompted a deluge of articles, opinion pieces, and comments testifying to the widespread affection audiences continue to have for *The Great Gatsby*, particularly its "extraordinary gift for hope" (Fitzgerald 6). If it were nothing more than an exercise in disappointment—a long-winded "gotcha!"—why would readers and viewers cling to a work that tells them that dreaming is a futile exercise?

Though *Gatsby*'s first readers tended to focus on the novel's many romances and "the spirit of the age," this emphasis changed dramatically in later years (Paterson 202).[38] During the 1950s and 60s, New Critics and other formalists sought to safeguard high art from consumer and

[37] As Ira Katznelson's study of the boom in college admissions during the Cold War *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* demonstrates, in the context of the U.S., discussions of race and class frequently overlap, without necessarily converging.

[38] See, for instance, Carl Van Vechten's 20 May, 1925 essay in *The Nation*, "Fitzgerald on the March." Similarly, in a characteristic review from 1925, Isabel Paterson called *Gatsby* "a book of the season only" and even the work's defenders frequently praised *Gatsby* by comparing it to the novels of Henry James, an expatriate writer with an oblique relationship to the putative American spirit (Beuka 1–13).

mass culture. In doing so they “created an ‘ideal order of eternal objects’ that celebrated American art and civilization, consolidating the authority of American literature studies in the process, and in a way conveniently marketable as an export commodity to showcase U.S. exceptionalism at the very moment when enthusiasm for American culture was starting to take off in a big way around the world” (Buell 51). These critics frequently employed Adams’ term “American Dream” to signal *Gatsby*’s status as part of a great tradition of American novels grounded in distinctly American themes.

In fact, the expansion of domestic readership facilitated by acts such as the G.I. Bill is inextricable from *Gatsby*’s canonization. In 1948 Bantam Books produced a “pocket book”-sized edition of *The Great Gatsby* as part of its series of paperback “quarter books” costing only twenty-five cents and marketed to largely non-metropolitan consumers. These quarter books, which were frequently vernacular novels such as romances and Westerns, were sold in conventional bookstores, the number of which grew to an unprecedented degree after the war, and in drugstores and groceries, making literature as easy to acquire as a sandwich or jug of milk (Frederick 407–410). This series skewed heavily towards tales of the frontier and U.S. expansionism; as a middlebrow venture, the series largely paralleled the highbrow efforts of New Critics who sought to create an autochthonous U.S. canon that testified to the legacy of European exploration in the Americas even as they appealed to a burgeoning and upwardly mobile middle class with a taste for tales of self-made and independent fortunes. While *The Great Gatsby*’s inclusion could have damaged its growing reputation—the novel, in the end, has much in common with Westerns and popular romances—just the opposite occurred. In 1955, *The Great Gatsby* was listed in *The English Journal* as frequently assigned high school reading, and public lectures, radio addresses, and literary spotlights about the work abounded during this period

(Friedman 523). *Gatsby* proved a uniquely fungible text, emerging also as an important part of college syllabi in a wide variety of institutions. Those Cold War professors who rose up to defend *Gatsby* against accusations that it spoke merely to a particular moment in history rather than more longstanding concerns taught at the oldest and most elite chambers of higher education, newly emergent land-grant universities, and even trade schools. More saliently, these educators insisted upon the widespread popularity and currency of the novel in their classes (Crosby; Overton).

Indeed, the very origins of *Gatsby*'s newfound fame can be found in its appeal to a less rarefied reading public. Beginning in World War II, the Council on Books in Wartime, a civilian effort housed within the military, and later the CIA sponsored a wide variety of artistic products as part of a policy of soft diplomacy intended to counter Fascism and Communism abroad and at home.[39] *Gatsby* was one of the volumes held up as promoting "American" values and it in turn came to be read as paradigmatically American. Soon after its formation, the Council decided to produce its own edition of *The Great Gatsby* for consumption by military servicemen, a group that drew heavily from the working and middle class: the novel has continuously been in print ever since ("Armed Services Edition Books | The Art of Manliness"). By the end of World War II, the Council had distributed nearly 1.3 million books to troops deployed abroad with the

[39] For more on the U.S. government's covert investment in the arts, see John Young Cole, "The Armed Services Editions: An Introduction." from *Books in Action: The Armed Services Editions*; Claire A. Culleton, *Joyce and the G-Men: J. Edgar Hoover's Manipulation of Modernism*; Donald A. Downs, "Government Censorship Since 1945" in *The Enduring Book: Print Culture in Postwar America*; Herbert Mitgang, *Dangerous Dossiers: Exposing the Secret War Against America's Greatest Authors*; Natalie S. Robins, *Alien Ink: the FBI's War on Freedom of Expression*; Thomas H. Schaub, *American Fiction in the Cold War*; Frances Stonor Saunders, *The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*; Harry Stecopoulos, *Reconstructing the World: Southern Fictions and U.S. Imperialisms, 1898-1976*; Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America;* and Robin W. Winks, *Cloak & Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939-1961*.

explicit aim of "uplifting" their spirits ("Armed Services Edition Books | The Art of Manliness"). Given this history, especially the class make-up of the U.S. armed services, what does it mean to read *The Great Gatsby* as a novel with the power to uplift?

The desire for just this sentiment proves a major theme of the postwar political and cultural landscape. Following the end of the War, the publishing industry speedily responded to calls from black audiences for more diverse reading by producing books specifically tailored for African Americans and young adult fiction that featured minority children in a positive light (Luey 36).[40] *The Great Gatsby* was a frequent point of reference in literary editorials and features in periodicals owned by and directed towards African American readership, such as the *Chicago Defender*, throughout the 1960s and 70s (Golden, "Only in America"; Golden, "Only in America"; Golden, "Only in America: A Removable Feast"; "Great Gatsby Is Here: Cleo Johnson Shows New Look"; "More of the Great Gatsby Look"). The evidence suggests, first, that audiences successfully leveraged their buying power to force the literary market to respond to their preferences, and second that these audiences sought out works that they felt resonated with their own personal experiences. Such a vast and engaged readership challenges the argument that *Gatsby* proved so popular because it merely represented the status quo. The status quo for whom?

Instead, in academic articles and literary spotlights, these voracious postwar readers relentlessly discuss the American Dream as an aspirational category that defines *Gatsby*'s aesthetic and cultural project as well as the legacy it leaves to its artistic descendants. With surprising consistency, Cold War academics, journalists, and readers focused on the tragedy of

[40] This sanguine take on the increasing diversity of the canon, though, has its downside, since many book historians see this shift as one of the contributors to the decline of the black press in the U.S. It's also worth noting that responding to a new market is not the same thing as political activism or change.

the American Dream as represented in the figure of Jay Gatsby, a tragedy that depends upon the desire to recreate a corrupted past.[41] David Dempsey echoed the opinions of professional critics when he wrote in the *New York Times* that Fitzgerald and his ilk evinced an "esthetic fatalism" predicated upon a belief that "to be disillusioned was a necessary condition for understanding the world" (121). These interests represent a different set of concerns from those of the 1920s and 30s when reviewers and critics paid more attention to the book's failed romance plot and evocations of criminalized consumerism.[42] Instead, postwar writers turn to the Dream itself, rather than the figures in pursuit of the Dream.[43] They do so by following Edmund Wilson in focusing overwhelmingly upon Nick as storyteller at the expense of an unwavering gaze upon

[41] Interest in the American Dream unites critics inside and outside the academy otherwise frequently at odds such as Trilling (*The Liberal Imagination*), Charles Weir Jr. ("An Invite With Gilded Edges," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1944): pages 100-113), Edmund Wilson (in the novella *Memoirs of Hecate County*), Floyd Watkins ("Fitzgerald's Jay Gatz and Young Ben Franklin" reprinted in *F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby: A Literary Reference*. Ed. Matthew Joseph Bruccoli. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2000. 117-121), and Andrews Wanning ("F and his Brethren" in *F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work*. Ed. Alfred Kazin. New York: Collier, 1967. 161-169).

[42] For interwar sources on this theme see Fanny Butcher, "New Fitzgerald Book Proves He's Really a Writer" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 18 Apr., 1925: 11; Edwin Clark, "Scott Fitzgerald Looks Into Middle Age" *New York Times Book Review*, 19 Apr., 1925: 15; H. L. Mencken "Scott Fitzgerald and His Work" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 3 May, 1925: E1; and Burt Struthers, "These Pregnant Thirties" *The North American Review*, June 1931: 484-491.

[43] See John Berryman, "F. Scott Fitzgerald" *The Kenyon* Review, Vol. 8, no. 1 (Winter 1946): 103-112; Cleanth Brooks "The New Criticism" *The Sewanee Review*, Vol. 87, no. 4 (Fall, 1979): 592-607; Tom Burnham, "The Eyes of Dr. Eckleberg: A Re-Examination of 'The Great Gatsby'" *College English* Vol. 14, no. 1 (Oct., 1952): 7-12; David Dempsey, "Literature Between Two-World Wars—and a Glance Ahead" *New York Times*, 18 Aug., 1946: 121; Norman Friedman, "Forms of the Plot" *The Journal of General Education*, Vol. 8, no. 4 (July 1955): 241-253; Richard Foster, "Mailer and the Fitzgerald Tradition" *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, Vol. 1, no. 3 (Spring 1968): 219-230; George Mayberry, "Some Authors Never Really Die" *New York Times* 17 Jun., 1951: BR3; Robert Ornstein, "Scott Fitzgerald's Fable of East and West" *College English*, Vol. 18, no. 3 (Dec. 1956): 139-143; Budd Schulberg, "The Final Triumph is Fitzgerald's" *New York Times* 28 Jan., 1951: Section 7; William Van O'Connor, "The Novel as a Social Document" *American Quarterly*, Vol. 4, no. 2 (Summer, 1952): 169-175; and Floyd C. Watkins, "Fitzgerald's Jay Gatz and Young Ben Franklin" *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 27, no. 2 (June, 1954): 249-252.

the objects of his stories. For Arthur Mizener and others, Nick acts as a tour guide into Gatsby's motivations and development and his insights into Gatsby's actions serve as a foil for the reader's growing understanding of the title character's plight (Mizener 79). Equally notably, *The Great Gatsby*, as many critics have observed, compulsively rehearses the *failure* of the American Dream. Yet Adams imbedded failure within his definition of the phrase when he lamented that "too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of [the Dream]" (214–215). For Adams, as for *Gatsby*'s mid-century critics, the historical formation of the American Dream emerges only once it comes into doubt. Indeed, the first published essay to use the concept in conjunction with *The Great Gatsby* was titled, "F. Scott Fitzgerald—The Authority of Failure" by William Troy (1945).[44]

By formulating the American Dream in the novel as alluring despite its fundamental flaws, postwar critics' description of the American Dream aligns with Bloch's analysis of utopia. In his discussion of death and utopianism in the final volume of *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch casts death, total oblivion and annihilation, as the ultimate threat to utopianism (*The Principle of Hope* 1104–1109). Death, unlike other states, represents a lack of futurity—the end of the present moment as a process of becoming—and of existence as manifested within the physical world. It therefore challenges utopia's temporal and physical dimensions simultaneously due to its inescapable nature. Yet by turning first to religious and religious-inspired representations of the afterlife followed by a meditation upon secular responses to death, Bloch argues instead that death's very finality is the key to its utopian potential (*The Principle of Hope* 1148–1182). Death, from this vantage point, represents the ultimate freedom, that which due to its inevitability and inescapability represents true authenticity and liberty. Moreover, despite the

[44] The phrase "authority of failure" was one that Fitzgerald himself used to describe his career in relationship to Ernest Hemingway's.

radically individualized experience of death, the fact that all beings will experience it transforms it into a fundamentally shared process (Bloch, *The Principle of Hope* 1181–1182). Ultimately, in providing a momentary stay against the transitory nature of existence, Bloch avers that the collective potential in death creates the condition for tragedies and heroes (*The Principle of Hope* 1171–1173).

Utopianism in this formulation thus encapsulates the negative without ever swallowing up or ignoring the prodding presence of death or other potential losses (Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature* 159). José Esteban Muñoz elaborates on the role of negation and failure in Bloch’s thesis by outlining the distinction Bloch made between concrete and abstract utopias. Unlike abstract utopias, which Bloch notes remain disconnected from any historical consciousness and therefore frequently slide towards fantasy or delusion, concrete utopias “are relational to historically situated struggles, a collectivity that is actualized or potential” (Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* 3). For postwar audiences, the knowledge of Gatsby’s impending doom does not nullify the temptations of the American Dream: as Bloch insists, the almost inevitable disappointment of utopian hope only amplifies its imaginative and transformational potential (Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* 9). Like Bloch’s view of utopianism, the Cold War version of the American Dream describes a future heavily indebted to the past rather than a current reality; it derives from a persistent dissatisfaction with one’s circumstances and achievements. Even when highlighting the Dream’s relationship to love in Fitzgerald’s novel, Trilling among others did so to illustrate love’s rotten roots, not its foibles or lapses: “we learn about a love—perhaps it is peculiarly American—that is destructive by reason of its very tenderness” (Trilling 232). For Trilling, love in *The Great Gatsby* is undone by tenderness—one of its fundamental

characteristics, not an unfortunate corollary of the ways characters use it. Trilling’s reading begs the question: how does a text that ends so wretchedly in a double murder-suicide come to stand in for American possibility?

**II: American Dreamers, Failure, and Utopia**

To read *The Great Gatsby* as Cold War critics did is to look for failure and disappointment, rather than glory, as an indicator that Gatsby’s dream is both enabled by its fundamental flaws *and* characteristically American. Doing so reveals that mid-century critics’ canonization of *Gatsby* as paradigmatically American—and therefore broadly applicable—relied upon an illustration of the capacity for transcendence as born of a foundational and inescapable disappointment. Though the scene of Gatsby’s death perhaps demonstrates this point most forcefully, *The Great Gatsby*’s peculiar pattern of narration throughout the novel is intimately bound up with *Gatsby*’s utopian final pages. Nick’s tendency to straddle the lines between self and other begins to model the collectivity Bloch sees as central to utopianism. Through Nick’s multi-voiced narration, the novel constantly redraws the parameters of its various communities with a particular focus upon the losers, rather than the winners, of American aspiration. Focusing upon this group of outsiders helps explain how Cold War critics read *Gatsby* as a tragedy and, relatedly, the reasons a diverse group of mid-century audiences saw Gatsby’s dream as a synecdoche for the American Dream.

While Nick most frequently ventriloquizes Gatsby (Mizener 79), he also takes on the voices of a virtual community of American Dreamers who circulate along the periphery of the American ideal that Tom and Daisy represent. For instance, when Nick relays Jordan’s first-person testimony of the young Jay Gatsby’s love for the then-unwed Daisy Fay, the novel delivers this foundational anecdote without quotation marks. Jordan’s primary authorship is

noted only once between parentheses—"(said Jordan Baker that afternoon, sitting up very straight on a straight chair in the tea-garden at the Plaza Hotel)" (Fitzgerald 59)—while the passage's frame, grammatical flourishes and tone align it with many of Nick's personal reveries. In addition, Nick's fixed gaze upon Jordan's surroundings and the repetition of the word "straight" de-emphasizes the first part of the sentence, deflecting attention away from Jordan's ownership of the story. Like the many people who have sat in the "straight chair" Jordan occupies at the Plaza, Nick implies that Jordan's words are open for occupation by others, himself in this instance.

These and similar examples of Nick's impositions into others' histories would be relatively unremarkable if they applied equally to all characters. Nick, though, proves a selective narrator, creating new communities that cut across class lines. Despite the relatively large amount of narrative attention devoted to Daisy and Tom, these two paradigmatic U.S. subjects—rich, Anglo-Saxon, heirs to vast fortunes—remain closed off to Nick's psychic interventions. Though he often reports upon the pair's emotional state, such as when Tom breaks into tears after Myrtle's death, he does so to mirror these affects, rather than provide insight into their origins. Indeed, in his final interaction with Tom after Gatsby's death, Nick thinks: "They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together…." (Fitzgerald 139) Nick underscores the uncertainty he feels in regards to Tom and Daisy's interiority: he speculates about their actions, rather than their feelings, brushing off their motivations with the phrase "whatever it was that kept them together."

Nick's focalization of certain characters as opposed to others bespeaks larger social pressures within the novel. Nick intervenes into the psyches of Jordan, Gatsby, Michaelis, and to

some degree George Wilson, figures that all find themselves at the margins of the U.S. aristocratic class Tom and Daisy represent. These figures also largely approximate certain sectors of the newly educated and professional during the postwar years, a fact that likely helped to endear certain characters to Cold War audiences at the expense of others. Despite her wealth, the unsportsmanlike, apparently parentless, and “vaguely homosexual” (Trilling 237) Jordan Baker shares a formal realm occupied by Gatsby, the rich gangster with dreams of legitimacy: virtual orphans, both seek wider acceptance by the overdetermined white world of Tom and Daisy. Like Nick, each member of this group is to varying degrees “uncivilized” (Fitzgerald 13). On the other end of the spectrum lie characters such as Meyer Wolfsheim. Recognizably other and unabashed about his underworld business, connections, and money, Wolfsheim neither can nor wants to enter Tom and Daisy’s rarefied realm. Wilson, Gatsby, and Jordan are thus united formally by the ways the novel represents their interiority, but also by their relative lack of success, by their desire for something better, the very desire that defined post-War consumerism in both its ironic and credulous iterations (Horowitz 1–9). While the scandalous accusation that Jordan surreptitiously moved her golf ball for her own advantage in a match does not destroy her career, the only direct discussion of her professional life in the novel comes in the form of an apology: “Sorry you didn’t win!” the two women in yellow dresses tell Jordan at the first of Gatsby’s parties that Nick attends (Fitzgerald 35). As Adams avers in his definition of the American Dream, for many characters in *The Great Gatsby*, the desire for success leads to disappointment. Yet this disappointment is apparently community building. Success, whether sanctioned (in the case of Daisy and Tom) or illicit (Wolfsheim), distinguishes groups, while failure unites an otherwise disparate collection of characters into a cohesive whole.

The moment of Gatsby’s death amplifies these narrative tensions and remains one of the most popular scenes among postwar critics who place the American Dream at the heart of the novel. In the passage, Nick’s characteristic form of intersubjective psychic connection depends upon a version of American promise intimately bound up with the emptiness of New World possibility:

> I have an idea that Gatsby himself didn’t believe it [a call from Daisy] would come, and perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream. He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about … like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees. (Fitzgerald 126)

Nick here projects himself into Gatsby’s mind, moving swiftly from a subjunctive speculation about Gatsby’s thought processes, to definitive and unverifiable statements about what Gatsby “must” have done. The second sentence contains the telling shift in mood: it begins the phrase with “if”, but lacks the subjunctive form of the “to be” verb—“were” rather than “was”—only one word later, as if to foreclose any possibility of doubt or misreading. Significantly, Nick gains this ability to intuit Gatsby’s thoughts in the moments before his murder by trading upon a portrayal of Gatsby’s dream as hollow to its core, a core that he traces to the very origins of modern European settlement in the hemisphere. This process amplifies Nick’s interest early in the novel with origin stories by suggesting a predetermination to Gatsby’s fatal end that Nick

links to the Renaissance birth of the myth of the New World. Moreover, the novel reverses certain aspects of the typical Old World versus New World paradigm by portraying the Old World as one of happy delusion in contrast to a New World of disappointment and demise rather than promise. Even in this wholly disillusioned vision, though, the New World maintains several of its key features: "scarcely created" and therefore edenic in its process of becoming, "immaterial" and haunted by ghosts like the spirits that plagued New England Puritans, much of what is recognizable in this vision inheres in the representation of the land. While the affect of this portrayal of Gatsby's dream clashes with stereotypical imaginings of the Americas as a place of opportunity, the landscape remains entirely recognizable. Though the passage constructs a distinctly homegrown genealogy for Gatsby's desires based in an early European presence in the New World, it does so to insist upon the doomed nature of this enterprise, rather than its infinite possibilities.

Nick's vision of the moment of Gatsby's death closely resembles both Bloch's description of utopia *and* Adams' insistence upon the American Dream's indebtedness to the U.S. soil. In his discussion of Christianity and death, Bloch invokes the Biblical figure of Job to unravel utopia's temporal and physical manifestations. Bloch contends that when Job gazes at the constellations he finds himself overwhelmed by the lack of consciousness of the universe, by, in other words, the way that oblivion surrounds all beings. Yet rather than succumbing to despair, Job surrenders himself to a "dissolution in the infinite." In doing so, he allows himself to be absorbed by landscape, finding unity where previously there was only polarization (*The Principle of Hope* 1150). Similarly, Adams insists that "If Americanism … has been a dream, it has also been one of the great realities of American life. It has been a moving force as truly as wheat or gold…. It *is* Americanism, and its shrine has been in the heart of the common man"

(174). Like Bloch’s utopia, Adams’ American Dream stitches a disparate population into a unified whole, elevating the “common man” to a position of greatness in the process. He bases this claim upon participation in this uniquely American and land-based endeavor as material as agricultural sustenance—wheat—or the fabled riches imbedded beneath the soil that served as the rallying call for both conquest and westward migration. *The Great Gatsby* thereby suggests that at the moment of his death Gatsby enacts a religious and secular version of the American Dream as utopia: in surrendering himself to his fate, he recognizes both the fleeting nature of the present *and* a universal imbeddedness within the American soil.

Despite the claims, then, of those critics who have argued that Gatsby’s dream crumbles against the hard realities of class and racial exclusion, the passage suggests just the opposite. Nick presents Gatsby’s fantasy as solid and warm, a dwelling that Gatsby successfully inhabited until it shattered against the *immateriality* of the New World. In fact, Nick calls George Wilson an “ashen, fantastic figure”, not an image out of the real world encroaching upon Gatsby’s vision. Wilson has literally absorbed the most characteristic feature of the land upon which he lives: ashes. What transforms Wilson into a phantasm, then, is not an unsuccessful confrontation with cold reality but rather his absorption of it. Nick’s meditation here thus does not indict Gatsby’s dream of winning Daisy’s favor, or even his earlier dream of greatness, but rather the dream dangled by the New World itself, a turn with widespread consequences for the other American Dreamers in the text. In this instance, Nick’s revelation suggests first that the American Dream itself proves fatal, not because it corrupts people or destroys them, but because implicit in it is a kind of failure that is specified precisely by the terms of its hopefulness. Moreover, the source of this corruption leads back to the very invention of the New World qua New World by European explorers. If this revelation suggests a continuity between

the theory of the New World and its materiality, it also dooms all of *Gatsby*’s American Dreamers to a similar fate.

Indeed, Cold War critics were quick to note that the failure of Gatsby’s dream in Fitzgerald’s “American fable” stemmed from sources that preceded him and that extended past the individual circumstances of his tale, a clear nod to postwar interests in “distinct” American themes (Ornstein 140). References to the United States’ pioneering origins suffuse the text and expand Nick’s community beyond the closed circuit of characters explicitly introduced in the novel. When describing his trips home during university breaks, Nick reminisces:

> We drew in deep breaths of [the air] as we walked back from dinner through the cold vestibules, unutterably aware of our identity with this country for one strange hour before we melted indistinguishably into it again.
>
> That’s my middle-west… the thrilling, returning trains of my youth…. I see now that this has been a story of the West, after all—Tom and Gatsby, Daisy and Jordan and I, were all Westerners…. (Fitzgerald 137)

The experience of traveling westward on a machine that facilitated U.S. expansion and helped to suture the most distant parts of the country together momentarily allows Nick and his fellow passengers to see their place in U.S. society at large. Though Nick casts this as a period of individuality, it passes quickly, and, as in his other philosophical ruminations, Nick asserts a universality to his thoughts through his use of the plural pronouns “our” and “we”. This intense moment of U.S. regionalism, of existing both as individuals and as part of a collective whole, rests upon a repetition of the role of U.S. explorer that proved particularly popular in both official and unofficial discourse during the Cold War. Here the Midwest’s interactions with the frontier spirit come to serve as a metonym for U.S. nationalism. Nationalism thus recapitulates

the past, both in terms of history and the earlier pages of the novel. Nick throws a backward-looking glance to earlier archetypes of U.S. expansionism, themselves a turn-of-the-century construction that continued to evolve after World War II, as his solution to the horrifying events he witnessed in New York. While this anecdote initially comforts, it nonetheless closes by insisting that the origins of Gatsby’s tragedy lie in the Midwest: “I see now that this has been a story of the West, after all”. Nick’s mimicry of the behaviors and poses of iconic New World prototypes—the conqueror, the settler, the explorer—suggest that despite being shared, the fantasy of escaping to a pure and uncorrupted prehistory is just that: a fantasy.

Nick’s description of nationalism as a kind of mimicry and repetition en masse, particularly in regards to the past, amplifies another of the novel’s formal features, one that many critics have noted suggests a recursive aspect to the New World’s old horrors. The idea of a group of citizens, all uniformly unique and therefore interchangeably bound to the same destiny, explains Gatsby’s desire to pursue his own aims by imitating those around him. Indeed, as the novel progresses, Gatsby increasingly echoes the other characters, repeating their phrases with only a slight shift in tone to alter the meaning. For instance, when Nick tells Gatsby “‘You can’t repeat the past’”, Gatsby responds “‘Can’t repeat the past? … Why of course you can!’” (Fitzgerald 86). Similarly, the morning after Tom reveals Gatsby’s illegal activities and illegitimate background, a disclosure that causes Daisy to withdraw from Gatsby and, ultimately, kill Myrtle Wilson while driving Gatsby’s car, Gatsby reasons “‘Of course [Daisy] might have loved [Tom], just for a minute, when they were first married—and loved me more even then, do you see?’” (Fitzgerald 119). The utterance hearkens back to Daisy’s lament the day before that “‘I did love [Tom] once—but I loved [Gatsby] too.’” (Fitzgerald 103). Like Nick’s constant replaying of origin stories, these circular speech patterns find a corollary in the degree to which

the novel loops back on itself in its final pages, rehearsing earlier narrative moves and events. Nick fantasizes that Tom leaves him after their final meeting in order to buy a pearl necklace or a set of cuff buttons, an echo of the pearl necklace Tom bought Daisy before their marriage, and of Wolfsheim’s human molar cuff links, respectively. Similarly, the broken fender on Gatsby’s car after it hits Myrtle recalls the wheel that came off Tom’s car when he crashed it, which in turn refers back to the wheel ripped off a car at the end of one of Gatsby’s parties. Yet rather than giving solace, these repetitions, particularly towards the close, increasingly portray the American Dream as an inescapable cultural condition that defines Americans. It simultaneously precedes the process of individualizing and continues after characters conform to the social norm. The locus of despair, it dooms all equally.

Likewise, the disenchanted tenor that dominates the novel’s final pages mirrors Nick’s description of East Egg’s and West Egg’s geographical features at the start of the tale as appearing crushed flat like the egg in the Columbus story. The parallel between the novel’s beginning and end suggests a tautological cycle: the American Dream, as it intersects with the New World, closes in on itself. Gatsby’s failure, by this logic of repetitiveness and disenchantment, was predetermined from the start; he just failed to realize it. These vacillations across the novel’s diegesis, despite Nick’s protests to the contrary, compound the sense of failure that suffuses Gatsby’s death by suggesting that the past does repeat, always ending in the same place only to begin the process anew.

In the novel’s final pages, Nick’s relentlessly cited, lyrical meditation upon Dutch sailors’ first glimpse of Manhattan in the sixteenth century brings these concerns to a head:

> [G]radually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors’ eyes — a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees

> that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder. (Fitzgerald 140)

As many critics have noted, the passage links wonder to "the last and greatest of all human dreams" rather than its realization. The fact that Nick refrains from naming the dream proves a significant elision: he leaves the dream a floating signifier, an invitation to readers to interpret this lacuna and fill it with their own objects. Such formlessness is a key attribute of Bloch's vision of utopia due to its fundamentally unrealized state. Nick's melancholy register and his insistence upon the very brevity of the state of possibility—"for a transitory enchanted moment" and "for the last time in history"—dramatize the aesthetic disappointment that inevitably results from the conquest of the Americas. Similarly, as in many other passages, Nick's imaginative musings allow him momentarily to inhabit the subject position of sixteenth-century Dutch explorers—a subject position to which he, living nearly four centuries after their arrival, should have no access. Nick's reverie, like Bloch's utopia, depends upon the nascent qualities of the Dutch explorers' vision as a fundamentally unrealized state. The experience of nostalgic wonder, or dreaming, briefly dissolves the subjective boundaries between time and place, as well as self and other—a kind of parable of the experience both of nationalism and reading.

This final moment, though, differs from other passages by arriving as the novel's last statement upon Gatsby, his dream, and affective communities. Nick describes the Dutch sailor's vision of what would become the island of Manhattan as the "last and greatest" of all human dreams, suggesting singularity for the first time. Unlike other mentions of the New World and

dreaming throughout the novel, this dream, whatever it might be, seals all others: there can be no more. In addition, for the first and only time, interpretation pivots explicitly to the reader. The elusive note upon which the penultimate paragraph ends, “And one fine morning—” (Fitzgerald 141) as well as the persistent use of the pronoun “we” opens the tale to the audience, in the same way that Nick has opened the characters’ tales to himself. Indeed, the text even dictates the path, “born back ceaselessly into the past”, a set of uncannily prophetic instructions given Cold War audiences’ desire to repeat the past in order to correct it, at least in terms of canonization. Muñoz’s gloss on the distinction between “possibility” and “potentiality”, as Bloch describes the terms, amplifies the seeming inevitability of *Gatsby*’s rise. In his reading of Agamben, Muñoz explains that the concept of possibility constructs the future in terms of a variety of outcomes, none more likely than any other. Conversely, potentiality describes a future anchored in the particularities of the present and therefore eminent, if not inevitable (Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* 9). In this final scene, Nick gestures to potentiality, rather than possibility: he indicates a transformative opportunity on the horizon while still leaving it conditioned and constituted by failure.

**III. So We Beat On**

In the novel’s final moments, the text invites readers to consume the story as Nick has consumed it, to interpret and speak for others, including them in the novel’s program. The danger of the offer, the knowledge that it has failed in the past and most likely will in the future, is the key to its utopian appeal. Cold War readers, after all, knew what their predecessors did not: that Gatsby’s spectacular demise was merely a harbinger of the financial calamity to come. To read *The Great Gatsby* as Cold War readers did is to find in the novel a statement on justice, one that sees the past as inescapable and the American Dream as potentially unforgiving and out of reach.

Considering the American Dream as a complex utopian structure in the novel reveals the centrality of immanent corruptibility to the novel’s utopian portrayal of the American Dream, and concomitantly, its aesthetic transportability. Indeed, these various inflections of the meaning and use of the American Dream underscore *Gatsby*’s potential to trigger certain cultural iterations at one moment, while triggering different readings at others. Despite this fatalism, Bloch reminds us that the immanence Gatsby’s death does not make it inevitable. While the past, with all its injustices, may have caught up with *Gatsby*’s protagonist, reading the American Dream as a utopia which reading communities themselves construct, rather than having it foisted upon them, gives us new insight into why so many have cherished the novel as a call to beat against the current.

## Chapter 4: Going Native: Commodities, Language, and Ventriloquism in *In the American Grain*

Like *The Great Gatsby*, William Carlos Williams' *In the American Grain* received a cool reception when first published in 1925. Williams, though, proved more dogged than Fitzgerald in his pursuit of accolades for the series of essays that trace U.S. verve and ingenuity back to the Viking and Spanish arrivals in the hemisphere. Despite the lackluster reaction from critics and the lay reading public, Williams planned a sequel, reissuing *In the American Grain* in 1939 to drum up support for the endeavor. When both the sales and the critical reception again fell short of his hopes, he abandoned the second project in dismay (Saunders 195, 140). But if presses and the arbiters of literary taste were unimpressed first in 1925 and then again in 1939, the conclusion of the Second World War and the intensification of hostilities between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. marked a definitive upsurge in Williams' favor. In 1952, the same year that Williams' FBI file prevented him from serving as Consultant to Poetry to the Library of Congress (6), James Laughlin, the editor of the Ford Foundation-funded journal *Perspectives U.S.A.* resurrected *In the American Grain* when he reprinted "The Destruction of Tenochtitlan" in the journal's inaugural issue.[45] Laughlin's press, New Directions, quickly followed up, republishing the full volume in 1956 and later reprinting nearly all of Williams' oeuvre as Williams himself became an icon of two dominant strains of post-World War II poetic movements: the Beats and their various offshoots, and language poetry. This sudden upsurge in literary fame represents a shift from Williams' earlier reputation and role within modernist coteries. Though he often circulated at the margins of the interwar avant-garde circles he

[45] Throughout the Cold War, the Ford Foundation had close ties to the CIA. For more on this history see Greg Barnhisel's recent study *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy 1946-1959* (Columbia University Press, 2015).

frequented,[46] *Perspectives* brings him definitively into the fold: in addition to "The Destruction of Tenochtitlan," two of his poems and a short story also appear in *Perspectives*' inaugural issue alongside a glowing review written by Randall Jarrell of his *Collected Poems*. Indeed, Williams was the most frequently featured author throughout *Perspectives*' three-year run.[47] If *Perspectives* catalyzed Williams' prominence as the ambassador of a particular strain of interwar U.S. modernism—one dedicated, pre-eminently, to "a struggle to forge an idiom which would be purely American as distinct from the tradition of English poetic style" (6) as Laughlin writes of Williams in his introductory note to the issue—then the many newspaper interviews, reprints, and critical essays written about him and his work throughout the Cold War codify this position.

*Perspectives*' stated purpose and mode of distribution make an essay drawn from *In the American Grain* an almost ideal realization of the journal's aims. Laughlin published *Perspectives* in English, French, German and Italian with plans to expand to Spanish at a later date, and sold it relatively inexpensively in the U.S. and in European countries where these languages were primarily spoken. The journal was also made available free of charge in USIA

[46] It would not be much of an exaggeration to claim that such covert CIA sponsorship made William Carlos Williams' reputation. Though an active member of the Arensberg Circle and the New York City avant-garde of the 1920s, widespread popular and intellectual fame eluded him. He was perhaps most famous during the 1920s as the friend of the highly acclaimed Ezra Pound. As was the case with both Fitzgerald and Faulkner, Williams struggled to pique the interests of audiences that included members other than his literary peers. In fact, even within this more intellectual and artistic group, Williams often faced a frosty reception: the French artist Marcel Duchamp, arguably the most famous member of the Arensberg circle, apparently thought Williams' unintelligent, a plumber rather than a true artist. While Duchamp's disdain likely has much to do with the two men's rivalry for the affections of the poet-artist Mina Loy, Williams often found himself on the outskirts of the modernist movements he frequented. Though this treatment perhaps makes him the ur-modernist—the outsider's outsider—such wary support spells disaster for book sales. Soon after its first publication, *In the American Grain,* like most of Williams' other works, went out of print "and remained out of print, virtually forgotten, for nearly fifteen years" (Conrad 3).

[47] Williams is one of only a handful of authors to be printed several times in the same issue and with 17 separate publications, is the most published author of the journal's run.

reading rooms throughout Europe (Barnhisel 205). As Laughlin noted in his introduction, he had two goals for this method of distribution: first, to introduce European authors to the best writing and art produced in the U.S., and second, to respond "to the sense of isolation which the American artist feels, separated as he is by the oceans from an important section of his natural public" (7). Likewise, nearly every one of the essays in *In the American Grain*, particularly the early American essays that open the volume, foregrounds the question of language's relationship to indigeneity and European settler-colonialism through tales of early contact between European explorers, indigenous groups, and slaves brought to the Americas from Africa. But the essays take move beyond a superficial examination of these themes: in each of the works that comprise the volume, friends, neighbors, enemies, scholars, and even distant strangers animate the tales of singular and paradigmatic American subjects by speaking for and as the subjects of their interest. The speakers, in other words, literally "go native" by, at times, speaking through the bodies of indigenous peoples. This ventriloquist logic arises largely by breaking from a representation of human beings and the lands they occupy primarily as goods to be possessed, distributed, accumulated, or sold, a disruption with its own material consequences.

This last note, about *In the American Grain*'s explicitly capitalistic overtones, indicates a further context worth noting. The republication and canonization of *In the American Grain*, and in particular those essays that foreground the Americas' settler-colonial past, dovetails with the beginnings of often anti-capitalist decolonization movements in the Global South. The CIA's attempts to defend U.S.-style democratic capitalism by codifying a literary and artistic canon that either explicitly or implicitly supports settler-colonialism and its economic avatars is thus coterminous with the first rumblings of a global challenge to these values in the guise of the pre- or nearly-postcolonial. Though a structuring condition for state initiatives, the explicitly financial

frame within which editors and state-agents marketed *Perspectives* has remained a sub-conversation in scholarship about Cold War cultural diplomacy; likewise *In the American Grain*'s ruthless commodity fetishism has remained a less-dominant critical thread. Yet if, as Andrew Hoberek argues, we understand the Cold War United States as a literary and popular culture obsessed with financialization—albeit, in subtle ways—then *In the American Grain*'s suggestion that constructing a uniquely American idiom depends upon turning the immaterial, human, and life sustaining into commercial goods reflects this particular Cold War zeitgeist. And yet, Williams' ventriloquized American idiom becomes its own undoing. It is, ultimately, a language that fails.

**I. Keeping the World Safe for Commodities**

Like *The Great Gatsby*, state agents and their avatars used *In The American Grain* and texts like it as diplomacy-building commodities. In his introduction to the first issue of *Perspectives U.S.A.*, Laughlin explained,

> It is the conviction of the sponsors of this magazine that [low cost and locally based] communication on the level of cultural exchange offers one of the best methods of fostering the development of world understanding and a sense of moral community among the peoples of the world. Appreciation of the arts can act as a solvent for ideological differences of opinion…. Cultural exchange can create a climate favorable to the peaceful solution of some of the world's problems and troubles. (8)

In the event that the errant reader might misconstrue Laughlin's meaning, he closed "*Perspectives* [is] free of propaganda or political pressure. Its sponsors believe in the principle of

the freedom of artistic expression. They also believe in the right of others to decide for themselves how they wish to interpret and apply that principle" (7).

From one perspective, Laughlin's comments conform to Frederic Jameson's and others' claims that the significance of modernism after World War II depended upon describing it as a largely apolitical aesthetic movement. While the disclaimer that *Perspectives* is "free of propaganda or political pressure" is laughable given the aims of cultural front initiatives instituted throughout the Cold War, Laughlin nonetheless pins his appeal for the salience of high art and literature on what he calls "freedom of artistic expression." This framing underscores several important aspects of how *In the American Grain* and other reprinted texts circulated. First, it casts the arts and the ways that they make and propagate meaning as a realm apart from other modes of expression. These delimitations to the general concept of freedom of expression follow from Laughlin's earlier assurances in the note that the few U.S. magazines already available abroad have demonstrated "the value of our political institutions and convey to the masses abroad the optimistic tone of American life" (6). In reifying artistic expression, Laughlin treats artistic culture as a stable and bounded concept, one with clear and easily recognizable divisions from other non-artistic representations. The arts, in this formulation, remain devoid of politics. Laughlin thereby casts the tacit support of the status quo, by abiding by the principle of "artistic freedom" as he defines it, as value neutral and devoid of political content, an understanding of the political realm that maintains its widespread currency today.

These closing comments and sentiments place Laughlin's opening statements—where he contrasts more popular forms like Hollywood films with the apparently more significant work of high culture—into relief. Laughlin begins with a kind of panegyric against middlebrow culture,

which he cites as a stultifying force responsible for the United States' reputation for mediocrity in the arts as compared to European nations:

> Certain accidents of history, combined with commercial and political pressures, have had unfortunate consequences for judgments about American culture in other lands. Various misconceptions exist about American culture abroad and a distortion of its values has been built up, quite as often by the shortcomings of some of its own phenomena (such as Hollywood movies or the comic book) as by antagonistic political propaganda. (1–9)

Here, Lauglin suggests that what makes the commercial, global circulation of these "low" cultural forms lamentable is their imbeddedness within political structures. Pairing the political with the commercial, Laughlin argues that rather than some flaw inherent to them, what plagues low culture forms like Hollywood films and comic books are the fact that they combine the political with the economic: that is to say, they show that the economic realm is also a political one and vice versa. Yet despite his disgust for the blatantly commercial aims of these lower forms of entertainment, Laughlin, unwittingly or not, insists that part of *Perspectives*' appeal lies in its own status as a commodity. After all, Laughlin sees financial limitations as the primary reason that European audiences lack exposure to U.S. culture: "the *outward* flow [of U.S. cultural materials] has been abruptly and seriously blocked, principally by the dollar shortage abroad and other monetary difficulties" (7). In making this statement, Laughlin tacitly acknowledges the commercial and financial resonances of the journal.

Perhaps despite his intentions, Laughlin's justifications correlate to reconsiderations of exchange and consumption that Daniel Horowitz contends crossed national boundaries, and included an increasing appreciation for the role of pleasure and enjoyment, in the post-War

years. Horowitz argues that in addition to panegyrics against consumer culture, like Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) or Walter Benjamin's more measured but nonetheless skeptical essays, these Frankfurt school style rejections of mass culture tell only one part of the story. Instead, Horowitz places these studies within a dynamic scholarly network that "challenged the division between high and low that had long held sway, replacing hierarchical approaches with parallel ones" (6). What Laughlin is selling, not unlike Quaritch before him and the movie westerns that in 1952 had just begun enthralling audiences domestically and abroad, is a particular version of settler-colonialism, one rooted in European imperialism and easily exportable. Laughlin's take on the frontier thesis depends upon an understanding of indigenous groups in the Americas as fundamentally inassimilable to western ideals, culture, and structures of governance—or worse yet, invisible. After lauding the diversity in U.S. life—although he does not explain just what he means by "diversity"—Laughlin links this diversity to a persistent and ongoing restlessness inculcated through the nation's settler-colonial past: "The United States is still in many ways a country of pioneers. Its culture sometimes strikes the outsider as chaotic because many serious American writers and artists still feel that they are setting out into new territory with freedom to develop it in whatever way their tastes and conscience dictate" (7). In the comment, Laughlin uses a territorial metaphor—one that like the conquistadors who Quaritch republished treats the American landscape as a tabula rasa—to link a multivalent view of freedom to domination. Moreover, he links territorial expansion with the idea of being self-made. Rugged individualism, though, does not obviate the desire for recognition: "The typical American artist is proud to stand on his own feet; yet, at the same time, he has a profound need to be appreciated abroad" (Williams et al. 150). Significantly, these two aspects of U.S. life—the desire to displace and accumulate all while claiming to be "self-made"—are as much *artistic*

processes as they are economic ones for Laughlin, a move that creates a homology between the formal qualities associated with the various arts and economics.

Indeed, Laughlin's discussion of the pioneer experience demonstrates the ways that genocidal settlement undergirds colonial expansion as Mahmood Mamdani has recently noted, but also, the imbrication of high culture with European dominance in the U.S. (4). Mamdani shows that while African Americans and other races have often been included in political and cultural reforms, even more radical ones, "the native question highlights the limits of that reform." The distinction, here, for Mamadi has to do with the difference between land and labor: while African Americans and other ethnic groups were brought to the Americas as a source of manual labor, indigenous groups were "a source of land" (12). Thus while one group could be incorporated into the U.S. nation-state, albeit on unequal terms, the other had to be displaced or annihilated for that very nation-state to expand and prosper. When Laughlin ends the paragraph by citing Williams as a progenitor of a unique American idiom, he thereby suggests that this idiom arises through processes of displacement, dispossession, and genocide.

Laughlin's opening frames *Perspectives U.S.A.* and Williams' writings within it along several converging axes of cultural power. First, given the commercial nature of the venture, Laughlin implies, like Quaritch before him, that various authenticating marks and institutions can distinguish high culture from popular culture. These authenticating marks include an earlier history of publication that failed to recognize the greatness and importance of an earlier generation of writers; the declaration of the magazine's paradigmatically American contents; and the insistence that the authors whose work will grace its pages are innovators of their craft. Nonetheless, like other commodities, these high culture objects are, by Laughlin's own admission, priced to sell and circulate. Though their cultural value exceeds their monetary value,

they remain commodities nonetheless. Second, as was the case with Quaritch's facsimiles, the journals accrue at least some of their cultural value from their global audience. Nation-building is Janus-faced: the glance inward to a sense of national pride and cohesion necessitates a simultaneous turn to audiences outside of the nation's boundaries, and vice-versa. These various considerations come together to suggest that cultural imperialism—and imperialism itself—follows an economic logic of market exposure and saturation. Art, from this vantage point, and the journal *Perspectives U.S.A.* in particular, becomes a materialized cultural ambassador that can spread its ideologies through commercial terms. The development of a U.S.-centered canon during the Cold War therefore always kept a firm eye on global pressures and dynamics even as it looked inward to mine its own artistic resources: nationalism, in other words, is constitutive of imperialism, rather than preceding it. Specifically, *Perspectives*, at least according to Laughlin, sells an ideological version of settler-colonialism that depends upon a commercial trade for its salience as much as for its artistic significance and appeal. In its crudest terms, Laughlin makes it clear that the canon, and the process of canonization, is in and of itself a commodity.

Laughlin's framing of language in the essay and his insistence that Williams' oeuvre lies at the heart of a linguistic project dedicated to producing a uniquely American idiom, proves crucial to the convergence of commodity culture, high art, and statecraft. Though the narrator's attempts in one of the essays from *In the American Grain*, "Père Sebastian Rasles," to liberate the word from "the fixities which destroy it" (128) place him squarely within the ranks of the American avant-garde visual artists and poets living in and around New York City in the early twentieth century, this desire to write in a uniquely American idiom did not enjoy widespread popularity until the middle of the century. Michael North contends in *The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language, and Twentieth-Century Literature* that many modernist poets "felt that the

success of the literary avant-garde and the linguistic independence of the United States were necessary to one another," thus devoting their poetry to "American popular culture, to the multiracial heritage of the Americas, and above all to modern writing in 'plain American' " (130). While Richard Aldington noted in 1920 that American avant-garde artists felt removed from the discussion of "pure English," North shows rather that these poets were "actively antagonistic" to the discussion, going so far as to see the standardization movement as an impediment to the new American literature (28).

But this debate about the nature of American English versus British English became a major part of the popular narrative of modernism during the 1950s due in part to the republication of literary studies that drew attention to this particular aspect of the U.S. avant-garde. As Malcolm Cowley wrote in *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s*, a work initially published in 1934 but re-released in a revised and expanded version by The Viking Press in 1951, "A definite effort was being made to destroy all traces of local idiom or pronunciation and have us speak 'correctly'—that is, in a standardized Amerenglish as colorless as Esperanto" (130). Though perhaps late in the United States' history to declare linguistic independence from England, North suggests instead that the recent influx of immigrants was changing the face of America as the United States became "markedly less English" (Hoberek 1–5). The publication history of Cowley's study suggests, though, that this "markedly less English" populace was not privileged as part of the literary canon until after World War II. "Père Sebastian Rasles"'s tacit conflation of Puritanism with British English and rejection of both functionally presents a more inclusive American identity, one that reflects Cold War social changes and pressures and yet remains blind to, or perhaps tacitly in favor of, the volume's insistence that inclusive communalism is not synonymous with increased rights and access.

One reason for an increased interest in American English rather than British English has to do with significant state investment in a U.S. centered canon during the Cold War. Indeed, a focus on the fiscal undertones of CIA-front journals and related publications shed new light upon the economic aspects of CIA and related foundation's sponsorship of journals, contests, and artistic processes throughout the Cold War and the ways that the language of mercantilism interacts with U.S. diplomatic and imperialist aims. Until the mid-2000s, the majority of studies of post-1945 U.S. literature argued that cultural producers responded to the wave of middle class prosperity throughout the 1950s and 1960s with a general lack of interest in economic language and political criticism, in contrast to the focus on class struggle in the nineteenth-century realist novel. More recently, a growing body of critics have made just the opposite contention, insisting that while discussions of the limits of economic prosperity took on new forms after World War II, they remain a dominant feature of Cold War writing and indeed, are one of the genre conventions of the middlebrow novel, which emerged and became popular in the second half of the twentieth century (1). In fact, many of the CIA's programs continued earlier, more explicitly commercial initiatives, such as the Armed Services Editions that brought *The Great Gatsby* back into print. Though *Absalom, Absalom!*, which I discuss in the next chapter, *Gatsby*, and *In the American Grain* may be particularly successful examples of works that benefited from governmental support, they fit neatly within a vast network of artistic objects valued by agencies like the CIA during World War II and the Cold War for their supposed allegiance to non-Communist leftist politics. Since then, many of the works that formed this initial collection have become hyper-canonical, key representatives, from one perspective, of aesthetic excellence and U.S. culture, and post-War political complacency and institutional suppression, from another.

The scale of these initiatives testifies to the significant impact they had on the post-World War II canon and artistic scene. In her breakthrough monograph *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (1999), Frances Stonor Saunders assiduously recorded the surreptitious artistic and cultural exportations of "American" values abroad supported by CIA-front organizations like the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), which former CIA-agent Michael Josselson ran from 1950 to 1967 (1). As Saunders explains, the CCF—a broad coalition of artists, intellectuals, writers, and musicians determined to combat Soviet propaganda by promoting "non-Communist" leftist-politics—served as the most active organization of a sprawling international effort that included dozens of international offices and multiple magazines, journals, newspapers, conferences, prizes, and public performances (Wilford 103, 14 pg. 103). According to Saunders and others, the CIA supported such efforts in order to suppress artistic expression allegedly seen as Communistic and instead, to promote core "American" values like individualism and freedom. As Laughlin's introduction makes clear, though, freedom often served as a byword for the freedom to consume. The benefits of CIA sponsorship for U.S. authors should not be underrated: in addition to funding more ephemeral ventures like small magazines, the CIA also periodically negotiated book contracts for promising authors with one of the publishing houses with which they partnered, such as Frederick A. Praeger. Though the scale of such ventures remains in dispute, one estimate suggests that upwards of 250 books were financed or produced with CIA support during the Cold War (Luey 39).

Public and university libraries also expanded during this period, with federal dollars geared towards building collections centered around an emerging canon that included many works explicitly supported by the CIA (Cmiel 330, 337). Such expansions, paid for largely by the 1956 Library Services Act, an initiative that channeled funds to rural areas that lacked

functioning libraries, ultimately led to a shift in library culture. No longer seen merely are warehouses for "great" literature, libraries increasingly spent funds on a wide variety of media throughout the 1950s and 1960s, ultimately becoming centers for civic activity where patrons could find information about a variety of topics free of charge (Downs 138). Though this story of an increasingly activist and populist public library has its sinister side—Oklahoma librarian Ruth Brown, for instance, was fired due to her support of a nascent Civil Rights movement and for stocking her library with titles like the *New Republic*, the *Nation*, and *Negro Digest* (Rexroth 44, 45; Rosenthal BR38)—such anecdotes suggest that the promotion of a canon perceived as aesthetically challenging was also supported by popular initiatives that sought to make that canon available to a wider audience, including those without a large amount of disposable income or a prior interest in the arts and letters. The economic message was clear: democracy and finance, education and consumption, the arts and economics, were achievable for all and clearly linked.

**II. Speaking in (Others') Tongues**

If inter-War audiences had little patience for Williams' aesthetic (and perhaps economic) experiments, his luck changed in 1952 when Laughlin, a long-time supporter of Williams' work and the newly announced editor of *Perspectives, U.S.A.*, published one of the essays from *In the American Grain* and several of Williams' poems in the magazine's inaugural issue.[48] The exposure inaugurated a dramatic upswing in the frequency and scale with which Williams' work was cited and his influence noted by an emerging generation of poets and writers. New Directions Press, the company Laughlin headed and arguably the most influential small press in the country, decided to republish all of *In the American Grain* in 1956, and later much of

[48] Though Williams did republish the volume in 1938, the New Directions' edition is the one that continues to be in print.

Williams oeuvre, including all six books of *Paterson* (1963), *The Collected Later Poems of William Carlos Williams* (1950, repub.1963), *The Collected Earlier Poems of William Carlos Williams* (1966), *Imaginations* (1970), and *The William Carlos Williams Reader* (1966), among many others. By 1961, Beat poets like Allen Ginsberg, cited Williams as a key predecessor. In their praise of Williams', these young writers categorized him alongside Walt Whitman as paradigmatically and uniquely American and an unparalleled innovator in the world of letters (Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature* 122). Though Random House published Williams' tongue-in-cheek autobiography in 1950, the support of the Ford Foundation-funded Laughlin, and the essays comprising *In the American Grain* in particular, catapulted Williams to fame.

The volume's themes make it an almost ideal candidate for this kind of sponsorship and popular affection. *In the American Grain*, like *Perspectives*, mirrors Cold War structures of feeling at a moment of active canon-formation where those works predicated upon American individuality and pluck became especially prominent and valuable. Due to its relentless focus on the nature of the American experience; its use of literary sources considered unconventional at the time, such as Columbus's journals during his four voyages; and its insistence upon a unique and identifiable American identity, *In the American Grain* allegorizes the very process of forming a U.S. national canon that locates its origins in the putative discovery of the New World by European explorers, and yet still manages to wriggle free from the strangle-hold of Anglo-influence and cultural dominance. This hybridized American spirit is borne through the process of claiming land, a commodity unto itself. Moreover, in a process that the essays cast as both compulsive and compelling, laying claim to the land often arises through sexual or other physically intimate interactions with its arbiters: Native Americans. These attributes intersect

with the book's historical methodology—rescuing forgotten figures or reconstituting their legacy such that they seem indebted to colonizers-as-native, rather than strictly foreign, influences—which mirrors the kind of reconstructive history in which the CIA and other state agencies were engaged throughout the latter part of the twentieth century. That the failed heroes of Williams' essays speak a dialect composed of a mixture of European and native languages provides a linguistic corollary to "homegrown" values: while, as Laughlin insists, Europe maintains an influence upon U.S. culture—particularly when it comes to classical republicanism and U.S. democracy—the source of this culture is an indigenous and therefore hybrid one.

In this vein, I argue that *In the American Grain* describes a perpetually unfulfilled, but nonetheless constantly longed-for process of "going native." The assumption of an autochthonous identity climaxes in the ability to speak in the voice of the Indian, to assume this new American idiom. This cultural ventriloquism arises through both physical and metaphorical touch. As a technology of bureaucracy, the book equates official speech and written histories with commodities rather than people: stuff, not the essence of a nation. Codified history thereby creates a distance between the speaker and his or her audience. In contrast, unwritten histories allow for the ability to speak through another's mouth. This twinned voice results in a fusion both with the speaker and the American landscape itself that displaces the European commodifying gaze. Williams' moments of pure "Americanism" emerge, then, in those instances where European explorer and land-as-native merge, becoming mutual reflections of each other.

Yet despite the sanguine possibilities of integration that the volume appears to present holistic unity functions as the longed for, but unachievable utopian state in Bloch's formulation of it, due to the contradictory nature of this new American man ("Red Eric" 3). First, Williams' American idiom serves as a kind of contradiction unto itself. In presenting an alternative to the

European tendency to view the Americas as a source of material wealth alone, this new idiom seeks to deny its status as the immaterial corollary to the act of accumulation upon which conquest depends. Second, those figures that speak this new idiom, namely Sebastian Rasles and the members of the Abnaki tribe with whom he lives, perish at the hands of other European settler-colonialists. If one can theoretically imagine, then, a unique American language that does not depend upon accumulation, this language presents such a challenge to the act of conquest that it must be destroyed.

Though "Père Sebastian Rasles" serves as the culmination of a hybridized linguistic process, confusion over who speaks and with what authority drives much of the volume's drama. Opening with an account of the Viking explorers in Newfoundland based heavily upon the medieval Icelandic sagas, from the beginning, the book continuously blurs the lines between narrators and speakers, simultaneously linking linguistics with genealogy and the written codification of the past. The first essay, "Red Eric," about Viking explorers' brief settlement in what is now understood to be part of British Columbia, describes how rather than finding solace in his new surroundings after being expelled from Greenland, Eric's troubles follow him. In addition to skirmishes with the Skrellings, the Viking name for the indigenous group that inhabits Vinland, Eric's family quickly turns murderously upon each other in a competition for land and power. After his dishonorable death, the essay continues in third person, ending with Eric's daughter Freydis's murderous rampage against her brothers' wives and families.

While the anecdote's plot remains relatively straightforward, its mode of telling proves anything but. The essay moves between a first-persona account provided by an Eric-the-Red-persona and an objective-third-person. This narrative confusion, though, proves strangely

tautological: the same series of events continue to plague Eric the Red and his descendants, regardless of who the characters are and who tells the story, a tautology that the text itself admits. Lamenting the fact that history "turns out always the same way," the essay reads:

> Then Lief, Eric's son, sails to Norway, a thousand miles, in one carry. But on his return, Lief the Lucky, he is driven westward upon a new country, news of which he brings to Brattahlid. At the same stroke he brings me back pride and joy-in-his-deed, my deed, Eric moving up, and poison: an edict from Olaf—from my son's mouth—solid as an axe to cut me, half healed, into pieces again. ("Red Eric" 6)

The vacillations between different points of view make attribution of this passage difficult. Who speaks? Though the first part of the passage views Eric as an external object, with the phrase "At the same stroke" the passage turns, apparently, to inhabit Eric's psyche. The description of these various familial intersections thus denature the narrative, such that voice and speaker are disarticulated from each other. Despite this disarticulation, the latter part of the passage suggests that words, even those words rendered second-hand, maintain their connection to the utterer and have the ability to destroy: "an edict from Olaf—from my son's mouth—solid as an axe to cut me." Though the "edict" comes through Lief, the narrator-as-Eric insists that Olaf's essence still infuses the words: indeed, the words conjure Olaf's specter into being, though this specter wields a material manifestation of words: an ax. The spoken word, routed through a mediating body, proves centrally connected to an understanding of connectedness and genealogy in the book, and a significant factor in the shaping of the various characters' destinies.

Yet the suggestion that words, even when alienated from their speaker, remain fundamentally attributable to a single party maintains the distance between the voices representing the various characters. Though their narratives intertwine, the speakers' words,

thoughts, and actions—even when attenuated—ultimately remain independent from one another. Rather than becoming composite figures, Eric, the narrator, and his children prove distinct entities, bludgeoned by history, rather than controlling it. True to form, then, though like the various other parties chronicled in *In the American Grain*, Eric and his progeny are "worthy of aught but evil," they remain the sole group that ultimately flees the New World. Indeed, "Red Eric" closes on an ominous note: "But this I predict of them [Eric's descendants], that there is little prosperity in store for their offspring. Hence it came to pass that no one from that time forward thought them worthy of aught but evil. Eric in his grave" ("The Destruction of Tenochtitlan" 28–29). This curse haunts the remainder of the volume, taking on multivalent meanings. On the one hand, it literally describes the outcome of Viking settlements in the New World, which eventually disappeared. This factual description of human history exists alongside a more metaphorical one. The words also damn Eric the Red's figurative descendants, those European figures who populate the volume's remaining pages with a reminder of a foundational violence lodged within the soil: the very commodity over which later generations will fight.

Such narrative and perspectives shifts—with dire material consequences—are a tendency of the volume itself. For instance, in "The Discovery of the Indies," an essay that draws heavily from Columbus's letters and journals housed in the New York Public Library, the narration moves between loose translations of Columbus's journals detailing his first journey to the Americas as it unfolded, and third-person evaluations of his worth and his legacy. The first-person journal entries are rendered without quotation marks, as though a direct emanation from Columbus's mouth itself, much like the words of the third-person narrator that are similarly presented as though needing no gloss. This pattern breaks in a dialogic moment that interrupts a

journal entry where Columbus frets about his increasingly mutinous crew. In this moment, Columbus provides his own justification for his apparently obsessive pursuit of greatness:

> *Peter Gutierrez:* So that, virtually, you have staked your life and the lives of your companions, upon the foundation of a mere speculative opinion.
>
> *Columbus*: So it is: I cannot deny it. But consider a little. If at present you and I, and all our companions, were not in this vessel, in the midst of this sea, in this unknown solitude, in a state as uncertain and perilous as you please; in what other condition of life should we pass these days? Perhaps more cheerfully? or should we not rather be in some greater trouble or solicitude, or else full of tedium? I care not to mention the glory and utility we shall carry back, if the enterprise succeeds according to our hope. Should no other fruit come from this navigation, to me it appears most profitable inasmuch as for a time it preserves us free from tedium, makes life dear to us, makes valuable to us may things that otherwise we should not have in consideration. (22-23)

In the passage Columbus moves from an existential defense of his pursuit of a goal that might not even exist—who knows where we would be and in what state if not here?—to a more materialist one. The abstract concepts "glory" and "utility" take on a physical weight due to the verb "carry" which suggests that glory and utility exist within the essay's imaginary as commodities not unlike gold and, more invidiously, human cargo. Further, in his closing, Columbus suggests that exploration's worth lies in its ability to "mak[e] valuable to us many things that otherwise we should not have in consideration." This passage is crucial for two main reasons. First, it shows that for Columbus, the drive for material accumulation quickly becomes the justification for his actions. But second, as in the other essays, these changes in narration are

marked by the transformation of abstract concepts into solid objects, into things, in this case, into things with financial value.

The passage's formal position in regards to the rest of the essay also set it apart as exceptional and worthy of special attention and consideration. As the sole example of dialogue in the tale, this moment serves as a demarcation point: the narration continues in first-person for the remainder of the piece. More notably, at this moment the essay breaks from the pattern set up previously in two ways. For the first and only time, a voice other than Columbus's or the third-person narrator breaks into the exposition. This dialogic move calls attention to Columbus as a speaker, rather than portraying his words as though static entries in a journal. The passage therefore changes the nature of the piece, querying its generic boundaries. What before appeared as a kind of translation, albeit one that takes many liberties, slides into a fictional anecdote in which Columbus, like Peter Gutierrez, one of the sailors left behind in Hispaniola and killed before Columbus's return, becomes a character, analogous to the real life figure upon which he is based, but nonetheless distinct from. The essay's narratological peculiarities as linked to the linguistic concretization of ideology, on other words, also affect the nature of the characters' speech and how readers receive that speech. Destruction, accumulation, dispossession, and distance in these essays are as much a matter of language as they are of economics and power.

A similar lesson can be drawn from "The Destruction of Tenochtitlan," the essay reprinted in *Perspectives U.S.A*. The piece documents Cortes's interactions with Montezuma, and the conqueror's eventual destruction of the Aztec city, a destruction that the text suggests stems in part from the lack of physical—and therefore linguistic—exchange between the competing cultures as much as it does on the thirst for riches that drove the conquest of the Americas. Though certain characters speak directly to the reader in the essay—their words set

aside with quotation marks—they fail to speak to each other. In addition, more so than any other essay, "The Destruction of Tenochtitlan" lavishes excessive narrative attention upon displays of wealth. The written documentation of riches becomes a technology of conquest in that it creates a firm distinction between parties and allows for the hunger for goods to continue unabated, as people themselves merely become another pecuniary source, sometimes in explicit contrast to the intentions of the essay's agents. When he hears of their approach, Montezuma tries to dissuade Cortes and his men from entering the city by sending them extravagant gifts: jewelry, gems, animal carcasses, cotton mantles, fine clothing, the list continues for nearly two pages. Of the items enumerated a single refrain unites the otherwise disparate collection: gold, gold, gold ("The Destruction of Tenochtitlan" 31). But Cortes continues undeterred, his curiosity whetted, rather than sated, by the opulent display.

When the two finally meet, the narrative breaks from its third-person objective stance to provide direct quotations for the first time. As in earlier essays, though, the source of these quotations remains unclear: are they translations from Cortes's journal? The narrative voice's imaginative recreation of the encounter? This narrative shift, though, remains tied to the material and fiscal. When Montezuma speaks, he does so in order to address rumors about his community's purported wealth and its relationship to his human status:

> "They have told you that I possess houses with walls of gold and many other such things and that I am a god or make myself one. The houses you see are of stone and lime and earth."— Then opening his robe: "You see that I am composed of flesh and bone like yourselves and that I am mortal and palpable to the touch." ("The Destruction of Tenochtitlan" 38)

Explicitly yoking objects associated with vast riches to his very corporeality, Montezuma's words seek to displace the object-driven pursuit of wealth in the New World with an acknowledgment of a universal humanity that transcends cultural barriers. Cortes, though, finds himself unable to reply. It is not only that Montezuma's words render Cortes mute, but also that at this moment the essay denies Cortes direct quotations. The confrontation with Montezuma's words, but also and crucially, his body, deprives Cortes of language, of the ability to interact.

Cortes's demand, though, that Montezuma submit himself to the Spanish crown reverses this power dynamic. For the remainder of the essay, Cortes's words alone are set apart with quotation marks, but then only to document the material wonders of Montezuma's empire: the gold and other riches, the city's markets, its architecture, and, crucially, its collection of people with extraordinary physical attributes—namely albinism—as objects. When he begins his assault on the city, Cortes speaks only one more time, and then to lament superficially the extermination he has undertaken: " 'It grieved me much but it grieved the enemy more' " ("Père Sebastian Rasles" 123). Unable to speak to or with each other, unable to touch except to destroy, the essay closes with the implication that after conquering it, Cortes found himself unable to rebuild the city to its former glory.

In these early essays, then, languages continually brush past each other without coming into contact: the need to see the immaterial as material, the inability to communicate with indigenous groups, and the act of conquest become part of the same distancing ideological apparatus. Despite these linguistic divides, the opening anecdotes record endless and repeated violent attacks. This New World violence seeps beyond the perhaps expected clashes between Europeans and natives and into European communities in the New World themselves. Though certain personalities, such as Cotton Mather, achieve a relative détente with the land-as-native by

shunning the wilderness altogether, these characters ultimately turn upon themselves and their own societies in a cannibalistic frenzy of paranoia. Separation from difference and crucially, the commodifying gaze, both in the volume and in the historical record, ends in tragedy. *In the American Grain* connects such material acts to their linguistic documentation, suggesting that physical distance from indigenous groups is tantamount to viewing everything as a commodity, a process which ends poorly both for the victor and the vanquished.

These tensions, though, take a definitive turn with "Père Sebastian Rasles." The essay presents a radically different relationship to language than the prior examples, one that the volume prioritizes as distinctly American in contradistinction to the "degenerative" Puritan influence (129). Throughout the piece, the narrator rails against linguistic stasis, seeking instead to create a more fluid American English, one indebted to the intimacy of cross-cultural touch represented by the voices of the defeated rather than the official history of the victors. In contradistinction to the essays that precede and follow "Père Sebastian Rasles," which track a historical figure or figures who may have faced individual adversity and defeat but represent an ultimately successful venture in nation-building, "Père Sebastian Rasles" focuses on a more definitive loss for the characters at the heart of the essay: the British seizure of what is now northern Maine from the French. Rasles, in other words, lost both the battle and the war, an event that ultimately led to the marginalization of French forces in an area that eventually became the continental United States.

Williams invokes these defeated parties in order to construct an alternative origin and lineage for the American language, one that pieces together the ephemera of an unwritten history in order to ventriloquize the tale of the dispossessed rather than translate the written words of the victors. By ventriloquizing European and non-European subjects in the story, the voices

projecting from the unheard past eventually mix to produce a uniquely American idiom. While elements of this formal process occurred in earlier essays—Columbus's imaginative musings in "The Discovery of the Indies," for instance—here, this kind of speaking together has its own, singular characteristics. Unlike accepted histories, which throughout the volume serve to estrange or silence, ventriloquism foregrounds its own hybridity. While earlier essays took a text as their basis—a circulating commodity—"Père Sebastian Rasles" amplifies the lack of this very commodity: those early American unwritten exchanges. As various voices speak through another, they ultimately intertwine and fuse without sacrificing their essence or individuality. Ventriloquism in this iteration, thus functions as a way to "go native," to exist as indigenous and European simultaneously. "Père Sebastian Rasles," posits ventriloquism as a solution to the problems that plagued the earlier essays. By explicitly resurrecting the voices of the defeated and dead—voices previously unheard—the essay represents an imaginative process in which different bodies and voices touch for community rather than profit.

The largely autobiographical story begins with a description of the narrator's six-week vacation in Paris, thereby highlighting the relationship of language to indigeneity, nationality, and imagination. A dialogue with Valéry Larbaud, a French scholar of the early Americas, frames the Rasles anecdote, both formally and thematically. Though the unnamed narrator frets over his poor grasp of French, this very narrator explains of Rasles' interactions with the Abnaki, "He tells of how they laughed at his early attempts at the language. Failing to catch certain gutturals at first, he pronounced but half the words" thereby foregrounding the vernacular process of language *acquisition* and its limitations rather than mastery ("Père Sebastian Rasles" 117). Though critics like José Maria Rodriguez Garcia see Williams' stories as a direct representation of the American past, the frame narrative for "Père Sebastian Rasles" suggests

otherwise, as Williams repeatedly makes reference both to the imaginative act that his telling entails as well as its orthographic implications. While arguing for the deleterious effect of the Puritans in the Americas, the narrator explains:

> take Brookfield, then, scene of the famous massacre, in 1680. The history (which we do not know) says first the whites and natives lived peaceably in this lovely, fertile valley, side by side cultivating and breeding cattle. Only after repeated evidence to the Indian of perfidy on the part of the white man—that he intended "by peaceful methods" to take and hold the land—to supplant the Indian, did he *gradually* withdraw, *later* to strike, in fair battle for his country. ("Père Sebastian Rasles" 115)

The comment "which we do not know" speaks to the unofficial nature of the history of native resistance to European avarice, its lack of written documentation, and to the orthographic implications of its telling—though asides may be heard orally, parentheses only appear on paper. The idea that something other than material gain could govern European and native interactions remains literally unknowable. Like the use of italics, which highlight the process by which an oral emphasis is transcribed, the use of a parenthetical statement remind readers of the written aspects of this dialogue. Similarly, the inclusion of French phrases in italics or quotation marks, such as "*le désert*" and " 'très théorique' " ("Père Sebastian Rasles" 124) remind audiences that this exchange occurs in French, thereby underscoring, rather than obfuscating, the fact that the anecdote arrives already in translation. Such gestures highlight the essay's aesthetic features, casting this written anecdote as a kind of game, one that calls attention to its paper inscription and the highly mediated reception of the dialogue even as it pretends otherwise. Such supposedly verbal moves, like the rendering of the Abnaki word for "We thank you," as "*8ri8ri*," only make

sense on the page—though the number "8" stands in for an Abnaki phoneme, its attendant pronunciation has been lost, at least in the world of the essay—there is no aural correlative for the reader ("Père Sebastian Rasles" 107).

In contrast, ventriloquism, particularly the channeling of unspoken words, circumvents the necessary imprecision of this kind of translation by foregrounding the intimacy of touch and creative instability. Words already monumentalized in writing speak for themselves instead of letting us speak in their stead. Moreover, ventriloquism implies a fusion of voices that happens inside the body, rather than on the page. The human, rather than the commodity, is therefore at the heart of ventriloquist practices. In contrast to the triumphalist and overdetermined Puritan documents that Williams eschews, the tale of a defeated American tribe and its French Jesuit advisor that he tells in "Père Sebastian Rasles" has escaped this closed and definitive historical transcription to paper and thereby the calcification that the collection suggests the British idiom emblematizes. Throughout the frame narrative, the narrator enacts this difference between a staid Old World idiom—and by extension, world-view and sense of possibility—and a more robust and flexible language of the New World. The latter's use of the spoken and written word, though, importantly has non-pecuniary material connections to the American landscape itself, and in fact depends upon a primal experience of it. Describing his trepidation prior to the meeting, the narrator explains, "He [Larbaud] is a student, I am a block, I thought. I could see it at once: he knows far more of what is written of my world than I. But he is a student while I am—the brutal thing itself" ("Père Sebastian Rasles" 118). This passage contrasts the pose of the student, marked by knowledge of the written word, with embodied experience, collapsing the identity of the American narrator onto the very stuff of his homeland.

The narrator's elucidation of the "true" American spirit for Larbaud's benefit serves as a corrective to the pious concerns of the Puritans that the narrator eschews as un-American. To demonstrate the linguistic consequences of the Puritan's distance from the Abnaki, the narrator tells Larbaud about attempts on the part of the British to court the favor and friendship of the Abnaki for strategic purposes. Hoping to seize the land the Abnaki occupied from the French, the British government realized they needed the aid of the indigenous groups in the area in order to achieve new territorial acquisitions. Relaying the story of how the English used religion to manipulate the tribe, the narrator aligns religion with nationality, collapsing the distinctions between the Puritans and the English and condemning them for the same reason. The British official tasked with turning the Abnaki into British allies woos the tribe by insisting that the British want to honor the American natives by giving them knowledge in a language they can understand. Cleverly, this British official imitates the Abnaki's analogical method of explanation thereby ostensibly embracing their cultural dynamics: "It was plain that the English had not put poison in [the good drink of Christianity] for they had set the cup wide open and invited all men, for they had translated the Bible into the Indian language. But the French kept the cup shut fast, the Bible in an unknown tongue, the Latin, and so kept their hands on the eyes of the Indians when they put it to their mouths to drink" ("Père Sebastian Rasles" 119). Though this explanation initially convinces the tribe, when they fall at the speaker's feet and kiss his hand as a show of affection, "he shook them off with a marked dislike of their posture" ("Père Sebastian Rasles" 121). This act of translation, then, parades as transparency, but eschews contact, preferring an ascetic distance to the tactility of touch. Though the British may participate in a surface imitation of native ways, they refuse to embrace them fully, rejecting the carnal results of linguistic exchange.

Ventriloquism, on the other hand, emphasizes intimacy and hybridity due to the honesty with which it admits to the imbrication of voices as one speaks through another. For the majority of the piece, Williams explicitly summarizes Rasles's opinions or quotes Rasles's letters in French whenever referring explicitly to the qualities Rasles ascribes to the Indian. He writes: "[Rasles] speaks of his struggles with [the Abnaki's] language, its peculiar beauties, '*je ne sais quoi d'énergique*' " ("Père Sebastian Rasles" 126). In addition, Rasles, unlike the British, never adopts the highly metaphorical way of speaking employed by the natives. In discussing their culture and social organization, he initially maintains his European essence throughout his interactions. The exception to these rules occurs just after the members of the Indian tribe refuse to side with the British in territory and trading disputes and therefore betray Rasles:

> Know that the Frenchman is my brother, we have the same prayer, he and I, and we live in the same cabin of two fires. If I see you come into the cabin near the fire of my brother, I watch you from my mat. If I see that you carry a hatchet, I would think, what does this Englishman want to do with that hatchet? I get up from my mat to consider what you will do. If he raise the hatchet to strike my brother, I will run to help him. ("Père Sebastian Rasles" 126)

Unlike the other instances in the story, the narrator refrains from referring to the frame of Rasles's letters, ventriloquizing, rather than explicitly translating the Indians' words. This act of ventriloquism, like the Indians' relationship with Rasles, leads to an orthographic hybridity: the narrator and the Indians' words become one, producing a new mode of speech, a new vernacular. Just as the Indians speak as a group, becoming a heterogeneous whole, in channeling this group, the narrator incorporates them into his literary subjectivity. In addition to this new method of narration, for the first time in the story, the characters speak in the present, rather than the past

tense, lending the passage an immediacy and vitality that the narrator's earlier translations of Rasles's words lack. What they discuss is an extension of filial bonds and community, *not* the economic importance of the land. In contrast to the antediluvian resonances of the conventional and yet highly mediated rhetoric that has dominated the story to this point, this present tense vernacular stands as a fluid, vital medium capable of change since it has not already been written into the past, but emerges only in the moment: a living word, rather than a dead one.

War, and in particular, a war in which the protagonists have already been inscribed into written history as the defeated parties continues to serve as the occasion for ventriloquism's transformative powers and thus for a more vibrant American vernacular—what a thing to offer Cold War readers! After learning that the French and English forces in the Americas have commenced official hostilities, the Abnaki decide to fight on the side of the French. When they ask Rasles for his blessing, the narrator ventriloquizes *Rasles* for the first time, writing, "I told them to remember their prayers and to do no cruelty, to kill no one save in the heat of the battle and to treat humanely all those taken prisoners—After that he thinks of them as soldiers" ("Père Sebastian Rasles" 127). As with the Indians, the narrator-as-Rasles also uses the present tense, creating a link between the Indians and the French Jesuit priest that further solidifies the racial mixture that occurs on the page. Similarly, the narrator explains this shift in Rasles reasoning from an explicit counsel towards peace to a blessing upon the act of war by noting,

> [Rasles] speaks with enthusiasm of the Indian as a fighter. He outlines their mode of approach upon a doomed village.—When they have drawn near to the point of attack, they say, twenty here, thirty there. To this party that village is given to be *eaten!* It is their term. (He speaks of appreciation of their term.) ("Père Sebastian Rasles" 127)

Continuing in the present tense, for the first time in the essay, the narrator claims that Rasles "speaks": the letters, in other words, gain a voice as ventriloquism becomes explicitly literary. In this passage, Rasles adopts, if not the Abnaki's manner of speaking, their terms for waging war.

Perhaps most significantly, though, to the essay's depiction of historical time and its relationship to American speech, Rasles refers to the to-be-attacked village as "doomed," inscribing failure rather than the condition of possibility upon the essay. This moment parallels the already certain defeat of Rasles and the annihilation of the Abnaki, which means that assured destruction alone serves as the enabling condition for such acts of ventriloquism. The absence of a written history that could forestall the narrator's imaginative history is instantiated by the Abnaki's military loss at the hands of the British. Indeed, the narrator explains that after the war, "[Rasles] was killed by [the British] at last—at the foot of his rude cross which he had erected in the center of his village—seeking to draw the fire of the enemy upon himself in order that the women and the children might escape—and they mangled him besides, leaving him disfigured and with his bones all crushed within him" ("Père Sebastian Rasles" 128). Martyred like Jesus, Rasles's sparse epistolary records—a gap that bespeaks his destruction—allow for the ventriloquism that positions him as the source of an American vernacular.

In contrast to their Puritan neighbors, Père Sebastian Rasles and his beloved Abnaki represent an alternative source of American history, one located in an almost unwritten history that, due to its relative obscurity and lacunas provides a dialogic opportunity for those seeking to find a new source for an autochthonous American vernacular. Unlike other kinds of historicization, which hinge upon the presence of codified language or text, ventriloquism allows for creative, rather than economic, potential, and for an intermingling of voices that fundamentally alters both parties. As the narrator explains in the final paragraph of the essay,

ventriloquism combats the "lack of touch, lack of belief" ("Père Sebastian Rasles" 129) that he sees as the Puritan legacy and "offers us ALLEVIATION from the dullness, the lack of touch incident upon the steady withdrawal of our liberty" (243). A transformative process, ventriloquism supplants other modes of communication by predicating a touch—at least a textual touch—that allows Williams' narrator to find new sources for American identities. Notably, in speaking for those lost to the historical record, the narrator constructs a past that cannot be disputed, that can only be reimagined, and reconstituted. Only retrospectively can the narrator ventriloquize this force deep within him, "forgotten but not gone" in Joseph Roach's words, that creates a vernacular history of the American idiom, one notably predicated upon the impurity of physical intermingling.

What cannot be ignored, though, is the fact that the process of becoming self-made, of achieving the linguistic corollary to the American Dream, results in annihilation. Rasles perishes and the Abnaki eventually lose their land at the hands of the British. Aspirational Americanness, apparently forged through integration and disinterest in fiscal prospects, has dismal outcomes. The essays that remain in the volume compulsively return to Rasles, either in name or by allusion, and when these individual protagonists falter, they seem haunted by their predecessor's failure. Rasles, after all, fails to have it both ways: he cannot encroach upon indigenous lands in a gentle mimicry of his conquistador ancestors yet peacefully reside and mix, even intellectually, with the groups he and his ilk displace. Going native, the essay suggests, is a kind of suicide.

**III. Books as Commodities in the Cultural Front**

If *Perspectives, U.S.A.* cannily attempts to repackage high art as an affordable commodity without sacrificing cultural value, then the parts of *In the American Grain* republished in the journal and in connection with it show the limits of the Cultural Front's project. Like the forum

responsible for its republication, *In the American Grain* shows that words, language, has a direct bearing on the material consequences of settlement, political influence, and capitalist accumulation. Yet *In the American Grain* further complicates these terms. The early essays suggest that a more ruthless approach to conquest forces the colonizer to treat everything around him or her as an object, as a commodity. The linguistic consequences of this behavior, though, delimit the cultural potential of conquered societies. You can, in other words, have capitalist accumulation and displacement or cultural exchange, but not both.

On the other hand, the essay "Père Sebastian Rasles" suggests that for the conqueror to create a new society, he or she must "go native" represented as a kind of linguistic and physical fusion. Apparently, this kind of exchange resists the commodifying gaze of earlier essays. But even this gentler approach to settlement is not without its own consequences. In going native, the European risks losing his or her life: after all, if conquering forces can see natives only as commodities, cannot actually communicate with them, then the nativized European is similarly compromised. This, then, is a more devastating failure, one that suggests that conquest unleashes a process from which there is no escape but mutual destruction and that the fantasy of a benevolent conquest is just that: a fantasy.

This last cast the early essays comprising *In the American Grain* as prescient, and a kind of warning to CIA operatives busy setting up puppet regimes in Latin America even as they sponsored journals and conquests in the Global South and in Europe. After all, Williams' understanding of linguistic transfer in the essays also parallels the CIA's process for distributing texts to export "American" values: interacting with a different cultural mode eventually results in a fusion with it in which the behaviors associated with indigeneity are ultimately subsumed and integrated into a hybrid Western voice. That the essays show the impossibility of this very

process of cultural transfer served as an harbinger of greater diplomatic failures to come. Indeed, *Perspectives*, too, experienced its own kind of defeat. Copious financial support could not save the journal from ruin. It failed less than three years after the release of its inaugural issue and the works of lesser-known authors like Herbert Gold and Daniel G. Hoffman published in its pages languished despite appearing in a prominent forum alongside the musings of cultural Leviathans like Clement Greenberg and Leslie Fiedler. Perhaps it, too, like the characters in *In the American Grain* found it impossible to broker a truce between commodities and community.

## Chapter 5: This American Afterlife: Ambassadorship and the Imperial Family in *Absalom, Absalom!*

Towards the end of *Absalom, Absalom!*, the divisions between individual subjectivity appear to disappear as Quentin and Shreve, two of the characters who narrate the tale of Thomas Sutpen's rise and decline, achieve an uncanny psychic connection. In their attempt to create a coherent narrative "out of the rag-tag and bob-ends of old tales and talking" their telepathic interactions ultimately reflect their speculations about the motivations of "people who perhaps had never existed at all anywhere, who, shadows, were shadows not of flesh and blood which had lived and died but shadows in turn of what were (to one of them at least, to Shreve) shades too" (243). This psychic connection comes increasingly to depend upon an apparently familial relationship between the characters that populate Shreve and Quentin's shared telling, a familial relationship that eventually extends to the tellers themselves. Approaching the long-delayed resolution to their tale in the New England cold, "both thin[k] as one":

> They stared—glared—at one another, their voices (it was Shreve speaking, though save for the slight difference which the intervening degrees of latitude had inculcated in them (differences not in tone or pitch but of turns of phrase and usage of words), it might have been either of them and was in a sense both: both thinking as one, the voice which happened to be speaking the thought only the thinking become audible, vocal; … quiet as the visible murmur of their vaporising breath. (259)

This empathic convergence bespeaks more radical connections. Not only do Quentin and Shreve think for and fuse with those unknown to them and long dead, the process in which the pair engages extends to the position of the reader. As Carolyn Porter has famously suggested,

> in *Absalom, Absalom!* [Faulkner] … forces the reader to share the burden of narrative construction actively. That is, by casting the novel's central action as an exercise of the imagination in narrative construction, Faulkner implicates his reader as a participant in the telling of a story. (Cohn, "Combatting Anti-Americanism During the Cold War: Faulkner, the State Department, and Latin America" 397)

Like Quentin and Shreve, the reader similarly pieces together "out of the out of the rag-tag and bob-ends of old tales and talking" a story of "people who perhaps had never existed at all anywhere." Indeed, the "thinking become audible, vocal" materializes for the reader as words on the page, not unlike "the visible murmur of [Quentin and Shreve's] vaporising breath." More explicitly than in *The Great Gatsby* and *In the American Grain*, storytelling as a communal and belated act of interpretation weaves characters of varying backgrounds and insights across the hemisphere together to make them, at least figuratively, a family. *Absalom, Absalom!* thematizes the question of how to recruit "ordinary," and far distant, citizens into the project of canon formation by using their position as reader-cum-storyteller to cast them as cultural stewards. Like the essay "Pere Sebastian Rasles," such unions in *Absalom, Absalom!* reflect a larger concern with convergence, and particularly in the case of the novel, with familial convergence.

These formal effects, though, take on a particular urgency when considered within a Cold War context. The novel's model of the reader or listener as participant interfaced with state-led efforts to craft a U.S. canon that would provide evidence of a continuous and homespun literary and artistic tradition. On a global scale, the novel's geographies—the U.S. South, North, and the Caribbean—mirror William Faulkner's movements in his guise as cultural ambassador during the Cold War. Though his initial rise in lay popularity occurred despite the best efforts of the

CIA, particularly the Cold Warriors Sidney Hook and Frank Wisner who initially discouraged the promotion of his work (Saunders 70), Faulkner ultimately owes at least some of his fame to the agency. Like Fitzgerald and Williams, Faulkner's receipt of the Nobel Prize in 1949 belies his prior irrelevance. Though his novels were lauded in avant-garde coteries in the 1930s, and were popular before and during World War II in Latin America and certain European countries, he remained a relatively obscure author in the U.S. for much of his career (292). Indeed when he attended the Nobel Prize ceremony in 1951 to accept his award, all but one of his novels were out of print. Though the CIA's attempts at cultural repression were initially successful—Faulkner's books sold poorly during the early-1950s, largely due to the efforts of people like Johnston (254)—once his reputation seemed unshakable the CIA openly championed the Nobel prize winner, sending him to Latin America and Japan as an official cultural ambassador.[49] Faulkner's trips, though, were not the only thing subsidized by covert government agencies: his Nobel Prize acceptance speech was the first entry in *Perspectives*' inaugural issue, directly preceding Williams' "The Destruction of Tenochtitlan."

If, through these efforts, the CIA hoped to turn Faulkner's novels into the stuff of popular consumption, then it appears they succeeded. In 1954 the decidedly middle-brow Book of the Month Club chose *The Portable Faulkner*, a collection that included the full text of *The Sound and the Fury*, as one of its selections. The inclusion of one of Faulkner's so-called high tragedies in a volume pitched towards a broader reading public is an indicator of the degree to which CIA sponsorship helped to make Faulkner's works into "crossover" hits: popular among lay as well as professional readers, a status they enjoy today when they periodically erupt into popular consciousness. For instance, in 2005 Oprah embarked upon a "Summer of Faulkner" with her

[49] As Deborah Cohn has argued, in part due to these trips Faulkner's works influenced future Nobel Prize winners like Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Conrad 3).

book club. Just three years later, during his 2008 bid for the Democratic Party presidential nomination, Barack Obama (mis)quoted *A Fable* when he delivered his lauded speech about race, "A More Perfect Union." Faulkner's novels, *Absalom, Absalom!* among them, occupy the realm of those few masterpieces seen as the purview of specialists and zealots as much of popular audiences.

It seems fitting, then, to pair the model of U.S. society *Absalom, Absalom!* limns alongside Faulkner's status as a representative of U.S. literary and cultural values abroad, particularly in the Global South, during the Cold War. After all, *Absalom, Absalom!* itself famously traces an imperial route of neo-conquest not all that different from the one that Faulkner traveled at the bequest of the CIA. Sutpen's (doomed) destiny obtains after he voyages to the Caribbean, a trip that uncannily echoes U.S. intervention in the Global South throughout the period. Thus while John T. Matthews has alleged that Faulkner's "impetus" in writing the novel "arises … from anxiety that modern U.S. imperialism was tending to revive and refurbish colonial plantation pasts in its plans for new territories of influence and development of the Caribbean, Latin American, and the Pacific," I contend that these anxieties were *particularly* visible and pressing during the Cold War (Blotner).

Sutpen's peripatetic voyages, though, catalyze the central tragedy of the plot as much as they do the mystery that drives *Absalom*'s narrators to piece together, through evidence and imagination, the events that led to Sutpen's downfall. Sutpen's afterlife, much like *Absalom*'s, is made formally appealing through a particular emphasis upon the imperial resonance of the individual family unit. In its suggestion that collective story-telling creates a kind of genealogical chain, the novel dramatize the very democracy-building aims that were the CIA's purported goal throughout the Cold War, even as it exposes the limits of this project. In *Absalom, Absalom!*, the

delayed Cold War darling, the compulsive retelling of Sutpen's tale in order to solve its mystery testifies to the structural imperative in the U.S. South to maintain racial divisions; yet miscegenation and its imperial past, the "monstrous love" around which Quentin and Shreve's version of Sutpen's story coalesces, nullify such continuity. As readers noted of the novel throughout the 1950s and 60s, *Absalom, Absalom!* provides a prehensile indicator of tensions yet to come. Integration through conquest, the twin specters of the Cold War, thus structure a novel that suggests, like *Gatsby* and *In the American Grain*, that the American Dream is not only internally inconsistent, it is doomed to collapse upon itself. If, formally speaking, the novel's various tellers seek to produce a cohesive version of Sutpen's tale where racial difference would not destroy that cohesion, then within a Cold War context that very formal project interrupts the CIA's programmatic imperial efforts.

**I. CIA Sponsorship and Popular Support**

Since the declassification of many government documents in the 1990s, interest in CIA sponsorship of literary and artistic culture during the Cold War has soared. Deborah Cohn, Harilaos Stecopoulos, Matthews, Harley D. Oberhelman, Helen Oakley, James East Irby, and Lawrence H. Schwartz among many others have insisted upon the centrality of state-sponsorship to Faulkner's career and reception and his place in the canon. These critics usually make two main points about Faulkner's mid-century rise to fame in the U.S. context. First, they note that New Critics and those writing for the *Partisan Review* and other journals frequently associated with covert CIA support recast Faulkner's aesthetic experiment as a universalist one (Oakley 408).[50] While Cold War intellectuals like Malcolm Cowley may not have seen Faulkner's novels

[50] Helen Oakley and Deborah Cohn represent the two poles of Faulkner's influence upon Latin American authors. While Oakley contends that it was often stultifying, Cohn instead represents this influence as a liberating force.

as unimpeachable, they nonetheless viewed Faulkner "not so much as a southern regionalist but more as a spokesman for the exploration of universal moral themes" (Cohn, "Faulkner, Latin America, and the Caribbean: Influence, Politics, and Academic Disciplines" 508, 507). Second, these critics often demonstrate the degree to which Faulkner's reputation in the second half of the twentieth century was largely a function of active CIA sponsorship, including several trips he made to Latin American and Japan as a so-called goodwill ambassador.

Between 1954 and 1961, Faulkner made two State Department-sponsored trips to Latin America; the first to Brazil, Venezuela, and Peru; the second only to Venezuela. In addition to these trips, Faulkner also traveled to Japan, the Philippines, Iceland, and Greece at the urging and on the dole of the U.S. Department of State ("Faulkner, Latin America, and the Caribbean: Influence, Politics, and Academic Disciplines" 507). Cohn describes these visits as remarkably fruitful and effective both from an aesthetic and a geo-political standpoint: "On his trips, [Faulkner] taught, spoke about his work, and commented on race relations in the US. Both his words and his own presence testified to the achievements of the US in nations hostile towards the US, and he was instrumental in tempering this sentiment" (16). These official trips as well as more clandestine support went hand in hand to transform Faulkner into an international and domestic literary superstar. While Faulkner's works may have provided a reprieve from the realist imperative in Latin America, on the domestic front, according to Harilaos Stecopoulos, *Absalom, Absalom!* lent readers a vocabulary with which to talk about postwar life and, at least in the case of the Harvard scenes in *Absalom, Absalom!*, a war that took place largely "over there" rather than "right here" (5).

Indeed, the novel itself foregrounds the power of literature and literary language to bridge cultural differences. As the first character in the novel to describe the building of Sutpen's

Hundred to Quentin, Miss Rosa's narrative serves as the template for the interpretations that follow. She invites Quentin to hear her telling of this seminal story,

> [b]ecause you are going away to attend college at Harvard they tell me … So maybe you will enter the literary profession as so many Southern gentlemen and gentlewomen too are doing now and maybe some day you will remember this and write about it. You will be married then I expect and perhaps your wife will want a new gown or a new chair for the house and you can write this and submit it to the magazines. (6)

Quentin misinterprets her words and doubts her motives, thinking, "*It's because she wants it told … so that people whom she will never see and whose names she will never hear and who have never heard her name nor seen her face will read it and know at last why God let us lose the war*" (Breit). Indeed, she does want her story told and hopes that Quentin will write it down so that it may become permanent. For Miss Rosa, the written word becomes the medium of continuity between the past and the present because it promises the intransience of her tale even if the oral narrative disappears. Her thinking parallels the very logic of the CIA according to internal memos about their Cold War initiatives. A single written version of the tale would nullify all variations, leaving only a unified Ur-narrative, a theory of power and control emblematic of the Cold War zeitgeist. In her request, Miss Rosa adopts a tentative vernacular that mirrors the tentative nature of the tale. She thereby acknowledges the danger implicit in lacking a definitive narrative, for until codified each teller will create it, or forget it, as he or she pleases. In suggesting that Quentin commit her story to paper, she asks him to serve as the medium of cultural continuity, casting herself as its touchstone.

In addition to these literary resonances, market forces also likely contributed to the sense that Faulkner's works grew out of a Cold War structure of feeling rather than an interwar one. Despite the earlier genesis of *Absalom, Absalom!*, advertisements placed in prominent newspapers and comments made by reviewers suggest that publishers often distributed pre-pub copies of reprinted texts along with new titles. Journalists periodically wrote about these reprints in their reviews and while careful to note the original publication dates, the framing of the pieces, particularly the evaluation and synopses provided, periodically obscured the distinctions between first and later editions (Amis). Indeed, readers and journalists frequently referred to *Absalom, Absalom!* as a deft analysis of their contemporary circumstances, particularly as the Civil Rights movement escalated. In a letter to editor titled "Demand to Be Heard" and printed in the *Afro-American* in 1963, reader Lola Jones Amis drew upon *Absalom* in her analysis of the escalating violence in the deep South: "Faulkner's story of white Thomas Sutpen, who would not say 'My son' to Charles Bon, whose ancestral miscegenation had bred him as half colored, half white probes beneath the surfaces of mere family relationships. It's, in fact, the very stuff of which the Birmingham situation, the Mississippi crisis, the Arkansas strife, is made" (Hunter; United Press International; Culligan). The authors of Faulkner's obituaries and reflections upon desegregation concurred, insisting that his works showed that he "sensed the approach of the drama" of the Civil Rights movement (Matthews 240). These readers and critics thereby ascribed a prophetic quality to Faulkner's novels, describing them as a window into the present rather than one to the past. Moreover, like Amis, these journalists placed Sutpen's family at the heart of *Absalom*'s drama, casting the personal as an analogue for larger racial tensions.

As Matthews has demonstrated, though, throughout the Cold War the family often coded imperial anxieties. Even a cursory survey of such popular hits as the 1962 film *The Manchurian*

*Candidate* testify to the degree to which U.S. subjects fretted about the possibility that intervention abroad could easily lead to infiltration at home (299). By 1978 when Cleanth Brooks argued that Sutpen, in his pursuit of an "abstract idea" fell prey to a characteristically "American neurosis" (210), he did so by building upon Arthur L. Scott's 1954 contention that this "American neurosis" was Thomas Sutpen's "fierce attempt … to establish a respectable white dynasty" (556). In the moment of *Absalom, Absalom!*'s canonization, racial tensions at home and Faulkner's imperial ambassadorship remain tightly imbricated. The CIA's initial reticence to deploy Faulkner the man as well as his texts for their political purposes speaks to the sensitivity and particularly topical nature of the issues the work broaches: namely, its argument that U.S. hegemony is purchased through the suppression of subaltern subjects at home and across the hemisphere, a bargain that nonetheless leads to tragic failure.

**II. Genealogical convergence in *Absalom, Absalom!***

Like *The Great Gatsby* and *In the American Grain*, references to the conquest of the Americas abound throughout *Absalom, Absalom!.* In the case of Faulkner's novel, though, they tend to be re-rerouted through the accumulative practices of settler-colonialism as a technology that provides the foundation for chattel slavery in the U.S. south. On its most basic level, then, the novel commits itself to a narrative process where threads seen as perhaps artificially disparate are brought to bear upon one another. In their telling and retelling of Sutpen's tale, these settler-colonial practices lead to the creation of a distinctly American genealogical unit, both rhetorically and biologically: Shreve's entry into the novel's cadre of tellers creates a pan-North American familial unit as much as Thomas Sutpen's paternal relationship to Charles Bon extends this family to the Caribbean and the mixed race children of slavery. The novel, in other words, follows both the routes and roots of CIA intervention in Latin America during the Cold War and

Faulkner's own speaking schedule. Such attention to the vicissitudes of *Absalom*'s formal dynamics and their relationship to the racial tensions through which Cold War audiences read the novel suggests that *Absalom*'s paradigmatic focus on slavery remains closely linked to its imperial register. The two themes—slavery and conquest—repeatedly coincide in the figure of a single body, that of Charles Bon. The novel, though, lays the groundwork for this embodiment of the contradictions of settler-colonialism and U.S. empire through a relentless attempt at narrative and genealogical convergence.

The one hundred acres of land that comprise Sutpen's Hundred, perhaps unsurprisingly, localize the novel's temporal, accumulative, genealogical, and rhetorical energies. When Sutpen arrives in Mississippi, he purchases the property that will ultimately comprise his plantation from a "Chickasaw Indian agent" (25), thereby claiming the land, albeit through capitalist means, from the peoples who previously occupied it. In a further parallel to earlier models of European expansion in the Americas, Sutpen pays for the future plantation with a "gold Spanish coin" (26). These references to native displacement, particularly through the vicissitudes of capital, though, do not end there. According to Hortense Spillers, the path Sutpen builds to his plantation follows the Trail of Tears and thus Sutpen's efforts to acquire the means necessary to establish his dynasty recapitulate the very indigenous removal that made U.S. expansionism possible (179). If Sutpen serves as the story's origin point, and, as Quentin muses, an overdetermined paternal figure who, according to the novel's narrative logic, created not only Quentin and his father, but also Quentin's Canadian roommate Shreve, then the tale of his rise and fall links the act of conquest in the Americas with the bureaucratic procedures of settler-colonialism. The various tellers of Sutpen's story thus do not simply labor alongside the reader to draw together the

various threads of Sutpen's life and legacy to produce a coherent narrative, in doing so, they also labor to produce a coherent national narrative, one initiated by settler-colonialism.

*Absalom* attempts this act of convergence by focusing on the body. Though Charles Bon, Sutpen's illegitimate mixed-race heir, most famously illustrates embodied convergence, so too, does Thomas Sutpen himself. Through the course of the novel, he comes to occupy a variety of subject positions, without ever sacrificing the one for the other: native, conqueror, colonialist, and plantation owner. As the novel loops back upon itself, readers learn that Sutpen grew up in the Tidewater region of Virginia:

> where he lived the land belonged to anybody and everybody and so the man who would go to the trouble and work to fence off a piece of it and say "This is mine" was crazy; and as for objects, nobody had any more of them than you did because everybody had just what he was strong enough or energetic enough to take and keep, and only that crazy man would go to the trouble to take or even want more than he could eat or swap for powder and whiskey. (Winston)

Such descriptions align Sutpen with stereotypes of Native American practices and conceptions of the land itself widespread throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (185). More specifically, they hearken back to early European explorers' insistence upon the Americas as a universal commons, free for the taking. Like those indigenous peoples mocked for selling land for the price of liquor or cheap trinkets, Sutpen, too, values these more ephemeral commodities. In addition, he sees the land as open to all: the idea of owning it strikes him as literally insane.[51]

[51] Such stereotypes have been incredibly persistent, as documented by Disney's 1995 film Pocahontas ("Combatting Anti-Americanism During the Cold War: Faulkner, the State Department, and Latin America" 395–402). For more, see Pauline Strong "Animated Indians: Critique and Contradiction in Commodified Children's Culture" on an analysis of ideological

Significantly, though, Sutpen does not resemble *actual* indigenous groups in any particularized or culturally nuanced way. Instead, he mirrors a fabricated conglomeration of stereotypes, anecdotes, and justifications for U.S. dominance over those Native American tribes that populated the frontier at its various stages of movement. He is *not* in the words of the narrator from Williams' story "Père Sebastian Rasles" "the thing itself" but rather a reproduction of the thing itself. These suggestions portray Sutpen as an indigenous mimic nonetheless corrupted by a typically European desire for ownership: of other humans in the form of chattel slavery, in part, but also of property, the very commodity that ultimately necessitates slave labor. Sutpen in this moment illustrates two twinned anxieties and their possibility. First, that close proximity to certain cultural practices, at least as understood by outsiders, threatens one's authentic self, in this case, Sutpen's status as a white man. And second, that contact with European norms can lead one to alter these behaviors and challenge inherited values. While the adoption of just these bourgeois norms was the very goal of CIA intervention in Latin America, cultural assimilation also poses an ontological problem: when class and racial distinctions become illusory, as the light-skinned Charles Bon most clearly illustrates, upon what grounds can a system predicated upon difference and domination continue to assert itself?

The novel's indigenous attentions thereby show that while critics almost universally attribute Sutpen's "innocence" to his ignorance of "the difference between white men and white men," his apparent artlessness springs from a more fundamental and more deeply rooted American experience.[52] Sutpen loses his innocence, yes, when he confronts the slave who turns

---

constructions of Indianness in the children's book and film adaptation *The Indian in the Cupboard* (Gleach).

[52] For more on the relationship of the culture of taste to slavery in the rise of Western imperialism and capitalism from the British Enlightenment to the 21st century see Simon Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2011.

him away from the front door of the plantation house where Sutpen's father works and tells Sutpen to go around the back, but this moment is also the moment when he realizes that land, too, can be considered private property. Prior to the slight, Sutpen,

> no more envied the [slave owner] than he would have envied a mountain man who happened to own a fine rifle. He would have coveted the rifle, but he would himself have supported and confirmed the owner's pride and pleasure in its ownership because he could not have conceived of the owner taking such crass advantage of the luck which gave the rifle to him rather than to another as to say to other men: *Because I own this rifle, my arms and legs and blood and bones are superior to yours*. (*Fictions of Labor: William Faulkner and the South's Long Revolution* 1)

Sutpen, in other words, has no framework with which to understand value beyond *use* value. These nods to Sutpen's youthful "native" lifestyle does indeed racialize class as Richard Godden, Porter, Walter Benn Michaels, and Matthews, among others have suggested, but not solely by aligning Sutpen with black slaves. Instead, Sutpen's early years suggest that the position of migrant laborer closely approximates stereotypes of Native American beliefs and habits, so much so that living among these peripatetic communities endows one with the same relationship to the American landscape as that purportedly held by indigenous groups. While white manual labor may, in the end, be associated with blackness, the novel suggests that the black-white binary is not the only one that dictates American identities. Indeed, this dominant racial hierarchy embeds within itself indigenous structures and the history of Native American displacement: it depends upon a middle term to mediate between the black slave and white slave-owner, just as the "difference between white men and white men" depends upon the presence of the black slave.

Foregrounding questions of conquest and indigeneity in light of Cold War geopolitical interests sheds new light on *Absalom*'s now canonical formulation of the slaveholder's power vis a vis his slave and its bearing upon miscegenation. As Godden has famously noted, on the slave plantation, "white becomes black and black white" through a "coercive system of production" (189–190). In particular, the moment when a black slave tells Sutpen that he cannot enter the slaveholder's home through the front door produces a narrative disruption that disorders signifiers and therefore agency. Shreve imagines:

> He [Sutpen] was quite calm about it […] arguing with himself quietly and calmly while both debaters agreed that if there were only someone else, some older and smarter person to ask. But there was not, there was only himself, the two of them inside that one body, arguing quiet and calm: *But I can shoot him*. (Not the monkey nigger […] The nigger was just another balloon face slick and distended with that mellow loud and terrible laughing so that he did not dare to burst it, looking down at him from within the half-closed door during that instant in which, before he knew it, something in him had escaped and—he unable to close the eyes of it—was looking out from within the balloon face just as the man who did not even have to wear the shoes he owned, whom the laughter which the balloon held barricaded and protected from such as he, looked out from whatever invisible place he (the man) happened to be at the moment. (232–234)

As Godden explains, in this passage, Faulkner invokes an undefined and continually shifting pronoun such that the slave and the slave owner, but crucially *Sutpen* and the slave, too, become indistinguishable: the passage closes with Sutpen looking out through the slave's eyes.

Confronted with a racial other, and in particular, with the question of access and accumulation, Sutpen again loses his racial identity to merge, if only briefly, with the black slave.

The scene is a pivotal moment since Sutpen's momentary intersubjective fusion with the slave arises after Sutpen has already been associated with a different non-white group: the Native American. *Absalom*, in other words, suggests that the dispossession of settler-colonialism precedes and in fact enables the practice of slavery. Indeed, after being turned away from the front door of the "big house" and told to go around to the back by a house slave, Sutpen retreats to the woods in order to make sense of his shame and grapple with the loss of his "innocence." He returns, in other words, to the land as the crucible of the self-made man. The wilderness, after all, is the primal scene: the land that must be cleared of trees as much as people to make way for plantations and chattel slavery. Sutpen emerges from his meditations convinced that the solution to his very American problem lies in the imperial beyond, not his own homestead. Rather than stay in Tidewater, Sutpen leaves the continental United States entirely in order to travel to Haiti, a geographic shift that further aligns him with Spanish and French explorers and conquistadors in the New World and with the CIA's hemispheric hopes.

This racialization of Sutpen as aligned both with indigenous groups and slaves adds a corollary to Porter's analysis of capitalist accumulation in Faulkner's representation of the antebellum south in *Absalom, Absalom!.* Porter focuses almost exclusively upon the triangulation of yeoman farmer, slave owner, and slave in order to give the lie to the position promoted by many New Agrarians that the antebellum South operated on a feudal, rather than capitalist system. Her schema, though, depends upon a framework that perpetuates the black-white binary as that of master and slave, thereby leaving no room for other kinds of labor in the novel. Though she mentions Indian removal in passing as part of her analysis of the paternalist myth key to

Jacksonian expansion and slavery alike ((525–527), she refrains from investigating the significance of the Native presence in *Absalom*. The white migrant laborer, though, occupies a unique position in the work, one closely bound to Native structures. Unlike the poor yeoman farmer, such as Wash Jones, who relies upon a slave economy in order to maintain a social position a rung above the bottom, the white migrant laborer accounts for his social worth through his freedom of movement and non-proprietary relationship to the land. Though this latter group intersects with those comprising the nexus Porter analyzes, they also dog it, underscoring the degree to which the plantation economy is both exploitative and alienating. Like Ikkemotube, whose ownership of land in the novel and his haunting presence frustrates a racialized hierarchy that posits white men in uncompromised dominion over the land and the people who work it, the migrant laborer similarly frustrates the unidirectional positioning of various races and classes in *Absalom, Absalom!*. While these very questions of racial transposition and transformation dog the novel, they also foreground the issues raised by Faulkner's travels abroad as well as the CIA's various publishing ventures. What is the relationship of cultural genealogy to race and national identity? What are the borders of different kinds of communities? Can one adopt the trappings of a western democracy without becoming a part of that democracy itself?

*Absalom*, though, refrains from providing easy answers and certainly not the kinds of answers the CIA might have preferred. Indeed, the focus on Cold War neo-imperialism as part of the novel's appeal sheds new light on its famous anachronism. Sutpen achieves the first stage in his design—the acquisition of slaves—by miraculously and mysteriously repressing a slave rebellion in Haiti in 1827 that had been successful in 1791. Yet Sutpen's triumph in this instance leads as much to his downfall as it does to a convergence of the histories of chattel slavery in the United States with larger patterns of conquest and imperialism. Sutpen's ability to "subdue" the

slaves earns him land, slaves, and the hand of Eulalia Bon, the daughter of the plantation owner for whom Sutpen works. Yet in the wake of his son's birth, Sutpen learns that at least some of Eulalia Bon's ancestors include African laborers brought to Haiti as slaves. The threat of miscegenation in this instance becomes explicitly linked to the settler-colonial as Barbara Ladd has suggested (Mintz 40–41). Indeed, as early as 1708, colonial governors argued that slavery in what would eventually become the U.S. South had more in common with the Caribbean than New England (Faulkner 28). Slavery and imperialism, in other words, are inseparable in the novel: to refer to one is to conjure the other. *Absalom* suggests that the kind of democracy-building initiatives currently underway—repressing populist movements, for instance—is only a temporary stay against disorder. More invidiously, the novel suggests that these shortsighted solutions ultimately threaten the very interests they claim to protect.

But the explicit convergence of a U.S. system of racial classification with settler-colonialism remains only one of the novel's fusions. In response to Eulalia Bon's disclosure, Sutpen absconds to Mississippi to make another attempt at building his dynasty, this time within a more rigid racial system that will ostensibly guarantee the racial purity of his progeny. When he arrives in Jefferson, Mississippi with his "wild negroes" to begin work on the plantation house that will grace his one-hundred acres, "he and the twenty negroes worked together, plastered over with mud against the mosquitoes and, as Miss Coldfield told Quentin, distinguishable one from another by his beard and eyes alone and only the architect resembling a human creature" (209). Apparently, unlike other slave owners, Sutpen labors beside and nearly merges with his slaves, a habit that intrigues and terrifies the citizens of Jefferson. Though the significance of these interracial interactions to the novel's structure has often been a site of critical interest, Sutpen's fusion with the land itself alongside such amalgamations remains relatively under-

examined. Covered in mud and mosquitos, it is not just that Sutpen works beside his slaves, but rather that both parties are marked and transformed by the Mississippi dirt into virtual twins. Even after forgoing his migrant past, Sutpen never loses his connection to the soil and, indeed, exports this admixture with the physical landscape to those around him. When Mr. Coldfield, the father of Sutpen's wife Ellen, mulls over the unnamed business deal Sutpen offers him, the ambivalence he feels between the opposing draws of his conscience and his material needs are routed through the land: "his conscience and then the land, the country which had created his conscience and then offered the opportunity to have made all that money to the conscience which it had created, which could do nothing but decline" (21).

Indeed, race and interracial unions remain firmly tethered to the land and its commodification throughout the novel. Clytie, Sutpen's mixed-race and enslaved daughter is described as "coffee-colored" while Charles Bon's octoroon Creole mistress has a body the shade of a magnolia flower. Racial mixture is thus marked through reference to imperial agricultural products specific to the Southern United States and Caribbean. The references here—to coffee, a consumable commodity, and a flower, also an item of exchange but one that portends a particular kind of femininity—suggest that the exchange of commodities across national boundaries cannot be disentangled from racial mixture. While through its various initiatives the CIA linked culture (in the guise of the arts and artists) to commercial objects (in the guise of the products of artistic endeavors, such as books, magazines, paintings, sculptures and so on) as a way to bear out political influence, *Absalom* makes a related argument. Yet in the case of Faulkner's novel, the exchange of things cannot be disentangled from the exchange of people. Even more radically, as the various instances of Sutpen's fusion with the land and those

around him illustrate, exchange across cultural boundaries—of words, of money, of values—leads to a kind of bodily convergence.

To wit, these land-based mixtures quickly cross into other arenas. Despite the town's vehement disapproval of his methods, Sutpen continues to mix physically and publicly with his slaves, ultimately enticing many of his neighbors to watch the spectacle. In every case, these performances call Sutpen's humanity into question. The novel's oft-cited boxing scene provides evidence of just this phenomenon. According to Rosa Coldfield, when Sutpen's wife and her sister stumbles upon the fight in the barn she finds:

> not the two black beasts [Ellen] had expected to see but instead a white one and a black one, both naked to the waist and gouging at one another's eyes as if their skins should not only have been the same color but should have been covered with fur too. Yes. It seems that on certain occasions, perhaps at the end of the evening, the spectacle, as a grand finale or perhaps as a matter of sheer deadly forethought toward the retention of supremacy, domination, he would enter the ring with one of the negroes himself. Yes. That is what Ellen saw: her husband and the father of her children standing there naked and panting and bloody to the waist and the negro just fallen evidently, lying at his feet and bloody too save that on the negro it merely looked like grease or sweat. (Godden, *Fictions of Labor: William Faulkner and the South's Long Revolution* 53)

Though Rosa speculates that Sutpen boxes with his slaves to demonstrate his supremacy, the actual events complicate such a straightforward conclusion. Rather than distancing him from his slaves, in this moment, Sutpen closely resembles them: the primal violence in which they engage transforms both parties into almost-beasts. In fighting with his slaves, Sutpen loses the very thing

that had once distinguished him from the slave who turned him away from the plantation mansion's front door when he was a child: his humanity. In attempting to enact the "difference between white men and white men," Sutpen forgoes the difference between white men and black men. Though his slave lies at his feet in a clichéd pose of shackled defeat, Sutpen is the one visibly bloodied by the incident. The slave's labor, his ostensible sweat, in other words, extracts blood from the master.

Godden and others have read this and similar scenes as evidence that in the racial hierarchy Faulkner imagines, "Ethnically speaking, the black has entered all available subject positions" (Stanchich) as "black *and* white begin all too hauntingly to look alike" (Sundquist 99). The Cold War context of the novel's fame, though, adds additional complications to these claims. After all, Faulkner's role as cultural ambassador makes particularly visible the impact of settler-colonialism in the novel and therefore, the other racial factors it considers. As Maritza Stanchich has noted, Chickasaw Indians catalyze the novel's plot and Sutpen's eventual intermixture with his slaves is foreshadowed by his early adoption of native practices and associations, namely his singular relationship to the natural landscape (254). These associations dog Sutpen throughout his life and suggest that, like Gatsby, the American landscape pulses at the heart of his failure. Furthermore, Sutpen's failed dynasty stems from slavery and its aftermath, but in particular, a slave system that finds its origins in the violent seizure of land by Europeans during the conquest of the American hemisphere. As Matthews argues, Quentin's comments about Deep South cotton versus Haitian sugar suggest a thorough understanding of the two agricultural systems, one that "produces a palimpsest in which one may detect Deep South cotton overlaying West Indian sugar" (144). While such origins overlap with the history of slavery in the New World, the two processes remain distinct. Native American removal and

genocide cleared the land of occupants so that slaves, in turn, could work the land. The two processes, in other words, are equally responsible for the formation of the United States, a factor upon which *Absalom* insists.

**III. Tellers**

Hemispheric and racial convergences like these structure the text, linking the conquest of the Americas to a larger history of Western domination and the failure of utopian possibilities. The novel achieves this interweaving of different cultural, racial, and historical threads by representing the family as the primary unit of convergence. By establishing the familial unit as the characters' ordering goal, Faulkner's characteristic emphasis upon incest positions Sutpen's story as representative of and continuous with the grand narratives of Western culture, particularly the classical and the biblical. The novel transcribes the one onto the other by making the two strains of Western culture "members" of the same family. By naming his mulatto daughter Clytemnestra, Sutpen casts her, like her classical avatar, as an emblem of familial destruction. In keeping with the actions of her namesake, Clytie sounds the final death knell to Sutpen's dynasty by setting fire to Sutpen's home and killing herself and Henry. Clytie is joined, though, by her white sister and Sutpen's legitimate daughter, Judith. Judith, like her Judeo-Christian progenitor, facilitates the death of an invasive racial other, Charles Bon, when he is killed by Henry Sutpen. In Faulkner's novel, Clytemnestra is Judith's sister, uniting the two traditions in the same family. Similarly, Shreve senses that despite her expectations, when Miss Rosa relocated to Sutpen's Hundred, she,

> [found] instead of a widowed Agamemnon to her Cassandra an ancient stiff-jointed Pyramus to her eager though untried Thisbe who could approach her in the unbidden April's compounded demonry and suggest that they breed together for

> rest and sample and if it was a boy they would marry. ("Absalom, Absalom!: The Difference Between White Men and White Men" 137)

In Shreve's imagination—as in Quentin's, who considered her "Cassandralike"—Miss Rosa should be the daughter of the Trojan king Priam, blessed with the gift of prophesy by the god Apollo. Yet instead, Miss Rosa finds a different classical tragedy when she becomes the Roman Ovid's Thisbe and Sutpen her pair, Pyramus. It is not simply that these various traditions become continuous with one another. Rather, *Absalom* inscribes them upon one another such that what could be rationalized as a diachronic progression becomes, instead, a synchronic present. These monikers hint at the imperial undertones of the U.S. slave system, but also connect New World conquest and imperialism to an older history of failed expansionism. The novel's dramatization of the collapse of Western imperialism and high culture, speaks, in other words, to the moment that the United States becomes the inheritor of this very history of "greatness."

Yet as Michaels contends, the characters in *Absalom, Absalom!* do not seek "to rescue some modicum of what had been but to create something new" that they can reconcile with present realities(Sundquist 118). United by the sense of a common history, "[t]he energizing power of Sutpen's design and its collapse drives into union with him and his family all of those who try to 'tell' his story" (Minter 57). Indeed, Shreve continually refers to Rosa Coldfield as "Aunt Rosa," locating himself in a genealogy generated through the telling of Sutpen's tale. The figurative familial inheritance of Sutpen's story connects one teller to the next as Sutpen becomes a version of the archetypal original man from creation myths, the focus from which all history stems. The various tellers of Sutpen's story, though, demonstrate perhaps the most explicit and obvious convergence in the novel. As the first character in the novel to describe the building of Sutpen's Hundred to Quentin, Miss Rosa's narrative provides the template for the

interpretations that follow. Though Sutpen's most vociferous critic, Rosa channels his story, becoming a figurative mother for the narrative dynasty spawned by her telling. Yet this literary motherhood springs from Rosa's own genealogical failures. When Sutpen returns from the Civil War, he apathetically proposes to her by suggesting that they copulate first and marry only if they produce a male heir. Rosa's rejection of his offer, ironically, transforms her into the bearer of his tale: had she agreed to the bargain, then Sutpen might have succeeded in producing an aristocratic line which would have meant that there would have been no story to tell. The most ebullient articulator of the "*might-have-been,*" Rosa becomes an emblem of hope by expressing the possibility of a different outcome under different circumstances (210). The act of interpretation, after all, leaves open the chance that at least in one version of the story the speaker would conclude that Henry killed Bon because Bon was a brother threatening incest, rather than "the nigger that's going to sleep with your sister." That this hope is born of a failure to reproduce enables Shreve and Quentin's own compulsive retelling. Failure, as Bloch suggests, creates aesthetic possibility, namely here, the possibility of renarrating the story in order to arrive at a different outcome. Indeed, after hearing the tale from Miss Rosa, Quentin and Shreve forge an imagined rediscovery of the facts of Bon's death, and thereby fulfill Sutpen's desire for descendants by integrating the tale into themselves. Through stories—not through blood lineage—Miss Rosa provides the link between Sutpen and his figurative descendants.

This desire for connection based upon a hyper-genealogical model inheres, as Porter contends, in the process of reciting Sutpen's story, a process that causes the characters to intertwine, repeat each other's words, and adopt the memories and thoughts of those far distant from them. As Shreve and Quentin decipher the narrative fragments reported to Quentin, Quentin muses,

> *Maybe we are both Father. Maybe nothing ever happens once and is finished. Maybe happen is never once but like ripples maybe on water after the pebble sinks, the ripples moving on, spreading, the pool attached by a narrow umbilical water-cord to the next pool which the first pool feeds, has fed, did feed* […] *Yes, we are both Father. Or maybe Father and I are both Shreve, maybe it took Father and me both to make Shreve or Shreve and me both to make Father or maybe Thomas Sutpen to make all of us.* (243)

In Quentin's reverie, he sees himself and Shreve as extensions of his father, literally connected by the story of Sutpen's inability to father an aristocratic, white dynasty, which the passage describes as an umbilical cord linking the characters to one another. Through the retellings, Shreve ultimately converges with Quentin, a harbinger of the kind of cultural conversion that the CIA ostensibly sought.

Once Quentin and Shreve arrive at the conclusion that "the most unfortunate thing for all concerned that could occur" occurred—that Henry killed Bon not because Bon was Henry and Judith's brother, but because he was Sutpen's bastard, mulatto child—Shreve inherits the burden and tragedy of Southern existence: "It was Shreve speaking, though save for the slight difference which the intervening degrees of latitude had inculcated in them (differences not in tone or pitch but of turns of phrase and usage of words), it might have been either of them and was in a sense both: both thinking as one" (267). This convergence mirrors the earlier convergence of Henry Sutpen with Charles Bon—a nod towards the fact that race is the only thing that separates their otherwise shared blood and inheritance—and feeds into Quentin and Shreve's eventual fusion with the brothers. When Shreve pauses in his enumeration of the events that unfolded the second time Charles Bon came home with Henry to Sutpen's Hundred, the narrator explains,

> So that now it was not two but four of them riding the two horses through the dark over the frozen December ruts of that Christmas eve: four of them and then just two—Charles-Shreve and Quentin-Henry, the two of them both believing that Henry was thinking *He* (meaning his father [Thomas Sutpen]) *has destroyed us all*, not for one moment thinking *He* (meaning Bon) *must have known* [that he is Henry and Judith's brother] *or at least suspected this all the time; that's why he has acted as he has, why he did not answer my letters last summer nor write to Judith, why he has never asked her to marry him.* (127–129)

The passage testifies to a radical fusion facilitated by the telling of Sutpen's tale. It is not simply that the boundaries between Quentin and Shreve become permeable; so too do the boundaries between the past and present, the historical and fictional. Moreover, Shreve's association with Charles Bon makes explicit the hemispheric connections between Haiti and Canada that lurk throughout the text, a prescient reminder of Cold War military and cultural dynamics.

Sundquist and others have read these and similar scenes as evidence that the refrain "might have been" refers, ultimately, to the unrealized hope that Bon's love for Henry and Judith Sutpen, and Henry's love for Bon, could have overcome the fact that Bon is "the nigger that's going to sleep with your sister" (Michaels, *Our America* 147). This desire would have taken on new meanings for Cold War readers contemplating U.S. intervention abroad on an unprecedented scale as well as the end of de jure segregation at home: the fact that Sutpen's failure spurs additional tellings suggests that narratives can address present injustices by rethinking the motivations of the past and casting history as labile rather than calcified and static. Given the CIA's interest in foreign countries, and Faulkner's subsequent role as a paid agent of the state, Quentin and Shreve's fanciful investigation of Sutpen's illusory past uncannily predict

U.S. neo-imperial interests and the hope that these interests will not result in a Sutpen-esque tragedy. At stake is not the veracity of their interpretation of Sutpen's story—they discuss "people who perhaps never existed at all"—but the potential that by sharing a cultural identity, narrators can imagine a new past, one that re-thinks the origins of the modern U.S. state to allow for a coherent future safe for the United States' ostensible interests: democracy and freedom. Thus when Quentin and Shreve, the Southerner and the Canadian, momentarily unite not just a sundered nation, but also a sundered continent and cultural heritage, they speak to a desire for a more universal kind of convergence.

Yet Quentin and Shreve's very attempts at unearthing the motives for Sutpen's behavior and his inability to achieve the descendants he craved (98) leads them to the inescapable conclusion that miscegenation led not only to Sutpen's decline but also to the disjunction that makes the project of cultural continuity impossible. The stakes of this cultural disunity, though, became only more pressing after the end of World War II. As Sundquist explains, at the time that the novel appeared, miscegenation served as "a representation of [the South's] gravest disorder and most perplexing dilemma, a representation of the double bind which was made increasingly visible in the South just before [the second World] War and which […] would become even more monstrous and perplexing for Jim Crow" (259). Were Sutpen to embrace Charles Bon as his son, he would risk the possibility of becoming the patriarch of a black line. Sundquist's comments underscore the degree to which *Absalom*'s legibility depends to some degree on the visibility of Jim Crow segregation as an unjust and unstable system. Racial mixing within this schema alters not just the future but the past as well, by reinventing history and replacing old terms with new ones. From this perspective, the appeal of *Absalom*'s narrative project—that both

the future *and* the past are unstable, and that the outcome of one alters the other—is also its threat.

The moment that bears out the various aspects of this threat occurs linguistically as Shreve struggles to make a case for love. Contending that Henry killed Bon because otherwise Bon would have committed incest and bigamy, Shreve demands,

> And who to say it wasn't maybe the possibility of incest, because who (without a sister: I don't know about the others) has been in love and not discovered the vain evanescence of the fleshly encounter; who has not had to realize that when the brief all is done you must retreat from both love and pleasure, gather up your own rubbish and refuse—the hats and pants and shoes which you drag through the world—and retreat since the gods condone and practise these and the dreamy immeasurable coupling which floats oblivious above the trammeling and harried instant, the: *was-not: is: was:* is a prerequisite only of balloony and weightless elephants and whales: but maybe if there were sin too maybe you would not be permitted to escape, uncouple, return. (Dayan 197)

Shreve, in using the word "balloony," conjures the image of the slave turning Sutpen away from the front door of the mansion, a nod towards the novel's racial dynamics even as he seeks to deny them. Through his words, sex and race converge, and thus Shreve speaks a truth that he seeks to obfuscate. For if Judith and Bon had intercourse, they would indeed commit a sin for which there would be no escape. Their coupling would prove permanent, but permanently disruptive. The miscegenation would "floa[t] oblivious above the trammeling and harried instant," would transcend all time, and indeed already has.

Ironically, Sutpen tells Henry of Bon's racial adulteration in the hopes of preserving a

line that already is in the midst of decline. Though Henry kills him, Bon still provokes his father's downfall. In a dismal parallel, Bon's sexual acts ensure that the last in Sutpen's line will be the grandson of Bon and his octoroon mistress: a child named Jim Bond. The very servitude Sutpen hoped to evade by imposing it upon others marks his great-grandson, who is incidentally the only one of Sutpen's descendants to survive. The slavery of the great-grandson dooms the patriarch to slavery as well: the present does not just reflect the past, but alters it (302). As Shreve suggests,

> I think that in time the Jim Bonds are going to conquer the western hemisphere. Of course it won't quite be in our time and of course as they spread toward the poles they will breach out again like the rabbits and the birds do, so they won't show up so sharp against the snow. But it will still be Jim Bond; and so in a few thousand years, I who regard you will also have sprung from the loins of African kings. (289)

Sutpen, the source of the "Jim Bonds," refused to learn from the example given to him, and insisted upon the necessity of slaves to prove his supremacy. The decision made miscegenation, represented as a disruptive cultural force, inescapable.

Faced with the reality that even love pales in comparison to miscegenation's ability to divide, Quentin and Shreve lose their psychic connection and fall away from one another. As the "family" dissolves, Shreve separates from the culture he helped to create. While Quentin shakes violently, Shreve remarks

> "I just want to understand it if I can and I dont know how to say it better. Because it's something my people haven't got. Or if we have got it, it all happened long ago across the water and so now there aint anything to look at every day to remind

> us of it. We dont live among defeated grandfathers and freed slaves (or have I got it backward and was it your folks that are free and the niggers that lost?) and bullets in the dining room table and such, to be always reminding us to never forget. What is it: something you live and breathe in like air? a kind of vacuum filled with wraithlike and indomitable anger and pride and glory at and in happenings that occurred and ceased fifty years ago? a kind of entailed birthright father and son and father and son of never forgiving General Sherman, so that forevermore as long as your children's children produce children you wont be anything but a descendant of a long line of colonels killed in Pickett's charge at Manassas?"
>
> "Gettysburg," Quentin said. "You cant understand it. You would have to be born there." (179)

Quentin's comments return Shreve to the position even more distant from Southern history than the one he occupied when Quentin first began telling the story in their Harvard dorm room. Early in their communal telling, Quentin mistakenly cites West Virginia as Sutpen's birthplace until Shreve interrupts, "('Not in West Virginia,' Shreve said. '—What?' Quentin said. 'Not in West Virginia,' Shreve said. 'Because if he was twenty-five years old in Mississippi in 1833, he was born in 1808. And there wasn't any West Virginia in 1808 because—' … 'All right all right all right,' Quentin said)" (289). Shreve, though, with Quentin's permission, quickly adopts the native son's more experiential, rather than factual, relationship to the past. Quentin's brusque correction therefore re-establishes the distance between them, sundering the hemispheric affiliation they shared earlier. It is no longer just their accent that separates them, but the circumstances of their lives as well. Similarly, Shreve reneges on the continual revision of the

past in which the pair engaged when he claims that the events "ceased fifty years ago." The historical trajectory of Southern culture becomes a defeated one: each subsequent generation falls prey to the trap of conquest and early death. All stand as the last in their line, "killed in Pickett's charge." Shreve fails even to get the geographic location correct as space and time lose their previous logic.

Quentin complies with Shreve's extrication of himself from Sutpen's tale, claiming that contrary to their previous experience, culture may only be passed on through a literal, rather than figurative family. He denies Shreve the ability to integrate with the Southern family that previously joined them as one when he corrects Shreve's mistaken titling of Miss Rosa:

> "Yes. You dont know. You dont even know about the old dame, the Aunt Rosa."
>
> "Miss Rosa," Quentin said.
>
> "All right." (298)

Throughout the novel, Shreve had continually referred to Miss Rosa Coldfield as "Aunt Rosa," locating himself in a genealogy generated through the telling of Sutpen's tale. This moment, then, suggests that racial difference proves the inevitable divide around which no narrative can cohere. At the close of the conversation, Quentin considers the end of the Sutpen line: Henry Sutpen hidden in the house merely "*To die. Yes*" (Gray 399), and Clytie's immolation of herself and Henry inside Sutpen's Hundred leaving only "that idiot boy," Jim Bond. Miscegenation constitutes a destructive image so powerful as to make cultural unity nothing more than a "might have been."

Despite the best attempts of the narrators of Thomas Sutpen's sordid history to forge a cohesive and unified culture, a family, the endeavor fails for the same reason Sutpen's design

failed. Miscegenation, the otherness hidden behind a mask of skin, dooms the production of a Southern culture that Faulkner, and by proxy his characters, enact (10). Instead, they seek to delay the inevitable through their circumlocutions, Shreve's insistent "wait, wait," and Miss Rosa's withholding of information. Though critics often claim that Miss Rosa remained ignorant of Bon's racial composition, textual evidence suggests the opposite. She calls Henry's murder of Bon, "almost a fratricide" (14), and like Cassandra, claims that she possessed knowledge of a downfall that she became powerless to stop:

> Yes, fatality and curse on the South and on our family as though because some ancestor of ours had elected to establish his descent in a land primed for fatality and already cursed with it, even if it had not rather been our family, our father's progenitors, who had incurred the curse long years before and had been coerced by Heaven into establishing itself in the land and the time already cursed. (Minter 81)

The passage links the tragic outcome of Sutpen's tale to the original settlement of the land by Europeans and suggests that genealogy is a curse rather than a boon. Considered in this light, Miss Rosa tells Quentin the story in the hope that its telling will lead to a new family and that in this new configuration the outcome will be different, one in which race ceases to prove an insurmountable barrier. For these reasons, the characters' words falter throughout the novel (301), as they constantly hope that the conclusion towards which they speed may in their telling, become something else. Even after Quentin and Shreve manufacture Sutpen's decline, still "[the South] began to take shape in its same curious light, gravity-defying attitude—the once folded sheet out of the wisteria Mississippi summer, the cigar smell, the random blowing of the fireflies" (111–112). Failure becomes an invitation to begin again.

In keeping with Bloch's vision of utopianism, these moments of harmony exist not despite of immanent failure, but rather because of it. And yet the novel delineates between the kind of connection forged through the shared narratives that the novel imagines and actual touch, which speaks, ironically enough, to exactly the imbroglios of the Cold War. When Rosa arrives at Sutpen's Hundred after being told that Henry has killed Charles Bon, Clytie calls her by her given name—rather than with the more formal "Miss Coldfield" that would have been required by Clytie's status as a slave—in order to warn Rosa away from the second floor of the house where Charles Bon's corpse lies. Though insulted by this show of familiarity, Clytie's touch leads Rosa to

> stop dead … I know only that my entire being seemed to run at blind full tilt into something monstrous and immobile, with a shocking impact too soon and too quick to be mere amazement and outrage at that black arresting and untimorous hand on my white woman's flesh. Because there is something in the touch of flesh with flesh which abrogates … let flesh touch with flesh, and watch the fall of all the eggshell shibboleth of caste and color too. (295)

Touch, according to Rosa, nullifies all earlier contracts, all other social systems.

The scene repeats in the final pages when, this time, Rosa has Quentin accompany her at night to Sutpen's Hundred to discover, once and for all, if Clytie has been sheltering Henry in the house with her. Once again, Clytie stops Rosa at the stairs, takes her arm, calls her "Rosie," and tells her not to go any further. This time, though, Rosa first pushes Clytie's hand away before she "turned on the step and struck Clytie to the floor with a full-armed blow like a man would have, and turned and went on up the stairs" (17). Tales and figurative families, it seems, can momentarily merge, but actual touch results in violence. The text, in other words, recapitulates

the paradox at the heart of the novel and of the Cold War: though telling the story may make readers participants, as Porter alleges, this participation can never cross the boundaries of the text itself. The fictional and the material can never quite converge.

If we read *Absalom, Absalom!* with the Cold War forefront in our minds, then we should conclude that the CIA was right to hesitate in their support of William Faulkner and the novel. After all, the book lays bare a set of irresolvable contradictions and violences that almost prophetically rehearse cultural, diplomatic, and political CIA interventions. First, *Absalom, Absalom!* casts conquest as a precondition to slavery, such that the very act of settler-colonialism and its modern analogues appears to lead inevitably to disaster and crisis. Second, in describing storytelling as a community and history-building force, *Absalom* stages perhaps the animating anxiety of the Cold War: paranoia about the nation's literal and cultural borders. Yet, rather than resolving these tensions, in its climax, the novel gives the lie to racial harmony in a nation still committed to imperialism in any form. *Absalom, Absalom!* ultimately suggests that all progress is inevitably built through racial violence, a racial violence that can only manifest itself through the touch that strikes down. What must have so worried the CIA was that the false promise of *Absalom, Absalom!*—that narrative can change the past—mirrored the false promise of CIA intervention abroad: that conquest could be called democracy building. Cultural coherence, it turns out, is genocidal. If the CIA context forces us to focus upon the imperial register of *Absalom, Absalom!*, then the novel's form reveals the very limits of settler colonialism itself.

And yet, that false promise itself becomes a disordering force. Quentin and Shreve, in their final moments, hint at their own desire for another telling. Unable to free themselves from the recursivity of the conquest of the Americas, Quentin and Shreve can only begin again.

Settler-colonialism, in Nahum Chandler's terms, provides both the limit and possibility of a hemispheric family (Walsh 85–86).

## Chapter 6: We Come in Peace: *Star Trek* and the 1969 Moon Landing

Up to one billion people worldwide, including Pope Paul VI, turned on their televisions and stared, transfixed (Launius 26). Crowds gathered in New York City's Central Park and London's Trafalgar Square to celebrate. Even President Nixon, a relative skeptic of the Apollo program, called the *Apollo 11* mission the "greatest week in the history of the world since Creation" (Mindell 6). And who could blame him? Neil Armstrong and Col. Edwin E. (Buzz) Aldrin's live broadcast of their inaugural steps on the moon's surface on July twentieth, 1969 seemed like a harbinger of a cultural revolution, a new era of intergalactic cooperation. As the plaque on the leg of their lunar module read, "We came in peace for all mankind."

This declaration of a civilizing mission had its precedents. In its rehearsal of the mythos of American expansion, the moon landing casts the astronauts in roles similar to the ones played by Spanish conquistadors and American frontiersmen. For their part, the astronauts enacted a pantomime of the Spanish conquest, planting an American flag upon the moon and thereby symbolically claiming it for the United States, just as Columbus first raised the standard on the Caribbean island of Guanahani. Like the explorers who preceded him, Neil Armstrong describes this new world to his audience at home by domesticating it. Though the lunar surface "has a stark beauty all its own," Armstrong quickly notes "It's like much of the high desert of the United States." This performance extended to the domestic audiences who watched the astronauts from earth: like the Renaissance Europeans to whom conquest narratives were addressed, viewers in 1969 consumed the footage of the *Apollo 11* mission from the safety of their homes, fascinated by the dangers before them and yet shielded by a previously uncrossed distance and divide.

Despite the fanfare for this ostensible triumph of American verve and intrepid machismo, in many ways, the *Apollo 11* flight marks not the beginning but the end of an era. In projecting

the American West upon the lunar surface in a heavily scripted appeal to the frontier myth, Armstrong suggests that man—notably, not humankind—has traveled to the limits of human imagination and technological prowess only to find, at least rhetorically speaking, what has already been settled, first by indigenous groups and then again by U.S. pioneers. Indeed, the very technology that made the *Apollo 11* flight possible minimized the vaunted heroics of the astronauts themselves. Though in making the case for manned space exploration, NASA repeatedly capitalized upon individualistic and progressive theories of human cultural, social, and technological development, the triumph of technology ironically countered the mission's ideological aims. Though the multiple redundancies built into the digital tools that delivered astronauts to the moon protected against the risk of technological failure, they ultimately made even the astronauts themselves extraneous: the *Apollo 11* mission was almost entirely controlled remotely from the space center in Houston (40).[53] The financial woes facing the space program only compounded this unexpected sense of a compulsive—and unproductive—recursivity. As Nixon increasingly slashed NASA's operating budget, Armstrong and Aldrin must have realized that their first steps on the lunar surface would also be some of the last, at least for the foreseeable future. If the moon landing served as the apotheosis of the modern frontier myth as defined by Richard Slotkin (Mindell 66), then it also signaled its deliquescence.[54]

[53] While X-15 test pilots like Armstrong insisted that human operators could manually pilot a rocket to the moon, he and his peers were repeatedly proved wrong in simulations and other assays. NASA engineer von Braun's vision of "rockets as automata, carrying passive human cargo" eventually prevailed, making the astronauts on board accessories to the mission, rather than the primary drivers of it (Strong, "Animated Indians: Critique and Contradiction in Commodified Children's Culture"). Aware that the space race required public support to flourish, NASA significantly underplayed the automated aspects of their galactic endeavors, highlighting instead the human ingenuity and stories inside the spacesuits.

[54] Though in the wake of the September 11th attacks this myth has come back with a vengeance, I argue that its affective power was widely questioned at the time of the *Apollo 11* mission.

The space race that climaxed—or declined—with the successful *Apollo 11* mission finds its fictional corollary in the original series of *Star Trek*.[55] Historically coincident (the Apollo program began in 1961 and ended in 1972 while the first iteration of *Star Trek* ran from 1966 to 1969) the two share a number of additional features. Both cultural events are closely tied to pugilistic and genocidal aims and ideologies despite explicit protestations otherwise. For instance, the rockets that catapulted the Mercury and Apollo modules into space descended from air raid technologies developed during World War II. Even this transition would have been impossible without the work of NASA's engineering doyen, Wernher von Braun, a former Nazi SS officer (Bindas and Heineman). Likewise, Kirk and his crew make frequent reference to a near-apocalyptic nuclear war waged during the twentieth century that, in obliterating all existing structures of sovereignty, became the catalyst for their intergalactic utopian present. Like the *Apollo 11* flight team, the crew of the Starship *Enterprise* ostensibly operates under the aegis of peace and scientific research despite this history and the military power that enables their missions: two of Kirk's most frequently uttered lines throughout the series are "we come in peace" and "set phasers to kill" (Pace 40).[56] Indeed, nearly every *Star Trek* episode involves some kind of battle and though Kirk often uses self-defense as his excuse for violence, the members of the Starship *Enterprise* only mourn the deaths of other beings—and their peers—when a direct filial relationship precedes the death. Even then, this grief never lasts beyond the unit of the single episode. Moreover, like the 1969 moon landing, in their journeys to colonial outposts, "discovery" of multiple Earth-like planets, and interactions with pure and "uncivilized" cultures the cast of *Star Trek* repeatedly reenacts the standard tropes of New World conquest,

[55] Unless otherwise stated, all mentions of *Star Trek* refer to the original series.
[56] In his own campy take on the series, Frank Zappa juxtaposed just these two lines in a song a few years after the series ended (Mindell 6).

embedding claims to belonging in the land itself, even as they increasingly reach for the lands of others. Yet like their real-world compatriots, this performance constantly lacks the gravitas and triumph for which it strives. Indeed, in contradistinction to the claims made in the *Star Trek* credits that the crew seeks to explore new worlds and "boldly go where no man has gone before," nearly every planet they visit is inhabited, often by earthlings or by aliens who look like earthlings. Like the *Apollo 11* astronauts, these excessively masculine cultural actors traveled week after week to the limits of human imagination only to find what had already been discovered.

In this chapter, I will analyze the televisual documentation of the 1969 moon landing and original series of *Star Trek* in relationship to a U.S. settler-colonial past to argue that to read these programs as sublime is to overlook the affective lapses encoded within official and popular framings of the two events. Audience responses to the pomp and circumstance leading up to and following the *Apollo 11* flight reveal complex reactions to a cultural event seen simultaneously as almost divine in its audacity *and* an indication of the United States' misplaced priorities. Similarly, the enjoyment of *Star Trek*'s episodes and themes was often borne through a critical and self-aware viewing process. Indeed, in terms of the *Apollo 11* mission, the event's triumphant tenor paradoxically catalyzes its self-critical aspects as even naysayers found compelling metaphors in space flight for the expression of political frustrations. When Eldridge Cleaver, the Information Minister for the Black Panther party, assailed the *Apollo 11* flight as a misuse of funds that would have been better spent alleviating black urban poverty, he suggested instead an executive project that would send Richard Nixon, J. Edgar Hoover, and Senator McClellan "to Mars with a shortage of fuel or a weak booster rocket—anything to guarantee that they wouldn't come back" (Mittell 10–11). These and similar responses to U.S. imperialism that

engage, often playfully, with the structures of state and cultural power only to dissent from them coincide with a moment when the twentieth century's production of the frontier myth briefly falters: the need to constantly re-enact the performance of territorial expansion makes it appear futile, compulsive even.

By turning to the media representations of *Star Trek* and the *Apollo 11* mission, I show that the propaganda selling the space race operates in an anachronistic manner whereby the government and mass media's deployment of contemporary technologies like television and newspapers to sell a refurbished version of a settler-colonial myth collapses under its own ideological weight. Unwittingly or not, *Star Trek* and these media-rich responses to the 1969 moon landing critique the show and event by using their very terms—they critique, in other words, through play—revealing the degree to which the invitation to participation that makes mass media appealing can result in audiences turning against or subverting its messages (225–226). After all, by 1969 the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, among others, had already manipulated the same technologies mobilized by the government, entertainment, and news outlets in order to lay bare the brutality of Jim Crow segregation and question the very nationalistic messages *Star Trek* and the *Apollo 11* mission were designed to reinvigorate. This attention to popular media's multifaceted and often-unpredictable potential allows me to make two related arguments. First, by analyzing the formal qualities of *Star Trek* and the *Apollo 11* event along with spectators' responses to them, I show that audiences' thrilled reactions involve a cynical participation in their highly artificial redeployment of the gestures of New World conquest. Second, I show that this cynical participation depends upon a complicated understanding of the relationship between technology and humans that threatens to divest human actors of their vitality and purpose.

**I: "We Come in Peace," "Set Phasers to Kill"**

Critics of the Cold War commonly agree that the near-universal upheaval of the 1960s resulted in a dramatic shift in the possibilities for aesthetic and political representation. The increasingly visible consequences of U.S. imperialism, in Vietnam above all but also in South America, led to widespread doubts about institutional versions of history and their moral register. Despite these findings, much of the scholarship about space exploration during the Cold War tends to analyze the popular representation and coverage of events during this period on an informational level, as if there were no possibility of play or critique in "straight" television broadcasts and newspaper articles. In part, this arises from the tacit methodologies of such studies, which frequently focus upon the intentions of government agents and television writers and executives, seeing these intentions as directly reflected in the resulting cultural artifact. For instance, an insistence upon the one-to-one correlation between the aims of the politicians and NASA administrators guiding the space program—as well as the uniformity of opinions about it—and its formal qualities and effects characterizes many critical accounts of the endeavor. When David E. Nye discusses the various television programs that contributed to the excitement surrounding the space race, he compares a series of Disney-produced cartoons about the potential future of space exploration geared towards children that aired from 1955 to 1958 with *Colliers* magazine articles weighing the scientific possibilities for space travel that ran during the same period. Nye fails to mention the fantastical and humorous aspects of Disney's series—the overwrought French accents of the various cartoon scientists, the fact that a talking robot introduces the broadcasts, and the mock-serious discussion of the two-dimensional beings that inhabit Mercury—treating the fictional and the factual as identical and commensurate (Sarantakes 74).

*Star Trek*'s roots within a defense of statecraft have often led to similar appraisals. Even when Gene Rodenberry—*Star Trek*'s creator—became entirely disenchanted with the Vietnam war his apparent belief in the power and import of the United States' founding values and the heroic potential of exploration and tacit imperialism remained strong throughout the series (Sarantakes 78; Tyrell 713).[57] As Nicholas Evan Sarantakes illustrates, while the producers, writers, and directors of the original series generally opposed the use of force and nuclear weapons in particular, their faith in the ameliorative potential of freedom, democracy, and liberal individualism never faltered. This sanguine take on U.S. foreign policy persisted even when imposed upon an unwilling party (55–57). Unsurprisingly, then, many science fiction scholars have dismissed the original series of *Star Trek* as *too* ham-fisted to merit sustained attention, preferring the more nuanced and ethically murky later series to the set of episodes that ran from 1966-1969. Michèle and Duncan Barrett, for instance, repeatedly note that the episodes featured in *The Next Generation* and beyond are preferable objects of critical analysis due to their complex dealings with the "large" questions *Star Trek* takes on: the limits of the human, the differences between exploration and conquest, and the formation of different societies (Miller 21). Thus despite an almost universal agreement about the playful nature of the show, for most critics that very quality must be overcome or pushed aside to focus on more serious, and less politically complicit, topics.

Though in many ways continuous with earlier leftist movements, the protests of the 1960s were unique in the degree to which they increasingly placed one of the twentieth century's most popular narratives about the founding principles of the U.S. nation—namely the frontier myth and its related American virtues—under pressure. To enumerate only a few examples of

[57] In fact, the future of *Star Trek* is largely continuous with the United States' past, despite the fact that a supposedly apocalyptic event gave rise to intergalactic travel (Bindas and Heineman).

military and political crises that challenged these animating principles in the last years of the decade, in January 1968 Communist troops shattered any sense of U.S. security when they stormed the American embassy and managed to attack ostensibly safe cities throughout South Vietnam. Both Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were assassinated within two months of each other in the spring of 1968. Also that year, as race riots broke out in cities across the country, students at Columbia seized several university buildings in protest of the Vietnam War and the university's support of a segregated gymnasium in Morningside Park (Jacobs 30–31). Just a month before the moon landing a radical faction—eventually calling themselves the Weathermen—took over during the national Students for a Democratic Society convention. The group declared war against the United States government and rallied for the creation of a mass revolutionary movement (Chafe 333–368). Civil unrest also broke out abroad, threatening U.S. interests. In May 1969, workers and student militants in Paris paralyzed France for nearly two weeks with a general strike against modern consumer and technical society, nearly causing the collapse of Charles de Gaulle's government. While a new democratic form of Communism briefly flourished in Prague under the leadership of Alexander Dubcek, Russian tanks violently extinguished the new regime in August 1968. The deliquescence of U.S. counter-Soviet and, concomitantly, imperialist initiatives coincided with the birth of the *Star Trek* series and gave rise to the space race and *Apollo 11* mission.

As even this brief list demonstrates, three terms—anti-capitalism, race, and anti-imperialism—went hand in hand in this moment of nationalist crisis (Redding 84; Slotkin 490–499). Yet in addition to these challenges to capitalist and Western order globally and domestically, suburbanization, mass culture, and the conformity required by what Donald Pease calls the "culture of consensus" during the Cold War were often depicted as feminizing and

detrimental to American stoic heterosexual masculinity, one of the main claims of national moral superiority (Howard 128–129). This particular axis of gender instability only amplified the more famous sexual and racial tensions of the period. As John Howard argues, throughout the post-war years, the Civil Rights movement became increasingly connected in the minds of many Southerners with queer sex. This imbrication of race and sexuality catalyzed overt hostility towards and legal prosecution of homosexuality in the Deep South as a judiciously viable outlet for anger over desegregation (Corber 2–3; Wagner). As educated Southerners moved North in greater and greater numbers, many brought this take on homosexuality with them to new cities. Like Communism, queer activity was seen as an invisible threat to national security. But this institutional homophobia was homegrown: the Cold War surveillance and politicization of non-normative sexuality drew upon an earlier policing of black bodies (Vider 895). In perhaps its most infamous iteration, nearly one month to the day before *Apollo 11*'s liftoff, on June 28, 1969 police raided the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, a popular gay bar and nightclub operating illegally without a liquor license, setting off a series of gay riots widely considered the catalyzing event for the LGBTQ rights movement. The Stonewall moment also marked a transition from gay effeminacy to masculine virility in urban centers, a shift, in other words, from a politics of the closet to a politics of militancy (Launius 21).

Bearing in mind this history of science-fiction television and the space race as reactions to a general sense of increasing domestic disorder from within *and* without the United States, Joan Johnson-Freese contends that the space race was merely another way for the U.S. to use the iconography and actions associated from the start of the twentieth century with the United States' settler-colonial past to assert its dominance on an international stage. This dominance did not require coherence or even feasibility. Indeed, in making the Apollo commitment in 1961,

Kennedy threw out the Eisenhower administration's long-range, slow-growth plan in favor of a model of sporadic, and potentially unsustainable, growth (Cooke 610). Johnson-Freese and others contend that throughout the period of its existence the U.S. space program was designed with three main goals: to testify to the superior technological and military prowess afforded by a capitalist democracy; to demonstrate that might without resorting to explicitly militarized violence; and to instill U.S. citizens and residents with a sense of national pride grounded in a sense of pioneer masculinity in an era of increasing unrest and nationalist skepticism.[58]

As the inconsistent and sometimes parodic reactions to the moon landing make clear, though, the government's heady aims were not always realized. There is, in other words, a disconnect between television producers' aims and government agents' intentions with their propaganda for the space race, on the one hand, and the propaganda's formal effects as well as the rhetorical tactics audiences wielded in their reply. For instance, many black spectators abroad and in the U.S. expressed some concern about the moon landing (Cooke 610). While frustration over the inferior resources devoted to urban poverty and black enfranchisement and equality remain the most well-documented response, the moon landing also commonly evoked less-politicized, but nonetheless skeptical commentary. Some subjects interviewed for ethnic and black newspapers fretted that space exploration may pose health risks to the astronauts and future space explorers, citing the death by heart attack of Bonnie, the pig-tailed monkey whose trip

[58] Attempting to rally American support in the face of supposed Soviet strength in space juxtaposed with American weakness, President John Fitzgerald Kennedy responded to the successful Soviet launches of Sputnik I and II by announcing in 1961 that he planned to land a man on the moon by the end of the decade, a "decision both spectacular in its achievement and outrageous in its cost" (Tyrell 713). Though Kennedy considered cancelling the Apollo program before his death once the Cuban Missile Crisis had allowed the United States to assert its superior military and technological might (Launius 19), President Nixon's cuts to NASA's funding in favor of other projects, namely the Vietnam War, fiscally instantiated Kennedy's doubts about the necessity of the space program as a projection of U.S. military power globally.

orbiting the Earth aboard Biosatellite III was cut short due to her deteriorating health; others called the veracity of the event into question; and still others suggested an impending calamity now that man had surpassed the limits of this world (1–8).

In fact, popular responses to the *Apollo 11* mission make fortuitous use of the events' formal features, such as the overdetermined whiteness of the astronauts in their space suits, to construct their critiques. In his song "Coon on the Moon" (1973), Blues musician Howlin' Wolf undermines the space race's purportedly significant events and triumphs through a credulous extension of the space race's promises. Wolf opens, "When I all grown out, a little boy/Stayed way down south/Had to wear second-handed clothes/Live out back-a the big house // Things have changed/Yes, we on the moon, now/They wouldn't let us play together/Now, we could go to no city school, now" .(28–31) Wolf continues by enumerating the hard labor common to black southerners and sharecroppers—picking cotton and plowing fields—as well as the forms of spatial hierarchy that segregated blacks from whites: living in unsuitable housing and playing separately from white children. Wolf intersperses his testimony of the oppressive nature of racial discrimination with comments about frontier expansion. In addition to citing the moon landing as evidence that "things have changed," he asks for the name of the first man to go to the North Pole. If this strange conjoining of apparently disparate events and outcomes were not enough to highlight the irony of the song's lyrics, Wolf also dwells on absurdist details that purportedly indicate a kind of progress. He notes, for instance that once "we used to wear boots every day" though now, in this utopian present, "we wearin' bran' new shoes," as though boots can never be new and shoes can never be boots. Similarly, he asks "Tell me, who was the first man/made butter out of a peanut?" a sardonic nod to George Washington Carver and the lack of recognition of African American technological innovations in the face of the furor over the moon landing.

Wolf's critique, though, becomes even sharper in its final two stanzas. He croons, "You know they call us, 'coon'/Say we didn't have no sense/You gon' wake up one mornin'/An the ol' 'coon' will be your president" (28–31). By taking mock-seriously the bromide that social progress follows technological progress, Wolf embeds the segregationists' ultimate nightmare into the song—a black president. In closing, he pushes his invective even further: "Ooh, we on the moon, now/You gon' wake up one mornin'/An' it'll be a 'coon' a-settin' on the moon" (33–35). The use of the word "coon" and the emphasis that Wolf places upon it when he sings by anticipating the beat and pitching his voice slightly higher draws attention to the slur and the meanings it encodes. On the one hand, it continues to taunt white racists with a prediction of black mobility. On the other, it rejects the contract offered by black respectability, refusing to imagine a black future that will approximate a white past. "Listen," Wolf seems to say, "the future will be as racist, as full of shallow appeals to equality and progress, as the present."

The sonic aspects of the song amplify these sardonic possibilities, particularly given the rhyme between "coon" and "moon" in the song's title as well as its reference to the racist Coon songs that were wildly popular around the turn of the century. Though nicknamed Howlin' Wolf due to his characteristic howl, in the song, Wolf refrains from moving into a falsetto. This omission indicates a general lack of vocal expressivity, a kind of mock seriousness. But Wolf's decision to remain in his lower register contrasts starkly with the aggressive guitar playing. Fiercely and increasingly pinching the strings as the song goes on, the guitar solos sound almost unmusical in their quiet rage. This harmonic decision flies in the face of the audiences' expectations of Cold War Chicago Blues, a musical genre marketed for its laid-back sweetness. Similarly, throughout the song, Wolf remains persistently ahead of the beat, though many canonical Blues pieces—Big Mama Thornton's "Hound Dog" or Muddy Waters' "Louisiana

Blues"—do just the opposite, remaining slightly behind the beat, instead. This is not-Blues masquerading as Blues, a song that both is and is not what it claims to be. A vicious thread runs through Wolf's lyrics and his playing as he gives the lie to the idea of nationalist progress by taking it so seriously that it becomes absurd. In introducing an element of play into the *Apollo 11* mission, Wolf provides a radical and working class rejoinder to liberal critiques of the moon landing as a misuse of public funds. "Coon on the Moon," while not denying the ameliorative potential of fiscal investment, makes clear that money alone is insufficient restitution for centuries of racial and class violence and unrest. For Wolf, the space race cannot be a perversion of priorities because the priorities themselves are already perverse.

**II. The Revolution Will Not Be Televised**

Wolf's radical Blues lament for the lapses of the Civil Rights Movement existed alongside more mainstream complaints and ironic critiques. The 1960s saw a dramatic shift in the terms upon which the U.S. body politic participated in national affairs and in the image of nationhood the United States projected. Though Wolf uses an "old" technology to broadcast his jeremiad, in persistently asking audiences to imagine an image of the moon, his song testifies to the centrality of television during the period. Indeed, many would have learned of the lunar landing, Stonewall riots, and later, the My Lai Massacre by watching the nightly news on their television sets. By 1960, 89.4% of U.S. homes had television sets, and by 1961 families watched an average of 5 hours and 22 minutes of TV daily (MacDonald 10). In a supplement to radio technology, television viewers could see *and* hear events unfold in real time. This visual shift was also an experiential one. Audiences not only consumed interviews recounting recent events to them second-hand, they could watch these events transpire before their very eyes. Even excessive violence was deemed an acceptable and necessary part of the integrity of television

journalism: the Vietnam War was, after all, the first televised military conflict. Moreover, television's multi-modal formal qualities—its combination of sound, moving images, even written words—meant that that *Star Trek* and the footage of the space race could mirror each other across formal registers. It is not simply that they repeat similar narratives; they enact and perform these narratives in hauntingly similar ways. When Captain Kirk and his crew donned their spacesuits in the episode "The Tholian Web" in November 1968, those spacesuits were recognizable as such in part due to their visual similarity to the protective uniforms worn by U.S. astronauts and vice versa.

This new media landscape reconfigured the options for interaction with the nation-state in ways that facilitated a sometimes-jaundiced view of space exploration and the space race. No longer did audiences need to be present at an event in order to witness it. If, as Benedict Anderson alleges, the newspaper unites a national body politic by joining them in a common endeavor, then watching television supplemented this sense of filial unity by furnishing it with moving images and sounds that could instantly transport viewers into the here and now experienced by their fellow country-members across the nation or globe, just as Wolf pictures himself on the moon. Audiences could "see" certain events transpire—rather than reading about them or hearing the broadcast on the radio—even if that "seeing" became necessarily hypertrophied. Though thousands made the trek to Merritt Island to watch the July 16$^{th}$ liftoff of the *Apollo 11* rockets in person, over 500 million people around the world watched the live broadcast at home and in various viewing parties, repeating this ritual four days later to witness Armstrong descend from the lunar module and take his first steps on the moon's surface. While the mission had a significant in-person component, the vast majority of viewers experienced the moon landing as a series of television broadcasts. It may be true, as Nye and others have argued,

that those who attended the liftoff experienced it as sublime, but considering the *Apollo 11* mission as a milestone in *television* as well as scientific, cultural, and military history suggests that the bulk of audiences—those who watched the event unfold on TV—had a very different experience.[59] As *Star Trek* so deftly illustrates, television, after all, has the power to make events seem overly accessible: not sublime, but familiar.

Indeed, later conspiracy theorists' insistence that the moon landing was a hoax, one filmed by Stanley Kubrick on a soundstage in Houston, testifies to a hyper-awareness of the televisual and scripted nature of the event. What perhaps seemed immediate, unpredictable, and threatening in the flesh, became necessarily contained, almost fictional, when featured on TV. The fact that the launch could be constantly replayed and rewatched only complicates its affective possibilities. While Nye and others have argued that the ability to inspire a feeling of sublimity in multiple and different viewers is the litmus test for the sublime in the U.S. (15), television dictates a different kind of repeatability, one that suggests that experience happens not once, but potentially multiple times. It is not precious, in other words, even if valuable.

Advanced knowledge of the opportunity for repeat viewings does not preclude the singular quality of watching the moon launch and landing nor of any other television firsts, such as the first interracial kiss on *Star Trek*, at the moment that they unfolded in real time. Yet this sense of singularity, when seen through the screen, was mediated even at the time by the ways that viewers were coached to watch television, particularly those programs related to the

[59] "I am hard-pressed to name any other event that has been as media-saturated … as the manned Space Program. Television brought the spectacle into our living rooms, *Life* magazine offered weekly installments of courage, virtue, and fortitude from both astronauts and their wives. Protestant middle-American values, ever the cultural dominant were sanctified by the sacrifice of those brave men of the space program. The space race was white, male, and military, if not militant. It was keeping America free by showing the world the technological expertise of democratic values fueled by federal mandate, corporate desire, educational incentive, and military involvement" (Johnson-Freese 9).

government and the military. As we will see later, there are visual similarities between the *Apollo 11* launch and the public service announcements aired on the radio and television throughout the 1950s and 60s to prepare U.S. citizens for the prospect of a nuclear attack from the USSR or its allies. *Star Trek*'s frequent reference to a nuclear disaster not unlike what these programs prepared viewers for only adds another dimension to their ubiquity. These experiments with mass television broadcasting had a significant impact upon TV programming. In addition to the rampant militarization and surveillance the Cold War inaugurated, it also saw the birth of a federalized warning system, including sirens, tones, and standardized dictates for what to do in an emergency. The effectiveness of such systems depended upon citizens' ability to distinguish certain sounds from others and internalize disaster precautions, a necessity that led to an aggressive education campaign on the part of the federal and state governments. These television and radio broadcasts coached citizens in what to do when under attack, casting threats as catastrophic, but also quotidian or banal: the price of doing business in the modern world. They demanded that citizens listen, learn, and then *act* upon the information presented in the public service announcements if they wished to remain safe. The ideal viewer was thereby trained by these broadcasts to see explosions similar to what they witnessed on the day of the July 16th launch as awesome yet routine, survivable through the careful, repeated, and systemic planning of which they were an integral part. Disaster became another eventuality; one that television could help viewers to practice and prepare for.

*Star Trek* also invoked this particular televisual iconography of war, destruction, and disaster. Though it, too, featured a number of television firsts—the first science fiction television show based explicitly upon serialized Westerns; the first interracial kiss (albeit a coerced one); the first interracial cast—these very inaugural events and features mirror and repeat the culture

from which they stemmed as well as the specific genres of serialized TV shows. In addition to its highly repetitive plots, Kirk and his crew somehow manage to escape death and destruction again and again, all in less than 60 minutes of viewing time. This means that no matter how impossible or dangerous a situation might seem, viewers knew that their anxieties would all be assuaged: Kirk and his faithful sidekicks, Dr. McCoy, Spock, Uhura, Sulu, and Chekhov would never perish. Part of the pleasure of watching the show thus lay in anticipating an outcome that viewers knew would come to pass, an expectation facilitated by *Star Trek*'s repurposing of historical narratives and myths.

In the face of political, economic, and social pressures, agents and supporters of the U.S. state reached for a vision of frontier excellence in the guise of the astronaut, the modern day conqueror who comes in peace. The footage of and reactions to *Star Trek* and the *Apollo 11* mission, though, make clear that dire scenes of nuclear apocalypse did not obviate television's multifaceted potential. These particular redeployments of twentieth-century renditions of the performance of conquest proves notable, though, in the degree to which violence and militarism constantly resurface as part of the fabric of suspense and interest that makes the events worth watching. In so explicitly taking up a particular version of the iconography of exploration and conquest made canonical throughout the twentieth century at a moment when the power of that iconography had been exposed as existentially bereft, the scripted and repetitive nature of *Star Trek* and the moon landing exposes imperial expansion's frayed margins. When Captain Kirk, with his classic staccato delivery, shouts out the opening lines of the Declaration of Independence as a justification for and resolution to hundreds of years of total war in the episode "The Omega Glory," he uncovers the desolation and absurdity at the core of the phrase "liberty and justice for all."

**III. Doubting Progress in Star Trek**

Like the space race, *Star Trek* invokes the idealism of space travel as a justification for present unrest by reinterpreting the violence of the twentieth century as a necessary precondition for an eventual and perpetual peace. Set approximately 300 years in the future, *Star Trek* takes place in a utopian period of human development where intergalactic travel and cooperation have seemingly replaced inter-and intra-cultural dissent. This future world, though, is resolutely post-lapsarian: Captain James T. Kirk and First Commander Spock make frequent reference to the Eugenics and Third World Wars, standoffs between the USSR and United States during the 1990s where both sides resorted to the use of weapons that threatened global apocalypse.[60] Yet the inevitability of mutual destruction ushered in a commitment to pacifism and cooperation. Turning to each other for support, the world's peoples pooled their collective material and intellectual resources, quickly learning to travel at speeds faster than light and making "first contact" with other forms of intelligent life in the universe.[61] The idea of collective progress borne of near-annihilation is therefore central to the founding mythos of the *Star Trek* universe.

Despite its centrality to the show's plot, though, progress in both its theoretical and material iterations is relentlessly called into doubt. On the most obvious level, the show's conceit about pacifism constantly comes under pressure. In conjunction with the other members of the "Federation," an inter-planetary democratic coalition similar in structure to the United Nations and ruled by the core U.S. principles of freedom and individuality, the *Enterprise* crew takes to

[60] Just what these weapons were remains unclear. At times, the show suggests that both sides detonated atomic bombs. In the episode "The Omega Glory," though, Kirk and Spock confirm that though the U.S. and USSR came close to nuclear war, that eventuality never came to pass. Indeed, Spock contends that the limited restraint exercised by both sides was the only thing that made peace possible.

[61] Though first contact is much discussed in later iterations of the *Star Trek* franchise, the original series only makes reference to the event without providing many details.

space to meddle—violently—in the affairs of others and establish new colonies wherever they land. Though supposedly governed by the "prime directive" (a stipulation that no Federation member may intervene in the affairs of another planet) the characters defy this rule in nearly every episode. The show, in other words, sees imperialism and colonialism as continuous with, rather than disruptive of, intergalactic peace, even if this commitment to cultural conquest endangers the *Enterprise*'s missions.[62] Like the *Apollo 11* flight, then, the original series of *Star Trek* imagines a future largely in keeping with a highly militarized settler-colonial past. The framing suggests that the future, as Daniel Bernardi has noted, will look almost exactly like the very history that the show critiques: there is no progress at all (34–39). Both as a series and in individual episodes, *Star Trek* envisions itself as the epitome of the technological, social, and cultural progress that it is not.

When television and science fiction critics turn to the original series of *Star Trek* they tend to read *Star Trek* as a direct allegory for the cultural, social, and racial zeitgeist of the 1960s rather than an aesthetic rendition of it, one that might periodically depart from the status quo (Bernardi; Barrett; Hemmingson; Johnson-Smith). While such accounts usefully elucidate how a popular culture text responds to a multi-faceted social scene, they risk flattening out the series' complexities in order to do so. After all, even the show's opening credits testify to the ways that progress, particularly in regards to colonialism, serves as a foil for the series. Unlike other kinds of television dramas, nearly each episode from the original series stands alone. This generic decision means that the series' credits must provide the entire context necessary to understand

[62] The recursive nature of the series is built into its genesis: Rodenberry pitched *Star Trek* to Desilu Production as a "*Wagon Train* to the stars" a and most of his prior television experience was as part of the team working for TV westerns, a genre already seen as retrograde by the late 1960s (Hark 8).

any given episode. They do so in just three sentences: "Space: the final frontier. These are the voyages of the Starship *Enterprise*. Its five year mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before." That such limited exposition can set the scene for three years of shows demands that despite the series' obsession with cultural evolution on other planets, the *Star Trek* universe itself remains in a perpetual state of arrested development. Each episode begins, virtually, at the same point as all the others. Any new information would have to be integrated into a continuous storyline, a process that would disrupt the logic by which the series coheres. Characters rarely mention or use new inventions and the vaunted Federation seems entirely dedicated to immediate concerns and missions, rather than possessing any long-term goals. The commitment to a perpetual and unchanging present flies in the face of *Star Trek*'s founding conceit of a radically new and perfected future moving constantly, and unyieldingly, forward.

The credits' videography and soundtrack mirrors this recursive logic. The interlude opens upon the vast blackness of space before the *Enterprise* glides slowly past a red planet. The camera shifts three times to show this same red planet traversed by the *Enterprise* from three different angles. Once William Shatner as Captain Kirk intones, "to boldly go where no man has gone before," though, the music shifts from the slow murmur of wind instruments and the occasional "ping" of the harp or violin to an energetic theme with a steady beat that provides the melody for a woman's high-pitched humming. The *Enterprise* in turn shifts speeds, whizzing diagonally across the screen four times before the credits close. Exciting as the change of pace in the credits appears, the ship apparently goes nowhere. Instead, it twice traces back over its own path without changing course or arriving at a particular location. The sense of purpose implied by its speed ultimately belies its lack of destination. The spaceship darts through the universe,

hurrying off only apparently to end up in the same place. This insistence on a fundamentally changeless ontological reality parallels the predictable structure of the sitcom: nearly every episode ends on the "bridge," the ship's control center. Thus despite the many instances where the *Enterprise* crew interact with peaceful and more highly evolved alien beings who suggest that perhaps in a few thousand years, humans will progress to these more sophisticated beings' level, the very lack of change within the series itself makes this suggestion farcical, rather than utopian. As the credits demonstrate, the very literal and figurative vehicles for change within the show can never deliver the crew to a new physical or mental state.

*Star Trek*'s depiction of progress as anti-progress has specific implications for the show's representation of nationalism. Species are grouped based upon their "home" planet, even if they have never so much as set foot upon this genealogical origin point. Immigration and naturalized citizenship are thus inimical to the original series. Klingons, Romulans, and Earthlings remain Klingon, Romulan, and Earthling even when encountered in territories held by other sovereign empires. While this schema presents nationality as inalienable, it is also immutable and grounded fundamentally in the land of planets themselves. Vulcans' greater strength and placid emotions, for instance, stem from the thinner atmosphere, higher gravity, and harsh environment of their home planet Vulcan.[63] Likewise, land and land ownership prove a persistent and unyielding source of conflict. When a given episode features beings of different races inhabiting the same planet, this cohabitation incites conflict rather than cooperation. Through these methods, the show casts homogeneity, not its famed diversity, as the pre-condition for peace. By portraying

[63] This insistence upon a non-cultural explanation of behavior persists despite the Vulcans' close resemblance to the Romulans, who developed in a similar environment. Despite their genetic and environmental similarities, the two ultimately find themselves at opposite sides of the developmental spectrum. While both groups possess an innate stoicism the Vulcans' pacifism contrasts starkly with the war mongering of the Romulans.

nationalism as unchanging and inescapable because bound inevitably to the land of one's blood, the series makes real change appear impossible.

Given the tendency to present national identity as something inherited and unchanging, something that one derives from one's home planet no matter how distant that planet may be, *Star Trek* deploys a particularly retrograde version of New World tropes, especially given the anti-imperial and decolonial energies of the time. In ostensibly buying into the Renaissance justification for New World conquest by suggesting that European explorers ameliorated the shocking savagery upon which they stumbled, at least on the surface *Star Trek* likewise frames progress as a desirable and achievable goal. For instance, in the episode "The Apple," the crew land on a planet run by a supercomputer referred to by the humanoid inhabitants as "Vaal." Vaal communicates with the humanoids through antenna that sprout from their necks, telling them how to behave and summoning them periodically to "feed" it the rocks it burns as fuel. In addition to this physiological oddity, the Vaalians appear simultaneously white and native: each member of the tribe boasts comically voluminous platinum blonde hair and European features but skin artificially tanned to a tawny orange color and elaborate tribal markings on their faces.[64] On the one hand, the Vaalians' "colored" skin and habits allow them to lay claim to an autochthonous relationship to the land they inhabit, one that apparently predates Vaal's existence and control. At the same time, their Caucasian features and Nordic hair suggests that they possess the genetic material and predisposition for self-rule (Bernardi 32–44).

[64] Hackneyed race passing is actually one of *Star Trek*'s trademarks. In perhaps its most egregious iteration, show executives cast Ricardo Montalban as the Sikh villain Khan Noonian Singh. Perhaps the substitution of a Latino actor for a Southeast Asian one would have been less egregious were it not for Montalban's noticeable Spanish accent and his fame during the 1960s as a famous Latin lover. As it stands, though, the attempt to have Montalban pass for Singh smacks of parody, at best.

Given the episode's concern with the potential for and efficacy of sovereign independence, the Vaalians' natural proclivities take on supreme importance. Vaal controls all aspects of the planet, including the weather, and provides the humanoids with sustenance and material comforts in exchange for the rocks it needs to continue to fuel its mechanical processes. Ignorant that Vaal is a machine, the humanoids worship it as a god. The Vaalians slavish subservience to this inanimate computer provides the episode's tension. Spock, in his guise as the rational scientist, argues that the apparently healthy and happy humanoids "have chosen a system which seems to work for them" and therefore their circumstances do not merit intervention. Dr. McCoy, though, vehemently refutes Spock's conclusions:

> It would take a computerized Vulcan mind such as yours [Spock] to make that kind of statement … There are certain absolutes, Mr. Spock, and one of them is the right of humanoids to a free and unchained environment. The right to have conditions which permit growth…. These are humanoids. Intelligent. They need to advance and grow. Don't you understand what my readings indicate [*sic*]. There's been no change or progress here in at least ten thousand years. This isn't life. It's stagnation. (quoted in Tyrell 713–714)

McCoy's dissent rests upon two fundamental and apparently universal humanoid characteristics: intelligence and the need for progress. Yet McCoy's categorization of humanoid and non-humanoid attributes crumbles under scrutiny. The Vaalians, after all, behave more like robots than humans; they do not mate or show each other affection and have no desires other than to serve Vaal. McCoy's insistence upon their humanoid nature thus depends upon his observation of their physical characteristics, an observation that cannot escape the vicissitudes of race. While the Vaalians' skin color and cultural practices align them with various indigenous groups,

ultimately, they undeniably resemble Europeans. Indeed, within the original series, the crew never uses the term "humanoid" or "human" to describe populations of color.[65]

On its surface, the exchange constitutes an exhortation for the universal salience of capitalist democracy and liberal individualism couched within a racialized understanding of humanism. Yet in delivering these lines, Spock and McCoy occupy opposite sides of a polarized spectrum that itself comes to appear absurd. Spock, characteristically, maintains his composure even as McCoy escalates to shrill histrionics. Jim, the paradigmatic cowboy hero, mediates by rendering the debate moot when he tells the two that their "philosophical argument can wait until our ship's out of danger." *Both* positions, not despite but rather because of their merits—with Spock as the cultural relativist and McCoy the idealist crusader for freedom and justice—evince a satirical element. The episode's denouement, where sex comes to stand in for freedom and progress, furthers this satire. Once safely on board, Spock wonders about the group's actions. Comparing the Vaalians to Adam and Eve, Spock asks whether the members of the *Enterprise* have effectively banished then from paradise by giving them knowledge. Though he fails to name this knowledge, the fact that the prior scene ended with the Vaalians laughing in a prehensile reaction to the mechanics of sexual reproduction suggests that Spock refers above all to carnal knowledge, which was, in the end, the only new information imparted to the Vaalians during the crew's visit.

Instead of responding, Kirk asks Spock if he's implying that Kirk played the role of Satan on the planet. When Spock denies this allegation, Kirk further presses him, referencing Spock's pointed ears when Kirk asks whether anyone on the ship resembles Satan. The jaunty playing of

[65] Though Kirk et al do travel to planets occupied by non-white humanoid races, such as is the case in *The Omega Glory*, the crew do not *call* these groups humanoid. The use of the moniker in some cases rather than others is therefore revealing.

flute music in the background furnishes the joke's punch line even though Kirk's tactics simply dodge Spock's thoughtful queries, reversing the status quo and poking fun at the ostensibly serious. The question of whether progress can coexist with happiness, or whether progress can even be achieved, hangs in the balance. Though such ham-fisted scenes typify the series, their standardization—and therefore predictability—only amplifies the show's playful elements by repeatedly reminding viewers of the strangeness of their own wholly fabricated cultural expectations, values, and assumptions. "The Apple," like many other episodes in the series, camps the idea of the imperial explorer arriving to ameliorate a savage native population worshiping false gods. It does so by raising questions about historical violence not to answer them, but rather to limn the boundaries of its joke.

Other episodes more explicitly stage the confrontation between intergalactic interlopers and indigenous cultures threatened by displacement or even a non-humanoid status that makes them illegible as sentient beings, calling upon the myth of the disappearing native when doing so. "Devil in the Dark" foregrounds the latter of these issues when the *Enterprise* crew arrives on a long-established colony populated by Federation miners digging for Pergium, a mineral essential to modern energy production. Just before the credits begin, a group of extras explain that a mysterious creature has been killing miners. The creature moves swiftly and has a unique tell: it burns its victims to a crisp.

The creature, or "monster" as the miners sometimes call it, threatens continued production on the planet, and by extension, the stability of the Federation. But impeding the relatively benign workings of the Federation are only one potential consequence of the production slow-downs caused by the mysterious deaths. The chief engineer repeatedly complains to Kirk about lost profits, implying that the decreased revenue is equivalent in his

mind to the potential loss of life that will result if the team fails to return production levels to their earlier rate. While on its own this particular detail might be relatively unremarkable, the attention paid to class lends it a new resonance. The episode begins with a dramatic close up of a marbled golden-brown planet while a series of string instruments play ominously in the background in a minor key. The camera then cuts to a shot of a blighted *Metropolis*-style industrial landscape complete with dim lighting and power plants. This scenery, though, lacks even the attempt at verisimilitude common to other sets: it is clearly nothing more than a painted backdrop with holes drilled into it through which blinking lights shine. The plot's events thus unfold in a landscape that closely resembles the works of Fritz Lang and other early twentieth-century filmmakers. The literal depthlessness of this sound stage calls attention to the artifice the show entails and encourages an allegorical reading of the episode. The miner's occupation, too, invites a particularly skeptical reading of the plot given that the persistence of miners' strikes throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century, particularly in the UK and Appalachia, had cast mining, the extraction of precious resources from the earth at the expense of one's body, as uniquely exploitative labor.[66] Such political and visual resonances between the episode and critiques of capitalist exploitation in various mediums and forms suggest that wage-based oppression and its various logics—the expendable nature of human life, for instance—will never

[66] For more on the history of miner's strikes in the United States and their relationship to U.S. labor history and government policy, see Howard Zinn, Dana Frank, and Robin D. G. Kelley *Three Strikes: Miners, Musicians, Salesgirls, and the Fighting Spirit of Labor's Last Century* (Beacon Press, 2001); Aaron Brenner, Benjamin Day, and Immanuel Ness *The Encyclopedia of Strikes in American History* (M. E. Sharpe, 2009); Sarah Chicone "Respectable Rags: Working-Class Poverty and the 1913-1914 Southern Colorado Coal Strike" (*International Journal of Historical Archaeology,* March 2011); James Gray Pope "The Western Pennsylvania Coal Strike of 1933, Part I: Lawmaking from Below and the Revival of the United Mine Workers" (*Labor History*, Feb. 2003); and Robyn Muncy "Coal-Fired Reforms: Social Citizenship, Dissident Miners, and the Great Society" (*Journal of American History*, June 2009).

end. To step into the world of "Devil in the Dark" is to step into a world that resembles a kind of nightmare.

After the deaths of several miners and *Enterprise* security personnel, Kirk and Spock discover that the creature is actually a silicon-based life form, called a "Horta," that burrows through the planet by secreting a powerful acid.[67] The Horta is literally made of stone and thereby, to some degree, coterminous with the planet itself. Much like the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas, who are represented throughout early American texts as being descended from the American soil itself, the Horta is *of* the land, not just from it. Moreover, she attacks the miners only because their new tunnels threaten her unhatched children. In sanctifying her motives and making her appear entirely at the mercy of foreign invaders, the episode draws upon the myth of the vanishing native to imply that the Horta's nobility is inextricable from her inevitable extinction. This realization, though, arrives in so absurd a fashion that it complicates the stock narrative popularized in novels like *The Last of the Mohicans*. Alone together in the tunnels, Kirk and Spock shoot the Horta with their phasers. Wounded, she retreats to one of the planet's many caverns, where Kirk and Spock stumble upon her and examine her bulbous brown, white, and red flesh (which itself mirrors the appearance of the planet in the episode's opening). Convinced that they need more information, Spock uses the Vulcan mind-meld, a technique that

[67] Much has been made by fans and critics of the expendable lives of *Star Trek*'s so-called "Redshirts," security personnel who wear, as the moniker suggests, red uniforms. These characters die at alarming rates throughout the original series: of all the characters killed during *Star Trek*'s first run, 73% were wearing red shirts. The excessiveness and predictability of their impending doom, the knowledge that the main characters will soon resolve the danger that obliterated them, contributes to the camp aspect in their role in the series as the first line of an imperial army. But this very campiness, the ways that their deaths repurpose the strategies and gestures of conquest, reveals the labor needed to conquer new worlds, and the expendable nature of some lives in order to enshrine others. We see, in other words, the very violence of conquest that popular histories of nation building sought to repress, made available because of the campiness of the event, the seriousness with which it takes its historical sources.

creates a psychic bond between him and whomever and whatever he touches, to ventriloquize the Horta's thoughts and emotions. He seeks, in other words, to become a cipher for this endangered being, to channel her voice through his own body and thereby to take on her narrative.

While eerie music plays in the background, Spock approaches the Horta before clenching and unclenching his fists and eyes in spasmodic and dramatic fashion. "Pain!" he screams, "Pain! Pain!" before falling back against Kirk, overwhelmed by the creature's agony. On cue, the Horta scuttles to a nearby mound of rock and burns "No Kill I" into the surface. After the camera pans to depict a murderous mob of miners carrying clubs and rioting outside the tunnels protecting Kirk, Spock, the Horta, and McCoy—who has beamed down to heal the wounded creature—Spock re-attempts the mind meld, eventually learning the Horta's purpose and history. With his hands against the Horta's "flesh" Spock shouts, "Murder! The thousands! Devils! Infinity ends! Chamber of the Ages! Altar of tomorrow! Murderers! Stop them! Kill! Strike back! Monsters!" an ejaculation that causes the recently arrived McCoy to ask Kirk for an explanation before raising an eyebrow in surprise. Despite the Horta's existential and physical angst, she allows Spock to reveal the location of a piece of machinery necessary to support humanoid life on the planet that the Horta had stolen in the hopes of banishing the humanoids forever. The revelation is accompanied by poignant string music that swells to a crescendo when Spock, in a dull moan, urges Kirk to use caution when entering the "hatchery" where the eggs lay in wait. The Horta's words, transmuted through Spock who has come to serve as a version of the native informant, and this soundtrack solidify the creature's relationship to indigenous groups: like the noble savage, she helps the conquerors even as she faces death and extinction at their hands.

This image of martyrdom contrasts starkly with the scene outside. Frustrated by the *Enterprise* security crew's attempts to keep them from the creature, the miners beat the two

guards unconscious and storm the tunnels. Before they can deliver a similar fate to Kirk, McCoy, Spock, and the Horta, Kirk arrests their momentum by explaining that the planet has hosted many generations of Horta. Every 50,000 years the entire species dies out, leaving behind one creature to care for the thousands of eggs that will constitute the next generation. Kirk insists the Horta is inclined to peace and was willing to share the planet with humans—another attribute of the noble savage—until the miners dug into her hatchery. Then she behaved as "any mother" would by protecting her young. But Kirk sees an upshot to this tale of woe. Given the planet's abundant mineral resources, the miners can use the Horta's ability to burn through rock with ease in order to extract untold riches. Spock communicates these terms to the Horta—not before singing the Horta's praises at the human's expense, an admonition accompanied by jaunty piping from the soundtrack—which agrees. The episode ends with a shot of Kirk and his crew on the bridge speaking to the chief mining engineer. The engineer explains that as soon as they hatch, the infant Horta immediate begin to move through the rock, revealing vast deposits of precious minerals. Kirk responds that he's "delighted" that the miners will be rich and gives the command to leave orbit as Kirk and McCoy tease Spock about his pointed ears and uncharacteristically human arrogance about his appearance.

Despite this sanguine conclusion, the episode's form destabilizes just this happy ending. Ultimately, the miners' continued presence remains on their terms and to their benefit. In exchange for survival, the Horta cedes her land and her home. The miners, on the other hand, presumably grow rich with the Horta's help. Yet even the veracity of this claim comes under doubt. Like the automated structures that we will see threatened the masculine vigor of the *Apollo 11* mission, the Horta, ultimately, render the humans useless. Given the vicissitudes of the labor market, in making the miners extraneous, the Horta enact the revenge of unemployment.

That the episode raises the question of unemployment in 1967, at the exact moment that President Johnson first became concerned with inflation makes the issue of wages, the cause, after all, of inflation, a fraught one.

Indeed, the references to monetary exchange that bookend the episode suggest a more complex commentary on the role of class in the conquest of the Americas. "Devil in the Dark" remains one of the few episodes that acknowledges the continued existence of money and capitalism in *Star Trek*. Though the *Enterprise* crew need not deal in currency—cultural capital and the threat of force are apparently sufficient for all of their material needs—the cast of characters who use financial remuneration as motivation is telling. The miners find themselves in the company of Harcourt Mudd, a con artist and pimp and Cyrano Jones, a trader and swindler, as some of the very few characters who speak openly about the role of finance in the 24th century.[68] The miners' association with a criminalized underclass is marked physically: unlike the *Enterprise* crew whose uniforms are adorned with gold insignia below the collar, the miners all wear brightly colored jumpsuits, ones that closely approximate those worn by prisoners. Even the chief engineer, a man prominently featured in his office several times throughout the episode, never wears anything other than his jumpsuit. Armed with pickaxes and shovels, despite the purported advances of the future, the miners apparently continue to perform a kind of manual labor that closely approximates the way mining was practiced throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The miners' garb thereby distinguishes them from the *Enterprise* crew, who remain in their uniforms for the duration of the episode, in contradistinction to their costume changes in other shows. The episode thereby suggests that class, like planetary allegiance, is inherent and static, and that the dangerous work of fueling an empire is undertaken by a specific

[68] Kirk does mention at one point that the Federation spent a lot of money on the crew's training, but this trade is about defense, rather than material goods and therefore is in a different class.

group of precariously employed people who will never be anything other than manual laborers. They lack even the ability to change their clothes.

While subtlety is not one of *Star Trek*'s strengths, nowhere is this parodic take on progress as it intersects with national narratives more explicit that in "The Paradise Syndrome." The episode foregrounds issues of land ownership, genocide, and conquest again through the theme of the vanishing native, a being simultaneously threatened and preserved by marauding explorers. The opening features Kirk, Spock, and McCoy on an idyllic planet endangered by an asteroid that they must divert in order to save the planet's inhabitants—why they must beam down to the surface to complete their mission is never explained. From a distance, the landing party watches the planet's natives while Kirk waxes nostalgic about the landscape's natural beauty and the apparent simplicity and harmony of the indigenous group's life. As he did when describing the Horta, McCoy cites the environment itself, rather than any cultural factors, as the source for the tribe's behavior. McCoy's arguments imply that indigenous groups mirror the land around themselves rather than possessing any cultural or social ability to self-determine. If this was not enough to invoke prelapsarian images of an uncorrupted and incorruptible American landscape, Spock explains that based upon their behaviors, the "peaceful" tribe appears to be "a mixture of Navajo, Mohican, and Delaware." Spock's conjecture proves uncannily accurate: though the landing party does not yet know it, the planet's indigenous inhabitants hail from Earth, but were saved and relocated to this distant planet—Earth's nearly identical twin—several centuries earlier by an alien group dedicated to preserving "endangered" life forms.

The production notes for the episode suggest an ulterior motive for Spock's list besides anthropological accuracy. Before production began, the Kellam DeForest Research Company advised the show's writers to reconsider the set of tribes enumerated in the original script. In a

report issued to the Roddenberry and his staff before the scene was finalized, the company made several suggestions:

> The report suggests changing the tribal mixture of the peaceful Indians, which already had been changed from simply "Mohicans" in the story outline to a "mixture of Navajo, Mohican, and Mandan" in the script, in order to be more authentic: "The Mandans were among the most violent, intransigent of all the American Indian tribes. They made war on everyone, on any excuse. Suggest Pawnee or Cherokee." The report also notes that " 'Mohican' is a very bad tribal name to use for several reasons: it is not really an Indian name (Mohegan or Mahican is close). It brings to mind immediately 'Last of the … ;' and they were also very war-like. Suggest: Delaware. (The Delaware were related and sets and props would be correct for either culture.)" (in Bernardi 48)

Despite these suggestions, the production staff incorporated only one of the report's suggestions into the final version: the inclusion of the Delaware tribe. Given that the Company noted that the use of the name "Mohican" was not only culturally and etymologically inaccurate, but also that it had become closely associated with inevitable genocide, the use of the name suggests that Roddenberry and his team explicitly intended these implications, hoping to conjure a particular set of implicit associations from their audience.

Ingenuity and technological progress provide the counterpoint to the episode's image of edenic naturalness. Kirk, Spock, and McCoy soon stumble upon an ancient, and apparently technologically advanced, obelisk. While Spock and McCoy gather samples, Kirk stands at the base of the obelisk before opening his communicator to discuss his landing plans with the crew still aboard the ship. This action releases a trap door beneath Kirk's feet, causing him to fall into

the obelisk's bowels. By the time he hits his head, is electrocuted by the complex set of computer equipment and consoles housed within the structure, and collapses on the control board apparently unconscious, the trap door has closed and Spock and McCoy fail to realize that Kirk lurks just below them. Given the exigencies of the asteroid's course, Spock and McCoy reluctantly beam up to the ship so that they have some hope of altering the space debris' trajectory and returning to the planet in two months to search for the Captain.

Disoriented and alone, Kirk awakens inside the obelisk and gazes at his communicator and phaser in confusion. He wonders in voiceover about his location, his name, and even his purpose as he stumbles about drunkenly. When the stairs he rests beside become illuminated with a celestial glow, Kirk ascends this golden passage, emerging from the obelisk at the very moment that two native women approach. Startled, they bow before him, convinced that he is the god and savior whose coming was foretold in their prophecies. Like the Vaalians, the women's actions show that they treat a piece of machinery—the obelisk—as the home of the sacred, a move that posits them as primitive and without any industrial knowledge. Moreover, the scene refers to the widely contested tales of Columbus and Cortès's respective arrivals in the Americas. In his letters back to Spain, Columbus claimed that the Arawak hailed the Spanish explorers they encountered as gods because of their skin color, the white sails on their ships, and the fact that Arawak religious traditions predicted that gods would arrive from across a great body of water (Cohen 118). Similarly, since the 16$^{th}$ century, Europeans widely assumed that the Aztec ruler Montezuma believed Cortès to be the return of the god Quetzalcoatl, a tale that purportedly facilitated Cortès' seizure and destruction of the Mexico City (Townsend). Though anthropologists and indigenous historians dispute these claims—many argue, for instance, that Aztecs did not believe that Quetzalcoatl would return—they have remained a persistent part of

popular and national culture and a common excuse given for the conquest of the Americas: indigenous groups did not resist because they considered Europeans to be gods.[69]

Given that the plot climax arrives at the very moment when Spock reveals that the tribe inhabiting the planet literally descends from indigenous groups threatened by the European conquest of the Americas, the episode suggests that progress is impossible for certain populations due apparently to a kind of genetic flaw passed from generation to generation. Despite the distance of hundreds of years and several galaxies, these descendants of the peoples European explorers encountered in the Americas possess the same beliefs and betray the exact same *behaviors* as their predecessors. While the society Kirk represents has advanced, these natives have not. Indeed, in the directions for the episode's script, Roddenberry wrote that the natives should not have progressed beyond the invention of the wheel despite living on the planet for centuries (Bernardi 46). Such an emphasis upon an apparently timeless and unending stasis amplifies the endangered quality of the tribe: not only were they transported to the planet due to the threat of European exploration, but Kirk's arrival rehearses the very process that imperiled the tribe's existence in the first place. From the show's opening moments, the episode casts the tribe as stuck in the past and therefore without a future.

The tribe's inability to progress furnishes the episode with its dramatic tension. The camera alternates between shots of Kirk's "primitive" life among the tribe and images of the *Enterprise* speeding through space, a visual reminder of Spock's claim that the tribe has not advanced far enough to grasp the concept of space flight. Though Kirk retains only vague memories of his prior life—he even tells the tribe that his name is "Kirok"—he maintains an innate superiority. For instance, the tribal leader gives him the title of "medicine chief" after Kirk

[69] I will refrain from belaboring the many flaws in this thesis beyond noting the many and varied accounts of indigenous resistance that continue to this day.

saves a young boy from drowning by performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Kirk's assumption of this prestigious position disrupts the tribe's traditions and suggests that Kirk possesses advantages that the natives lack. Prior to his arrival, the position of medicine chief was passed generationally from father to son: Kirk interrupts this process, implying that change occurs only in the guise of the white explorer, another replaying of conquest tropes. These and other details show that though he ultimately dons the natives' clothing, Kirk only plays Indian. Indeed, in his guise as medicine chief, Kirk, again through the strength of his own ingenuity, sets about improving the lives of the planets' inhabitants by introducing a variety of innovations like food preservation, water irrigation, and lamps. These activities contrast with the tribal leader's lamentations that the "wise ones"—the group that "rescued" the tribe and transported them to their current planet—wanted them to be more advanced. The characters' anxieties and Kirk's actions suggest that certain groups have the capacity for progress while others do not. Those lacking in this particular virtue find themselves perpetually endangered and without any means to protect themselves—they are therefore always under threat of erasure.

The question of disappearance takes literal form when Kirk, as Kirok, marries Miramanee, the daughter of the tribal leader, a priestess, and one of the women who first spotted him at the obelisk. Though this union maintains tribal traditions and strictures—Miramanee claims that the priestess always marries the medicine chief—the marriage only furthers the tribe's precarity. In a campy representation of pre-conquest bliss, Miramanee confesses that she has become pregnant in a scene where Kirk, dressed in a ridiculous take on indigenous costuming, chases her through a gleaming wooded glen while the two laugh and eventually tumble across each other's bodies. Kirk's overjoyed response does not obviate the implications of the pregnancy: whether he knows it or not, Kirk remains an outsider. The child Miramanee

bears will, like Spock, belong to two "worlds," at home in neither. Yet Miramanee's tribe—who notably lack a name—and Kirk are all human, not humanoid: all come, originally, from Earth. Unlike intergalactic marriages, such as the one that the union of Spock's parents represents,[70] Kirk and Miramanee's pairing on its very surface comments upon racial mixture in an explicitly human, rather than alien, realm.

It is notable, then, that this progeny is not allowed to "live long and prosper." While Kirk frolics through his prelapsarian sojourn, the crew fails to divert the asteroid. With their power banks low, they return to the planet, hoping to find some way on its surface to prevent collision. Their arrival coincides with Kirk's fall from grace. As the skies darken and the winds howl, the tribe rushes to Kirk and Miramanee's hut seeking his help: in a moment of coincidence characteristic of the series, the medicine chief's main responsibility is saving the planet from the annihilation that the asteroid threatens, the very feat that Kirk's own crew could not realize. Urged on by Miramanee and despite his own doubts about his suitability for the task, Kirk runs to the obelisk in the woods where a crowd has already gathered. Though he bangs on the structure's surface and wails outside, he cannot gain entry to the temple, nor does the obelisk respond to his entreaties by emitting the "blue flame" the tribe expects. The crowd, fomented by Kirk's rival's cries that Kirk's failure proves that he is an imposter, begins to stone the man they previously considered a deity. They do not stop when Miramanee rushes to his side to shield him. Both crumble to their knees before the Enterprise crew intervenes. After restoring Kirk's memory by channeling his psyche with a Vulcan mind-meld, Spock explains that he has solved the various mysteries plaguing the episode. The complex etchings on the obelisk represent musical notes and the obelisk itself is not a temple at all but an enormous computer dedicated to

[70] Spock's mother is an Earthling, though is father is from the planet Vulcan. Spock's "half breed" status is a frequent punch line throughout the series.

diverting the course of any threatening asteroids. Protection is as simple as playing the correct sequence of musical tones—apparently the exact sequence of sounds Kirk's communicator made when he opened it—and then correctly manipulating the complex and highly sophisticated console inside the obelisk. Spock successfully completes the mission by pushing a single button. Problem solved, crisis averted: the planet, and its people are saved.

All, though, does not end well. The obelisk, rather than the *Enterprise* crew, saves the planet, another indication of the group's buffoonish impotence. Moreover, as a result of her injuries, both Miramanee and the child she carries perish while Kirk emerges entirely unscathed. Given that Miramanee's death allows for the logic of the series to continue without disruption or change, her disappearance renders her invisible. Though Miramanee remains the sole woman Kirk marries and impregnates in the entire series, she and her relationship with Kirk are relegated to the same status as Kirk's many impersonal interactions with other humans, humanoids, and alien beings in his travels. None of these figures challenges his position of authority on the *Enterprise*, his daily life, or his mission in any sustained way. Despite the melancholy tenor of the episode's close, audiences knew that the following week they could watch a new episode that would pick up as though nothing had happened. Racial mixture, from this perspective, represents the horizon of possibility for the episode. Though Kirk's relationship with Miramanee in some ways mirrors his other romantic intrigues, Miramanee alone perishes: every single other human and humanoid Kirk fancies—and notably, all these women are white—survives. The mixed-race body, though, must be jettisoned. Thus for all of Kirk's jocular teasing of Spock for his lack of emotion and purportedly mechanical relationship to human affairs, the lack of real affect that Miramanee's death has upon Kirk casts him, rather than Spock, as mechanistic, sociopathic even. Kirk's own words turn against him in this moment, revealing him, the stand in for frontier

masculinity, as cold and calculating. Such sociopathic tendencies also impact the episode's representation of race. Through Miramanee's death the episode sidesteps the politically volatile issue of miscegenation: there is no body to testify to Kirk and Miramanee's coupling. By terminating Miramanee's pregnancy and killing her, "The Paradise Syndrome" posits genocide as the answer to the biological realities of exploration and conquest.

Such sexist and genocidal messages, in fact, were audiences' main complaint about the series. Though fans clamored to save *Star Trek* in 1968 and later, they did not treat the show as an unimpeachable work of art. After its first cancellation, hundreds of viewers wrote to Roddenberry and the show's producers to express their admiration for and critiques of the series, often in the same letter. In these documents, viewers frequently see the series' ultimately anti-progressive nature as its greatest flaw. In particular, the show's treatment of women and people of color were the two most frequent complaints. Rather than decrying the show's message or purpose, commenters noted that the show's tacit sexism and racism actually seemed at odds with its premise. In 1975, fan Margaret Bailey wrote to Gene Roddenberry to protest the "unsupportable and irresponsible" treatment of women on the show. "I cannot imagine women in 200 years accepting the costumes, hairdos, or treatment required of them in *Star Trek*," she writes. "Furthermore, it would not be socially responsible to perpetuate such unparallel treatment of the sexes in a portrayal of a future which we hope to be less discriminatory and concerned primarily with each individual's best contribution to the combined welfare of humanity" (Sackett 62). Bailey's main complaint, though, remains an aesthetic one as she castigates Roddenberry for lapsing in his fidelity to the future world he invented: "The costumes and make-up of women on *Star Trek* episodes are not realistic. Even today women generally wear clothes applicable to their jobs. To suppose that they will wear dresses, let alone skirts so short that their crotches are but

inches from view, is silly" (Sackett 62). She closes her letter with a sample script that objectifies men in the way the original series did women noting "It's not very pleasant to see one's sex portrayed as weaker and less reliable, always relying on the other sex which is strong, dependable, and always professional" (Sackett 64). By using the series' own formal qualities, Bailey playfully manipulates the show's themes by demonstrating her own mastery over them. In publishing such complaints, the series' executives codified them as part of the official *Star Trek* franchise, thereby formalizing a simultaneously enthralled and critical viewing experience.[71]

The series' relationship to race and racial diversity also came under fire. Though no less than Martin Luther King, Jr. praised Nichelle Nichols, the actress who played Lieutenant Uhura, for serving as a role model for black youths, allegations of racial discrimination dogged production. Nichols considered leaving the show after the first season and while she ultimately decided to stay, her character, Uhura, is almost always relegated to the background. After the series ended, Nichols openly expressed her frustrations with the producers' vision for Uhura: "I mean I just decided that I don't even need to read the FUCKING SCRIPT! I mean I know how to say, 'hailing frequencies open' " (qtd. in Bernardi 41). Similarly, though ethnic presses largely praised the series, and Nichols' place in it, critics latched onto the ways that *Star Trek* recapitulated current stereotypes, thereby suggesting that the future would be largely continuous with the present, rather than different from it. In a December, 1967 article for the *Chicago Defender*, Paul Monash referred to Nichols' character and characters like hers as "invisible men" or "wonderful second banana": "They're stereotypes, beautiful mythic stereotypes, designed to

[71] Though I don't explicitly discuss it in my essay, the basis of this paper clearly rests on Arthur Redding's notion that "just as the intellectual ambivalence toward popular culture implies that there was, paradoxically enough, a surprising amount of dissensus within American liberalism of the 1950s, so too can we understand popular culture as both a mechanism of and a threat to the hegemony of consensus" (6).

make you feel real comfortable. What a lovely world it would be if all Negroes were like them—sharp, swinging, loyal, really with it, and almost with us. (Because, you see, television carefully and very, very subtly keeps them in a certain place—their place)" (24A). While such responses are not necessarily uniformly or even commonly playful ones in and of themselves, they nonetheless suggest that fandom and uncritical viewing do not necessarily go hand in hand. What these critiques have in common is a general skepticism towards the series' representation of progress and a manipulation of the multifaceted nature of popular culture to lodge their critiques. Viewers picked up on those moments when, intentionally or not, the show turns on itself, rendering absurd the series' conceit of intergalactic peace and human cooperation. While the series repeatedly reaffirms a racialized world view where only certain people are capable of intellectual thought and cultural advancement, this reaffirmation contradicts its own stated history and becomes part of the fabric of its parodic, satirical, and humorous moments. The show is ripe for critique and parody in part because it explicitly invites critique and parody. Audiences were all too happy to oblige. By pulling the rug out from under *Star Trek*'s key conceit, progress served as a source of doubt, a foundational absurdity, rather than assurance throughout the series.

**IV. Moon Landing**

If *Star Trek* ultimately challenges its own foundational imperatives—the viability of human progress as a particularized frontier American trait—the *Apollo 11* mission, in its appeal to the violence of modern warfare and the spectacle of masculinity that undergirds the performance of force, also cannot realize these heady aims. In devolving into a form of variably campy, parodic, or absurd critique inseparable from the enjoyment of the spectacle, like *Star Trek* the moon landing ultimately fails to achieve the transcendent purposes for which it was designed. By tacitly and explicitly acknowledging the limits of the ability to seize "free" land,

NASA and its avatars circumscribe the astronauts and, by extension, the possibilities for frontier manhood during the Cold War. As Wolf's response illustrates, these demonstrations of official fissures and doubts supplement audiences' own ambivalent reactions. Both government propaganda and audiences themselves, in other words, betray a sense of instability in regards to the cultural meanings of the space race.

As with *Star Trek*, the space race is inseparable from the media documentation of it. The mainstream media's (perhaps unwitting) tendency to satirize purportedly stable aspects of frontier masculinity further undercuts the image of the iconic explorer such that his paradigmatic movements and attributes provide the basis for mockery rather than reverence. Just as Kirk's hypermasculinity becomes a parody of itself, in both the fanfare leading up to and coverage of the event, as well as the astronauts' movements when on the lunar surface itself, traditional femininity holds a perverse mirror to the masculine, warping the latter. Just as drag makes visible the unnaturalness of "authentic" femininity, so too do articles that draw attention to the intrepid male spirit of the lunar landing make visible the various kinds of unnatural denial and posturing attendant in masculine behaviors like exploration and conquest. Part of the moon landing's appeal both now and in 1969 lay in the degree to which it calls attention to readily available meanings. Unlike other modes that must reveal a hidden secret or upend normative categories, mainstream media responses to the preparations for the lunar landing parody settler-colonialism and intrepid masculinity largely due to the "obvious" fact of their continued salience.

For instance, as reported by the *New York Times* in the days leading up to the launch, a team of women working for the International Latex Corporation of Dover, Delaware, constructed each *Apollo 11* space suit by hand using sewing machines, single needles, glue, and heat-sealing

tools (Lantry 348). In a move apparently characteristic of his colleagues' actions, Captain James Lovell, one of two astronauts who flew into space on the *Gemini 7* mission in 1965, thanked the ILC workers for their fine craftsmanship in a letter that read: "To the Girls of Frederica—Thank you for sewing straight and careful. I would hate to have a tear in my pants on the moon" (qtd. in Lantry 350). Lovell's diminutive moniker for the women charged with a task of paramount importance—a tear in one of the astronaut's pants would apparently cause an astronaut's blood to boil, a disaster that would certainly compromise his ability to move, if not his life—makes a joke of such masculine appeals to feminine skills. Lovell's lightening of the life-and-death business the women undertake with comic imagery contributes to the tense strangeness of the letter. In calling the female workers at the International Latex Corporation of Dover "girls," Lovell underscores the importance of female labor through critical and playful understatement. Significantly, as Lovell's comment about "sewing straight" makes clear, the "Girls of Frederica" made the spacesuits by hand rather than using machines or mass-producing the garments. Their labor is therefore framed as outside of industrial labor, a factor that further invokes the domestic realm. Yet Lovell's words highlight the ways that domestic practices and icons—such as that of the angel of the home carefully darning socks—are interwoven into the military actions of *Captain* James Lovell. Lovell thereby recapitulates domesticity as a structuring condition for American conquest, ironically by shading it in diminutive terms.

At the same time, female workers like those at the plant in Frederica had long been at the center of labor rights movements and disputes. The New York Shirtwaist strike from 1909-1910 and the Chicago Garment Workers' strikes from 1910-1911 challenged male leadership and traditional gender roles by broadening the category of labor to include groups and jobs previously seen as outside its parameters or a part of the private sphere. Led by women and

successful in both cases, the two events were seminal moments in U.S. labor history and served as an object lesson for the effectiveness of collective action and bargaining as well as the viability of female labor and union leadership. This tradition continued throughout the twentieth century, as readers in 1969 might have noted. In 1968, 850 sewing machinists at the Ford factory in Dagenham, England went on strike to protest discriminatory labor and wage practices at the plant. Sewing in particular had thus become a fraught act, one that testified to female *power* rather than subservience. With these factors and events in mind, Lovell's statement proves more complicated that it initially seems. While on its surface, it shores up normative gender categories (domesticity versus conquest in this instance), it does so only to render these very categories unstable. Lovell's overly cute rhetorical choices, calculated understatement, and winking syntax come together to produce an anachronistic expression of female labor. In doing so, his apparent seriousness opens itself to ironic readings by the *New York Times*' audiences with the potential to upend normative categories and hierarchies.

This complexity extends to the specifically televisual aspects of the endeavor as well. The explicit military iconography documented in the original CBS News footage of the *Apollo 11* liftoff hosted by Walter Cronkite on July 16th, 1969 plays off the endeavor's pugilistic overtones by drawing upon ballistic imagery as a source of fear and awe while containing the martial aspects of the images presented.[72] The result is a televised liftoff sequence that approximates a play or sham battle—one that viewers might have become familiar with through shows like *Star Trek* and TV Westerns. The apparent purposelessness of such an intense, and intensely historicized, show of military might—sometimes justified only for the sake of the visual

[72] The tantalizing potential for disaster was embedded into the event: only two years earlier, a launch pad fire during the *Apollo 1* mission had killed three astronauts ("White House 'Lost In Space' Scenarios: From Apollo to Discovery, President Always Prepared for the Worst").

spectacle it would create—does not obviate its ideological or visual power, nor its ability to amaze and terrorize. Instead, the programs dedicated to the liftoff and lunar landing weave appreciation and skepticism together such that a credulous belief in NASA's astonishing force can approximate its perverse opposite: the laugh of ridicule.

Cronkite's footage demonstrates television's ambivalent qualities: though part of a news media entrusted with a state directive, Cronkite's broadcasts periodically veer from this mandate even while attempting to honor it. The shots of the lunar liftoff and landing achieve this mixture of seriousness and play by moving between visual appeals to U.S. military muscle and scenes of domestic, almost nerdy, tranquility. After he describes the flight plan to his audience, a technical and byzantine affair, cameras cut to the Kennedy Space Center and a shot of the Saturn Rocket tethered to an enormous steel balustrade. As Cronkite enumerates the capacious scope of the rocket's firepower, an image of smoke curling around the base of the rocket fills the screen, foreshadowing both the blast to come and setting the stage for an admiration of NASA's ability to direct this display of explosive force. Yet in addition to the almost obsessive focus upon the rocket itself, the camera pans several times to the smiling and waving spectators who watch the lift off from a distance, thereby neutralizing the threat the rocket represents. As the ignition sequence begins, the camera cuts from a high-angle shot of the rocket to a view of the rocket's underside, suggesting, momentarily, in the former case that the viewer is the rocket's target and, in the latter, allowing television audiences to marvel at the force of ignition. As the rocket blasts off and debris from the bonds that formerly secured the shuttle to the earth fall towards the ground, the rocket's flames consume the visual field, briefly turning the screen white. The letters "USA" flash past the camera as the rocket careens into space and astonished spectators, both at home and on the base, look on in awe.

Such imagery lends the liftoff the air of a nuclear holocaust.[73] After all, the rockets that catapulted the Mercury and Apollo modules into space descended from air raid technologies developed during World War II. Even this transition would have been impossible without the work of NASA's engineering doyen, Wernher von Braun, a former Nazi SS officer (Mindell 66). More invidiously, though, the sequence follows the visual and audio conventions of televised public service announcements that aired throughout the Cold War produced by various, often overlapping federal agencies, that instructed U.S. citizens about the risks and effects of a nuclear attack and how to prepare for one.[74] These TV segments, which aired on mainstream channels like CBS, NBC, and ABC, were part of a complex and detailed system of what Guy Oakes and Andrew Grossman call "emotion management" designed to inculcate a palpable fear of nuclear attack in the U.S. populace, while convincing viewers of the real potential for survival if citizens abided by state suggestions for disaster preparations and procedures (361, 366, 377).[75] The broadcasts fall into two main categories: simulations of nuclear attack that warn about the risks of ignoring disaster preparations, and controlled experiments that assure audiences of the potential chance, even if risibly slim, for survival. Like school drills where children cowered under their desks in anticipation of nuclear fallout, the irony and futility of these survival

[73] The most prolific producers of these videos included the Federal Civil Defense Administration, the Office of Civil Defense, and CONELRAD (Control of Electromagnetic Radiation).

[74] Though this campaign included radio broadcasts, recordings, and print media, here I will focus only on the televisual manifestations of these PSAs.

[75] For more about NSC-68, the U.S. Security Council report that facilitated the production of these programs and largely dictated their content by casting an increase in nuclear power as protection against certain annihilation, rather than a guarantor of it, see Susan L. Brinson's "CONELRAD on the Front Line of Cold War Defense" and Steven Casey's "Selling NSC-68: The Truman Administration, Public Opinion, and the Politics of Mobilization, 1950-51." For more on the activities of the Federal Civil Defense Administration, a related agency, see Robert A. Jacobs' " 'There are no Civilians; We Are All at War': Nuclear Shelter and Survival Narratives During the Early Cold War."

strategies were not lost on Cold War producers, again an indicator of state ambivalence. Indeed, after a cataclysmic opening, the shows follow a number of plotlines, such as tests of canned goods in simulated nuclear attacks, cartoon recreations of life after ballistic apocalypse, or housewife-journalists' chipper descriptions of the obliteration of all that stood in the practice-blast's path.[76] Like *Star Trek,* the PSAs thereby commonly apply a jocular pairing of the excessive and the trivial that the lunar launch mirrors.

Despite the different aims of the various broadcasts, they almost all begin in the same way. The opening sequence displays the show's title, which sometimes appears only gradually against a darkened screen as though being assembled from the debris of nuclear fallout while music plays in the background. These soundtracks are alternatively jaunty, like the themes from shows like *Bewitched* or *I Love Lucy*, or feature string instruments playing in an eerie minor key, similar in effect, if not in kind, to the opening for the *Twilight Zone* and other shows about paranormal activity. The programs' opening sequences are soon interrupted by the sound of an explosion as the screen goes entirely white.[77] This practice occurs in almost every single one of the dozens of PSAs I viewed. More so than any other element, then, the inclusion of this whiteout screen followed by an image of a mushroom cloud define the genre.

In mimicking this convention, the footage of the July 16th *Apollo 11* launch refers to these very disaster preparation videos. Given TV viewership at the time, the iconography of nuclear

[76] These videos are widely available online and in various video databases. The following list, from the late 1940s through the 1960s provides a representative sample of the genre: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFcRhDtkQyQ; http://digital.films.com.proxy.its.virginia.edu/PortalSearch.aspx?a=a&rd=lo&q=prelinger+archives&page=5; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWNeF0Gak30; http://digital.films.com.proxy.its.virginia.edu/PortalViewVideo.aspx?xtid=41780.

[77] The screen whiteout has become a convention in TV as a medium that signals total annihilation. The use of this convention in the *Apollo 11* broadcast as well as in nuclear preparation PSAs demonstrates their participation in the formation of this convention as well the continued use of the televisual meanings forged during the Cold War.

attack would have been ubiquitous (MacDonald 10). Moreover, the fact that private and public footage of the liftoff make use of the convention—CBS and NASA both displayed a whited-out screen in their July 16th footage—testifies to the ways producers and government agents represented the mission as deeply entrenched in Cold War nuclear culture. The parallels extend to the different broadcasts' soundtracks as well. The sound of the rocket blast off is almost identical to that of bomb blasts in the government PSAs. While this alone may be unsurprising—the Mercury rocket was a military rocket after all—these parallels further solidify the resonance between the footage of the *Apollo 11* liftoff and Cold War programs warning about the threat of nuclear attack.[78] The PSAs thereby play upon established television genre conventions to prepare viewers for a certain affective state, either fortitude in the face of the unexpected or a foreboding sense of anxiety. Both impulses end in the same place: whether insisting upon the dire risks of nuclear attack or sidestepping the urgency of the message, the PSAs labor to demonstrate that the U.S. government has taken the necessary precautions to keep its citizens safe.

The space race's militarism, though, moved beyond the surface. As part of the spoils of World War II the United States pilfered German rocket technology and this technology formed the basis of the U.S. space program. Moreover, due to the pressures of the Cold War, NASA abandoned a reusable approach to the development of space shuttles in favor of ballistic capsules

[78] The military heraldry woven through the event suggests that if the liftoff serves as a warning to the United States' enemies, it is also a warning to its citizens. As part of its thermo-nuclear tests conducted on the Marshall Islands between 1945 and 1962, the U.S. government ordered a quarter-million servicemen to Nevada and the Marshall Islands, positioning most of them less than ten miles from "ground zero," with some only two miles away, dressed in ordinary uniforms and protected only by dirt trenches. When they dared to speak of it at all, many of these servicemen reported that at the moment of the blast "with my eyes tightly closed, I could see the bones in my forearm as though I were examining a red x-ray." These same members of the armed forces explained that the experience left them with symptoms similar to what doctors now call post-traumatic stress disorder. One witness confessed, "to this day, I shudder and perspire when I recall my experience in that trench" (Nye 232). This ostensibly "peaceful" event thus manipulates the horrors of nuclear attack in order to achieve its sense of transcendence.

"that could be placed atop launchers developed originally to deliver nuclear warheads to the Soviet Union" (Launius 26). All three of the astronauts aboard the shuttle served in the Air Force and only Armstrong had retired from active duty. The use of military technology, in other words, was an explicit decision rather than a technological necessity. Yet the assiduous attention to the visual, auditory, and symbolic aspects of war-making was for show: the violence on display was all performance and its excesses ironically call attention to the "close connection between the development of American resources and the violent destruction of those who opposed the dominant forms of economic and national organization" (Slotkin 492). Even as the footage of the *Apollo 11* takeoff interpellates the U.S. body politic and international onlookers into a framework that marvels at the excesses of the state, the liftoff itself remains little more than a sham battle, the kind enacted at World's Fairs and thus memorable as spectacle rather than substance. This mock military launch is just that, an imitation, spectacularized-war rather than war itself. The delighted crowds in their fashionable clothing smile, rather than tremble, at the rocket launch. It thus falls prey to the very tactical, enervating forces against which its framing so carefully struggles as suburban audiences relax and enjoy the show.

The transcript and footage of the moon landing itself only highlights the apparent futility of the mission, its flimsy purpose, and its almost playful use of earlier conventions. These lapses are a result of kinks in state bureaucracy *and* the technology of mediation. Unlike the liftoff, which implied the threat of nuclear attack, the lunar landing appeals to fiction in its references to Hollywood, TV Westerns, and more contemporary takes on these genres like *Star Trek*. The astronauts' mimicry of such shows provided audiences with a framework to understand the moon

landing and its cultural meanings.[79] Stepping firmly onto the unknown and hostile surface of the moon, these space cowboys had the law and God on their side: their success was as assured as that of Kirk or the putative sheriff, defending his town from bandits lurking in the shadows. In Norman Mailer's recounting, "there was something bizarre, touching, splendid, and ridiculous all at once, for the feat was immense, but the astronauts looked silly, and their functional conversation seemed farcical in the circumstances" (126).

Yet in their re-enactment of frontier performances, Mailer notes that Armstrong and Aldrin, like Kirk and the rest of the *Enterprise* crew, can do little more than compulsively and mechanically reiterate the findings and experiences of an earlier generation of explorer. This compulsive tenor imbued the act with a cloying inevitability, lending historical events a mechanical, rather than unexpected quality:

> What an achievement! … Cortez had conquered the mighty armies of the Aztecs with less than a thousand conquistadors, Castro landed in Cuba with eighty-two men, lost seventy in ambush on the beach, and five days later, hiding in the jungle said to the survivors: 'the days of the dictatorship are numbered.' Now Apollo 12 had landed on the moon, for if Apollo 11 was down, Apollo 12 could not be far behind. A new age of man had probably begun (Mailer 382).

[79] By 1969, the film Western had already declined and the audiences for its televised cousin were also waning. J. Fred MacDonald cites the genre's explicit violence as the primary cause for its downturn. Throughout the 1950s and 60s, organizations like the Parent-Teachers Association, the U.S. Surgeon General, and religious tasks forces, among others, convinced the Federal Communications Commission of the risks of the frontier brutality featured in TV Westerns. These groups tied the rise in juvenile violence and delinquency to the influence of what children and teenagers watched in their parents' and friends' homes. Their efforts, according to MacDonald, signaled a definitive shift towards domestic Westerns which focused upon family life on the frontier, like *The Virginian*, *The Monroes*, and *Daniel Boone* (MacDonald 87–96).

Despite Mailer's overblown rhetoric, the enumeration of previous accomplishments—some which explicitly defy U.S. interests—as well as the word "probably" undercuts the moment's triumphalism. Though the moon landing continues to represent a great act in Mailer's estimation, its greatness remains imbedded in its own scripted recursivity: an indicator of populist doubt, as it was for Wolf as well, rather than state power. Mailer hints at a kind of boredom with the necessary redundancies of manned space exploration as well as the redundancies of history, a boredom usually repressed in ideological appeals to the frontier myth. Mailer's analysis dovetails with the astronaut's own comments from the moon's surface. After the group's splashdown Aldrin reported, "I remember thinking, 'Gee, if I didn't know where I was, I could believe that somebody had created this environment somewhere out in the West and given us another simulation to work in' " (Mailer 398). In these direct appeals to the logic of national expansion, Armstrong suggests that the astronauts went all the way to the moon only to find the American West. Indeed, in the wake of the first lunar landing and the successful missions that followed, the United States government stated that it did not have and was not claiming any official right to ownership of the moon (Bansal 79). This admission acknowledges the symbolic power of the astronauts' lunar performance, even as it disavows the territorial gains traditionally associated with it. In this light the moon landing proves unable to regenerate the American spirit: despite their attempt to uncover something new, the astronauts find the same, hard realities.

Likewise, the astronauts' theatricalized movements on the lunar surface resemble a stilted repetition of the actions undertaken by conquistadors when they arrived on the American soil as memorialized in various ephemera, like postage stamps, popular histories, and figurines throughout the twentieth century. In Walter Cronkite's coverage, Armstrong and Aldrin lumber jerkily across the lunar surface, planting the U.S. flag, collecting moon rocks and soil samples,

and setting up their various experiments. They lurch forwards and fall backwards in the low-gravity environment, struggling to complete tasks that they could undertake with ease on Earth. Their transcript is peppered with banal exclamations and observations about the difficulty of walking on the lunar soil and sanitized ejaculations when they lose their balance or fail to complete one of their designated tasks. Despite the auspicious occasion for the footage, then, the duo appear somewhat buffoonish (Atwill 13).

Moreover, the many shots of the nebbish scientists watching from NASA headquarters in Houston interspersed throughout the broadcast extend this buffoonery to the astronauts' less heroic alter egos. As the two astronauts collect moon samples (and according to Cronkite, NASA engineers "nag, nag, nag" Armstrong and Aldrin about their contingency sample) the camera cuts between the astronauts and the scientists back on Earth. The camera's frame portrays the NASA staff members as an anonymous, indistinguishable group, and as Cronkite's comments indicate, vaguely effeminate. Despite their wive-ish "nagging" though, these engineers run the show, guiding the astronauts in their navigations, directing their experiments, and remotely executing scientific tests. The explicit puppetry of the event, the very visible ways that the astronauts rely on the directions and guidance of astrophysicists and engineers undercuts the potential for sublimity in the moment. Though the astronauts do everything that earlier explorers had done—they symbolically claim the land for their nation, they test their surroundings, they ensure that they follow the regulations set before them—the fact that the broadcast allows viewers to peek behind the curtain, as it were, destroys the sense of independence so necessary for the sublime. Though audiences view this first experience of interplanetary travel through Aldrin and Armstrong's eyes, these two arbiters of transcendent U.S. nationalism represent the event not as overwhelming, but rather as all too predictable (Atwill 13).

Technology as it operates in the media documentation of the *Apollo 11* launch and landing enervates rather than revivifies this modern frontiersman. If, as Donna Haraway suggests in "A Cyborg Manifesto," the distinctions between humans and machines have become increasingly blurred throughout the twentieth century, then the footage of the space race evacuates this composite being of its vigor and potential (304–307). Moreover, rather than reinscribing phallic masculinity, the images and footage of the lunar launch and landing upend normative gender roles such that they lose their affective and strategic salience. In both official state media and in mainstream publications and television broadcasts, technology undermines the categories of masculinity and femininity, though without providing a new basis for human society, as Haraway alleges (311–314). Rather than this utopian vision, the astronauts' reliance upon technology makes them, and the state for which they serve as avatars, appear weak.

The ability to view the lunar landing in opposition to the heroic potential government bureaucrats and NASA administrators intended, though, is not merely available in retrospect due to the alienating distance of elapsed decades. As was the case with *Star Trek*, Cold War audiences' responses to the *Apollo 11* mission suggest that, at least for some, the event registered as anti-climactic even at the time. Indeed, a canny mixture of excited disbelief and skepticism perhaps best characterizes the various critical responses to the moon landing.

Like Howlin' Wolf, visual artists reacted against the racial overtones of the *Apollo 11* mission and the space program in general with biting satire. In 1969, visual artist Faith Ringgold produced a 36" by 50" oil painting titled "Flag for the Moon: Die Nigger" of what appears at first glance to be the U.S. flag. A closer look reveals the word "die" superimposed in black horizontally over the stars, while the stripes, it turns out, are not stripes at all, but rather spell out, starting with the bottom-most stripe, the slur "nigger." Ringgold's image reconfigures the

symbols of national unity such that the 50 stars representing the 50 states are interrupted by genocide: die. Similarly, the stripes, the representation of the flag of the thirteen original British colonies that declared independence, are transformed into the direct object of that genocidal impulse. Ringgold's take thereby reflects upon the paradox of revolutionary U.S. freedom—that a significant portion of the population of the original thirteen states remained enslaved. The colors, too—die in black and nigger in white—speak to the racially divided nature of the United States, historically and, apparently, in Ringgold's present. The seriousness of the subject matter and message, though, depend upon a playful take on current events and nationalist iconography. "Flag for the Moon" both is and is not an image of the U.S. flag. The piece is recognizably American because of its mockery of the authenticity of nationalist iconography. It thereby calls attention to the truths that the flag is supposed to represent—unity, freedom, democratic expansion—by using that very symbolic language to document a different reality. The occasion for this piece of protest art, the space race to the moon, highlights the degree to which the new frontier merely recapitulates old ones. The image manages to exist simultaneously as parody and serious critique: indeed, the two energies feed off of each other.

For Mailer, too, the performance of masculine conquest that the lunar landing represents is driven by a deep sense of guilt over the genocide of Native Americans and the impact historical violence against indigenous groups had upon the U.S. landscape. On the morning of the launch, Mailer ruminates upon the empty fields outside of Cape Canaveral, Florida that once housed various Southern tribes:

> In that long-ago of prairie spaces when the wind was the message of America, Indians had lived beneath the moon, stared at the moon, lived in greater intimacy with the moon than any European…. Now tonight were the ghosts of old

> Indians awakening in the prairies and the swamps? Did the echo of the wind through the abandoned launch towers of the Cape strike a resonance across two thousand miles to the grain elevators by the side of railroad tracks in the mournful empty windings of the West? The country had been virgin once, an all but empty continent with lavender and orange in the rocks, pink in the sky, an aura of blue in the deep green of the forest—now, not four centuries even spent, the buffalo were gone, and the Indians…. All the while we had been composing our songs to the moon and driving the Indian onto the reservation, had we also been getting ready to go to the moon out of some deep recognition that we had already killed the nerve which gave life to the earth? (82–83).

Mailer reads the New World imagery woven into the moon landing as a eulogy to a lost continent rather than a testament to U.S. strength and power. The fusion of man with machine that enables this next stage in U.S. conquest—and that has always driven murderous settlements—exposes this very purpose as a forlorn acknowledgment of a desiccated American spirit. Mailer's meditations rest, in particular, upon the violence of nation building and the interrelationship of European descendants' longing to continue their push past the borders of the continental U.S.—the wistful songs addressed to the moon—and Native American removal.[80] For Mailer, this next geographic extension re-embeds the United States and the people who live there in a pattern of depletion and longing of which they are already a part.

[80] Though he does not mention the city by name, NASA's choice of Cape Canaveral as a pre-launch location amplifies this history of white supremacy. Though home to the Seminole Indians in the 1960s as well as now, the Seminole are more recent settlers. Cape Canaveral was free of Spanish settlers, the first Europeans to land in the New World, for decades after their arrival due to the fearsome resistance of the Ais Indians. The group reportedly repulsed Ponce de Leon and his men when the Spaniard arrived to explore Florida and kept the area free of European settlers until they struck a deal with the French. Later, Seminole Indians destroyed the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse, located at the site of various NASA launches, forcing the structure to be rebuilt.

Mailer's swan song, delivered at the exact moment that Native American sovereignty movements had begun to instantiate themselves, updates a long line of vanishing Indian laments that go back to the nineteenth century. By bemoaning the disappearance of Native history, Mailer refuses to see the very present of this history. In such moments, Mailer naturalizes American progress even as he appears to critique it. Such responses to the lunar landing demonstrate the complexities and dangers of representing the *Apollo 11* mission. In calling attention to the gaps between the human aspects of the nation and its technological avatars, Mailer reaches for the very tropes he seeks to reject.

**V. Conclusion**

Reading the original series of *Star Trek* and the *Apollo 11* mission for more than just their lapses provides new insight into how cultural texts—both fictional and non-fictional ones—successfully and unsuccessfully reproduce themselves. In both instances, the most seemingly humorous and sanguine moments possess the potential to exceed the script, inviting audiences to take up the formal qualities of the performance and to make use of them as they see fit. As these playfully critical moments embedded in *Star Trek*, the Apollo 11 mission and their audience reception, these two reactions to the Cold War zeitgeist and the war in Vietnam testify to the collapse of the possibilities for national unity in imperialism in 1969. While the space program reaches for sublimity in its appeals to a triumphant European past, it finds the emblems of this past exhausted. Likewise, rather than suggesting a glorious future for the United States and mankind, the original series of *Star Trek* instead testifies to the endlessly recursive nature of history, a tautology that comes to threaten the very possibilities for continued human survival in the glorious future the series imagines. This collapse, though, does not obviate all aspects of the two media events' affective power. As Mailer, Wolf, Ringgold and *Star Trek* fans' responses

suggest, more so than anything else, the televisual representation of space exploration exposed nationalism's ragged edges, the reality that every victory was built upon a past or present violation, that happiness ultimately overlaps with sadness:

> There was finally something marvelous. This old-fashioned indistinct movie of comedians in old-fashioned suits was in fact but a cover upon the curious happiness everyone was feeling. It was the happiness which comes from a wound. For with the pain, and there was pain in the thought of the moon—so private a body to the poet buried in every poke of a head—the moon being now invaded, there was also the happiness that accompanies the pain, for the landing was a straight-out wound to every stable disposition of the mind. Yet a wound in that period when we do not know which flesh is severed forever and what is recuperable is an hour of curious happiness. (Mailer 128)

For all of their buffoonery, in limning the contours of a strange new world that even more strangely recapitulates the past, both *Star Trek* and the lunar landing admit the opportunity for a weary smile. In demonstrating the intertwined nature of triumph and failure, conquest and dispossession, the two events reconfigure the terms of the purported "end of the American century." Indeed, the moments when *Of a Fire on the Moon* tips its hand and reveals the limits of its dis-allegiance to the master-narratives of the U.S. nation state, such as when Mailer negates Native American resistance in order to capitalize upon the poetic appeal of absence, are perhaps its most important. To critique the idea of space travel requires, first, acknowledging its power, the thrills it encodes, the possibilities it possesses. Turning to *Star Trek* and the *Apollo 11* mission with a sardonic grin mandates that the critic find herself simultaneously inside the joke (if she hopes to understand it) and outside of it (if she hopes to laugh). While Mailer, Ringgold,

Wolf, and fan culture's reactions to the Cold War zeitgeist and the war in Vietnam testify to the collapse of the imperial possibilities for the figure of the conqueror in 1969, they do so at their own peril.

## Conclusion: This Land is My Land

If the Columbian celebrations at the Chicago World's Fair testify to the reanimation of the figure of the conquistador for state-sponsored nationalist purposes in 1893, then *Star Trek* and the Apollo 11 mission demonstrate the collapse of these possibilities in 1969. While this arc suggests a rise and fall akin to diagrams of Classical and Renaissance tragedies—a sharp ascent followed by an even sharper decline—the nationalist topography I trace tends to result in circuitous repetitions rather than denouement or catharsis. The various episodes that comprise my analysis demonstrate that sublimity, especially as it interacts with a state-sponsored settler-colonialist version of nationalism, is constantly challenged and undercut by the very elements that promise its transcendence. As the Alamo Museum, Quaritch's reprints, and the publication histories of *The Great Gatsby, Absalom, Absalom!,* and *In the American Grain* show, the expansion of geographic borders always threatens its opposite: their infiltration and the loss of territory. Similarly, the desire to appeal to foundational moments of European presence in the Americas as a stay against the insecurities of the present and a path towards patriotism is constantly dogged by the specter of conquest's lapses and missteps. Yet if the failure to achieve transcendence is one vector that marks my archive, so too are the messy and unexpected allegiances that I find at every turn.

While the desire to document such messiness is increasingly in vogue in both academic and popular culture, so too are criticisms of this very heuristic move. For instance, in his review of a series of historical exhibits at New York and Washington, DC museums that document the United States' investment in slave labor, imperialism, and racial oppression, Edward Rothstein lodges his now standard complaint: museums are focusing too much on the United States' failure to live up to its promises and not enough upon the promises themselves, the audacity of the

democratic experiment, and the nation's constant pursuit of greatness. "Museums, in their traditional roles, were almost mythological institutions," he writes, "claiming to display the origins and themes of a society, shaping understandings with a coherent interpretation of the past. That model has now been remade with the singular replaced by the plural, coherence displaced by multiplicity." Though he claims to discuss a transatlantic tendency, one that plagues Europe as much as the U.S., Rothstein keeps his gaze firmly on the domestic scene when he argues that the desire to incorporate more voices into the various histories embedded within any location or event ends up "attentively chronicling American flaws." Rothstein sees a certain kind of fidelity to historical accuracy as the problem with these exhibits: in attempting to represent groups and individuals previously overlooked or discounted, these museums focus on the United States' lapses, instead of its triumphs.

Rothstein's dismissal of this "cluttered" version of history finds its opposite in the New American Studies praxis that has dominated the field for a generation. In Robyn Wiegman's account, New American Studies arose as a rejection of Cold War scholarly efforts to contain subversive activity domestically and abroad by promoting an elitist literary and artistic canon, legible only to the culturally initiated. In particular, Wiegman suggests that New Americanist scholars seek to distance themselves from their object of study in order to avoid complicity with the power relations—imperialism, racism, patriotism, and so on—inherent in the object itself (200). For Wiegman, this critical tendency figures complicity as a critical lapse, a lack of meta-textual awareness, in contrast to non-complicity, which instead emblematizes a more thoughtful, politically responsible, and ostensibly intellectualized response to aesthetic objects (200). In Wiegman's words, "New Americanism posits itself as exterior to the object of study that names it in order to guarantee an analytic position commensurate with the political desire that animates

it—a position that is simultaneously outside the object's geopolitical power but inside the disavowed histories, affects, and violences that attend and support such power" (202).

The two views (Rothstein's on museums and practitioners of New American Studies on the nation) represent obverse sides of the same coin. On the one hand, Rothstein positions himself and critics like him as so entrenched within the object of study that to describe that object's flaws threatens its intelligibility. On the other, New Americanists see themselves as at least partially outside the dominant narratives of the nation-state they critique—indeed, it is this outside position that allows for critique at all in Wiegman's analysis.

The shortcomings of Rothstein's position might appear obvious to scholars trained in American or literary studies. He equates multiplicity with incoherence, alternative historiographies and viewpoints with insignificance, and most saliently from my point of view, critique with failure. While the limitations of New Americanists' take upon complicity and non-complicity may seem less apparent, it, like any heuristic frame, is not unimpeachable. Despite Wiegman's insistence upon the significance of the New American Studies rejection of the United States' imperial ambitions, she considers the ability to stand outside the object of study an impossible desire (223–238). While Wiegman acknowledges that those committed to U.S. American Studies—a term for a later turn in American Studies scholarship largely along the lines of New American Studies—often agree about the mutual imbeddedness of outside and inside when it comes to the nation-state, she faults this fantasy for its effects as much as its methodology. By equating a rejection of identification with the U.S. nation-state with anti-complicity with the state's more nefarious dealings, the New American Studies promises a resolution in the form of a "wish for an uncontaminated future" that it cannot provide (236–238).

Wiegman has not been alone in her desire to mediate this standoff between a contaminated complicity and the avatars of its hegemonic opposite. A growing chorus of authors, many of them practitioners and authors of the New American Studies themselves, have intervened in the conversation to suggest alternative frameworks, ones that do not see disavowal as a prerequisite for scholarly inquiry, nor its main antagonist. For instance in *Disidentifications*, a groundbreaking study of queer communities of color, José Esteban Muñoz provides a theoretical understanding of how apparently disparate ideological investments and modes of being can coexist within the same community *and* an analysis of the material conditions of this coexistence. Muñoz revises Judith Butler's use of the term "disidentification" in *Bodies That Matter* by adding a temporal dimension to this particular act of self-fashioning:

> Disidentification is about recycling and rethinking encoded meaning. The process of disidentification scrambles and reconstructs the encoded message of a cultural text in a fashion that both exposes the encoded message's universalizing and exclusionary machinations and recircuits its workings to account for, include, and empower minority identities and identifications. Thus, disidentification is a step further than cracking open the code of the majority; it proceeds to use this code as raw material for representing a disempowered politics or positionality that has been rendered unthinkable by the dominant culture. (*Disidentifications* 31)

Muñoz's dialectical approach to the simultaneously overlapping and divergent categories of race, sexuality, and class in the United States, as well as the contingency of various contexts leads him to an imbricated view of identity and aesthetics, one that empowers oppressed groups by investigating the ways they manipulate dominant culture to their own uses.

Likewise, I have sought to demonstrate how the works that comprise my archive testify to a manipulation of the genre of New World exploration—what I have called, in shorthand, conquest narratives—to produce a national narrative that recruits and appeals to even those it supposedly rejects, a factor that belies these narratives programmatic aims. These experiments with the meanings of nationalism are also unabashed about their failures and therefore ambivalent about their hegemonic status. Appreciation in this schema is not antithetical to critique, just as failure is ultimately constitutive of transcendence and further settler-colonialism. To examine audiences and art objects in this way is to position both simultaneously inside and outside of the communities they comprise. As I note in my final chapter, jocular mimicry—whether intentional or not—provides one object lesson in a praxis of embedded criticism. Such critique rests in part upon the audience's decision to acknowledge the ways that an object, event, or performance stages an ironic contrast between the familiar and the unfamiliar that produces a knowing enjoyment. Parody, pastiche, satire, and similar modes of critique, then, see belonging and alienation as compatible, rather than antinomial impulses. This dual position provides an important inroad to overtly political and exclusively aesthetic modes of critique—if the two can ever be separated—in its ability to remind viewers of the fabricated nature of our own reality, the ways that the world around us are mediated and excitement is managed.

A gaze that faces inwards and outwards at the same time seems to me to describe both the art objects I discuss and the audiences that respond to them. The conquest of the Americas, as a repository of nationalist possibility to which the artifacts that comprise my archive compulsively return, almost seems to demand this response.

**Works Cited**

"1950 Annual Meeting Notes, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Held in Dallas, TX." 11 May 1950: n. pag.

Adams, James Truslow. *The Epic of America*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1931.

Amis, Lola Jones. "Demand to Be Heard." *Afro-American* 25 May 1963: 4.

"Annual Proceedings, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Annual Convention, 1891." 1891: n. pag.

"Armed Services Edition Books | The Art of Manliness." N.p., n.d. Web. 25 Jan. 2013.

Atwill, William D. *Fire and Power: The American Space Program as Postmodern Narrative*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994.

Bank, Rosemarie K. "Representing History: Performing the Columbian Exposition." *Theatre Journal* 54.4 (2002): 589–606. *CrossRef*. Web. 9 Sept. 2014.

Bansal, Malti. *Now We Set to Settle on Moon: Chandrayaan Discovery Paves the Way*. New Delhi: Mind Melodies, 2010.

Barnhisel, Greg. *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy, 1946-1959*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.

Barrett, Michèle. *Star Trek: The Human Frontier*. Ed. Duncan Barrett. New York: Routledge, 2001.

Baucom, Ian. *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Berkhofer, Robert F. *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*. 1st ed. New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1978.

Works Cited

Bernardi, Daniel. *Star Trek and History: Race-Ing Toward a White Future*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

Beuka, Robert. *American Icon: Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby in Critical and Cultural Context*. Rochester: Camden House, 2011.

Bindas, Kenneth J., and Kenneth J. Heineman. "Image Is Everything?" *Journal of Popular Film & Television* 22.1 (1994): 22–37.

Bloch, Ernst. "Something's Missing: A Discussion between Ernst Block and Theodor W. Adorno on the Contradictions of Utopian Longing." *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1988. 1–17.

---. *The Principle of Hope*. Trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.

Blotner, Joseph. "The Regional Can Be Universal." *New York Times* 25 Oct. 1964: BR55.

Bost, Suzanne. "Women and Chile at the Alamo: Feeding U.S. Colonial Mythology." *Nepantla: Views from South* 4.3 (2003): 493–522.

Breit, Harvey. "Repeat Performances." *New York Times* 6 May 1951: BR10.

Brooks, Cleanth. *William Faulkner: Toward Yoknapatawpha and Beyond*. Baton Rouge, La. : Louisiana State University Press, 1990.

Brown, Bill. "Science Fiction, the World's Fair, and the Prosthetics of Empire, 1910-1915." *Cultures of United States Imperialism*. Ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993. 129–163.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Dream of the Great American Novel*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014.

Works Cited

"Catalogue of Interesting Books Relating to Games, Sports, Music, Cookery, Exercises, Offered at the Net Prices Affixed - Google Books." N.p., n.d. Web. 4 Dec. 2011.

Chafe, William Henry. *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II*. 5th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Chandler, Nahum Dimitri. *X: The Problem of the Negro as a Problem for Thought*. First edition. New York: Fordham University Press, 2014.

Chicago Historical Society. *Grand Illusions: Chicago's World's Fair of 1893*. Ed. Neil Harris. Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1993.

Cmiel, Kenneth. "Libraries, Books, and the Information Age." *The Enduring Book: Print Culture in Postwar America*. Ed. David Paul Nord, Joan Shelley Rubin, and Michael Schudson. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009. 325–346.

Cohen, J. M. *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969.

Cohn, Deborah. "Combatting Anti-Americanism During the Cold War: Faulkner, the State Department, and Latin America." *Mississippi Quarterly* 59.3-4 (2006): 395–413.

---. "Faulkner, Latin America, and the Caribbean: Influence, Politics, and Academic Disciplines." *A Companion to William Faulkner*. Ed. Richard Moreland. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007. 499–518.

Columbus, Christopher., M. P. Kerney, and Bernard Quaritch. *The Spanish Letter of Columbus to Luis de Sant' Angel: Escribano de Racion of the Kingdom of Aragon, Dated 15 February 1493*. London: [G. Norman and Son, printers], 1893.

Conrad, Bryce. *Refiguring America: A Study of William Carlos Williams' In the American Grain*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

Cooke, A. C. “Black Community, Media, and Intellectual Paranoia-as-Politics.” *Journal of Black Studies* 42.4 (2011): 609–626. *CrossRef*. Web. 29 Jan. 2014.

Corber, Robert J. *Homosexuality in Cold War America: Resistance and the Crisis of Masculinity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

Cowley, Malcolm. *Exile’s Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s*. New York: Penguin Books, 1994.

Crosby, Harry H. “Recruiting English Majors at the State University of Iowa.” *College Composition and Communication* 7.2 (1956): 84–86.

Culligan, Glendy. “Author Faulkner’s Life Was Marked By Contradictions--Like His Works.” *Washington Post, Times Herald* 7 July 1962: A1.

Dayan, Colin. *Haiti, History, and the Gods*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. Web.

Decker, Jeffrey Louis. “Gatsby’s Pristine Dream: The Diminishment of the Self-Made Man in the Tribal Twenties.” *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 28.1 (1994): 52–71.

---. *Made in America: Self-Styled Success from Horatio Alger to Oprah Winfrey*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

“Defender of the Alamo: Miss De Zavala, of Texas, Who Is Fighting to Keep the Famous Old Mission Intact.” *Human Life* June 1908: n. pag.

Dempsey, David. “Literature Between Two World Wars--and a Glance Ahead.” *New York Times* 18 Aug. 1946: 121.

Department of the Interior, Census office. “Report on Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890.” 1895: n. pag.

Downs, Donald A. "Government Censorship Since 1945." *The Enduring Book: Print Culture in Postwar America*. Ed. David Paul Nord, Joan Shelley Rubin, and Michael Schudson. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009. 135–150.

Driscoll, Clara. "A Plea for the Old Land Marks." *San Antonio Express* 29 Apr. 1900: n. pag.

---. Clara Driscoll to Rebecca Fisher. 9 Mar. 1909. Letter.

Faragher, John Mack. "Introduction: 'A Nation Thrown Back Upon Itself': Frederick Jackson Turner and the Frontier." *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and Other Essays*. Ed. John Mack Faragher. New York: H. Holt, 1994. 1–10.

Faulkner, William. *Absalom, Absalom!: The Corrected Text*. Vintage international ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

Fiedler, Leslie A. *Waiting for the End*. New York: Stein and Day, 1964.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Flores, Richard R. "Private Visions, Public Culture: The Making of the Alamo." *Cultural Anthropology* 10.1 (1995): 99–115.

---. *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity, and the Master Symbol*. 1st ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002.

---. "The Alamo: Myth, Public History, and the Politics of Inclusion." *Radical History Review* 2000.77 (2000): 91–103. *CrossRef*. Web. 26 July 2013.

Foner, Philip Sheldon, and Paul Avrich Collection (Library of Congress). *May Day: A Short History of the International Workers' Holiday, 1886-1986*. New York: International Publishers, 1986.

Frederick, John T. "The Quarter Books." *College English* 9.8 (1948): 407. *CrossRef*. Web. 23 June 2014.

Friedman, Albert B. "The Literary Experience of High School Seniors and College Freshman." *The English Journal* 44.9 (1955): 521–524.

Gallagher, Gary W. "Shaping Public Memory of the Civil War: Robert E. Lee, Jubal A. Early, and Douglas Southall Freeman." *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*. Ed. Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004. 39–63.

Girard, René. *Violence and the Sacred*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.

Gleach, Frederick. "Pocahontas: An Exercise in Mythmaking and Marketing." *New Perspectives on Native North Americans*. Ed. Sergei Khan and Pauline Turner Strong. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006. 433–455.

Godden, Richard. *Fictions of Labor: William Faulkner and the South's Long Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

---. "'The Great Gatsby': Glamor on the Turn." *Journal of American Studies* 16.3 (1992): 343–371.

Golden, Harry. "Only in America." *Chicago Defender* 9 Jan. 1971: 12.

---. "Only in America." *Chicago Defender* 22 Dec. 1969: 16.

---. "Only in America: A Removable Feast." *Chicago Defender* 5 Aug. 1964: 11.

Goldsmith, Meredith. "White Skin, White Mask: Passing, Posing, and Performing in The Great Gatsby." *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 49.3 (2003): 443–468. *CrossRef*. Web. 24 May 2014.

Graham, T. Austin. “The Literary Soundtrack: Or, F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Heard and Unheard Melodies.” *American Literary History* 21.3 (2009): 518–549. *CrossRef*. Web. 24 May 2014.

Gray, Richard. “‘From Oxford: The Novels of William Faulkner.’” *William Faulkner: Six Decades of Criticism*. Ed. Linda Wagner-Martin. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002.

“Great Gatsby Is Here: Cleo Johnson Shows New Look.” *Chicago Defender* 31 Oct. 1973: 17.

Greenblatt, Stephen. “Resonance and Wonder.” *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine,. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991. 42–56.

Growoll, Adolf. *American Book Clubs, Their Beginnings and History, and a Bibliography of Their Publications*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1897.

Gruesz, Kirsten Silva. “1521, August 13: Mexico in America.” *A New Literary History of America*. Ed. Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009. 6–11.

Haraway, Donna. “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century.” *The Cybercultures Reader*. Ed. David Bell and Barbara M. Kennedy. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. 291–324.

Hariot, Thomas. *Narrative of the First English Plantation of Virginia*. London: B. Quaritch, 1893.

Hark, Ina Rae. *Star Trek*. London : Basingstoke [England] ; New York: BFI ; Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Hemmingson, Michael A. *Star Trek: A Post-Structural Critique of the Original Series*. [San Bernardino, Calif.]: Borgo Press, 2009. *Open WorldCat*. Web. 14 Dec. 2014.

Hoberek, Andrew. *The Twilight of the Middle Class: Post-World War II American Fiction and White-Collar Work*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Hollinger, David A. "Amalgamation and Hypodescent: The Question of Ethnoracial Mixture in the History of the United States." *The American Historical Review* 108.5 (2003): 1363–1390.

Honour, Hugh. *The New Golden Land: European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time*. 1st ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1975.

Horowitz, Daniel. *Consuming Pleasures: Intellectuals and Popular Culture in the Postwar World*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

Howard, John. *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

H.P Drought & Co. Letter from H. P. Drought & Co. to Mrs. Joseph Dinnrell [sic]. 6 Nov. 1905. Letter.

Hunter, Marjorie. "Faulkner Sensed Impending Crisis." *New York Times* 7 Oct. 1962: 61.

Jacobs, Ron. *The Way the Wind Blew: A History of the Weather Underground*. London: Verso, 1997.

Jameson, Fredric. *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972.

---. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1981.

Jehlen, Myra. *American Incarnation: The Individual, the Nation, and the Continent*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Johnson-Freese, Joan. *Space, the Dormant Frontier: Changing the Paradigm for the 21st Century*. Ed. Roger Handberg. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997.

Johnson-Smith, Jan. *American Science Fiction TV: Star Trek, Stargate, and Beyond*. Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2005.

Kutzinski, Vera M. *Against the American Grain: Myth and History in William Carlos Williams, Jay Wright, and Nicolás Guillén*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.

Ladd, Barbara. "'The Direction of the Howling': Nationalism and the Color Line in Absalom, Absalom!." *American Literature* 66.3 (1994): 525–551.

Lantry, Douglas N. "Dress for Egress: The Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum's Apollo Spacesuit Collection." *Journal of Design History* 14.4 (2001): 343–359.

Laughlin, James. "The Publisher: The Function of This Magazine." *Perspectives U.S.A.* 1.1 (1952): 5–8.

Launius, Robert D. "Kennedy's Space Policy Reconsidered: A Post-Cold War Perspective." *Air Power History* 50.4 (2003): 16–29.

Lehan, Richard. "Focus on F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby: The Nowhere Hero." *American Dreams, American Nightmares*. Ed. David Madden. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970. 106–114.

Linenthal, Edward Tabor. "'A Reservoir of Spiritual Power': Patriotic Faith at the Alamo in the Twentieth Century." *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 91.4 (1988): 509–531.

Luey, Beth. "The Organization of the Book Publishing Industry." *The Enduring Book: Print Culture in Postwar America*. Ed. David Paul Nord, Joan Shelley Rubin, and Michael Schudson. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009. 29–54.

MacDonald, J. Fred. *Who Shot the Sheriff?: The Rise and Fall of the Television Western*. New York: Praeger, 1987.

Mailer, Norman. *Of a Fire on the Moon*. 1st ed. Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1970.

Mallios, Peter. "Undiscovering the Country: Conrad, Fitzgerald, and Meta-National Form." *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 47.2 (2001): 356–390. *CrossRef*. Web. 24 May 2014.

Martinez, J. Michael, and Robert M. Harris. "Graves, Worms, and Epitaphs: Confederate Monuments in the Southern Landscape." *Confederate Symbols in the Contemporary South*. Ed. J. Michael Martinez, William D. Richardson, and Ron McNinch-Su. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000.

Matthews, J. T. "Recalling the West Indies: From Yoknapatawpha to Haiti and Back." *American Literary History* 16.2 (2004): 238–262. *CrossRef*. Web. 22 May 2013.

McKitterick, David. "Second-Hand and Old Books." *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, 1830–1914*. Ed. David McKitterick. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 635–673. *CrossRef*. Web. 28 Dec. 2011.

Mencken, H. L. "As H. L. M. Sees It." *F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Critical Reception*. Ed. Jackson R. Bryer. New York: Burt Franklin, 1978. 211–214.

Michaels, Walter Benn. "Absalom, Absalom!: The Difference Between White Men and White Men." *Faulkner in the Twenty-First Century: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha, 2000,*. Ed.

Robert W. Hamblin and Ann J. Abadi. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003. 137–153.

---. *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism*. 1st pbk. ed. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

---. "The Vanishing American." *American Literary History* 2.2 (1990): 220–241.

Miller, Jim. *"Democracy Is in the Streets": From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987.

Mills, Cynthia. "Introduction." *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*. Ed. Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003.

Mindell, David A. *Digital Apollo Human and Machine in Spaceflight*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008. *Open WorldCat*. Web. 31 Mar. 2014.

Minter, David L. *Faulkner's Questioning Narratives: Fiction of His Major Phase, 1929-42*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 2001.

Mintz, Sidney Wilfred. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin Books, 1986.

Mittell, Jason. *Television and American Culture*. New York, N.Y: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Mizener, Arthur. "Scott Fitzgerald and the Imaginative Possession of American Life." *The Sewanee Review* 54.1 (1946): 66–86.

Monash, Paul. "Producer Comments on TV 'Invisible Men.'" *The Chicago Defender* 2 Dec. 1967: 24A.

"More of the Great Gatsby Look." *Chicago Defender* 31 Oct. 1973: 18.

Morris, Leslie A. "Bernard Alfred Quaritch in America." *Book Collector: Special Number for the 150th Anniversary of Bernard Quaritch*. Ed. Richard Linenthal. London: Book Collector, 1997. 180–197.

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York: New York University Press, 2009.

---. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

"Newspaper Clipping from Album." 12 Nov. 1940: n. pag.

North, Michael. *The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language, and Twentieth-Century Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Nye, David E. *American Technological Sublime*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994.

Oakes, Guy, and Andrew Grossman. "Managing Nuclear Terror: The Genesis of American Civil Defense Strategy." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 5.3 (1992): 361–403.

Oakley, Helen. "William Faulkner and the Cold War: The Politics of Cultural Marketing." *Look Away!: The U.S. South in New World Studies*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004. 405–416.

Ornstein, Robert. "Scott Fitzgerald's Fable of East and West." *College English* 18.3 (1956): 139–143.

Orvell, Miles. *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

Overton, Harvey. "Eleventh-Grade Electives: They Provide for Different Tastes and Abilities." *The English Journal* 44.4 (1955): 211–214.

Pace, Eric. “Cleaver Assails Apollo Program: Militant, in Algiers, Terms It a ‘Misuse of Public Funds.’” *The New York Times* 20 July 1969: 40.

Paterson, Isabel. “Up to the Minute.” *F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Critical Reception*. Ed. Jackson R. Bryer. New York: Burt Franklin, 1978. 200–202.

Poole, W. Scott. “Lincoln in Hell: Class and Confederate Symbols in the American South.” *National Symbols, Fractured Identities: Contesting the National Narrative*. Ed. Michael E. Geisler. Lebanon: Middlebury College Press, 2005.

Poore, Charles. “Books of The Times.” *New York Times* 27 Dec. 1951: 17.

Porter, Carolyn. *Seeing and Being: The Plight of the Participant Observer in Emerson, James, Adams, and Faulkner*. 1st ed. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1981.

Radway, Janice A., and Carl F. Kaestle. “A Framework for the History of Publishing and Reading in the United States, 1880-1940.” *Print in Motion: The Expansion of Publishing and Reading in the United States, 1880-1940*. Ed. Carl F. Kaestle and Janice A. Radway. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009. 7–21.

Redding, Arthur F. *Turncoats, Traitors, and Fellow Travelers: Culture and Politics of the Early Cold War*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008.

“Remember the Alamo!” *San Antonio Light* 8 Mar. 1936: n. pag.

Rexroth, Kenneth. “Bearded Barbarians or Real Bards?: America’s Young Poets Have Something to Say as Well as a New Way to Say It.” *The New York Times* 12 Feb. 1961: BR1–BR45.

Rinehart, Melissa. “To Hell with the Wigs! Native American Representation and Resistance at the World’s Columbian Exposition.” *American Indian Quarterly* 36.4 (2012): 403–442.

Robins, Natalie S. *Alien Ink: The FBI's War on Freedom of Expression*. New York: W. Morrow, 1992.

Rosaldo, Renato. "Imperialist Nostalgia." *Representations* 26 (1989): 107–122.

Rose, Julie K. "The World's Columbian Exposition: Idea, Experience, Aftermath." *The World's Columbian Exposition: Idea, Experience, Aftermath*. N.p., 28 Jan. 2012. Web.

Rosenthal, M. L. "Poets Reappraised." *The New York Times* 28 Nov. 1965: BR38.

Rydell, Robert W. *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Sackett, Susan, ed. *Letters to Star Trek*. 1st ed. New York: Ballantine Books, 1977.

Sarantakes, Nicholas Evan. "Cold War Pop Culture and the Image of U.S. Foreign Policy: The Perspective of the Original Star Trek Series." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7.4 (2005): 74–103.

Saunders, Frances Stonor. *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*. New York: New Press, 1999.

Scott, Arthur L. "The Myriad Perspectives of Absalom, Absalom!" *American Quarterly* 6.3 (1954): 210–220.

"Scott Fitzgerald, Author, Dies at 44." *The New York Times* 23 Dec. 1940: 19.

Slotkin, Richard. *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: Atheneum, 1992.

Sollors, Werner. *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Spillers, Hortense J. "Topographical Topics: Faulknerian Space." *Mississippi Quarterly* 54.4 (2004): 536–568.

Stanchich, Maritza. “The Hidden Caribbean ‘Other’ in William Faulkner’s Absalom, Absalom!: An Ideological Ancestry of U.S. Imperialism.” *Mississippi Quarterly* 9.3 (1996): 603–618.

Stecopoulos, Harry. *Reconstructing the World: Southern Fictions and U.S. Imperialisms, 1898-1976*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.

Strong, Pauline Turner. “Animated Indians: Critique and Contradiction in Commodified Children’s Culture.” *Cultural Anthropology* 11.3 (1996): 405–424.

---. “Representational Practices.” *A Companion to the Anthropology of American Indians*. Ed. Thomas Biolsi. 2nd ed. Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2008. 341–359.

Strong-Tracy, Elizabeth. “Control of the Alamo.” 1908: n. pag.

Sundquist, Eric J. *Faulkner: The House Divided*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983.

Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*. 1st ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1984.

Townsend, Camilla. “No One Said It Was Quetzalcoatl: Listening to the Indians in the Conquest of Mexico.” *History Compass* 1.1 (2003): 1–14. *CrossRef*. Web. 14 Dec. 2014.

Trachtenberg, Alan. *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*. Ed. Eric Foner. 1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.

Trilling, Lionel. *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society*. New York: Viking Press, 1950.

Turner, Frederick Jackson. “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.” *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” and Other Essays*. Ed. John Mack Faragher. New York: H. Holt. 31–60.

Tyrell, Wm. Blake. "Star Trek as Myth and Television as Mythmaker." *Journal of Popular Culture* 10.4 (1977): 711–719.

United Press International. "William Faulkner Is Dead in Mississippi Home Town." *New York Times* 7 July 1962: 1.

University of Missouri-Kansas City Libraries. "LaBudde Special Collections: Kelmscott Press of William Morris." Libraries, University of Missouri-Kansas City. *LaBudde Special Collections*. N.p., 2014. Web. 18 Sept. 2014.

Vespucci, A. *The First Four Voyages of Amerigo Vespucci Reprinted in Facsimile and Tr. from the Rare Original Edition (Florence, 1505-6)*. B. Quaritch, 1893.

Vider, Stephen. "'Oh Hell, May, Why Don't You People Have a Cookbook?': Camp Humor and Gay Domesticity." *American Quarterly* 65.4 (2013): 877–904. *CrossRef*. Web. 10 Feb. 2014.

Wagner, Bryan. *Disturbing the Peace: Black Culture and the Police Power after Slavery*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Walsh, Patrick J. *Echoes Among the Stars: A Short History of the U.S. Space Program*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2000.

"White House 'Lost In Space' Scenarios: From Apollo to Discovery, President Always Prepared for the Worst." *The Smoking Gun*. N.p., 8 Aug. 2005. Web. 20 Apr. 2014.

Wiegman, Robyn. *Object Lessons*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012.

Wilford, Hugh. *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Will, Barbara. "'The Great Gatsby' and the Obscene Word." *College Literature* 32.4 (2005): 125–144.

Williamson, Harold. *Northwestern Mutual Life: A Century of Trusteeship*. New York: Arno Press, 1976.

Williams, William Carlos et al. *Imaginations*. New York: New Directions Pub. Corp., 1971.

Williams, William Carlos. "Père Sebastian Rasles." *In the American Grain*. New York: New Directions, 1952. 105–129.

---. "Red Eric." *In the American Grain*. New York: New Directions, 1956. 1–6.

---. "The Destruction of Tenochtitlan." *In the American Grain*. New York: New Directions, 1956. 27–38.

Winston, Jay S. "Going Native in Yoknapatawpha: Faulkner's Fragmented America and 'The Indian.'" *Faulkner Journal* 18.1/2 (2002): 129–143.

Wolf, Howlin. *Coon on the Moon*. Chicago: Chess, 1973. Audio Recording.

Woolford, Sam, and Bess Woolford. "Alamo Suvery for the Daughters of the Republic of Texas." 1957: n. pag.