

Journal of the Georgia Philological Association



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Foreword

From the GPA President...

Two years have passed since the publication of an edition of *JGPA*, and our world has continued to dramatically change in that time. COVID-19 remains a global epidemic. The national outcry for racial justice that coalesced around the murders of Ahmaud Arbery in February 2020 and George Floyd in May of 2020 reverberates still. A deep polarization in politics threatens to fracture our nation beyond repair, and halfway across the world, Russia has invaded Ukraine, killing thousands of civilians and displacing thousands more. This is the environment in which we conduct our work of scholarship and teaching, and I know that I am not alone in feeling overwhelmed, angry, and full of despair. Given the chaos and what seems like the unrelenting tragedy of the world in which we live, I sometimes doubt the value of what I've chosen to do for a living, let alone the value of our tiny group of scholars coming together to discuss our work in conference and printing our thoughts for others to read.

But always, always I am brought back from this dark place by my students—by watching them develop skills they will need to obtain the jobs they want, by watching them learn from each other, by watching them grow to love words, and most of all by learning from them myself. And I am brought back from my doubts at each meeting of the GPA—by learning new pedagogical methods I can use to engage my students, by exploring exciting new avenues of scholarship, and by supporting the graduate student work that represents the next wave of the academy. What we do in the classroom matters, and the scholarship represented at the GPA conference and in this journal is a product of that classroom labor. Whenever I feel inclined to lean into despair, I remind myself that our commitment to our students is more powerful than the horrors of the world.

The sixteenth annual conference of the GPA was held virtually over two days in May 2021. Although we would have

liked to meet in person, the option to meet virtually allowed us all to share our scholarship and see each other's faces despite the risks COVID-19 still posed. Attendance was robust with many graduate student presenters and a healthy number of attendees who were new to GPA, some of whom were excited to take on leadership roles as officers in the association. To maximize presentation time, no keynote address was scheduled for this year. The Vicki Hill Memorial Graduate Recognition Award was presented to Danielle Bond for her paper "Reaching for the Hands on the Page: From the Written to the Visual in the *Kelmscott Chaucer*."

The seventeenth annual conference of the GPA was held on May 19, 2022, at the Conference Center on the Macon campus of Middle Georgia State University, and seeing everyone in person again after two years was so rewarding. Our keynote speaker was Monica Miller, who completed two book manuscripts—a co-edited collection of articles and an edited collection of Flannery O'Connor's letters—in 2021. In her address, she discussed both the joys and challenges of this work, including the extra challenges of editing book collections in the midst of the pandemic. A version of that address is included in this edition of the journal. We also awarded the Vicki Hill Memorial Graduate Recognition Award to Ben Elliott for his paper "'A Fountain by Another Name': Communication Breakdown, Language, and Meaning in Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*."

This journal marks the last edition for which Farrah Senn will serve as editor. Farrah has done a remarkable job as editor of *JGPA* over a series of very challenging years, and as president, I would like to thank her for her service to the association. We are grateful for the work she did to revive the journal from dormancy and wish her success in her subsequent professional endeavors. She will be succeeded by Nate Gilbert of Middle Georgia State University.

Dr. Lorraine Dubuisson
President
Georgia Philological Association

Introduction

From the Editor ...

This edition may be a bit thinner than those of the past few years, but we maintain our quality above all. As an annual publication, *JGPA* this year, too, is really where the effects of the COVID-laden years are felt most. Fewer scholars had the time, means, or health enough in the past year to pursue their academic interests, and several who did were unable to update their manuscripts for publication due to the disruption, illness, and deaths related to the ongoing pandemic. Hopefully, moving forward, we can get back to a semblance of normality, whatever that will look like from this point on. While many may be tired of the “COVID excuse,” it remains valid for the time-being, unfortunately. That is precisely why we need to heap well-deserved and extra praise onto the contributors to this edition who managed through much crisis to research, study, and create works that will further our knowledge in multiple areas, including pedagogy, regional politics, new thoughts on older literature, and even very new thoughts on very old literature.

The first selection, “From a Distance: The Challenge of Edited Collections during Difficult Times,” is the manuscript of the keynote address at our most recent annual meeting, which we were thankfully able to have in-person for the first time in several years. Monica Carol Miller sets the tone of this edition by discussing the challenges endured and lessons learned in recent projects due to many of the very same issues I have denoted here about our journal. Lorraine Dubuisson’s insightful review of one of Miller’s projects, an edited collection entitled *The Tacky South*, follows the address.

In keeping with our custom of being an interdisciplinary publication, the next several articles contribute to the furthering of academic enterprises in various ways. Julie Goodspeed-Chadwick provides practice recommendations for supporting the humanities within an institution of higher education; Jim Coby and Jericho Williams provide literary introspection on some particular works in their articles entitled “‘Her perfume was moonshine’: Gender and Alcohol in Franklin and Fennelly’s *The Tilted World*” and “Working-

Class Wager: Deprivation and Escape in Jack London's *Martin Eden* and *John Barleycorn*," respectively.

Then, in "W. J. Cash and the Historiography of Southern White Class-Consciousness," Charles Roberts delivers a historical analysis befitting placement alongside the other scholarship on the South featured in this edition.

Delving into the interdisciplinary realms of poetry, religion, and psychology, Faten Najjar discusses the "collective trauma" of the religious turmoil experienced by poet John Donne and his contemporaries caused by Henry VIII's break with the Catholic Church in her article entitled, "John Donne's 'Satyre III': (Re)telling Trauma, (Re)defining Religious Identity".

Finally, I include a book review of Irvin Finkel's *The First Ghost Stories*, a publication that provided for me during these difficult times the much-needed combination of entertainment and education on one of my favorite topics of ancient culture.

I would like to recognize these contributors and to express my gratitude for their patience in dealing with multiple publication delays. Many professors, including myself, took on extra duties during this time, especially working to make sure students still got their courses and did not fall behind, all the while striving to pursue our other academic endeavors, to varying degrees of success. But, we are tired.

I have immensely enjoyed my work as Editor-in-Chief of this journal and am proud of the work that our organization has done previously and even through all the turmoil of the past few years, and I am humbled and honored to be a part of what we do. I think our publication meets the quality of much larger journals and organizations, and there is great fulfillment in that.

It is not for any other reason than for the desire to maintain the esteemed quality of this publication that I now gladly pass the editorship to another. I have enjoyed my years of service, but it is now time that I focus on more of my scholarship goals and allow someone else the privilege of working with the writers who take part in our annual production. Thanks to everyone who made this a rewarding and enriching experience, especially our Co-Editor, the invaluable Dave Buehrer, who has been with me for each edition, as well as our organization president, Lorrain Dubuisson, who organizes our efforts and sees everything through to completion. While I am excited about the opportunity to work on some new and ongoing projects, I will also

look forward to reading the insights of all our contributors in next year's edition and to still seeing everyone at our annual meetings.

Dr. Farrah R. Senn

Editor-in-Chief

Journal of the Georgia Philological Association

“From a Distance: The Challenge of Edited
Collections During Difficult Times”: Keynote
Address, 17th Annual Meeting of the Georgia
Philological Association

Monica Carol Miller
Middle Georgia State University

This summer (2022), three books that I’ve worked on should be published, as long as supply chains stay intact. I edited the book *Dear Regina: Flannery O’Connor’s Letters from Iowa*, a collection of letters that the Georgia author wrote to her mother when she was in graduate school in the 1940s; this will be published by the University of Georgia Press in June. *The Tacky South* is a collection of essays that I co-edited with my colleague Katie Burnett, a professor at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee; it will be published by Louisiana State University Press in June, as well. And there’s also *The Routledge Companion to Literature of the American South*, a reference/textbook with 96 contributors that I co-edited with Katie and our co-editor Todd Hagstette; Todd is a professor at the University of South Carolina-Aiken. It should be out from Routledge in July. These were all very different projects, with different challenges and lessons learned.

Today, I want to tell you about two of the projects—*The Tacky South*, a collection of 18 essays on topics ranging from The B-52s, red velvet cake, reality television, and an entire section on Dolly Parton—and *Dear Regina*, a collection of 486 letters written between 1945 and 1947 that I transcribed from the archive, got permission to publish, and shaped into a book. As far as the Routledge book is concerned, I’ll just say that 96 contributors are a lot. And after I’d spent time grading first-year composition drafts with comments like “This paragraph needs a topic sentence” and “You need a citation for this,” it was challenging to then read submissions from senior scholars and have to write, “This paragraph needs a topic sentence” and “You need a citation for this” on their work as well.

That reference book will be out in July, and I’m also very proud of it. Today, however, I want to focus on the first two projects, which were hard work, but also a lot of fun. At the end of this talk, I hope that

you'll have learned some tips for both the nuts and bolts of putting together an edited book as well as more general advice for successful—and enjoyable—collaborative work, especially collaborating at a distance during a pandemic.

I will admit, however, that I had some advantages going into these projects, beginning with a pre-pandemic familiarity with working from a distance. To begin with, I've lived a lot of places, and some of my closest friends live far away. My friend Renea in Cincinnati and I had been having “virtual tea parties” via Skype and Zoom for years before the pandemic. Before I came to MGSU, I had a three-year post-doctoral fellowship at Georgia Tech, where collaborative work in online spaces is the norm. Even when we had face-to-face meetings, it was expected that everyone had laptops open, and we would usually be working in Google Docs, sheets, and slides throughout the meeting (as well as taking part in the kind of backchannel communication that we now sometimes see in Zoom chats). So, I went into these collaborative projects with some useful tools.

Let me begin with *The Tacky South*. In the fall of 2015 (seven years ago!), I was in New Orleans for the American Literature Association Symposium on “The City in American Literature.” While in town for the conference, I went with my friend, scholar Michael Bibler, to the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, where an exhibit of Cynthia Scott's assemblage chandeliers made of plastic colanders and food containers prompted a rollicking discussion of many things silly, tacky, and weirdly southern. Michael had given a couple of talks on the band The B-52s by this point, and he too was thinking about the concepts of silliness, play, campiness, and tackiness. A smartphone Google search led us to the seed of *The Tacky South* collection: we discovered the southern etymology of the word “tacky,” which has its roots in the South Carolina horse farms and the so-called “tackies” who tended the tack horses. So, the judgmental meaning of tackiness comes from the American South.

From a bar in the French Quarter, we texted our discovery to our friend Katie in Nashville, and the three of us began our plans to organize a panel on the “Tacky South” for the 2016 Society for the Study of Southern Literature conference, held the following spring in Boston. After that, Katie and I organized panels on the topic for the Modern Language Association and the American Studies Association conferences; many of the essays in the collection came from those panels, such as the essays on Nudie Suits and the singer Robert Earl Keen.

Katie and I went to the University of Tennessee-Knoxville together; she was a PhD student when I was working on my masters, and we both studied southern literature. We've since organized panels together, roomed together at conferences, and developed a strong friendship beyond work. One of the reasons for our successful collaboration has been both our similar interests and our similar work ethic. Katie is the department coordinator for the departments of English and Women's and Gender Studies at Fisk, in addition to being the mother of a toddler—so she is extremely organized. We found that we both check our email about the same amount, so whoever saw an email first would generally answer it, and then note it if necessary on the Google sheet that we used for keeping track of the project. Because she wears so many hats, Katie sets aside time each week to send emails, so she would typically be responsible for mass emailings to contributors or press people. I would generally draft the emails that went out, and I set up the shared documents and folders in the Google drive. My career as a secretary before returning to graduate school for a career in academia has been invaluable in this respect, as I'm good at setting up spreadsheets and drafting polite emails.

I can't stress enough how important such digital collaborative tools have been in these projects—which is in part why I have all of my professional writing students that I teach learn to use them, along with setting up a video conference meeting. Spreadsheets make everything easier, especially long-distance collaborations. Last fall at the virtual South Atlantic Modern Language Association conference, Katie and I organized a roundtable of editors of such collections, and the majority of the participants agreed that tools for keeping things organized was key for successful collaboration. This group included editors of *Reconsidering Flannery O'Connor* (University Press of Mississippi, 2020), an edited collection of essays that has its roots in the 2014 National Endowment for the Humanities month-long seminar on Flannery O'Connor at Georgia College & State U., and the editors of *Southern Comforts* (Louisiana State University Press, 2020), a scholarly collection of essays on drinking and southern literature. We have all shared our book proposals and email templates with each other, and I was glad to be able to learn more about their processes in collaborating.

I use spreadsheets to keep track of many things, even projects I have worked on primarily by myself. I certainly have used them to keep track of drafts, permissions, and images in *Dear Regina*, the book of

Flannery O'Connor's letters that is coming out this summer, too. I first visited the archive at Emory University that contained these letters when Emory first acquired them during the fall of 2014—I had just moved to Atlanta, after spending a month at the NEH seminar in Milledgeville on O'Connor. The archive is fascinating—it has items such as greeting cards her father made for Flannery, her veil from her first communion, her glasses, as well as so many papers and letters.

The O'Connor Foundation is notoriously difficult to get permission to quote anything from O'Connor's papers. In fact, when you work with her papers kept at Georgia College's Special Collections, you're not even allowed to have a cellphone in the room with you. So when I first went to Emory, I felt a bit nervous when they asked if I would want to take photographs of the papers—was this a test? But when I said yes, they just gave me a form to complete.

There is so much that's fascinating in that archive—so much that will inform O'Connor scholarship in future years. Up until she left for graduate school at the University of Iowa, O'Connor had grown up in Savannah and then Milledgeville, Georgia: both smallish, southern cities in which she was a member of well-respected and long-established families. Iowa was a revelation for so many reasons: she was away from home, and also away from her known climate, region, family, and habits. Iowa gave her an opportunity to reinvent herself—literally, as this was when she started going by Flannery O'Connor, rather than Mary Flannery, as well as creatively, as her work evolved from the cartoons she first came to Iowa to create to the incisive fiction which she produced as a student in the Writers Workshop there.

And while her graduate school experience allowed for such reinvention, there was much about her former life which stayed constant that we can see in her letters: her daily mass attendance, her spiritual devotion, and—surprising to many—her strong relationship with her mother. When both scholars and fans of O'Connor consider the mother-daughter relationships in her work, they tend to assume that the dynamics in the stories have their basis in O'Connor's relationship with her own mother, Regina Cline O'Connor. To be fair, much of this interpretation is based on Flannery's own descriptions of their relationship—for example, she told a friend that the character Joy-Hulga in her story "Good Country People" has a good deal of its roots in her own experience as a daughter with an overbearing mother. The embossed sweatshirt that the character Joy-Hulga wears, for example, that annoys her mother in the story, is inspired by a Georgia Bulldogs sweatshirt

that Flannery had and would wear to annoy her mother; Regina thought that an adult woman should not wear such a thing, as it made too much of a spectacle. (I love that the picture on the cover of *Dear Regina* has Flannery wearing this very same sweatshirt.)

However, the letters in *Dear Regina* reveal that the day-to-day relationship between the mother and daughter had much more depth and affection than the generally accepted narratives of their relationship contain. Indeed, I believe such characterizations have exaggerated and overemphasized the contentiousness between the mother and daughter. Flannery wrote to her mother nearly every day that she was away from home. It is clear that Flannery is a willing participant in this correspondence; she notes in a letter early on that “I am the only one here who hears from home every day and should like to continue to be.” In fact, I believe that the exaggerations of their contentiousness have led to some misreadings of the mother-daughter relationships in her stories, and I think that once readers peruse these letters, they might be willing to take mother figures such as Mrs. Hopewell in “Good Country People” or Mrs. Crater in “The Life You Save May Be Your Own” more seriously, rather than reject them as flat, comical characters, as they often are dismissed as being.

So, this is just one example of the significance that these letters have. After that first visit, I was jazzed about these letters, and I emailed Emory to ask about getting permission to quote from the archive. However, the first response I received—which, to be fair, was shortly after they’d acquired the collection, and apparently not everyone was up to speed on everything—was that Robert Giroux was listed as the contact, so I should contact him about permission to quote from the letters.

That’s when I decided that photograph offer must have been a trick, too. It’s true, Robert Giroux (of Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux) was O’Connor’s editor and one-time contact for permission to quote from her papers—but he died in 2008! This was 2014. So, was this another trick? A polite way of saying no? Should I tell them that I’d consulted a Ouija board, and Bob said it was cool?

I put this problem aside until I was actually working on an article that I really did want to use a quote from the letters in. I was writing a chapter on farm women characters in O’Connor’s work for the book *Reconsidering Flannery O’Connor*, and I wanted to quote from a letter in which O’Connor responds to learning that her mother is going to

inherit the family farm, Andalusia, in Milledgeville. She expresses concern at how much work it will be for her mother. I wanted to quote this to encourage readers to take these farm women characters more seriously and less parodically than we typically do; usually, they're dismissed as comedic (like the mother figures, as well). To my great surprise, the attorney for the Flannery O'Connor-Andalusia Foundation who was the actual contact for permissions replied with approval from the Foundation to quote from the letter in my article. Elated at this news, I replied to his email, asking if there were any plans to publish the collection of letters, as they really provide a new perspective on the young O'Connor as she is learning her trade at the University of Iowa. At their request, I sent them a book proposal, and to my continued surprise, they gave their permission to publish the letters—provided that I have an agent (which they also offered to provide) to do the work of shopping the manuscript around.

So, not only did I finally have permission to publish the letters, but I also had an AGENT. “My agent” is almost as much fun to say as “my forthcoming book.” I had taken photos of most of the letters while working in the archive, but there were some gaps to fill in; in fact, I spent part of spring break 2020, right before the world went online, at Emory ensuring that I had all of the letters documented. I spent the rest of that spring break finishing transcribing the collection and writing a general introduction and introductions for each section. The book is divided into the three academic years that O'Connor was at Iowa. Then, my agent spent several months shopping it around—so, after a frenzy of work, I had several more months to hurry up and wait.

It was not until that fall of 2020 that the University of Georgia Press expressed interest in the project. So, periodically throughout 2021, there were various things—but fun things!—that I needed to do for this book, like get high resolution copies of photographs from Emory for the book and talk to Andalusia about its photo collection for possible cover images. During Spring 2022, I went through the manuscript copy edits and had my wonderful husband index the book (he also indexed *The Tacky South* this past spring—in addition to being MGSU's interlibrary loan librarian and a graduate student in Valdosta State's MLIS program, he also has experience as an indexer. Being able to rely on him to index these recent books of mine has been invaluable). I also had some encouraging conversations with UGA Press's editors about future book ideas. Of all these book projects, *Dear Regina* has

been the least stressful, in part because it has just mostly been me and the press (and my fabulous indexer spouse).

But at this point, I am so ready to write my own, original words! I am proud of these books that I've worked on, but it's also got me appreciating just sitting down and writing my own ideas now.

Some final thoughts I'll leave you with if you're thinking of collaborating or working on an editing project: learn to use digital tools, find an editing partner with a complementary work ethic and working style, find a good press to partner with, and keep your projects to no more than 50 people.

A Review of *The Tacky South*, by Katharine A. Burnett and Monica Carol Miller, Eds.

Lorraine Dubuisson, PhD
Middle Georgia State University

The Tacky South, edited by Katharine A. Burnett and Monica Carol Miller, is a collection of impeccably researched essays that attempts to define tacky, to trace its etymological roots to the Old South, and to explore what the term has evolved to represent in the 21st century. The authors of these essays consider what calling someone or something tacky really means and what embracing the label, as country music singer Dolly Parton so willingly does, signifies. As the editors state, “all roads lead to Dolly in this collection” (Burnett and Miller 7), and she provides a cultural through-line from her colorful portrait on the cover to mentions in multiple essays as the quintessential queen of all things both southern and tacky.

Most of the authors in the collection have southern studies credentials. Miller, for example, is the president of the Flannery O’Connor Society and the secretary-treasurer of the Society for the Study of Southern Literature as well as publishing widely in the field. Charles Reagan Wilson, who wrote the foreword, is a giant of southern studies whose name is immediately recognizable from his tenure as the director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at Ole Miss. As a result, *The Tacky South* makes a welcome addition to the bookshelf of any southern studies scholar; however, scholars of film, literature more broadly conceived, music, and popular culture will find essays that speak to their interests. This volume also holds broad appeal for a mainstream market; readers of the popular magazine *Garden & Gun* and devotees of the podcast *The Bitter Southerner* will find much to enjoy here without being bogged down in the jargon and unnecessary, obfuscating complexity that mars far too much academic writing.

The collection is divided into three sections. The first, “Policing Tackiness,” “[traces] the use of the term ‘tacky’ from its original etymology, through historical applications, to its manifestations in literary and cultural representations up through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries” (Burnett and Miller 13-14). It opens with “Picturing the Tacky: Poor White Southerners in Gilded Age Periodicals” by Jolene Hubbs, in which Hubbs argues that in the late 19th century South, “‘tacky’ began to be used as a noun describing poor white southerners

and as an adjective describing people who are “‘dowdy, shabby, in poor taste’; that is people who manifest tastes associated with poor whites” (Hubbs 24). Other essays in this section examine the intersection of tackiness with race, class, and gender. A good example of the latter is Miller’s “Southern Women Don’t Wear Sweatpants: Southern Mothers and the Deceptive Policing of Appearance.” This essay explores tacky “as both a delineation of acceptable behavior as well as a pressure valve for occasional relief from the unattainable expectations of successful white womanhood” (Miller 135).

The second section, “Revolutionary Tackiness,” deals with the ways in which tackiness can be subversive and push transgressively against the boundaries of convention and tradition, those stalwart southern bywords. Emblematic of this section is Michael P. Bibler’s article, “The Tacky Little Dance Band from Athens, Georgia: On Seams, Assemblages, and the Democratic Beat of The B-52s.” The band is ambivalent about the often-applied tacky descriptor (218) and rejects the idea that it is being ironic in embracing an aesthetic seen as tacky (219-20); nonetheless, Bibler argues that “tackiness, understood as a form of juxtaposition” (225) in terms of musical styles, has allowed The B-52s to create a democratic sort of music that defies categorization (227). Another standout article from this section, “The Cultural Paradoxes of Red Velvet Cake” by Marshall Needleman Armintor, discusses the tacky confection from its murky ancestry through its immortalization in *Steel Magnolias*, a movie that not-so-coincidentally happens to star this collection’s favorite country music celebrity.

The final section of the book is appropriately titled “Dolly as Common Ground.” This handful of essays is best illustrated by Anna Creadick’s “Tacky-Lachian Dolly: Double D Femme in the Double-Wide Mountain South.” As Creadick explains, “this essay loiters at the intersection of tackiness, Appalachia, and the body to consider that particular variety of mountain mama who expresses her excesses with glee” (233). Several of the articles in *The Tacky South* employ humor to great effect, but Creadick’s affectionate homage to Dolly is both extremely funny and extremely insightful, making it one of the most satisfying reads in the entire collection. This section provides a fitting conclusion to a volume in which Dolly plays such a significant role as exemplar of tackiness.

Although each of the essays in *The Tacky South* is well-written and interesting in its own right, a couple of them seem only tangentially

connected to the theme of tackiness. For example, “Reading *Lolita* in Coal Country” by Jimmy Dean Smith is more about “place-specific comparisons between rapacious industrialization and the monstrosity of sexual predation—that is between the instrumentalization of Appalachia and that of the children who live among its resource-rich mountains” (92) than it is about the overarching topic of the collection. Even so, the occasional deviation from a strict exploration of tackiness does little to detract from the value of the multi-faceted approach to the concept contained in the volume.

The Tacky South is thought-provoking, entertaining, and a worthy addition to scholarship of the South. Its wide-ranging view of tackiness, and of the South itself, delves deeply into the subject matter while raising questions for further exploration. As Burnett and Miller acknowledge, “there are few if any studies specifically devoted to a study of tackiness” (16); *The Tacky South* thus paves new critical ground and opens the door to a fruitful framework through which future scholarship can understand the literature, music, popular culture, and other elements of the American South.

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Small-Scale and High-Impact Humanities Advocacy, Support, and Outreach in Undergraduate Student Research

Julie Goodspeed-Chadwick, PhD
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It is possible structurally to support the humanities in ways that are sustainable and that are not prohibitive. Within an institution, it is important to have support: support in any and all variations—including financial, mentoring, and structural support, as well as assistance with the dissemination of an idea or enterprise. With advocacy, support will grow, and, in turn, outreach and impact will grow, too. I will illustrate how institutional and structural advocacy and support within an organization—even a small-scale outfit—can dramatically transform opportunities for both students and faculty, sometimes with the larger public benefiting, as well. We know that undergraduate student research is a high-impact practice, and we can fold students into the important work of the humanities in a fashion that will invigorate our own scholarship and teaching.

Now in its twelfth year, I am the founding director of our Office of Student Research (OSR), an initiative that invites, vets, funds, and disseminates student research, mostly undergraduate student research. The OSR promotes intellectual inquiry and innovation to enrich the educational experiences of students by providing support for research projects that engage students in academic scholarship that contributes in meaningful ways to communities in our city of Columbus, IN, and beyond. Our OSR students have presented at national and international conferences with their professors; they have made scientific discoveries with their faculty mentors; they have published OSR-sponsored research as co-authors in peer-reviewed publications with their professors; and they have developed strong relationships with faculty, staff, and the university as a result. I also serve as an assigned faculty mentor to other faculty in the area of student research, and to that end, I work with faculty to envision, design, implement, and disseminate student research. From my position, I can see first-hand the crossroads between institutional and structural support of the humanities and the exciting results that emerge in student research, especially when it relates to faculty research projects, and here I will focus on strategies for advocating

and supporting humanities research—specifically undergraduate research—as professors and/or administrators.

To replicate what we have at my institution, a college with fewer than 1,500 students and fewer than 70 full-time faculty members, I would recommend a budget of just under \$18,500. Administrators can do with far less--and virtually nothing if need be. We have been in a position where we do not have as much money as we would like to meet our aims: when, for instance, there was no money to be had for faculty incentives, or a stipend for the director to manage the OSR, or enough funds to financially support every project worthy of that support. But even a physical exhibition and the costs associated with it (professionally printed posters on foam board and catering costs) can be replaced by cost-free virtual exhibitions, in which videos and PDFs of posters substitute for the experience of a face-to-face event. If possible, it would be advisable to offer a stipend to the person who manages the office, however. Our stipend at IUPUC is \$3,500 for the year-round position, which offsets the fact that the faculty member may be on a 10-month contract and will be working over the summer. If the faculty member can be offered a course release in addition to the stipend, that communicates the message that the position is highly valued and gives the faculty member additional and much needed time to dedicate to the office. But the most important investment in the functioning of the office is in the support of student research itself. For instance, we have been able to offer \$10,000-\$12,000 in the form of student research grants, and students, under the supervision of their faculty members and the OSR director, can use a grant, which caps at \$1,000, to offset conference travel fees, to secure research materials, and to pay for services related to research. Because not every student needs funds to conduct research—a library card might suffice—we still award grants to deserving student projects and cover the cost of the professionally printed posters. Altogether, we spend about \$800 on printing posters, which covers about 12-15 student projects. If money can be allotted to catering, then the annual Student Research Exhibition, the showcase of OSR-funded research, feels special, and the event is further sanctioned as one that is welcoming, especially if it is a showcase open to the community. Catering costs vary widely, and some years we have had to be creative with our food: that is, appetizers and desserts with sparkling water work as well as the elaborate spreads we have furnished in the past. And, lastly, but importantly, we offer faculty research incentives,

including money deposited into faculty mentors' research accounts, as a thank-you from the OSR. Depending on the year, we award \$300 or \$400 to each student research mentor. While this might seem like a rather inconsequential line in the budget, it has proven integral for us because we have had our most competitive years when we are able to offer these small but symbolic incentives. All participants like to feel appreciated and affirmed for their time and efforts.

Just as important as figuring out how much money an administrator will have to invest in and support student research is being able to advocate for those things. Once the advocacy generates faculty and student buy-in, so to speak, which is structural support just as a financial investment by the institution is, then community outreach can happen, which can additionally support the institution in myriad ways. Thus, I will dedicate the most time here to considering advocacy because this is a bridge between support and community outreach, as well as the main aspect in generating support in the first place. Once the community comes to recognize and value student research, monetary donations will come in, and the relationship between the university and the community is strengthened. (Our most recent donations totaled about \$630.) Additional opportunities for research will emerge when community partners see the good that comes out of faculty-mentored student research from working with OSR projects, from the pages of the local newspaper that spotlights the Exhibition, from the OSR webpages, and from attending the Exhibition itself each April.

George D. Kuh cites undergraduate student research as an important high-impact practice. High-impact practices like undergraduate research increase the rates of student retention and engagement (Kuh), exactly what we need right now when articles about a crisis in enrollment appear in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), of which Kuh is the founding director, "High-Impact Practices (HIPs) share several traits: They demand considerable time and effort, facilitate learning outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and students, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback. As a result, participation in these practices can be life-changing" (Kuh). A culminating senior experience, such as a capstone or honors thesis, also can serve as a high-impact practice, and these experiences may be fused with other undergraduate research opportunities.

Shari Lanning and Mark Brown indicate that the data show “that student engagement is the most critical factor in retention programs for undergraduate students. [...] These studies illustrate that if students do not feel engaged, they are at high risk for leaving their institution prematurely. Among such high impact practices, undergraduate research has been shown to have the most positive effects with regard to promoting student engagement” (160). They advocate “the use of mentored research as a high impact practice in undergraduate education” and “call upon the education community to share their models, approaches, observations, and research findings related to undergraduate research initiatives” (Lanning & Brown 160). That call underwrites this essay as well.

My approach incorporates bridging the divide between understanding the humanities or liberal arts in “instrumental terms” and “as an end in and of itself” (43), in the words of Fareed Zakaria in his book *In Defense of a Liberal Education*. Zakaria argues that “the reality is that liberal education has always combined a mixture of both approaches—practical and philosophical” (43)—or, to reframe it, “training the mind to think and filling the mind with specific content” (51). Undergraduate research, especially that in the humanities, is akin to liberal education in that we want students to improve their abilities to “read critically, analyze data, and formulate ideas—and most of all to enjoy the intellectual adventure” (61) as well as to communicate—i.e., speaking and writing persuasively and convincingly (Zakaria 75), and, I would add, in an ethical manner. The skills students acquire and the abilities they hone allow them to approach problems or issues in increasingly more effective and creative ways in our ever-changing and globally connected world.

Other skills undergraduate student researchers cited in a survey at Grinnell College include “inquiry and analysis, reading and understanding primary literature, communication, and teamwork” (Lopatto). In addition to these, student researchers “learn tolerance for obstacles faced in the research process, how knowledge is constructed, independence, increased self-confidence, and a readiness for more demanding research. These benefits are an advantage in any career path,” as David Lopatto concludes after studying the survey responses.

Richard F. Vaz asserts in “High-Impact Practices Work” that such practices:

Can help students develop skills that are essential in the workplace and that transfer to a wide range of settings—such as communication, problem solving and critical thinking. In addition, they can give an institution a distinctive and competitive edge at a time when many colleges and universities are struggling to maintain enrollments.

He continues:

High impact practices—which include project-based learning, community-based learning and undergraduate research—have several features in common. They promote active engagement, requiring students to spend considerable time on task. They involve collaboration, both in and out of classroom settings. Students are asked to take responsibility for their learning, while faculty members assume coaching and mentoring roles.

Further, alumni of these practices reported “better interpersonal skills, leadership abilities, a stronger personal character, the development of a sense of mission” as a result of project experiences (Vaz). Vaz recommends what we do at my campus: a showcase of faculty-mentored student research across disciplines to other faculty and administrators. In our case, however, we also invite all students and their families and friends, community members, and the public at large; the mayor, for instance, has attended our exhibition. Such examples as featured in our exhibition show faculty and students what Vaz argues is integral to a culture change: “a shift in focus away from what faculty members do and say to what students do and learn.”

From my tenure with creating and building a sustainable office of undergraduate student research, I would note that the following important benefits avail themselves to students (and faculty!) who pursue student research: fostering of and increased abilities related to learning, creativity, problem solving, curiosity, personal and professional growth, and innovation. Additionally, students learn more about decision making, prioritizing, taking initiative, and perseverance. They also acquire knowledge about and improve their persuasive and convincing argumentative and presentation skills as well as teamwork and time management skills. For the students I encounter at my institution, many of whom are first-generation, I keep in mind what Zakaria asserts: “Reducing inequality in the long run is widening access to good education” (99). Zakaria claims, moreover, that “[i]f you want to succeed in life, most often you need to put in the hours, develop good work habits, work well with others, and get lucky” (105). Framed in these

ways and with the understanding that undergraduate student research is a learning experience that students can take part in at any point in their undergraduate career—and that there is no such thing as perfect undergraduate work—students and faculty mentors come to realize the rewards that derive from engaging in research together, and that the opportunity to be part of the OSR is mutually beneficial.

Altogether, the OSR on our campus has sponsored 107 student projects involving 153 students over the course of 10 years. Projects span disciplines and have resulted in peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations, honors projects, strong mentoring relationships, graduate school acceptances, and job placements. The student featured recently in our local and state-wide media was a humanities student, who presented her research concerning her parents, who were Christian Eastern Europeans and Holocaust survivors. The OSR funded her archival study at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. As a result of her research, she created a digital memoir of the story of her parents, and she has shared her story and what she has learned with local schools, teaching them about the Holocaust and its victims and survivors.

Because the humanities tend not to command as much acknowledgment from the wider public as other fields, such as engineering, nursing, or the sciences, when it comes to undergraduate student research, I will offer two examples of projects that I have mentored in literature. My hope is that others will see that professors can mentor projects that coincide with work they are already doing in the classroom and/or in their own research agendas. It is important that we consider how we might mentor undergraduate students in research because such work is proven to be a high-impact teaching practice and because such study broadens the horizons and prospects of students, both now and in the future. For example, one student research project I mentored dovetailed with a book I was writing at the time. I had come back from a sabbatical to teach a course about the archival research I had conducted about Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes, and Assia Wevill, and I wanted the students to take what they were learning in the classroom and bring it to our larger communities in the form of community engagement and service-learning projects. Thus, the OSR project I mentored was a group project that came out of an amalgamation and culmination of classroom assignments from that particular course. The students presented what they had learned through creative products they designed

to meet the expectations of the community engagement and service-learning components of the course. The OSR funds were used to defray their costs to present with me at an international symposium on Sylvia Plath in Belfast, Northern Ireland. They were the only undergraduate students to co-present with their professor, and, for all of them, it was the first international trip they had taken. Moreover, for the majority of the undergraduate presenters, it was also their first academic conference, and, to add to their excitement, their projects were highlighted in the opening keynote address of that conference. Of these students, one went on to pursue graduate study in English as a result of her experiences in the course, and all three are now employed in jobs they find rewarding. A different OSR project I mentored several years later focused on representations of Sylvia Plath in Ted Hughes's best-selling poetry collection *Birthday Letters*; this project was also a team effort. Five students worked together to link their concept maps of individual poems in Hughes's collection, offering feminist critiques and highlighting traumatic moments in the book. To be forthcoming, I was working on an article at the time that posited innovative ways to teach *Birthday Letters* to undergraduate students. These students studied the collection with me in an English and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies capstone course, and it is important to note that the majority of them were not English majors but, rather, English minors or Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies minors. Nevertheless, their work was reviewed and accepted for co-presentation with me at a national conference in Louisville, Kentucky, and we received praise for the scholarship from conference audience members following our presentation. An OSR grant paid for the conference registration fees, allowing the students to present without financial burden. Of these students, two went on to pursue graduate study in Business and Library Science, and the other three won various academic and leadership awards before graduating and securing employment outside the humanities. None of these students pursued literature in graduate school or in the workforce, and yet their research work in literature nevertheless honed their skills to such a degree that they were very attractive candidates for graduate study and readily found employment in a competitive post-degree job market. Through research, they demonstrated that they could create, innovate, and deliver valuable products, steeped in critical reading, thinking, and writing.

As touched upon earlier, it is important to incentivize student research for students and faculty so that they will be motivated to participate in it. Incentives might range from course credit or honors credit for students or a line on their diplomas to a course release or extra research money for faculty. Momentarily, I will share an example of a solicitation email I sent in the summer to recruit faculty because the most common way students come to research is by being approached by their professors. Some students contact me after I send a solicitation email through the student listserv, and I work to place them with an appropriate mentor. Other students might approach faculty about the OSR in connection with an honors project because I provide introductions to the OSR at honors program meetings and first-year seminars. Some become interested in the OSR after attending the annual Exhibition as part of a class visit. But the most productive faculty-student partnerships occur when faculty have been able to identify students who are the right fit for a particular project or when faculty members encourage students to apply for an OSR grant in conjunction with work that they are doing in class or in an independent study or as student assistants. Because capstone courses also constitute a high-impact practice, along with service learning and study abroad experiences, faculty might look for ways to transform or reformulate those practices into opportunities for student research. Faculty can fold students into their own research projects as well, and in the case of the OSR, we accept reviews of literature that point out gaps or holes or articulate areas to explore or questions to address as research, in addition to other configurations of research. We also accept community-based or translation of research/applied research projects in fields such as Nursing and inventions that come out of Mechanical Engineering. While the OSR experience might seem initially daunting to faculty or students, I am careful to explain that students will present whatever they have in April at the Exhibition, and we will celebrate it as part of a showcase of the work undergraduate researchers have tackled.

Here, then, is an example of an email I recently sent that received half a dozen interested faculty responses within an hour:

Dear faculty colleagues-friends,

As we are designing our courses in anticipation of the fall semester, please consider mentoring a student in connection with our Office of

Student Research (OSR)! You'll find these benefits associated with being a part of the OSR this year:

- A \$300 research incentive will be deposited into the faculty mentor's research account. This money can be used for research purposes outside of the OSR. This year, only one OSR research incentive can be awarded per faculty member, even if the faculty member is mentoring more than one OSR project. Additionally, only one incentive can be given to co-mentored projects; a primary faculty mentor for each project will need to be designated.
- Mentoring an OSR project is a concrete and documented example of mentoring that goes above and beyond and that can be counted as research, teaching, or service, depending on the nature of the work and how one wants to slot their contributions as an OSR faculty mentor on promotion dossiers, awards statements and dossiers, and faculty annual review reports.
- Mentoring students in one's areas of expertise can be invigorating for the faculty member's own research and scholarship!
- Altruistic rewards: research shows that involving undergraduates in research ventures is one of the very best practices related to student learning, and mentoring students is important and impactful work for faculty.

Research projects are considered at any stage, but applicants must be current students at the time of application and secure a committed faculty mentor before they can apply for an OSR grant. OSR projects may come out of coursework, independent studies, or independent research with a faculty mentor(s). Students with projects that do not require funding or students who have already completed research projects are encouraged to apply as well. The expectation is that students will present whatever they have in relation to their research (projects do not need to be completed entirely) at the Student Research Exhibition.

Students who participate in the OSR find that they can

- engage in funded (as needed) research in areas that are important to them;
- cite the OSR grant as an internal competitive grant on résumés and grad school applications;
- develop strong relationships with their mentors;

- use their OSR project as the basis for an Honors project; and
- present at the Student Research Exhibition and at other conferences as appropriate.

Furthermore, students are

- recognized at the annual awards ceremony and
- featured on the university webpage.

Please consider mentoring a student in concert with the OSR. You'll find details and the application form attached to this message, as well as posted on the website. You can read about the expectations for student research projects and view posters and photos from Student Research Exhibitions over the years, too.

Please feel free to contact me directly: I'd be delighted to discuss the OSR and its opportunities with you and/or your students and to work with you accordingly. Do consider building a potential OSR project or opportunity into your course or syllabus if it makes sense to do so.

May you be well and thriving,

Your OSR director

Considering that many students commute, and because we have gained experience functioning in the midst of a global pandemic, we know that students and faculty, at times, will need to research remotely or with precautions as dictated by our colleges and universities. It is only fair that their work in going above and beyond be supported, and my university has protected our budget during trying times, recognizing undergraduate student research as a priority on our campus. Students are promoted through professional photographs that are archived with PDFs of their research posters on the OSR webpage. The local newspaper has featured the Student Research Exhibition prominently in its pages over the years, and students receive award plaques at our annual student-faculty campus awards ceremony, where other important academic awards are also distributed. Even more importantly, students will find the following: that research is exciting as they work toward new knowledge; they can list the internal competitive

grant on their résumés or on their graduate school applications; they can form strong relationships with their faculty mentors; and they have the opportunity to present at conferences and to contribute to publications if applicable.

In the article “Enhancing Undergraduate Research in the Arts and Humanities,” Cathy W. Levenson points out that students think of STEM-related research when they think about student research. A solution? To create an office of student research that actively supports work in the humanities. Florida State University conducted a survey that “confirmed a significant interest in undergraduate research that stemmed from faculty members’ understanding of the benefits of research experience to undergraduate training. The committee also recognized the need to provide more support for student researchers, enhance the visibility of faculty who give their time to undergraduates, and expand the scope of the work in which undergraduates participate” (Levenson). Ensuring that humanities faculty and students are encouraged and represented in student research initiatives allows us to showcase the exciting and important work we do—and it makes not only the work, but the people involved in it, visible.

In her book *The New Education*, Cathy N. Davidson maintains, “Students work best when they know their work is for the future beyond school, not just for the test, and when they realize their work contributes” (267). Striving toward effecting “some kind of change in the world” is motivating, Davidson finds in her experience mentoring undergraduate students (267). In *Beyond the University: Why a Liberal Education Matters*, Michael S. Roth charts the “deep American tradition of humanistic education that has been integral to our success as a nation,” allowing students to think for themselves, contribute to society, activate their creative potential, develop “ideas of experience and inquiry that serve personal and civic life without being narrowly utilitarian,” in order to become meaningful actors in a “culture that prizes innovation and an economy that depends on it” as well as on the beneficial functioning of a “democracy” (Roth 3). In our present day, unfortunately, study in the humanities at the undergraduate level “is increasingly seen as a luxury for the entitled, one that is scarcely affordable in a hypercompetitive world” (Roth 2)—and, I would add, in a world that has had to battle a pandemic and the decreased employment opportunities it caused. Eloquently, Roth argues, “At its best, education develops the capacities for seeing possibilities and for relishing the world across borders we might otherwise not have dared to

cross” (7). By establishing a small research program, the university can bolster work in the humanities by advocating for it, supporting it, and reaching out to the community and securing its support additionally. In this way, we also make higher education an “intellectual and experiential adventure” (Roth 8).¹

Note

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“Her perfume was moonshine”: Gender and Alcohol in Franklin and Fennelly’s *The Tilted World*

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In his essay about *The Tilted World* for the *Virginia Quarterly Review Online*, Robert H. Brinkmeyer, Jr. expresses slight trepidation over the prospect of a novel co-written by a married duo: “When I first picked up *The Tilted World*, I didn’t know what to expect, since I knew Franklin as a novelist and Fennelly as a poet” (“New Fiction of the Great Flood of 1927”). Indeed, the collaboration of these two artists, whose artistic sensibilities initially seem disparate, to produce such an ambitious text as *The Tilted World* appears a challenging prospect. Robert Hass describes Fennelly’s poetry as “rowdy and stimulating” and full of “ambitious energies” (28, 30). Meanwhile, Tom Franklin is praised for his rollicking literary thrillers set in the Deep South. The two focused on their strengths as writers, however: Tom Franklin explains for Stephen Usery’s *Mysterypod Podcast: Interviews+Books+Crime* that “she [Fennelly] would do the female main character, Dixie Clay, while I would write the male main character, Ted Ingersoll. We went apart, wrote for two weeks, and then had a date [...] where we gave each other our pages” (“Case 043 – Tom Franklin & Beth Ann Fennelly”). The two continued to write separately, occasionally exchanging and revising their partner’s work, and ultimately produced a widely praised literary novel. Beyond simply producing a riveting work, however, they also challenge monolithic notions of the American South in *The Tilted World* by engaging with the politics of gender and of alcohol production and consumption.

The Tilted World revolves around dual narratives. The first thread concerns Dixie Clay Holliver, a young woman who falls in love with a mysterious stranger passing through her hometown: Jesse Holliver, a man from whom she eventually learns to manufacture bootleg liquor. Grieving from a miscarriage and searching for something to occupy her newfound time following her loss, Dixie Clay begins exploring Jesse’s finances and soon discovers what she has long suspected – Jesse is the chief bootlegger in northern Mississippi, an area that would otherwise be dry under the laws of Prohibition during the 1920s-30s. Rather than exposing this newly discovered aspect of Jesse’s life, Dixie Clay decides that she will assume the manufacturing

of the liquor and leave Jesse to the marketing and sales. So continue their lives for several years until two federal revenue agents, Ham Johnson and Ted Ingersoll, arrive to investigate two of their missing colleagues in Hobnob, Mississippi. Amid this criminal investigation, the rising waters presaging the Great Flood of 1927 further heighten anxiety for the characters.

During my initial reading of *The Tilted World*, I was given pause by how cluttered the novel felt. My thought, however, referred not to a crowded list of characters or overwrought plotlines, but rather to the materiality so present in the text. I found it remarkable just how interested Franklin and Fennelly, and, by turn, their characters were in the objects that surrounded them within the text. A cursory glimpse at the novel reveals Ingersoll's obsessions with musical instruments, guns, and animals. Johnson is enamored with food, alcohol, and weaponry of all sorts, and Jesse Holliver finds meaning in his possessions: his car, his still, and above all, his money. Most significantly, however, it is Dixie Clay who begins to find meaning in her life through production of alcohol. Through her engagement with the materials and economies related to alcohol production, Dixie Clay becomes a simulacrum through which Franklin and Fennelly deconstruct myths concerning a monolithic American South. Leigh Camacho Rourks explains that Franklin's "mythic descriptions of the South evoke an aggressive, harsh, and unforgiving landscape that is defined by its nearly untamable and incredibly dangerous flora and fauna, not to mention its violent history" (112). That is, Franklin and Fennelly actively and consciously work to disavow "moonlight and magnolias" conceptualizations of the American South, eschewing feigned nostalgia for a time, place, and gender roles that never *really* existed in favor of entanglement with the rougher aspects of southern existence. The authors thereby participate in the work that Barbara Ladd called for in her now-classic essay of reconstructing southern literature as a more inclusive field. Rourks' notion certainly holds true for *The Tilted World*, where amidst the ever-present dangers provoked by humans, we encounter the looming knowledge that the Great Flood of 1927 could potentially wash away the characters. Moreover, we also witness characters fascinated with objects, the "stuff" of daily existence.

A passage midway through Franklin and Fennelly's novel demonstrates the tremendous emotional potential that objects possess

within the text. As Ingersoll returns to downtown Hobnob during a particularly strong onslaught of rain, he encounters several stores whose wares have been depleted through purchase, donation, looting, or some combination of the three. One place that catches his eye is “the hardware store where a sign warned, WE HAVE NO MORE UMBRELLAS, RAIN PONCHOS, OR GALOSHES. And underneath that, in a different hand OR CARBIDE LAMPS, OR LANTERN FUEL. And underneath that, in yet a different hand, OR HOPE” (184). In this quotation, Franklin and Fennelly evince the myriad ways that material objects affect our lives, both during the best of circumstances and during times of trauma. Most importantly, however, as the author of the third message above clearly understands, a dearth of material comfort impacts the lives of those without, as the absence of the materials at hand leads to psychological consequences, as suggested by the loss of hope concomitant with the absence of material products. While it is true that the goods listed on the sign could do little to protect against the rising floodwaters, they could at least provide some minimal level of relief to those possessing them. They potentially might serve as a type of psychological salve that would allow residents to experience a degree of support, maintain a level of calmness, and use that assuredness to better come to terms with their situation and plan their escape.

While I found it natural to write about materials in *The Tilted World*, I was somewhat surprised by the relative scarcity of studies of southern fiction dealing with such material objects. Even though, as Jay Watson notes, “an insistent materiality [...] troubles and illuminates the spaces, communities, and minds of the southern United States” (“The Other Matter of the South” 157), such critical studies are few and far between. This dearth of writing about “things” is especially odd considering that over two decades ago, in her career-defining *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women’s Writing, 1930-1990*, Patricia Yaeger argued “that so much drama revolves around things in southern literature” (emphasis in original, 191). Furthermore, alcohol as a type of material possessing vitality and demonstrating an outsized impact on southern culture (whether in the popular imagination or in actuality) has not, until very recently, proven to be a significant subject of academic inquiry. The editors of *Southern Comforts: Drinking and the U.S. South*, Matthew Dischinger and Conor Picken, explain that “despite the fact that the South has long been identified as a region populated by hard drinkers, moonshiners, and bootleggers [...] scholars

have often ignored that cultural centrality that alcohol and drinking occupy in accounts of the region” (Dischinger and Picken). Indeed, while alcohol factors heavily in several popular products from and conceptualizations of the American South (e.g., Kentucky Bourbon, Tennessee Whiskey, *Smokey and the Bandit*, and on and on), it has not received the outsized attention it deserves. Franklin and Fennelly place alcohol and its attendant communal and commercial complexities centrally in their novel. Through an understanding of Dixie Clay’s various relationships with whiskey, Franklin and Fennelly ultimately achieve a goal far more important than simply telling a story: they manage to position Dixie Clay as a figure who will help to redefine turn-of-the-century white southern femininity. In particular, I find that Dixie Clay breaks from a type of southern “cult of true womanhood” (Welter 151) through her decidedly non-domestic artistic endeavors and her covert political influence.

Before delving too deeply into Dixie Clay’s story and how whiskey serves to influence her world, a brief detour into the nature of assemblages in the novel will prove beneficial. Alcohol might be best understood as an actant. An idea first theorized by Bruno Latour, an actant is “a source of action that can be either human or nonhuman” (Bennett viii) and which “modifies another entity in a trial” (Latour 237). Thus, an actant operates much in the way that we might understand an actor to. An actor on the stage engages with other actors, with the audience, but also with non-human entities like microphones, props, and more ethereal components, such as the script and the legacy of previous actors who have performed the role. An actant, likewise, engages with any number of different objects and ideas, but these need not a human to operate. In essence, to label something an actant is to grant it agency, regardless of whether it has typically been allowed such cultural privilege. With this concept in mind, it becomes apparent how alcohol very much creates every significant conflict within the novel, save for those brought on by the floodwaters late in the narrative. Consider: the revenuers ostensibly murdered by Jesse have been sent to investigate illegal liquor production; Ingersoll and Ham each land in Hobnob in order to ascertain information about the missing revenuers and about the production and sale of moonshine more broadly; alcohol causes the fracture in Dixie Clay and Jesse’s relationship; and it inspires Jesse with the impudence to physically assault Dixie Clay and take Willie from her. Despite the irrevocable impact that alcohol makes

on every character in the novel, Dixie Clay's attitudes prove most compelling because she does not imbibe (thereby allowing us to ignore alcohol's negative effects on the body and focus on more interesting complications), but also because alcohol impacts her life and assemblages more so than any other character in the book. This allows Franklin and Fennelly to craft a wholly full and independent female character who disregards both legal and social constructions of how a southern woman "should" act.

Moreover, it is necessary to define how traditional southern femininity has appeared in popular culture in order to contrast it with the novelists' depiction of the same. For much of the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century, "the myth of the lady" that persisted in the South "emphasized the softness, purity and spirituality of women, while denying them intellectual capacity" (Scott 15). Characters like Scarlett O'Hara and Melanie Wilkins from Margaret Mitchell's wildly successful *Gone With the Wind* perhaps best typified this mythology. And while white southern femininity was built around precepts of keeping these women subservient to men, it also concerned distancing white women from their African American counterparts. Summarizing the conceptualization, Tara McPherson writes, "The performative nature of the [southern] lady signals a difference both in kind and of degree, limning a very different history of race, gender, and place than that of other regions" and "that difference has been fetishized, fixated on, and marketed for so long that it has taken hold, creeping into white southern consciousness like kudzu" (152). Although current conceptualizations of what it means to be a woman in the South are quite different from and more complicated than what they were years ago, there remains no doubt that certain persistent stereotypes remain in our culture.

We need look no further than the press kit for the popular magazine *Southern Lady* to see evidence of such pervasive myths. In an electronic press kit which highlights the target markets, sales figures, and events associated with the magazine, all coupled with bright, florid pictures of upper-middle class homes, the anonymous author makes a pitch to booksellers to order copies of the magazine. The author seemingly realizes that womanhood cannot (and should not) be easily defined and attempts to wrestle with the shifting nature of southern femininity and to problematize the overwhelming whiteness of the idea by explaining, "In the South, women treasure time-honored traditions while creating new ones" (*Southern Lady*). Still, stereotypes rooted in

antiquated understandings of the South quickly arise, and the copy becomes snagged in the trappings of easy “traditional,” retrograde definitions. For example, by writing that southern women are concerned above all with “flavorful food, elegant entertaining, travel destinations, how-to projects, home décor, and garden inspiration” (*Southern Lady*), the author falls back on stereotypes firmly rooted in domesticated spaces. Perhaps the author should not be scrutinized too closely, however, as such imaginary constructs have long embedded themselves in popular cultural expressions of the South. In his book *Pageants, Parlors, and Pretty Women: Race and Beauty in the Twentieth-Century South*, Blain Roberts explains that throughout much of the twentieth century, authors and filmmakers “depicted the southern lady [...] as one of God’s most beautiful creatures” (3). Unable to escape from both the omnipresence of God and from the idea that women in the South are inherently “beautiful” both inside and out, popular media, Roberts explains, and particularly visual media, was aimed at creating a fashionable (and marketable) ideal for southern femininity. Of course, “most white southern women were not of elite birth, and many of those who were would have been a far cry from the physical ideal” (Roberts 3). That is, the myth of the southern lady was “in large part a fantasy” (Roberts 3). Nevertheless, the fantasy persisted and throughout southern literature we see the southern nostalgia “system’s entrapment of women in the domestic” (Polk 346). Alcohol, moonshine specifically, provides an outlet, however, for Dixie Clay Holliver to escape the entrapments of traditional white southern femininity and reveal a more entrepreneurial spirit that typically appears in male characters.

In many ways, the manufacture of whiskey becomes inexorably tied to the dissolution of her marriage to Jesse, and thereby to Dixie Clay’s desired escape from the domestic sphere. The more time Jesse spends working at the still, the less time he and Dixie Clay spend together. Keira V. Williams writes that “the reality of female suffering within the domestic sphere permeates regional writings,” particularly when those representations include “middle-class, full-time, beatific motherhood” (31). Clearly, Dixie Clay falls prey to these notions, and, beyond those listed by Williams, we can understand that her suffering is manifold due to the additional loss of her child. Because of this loss and Jesse’s lack of attention to consoling Dixie Clay, though, their marriage is all but finished when she encounters the moonshine still. Rather than chastising Jesse for his efforts, Dixie Clay takes the opportunity to

exert her own influence on the process. She sees no reason to tend to traditional domestic duties, so she decides instead to focus her energies on whiskey distilling. In doing so, Dixie Clay begins to subvert long held definitions about southern white femininity, as her skill set moves beyond the domestic realm and into the illicit world of moonshine production.

Dixie Clay's initial impressions concerning moonshine and her husband's illegal still operation evince a degree of trepidation in her, however. Upon experiencing Jesse's "sweet medicine smell" in bed one evening (95), Dixie Clay becomes curious about his process and journeys into the woods surrounding their home. There, she finds "a low, rusty shed of corrugated metal, slanted like a house of cards" and filled with machinery and tubs (95). Shortly thereafter, she demands that Jesse teach her "how to cook that moonshine" (97). This event marks a change in Dixie Clay's life. Her domestic and homemaking efforts take a backseat to her increasing interest in and engagement with the distillation of alcohol. And so, as Jesse becomes more interested in staying away from his moonshine still to gamble and fight, Dixie Clay comes to realize that "he was two people, but she had only married one" (96). Somewhat similarly, we begin to see Dixie Clay evolving into a different person. She transforms from being the quiet domesticated housewife into a baroness of the illicit liquor trade in the Mississippi Valley.

Alcohol as a liquid entity, the result of a manufacturing process and a product available for sale, opens entrepreneurial and labor possibilities for Dixie Clay that are denied other women throughout the long history of southern literature. Lucinda H. MacKethan notes that "the cultural ideal of domesticity, which separated matters of home and hearth (women and children) from matters of public opinion, self-interest, and law (men and marketplace)," long held a tight grip on conceptualizations of the U.S. South (223). Having lost a child, Dixie Clay becomes desperate for responsibility and purposefulness; tending to a moonshine still serves as a release for some of these pent-up emotions. As she becomes more and more experienced with the whiskey's manufacture, Dixie Clay enters into something resembling a latent contract with the alcohol. That is, she and the whiskey, in its pre-distilled state, interact with one another and achieve symbiotic aims: the alcohol to be produced and Dixie Clay to find an activity to occupy her mind and her time. Evidence of their kinship and of Dixie Clay's acumen as a bootlegger occurs one evening "a few months in [Dixie Clay's] career

as a shiner” (98). On that night, Jesse, who previously held responsibility for the creation and distribution of the alcohol, surprises Dixie Clay at the still. Upon entering the still, Jesse, intent on finding fault in her methodologies, witnesses Dixie Clay “pouring sugar into the bowl to start the ferment” without measuring out individual ingredients (98). Incredulous, Jesse asks, “How many cups of sugar you reckon you just poured out?” (98). Curtly and with authority, Dixie Clay replies that she used “Four [...] exactly” (98-99). Upon measuring Dixie Clay’s amount with a measuring cup, Jesse finds that she was, in fact, completely accurate in her pour, and is forced to admit, “You’re okay, Dixie Clay” (99). While the recurrent process of crafting moonshine time and time again no doubt builds Dixie Clay’s authority with the subject, I would also suggest that such repetitions additionally provide a sense of pride and autonomy for her. As the previous scene demonstrates, Dixie Clay evades Jesse’s acrimony by forcing him to reevaluate his lack of respect for his wife and for her skill as a shiner. Through her work with alcohol, she garners for herself a sense of pride, accomplishment, and individuality. She no longer finds her identity rooted to her husband or to the fact that she lost a child. Domestic concerns become overshadowed by the fact that she is quickly becoming recognized as the person responsible for “the best whiskey in Washington County” (99). This note of admiration not only attests to Dixie Clay’s movement away from the domestic sphere, but also to her keen business sense. Indeed, the attentiveness and devotion that many other moonshiners would abandon in favor of faster, more economically viable, but far more dangerous production alternatives signal that Dixie Clay consciously positions herself as a connoisseur of high-quality liquor. The understanding here is that consumers will always be willing to pay a premium for goods of superior quality. In the end, Franklin and Fennelly craft Dixie Clay as an escapee from the domestic trappings of southern womanhood twice over--by her chosen profession and by her adroitness in business.

But the danger of distilling moonshine becomes increasingly clear as the novel continues, and this further illustrates Dixie Clay’s breaking from traditional southern gender norms. One of the most pertinent uses of alcohol as an actant revolves around the political implications and aspirations of Dixie Clay. First, it is necessary to acknowledge that by manufacturing moonshine during 1927, Dixie Clay disregards the Eighteenth Amendment, which, as Larry D. Clark

explains, “turned the commerce of liquor, not its consumption, into a vice” (144). Therefore, Dixie Clay takes part in the “rebellion on the part of many who finally refused in any way to honor a law held almost universally in contempt” (Clark 209). That is, the mere production of moonshine is an intense act of rebellion – a criminal path, no doubt, but also the path that likely provides the most fruitful opportunities for Dixie Clay to achieve independence. Such an opportunity comes one evening in the form of “Ron Clark – a state representative” (131), who arrives at the Holliver household and asks to sample some of Dixie Clay’s wares. After an approving sip, Clark says, “Got reelection coming up. I’ll take as much as you got” (131). Dixie reveals that each bottle costs four dollars and fifty cents, to which Clark scoffs that a bootlegger nearby sells his moonshine “for a dollar” (131). Clark’s skepticism provides Dixie Clay with an additional opportunity to explain the care and quality she puts into her concoction: “Don’t you know – [the other bootlegger] uses denatured alcohol, cut with embalming fluid, mixed in a bathtub that hasn’t been scrubbed since God invented soap. Could blind you or kill you or both, and all for just a dollar” (131). Ostensibly, Dixie Clay derides her competition with the claim that her alcohol will prove more agreeable with her consumers’ stomachs; the implication of this statement, however, goes a bit further. By noting several of the abnormalities and shortcuts that Hays—that other bootlegger—employs when distilling his liquor, Dixie Clay affirms a keen awareness and understanding of the process of distillation and marketing.

Beyond the demonstration of her brewing ability, Dixie Clay also evidences a real knack for negotiation during this scene. In an attempt to purchase the stockpiled alcohol, Clark, with a seeming air of accommodation, offers “two dollars a bottle” (131)—an amount roughly in the middle of his initial price and Dixie Clay’s asking price. And while the monetary component of the transaction remains in flux, Clark missteps when he assures Dixie Clay, “You can go to the picture show all week on that. Buy yourself a hair bob for those pretty curls” (131). Whether Clark genuinely misread Dixie Clay’s interests or decided to revert to sexist stereotypes for his own amusement is unclear and ultimately irrelevant. The very fact that these ideas are posited denotes just how deeply embedded misogynistic notions about stereotypical gender roles are for the population. For a politician of some renown and power to express such ideas further signals dominant sexist ideologies. That a person holding such regressive views might

be elected as a representative illustrates that his opinions likely align with those of a majority of his constituency. As such, the pigeonholing of Dixie Clay as a stereotypical “southern lady” proves particularly insidious here. Regardless, Dixie Clay stands firm, responding that her price is “four-fifty a bottle,” before suggesting that if Clark can’t afford that steep of a price, perhaps “Wright Thomas—the other candidate” can (131). Clark balks at the price and retreats to his car, but promptly returns “and bought all eight cases” (132). In this scene, Franklin and Fennelly make clear that Dixie Clay is a shrewd negotiator, capable of outsmarting even the most capable and experienced of customers. Moreover, through her tough negotiations and sales-pitch, Dixie Clay embeds herself within the socio-political and economic workings of the town. Shortly after Clark purchases the whiskey, Franklin and Fennelly reveal that Clark had previously “raise[d] his fists to the sky” and screamed “Wright Fucking Thomas!”, his opponent’s name, before “march[ing] up the gallery stairs” and buying the whiskey from Dixie Clay. Significantly, Clark’s animosity finds its target in his opponent, not in Dixie Clay. The negotiations, contentious as they were, fell squarely in line with the type of haggling one might expect from an established dealer. With that in mind, Dixie Clay transcends gendered stereotypes previously held against her. She is not just a *woman in the bootlegging industry*; she is a bootlegger—and a respected and qualified bootlegger, at that. So appreciated are her wares, in fact, that Franklin and Fennelly imply that they possess the capacity to swing an entire election.

After documenting Clark’s outburst and eventual purchase from Dixie Clay, Franklin and Fennelly write, “And [Clark] was reelected” (132). While they do not explicitly state that Dixie Clay’s whiskey is responsible for Clark’s victory, they strongly suggest it. What becomes clear, then, is that Dixie Clay’s influence extends far beyond the domestic realm of alcohol production. Indeed, her moonshine shapes the political machinations of the Mississippi Valley area, and through these movements, Dixie Clay becomes one of the most important constituents of Hobnob. Despite the fact that Dixie Clay never holds office, she still helps to influence the elections. Miller and Remington acknowledge that little is written about women in southern political circles because, until somewhat recently, there existed “a relatively low level of involvement by women in southern politics” (119). As Dixie Clay is a fictional character, I hesitate to read too much into the “real

world” implications of this scene, but for the purposes of this text, Franklin and Fennelly, having Dixie Clay argue so fervently about her product and wield her economic weight when in discussions with Clark, present a strong-willed female character who shatters preconceived notions about southern femininity. Importantly, the bulk of Dixie Clay’s achievements in this regard can be traced directly back to her entanglements and workings with alcohol. Therefore, her influence clearly extends beyond the domestic realm, and any notions concerning southern women wanting to steer clear of political areas ring false, as Dixie Clay is quite obviously aware of her centrality in the political arena. Therefore, alcohol—its marketability and the processes necessary to manufacture it—brings Dixie Clay great pleasure and a remarkable amount of power.

According to Pickens and Dischinger, “We see a relationship between mythologies of drinking and the mythologies of region,” since “narratives of drinking in the South typically rely upon an already formed and constantly reified notion of the region” (5). While Pickens and Dischinger write primarily of stereotypical images of weathered and worn backwoods alcoholics, smooth-talking and hard-drinking politicians, and the occasional southern author known to imbibe, their comments also effectively open a space for discussions of the ways in which alcohol might help scholars and readers to deconstruct mythologies of place. Throughout *The Tilted World*, Franklin and Fennelly take such narrative actions. Through having Dixie Clay engage with alcohol in various capacities, the authors present a character unconsciously fighting against the constraints of southern womanhood. Patricia Yaeger explains that “southern literature, at its best, is not about community but about moments of crisis and acts of contestation” (38). If Yaeger’s thoughts hold true, then Franklin and Fennelly’s novel proves valuable as a tool that employs the “contestations” inherent to Dixie Clay’s profession in order to grapple with the crisis of stereotypes of southern womanhood. In short, *The Tilted World* does nothing less than help readers to reconceptualize southern femininity and dismantle monolithic notions of southern identity.

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Working-Class Wager: Deprivation and Escape in Jack London's *Martin Eden* and *John Barleycorn*

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Jack London's death at the age of forty in November 1916 surprised legions of readers. Even though four doctors concluded that London passed from natural causes and his death certificate later identified the culprit as uremia (kidney failure), fans speculated that his death resulted from suicide, an accidental morphine overdose, or poisoning related to alcoholism (Labor 381). In a sense, they intuited and suspected a greater cause because London's body collapsed, an uncomfortable conclusion to a restless life lived perhaps too often at full throttle. As the highs and lows of literary success embroiled, inspired, and inflamed London's mind, he displayed a sometimes-frantic need "to write more, to write about himself, about his own fame, over and over again until he eventually br[oke] down" (Auerbach 108). His repeated attempts to understand how his achievements rerouted his early life, which began in the slums of Oakland that he left behind in body if not entirely in spirit, culminated in *Martin Eden* (1909) and *John Barleycorn* (1913), two earnest autobiographical novels that reflect London's personal struggles while coming of age in Oakland and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Martin Eden and *John Barleycorn* portray the risks associated with writing and drinking, two of Jack London's great gambles. Considering these novels as documents that address the problems linked with these two habits within the context of working-class life, this essay pinpoints the patterned warnings that London sought to convey about the intoxicating dangers of writing or alcohol as a means of elevating one's social status. Prior to these works, some of his more successful novels, including *The Call of the Wild* (1903), *The Sea-Wolf* (1904), and *White Fang* (1906), originated from difficult experiences following his escape from poverty in Oakland via various adventures at sea and in the Yukon territory during his early 20s. However, in *Martin Eden* and *John Barleycorn*, London looks directly at his home community to show the enveloping web of social-class constraints within working-class lives.

Because they pertain to London's early struggles, *Martin Eden* and *John Barleycorn* exist as haunting documents about seeking self-expression and escape from the repetitive, grueling, and mundane nature of working-class realities. Peppered with the darker aspects of London's childhood and discomforts from his young adulthood, these novels bear traces of the writer's "ghostly" autobiographical presence (Williams, *Author* 6). They are also largely devoid of some of London's grander and more commercially celebrated adventures in the aforementioned novels, a vital detail in understanding what London attempts to do in each work. Rather than presenting naturalistic conflicts among humans, animals, and environmental factors central to *The Call of the Wild*, *The Sea-Wolf*, and *White Fang*, the author examines fictionalized versions of himself to address the complex ways that writing and consuming alcohol can quietly become predatory and all-consuming in the life of a working-class artist. *Martin Eden* offers a bleakly and more traditionally naturalistic conclusion, whereas the more self-reflexive *John Barleycorn* suggests legislative hope as a means of lessening the occurrence of real-life tragedies that London sensed himself approaching at the time. Together, they showcase the consequences of deprivation and the allure of escape found in writing and alcohol consumption as a means of responding to the pressures of working-class life. London further suggests that these pressures can continue throughout a working-class individual's lifetime, no matter whether that person ascends to a higher social class or not.

Art and Escape: *Martin Eden* (1909)

Martin Eden depicts one of American literature's more intimate interior descriptions of a working-class artist. The story reveals the rise and fall of Martin Eden, an aspiring writer from Oakland. Written in the third person, the novel charts twenty-year-old Martin's long pathway towards finding his voice and financial success. As Paul Berman notes, the "heart of the novel" consists of Martin's "nineteen-hour days of reading and study, his pilgrimages to the Oakland public library [...], his effort to write his own stories and poems and essays, his submissions to magazines, his failures and further failures, [and] his zeal to succeed" (xiii). At the same time, the novel brims with details about the perils of writing. It presents a complicated, multi-faceted picture emerging within the context of one writer's impoverished background, highlighting the difficult challenges for aspiring authors hailing from such disadvantaged environments. Altogether, London shows us a man

who expends an extraordinary amount of effort to earn his way into mainstream writing culture and who insists on his artistic individuality at the expense of all else. Imagining Martin's tumultuous rise and then swift decline, London stresses the perils of striving to reach beyond one's social class to earn the respectability associated with the higher classes.

When the novel begins, Martin has no idea that he will become a writer, and it is Ruth Morse, a young, affluent woman, who attracts Martin's interest and fuels his fascination with literature. While focusing on Martin's blooming infatuation with her, London also depicts how their class differences separate them from the very start. For example, he stresses how the pair's physical features correspond with their separate lives. Ruth is "pale, ethereal [...], with wide, spiritual blue eyes and a wealth of golden hair" (6). Dressed impeccably, she is impossible to interpret for Martin, who intuits her as a "divinity, a goddess," as filtered by him through the writing of Swinburne or a painting of Iseult (6). Ruth resembles no woman Martin has ever met. Conversely, Martin has one hand "covered with fresh abrasions, in the process of healing [...], [and] a scar on his cheek, [and] another that peeped out from under the hair of the forehead, and a third that ran down and disappeared under the starched collar" (7).

Martin's first conversation with Ruth later leads to a visit at her family's home, where London further explores how the couple's differing backgrounds separate them. Describing Martin, London writes, "The process of getting into the dining room was a nightmare for him. [...]. The array of knives and forks frightened him. They bristled with unknown perils" (15). Martin focuses on making a good impression on Ruth's family, but inwardly, he harbors fears about not knowing what to say or do. As Martin sits at the table, he tiptoes through a minefield of dangerous social obstacles. For Ruth's family, eating is a leisurely expression of sensibility rather than a utilitarian activity completed quickly and efficiently. Speech patterns and words that Martin associates with the ornate language he has previously encountered only in literature render him conversely speechless. In the course of the conversation, he begins to feel "oppressed by the consciousness that this carefulness of diction ... [was] preventing him from expressing what he had in him" (18). In prior social circumstances while in bars, Martin had been able to offset personal differences partly through the consumption of alcohol, which is not central to Ruth's family's way of

living. In its own manner, this situation is as emotionally treacherous for him as a risky venture might be for some of London's characters in his non-California-based adventure fiction. "Starved for love," Martin attempts to adapt to his surroundings and to loosen up in the all-encompassing presence of the Morses' social refinement (16).

This situation with Ruth replicates London's own feelings towards Mabel Applegarth, London's first love who also came from a higher social class than the young writer (Sinclair 145). At twenty-two, London returned to California during the summer of 1898 following a stint in the Klondike and began writing feverishly. A letter written to Mabel on Christmas morning captures the evolution of London's thinking. Reflecting about the pursuit of happiness, he writes, "The whole thing is a gamble, and those least fitted to understand the game win the most. The most unfortunate gamblers are those who have, or think they have systems to beat the game—they always go broke" ("To Mabel," 32). In a darker moment, London also describes the divide between the majority of people and the small wealthy elite within many communities. He writes that the people who find themselves in sight of the "Islands of the Blest" often realize that their "ticket in Life's Lottery bears the wrong number" ("To Mabel," 32). Here—a few years away from his rise to fame and roughly a decade before writing *Martin Eden*—London succinctly alludes to the disillusionment with class divisions that resurfaces repeatedly throughout his later novel.

This glimpse into Ruth's home drastically alters Martin's conception of himself. Intent on impressing Ruth after his poor showing at the dinner, Martin leaves with a plan to begin a new phase of his life. "Stagger[ing] like a drunken man" in his feelings of infatuation and determination, he emerges from the pristine interior of the Morses' house onto the street (28). This fervor soon dissipates, however, when a police officer hails and jolts him back into his real world where outward displays of passion from someone with his profile may be interpreted as public intoxication. In this scene, London delineates the high stakes that Martin faces as he seeks to accomplish in mind something beyond his stature and appearance. He regains his composure and continues home, but the incident reminds him of the gulf between the society of the Morses and his everyday world. However, the event also only serves to deepen his commitment to attempting to transcend his social class. Within the next week, he frequents the library, reads excessively, decides to pursue writing as a career, and begins what amounts to a cleansing process to lift himself above his neighbors and

peers. Martin replaces with reading his former life of drinking beer with his friends, and he pursues a new course of personal cleanliness, scrubbing himself like he never has before.

Yet, as Martin seeks to improve himself, London points out the subtle sense of isolation that shadows his new choices. In the fictional worlds he enters, he fails to encounter anything related to his own class, and when he alters his behavior in the physical world, he repositions himself and walks further away from the community in which he grew up. Choosing to wager his future success on writing nudges Martin instead into the early stages of what becomes an addictive obsession with words. His aspirations quickly evolve from earning more respect from Ruth to doing all that he can to achieve writerly fame. Initially, his goal seems far out of reach. As he first learns about the functions of paragraphs and quotation marks, he imagines that every published piece of writing will bring Ruth “nearer to him” (79). However, here, too, London reveals a disjunction between Martin’s fictional worlds and his material surroundings. For instance, Martin writes in a cramped, uncomfortable setting while living with his sister Gertrude Higginbotham and brother-in-law Bernard. The couple works tirelessly to operate a store and decide to offer Martin shelter only as a means to supplement their income through rent. To make matters worse, Bernard continually scoffs at Martin’s burgeoning interest in writing. This physical environment—with “the odors of stale vegetables and soapsuds, the slatternly form of his sister, [and] the jeering face of Mr. Higginbotham”—fails to provide a nurturing, creative space and, consequently, morphs into “a dream” to Martin (94). “The real world,” London writes, exists within Martin’s head, and his stories project the “pieces of reality out of his mind” (94). In expressing the great gulf between the real and imagined, as well as Martin’s reformulations of reality as a coping mechanism, London portrays the difficulty for some working-class writers to find a supportive atmosphere conducive to creative writing.

But as the rejection slips mount, the tension of the social conflict increases as Martin begins to understand he must consider other, more profitable work besides writing. Although his fascination with Ruth continues, he intuits that he must earn income to support himself and maintain his reputation in her eyes while still attempting to write on the side. At this point, breaking into the publishing world feels impossible to him, and London suggests that Martin’s outsider status

works against him as well. Martin lacks anyone to support his goals or to inform him about the ins-and-outs of the publishing industry. He engages in literary conversations with Ruth, but otherwise, no one he knows has ever attempted to write professionally. Coming to think of impersonal editors as gambling apparatuses, Martin likens his early publishing attempts to a failed gamble:

It was like the slot machines wherein one dropped pennies, and, with a metallic whirl of machinery had delivered to him a stick of chewing-gum or a tablet of chocolate. It depended upon which slot one dropped the penny in, whether he got the chocolate or gum. And so with the editorial machine. One slot brought checks and the other brought rejection slips. So far he had found only the latter slot. (119)

Here, London captures the great risk of writing for someone coming from a similar background to Martin's. However, the "chocolate-or-gum" metaphor fails to convey the all-or-nothing stakes of publishing for someone like Martin who is pressed for time and in desperate need of monetary compensation. Instead of something sweet, a bitter rejection lacks the satisfaction that either gum or chocolate affords, while the yet-unrealized possibility of publication seems as foreign as it is enticing. For writers constantly submitting their work, the relationship between the input of work and an even-marginal output of pay for it is divorced from working-class life. Martin works, then, for an internal satisfaction that begins to render him externally destitute.

His financial situation forces him to accept a job at a steam laundry, which hurls him back into a life of physical exhaustion and economic exploitation. London describes Martin's difficulty with setting his writing aside, however. Though saddled with the necessity of returning to work, Martin longs for time to continue writing and assumes a more protective stance over his body and mind. He feels bad leaving his manuscripts—now "pitiful dishonored children that were welcome nowhere"—behind, with a sadness "akin to that with which one leaves home and family" (139). In likening Martin's writings to children, London shows not only his protagonist's degree of dedication to his work, but also a reimagining of the self. London describes Martin's return to menial work as a "new battle, wherein for some time there would be no writing" (139). His first shift at the steam laundry is fourteen hours. As soon as his coworker Joe Dawson grasps Martin's great capacity for labor, he pushes his new partner's limits. Described as a "dozen demons for work," Joe toils relentlessly and encourages

Martin to keep up the pace (144). The narrator captures the fatigue on Martin's mind by stressing his bodily transformation as he works:

The echoing chamber of his soul was a narrow room, a conning tower, whence were directed his arm and shoulder muscles, his ten nimble fingers, and the swift-moving iron along its steaming path in broad, sweeping strokes, just so many strokes and no more, just so far with each stroke and not a fraction of an inch farther. [...]. And even as his hurrying soul tossed, it was reaching for another shirt. (149)

With fading memories of both Ruth and his writing, and feeling more and more like a thoughtless machine, Martin quits this job after just six weeks, vowing to return to his prior work at sea.

Martin spends some of his time recovering from the steam laundry by focusing on Ruth, who encourages him to resume his writing, but class pressures soon return to vex him. At this point, she has just graduated from college. Her parents try to curtail her relationship with Martin and urge her to pursue more financially promising young men. Ruth pushes back against their pressure and continues to spend time with Martin as he clings to his ideals of becoming a professional writer. For the pair, this relaxed period is perhaps the most serene moment in the novel. Martin has enough money to sustain himself, Ruth is free from study, and they appear happy and deeply in love. In stark contrast, however, London's distanced narrator employs a bitter, judgment-laden tone while recounting Martin and Ruth's mutual feelings. He notes, "they were as naïve and immature in the expression of their love as a pair of children, and this despite the fact that she was crammed with a university education and that his head was full of scientific philosophy and the hard facts of life" (180). As the narrator describes the pair with "their hearts in each other's hands," he is all-too aware of the reality just beneath the surface (181). From the vantage point of Ruth's family, Martin remains a disgracefully poor suitor. Describing Martin and Ruth's deepest moment of love, the narrator thus undercuts any assumptions of its potential longevity, especially given the social pressure from Ruth's upper-class parents.

This narrator's cynicism sets the stage for the collapse of Martin and Ruth's relationship, and, ironically, Martin's quick rise to fame. For a while, Ruth's affection alleviates the stress of Martin receiving ongoing rejections by editors (Hou 282). However, Martin's lack of income begins to drag him below even the appearance of middle-class

standards of outward respectability. After a long and arduous wait, he publishes a couple of stories, only to realize the nonexistence of the wealth that he assumed would come with professional authorship. Still clinging to his ideals, Martin eats less and, in time, pawns his watch and overcoat, the most valuable items he owns. Too embarrassed to be seen by Ruth's family, Martin hides and stomachs the pangs of going without daily necessities. As he sinks deeper and deeper into distress, Ruth is unable to discern the physical realities and shame that for Martin accompany his living in poverty. London writes, "Poverty, to Ruth, was a word signifying a not-nice condition of existence" (206). The narrator ridicules the abstract conceptions of poverty commonly held by the middle and upper classes, such as the idea that poverty is merely a "sharp spur" to hasten men "who were not degraded and hopeless grudges" toward achieving success (206). Blistering in his critique of this faulty mindset, the narrator admonishes Ruth and those of her ilk for imagining that Martin's poor circumstances were beneficial because they might eventually goad him to pursue more lucrative career paths. Because of these inherited mythical American beliefs in upward mobility and in the validity of the notion that "starving artists" only work at their craft until they can no longer tolerate their poverty, Ruth "never read hunger in Martin's face, which had grown lean and had enlarged the slight hollows in the cheeks" (206). The weight of Martin's destitution grows heavier and heavier, pressing sharply into his quality of life, at a pivotal moment when the closest person to him cannot deduce the silent effects of his decisions.

In a subtle manner, London peels back the layers of poverty's effect on subconscious desire, exposing the silent gulf that expands and undermines Martin and Ruth's relationship. As he delves deeper into writing, Martin hardens and develops a politicized voice against what he sees as the trappings of class hierarchies. Although the undercurrent for this transformation appears at the beginning of the story, its emergence represents an abrupt and ironic shift in the novel's direction. Just as Martin quits an oppressive job, publishes a couple of stories, and feels closer to Ruth, their separate perceptions of the material differences in their lives end up dooming their relationship. In time, Ruth realizes that Martin's publications provide insufficient income, and she secretly wishes that they had been rejected so that Martin would not continue "writing and starving for a few more months" (221). The closer his reality—a meager space, dirty clothes, and few material comforts—approaches her, the more internal conflict she conceals. By

revealing Ruth's inner motivations, the narrator redirects the story toward a head-to-head, class-based conflict that will upend the pair and drive Martin out of love's grasp entirely. Internally, Martin appears different from and more complicated than the stereotype of the cloistered, starving writer-artist that Ruth imagines him to be. Bucking a rag-to-riches-via-love narrative, London stresses a combination of Martin's social intelligence, his talent of fitting in "wherever he found himself," and a "feeling of unrest" and assuredness in "a call of something from beyond," as the collective means for him to nurture what becomes his impenetrable, distinct spirit (234).

Just before Martin catches a break that precipitates great public interest in his writings, he experiences a personal realization that contributes to Ruth's separation from him. The conception that he previously held about the great intellect of the upper classes abruptly collapses under the weight of his recent experiences. He realizes that the long hours of time spent constructing stories from his life and reading classic books alienate him from both the people who populate Ruth's world as well as the minds of people within his own class. Thus, he begins to cultivate a new sense of worldliness that positions him as equidistant from the refinement and glamor he associates with the upper classes and from the impoverishment of his own social conditions (Reesman 225). Martin now abhors visiting Ruth's home, in which her mother routinely entertains respectable people who disappoint and bore him. Considering his own circumstances, and more precisely his more recent long bouts with intense writing while living under the burden of a debilitating poverty, Martin disdains what he sees as the Morse family's superficiality and ignorance. He thinks, "What was the matter with them? What had they done with their educations? They had had access to the same books he had. How did it happen that they had drawn nothing from them? [...] To real literature, real painting, the Morses and their kind, were dead" (251). Here, and unbeknownst to Ruth and others, Martin steps out of his shell as a struggling artist and individual. He is no longer a faceless member of the working class, nor an aspiring upper-class wannabe. The ubiquitous intellectuals that Martin once imagined occupying the Morses household turn out to be separated from members of his class only by "the food they ate, clothes they wore, [and] neighborhoods in which they lived" (252). This realization motivates him to keep some distance from the Morse home just as Ruth loses faith in his success.

From roughly three-quarters of the way through *Martin Eden* until its end, a fast-paced succession of events details how wagering his life on writing precipitates Martin's calamitous mental collapse. Not long after Martin realizes who he has become, he gives an impromptu speech at a socialist rally in Oakland that attracts notoriety and a larger readership for his work. Farcically, a member of the press misinterprets what he says about his belief in individualism, and he becomes an accidental poster boy for the socialist cause. This accident garners Martin ample attention and prompts his first major step toward publication. London's cynical jeer at political machinations and the social fad of the hour reads as an infuriating slap in the face for many readers hoping for an inspiring denouement after following Martin's lengthy earlier struggle. In success, London suggests, Martin finds a perilous degree of isolation. Ruth, embarrassed and bewildered after hearing about his speech, breaks up with him; when he attempts to associate with members of his own class, he realizes that all his reading and self-guided learning has separated him irrevocably from them. He senses that he is an "alien" and that over the course of time, he has "exiled himself [...] [by] travel[ing] in the vast realm of intellect" (358). Along with belaboring the possibility of connecting with an ideal readership and realizing the impossibility of a relationship with Ruth, Martin sees his burnout as a prompt for newfound feelings of disenchantment with the outcome of all his risk-taking ventures.

London briskly concludes the novel with Martin's suicide, writing, just after Martin hurls himself into the sea, "Death did not hurt. It was life, the pangs of life, this awful, suffocating feeling; it was the last blow life could deal him" (403). Overwhelmingly, early readers and reviewers of the book loved Martin's character but despised the novel's naturalistic ending. While some castigated London's abrupt conclusion, the author defended his story's resolution, responding to one unidentified critic by writing that he (London) was "no more treacherous to Martin Eden than life is treacherous to many, many men and women" ("To Lillian" 302). Nevertheless, London's unsettling picture of a hard-working writer who ends his life after a nightmarish attempt to realize a dream presents a convincing example of the social gamble associated with trying to transcend one's social class through writing alone.

Drinking and Social Support: *John Barleycorn* (1913)

If London presents writing as a great social gamble for working-class individuals, he raises the stakes even higher in *John Barleycorn*, a peculiar, semi-autobiographical novel that couches alcohol's fleeting celebrations within what becomes a more urgent plea for its criminalization. The novel attracted an enormous amount of attention, partly because a world-renowned writer had turned a sharply critical eye on a highly-debated drug in America, and the book eventually helped inaugurate the era of Prohibition in the 1920s. In a similar fashion as London's prior autobiographical novel, *John Barleycorn* replicates *Martin Eden*'s loose structure—a personal initiation, a rise and increasing engagement, and then a crashing fall—but strikes a deeper cultural nerve because it addresses the more common condition of drinking rather than experiencing a writer's plight.

John Barleycorn was also an intensely personal project for London. Its composition demanded that he comb through years of troubling thoughts and events regarding alcohol's deleterious effects on him from his childhood through the present time of the book's composition. The novel originated after a manic, booze-filled sojourn in New York City for London (Sutherland, "Note," xxxv). Once London arrived in New York with his wife Charmian, she wrote, "the city reached into him and plucked to light the least admirable of his qualities" (230). She notes that London began drinking heavily and arguing with anyone who disagreed with him, and that during nine-tenths of their two-month vacation in New York, London "was not his usual self" (230). Charmian describes the New York trip as their lowest point and felt embarrassed for London about the negative impression he left upon new friends and acquaintances (230). However, during the following five months, London sought to improve his health by traveling aboard the alcohol-free ship *Dirigo*, on which he rested and spent time reconsidering the link between his life-long drinking and depression. From these ruminations, he sketched the beginning of the book *John Barleycorn*, which would garner him more attention than even his immensely successful prior works (Stone 277).

John Barleycorn announces its authenticity from its very beginning. In a move that a later critic would denote as a precursor to "postmodern self-referentiality," London collapses the veiled distance he presents in *Martin Eden* by switching from third-person to first-person narration in the novel, and referencing many of his own experiences

throughout it while vaguely disguising them as part of the ostensibly fictional narrator's life (Tucker 604). The book opens on October 11, 1911, in California, on the election day when residents have granted women the right to vote in the state. Beginning in the middle of a conversation with a fictional presentation of his wife Charmian, the narrator Jack proclaims that he supports the new amendment because of his confidence that women will collectively wield their political influence to establish the prohibition of alcohol, and hopefully to "drive the nails into the coffin of John Barleycorn" (1). Jack's loquacious tirade in response to his wife's question about his long friendship with "John Barleycorn" makes clear that Barleycorn is London's personification of alcohol. Summing up his relationship with John Barleycorn, Jack replies, "I am. I was. I am not. I never am. I am never less his friend than when he is with me and when I seem most his friend. He is the king of liars" (2). Because of the deep earnestness he felt about the perils of alcohol at this time, London personifies John Barleycorn in overtly masculine terms, and he addresses him as one might a personable but dangerous acquaintance.

This narrative angle, however, as a whole-hearted attempt to usher in a ban of alcohol from the perspective of a narrator who ignores the possibilities of physical addiction, dismisses any hereditary factors associated with alcoholism. Instead, London brings the social environment into sharp focus, adhering to the belief that a person only becomes a dangerous consumer of alcohol after he or she chooses to drink regularly with others (Dardis 11). Next, the narrator denies alcohol's appeal to his own taste. He asserts that alcoholic drinks are unpleasant and unappetizing to him, and he describes his relationship to John Barleycorn as based more on availability and social expectation. "Not only had it always been accessible," he shares, "but every interest of my developing life had drawn me to it" (3). This establishes the novel's areas of emphasis, including exploration about why the narrator routinely consumed alcohol, the effects that it had upon him and those around him, and the particular havoc it wreaked on other working-class men in the course of time—those men whose culture led them to believe in saloons as "the place of congregation" (3). Downplaying the possibility of physical dependence, London through his narrator instead writes against the perils of alcohol from within the confines of social class and experience. He only differentiates between shallow, unimaginative men and thinkers as a means to place his narrator in the latter category,

a group he surmises more at risk of becoming depressed while under the influence of alcohol.

First, the narrator reveals his acculturation within a social world of unquestioned alcohol consumption that begins during his childhood. He shares his first moment of intoxication at age five while retrieving a pail full of beer for his father. In an effort to keep the beer from spilling, he takes a drink during his trek home. When his father realizes that his son is intoxicated, he sets him down beside a tree to rest while the father labors on throughout the afternoon. Here, London shows the relative nonchalance that some working-class men exhibited by exposing their children to drinking. To consume alcohol, he implies, is a natural part of the working-class life. With hindsight, the narrator shares that he had accidentally during this occasion poisoned himself by sipping too much beer, though not enough to alert his father to the potential threat to his health.

As he grows older, Jack vehemently deploras his later childhood encounters with “John Barleycorn.” At seven, after being pressured to consume wine, he relents, which leads to a terrible dream about his father gambling in underground dens in San Francisco. As Jack awakens--screaming, fearful, and full of dread--he curses his father’s habits that permeate his dreams and disrupt his sense of safety. This perspective offers a sharp contrast from *Martin Eden*. Whereas Martin’s immersion into writing begins at twenty when an unpredictable career route miraculously presents itself, alcohol saturates Jack’s childhood from its beginning as a common and expected means to participate in male working-class life.

Despite nightmarish childhood memories associated with alcohol, heavy drinking begins to take root as part of the narrator’s life during young adulthood, when drinking first appeals to working-class men seeking employment, a sense of family, and a way to elevate their social status. “Pinched by poverty” (48), yet also resistant to becoming “a slave to [the] petty routine” he associates with exploitative manual labor at a cannery where he works at the age of fifteen, the narrator eventually joins a group of oyster pirates (39). With many of their working hours comprised of worrying about law enforcement and avoiding occasional dangers, these pirates resort to frequenting bars to build camaraderie during their leisure time. Young and wanting to impress his mentors, Jack accompanies his peers to bars, and then surmises the social function of drinking:

Wherever life ran free and great, there men drank. Romance and adventure seemed always to go down the street locked arm in arm with John Barleycorn. To know the two, I must know the third. Or else I must go back to my free-library books and read of the deeds of other men and do no deeds of my own save slave for ten cents an hour at a machine in a cannery. (43)

This choice between social class-based friendship versus self-imposed isolation reframes the narrator's course of life. Unlike Martin Eden, he embraces his fellow companions and temporarily accepts their way of life. The narrator details how the highs of the mirth and heavy drinking accompanying risky work triumph over the lows and serve to reorder some working-class men's priorities. Whether banal or stressful (or both) for these men, their employment fosters a dehumanizing process that only "John Barleycorn" helps to alleviate during their down time.

This appeal for working-class solidarity through drinking and boisterous fun, however, threatens to damage men's home lives as it slowly changes their main, pressing concerns. For example, the narrator notes that he once imagined himself as a thrifty spender after witnessing financial strife throughout his childhood. However, the evenings spent drinking among the oyster pirates alter his philosophy. The fleeting highs of intoxication become far more joyous than the longer delays in gratification associated with saving money. Not wanting to separate himself from the others, he wagers on the social benefits of companionship instead of accumulated earnings, and in time, he comes to value drinking more than wealth: "Money no longer counted. It was comradeship that counted" (50). At this point, he collapses into something like addiction to alcohol in a social sense, and quite possibly as physical dependency, as well. In his analysis of the novel, scholar John Crowley points out that Jack's logic implies that the "manliest of men," who rely on the adventures of drinking with their comrades, also become none other than full-fledged alcoholics who delusively desire "homosocial intimacy [...] that exists nowhere outside the bottle" (28). This reality also sheds light on the novel's assertion that women bear the brunt of the damage caused by working-class drinking culture among men. Beyond his opening conversation with Charmian, the narrator returns repeatedly to the idea that women who know "the drink game" (13) pay "an incalculable price of sweat and tears for man's use of alcohol" (204). As much as London shies away from describing how alcohol directly impacts the narrator's relationships with women—perhaps as much a flaw in the narrative as indicative of London's own

refusal to delve more deeply into a painfully sensitive topic—he alludes to the depths of the harm that class-based alcohol consumption patterns cause among families in which men drank heavily, abandoned their responsibilities, and risked ruining their relationships at home through their absence, physical violence, or both.

However, and as in the case of *Martin Eden*, London draws intensely from his own real-life struggles in his portrayal of the narrator's realization that he must break free from John Barleycorn. In a letter from September 1913, he writes, "I assure you that everything in *John Barleycorn* is true" ("To T.A.," 401). Yet, in a sharp contrast to the conclusion of *Martin Eden*, instead of moving the narrator toward a bleak suicide or death, the author elects a more motivational route. Unlike the cornered and doomed Martin, the self-reflective narrator of *John Barleycorn* comes to believe working-class men can break the cultural normality of alcohol and overcome their dangerous drinking habits. To do so, they must first be honest about what alcohol provides them beyond simple camaraderie. The narrator acknowledges that alcohol gives him quick respite from working conditions that cause exhaustion (138), magnifies happiness momentarily (165), and offers real, albeit temporary, strength (179). From there, by considering alcohol's positive benefits alongside the more pervasive negative ones, he acknowledges that drinking for those of his stature and class always presents a gamble in day-to-day life. Given working-class realities and struggles, heavy alcohol consumption becomes physically and emotionally detrimental over the course of time. Making the repeated choice to continue drinking becomes "a matter of mental training and growth [...] cultivated in social soil" (205). Focusing on alcohol's social milieu rather than physical addiction enables London to expose what seems like a natural process of moving from job to bar for many working-class Americans.

For much of his career, Jack London spent significant amounts of time devoted to writing, drinking, and adventuring. He wrote as he drank and travelled: boldly, in large gulps, and with a willful, blind hope for better journeys and new experiments. Arguably, the means in which he satisfied his hunger for life burnt him out, as his body succumbed in 1916 to the result of high and lows stemming from each of his great passions a little more than three years after the publication of *John Barleycorn*. In 1909 and 1913 when he published these novels, London may have been unconscious of the few years he had left to live,

but he was confident about the potential snares for working-class people who sought careers as writers or who invested their time in heavy drinking for social gratification. His reflective honesty and attempts to address these social and personal concerns enabled new pathways for him as an artist; in fact, the more one knows about London's life, the more disconcerting *Martin Eden* and *John Barleycorn* appear to be. Notably, the solutions they passionately proffer in their conclusions—suicide or prohibition and criminalization of drugs like alcohol—do not work as a means for improving working-class life or conditions. One could also argue that *Martin Eden*'s pessimistic ending and the subsequent failure of the prohibition of alcohol for which *John Barleycorn* advocates are the key reasons why both remain less popular books than London's adventure novels today. Yet, with a focus on deprivation and the need for escape, these works remain harrowing and insightful more than a century later, especially given increasing social inequality and drug abuse involving alcohol as well as more potent and devastating drugs such as methamphetamines and fentanyl in the U. S. From the vantage point of one of the world's most famous writers of his time, *Martin Eden* and *John Barleycorn* present searing, confessional, and confrontational portraits of the allure and dangers of social gambles in working-class life in the past, and in this way, these novels insist that we recognize and work to address working-class challenges of the present.

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W. J. Cash and the Historiography of Southern White Class-Consciousness

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Wilbur J. Cash's 1941 work *The Mind of the South* remains one of the most influential books on the South ever written. Many of Cash's ideas about the nature of the South have entered the lexicon of southern history, including what Cash describes as the proto-Dorian bond: southern whites, united in a hatred of blacks, developed a union between rich and poor. The dominance of whites and a share in that dominance mattered more to poor whites than class issues ever could. This explanation—the absence of class-consciousness in the South as being the result of white racial solidarity—has remained influential among historians of the American South to this day. Many historians agree that southerners rich and poor believed in this proto-Dorian bond, if only subconsciously, and that all worked to maintain it. While some historians dispute the degree of its absence, contesting that class-consciousness was more important than Cash allows (even significant enough to potentially change the southern political landscape), few deny the importance of the advantages of whiteness to both rich and poor. Some historians challenge Cash's conception of that bond as being important across the class spectrum, however, instead arguing that it was more pronounced at the top of the social ladder than at the bottom. These historians assert that had it not been for the machinations of the white elite, lower-class southerners would have focused more on economic issues and less on race.

Cash, a native of South Carolina who had spent most of his career as a journalist in the South, looked at southern history as a whole for his explanation of the state of the South in 1941. He believed that the history of the South was immensely important in explaining its current situation, and one of the significant themes of *The Mind of the South* is the continuity of southern history. In the antebellum period, the plantation owner and the common farmer were not far removed from one another, having both sprung recently from similarly low origins. This sense of community, strengthened by the bonds of whiteness, meant that the wealthy felt a sense of kinship with the poor and the poor a certain comfort in their place. To keep the common whites content, the most ambitious were allowed to rise above their station and join the

upper class. The resulting social system appeared to promise poor whites the opportunity for social climbing without removing the safety net of never dropping in honor (in public, at least) below blacks (39).

As Cash describes them, class divisions in the South did occur, but few ever threatened to shake the prevailing power structure. Southern society made a distinction between rich and poor, but it made a greater distinction between white and black, which all whites considered far more important than class differences. Cash calls this the proto-Dorian bond: any white man, no matter how poor, could consider himself the superior of African Americans and, in some way, the equal of his fellow whites as members of the dominant class. This bond created a near-total absence of concern about economic or social issues among the white lower class (39). Reconstruction, which gave black southerners some small voice in politics, thus strengthened the proto-Dorian bond among southern whites (108). Not even the Populist movement threatened in any meaningful way to break the white supremacy bond, as the continued threat of black equality kept even the poorest in ranks. So important was that proto-Dorian bond, in fact, that the ruling southern order eagerly turned to formerly despised objectives, building the factories and funding the schools of "Progress" to ensure that poor whites would not fall into a direct competition with blacks that might destroy the whole fabric of southern life (173). And poor whites moved from the farm to the factory because they knew that, all else considered, Progress salvaged the whites' racial status (214).

The almost complete absence of white class conflict and the lack of class-consciousness among poor whites puzzled Cash, as it has many others to this day. Southern workers, at first glance, seem as though they should have developed a sense of class-consciousness over time. *The Mind of the South* argues that the bond between rich and poor whites and the corresponding lack of class-consciousness were among the deepest parts of the southern psyche, a conception of the social order that had its roots in the period when whites first settled the South in large numbers. Cash argues that only an apparent move toward a sort of class-consciousness took place under the influence of populist demagogues like Benjamin Tillman and Cole Blease. But these politicians, with perhaps the sole exception of Huey Long, never threatened the white power Democratic Party or the proto-Dorian bond that Cash emphasizes. The upper classes did not accept these populist leaders, but so long as the demagogues did little of substance to threaten the ruling

classes, the elites tolerated them (252). Even Olin Johnston's appeal to millworkers demonstrates that race never strayed too far from white attention, as his political rhetoric soon degenerated into common race baiting. Events after the First World War furthered limited the appeal of class-motivated politics, as powerful patriotic and anti-Communist sentiments swept the country and especially the South. Along with the connection in the southern mind between commercial progress and southern patriotism, the new nationalism and red scare mentality easily led to the idea that "labor organizer equals Communist organizer" (Cash 297).

Cash's understanding of class division and the roots of its absence were firmly grounded in his view of history. The frontier heritage notion of the community bond between rich and poor whites subdued the development of any class feeling, and the proto-Dorian bond dedicated to white power ensured that class-consciousness among whites would have difficulty gaining any momentum. Cash saw the South moving towards a decisive class break in a way it never had before, however, with the start of the New Deal era (417). Still, Cash ended his book on a pessimistic note. *The Mind of the South* has the odd narrative quality of seeming to be leading right up in the final section of the book to a development of class-consciousness and social responsibility among white southerners, but then (as before), the potential for class focus comes to nothing. In fact, Cash described the South's problems in 1941 as the same problems of the antebellum period. The most important reason for this continuity was the intensity of racial feeling. Class issues existed, but racial concerns crowded them out of the southern white psyche.

The continuing influence of Cash's conception of southern whites as lacking class-consciousness can be seen in many historical works. Jack E. Davis's study of Natchez, Mississippi, *Race Against Time: Culture and Separation in Natchez Since 1930*, for example, describes a complex Natchez social structure that is fundamentally built on race. Cash's notion of a proto-Dorian bond is on full display in Davis's work. In the Jim Crow era, white society allowed less autonomy and opportunity to prominent members of the black upper-class society than it did to working class whites (87). Class divisions still dictated certain social rules in mid-twentieth century Natchez. Upper and middle class whites stereotyped lower class whites as hicks and rednecks. Poor whites bristled at the contempt of their social betters and wanted higher pay, and sometimes they even joined unions. But working-class

whites always could count on their whiteness, which gave them a sense of opportunity and equality (137). No matter how wealthy or respected a black might become, race still separated upper- class blacks from all whites, whatever their class (103). Similar to Cash's description, Davis depicts poor whites who appreciated this conception of themselves as part of a dominant, ruling class and blacks as the lowest rung of the social ladder. Such working-class whites thus rejected desegregation, and unions generally offered little aid to any civil rights efforts (204). Some white workers went to absurd lengths—bringing their own drinking water to work or refusing to use the same showers as blacks—to demonstrate their disapproval of desegregation (Davis 203).

Earl and Merle Black's study of southern politics, *The Rise of the Southern Republicans* (2002), expands Cash's assertion that southern whites focus on race at the expense of class to include the entire twentieth century. The conservative Democrats that dominated the southern political scene of the first half of the twentieth century profoundly opposed any civil rights legislation. But these Democrats also endorsed several other policies that appear unfavorable to white working-class interests. They tended to oppose all organized labor and had the support of the business community (55). The most important issue was race, demonstrated, as Black and Black explain, by the fact that conservative Democrats tended to be more successful among whites in Deep South states with higher black populations (114). Consequently, the Republican Party could not compete in the South. It still carried the taint of Reconstruction, and after the Great Depression, southerners blamed the Republican Party for the two greatest catastrophes in American history. Not even Dwight Eisenhower, apparently an ideal Republican candidate for South, could carry more than four southern states in the presidential election of 1952 (62). Eisenhower's limited appeal, however, dissipated after the *Brown* decision and after Eisenhower ordered troops to enforce desegregation (65). That said, playing the race card could make Republicans competitive, at least in the presidential race. Barry Goldwater's "Southern strategy" carried more than half the white votes in the South in 1964 by making it clear that the Republican Party would stand against integration (140). Goldwater also had the advantage in the South of running the same year as the 1964 Civil Rights Act was signed, making that election the year that most southern whites began to vote Republican in presidential elections (205). Then, Ronald Reagan gained popularity among many southern

conservatives because he had opposed both the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, and Reagan gave clear signals about white solidarity (216-17). Black and Black's message is clear: while Reagan and the Republicans' appeal was by no means entirely racial, the fact remains that as the Democratic Party became more appealing to black voters in the post-civil rights era, its appeal among southern whites diminished.

Glenn Feldman's work focusing on the state of Alabama, notably in *The Irony of the Solid South: Democrats, Republicans, and Race, 1865–1944* (2013) and *The Great Melding: War, the Dixiecrat Rebellion, and the Southern Model for America's New Conservatism* (2015), perhaps pushes the argument furthest. Feldman asserts that scholars of the South have overstated any possibility of economic liberalism or progressivism in the region. Any debate between economic and business conservatism hinged on who could best make the claim to the defender of white supremacy; the primary thread of Feldman's analysis is following how economic conservatives generally managed to maintain that position. The "great melding" of his latter book represents three political shifts or "meldings"—southern elites combining economic and racial conservatism, economic conservatism and religious fundamentalism, and the two conservative classes (the old, landed elite and the rising industrial class). As he writes in *The Irony of the Solid South*, a quotation that sums up much of his work, the book is intended in part to inspire scholars to study "how economic and business conservatives purposely and successfully snatched away the standard of white supremacy from their liberal adversaries, thus largely dooming economic liberalism to irrelevance (and worse, cultural opprobrium) in the South" and "how emotional political issues have been used repeatedly by southern elites to distract plain whites from their material interests and undermine attempts at biracial political and economic action" (xvii). The success of any efforts at economic liberalism in the South, Feldman argues, was temporary and generally illusory, and the South's "liberal" period of the 1920s-1940s has been greatly over-estimated. Feldman, like Cash, sees southern history as a continuity defined by white supremacy and cross-class white unity in defense of racial supremacy.

While historians have quantified the relative importance of racial concerns among southern whites and the way that class concerns were muted, several memoirists also show the importance of race among whites. The title alone of Melton A. McLaurin's *Separate*

Pasts: Growing Up White in the Segregated South (1998) indicates the emphasis on race in his story. This author's hometown of Wade, North Carolina, had a clear class distinction—wealthy mill owner Clarence Lee Tart had earned the deference of every man in the town, and could choose to live away from the common mill workers and loggers. But the town also divided racially, with whites and blacks largely though not entirely divided by residential section (6-7). McLaurin notes that many of the poor blacks and whites both worked at the same businesses and often in the same jobs, but that race remained the key factor in Wade's social structure. He describes the message he learned in hundreds of different ways: "I was white; I was different; I was superior" (14). Despite whatever class problems Wade might have had, McLaurin's emphasis on racial issues makes it clear what factors he believes influenced the town the most.

Another memoir, Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin's *The Making of a Southerner* (1992), is largely the tale of how she came to question the traditional southern narratives her family taught her. The most significant aspects of the work regard Lumpkin's rejection of (or having others reject) the racial customs of the South. Lumpkin came into contact with the poorer classes, for example, when she attended school in Richland County, SC, where she met ill-nourished children whose clothes, food, manners, and even religion differed greatly from her own. Her contact with these poor whites, however, seems to have had the most impact in its own racial way: these whites did not enjoy the advantages of their whiteness. Much like McLaurin's, Lumpkin's memoir emphasizes race relations far more than class divisions, though class is discussed a bit more by Lumpkin than it is by McLaurin. Both of these works are part of a long line of southern memoirs that focus on the racial tensions of the South.

As important as the specific arguments and descriptions of what these historians and memoirists say is what they are discussing generally in the first place. Race is clearly the most important social and political factor in all of these works, even ones with considerable focus on economic and class issues. Many of these authors conclude, similar to Cash, that the race problem was the primary obstacle to the development of any sort of class-consciousness, and the impact of class-based politics or social movements in the South is somewhere on a spectrum of small and unimportant to nonexistent. Not all historians, however,

agree that class-consciousness was as completely absent or inconsequential as Cash portrays it to be. Even those who disagree with Cash, however, often do so only as a matter of degree.

In his discussion of labor relations, for example, Bryant Simon relates the absence of class-consciousness to the limited effectiveness of labor organization. Simon asserts that class-consciousness mattered enough among southern workers that they managed to seriously challenge, though unsuccessfully, the prevailing southern political structure. Simon's *A Fabric of Defeat: The Politics of South Carolina Millhands, 1910-1948* (1998) begins with class conflict on the first page. Simon writes specifically against the notion of working-class southern whites as uneducated racists, arguing that they had their own complex, often class-oriented motives for action (7). In fact, during the 1920s and 1930s, white workers even began to vote in a pattern that suggested they were putting economic interests ahead of racial ones. In the pre-World War I era, the millworkers' favorite politician was Cole Blease, who threatened his constituents with the specter of empowered blacks. Blease's appeals to racial solidarity lost much of their support during the Depression, however. Millhands put their political faith nationally in Franklin Roosevelt and locally in former millworker Olin Johnston. But the effort to expand civil rights toward the end of the 1930s produced white backlash. White voters split along class lines when they believed white supremacy remained safely uncontested, but when African Americans began to press against the confines of Jim Crow, political power again hinged on who could make the best claim for protecting white power (220). The rising economic conditions of many millworkers in the 1940s, instead of leading to the development of a moderate middle class, made them even more concerned about the threat of black competition. They became, Simon notes, people with something to lose (235). This was reflected in the coarsening of the campaign rhetoric of Johnston, who was, Simon writes, "not the kind of man who swam against history" (230). He went from ignoring race as much as politically possible to, by 1942, running a campaign that centered on it. It is useful here to mention Cash's description of Blease: "The man was a sort of *antenna*, as it were, fit to vibrate in perfect unison with [the millworkers'] exact sentiment" (253; emphasis in original). While Simon sees much more class-consciousness among whites in the first half of the twentieth century than Cash gave them credit for, at the end of both books, those working-class white voting patterns are

seen to be the same. Race, not class, was the key issue at the end of the period Simon looks at, just as it was at the beginning.

Few works on the region have been revisited as often as *The Mind of the South*, and few writers have made as much of an impact on the way that the South is understood as did W. J. Cash. One of the few who exceeded his impact, C. Vann Woodward, took considerable interest in Cash and wrote much, both directly and indirectly, in response to Cash's work. Woodward basically disagreed with Cash. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955, 2002), perhaps Woodward's most influential book, directly contradicts Cash's conception of continuity in southern history, and Woodward charts a period of experimentation prior to the consolidation of Jim Crow segregation in the South that seems to conflict with Cash's description of an immutable proto-Dorian bond. Woodward saw powerful forces opposing segregation—notably, an older version of southern conservatism, southern radicalism, and northern liberalism. Due to a post-Reconstruction emphasis on national reconciliation and changing national ideas about race as the United States took its first steps into the imperial project in the 1890s, any will in the North to preserve black rights in southern states began to dissolve. Both southern conservatives like the so-called Redeemers and southern radicals sought alliances with black voters prior to the Populist revolt. But declining economic power and the threat of the Populists forced southern conservatives into an alliance with the most extreme white supremacists, while white southern radicals were either driven from politics or drawn into the promise of a cross-class racial alliance. Thus, those three forces which resisted segregation all weakened at the same time, enabling (and, after the Populists, requiring) the construction of a new system of racial hierarchy. White supremacist propaganda smoothed over the objections of poorer whites; failing that, violence and intimidation kept the lower-class whites in line. Politics, however, was not the only place where the new race policy showed. Literary treatment of African Americans went from paternalistic and patronizing to insulting and degrading, like Thomas Dixon's 1902 racist novel *The Leopard's Spots*. Public intellectuals described blacks as inferior, a degenerate race, destined only for farm work and labor. It was in this context, after about 1900, that Jim Crow laws were widely introduced. Contra Cash's notion of a proto-Dorian bond, Woodward describes a fractured and striven white South. Thus, far from being an inherent part of the southern psyche, white supremacy was something that had to be

maintained, and its specific institutional structures had to be created and recreated as times changed.

Other historians, after Woodward, do not see the proto-Dorian bond as being as integral among working class whites as Cash does, instead focusing on the importance of elite maintenance of that bond and of lower-class racism. Patricia Sullivan notes in *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (1996) that political commentators immediately after World War II were uncertain about the political future of the South. With union membership rising and civil rights groups growing, labor and civil rights activists had reason to be optimistic. Cooperation between black and white workers influenced the success of the labor movement, because enfranchising the black population would eventually lead to the ousting of conservative Democrats and other reactionaries (Sullivan 150). Civil rights and economic concerns did not conflict; each helped determine the success of the other. This symbiotic recognition is a key aspect of Sullivan's book. The activists Sullivan describes, people like Palmer Weber and Clark Foreman, or politicians like Henry Wallace, appreciated the importance of combining economic justice with racial justice. However, in the post-World War II era, anti-communism became a more important concern for the Democratic Party than economic issues. The opportunity for a change in the political economy was lost, but in Sullivan's view working class whites did not miss it. Instead, the national Democratic Party turned its back on the opportunities presented in the fluid political landscape of the postwar era, allowing conservative southern elites to use race to divide the working class and retain their own elite position.

Like C. Vann Woodward, Grace Elizabeth Hale argues that racial segregation and notions of white unity are modern inventions. *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (1999) rejects a deep-seated psychological or historical origin for the emergence and development of segregation in the South. The Civil War and Reconstruction broke traditional relationships and raised the possibilities of new ways to identify oneself. "Whiteness" was created, therefore, as part of a mass consumer culture. A variety of groups, "former Confederates, a growing working class, embattled farmers, western settlers, a defensive northeaster elite, women's rights advocates, an increasingly powerful scientific community," among others, "simultaneously but for different reasons, found race useful in creating new collective identities" (Hale 7). These evolved racial meanings emerged at a time when a new mass market consumer culture made it

possible, not to mention financially rewarding, to circulate imagery that reinforced racial identities. But the new racial hierarchy was fragile, especially vulnerable in the middle where the alleged absolute boundaries of racial division were met by real people in real places. Mixed-race people and places challenged the allegedly complete barrier between white and black. The “culture of segregation turned the entire South into a theater of racial difference, a minstrel show writ large upon the land” (Hale 284). The willful suspension of disbelief to maintain that performance, however much white southerners tried to reinforce it, could not resist pressure from inside and outside the South, though. Mass action by southern African Americans would finally destroy this culture of segregation, though deep forms of inequality continue to this day.

Historians looking at the postwar South (Cash died in 1941) have charted the complicated relationship between race and class among white southerners, often emphasizing the extent to which white cross-class unity failed or had to be reinforced by elites. Matthew D. Lassiter’s *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (2006) and Kevin Kruse’s *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (2005), while making different arguments about the importance that racial motivations played in white southern residential and voting patterns, both describe how class divisions threatened white unity. Kruse argues that modern conservatism (at least, southern conservatism) has its roots in the process of suburbanization. In the 1950s, Atlanta’s white business leaders, while as segregationist as the rest of other whites, were practically-minded enough to recognize that some mild progressive politics and a public image of a “city too busy to hate” were economic winners. Atlanta politics in the late 1940s and 1950s were an alliance of “blacks and upper-middle-class whites against the working-class whites of Atlanta” (Kruse 41). Middle-class and especially working-class whites revolted, first against a white elite that could call for desegregation while living in all-white wealthy neighbors, socializing at all-white clubs, and sending their children to all-white private schools. But non-elite whites also increasingly doubted each other. A single house owner selling to a new black resident could set off a panic for other whites to sell and create a rapid racial transition. Kruse argues that this led to the next, crucial step in the development of conservatism. “Believing that ‘community’ was

meaningless when it mattered most,” Kruse writes, white segregationists “moved toward a new ideology that was its antithesis—individuality” (104). Working- and middle-class whites sent their children to private schools when possible, but more commonly they fled the city. Atlanta thus became a majority-black city in the 1970s, and white suburbanites adopted identities which on the surface were race-neutral but which were essentially still “segregationist identities, such as the angry taxpayer or concerned parent” (Kruse 245).

Matthew Lassiter gives class an even bigger role in his similar analysis of how suburbanization in the 1960s and 1970s led to political change in the South. He criticizes the “race-reductionist” emphasis which “downplays the centrality of class ideology in the outlook of suburban voters and ignores the consistent class divisions among white southerners evident throughout the Civil Rights era” (Lassiter 4). Understanding the emerging white-collar suburban identity in cities like Charlotte and Atlanta (which, to be sure, cannot be divorced entirely from racial notions but was not solely or primarily defined by race) is the key to understanding the South’s political realignment.

Heather Bryson’s PhD thesis, “To Give Racism the Face of the Ignorant: Race, Class, and White Manhood in Birmingham, Alabama 1937-1970” (2011) similarly argues that southern elites had to work to maintain white supremacy. Bryson claims that in Birmingham, Alabama (which had perhaps the worst reputation for race relations of any city in America), the commitment of working-class whites to segregation constantly faltered (13). Especially in the 1930s and 1940s, cross-class white unity was notably absent in Birmingham. Even during the controversies of the Civil Rights movement, the segregationist alliance only lasted during the most emotional period of 1956-1960, and white unity began to fail by the early 1960s. Similar to the process Kruse describes happening in Atlanta, Byron writes that “working-class whites realized that their children would be the ones to shoulder the weight of integration. By 1962, after Connor, Hanes, and Waggoner closed down all of the public parks [in Birmingham], working whites understood that they and their children could also be the victims of white intransigence” (121). To the extent that cross-class white unity existed in Birmingham, it agreed that the strictest pro-segregation extremes were not worth the trouble—business elites feared the economic costs, while working-class whites lacked the private parks, clubs, and backyards that the elite could turn to when massive resistance policies

shut down city parks and other accommodations in the face of integrationist pressures.

In *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s* (2000), Pete Daniel looks at class and racial division from a cultural perspective, portraying a rural and working-class southern culture that had much less racial tension than rest of southern society. In rural areas black and white farmers “raised the same crops” and lived similar, often interacting lives (92). These farmers, streaming into growing southern cities, carried their rural values and informed much of the new working-class urban culture. A look at the cultural productions of lower-class culture demonstrates Daniel’s belief in a more racially-tolerant lower class society. He presents stock car racing as a wild and violent, but pure, manifestation of such a lower-class southern culture. Early stock car racing discriminated less than the rest of urban society, even featuring black and female racers and pit crew members--at least until the increasing profits of stock car racing and NASCAR regulations brought respectability and the end of integrated racing. Similarly, black and white musicians, coming from similar musical backgrounds grounded in gospel and church music, worked and created together in the post-World War II South. DJs practiced “invisible integration,” playing music that both blacks and whites listened to (126). Elvis Presley, the white man willing to perform black music, embodied these black and white traditions. The rural black and white combination, beginning in Memphis, created a musical revolution (Daniel 147). But, as happened with auto racing, fame and profit eliminated the interracial harmony that had been so important in the earlier successes of southern music. The final result, Daniel writes, was that “commercialism [bent] low-down culture to its purposes” (120). He also describes the working class as more or less “passive” in following the segregationist beliefs of upper-class whites during the integration fight in Little Rock, Arkansas (228). And the elite determined that they must lead, fearing a combination of working-class whites and blacks that could threaten the ruling class’ use of race as means to maintaining political and social control (229). Daniel believes that the opportunities, in his view, provided by integration and the more racially-harmonious nature of southern rural and working-class culture, diminished because an elite dedicated to traditional southern notions of race relations intentionally ruined them.

Among the strongest assertions that class, not race, drove southern politics, at least by the postwar period, comes from Byron Shafer

and Richard Johnston, who explicitly state, in *The End of Southern Exceptionalism: Class, Race, and Partisan Change in the Postwar South* (2006), that economic changes and social class, not race, came to dominate southern politics in the post-World War II era. Characterizing historical literature on the South's postwar partisan change as "charming and richly contextualized, but unsystematic and deeply inbred" (4), Shafer and Johnston argue that the question can only be answered with testable hypotheses and data. They assert that if race was the primary motivator for the partisan shift in southern politics in the second half of the twentieth century, Republicans would become more influential among whites where the black population was largest. To prove this argument, the authors study election returns for national offices between the 1950s and the 1990s, in particular for the House of Representatives. Race is not absent from their argument, but Shafer and Johnston claim that "Republican support largely expanded on the back of economic development while being restrained [...] by the civil rights revolution" (17).

Kari Frederickson's recent *Deep South Dynasty: The Bankheads of Alabama* (2022) perhaps best charts how Cash's proto-Dorian bond was a real phenomenon in the sense that white southerners believed in a cross-class racial unity that often overshadowed or obscured class-based concerns, but how that presumed unity also required (over generations) careful cultivation and maintenance by the southern elite. Charting the lives of the Bankhead dynasty of Alabama, Frederickson's story covers almost the same history that Cash's does, beginning with a brief look at the antebellum origins of John Hollis Bankhead, Sr., through John Bankhead, Jr.'s, death in 1946—only five years after the publication of *The Mind of the South*. Frederickson shows the lengths that southern politicians went to win the support of their white constituents.

The Bankheads (John Hollis Bankhead, Sr., who held seats in the Alabama legislature off-and-on from the 1860s through the 1880s, then served as United States Senator from 1907-1920; his children John H. Bankhead, Jr., an influential businessman and lawyer who served in the Alabama legislature and as U.S. Senator from 1931 until his death in 1946; William B. Bankhead, who held a variety of leadership positions, including Speaker of the House of Representatives, during his time as a congressional representative from 1917 until his death in 1940; and Marie Bankhead Owen, who was director of the Alabama Department of Archives and History for 35 years and played a crucial

role in promoting the “Lost Cause” perspective of Alabama Civil War history) were wealthy and powerful, but they were also proponents of an active government that benefited white Alabamians. John Bankhead, Sr., imagined himself as representing lower-class interests, especially the white farmer, but, as Frederickson puts it, “he ultimately advocated policies to disable grassroots political threats from the have-nots when they became too hot” (46-47). John Jr.’s most notable accomplishment during his time in the Alabama House of Representatives was drafting legislation that disenfranchised almost all black and poor white Alabama voters. But John Jr. (and Will) were both genuinely, if rather paternalistically, concerned about the well-being of poor whites, and both were strong supporters of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal. Frederickson demonstrates that white supremacy did not eliminate class or social concerns from southern politics; rather, that same white unity made economically-progressive politics possible, as politicians with unimpeachable segregationist credentials were the most effective proponents of reform.

Not all historians agree with Cash’s contention that southerners, both rich and poor, were entirely committed to the proto-Dorian bond, with some challenging Cash’s conception of the bond as being important across the class spectrum and instead arguing that it was more important at the top of the social ladder than at the bottom. These historians assert that the elite, and not lower-class southerners, acted as the real guardians of the bond. Still, after more than six decades have passed since its publication, *The Mind of the South* and Cash’s ideas about the class-consciousness of the white South remain influential among historians of the South to this day.

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John Donne's "Satyre III": (Re)telling Trauma, (Re)defining Religious Identity

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Introduction and Theoretical Framework

In its original and primal use which dates back to the seventeenth century and according to the Online Etymology Dictionary, the term "trauma" basically pertained to the medical jargon and used to refer to physical wounds. Relying on the same source, trauma has Greek origins and was also used to refer to defeat. By conjoining the two meanings of the term trauma, both ancient and modern, it can now be said to refer to a "psychic defeat" before any disturbance to one's well-being. Little by little, the word began to acquire new meanings and started to be involved in the field of psychoanalysis. At this stage, the term is deployed to refer to non-physical psychological pain. Indeed, in his influential book *On Metapsychology*, Sigmund Freud theorized that the adjective "traumatic" describes "any excitations from the outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield" (301). In this definition, Freud claims that trauma is any disturbance to one's psychological equilibrium.

The section entitled "Fixation to Traumas-The Unconscious" in Freud's book *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* explores some direct effects of trauma resulting from intense stimuli in a short period of time. In such a situation, Freud claims that the mind finds itself overwhelmed and unable to work things off normally "and this must result in permanent disturbances of the manner in which the energy operates" (315). For instance, two of Freud's patients have proven to be "fixated" on certain parts of their pasts "as though they could not manage to free themselves from it and were for that reason alienated from the present and the future" (313). In other words, trauma has proven to cause an inability to move forwards and the life of the patient/person becomes a vicious circle revolving around the traumatic event. Consequently, the patient/person is drained not only psychologically but also physically. Because of "hysteriform attacks", the patient/person feels the traumatic event as an omnipresent "immediate task" necessitating to be dealt with.

In his article, “Towards a Theory of Cultural Trauma”, Jeffrey Alexander defines trauma as “the power to shatter” (2), and he agrees with Freud that it is a disturbance to one's well-being resulting in a disrupted sense of security. Alexander builds on what he called “Lay Trauma Theory” and categorizes its understandings under two labels/versions: The Enlightenment Understanding and the Psychoanalytic Understanding. The Enlightenment Understanding of trauma considers the latter as a rational response to intense “explosive” events that call for resolution. This type of understanding applies mainly to communities who have been subject to traumatic events; therefore, it is an understanding that applies to what came to be called “collective trauma,” which is widely used in historiography (Alexander and Neal). The second version of “Lay Trauma Theory,” which is the Psychoanalytic Understanding, reckons that individuals who are subject to traumatic experiences tend to repress them in their unconscious rather than processing them cognitively.

In its intersection with the world of literature, trauma acquires wider and richer dimensions. For instance, it intertwines the writer's and the reader's experiences in a fictive realm. The latter may be a reflection of the writer's individual trauma or a representation of collective trauma through characters of his own invention. These characters (for fictional works) or personas (for poetic works) can be seen as prototypes of their community or a miniature microcosmic representation of a larger scale community. On the same strings, in his third “Satyre”, John Donne orchestrated a symphony of personas to speak out the trauma the Catholic community underwent under the Elizabethan rule. The Symphony is presented as an indirect dialogue between individuals pertaining to different religious sects. These personas are seeking/arguing over what is “true religion.” This philharmonic of voices translates the confusion and the puzzlement of the Elizabethan community over choosing between Protestantism and Catholicism.

This puzzlement was the result of a religious shift, as Eamon Duffy emphasized in his book entitled *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*. This shift was launched with the reign of Henry VIII, who was the first monarch to break free from the chains of the Roman Catholic Church by establishing his own church—the Anglican Church—and this was succeeded by reigns alternating between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Hence, briefly, the religious shifting can be summarized in the following dualities: Henry VII's reign as Roman Catholicism vs. Henry VIII's as Protestantism;

Edward VI's and Mary I's reigns as Roman Catholicism vs. Elizabeth I's as Protestantism. These alternations in imposing and re-imposing religious choices by certain monarchs necessitated strict measures and accused recusants from the mainstream religion of heresy and high treason. Mass executions of disbelievers took place, especially during Mary's reign, followed by land confiscations, heavy fines, and imprisonments during Elizabeth's reign. Religious instability resulted in a pronounced feeling of loss of religious identity that can be referred to as "collective trauma" or "cultural trauma." Indeed, Alexander reckons that "cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental irrevocable ways" (1).

For this reason, there was a great debate over how Donne found himself under the obligation of getting rid of the religion of his father and ancestors and struggling against his "inner attachment", as Carey put it, to Catholicism as the truest religion. Carey considers that "Satyre III" focuses on the fact that "choosing a religion is purely an intellectual business, as unemotional as mountaineering" (46). Yet, in *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, Dennis Flynn et al. disagrees with Carey's consideration of Donne as "an apostate" and proposes that it is an exaggeration and Donne might be seen simply as "a survivor" of the Elizabethan bloody laws and series of executions and indeed a survivor of what Alexander calls an "enlightenment trauma" too,¹ I would add. In other words, Donne's conversion to Protestantism was just a technique of adaptation to the society and to the system in which he lived and a progressive rational resolution from both burdens of a personal and a collective trauma (as he is part of the Catholic community). Hence, Flynn's argument seems to be more sound than Carey's. Flynn reckons that the traumatic childhood of Donne had later shaped his choices and consequently his destiny. Carey himself falls in the of trap self-contradiction by acknowledging that "Donne was born into terror and formed by it" (18). Therefore, Flynn seems to agree with Herbert J.C. Grierson as he argues that "Donne would not have become a Protestant in a Catholic country" (qtd. in Nutt 191).

Therefore, this paper is an attempt to relate and investigate how Donne's individual trauma retells and reflects England's collective trauma and how trauma helped shape a whole new religious identity for Donne as for his community since Donne presents a prototype of his

community. By applying a blend between Freud's psychoanalytic definition of trauma and Alexander's trauma theory and matching them with autobiographical facts from the life of John Donne, we can gauge three interrelated ideas which will be the respective areas of investigation in the coming parts of this paper. The first idea concerns Donne's deceitfulness to his entourage about his true religion and his questionable claim of adherence to Protestantism. The second idea relates to discussing and investigating his attachment to Catholicism. The third idea is a concluding part about the role that trauma played in defining John Donne's religious and even political identity.

From England's Collective Trauma to Donne's Individual Trauma

England, as a whole country, underwent what Jeffrey Alexander and Arthur Neal referred to as “the enlightenment version of lay trauma theory.” This concept refers to an ensemble of intense, outraging, or shocking circumstances that trigger problem-solving responses and regards the procedure of going beyond the traumatic experience as purely rational. Indeed, Alexander claims that “The objects or events that trigger trauma are perceived clearly by actors, their responses are lucid, and the effects of these responses are problem solving and progressive” (3). In England's case, these intense, outraging, or shocking circumstances are present through what may referred to as “religious unsettlement” since Henry VIII. For instance, the country, since the latter's reign, was a swinging pendulum between Catholicism and Protestantism alternatively over four successive Tudor reigns; and the solution to reestablish religious homogeneity and order was, for many monarchs, repressive measures to ensure stability and avoid the risk of insurrections.

The “religious unsettlement”, which I referred to earlier, started with the breach with the Roman Catholic Church under the reign of Henry VIII. The break with Catholicism was due to Henry's fear to stay without a male heir. As he sought permission for divorce from the Roman Pope, his request was met with adamant refusal. Briefly, Henry VIII decided to establish a Church abiding by his own rules what later came to be called, indeed, “the Anglican Church”. The Henrican Reformation persisted under his son Edward VI but was reversed during the reign of his daughter Mary I who was, like her mother Catherine of Aragon (Henry VIII's first wife), a pious Catholic. Her restoration of Catholicism did not last for long, and as soon as her sister Elizabeth I ascended to the throne, she reestablished Protestantism.

A condensed account of this traumatizing loss of religious identity is thoroughly discussed by Eamon Duffy in his book *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*. In this book, Duffy discusses and illustrates how these successive monarchic and religious switches over a very short period of time (a span of 22 years) under the reigns I already mentioned (i.e., Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I) resulted in a profound shock especially on the beholders of the so-called “True Faith” (i.e., Catholics). During the reign of Protestant monarchs, Catholics were persecuted and vice-versa. Indeed, Richard Sugg agrees on Eamon Duffy's theory and asserts that these religious and monarchic switches made “many of the Catholic faithful view the new religion [Protestantism] as a passing—if traumatic—aberration” (Sugg 8). In other words, Protestantism was no more than a traumatic experience that shall end one day or another.

In his *National Trauma and Collective Memory*, Arthur Neal theorizes that a collectivity is said to be traumatized when it is subject to an event/series of events which have an “explosive quality”. He accentuated the intensity of these events using the metaphor of a volcano as it shakes “the foundations of the social world” (IX); which results in a “disruption” and “a radical change” in the psychology of that community, especially when the traumatic events occur “within a short period of time” (9). Here arises the accuracy of studying the repressive modes taken against Catholics during the Elizabethan reign and the previous reigns as they construct sedimentary layers of trauma that happen to cumulate very quickly. By analogy, we can draw the following assumption: the sedimentation springing from religious swinging resulted in a traumatic bewilderment that was manifested in Elizabethan literature in general and in John Donne's in particular.

In a parallel world to John Donne's, the other Catholics were economically drained off because of the heavy financial incentives that were imposed on them for not attending the English Church services. For instance, those who chose to boycott Anglican services were subject to heavy fines (up to 20£). This amount of money, as historical records prove, was roughly equal to what a school master earns over a whole year of work (Shell and Hunt 69).² But those who found themselves incapable of paying the issued fine “were to have all their goods and two-thirds of their land confiscated” (Carey 15). This explains quite clearly why Catholicism “became to some degree a gentlemanly and aristocratic preserve” (Shell and Hunt 70). The heaviness of the

finer imposed added to other harsher punishments including imprisonment, torture, and capital punishment, and made it impossible for Catholics to survive in England unless undercover. Many of them did not stand the situation and fled for their lives to other Catholic countries like Spain and Italy. Staying faithful to the Catholic religion in England was a heavy burden. John Carey summarizes the fate of the Catholic youth in the following lines:

The victims were among the most gifted and intrepid of England's youth: young men like Edmund Campion, executed in 1581, who had been sent to Catholic colleges abroad for their education, and who returned on their suicidal missions, joyfully embracing martyrdom to save their motherland from Anti-Christ. (19)

By "Anti-Christ" here Carey is referring to how Catholics perceive Protestants who stole their motherland and killed their families.

Losing their offspring to martyrdom defending the true faith of their ancestors was traumatizing generations of Catholics beyond repair. The loss of their educated youth meant the loss of hope in restoring the golden days of Catholicism and the hope of just being left in peace for being a Catholic. Consequently, the Catholic community can be said to undergo a "collective trauma," defined by Kai Erikson as "a *blow* to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality" (qtd. in Alexander 8). Collective trauma also is the byproduct of an accumulation of many traumatic experiences over a certain period of time that emerges gradually on the social tissue redefining its cultural, political and religious identity and giving it a new sense of belonging and interlinkedness. Indeed, according to Erikson:

The collective trauma works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it, so it does not have the quality of suddenness normally associated with "trauma." *But it is a form of shock all the same* a gradual realization that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that *an important part of the self has disappeared . . .* "we" no longer exist as a connected pair or as linked cells in a larger communal body.³ (qtd. in Alexander 8)

As Catholic, Donne's family faced many struggles, beginning with the execution of Thomas More in 1535, John Donne's great-grandfather; and continued with the imprisonment of his uncle and brother between 1585 and 1595.⁴ Infected with the plague, the latter died in prison. Even studying did not help Donne neither better his material

situation nor in getting a degree that would grant him some aristocratic position, since taking the degree necessitated taking the Oath of Allegiance, which meant betraying his faith. But, as many critics have remarked, Donne was aware that he “could not, if [he] remained faithful to [his] religion, hope to play any part in public life, and [he] were debarred from taking a university degree by the requirement that graduates should subscribe to [Luther’s] Thirty-nine Articles” (Carey 15). John Donne's traumatic struggle within his family and entourage (a Catholic microcosm) illustrates the trauma of the larger Catholic community (Catholic macrocosm) living under the Protestant rule of Elizabeth I.

One main reason to study Donne's religious trauma in the light of his political ambition and his religious affiliation (i.e. mainly through his apostasy) is that religion and politics were very much interconnected in his age and have imposed many collective religious struggles upon the Catholic community. Indeed, the Protestant religious affliction that Henry VIII first imposed, and that queen Elizabeth I later sought to preserve, shaped much of the nation's policy-making, whether nationally or internationally. In these regards, any reaching for political ambitions could not be achieved without following the religious affliction of the ruling dynasty. Donne was, to a great extent, aware of that, as John Carey contends throughout the biography he wrote on the poet. Carey furthers his assumption about Donne's apostasy and asserts that it is one of the most important things to consider when it comes to studying Donne through the following statement: “the first thing to remember about Donne is that he was a Catholic; the second, that he betrayed his faith” (15).

Regarding the previously mentioned obstacles, it becomes quite evident that chances were very poor concerning reaching for honorable post in secular circles without a university degree. Sir Thomas Egerton, England's Lord keeper, saw Donne as an effective member in the Inns of the court. Consequently, he hired the latter to work for him as his secretary. Here, it is worthy to note that working as a Lord Keeper means acting as an intermediary between the Parliament and the Regina. He was also in charge of controlling The Upper House of the Parliament and attending the meetings of the council which were often organized on daily basis. Such an opportunity (i.e. Donne being hired by Egerton as secretary), would be, to a great extent, beneficial to

Donne's career and would facilitate later ascension in the political ladder. Donne was aware of that and "must have been delighted both by having secure employment and by the prospect of even greater things lying ahead of him: one secretary of Egerton's was knighted and became ambassador to France" (Oliver 38).

Although we have no clear evidence about the evolution of Donne's spiritual life, even the poems he wrote during the years he was working in Inns of Court, as P.M. Oliver reckons, "are of little assistance in the attempt to pin down the stages in Donne's religious progress" (36). Despite that, Oliver assures his readers that, by the time Donne started to work for Sir Egerton, he must have converted to Protestantism; or, at least, given "every indication" of so doing. Oliver's arguments seem quite contradictory at the first sight, but when we come to analyze them we find out that even if we suppose that Donne remained a crypto-Catholic, he must have played the role of the pious faithful Protestant quite brilliantly. The discrepancy that one might sense in P.M. Oliver's argumentation ends when he brings out a seemingly important detail about Sir Egerton's past that might help us rearrange the jigsaw of Donne's life to fit them within the larger puzzle of his community's trauma. The former (i.e. Sir Thomas Egerton) while being a student in Lincoln's Inn, "had been hauled before the Court of Star Chamber for recusancy" (Oliver 38). Thus, seemingly, he wouldn't be ready to live the experience again for harboring Donne as a Catholic; simultaneously, the latter cannot risk his life telling him that he is a Catholic since he is unable to draw positive expectations on Sir Egerton's reaction to his little secret. Therefore, Donne had to act out like a real Protestant to quickly earn his master's trust. John Donne best expressed his internal struggle to adapt to external pressures on changing his faith are best summarized in the following lines taken from his prose work *Pseudo-Martyr*:

I was first to blot out, certain impressions of the Roman Religion, and to wrestle . . . against some anticipations early laid upon my conscience, both by persons who by nature had a power and superiority over my will, and others who by their learning and good life, seemed to me justly to claim an interest for the guiding . . . of mine understanding. (2)

Working in the Egerton household did not only bring Donne to a wide circle of contacts in the public sphere and bring him closer to his dream in higher secular employment; but also pushed him harder into

the into a Protestant straitjacket. The trauma he lived when losing members of his family and the continuous pressure from college and in the Inns of the court where he worked helped only to get the Protestant straitjacket tighter as he has to protect not only his life but also his ambition. All these “shattering experiences” maybe referred to as John Donne's individual trauma as they represent “a blow to [his] psyche that breaks through [his] defenses so suddenly and with such a brutal force that one cannot react to it effectively” (Alexander 8). By applying this definition on Donne's case we find out that the traumatic experiences made him rethink his Catholic legacy and reshape a unique religious identity. For instance, Richard Sugg reckons that “Donne himself must have developed a certain distinctive psychology as he became conscious of the strange and fraught atmosphere which uneasily charged both his home life and his experiences in the wider society of Oxford, Cambridge and London” (8). Briefly, Donne's conversion to Protestantism was not an easygoing process, it was rather the byproduct of many traumatic experiences that his family members and himself went through; yet, Donne was not ready to compromise his life and ambition. Therefore, he decided to bury his trauma(s) in his heart and walk under the cloak of the perfect protestant citizen.

Donne's Claimed “Experience of Apostasy”

John Carey claims that Donne actually converted to Protestantism and assumes that the bard's “apostasy was not rash or sudden” (26). That is if ever he converted really to Protestantism, it has to be a rather very well-calculated step. “Satyre III” can be considered as one of Donne's most important poems when it comes to understanding the dark corners of his spiritual realm and his shaken religious identity. Carey introduced “Satyre III” as “the great, crucial poem of Donne's early manhood” (26), as it is preoccupied with the inner religious conflicts in his mind and heart. The poem opens up with an anguished tone about the uncertain feelings boiling in his chest. The persona seems to be overloaded with a mixture of sensations: sadness, worry, anxiety and anger that he expresses as follows: “Kinde pitty chokes my spleene; brave scorn forbids / Those teares to issue which swell my eye-lids” (line 1-2). According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, and in its archaic and literary use, the word “spleene” refers to bad mood marked with wrath and anger; simultaneously in its scientific use it refers to “a small organ near the stomach that controls the quality of

the blood cells.” Indeed, according to the theory of the four humours, blood is made of Hot and Moist and is responsible for cholera. As the word “spleene” is polysemous then both meanings can apply. Therefore, the first two lines can be analyzed as follows: the persona speaks out the whimsical feelings that suffocate his thoughts as he continues to describe:

I must not laugh, nor weepe sinnes, and be wise,
Can railing then cure these worne maladies?

The persona seems to be quite fearful of others’ reactions as he pities his poor self since he discovers that he cannot outcry his anger or burst into tears to relieve himself from the burdens lying on his chest. After broadcasting his complaint about the emotional upheavals he is going through, the persona seems to be ready to speak out his mind. The following lines start to unravel what occupies the mind of the speaker, who, as early as line five, bursts out:

Is not our Mistresse faire Religion,
As worthy of all our Soules devotion,
As virtue was to the first blinded age?

Here, the persona clearly states that the subject of his worries is religion. He begins by launching a litany of questions. This flux of questions is almost breathless. The style he wrote with seems very much like a stream of consciousness. Thoughts were swarming through his head in search for truth in each religion, so that he can make the right decision about to what religion he must adhere. Here, Donne's persona presents himself as a microcosm for a macrocosm of the elites whose reasoning is marked by doubt and questioning on the one hand. On the other hand, he identifies himself with the macrocosm of the Catholic community which lives under the same emotional upheavals presented in the opening of the satire by Donne's persona:

Are not heavens joyes as valiant to asswage
Lusts, as earths honour was to them? Alas,
As wee do them in meanes, shall they surpasse
Us in the end, and shall thy fathers spirit
Meete blinde Philosophers in heaven, whose merit
Of strict life may be imputed faith, and heare
Thee, whom hee taught so easie wayes and neare
To follow, damn’d? O if thou dar’st, feare this;
This feare great courage, and high valour is. (lines 8-16)

Lines 8-9 present a remainder of the pleasures that await the blessed ones in heaven to quench their thirst for joy and easiness. Fearing to be

among the damned, the speaker recants his serene fantasy about heaven with the exclamatory “Alas”. According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, the word “Alas” is used to show sadness and sorrow. By placing “Alas” at the end of the poetic line followed by a short pause (a comma), the persona seems to be evoking a moment of sadness accompanied by a short contemplation after which he resumes his thoughts. The speaker accords the adjective “blinde” to philosophers as an allusion to their paganism because they were blinded from seeing the light of the divine (i.e. the light of God). The persona fears that these “blinde Philosophers” would “surpass” him in heaven and meet “thy fathers spirit.” At a first glance this might be read as an indirect reference from Donne to the memory of his father whose soul he expects to be resting in heaven. Though, the tone seems quite nostalgic and fixated on the memory of his father, since the death of the father was a markedly traumatic event in Donne's childhood and the first pillar in his individual traumatic experience.

Yet another reading of these words arises once we discover that what “blinde Philosophers” and “thy fathers spirit” have in common is the “merit/ Of strict life may be imputed faith”. This verse echoes the biblical concept of “imputed righteousness” which refers to Christ's ascribing his righteousness upon true believers to purify them from sins and therefore go to heaven which here applies on believers in Catholicism as it is the faith of the ancestors with whom Donne share his religious identity crisis and traumatic experiences of loss of beloved ones.

By fantasizing that his father is in heaven, Donne seems to be intimately tied to his father's soul and can't imagine him but in Paradise. For instance, Joe Nutt assumes that “it is hard to believe that in “Satyre III” when Donne writes about religion and fathers, he does so without any thought of his own father, whose religion he is about to abandon” (190). In the same context, Jacques Derrida states that “Psychoanalysis has taught that the dead – a dead parent, for example – can be more alive for us, more powerful, more scary, than the living” (65). In other words, “the memory” of Donne's father is still haunting his life and directing his choices.

Bringing out such a thought arises a first binary opposition between Catholicism as the religion of the blessed and Paganism (which is an indirect reference to Protestantism) as the religion of the damned. But Donne reverses the logical hierarchy of Catholicism's vantage over

Paganism as he fantasizes pagan philosophers in heaven. Thus, reversing the center of the binary opposition to Paganism over Catholicism. He even reinforces the reversal by expressing his fear from being one of the damned which he compares to the “high valour” one has for the Divine:

Thee in ships wooden Sepulchers, a prey
To leaders rage, to stormes, to shot, to dearth?
Dar'st thou dive seas, and dungeons of the earth?
Hast thou couragious fire to thaw the ice
Of frozen North discoveries? And thrise
Colder then salamanders, like divine
Children in th'oven, fires of Spaine, and the line,
Whose countries limbecks to our bodies bee,
Canst thou for gaine beare? And must every hee
Which cries not, Goddesse, to thy Mistresse, draw,
Or eate thy poisonous words? Courage of straw! (lines 18-28)

The speaker starts by enumerating the various dangers, pains and difficulties many people would bear for the sake of material gain. He emphasizes the sacrifices one is ready to make in order to reach for material glory: “Canst thou for gaine beare?”. Daring all this suffering as “lay / [...] in ships wooden Sepulchers”, “a prey / To leaders rage, to stormes, to shot, to dearth”, “dive seas, and dungeons of the earth”, etc. just for an ephemeral goal that is worthless in the afterlife. But, when talking about the Dutch, an important historical event comes to mind. For instance, England helped out the Dutch Protestants in their war against Spain and papal rule⁵ (Morgan 80-84). We cannot ignore also that Donne sailed in two of the expeditions against Spain. Hence, the poet's persona makes his own reflections upon the experiences as an important reference that cannot be skipped.

As the poem unfolds, the style starts to shift from questioning into preaching to reach the conclusion that fighting for personal gain is not courageous, but rather cowardly because in reality the addressee is unable to fight his real enemies. The speaker starts line 32 by urging his audience “Know thy foes.” We are rather created to fight mainly three enemies. The first enemy the speaker names is the devil: “The foule Devillo.” The second and third enemies are the world and one's lustful nature, for the speaker says, “and as / The worlds all parts wither away and passe, / So the worlds selfe, thy other lov'd foe, is / In her decrept wayne, and thou loving this.” In these lines, a whole set of binary oppositions arises: evil vs. good, carnal vs. spiritual, body vs. soul,

etc. These binary oppositions might be classified under one main binary opposition which is ephemeral vs. eternal.

The next lines go as follows:

Seeke true religion. O where? Mirreus
Thinking her unhous'd here, and fled from us,
Seekes her at Rome, there, because hee doth know
That shee was there a thousand yeares agoe,
He loves her rages so, as wee here obey

The statecloth where the Prince sate yesterday. (lines 43-48)

The persona urges his addressee to "Seeke true religion" by all means. He directs an indirect urge to his interlocutor to imitate him in the procession of truth that he bases on doubt and questioning. Then, he decides to give his addressee a voice "O where?", as if they are engaged in a discussion. The persona responds with a statement about "Mirreus" which is derived from Myrrh which, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, is a substance taken from trees to form incense. This incense is used in Catholic Churches. Another instance that the speaker is talking about Catholicism is his reference to Rome as he again urges that if you "Seeke true religion" then "Seekes her at Rome," as Rome is the center of Catholic and Papal power. The persona backs up his argument with the assumption that Catholicism is as old Jesus' rags, whereas the new faith Protestantism is only a marred version of it that was created by "the Prince" very recently seemingly just as recent as "yesterday".

The next lines introduce a new character:

Crantz to such brave loves will not be intrall'd,
But loves her onely, who at Geneva is call'd
Religion, plaine, simple, sullen, yong,
Contemptuous, yet unhansome; As among
Lecherous humors, there is one that judges

No wenchs wholesome, but course country drudges. (lines 49-54)

This Crantz that the poet introduces in the poem is but a "personified character in 'Satyre 3' who represents an adherent of Protestant Calvinism, loving the plain, simple, unadorned church as found in Geneva" (Ray 80). Donne seems to be highly critical to Protestant Calvinism because he thinks that it turns religion into a state affair. He makes use of a pejorative lexicon to express his disapproval of latterly mentioned religion like: "sullen", "Contemptuous", "unhansome", etc. Thus, implicitly appealing for a separation between religious affairs and state

affairs because they might turn out into “Lecherous humors”. For instance, Marshall Grossman comments on the above quoted verses saying that:

It should be noted that Donne's satirical description of Catholic reverence of its ancient tradition is framed so as to implicate those for whom loyalty to the crown trumps the question of religion. If the former obey the pope because he sits on Peter's throne, the latter are on no more substantial ground obeying the prince. Catholic fidelity to the trappings of Rome is thus a mirror image of abject loyalty to the insignia of monarchy.⁶ (n.p.)

The debate gets more engaging as the poem unfolds. The poet continues to argue as follows:

Graius staves still at home here, and because
Some Preachers, vile ambitious bauds, and lawes
Still new like fashions, bid him thinke that shee
Which dwels with us, is onely perfect, hee
Imbraceth her, whom his Godfathers will
Tender to hyim, being tender, as Wards still
Take such wives as their Guardias offer, or
Pay valewes . . . (lines 55-62)

Another fictive character is introduced in line 55: Graius. According to Grossman, Graius represents “Erastians who preferred to leave the choice of religion to the monarch”⁷. The persona criticizes the passivity of thought of this group as they blindly follow their preachers without the minute doubt or questioning. Indeed, “Mirreus, Crants, and Graius embrace different dispensations, but they have in common a faith that avoids confrontation with doubt.”⁸ They all depend upon “external authorities” to decide for them to what religion they should adhere rather than depending upon their individual conscience or intuitive intelligence:

... Carelesse Phrygius doth abhorre
All, because all cannot be good, as one
Knowing some women whores, dares marry none.

Another stance is represented by Phrygius who, very much like his previously mentioned fellows, “avoids this stressful confrontation”⁹ with his own conscience. He is rather “Carelesse” about the whole matter because he believes that it would add no good to one's life.

On the opposite side of Phrygius's stance, we find Graccus who thinks that all religions are varied but alike:

Graccus loves all as one, and thinkes that so
As women do in divers countries goe
In divers habits, yet are still one kinde,
So doth, so is Religion; and this blind-
Nesse too much light breeds; but unmoved thou
Of force must one, and forc'd but one allow.

Graccus's stance sounds very much like what we call nowadays universalism. Donne here employs again women in his simile as he did when describing Phrygius's stance, but pejoratively with the latter and positively with the former. Hence, Donne is personifying religion through the similes he suggests. In other words, a good religion is very much like a good woman and vice-versa. Yet, still unsatisfied with this stance, Donne's persona comments that "this blind- / Nesse too much light breeds". He emphasizes that this stance is invalid because one shall stick to just one single religion. All these stances emphasize the sense of bewilderment and the loss of the sense of religious identity both individually and collectively.

Catholicism: The Foremost Deceit

As Satire III continues to unfold, it reveals more clearly Donne's apostasy. For instance, after arguing the different religious stances that he presented through the different fictive characters he inserted in the poem, the persona seems to be puzzled with all these stances (i.e., of the previously mentioned fictive characters) and defers to another thought:

And the right; aske thy father which is shee,
Let him aske his; though truth and flashood bee
Neare twins, yet truth a little elder is;
Be busie to seeke her, believe mee this,
Hee's not of none, nor worst, that seekes the best.

In this passage, the speaker urges his addressee to ask their ancestors about true religion. He also emphasizes that ancestry has more access to truth since "though truth and flashood bee / Neare twins, yet truth a little elder is" because experience and maturity both matter when it comes to thinking and mental procession of truth:

To adore, or scorne an image, or protest,
May all be bad; doubt wisely; in strange way
To stand inquiring right, is not to stray;
To sleepe, or runne wrong, is On a huge hill,

Cragged, and steep, Truth stands, and hee that will
Reach her, about must, and about must goe;
And what the hills suddenness resists, winne so;
Yet strive so, that before age, deaths twilight,
Thy soule rest, for none can worke in that night.

The poem's speaker believes that attitudes do not matter as much as questioning and doubt do because they are the right path to take in order to make the best decision. He even assumes that wherever thinking takes our consciousness we are never going "to stray". The persona places truth "On a huge hill" and one must have a great sense of perseverance in order to pass all the obstacles he might face in order to reach for it. Indeed, a sample obstacle he presents is the "suddenness" which means the steepness of the way to Truth. Andrew Hadfield comments on the lines saying that "Truth, he informs us, is hard to reach; [...] Truth is almost impossible to understand" (Hadfield 55) as obstacles may blur our vision.

Therefore, the key to salvation is making the right choice before it is too late, or before death, as the poem continues to reveal:

To will, implies delay, therefore now doe:
Hard deeds, the bodies paines; hard knowledge too
The mindes indeavours reach, and mysteries
Are like the Sunne, dazzling, yet plainte to all eyes.
Keep the truth which thou hast found; men do not stand
In so ill case here that God hath with his hand
Sing'd Kings blanck-charters to kill whom they hate,
Nor are they Vicars, but hangmen to Fate. (lines 85-92)

In these lines, the persona urges his interlocutor and preaches to him that there shall be no delays to motivate his consciousness and take his path because it is not "travelling hopefully" that matters, it is rather the arrival that matters. "Therefore now doe" the persona emphasizes his urges to his addressee, while there is still time. The journey in the search of truth and worthiness of each religion is pretty much tiring for the mind as the persona acknowledges. But once you reach the destiny your consciousness appreciates it would be "like the Sunne, dazzling, yet plainte to all eyes". In line 89, the persona warns that truth must be kept to oneself and not shared with others because it would not be tolerated especially by men of authority (kings, for instance) because if ever your thoughts contradict with theirs, you shall face death. This is very much the case for John Donne who seems to recall the incident that happened with his ancestor Thomas More, who, for speaking out

his mind,¹⁰ was executed. Therefore, Donne seems to be fixated on this traumatic event as if he is still “faced by it as an immediate task which has not been dealt with.” (Freud, *Intr* 315)

Donne implicitly expresses his fear of facing the same destiny:
Foole and wreth, wilt thou let thy Soule be tyed
To mans lawes, by which she shall not be tried
At the last day? Oh, will it then boot thee
To say a Philip, or a Gregory,
A Harry, or a Martin taught thee this?
Is not this excuse for mere contraries,
Equally strong? Cannot both sides say so?
That thou mayest rightly obey power, her bounds know;
Those past, her nature, and name is chang'd; to be
Then humble to her is idolatrie.

Here the speaker continues to urge that one shall not abide by the law because God will not judge people according to the laws of their rulers but, rather, according to His law. This statement marks an implicit scorn of the hierarchical classification and the medieval belief consisting in the monarchic representation of God on Earth. Thus, as man's laws cannot reach thoughts, then one's consciousness is free to dwell wherever it wants. But, if one follows the crowd, he would be damned because he knows where Truth dwells and chose to stay astray. Consequently, one would be considered more sinful than a pagan. A final duality may be spotted in these lines which is the faithful and the pagan. The latter is privileged over the first as his consciousness is freer.

In the same vein, the poet continues to argue:
As streames are, Power is; those blest flowers that dwell
At the rough streames calme head, thrive and do well,
But having left their roots and themselves given loss
To the streames tyrannous rage, alas, are driven
Through mills, and rockes, and woods, at last, almost
Consum'd in going, in the sea are lost:
So perish Soules, which more chuse mens unjust
Power from God claym'd, then God himselfe to trust.

In this section of the poem, the persona likens power to a stream of water and draws a metaphor that likens man of true religion with flowers. If the stream is calm, the persona urges his addressee to blossom just like a flower does; but if the stream is rough and tumultuous, then

pretend that you go with the flow but never lose faith because God always protects the blessed souls which glorify his power over any other power. At this level, another duality arises: power vs. submissiveness. Submissiveness is privileged over power as it guarantees survival.

Therefore, we may assume that Donne, by remaining enigmatically silent about the declaration of his religious affliction, is being deceitful to himself and to his *entourage*. But, his poems, especially “Satyre III”, “bear the marks of a religious crisis, and one that has not yet sunk exhaustedly into the stock of past experience, but is active upon the turns and conflicts of thought” (Carey 45). Not only that, but the poet also glosses his deceits by trying to convince his readers that he himself is puzzled in making his choice of the true religion. For instance, Hadfield states that “‘Satyre III’ deals with the incessant search for true religion “and the apparently impossible task of sorting out the grain from the chaff. The persona expresses the fear that new developments in religious observance are no more than “fashions” (line 57), as superficial in their way as the whims of courtly behaviour” (55).

Ultimately, then, “being born into a persecuted and understandably embittered Catholic minority impressed on the young Donne a perception of religion as an essentially divisive force” (Oliver 18). The notion of “divisive force” functions on two different levels. The first is the social division that prohibits Catholics from ascending on the socio-economic ladder, thus preserving a rigid social order. The second level is political because Catholics were banned from the political arena. Satire III might be considered as a normal result of the religious shifts the country experienced; therefore, it raises doubt about religious truth. The poem was considered by many a critic as the most obvious declaration of non-conformity to Anglicanism that Donne ever performed in his writing activity. This non-conformity includes a religious and a political sense. His sympathy for Catholicism is highly apparent as he twice associated it with the word “father”. Donne not only seems to be nostalgic to the memory of his father, but also to his teachings, to the only link that ties them together and that remained after his death: his religion. Yet, ironically, he had to get rid of the “old” rags of Catholicism and let his ambition flourish under the auspices of Protestantism.

Conclusion

Having this thorough analysis of the third satire (“Satyre III”) at hand, we can draw up some assumptions. The first assumption, or deceit, as it may be called, is that Satyre III seems to bear great

resemblance to Donne's later prose work entitled *Pseudo-Martyr* in the aspect that both explicitly propagandize for Protestantism but implicitly defend Catholicism and bear great sympathy to it. All this engenders that it was not out of votaries that Donne wrote these lines but he wanted to intertwine his Logos, pathos and ethos, as they constitute the main modes of persuasion, in defending the true faith; the faith that he tried to hide and protect: Catholicism. This idea is enhanced especially when we come to study the spotted binary oppositions I discussed in the analysis with reversed centers. By reversing the centers, i.e. of the binary oppositions, Donne seems to deconstruct the religious reality / image he is dissatisfied with and break free from his traumatic fixation on his past. If such thoughts were expressed overtly, they would be detected as dangerous to the stability of the political and religious systems. Indeed, the political discourse had been highly religious in its core, and equated the practice of Catholicism to high treason as I was discussing earlier in the first part of this paper.

To conclude, Donne seems to avoid direct confrontation with his religious choices and prefers vague hints like the ones we have been discussing through the analysis of "Satyre III" or what he wrote "in a letter to his friend Sir Henry Goodyer, Donne wrote simply that 'Religion is Christianity'" (Shell and Hunt 65). He himself acknowledged that he underwent a long period marked by agnosticism. Therefore, no one can draw a firm assumption on how long it took him to settle himself down with the new faith. But what might seem quite sure is that this period of uncertainty and intense fixation on past traumas was at its utmost during the 1590s. Donne expressed his own religious hesitancy and puzzlement through the below-quoted statement:

I used to inordinate haste nor precipitation in binding my conscience to any local religion...And although I apprehended well enough that this irresolution not only retarded my fortune, but also bred some scandal and endangered my spiritual reputation by laying me open to many misinterpretations, yet all these respects did not transport me to any violent and sudden determination till I had, to the measure of my poor wit and judgment surveyed and digested the whole body of divinity controverted between ours and the Roman Church (Donne Pseudo 1-2).

This quote along with the previously analyzed poem (i.e. "Satyre III") set the tone for defining the main tenets of a true faith in the eyes

of Donne's persona whose mind sounds torn between two faiths. But, as Donne contests "ours and the Roman Church" it becomes clear that "ours" refers to Anglicanism. This does not deny that it might be a simple way to propagandize for Anglicanism to reach his Ambitions which is ironically true and which affirms the ironical intentions of "Satyre III."

Briefly, Donne was a Catholic in heart and flesh with a Protestant cloak. In other words, Protestantism is only a means to reach for his ambitions and a means of survival; from this perspective Donne can be considered as highly opportunistic. But mainly, it seems that Donne's fixation on the death of his great infamous ancestor Sir Thomas More, whose vision of humanism as political activism lead to his execution along with other Catholic relatives, made him learn a bitter lesson. This lesson is a social construct filtrated from the collective trauma lived by the Catholic community of Donne's entourage and crystallized by Donne which consisted in adjusting to the circumstances, even deceitfully.

Notes

¹According to Alexander, Enlightenment trauma is one of the versions of Lay Trauma theory along with the Psychoanalytic one. It refers to an understanding which “suggests that trauma is a kind of rational response to abrupt change, whether at the individual or social level” (3).

²“In theory, the cost of conscience in Elizabethan England was staggering; fines were set at 12d per day in 1559, and increased to £20 per month in 1581” (Shell and Hunt 69; also see 38).

³The words in Italics are Alexander's emphasis not mine; yet, the emphasis goes perfectly with the objectives of the paper.

⁴The dates of the imprisonment and death of John Donne's uncle and brother are very much disputed by the bard's biographers like John Carey, Izaak Walton and others. But all suggested dates fall within the interval (1585-1595).

⁵For more details about the British international tentional relations please consult Hirman Morgan's “British Policies before the British State.”

⁶For more details on Grossman's arguments about Donne's religious opinions please consult: Grossman, Marshall. *The Seventeenth Century Literature Handbook*.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Thomas More contradicted Henry VIII's decision of establishing his own Church (which later came to be known as the Anglican Church) and refused to take the Oath of Supremacy.

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A Review of *The First Ghosts: Most Ancient of Legacies*, by renowned Assyriologist Irving Finkel

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Dr. Irving Finkel admits in his newest book *The First Ghosts: Most Ancient of Legacies* that he has never seen a ghost (8). However, from the earnest attestations of otherwise reliable people in modern times all the way back to the preponderance of ancient writings addressing the subject, there is little doubt that ghosts have interested humans since the earliest of times. From this perspective, Finkel takes a close look at a selection of written evidence from one of the first civilizations in ancient Mesopotamia to establish the beginnings of these beliefs and to trace how these ideas and practices evolved from the oldest known extant inscriptions to the pre-classical era.

Finkel is a renowned philologist and Assyriologist, and he serves as Assistant Keeper (curator) of the British Museum's Department of the Middle East. He specializes in cuneiform studies and the history of board games, according to information on the British Museum's website. Finkel oversees translating the museum's collection of over 130,000 cuneiform tablets largely derived from the excavations of the library of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh, which essentially form the basis of modern Assyriology, including the very tablet that a young museum assistant named George Smith translated as an Assyrian version of the biblical flood narrative (Scott 2014). Finkel himself translated a tablet that became the basis of his book *The Ark Before Noah: Decoding the Story of the Flood*, which received much media attention with its release in 2014. Finkel's latest work, *The First Ghosts*, was published in 2021 in Great Britain by Hodder & Stroughton, but he shared some of his book research in a live-streamed talk in November 2020 (available now via YouTube recording through the *Archeology Now* site), explaining then that book publication had been delayed due to issues related to COVID.

The book tracks the human belief in "ghosts" from the very first written records concerning them, namely cuneiform writings from ancient Mesopotamia, and takes readers through the evolution of beliefs about and handling of the phenomenon in the pre-classical times. Finkel responsibly makes clear his stance on ghosts in his author's note,

as well as the resulting approach that he takes to the information he is relating. He states, for instance:

There is no book in existence in any modern language that even begins to cover all we know about Mesopotamian ghosts, but there are extraordinary riches within these pages to surprise the interested reader. I have tried to write with understanding about the people and the ghosts of Mesopotamian antiquity in their own terms: in their world, persons saw ghosts all around them and no one individual disbelieved anyone else. (11)

In other words, he seeks to fill a literary gap, but does not proclaim to have here written an all-encompassing work that will do that *en totem*, but one that will introduce subject matter that can be further explored, all in the context of the ancient Mesopotamians' unapologetically unquestioned belief in the existence of ghosts as a phenomenon that must be dealt with via very specific means.

He begins with the most primitive archeological finds that suggest at least an idea of some kind of life after death and articulates the earliest known extant written reference to ghosts in the ancient Mesopotamian records. The book continues in such a manner, using both information garnered from archeological finds, especially ancient burials that suggest prevailing ideas about life after death, as well as corresponding inscriptions. Finkel also takes care to indicate similarities and differences in the burial practices of elites and rulers versus the average, "everyday" Mesopotamian.

Most interestingly, Finkel describes the incantations and practices that were prescribed for various ghost "problems" in the ancient world. These really read like recipes, with very precise step-by-step directions on not only how to handle unwanted ghosts, but also how to prevent such visitations to begin with, including which Gods or demons may be invoked to help. For those interested in philology, especially since this information is obtained from some of the first words known to be written, Finkel does not shrink from introducing the reader to some ancient Sumerian and Babylonian words. In the final chapter, which he entitles, "User's Guide: Telling Your Ghost from Your Demon," he further explains this idea by sharing the Sumerian and Akkadian words for ghost, "gedim" and "etemmu," respectively, and for demon, "udug," and "utukku," respectively (240). Demons, in fact, can be differentiated from ghosts by the fraction of divinity contained in their makeup, as can be evidenced by the way the term is depicted in

cuneiform, using the fractions and signs to indicate that a being with one-third divinity and two-thirds divinity can exist (242-43). This explanation and others give the reader a more precise understanding of the beliefs and how they are reflected in the very terminology used. So, in addition to getting a glance at the primary texts, readers will come away with an introduction to the related vocabulary and etymology.

While this is not the first work that addresses the belief in the afterlife, ghosts, or demons in ancient Mesopotamia, it has the dual advantages of being more comprehensive and more accessible than many others. For example, Walter Faber's *Lamaštu. An Edition of the Canonical Series of Lamashtu Incantations and Rituals and Related Texts from the Second and First Millennia B.C.*, published in 2014, is a valuable addition to scholarship in this area, but is more narrow in scope and more academic in format. Similarly, the earlier *Magico-Medical Means of Treating Ghost-Induced Illnesses in Ancient Mesopotamia* by JoAnn Scurlock, published in 2006, addresses a specific type of belief and divination related to medical issues. Finkel's mentor, W.G. Lambert, to whom this current work is dedicated, is considered a foremost authority in Mesopotamian studies, but his work focused more on religion and mythology in general, especially the Babylonian Flood Story (Atra-hasis). Finkel's study augments this body of literature with a focus on the concepts held by ancient Mesopotamians about ghosts in particular, referring to specific texts and placing each within their locale and time-period.

Not only does the work take research into a more nuanced area, but Finkel has the advantage of having immediate access to the actual tablets to which he refers. As the curator of the British Museum's prized and unrivaled collection of over 130,000 cuneiform tablets, Finkel has rare, unfettered access to these (very) primary texts. Further, he has been intimately familiar with these texts for many years, with his tenure at the British Museum beginning in 1979. His information comes very firsthand, as he has no need to rely on others' translations, since he translated each of the tablets used in the book himself (Finkel, *First Ghosts* 11). Combined with his aforementioned cuneiform tutelage via one of the leading authorities (Lambert), his access and experience make it difficult to name a scholar more qualified to speak on the subject than Finkel.

In addition, Finkel has the further distinction of being generally considered an entertaining speaker, which comes through in his writing

as well. He also narrates the corresponding audiobook with characteristic panache, using voices of other collaborators to narrate directly-quoted texts, making it an even more lively listen. Those familiar with his other live talks--including his presentation to The Oriental Institute, "The Ark Before Noah: A Great Adventure," his British Museum events such as "The Great Library of Nineveh with Irving Finkel," or his much acclaimed *YouTube* Royal Game of Ur board game match with mathematician Tom Scott and episodes of his *YouTube* show "Curator's Corner"--will probably immediately recognize that in this publication Finkel is similarly easy to follow in print and enjoyable to hear via the audiobook version. Like these live presentations and YouTube productions, this book likewise has the dual qualities of being accessible to lay readers as well as being sufficiently thorough in breadth and depth to be beneficial to academic research and studies on the subject.

The only detraction to the average reader may be the length of the book, primarily due to his inclusion of the exact language of many primary texts that have informed this work; however, to have omitted these would have detracted from the aforementioned asset of depth, and most who may find it tedious will probably also find it easy enough to skim or skip any of the texts in which they are not interested in the minutia. Most scholars, however, would find this level of detail enlightening and more exact. In fact, this book is probably most beneficial to interdisciplinary scholars – or those scholars who may not study Assyriology in particular but have a working knowledge of ancient cultures and want to know more about not only the ancient Mesopotamian beliefs regarding ghosts, but even about the daily life of those in the ancient Middle East in general. The digital edition of the book even has very handy hyperlinks, making it easy (or not, depending on one's preference) to access notes and cross-references.

The British Museum's website still features a video Finkel did prior to the release of the book called "Mesopotamian Ghostbusting with Irving Finkel," complete with a stylized picture of himself in the famous "ghostbusters" logo of the classic American movie of the same name. This equal mix of fun and scholarship makes this latest book accessible to more types of scholars and enthusiasts while still maintaining the level of scholarly rigor one would expect from a curator at one of the most prestigious museums of the world. With a print version,

a digital version, and an audiobook available, a reader has several mediums from which to choose. In one of his final statements on that matter, Finkel reflects some language that would be relevant to those familiar with biblical writings in recounting a Babylonian saying oft used as an addendum to magical procedural instructions: “He who can see will see; he who can hear will hear” (227-28). Contrasting here the modern skepticism and habit of discrediting or disbelieving witnesses, Finkel relates the ancient civilizations' practical acceptance of “ghosts” as visible spirits (227-28). His own words sum up his endeavor in this book well, which he ultimately undeniably achieves: “This, the first ghost system that we can document in history, sets the stage in many ways for what came later” (223). As he also relates, it is a “simple matter” to show that a belief in ghosts persists (223), and now with this work, we have a glance at what may be the foundations of our modern fascination with the same.

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