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**THE YOUTH OF THE NATION: THE SPACE-TIME OF ADOLESCENCE IN  
THE TURN OF THE CENTURY UNITED STATES**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

LITERATURE

by

**Albert P. Connelly, IV**

September 2013

The Dissertation of Albert P. Connelly, IV  
is approved:

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Professor Chris Connery, chair

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Professor Susan Gillman

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Professor Rob Wilson

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Tyrus Miller  
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies



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The Youth of the Nation: The Space-Time of Adolescence in the Turn of the Century  
United States

Albert P. Connelly, IV

**Abstract**

This dissertation argues that at the turn into the twentieth century a constellation of genres and disciplines including genetic psychology, race science, political rhetoric, and romance constructed youth as a spatio-temporal category. While youthfulness as an abstraction had already been yoked to the rise of capitalist democracy, these discourses fundamentally shaped a youth concept specific to the material and ideological demands of the moment, one with far reaching consequences for future generations of the young. A new subject position emerged, abstracted from statistics and anecdotal evidence, postulated by scientific theory, and shaped by the logic of cultural production in an age of incorporation. Youth, in the sense that it was used during the period, served to symbolize a range of experiences and conceptions as a generalized identity, one that, while open to variations and following different trajectories, never fully accounted for what it purported to describe. A key focus of post-Darwinian sciences of human development, youth became the protagonist of biopolitical concepts such as race, nation, empire, and “the West.”

For my family, who read to me.

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## Introduction: Commemoration and Crisis

### I. Centennial

Over the course of the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia ten million people crowded around the Corliss Walking-Beam Engine-- seven hundred tons and forty feet high, generating 1,400 horsepower. As a machinic totem for masculine power the Corliss seemed to offer evidence that the nation had come of age: ““What the country really celebrated”” at the Exposition, a character in Henry Blake Fuller’s *With the Procession* remarks glibly, ““however unconsciously, was the ending of its minority and the assumption of full manhood with all its perplexities and cares”” (qtd. in Kazin 24). The May 10 opening of the International Exhibition of Arts, Manufactures and Products of the Soil and Mine was damp. Rain fell for hours while a review of troops including the State Fencibles and the Weccacoe Cornet Band tramped through the mud. As the crowd continued to gather, the Brazilian national hymn (one of eighteen played at the ceremonies) accompanied the portly Dom Pedro II’s arrival. He gestured with his top hat at the boisterous crowd-- praise indeed for the Emperor of the world’s last slave state-- his consort trailing at his side wearing a dress of “a rich lavender silk, en traine, with satin bonnet and delicate lace shawl” (Ingram 80). The orchestra played a special number, the “Centennial Grand March,” composed by Richard Wagner, at the conclusion of which a bare-headed Bishop Simpson arose to give a lengthy thanks to God for allotting to his “chosen people” this portion of the earth (“Thy footstool”) whose “unnumbered products and untold treasures” so enriched the nation (82). Elaborating his prayer to include “labor saving machinery,” and “books and periodicals” he asked a blessing upon President Grant,



Secretary Fish, the Supreme Court, the members of the Centennial Commission and “all the nations of the earth” with special reference to those “come to exhibit the triumphs of genius and art in the development of industry and the progress of civilization” (81-86). Above all, intoned the reverend, “May the new century be better than the past” (85).

With this final adjuration at an end, the crowd shuffled expectantly to the “Centennial Hymn,” a prelude to the official handover of the Centennial buildings by John Welsh, the President of the Centennial Board of Finance, a man with side-whiskers so regal they overlapped the lapels of his coat. Accepting this charge was the President of the Centennial Commission, Joseph Hawley, who thanked President Welsh amid great cheering and deferred to Dudley Buck, who then led the Centennial Chorus in his own composition, the “Centennial Cantata,” featuring lyrics by Sidney Lanier. The performance completed, President Hawley rose again to present the Exhibition to President Grant, referring to “the remarkable and prolonged disturbances in the finances and industries of the country” occasioned by the crash of ’73 which had made the organization and funding of the Exposition such an arduous task (89). His popularity not yet tarnished by the Whiskey Ring, the Credit Mobilier scandal, Black Friday, and the Sanborn Incident-- though the neologism “Grantism” already denoted graft and greed-- President Grant spoke of the labor of building a nation. According to the *Centennial Scrapbook* his speech invoked an epic of “felling forests, subduing prairies, building dwellings, factories, ships, docks, warehouses, roads, canals, machinery, etc., etc.” (91). With a nod to visiting dignitaries Grant

looked out over the crowd-- as many as 186,272 people (110,000 of whom held free passes)-- and announced, "I declare the International Exhibition now open" (92).

A year later in the course of the first nationwide strike American workers in West Virginia, Illinois, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, unconvinced of the felicity of progress, felt the force of state violence when federal troops and militia fired upon them. Beginning in Martinsburg, West Virginia and lasting 45 days,

when the great railroad strikes of 1877 were over, a hundred people were dead, a thousand people had gone to jail, 100,000 workers had gone on strike, and the strikes had roused into action countless unemployed in the cities. More than half the freight on the nation's 75,000 miles of track had stopped running at the height of the strikes. (Zinn 246).<sup>1</sup>

The antagonism between workers and owners intensified in the years that followed, and from the patchy statistics gathered concerning industrial conflict it appears that between 1881 and 1905 there were 36,757 strikes involving 6,728,048 workers, many of whom were immigrants (Montgomery 99). Of the 14,359 common laborers employed by Carnegie's Pittsburgh plants, for example, 11,694 were recent arrivals from South and Central Europe who earned below-subsistence weekly wages of \$12.50.<sup>2</sup> Such conditions, their employer wrote in 1889, were the product of "the law of competition," a mechanism which in the long term benefitted "the race," because "it is to this law that we owe our wonderful material development," (26). As the basis of social evolution, he affirmed, prevailing inequalities were to be celebrated rather than simply tolerated. After all, Carnegie argued, it is "upon the sacredness of property [that] civilization itself depends."

<sup>1</sup> For a contemporary (and reactionary) account of the strike see *Annals of the Great Strikes in the United States* (Chicago: CB Beach. 1877) by Joseph A. Dacus.

<sup>2</sup> See Herbert Gutman, "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America, 1815-1919. *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 78, No. 3, (Jun., 1973), pp. 531-588.

Others were not so sanguine about the effects of capitalist industrialization, particularly in terms of the need for immigrant labor to feed the rapidly expanding manufacturing sector. Rena Atchison's study, *Un-American Immigration: Its Present Effects and Future Perils*, worried that foreign born workers were transforming "the native land of Washington, Lincoln and Grant [into] a sewer for the social filth of Europe [by] transplanting to American soil the industrial serfdom of Europe" (13). Widespread anxieties about national character and cohesion were obvious even to visitors. Traveling through the United States in 1890, Rudyard Kipling sounded a satirical caution:

The bond between the States is of an amazing tenuity. So long as they do not absolutely march into the District of Columbia, sit on the Washington statues, and invent a flag of their own, they can legislate, lynch, hunt negroes through swamps, divorce, railroad, and rampage as much as ever they choose. They do not need knowledge of their own military strength to back their genial lawlessness (113).

Despite his deepening annoyance at being complimented repeatedly on the charm of his "English accent," Kipling's views on the United States are not entirely negative. He is struck by the amiability of those he encounters, from the members of San Francisco's Bohemian Club to a bunco operator who attempts to lure him into a fixed poker game. Yet the incessant optimism of his acquaintances begins to grate pretty quickly, particularly when it takes the form of breathless pronouncement. Stopping over in Chicago he chats with a cab driver who extols the anarchic development of the city in the long wake of its famous fire as "proof of progress," a statement, Kipling tells his readers, indicating "the cabman... had been reading his newspaper, as every intelligent American should. The papers tell their clientele in

language fitted to their comprehension that the snarling together of telegraph-wires, the heaving up of houses, and the making of money is progress” (94). Extending his visit a few days Kipling begins to realize that such journalistic cliches have not only entered popular consciousness but have in fact come to dominate it:

All that Sunday I listened to people who said that the mere fact of spiking down strips of iron to wood, and getting a steam and iron thing to run along them was progress, that the telephone was progress, and the net-work of wires overhead was progress. They repeated their statements again and again (98).

Kipling’s anecdote echoes another related by de Tocqueville, who asked a sailor why American ships seemed to be “built so as to last but for a short time” (*Democracy in America* 545). There was no point in building a vessel that would last, the sailor explained, because the rapid improvement of nautical technology would soon render it obsolete. From this exchange de Tocqueville concluded that in the United States “it can hardly be believed how many facts naturally flow from the philosophical theory of the indefinite perfectibility of man, or how strong an influence it exercises even on men who, living entirely for the purposes of action and not of thought, seem to conform their actions to it, without knowing anything about it.”

Knut Hamsun’s account of his two year sojourn in the US, *The Cultural Life of Modern America*, is even more dour than Kipling’s. Surveying New York he notes “the intense noise, the restlessness, the hectic life in the streets, the nervous, bold dispatch with which things move along everywhere” and concludes that it is not the nation’s institutions that galvanize Americans into action but ruthless economic necessity (5). “Everywhere there is the same bustling hurrah in things, the same

steam-hammer din, the same clamorous activity in all that goes on,” he writes. The immigrant family who “lived on two crowns a day” in Norway “needs a dollar and a half” in New York “and for the great majority it takes considerable doing” simply to stay afloat (6). The frenetic economic life of the city, for Hamsun, possesses the character of a relentless assault on the senses: “People are in a constant state of alarm; they feel pressured... astonished... confused.... They get upset if they are simply going to get a new pair of shoes, dreading that they may not know enough English to haggle.” This anxiety, provoked by a sense of inadequacy, of not yet being fluent in the language or customs of the assimilated and native-born, rapidly contorts into disbelief at “Americans’ enormous patriotism,” a love of country so pronounced it seems to the author deranged. “It is incredible,” Hamsun complains, “how naively cocksure Americans are in their belief that they can whip any enemy whatsoever. There is no end to their patriotism; it is a patriotism that never flinches, and it is just as loudmouthed as it is vehement” (7). Sucked into the life of the city as if by centrifugal force, derided as greenhorns, pummeled by market forces, immigrants and visitors are “frequently amazed at the ignorance, the gross unenlightenment on which this national pride rests” (8). Americans seem to be entirely insulated against even the very existence of life beyond the national borders, and “this ignorance of others... pervades every social class, all ages, everything” (9). It is a disregard so enormous that Hamsun can only conclude that it must be self-consciously cultivated, a collective narcissism ranking as “one of the national vices of the American people.” Americanization, then, proceeds at a breakneck pace. Socio-economic pressures-- the bludgeon of national pride and the desperate rush to survive-- push immigrants “to

erase every last trace” of their origins (11). Marinated in nationalist fervor, relative newcomers begin to espouse the doctrine of reduced immigration, nativist sentiments which, for Hamsun, “are simply green fruits of American patriotism.... the result of the Americans’ strongly developed celestial belief in themselves” (13). For natural born citizens “penny-whistle patriotism has permeated their thinking since childhood, transforming a justifiable national pride into an unjustifiable arrogance that nothing and no one can shatter” (20). Even the poorest seem armored by this bulletproof complacency, perceiving “the aristocracy of fortunes, of accumulated capital” as a kind of divine hierarchy, a belief “the entire nation cultivates with out-and-out religious fervor,” one which smacks of “the medieval power of the ‘true’ aristocracy without possessing any of its nobility; crudely and brutally, it is a certain horsepower of economic invincibility.”

Written at the terminus of the first of two stunning surges in manufacturing (1884-1889 and 1899-1909) Hamsun’s metaphor for the magnitude of American capitalism blended seamlessly into the rhetoric of the Age of Energy. Over the course of the long 19th century-- from the 1780s until WWI-- American gross national product had increased at an average rate of 3.9% per year growing 175-fold. In the same period population grew by a factor of 40-- between the Civil War and US intervention in Europe alone 25 million immigrants arrived-- while capital stock rose 388-fold. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century the relative economic position of the United States-- now the largest producer of goods and services in the world, with a gross domestic product 2/3 as large as all the leading western

economies-- and the United Kingdom were reversed. What did it all mean? As Michel Beaud explains,

a fundamental mutation of capitalism was beginning: concentration and centralization of industrial capital, formation of trusts and national monopolies, and, inevitably, expansion onto a worldwide scale of the sphere of influence of the dominant capitalism, by means of trade and the exportation of capital, the formation of multinational groups and colonization. (156).

Yet such an assessment, as accurate as it is, lacks the immediacy of thoughts and sentiments provoked by the vagaries of everyday life. For the author of *A Literary History of America*, published one year into the twentieth century, the shocks of transformation seemed to indicate that “the world is passing through experience too confused, too troubled, too uncertain, for ripe expression; and America seems more and more growing to be just another part of the world” (518).<sup>3</sup>

## II. Historical Background

Many narratives seeking to generalize about the transformation of the United States in the years surrounding the turn of the century emphasize a favored trope of American historiography-- the inexorable tightening of society, the increasing rigidity of a social order embedded in the inflexible necessities of gargantuan economic forces.<sup>4</sup> Life, such histories illustrate, was becoming more determinate. And if the business cycles of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era were staggeringly erratic, plunging families into poverty and catapulting a new cohort of the ultra-rich upwards, scattering the waning ranks of yesterday’s “old stock” Anglo-Dutch elite, the hard

<sup>3</sup> Barrett Wendell, *A Literary History of America* (1901) NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Robert Wiebe’s classic *The Search for Order*.

facts of getting a living were irrefutable. The horizon of the possible, perpetually flushed and inviting according to a tenacious national myth-system, contracted as it expanded: radiating from the clutter of cramped tenements rail lines sliced through the farm country steppes of the middle border. The market-- in the early Republic not yet an ontology but an event-- was abstracted by financialization. The self-sufficient barter and haggle of the mercantile system gave way to mystifying financial instruments such as stock certificates and hypothecated bonds. What was once out in the open now receded into a fiduciary labyrinth blocked from the view of ordinary Americans. Is it any surprise then that the cultural and scientific values of verisimilitude and verifiability flourished in a period forged by invisible powers? A question as loaded as this is really a dubious declaration: the rise of the cult of realism was the socio-economic corollary of the dematerialization of the creation of wealth.

Yet even as the tokens of the occulted processes of accumulation proliferated, prestidigitating capital into the polished recesses of financial offices, industrial and finance capitalism visibly reconfigured human experience. Erstwhile bobbin-boy Carnegie might vanish to his Scottish castle across the Atlantic but he left a stern lieutenant on watch, and Henry Clay Frick, the wizard's apprentice who conjured Homestead, understood very well the significance of coke-field conditions and their effect on laborers. It is not accurate, then, to say that social life lost some of its substance with the rise of the Robber Barons' "reign of gilt." Still less that cultural modes such as realism or naturalism functioned to compensate for this spiritualization of matter. The period was characterized not only by an appetite for the real and the experience of a financial uncanny, but by a persistent hunger for romance in the midst



of brute corporeality. If this was the age of Madame Blavatsky, of communion with the dead and fascination with fairies, it was also an era when the hieroglyphs of germ-plasm inscribed in the blood determined the fate of the Million. For the freedmen of the South solid ground mattered most, because owning it was believed to be the foundation of citizenship, a theory proven by negation with the spread of the neo-feudal serfdom of sharecropping. “On the day of their freedom,” Charles Beard wrote in 1921 of the manumitted, “they stood empty-handed, without property, without tools, without homes, hardly the possessors of the clothes on their backs” (264).

In 1850 100 million acres of the continental United States had been cleared for farming. By 1900-- 38 years after the Homestead Act, which privatized public land at a rate comparable only to the massive government largesse shown to the rail roads-- that figure had doubled, and just ten years later in 1910 300 million acres of land were open for agricultural production. Yet the effect of the expansion of cultivation was compounded by greenbelt mechanization and the rise of what a later age would call agri-business and was then known as the “Bonanza farm.” While Delta sharecroppers labored using methods not significantly different from their neolithic forebears, “by 1898 McCormick was producing combines that cut a swath 28 feet wide and turned out three sacks a minute, each holding 115 pounds of grain” (Carlson 32). In one hour, then, seven men could reap enough wheat to produce 20,700 pounds of grain. What’s more, by the turn into the twentieth century a mere fifteen man-hours were required to produce a crop of wheat. Using a milling process improved by intellectual property theft, American farms generated a food surplus that became an enormously profitable commodity in global trade, a circuit of production, exchange,

and accumulation so gigantic that it seemed to beckon for a poet. Frank Norris raced to fill that position, attempting to track the pathways of capital and raw commodities in his projected *Trilogy of the Wheat*. “It was Empire,” he wrote in *The Pit*,

the restless subjugation of all this central world of lakes and prairies. Here midmost in the land, beat the Heart of the Nation, whence inevitably must come its immeasurable power, its infinite, inexhaustible vitality. Here of all her cities, throbbled the true life-- the true power and spirit of America: gigantic, crude with the crudity of youth, disdainful rivalry; sane and healthy and vigorous; brutal in its ambition, arrogant in the new-found knowledge of its giant strength, prodigal of its wealth, infinite in its desires. (62-63).

The average mill in Minneapolis having outstripped an average output of 274 barrels of flour a day in 1874 to 1,837 barrels at the end of the 1880s, industrial agriculture increased in size and ambition. Firms such as Washburn and Pillsbury began to vertically integrate their mills in the 1890s, building grain elevators, developing new foods such as breakfast cereals, and branding their products (Gold Medal Flour). With the South wrested from economic dependency on Britain, the incorporation of America under northern capital advanced. Accordingly, the reverberations of the industrialization and financialization of the national economy were of a magnitude that sometimes provoked romance in those attempting to describe it. Years later, Ernest Ludlow Bogart would write that “the keynote of all American history... is found in the efforts of a virile and energetic people to appropriate and develop the wonderful natural resources of a new continent and there to realize their ideals of liberty and government” (vii).<sup>5</sup> America’s economic development, then, was tied to its republican institutions, which facilitated “free competition” even as they promoted political freedom. Such social structures were

<sup>5</sup> *The Economic History of the United States* (3rd ed. 1920)

peculiarly suited to ever-changing environmental conditions that, in turn, “compelled new adaptations and promoted ingenuity and energy of character.”

Inevitably the growth in agricultural production affected other sectors of the economy. Railcars were needed to deliver those hundred millions of bushels of wheat-- by 1910 a sixth of the total world output-- and thus factories to build them. The indispensable materials for this undertaking entailed a long chain of labor: the steel to build trains and lay track required puddlers to process iron ore pried from the ground by miners. The packing and canning industries expanded, as did the merchant fleet. Spurred by the demands of economies of scale-- “the American system”-- technological innovation proliferated. A corresponding cult of the inventor-entrepreneur embodied by Thomas Edison celebrated the ingenuity and iconoclasm of the laissez-faire ideal-type even as it effaced the armies of workers operating the trip-hammers and shear-presses of heavy industry.

“The American Jules Verne,” Luis Senarens, a Cuban-American teenager hired at 16 to write dime novels for publisher Frank Tousey, produced hundreds of “edisonades” devoted to the exploits of boy-inventors out of a lifetime total of probably 1,500 to 2,000 books. Initially writing under the house pseudonym Noname, Senarens produced 179 stories on the adventures of young genius Frank Reade, Jr., creator of such devices as an air ship, an electric submarine, and an anthropomorphic “steam wonder” capable of traveling as fast as a locomotive, among other marvels of transportation. Edison and his doppelgangers featured in dozens of scientific romances and dime novels, including *Tom Edison, Jr.’s Electric Sea Spider; or, The Wizard of the Submarine World* in which the protagonist-- ostensibly the son of the

historical person-- and a crew of "bright-looking young Yankees" battle Yellow Peril figure Kiang Ho, a Harvard educated "Mongolian" scientist who threatens to disrupt global shipping with his gang of Chinese pirates (qtd. in Ness, *Fantastic Victoriana*). Senarens's readers would also find confirmation of technological progress in the era's advertising culture and material artifacts. Interspersed with advertisements for pneumatic tires, nickelodeons, and breakfast cereals notices promising to restore youth "by electricity" touted treatments for neurasthenia. Such inventions indicate not only a growing youth market and modernity's vitality-sapping potential, but a dyschrony which thrust the young out of their normative development. Modernity's velocity-- newly spatialized by roller coasters, cinema's flicker-fusion effect, and other cultural accelerants-- retemporalized bio-social growth, threatening sexual precocity and unseasonable senescence. For G. Stanley Hall, a foundational figure of American psychology, this possibility was "one of the chief dangers" of adolescence, a period when "the sexual elements of soul and body" become uniquely vulnerable to "premature[...] and disproportiona[te]" development ("Universities and the Training of Professors" 304). Ideally, sexual drives "should ripen very slowly and with the least practicable consciousness." If not, the primal instinct

sucks up all that is vile in the environment and dwarfs every power of mind and body. Its desolation is chiefly wrought in the realm of feeling, causing emotional abnormalities, perversions, and defects. The heart is not whole. Life burns out into a premature old age... wretched and contemptible.<sup>6</sup>

### **III. The Age of Greenness**

<sup>6</sup> For a fuller discussion of precocity see Joseph Kett, "Curing the Disease of Precocity." *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 84, Supplement: *Turning Points: Historical and Sociological Essays on the Family* (1978), pp. 183-211

Over time youth has been assigned to specific locales even as its significance has expanded. G. Stanley Hall posited adolescence as a biological stage of life extending roughly between the ages of 14 and 24. A century later the United Nations defines youth in roughly the same terms, as an individual from 15 to 24 years old. The crucial difference, at once obvious, is the transition from the quasi-medical discourse of adolescence to the less distinct physio-social category of youth. As a cultural value youth has become so polymorphous and pervasive that it has lost denotative force. This in itself is a symptom of postmodernity's logic of fragmentation, of semiosis without history-- what Jameson characterizes as "the inner convulsions of the Sign" in a moment of advanced reification (197). Youth has become a property and a modality, one that seemingly may be acquired or conserved at will-- in short, a generalized value-- a sign whose signified threatens to dissolve into its signifier, and therefore functions accordingly as liquid cultural capital.

Yet looking back at the representation of youth in the late medieval period this abstraction of value can be read as a repetition with a difference. In European pictorial art before the advent of visual perspective a set of differentiae constituting "a constant code, flexible and incisive, that was partly inherited from Greco-Roman iconography" marked youth in distinction to children or adults (Pastoreau 229). The size of represented figures is the most frequent means of distinction, a method with a spatialized ideological content. In Pastoreau's phrasing, "the scale of sizes is in fact a scale of values. It underlines the power and weight of age, the respect that is its due, the power it possesses." The young of the Middle Ages-- or their simulacra at least-- literally take up less space.

Similarly, the position of figures within the field of the image function to grade ages and express disparities in social status. The decorative marginalia of illuminated manuscripts often feature foliage and monsters, establishing a kind of wild zone on the fringes of the text. A century after this innovation, as the practice became a full-blown fashion, illustrators began to populate the margins with young people at play. Alternately the young might be pushed to the front of heraldic images which operated according to a convention that equated the background with tradition and the foreground with the new. Beyond the size of topoi and their placement within images youth are represented by “minus attributes” such as the absence of either facial hair for boys or head-coverings for girls (233). The young are often depicted wearing shorter or close-fitting clothes, or lacking a key sartorial detail such as “fur, braid, [or] embroidery” (234).

On the other hand medical encyclopedias of that era promoted an enduring repertoire of commonplaces about the young and their bodies, according to a catalog of positive descriptors such as “handsome, light, smooth, fresh, healthy, smiling, slender, lively, and ‘nimble’” (234). In the moral economy of such representations defects of appearance in the young indicated a depraved character. The typical young virgin, according to Bartholomew English possessed a “warm and moist complexion. She [is] ‘clean of heart and body,’ pure ‘as the iris of an eye’... simple and ‘not talkative, with a fine countenance and delightfully dressed’; her soul [is] timid and shy, because she [is] ‘a virgin in the greenness of her age’” (235).<sup>7</sup> In contrast, images

<sup>7</sup> Consider this description in comparison with Hilma of *The Octopus*: “She wore a skirt of plain blue calico and a shirtwaist of pink linen, clean, trim; while her sleeves turned back to her shoulders, showed her large, white arms, wet with milk, redolent and fragrant with milk, glowing and resplendent in the early morning

of charivari or student life often used a variety of textures and colors to indicate rowdiness, spatializing noise visually. Pastoreau goes so far as to suggest that “pigmentary instability could correspond to symbolic instability” because green was a rather problematic color in terms of its ability to penetrate surfaces and remain “true” in tone (237).

The semiotics of the young centuries later has grown increasingly complicated as signs associated with youth flood the mediascape, and by their ubiquity encompass even those who are not chronologically young. This very nebulousness echoes the rudimentary quality of the category of youth in the medieval period. Fashion, for instance, as one of the most sensitive and mutable signifying systems, has visibly responded to the culturalization of youth and its proliferating representational power. One of the legacies of the 60s was a relaxation of manners, which included reformulating quotidian dress codes. Various sartorial articles-- particularly athletic clothing such as baseball caps, hoodies and trainers-- function as the slang of a language of fashion which articulates the semiotic centrality of the concept of youth. This development cuts in both directions: the age of the customers of chain stores such as Forever 21 ranges drastically even as tweens adopt styles that cultural conservatives argue would have been inconceivable in an earlier historical period. Like shirtwaists and bloomers, tights and spaghetti strap camisoles reframe the female body to the distress of parent culture and demonstrate sharply how popular perceptions of youth-- girls in particular-- are subject to an elastic yet heavily

light” (120). If this passage is an homage to Norris’s wife Jeanette Black, and a repetition of the quasi-Gibson Girl physical type appearing in virtually all of his novels (Flossie, Lloyd Searight, Travis Bessemer, et al) it is also a neomedievalist idealization of womanhood.

gendered moral code. “As an object of discipline and liberation,” Tera Hunter observes, “the body is a site where a society’s ideas about race, class, gender, and sexuality are constructed to give the appearance of being mandates of nature while actually conforming to cultural ideologies” (185). Accordingly, recent complaints that childhood as an institution has virtually evaporated, that girls and young women in particular have been “pornified”<sup>8</sup> and converted to objects of prurient public consumption, resonate across the history of modernity. “For some years,” the authors of *Young Working Girls* wrote in 1913, “there has been a gradual though appreciable tendency toward deterioration in moral tone among a great proportion of adolescent girls in tenement districts” (84).

Historians who would locate “the emergence of age groups between adolescence and marriage as a separate and more independent category of ‘youth,’ which in turn had a powerful impact on the arts and literature” further back than the postwar era often invoke the 1920s as a decade when the age-segmentation of activities seems to have been completed (Hobsbawm 169).<sup>9</sup> The middle class young attended college in larger numbers and gained increasing access to automobiles, enabling a semi-autonomy born of mobility. Jazz, and the dancing it solicited, raced young bodies, provoking a racially marked verbal idiom and a retemporalizing body language distinct from those of the older generations. The notion of generational consciousness itself, which Karl Mannheim ascribed to periods of social crisis in his

<sup>8</sup> See Pamela Paul’s *Pornified: How Pornography is Damaging Our Lives, Our Relationships, and Our Families*. New York: Henry Holt. 2005.

<sup>9</sup> See Paula Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s*.



1928 essay “On the Problem of Generations,” served to recontextualize youth identity from within and without, thus shaping its experience.

#### **IV. The Space-Time of Youth**

Even the roughest thumbnail sketch of *fin-de-siecle* youth would be incomplete absent reference to socio-historical processes such as industrialization, modernization, and rationalization. Given that burgeoning numbers were not the cause of its growing significance-- “between 1860 and 1920,” Aschenbaum notes, “the percent of the population between the ages of fifteen and thirty remained remarkably stable”-- the question of what led to fundamental changes in youth’s structural position must be asked (58). Determining factors including the proliferation of wage labor, compulsory education, technological improvements and their social effects<sup>10</sup> gathered momentum, disrupting traditional folk-ways, impelling internal migration, and innovating and respatializing material practices which produced new structures of feeling and thought. Whether they came from the shtetls of the Pale or American hamlets, the masses drawn into the cities birthed or brought children, consolidating young cohorts and contributing to the urban origins of youth culture.<sup>11</sup> According to Jane Addams, the city itself constituted a potentially dangerous playground, an obstacle course of lures and spectacles that played on the “spirit of

<sup>10</sup> The annihilation of space by time, the routinization of work, the fluorescence of regimes of leisure and consumption.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the immigrant origins of the “invention of adolescence” see Sarah Chinn’s *Inventing Modern Adolescence: the Children of Immigrants in Turn-of-the-Century America*, which argues that as a result of “the immigration boom... there were more young people in cities than ever before” (13) and that this population experienced a generational “rift” which influenced the framework for the interpretation of adolescence (174).

youth,” a characteristic she attributed not only to the children of immigrants but the boys of an earlier era who ran away to the whaling fleets.

This dissertation argues that at the turn of the century a constellation of genres and disciplines including genetic psychology, race science, political rhetoric, and romance constructed youth as a spatio-temporal category. While youthfulness as an abstraction had already been yoked to the rise of capitalist democracy, these discourses fundamentally shaped a youth concept specific to the material and ideological demands of the moment, one with far reaching consequences for future generations of the young. A new subject position emerged, abstracted from statistics and anecdotal evidence, postulated by scientific theory, and shaped by the logic of cultural production in an age of incorporation. Youth, in the sense that it was used during the period, served to symbolize a range of experiences and conceptions as a generalized identity, one that, while open to variations and following different trajectories, never fully accounted for what it purported to describe. A key focus of post-Darwinian sciences of human development, youth became the protagonist of biopolitical concepts such as race, nation, empire, and “the West.” In this regard romance was indispensable. As a historiographical template, a popular narrative of civilizational advancement, and a mass cultural modality linked to US imperialism it storied the era’s transformations and new knowledges.

Social identities imply narratives which spatialize and temporalize their subjects. The first chapter, “Rode Only Fast Trains,” addresses the time-space of youth in terms of mobility, a core theme of national identity. In this chapter nation and youth are identified by virtue of their association with values of dynamism and

change, an identification troubled by a figure of the dark obverse of American restlessness, the tramp. This chapter examines a loose grouping of texts gathered under the heading of “tramp literature,” an *ad hoc* genre which includes the ethnographies of Josiah Flynt and Nels Anderson; various social scientific studies of this social “problem”; memoirs of life on the road by Jim Tully, Jack London, and A-no. 1; and several tramp novels, including Lee O. Harris’ *The Man Who Tramps* and Horatio Alger’s *Tony the Tramp*. I introduce the notion of “types” so prevalent in the popular discourse of the era, distinguishing between different classes of the young transient poor. Categories such as the “road kid,” “prushun,” and “gay-cat” posit categories of youth drawn to tramping for a variety of reasons. Flynt and Anderson attempt to describe in quasi-sociological fashion the habits and motives of these populations while texts such as Charles Davenport’s *The Feebly Inhibited: Nomadism, or the Wandering Impulse with Special Reference to Heredity* take up the issue of mobility itself within a race science framework. I argue that youth symbolized the speed and scope of modernity in a multivalent manner, representing not only the promises of freedom of movement but its potentially disruptive power.

“Thridding the Maze,” the second chapter, focuses on youth through a critical lens purposefully emphasizing time at the expense of space. This chapter argues that the temporal dimensions of youth far exceed its obvious significance as a life-stage of individual growth. Instead, the adolescent white male-- particular to his kind yet metonymically universalist-- reckons with racial prehistory, time-traveling to the origins of the West, whose new vanguard is already coming to be recognized as US American. Youth is raced because race itself is a temporal category inextricable from

dominant ideologies of progress and development. Analyzing G. Stanley Hall's foundational work on adolescent psychology in conjuncture with reformist tracts and several scientific romances including Hall's own lost race story "The Fall of Atlantis," I argue that youth, race, and civilization unfold along circular temporalities. The highly plastic nomenclature of race signifies overlapping categories: "the race" may mean whiteness, the nation, the Anglophone world, or humanity itself. The chapter examines the ways Ernst Haeckel's thesis-- "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny"-- modeled not only adolescent becoming but civilizational progress, national development, and white identity-formation. Biogenetic law identified race with youth, forging a chain of associations linking individual ontogeny, "the race's" phylogeny, national annals, and the ascendancy of "the West."

The final chapter, "Administrators of the Future," analyzes the spatialization of youth in relation to the reconfiguration of US power and national identity in a global context. At the very moment that US cities become home to the immigrant crowds Henry James found so alienating, with their "swarming ambiguity and fugacity of race and tongue," military conquest (and popular fiction) domesticate the remnants of Spanish colonialism (*American Scene* 150). In this sense the settlement houses of Chicago or New York function as the urban correlative of a humanitarian mission to rescue the young peoples of a decadent, centuries-old empire governed (via his mother the Queen regent) by Alfonso XIII, a twelve year old boy. Three performances of romance-- the naturalist adventure stories of Frank Norris; the imperial "boys' books" of the Spanish-American War; and G. Stanley Hall's romance of adolescence-- provide an "exotic landscape" scattered with "generative spaces" for

individual, national, and racial development (Bruzelius 24). Building on the previous chapter's discussion of Hall's adolescent as the hero of a narrative of doubled return to the psychic scene of racial origins, I read his pathbreaking work *Adolescence* as a "genetic romance." Further exploring the geography of youth, I then examine how popular fiction maps the nation's colonial acquisitions, not only by imagining *mise-en-scenes* of adventure for both fictive and real-world "sailor-boys" and "trooper Galahads," but by inflecting land and sea with values characterizing the category of adolescence itself. Yet this process of geographical resignification-- of adollescening particular spaces and their inhabitants-- inevitably curls back, reconstituting youth. Finally, I argue that Frank Norris synthesizes a spatialized youth concept from disparate discursive elements including a popularized "naturalist theory" of human development, the rhetoric of imperial reportage, and elements of adventure romance.

## Chapter 1: “Rode Only Fast Trains”: Mobility and the Construction of Youth

### I. Types

The half-century between the end of Reconstruction (1877) and the Red Scare (1920) was a period determined not only by industrialization but by the triumph of white supremacy and the initiation of a new phase of imperialism-- what had up to that point been designated “expansionism” in an exceptionalist euphemism intended to recast the realities of a centuries long project of continental conquest and colonization.<sup>12</sup> The project of national consolidation, of re-incorporating the South and imprinting republican political forms and free market norms on the as yet untamed terrain, was thus linked in practical geo-political terms with the entry of the United States into a world arena. Already a leading economic power, the nation sought final unification not only via the recuperation of its southern states and victory in the Plains Wars, but by asserting its ability to obtain and govern colonies. If the effort undertaken was modest by the standards of Britain, which at that time controlled perhaps one-fourth of the planet’s surface-- it was evident that the vision of an “empire of liberty” espoused by Jefferson was not simply a grand phrase but a strategy for hemispheric and perhaps global preeminence.<sup>13</sup>

This effort to assume the mantle of power-- to achieve parity with “old Europe”-- was marked by a virtually existential belief in American distinctiveness, a sense of destiny coded in terms of race and religion by the misconstrual of the

<sup>12</sup> My understanding of the origins and development of US empire relies on the historiographical and theoretical work of several different scholars, including William Appleman Williams, Amy Kaplan, Ellen Meiksins Wood and David Harvey among others. This issue is more fully explored in subsequent chapters.

<sup>13</sup> I have relied on histories of the period such as Nell Irvin Painter’s *Standing at Armageddon*, Jackson Lears’ *Rebirth of a Nation*, Allan Trachtenberg’s *The Incorporation of America* and Matthew Jacob Frye’s *Barbarian Virtues*.

colonization of the North America as a largely Puritan affair. The presence of enslaved Africans-- the first of whom arrived in Virginia in 1619 aboard a Dutch ship, the *White Lion*-- was elided, as was the fact that the initial permanent settlements were established in the South, and further that the majority of the colonists emigrated for economic reasons. In the retrospect of myth-making, however, the New World became the final destination of a spiritual elite whose stern virtues would form the kernel of a nation made great by its resoluteness and purity of character.

Yet by the Gilded Age the Puritans were a memory, particularly as industrialization and technological innovation accelerated. Though the sharp Yankee trader delineated in Constance Rourke's *American Humor* continued to exert an undeniable influence on national self-perception, he was morphing from a rural figure to a city "type," one whose apparent contradictions would serve as a vital force galvanizing industrial progress and propelling the United States onto the world stage. The paradoxes animating this stream-lined Jonathan-- provincial innocence and a keen sense of profitability, rustic manners and technical mastery-- were rapidly being reworked. It was not that a new archetype was needed-- for the development of cultures is not so simple that a pantheon of personifications is sufficient to explain their continuities and breaks-- but that new qualities were to be emphasized in order to bring forward core cultural values with which to order an emergent socio-historical situation.

Thrust outside the intimacies of the village, where face-to-face encounters were common, urbanization compelled the inhabitants of the burgeoning cities to

cobble together from disparate sources an understanding of the world and their locations within it. Dominated by commercial distractions and trans-national throngs the urban landscape threatened to become too chaotic to navigate. In response, a street-level typology was constructed from both existing materials, incorporating traditional associations of identity with practice, and the social significance of new figures. Erickson notes the popularity of “a genre of children’s books... with titles like *City Characters* or *City Cries*” which collected “urban types” and functioned as informal “primer[s]” (576). Over the course of several generations proto-ethnographic literature such as *New York by Gaslight* (1850), Crapsey’s *The Nether Side of New York* (1872), Sigmund Krausz’s *Street Types from Great American Cities* (1891), and Hapgood’s *Types from City Streets* (1910) placed types within an often lowlife urban geography. The most effective of these models became stereotypes-- a source of comfort and familiarity (and considerable conflict) in a vexing and often alien world. Krausz’s photo-essay-- which “compelled [him] for weeks and months to haunt the crowded thoroughfares, the fashionable avenues and the dingy alleys for such characters as seemed to suit [his] purpose” (introduction)-- includes a boy peddler hawking matches and fly-paper, a street fakir, a young employee of the rapid messenger service, a bill poster, an organ grinder, “hallelujah lasses” (118), a tough, and a portrait of an older, working-class man holding a pail titled “rushing the growler” (102). The form of these representations-- brief sketches or individuated images-- reduced the city to a manageable scale. Rather than the teeming panoramas of a metropolitan sublime-- an often frightening vision of a world overwhelmed by difference-- illustrations such as those by Charles Dana Gibson and periodicals’ slum



sketches adopted an aesthetic of “the ‘urban picturesque,’” which took pleasure in heterogeneity, and “sought to make modernity less terrifying by making it familiar through a gradualist approach that linked old concepts with new phenomena” (Bramen 444).<sup>14</sup> As personal interaction became less relevant to the interpretation of everyday life and people increasingly came to depend on mass media for information “consumable, industrially generated substitutes for intimate knowledge” proliferated (Ewen 9).

Louis Paulian’s *The Beggars of Paris*,<sup>15</sup> translated for publication in the United States in 1897, asks rhetorically, “What is a type?” answering confidently though somewhat cryptically that “it consists of all the distinctive characters of a race or a profession taken together. To acquire the type of a profession one must have practised it for some time, and have been subject to its requirements, its habits, and its consequences” (54). The nomenclature of types emphasizes activity as the basis of categorization-- rag-pickers, sandwichmen, flower girls, street sweepers-- though with certain exceptions: those with minimal social status such as the street arab; the leisurely flaneur and flaneuse whose frequent designation, “stroller,” describes an aspect of class privilege rather than a form of labor; and figures whose race blots out any other facets of their social identity, as with Krausz’s “John,” a portrait of a Chinese American man, “a living representation,” the accompanying text suggests, “of a civilization so old that its origin is lost in the mazes of antiquity” (94). In the same manner in which Chinese American women, regardless of their

<sup>14</sup> See “The Urban Picturesque and the Spectacle of Americanization” by Carrie Tirado Bramen in *American Quarterly*, v. 52, n. 3 (September 2000)

<sup>15</sup> Louis Paulian, *The Beggars of Paris*. translated 1897. New York: Edward Arnold.

accomplishments or class status, were often called Mary, the actual individual in this last case, labeled with a generic name, does not function as an ideal-type of the sort Emerson intended when characterizing Goethe as “the type of culture” but as a specimen (*Representative Men* 270). According to the first of these usages type means a paragon, while in its second sense type indicates typicality. Type signified both of these ideas during the nineteenth century, notably the former, which was theorized by Weber in 1903, though a third cluster of meanings-- type as a person of a certain character, as one with whom mutual interests might be shared or to whom one is romantically attracted-- did not arise until the 1920s.<sup>16</sup>

Cartoonist R.F. Outcault, creator of *The Yellow Kid*, claimed that his famous comic-strip character “was not an individual but a type. When I used to go about the slums on newspaper assignments I would encounter him often, wandering out of doorways or sitting down on dirty doorsteps” (Hancock 130).<sup>17</sup> Types were both the source and result of literary production not only in terms of the sketches and studies of magazine writers but as a foundation of popular theater. Vaudeville and variety shows borrowed and revised stock characters ranging from Irish cops to drunks to servant girls, while minstrelsy-- a viable if slowly declining comedic form-- featured Zip Coon, Jim Crow, Ginger Blue, and Bone Squash.<sup>18</sup> As with the minstrel show, vaudeville trafficked in “cultural identifications and hostilities, ethnic satire, and

<sup>16</sup> Oxford English Dictionary.

<sup>17</sup> See La Touche Hancock, “American Caricature and Comic Art.” *The Bookman* Vol. 15. Oct. 1902. 120-131.

<sup>18</sup> “The vagaries of a drunken man, the follies of an Irish servant girl, the exploits of a policeman, and other scenes from street and tenement-house life are always and everywhere hailed with loud applause. The people are at heart realists, whatever else they may be now and then” (179-180). See “Amusements” by Fred E. Haynes in *The City Wilderness: A Settlement Study* (1898).

social and political commentary of wide-ranging, sometimes radical character”  
(Saxton 166).

Typing often blossomed into stereotypes, a form of perception-cognition that  
“precedes the use of reason” (Lippman qtd. in Ewen), one in which ideas are  
encountered and confirmed simultaneously-- what Almog identifies with some  
circularity as “a common intuitive process”:

The brain simultaneously absorbs a conglomerate of symbols such as  
hairstyle, attire, mannerism, and accent projected by the image of the  
individual and then relates them to known symbols typical of certain people  
that have already been catalogued by the brain. (2).

Different kinds of types-- racial, ethnic, national, class- and gender-based--  
grew more numerous with the advent and improvement of new representational  
technologies such as photography and motion pictures, and as the science of human  
difference grew more complex. Composite portraiture-- developed by Francis Galton,  
coiner of the term “eugenics” in 1883-- promised to reveal “the group within the  
individual” (Ewen 211) by overlapping exposures of convicted criminals to form a  
single image and thus produce “an ideal and an averaged” type (qtd. in Ewen 213).<sup>19</sup>  
Actualities and motion-studies framed and recorded the movement of types.<sup>20</sup>  
Physiognomists and phrenologists, whose persuasive powers were waning,  
nonetheless influenced psychology and sociology, disciplines which were also shaped  
by folk notions of social variety and the plethora of casual observations of the urban  
populace. These inheritances were rationalized by means of statistical research,  
positing substantive distinctions between classes of people based on their observable

<sup>19</sup> Also *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture* by Shawn Michelle Smith.

<sup>20</sup> See, for instance, “Tracing the Individual Body: Photography, Detectives, and Early Cinema” by Tom Gunning in Charney and Schwartz (eds.) *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*.

traits. Yet the epistemological regime which privileged the empirical truth of visible characteristics in order to transmute appearance into essence was complicated by efforts to account for identity by looking beyond the surface of the body into the deep history of the race.<sup>21</sup> As late as 1913, a *Handbook for Scoutmasters*, published by the Boy Scouts of America, advised in a chapter titled “Adolescent Types and Characteristics”:

Childhood is characterized by simple savage qualities and barbaric virtues, and the development of self-mastery. It develops the brave, the hunter, the chieftain in boy-play, the masterful boy and the bully. Boyhood develops physical strength and ability, skill and endurance, and team play, and as leaders the showy boy, the wrestler and scrapper and the game-leader hero. Early adolescence is characterized by the development of feudal virtues, the doing of good deeds, development of gentleness, resourcefulness, mental alertness, shrewdness, and by complex team play. During this period there is developed the boy autocrat, the athletic hero, the explorer, the real gentleman and the boy criminal. Middle adolescence develops the pronounced types-- sports, toughs, dudes, vandals,-- the college student and his imitators, the strategist, the “good fellow,” and the young business man, and gives to the boy in character greater resourcefulness, business success and shrewdness, extreme individuality, mannishness, etc. Later adolescence is characterized by the development in boy-character of popularity, originality, leadership, efficiency, vocational skill, and social grace. Among individual types it develops the debater, the politician, the lawyer, the physician, the artist, the scientist, athletic captain, man of the world, etc. (97-98).

## II. Youth as a Concept

With the Redemptionist counter-revolution which extinguished Reconstruction and sentenced the United States to another century of racial violence and subjugation, citizenship retained its essentially white, Christian, male identity. Those cultivated to assume its obligations and grasp its opportunities-- in a phrase the young-- would require training. The category of the condition which did not so much

<sup>21</sup> This idea is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

describe as produce them would have to be revised. All of the analytical power of science, particularly the nascent disciplines of psychology and sociology, would play a part in youth's rationalization. If American identity remained a birthright in spite of the nation's touted immigrant character, then even so Americans were of necessity made rather than born. And the proper subjects of modernity -- those burdened with the tasks of civilizing the planet in the name of God, political liberty and untrammelled commerce-- continued to be white, male, and Christian.

The legal aspects of that project are important though not ultimately the focus of this dissertation. Local ordinances, state laws, and acts of Congress defining citizenship racialized many immigrants and limited their participation in civic and economic life. The Asian Exclusion Acts, for example, marginalized many potential citizens and undermined the institution of family to the benefit of young, white males. Lawful discrimination against Chinese immigrants responded to working-class discontent produced by the incorporation of mining and the subsequent dispossession of miners engaging in small-scale placer extraction.<sup>22</sup>

More obviously, reformers pushed for legislation that would define and protect childhood from the depredations of industrial society. Child labor laws, compulsory education, and age-of-consent statutes were instrumental in the creation of childhood as a protected (and policed) condition and its production as a bourgeois cultural ideal, one with roots in the art of the Catholic church, though its character was ultimately determined by the social dislocations of industrialization. Well into the

<sup>22</sup> See Alexander Saxton. *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1995.

nineteenth century females were seen as lacking any interim stage between childhood and maternity. In 1885, for instance, Delaware's age of consent, the lowest in the United States, was seven years old. Purity reformers including the Women's Temperance Christian Union, shocked by this vestige of English common law, campaigned for new legislation redefining the parameters of statutory rape so that by 1920 only one state, Georgia, retained an age of consent younger than 16.<sup>23</sup> Significantly, efforts to effect that transformation began at a time when the average age of menarche had fallen, in just half a century, from 16 to 15. Official concern for the sexual behavior of the female young inflamed fears of precocity and led to increasing bureaucratic and scientific surveillance of adolescent girls. Similarly, the advent of minimum education requirements, age-grading, and the proliferation of compulsory schooling-- by 1930 half of all Americans aged 14 to 20 were enrolled in high schools-- provoked the intensification and rationalization of anti-truancy efforts. As part of a larger program of social modernization both of these trends-- among many others--resulted in an increasing age consciousness which focused on a figure who, if not entirely unprecedented, was becoming more clearly defined. As Medavoi argues

The figure of the adolescent condensed together various socioideological developments in the pre-Fordist era of industrial capitalism.... In part, the adolescent represented a difficult compromise between labor and capital over where to draw the line between child and adult labor within the industrial wage system. Meanwhile, in the emerging system of education, the adolescent also became central to norms of reproduction for the professional middle-class. Fears of urbanization and over-civilization were also spoken to by the adolescent, whose stage in life allowed for intervention in such nature and

<sup>23</sup> See Mary E. Odem's *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press. 1995. esp. pp. 8-37.

recreation organizations as the Boy Scouts. Finally, the adolescent also functioned as part of the legitimation narrative for Western imperialism, which... was steeped in the symbolics of age dependency and development. (25).

Instrumentalized and narrativized by a complex of discourses, the adolescent was adapted to different concerns. Youth-- as an abstraction signifying restlessness, enthusiasm, promise, and any number of other traditional valences-- and as a particularity-- youth-as-a-social-class-- functioned as a conceptual fulcrum for the ideological development of the nation, western civilization, and the latter's occasional near-synonym "the Race." The spatio-temporal dimensions of what I will be calling the youth concept are the key here, cross-cutting a range of disciplines, from the often self-contradicting statements of race science to the quasi-sociological reportage of tramp literature. Most broadly, the youth concept operates at the level of a generalized value describing the civilizational energy of the West in its fulfillment of modernity, a project that seems all the stranger given the frequency with which those terms-- western and modern-- continue to be conflated. The temporality of youth as a stage of life is transferred to nations, which, "like men," as the future American consul-general to Egypt and Confederate diplomat Edwin de Leon wrote in 1845, "have their seasons of infancy, manly vigor, and decrepitude" (qtd. in Curti 34). This sentiment, that political development possesses structural similarities to the human life-cycle, persists to the present moment. During the latter part of the 19th and the early 20th centuries, the individual's ontogenic clock was linked by Haeckel's biogenetic law to the race's phylogenic calendar, an analogy that seemed to confirm a global view of the birth, rise, and death of nations and civilizations, a geopolitical

imaginary which in turn underwrote foreign policies such as those leading to the Spanish-Cuban-Philippine-American War. Youth's inflation-- as a cultural value and in terms of the number of years allocated to it--- thus gilds the move to off-shore imperialism.

### **III. The Geography of Youth**

Writing on youth of the period appears as a bundle of intertwining narratives, at once analeptical and proleptical, looking backward and forward in time across a field of genres: naturalist versions of the bildungsroman, most obviously, with their plots of individual development or degeneration and thematics of nostalgia or nausea, but also social scientific accounts of adolescence which interpret the turns and pitfalls of maturation. In many of these texts the language of human growth, from recapitulation to atavism to arrested development, necessarily temporalizes the body's changes and practices, and in completing that gesture places the young either within or without their proper locations. The time-space of youth-- yoked to race, civilization and nation-- thus provides a partial map of modernity, itself a stage, staged according to different scales: in Machine Age departments stores and cluttered middle-class parlors, among slag-cars and industrial spindles. Of necessity the drama of that variegated social terrain includes action, a plot tracking those entrained to western farmlands or shipping out for new colonies, one that in its re-telling reaches back to the one-room schoolhouse of cultural memory.

The double valence of "stage" as a temporal measure and a social space reveals something about the nature of a culture in the process of redefining itself in



order to come to terms with changing material conditions. The foundational studies undertaken by scholars such as Frederick Turner, Albert Brigham and Ellen Semple worked within this groove, establishing historical geography as a viable academic discipline and justifying the ostensibly unique character of the United States. For all three of these figures continental expansion, the conversion of raw space into distinct places, was inseparable from the evolutionary development of the nation, an equation encapsulated by the phrase “geography is history” and a cornerstone of American exceptionalism which defined the United States *sui generis*. Turner’s canonical essay, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” delivered as a historiographical declaration of independence one week after the 4th of July on the quadri-centennial of Columbian “discovery,” conceived of the frontier as a westward procession rather than a static locale. The effect of this narrative, according to Limerick, was to “eliminate[...] choice and decision from the picture. People moved in streams, tides, flows, currents, torrents, floods, and inundations” (159).

Rejecting the “germ theory” of historical development espoused by his teacher Herbert Adams, which characterized American identity and history as the flowers of colonial seedlings, Turner argued that settlement transformed Europeans into Americans, producing a distinctive culture as the nation progressed (2). He modeled this process not “along a single line” but as a loop, an incessant “return to primitive conditions” which rebirthed and thus replenished society in order to “furnish the forces dominating American character.” The perennial values of iconoclasm and resourcefulness were refined by the heat and pressure of unprecedented challenges,

generating a people inclined to be democratical, libertarian and, in the Franklin-esque vein, thrifty. They exhibited, Turner writes in an Emersonian passage,

That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom. (37).

The explanatory power of Turner's thesis--"the record of social evolution"--proved so compelling that a student, Walter Webb, expanded it to encompass the entirety of the Anglophone world. In doing so he established a prototype of what would be popularized in coming decades, with the uneven decline of theoretical white supremacy, as "the West"-- a geopolitical entity incorporating all Europe and its former settler colonies (11).<sup>24</sup> Significantly, Turner elided every race from this scene of regeneration save Anglo-Saxons and Indians, and his argument that Americans could be cleansed and strengthened only by encounters with savage enemies on native turf paralleled G. Stanley Hall's uses of the theory of recapitulation. In his affirmation of the purifying enhancements of a clash with the primitive, Turner adopted the general outline of a narrative of racial, which is to say white masculine, development, one found in Roosevelt's *The Winning of the West* and elaborated by Hall as a means to resolve the "neurasthenic paradox" of modern times (Bederman 92).<sup>25</sup> In each of these scenarios, the realization of the American character demanded

<sup>24</sup> See Alistair Bonnett, *The Idea of the West*. Against this emergent trend, the works of Lothrop Stoddard and Madison Grant continued to argue for the primacy of whiteness as a geopolitical category. For example: "Civilization itself means nothing. It is merely an effect, whose cause is the creative urge of superior germ-plasm. Civilization is the body; race is the soul" (Stoddard 300).

<sup>25</sup> Though as Bederman notes, Roosevelt, while afflicted with asthma, was not considered neurasthenic. See page 275 (n. 20) of *Manliness and Civilization*.

a return to nature, even temporary embrutement. The frontier, Turner writes in a popular passage, finds the colonist “a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in a birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin” (4). The homely sartorial metaphor notwithstanding, Turner’s orientation was influenced by both the sweep of Transcendentalist poetics and the paradigmatic developmentalism of Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley, who “provided him with an explanatory framework...organic as well as deterministic” (Block 32), which structured the search for “the vital forces” (Turner 2) that conjure these social and political forms and adapt them “to meet changing conditions.” The land mass itself is like a massive organism, its pathways produced geologically, used and improved by “aboriginal intercourse... broadened and interwoven into the complex mazes of commercial lines.... like the steady growth of a nervous system for the originally simple, inert continent” (14-15).

The foreword to the first volume of the 1900 edition of *The Winning of the West* -- a book Turner had reviewed as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins<sup>26</sup>-- evinces similar biologicistic influences and shares Turner’s sense of national destiny and evolutionary inexorability. “The backwoodsmen had pushed the Spaniards from the Mississippi, had set up a slave-holding republic in Texas, and had conquered the Californian gold-fields,” Roosevelt writes.

It is true that they won great triumphs for civilization no less than for their own people; yet they won them unwittingly, for they were merely doing as

<sup>26</sup> See Patrick B. Sharp’s *Savage Perils: Racial Frontiers and Nuclear Apocalypse in American Culture*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007 p. 58

countless other strong young races had done in the long contest carried on for so many thousands of years between the fit and the unfit. (x).

Roosevelt's diction seems to imply more of a racial reflex than a geopolitical strategy, but such sentiments-- particularly in the afterglow of the conquest of the Spanish Empire in the Caribbean and the Pacific (a slow-burning guerrilla war notwithstanding)-- would echo for years to come. The commonplace that US national character was determined to a great extent by geography-- an idea that has yet to recede-- necessarily shaped perceptions of social questions and, by extension, the concept of youth. In "The Operation of Geographic Factors in History," Ellen Semple posits North America's relative distance from Europe as evidence of its purifying effect: "the ocean barrier culled superior qualities of mind and character," she writes, including "independence of political and religious conviction, and the courage of those convictions, whether found in royalist or Puritan, Huguenot or English Catholic" (437). Furthermore, the relative paucity of settlers' numbers and their isolation "favoured variation." Invoking a neo-Lamarckian logic, Semple argues that "heredity passed on the characteristics of a small, highly selected group," an Anglo-Saxon population "kept pure from intermixture with the aborigines... owing to the social and cultural abyss which separated them." Given the principle that "individual variations are in time communicated by heredity to a whole population under conditions of isolation," the passage of generations in a seemingly boundless open land produced a "modified type" who flourished within a propitious environment:

Ease in gaining subsistence, the greater independence of the individual and the family, emancipation from carking care, the hopeful attitude of mind engendered by the consciousness of an almost unlimited opportunity and capacity for expansion, the expectation of large returns upon labor, and... the

profound influence of this hopefulness upon the national character, all combined, produce a social rejuvenation of the race. (437-438).

As society expanded and increased in complexity pastoral simplicity eroded. New conditions compelled Americans to exercise “the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the individual,” practices which further ripened the fruits of their escape from “the paralyzing effect of custom in the old home country” (438). The liberation and exertion of latent energies, adapted to changing circumstances, revivifies Anglo-Saxon stock in order to birth an American race, and establishes a living link between ancient virtue and burgeoning strength, a formulation Semple justifies with the equivalence that “activity is youth and sluggishness or paralysis is age.” She might have added that such activity can prosper the race only on the condition that it is purposive.

#### **IV. Mobility**

“In the early 19th century,” Stephen Jay Gould writes, “concepts of motion, change, and progress replaced the static outlook in biology” (7). Motion, the spatialization of time and the temporalization of space, is itself an abstract value according to Gilded Age and Progressive Era views. Teleological historiography, the accumulation of wealth and the growth of industries, the accelerating speed of raw materials and finished commodities transported by train across territories, the momentum of progress-- progress of the race, the nation, the individual: these are all highly valued forms of motion animating modernity’s conception of itself. Such restlessness is held to be demotic-- a birthright bestowed by natural rights and an

open challenge to those who would “mind the main chance” as Royall Tyler once phrased it (16).<sup>27</sup> Mobility and democracy-- their high stakes and their struggles-- have intertwined as twinned concepts in American culture for centuries, even when that mobility and its attendant freedoms consisted largely in the motion of the spirit (Whitman) or the conscience (Thoreau). Freedmen fleeing the failure of Reconstruction, itinerant musicians, blade-grinders, rattlers, ramblers, and bindle-stiffs mapped and charted the territories, blazing trails and establishing short-cuts from rail yard to roadhouse to jungle. Those wanderings, flights, and transplantations expressed social and cultural imperatives: practical economic decisions regarding employment prospects, the lures rigged by urbanization, the transportation and communication revolutions of industrial capitalism, and a national imaginary emphasizing expansiveness and promising opportunity.

The pursuit of happiness itself denotes movement, liberal democracy’s civic version of the Sioux vision quest, when individuals hunt self-knowledge and reward independently, tracking their quarry from hamlet to city, from the Eastern seaboard to an ocean of wheat. The mythology is of course overstated and conceals those indispensable social networks necessary to heeling a continent: “It was never self-help that made the United States great,” writes Felipe Fernandez-Armesto. “For every gunslinger in the street or maverick in the corral, there were thousands of... citizens in stockades and wagon trains” (197). In a sense Fernandez-Armesto’s observation cuts across this dialectic in its dependence on the image of bodies both at rest and in

<sup>27</sup> See Royall Tyler, *The Contrast* (1787). Though in that context it is an arranged marriage at stake when Van Rough tells his daughter Maria she must marry Van Dumpling.

motion: those settlers travel together as they roll across the hardpan, and the temporary stockades they inhabit will soon be superseded by permanent structures as the frontier and the age advance. Years after the fabled closure of the Western frontier, the traces of that “heroic era” would persist, and if pioneering had given way to the predictable rhythms of husbandry, for a young Hamlin Garland his neighbors “still retained something broad and fine in their action, something a boy might honorably imitate” (5).

In terms of American literature easily the most iconic figure of youth-in-flight is Huckleberry Finn, whose plans “to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest” have been taken up by generations of scholars as a national-archetypal urge for autonomy and adventure, a desire to flee the confinements of embalmed Sunday afternoons and starched collars in search of the rough sprawl of the unincorporated frontier (Twain 296). That it is the territory he seeks to explore-- a space constructed by at least a preliminary mapping-- rather than Africa’s deserts or the Arctic pole tells us that the trajectory of his journey will remain within limits. If each last hectare there has not been completely surveyed, if the country still possesses surprises, then Huck nonetheless wanders within the domestic boundaries of a nation already well advanced in the process of racially-cleansing and repopulating the last gaps between the post-colonial seaboard and the boomtowns of the West.

Set in the mid-nineteenth century, thirty or more years before its publication, Twain’s novel evinces a nostalgia that would subsequently grow more acute. And though its open ending can be seen as simply an enterprising writer’s hedged bet on the further exploitation of proven literary materials, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

tacitly admits that continental exploration has long since shifted from an age of outright encounter to an era of navigating the terrain between small towns and settlements. The reading public who first cut the book's pages would likely be familiar with a sense of heterogeneity and heteronomy against which so many people of the period contended: the increasing complexity of social life and the rise of forces beyond any immediate or local control. Huck's escape from widow Douglas and St. Petersburg, then, can be only temporary and provisional. And if according to the manner of the dime novels after which *Adventures* is fashioned a Huck, Jr. succeeded Huck, then his son would likely follow his father, beating it from harvest to jungle by riding the rails or blind baggage.

This consonance between rugged frontiersman, rambling truant, and floater might account for the contradictory responses to the tramp. Cresswell notes the changing perceptions of the itinerant homeless, the gradual shift from their identification with outcast barn-burners to pie-filching bindlestiffs. The cinematization of the type with the advent of Chaplin's comic Little Tramp, however, never entirely stripped him of a subversive charge: comedy is a genre of social disruption despite any expectation that events will be recuperated so that in the end the joke's not on us. We might therefore with profit consider what Huck Finn would look like were his story told in a different modality. Part of the power of Twain's narrative is the extent to which he is willing to show us the depravity of Huck's life with Pap. At certain points in the plot-- the beatings, the drunkenness, the invective-- Twain seems intent on forcing his readers to hurt. When Huck sits all night with a loaded rifle next to the unconscious body of his father, who has collapsed in a stupor



after attempting to kill him, he simply remarks, “I slipped the ramrod down it to make sure it was loaded, and then I laid it across the turnip barrel, pointing towards pap, and set down behind it to wait for him to stir. And how slow and still the time did drag along” (42).

A hard-boiled Huck would be deprived of such controlled gestures at sentiment or even humane burlesque. Already in Twain’s novel the violence of the lynch mob and the Cavalier cult are depicted with flashes of dramatic intensity which highlight their intolerability-- cruelties far from incidental yet neither truly systemic. The *mise-en-scene*’s moment in history-- the pre-anomic phases of industrialization-- permits a commensurability of subjective experience with the objective social world and in this regard guarantees an affective logic. Huck may be so sickened at the killing of Buck Grangerford that he is incapable of describing how it went, but that inability to tell the details cannot be confused for numbness. Were he narrated into the realm of the road-kid-- the young tramp subjected to anthropometric methods and interpreted according to the totalizing vision of Spencerian social science-- Huck would be particular to himself only after his abstraction. The youth concept-- the outcome of a discursive convergence of statistical research, synthetic sociology, and the romantic-naturalist text-- generalizes its subjects as early Machine Age Huckleberrys by typing and subdividing them according to essence and practice. In this regard the principle of motion is vital. The Turnerian vision of American mobility in which national identity unfolds from Old Europe’s transformed racial stock backlights the conviction that movement is integral to the development (or

degeneration) of the young and thus their metonymic relationship to the larger collectivities whose future they represent: the race, the nation, civilization.

In a culture that conflates freedom of movement with social mobility, the issue of human migration-- whether in terms of Horace Greeley's "Go West Young Man" (an imperative that advertises Empire as a moral duty and an entrepreneurial opportunity in constructing its youthful, masculine subject) or the nativist backlash against Chinese, Irish, and southern European diasporas-- necessarily assumes multiple valences. Crapsey's miscegenated "nomadic race" is clearly enough of the same kind as Needham's childish bedouins and the ubiquitous street arab (157). They are types-- the products of an effort to render an increasingly heteronomous social world more intelligible, an attempt to cognitively map the confusing terrain of modernity-- who have been assigned a social essence based on explicitly gendered, classed and raced behaviors, representing only some of many categories in a typology of bodies in motion. These underclass wanderers are the object of normative derision, editorial sensationalism, police surveillance, civilizational gate-keeping and reformist projects for their reclamation. They people dime-novel narratives and sociological reports, functioning as transient outsiders whose seemingly purposeless rambles counterpoint the steady habits of those who stayed down on the farm or left for the city with a guaranteed job. As Cresswell has demonstrated, "a morally coded set of geographical suppositions about mobility" inflected the discourse surrounding the tramp scare of the 1880s, a phenomenon with roots in the 19th century's convulsive economy-- in particular the disastrous depression of 1873 (14). Against the sedentary identity of place, tramps and other nomads embodied a rootless marginality, an

ambiguous relationship to the embedded subject positions of solid citizens-- those pillars of the community deemed foundational by reason of their stasis. Such a figure of civic virtue could be found in Lee O. Harris-- once described as “synonymous with what is honorable and upright in citizenship” (*Biographical Memoirs of Hancock County* 317) and known to many as the teacher of James Whitcomb Riley-- who warned in his 1878 novel *The Man Who Tramps* that

It is the irresponsible floating populace, who have no home ties to bind them to society; the vicious, who seek to plunder and destroy; the outcasts of all nations who drift upon our shores and fasten upon the industries of our country like barnacles to the bottom of a ship; in short, that great American institution “The Man who Tramps,” who, watching for every opportunity to profit by the contest between labor and capital, commits deeds of violence in the name of workingmen only that he may plunder from rich and poor alike. (267-268).

As with Brace’s dire prediction of national decay from within there is a tension in Harris’ novel, long familiar to the discourse of domestic American politics, between elite republicanism and mass democracy, a liberal fear that an easily duped working-class may be forged into the instrument of social destruction. *The Man Who Tramps*-- a hybrid text that combines elements of the dime novel detective story, the romance, and moral-political screed-- tells the story of Harry Lawson, an orphan from New York transplanted by train to Indiana by a charitable organization much like the Children’s Aid Society, who enters the charge of a struggling farmer named John Shannon. Shannon’s wife, Jane, is a hard-bitten woman, whose relentless nagging eventually leads Harry to run away. Propelled onto the road, he encounters Flynn,

a man about forty years old, a little above the medium height, with a very dark complexion, dark enough for a mulatto, but with long, straight black hair, and small restless black eyes, sparkling beneath his projecting brows. His cheek-

bones were prominent and his lips were thin and straight, giving to his features a look of firmness and resolution (25-26).

In the typology of tramps Flynn represents a class who “carried with them a pestilence which permeated society, and threatened the very life of the nation” (21). He is, Harris writes, a “political” tramp, one “who talked like a scholar” and numbered among those who “prided themselves on being philosophers.” Flynn’s phenotypical and phrenological indeterminacy-- he is “dark enough” yet straight-haired and thin-lipped, his forehead suggests an apish nature even as the rectilinear features of his lower face inspire respect-- embodies the apparent contradiction between marginal social status and intellectual dexterity. Conversing with Harry, it soon becomes apparent that the paradoxical identity of this anomalous character is related to his subversive beliefs: Flynn is a communist. Communism as Harris describes it-- in one of several asides to the reader that break from the plot to discuss the social content of the novel in greater analytical detail-- is at its core atavistic, the reversal of millennia of progress, a reversion to a pre-civilizational epoch with all the implied barbarisms. In attempting to establish economic “equalization” communists “throw all things together, and shake them up,” effectively turning back the clock:

Let us close our eyes to the reign of terror that must ensue before this is done. Let us bury our dead from our sight, and wipe up the blood, and sweep up the ashes. Let us close our ears to the wail of tortured innocence and the brutal laugh of rapine and sensuality. Let us teach ourselves to gaze unmoved upon ruined homes and depopulated cities; upon a land torn with dissensions, and sacked by pillage; upon a government dismembered and prostrate beneath the heel of anarchy; upon a country shunned by the nations of the world and execrated by its own citizens; upon the destruction of law and order and the rule of that worst of despotisms, the despotism of the mob. Have you done it? Well, now we are ready to begin our equalization. We are now where society began thousands of years ago (52-53).

Temporal disturbance in the capitalist reproduction of social life threatens to unravel civilization itself. The seeds of revolution germinate within milieu of directionless wanderers, a lumpenproletariat in its widest sense: not simply the antagonistic “scum, offal, [and] refuse of all classes” of Marx’s analysis of 1851’s French coup, but what Peter Stallybrass traces to a more fundamental usage as “one of the commonplaces of bourgeois social analysis in the nineteenth century: the depiction of the poor as a nomadic tribe, innately depraved” (70). Those qualities-- rootlessness, primitivity, inherent defectiveness-- are illustrated in terms of a menacing heterogeneity of types, a spectacle of multiplicity and confusion intended to revolt the reader. Harris employs a similar strategy, repeatedly emphasizing the variegation of the “the great fraternity of tramps” (272) one which includes “men of nearly all nationalities and colors, and of all ages, from the robust youth, just entering manhood, to the poor decrepit old man, begging his way to the grave” (36). Echoing *The 18th Brumaire*’s most quoted passage,<sup>28</sup> Harris catalogs them as “the lazy, shiftless vagabond, the rough and the loafer, the pickpocket and the burglar, the highwayman and the incendiary” (272). At the scene of *The Man Who Tramps*’ climax, these lumpen thugs, distilled to a singular figure-- this “worthless tramp, this man without a home and desiring none; this leech upon the veins of industry; this ulcer upon the body politic” (269)-- unleash horrors upon the citizens of Pittsburgh “worse than Egyptian leprosy” (270).

<sup>28</sup> “[V]agabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, mountebanks, lazzaroni, pickpockets, literati, organ-grinders, ragpickers, knife grinders, tinkers, beggars-- in short the whole indefinite disintegrated mass, thrown hither and thither, which the French term *la boheme*” (75).

Harris's phantasmatic prediction of doom meshes easily with other works explicitly treating the events of 1877 such as JA Dacus's *Annals of the Great Strikes*. The latter text offers its readers a terrible panorama of "vast swarms of vicious idlers, vagrants and tramps....on the alert, ready to plunder, burn, and cut throats on the slightest provocation," laying siege to whole cities (57). With Harris, Dacus shares a vivid contempt for the incoherent force of the crowd, and he too invokes the Paris Commune as a template for unrest, condemning a motley assemblage of the disenfranchised who "joined in the tumult [as] boldly demand[ing] concessions...subversive of all government, all social order." Yet *The Man Who Tramps* reaches past political invective. It suggests an informal genre, the dime novel picaresque, by virtue of an almost exclusive focus on the travels of its young protagonist Harry, thereby establishing a link between the condition of youth, social instability, and "excessive mobility." If the development of industrial capitalism was fraught because the concentration of wealth and political power seemed inexorably to follow the expansion of productive capacity and the influence of financialization, then by analogy that developmental arc-- out of balance, threatening-- applied to the course of human growth and change. Accordingly, explosions of mass irrationality and labor upheaval resonate against the disturbances of adolescent storm and stress. The lumpenproletariat, then, trampdom, describes both a parasitic tumult of the debased and déclassé seething outside the social structure, and a moment of danger in society's reproduction. In the imaginations of novelists and social scientists the impatience, violent utopianism, and restlessness of a populace bucking against the

imposition of a seamless social order correlates with “socially functionless” youths not yet fully integrated into the practicalities of adulthood (Draper 2306).

## V. Nomadism

Concepts were invented to describe the condition of “excessive mobility” and its pathologies which functioned to further demarcate public and private domains. Homelier diction-- “wanderlust,” from the German “wandertrieb” (OED), a word semantically linked to vagabondage and vagrancy-- was supplanted by quasi-scientific terminology or terms were re-signified. Charles Davenport invented such a vocabulary, locating the traits of “nomadism” (8), “dromomania” (7), and the “wandering tendency” (11) in racial “stock” (8). Often satirized as a romantic affliction signaling the poet’s desire to seek out realms of transcendence and know them through an excess of feeling, wanderlust formed part of the cultural background of the period’s discursive construction of mobility. Though the *Oxford English Dictionary* dates its first usage in 1902 the term had been absorbed into English decades before and was so pervasive-- whether as a flippant turn of phrase in magazine articles or as a scientific colloquialism used to introduced harder concepts such as Charcot’s “ambulatory automatism”-- that it had achieved the durable status of a cliché.<sup>29</sup> Thus in 1914, the protagonist of a boy’s novel titled *The Gay-cat*, a

<sup>29</sup> “It was Charcot who in 1888 created the term ambulatory automatism, but undoubted cases analogous to Charcot’s had been previously reported by many other observers” (43). From the entry “Ambulatory Automatism” in *The Practical Medicine Series*. Vol. X. *Nervous and Mental Diseases*. Ed. Hugh T. Patrick and Charles L. Mix. Chicago: The Year Book Publishers, 1909.

prushun hopelessly dominated by an exploitative jockey,<sup>30</sup> might have induced an older reader's patronizing smile when he thought

An urge was in him. That urge had drawn him out of the arms of his graying mother when he was ten and after a circus train that had dipped into the little valley to extract its tribute of quarters and the irretrievable tribute of boys. That miserable urge kept him moving-- moving to find peace. It was the Wanderlust. The Wanderlust held him in a crueller and more irrevocable slavery than did Frisco Red. For it, he endured Frisco Red. But the urge for always moving on was his real master. The accursed Wanderlust! (18).

A year later, on the other hand, William Healey could write in all seriousness that given "the delights of 'the open road'... a period of real Wanderlust, at least in the *Wanderjahre*, is no sign of aberration" (*The Individual Delinquent* 369). This assurance came with the caveat, however, that such aimlessness would no longer be benign if the Wanderluster stepped beyond the framework of proper timing and perpetuated his rambles "past the unstable years of adolescence." Yet even at the age when roaming could be indulged as an expression of waxing energies there were possible dangers such that "youthful vagabondage, truancy," might be conceived as "the kindergarten of crime" (370) Wanderlust, then, was a commonplace even as it was taken to be a condition worthy of study, or at least as the basis of more rigorous concepts such as "apodemialgia," a medical term variously defined as the "longing to get away from home or to travel, Wanderlust; the opposite of nostalgia" (*A Practical Medical Dictionary* 68), "a morbid or insane longing to go away from home" (*American Illustrated Medical Dictionary* 58) or even, in an indication of the protean incoherency of the study of human migration, as "nostalgia. According to others, the

<sup>30</sup> A jockey was an older tramp who had adopted a homeless child, or prushun, in order to train him to beg. Grown to adulthood prushuns might turn into "blowed in the glass bindle stiffs" or those who have been "confirmed" as tramps.



opposite to Nostalgia, or a desire to leave one's country" (*Medical Lexicon* 82). From the 1870s French social scientists had been attempting to understand the biological basis for vagabondage, medicalizing it as "fugue" in the process and transforming it into a social problem, one so compelling that, "to exaggerate, it became the 'universal of mental pathology, the prism through which all the categories of madness and abnormality could be distributed'" (Donzelot qtd. in Hacking 37). According to Hacking the concept of fugue gained little traction across the Atlantic, in part because of the lure of the frontier-- the United States was already a fugue state.<sup>31</sup>

Davenport's study of human migration, *The Feebly Inhibited: Nomadism, or the Wandering Impulse, With Special Reference to Heredity*, begins with a rudimentary continuum between apes, "primitive peoples," children, and adolescents. While the ancestral ape was a "typical nomad," he argues, subsequent human populations evinced a like instinct which led "them to hunting rather than agriculture as a livelihood" (10). This compulsion can be seen in primitives' "love... of the chase" by their "fondness for horses; and by a thieving propensity, or at least a lack of appreciation of property rights" (11). Polynesians and Native Americans are two of the groups Davenport cites as carriers of this ape-derived inclination because of their "absence of a fixed abode"-- a form of social (dis)organization figured as a lack of domestic space, determined by instinct and not culture, and thus temporalized as the durability of a baseline trait rather than a recurrence to it. In cases of nomadism in "a non-nomadic people" such as European or American tramps, the temporality at work

<sup>31</sup> Or, as he phrases it with a fairly glib bit of short-hand: "Two phrases readily explain why fugue was unimportant in America: No conscript army, and 'Go West, young man.'"

may either take the shape of a persistence limited to “certain families” or as an atavistic phenomenon which prevails in those whose “inhibitory mechanism is slightly developed and in others in whom it is readily paralyzed.” The purpose of establishing this difference is clear enough: in the hierarchy of races and cultures Americans cannot occupy the same civilizational level as Polynesians. If the wandering tendency is the result of a persistence then it must be particularized down to the unit of the family, to a localized “stock” which proves to be the exception to the larger society’s evolution away from the anthropoid impetus to wander.

Let it be clear that Davenport’s primary concern lies with those who are defined in advance as pathological. The first men and women who evolved from apes were helpless to suppress the impulse to roam, and it would take millennia for those compulsions to dwindle to the point where the agrarian stage of civilization could commence. If youth-- children, and adolescents in particular-- exhibit similar traits it is immediately accounted for as a function of recapitulation, the theory first advanced by Haeckel that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny or, “every individual... climbs its own family tree” (Gould 143). Neither of these scenarios deviate from what nineteenth century science held to be iron clad laws of human development. The emergent fields of sociology, psychology, and anthropology were deeply influenced by this episteme and viewed the study of the primitive as a key to understanding humanity’s collective past and fractured present. It was modernity’s internal others, those contemporary with modern society yet who by virtue of their excessive mobility seem to be out of synch-- as with Davenport’s nomads or the image of the street arab, a figure clearly identified with the “primitive” bedouin-- who presented a category-

destabilizing problem. Their anachronistic status troubles a Hegelian-Darwinian conception of evolutionary history, of time as a linear progression from savagery through barbarism to modernity, disrupting this normative structure and thus presenting itself as a pathology.

Out of synch or off the scale: in her compulsive wandering the nomadic paradoxically exhibits a surplus attributable to a dearth of proper inhibition. The unbalanced behavior of those affected stems from a biological lack--“the absence of a simple sex-linked gene that ‘determines domesticity’”-- which results in motive excess (Davenport 23). The temporal dimension of this disproportion is ultimately allochronic. The contemporary primitive is denied coevalness with modernity’s subjects and resides outside of historical time. The instabilities of adolescent youth-- untamed energies, irrational whims, and capacious appetites for adventure-- are therefore situated somewhere between the sober rhythms of adult life and the irredeemable errors of dromomaniacs.<sup>32</sup> In order to locate the young in the interstices between a conceptual center and margin-- to demonstrate they are not truly outside the limits of the modern though not yet fully within it-- those figures Davenport relies upon to construct his system must be proven beyond the powers of social recuperation.

In the chapter titled “Association of the Nomadic Impulse with Psychoses” Davenport seeks to link “the frequent association in the same family and even in the same individual of nomadism and various well-known aberrant nervous mental

<sup>32</sup> “Dromomania has been used as a synonym of ambulatory automatism. Nomadism has often been applied to a racial or tribal tendency to wander. On the whole, I am inclined to use the word ‘nomadism’ just because it has a racial connotation” (7).

states” (25). He offers, by way of example, “periodic psychoses, with depression and frequently suicide... fits of temper, including various explosive tempers... migraine and periodic headaches...epilepsy...hysterical attacks...sprees...sexual outbreaks or general weakness of sex control...”. Of particular note is the concept of periodicity--the predisposition of the afflicted to occasional crises resulting from “internal tension” (25). Davenport goes so far as to designate those who suffer from this condition as “a race of periodics” for whom “the nomadic tendency is released in the periodic state which paralyzes the inhibitions” (26). Excessive wandering is not caused by periodicity but enabled by it. Further, “nomads, of all kinds, have a special racial trait--are, in a proper sense, members of the nomadic race” (25).

The proof of these extraordinary claims is drawn from one hundred family histories gathered by fieldworkers and voluntary contributors, a fascinating compilation of anecdotal evidence regarding the lives and temperaments of various individuals who seem to exhibit the traits of Nomadism. The first “propitius” (subject) is a boy in his early teens who has since the age of three run away from home repeatedly, “lies and steals without reason, and contracts debts for his father to pay” (27). After committing burglary the boy was sent to a reformatory. His father, a medical doctor, demonstrates no pathology, though his mother is “subject to *frequent headaches*” (all italics in original). The rest of the family seems well-adjusted, but significantly for Davenport the boy’s maternal grandfather “was a *Western desperado*, drank hard at times, and was involved in murder, etc.”. Davenport infers that the boy and his grandfather are linked by characteristics passed down in Lamarckian fashion, that in essence they are of the same nomadic race, an identity

that cuts across time and class position. Whether the boy's behavior is properly speaking atavistic, which by definition implies that characteristics have skipped at least one generation, is put into question by the periodicity of his mother's headaches. It may be that the condition troubling boy and grandfather became recessive in the mother, a scenario in keeping with Davenport's claim that "nomadism is found prevalingly in the male sex" (27).

Condensing these genealogies into a series of tables, Davenport reduces the already fragmentary narratives to a few phrases or key words that are intended to indicate the presence of nomadism: "a bear hunter of note"; "deserted from the army; went on sprees"; "escaped from slavery and ran away to Kansas"; "fond of Indian out-door life and always used an Indian blanket; descended from Pocahontas"; "migrated to the United States from Germany; said to have been queer" (16). If these narrative shards seem incomplete or absurd as a means of establishing the wandering tendency, they provoke a set of concerns the exploration of which reveals the cultural logic of the formation of youth as a category in the Machine Age. The notion of the "spree" is particularly compelling-- a time-space whose latter-day usage has come to describe violent or commercial activity almost exclusively. Contemporary media report "killing" or "shooting" sprees in their accounts of mass murder, for example, as in the Virginia Tech murders of 2007 when a student killed 32 people, including himself, in about ten minutes. Yet it is not relative speed alone that defines the killing spree; according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, among the hallmarks of the spree is that it occurs in at least two locations, and that there are "two or more

murders committed by an offender or offenders, without a cooling-off period.”<sup>33</sup>

Though the term first entered the English language in the fourteenth century, by the nineteenth century, “spree” was often used to indicate a period of rambunctiousness, usually associated with immoderate drinking (quite often on the part of sailors), and gave rise to a verb form, “spreeing.” Spreeing is thus a kind of fugue state, one in which the subject abandons the usual spatio-temporal patterns of everyday life and enters a state of exception characterized by its excess, velocity, periodicity, and re-territorialization. Like the ancient nomadic, the truant, and the modern primitive, the spree-er inhabits what Hamlet called a “time... out of joint.”-- a condition of spatio-temporal disturbance.<sup>34</sup>

In Shakespeare’s play, Hamlet first uses this phrase after meeting his father’s ghost, who informs him of the fact of his murder in a speech that flashes back to the scene of the crime. In its detail, the dead king’s description functions as a form of analepsis, interrupting the play’s forward momentum and confronting Hamlet with the knowledge not only that his uncle has assassinated his father but that as a result of the murder the natural sequence of events, the succession of political power, and thus the very temporality and order of the state has been interrupted. The act of murder is a wrenching event that dislocates his father’s life-cycle, the political rhythm of Denmark, and history itself.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century the figure of Hamlet was mobilized to argue against a type of youth whose effete self-absorption went against the

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.fbi.gov/publications/serial\\_murder.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/publications/serial_murder.htm)

<sup>34</sup> Act I, scene v. line 188

American grain. Theodore Roosevelt's insistence on the need for young men with "character that does and dares" privileged action over introspection, optimism rather than cynicism (*The Strenuous Life* 117). According to a popular argument, over-civilization had bred neurasthenic youths insufficient to the tasks that faced America with its entry onto the global stage. The difficulty besetting Shakespeare's Hamlet, and by extension the modern American Hamlet, Hutchins Hapgood claimed,

was that he was too highly cultivated, that he had become too finished and sensitive, and that he had no longer that crude, animal will, so essential to power. He had magnificent thoughts and great beauty of expression, but he was too far away from the common brutal origin of the race to be able to act effectively. (165).<sup>35</sup>

The desirability of brute volition featured prominently in numerous analyses of human development, such as James Edgar Swift's "Some Criminal Tendencies in Boyhood: A Study in Adolescence," which undertakes "a study of the youthful escapades of some of those men who have come out all right" in order to untangle the problem of juvenile crime (65). Struck by the relative triviality of offenses committed by inmates of the Wisconsin Reform School, acts "hardly more serious than [my] memory could recall from [my] own boyhood," Swift distributed a questionnaire to 103 white-collar professionals "of unquestionable moral standing"-- professors, students, "lawyers, ministers, dentists, merchants, etc." and asked them to describe their youthful indiscretions. Their responses revealed widespread minor delinquencies such as truancy; fighting; theft of grapes, apples, and watermelon (or, more significantly in Swift's view, money); drunkenness; lying; and a miscellaneous

<sup>35</sup> This, in contrast to MF Libby, who described the character as "the greatest adolescent type in any literature" in his essay "Shakespeare and Adolescence" first published in the *Journal of Genetic Psychology* (183).

category of misdemeanors “of too varied a character for classification,” including “interfering with trains by flagging, greasing the rails, obstructing the track, throwing stones through the car windows, stealing old iron or coal” (70). Within limits, Swift maintains, such “larks and adventures” signal “an independent and initiative nature” (65) fully in accord with “race instincts” (91). Truancy, for example, is an expression of a “wandering tendency [which] seems to be a survival of the migrations of primitive races” (66). Gesturing at Darwinian theory, he notes by way of preliminary that such instincts are to be found among many animal species such as “young salmon.... northern hares and squirrels... the Norway rat and lemming.... Kamchatka rats.... [and] turtles.” By virtue of the evolutionary link with their “animal ancestors” human beings in their “primeval” stages inherit the same disposition, one which “firmly implanted in the race the desire to roam” in response to a number of different motivations such as the search for food or a better climate, warfare, or “often mere causeless restlessness” (67). The legacies of ancestral mobility persist among adult modern primitives: “certain peoples, as the gypsies,” for instance, “endowed with an hereditary instinct for vagabondage,” or “the nomadic hordes of the Asiatic steppes and the wastes of the Sahara [who] transmit a restlessness to their descendants which in itself is an obstacle to sedentary life.” Finally, within the context of capitalist modernity, the peregrinations of tramps exhibit the tenacity of “this slowly disappearing race tendency to migrate.”

The chain Swift has established-- from animals to prehistoric savages to latter-day nomads to modernity’s dropouts-- requires only a single additional term to be completed, one provided by the ubiquitous concept of biogenetic law. “Biological



studies seem to indicate that man passes through the physical development of the race” (77) he notes, and, even further,

recent study in race psychology... has led to the belief that there is the same recapitulation in the psychic life as in the physical. The child manifests many tendencies that are characteristic of savages. His fears, tendency to truancy and vagrancy, thieving, love for gaudy colors and ornamentation, anger, and feeling in the presence of nature and water, all point to the same conclusion. (78).

To complicate this familiar equivalence of the young with the primitive-- a pervasive trope not only within genetic psychology but across a broad range of discourses-- Swift, citing Gustave Le Bon, adds the crowd. “Le Bon has shown us,” Swift explains, “how, in a crowd, the older racial tendencies come to the surface and exert the controlling influence over the actions of adults” (84). The individual, immersed in the mass, is structurally deprived of his individuality and becomes ““a creature acting by instinct”” (Le Bon qtd. in Swift 84), a barbarian who “possesses the spontaneity, the violence, the ferocity, and also the enthusiasm and heroism of primitive beings, whom he further tends to resemble by the facility with which he allows himself to be impressed by words and images” (Le Bon 36).

## **VI. Dimes**

The stage of adolescence, of course, was posited not as an irreversible break with the temporal norms of modernity but as ultimately, and naturally, recuperable. Yet the danger that young people would fail to emerge from the quasi-pathological condition of adolescence haunted the work of biologists, reformers and psychologists, leading many of them after the turn of the century to embrace the biopolitical

discourse of eugenics. Proper training and education were no doubt indispensable to the rise of successive generations fit to meet the demands of the nation's and the race's future, a belief which animated not only the standardization of primary and secondary education but the playground movement of the early-twentieth century. Fears of collective degeneracy were not completely dispelled by these programs, however, and what was seen as the unique susceptibility of youth to pernicious influences aggravated a burgeoning national tendency to surveil and police moral comportment. The "comstockery" derided by figures such as Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and HL Mencken flowered in a fertile earth of ruling-class paranoia already broken and tilled by mass immigration. Demographic changes fueled the suspicion that a populace whose heterogeneity and estrangement from the traditions and values of the fabled Yankee or Cavalier could fatally alter American identity, undermining democracy itself in its industrializing forms.

In *Traps for the Young* (1883) Anthony Comstock, the Secretary and Chief Special Agent of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice and Post Office Inspector, warned of the deleterious effects of pulp literature-- enormously popular half-dime novels and story papers such as Edward L. Wheeler's *Deadwood Dick*, *The Prince of the Road*; or, *The Black Rider of the Black Hills* (1877). Such narratives, Comstock preached, whether "the silly, insipid tale, the coarse, slangy story in the dialect of the barroom, the blood-and-thunder romance of border life" or "the exaggerated details of crimes, real and imaginary" (21), debased the finer qualities and aspirations of the young by their emphasis on "self gratification" over "high moral purposes" (24). Couched in "the seductive excitements of fiction" pulps

deranged the rational faculties with their hyperbole and “monstrously absurd exaggerations,” familiarizing boys and girls with the worst aspects of human behavior and undermining that “great safeguard of human society-- reverence to law.”<sup>36</sup> The singular virtue of the young, according to the Chief Special Agent, lies in their fealty to the authority and wisdom of their elders, qualities pulps represent “as a species of tyranny which the hero first chafes under, then resists, and lastly ignores” (24-25). Impairing this necessary deference, dimes undermine domestic hierarchy, and inevitably lead the young not only to “ignore proper authority” but to slide into a “dangerous and lawless life” in which the social hegemony of the state itself is at risk (25).

Underwriting this vision of youthful subversion is a powerful presumption made by reformers, bureaucrats and scientists alike: impressionability, a primary characteristic of the psychology of the young, is yoked to the “fundamental racial instinct” of imitation (Swift 86) or, as Comstock phrases it, “There is a good deal of monkey in a bad boy. He delights to imitate” (27). The mimetic faculty-- a capacity emphasized in contemporaneous descriptions of primitives, savages, racial others and even animals-- was held to be a core trait of humanity preeminent in the youthful subject. Susceptibility to instruction by example and admonition was thus both a grace and a vice. Whether bestowed by divine intelligence or selective adaptation, the tendency to mimic threatened to engender satirical dispositions or worse, unnatural behavior leading to social destruction. While for Emerson “a boy is in the parlor what

<sup>36</sup> This assessment was not entirely different from Knut Hamsun’s acerbic view. Popular “detective stories,” he wrote, usually featured “a young Yankee lad of 16 or 17 from the New York detective division who has discovered and shot down a whole band of foreign Jewish peddlers” (35)

the pit is in the playhouse” (*Selected Writings* 147)-- a phrase suggesting the healthy irreverence of the youth who refuses to be humbugged or handled-- for later generations, particularly social conservatives such as Comstock, the disposition to imitation in an era of incipient mass culture presented a dilemma: “Think of feeding the youthful mind on such carrion, of distorting the imagination by putting such abominations before children” (26). As others have noted, in terms of its sensationalist diction and fierce ejaculations, Comstock’s indictment of pulp literature traffics in the very sort of lurid prose he condemns.<sup>37</sup> In this sense the dime genre shapes the reformist admonition and expose. There is a shared melodramatic sensibility, a common emphasis on romantic exploits and the rough character of the city, a concern for the vicissitudes of youthful experience. Thus when Comstock writes that the novels “speak to many youthful minds like the piercings of a sword-- a poisoned sword!” he echoes their more turgid passages (41).

The figures represented in popular literature constituted a range of fictive types with which young Americans might identify and thus develop their own sense of self, a fairly uncomplicated process of literary consumption and imitation many social critics and reformers accepted unquestioningly. In this sense, the content of the novels-- the stylized encounters, the straightforwardly delineated characters, and the terrain itself-- provided the components of youthful fantasy that functioned to clarify individual and national identity. Yet with the advent of outlaw characters such as the road agent Deadwood Dick dime novels adapted “traditional stories of bandits and

<sup>37</sup> See, for instance, Hawes, Joseph. *Children in Urban Society: Juvenile Delinquency in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford UP, 1971.

highwaymen,” tailoring them to a Gilded Age context of class conflict (Denning 165). In this sense they possessed an allegorical dimension that posed a symbolic challenge to the search for social regimentation represented by comstockery.

*Deadwood Dick* was one of the earliest pulps to celebrate a figure operating on the fringes of the law. Edward L. Wheeler’s novel, published in the inaugural issue of Beadle’s Half Dime Library, was the first of thirty-three stories featuring the same central character and eventually spawned a namesake, Deadwood Dick, Jr.<sup>38</sup> Released on the anniversary of Custer’s defeat at Little Bighorn<sup>39</sup> and the year of the Great Rail Road Strike, *Deadwood Dick* narrates the vicissitudes of three male characters, each resembling the other, as they navigate the anarchic mining camps of the Black Hills. The first of these, the red buckskin-clad Fearless Frank, “an interesting specimen of young, healthy manhood” (273) of near Greco-Roman perfection, accompanies a wagon train of prospectors to “the new El Dorado” of the West (275). During the course of his journey he hears cries for help in the distance and parts from the caravan in order to investigate, finding a beautiful “maiden of perhaps seventeen summers”-- bound to a pole and stripped to the waist, bearing the stripes of a whip on her back (278). Within the first pages Wheeler establishes that his story partakes of the tropes of the romance in which lone riders, like their knight-errant templates, will be compelled to defend white womanhood-- in this circumstance against “the fiend incarnate” Sitting Bull (279). Yet with an indication of the changes underway in the metaphysics of Indian-hating, and as a means of establishing Fearless Frank’s

<sup>38</sup> Though this later figure was not the product of Wheeler’s pen-- he died in 1885-- but of various ghostwriters retained by the publishing house.

<sup>39</sup> Notably, the Great Sioux War (also known as the Black Hills War) did not end until April, 1877.

outsider credibility, his meeting with Sitting Bull results not in bloodshed but with the Sioux chieftain's praise. "You came, Scarlet Boy, in the midst of all panic;-- came, and though then but a stripling, you applied simple remedies that restored Sitting Bull to the arms of his warriors" (297-8). Sitting Bull, it appears, was once struck by lightning and only Frank's timely intervention-- "my warriors were in consternation; they ran hither and thither in affright, calling on the Manitou to preserve their chief"-- saved him. A brief parley ensues, during which Frank appeals to Sitting Bull's sense of obligation, and in an "instant the glade was cleared of the savages" (298).

Such rapid developments characterize the narrative as a whole and establish a mutability of events paralleled by the shifting identities of the characters. Fearless Frank, it soon evolves, is in fact Justin McKenzie, "a gay, dashing young ranger," "nearest of kin to a rich old fur-trader," who, a confirmed misogynist, forbade Frank to ever marry on penalty of disinheritance. Unable to resist the charms of the orphan Anita, Frank/Justin elopes with and lawfully marries her in secret. The licitness of their union is unknown to Anita's brother, Ned Harris, who, enraged at his sister's apparent dishonor, swears revenge against Frank/Justin and departs with Anita for the Black Hills. Once there he embarks on a career as a road-agent: Ned Harris is in fact Deadwood Dick! It remains only for Alice, the victim of Sitting Bull's cruelty, to be revealed as the daughter of "General" Nix, a predictably crusty old-timer of rustic expression, and to bind her in matrimony to Harry Redburn, "a young and handsome 'pilgrim'" Wheeler introduces playing cards in Deadwood's incongruous Metropolitan saloon (285). As this wealth of secret information is laid bare at the novel's denouement, Alexander and Clarence Filmore, a scheming father and son

responsible for the death of Anita and Ned's parents who have been dogging the heels of Deadwood Dick in an effort to unmask and assassinate him, are lynched "for their attempted crimes" (356). Two weddings and two executions: paired ritual passages mark the culmination of Wheeler's narrative. Love is consummated in matrimony while villainy is punished with death, a juxtaposition that seems to equate the obligations of marriage with the finality of lifelessness. Dick/Ned, excluded from this libidinal economy and freed by lethal mob justice, makes a last gesture at entering the realm of settlement and domesticity, asking the "ruined" (292) but true Calamity Jane to be his wife:

"No!" said the girl, haughtily, sternly. "I have had all the *man* I care for. We can be friends, Dick; more we can never be!"

"Very well, Jennie; I rec'on it is destined that I shall live single. At any rate, I'll never take a refusal from another woman. Yes, gal, we'll be friends, if nothing more." (emphasis in original 357).

Deadwood Dick consigns himself to the fate of life on the margins, to a sphere of activity lacking any re/productive dimension and thus radically liberated from the constraints labor might impose. Thenceforth the Prince of the Road will reside just beyond the limits of civilization proper-- singular, childless, stealing wealth rather than making it. Locked out of the temporal cycle of maturity, he will remain perpetually young by virtue of adopting the structural position of youth.

A year after the publication of Wheeler's first Deadwood Dick story, the *New York Times* reported that three "boys" aged 10, 16 and 18 were arrested in connection with the robbery and attempted murder of Thomas Lynn. In contrast to the notorious Jesse Pomeroy-- who denied speculation that his crimes were the result of the "avid consumption of dime novels" (Savage 9-10)-- Adolph Baldsmeeder, ascribed his

delinquency to the influence of story papers, “for which he had a passion” (*New York Times*). According to the article he was obsessed with “*Deadwood Dick, Five Hundred Dollars Reward for the Capture of Deadwood Dick, The Red Right Hand, Double Daggers* and similar trash.” As a result, the journalist inferred, “his mind became inflamed with a thirst for bloody adventures.” Planning to leave for Texas to “make a fortune on the road,” Baldsmeeder, “a tall, wiry, freckle-faced, red-headed boy, with gray eyes, cold, fine cut features, and a dare-devil demeanor that puts one ill at ease,” encouraged his friends to join him. “Captivated by his descriptions” of outlaw life, “all three swore an awful oath to be highwayman, to be true to one another, never to betray one another in trouble, nor cross one another in love affairs, and each to suffer death at the hands of the others upon violation of any of their sworn vows.”

In Fleetwood Park they engaged in a ritual, “each one holding in his uplifted hand a keen-edged dagger made of a fine steel” and declaring their loyalty. Baldsmeeder bought a pistol from a pawn-shop and demonstrated his marksmanship to his friends, going so far as to shoot a dog in order to show that the pistol was of a sufficient caliber to kill. The robbery attempt failing-- the victim, Lynn, sustained a wound in the leg-- the three fled. From his cell-- “in his cool, blunt way”-- Baldsmeeder told the *Times* reporter, “I’ve got the devil in me. I would like to have had time to search that Lynn, I tell you I’d ha’ made things howl down in Texas. They can’t take my head off but once. Give me some tobacco.” Even if Baldsmeeder had never thumbed through a dime, it seems clear his biographer had. Using pulp language the reporter frames his young subject, inserting him into a story



which ostensibly echoes Baldsmeeder's self perception. The failed killer is thus packaged twice over: once by scripting his actions for the *Times*' readers, and again by typing his subjectivity according to a characterology of popular fiction.

The currency of the dime-narrative of youth persisted, particularly in the press. Fifteen years later, on Christmas eve of 1893 the *New York Times* reprinted an item from the *Indianapolis Journal* stating that two boys executed by hanging for murder in Danville, Illinois blamed their crimes on the effects of "reading trashy literature of the Jesse James and Deadwood Dick type" and that as a result several local news-dealers had declared they would cease to sell "cheap sensational novels." Even so, by the first decade of the 20th century, a cohort raised on the adventure of story papers looked back on them with nostalgia as the expression of an innocent "picture of American wild life," a collection of narratives whose melodrama seemed to match the propulsive pace of society in the United States after the Civil War (Harvey 41). Charles M. Harvey's short essay "The Dime Novel in American Life", published in 1907, dismisses Comstock's preachments against popular fiction for the young, arguing that these "cheap and wholesome" (42) texts "incited a love of reading among the youth of the country," consolidating readers' sense of heteronormative gender identity, elevating them from their "surroundings, however sordid," (44) and enhancing their "taste and tone" (43).

## **VII. Tony the Tramp**

Even Horatio Alger, now generally misrepresented as the writer of absurdly didactic "luck and pluck" stories for boys, could not escape comstockery: he

numbered among the authors targeted by the American Library Association in a campaign to purge public libraries of sensational fiction.<sup>40</sup> A beneficiary of the steam press and compulsory schooling, innovations which increased juvenile literacy, Alger published over 118 books in his lifetime, a mere drop in an ocean of popular fiction which included the mass-produced dime novels of the House of Beadle, Street & Smith Company (where Theodore Dreiser, working as an editor, began writing *Jennie Gearhardt*),<sup>41</sup> George Munro & Company, Norman L. Munro & Company, and Frank Tousey's publishing house. The *Library Journal* of Fall 1879 devoted two issues to the problem of pulp literature, publishing addresses given at its Boston conference on "Fiction and the Reading of School Children." An essay by Miss Bean, librarian of Brookline Public Library, titled "The Evil of Unlimited Freedom in the Use of Juvenile Fiction" protested against "this craze for books" among schoolchildren, a compulsive and "inordinate consumption" of reading material which led to "desultory and careless mental habits" (342). Robert Metcalf, master of Wells School, echoed her sentiments, warning against "a crude, unsystematic, miscellaneous jumble of reading on the part of our children" (345), while another librarian, S.S. Green of Worcester, asked rhetorically whether it was appropriate to provide "highly spiced stories for the young" (347). The condemnation of dimes was not universal; T.W. Higginson observed that "it is not a bad impulse but a good one" which attracted children to sensational fiction (357). "The motive that sends him to Oliver Optic," Higginson argued, "is just that love of adventure which has made the Anglo-

<sup>40</sup> See Carol Nackenoﬀ's *The Fictional Republic: Horatio Alger and American Political Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford UP. 1994.

<sup>41</sup> See *Theodore Dreiser: Interviews*. Rusch and Pizer, eds. p. 311

American race spread itself across a continent, taking possession of it in spite of forests, rivers, deserts, wild Indians and grizzly bears.”

It is not clear that Alger would have agreed with this latter statement. In *Tony the Tramp, or Right is Might*-- serialized in the year of the centennial, dead-center in the midst of the Long Depression-- the story's young title character, an unwilling prushun compelled by his malicious jockey, Rudolph Rugg, to ramble the back roads, desires only to “live somewhere, and not go tramping round the country all the time” (7). The opening chapter presents these two figures as racio-ethnic types. As with Harris' text the older character is “dark-complexioned” with a “low, receding brow” who gives the “impression... that he was of gypsy blood” (5). The boy, by contrast, though tanned by the sun “was originally of light complexion” and unsurprisingly possesses “chestnut” hair, blue eyes, and “regular” features. Signaling a core physiognomic trope common to all of Alger's stories, the succeeding dialog confirms that these visible traits correspond to psychological drives. Tony, in spite of the fact that he is tired and hungry, resists begging for a meal much to Rudolph's disgust, who takes his objection as evidence that Tony is “getting proud” (6). In distinction to Rudolph, who claims that he is “a vagrant by nature” born of “roving stock,” Tony emphasizes his yearning for domesticity: “I want to have a home, and a business, and to live like other people,” he sighs. (7). Combined with his Anglo-Saxon characteristics, the boy's sessile instincts imply a secret genealogy and the narrative that ensues follows a well-traveled rut: Tony, of uncertain origins, manages to escape the pernicious influence of Rudolph, supporting himself through diligence,

serendipity, and entrepreneurial energy until, inevitably, he is revealed to be the unjustly dispossessed orphan of a wealthy English family.

Alger's formula, though thoroughly tested, is not without inconsistencies, a peril of its schematic plot. In the novel's first pages Rudolph claims to be Tony's maternal uncle, telling him that "Your mother was my sister [who] died soon after you were born" (9). Later that day, approaching a farmhouse, Rudolph compels Tony to pretend to be his son as part of a plot to defraud its occupants, a ruse Alger seems to have misremembered. Tony absconds and Rudolph relentlessly pursues him, though without success. After several developments Rudolph enters the employ of the adventuress Mrs. Middleton, who seeks to ensure that the boy remains lost so that he will not lay claim to his rightful inheritance. Fortified by a per diem Rudolph assumes the disguise of a Quaker in order to track his prey unnoticed. He finds Tony working as a stable hand and Rudolph's masquerade proves so effective that he is able to catch Tony in the woods during the course of an errand. A low-hanging branch snags Rudolph's hat and wig, uncovering his real identity, and since there is no need for deception any longer Rudolph maliciously reveals that the two are not related. "'You always told me I was your son,'" Tony exclaims. "'It was not true,' ... Rudolph [states] calmly. 'You are not related to me'" and throws Tony down a well (93).

Tony escapes once more and-- unfairly discharged from his position as a stableboy for absenteeism yet refusing a proffered hand-out from a workmate-- travels on his meager wages to New York, where he rescues a young prodigal from armed robbery, thereby fulfilling still another convention of the novel's narrative arc: a single act of heroism is rewarded, in this instance with a new wardrobe and the

promise of a protector. “Hands encased in a pair of gloves of faultless fit, and looking enough like a young patrician to pass muster among his fashionable neighbors,” Tony and his newfound protector-- George Spencer, having foresworn drink and gambling after the shock of his close encounter-- attend the opera, where Tony’s true identity seems confirmed: “Though he had led the life of a tramp, he had the instincts of a gentleman” (129).

From the vantage of this society debut the novel’s denouement comes into sight. Having symbolically restored Tony to his rightful social position by clothing him in garments suitable to his station Alger is now required by the story’s logic to allocate deserved rewards and just desserts. Yet in the manner of a fabulist the author takes care that the villains’ punishments are self-inflicted. Rudolph Rugg, bought with an annuity of 200 pounds to testify that he was paid to abduct Tony as a child, drinks “himself to death in six months” (168). Mrs. Middleton, the usurper of Tony’s fortune, is convinced to surrender her claim to the estate on threat of legal action and with a sweetener of 300 pounds. Tony permits her to remain at Middleton Hall until she is married to the gold-digging Capt. Lovell, who discovers her relative impoverishment only after the fact and accordingly becomes “brutal.” “The marriage was not happy,” Alger writes with a trace of sanctimony and palpable satisfaction, “but she has all the happiness she deserves, and so has he.” Tony himself, now known as “the Hon. Anthony Middleton of Middleton Hall,” attends Oxford, and, “an immense favorite with the circle to which he now belongs,” is widely admired for “his frank, off-hand manner.”

At a formal level, the weight of exposition, hoary conventions, and befuddled plot points of the novel equilibrates its mechanistic moral economy. Alger's stated goal in writing boy's fiction was to induct the young into the duties and opportunities of liberal democracy-- a process, it is true, he riddled with mystifications-- to uplift the street arabs who formed in composite the protagonist of his first novel, *Ragged Dick*. Criticisms of Alger as "responsible for far greater bad influences [on children] than the writers of... dime novels" miss the mark because they misrepresent his novels' motive logic (*The Editor* 285). An untitled essay in the June 1906 edition of *The Editor* claims that

the Horatio Alger Stories... have been proved to be responsible for the running away from home of scores and scores of boys. In practically all of this author's stories the heroes leave home in some country town, go to the city, and become rich. Moreover, they become rich in the most impossible ways. The ease with which they rise to affluence misleads the boy reader, who fancies he has but to go to the city in order to begin at once to climb upon the ladder of wealth and fame. In some libraries these books are barred. (285).<sup>42</sup>

It seems likely that the writer of the article has never actually read Alger's work. True enough, Alger's heroes often become prosperous in improbable ways-- always by the agency of blind luck and enlightened patronage-- yet his earlier novels seldom involve migration from country to city, and his characters' movements are generally limited to traveling the intra-urban landscape (the *Ragged Dick* and the first *Tattered Tom* series) westward to the frontier (the second *Tattered Tom* series, including *Julius, or, The Street Boy Out West*; *The Young Outlaw*; and *The Telegraph Boy*), or between small towns (*Bound to Rise*; *Risen from the Ranks*). If, by way of

<sup>42</sup> And, the anonymous author continues, broadening his critique, "Nobody knows how many boys have floated down rivers after reading *Huckleberry Finn*; nobody dares compute the number of boys who have formed secret societies with meeting places in caves after reading *Tom Sawyer*" (285).

exception, the protagonists from the *Luck and Pluck* series visit the city, their roots remain sunk in the rural communities where they were born. In every case the main character's final destination is a version of home-- one that rarely features the family in aggregate-- as an outcome of ethical struggle or as the restitution of what has been taken. The physical movement required to get there corresponds in bildungsroman fashion to a developmental teleology. Dick Hunter threads the city labyrinth to a boarding house, placing himself under the tutelage of Henry Fosdick in his rise to respectability. In a journey originating in trampdom and terminating at the country manor Anthony Middleton engages a tutor and drops his vernacular. Both boys undertake education in order to claim a place in the world, a form of progress allegorized by the purposiveness of their mobility.

### **VIII. Tramp Sociology**

"I saw to-day," Walt Whitman wrote in his journal in the Spring of 1879,

a sight I had never seen before—and it amazed, and made me serious; three quite good-looking American men, of respectable personal presence, two of them young, carrying chiffonier-bags on their shoulder, and the usual long iron hooks in their hands, plodding along, their eyes cast down, spying for scraps, rags, bones, &c. (*Democratic Vistas* 161).

Whether the Panic of 1873-- the cause of a global depression, at 65 months the longest in United States history-- could be traced to the collapse of the Vienna stock exchange, the Franco-Prussian War, or Jim Fisk and Jay Gould's attempt to corner the market in gold, for Whitman its reverberations-- 114 of the 253 months between March 1879 to January 1901 were recessive-- occasioned an uncharacteristic lapse of faith. "If the United States," he reasoned

like the countries of the Old World, are also to grow vast crops of poor, desperate, dissatisfied, nomadic, miserably-waged populations, such as we see looming upon us of late years—steadily, even if slowly, eating into them like a cancer of lungs or stomach—then our republican experiment, notwithstanding all its surface-successes, is at heart an unhealthy failure. (161).

The paired metaphors in this passage are remarkable: the United States having produced “vast crops” of the immiserated has generated its own fatal disease, a metastasizing “cancer of lungs or stomach” which threatens to consume the republic from within. The curious juxtaposition of agricultural and medical figures represents the nation as a farmer working the fields of its own body, its institutions as vital organs devoured by toxic offspring. This is no mere blight, leading to a failed harvest, but a principle of social reproduction as degeneration-- a betrayal.

By all accounts the winter of 1873-1874 was a hard one: a million unemployed, 100,000 in New York alone.<sup>43</sup> In the years that followed, jobless workers-- forced by economic circumstances to seek employment elsewhere-- scattered through the countryside, traveling on foot and by train. Time-space compression-- a result of improvements in communication and transportation such as the extension of railroads, which had already rigged the skeleton of an integrated internal market-- was thus the condition of possibility for the formation of the tramp as a social type. Trackage had doubled in the years preceding the Panic and lines that carried commodities from the wheat belt of the mid-west to major nodes of commercial activity-- Chicago, the eastern cities-- now funneled the “desperate [and] dissatisfied” into regional urban centers or deposited them along an archipelago of

<sup>43</sup> From New York: “Midwinter found tens of thousands of people on the verge of starvation, suffering for food, for the need of proper clothing, and for medical attendance.” Quoted in Gustavus Myers, *History of the Great American Fortunes*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Co., 1910.



bonanza farms. The nomadism Whitman invokes was in this sense a rational tactic for survival-- one adapted to the transformed landscape of the industrializing West. The ensuing moral panics were ultimately codified in various states with "Tramp laws," which were "directly derived from the southern Black Codes used to control the freedmen's movement and re-establish white supremacy in the aftermath of the Civil War" (*American Masculinities* 211). The defining feature of tramp laws was their concern above all with "excessive mobility," such that increasingly tramps were distinguished from other members of the ranks of the impoverished. "Key to this differentiation," Cresswell explains, "was a specifically geographic factor-- the newly extended possibilities of mobility on a continental scale. The new technologies of modernity-- so connected in American myth to democracy and Manifest Destiny-- also created new forms of deviance and new repressions" (52). The discourse of tramps took pains to elaborate the relationship between this newly formulated class of outsiders and the young. Boys and young men in particular were seen to be susceptible to the seductions of the open road, a state of affairs which sharpened many social scientists' and reformers' sense of the chaos portended by trampdom. It was in the process of constructing the tramp as a marginal figure according to a spatial logic of proper, purposeful mobility that such writers also shaped the formation of the youth concept directly and indirectly.

Tramp literature abounded at the turn of the century, from Josiah Flynt's *Tramping with Tramps*, a quasi-ethnographic account of life on the road in the US and Europe to Nathan Kussy's brutal muckraking novel *The Abyss*. All of the texts from this genre served to familiarize their middle-class readers with the language and

practices of the “submerged tenth,” that fraction of the population who had drifted beyond the sphere of reform or reclamation, subsisting in the depths of a shadow economy. Invariably the authors offered some typology of the transients they encountered, distinguishing for instance between “gay-cats” – a term that originally denoted an inexperienced youth but came to mean someone willing to work during the course of his travels – to the lowest figure of tramp life, the “tomato-can vag,” so named for his habit of drinking the dregs of beer barrels from scavenged tin cans. “Mush fakirs” mended umbrellas as a way of supporting themselves. Yeggs were criminals. Rattlers rode freight cars only, while ramblers preferred passenger trains. Moochers, floppers, stew bums, spongers, pikers: the taxonomy of tramps tended to focus on the actions of a type rather than his appearance.

Arguably the most important set of distinctions – tripartite in nature – distinguished between tramps, hoboos and bums. Hoboos were migratory workers and thus fell into the category of “gay-cats,” though this highly unstable latter term also indicated someone essentially untrustworthy and liable to “peach” on others to the authorities. Bums might be stationary or might travel though they generally lacked the initiative to move about with any frequency or ambition. They also tended to drink heavily. Tramps were in a sense the vagrant aristocracy, taking pride in their resistance to labor and often held to be constitutionally inclined to the wandering life. Yet to the propertied and the sedentary no such distinctions applied. Instead, the negative attributes of excessively mobile figures – “the absence of commitment, attachment and involvement,” terms with which youth might be described – were

folded into a single category, the tramp, who embodied “widespread associations of mobility with deviance, shiftlessness” (Cresswell 15).

For our purposes, tramp literature may be divided into five sub-genres, including participant-observer ethnographies, reformist tracts, sociological studies, fiction, and autobiographies. These categories are by no means distinct and their overlap can be considerable, particularly with regard to certain texts. Josiah Flynt’s *Tramping with Tramps*, serialized in such periodicals as *The Century* before its 1899 publication as a book, was easily the most widely-read and influential account of tramp life, spawning generations of imitators and providing a putatively sociological grounding for a genre which otherwise would be vulnerable to accusations of sensationalism. Over time this foundational work would become both the basis of and justification for other narratives which presented themselves as educative even as they mined a lowlife terrain no longer limited to the Bowery but encompassing the nation as a whole. Flynt himself was described in Alice Solenberger’s *One Thousand Homeless Men: A Study of Original Records* as a tramp of the “periodic type... who at certain times seem utterly unable to control an abnormal restlessness which urges them to forsake the comforts and conventions of their own homes for the freedom from responsibility, the novelty, and the varied interests of life on the ‘open road’” (222). Certainly Flynt was troubled, dying at the age of 37 of cirrhosis, and dedicating his autobiography to “my fellow dupes,” including “all those human beings, who, like myself, have come under the spell of that will-o’-the-wisp, Die Ferne [literally, “the far-away”] the disappearing and fading Beyond, and who... are doomed sooner or later to see the folly of their quest” (*My Life* no page number).

In *Tramping with Tramps* Flynt proposes to produce a natural history of his subjects, and he claims to have been able to “study their countenances, to get acquainted with their type, as it is called, and to compare it... with its pictorial representation in books and pamphlets” (8). In pursuit of that end he discovers that contrary to the claims of Lombrosian criminologists there is no physiognomic basis for such a type. Nor are tramps “in their natural habitat” insane, disfigured, or excessively tattooed. Any distinctive marks they do bear, such as certain facial expressions seeming to indicate criminality, Flynt argues, are the result of environment. Flynt devotes an entire chapter to young people, in which he argues that “there are four distinct ways by which boys and girls get upon the road: some are born there, some are driven there, others are enticed there, and still others go there voluntarily” (29). Of the third variety, those enticed, Flynt establishes three sub-categories including “worshippers of the tough,” (47) those suffering from “rail road fever” (53) or wanderlust, and still others who have been “decoyed into Hoboland” (55) Worshippers of the tough are boys operating under the mistaken belief that a “cow-boy swagger and the criminal’s lingo are the main features of a manly man,” (47). Flynt explains that rather than representing “evil-bent natures” or “the result of bad training,” this class of road-kid possesses the faculty of mimicry natural to all children to such an abundant degree that they “see a picture or hear a story of some famous rascal, and it has lodged in their brains, until the temptation to ‘go and do likewise’” overwhelms any remaining volition. Echoing Comstock, Flynt argues that “teaching by suggestion” in the form of dime novels and “the flaring faces

of the ‘Police Gazette’” produces a rupture in the youth’s everyday life which leads to “years of foolish wandering” and, in the end, the reformatory.

The internal compulsion of wanderlust accounts for the second category of the enticed-- one within which he would doubtlessly place himself-- a phrase Flynt never defines save by way of anecdote. He describes a boy seized with wanderlust, emphasizing his irrationality and unrealistic expectations, who succumbs to the sudden urge to travel: “The queerest things enticed him to go,” Flynt writes, “the whistle of a railway-engine... the sight of the... village street” (54). The boy’s plans are equally story-book: “to go West and play trapper and scout... a life cramped but struggling, and emerging in glorious success as candidate for the Presidency.” Such “Wanderlust becomes chronic... because it [is] not treated properly in its intermittent stage.... [T]he fever breaks out among children of the best birth as well as among those of the lowest, [an affliction] quite as much of a disease as the craze to steal... and it deserves the same careful treatment” (55).

In the scenario describing those “decoyed” into tramp life, a boy is seduced onto the road by an unscrupulous tramp, who “cruelly fires his imagination with tales of adventure and travel.” There is something of the Brothers Grimm to this rendering, the theme of a ragged stranger leading children away from their homes in order to enslave them. According to Flynt the tramp focuses on a single boy, directing stories toward him, and giving other cues-- “winks and smiles”-- in such a way that though the boy is initially unconscious that he is being played to, “it is not long... before.... he begins to wink too.... ‘I’m his favorite, I am,’ he thinks. ‘He’ll take me with him, he will, and show me things’” (56-57).

Yet Flynt's final exemplar of youthful mobility, the "voluntary" road-kid, is easily his most intriguing. He writes that "they seem to me to belong to that class of children which the criminologist Lombroso finds morally delinquent at birth," a typification that gestures toward some atavistic defect (61). Such boys "take to the road as to their normal element, and are on it but a short time ere they know almost as much as the oldest travelers. Their minds seem bent towards crime and vagabondage, and their intuitive powers almost uncanny." These abnormalities are so pronounced that Flynt is compelled to admit that he "sometimes imagined that they were not children, but dwarfed men born out of due time." If the explanatory power of Flynt's typology now seems to buckle, collapsing into sheer speculation, even superstition, he attempts to retain a semblance of analytical perspective: "The temptation is to think that they are accidents, but they recur so frequently as to demand a theory of origin and existence. They are, I do not doubt, the product of criminal breeding." Even further, though "most of them... have fairly well-formed bodies" there is "something out of the ordinary in their eyes, and in a few cases in the entire face. Sometimes the left eye has drooped very noticeably, and one boy that I recall had something akin to a description I once heard of an 'evil eye.'" While these boys' faces "were not exactly deformed... there was a peculiar depravity about them... in the arrangement of features" (63). His initial efforts to scientifically examine the tramp as a social type using proto-ethnographic methods has almost completely unraveled. From the opening chapter of *Tramping with Tramps*, which adopts a naturalist's eye, holding the truth claims of physiognomy in suspicion, Flynt now finds himself at a loss, forced back upon something very like the perspective he had rejected. Against his

preliminary judgements, the physical appearance of the voluntary road-kid speaks to a nearly ineffable essence, at the very least a mystery hidden within the processes of reproduction and inheritance. Though his study of the youthful tramp pulls short of asserting whether that hereditarian mechanism is Lamarckian, he has clearly retreated to a model of human difference, Lombroso's "born criminal," which at the time of writing-- despite notable champions-- was already seriously in doubt.

Decades earlier, in the first years of the Long Depression, Ely Van de Warker, founding member of the American Gynecological Society and author of *Women's Unfitness for Higher Coeducation* (1903), had written in an article for *The Galaxy* titled "Peripatetic Madness" that the tramp "exists in sufficient numbers to represent a separate order of humanity... with mental traits sufficiently common and well marked to define a type" (776). Van de Warker opens his analysis of the tramp with a discussion of a more familiar figure at that time, the pauper, who, as "ejected material [is] unfit, by reason of his mental and physical defects, to be made an active part of the social fabric" (776). Paupers can be distinguished from the working poor in spite of their surface similarities by virtue of the fact that they are unproductive, a deficit produced not by disease but heredity, an atavistic predisposition which becomes pronounced "when the social defect is once thoroughly grafted upon a stock" (777). This hereditarian deformation may produce "certain bodily peculiarities.... a physical type of what is occurring mentally." Over generations the pathology deepens until the pauper becomes "simply a vertebrate classified with the genus man, without the cunning of hand and the surplus of vital energy that distinguish his higher brother the toiler."

Van der Warker relates this degeneration to the relative complexity of a given society. For instance, an American pauper “might become a man of property among the Lazzeroni of Naples; one of the latter, a man of wealth among the wretched creatures that infest the Moslem cities on the other side of the Mediterranean, a fair specimen of whom would be sure to become a Croesus among the aborigines of Australia” (778). The civilizational hierarchy is explicit, one mapped according to a principle of material accumulation and phrased in the language of biology, an ultimately Spencerian view which adopts a neutral scientific pose even as it moralizes on the relative worth of foreign nations and the domestic “honorable poor.” The irredeemable counterpart to this last-- victims of laissez-faire capitalism’s zero-sum game because of “unmerciful disaster,” accident, or disease-- is the “parasite.”

These prefatory remarks function as a set of first principles for an explication of “the shadowy individual called the tramp.” Again, the author metaphorizes social phenomena with the vocabulary of natural history: the tramp bears little relation to the pauper-- who might be conceived as a species of human barnacle drawing on the social body-- and instead relates to society as “the jackal and the vulture” do to “an advancing army.” Interestingly, Van de Warker then modulates his comments again, this time from a tacitly zoological metaphor-- the tramp “skulks in the rear and hovers on the flanks of social order”-- to a combination of biological and civilizational discourses: “He is the Ishmaelite of civilization-- a disorder in the midst of order, an animal that cannot be reared except where society exists with the greatest tension.”

Thus far the rhetoric of social exclusion remains familiar: the marginalized are raced and classed in the language of organic analogy and moral judgement. Yet



these outcasts, if not strictly speaking redeemable, might nevertheless possess positive traits. Like Flynt, Van de Warker notes the tramp's curious form of enterprise, casting the "ideal tramp [as] the disreputable embodiment of the modern spirit of unrest" (779). Tramping life requires prodigious energies, capacities the pauper lacks, rendering the latter incapable of what, for Van de Warker, marks the successful outcome of the civilizing process: accumulation. In distinction, the tramp's powers, his ability to resist fatigue and live without comforts, are all "expended in the direction of his leading mental characteristic-- the nomadic tendency" The tramp, according to his "moral nature," is incapable of desiring accumulation, an anomalous trait Van de Warker describes "as a reversion, amid the strongest forces of civilization, to a partial savagism, as an order of life among us which may be normal only with the Koords (sic) and Arabs, and which here exists counter to every factor of social order and prosperity" (783).

Though he does not mention the young explicitly, the implications of his article ought to be underscored: full citizenship, even racial membership, depends upon the ability to engage successfully with economic life as it exists in the present moment. If paupers are in this regard simply incapacitated, then that other class of poor, tramps, fails as well, though notably due to a psychological variant of hereditary determinism. The class of youth, like both of these marginal groups, is distinguished by its non-productivity and unincorporation, its externality to that economic logic, and thus inhabits a moment of uncertainty in the reproduction of social life. What is more, a plurality of the young, as "grafted... stock" (777) carry within them "subtile

forces of involution, which stem or pervert the steady current of social advancement” (783).

Over the course of the next half century tramps were railed against and accounted for in similar terms, though as the social sciences gradually developed clearer disciplinary boundaries and rationalized their methods that subject would be increasingly linked with youth. Edmond Kelly’s 1908 essay, “The Elimination of the Tramp,” alarmed many when it proclaimed the existence of “an army of 500,000 tramps of which a large percentage are boys from sixteen to twenty-one years of age, all of them tending to graduate from vagrancy to crime” (1-2). Such a startling figure-- only ten years before Josiah Flynt had estimated the number of tramps at roughly 60,000-- demanded some response. As had been done so often in the past, Kelly proposed to understand the tramp problem by sketching out a system of types. There was “the neuropath ... for whom tramping is as specific a symptom of insanity as hallucination or delirium tremens” (9-10); the able-bodied and the infirm-- each with its own subdivisions-- “the blameless and non-blameless” (11); but most importantly “the youth under twenty-one who tramps for amusement. This class,” Kelly assured his readers, “constitutes a large percent of the whole tramp army” (9). But what could be the cause of these phalanxes of excessively mobile youth? Could it be true that “the habit of ‘train-flipping’ ... stealing a ride for a few blocks and dropping off, as boys steal rides on the back of a waggon (sic), for pure fun, is the beginning of it” ? (51).

After Josiah Flynt, Nels Anderson was perhaps the most significant figure in tramp sociology-- certainly his monograph *The Hobo* (1923) occupies a central

position in the canon of the Chicago School. Yet it is in “The Juvenile and the Tramp”-- where he dwarfs Kelly’s claims, suggesting that there are “perhaps two million homeless, wandering men” (290) of whom possibly “one-fourth... are boys under twenty-one”-- that the link between mobility and the young is most explicit (293). Attempting to answer the question of “attractions,” Anderson stipulates four motives as points of entry into tramp life: “pioneering attractions” rooted in the historical influence of the frontier, which has drawn “many foot-loose men, especially young men”, “work attractions... climatic attractions.. and transportation attractions” (290-291). The temptations of tramp life for the young bear striking similarities to the seductions of narrative, according to Anderson. “It is some unusual expression he yearns for,” Anderson suggests, “to prove himself in some unusual way. He may want to go to sea, to fight Indians, to dig gold or be a cowboy or movie actor. He may only have visions of seeking work in the city” (293). In this sense the young traveller is the protagonist of his own story whose plot is conditioned by forward momentum away from the stultifying routines of everyday life to the possibilities of the open road. Anderson relates that one of his informants-- a “wanderlust type” known as M.S.-- became bored with his home life, a state of dissatisfaction which flamed into open rebellion when “his father would not permit him to go to a fireman’s carnival [and] told him to mow the lawn” (294). Impelled by his restlessness, M.S. ran away with a friend, traveling to the carnival, in which they quickly lost interest, then deciding to catch a freight to Omaha, where they worked for several days before touring Denver, Ogden and Pueblo. Though the boys eventually returned home and attended school through the following Spring, when warmer days came they left again. For two

summers they traveled, riding “to Ogden to visit the gambling halls where they heard that the gold was stacked on the tables,” to Cripple Creek to work in the gold mines

to Rocky Ford, Colo., to pick melons because they wanted to see fields of melons and eat their fill. Walked from Colorado Springs to the foot of Pike’s Peak to see the soda springs; stayed all day, drank themselves sick. Made a trip to Wyoming to pick potatoes.

They worked only when forced to it or to get variety. Begged without fear. Begged for each other. Rode only fast trains.

Anderson’s rough notes-- reproduced to illustrate the wanderlust variant of a motive typology that includes “egocentric,” “mentally defective,” “home trouble,” and “work”-- sketch a rudimentary narrative of questionable decisions and desultory actions. As with Flynt’s *Tramping with Tramps*, the exploits of the older tramp catalyze latent desires for action and experience, and contact with “seasoned tramps” is held to be responsible for the impulse to travel. “The tramp with his tales of adventure,” Anderson writes, “thrill[s] the average boy” (300). Once embarked, the “boy tramp” exhibits remarkable powers of adaptation, becoming “an apt student of tramp lore” capable of holding down a long-haul freight and eluding the police (297). “He makes a studied effort to absorb everything that he should know,” Anderson observes, “the slang, the habits and all the tricks of the road; anything that will give him the air of an old-timer.” This informal education, however, is fraught because “sex perversion is very prevalent” among tramps (301). The homosociality of the road, according to Anderson, necessarily leads to homosexual behavior, including prostitution, rape, anonymous and ephemeral encounters, and romance.

One of the defenses that is sometimes advanced for perversion is that it does not entangle one in the complications that usually result from intimacies between men and women. Men, they claim, can indulge and pass on without feeling that they have any claim upon each other. Much of the homosexuality

between tramps is of this nature. Neither man knows or cares anything about the other.

Free of the entanglements of heterosexual coupling, the tramp engages in same-sex activity opportunistically, though there are short-lived “attachments” between individuals-- particularly jockers and prushuns-- which “surpass the love of woman” (306). Such relationships can be “very intense and sentimental” and occasionally older tramps “will give to their ‘fairies’ girls’ names [such] as ‘Mabel,’ ‘Do’lie,’ ‘Susan,’ etc.” Anderson’s remarks emphasize the existence of a marginal social position which is outside of the loop of reproduction-- the youth who is already beyond the realm of economic and social life is exempted from procreative obligations.

Tramp sociology attempts to account for a social type and in the process constructs its object of inquiry, gathering ethnographic anecdote, culling statistics, and relying on popular conceptions of the tramp which are themselves the product of mass media and traditional links between geographical movement and poverty. Yet in focusing on a particular class of mobile figures and specific forms of mobility the work of Flynt, Anderson, and others encompasses a subset of the tramp-- the juvenile wanderer. While the direct object of such ethnographies is the tramp, their secondary focus becomes youth, the study of which elaborates a youth concept riven by contradictions. The young are permitted, even encouraged, to move within certain limits yet the racial legacies which influence youthful mobility are unstable and potentially explosive. Ideological commitments and cultural values pertaining to national identity, manifest destiny, Progress, “racial instinct,” and evolutionary and

social teleologies shape sociological accounts of the young, and in this sense youth is always an articulated category-- coded white and male in its most general formulation-- conceived in national, racial and civilizational terms.

## **IX. Tramp Narratives**

The ambivalent fascination with the tramp as an embodiment of modern mobility and developmental ambiguity persisted into the twentieth century, fed not only by tramp autobiographies but vaudeville and comic strip characters. Yet if tramp sociology had broadened its gaze to incorporate adolescence, popular depictions of the tramp were coalescing in another register. James Young's 1905 stagecraft manual, *Making Up*, for example, offers theatrical techniques for the representation of a range of "types and nationalities" such as the Drunkard, the Stage Yankee, the Gypsy, the Hebrew, the Chinaman, and the Tramp, the last of whom is identified as "a conventional stage type [who] has become an object of exciting laughter rather than commiseration" (92). Young recommends that actors seeking to play the tramp on stage consult back issues of *Puck* and *Judge* for prototypes, who "are legion and represent the evolution of the type from the first stages of 'seediness' to the condition of complete abandon" (93). Having decided upon a particular variant, the next step "is to secure a dark sunburnt color grease paint [which] will produce the appearance of skin tanned by exposure... Lines can also be worked in, the cheeks sunken.... The beard, the unshaven face, shaggy eyebrows, and wig of unkempt hair complete the picture." From the general distinguishing features of the tramp described here it becomes obvious that in popular theater at the turn of the century the tramp had

become not only a stock comedic figure, but one of sufficient maturity to possess a beard, which Young assures his readers “is common to all tramps, no matter how much they differ in other respects.” Vaudevillians such as Nat Wills and Billy McDermot-- who advertised his persona as “the last of Coxeys’ army”-- exhibit clownish characteristics Charlie Chaplin, Red Skelton and other film actors would embellish, “glorying in... detestation of work and water and gaily oblivious of the rights of property,” as Caroline Caffin’s *Vaudeville* (1914) asserts (205). In this context the tramp is reckoned “a purely American product... a happy, tattered, slovenly, red-nosed rogue” consumed by gargantuan appetites, costumed in “a battered hat... the remnants of a once black coat; ragged pants, too large for him, supported by a string... from which is suspended his trusty tomato can; a gaping pair of shoes cover[ing] sockless feet” (206). Caffin traces this theatrical archetype to the picaresque-- a hybrid of comedian and Harlequin, faintly depraved “and, like them... a survival and already a tradition”-- who, she implies, possesses a distastefulness pronounced enough such that audiences “tolerate rather than crave these grotesques” (207).

Tramp autobiographies, on the other hand, were almost exclusively narratives of youthful initiation and education. Josiah Flynt expanded on his earlier writing in *My Life*, an account of his early encounters on the road, while Ray Livingston’s, *Life and Adventures of A-no. 1: America’s Most Celebrated Tramp Written by Himself*, was advertised by its author as “the true story of a blasted life.” Livingston was known nationally by his moniker, A-no.1 even before publishing his memoir at age 37. The *New York Times* reported Livingston had “traveled more than 500,000 miles,

at a total cost of \$7.55, riding on top of cars and underneath freight and passenger cars” (April 6, 1908) though his own account was slightly more modest: “I ‘hit’ the road on the 24th of August, 1883, and the total mileage on the 1st of May, 1910, was 471,215 miles, and my cash expenditures for transportation, exclusive of unavoidable street car and ferry boat charges were \$7.61” (Livingston 137). Livingston’s narrative relates his travels through South America, Germany, the continental United States and the Klondike, episodes replete with strange figures and remarkable events which illustrate his transformations from callow road-kid to manipulative young grifter to redeemed adult.

As a genre, autobiography has been described fundamentally as “the detailed, secular narrative of the author’s unfolding mind and fortunes” (Buell 47).<sup>44</sup> Tramp autobiography differs from this basic definition in its explicit concern with exceptional circumstances occurring outside of the range of sedentary experience. Though the subject of impoverishment and criminality was by no means new, given the ghetto tourism of Crapsey and others, the years surrounding the turn of the century witnessed the advent of lowlife autobiography-- a genre devoted to descriptions of existence on the fringes of respectability as related not by genteel flaneurs and reformers but by the marginalized themselves. *Madeleine*, the autobiography of a prostitute and madame published with an introduction by Judge Ben Lindsey in 1919, was one such text. Claiming authority on the basis of firsthand

<sup>44</sup> This description, from *American Autobiography: Retrospect and Prospect*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 1991) is intended to function as a placeholder rather than an in-depth discussion of autobiography. For a much more detailed and comprehensive treatment of autobiography and collateral genres consult Smith and Watson’s excellent *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (2nd ed.).



experience, the anonymous author told her story as a warning to young women to stay clear of the lures leading to “social bankruptcy” (3). At the same time the tone of her narrative was not at all that of a chastened sinner but of a pragmatic, if often self-contradicting, insider “who had navigated a dangerous youth and spent her womanhood negotiating the sale of her body” (Hapke 170). Though vindicated of obscenity charges pressed by John Sumner, head of the Vice Society, who judged it ““one of the worst and most dangerous books of the day,”” *Madeline* was not reissued by Harper’s (qtd. in Hapke 167).

Cautious publishers and vice crusaders aside, the increasing acceptance of such autobiographies marks a shift in social manners and signals the way reformists drafted lowlife narratives into a political program of change ultimately intended to preserve moral order. While Sumner and others sought to suppress texts like *Madeleine* as offensive to middle-class values, such accounts simultaneously echoed the grand themes of naturalism and cleared the ground for literary modernism’s subjective treatment of raw social materials (Norris 86). Promising lurid details of the struggle for survival unfolding beyond the well-lit precincts of respectable neighborhoods, the lowlife narrative presents its protagonist as representative of a larger collectivity-- the race and the nation. At work in this instance is a metonymic logic in which the fallen narrator stands in for her kind, though that principle is distinct from the exemplary function of virtually all canonical autobiographies such as Ben Franklin’s and Frederick Douglass’s. Franklin’s autobiography is simultaneously unrevealing and intensely didactic, posing an ethical model for economic practice and republican citizenship in lieu of personal disclosure. In a

manner similar to virtually every slave narrative from Equiano's to Jacobs's, Douglass's successive narratives of enslavement, self-manumission and activism posit themselves as representative texts. When, as a teenager, he battles Covey, Douglass tacitly acts for any enslaved person. While certainly not as parsimonious with psychological insights as Franklin, Douglass nonetheless foregrounds his positionality at the expense of personal revelation.

With the tramp narrative autobiography's representative function is complicated by its position with regard to the advent of social scientific ethnography. True enough, the youthful figure drawn to a life of vagabondage always substitutes for youth as a class metonymically according to a dynamic of readerly identification. At times this link is expressed only implicitly, echoing anxieties about the power of representation to exert a pernicious influence on the young, as when Livingston opens his memoir with advice for the "restless young men and boys who read this book":

Do not jump on moving trains, even if only to ride to the next street crossing, because this might arouse the "Wanderlust"... Wandering, once it becomes a habit, is almost incurable, so NEVER RUN AWAY, but STAY AT HOME, as a roving lad usually ends in becoming a confirmed tramp.

Yet the tramp autobiography as a single component of a larger discourse enunciated within a field of other statements-- sociological and psychological studies such as Linus Kline's "The Migratory Instinct" and Alice Solenberger's *One Thousand Homeless Men*-- goes beyond merely representing its kind-- youth as such in all its coevalness. Within the context of reformist admonition and social scientific adumbration tramp autobiography constructs a subject *going somewhere*, one who embodies the future of the race and national destiny, though significantly with no

guarantees that this forward momentum will not result in reversion to an ancestral condition, that the development of youth will resist collective arrest or decline. Juxtaposed with the potentially degenerative temporality of spatial excess-- mobility's deep implication with racial memory-- are the claims of tramp autobiography to absolute singularity, as the wholly specific story of a unique individual operating within a tradition of American iconoclasm, valorizing itself as the testimony of an outsider. Tramp autobiographies perpetuate the geographical imaginary of the national landscape as a site of adventure, echoing tales of the frontier and their thematics of risk, chance, and resourcefulness, but in doing so they reterritorialize that space as capitalized and industrialized, eliciting a different repertoire of proficiencies. Affirming the sweep of the continental expanse and the durability of those whose movements through and mastery over it are perceived as integral to national identity, tramp autobiography draws from a tradition of trailblazing and discovery. At the same time tramp autobiography tells stories of individual development by explicitly linking mobility to personal maturation. The seasoning of the protagonist, his acquisition of knowledge, parallels his conquest of space even as it locates him in a riddle of racial phylogeny. The implication of tramp autobiography within these tensions pushes us to consider examples of the genre not merely as straightforward records of events, but as a way of narrating modernity's contradictions-- its material powers and scientific values pitted against a sense of ontogenic vulnerability and lingering primitivity-- through the prism of the youth concept.

## X. Tramp Narratives 2

The title of Jack London's rough study of tramping, *The Road*, represents a chronotope with profound resonance in American culture, one in which "the unity of time and space markers is exhibited with exceptional precision and clarity" (Bakhtin 98). According to Mikhail Bakhtin, "the importance of the chronotope of the road in literature is immense: it is a rare work that does not contain a variation of this motif," an observation which even the most casual glance at the cultural production of the United States confirms. Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, structured according to a staggered 150 mile journey of "removes";<sup>45</sup> slave narratives and pioneers' diaries; the songs of Robert Johnson and Joe Hill; Frank L. Baum's yellow brick road; Crosby and Hope's road movies; Kerouac's *On the Road*; "Route 66"; the Trail of Broken Treaties: a list might be generated which though not inexhaustible would tax our indexical powers. That examples of visual art beyond cinema seem less salient emphasizes the fundamental narrativity of the road as a medium of conveyance, a site of travel and transportation, or, in the words of Bakhtin, as a figure in which "spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out whole. Time," he writes, "as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history" (84). Animating the tramp narrative is a tension between this chronotopicity of road or rail-- the sense in which its socio-spatial dimension, constituted by and thus realized in the variabilities of motive practice (velocity, trajectory, friction), produces

<sup>45</sup> See Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola and James A. Levernier, *The Indian Captivity Narrative, 1550-1900*. New York: Twayne, 1993

a temporality-- and the tramp's sense of "the futility of telic endeavor... the delight of drifting along with the whimsicalities of chance" (London 218). London posits the latter as the lesson learned by the tramp, who "never knows what is going to happen in the next moment [because] he lives only in the present," a temporality without end in any sense, one which flatly contradicts a colloquial expression epitomizing Taylorization: "Time is money."

London's tramps (whom he identifies interchangeably with hobos) bear some resemblance to Norman Mailer's infamous "white negroes" in their status as existential heroes cut loose from the straight world of obligation and convention, the governing temporality of which is sequential, rationalized, and habitual. The mobility of the worker-citizen constructs a spatio-temporal order which reflects the larger imperatives of a social system structured by discrete units of productive and leisure activity. The morning commute, the demands of the job, the return home, and the disposable "free time" preceding a night's rest schedule the repetition of this itinerary in a chain of successive days. Like Mailer's quasi-sociopathic hipsters, the characters of *The Road* seem to have interrupted this reproductive loop, though that text's true protagonists must make a clean break rather than simply fail to adhere to society's tacit dictates. Incarcerated for vagrancy, London meets the latter in prison, "the ruck and the filth, the scum and dregs, of society-- hereditary inefficient, degenerates, wrecks, lunatics, addled intelligences, epileptics, monsters, weaklings, in short, a very nightmare of humanity" (253). None of those listed in this catalog of defectives have managed to escape the hegemony of modern industrial temporality but are instead confined spatially to "a common stew" locked in an institutional timeframe even

more rigid than the citizen-worker's. Yet when London himself is imprisoned after only the feeblest gesture at due process and submitted to the dehumanizing regime of the Erie County Penitentiary he enters a penal economy in which time is rationed according to the same logic as it is "outside the walls." Having been chained, stripped naked, deloused, vaccinated, and shaved, the final form of control measures time for him according to meals, work, and sleep. An ally manages to assign London to an easier job which enables him to pilfer, provide services, and trade-- part of a wider network of exchange he calls a "full-grown system of barter" and graft that begins when "newcomers [are] mulcted" in the prison barbershop and extends into every aspect of prison society (246). "We farmed the general wretchedness," London writes, describing the mutual self-interest characterizing his section of prison. And "since we were modelled (sic) after capitalistic society [we] exacted heavy tolls from our customers" (252). The prison's inhabitants are thus constrained to a form of economic intercourse parallel to that which predominates in the larger society. Yet against the determinate forces of exchange for profit and the spatio-temporal limits they imply, London counterposes the radical mobility of "The Road." Neither a destination nor simply a mode of existence the road is a means of appropriation outside of the productive loop, one he is drawn to "because I couldn't keep away from it; because I hadn't the price of the railroad fare in my jeans; because I was so made that I couldn't work all my life on 'one same shift'; because-- well, just because it was easier than not to" (274).

Freed from productive activity, tramps mark time and cross space according to the relative friction of transportation and distance, bound by the realities of train

schedules, weather conditions, and the vagaries of private police. A map of the national railroad network in 1890 reveals a plexus of lines webbing the Northeast and Midwest which begins to thin out toward the Rocky Mountains and dwindles to three major conduits further west. Vast areas of the United States, particularly the Indian Territory, had no train service at all, limiting and concentrating tramps' mobility. In "Hoboes That Pass in the Night," London relates the uncanny experience of traveling almost in tandem with another tramp yet never actually meeting him, a ghostly companion with the "'monica'... Skysail Jack" (257)-- an echo of his own "nom-de-rail" Sailor Jack (259)-- who always seems to be mere hours and miles ahead or behind.

London feels an immediate affinity for the road-kids, particularly their use of slang, the specificity of which seems exotic: "They talked differently from the fellows I had been used to herding with. It was a new vernacular.... with every word they uttered the lure of The Road laid hold of me more imperiously" (277). Initiated into the gang with a successful trip over the Sierra Nevadas, London follows them into the city where he watches "the kids... 'battering' the 'main-stem' for 'light pieces'"-- another lesson in road knowledge, one he initially resists (278). At first begging for spare change, no matter how truculent the tone, strikes London as ignoble-- certainly less worthy an activity than stealing-- but he discards his scruples and becomes adept at "throwing his feet" for hand-outs and set-downs. In return for any proffered generosity London spins tales, a talent requiring insight and imagination, the ability to

divine the nature of the victim and conceive a tale that will hit home. The successful hobo must be an artist. He must create spontaneously and instantaneously-- and not upon a theme selected from the plenitude of his own

imagination, but upon the theme he reads in the face of the person who opens the door” (193).

Here is another form of barter-- a traffic in charity and “realism... the only goods one can exchange at the kitchen door for grub” (194).

The realism of such stories, as with the body of London’s work, is generally romantic, focused on struggles and exploits which function as the opportunity for an explication of underlying natural forces ruling humanity. Hard traveling, like hunting seals in the Sea of Japan or gold-prospecting in the Klondike, is a battle against an array of enemies who must be dominated or at least successfully deflected: “bulls,” the elements, and the train itself as an iron beast that must be “decked” or “held down.”<sup>46</sup> The road is therefore an arena of combat littered with pitfalls, as brutal as jungle or veldt, where combatants enter the pure present of conflict, activating their primal powers. “Road-kids,” writes London, “are nice little chaps-- when you get them alone and they are telling you ‘how it happened’ but take my word for it, watch out for them when they run in a pack. Then they are wolves, and like wolves they are capable of dragging down the strongest man” (282). The identification of road-kids with wolves is explicit, though significantly “when they run in a pack” as part of a “push” moving from one point to another. The collective mobility of the road-kids not only generates a temporary reversion, recalling Le Bon’s primitive crowd and the

<sup>46</sup> In *The Octopus*, Presley views the train as a mythological beast, a “cyclopean” killer of sheep identified with Polyphemus from *The Odyssey*: “The pathos of it was beyond expression. It was a slaughter, a massacre of innocents. The iron monster had charged full in the midst, inexorable. To the right and left, all the width of the right of way, the little bodies had been flung; backs were snapped against the wire posts; brains knocked out” (42). This peculiar motif of the train as a mythic icon of Antiquity is repeated in *Vandover and the Brute*, which opens with Vandover recalling his mother’s death at the train station, where “a locomotive, sitting back on its motionless drivers like some huge sphinx crouching along the rails, was steaming quietly, drawing long breaths” (7).



scenes of destruction envisioned by Dacus and Harris, but leads to encounters which might be classed as more violent, ultimately criminal versions of Davenport's sprees or Swift's escapades. London describes the robbery of a bindle-stiff, a "favorite prey of the road-kids" in a tramp jungle called The Willows one night. Surrounded and outnumbered, the man, "a husky laborer," attempts to fend off attacks from all directions but he falls under "the strong arm," a fighting technique demonstrated by a youth called Barber Kid. "Into the man's back goes [Barber Kid's] knee; around the man's neck, from behind, passes his right hand, the bone of the wrist pressing against the jugular vein. Barber Kid throws his whole weight backward" (283). Strangled unconscious, the bindle-stiff collapses and in a second "the road-kids are upon him... clinging to arms and legs and body, and like a wolf at the throat of a moose Barber Kid hangs on." Dragged down, pockets rifled, even his shoes are stolen.

It would be simple enough to relegate London's description of road-kids to a corner of the burgeoning criminological field of juvenile delinquency, treating the events and figures he describes as relatively inconsequential, as at best a statement in favor of the persuasiveness of the principle of environmental determinism in explaining the "problem" of modern youth. Such a reading is not incorrect, though it fails to acknowledge the ways in which space and time became key constituents of the youth concept through an emphasis on youthful mobility. London's *The Road* elaborates this cultural development by narrating the road-kid as a social type adapted to the landscape of industrial capitalism while subverting its logic of exchange, who exploits transportation technology to travel greater distances at faster speeds while circling back to a prior phase of phylogenetic development. The road-kid's adolescent

virility-- his racial efficiency and anti-social behavior-- is measured by the degree to which he masters space and time. Needless to say this trope depends on a masculinist paradigm, one which reinscribes the gendered duality of separate spheres, consigning women and girls to the domain of domesticity and men and boys to the public realm. Even further the type of youth in its ideal sense subtends whiteness. The youth concept, then, routed through the social motif of excessive mobility unavoidably contributes to racial and gender formation. White boys are the prototype.

The dangers of retrospection in autobiographical accounts of youth echo those encountered in fiction. “The novel of youth,” Kristin Ross observes, “is ventriloquized out of the mouths of the aged, narrators freed from the exigencies of desire who consider the escapades of their youth both lucidly and indulgently” (48). Something of this can be found in the narratives of Jim Tully and Harry Kemp, who write about their experiences as young tramps at the turn of the century in decidedly different ways. Jim Tully’s *Beggars of Life* (1924), though it narrates the author’s experiences as a road-kid in a deceptively uncomplicated manner, exhibits traits of a pulp-modernist style in its hard-boiled insistence on an unadorned, hypotactical diction. On the other hand, *Beggars* possesses some degree of interiority: “My head was awirl,” Tully confesses in the course of his story, modulating to free indirect discourse in order to ventriloquize a younger self, “I would go away to the west and make a fortune. I would come back to town in Ohio and show the people there a thing or two. I would write a book. I’d go into Chicago and quit the road” (69). If his text blurs the distinction between autobiography, ethnography and the novel-- or, more precisely, if it unavoidably draws attention to the contradictions of autobiography as a

form of writing which purports to tell the truth using the methods of fiction-- then it is equally clear that this category confusion is accomplished by employing flat description rather than self-dramatizing bombast. Even the narrative structure of *Beggars* resembles a plane rather than an arc: the plot, if it can be characterized thus, is episodic, and takes any forward momentum from the mode of travel it describes. Stricken with typhus in the wheat belt, Tully holds down a train all the way to Chicago in order to check in to a charity ward. The series of events constituting that rudimentary story take their dramaturgical value not from sophisticated emplotment but from the form of his illness itself: boy gets sick, suffers on train, arrives in city, recovers in hospital. *Beggars'* narrative minimalism carries the realist-reportorial aesthetic of a writer like Crane to a new extreme.

In the opening passages the narrator, Tully himself, describes a "youthful vagrant" with one eye encouraging him to abandon the lifeless burg of St. Marys, Ohio, though with a bit of warning advice:

"Don't ever let no old tramp play you for a sucker.... them old birds're too lazy to scratch themselves when they're crummy. So they gits young kids and teaches 'em to beg.... The old tramps call their kids punks. There's a lot of punkgrafters on the road" (3).

In the subcultural slang of the transient homeless of 1907, a punk, or a prushun, still signifies the youngest and weakest of the "floating army" of tramps, an abject figure, often orphaned and outcast, frequently at the mercy of a "jocker"... a hobo who took a weak boy and made him a sort of slave to beg and run errands and steal for him" (65). In the shadow economy of tramp society, the punk occupied the lowest conceivable position, one maintained by coercion and cultivated dependency. In

contrast to the sturdier and more independent road-kid, the prushun, “ruled... by fear.... obeyed with a doglike affection” whenever the punkgrafter commanded.

Writing in retrospect after years of traveling, Tully confirms the one-eyed youth’s observation, adding that “the boys who become slaves to ‘jockers’ are of the weaker and more degenerate type,” distinguished from ordinary “hobo boys,” who-- though they “always come from the swollen ranks of poverty and degradation”-- stand a chance of developing into, as Jack London once said of Josiah Flynt, “the real thing, blowed in the glass” (*The Road*). The “degenerate type” Tully refers to seems to indicate an entire class of boys and men who engage in homosexual behavior, activities which constitute an identity coherent enough to warrant categorization. Writing almost a decade earlier, William Healy had argued that “not least among the evils of tramp life in general is the well-recognized tendency under these conditions to homosexual perversions” (370). Given the length of time he spent on the road-- “more than seven straight years” according to Charles Willeford-- it is interesting that Tully’s narrative dispenses with any further discussion of this particular facet of tramp life (*Beggars v*).

Yet *Beggars of Life* evinces few pretensions to sociology of the sort credited to tramp authorities such as Nels Anderson and Josiah Flynt. Tully’s autobiography seeks to establish another order of truth, one that rejects “writers of such drive!” at least in part because they have failed to add “one iota to the solution of the problem” of rootless vagrancy (168). “I am no reformer,” (169) he writes in the concluding chapter of *Beggars*, though he suggests that “a few more Judge Lindseys” and “more women like Jane Addams” might begin to solve the problem of the tramp (168). Still,

“those who have solutions for all the ills of humanity” are often “people who love the mob in the abstract, but keep away from the scum of life themselves” (168).

Tully’s autobiography exposes the necessities of life on the road in a hard-boiled fashion that stakes out an ostensibly ideologically-neutral position. The result, however, is not mere reportage: many of the events described are lurid, unwholesome, and distasteful, but their banality seems to be an effort to strip these experiences of any didactic dimension. Industrial modernity has produced a mode of literary representation that resists probing into deeper questions, or of taking a position on social problems in any programmatic or whole-hearted fashion. This is a proto-noir aesthetic, dirtier than realism and more reticent to formulate pronouncements than naturalism. As such it produces a record of events which, if not completely devoid of interiority, is supremely concerned with surfaces, and yet which lacks an obsessive need to note every detail. *Beggars of Life* is a carefully controlled rough sketch of a highly compressed period in Tully’s life, one from which few lessons or affirmations may easily be drawn. As such it speaks less to any youthful sensibility than what it means to remember being young, of “living in the memory of adventure” (170).

In contrast to Tully’s calculated sub-literariness, Harry Kemp’s *Tramping on Life* self-consciously adopts the conventions of the *kunstlerroman* and the picaresque, embedding itself in a tradition of artistic development and youthful quest. The excessive inter-textuality of this autobiographical novel-- Kemp references Byron, Keats, Shelley, Whitman, and Spenser among many others-- identifies it with a post-romanticism that is at once absurd and deadly earnest. *Tramping on Life* relates the

peripatetic youth of the author's alter ego, a story that drags his readers from New Jersey around the Cape to Australia, China, San Francisco and Kansas. The narrator, John Gregory— a scrawny, hyper-literate delinquent who seems constitutionally incapable of functioning within the confines of society's institutions— takes to the vagabond's life after reading Josiah Flynt's *Tramping with Tramps*. Kemp's autodidactic propensities find expression in a literary imagination brewed from German Romanticism, pulp fiction, the "road books" of Jack London, the Bible, and various Greek and Latin classics. Each new book inflames Johnny's bibliophilia further, fueling an already febrile fantasy-life out of all proportion. Even as a child literature sends him into paroxysms of daydreaming, as when he discovers a copy of "*Savage Races of the World*" :<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Kemp may be referring to *The Story of Man: A History of the Human Race, From the Creation to the Present Time, Embracing an Account of the Origin of Races and Their Dispersion Over the Globe*, written by J.W. Buel and published in 1889. The title page of this work closely resembles Kemp's *Savage Races of the World*, including "a score of harrowing and sensational sub-titles in rubric" which reads like a carnival barker's spiel:

Following All the Footsteps of Man's Wanderings in His Ascent from Primitive Savagery, Through the Prehistoric Ages, and Describing His Distribution Over the Face of the Earth with an Exhaustive Account of the Earliest Peoples that Settled All Nations, their Customs, Superstitions, Government, Barbarism, and also Descriptions of All the Benighted, Wild and Savage Races of Africa, South America, the Polar Regions, Asia and THE ISLANDS OF THE SEA, Including Also a History of the Ancient Civilizations of the World, the Lost Arts, and the Mighty Convulsions of Nature by Earthquake and Eruption that Have Destroyed Empires, Continents, and the Monuments of Extinct Races Covering Periods Known as THE STONE, BRONZE, AND IRON AGES, and Embracing a Full Account of the Cave, Lake, and Tree Dwellers, Also the Aztecs, Druids, Celts, Norsemen, Vikings, and the Marvellous Splendors of the Ancient Egyptian, Syrian, and Indian Civilizations. Embellished with Many Curious Facts and Singular Customs, Wonderful and Weird Adventures, and a Multitude of Marvellous Incidents Connected with The History of Ancient Peoples and Wild Races of Modern Times.

In 1938 Kemp again referred to *Savage Races of the World* in an interview with WPA worker May Swenson:

Books on adventure gave me my first glimpse of the delights of freedom. By the time I was eight-- my family lived in Youngstown, Ohio, at that time-- I had read Stanley's *Adventures in Africa* three times in succession, *Polar Explorations* by Kane-- and I was especially fascinated by a book

I revelled (sic) and rolled in this book like a colt... For days and nights, summer and winter, I fought, hunted, was native to all the world's savage regions in turn, partook gleefully of strange and barbarous customs, naked and skin-painted. I pushed dug-outs and canoes along tropic water-ways where at any moment an enraged hippopotamus might thrust up his snout and overturn me, crunching the boat in two and leaving me prey to crocodiles.. I killed birds of paradise with poison darts which I blew out of a reed with my nostrils... I burned the houses of white settlers... even indulged shudderingly in cannibal feasts. (12).

Provoked by a wealth of exotic imagery, Johnny travels in his imagination to the domain of the modern primitive and becomes him-- an atavistic impulse governed by racial memory and enhanced by the imitative disposition of the young.

The one thing that pre-eminently seized my imagination in *Savage Races of the World* was the frontispiece,-- a naked black rushing full-tilt through a tropical forest, his head of hair on fire, a huge feather-duster of disheveled flame.. somehow this appealed to me as especially romantic. I dreamed of myself as that savage, rushing gloriously through a forest, naked, and crowned with fire like some primitive sun-god.

Within Johnny's own family circle the wandering tendency is exemplified by his grandfather, who was compelled to depart home because of shady financial dealings, and his father, who leaves town after the death of Johnny's mother, pursuing "a nomadic way of living," traveling "aimlessly.... from state to state.... He had all sorts of adventures roaming about" (10). In the care of his grandmother, Johnny spends his early childhood reading precociously from his grandfather's abandoned library, a collection of books such as "Stanley's *Adventures in Africa*, Dr. Kane's *Book of Polar Explorations*, Mungo Park" (12). When his great-grandmother moves

called, *Savage Races of the World* -- I've forgotten the author's name. I revelled and rolled in these books like a colt let out to first pasture.

See <http://lcweb2.loc.gov>. A search has revealed no books with this title. Buel's *The Story of Man* features a color frontispiece which roughly resembles Kemp's description.

in he gains another narrative source, listening to her stories of “old settlers in Pennsylvania... of Indians.... She boasted of my pioneer ancestors... strapping six-footers... who carried one hundred pound bags of salt from Pittsburgh to Slippery Rock” (15). His neighborhood itself is in flux, its ethnic composition shifting as the city’s industrial base expands, drawing “a welter of strange people we then called the ‘low Irish’” to work in the steel mills, after whom “came the ‘Dagoes’... and after them the ‘Hunkies’... each wilder and more poverty-stricken than the former” (11).

Summoned to Haberford, New Jersey by his father, Johnny boards a train and travels to the town where he will spend the rest of his early boyhood. It is here he experiences the first stages of a disoriented adolescence, his consciousness blanketed by “a grey chaos” of confused sensation and thought. “I trembled often like a person under a strange seizure,” Johnny writes, “My mind did not readily respond to questions” (33). His transformation reads like a hyperbolic example of Hall’s enduring notion of puberty as a period of storm and stress: “Strange involuntary rhythms swung through my spirit and body. Fantastic imaginations took possession of me.” He succumbs to relatively benign expressions of restlessness including a religious mania which compels him to pray every night-- a predisposition to conversion Hall, echoing early nineteenth century perceptions of youth as the age of religious sensitivity,<sup>48</sup> considered “a natural, normal, universal, and necessary process”-- and an obsession with astronomy (*Adolescence 2*: 301). Yet within a few months Johnny, sickened by school, hops a freight, returning weeks later “dirty from

<sup>48</sup> See Kett, “Adolescence and Youth in Nineteenth-Century America” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. V. 2. N. 2. (Autumn, 1971) pp. 283-298.



riding in coal cars,” and having decided that he would rather work than continue his education (35). His father agrees and finds him employment at the “Composite Works” where Johnny enters a world of scientific management, low wages, and industrial hazards, one where the workers “seemed part and adjunct to the machines.... bared forearms flash[ing] regularly like moving, rhythmic shafts... deft hands clasped and reached, making only necessary movements” (36). Those working in the acid house “Swedes mostly... attentive churchgoers on Sunday... laboured their lives out among the pungent, lung-eating vats of acid” so that within weeks the healthiest new hires are reduced to “hollow-cheeked, jaundice-coloured death’s-heads” (37). Repulsed by these scenes and rejecting the disciplinary regime of factory work, Johnny leaves for New York harbor intending to sign aboard a ship as cabin boy, initiating a long journey of thousands of miles. Hired to work on a German freighter, the *Valkyrie*, he jumps ship in Sydney and tramps the countryside. After several weeks he stows away on the *South Sea King*, a steamboat transporting cattle to troops stationed in China to suppress the Boxer Rebellion. Departing China he sneaks aboard the *USS Indiana*, arriving in California after a layover in Manila. Once disembarked he crosses North America on foot and by train.

Kemp’s account of the restlessness which propels Johnny into motion echoes ideas about youth and mobility formulated by G. Stanley Hall and the tramp sociologists, though the aesthetic and ideological loyalties of *Tramping on Life* are profoundly opposed to a Victorian moral sensibility. In 1904 Hall, following the work of Kline, had argued that “at the dawn of adolescence [the] impulse to migrate or

wander shows a great and sudden increase,” linking that tendency to racial memory (*Adolescence 2: 377*). Furthermore

this instinct, if not normally developed and then reduced again by the right of correctives, has many strange forms of persistence into adult life in the gad-about, globe-trotters, vagabonds, rovers, gipsies, tramps, or those interesting psychic species who move or change their vocation, go from country to city, from housekeeping to boarding, the swappers and traders of all they possess, an unique type of travelers, with no purpose but to go, boatmen and trainmen, who for love of it can not leave their vocation, the passionate shoppers, meeting and funeral goers, gossips and news mongers, hunters, fishermen, and other restless classes who are averse to all static conditions, and in whom the home-making instinct is dying out.

Like Hall, Kemp describes the on-set of puberty as a virtually medical condition and expresses its biological truth with the imagery of Romanticism. Whereas Hall invokes “scholares vagantes, who spent the vacations of the medieval universities in roving” and “the jongleuds and troubadors of the eleventh and twelfth centuries” (2: 378) Kemp, suffused with “visions of big American cities, fields of wheat and corn, forests, little towns on river-bends” conducts himself as an American Byron, tramping the countryside, hair tousled and shirt open at the throat, carrying a volume of Heine’s poems (*Tramping on Life 67*). Hall maintains that “at puberty, reaction against the confinement of winter impels many to leave the hibernating quarters and makes some habitual vagrants” (*Adolescence 2: 377*) while Johnny confesses to be affected by spring in a manner similar to “migratory fowls. With [spring’s] first effort of meadow and bough toward renewed flowers and greenness, the instinct for change and adventure stirs anew in me” (*Tramping on Life 241*).

Emotive, even over-heated-- defining characteristics of the age of *sturm und drang*-- the text’s protagonist frames the world according to the pretensions inspired

by his prolific reading, cultivating an affective excess, an ecstasy which each discovered vista, every new work of literature, only quickens. Even in his lowest circumstances— as when he is falsely accused of thievery and thrown into a Texas jail crowded with oddballs and malcontents— Johnny’s bookish passion for worldly experience and the utter conviction of his own profoundly artistic nature never falters. In this regard Johnny resembles a caricature of the bildungsroman’s wandering hero, possessed by ludicrous intensities and gargantuan appetites, simultaneously self-deprecating and -mythologizing, whose rambles invariably become a stage for comic-Faustian soliloquies. Informed of his arrest

I wanted to sing... whistle... dance... I was in the midst of adventure and romance. I was a Count of Monte Cristo, a Baron von Trenck. I dreamed of linguistic and philosophic studies in the solitude of my cell at the penitentiary till I was master of all languages, of all wisdom, or I dreamed of escape and of rising to wealth and power, afterwards, so that I would be pardoned and could come back and magnanimously shame with my forgiveness the community that had sent me up.

His destiny as the “Vagabond Poet” perpetually re-affirmed, he composes Swineburnean verse, joins a physical culture commune and practices nudism, bluffs his way into college without a high school diploma where he becomes a star athlete, skips classes to read Paracelsus, and, in one hallucinatory episode while taking shelter in the outhouse of a burned down farmstead, comes “to the realization that *I* was Keats, re-born in America, a tramp-student of Kansas” (italics in original 244). If such visions could be generated only in the mind of a naif they are supplemented nonetheless by Johnny’s sense of his own absurdity: “I perceived fully how silly, weak, grotesque, and vain I was; and yet, how big and wonderful, it would be to swim

counter, as I meant, to the huge, swollen, successful currents of the commercial, bourgeois practicality of present-day America” (184).

*Tramping on Life*'s episodic structure, cast of disreputable characters, low-life locales and its concern for the development of its protagonist's coming of age mark the novel as a picaresque bildungsroman, one that, like its late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth antecedents, “abstract[s] from ‘real’ youth a ‘symbolic’ one, epitomized... in mobility and interiority” (Moretti 5). Kemp's Machine Age picaroon, Johnny, molded from the experiences of the author's own life, is a figure true to the atmospherics of genetic psychology's account of adolescence and the values of a refunctionalized romantic ideology, a character whose emotional overflow mingles spontaneity with self-reflexivity. As a roman à clef celebrating the heterodoxy of youth, the narrative speaks to the “American moderns” described by Christine Stansell who peopled the bohemian enclaves of the larger cities and mounted a cultural attack on a Victorian structure of feeling already in uneven decline. The cusp of a new “Young America”—a loose agglomeration of culture workers rather than a coherent movement, one which openly declared its antipathy to Santayana's “genteel tradition” and old-fashioned respectability (and was parodied unmercifully in the process)—found its advertisements in the essays of Randolph Bourne, the committed journalism of Max Eastman, Mabel Dodge's “conversational politics,” and others. In the process the youth became “a signifier of political import” (Stansell 94).

## Chapter 2: “Thridding the Maze”: The Race of Youth

### I. Street Arabs

In 1884 George Needham published a massive reformist tract titled *Street Arabs and Gutter Snipes: The Pathetic and Humorous Side of Young Vagabond Life in the Great Cities, With Records of Work for Their Reclamation*. “The ‘street Arab,’” he wrote, “is a very Bedouin in the midst of the thronging city multitude, manifesting many of those selfsame traits which so uniquely distinguish the veritable ‘child of the desert’” (21). The qualities Needham assigns this population of young people resonate strikingly with the colonialist imagery used to characterize non-Western inhabitants of pre-industrial regions of the world.

Poverty, even, is sweeter to them than confinement. Naturally they become warlike and predatory in their habits. Assuming that ‘all is fair in war,’ they act upon the principle that ‘might makes right,’ whether it be the might of brute force or savage cunning. The comforts and restraints of social and civil life are not to be compared with trusty weapons and a swift-going steed. Despising governments, they are yet controlled by their emirs, their sheiks, and their traditions. Ishmaelites by descent, they are Ishmaelites in disposition also; their hand against every man, they trust no one thoroughly, save their own brotherhood. Uncertain, vindictive, and selfish, they are the source of apprehension to every traveler. Living in clans or hordes, for self protection, however, rather than for love’s sake, their one pre-eminent object in life is subsistence-- food, shelter, clothing (21-22).

In deeming homeless youths “street Arabs” and embellishing that metaphor, Needham not only invokes the savagery of the poor and the childishness of modernity’s others, but envisions the industrializing city as a desert waste whose turns and passages are riddled with dangers.<sup>49</sup> Yet unlike other reformers of the

<sup>49</sup> A century later the identification of boys with Arabs persisted in Philippe Aries’s classic 1960 study *Centuries of Childhood*. In the chapter “The Roughness of Schoolchildren” he describes a riot in 1646 at the college at La Fleche undertaken by disgruntled students. In revenge for “a public flogging by the corrector” a number of youths proposed to brawl with the faculty (316). One of the students was disarmed

period such as Henry George, Needham never suggests that the urban geography of industrial capitalism-- the scorched earth of a class stratified society-- births these “embryo Ishmaelites” (23). Whereas George recognizes the contradictions driving the United States’s immense productive powers, Needham locates the blame for “arabism” (238) in “cheap literature and low theatre” (57) “unnatural parents” (75) and the moral defects of those with “leaden natures” (231). In contrast, George’s *Progress and Poverty* argues that while industrialization “has clothed mankind with powers of which a century ago the boldest imagination could not have dreamed,” the price of unfettered development is a crippling, even deadly, inequality: “amid the greatest accumulation of wealth, men die of starvation, and puny infants suckle dry breasts; while everywhere the greed of gain, the worship of wealth, shows the force of the fear of want” (8). Writing dead center in the midst of a series of economic depressions-- “nearly half the years between the 1870s and WWI were depression years,” Matthew Jacobson Frye writes-- Needham incoherently attributes the existence of “street Arabs” to the shortcomings of their characters.<sup>50</sup>

If *Street Arabs and Gutter Snipes* offers no theories of causation for the perceived social pathologies of underclass children, it does seek to amass anecdotal evidence of their behavior and the feasibility of their “reclamation” (23). To that end Needham establishes a typology of figures including not only street Arabs-- the

and locked in a room, at which his comrades “went to the armourers and provided themselves with weapons” (317). “Here,” Aries writes, surely with the Algerian Revolution in mind, “we recognize the state of nerves which is still characteristic of Arab crowds, and which can easily turn a trivial incident into an orgy of killing and looting.” The young men in question embody the irrationality of the Orientalized other, an unreason compounded by the illogical passions of the crowd, a “state of mind,” Aries continues, Europeans “find... increasingly difficult to imagine.”

<sup>50</sup> 1873-79, 1882-85, 1893-97, 1907-08, 1913-15. *Barbarian Virtues* (18)

“nomadic tribes of the cities” first named by Lord Shaftesbury-- but “gutter snipes,” “waifs” (27), “urchins” (25), “ragamuffins” (44), and “shirkers” (96). Gutter snipes are small children more vulnerable than street Arabs, though a constellation of meanings have accumulated around the term. For Needham, “snipes... are creatures of suction,” who sustain themselves on garbage (23). In distinction to the always masculine street arab they include girls, and Needham relates the pathetic story of “a feeble little creature” of this class who, asked if she were hungry, replied, “I ain’t got the gripes yet.” As Luc Sante explains the difference, “street arabs were older and tougher, got jobs and stole significant objects and they controlled and ordered around the younger, weaker guttersnipes, who lived on crumbs and leavings and waste” (307). The relative position of these two social categories with regard to urban space is also instructive: street and gutter indicate the fundamentally public nature of the lives of those they purport to describe as well as connoting different degrees of marginality, a distinction that would eventually be lost in the bureaucratic taxonomy of the sociology of deviance, the “juvenile delinquent.”

Iconographic evidence of the street arab was provided most famously by Jacob Riis, whose photo-essay *How the Other Half Lives* straddled the distinction between ethnography and reformist pamphlet in order to illustrate the lives of New York’s poor. “The street Arab,” he writes,

has all the faults and all the virtues of the lawless life he leads. Vagabond that he is, acknowledging no authority and owing no allegiance to anybody or anything, with his grimy fist raised against society whenever it tries to coerce him, he is as bright and sharp as the weasel, which among all the predatory beasts, he most resembles. His sturdy independence, love of freedom and absolute self-reliance, together with his rude sense of justice... are strong

handles by which those who know him can catch the boy and make him useful” (153).

The origins of “waif” extend back to the Old French *guaif*, indicating a stray beast, and the term enters Middle English with the collateral meaning of something lost and unclaimed. According to Needham, in British jurisprudence waif denotes “goods found of which the owner is known,” specifically stolen articles abandoned by a pursued thief (24). The terms “urchin” (ca. 1300-1360 CE-- any mischievous boy) and “ragamuffin” (from ME *ragamoffyn*-- a child in ragged clothes) are subsidiary to Needham’s purposes, though he employs them throughout *Street Arabs and Gutter Snipes*. “Shirkers” on the other hand are older street arabs with “that unfortunate type of face not easily softened or improved by a fit, more or less enduring, of moral resolution” (97). By way of illustration, Needham quotes an unattributed account of a reformer associated with the Labor-House for Destitute Youths who encounters this sort of “youthful rough” (98). Leaving the building, the unidentified narrator sees two young men “apparently about eighteen years old” loitering in an alleyway whom he suspects are more interested in a free meal than moral redemption. According to the author, they seek to gain his attention by engaging in a sham discussion he is meant to overhear:

“I say them wot’s got the ‘ard-’artiness to make game of them who’s out o’ pocket to convert us from our wicked ways, ought to be jolly well ashamed of themselves. That’s what I say Charely. I tell you fair and honest, Charley, I’m open to be converted if any kind gen’l’man would set about it!” (99).

The Dickensian eye-dialect indicates not only the English provenance of the anecdote, but an aestheticizing tactic intended to convey the youths’ status as types



and thus their innate unreliability. Indeed, upon closer inspection, the narrator finds that the two are far from the final stages of hunger, and are instead

rather plump and sleek.... sturdily built, muscular young fellows, fit for any sort of rough, hard work.... They were of the hulking sort, street-corner loungers of the unmitigated lazybones breed, much given to standing at ease at alley entries, with their feet crossed and their hands enjoying repose in their pockets. And, unless I was mistaken, Bill's soft cap was pulled to its full capacity over his head, not so much that he objected to expose his ears to the gaze of the public, as to hide the havoc a prison barber had made with his hair (101).

Semiotically, Charley and Bill's sartorial style and slack posture signify incorrigibility. The lengthy list of descriptors catalogs contradictory traits: Charley and Bill-- plump yet muscular, fit and sturdy yet passive and slothful-- are guilty of mocking "the god Progress, the eldest son of Work" (Lafargue 18) by asserting their "Rights of Laziness" (29). If the two young men can be read as social texts by virtue of their body shapes and shady attitudes, their faces yield further evidence of what in subsequent years would come to be theorized under the rubric of degeneration. Their distinctive physiognomic features include "the heavy underjaw, the eyes deep sunk in their sockets, the massive chin, the large outstanding ears with the barren space behind." Needham relies on both cultural markers-- dress, attitude, speech-- as well as phrenological stigmata to demonstrate the existence of "the irreclaimable brand" of youthful dissipation as a phenomenon in which acquired characteristics might be read. In doing so his book adopts the etiological methods of two works published roughly a decade before and a decade after *Street Arabs and Guttersnipes*.

In October of 1849, New York police chief George Matsell issued his semi-annual report, in which he decried

the constantly increasing number of vagrants, idle and vicious children of both sexes, who infest our public thoroughfares, hotels, docks, &c.; children who are growing up in ignorance and profligacy, only destined to a life of misery, shame and crime, and ultimately to a felon's doom. (58).

Alarmed by the number of these “embryo courtesans and felons” (59), Matsell detailed five “classes” of delinquent children including “juvenile rogues” (61) guilty of stealing from river piers; “crossings sweepers” (62) prone to “shameless advances” and “lewd billingsgate” who begged pennies in order to spend them in “minor theatres, or... the lowest dens of drunkenness and disease” (63) of the Five Points; girls who under the cover of selling “fruits, socks, toothpicks, &c” engage in “the most loathsome and degrading familiarities” with their customers; “Baggage Smashers” (64) who “congregate around steamboat landings and railroad depots”; and, finally, “boys similar to those last mentioned, with this exception, they have homes, and many of them, are the children of respectable parents” (65). Significantly, Matsell's final distinction indicates the socioeconomic hierarchy implicit in the act of typification. Despite the fact that baggage smashers engage in similar behavior, they are to be distinguished according to class position. More importantly, his report led to an efflorescence of “child-saving,” including the establishment of the Children's Aid Society, an organization led by Charles Loring Brace.

Originally written by Brace in 1872, *The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years Among Them* argues that the most dangerous of all classes are “the ignorant, destitute, untrained, and abandoned youth: the outcast street-children grown up to be voters, to be the implements of demagogues, the ‘feeders’ of the criminals, and the sources of domestic outbreaks and violations of law” (26). Published only a

year after the “2nd Orange Riot” and the “terrible Communistic outbreak in Paris” of 1871, *The Dangerous Classes* warns that without some effort to reform social conditions New York itself could detonate into class war, a civic chaos promising to “leave [the] city in ashes and blood” (29).<sup>51</sup> Brace underscores the urgency of this prospect by reminding his readers of the 1863 Draft Riots, when “the better streets were filled with a ruffianly and desperate multitude” of underclass brutes, “creatures who seemed to have crept from their burrows and dens to join in the plunder” (30). Fifty years later in *Gangs of New York*, Herbert Asbury would embroider upon such subterranean rhetoric: “the human sweepings of European cities” deposited in New York and left to fester in its slums, formed spontaneous mobs who came “swarming from their holes at the first indication of trouble” (111).

Of particular horror to Brace, surely thinking of the mythical *petroleuses* said to have firebombed Parisian mansions, is the troubling fact of “how much *women* figured in these horrible scenes” of destruction during both events, an apparent inversion of hierarchy more subversive than any lumpenproletarian insurrection (emphasis in original 30). And while Brace, like many of his contemporaries, rightly condemns attacks on Black New Yorkers as among the most vicious manifestations of the earlier revolt, he fails to account for how the Commune and the Draft Riots differed at all. From his perspective as a reformer he could understand the Paris uprising only as an irrational spasm-- the European analog of the violent confusion

<sup>51</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between the Paris Commune and American domestic politics see Nell Irvin Painter’s *Standing at Armageddon* and Philip M. Katz’s *From Appomattox to Montmartre*. For a view into the US press’s representation of the the Commune see Samuel Bernstein, “The American Press Views the Commune” in *Essays in Political and Intellectual History*. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press. (reprint) 1969.

which a decade earlier had racked New York. The event that for his contemporary Karl Marx signaled both “a thoroughly expansive political form” and “the constant anarchy and periodic convulsions” of capitalism appeared to Brace to foretell the fate of a morally declining society (Marx 61). According to this view two discrete historical events are not only roughly equivalent but equally portentous. Yet the key to the looming collapse are those at catastrophe’s cusp, the young. The Parisian communards Marx hailed as a Miltonian army “storming heaven” were for Brace the “riotous and ruffianly masses” of 1863 displaced onto the boulevards of Paris; and at root all of these ragged insurgents were “simply neglected and street-wandering children... come to early manhood” (Brace 30).

Yet, his statement, despite its connotations, was accurate after a fashion: children and adolescents alike participated directly in both upheavals. After several days of rioting, the *New York Times* claimed that “three-fourths of those who have been actively engaged in violence have been boys and young men under twenty years of age, and not all subject to Conscription” (qtd. in Asbury 109) while according to eyewitness accounts at Monmartre in the moment General Lecomte ordered the National Guard to fire upon communards a “crowd of women and children massed at the entrance of Rue Muller [and] threw themselves in front of the infantrymen shouting, ‘Don’t fire!’” (*Communards* 64). The practical, visible role of the young led intellectuals and journalists to interpret the significance of those historic events in terms of youth as an abstract concept. For its Social-Democratic critics, the spontaneity of the Commune indicated its prematurity as a revolutionary moment, even as the American press, reflecting reflexive antipathy to popular revolt,

demonized communards by expelling them from the sphere of Western modernity altogether, accusing them in one instance of “an ignominy so colossal that future generations will be compelled to ransack the records of Mohammedan fanaticism for [any] parallel” (“Paris in the Hands of its ‘Friends’” 4). Premature revolutionaries or alien primitives motivated by an inscrutable creed: like street arabs the Communards were thrust into a temporality out of synch with present realities.<sup>52</sup>

The presence of women and children in the ostensibly masculine, adult sphere of armed struggle motivated many of these responses by abrogating traditional notions of modernity’s proper political subjects. The uncorroborated story of 12 year old Robert Lowe, described in the *Times* as an “enfant terrible” whose “fierce and bloody resistance against Thiers’ soldiers resulted in “slaughter,” is a case in point (“Notes and Comments” 3). Colored as treacherous, even monstrous, Lowe’s opposition to French troops, is routed through the sign of youth. Eight years earlier the *Times* had professed its shock that during the burning of New York City’s Colored Orphans Asylum “hundreds... perhaps thousands of the rioters, the majority of whom were women and children... in the most excited and violent manner... ransacked and plundered the building from ceiling to garret” (“The Mob in New York” 1). The enormity of such events depended not only on the violation of property but the perception that gender and age norms had been trespassed.

<sup>52</sup> And, significantly,

the shock of the Paris Commune-- signaling, despite its brutal repression, that social upheaval and a radical alternative to capitalism could erupt in the midst of the imperial metropolis... played an important role in the emergence of the social sciences as attempts to prevent or channel social antagonisms. It is perhaps not surprising that the fanatic, as a figure of pathological politicization, should also be found in this context. (Toscano 17).

Here then is an inversion of the Victorian cult of the child: by a principle of enantiodromia the cultural apotheosis of innocence promulgated a vision of the young which necessarily folded into its antinomy. For every child there exists a dark twin-- a degraded figure abjected by poverty and prone to savage behavior. Taken together, these outcasts and throwbacks constituted a pathologized mass of unfortunates, society's "industrial residuum," a class of the most impoverished and ignorant of Americans. Teeming in large cities such crowds formed the backdrop of Ignatius Donnelly's *Caesar's Column*, an epistolary speculative fiction in which the massive social inequities of industrial modernity have become so sclerotic that they are in danger of leading to civilizational cataclysm.

Visiting New York in the year 2000, the Anglo-Saxon protagonist, Gabriel Weltstein ("world stone"),<sup>53</sup> is caught up in the great city's imminent crisis. With a newfound acquaintance, Maximillian, he tours "the Under-World," where "multitudes of children" whose "faces [a]re prematurely aged and hardened" and whose "bold eyes revealed that sin ha[s] no surprises for them" exhibit a disturbing absence of "the gambols which characterized the young of all animals" (32). A confusion of ethnic and racial types characterizes the urban canaille, a visual flood "of all nations commingled-- the French, German, Irish, English-- Hungarians, Italians, Russians, Jews, Christians." Even Chinese and Japanese are present, their "slant eyes...and... imperfect Tartar-like features" reminding Weltstein "that the laws made by the

<sup>53</sup> Alexander Saxton argues that "the ethnic connotations of Weltstein were linked positively to Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon" (233).

Republic in the elder... days, against the invasion of the Mongolian hordes, had long since become a dead letter” (38).

A recent arrival from a white settler-colony in Africa, Weltstein finds the scene so strange it seems to possess a supernatural quality. The Under-Worlders’ uniform silence, in contrast to the seething phenotypical difference, he writes, gives him the impression of “witnessing the resurrection of the dead... [T]hese vast, streaming, endless swarms were the condemned, marching noiselessly as shades to unavoidable and everlasting misery. They seemed to me merely automata, in the hands of some ruthless and unrelenting destiny.”

The fate awaiting these lumpen zombies is final enough. As Weltstein discovers, upon death their bodies are incinerated in the interests of public sanitation:

Public safety and the demands of science... decreed that they should be whisked off... a score or two at a time, and swept on iron tram-cars into furnaces heated to such intense white heat that they dissolved, crackling, even as they entered the chamber, and rose in nameless gases through the high chimney. That towering structure was the sole memorial monument of millions of them. Their graveyard was the air..... The busy, toiling, rushing, roaring, groaning universe, big with young, appeared to cry out: “Away with them! Away with them They have had their hour! They have performed their task.” (33).

If such treatment seems harsh, the foreman of the crematorium explains to Weltstein, in the absence of any civilized virtues the Under-Worlders “had almost gotten down to the condition of the Australian savages, who, if not prevented by the police, would consummate their animal-like nuptials in the public streets” (35).

The theme of hereditary reversion to barbarism enhanced by the inequities of modern society would be referenced across discourses repeatedly, from proto-pulp

fiction to political rhetoric to the rapidly professionalizing social sciences. In almost every iteration the notion of a thwarted recapitulation is invoked:

If it were possible we might trace back from yonder robber and murderer-- a human hyena-- the long ancestral line of brutality, until we see it starting from some poor peasant of the Middle Ages, trampled into crime under the feet of feudalism. The little seed of weakness or wickedness has been carefully nursed by society, generation after generation, until it has blossomed at last in this destructive monster. Civilization has formulated a new variety of the genus homo-- and it must inevitably perpetuate its kind. (35).

*Caesar's Column* provides evidence of a shift in a nineteenth century structure of feeling, from "archaic fears" of humanity's destruction in which "the agent of punishment was nature" to a fin-de-siecle nightmare of society deforming and cannibalizing itself, a scenario of species-death in which the limitlessness of human potential summons its antithesis (Friedlander 80). Against positivist enthusiasms and grand narratives of historical progress plots of decay abounded. Economic inequities would cause the embrutement of the lower classes and thus the annihilation of bourgeois society. The moral flaccidity and physical mutation of the young would result in a mortally weakened nation. The misapplication of dangerous technologies would wipe out civilizations. Resources would be depleted. Invaders from other countries, planets, or dimensions would ravage the earth in a final war. The subjunctive mood of these fears was concretized by a catalog of settings and scenes of degeneration-- the sinking ship, the burning city, the exploding laboratory, the muffled collapse of whole towns by contagion, the seething riot, and the factory revolt. Science itself would mass produce monstrosities. From Mary Shelley's lone *Monster*-- the singular product of an individual, hubristic genius-- to the "beast people" assembled in the operating room of Moreau's uncharted island, a difference



in scale occurred (Wells 92). In contrast to the rationalist core of Bellamy's romance *Looking Backward*, which transforms society into a Haussmannien grid of avenues and arcades, the eschatological fantasies of these latter fictions were expressed in the vocabulary of (race) science: atavism, neurasthenia, uterine exhaustion and racial senescence.

## II. City of Lost Children

Introducing *The Dangerous Classes* with a forecast of mob destruction drawn from the Draft Riots of 1863 and the Paris Commune of 1871 gives urgency to the subsequent arguments and anecdotes Brace advances in the interests of middle-class reform. The call for philanthropic policies depends upon the possibility that the trajectory toward social cataclysm might be deflected. To that end, Brace sketches out what he believes to be the primary causes of the forms of criminality and moral incapacity foreshadowing the cities' reduction to "blood and ashes," an etiology which reveals both "preventible and non-preventible causes" (32). The first of these include "ignorance, intemperance, overcrowding... want of work, idleness, vagrancy, the weakness of the marriage-tie, and bad legislation." In distinction, "inheritance, the effects of emigration (sic), orphanage, accident or misfortune, the strength of the sexual and other passions, and a natural weakness of moral or mental powers" prove too stubborn to be ameliorated. Among these pernicious influences on the young, heredity seems unavoidable: "Certain appetites or habits, if indulged abnormally or excessively through two or more generations, come to have an almost irresistible

force, and no doubt, modify the brain so as to constitute almost an insane condition” (43).

Brace, using Charles Darwin’s terminology and a Lamarckian model, identifies the vehicle of these acquisitions as “‘gemmules,’ or latent forces, [the] cells of [the child’s] immediate ancestors,” a concept that hypothesizes the inscription of environmental determinants into the individual at a cellular level which are then passed down through sexual reproduction. And while “temperance and virtue” are “the natural drift among the poor” because they abet the survival of the species, the unruliness and restlessness of urban life disrupt generational and familial patterns, threatening the transfer of wholesome characters (45). As proof against mutation, Brace extolls the beneficence of Industrial Schools, recommends relocation to “kind Western homes,” and prescribes a quality diet, routine, and religion. The first and second of these advisements conflate eastern institutions with the western frontier, and notably both spaces possess double functions, not only acting as society’s safety valves but exerting a healing influence on the degraded. American expansionism-- the flowering of a quasi-Jeffersonian yeomanry in rich tracts cleansed of indigenes and primed for agrarian and extractive exploitation-- becomes a pedagogy for the young, clearing a space where “the boundless hope [which] pervades all classes” (46) may find expression. Simultaneously the industrial school, the other “spatial fix” for monopoly capitalism’s human contradictions, constitutes a sort of factory for the production of republican values<sup>54</sup> (Harvey 29).

<sup>54</sup> “Between 1853 and 1893 the New York Children’s Aid Society shipped more than 84,000 working class children out of New York City and placed them with small town and farm families across America (Rebecca Edwards, *New Spirits: Americans in the Gilded Age, 1865-1905*. 107).

Brace's vision of a city of debased children burgeoning into an army of delinquents and predators functions as both a map and a timetable, gesturing at the spatio-temporal dimensions of the concept of youth. Overcrowding in the poor neighborhoods renders privacy impossible, a key precondition for virtue, he notes, "especially in a girl" (Brace 55). Such a surplus of sociality, it is intimated, often results in precociousness, which all too often takes the forms of incest and intemperance. The charge of precocity is significant as a leitmotif of reformist and social-scientific discourse, one that complicates the theory that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny.

The lumpen geography of New York plots the coordinates of social pathology. "The infamous German 'Rag-pickers Den,' in Pitt and Willett Streets" leads into

the murderous blocks in Cherry and Water Streets... the thieves' lodging-houses in the lower wards... the low immigrant boarding-houses and vile cellars of the First Ward... the notorious rogues' den in Laurens St.-- "Rotten Row"... the community of young garroters and burglars around "Hammersly St. and Cottage Place." And, still more north, the dreadful population of youthful ruffians and degraded men and women in "Poverty Lane"... On the east side, again, was "Dutch Hill"... the 11th ward and 'Corlear's Hook'... the Italian quarter....(94-95).

The spatialization of poverty and dysfunction is by no means unique to Brace. Many authors offered their audiences sensationalist accounts of the city by way of the ghetto itinerary, a genre whose inherent voyeurism often masqueraded as didactic or empathetic cultural commentary. The hard-boiled flannerie of Edward Crapsey's *The Nether Side of New York: or, The Vice, Crime and Poverty of the Great Metropolis* (1872) for instance, explicitly identifies itself as a socio-cartographic project, though it shares little of the sentimentalism of Needham's or Brace's work. Surveying the

built space of New York's uneven terrain, Crapsey writes, "The fact that the city became in time merely a collection of Bedouins, was inevitable from the topography of its site, and the peculiarities of its people" (7). As wave after wave of immigrants crashed to the shores, Manhattan began to function as a filtration device entrapping the weakest in the lower reaches of an informal economy, while those with initiative flooded the western plains:

Of these millions, nothing, with few exceptions, but the dregs settled in the metropolis where they landed. All the rest, representing nearly all that was valuable in this avalanche of humanity, was poured upon the untilled lands of the West, where a mighty empire sprang from their loins with the amazing swiftness of necromancy (6).

The demands of capitalist development are first naturalized then occulted in his account, the social transformations of the day figured as sudden and supernatural, the result of arcane and irresistible processes.

Crapsey's travelogue begins under police protection in Gotham Court where he encounters one of Needham's shirkers, "a youth of eighteen or twenty years, ruddy, puffed, with the corners of the mouth grotesquely twisted" (111). The detective accompanying Crapsey recognizes this figure as "Buster," and convinces him to give a tour of his apartment. There follows a description of a "typical" dumbbell tenement, characterized by precarious flights of stairs and narrow corridors. The subterranean darkness of this space and its revolting odors suggest the confines of a mineshaft or an abattoir. Dim kerosene lanterns are the only source of light, while the stairwells lack illumination entirely. Crapsey then gives a "plainly told" account of Buster's room which for the first time in his narrative gestures at underlying reasons for the presence of poverty in the midst of affluence:

The bedroom, which was little more than half the size of the other, was the outrage of capital upon poverty known as a 'dark room,' by which is meant that it had no window opening to the outer air; and this closet had no furniture whatever except two "shakedown." (112).

*The Nether Side of New York* thus exemplifies a form of writing that would serve as a foundation for multiple discourses. Its naturalistic concern with titanic social forces and sharpness of detail, its quasi-anthropological participant-observer narration, idiomatic speech, and reformist-inflected rhetoric constitute an invitation to a kind of moral tourism, a dare to Crapsey's readers to test the truth of his statements. There would be more than enough time to embark on such ventures: over twenty years later sociologist William I. Cole described Chicago's working-class neighborhoods in distinct yet comparable terms:

Like most great poor quarters, the district... has developed a Bowery of its own, around which center the excitements of vice. Those who come into the district to do wrong undoubtedly come first of all to the theatres, small dime museums, and other places of amusement along Washington Street. These, together with the saloons, pool rooms, all-night restaurants, and all the excitements of the street, give the fascinations of vice their full chance. When the work of the day is over, crowds of pleasure seekers fill the sidewalks; hotels and theatres become brilliant with lights; the hurdy-gurdy jingles merrily; and the street is changed for a time into a sort of fair, where evil offers itself in many attractive guises. The spectacular nature of its great thoroughfare is the district's source of incitement to vice. (169-170).

Cole's tracking shot along Washington St. emphasizes the influence of environment on behavior, locating the causes of social dysfunction in the visual stimulus of commerce, a gesture which shifts the blame for social problems from innate individual defects to the spatial organization of the street itself. Whereas Crapsey's views of New York's tenement districts are entirely negative, Cole's description of the Chicago Bowery demonstrates the structurally determined aspect of

“evil” even as it advertises its “many attractive guises.” Both texts construct a gaze more immediate and involved than any panorama, engaging their objects of study at ground level, though *The Nether Side of New York* breaks off this contact and pulls back, widening its focus in order to establish the overall terrain of the slums.

This urban map, as Crapsey suggests earlier, is virtually topographical, or perhaps his representation of the city owes more to natural history-- New York as an unstable bio-region pocked by “fever nests” (117). At night bootblacks and newsboys, exhausted from their trades, search the thoroughfares for a resting place to “kennel like dogs” (125). Where one year respectable neighborhoods flourished dives now predominate, yet the reverse is also true: “Territory has shifted with the changes of the city,” Crapsey writes, so that the aforementioned Five Points, where Charles Dickens witnessed scenes of abnegation exceeding even those he had encountered in London, now seems “almost reputable” (155).

Above its slimy chthonic vaults a superstructure of overcrowded apartments house “nests where only moral and physical death is hatched,” “human hives” seething contagion and disorder (117). The buildings themselves take on a monstrous animation. They are “breeders of contentions, brawls, domestic murders,” generating events that serve to “bestialize” their youngest witnesses. Successive generations weaken under these pressures, their physical vitality sapped and moral fiber attenuated. In the end, Crapsey envisions Gotham Court and its surroundings as a necropolis, “where the living have but little more of the earth’s surface than the minimum allotted to the dead” (115). Yet it is locations such as Arch Block that epitomize the baffling contradictions of urban decay, in part because at this locale

“nearly half are negroes and the majority of the remainder Italians” (157). Drinkers of “benzine”-- a sort of raw whiskey-- “idlers, brawlers, [and] thieves” loiter in the doorways of “groggeries and groceries” soliciting passers-by. Those who live in the Arch Block area, black and white, appear to form an altogether distinct race by virtue of their habits and especially the fact that they mix freely-- for Crapsey, a particularly egregious “depravity”. These men and women, he claims, “are of a nomadic race, and prowl for prey in the streets.”

### III. Progress

Any disruption of the natural sequence of growth and decline evokes the era’s promiscuous faith in two temporal-developmental principles. The first, a fusion of Darwinian evolutionism and neo-Lamarckian theory, holds that behavior and environment influence racial stock in the form of acquired characteristics. This belief, intersecting with other theories of race science,<sup>55</sup> explored within literary narratives and animating the gospel of social reform, would have a powerful influence on

<sup>55</sup> I use the term Race Science metadiscursively, to signify an array of theories originating in the early modern period which claim to account for the essential dimensions of perceived (phenotypical) human differences, whether racist or racialist in intent or effect, from the polygenist arguments of Paracelsus through the Bell Curve wars of the 1990s. Any discipline claiming scientificity which advances hypotheses or observations regarding human development when those statements are not universally applicable to all human beings participates within Race Science. It is not my purpose here to offer a thorough overview of this highly variegated and complex field, the object of which-- race-- Montagu refers to as “a conceptual omelet” (103). Rather I will limit my remarks to a few aspects of Race Science apposite to the Youth Concept, which, I argue, is implicitly constructed around a protagonist, the young white male. For historical treatments of the rise of the idea of race in its modern sense, see Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 2007; Ashley Montagu, *Man’s Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*. (1942); Joseph L. Graves, *The Emperor’s New Clothes: Biological Theories of Race at the Millennium*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP. 2008; George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP. 1971; Thomas Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford UP. 1997; Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP. 1996; Lucius Outlaw, “Towards a Critical Theory of Race” in *Anatomy of Racism*, ed. David Theo Goldberg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (1990).

popular, scientific and institutional views of youth. The second conviction was just as ubiquitous, and could be found in a complex of discourses from paleontology to political science: development progresses according to specific stages and any violation of this principle indicates anomalies which, significantly, might be repurposed as evidence for the very principle they seemed to abrogate. To track the history of the development of the youth concept I examine the literature of race science, a portmanteau term encompassing the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and biology; the scientific romance; and political discourse. It is my intent to show that the body's clock, the racial calendar of the species, the nation's and civilizations' futures and epochs are routed through youth, the "material sign" of modernity, its protagonist and antagonist, a figure almost exclusively identified as white and masculine (Moretti 5).<sup>56</sup>

G. Stanley Hall's use of the theory of recapitulation, so influential at the turn of the century, plotted a narrative of normative human development with the figure of the adolescent as its pivotal protagonist. The young subject who deviated from its stages not only became individually pathological but potentially subverted national progress and the destiny of the race. Given optimum circumstances-- a proper environment encouraging timely ontogenic passage through scripted phylogenetic phases-- youthful potentiality matured into successful adulthood and perhaps beyond.

<sup>56</sup> Though my application of the semiotic notion of the "material sign" differs from Moretti's, whose study of the bildungsroman incorporates Cassirer's term (via Panofsky) in order to underscore youth's symbolic function as "modernity's 'essence,' the sign of a world that seeks its meaning in the future rather than the past" (italics in original 5). While in the context of this chapter youth-as-signifier does indeed invoke a very modern sense of futurity (in the form of progress, evolution, and civilizational development), in my reading of genetic psychology as a form of race science the adolescent signifies the future only through the symbolization of a recapitulated ancestral past. In this regard I agree with Seitler-- though our ultimate foci differ-- that "modernity sought a break with the past, but that break necessitated the past's return" (1).



Absent physically and morally hygienic conditions, however-- a scenario almost always set in a wrecked ghetto-scape blasted by laissez-faire economics among the city's commercial lures-- the young man or woman might decay while yet in the bud. To social reformers such as Brace the dangers demoralization posed most clearly menaced the working-classes, whose children, he lamented, were "ungoverned, prematurely sharp, and accustomed to all vileness" (*Dangerous Classes* 81). Yet given the many incitements to vice in the urban environment-- Jane Addams specifies "gin palaces," and "dancehalls" among them-- youth of all classes, whether slumming bourgeois adolescents or their underclass counterparts, risked sinking into the depths of lowlife and squandering their racial inheritance (7). Should the millennial clockwork of biogenetic law be damaged by vicious habits any child might enter a state of arrest, precipitating physiological and psychological decline. Even worse: according to neo-Lamarckian theory the offspring of these new-minted degenerates acquired their parents' impaired traits, characters they would transmit in turn to their own children, spreading the racial gangrene, corrupting the social tissue.

Two of the most salient theories of Machine Age race science, biogenetic law and neo-Lamarckism, envisioned racial destiny in the condition and comportment of the young. Apprehensions of degeneration, of developmental disturbance in the rising generation, haunted popular literary and scientific conceptions of youth with prophecies of racial and civilizational decline. At a more general level, fears of dyschronicities-- a symptomatology of temporal perturbations such as precocity, degeneracy, atavism and arrested development-- freighted the social imagination of industrial modernity. Max Nordau's *Degeneration*, for example-- a coruscating

preachment against decadent “pornographists” (557) like Huysmans, Villiers de l’Isle-Adam, and “Zola’s disciples” (483)-- castigated his cultural adversaries as modernity’s inverts: “They are not the future, but an immeasurably remote past. They are not progress, but the most appalling reaction.... They are not youth and the dawn, but the most exhausted senility, the starless winter night, the grave and corruption” (556). Indeed, an entire pseudo-scientific discourse of degeneration flourished throughout the Age of Progress. George Dawson’s 1896 study of “youthful degeneracy” relied on a survey of adolescents incarcerated at the Lyman School for Boys and the State Industrial School for Girls, a population of “typical delinquents” (226) such as “thieves... incendiaries... assaulters... sexual offenders [and] general incorrigibles” (227). His search for Lombrosian “stigmata of degeneration” resulted not only in a catalog of psychological predispositions correlated to “physical anomalies” (227) including “protruding ears,” “deformed palate,” and “asymmetrical arms” (248)-- perceived defects Dawson links to thievery-- but in visible characteristics assigned an explicitly developmental and thus temporal valence. “Among the girls examined,” he writes, “several were precociously developed, a peculiarity that has been noticed frequently among delinquent girls. [I am] inclined to the opinion that immoral girls, especially those that are unchaste, mature early” (231).<sup>57</sup> His interpretation of the facts is remarkable, and not only because it never

<sup>57</sup> The effect of industrial modernity on young women is also addressed by Friedrich Engels in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844):

The fact that young girls are at work during the period of adolescence has many unfortunate effects.... Some girls particularly those who are better nourished... develop more quickly than they should do because of the heat of the factory rooms. There are some cases of girls aged between twelve and fourteen who are already physically mature. In such cases the heat of the factory has

occurs to Dawson to ask who else besides his young female subjects might lack chastity, or whether the causal relationship between sexual activity and precocious development might be reversed. Time and timing are the keys to social and racial progress via the proper developmental sequence in individuals.

Yet by far the supreme temporal narrative of the era<sup>58</sup> among both professional scientists and the public at large, Darwin's theory of evolution, was not necessarily progressive. The mechanism of natural selection depended on an organism's adaptation to its environment rather than the inevitable perfection of a given type. If, for instance, in some future world the presence of gills and webbed fingers would benefit *homo sapiens* then those populations evolving these features-- hardly a classical aesthetic ideal of the human body-- would likely survive while others became extinct. Still, the very phrase natural selection seemed to imply a governing intelligence, some telos or final cause, and the neutrality of the evolutionary process was often overlooked or willfully set aside. In 1871, when Darwin borrowed a phrase from Herbert Spencer, "the survival of the fittest" he only

the same effect as a tropical climate. In both cases nature revenges herself on precocious physical development by premature old age and debility. On the other hand, there are also cases of retarded physical development among young women. Cowell gives examples of cases in which the breasts mature late or not at all. Menstruation often does not begin until the seventeenth or eighteenth year, and occasionally is even postponed to the twentieth year. Often it does not occur at all. Medical evidence is unanimous that girls in factories suffer from irregular menstruation, coupled with great pain and various disorders such as anaemia, which is particularly common. (183-184).

<sup>58</sup> "The thought of the time," wrote Upton Sinclair in 1907,

has familiarised us with the evolutionary view of things; we understand that life is the product of an inner impulse, labouring to embody itself in the world of sense; and that the product is always changing-- that there is nothing permanent save the principles and laws in accordance with which development goes on. We understand that the universe of things was evolved by slow stages into what it is to-day, that all life has come into being in the same way. We have traced this process in the far-distant suns and in the strata of the earth; we have traced it in the vegetables and in the animals, in the seed and in the embryo; we have traced it in all of man's activities, his ways of thinking and acting, of eating and dressing and working and fighting and praying. (*The Industrial Republic: A Study of the America of Ten Years Hence* vii)

deepened the misconception, giving a scientific imprimatur to Malthusian notions and the core assumptions of liberal political economy that had been percolating for years (*The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* 61). Critics of open immigration such as eugenicist Madison Grant noted that progress and evolution were not, strictly speaking, identical, emphasizing that “the ‘survival of the fittest’ means the survival of the type best adapted to existing conditions... which today are the tenement and the factory.... From the point of view of the race it were better described as the ‘survival of the unfit’” (*The Passing of the Great Race* 82). To WEB Du Bois, on the other hand, looking back on his youth, the intellectual climate of the Progressive Era proclaimed “the way was charted, the progress toward certain great goals was undoubted and inevitable” (*Dusk of Dawn* 572). The hegemony of progress was so unassailable it acquired the status of a proper noun: “There was room for argument concerning... possible detours in the onrush of civilization; but the fundamental facts were clear, unquestioned and unquestionable.... It was a day of Progress with a capital P” (573).

Progress as the outcome of struggle, whether in the natural world or human society, was of course the keystone of Social Darwinism, an ideology distilled by one of its sunniest touts, Andrew Carnegie, to a principle he advertised as “best for the race, because it insures the survival of the fittest in every department” (655). Social hierarchy, he wrote in “Wealth,” sets the conditions for a contest which will ultimately improve humanity:

We accept and welcome, therefore, as conditions to which we must accommodate ourselves, great inequality of environment; the concentration of business, industrial and commercial, in the hands of a few; and the law of

competition between these, as being not only beneficial, but essential to the future progress of the race (*North American Review* 655).

For Carnegie's "Dear Master Teacher" progress was a law, one he conformed to the theory of evolution by organic analogy in order to solve "the perennial problem of reconciling order with change," to streamline the means by which economic dynamism served to maintain social stability (RM Young "Herbert Spencer").<sup>59</sup> Spencer, so jangled by the intensity of elaborating and systematizing his own thoughts he wore ear plugs in conversation with others, clearly understood the political implications of that paradox.<sup>60</sup> His work was an astounding synthesis of disparate elements, incorporating the embryology of von Baer, in particular the epigenetic claim that the ovum develops "from structural homogeneity to heterogeneity," with the progressivist orientation of Lamarck who posited that a divine agency "imbued all living things with an internal desire to improve" (Graves

<sup>59</sup> For example:

Progress, therefore, is not an accident, but a necessity. Instead of civilisation being artificial, it is part of nature; all of a piece with the development of the embryo or the unfolding of a flower. The modifications mankind have undergone, and are still undergoing, result from a law underlying the whole organic creation; and provided the human race continues and the constitution of things remains the same, those modifications must end in completeness. As surely as the tree becomes bulky when it stands alone, and slender if one of a group; as surely as a blacksmith's arm grows large and the skin of a laborer's hand thick; as surely as they eye tends to become long-sighted in the sailor, and short-sighted in the student; as surely as a clerk acquires rapidity in writing and calculation; as surely as the musician learns to detect an error of a semitone amidst what seems to others a very babel of sounds; as surely as a passion grows by indulgence and diminishes when restrained; as surely as a disregarded conscience becomes inert, and one that is obeyed active; as surely as there is any meaning in such terms as habit, custom, practice;-- so surely must the faculties be moulded into complete fitness for the social state; so surely must evil and immorality disappear; so surely must man become perfect. (*Social Statistics* 32).

<sup>60</sup> From Robert M. Young:

He had a breakdown from over work while writing *The Principles of Psychology* in 1855 and collapses recurred. He was left with a strange sensation in the head which he called 'the mischief', along with palpitations and insomnia. Among the consequent eccentricities was the use of earplugs which he inserted to avoid over-excitement. It was noted that these times included occasions when he began to lose out in an argument" ("Herbert Spencer and 'Inevitable' Progress").

81). Nor was this the limit of Spencer's intellectual bricolage. Like one of his literary admirers, Jack London,<sup>61</sup> he borrowed eclectically from Coleridge, Malthus, Adam Smith, "anarchism... and the principle of the conservation of chemical energy" as the basis for a highly influential view of evolution, one ascribing directionality to change so that it might be reconciled with Providence and the power of education to improve. The anarchy of industrial monopoly, where the consolidation of an economic order produced social disorder on a mass scale, required the sort of justification by which upheaval might be seen to promise more of the same, a syncretic philosophy that would naturalize existing social (dis)organization and thereby extend and entrench the political power of economic elites. The belief that structural interference with the worst excesses of industrialization and incorporation violated the natural order could then be extrapolated, from the level of the nation to the world, justifying imperialism as a practical matter of managing global resources in the interests of the human race as a whole.<sup>62</sup> Its birth coincident with "new" imperial strategy and finance capitalism, progressivist social science scientized social inequality and aided in the construction of a temporal order, a conception of time intended "to accommodate the schemes of a

<sup>61</sup> From *Martin Eden*:

And here was the man Spencer, organizing all knowledge for him, reducing everything to unity, elaborating ultimate realities, and presenting to his startled gaze a universe so concrete of realization that it was like the model of a ship such as sailors make and put into glass bottles. There was no caprice, no chance. All was law. It was in obedience to law that the bird flew, and it was in obedience to the same law that fermenting slime had writhed and squirmed and put out legs and wings and become a bird. (653).

<sup>62</sup> Though Spencer himself was anti-imperialist some of those influenced by him representing "a broad stream of social Darwinism" argued for the redemptive power of imperial conquest as "desirable from an evolutionary point of view" because it represented "a central form of the struggle for existence and the dynamic of progress" (McCarthy 78).

one-way history: progress, development, modernity, (and their negative mirror images: stagnation, underdevelopment, tradition)” (Fabian 144).

Such an allochronizing model of human development originated, as Bowden, argues, in various histories written by Europeans such as Bartolome de Las Casas, Jose de Acosta, and Joseph Francois Lafitau during the first decades of the conquest of the Western Hemisphere, works retrofitted for the more theoretical pronouncements of European philosophers (Bowden 53-56). Adam Ferguson located the origin of the idea of progress in the “discovery” of Native Americans, suggesting that “It is in their present condition, that we are to behold, as in a mirrour, the features of our own progenitors; and from thence we are to draw our conclusions with respect to the influence of situations, in which, we have reason to believe, our fathers were placed.”<sup>63</sup> Paradoxically, then, it was the opening of the antipodes to European colonization and the encounter with indigenes who were represented as humanity “in the state of nature” which seemed to justify the modern concept of progress, establishing a new model “of history along a linear time scale providing a secular telos as the basis of the historical process” (Jahn qtd. in Bowden 48).

This developmental thinking-- a “denial of coevalness” (Fabian 31) which posited latter-day primitives as their “civilized” contemporaries’ living past-- was given the high gloss of empirical fact by anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan who claimed on the basis of fieldwork among the Seneca and Ojibway that ““it can now be asserted upon convincing evidence that savagery precedes barbarism in all tribes of

<sup>63</sup> “An Essay on the History of Civil Society” (1767)  
<http://socserv.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/ferguson/civil.html>

mankind, as barbarism is known to have preceded civilization” (qtd. in Bowden 55). Constructing a tripartite developmental schema to demonstrate the stages of progress from savagery to civilization, Morgan argued that “the history and experience of the American Indian tribes represent, more or less nearly, the history and experience of our own remote ancestors when in corresponding conditions” (*Ancient Society* vii). Morgan found confirmation for his hypothesis in the apparent linearity of scientific discovery and technological invention, material aspects of another, psychological, sequence of refinement and improvement which unfolded across eons “from a few primary germs of thought” (vi) chief among them “the idea of property” (6).<sup>64</sup>

Though some historians look to antiquity for its roots, the hegemony of progress originates in the Enlightenment<sup>65</sup> according to Victorian era intellectuals such as Walter Bagehot, who argued in *Physics and Politics* that “the ancients had no conception of progress” (41).<sup>66</sup> The idea’s meaning, frequently examined and debated, has been epitomized as the belief that “civilization has moved, is moving, and will move in a desirable direction” (Bury); faith in “irreversible meliorative change” (Van Doren); and the existence of a “tendency inherent in nature or in man

<sup>64</sup> Engels lauded Morgan’s study as a “key to the... hitherto insoluble riddles of the earliest Greek, Roman and Germanic history” and working from Marx’s notes on *Ancient Society*, extrapolated this vision of development into his *The Origin of Family, Private Property, and the State* (qtd. in Bowden 49).

<sup>65</sup> Some intellectual historians locate progress in antiquity. See, for example, Nisbett’s *The History of the Idea of Progress* or, for that matter, Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura*. My own view owes much to JM Bury’s classic *The Idea of Progress* (1920) and Brett Bowden’s *The Empire of Civilization: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea* (2009)

<sup>66</sup> It is worthwhile to read the rest of this passage:

The ancients had no conception of progress; they did not so much as reject the idea; they did not even entertain the idea. Oriental nations are just the same now. Since history began they have always been what they are. Savages again, do not improve; they hardly seem to have the basis on which to build, much less the material to put up anything worth having. Only a few nations, and those of European origin, advance; and yet these think---seem irresistibly compelled to think---such advance to be inevitable, natural, and eternal.



to pass through a regular sequence of stages of development in past, present, and future, the later stages being... superior to the earlier” (Lovejoy qtd. in Keohane 22). A bowdlerized intellectual history of 18th century Europe represented the concept as a philosophical fetish, dramatizing its imperial reach with a tableau of Condorcet writing furiously in a candle-lit attic, defending modernity’s irresistible momentum even as he hid from its most implacable political exemplars, Red Terror fanatics.<sup>67</sup> Something of this caricature persists even among otherwise sensible critics such as John Gray, who judges the idea as the discredited catechism of “an early nineteenth-century cult, French Positivism, [one] founded on reason but... not a result of scientific inquiry. It is the Christian idea of history as a universal narrative of salvation dressed up in secular clothes” (*Heresies* 31). Certainly progress has lost much of its currency since Richard Price contended that “human life at present compared with what it once was” bore the same relationship to “a youth approaching to manhood compared with an infant” (qtd. in Israel 3)-- particularly after the “Age of Extremes,” the catastrophic “short 20th century.”<sup>68</sup> In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War Sydney Fay bluntly informed his auditors that the idea was “logically meaningless” (“The Idea of Progress” 231). What the term meant to those who used it in the period under examination, however, is what matters, and Bowden’s summation suffices:

In essence, the idea of progress holds that human experience, both individual and collective, is cumulative and future-directed, with the specific objective being the ongoing improvement of the individual, the society in which the individual lives, and the world in which the society must survive. (50).

<sup>67</sup> For a more ambivalent view of Enlightenment-era notions of progress see Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Science of Freedom*. New York: WW Norton and Co. 1996. especially pages 98-125).

<sup>68</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*. New York: Vintage Books. 1994.

This is not to suggest that the idea of progress was uniformly accepted as an unproblematically future-oriented attitude of optimism regarding the world.<sup>69</sup> If Edward Bellamy's best-selling *Looking Backward* (1888) prophesied a socialist-technocratic utopia in the 21st century, John Ames Mitchell's less popular *The Last American* (1889), a satire on Gilded Age venality, mocked the compulsory optimism of progressives with a 30th century Persian expedition to North America, where the remnants of an ancient race known as the Mehrikans once flourished. The leader of this archeological mission, Khan-li, an admiral in the Persian navy and "Prince of Dimpf-Yoo-Chur," sails to the deserted shores of Nhu-Yok in his ship the Zlohtub accompanied by the scholar of ancient Mehrikin history Nofuhl, two slow-witted underlings, Ja-Khaz and Ad-el-pate, and the more sensible Lev-el-Hedyd. Though the comedic novelty of Mitchell's allegorical strategy exhausts itself within moments, the most compelling aspect of this illustrated novella is its conceit of emptied, vine-choked ruins bearing the traces of an advanced and thriving metropolis. This device becomes the opportunity for Mitchell to remark on American society's peccadilloes as the Persians attempt to reconstruct the causes of Mehrikan civilization's demise in 1990 and what life might have been like there. Predictably, the Persians' creative misreadings are a source of some slight humor, as when the landing party discovers a tobacco store Indian and conclude that it is an idol the Mehrikans once worshipped. Yet the most cutting of critiques is voiced by Nohful, who dilates on the national character of Mehrikans to his prince, describing them as "a sharp, restless, quick-

<sup>69</sup> See Jonathan Israel's *Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy*, which argues that "the notion, still widespread today, that Enlightenment thinkers nurtured a naive belief in man's perfectibility seems to be a complete myth conjured up by early twentieth-century scholars unsympathetic to its claims" (3).

witted, greedy race, given body and soul to the gathering of riches” (31) who “possessed neither literature, art, nor music of their own. Everything was borrowed” (28). If in matters of culture the Mehrikans were superficial or derivative, the ruins themselves speak to a certain ingenuity and visionary scope. Confused by this incongruity, Khan-Li presses Nohful for an explanation. The historian tells him that the Mehrikans, ever worshipers of wealth, soon became “drunk with money” even as the poorest among them were desperate to simply survive. This disparity resulted in “social upheavals with bloodshed and havoc” (92).

Though PW Dooner’s *Last Days of the Republic* (1880), like *The Last American*, imagines the United States destroyed, its tone contrasts sharply with the latter’s broad ironies and ludic gambits. Indeed *Last Days of the Republic* is scarcely a novel at all, lacking any sense either of literary play or even characters. The result is a dry prediction of national implosion caused by an invasion of alien Chinese who gradually undermine the Anglo-Saxon foundations of American society, an eschatology animated by Yellow Peril paranoia and phrased in the diction of nativist journalism and ponderous Victorian syntax. This narrative strategy seems intended to impart to the text a veneer of scientificity, a realpolitik of “Coolieism” (51).

In the more quotidian realm of dentistry Marshall<sup>70</sup> argued that progress caused tooth decay. Rehearsing a familiar catalog of technological wonders-- “steam and electricity... the lightning express train and the ocean greyhound... the electric telegraph and the telephone, the wireless telegraph... motor-car... motor boat and... aeroplane” (140)-- he echoed George M. Beard’s neurasthenia thesis that a social

<sup>70</sup> *Principles and Practices of Operative Dentistry*. Philadelphia: JB Lippincott Co. 1901.

environment which produced “overwork or over-indulgence,” sapped the will, leading to “enervation, depression of vital forces, malnutrition, and defects in the mental, the nervous, and the physical development” (141). That the bearers of the highest forms of civilization, “the Anglo-Saxons of America and... the great European nations,” suffered the most from dental caries proved that progress could have ambivalent effects.

The progressive schema of civilizational development powered ostensibly more sober political analyses, notably in the context of US imperial ambitions. Franklin Giddings’s *Democracy and Empire* (1900)-- published as the United States pursued a counter-insurgency campaign in the Philippines which included collective punishment, the murder of prisoners, rape, and water torture--<sup>71</sup> claimed that “democracy and empire, as paradoxical as such a relationship seems, are really only correlative aspects of the evolution of mankind” (v). European and North American democracies, he argued-- the natural outcome of a telic history-- must of necessity undertake a program of enlightened imperialism which seeks to gather “all the semi-civilized, barbarian, and savage communities of the world... under the protection of the larger civilized nations.” This social, economic and political project, as much a product of moral instinct as material forces, possesses a virtually biological

<sup>71</sup> “In the Philippines... in the Island of Samar, it would seem... orders were issued to massacre the entire population over the age of ten, and to turn the whole place into a wilderness. Further, Philippine prisoners were... tortured by forcing water under pressure into their bodies, an old method of torture employed centuries ago in Europe” (“The Progress of the World” 451).

Here the racio-temporal logic of colonization, which deems natives children, rebounds on itself. Filipinos ten and older are mature enough to be treated as adult combatants. (Compare this imperial rhetorical strategy with the current euphemism “military aged males,” which is deployed to describe the victims of US drone strikes in the Arabian Peninsula, Central Asia, and the Horn of Africa.) See also Stuart Creighton Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903*. Yale UP. 1982.

inevitability. In a general outline of the development of civilization from its first phases, Giddings suggests the universal force of progress required “the establishment of political and social homogeneity by coercive methods,” a period necessarily “rude, tyrannical, often brutal” though productive of a forced peace: “it put an end to intertribal wars.... it gradually released... men and greater stores of capital,” thus establishing a “homogeneity of belief and habit which... prepared men to live together... with comparatively little governmental restraint” (7). In the next stages of development, he writes,

Men became critical.... The spirit of revolt... grew and waxed strong. The imperial bond was weakened, and vast territories became an easy prey to invading barbarians. Chaos and anarchy slowly gave way to the formation of a new order; and through successive developments-- of feudalism, of the growth of petty principalities, and of new city states-- new political forms were slowly evolved. Throughout all these changes, the spirit of liberty, often suppressed, sometimes well-nigh crushed, was, after all, surely growing and coming to its maturity; until at length it swept all before it in the vast movements of the Renaissance, of the Reformation, and of the revolutionary struggle, out of which emerged the practical principles of personal liberty, freedom of contract, and constitutional law (7-8).

The third stage of development achieves a higher synthesis of homogeneous values and libertarian impulses, what Giddings terms “democratic empire,” a geopolitical entity welded together not by racial or ethnic affinities but by “an ethical like-mindedness which prizes liberty above all else” (11). Initially, Giddings’s developmental thinking seems to cast aside racial essence as irrelevant though he continues to depend upon an evolutionary paradigm in order to justify the United States’ offshore imperialism. In this case race no longer determines the fitness of subject peoples to realize their future in present-day European and North American political institutions but requires their willingness to adapt to the exigencies of

industrial capitalism and its republican organs. Yet Giddings-- who was himself described as a descendant of "ancestors on both sides New England Puritans of the strictest type"-- uses the term race in *Democracy and Empire* in such a way that it becomes synonymous with white (Gillin 199)<sup>72</sup>. "America," he asserts, "is not wholly an offspring of English race and thought. America is also Celtic, Gallic, and Teutonic" (Giddings 338-339)-- an identification narrowed even further when he argues that "the American is at bottom a Saxon-Norman.... it is the blood of the old untamable pirates that courses through his veins" (x).<sup>73</sup> The project of imperialism, then, as a natural or cosmic inevitability and a civilizational obligation, subsists in the blood of imperialists, the expression of irrepressible racial energies. The basic pattern of advancement via stages-- each stage fully realizing itself before transitioning into the next-- secures a model of growth employed to explain all change, from the deep time of geologic formation, to cellular growth and the life span of organisms, to the historical arc of transnational empires, and ultimately the cosmos itself.

Yet even if natives avoided a racist prison house, the notion that Filipinos or Guamanians suffer retarded civilizational development, that the peoples of primitive cultures lag behind, provides the ideological warrant necessary to subject them to the putatively disinterested programs of powerful nation-states. Like Francis

<sup>72</sup> "Masters of Social Science" in *Social Forces*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Dec. 1926), pp. 197-214.

<sup>73</sup> The irony of Giddings's admission of imperialism's criminal lineage was likely unintended, though the evocation of the freebooter speaks to the gender-economy of a foreign policy inflected by the values of "the vigorous life." His efforts elsewhere to quantify racial difference and establish "a more precise measure of the homogeneity of the American population" (7), Stocking writes, "embody in residue almost every aspect of the development of racial thought in the nineteenth century.... Giddings's attempts at systematization left the race concept in a rather confused state," sustaining the murky relationship between key terms such as Race, Nation and Kinship (8). See "The Turn-of-the-Century Concept of Race" in *Modernism/Modernity*. 1.1. (1994). pp. 4-16.

Amasa Walker's "beaten men from beaten races"-- the immigrants washing ashore at Angel and Ellis Islands lacking "the inherited instincts and tendencies" necessary for winning the struggle for survival-- the native as child remains incarcerated on the wrong side of history (Walker qtd. in Gossett 303). In Walker's rendering it is not the past *per se* which unfits the immigrant, but the absence of proto-democratical political traditions linked to the landscape of the northern forests:

Centuries are against them, as centuries were on the side of those who formerly came to us. They have none of the ideas and aptitudes which fit them to take up readily and easily the problem of self-care and self-government, such as belong to those who are descended from the tribes that met under the oak-trees of old Germany to make laws and choose chieftains." (Walker qtd. in Gossett 303).

Still, intervention into the lives and affairs of "the lower races" need not be explicitly militaristic. G. Stanley Hall, whose own work in psychology was deeply invested in the tension between racial difference and universal history, argued against the outright exploitation of non-European cultures because their members are

essentially children and adolescents in soul, with the same good and bad qualities and needing the same kind of study and adjustment. The best of them need no less our lavish care. They have the same right to linger in the paradise of children. To war upon them is to war upon children.... To commercialize and overwork them is child labor on a large scale. If unspoiled by contact with... civilization... they are mostly virtuous, simple, confiding, affectionate, and peaceful... curious, amazingly healthful, with bodies in nearly every function superior to ours (*Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 11).

Delivered a year before the watershed publication of *Adolescence*, Hall's address prefigures a shift in emphasis from "child study" based on biogenetic law to recapitulation theory writ large to encompass the problem of subordinate nations. Over the coming years he would expatiate at length on the policy applications of

recapitulation in a new periodical, *The Journal of Race Development*, where his ideas about evolutionary progress were rearticulated in the service of carefully guiding subject populations from savagery to a condition approaching civilization.<sup>74</sup> This new focus-- as Bederman and Gould argue, in part a response to the waning persuasiveness of recapitulation theory-- capsizes the terms of Hall's prior work in an effort to maintain its credibility. In Hall's initial usage, biogenetic law narrates an invigorating journey to the racial past, a plot which parallels Marlow's steam-powered expedition into "the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings" though with decidedly different effects (Conrad 55). Conrad's colonialists enter a zone so primitive it ultimately extinguishes history. In distinction to Marlow and his white companions, who stand "at the end of countless ages," the native inhabitants of that terrain lack even the basic framework of "any clear idea of time" (67) because they remain caught in its "beginnings" (68).<sup>75</sup> Yet if Marlow's time-traveling retrieval of Kurtz ends sordidly, evacuated of meaning, Hall's recapitulatory voyage-- as an ennobling, even ritual, passage through phyletic eons-- is quite the opposite. Indeed that recursive racial past might be seen as another country, a proving ground for the rising generation, a frontier zone not unlike RH Davis's Central America or Frank Norris's southern Africa, where young men make direct contact with primitivity, learning its crude technologies and obscure conventions, in order to return to the present armed against nervous disorders and

<sup>74</sup> In 1922, after merging with the *Journal of International Relations*, the *Journal of Race Development* would be re-titled *Foreign Affairs*.

<sup>75</sup> Or, in Stephen Kern's formulation: "Marlow's journey is an allegory of the history of mankind in reverse, a devolution of the species into the past, into darkness, into nothing" (*The Culture of Time and Space* 167).



effeminate affectations. In this sense the tropical fever Norris suffered while covering the Jameson Raid inoculates him against the ultimately more insidious and thus rapacious disease of neurasthenia. As the rise of tropical medicine demonstrated by focusing on new forms of prophylaxis against local microbes-- contradicting “long-held medical theories of white degeneration in the tropics” (Anderson 506)-- the conquest of primitive space and its inhabitants (now zoologized as the carriers of invisible parasites) converted the tropics into a colonial laboratory which aided in the construction of the American colonizer as a “racially resilient type” (508).<sup>76</sup>

Both Giddings and Hall to some degree sidestep contemporary, explicitly racist justifications for empire even as they retain the fundamental presuppositions of imperial geopolitics: a civilizational discourse predicated on the unity of the races in spite of phenotypic differences, all of whom are subject to the immutable evolutionary laws of a universal history that pushes humanity inexorably forward. In both views, however-- racial hierarchy as the crude if studied justification for freebooting colonialism, human unity as the foundation of a benevolent *mission civilisatrice*-- individuals, nations, races, and the world itself, develop progressively.

### III. Conjecture and Conjuncture

In her recent study of American literary naturalism Jennifer Fleissner posits the presence of apparent homologies between G. Stanley Hall's *Adolescence* and the

<sup>76</sup> See Warwick Anderson's excellent “‘Where Every Prospect Pleases and Only Man is Vile’: Laboratory Medicine and Colonial Discourse” in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 18, No. 3. Spring 1992. pp. 506-529. For an earlier, climatological theory of white degeneration in the tropics, see Chapter XXI of William Z. Ripley's *The Races of Europe* where he argues, for example, that “the temperate youth in England becomes a heavy drinker in the barracks of India” and that “one of the most subtle physiological effects of a tropical climate is a surexcitation of the sexual organs” (561-562).

bildungsroman because the former seems to echo the latter in highlighting “the very narrative so central to the realist novel: the plot of a young woman’s first blossoming, courtship, marriage, and finally maternity” (23). Yet the relationship between Hall’s text and the genre of the bildungsroman, she suggests, is “less a simple echo... than a mirror of the shift within realism toward naturalism” (24). If *Adolescence* can be read as a “psychological bildungsroman” the “scientization” of its plot stalls its (in this case) female protagonist under the weight of accumulated detail, bringing “the feminine stuckness [Hall] deplores into being” in a manner comparable to the naturalist obsession with ““recounting every detail of the totality.”” In this reading, the basic narrative arc of adolescent development-- the unfolding of native traits in their contact with external social forms-- does indeed resemble the plot of the bildungsroman. The achievement of a mature self-awareness that relies on the reconciliation of social obligation and individual desire is generally figured as a kind of journey which also represents contending forces of the socio-historical totality. For Moretti, the completion of that quest results in the individual developing into “a simple part of a whole” (*The Way of the World* 16). Such a process unavoidably “correlat[es] individual with social history” (Boes 275) as in *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* where “purely personal elements of [the] plot”-- Wilhelm’s childhood passion for puppetry, or his idiosyncratic interpretation of *Hamlet*-- “become saturated with collective significance” (276).

Yet the links Fleissner forges between the psychologized adolescent, the contours of the bildungsroman, and the naturalist text elide the vestigial presence of romance elements in G. Stanley Hall’s *Adolescence*. True, such conventions are not

imported wholesale into that text. Instead, they are structured by other narrative paradigms extending back to the “conjectural histories” of the Enlightenment, with which numerous European thinkers delineated a basic plot of human progress (Palmeri 2). As early as 1750 Adam Smith suggested a stadial theory of development spanning ages of barbarism, pastoralism, agrarianism and capitalism.<sup>77</sup> Passed down to Hall in altered form through the writings of August Comte and Herbert Spencer, various components of conjectural history-- most saliently stadial theory and a basic organic analogy between the individual and the larger collectivity-- cohere within a matrix of cultural materials including both the broad features of romance and a post-romantic aesthetic ideology. According to Ross, a personal crisis in the early 1890s impelled Hall to return to his “romantic allegiance,” drawing him into a “newer emphasis on feelings and instincts” which would be fully elaborated with the publication of *Adolescence (The Psychologist as Prophet 266)*. Indeed, Ross argues that Hall’s overall intellectual development was shaped by a sharp antagonism between the demands of naturalist science and the “meaning and security” offered by the intangible certainties of religious faith (44). One text in particular, Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*, helped him to arrive at a definitive decision to abandon theology altogether in favor of a scientific perspective. Such a course had already been argued compellingly, he wrote, by “Comte and the Positivists [who] had pretty much made out their case... that the theological, if not metaphysical, stage of thought should be transcended” (qtd. in Ross 44). Yet even more significantly, Ross claims, “Hall

<sup>77</sup> See Christian Marouby, “Adam Smith and the Anthropology of the Enlightenment: The ‘Ethnographic’ Sources of Economic Progress” in *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*. Larry Wolf and Marco Cipolloni (eds). Stanford: Stanford UP. 2007.

echoed Hegel and Comte [and Spencer] in their search for a single structure of laws to describe the parallel development of individual consciousness and the consciousness of the human race.” The foundation of those laws was to be found in the efforts of Enlightenment scholars such as Adam Ferguson and Condorcet “to develop naturalistic narratives of the course of human societies, including especially the earliest stages of human social life” (Palmeri 3).

Adopting a literary-critical approach, Palmeri analyzes conjectural history as a genre of historiography with a profound influence on the origins of modern sociology. The common features shared by virtually all of the conjectural historians, he argues, included “a naturalistic” orientation which rejects providentialism; “an organic conception of society” whose parts are both “interrelated and interdependent”; a radical contingency emphasizing the distance between human actions and historical outcomes; and some version of stadial theory (3). The last of these characteristics, the conception of change according to stages, generally focuses on a combination of subsistence methods and civilizational attainment. Lacking empirical evidence of the lifeways of prehistoric peoples, the conjectural historians constructed “psychologically plausible narratives” which infer the processes of development on the basis of historical and contemporary accounts by traders and travelers (7). While in the first paradigm human societies evolve along four stages according to modes of production-- hunter-gatherer, pastoral, agrarian, commercial-- in the second a given group rises from savagery to barbarism before finally rising to

civilization.<sup>78</sup> As Palmeri notes, both stadial models were so pervasive they powerfully influenced subsequent theories of social development. The three-stage structure in particular “was almost ubiquitous and inescapable in social thought throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth” (6).

Some of the similarities between Hall’s theory of adolescence and the conjectural historians’ methods should be immediately obvious. As a scientist he had already dispensed with theology as an explanatory discourse, though his romanticism ensured that providentialist traces inflected his vision of the heroic role of the adolescent in the reproduction (and, implicitly, perfection) of the human race. Hall’s theory of adolescence was of necessity organic in its immediate concern with the centrality of biological processes-- whether of the pubertal body or the recapitulatory psyche-- and organicist-analogical in its assertion that individual development paralleled socio-racial transformation. He made the latter contention, however, on the basis of Spencer’s rearticulation of Enlightenment-era ideas. Spencer was, after all, the likely source of Hall’s fascination with the relationship between consciousness and evolution, such that at the end of a period of teaching at Antioch he “claimed that his philosophical work for the past years had been ‘nearly from the Spencerian standpoint’” (Ross 59).<sup>79</sup> Yet because of his intellectual debts to Darwin-- which were complicated by the unresolved issue of Lamarckism-- improvement was not

<sup>78</sup> Though as Palmeri cautions there were any number of different stages. Condorcet, for example, posited ten, while others suggested two “civilized” stages-- the first essentially agrarian and the second “based on commerce and manufacturing which was sometimes considered over-civilized” (Dekker 75).

<sup>79</sup> Though by the decades between 1890 and 1910, “sociologists were emerging from the spell of Herbert Spencer’s ‘organic analogy’” (Stocking 122). While a plurality of scholars in the human sciences became increasingly skeptical of the social evolutionist model, “the bulk of social scientific thinking... was still carried on largely in an evolutionary tradition which can best be called Spencerian.” See “The Dark-Skinned Savage: The Image of Primitive Man in Evolutionary Anthropology” in *Race, Culture and Evolution*. Chicago: University of Illinois. 1982 (2nd ed.)

foreordained in the final analysis, and ultimately the open-endedness of recapitulation in relation to the mechanism of natural selection produced potential theoretical dissonances, particularly regarding Hall's view that universal principles of development governed the natural world.<sup>80</sup>

Though the two differ in marked ways, Spencer echoes Adam Ferguson's interest in the second, "tribal" stage of the tripartite stadial theory by foregrounding the defining power of struggle (Palmeri 7). While Ferguson was concerned that the "safety and ease" of modern society threatened to attenuate that stage's primitive virtues Spencer ultimately believed society would reach a point when warfare would become obsolete (a faith, incidentally, the New Imperialism broke) (qtd. in Palmeri 7). Even so, Spencer asserted in *Principles of Sociology*, "without universal conflict there would have been no development of the active powers." Hall's conception of adolescence was also shaped by conflict, though such physical contentions were localized to the individual body and more or less occurred internally as psychic *sturm und drang*. Of particular significance in this regard is the notion of the adolescent

<sup>80</sup> In this regard the work of James Mark Baldwin may be seen to supersede Hall's. Both scientists attempted to navigate Neo-Lamarckian theory, though Baldwin's conclusions-- what came to be known as the Baldwin Effect-- suggested recapitulation characterized not only the biological development of the individual and the species, but the individual and the culture. For Baldwin, these "two spheres of application of the principle of recapitulation" are clearly linked: "Society, genetically considered, is not a composition of separate individuals; on the contrary, the individuals are differentiations of a common social protoplasm" (*Autobiographical Notes*). See Baldwin's *Social and Ethical Interpretations* where he argues that

Just as the comparative morphologist furnishes his data to the human embryologist and asks him to discover the parallels which indicate recapitulation; so the ethnologist may come with his determinations of the social conditions of primitive man at various epochs, and ask the psychologist to point out the parallel stages in the child's progress (199).

For a brief account of Baldwin's career and its significance see Robert Wozniak's "Consciousness, Social Heredity, and Development: The Evolutionary Thought of James Mark Baldwin" in *American Psychologist* Vol. 62, No. 2, 93-101. Feb. 2009.

stage and its identification with barbarism, or what Spencer called the “super-tribal conditions of social life” (Palmeri 17).

For Comte-- like Hall, a recapitulationist-- the three civilizational stages had intellectual counterparts: in order of development the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive. The metaphysical stage displays an emergent rationality which seeks to constrain or abolish primal appetites in favor of the active realization of philosophical ideals. It lacks the absolute rationalism of the positive stage and exceeds the naive and brutal conditions of the theological, in which humanity is dominated by religious obscurantism and physical force. In addition, the different stages possess distinct thought-forms. The first two of these ideational frameworks are anthropomorphic-- the earliest being essentially animistic, “ascribing will and power to all things,” while the second is dominated by “allegorical personifications” (10). The third cognitive model, the positive, is guided exclusively by logic and empiricism. This epistemological progress was epitomized by Hall in a single sentence in the second volume of *Adolescence*: “Childhood is sensual, materialistic, very dualistic; youth, ideal, optimistic; manhood, realistic, positivistic” (2:50).

As Dorothy Ross argues, the sociological rearticulation of conjectural history by Comte and Spencer “deepen[ed] the consciousness of historical change” (924) in the United States, though it did so unevenly, and the historiographical imagination retained elements of a “millennial investment” linking Puritan eschatology with the triumph of the republic (“Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth Century America” 912). Woven into an ostensibly secular progressive history, “prehistoricist” (910) strands of thought implied a pattern generated by “extrahistorical phenomena” such

as “timeless reason” or God (911). For most of the nineteenth century, this hybrid historicism dominated popular versions of history and indeed the discipline itself, promoting exceptionalist and destinarian thinking, ideologies which were in turn reinforced in the antebellum period by “a new burst of evangelical piety and nationalism” (913). Scholars such as George Bancroft perpetuated the active role of providence in American history implicitly even as they celebrated progressive historical change, relying on the “germ theory” of national character undergirded by a race-myth of Teutonic origins.<sup>81</sup> Despite the fact that Bancroft absorbed the outline of stadial theory he conceived of “American history as ‘realization’ rather than change, as the fulfillment of a universal process” (919).

Historical consciousness began to shift in the Gilded Age with the advent of disciplinary “scientific norms” and the dissemination of Darwinian evolution, which may have encouraged historicist views because it dispensed entirely with the notion that stasis characterized the natural order (Ross 921). In spite of this revision, “the prehistoricist cast of mind... was still present.” Though Herbert Adams derogated the romantic-religious ideological commitments of Bancroft, he nonetheless attempted to “assimilate American history to a pattern of age-old unchanging principle,” laws of development already concretized in the institutional landscape of the nation. His search for continuity was ultimately conservative in its political orientation and effects, and as such spoke to the social instabilities provoked by capitalist industrialization. According to Ross, the work of Gilded Age historians like Adams

<sup>81</sup> Horsman aptly encapsulates this school of historiography: “They believed that the national character was largely a matter of race, that liberty was the special attribute of Germanic/ Anglo-Saxon peoples, and that Providence had directed human progress westward to America where the United States was engaged in the fulfillment of a divine plan” (*Race and Manifest Destiny* 182-3).



tacitly argued that in a moment riddled with uncertainties “American republican institutions must be preserved and progress charted along the path of the past” (923). Yet with increasing frequency a new wave of historians questioned the ideal unity of racial genius, providential guidance, and national history by metaphorizing historical change with biological and anthropological figures, a rhetorical stance predisposed to be skeptical of design or progress.

In spite of that historicist skepticism, the nexus between American exceptionalism and the story of Western progress-- studded with the tropes of burgeoning commerce, the growth of knowledge, and increasing democratization-- continued to function as a grand narrative, locating the nation in “millennial as well as historical time, freeing it from the ills of Europe and guaranteeing it an ideal future, exemplary for the world” (“Grand Narrative in American Historical Writing” 652). The plot itself-- as Ross argues, borrowing with some reservations from Northrop Frye-- is taken from romance, a narrative told from the perspective of a noble but unfinished protagonist who undertakes an identitarian quest before arriving at a space of reconciliation. Conceiving “all human history as a single story” the grand narrative posits United States itself as the (collective) hero, exiled from “home” and redeemed by struggle, a conceit which remained intact until the century’s turn (654). Even as disciplinary professionalization spread and deepened, scholars sought to use scientific methods to vindicate a historiographical “edifice built up by literary history.” William Sloane, for example, whose orientation was “modeled on

embryology rather than Darwinian theory” considered the human race as a single organic totality tracing a path from the lower stages to the higher.<sup>82</sup>

Hall’s adoption of stadial theory inclined him to contrast different races not in terms of their essential superiority or inferiority but because they possess specific gifts peculiar to their level of civilizational attainment. At the same time the analogy between race and individual guaranteed that “childish” primitives occupied a lower stage of development in comparison with the maturer Euro-American societies of the North Atlantic. Like the views of a younger cohort of *fin-de-siecle* historians, the values Hall ascribed to adolescent identity retain a romantic-providentialist impulse which resonates against the value-laden scheme of stadial development with its emphasis on subsistence practices, civilizational level, and intellectual-imaginary conception. Significantly, however, he ultimately transposed that formation onto ontogeny itself. Of necessity then his study of the adolescent focused attention on the intermediary stage of barbarism, which was characterized by conflict, action, a metaphysical relationship to the world, and an allegorical mode. Thus Hall’s suggestions for an apposite pedagogy for the young repeatedly invoke the Middle Ages, a historical epoch, he argues, when “the [medieval] youth’s mind was saturated with tales of knight-errantry, of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, and the Quest of the Holy Grail, and taught the old Teutonic love of women, arms, and the gods” (2:261). Even college students in the very last phases of recapitulation bear the traces of this parallel between historical and individual development in that their

<sup>82</sup> In this he echoed the *Naturphilosophen* of an earlier era, who viewed the whole of the animal kingdom as single organism, a metaphor that caused the adherents of romantic biology “to view lower animals as the intermediate stages of a developmental process leading to man” (Gould 37).

associations function as “the ontogenic analogue” of medieval guilds (1:109).<sup>83</sup> More explicitly, age-graded organizations such as the Princely Knights of Character Castle, established in 1895, give social form to those stories, encouraging boys to emulate legends stressing “the principles of heroism... purity, and patriotism” (qtd. in Hall 2:419).<sup>84</sup> Such “romantic glamour” (1:224)-- in Twain’s *Connecticut Yankee* a satire of “antimodern vitalism” unveiling the darker aspect of Enlightenment’s dialectic<sup>85</sup>-- mediates the analogy between the body’s development and the progression of human history (Lears 165).

Seeking anecdotal evidence for the romance character of this scientific emplotment of adolescence Hall consults a panoply of literary and sociological sources. He cites Jacob Riis’s description of “the young tough” of the Lower East Side, “his mind... inflamed with flash literature and ‘penny dreadfuls’ [who] is ambitious to get ‘pinched’... and to pose as a hero” (1:361). Such figures, “the driftwood of society, its... plancton (sic),” act out social dramas in the popular theater

<sup>83</sup> For one such student, Frank Norris, the relationship between modern America and the European Middle Ages was less a functional parallel than the basis of a critical contrast: while in that celebrated past “Real blood-- real death-- real gasp and dying moan--/ Aroused the equite’s mind, the baron’s heart;/ .... we, a dainty age, and milder grown,/ Find our diversion in the mimic art” (*Yvernelle* 12). Note particularly the distinction between the “real” of romance and “mimic” affectation. During his neomedievalist phase Norris produced several stories, essays and poems set in or treating the Middle Ages, including “The Jongleur of Taillebois,” a gothic story whose plot he later repurposed. See *Frank Norris: A Life*, pp. 133-137.

<sup>84</sup> “The Princely Knights of Character Castle... founded in 1895 for boys from twelve to eighteen to ‘inculcate... the principles of heroism-- endurance-- love, purity, and patriotism.’ The central incorporated castle grants charters to local castles, directs the ritual and secret work. Its officers are supreme prince, patriarch, scribe, treasurer, director, with captain of the guard, watchman, porter, keeper of the dungeon, musician, herald, and favorite son. The degrees of the secret work are shepherd lad, captive, viceroy, brother, son, prince, knight, and royal knight. There are jewels, regalia, paraphernalia, and initiations. The pledge for the first degree is, ‘I hereby promise and pledge that I will abstain from the use of intoxicating liquor in any forms as a beverage; that I will not use profane or improper language; that I will discourage the use of tobacco in any form; that I will strive to live pure in body and mind; that I will obey all rules and regulations of the order, and not reveal any of the secrets in any way’” (*Adolescence* 2:419).

<sup>85</sup> “Here I was,” Hank Morgan observes, exasperated, “a giant among pygmies, a man among children, a master intelligence among intellectual moles” (*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* 64).

of the street, impelled by “their own ideality and... gaudy pinchbeck honor,” as in the story of a young adolescent who, “when arrested, wrenched away the policeman’s club, dashed into the street, rescued a baby... and came back and gave himself up.” Such minor narratives, Hall argues, indicate both the young male’s fantasy investment in combat and the profundity of his attachment to honor, an ideal that achieves apotheosis in “the ethnic Bible of the Saxon race in its adolescent stage, the literature of chivalry” (2:433).

Because “the very lifeblood of chivalry is heroism,” familiarity with medieval figures such as Parsifal, Tristram, and Gawain promises to instruct “the heart at an age when sentiment is predominant.” These “northern myths” provide both “a vast body of ethical material [and] incidents thrilling and dramatic” which may then elicit a moral response from the young, “stir[ring] those subtle perceptions, where deep truths sleep in the youthful soul before they come to full consciousness” (2:443-4). By delving into medievalist literature which treats “heroes... decisive events, [and] great institutions” teachers not only satisfy the individual’s hunger “to revive... ancestral experiences” but enable him to “enter upon his full heritage, live out each stage of his life... and realize in himself all its manifold tendencies” (1:xi).

Narrativity operates at several levels in Hall’s theory of adolescence. If the romance provides character types and imagery, it also furnishes the rough outline of a plot-- though notably only one among others. In addition, recapitulation’s narrative functions as a foundational text of “child study,” a method and a curriculum of instruction for the young, which in turn promotes the individual’s experience of the phylogenic plot, and ultimately structures *Adolescence* itself. Contrasting the

contribution of Hall's book to adolescent psychology with contemporaneous European scholarship, Neubauer suggests the apparent incongruity of Hall's heavy emphasis on a physiological (over a psychological or cultural) etiology with the fact that "the unity [of *Adolescence*] is not theoretical and scientific but narrative" (146). In this sense the textual economy of *Adolescence* is governed by the theory it espouses, a "comprehensive recapitulatory meta-story" that enacts a return to prior intellectual sources such as Aristotle in the interests of "rebas[ing] psychology on biology" by repeating and epitomizing that data (qtd. in Neubauer 147). The numerous passages Hall devotes to others' work are shaped by the familiar constraints of heterochrony: the reiterated material must of necessity be a new version, condensed and expedited, in order for its repetition to be practicable. Just so: inoculating the adolescent against modernity's speed and heterogeneity-- the anachronies and surpluses of the city with its glut and "greater superficiality" of information, "impure air," pubertal precocity, steeper mortality rate, incitements to vice, and "incessant distraction"-- requires a "repose" which transpires only within an accelerated and redacted temporality (*Adolescence* 1:309). By a further twist, the prolonged "leisure" of adolescence-- purposeless activity, a moratorium on productivity-- not only follows a condensed schedule but always serves social reproduction and racial destiny.

Like the maturing adolescent, the new psychology of adolescence both breaks with and refers back to the past, and thus what Hall characterizes as "saltatory"-- a true rupture within both the human life-cycle and, tacitly, the emergent discipline-- is ultimately fused into the continuity of tradition. At the level of image Hall

accomplishes this feat by figuring ontogeny in terms of the planet's rotation. Explaining that "pubescence dawns with almost fulminating intensity," he not only emphasizes the radical disjuncture of adolescence but presents his readers with the caveat of this "new birth[']s]" circularity, one which under optimum conditions underwrites a progressive future. Here the Janus-faced disposition of adolescence and its theorization comes fully into view, at once comprehending the history of phylogeny and prophesying humanity's future. Yet these terms-- ontogeny and phylogeny, the past and the future-- are ostensibly "each keys to the other" (1:viii) . The "traces of... events in the history of the race," thought to be "utterly lost" not only from the historical archive but "racial memory" itself persist in the "soul" of the adolescent even as they are unthinkable (2:447). On the other hand, reading the behavior of the young will allow the psychologist to "reconstruct [its] buried objective, phyletic correlates" (2:448) which in turn promise to illuminate "the unhistoric period-- the darkest of all dark ages, during which brute became man" (2:91).

To the generalized perception of social relations becoming "each year more tangled and more distended [such that] Americans in a basic sense no longer knew who or where they were," the narrative of genetic psychology responded with the cultural materials at hand (Weibe 42). Confronted with an incomplete chronology of racial development, it plotted adolescence according to a romance narrative and the positivized model of stadial theory. The politics of this emplotment are in the broadest sense conservative insofar as they retain a narrow vision of transformation as part of the natural and social order. In the same way that colonial romances of the

1890s froze the historicity of the American Revolution into an artifact in order to politically guarantee the *status quo*, recapitulation is “ended”-- given a telos-- and thereby stripped of its radical, potentially destructive force.<sup>86</sup> The preservation of civilizational order requires the hypostatization of recapitulation’s and revolution’s characteristics by subordinating their tropes of rebellion to the impossibility of systemic change. Though Hall repeatedly points out that the supposed apex of human development-- western European societies and their settler-colonial offshoots-- are not necessarily destined to triumph indefinitely, that other “stirps” might replace them and even exceed their achievements, the structure of recapitulation evinces a basic temporal-ideological orientation not unlike that which is often epitomized in the phrase “the end of history.” The future will be better than its past. Civilizationally speaking it will be “the present plus more options.”<sup>87</sup>

Youth is recuperated, routed into the circuit of a progressive racial history that effectively universalizes the white, masculine, liberal-capitalist subject by basing the claims of genetic psychology on literary exempla and romancing the facts. In every respect the male adolescent-- unlike his female counterpart, who remains suspended in a perpetual state of becoming-- is an “agent of variation [who] tends by nature to expertness and specialization, without which his individuality is incomplete” (2: 625). The slippery diction and imprecise categories of race theory also play a role in this context. In 1888, Roediger writes, scholars counted “between two and sixty-three

<sup>86</sup> “The historical romances of the 1890s ‘de-revolutionize’ the Revolution, in Michael Kammen’s terms, not only to mitigate social conflict at home, as he argues, but also to repossess and neutralize the symbols of the American Revolution that served as a usable past for contemporary revolutions abroad” (Kaplan 117).

<sup>87</sup> This phrase is sometimes credited to Terry Eagleton, though he has used it several times (most recently in *Why Marx Was Right*) as a quote without any specific attribution.

racess” while almost forty years later “an exasperated U.S Supreme Court... complained that various scientific authorities placed the number of races at between four and twenty-nine” (11).<sup>88</sup> In the United States the hierarchization of white races had begun as early as the 1840s with the first rush of Irish immigration, such that the 1860 census “divided the country’s ‘white’ population into... ‘native,’ foreign,’ and Irish’ and included a discussion of ‘Teutonic’ and ‘Celtic’ elements of the populace” (Baum 125). That tendency toward intra-racial discrimination proliferated in the ensuing years, and at the turn of the century, Baum argues, Blumenbach’s category of Caucasian had suffered “partial eclipse” (118). Written in this racio-ideological environment, Hall’s theory enumerates a plethora of different races even as it emphasizes what initially appears to be a single, species-wide human race.

By far the most frequent element of racial vocabulary to appear in Hall’s text is “the race,” (121 references) followed by “human race” (twenty-four instances, though five of these are in titles or quotes). Hall’s use of the phrase “the race” modulates between explicit and implicit significations, in some instances clearly denoting the human species, while in others indicating the white, middle-class professionals for whom *Adolescence* was written. For example Hall hypothesizes that “if such a higher stage is ever added to *our* race... it will come by increased development of the adolescent stage, which is the bud of promise for *the* race” (emphasis added 1:50). The relative dearth of terms marking whiteness is equally

<sup>88</sup> In addition to the incoherence of competing race concepts over the course of the modern era-- a phenomenon further complicated by the late-nineteenth century vogue for fragmenting Europeans into various “nation-races”-- there existed, as Melish argues, a highly localized “racial vernacular” which often undermined racial categories, particularly the black/white binary which has historically dominated US racial discourse (18).



significant. While “Teutonic” occurs only seven times in *Adolescence*’s 1,400 pages, there are three instances of the use of “Anglo-Saxon” and two of “white race.” “Caucasian” and “Nordic” are not to be found at all. Nor does Ripley’s tripartite scheme of the European races-- Teutonic, Alpine and Mediterranean-- make an appearance.<sup>89</sup>

In one sense the absence of whiteness simply confirms a basic insight of semiotic analysis: in socio-political discourse dominant identities are almost always unmarked. It is also a function of intellectual inheritance, specifically views of race, geography, and history already formulated during the Enlightenment and often expressed in the providentialist language of racio-political concepts such as Manifest Destiny. Even as the same generation of thinkers who conceived the stadial thesis “theorized the idea of equality and the principle of universality on which it rested,” Bessis observes, “only Europe and its children across the Atlantic were eligible for the rights that it implied” (27). To some degree stadial theory encouraged identification or at least sympathy with primitive peoples, and its “abstractive, universalizing methodology... was designed to yield a composite ‘character’ free of local peculiarities” (Dekker 79). Like the denial of the franchise for women and the colonization of most of the world’s inhabitants, slavery’s persistence into the latter half of the nineteenth century-- which was then superseded by an in/formal system refusing people of color full political rights-- ensured that this “limited universality” continued (Bessis 25). For all his belief in the psychic unity of mankind Hall, and his

<sup>89</sup> As Nell Irvin Painter notes, though Ripley gained fame as the author of *The Races of Europe* (1899), by 1908 he could refer to “*the white race*” (emphasis in original 226). Still, Painter writes, in years to come “this cloudy perversion of Darwinian evolution and Mendelian inheritance thrived.” See chapter 15 of *The History of White People*.

theory, fall prey to the powerful ambiguity characterizing racial discourse, deploying “the race” as a racialist prototype of the geopolitical category of “the West.” The theory of adolescence, in other words, ultimately functions to build white, capitalist-democratic subjects shaped by the universal mechanism of recapitulation on the basis of a collectivist principle of shared racial inheritance. For Hall, that common process and property is the precondition for the formation of modernity’s rights-bearing individuals who will create the new world to come. In his insistence on the custodial function of the older generations at a “local” national level via their representatives in the state Hall diverges from the laissez-faire conception of society as a complex scheme of disconnected parts whose trajectories weave tight the social organism. Public health measures,<sup>90</sup> the development of specific educational regimes such as “cultural epochs” pedagogy, the regulation of industrial capitalism’s most destabilizing excesses: whole institutional landscapes and cultural canons are inferred by his call for adolescence to be insulated and protracted, an emergent biosocial infrastructure which ultimately serves the dominant racial, economic, and political order.

The descriptors modifying the term race-- all of which can be found in *Adolescence* though some are quoted therein from other sources-- illustrate the incoherence of his use of a concept which is already internally inconsistent. Depending on context, races are categorized by “stock,” nation, or geographical location<sup>91</sup>; physical features such as complexion<sup>92</sup>, stature<sup>93</sup>, head configuration<sup>94</sup>, or

<sup>90</sup> Though Hall was not, strictly speaking, a eugenicist.

<sup>91</sup> African, alien, American, arctic-dwelling, Asiatic, Australian, Bantu, British, Bushman, Chinese, English, Eskimo, European, French, German, Hindu, Indian, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Lapp, Maylay,

relative hirsuteness<sup>95</sup>; degree of racial health or hybridity<sup>96</sup>; religion<sup>97</sup>; generalized personality traits<sup>98</sup>; relationship to colonialism<sup>99</sup>; civilizational level<sup>100</sup>; mode of subsistence<sup>101</sup>; rate of reproduction or population size<sup>102</sup>; temporality or ontogenic analogy<sup>103</sup>; or, apparently, divine dispensation<sup>104</sup>. The multiplicity of the term, and the seemingly unconscious shift in its applications, bear a striking resemblance to the word adolescence itself, which is used in different registers to describe a life stage, a historical era of European culture, and “primitive” or colonized peoples. The protean nature of the concept comes into relief if we ask what it might mean that psycho-biological adolescence is a universal experience, Europe is no longer culturally adolescent, and the colonized regions of the earth are populated by adolescent races. The variety of historical analogies deployed in *Adolescence* only deepens the confusion, as when Hall asserts that the “severer code” of industrial modernity has complicated the adolescent’s passage from dependency to independence, an “epoch... not unlike that of the sudden emancipation of the negroes in the South” (1:334). Such

Mexican, Micmac, native, neighboring, neo-Latin, northern, Papuan, Patagonian, Philippine, Sawaiori, Scotch, Spaniard, Swedish, Tasmanian Teutonic, tropical

<sup>92</sup> Black, colored, red, white, yellow, and negro by virtue of its Portuguese etymology.

<sup>93</sup> Hall refers to both shorter and taller races.

<sup>94</sup> Hall uses both the scientific and vernacular terms for the categories of Retzius’s cephalic index as popularized by Ripley in his *The Races of Europe* (1899): broad-headed or round-headed (brachycephalic) and long-headed (dolichocephalic), though not intermediate (mesocephalic).

<sup>95</sup> Bearded.

<sup>96</sup> Eugenic, mixed, mulatto, pure, stronger, vigorous, and virile.

<sup>97</sup> Christian, fetishistic, Hindu, Jewish, and Moslem.

<sup>98</sup> Docile, hostile, humble, kind-hearted, lazy, and servile.

<sup>99</sup> Colonizing, conquered, dominant, ruling, subjugated, and subject.

<sup>100</sup> Ascending, ascendent, backward, best, better, crude, cultivated, descending, decadent, great, higher, inferior, low, lower, lowest, lowly, natural, primitive, rising, savage, super, superior, tribal, and undeveloped.

<sup>101</sup> Agricultural, nomadic, and warrior.

<sup>102</sup> Barely-growing, fertile, large, largest, overgrown, spreading, vanished, vanishing.

<sup>103</sup> Adolescent, early, immortal, old, and senescent.

<sup>104</sup> Favored.

a comparison evokes not only long-desired freedom but-- as Hall explains, claiming that planters were prone to indulge their slaves in the theft of household goods-- the new standards of behavior such liberation entails. We might with some profit weigh that figure against what Charles Chesnutt, thinking of the first generation born after slavery, termed “the chip-on-the-shoulder stage” -- a metaphor which explicitly yokes adolescent sullenness to racial development and, crucially, the liminal position of African Americans in the United States (42). In *The Marrow of Tradition* Chesnutt portrays a young nurse who possesses “neither the picturesqueness of the slave, nor the unconscious dignity of those of whom freedom has been the immemorial birthright,” as

standing, like most young people of her race, on the border line between two irreconcilable states of life.... she was in what might be called the chip-on-the-shoulder stage, through which races as well as individuals must pass in climbing the ladder of life,-- not an interesting, at least not an agreeable stage, but an inevitable one, and for that reason entitled to a paragraph in a story of Southern life, which, with its as yet imperfect blending old with new, of race with race, of slavery with freedom, is like no other life under the sun.

Two further parallels compound the familiar analogy linking ontogeny and phylogeny. Even as he underscores the irreconcilability of the “states” of enslavement and freedom, Chesnutt localizes that divide, and with it the stadial metaphor, by using a commonplace of civilizational discourse to merge individual growth, the African American community, and the political history of the American South. Hall, on the other hand, deploys the figure of the freedman as a means of emphasizing the social lessons the adolescent is compelled to learn. The enthusiasms of emancipation, he suggests, must give way to the circumspection of maturity. As a casual use of history, Hall’s metaphor is more interested in “color”-- Chesnutt’s “picturesqueness”-- than in

the hard legacies of subjugation: the violent miseducation of slavery and the new oppressions of Jim Crow. Lacking context or depth, Hall has simply piled on another simile in order to lend verve to his concept of adolescence, though, without seeming to know it, he has also relegated the adolescent to an inferior role. More importantly, by subsuming the historical conditions and experience of the manumitted into adolescence, he effaces the very historical particularity-- slavery and its aftermath-- which would potentially open the way to universality.<sup>105</sup>

#### **IV. Biography of a Youth Concept**

Over the course of modernity the concept of race functioned as an indispensable constituent of the ideology of progress. Perceptions of phenotypical difference, linked to cultural specificities and technological disparities, seemed to provide evidence-- though it was hardly needed-- of the existence of racial hierarchy, the philosophical underpinnings of an often unquestioned, popular logic of race known even then as white supremacy. In time the clarity of the white supremacist vision would weaken, giving way to the consolidation of “the West” as part of a civilizational paradigm pitting politically modern, economically developed nations against their pre- or anti-modern, un(der)developed counterparts.<sup>106</sup> The “race concept,” as WEB Du Bois phrased it in his autobiography *Dusk of Dawn*, was thus a

“[H]uman universality emerges at the point of rupture. It is in the discontinuities of history that people whose culture has been strained to the breaking point give expression to a humanity that goes beyond cultural limits. And it is in our emphatic identification with this raw, free, and vulnerable state, that we have a chance of understanding what they say. Common humanity exists in spite of culture and its differences” (Buck-Morss 133).

<sup>106</sup> Though as Alastair Bonnett suggests, “The idea of the West did far more than simply erase the embarrassment of race. More specifically, it could evoke a set of political principles and values that could be both cosmopolitan and subtly ethnocentric, potentially open to all but rooted in the experiences and expectations of a narrow social strata” (15).

way of mapping and historicizing the world, a fact he grasped even in elementary school during geography lessons “when the races of the world were pictured: Indians, Negroes and Chinese, by their most uncivilized and bizarre representatives; the whites by some kindly and distinguished-looking philanthropist” (625). Du Bois’s lifetime project was to unravel “the history of the development of the race concept,” one imposed on him as an African American intellectual by virtue of the protean nature of racial discourse. Enrolled at Fisk University, Du Bois encountered explicit affirmations of racial equality from both students and faculty, views that were flatly renounced during his graduate education at Harvard, where “it was continually stressed in the community and in classes that there was a vast difference in the development of the whites and the ‘lower’ races [and] that this could be seen in the physical development of the Negro.” The proof for these claims were “scientific”: “a series of skeletons arranged from a little monkey to a tall well-developed white man, with the Negro barely outranking a chimpanzee”; studies of the relative size and weight of human brains, classed according to race; “and at last... the ‘cephalic index.’” Skipping registers, the racial superiority of whites was linked to “culture and cultural history,” both of which were denied to Africa and thus the descendants of Africans (626). The instability and incoherency of explanations of race and justifications of white supremacy, “the continuous change in the proofs and arguments advanced,” Du Bois writes, disturbed him so greatly his mind revolted:

I could accept evolution and the survival of the fittest, provided the interval between advanced and backward races was not made too impossible.... But no sooner had I settled into scientific security... than the basis of race distinction was changed without explanation, without apology.... I began to see that the cultural equipment attributed to any people depended largely on who

estimated it; and... I realized what in my education had been suppressed.... It was not until I was long out of school... that there came the hurried use of... psychological tests, which were quickly adjusted so as to put black folk absolutely beyond the possibility of civilization. By this time I was unimpressed. I had too often seen science made the slave of caste and race hate. (626-627).

Du Bois realized that in spite of the putative rigor of race-scientific methods-- physiognomic interpretations of prognathous facial angles, I. Q. testing, Morton's collection of birdshot-stuffed skulls-- "race" and race problems" were discussed "as a matter of course without explanation or definition." Lacking epistemological foundations, race science simply affirmed the existence of races, tacitly asserting that "the walls of race were clear and straight... the world consisted of mutually exclusive races; and even though the edges might be blurred, there was no question of exact definition and understanding of the meaning of the word" (639).<sup>107</sup> For Du Bois this was insufficient, and against the tendentious evidence of scientific racism he formulated a racialist philosophy emphasizing the social salience and reality of race as a construction, one both material and experiential, with roots not only in apparently objective physical differences between human groups, but, significantly, based in history and his family genealogy-- what he termed "my racial history" (636). In this sense Du Bois's autobiography itself is a history of the development of the race concept, taking him-- patrilineally, for example-- from the Bahamian plantation of his great-grandfather Dr. James Du Bois, a white man of Huguenot descent, to his grandfather Alexander Du Bois's "darkened parlor with its horsehair furniture," to the

<sup>107</sup> Du Bois's bewilderment was echoed by Henry Adams, writing over thirty years earlier in the historical moment *Dusk of Dawn* described: "Race ruled the conditions; conditions hardly affected race; and yet no one could tell... what race was, or how it should be known" (quoted in Lears 34).

unrecorded wanderings of his father, Alfred, in appearance “a throwback” to James (633).

The existential complexity of Du Bois’s provenance is deepened by the gravities exerted on his imagination by Africa as a point of origin and America, the nation of his birth-- a paradox of obligations and affinities Du Bois had already formulated as the critical fissure of “double consciousness” in *The Souls of Black Folk* in 1903. It is his connection to Africa which galvanizes the race concept, converting it from the commodity-- the bad goods-- of race science “fact” into a kind of capital that is at once fixed and liquid. “The mark” of his African antecedents “is upon me,” he asserts, “in color and hair. These are obvious things” (639). Yet they are “of little meaning of themselves; only important as they stand for real and more subtle differences from other men. Whether they do or not, I do not know, nor does science know today.” Writing in 1940, from the vantage of an era not yet entirely confident of heredity’s genetic mechanisms, Du Bois involutes the certitudes of race science which locate essence in appearance, claiming that “real” difference is “subtle,” in part the product of “a common history... a common disaster” which resides in “one long memory” (640). “The real essence of this kinship,” he continues, “is its social heritage of slavery; the discrimination and insult; and this heritage binds together not simply the children of Africa, but extends through yellow Asia and into the South Seas. It is this unity that draws me to Africa.”

DuBois’s kinship with Africa is primarily social-- political and historical-- instead of solely (and metaphorically) tethered by blood. To explain the materiality of that relationship he is compelled to remap the relative position of Africa and America



in the world. Rather than reinscribing the slave trade-generated cartography of the Black Atlantic-- the triangular flow of finished goods, chattel, and staples from Liverpool to the Bight of Benin to Savannah and back-- he attempts to show how the concept of race transforms time into space. It is, he reiterates, a “heritage”-- of “discrimination and insult,” of white supremacy, of the development of the race concept-- which “extends” into Asia-Pacific. By mapping the race concept a metonymic relationship is established, not only between Du Bois and “the darker races,” but to the race concept itself. The concept is simultaneously subjective and (erroneously if practically) objective, both prisoner and prisonhouse, an embodied individual and a general social force. In all of these senses-- as a complex of discourses with a definite development, as a spatio-temporal category, as a set of material practices (a socio-materiality), as the foundation of a social and political metonymy-- Du Bois’s race concept provides the framework for a concept of youth.

## **V. Racing Youth**

It seems obvious that youth is a temporal category, as both a label for a phase of ontogenic development and a condition abstracted from individuals and applied to nations, races, and cultures. The qualities associated with youth-- dynamism, impetuosity, possibility, and others-- were increasingly linked with modernity over the course of the eighteenth century onward, a tendency which found cultural form in the rise of the bildungsroman and a political valence in the period of “Young Europe.” The United States, the perennial youth of all nations according to a

flourishing secular myth-system,<sup>108</sup> was faced at the turn of the century with a dichotomy between its commercial and democratical restlessness. The unsurpassed growth of the industrializing economy and the national-continental body sharpened the desire to reach an age of majority, to enter fully into geopolitical equality with the great powers. Well before the era of World War I, a period Max Eastman once described as “the adolescence of the twentieth century,” the contradiction between youthful aspiration and fully realized maturity seemed to reach a point of crisis (qtd. in Kazin 146). On one hand the off-shore imperialism signaled by the invasions of Cuba, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam could be construed as the behavior of decadent Old Europe, an alien policy grafted from the rotten stock of cynical nations, motivated solely by calculations of greed and power. Eliding the extirpation of Native Americans-- which was conceived as an internal matter, the wages of Manifest Destiny-- public discourse began to roil. The United States was on the verge of a phase of decadence, it was argued, betraying the genius of its libertarian past. On the other hand, the Spanish Empire, already defunct well before 1898, seemed the perfect foil for American international ambitions. The language used to describe Spain-- senile, tottering, degenerate-- notably borrowed from biology and physiology, casting

<sup>108</sup> For instance the following passage from Alfred Maurice Low’s *The American People*:

American civilization is the youngest of which the world knows. It is still formative. This makes a serious study fantastic almost, for... we can reach a conclusion only by comparing it with something else, and when we compare American civilization with that of any other modern people it is almost as if we had to resort to a miracle to explain causes. It is as if the boy overnight had been touched by the magician’s wand and awakes a man, a giant in force and intellect, and yet with all the vital enthusiasm of youth, who is conscious of his strength and who has the stripling’s contempt for age. Men sneer at his juvenescence and think it surprising that he is still so crude, and wonder when, if ever he will emerge from adolescence and arrive at the dignity of man’s estate, and yet they stand amazed at his power and his mind. He defies every tradition, the wisdom of his elders he laughs at and becomes a law unto himself, the fallacy of theory he joyously mocks, and with it all he grows stronger, better, spiritually more exalted. (34-5).

the US as a vigorous upstart against a petrified monarchy. The racial dimensions of that scenario were expressed in a form of “blood talk,” a sanguinary rhetoric of racial difference, purity, and strength according to which Spanish blood lacked vitality, had attenuated through years of indolence and passivity, and was corrupted by intermixture with colonial natives (Gillman 46).<sup>109</sup> Alternately, it was the very lack of admixture which rendered Spanish blood suspect. In Frank Norris’s short story “A Case for Lombroso” Cresencia Hromada is the child “of a family of unmixed blood, whose stock had never been replenished or strengthened by an alien cross. Her race was almost exhausted, its vitality low, and its temperament refined to the evaporation point” (*The Apprenticeship Writings* 128). At present, Norris wrote less than a year before the United States declared war on Spain, “Cresencia might have been called a degenerate.”<sup>110</sup> Such degeneracy might be located in the inefficiency of the institutions of the Spanish state, and the dubious blood of its subjects seemed to be verified by its military impotence. According to the press, Dewey’s overwhelming victory in Manila Bay and the relative brevity of the first phases of combat confirmed that Spain had entered a stage of decay, one analogous to human senescence.

<sup>109</sup> A multivalent trope, according to Gillman blood

was probably the most commonly used term in racist and racialist discourses of the nineteenth century. Blood appears as a legal concept in the United States through the one-drop rule of racial identity; as an allied scientific term in the movement to measure and classify racial differences; as a medicoreligious concept justifying anti-Semitism through medicalized notions of the disease/disorder of the Jew and his “cure” through the ritual use of Christian blood; as a basis for scientific and social-scientific theories of heredity (and degeneracy) of racial characteristics; and as a quasi-mystical figure for nation and race purity (“Anglo-Saxon blood,” e.g.). (46).

<sup>110</sup> See also the “jackrabbit round-up chapter” of *The Octopus* in which “Anglo-Saxon spectators... drew back in disgust, but the hot degenerated blood of Portuguese, Mexican, and mixed Spaniard boiled up in excitement at this wholesale slaughter” (354).

The politics of blood fused biological and historical destinies. When Benjamin Kidd, attending a party in his honor, remarked that the victory at Manila Bay ““was the most important historical event since the battle of Waterloo,”” Franklin Giddings responded, ““I find myself compelled to differ.... In my judgement it was the most important historical event since Charles Martel turned back the Moslems”” (Strong qtd. in Gossett 312). Though Kidd and Giddings may have disagreed on which historical metaphor was most apposite, each inserted the conflict in the Philippines into a grand narrative of the West, as one item in a catalog of “magic moments” spanning millennia in the ineluctable march to civilizational redemption (Gress 27). That grand narrative, itself one aspect of the concept of the West rather than a neutral description, traditionally incorporates watershed events demonstrating cultural superiority as the motor of progress. In doing so it simultaneously makes a claim to universality while rooting Western values in “particular languages, societies and cultures” (GoGwilt 40) even as it plots an invented “continuity of historical development” (42).<sup>111</sup> The death of Socrates in 399 BCE, for instance, dramatizes the primacy of reason in the face of state violence, an ethics of truth-telling that will not be silenced. The rise of Rome with its engineering feats, martial prowess, and juridical genius culminates in 312 CE with the adoption of Christianity as the state

<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, GoGwilt writes, “it was only between the 1880s and the 1920s that ‘the West’ entered the English language as a term linking a contemporary political bloc, a discrete historical development within world history, and a lived sense of cultural identity” (37). See his “True West: The Changing Idea of the West from the 1880s to the 1920s” in *Enduring Western Civilization: The Construction of the Concept of Western Civilization and its “Others”* Silvia Federici (ed) Westport, CT: Praeger. 1995

religion, a synthesis of Roman *techne* and Christian *agape*.<sup>112</sup> In Gress's re-telling the narrative leaps ahead to 1492, commemorating the twinned victories of Andalusian reconquest and American discovery. (Though unlike Giddings he elides Charles the Hammer's much-inflated victory<sup>113</sup> at the Battle of the Court of Martyrs). The Renaissance, with its struggle upward from scholastic deference and medieval night, soon ensues, followed by the Reformation, personified by an iconic Martin Luther rebelling against the doctrinal enslavement of the Catholic church-- a declaration of independent conscience foreshadowing the destruction of the Spanish Armada in 1588. A century later the Glorious Revolution completes the identification of the Anglo-Saxon polity with republicanism, spurring the West's democratical insurgency, which reaches its pinnacle in the American (rather than French or Haitian) Revolution. Democratization eventually encompasses even the freedmen of the American South, a gift those living comfortably with Jim Crow-- including Union veterans such as Daniel Brinton<sup>114</sup>-- suggested may have been given irresponsibly.

Embellishing upon the grand narrative, supporters of the Spanish-American War "developed a novel, two-sided racial formation attuned to the need for an annexationist argument" the first aspect of which "racialized Americans as Anglo-

<sup>112</sup> Gress's admittedly rough sketch of the grand narrative misses the battles of Thermopylae and Plataea, the first as a victory-in-defeat-- the ultimate, fierce sacrifice for the inchoate West-- the latter as its martial vindication, turning back the Median hordes. See *From Plato to Nato*.

<sup>113</sup> See David Levering Lewis for a highly contrastive interpretation of this famed Western conquest: "[The] victory of Charles the Hammer must be seen as greatly contributing to the creation of an economically retarded, balkanized, fratricidal Europe that, in defining itself in opposition to Islam, made virtues out of religious persecution, cultural particularism, and hereditary aristocracy" (*God's Crucible* 174).

<sup>114</sup> In 1895 Brinton as retiring president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science argued in a speech titled "Aims of Anthropology" delivered in his absence that racial "peculiarities... supply the only sure foundation for legislation; not a priori notions of the rights of man, nor abstract theories of what should constituted a perfect state, as was the fashion with older philosophies, and still is with the modern social reformers" (249).

Saxons” and simultaneously absorbed them into the racio-national polity of the British Empire, thereby imposing on the United States all of its civilizational obligations and privileges (Kramer 204).<sup>115</sup> Imperialism, the natural consequence of Anglo-Saxon restlessness, was part of an Anglophone racial legacy. Revised, the narrative required not only protagonists but living antagonists, a role into which Spain-- and soon afterward the Philippines-- was rapidly cast. A *New York Times* article reported that Rev. Henry Frank, pastor of the Metropolitan Independent Church, sermonized on the necessity of an attack on Spain, “a senile monster”<sup>116</sup> that must be prevented from strangling Cuba, “a struggling infant among the nations” (“The Necessity of War”). Rev. Dr. McComb yoked Spanish obsolescence with the nation’s counterfeit political system, claiming that “Spain belongs to the sixteenth century, is corrupt, moribund, eaten through and through with fraud and chicanery” (“America’s Action Justified”). By contrast, “America belongs to the nineteenth century, is the home of freedom and defender of right.” Other pastors also emphasized Spanish archaism. Rev. Dr. Goodell asked, ““With such a history behind him, with such surroundings to develop all the cruelty of his nature, can you wonder

<sup>115</sup> See *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 2009.

<sup>116</sup> Rev. Frank ought to have been a dime novelist:

It seems almost inhuman to punish such a senile monster. But let us bear in mind the blood this vicious monster drew from the veins of the defenseless men and women-- aye, of suckling babes upon their mothers’ breasts. Let us not forget how a beautiful isle lies to-day blistering and prostrate because of the brutal blows of that monster whose bloody hands are staid alone by the bayonets of our brave boys and the belching of our shotted guns. How horrible the scene of destruction and desolation which has been enacted for years within the doomed households of beautiful Cuba, where the dripping sabre of the Spaniard hung like the sword of Damocles above every hearthstone, every closet contained a skeleton of the victim of brutality. O mock tears that would now weep for a few drops of spilled Spanish blood, but which never fell for Cubans slaughtered and human rights outraged!

that the Spaniard has no ability to wage civilized warfare?” Yet “the thunderous shock of Dewey’s cannon blew the rack and thumbscrew and the whole paraphernalia of mediaeval persecution off the face of the earth forever,” he assured his parishioners. “Barbarism has no place in the light of the twentieth century. The Spaniard in the West is as much a relic of the past as was China in the East.” Rev. W.F. Anderson concurred, though his judgement was expressed even more succinctly: “Spain has refused to march forward in the procession to a higher civilization” (“The Benefits of the War”). Prefiguring both the development of the West as a geopolitical entity and humanitarian-interventionist policies of the 21st century, he predicted the coming conflict would “result [in the] cementing together of the English-speaking races.... securing... the God-given rights of humanity.”

The war exacerbated anxieties about racial and national identity, and civilizational attainments, yet even beforehand in 1895 William M. Sloane had felt compelled to insist that “the civilization of the United States is not an early-ripe one, verging to decay before reaching normal maturity. We are Europeans of ancient stock, and a change of skies did not involve a new physical birth for our society” (15). Just over two years later, boxing champion Jim Jeffries took time from his training schedule to disabuse *San Francisco Chronicle* reporters of rumors that there was “Spanish blood in him” (“The Big Boxers Ready to Meet”). Meanwhile the July 16th edition of the *Medical Record*, observing that “opinion appears to be universal that the Latin race as a whole is on the down grade,” noted Dr. Mosso’s recent article on Spanish degeneration, which he explained as a result of climatic conditions:

“life... develops more intensely, more rapidly in the southern latitudes. In India the female becomes a mother at thirteen, in Italy she may become so at fifteen, in the people of the north at eighteen.... so we may say that the youth of the Latin race are made men two or three years before the youth of the north.” (91).

Significantly, Mosso’s explanation of the racio-national “temperament” of Spain establishes a signifying chain which links decline, a process characteristic of senescence, and precocity, an anachronistic condition initially figured in the female body-- a commonplace of human development studies of the era<sup>117</sup>-- to “youth,” a designation explicitly gendered masculine. The state of temporal exception indicated by precocity might be supplemented by the sense that Spain’s development had been arrested. The Spanish, in comparison to “the other races of Europe,” the editor avers, quoting an essay from *The Spectator*, “appear to constitute an entirely separate national character, which hundreds of years have never changed.” Yet always progress and modernity-- and their absence or inversion, metaphorized by recourse to the individual lifespan-- were subsumed into the element of blood-- both its properties

<sup>117</sup> Precocity could be physiological or behavioral. From inventor, “natural food” advocate, medical doctor, and admirer of Swedenborg Emmet Densmore’s quasi-feminist *Sex Equality: A Solution of the Woman Problem*: “Generally speaking, physical precocity is more marked in women than in men, and the more primitive the race the earlier is the full stature attained” (95).

From a life history of an institutionalized girl submitted to the House of Representatives:

Girl, age 13 years, had an extraordinary physical development for her age.... The child early showed vicious instincts.... She was arrested for a series of thefts of goods displayed at stores it was a case of precocious puberty (sic). She.... was placed in several institutions, but all were glad to get rid of her. At one convent... she refused to eat; pretended there was something the matter with her eyes, so she could not sew. At another place... she frightened the sisters and boarders by twisting herself so when laughing that they thought her insane.... she would attack the sick and scandalized the personnel by her words and jests. She was vicious by nature. She suffered from a cerebro-spinal trouble and excessive sexuality. (*Juvenile Crime and Reformation* 48).

See also Stephen Jay Gould’s *The Mismeasure of Man*: according to Edward Drinker Cope “warmer climates impose an earlier maturation” (144). Mary E. Odem’s *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920* treats the juridical-institutional aspects of precocity, while Joseph Kett’s “Curing the Disease of Precocity.” *American Journal of Sociology*. V. 84 1978 examines precocity in both males and females, as does Hall’s *Adolescence*.



and as a (racial) form of property-- a transferential medium not only between generations but down through the history of civilizations and across the globe. Thus the *Medical Record* concludes that “the Spaniards undoubtedly possess much of the Mohammedan pride and fatalism, owing perhaps to the infusion of Moorish blood in their veins.”<sup>118</sup>

The public discourse addressing the Spanish-American war, clearly influenced by the contemporary logic of race, models the ways that the concept of youth took shape in social-scientific, literary and popular imaginations. At the core of this process lie notions of time and timing-- of sequence, duration, rhythm, origin, and end-- which overlap and complicate one another. Under the rubric of race science five temporal schema structure the category of youth. Progressive development functions as a master signifier which determines its apparent obverses: atavism, recapitulation, degeneration and precocity. Counterpointing the progressive present, in other words, are two possible returns to the past (atavism, recapitulation) and two different yet profoundly malignant futurities (degeneration, precocity). Grappling with the era’s complicated relationship to time, Dana Seitler argues that “the entrancement with temporality” itself in Machine Age America, “the disorienting experience of modern time... gave rise to a paradox: modernity sought a break with the past, but that break necessitated the past’s return” (1). The temporal motif of atavism-- particularly in its recapitulatory form-- “posits a notion of the individual as constitutionally affected by

<sup>118</sup> That “Moorish blood,” it goes without saying, was by definition atavistic, as Edward Ross tacitly asserted when he observed that “The Arab spreads the religion of Mahomet with the Koran in one hand and the sword in the other. The white man of to-day spreads his economic gospel, one hand on a Gatling, the other on a locomotive” (75). Significantly, the difference between the jihadi and the imperialist lies in the substance of their faith-- religious devotion versus “the economic gospel”-- and their relative level of technological development.

the past” in the form of “ancestral prehistory” (2). Subjectivity then is not the individual’s private property but a collective legacy, the active residue of racial childhood saturating the bourgeois self.

## **VI. Recapitulation: Machine Age Leitmotif**

Theories of human development by definition concern change and thus of necessity time. According to many strands of post-Enlightenment science temporal categories such as sequence, rate, and duration have hierarchizing and normative functions which define as pathological phenomena whose “time is out of joint.” In its natural development the human organism passes through stages of growth and decline over a timely duration and those races and individuals who fall outside of these temporal norms are defective. Thus, for example, Georges-Louis Leclerc’s *Natural History* explained the advent of racial difference in a long-term secular fall from an original type via climate-induced degeneration. Thomas Jefferson famously advanced as “a suspicion only” that “the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by *time and circumstances*, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind” (emphasis added 262).<sup>119</sup> Post-Darwinian polygenists such as Josiah Nott, noted author and lecturer on “niggerology,”<sup>120</sup> claimed that separate races originated at different points in the evolutionary process. German zoologist Ernst Haeckel’s biogenetic law, the conceptual roots of which reached as far back as the age of the pre-Socratics, was also a theory of change, one that drew from a

<sup>119</sup> See *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*. New York: Modern Library. 1972.

<sup>120</sup> See Gould’s *The Mismeasure of Man*. The term was also used by antebellum Irish immigrants to describe abolitionism. See Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*.

venerable “analogistic tradition” yoking the microcosmic part to the macrocosmic whole (Gould 13). As Gould suggests, one reason recapitulation theory became a leitmotif of nineteenth century thought extending far beyond the disciplinary boundaries of biology was its consonance with classical tradition, including ideas espoused by philosophers such as Anaximander, who

envisaged an originally fluid earth.... “[H]ypothetical ancestors of man were supposed to be first encased in horny capsules, floating... in water; as soon as these ‘fish-men’... came on land, the capsule burst, and they took their human form.” To support this ‘phyletic’ sequence, Anaximander pointed to the early fluidity and transparency of the embryo, its residence in the amniotic fluid, and its long period of helplessness after birth (Gould 14-15).

That “mere analogy,” however, gradually took the form of “a necessary causal explanation” (Gould 14) in the monist, Romanticist-influenced school of *Naturphilosophie*,<sup>121</sup> which raised the theory of recapitulation to the level of a unifying logic, the holistic mechanism of “transcendental morphology” (*Encyclopedia of the Romantic Era* 2:794). The perceived parallelism between the change and growth of the universe in relation to its living constituents, in other words, shifted emphasis, impelled by the unsurpassed reputation of Aristotle, who had in *De generatione animalium* espoused an epigenetic view of development-- in which an organism moves from a relatively simple state into greater complexity<sup>122</sup>-- and

<sup>121</sup> For a fuller discussion of the “transcendental origins” of recapitulation theory and *Naturphilosophie* see chapter 3 of *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*. In “Romanticism, Race, and Recapitulation” Gabriel Finkelstein briefly discusses an exemplar of Romantic biology, Henrik Steffens (whose lectures were attended by a young Karl Marx) the author of a particularly elaborate four-fold parallelism linking “four elements (nitrogen, oxygen, carbon, hydrogen)... four races (Negroid, Malaysian, Mongolian, American)” corresponding to four phases in the human life span, childhood, youth, adulthood and senescence, respectively.... “four physiological systems (cerebral, arterial, ganglial, venous); four temperaments (sanguine, choleric, melancholy, phlegmatic); four cardinal points (south, east, west, north)... [and] four continents (Africa, Asian, Europe, America)” (2101 Science Vol. 294 7 Dec 2001 [www.sciencemag.org](http://www.sciencemag.org)).

<sup>122</sup> In distinction to the preformationist view which posited that structures are already in place, in homuncular fashion, which then evolve.

classified organisms in order of their perfection. Such a hierarchy applied to the development of the “soul of Man,” which evolved from a plant-like condition, to that of an animal’s, before culminating in its rational form. Though these metaphysical ideas were not the scientific theory at which Haeckel would arrive-- Gould is emphatic on this point-- they nonetheless facilitated biogenetic law’s widespread acceptance.

Haeckel saw that the embryos of different vertebrate animals appeared alike, a perception that seemed all the more striking when he subsequently noted the gill-like features of human fetuses. This observation in turn led him to the thesis that fish were the evolutionary ancestors of modern human beings, an argument thereafter condensed into the highly portable phrase “ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny.” What this meant, he elaborated, was that ““during its rapid evolution, an individual repeats the most important changes in form evolved by its ancestors during their long and slow paleontological development”” (qtd. in Gould 77). The temporal dimensions of this process were perplexing. How could an individual organism repeat the totality of its ancestors’ development over the course of gestation? Clearly if a species passes through all of its antecedents’ forms in order to evolve beyond them, some shift in the rate of development must occur; otherwise the time span of embryonic growth would become impossibly long. The key to Haeckel’s theory of recapitulation is its emphasis on the presence of adult characters in “the early stages of human ontogeny by a universal acceleration of developmental rates in evolving lineages” (Gould 2-3). Haeckel’s biogenic law stipulated “*a change in the timing of developmental events*” as its mechanism, which thrust “ancestral adult forms into the juvenile stages of

descendants” (emphasis in original 2). The development of later individuals in a lineage necessitated the appearance of heterochrony, a means by which all previous development of ancestors was telescoped into the growth stages of the descendant. To solve this problem two ideas were advanced: acceleration and “terminal addition,” the latter of which held that adult characteristics of yesterday become the juvenile ones of today. The ontogenic repetition of phyletic development must proceed at an accelerated rate or with some of the stages elided, and newer features were the “youngest” phyletically. It was in this sense that Hall, moving by yet another analogy from physiological to psychological development, would claim that the child-- in thrall to the compressed deep history of racial experience-- was “vastly more ancient than the man” (“Evolution in Psychology” 261).<sup>123</sup> Even further, the child was in some sense itself an adult, contending with the instincts and traits of a mature primitive.

Yet recapitulation not only re-temporalizes the evolution of the species; it establishes a synecdochal link between ontogeny and phylogeny. In the context of humans, the original analogy-- the growth of the individual organism proceeds in a fashion similar to the development of the species-- accrues other valences beyond those of biological science. In the words of Conklin, ““here was a method which promised to reveal more important secrets of the past than would the unearthing of all the buried monuments of antiquity”” (qtd. in Gould 116). Gould notes both the

<sup>123</sup> “And for older children fetishisms galore, gangs corresponding to the primitive tribes, propensity for hunting, killing, striking with clubs, stealing, etc. ... all show that the child is vastly more ancient than the man, and that adulthood is comparatively a novel structure built upon very antique foundations. The child is not so much the father of the man as his very venerable and, in his early stages, half-anthropoid ancestor” (261-262).

widespread presence of recapitulationist themes in literature from Blake's *First Book of Urizen* (1794) to JG Ballard's post-apocalyptic novel *The Drowned World* (1965) and a catalog of recapitulations of primitive social life in the behavior of children in AF Chamberlain's *The Child: A Study in the Evolution of Man* (1900) including counting games, fishing with the bare hands, "name changing.... indiscriminate eating.... orophily or 'the delight in being upon a mound'.... belief in the reality of dreams, love of adornment" and posture (118). G. Stanley Hall himself "listed nearly 50 common [childhood] fears as phyletic vestiges" (Gould 139) including "gravity fears" (Hall "A Study of Fears" 154), "fear of losing orientation" (160), "fear of closeness" (162), "fears of wind" (171) and "celestial objects" (173), "pyrophobia" (179), and many others, each accompanied by anecdotal information gathered by questionnaire.<sup>124</sup> So, for example: "M., 16. Suffers intensely from the fear of being buried alive, and writes accounts he has collected of the horrid distortions of bodies later dug up that came to life" (163) while "F., 14. Has a horror of wool, and will not wear it in inner or outer garments" (215). Hall argues with regard to the latter, "doraphobia," that the fear of fur-- and its opposite, "the love of fur" -- can be fully explained only by "recourse to a time when association with animals was far closer than now, or perhaps when our remote ancestors were hairy." Even more importantly for the purpose of human enhancement toward a higher stage of perfection, "the

<sup>124</sup> Darkness, dreams, thunder, animals, eyes, teeth, fur, feathers, "special fears of persons" (216), solitude, death, diseases, "moral and religious fears" (228), "end of the world" (229), ghosts, a catchall category labelled "morbid" which covers "fear of points and edges... blood... conflict... [and] baseless fears of starvation" and finally "school fears" (234-235).

phagocytic power of eliminating baser fears” indicates both “individual strength and... soundness and vigor of heredity” (243-244).<sup>125</sup>

Criminal anthropology utilized biogenetic law in its attempt to develop a natural history of crime, a project focused on the atavistic behavior and stigmata of criminal populations which Lombroso, the discipline’s most famous practitioner, likened to those present in adult primitives, civilized children, and animals-- as Gould indicates “the three-fold parallelism of classical recapitulation theory” (123). As many have noted, explicating the last of these correspondences, the analogy between criminal and animal behavior, could lead to absurdities: Lombroso illustrated the tendency to form criminal gangs anecdotally with the case of “three communal beavers [who] killed [another beaver] for his solitude.” Nor was the notion of the natural criminality of children without influence, another late-Victorian counterweight to a long-established sentimental cult of the child. Havelock Ellis, for example, concurred with Lombroso’s assessment that many children exhibited “the saddest tendencies of criminal man,” observing that “the child is naturally nearer to the animal, to the savage, to the criminal, than the adult” (qtd. in Gould 124). Yet this belief-- supported not only by “race psychology” but cogent “biological studies” (“Some Criminal Studies of Boyhood” 78) such as those cited by Edward James Swift-- did not constitute a scientific affirmation of the Calvinist principle of natural depravity so much as it slipped seamlessly into Machine Age anxieties about masculinity, in particular the “neurasthenic paradox” which Gail Bederman identifies

<sup>125</sup> G. Stanley Hall, “A Study of Fears” in *The American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. VIII. No. 2. January 1897.

as the central problematic of G. Stanley Hall's own iteration of biogenetic law (92). Swift, far from demonizing criminal proclivities in the young, comes to the conclusion that "this period of savagery, or semi-criminality, is normal for all healthy boys" (85). Nor can there be any doubt that such a sanguine view of the delinquent youth glosses the burgeoning biopolitical regimes of an emergent juvenile criminal system. For example, at a hearing concerning a bill to "Establish a Laboratory for the Study of Criminal, Pauper and Defective Classes" Arthur MacDonald submitted as evidence a series of terse descriptions of those who, "incapable of reformation" and having failed to fully recapitulate, might be the object of such studies:

[B]oy, 14 years of age, father dead; length of head 170 mm., width 155 mm., height 150 cm., sitting height 77 cm.; he had a club foot and congenital paralysis. His father was an alcoholic, dying at the age of 35 of pleurisy. The mother had good health. She was treated brutally by her husband while with child. Two other children, a boy of 10 and a girl of 7, showed nothing unusual. The boy's paralysis did not prevent him from being active. He could read, but wrote with difficulty, though he had attended a number of different schools, private and public. He became involved in an immoral affair, which was his undoing before the court where he served as a witness and gave the details of the scandal. His imagination was perverted.

The child was sent to a reformatory, but without success in treating him. He attempted murder in the street. The defect in this boy was aggravated by the circumstances of his life; it was impossible to reform him (47).

## **VII. From Analogy to Synecdoche**

The march of individual existence shadows forth the march of race-existence, being, indeed, its representative on a little scale.... A national type pursues its way physically and intellectually through changes and developments answering to those of the individual, and being represented by Infancy, Childhood, Youth, Manhood, Old Age, and Death respectively.... Nations must undergo obliteration as do the transitional forms offered by the animal series. There is no more an immortality for them than there is an immobility



for an embryo in any one of the manifold forms passed through in its progress of development (Draper 12).<sup>126</sup>

With *Adolescence* Hall's genetic psychology provided a quasi-biological architecture for the youth concept, a procedure that rendered this collective subject the object of medical inquiry, one which scientific reformism adapted to its own project of social oversight. The theory of recapitulation, founded on a powerful analogy between the individual's life stages and the development of its species, traveled further, from Haeckel to Hall, who abstracted youth and its psychological characteristics as the ontogenic part standing in for the phyletic whole. This master trope, re-linking ontogeny to phylogeny, would have a profound influence on social conceptions of the young even after Haeckel's biogenetic law fell into disrepute. The threat and promise of the young-- the dangers they seemed both susceptible to and representative of, the redemptive national and racial destinies they appeared to portend-- were intertwined with a range of often conflicting, even incoherent, ideas about human difference and its role in racial progress and decline. Complicating matters, the youth concept as a temporal category-- obvious enough in its most literal dimension as a chronobiological stage-- was potentially destabilized by developmental anomalies including atavism, arrest, precocity, and degeneration.

At almost 1400 pages *Adolescence* is a scholarly leviathan pieced together from decades of research. Hall grafted lengthy passages of the work of his students and colleagues onto the body of this text, and his sources extended from Homer and Democritus-- the former, according to Hall, creating in the character of Telemachus

<sup>126</sup> Draper, John William. *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe* (rev. ed.) Vol. I. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1876.

“perhaps the fullest portrayal of adolescence in which Greek life and Greek ideals are symmetrically mingled”-- to his contemporaries Zitkala-sa and Charles Chestnutt (*Adolescence* 1:521). The cumulative effect of this eclecticism disconcerted many readers, including Carrie R. Squire, professor of education at Montana State Normal College, who praised *Adolescence* for the “fire and poetical fervor of its language” (359) and the “audacity and suggestiveness” of its ideas even if the latter “are hurled at us with little regard to system” (349).<sup>127</sup> Her reading of Hall’s magnum opus is incisive, pointing out that his claims for a complete paradigm shift in psychology on the contrary owe much to Darwin and Spencer, and questioning his use of the questionnaire method which-- while it improves upon “introspection”-- nonetheless “may be easily juggled with,” leading researchers “into the wildest romances upon mental life and behavior” (351-352). The titular character of those wild romances, however, often eludes the reader’s view. Much of *Adolescence* surveys the pre-adolescent stages of growth, when the panorama of recapitulation is at its most vivid. The protagonist of Hall’s vision of human development must confront the forces of his racial past, achieving full individuation (and integration) by wrestling with the cosmic forces of the species-collective and the complexities of industrial modernity. As a quest narrative this story of maturation is both epic and romantic: the hero-- within whom “the traces of the psychic recapitulation of the history of the race are most traceable and most unbroken”-- seems to symbolize all of humanity in his battle to tame nature and the quasi-divine forces of its laws (“Evolution and Psychology”

<sup>127</sup> “Genetic Psychology as the Basis of a New Education” in *The Elementary School Teacher*, Vol. 5, No. 6 (Feb. 1905) pp. 349-359.

262). In addition, the protagonist of *Adolescence* must be masculine by virtue of the fact that girls' position with regard to phylogeny and modernity is less agonistic than his.<sup>128</sup> One etymological clue to this gendered identity lies with Hall's frequent substitution of "adolescent" with "ephebic"-- a term whose root-form denotes a young Greek citizen "from eighteen to twenty... occupied chiefly with garrison duty" (OED). In the myth-system of Hall's genetic psychology that young recruit transforms into a *Sturmer und Dranger*; his relationship to the world, and thus his higher racial destiny, is achieved only through combat with the living forces of an ancestral past. Hall sharply delineates this gendered contrast: drawing from an enduring patriarchal tradition which represents the female as bound to nature, he characterizes young women as largely inert; they are, to borrow from one classical example, lands to be husbanded, substance to be worked.<sup>129</sup> The adolescent girl's fulfillment rests not on fighting to incorporate and transcend the racial past but in accepting its tidal logic. "Woman's body and soul," he writes, "is phyletically older and more primitive" than the male's. She is "rooted in the past and the future.... far nearer childhood than man, and therefore in mind and body more prophetic of the

<sup>128</sup> Though of course young women were increasingly the objects of uplift and social control. The authors of *Young Working Girls*, for example, worried that industrial regimes of production were actively harming adolescent girls: "The enforced attention required" by factory work, "the monotonous repetition of a few movements, and the repression of all youthful spirits during working hours, put a check on the deep-seated desire for spontaneous action which is so characteristic of, an necessary to, adolescence" (102). See also Nancy Lesko, "Making Adolescence at the Turn of the Century: Discourse and the Exclusion of Girls" in *Current Issues in Comparative Education*. April, 30, 2002.

<sup>129</sup> When Creon dismisses the effect of Antigone's execution on her intended husband, his son, he simply remarks, "There are other fields for him to furrow." Hall, on the other hand, rather more turgidly explains the "strange fascination for flowers" demonstrated by young women as

at root because of the fact, now... lost to modern consciousness, that she feels... that flowers are the best expression nature affords of her adolescence, that from the efflorescence of dawning puberty to full maturity she is a flower in bloom, and that till the petals fall they are the external type of her virginity, and so they remain afterward the memento of her unfallen paradise. (2:208).

future as well as reminiscent of the past” (*Adolescence* 2:566). In spite of this apparent centrality to the processes of recapitulation and advance, what this janus-faced temporality appears to mean for Hall is that

*Das Ewig-Weibliche* is no iridescent fiction but a very definable reality, and means perennial youth. It means that woman at her best never outgrows adolescence as man does, but lingers in, magnifies and glorifies this culminating stage of life with its all-sided interests, its convertibility of emotions, its enthusiasm, and zest for all that is good, beautiful, true, and heroic. (2:624).

As patronizing as this statement is, Hall relies heavily on the figure of the female adolescent in order to elaborate the primary focus of his work, the male youth. If “at her best” a girl remains locked outside of a condition that for men indicates full maturity, she also embodies a principle which not only governs her developmental timing-- linking her to “inferior races, like the Africans” by virtue of a relatively early entry into puberty (a phenomenon often “hastened by a warm climate”)-- but also establishes her temporal disposition (Burnham 175). Perpetually unfinished by virtue of her gender, she nonetheless possesses a surplus-- not simply of emotion, an all too familiar trope, but of plasticity and vitality, normative characteristics of youth Hall culls from questionnaires and literary exempla. In Chapter Eight of *Adolescence* he cites an essay-- “The Study of Adolescence,” written by one of his Ph.D. students at Johns Hopkins University, William Burnham-- which incorporates literature as the repository of models of “adolescent activity” (177). Among the sources suggested by Burnham are “the poetry of the modern romantic school” including Byron, Novalis and Shelley; Olive Schreiner’s *The Story of an African Farm*; George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss*; and the diaries of Marie Bashkirtseff. The latter two texts are most

significant in the context of adolescence's gendered logic. Hall pays particular attention to Bashkirtseff's *Journal of a Young Artist* (1889), whose author he describes as "one of the best types of exaggerated adolescent confessionalists" (*Adolescence* I; 554). Though wary of adult writers whose "literary characterizations of adolescence are so marked by extravagance" (536) he praises the diaries as a "precious psychological document" detailing "the adolescent ferment in an unusually vigorous and gifted soul" (555). Hall's precis of Bashkirtseff's text focuses on the autobiographical subject's heightened self-consciousness and passionate, even erratic, behavior, though he condenses her account so sharply she seems manic-- which is perfectly consonant with Hall's assertion elsewhere that the vicissitudes of adolescence once "made Plato call this the age of perpetual drunkenness" ("American Universities and the Training of Professors" 302). The intensity of self-perception which grips Bashkirtseff-- her doubts, fickle moods, despair, and euphoria-- functions as evidence of her own "natural" immaturity as a young woman, a condition that men just as "naturally" leave behind when they assume the obligations of adulthood. Yet this nature is clearly and profoundly cultural in its implications, particularly in light of the fact of Bashkirtseff's death from tuberculosis at the age of twenty-five. Precocious, sensitive, a talented painter, she would remain suspended in youth by her fatal sickness and thus come to embody for generations of readers "the Romantic vision of an accelerated life sealed by an early death" (Savage 12).

George Eliot is mentioned three times in *Adolescence*, once in passing as a figure representing "typical directions of activity" among the young (537) as when Hall notes she evinced "a passion for music at thirteen and became a clever pianist,"

while several years later “she was religious, founded societies for the poor and animals, and had flitting spells of misanthropy” (538).<sup>130</sup> Yet Hall is primarily interested in her for the characters she created in her novels, particularly Maggie Tulliver:

Of George Eliot’s types of adolescent character, this may best be seen in Maggie Tulliver, with her enthusiastic self-renunciation, with “her volcanic upheavings of imprisoned passions,” with her “wide hopeless yearning for that something, whatever it was, that was greatest and best on this earth.”

It is remarkable if unsurprising that Hall references *The Mill on the Floss* (via Burnham) solely to emphasize Maggie Tulliver’s extremes of feeling rather than George Eliot’s sophisticated deployment of Herbert Spencer’s organic analogy, a basic intellectual method which ultimately forms the foundation of Hall’s use of biogenetic law. True enough, Maggie is often the victim of her own turbulent depths, as in the famous scene when she cuts off her hair to spite her mother and Aunt Glegg. That kind of storm and stress, however, comes under increasing control as she grows older, and if, as a young woman, she longs to reciprocate Stephen Guest’s romantic demands, she denies both him and herself in the service of a moral code that no other character in the novel except perhaps Philip Wakem is capable of fully appreciating. Yet even if we accept Hall’s caricature of Maggie as a girl simply at the mercy of over-sized emotions-- a psyche defined by its broad, hyperbolic gestures-- there is no doubt that Hall and Eliot occupied contiguous intellectual terrain. In chapter one of

<sup>130</sup> Just as Maggie Tulliver seems to have epitomized adolescent enthusiasm for a number of contemporary psychologists the topic of adolescence itself inspired a distinctive poetics of psychology. In “Mental Growth and Decay,” Edmund Sanford echoes not only Hall’s wide-ranging generalizations but his anaphoristic cadences with the repetition of the phrase “It is a time...”: “It is a time in which George Eliot describes Maggie Tulliver as feeling a ‘wide hopeless yearning for that something, whatever it was that was greatest and best on earth,’ and of which Longfellow sings, ‘A boy’s will is the wind’s will, and the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts’” (442).

the same book of the novel, *The Valley of Humiliation*, Eliot moves from an invocation of medieval romance to a proto-ethnographic posture which depends in great measure not only on the scientific convention of empirical observation but the conceit of Spencerian synthesis. From a highly contrastive rendering of the “remnants of commonplace houses” and ruined castles lining the Rhone which summon “a time of adventure and fierce struggle,” Eliot modulates into a discussion of the nature of history and the significance of the quotidian (271). While the flooded villages represent “a gross sum of obscure vitality, that will be swept into the same oblivion with the generations of ants and beavers,” their English counterpart, the provincial town of St. Ogg’s, nonetheless merits scrutiny. Its inhabitants may be “moved by none of those wild, uncontrollable passions” (272) that motivate crime or legend, but they are all the same a key to the “historical advance of mankind” (273). “For does not science tell us,” the narrator asks, “that its highest striving is after the ascertainment of a unity which shall bind the smallest things with the greatest?”

Seeking to consolidate the position of genetic psychology, G. Stanley Hall suggested yet another analogy, linking the discipline he had helped to establish with the science of paleontology. If the presence of fossilized shells in the Alps had once been explained by proposing that they “were dropped there by Crusaders,” an account modern paleontological practice had long since superseded, then the question of the “morbid fears of children,” he continued, returning to a favorite example, cannot be understood simply by virtue of “early frights” or “infant experience” but by the racial psychology of “paleo-atavistic influences” (“A Glance at the Phyletic Background of Genetic Psychology” 151). Time, Hall reckoned, though equally “indefinable and...

primordial as its counterpart, space” was the key to ontogenic development (149): not merely in terms of the years required to mature from childhood to adolescence, adulthood and senescence, but as the deep time of “the phyletic experience of the soul which acquired through innumerable generations all that is innate in the individual” (150). A “horological” perspective on the sequence and duration of development, Hall thought, was even more productive than other theoretical methods, including taxonomy and deduction from categories (*Adolescence* 2:511).

The theory of recapitulation, as the cornerstone of Hall’s conception of psychology, privileged the ancestral echoes punctuating contemporary experience, particularly in education. The social life of students evinced “barbaric survivals” including “fagging,”<sup>131</sup> (“Student Customs” 95) verbigeration, and “cork minstrelsy” (*Adolescence* 1:317). Alternately, Hall described the formation of the ideal curriculum as “a sort of viaticum of the upward pilgrimage of the soul, thridding the maze of knowledges and skills, shortening and epitomizing the progress of human development, as ontogeny epitomizes phylogeny, and giving a stable basis to all human institutions” (“American Universities and the Training of Teachers” 149). The ephebic stage of human growth, like childhood, was animated by the lingering forces of a long ancestral memory, though this “racial swing point, a time when an evolutionary leap forward was accomplished or missed,” demanded the final reconciliation of those atavistic powers of the past with the social demands of the present (Lesko “Time Matters in Adolescence” 40-41). It was a period of ferment and

<sup>131</sup> As practiced in English public schools, when junior students act as the servants of upperclassmen, with a bit of hazing and corporal punishment thrown in.



derangement, haunted by “vague and undefined longing, reveries, new sensations, impulses, emotions, tastes, and instincts” (Hall “American Universities” 301). In his desire to fully establish the specificity of adolescence even as he generalized from the fragmentary evidence of questionnaires, Hall often employed such catalogs, seeking to communicate the variability and boundlessness of adolescent experience to his readers with a plurality of symptoms and conditions.<sup>132</sup> To the adolescent, “all seems solvent, plastic, vulnerable as never before to every suggestion or infection of good or evil.... The youth,” Hall expostulated, “would do, be, feel, all things by turns, but often nothing long.” Such rhetorical breathlessness is mimetic; it is meant to approximate the tempest of an abstracted, physiologically determined youth impelled along a particular though un-foreclosed trajectory. The desire, confusion, and restlessness referred to resonate against the themes of the *Sturm und Drang* itself, a movement which bridged European Enlightenment (Hall called youth “the age of aufklarung”)<sup>133</sup> and German Romanticism. In the face of social and familial friction the young male protagonist-- beset by unconscious forces, fascinated by nature and the primitive-- “search[es] for self-realization” (Hill 21).<sup>134</sup>

According to Grinder’s reading, *Adolescence* may be reduced to a set of five principles. The first of these proposed that the process of recapitulation terminates at

<sup>132</sup> In the process, Lesko observes, “adolescents were massified and then the massed populational characteristics were applied as naturally occurring characteristics” (“Making Adolescence at the Turn of the Century” 183)

<sup>133</sup> “Student Customs” p. 101

<sup>134</sup> Karier also refers, rather deprecatingly, to Hall’s Romantic affinities: “Hall’s idealism... carried the romantic faith of Fichte, the voluntarism of Schopenhaur, and the nihilism of Nietzsche, all steadied and anchored in a set of primitivistic beliefs based on the German concept of Volk” (152). Yet this loose assessment is hardly controversial in comparison with his claim that “Hall, with almost uncanny prophetic vision, blueprinted National Socialism at least a decade before it was realized in Germany” (156), a travesty of Hall’s views given that he criticized both anti-semitism and “German militarism” (Hall, “Psychological Notes on the War” qtd. in Ross 419).

the end of adolescence, thus marking this phase as the last chance for evolutionary advance. “While adolescence is the great revealer of the past of the race,” Hall wrote, “it, and not maturity... is the only point of departure for the superanthropoid that man is to become” (*Adolescence* 2:94). The status of adolescence as a crucial turning point in the advancement of the species stems in part from its susceptibility to environmental influences, which stamp the individual in Lamarckian fashion with “acquired characters transmissible by heredity” (Hall qtd. in Grinder 359). That impressionability, the adolescent phase as “the bud of promise for the race,” is the key to transcending present limits in order to advance. To maximize this potential, the natural progress of human development must be cultivated, and each stage along the way fully realized. “Should environmental pressures suppress a given stage,” Hall warned, “the course of development might become arrested or retarded.” The logic governing this unimpeded growth is, in Hall’s own words, based upon “Aristotelian catharsis”: the adolescent must be indulged in minor vices such as selfishness in order that these negative traits are exhausted at the advent of adulthood. Literary education may itself be part of this cathartic experience: “stories like those of Captain Kidd, Jack Sheppard, Dick Turpin, and other gory tales”-- the very blood and thunder dime novels Anthony Comstock had prophesied thirty years before would corrupt the young beyond redemption-- ultimately function to “arouse betimes the higher faculties which develop later.” In addition, Grinder notes, Hall emphasized the importance of physical over cognitive growth, effectively equating the maturation of the adolescent’s body with its racial advancement. Finally, Hall viewed ontogenic development up to the adult stage as a series of periodic

alternations between recapitulation and nascency-- a process he imagined as the rhythmic counterpoint between plateau and incline, respectively-- which could be used to establish developmental norms. The moment of recapitulation was relatively quiet: the “adolescent persisted as if on a growth plateau while passing through one of its ancestral forms” in distinction to the accelerated character of the nascent period of transition between stages. An illustration of developmental plateaux can be found in the comparatively (physiologically and psychologically) stable years of 8 to 12, just before the onset of puberty, a phase which “suggests... some long stationary period during which life had been pretty unfolded and could be led indefinitely... in some not too cold Lemuria, New Atlantis, Eden, or other possible *cunabulum gentium*” (*Adolescence* 1:44-45). That arrest, Hall speculated, might even indicate the relic of an “age of senescence in some post-simian stage of ancestry.” At this juncture the child evinces characteristics “phyletically vastly older than all the neo-atavistic traits of body and soul” which will arise in the later stages of adolescence (1:x).

Yet the apparent order of development was shot through with chaos. The body develops according to “unequal ratios”: proportionally the head grows less than the arms, for instance, though even this staggered growth has its rhythm according to slower and faster increments (Grinder 362). “Maximal size” may occur at different points within or between individuals, an indication that different body parts are older or younger phyletically. By analogy the mind was equally variegated, the product of ancestral experience and “itself a miniature historical realm” its strata accumulating palimpsestically with “the changing epochs of development” (*The Psychologist as Prophet* 374). These uneven developmental temporalities might be recuperated under

the rubric of “periodicity,” (*Adolescence* 2:639) according to Hall “perhaps the deepest law of the cosmos,” a concept he presumes his readers will understand extends beyond menses, comprehending, in the words of one of its proponents, “everything in nature” (Browne 537).<sup>135</sup> In chapter ten of *First Principles*, “The Rhythm of Motion,”<sup>136</sup> Spencer had elaborated a theory of periodicity which extended from atoms to entire societies, while Madame Blavatsky revealed to her devotees that the second tenet of the “Secret Doctrine is the absolute universality of that law of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow, which physical science has observed and recorded in all departments of nature” (17).<sup>137</sup> Hall’s usage of periodicity gestures at such extravagant postulations, though more often he invokes the term within fairly concrete situations, as when he observes “a periodicity of activity in young men that suggests a monthly and sometimes a seasonal rhythm”-- a temporalization of youthful mobility which other authors such as Kline would link to the migratory patterns of animals, nomads and tramps (*Adolescence* 2:76).<sup>138</sup> This tendency illustrates “an atavistic trace of savage life... controlled by moon and tides and warm and cold seasons,” in which the adolescent’s racial forebears developed material and symbolic practices tailored to the cycle of environmental conditions, survival strategies found residually in youthful “spells of overactivity, alternating with those of sluggishness

<sup>135</sup> J.H. Balfour Browne, *The Medical Jurisprudence of Insanity* (2nd ed.) San Francisco: Sumner Whitney and Co. 1880

<sup>136</sup> Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* (4th ed.) New York: JA Hill and Co. 1904

<sup>137</sup> HP Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy* Vol. I (2nd ed.) London: The Theosophical Publishing Co. 1888. Or consider Presley’s thoughts looking out across the farmlands of the San Joaquin Valley: “the vast rhythm of the seasons, measured, alternative, the sun and the stars keeping time as the eternal symphony of reproduction swung in its tremendous cadences like the colossal pendulum of an almighty machine” (*The Octopus* 446).

<sup>138</sup> For a fuller discussion on this point see the previous chapter.

and inertness” that function as “neural echoes of ancient hunts and feasts, fasts and famines, migration and stagnation.”

However pervasive universal rhythms-- natural or otherwise-- might be, the risks of recapitulatory failure were abundant. In later stages of adolescence social influences could “cause arrest and prevent maturity” increasing the chances of “reversion,” Hall’s term for atavistic degeneration (*Adolescence* 1:47). “The young pubescent,” Hall cautioned, enters the final phase of growth “relatively limp and inept,” weakened by the intensity of his transfiguration “like an insect that has just accomplished its last molt,” and requiring “protection, physical care, moral and intellectual guidance” (qtd. in Grinder 362). Modulating from this hemimetabolic metaphor, Hall conjures a dramaturgical space in the manner of Defoe or Shakespeare which may be read simultaneously as the primal scene of evolution and a familiar narrative pivot (*peripeteia*): “this last great wave of growth throws the child up onto the shores of manhood or womanhood relatively helpless as from a second birth.”<sup>139</sup>

## VIII. The Archaeologists of the Future

G. Stanley Hall’s *Recreations of a Psychologist*, a collection of “vacation skits” published in 1920, includes a novella titled “The Fall of Atlantis” which opens with the familiar conceit of a discovered document (v). The narrator, a “writer of social and political romances” arbitrating a labor dispute (the nation is currently racked with 300 strikes) turns, frustrated, to the distraction of Plato’s *Republic* (3).

<sup>139</sup> From *Robinson Crusoe*, a novel Rousseau proposed as the text inaugurating “the age of intelligence” (Rousseau 94) for Emile: “I held my hold till the wave abated and then fetched another run, which brought me so near the shore, that...the next run I took I got to the mainland, where to my great comfort I clambered up the cliffs of the shore” (Defoe 58).

Pausing at Critias's account of Atlantis, the narrator is struck by the stated causes of Atlantean destruction-- "jealousy of the gods" and "earthquake and deluge"-- phrases he takes to be purely symbolic, the mythologization of deeper forces and apposite to the pressing contemporary political question of whether "nations, even the greatest [must] die like individuals" (2). Exhausted, the narrator lies down to sleep but instead falls into an altered state in which he writes continuously, regaining consciousness a week later with no recollection of what has transpired. Almost a month after emerging from what, he speculates, might have been a "psychic fugue," a manuscript arrives by mail written in his own hand. Amazed by this uncanny message, he pieces together the events of that obscure week, speculating that "as a patriot and a student of social, industrial, and political affairs from a romancer's point of view," he had become demoralized by the seeming inevitability of national decline due to "irreconcilable wills... the lack of public spirit in public affairs, and the... dominance of private interests everywhere" (5). As an escape from this troubling prospect his "larger racial unconscious self... executed a unique flight from... the reality" of the present to an "extinct" era, a world where "fancy [gave] expression to all the latent hopes and fears that the present situation has inspired for our civilization." This disclosure-- the motif of a mysterious document which precipitates an expedition-- not only links "The Fall of Atlantis" to the spatial logic of the lost-race narrative but suggests a form of (racial) time-travel. Unable to recollect the experience of inscription, which remains obscured by "the dark veil of amnesia," the narrator hypothesizes that the displacement of social anxieties across time occurs within the matrix of a racial unconscious. That provisional explanation initiates both a

journey through space and racial history by ultimately confronting an unforeseen collective “destiny” at a moment of crisis by recurring to the past.

The resulting manuscript within the story-- “in a sense a dream within a dream”-- is itself perplexing in terms of structure, leaping forward eighty years-- like Bellamy and Donnelly to “the year 2000 AD” (7)-- to narrate the discovery of ancient Atlantis, before arcing “backward” across a millennium, a disorienting “double involution” of time which occludes the relationship between “the consciousness of this strange and perhaps almost insane” period of automatic writing and the author’s “real, normal self” (6). Still, should he ever enter this racially unconscious dream-state again, the narrator speculates, and manage to retain a conscious memory of it, “this would be a symbol that our own age may come to knit up into its life the lessons of the era here resumed and really profit by them, and then I need not regard my narrative as fiction but as veracious... quintessential history.” If such a premise seems closely associated with the occult, the dream is given scientific plausibility as an effect of the racial unconscious.<sup>140</sup> Though the forces that constitute this bio-developmental mechanism are so obscure that they seem to occupy a supernatural register it is precisely at this blurry juncture of discourses that genetic psychology-- including its theory of adolescence-- operates.

As with Julian West-- whose 113-year sleep is induced by Doctor Pillsbury, “Professor of Animal Magnetism” (in essence, the hero admits, a “quack”)-- the justification for the experience of Hall’s protagonist seems scarcely credible (Bellamy

<sup>140</sup> In this respect the novella bears a striking resemblance to Jack London’s misappropriation of Weismann’s neo-Darwinian theory of “germ plasm” in *Before Adam*, a novel whose “city boy” protagonist experiences terrifying dreams of a primitive world, visions he comes to identify as the effect of a powerful “racial memory” (13).

35). If West succumbs to the quasi-scientific power of mesmerism-- a discipline closely associated with “numerous religious cults which tried to recombine science and religion into a new dogma” (Stableford 40) such as Theosophy, Christian Science and the Spiritualist movement-- the hero of Hall’s novella seems to be the object of ostensibly scientific yet only slightly less occult forces, the inscrutable “racial unconscious” (Hall 5). No doubt Hall would object to this interpretation of “The Fall of Atlantis,” which, he remarked, could have been assigned the more editorial title “Strikes of Doctors, Lawyers, Teachers, Clergy, and finally Women, Causing the Downfall and at last the Physical Engulfment of a Superstate” (v). In studies on “spiritism” like “A Medium in the Bud”-- an essay which attributes a young patient’s “nascent mediumship” to “that romantic effervescence of soul” peculiar to adolescence-- his antagonism to popular parapsychology was pronounced (146). While admitting that in “spiritistic claims.... there is something... of great moment that psychology has not yet fathomed” Hall argued that belief in parapsychological phenomena such as slate-writing and table-tapping indicates “a strange psychic rudiment in... makeup that ought to be outgrown like the prenatal tail or the gill slits” (*Studies in Spiritism* xvi). In Hall’s introduction to Amy Eliza Tanner’s analysis of the Psychical Research Society his opinion was definite if somewhat circular: “Spiritism is the ruck and muck of modern culture, the common enemy of true science and true religion, and to drain its dismal and miasmatic marshes is the great work of modern culture” (xxxix).<sup>141</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Hall had first encountered spiritism as a graduate student in Germany and later became a vice-president of the American Society for Psychical Research, a position he resigned a few years later. See Dorothy Ross, *The Psychologist as Prophet*. pp. 162-164.



Despite the narrator's inability to fully account for his fugue, the language framing this narrative device, operating within a psychological-scientific idiom which rejects "supernatural impartation" (Hall 6), links "The Fall of Atlantis" to the scientific romance, a genre which, Brian Stableford argues, owes a debt to the realist mode of writing in its depiction of a post-metaphysical Weberian universe even as it takes up themes of older speculative fiction such as imaginary voyages and lost races. As a crucial component of the early formation of science fiction, the lost-race story incorporates both the imaginary voyage-- a genre with a lengthy genealogy extending back to the classical era-- and imperial adventure fiction. According to Reider, the influence of the adventure genre imprints the lost-race narrative with the "form of romance," specifically the idiom of the "neomedieval 'romance revival' of the late nineteenth century" (34). While in its earlier versions, as with *Gulliver's Travels*, the imaginary voyage privileged a satirical stance, providing a position from which to critique society, over the course of its development lost-race texts such as H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* were increasingly structured by a quest narrative adapted to the ideological needs of high imperialism. Among the motifs of the action-oriented lost-race narrative are the presence of a scientist-narrator, pseudo-ethnographic description, and specimen gathering. In these respects the lost-race narrative inserts its romance adventures within the co-ordinates of a scientific modality, a strategy that evinces in nascent form the conventions of science fiction.

"Scientific romance" has largely been replaced in the literary-critical lexicon by "science fiction," a term the readers of Hugo Gernsback's *Amazing Stories* more or less coined in 1926 as "scientifiction," while Stableford himself uses the category

in part as a means to distinguish American and British publishing practices (Slusser 27). It is not my intent to unravel the tangled genealogy of science fiction in order to argue whether its origins are to be located in the Gothic mode as an outgrowth inaugurated by Shelley's *Frankenstein*; in another Atlantean tale, Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*; or even as a "conjecture romanesque rationelle" initiated by the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.<sup>142</sup> Instead, resurrecting scientific romance as a superseded genre combining scientific theory and the broad features of the romance to resituate it into an American context facilitates a larger argument I want to make concerning temporality, narrative, and the discursive construction of the adolescent.

A generic label initially employed by Charles Howard Hinton as the title of a collection of essays and stories (1886) the term scientific romance was used frequently during the two decades on either side of the century's turn. And though HG Wells identified early works such as *The Island of Dr. Moreau* as scientific romances he did so with exasperation, fearful he would be remembered as a writer of sub-literary popular fiction. Hall, on the other hand, his reputation as one of the founders of modern American psychology relatively assured, suffered fewer such doubts.<sup>143</sup> He presents "The Fall of Atlantis" to his readers as a bit of whimsy, though one with significant civilizational implications. In this latter respect Hall's story of social collapse might be classed with his previous work on adolescence, which was

<sup>142</sup> See George Slusser, "The Origins of Science Fiction" from *A Companion to Science Fiction*, edited by David Seed. Other accounts of Science Fiction beginnings include Darko Suvin (1979); *Science Fiction* (2nd ed.) by Adam Roberts and *Science Fiction by Gaslight* by Sam Moskowitz. For an opposing view to Stableford's see Gary Westfahl, *The Mechanics of Wonder: The Creation of the Idea of Science Fiction*.

<sup>143</sup> Though Hall's administration of Clark University seldom ran smoothly. At an early stage in the university's history his methods-- and financial duress-- led to a mass exodus of professors to the University of Chicago. See Dorothy Ross, *The Psychologist as Prophet*, for example pp. 207-230.

also concerned with racial destiny in its support for the rationalization of educational methods as a means to ensure the successful maturation of the young-- an indispensable process for the reproduction of the nation and the race. "The Fall of Atlantis," rather than simply invoking scientific imagery "in order to serve some rhetorical purpose" (Stableford 8), recontextualizes Hall's uses of biogenetic law-- the mechanism of racial integrity-- as a narrative temporal model even as it embraces more contemporary eugenicist ideas in an atmosphere of political unrest.

The initial setting of the novella occurs at a moment of conflict when the social order is at risk-- conditions mirroring those of the story's inscription. Hall wrote in the aftermath of "the splendid unity" of World War I, a period of violent struggle between revolutionary anti-capitalist movements such as the IWW, a reactionary press, and right-wing para-military forces (5).<sup>144</sup> *Recreations* was published just as Mitchell Palmer's Department of Justice devised legal strategies for the indefinite detention and mass deportation of politically undesirable immigrants. That year the Attorney General told members of the House of Representatives that

If there be any doubt of the general character of the active leaders and agitators amongst these avowed revolutionists... an examination of their photographs... would dispel it. Out of the sly and crafty eyes of many of them leap cupidity, cruelty, insanity, and crime; from their lopsided faces, sloping brows, and misshapen features may be recognized the unmistakable criminal type." (*Hearings Before the Committee on Rules* 27).

<sup>144</sup> For a first person account of the IWW during the Red Scare see Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *Rebel Girl*. Paul Frederick Brissenden's sympathetic monograph, *The I.W.W.: A Study of American Syndicalism* was published as the Palmer Raids commenced. Other histories replete with accounts of violence against the Wobblies, unofficial and otherwise, include Patrick Renshaw's *The Wobblies: The Story of Syndicalism in the United States* and Melvin Dubovsky's *We Are One*. For a thorough examination of the legal mechanisms established in order to marginalize the IWW as a political force, see Ahmed White, "The Crime of Economic Radicalism: Criminal Syndicalism Laws and the Industrial Workers of the World, 1917-1927."

The vestigial physiognomical perspective, enunciated by Palmer in defense of what was rapidly coming to be viewed (not entirely correctly)<sup>145</sup> as the reckless outburst of paranoid wartime excess, demonized dissidents as Lombrosian pariahs marked by atavistic stigmata, expressing, disingenuously or not, the imminent threat of decline. In this view a plague of foreign elements, undermining the social organism, should of necessity be expunged. Hall too, saw changes on the horizon; his “screed” narrates the United States at the third millennium as inhabiting a transfigured world (*Recreations* 6). Technology has advanced and society has been reformed in many areas, though the “sinister menace” of social dysfunction persists (8). Replacing steam power, electricity is used for light and cooking; “wireless systems” (7) have made telegraph and telephone redundant; submarines search for “vast mineral wealth” on the sea floor; commuters race along “air roadways” patrolled by “flying policemen.” These inventions, the future tech of the year 2000, function as Suvinian nova, seminal points of diegetic difference which distinguish “The Fall of Atlantis” from outright fantasy or a loosely-construed realist mode.<sup>146</sup>

Yet surpassing even technological innovation, the geopolitical order itself has radically reconfigured. In an odd Bolivarian wish-fulfillment Latin American countries have consolidated into a single republic. China leads the world militarily and economically followed only by “Slavo-Germania” (7). Italy, England, and France

<sup>145</sup> William Preston, Jr. in his classic study *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933* (2nd ed.) locates the origins of the Red Scare “from the 1890s on” in a fusion of an “early form of the emerging national security complex” (286)-- legal mechanisms, immigration and police agencies-- with “grassroots mob actions and a unilateral corporate feudalism” (284).

<sup>146</sup> The novum: “a totalizing phenomenon or relationship deviating from the author’s and implied reader’s norm of reality” (*Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* 64). It may include a “new ‘invention’ (gadget, technique, phenomenon, relationship.... setting (spatiotemporal locus), agent (main character or characters)and/or relations basically new and unknown in the author’s environment.”

have confederated “so that we felt that [their] boundaries... were part of our own” though Africa, “divided and subjected,” still suffers under the colonial boot. In response to a crisis of global overpopulation, Hall’s unnamed narrator explains, “every state and race accepted the religion of eugenics and felt that the future belonged to those... that were most fecund, and the squalor and vice at the bottom of the human scale were never so destructive” (8). Protestant churches have evolved into “ethical and culture societies” due to mass atheism, though Catholicism remains unchanged. The divorce rate has increased, even as the number of marriages dwindles. Women possess full political rights, though notably their social status remains tied to domestic duties.

Setting the scene with a brief sketch of the new social conditions, “The Fall of Atlantis” leaps romantically into the action. Like his (fictive) real world twin the narrator’s second self is an intellectual, “a student of the past” whose primary scholarly focus lies in “the early history of advanced races” (9). As an expert in archaeology (a fitting occupation for the fictional counterpart of a genetic psychologist) Hall’s second-order protagonist volunteers for an expedition inspired by Ernst Haeckel’s thesis of the existence of a vanished continent known as Lemuria - “somewhere between Madagascar and Australia,” potentially the “true cradle” of humanity (9)-- whose rediscovery would not only expand historical knowledge but might function as “a wholesome warning” and a “lesson in humility” to the human race (10). Traveling with his companions in a flotilla of remarkable naval vessels which can extract oxygen from the water, move both upon and below the ocean’s surface, and “crawl along the bottom like war tanks,” the protagonist embarks from

Cape Hatteras in the direction of the Pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar). Five months later the expedition discovers the first sign of Atlantean civilization, a stepped pyramid 1,200 feet tall. “For two decades the work of excavation went on,” he writes, uncovering a near-replica of the Platonic myth: a temple of Neptune, golden statuary of dolphin-riding Nereids, the king’s palace and a plethora of other structures arrayed across a massive plateau circled by a “great canal 3,000 miles long” (12). The remains of Atlantis, preserved for centuries, soon yield clues to the social life of this “sunken civilization”:

Every kind of transportation, even by air, was highly developed. There were great seats of learning and societies of savants, vast libraries and museums, amusement palaces, forums for games, assembly halls, and vast power-houses which generated electricity for every use... Illiteracy was unknown. Eugenics had long been so organized that parenthood could be licensed only after a medical and psychic examination. Hygiene was so highly developed... that the average length of life was nearing one hundred years. There was little social or industrial loss from illness, so that the sick or invalided were always subjected to suspicion. In stature the men averaged about seven inches taller than those of our tallest races, the Swedes and Patagonians, and the women were models of symmetry and beauty. To keep oneself always at the top of one’s condition was the central item of their code of ethics. Once a year every child and adult must strip, be tested, and examined to see if he was maintaining his own, or gaining in knowledge, health, and virtue, and he was disfranchised and barred from parenthood if he fell below the standard, for human quality was a cofactor with numbers in augmenting the power of the state. (13).

Atlantis proves to have been the seat of a “colossal and magnificent empire,” with Europe, Tyre, Sais, Quito, China and Egypt as its vassals (14). Yet Atlantean administrators “sought... only to develop and perfect the religious and cultural tendencies implicit in the hearts and souls” of their subjugated populations, “a policy that always and everywhere justifies itself” (34). Here Hall epitomizes his theory of adolescent races and thus recapitulates the pedagogical ethos stated in *Adolescence* in

which the teacher, like the imperial metropole, allows the “nature” of the student (the colony) to unfold with a minimum of direction. Yet the enlightened governance of Atlantis-- a fantasy of counterfactual historical sociology he indulges in at length-- cannot preclude its decline. Despite the fact that the archaeological reconstruction of Atlantis suggests that in the year 2000 not a single contemporary nation has yet reached its level of development, “there had somehow been a great fall.” Hall’s narrative now turns to the matter of the lifespan of civilizations, and the shape of history itself comes into question: is historical development in fact a long term cycle of perhaps 24,000 years, “after which the slate of history [is] wiped clean and everything repeat[s] itself almost in the same order as before”? (14). The narrator claims to have discovered “the sponge” (15) that “the gods.... used to erase the tablets of history [which] myth has always called a deluge” (14-15). Climatic and geological alternations, it appears, are one of the causes of the rise and fall of whole populations: “in one eon the sea-bottom became dry land, and in the next the land surface became the sea-bottom,” he explains. This planetary and civilizational cyclicity, the narrator speculates, persists until it plateaus: Atlantis “was doomed to decline to barbarism, and in time to start upward again with new stirps [lineages] as the organ of a new Zeitgeist that was really the old one disguised, slowly turning the secular wheel of fate.” A committee forms to elucidate this mystery, with the narrator appointed its chairman.

In the latter days of Atlantis, the committee discovers, social organization “slowly developed toward syndicalism.” These ancient Wobblies, “whose conditions would seem to us in every way ideal... became... a guild intent upon its own interests

instead of... upon the public good alone” (16-17). Even so, for a time the golden age of Atlantis continued. Citizens, compelled to enroll in the “National Health Insurance Organization” received preventive medical treatment. Should their offspring-- shades of Sparta-- “by reason of defect, inherited disease, or congenital weakness or predisposition to crime [seem] destined to be a burden to society and to themselves,” they were euthanized, a law decreed by “the guardians of the blood of the tribe” and refusal of which was tantamount to treason (18-19). Let it be clear that for Hall it is the rise of “syndicalism” which represents the true social threat in these passages rather than an effectively totalitarian public health system in which physicians not only dictate individuals’ diets but “ruthlessly eradicate... bad habits and all forms of perversity” such as masturbation (19); “guardians of sleep” oversee the curfew, prescribe vacations, work hours and “even recreations” (21); the bodies of the dead are often sent to medical schools, harvested of their organs, or used in the production of “certain compounds”; “vivisection experiments” on animals and “condemned criminals” is permitted; and Atlantis itself has been bacteriocidally purged of “noxious” elements (20). The future-past of human society, as represented by the archeological information extracted from the ruins of Atlantis, is a totally administered society governed by a biopolitical order so invasive it accumulates statistical evidence down to “the kind and amount of food and drink determined by age, sex, temperament, alimentary type, and occupation”

This eugenical-technocratic paradise begins to degenerate, however when members of Atlantean society lose sight of their interconnection, their primary obligation to the racial collectivity embodied in the state. In an observation that bears



a passing resemblance to the fear of factional politics in the early American republic, Hall warns of the “Nemesis of hyperdemocratization,” a kind of political fragmentation stoking “hyperindividuation” (17). Citizens began to neglect their health insurance payments. Populist discontent with hygienic ordinances increased, in particular the “eugenic control of wedlock” and “laws against kissing” without first using chemically active “smooch-paper” (a term, Hall explains, prevalent in the “slanguage” of the day) which “instantly recorded... the presence of... kissing bugs in the mouth or throat” (22). This resentment of state intervention in health matters led to “red and radical resistance... organized in secret clubs... which defied the curfew laws and the individual right to turn night into day.” As the money necessary to finance the national healthcare system dwindled, medical entrepreneurs began to sell patent medicines and private hospitals were established. The hygienic order of society eroded further with the incipient privatization of state functions: “the people as a whole slowly grew debilitated,” and soon after signs prefiguring “the great revolt” appeared in the form of a “recrudescence of vulgar .... home-cures” while “herbs, nostrums, and superstitious practices abounded” (25). In response the guild of physicians goes on strike, leaving patients to die in abandoned hospitals: “it was a long and tragic story of boycott, lockout, injunction, with many a brawl, raid, and sabotage, for neither party would yield” (26). Hall’s jeremiadic account of the medical breakdown of society details a flood of quack remedies and “fanatic sects” refusing to believe that disease even exists:

exorcisors, casters of horoscopes... and... electric and X-ray cures and tonics abounded. Swarthy foreigners... brought new rites or nepenthes. In some localities even scatological ceremonials were revived [such as] serpent-

worship... witch broths... panaceas... healing lotions, holy shrines, relics, amulets, mascots, charms... secret curses. (27).

The justice system of Atlantis, overseen by an academy of the learned, was embodied in a set of legal codes which are to be found as “fragmentary reminiscences” inspiring “the stone tables of Moses” and the laws of Solon and Lycurgus (28). Those codes, Hall’s narrator suggests, obscured by the passage of time, trickled down through history as “unconscious inheritance and submerged reminiscence,” a collection of dim racio-political memories influencing “the imagination to reproduce... psychokinetic equivalents in forms thought to be original creations” (28-29). In other words, “just as the engrams of the great saurians... inclined the mind of man, eons after they were extinct, to make fables of draconian monsters slain by culture-heroes... like St. George” so too does the human psyche retain the footprints of prior racial experience.<sup>147</sup> Yet as capital burgeoned, “men tended... to decay” (35). A flood of wealth from Atlantis’s colonial possessions, coupled with its unequal distribution led to “venality,” while the litigiousness of unscrupulous lawyers deepened growing social malaise. A populist political class emerged. The old laws fell into disuse and new legislation subverted the justice

<sup>147</sup> To give a sense of the dense thickets of Hall’s prose consider the following sentence:

Thus it is that the vast domains of experience of man and also of his far back animal progenitors, when obliterated from all records of the race, leave as their most permanent and last-to-be-effaced trace a predisposition of the imagination to reproduce their psychokinetic equivalents in forms thought to be original creations, just as the engrams of the great saurians and megatheria of the Trias age, inclined the mind of man, eons after they were extinct, to make fables of draconian monsters slain by culture-heroes who unified peoples and founded states, like St. George, Seigfried, Perseus, Beowulf, because man’s psyche and its organ, the brain, now inherit all the marvelous plasticity once shown best of all in the morphological plasticity of these most polymorphic lacertilian forms, or finds another illustration in our altitude psychoses and nightmares of hovering, in which we see reverberations in the soul of the piscine and pelagic life of our aquatic progenitors. (29).

system, dividing the people. “Manipulators of public opinion” appeared; legislators arose who “profited by their secret confidences” with financiers. Inside-traders and lobbyists further corroded the system (37). Hall’s account of the decline from Atlantis’s “Saturnian age” exhibits all of the symptoms ruthlessly explicated in the muck-raking journalism of Steffens and Tarbell with the result that autonomous communities break away from the corrupt society in search of Atlantis’s idealistic origins (30). Over the course of the next hundred pages Hall details the collapse of Atlantean civilization in virtually every possible aspect, foregrounding the fragmented heteronomy of this ancient mass society, from the sclerotic struggle between capital and labor to the pernicious effects of labor specialization. Two complementary tensions focus Hall’s panoptic view of social senescence. The specific skills required for labor have been segmented and routinized such that workers no longer comprehend “more than a single brief chapter” of the production process, thus obscuring their role in the larger economy (38). At the same time there arose a “proletariat which demanded that every opportunity be open to all”-- an outcry for social democracy challenging the belief (deeply held by Hall) that there exist necessary gradations even within an ostensibly egalitarian society (61). As Ross explains, the revolutionary romanticism of Hall’s pedagogy-- his insistence, for example, on a cultural epochs approach to education which broke almost completely with the rote, disciplinarian methods of nineteenth century education-- was leavened with a profound conservatism which dismissed any possibility of leveling social hierarchy. The desire for universal public education-- demonstrated by a 750% rise in the number of high schools between 1880 and 1900-- should not be misconstrued to

confirm the belief that all students are equally educable, and any insistence on this point is evidence of “hyperindividualization” an ultimately narcissistic self-regard which places the (racial destiny of the) collectivity in jeopardy.<sup>148</sup>

“Throngs of second-rate pupils” matriculated at schools where curricula were instrumentalized for immediate practical applications, and thus “the cult of mediocrity began to exclude that of talent” (61). Mass education led to uniformity, students were “organized into classes by lock-step” and thrust into academic “platoons” (62). With the debasement of education other social problems such as “hoodlumism” sharpened. “Gangs of swagger young toughs” terrorized the city, prowling both night and day. In an echo of the gender anarchy of the Paris Commune “these young Apaches were sometimes led by their brazen girl mates,” the narrator reveals, in committing crimes against property. The increase in juvenile delinquency and drop in literacy rates presaged disaster because “there and then, as here and now, the sentiments and ideals of youth were recognized as the best material for prophecy” (105). With the lapse of maternal ideals-- a long-term assault on the Atlantean cult of domesticity-- women increasingly took up careers, “flippant coquetry,” and prostitution (110), a tendency that ultimately resulted in a rebellion in which the unmarried, unwed, increasingly “half-sexed” female population took vows of celibacy, a “strike of matrons like that fabled to have occurred in ancient Rome” (115). Now at the edge of racial prostration,

the gods were forgotten... the vigor of the human race, sapped; even Mother Earth was less fertile, the land deforested, and mines exhausted; the enterprise of industry had vanished; families were dying of race suicide and the entire

<sup>148</sup> See Ross 319: though only “about 12 percent of the high-school-age population was in the schools.”

population was ravaged by manifold diseases; property and even land tenure was becoming ever less secure; and mutual suspicion, envy, jealousy, malice, and revenge often had free course and piety was deemed folly. The physique and even the average stature of the people declined, while symmetry, grace, and beauty in man and women became more and more infrequent.... the twilight of the race darkened.... (113-114).

After such a sublime tableau the final chapter of Hall's story, "The Last Scenes and Days of Atlantis," might seem superfluous. In a gesture back at the narrator's historiographical interpretation of the life course of Atlantis as a mythical "sponge," he describes the ensuing deluge. As the continent begins to sink rising waters create an archipelago and animals flock to the remaining dry land. A number of Atlanteans flee in "arks," and while most of them died "others were marooned or made a landing... upon the far colonial shores [of] Yucatan, Peru, and Mexico, while some even reached China, Egypt, and Crete, or their descendants made mounds in America" (though it seems likely that they have since died out) (116). New environmental conditions triggered evolutionary adaptations. Those organisms possessing "aquatic stages in their phyletic evolution tended to relapse toward it" (119). The scarcity of resources such as agriculturally productive land pushed an Atlantean version of Norsemen to migrate into areas to which they had never travelled before, bringing with them "a fresh and hardy strain of blood" (117), an infusion of barbarian stock which momentarily "retarded the processes of decline" (118). Domesticated animals feralized while many people fell back into a prior hunting stage of civilizational development and "great *felidae* and troops of mammoths boldly invaded... the outskirts of the cities" (120). "Most dreaded of all," the narrator relates, "were the troops of great manlike apes" kidnapping children who

often subsequently “lost the power of speech and sometimes became leaders of ape tribes.” Inter-species reproduction occurred as well, “and the crossed offspring of these unions were particularly dreaded, for they seemed chiefly bent on carrying maidens into the jungle.” Female ape-human chimeras “became vampire-like seducers of men,” ape-woman succubi who engaged in “unspeakable orgies” which later myth-systems incorporated as “bacchantes, Walpurgis Night revels, tales of Venusberg, Buddhist rites and superstition, and the legends of the sons of gods mating with the daughters of men” (120-121).

The final epic confrontation between Atlanteans and the “sub-humans” became genocidal, a “war of extermination” in which the entire human population fought street to street: “all day the battle raged, but at its close the simians and their human allies were completely routed and mercilessly slaughtered, and their survivors fled like skulking fugitives.” Even then, however, its population severely depleted, Atlantis clung to life. As the shark-filled waters continued to rise, punctuated by volcanic eruptions and great steaming geysers, the last remnants of Atlantean civilization, an ancient order of archivists charged with the preservation of a massive library of historical documents, lost all hope and indulged in drunken “carousals,” throwing manuscripts into the water (126). One of their number, Zotes, an adolescent “probationer [of the] sacred scribal college” recently arrived from “a far-off colony east of Egypt,” recorded these events on a golden tablet which he concealed as the flood crept through the vaults. In his text he speculated on stories he had heard as a child of a strange island called Lemuria populated by “anthropoids that had not left apehood but had shown signs of slow approximation to the estate of primitive man”:

Perhaps, he thought, this eastern island continent was not all submerged... and perhaps some time another race of men might arise and-- such is the irrepressible buoyancy of youthful fancy-- they might, ages hence, learn of Atlantis and find in its story both encouragement and wholesome warning for their own race.

In an effort to complete the narrative circuit of the story, Hall introduces in the final paragraph the rather startling information that Lemuria, the memory of this “youngest and last of the Atlanteans,” is in fact the genesis point of the narrator’s own era, that the world in the year 2000 is populated by those “sprung from the very half-human apes” of that mysterious continent (127). The search for the failed civilization of Atlantis, the goal of the submarine expedition, ends with the discovery that the explorers are the descendants of another drowned world.

### **IX. Conclusion: Timing Youth**

The circularity of the “Fall of Atlantis”-- embodied in the figure of Zotes, whose historical testimony functions as the crucial point of intersection where the Atlantean race-cycle ends and Hall’s narrator’s lineage begins-- closely resembles the recapitulatory route pursued by the young in their quest for a civilizational destiny no longer foretold as manifest. That plot of regeneration via atavistic reversal would seem abetted by the sabotage of irreversible time Stephen Kern ascribes to Edwin S. Porter’s film-editing innovations and the invention of the incandescent lamp.<sup>149</sup> Modernity, as “a vital individual and collective sense of contemporaneity” (Berman 25) in which the human relationship to time, even in the most intimate moments and places, is always social-- a set of “material processes” framing the subject’s

<sup>149</sup> *The Culture of Time and Space*. pp. 29-35.

experience of itself and the world-- absorbed and rearticulated these changes (Harvey 204). The difficulty here, however, is in distinguishing the different effects of emergent and dominant temporal orders. The time of financial-industrial capital, a “chronotype”<sup>150</sup> that emerges from revolutionary processes not only demonstrating technology’s spatial mastery but emphasizing temporal flux, accelerates both subjective experience and the objective real of production (Bender & Wellbery 3). As a complex of material regimes and conditions that real extends into the bio-cultural realm of sexual reproduction, entry into which, according to Hall, constitutes life’s “most critical revolution” (*Adolescence* 2:337) when “every gemmule is mobilized” (2:122) and “the floodgates of heredity [are] opened” (1:308).

As Harvey emphasizes, different modes of production create distinct temporal epistemologies. Hall’s genetic psychology, then-- assembled from residual romantic values, neo-Lamarckianism, and the weakened though still hegemonic ideology of progress-- reconfigures the Taylorizing time-horizons of the Machine Age according to a scientific-millennial emplotment of the “natural” rhythms of growth. If evolutionary theory derails the certainty of progress, and with it America’s role as the “redeemer nation,” by conjure-tricks of ideological prestidigitation these doubts are repurposed as justifications for off-shore imperialism and racial hygiene (Tuveson vii). Darwin’s heresies, metabolized into orthodoxy by a culture devoted to the scientific evidence of things not seen, might even be reconciled with Christian

<sup>150</sup> “Chronotypes are models or patterns through which time assumes practical or conceptual significance. Time is not given but... fabricated in an ongoing process. Chronotypes are themselves temporal and plural, constantly being made and remade at multiple individual, social, and cultural levels. They interact with one another... They change over time and therefore have... histories.... Chronotypes are not produced ex nihilo; they are improvised from an already existing repertoire of cultural forms and natural phenomena” (4).



theology, as Joseph LeConte taught Frank Norris. Hall's own solution to the problem of human perfection in a post-Darwinian world without guarantees was to rationalize the education of the young, to recalibrate the adolescent's temporal relationship to childhood and adulthood by recourse to a romantic modality. As the symbolic bearer of cultural values and technologies, and the agent of material (sexual, economic) reproduction of the nation and "the race"-- terms far less inclusive than they might first appear-- youth-as-adolescent (i.e., the young, white, bourgeois male) stands at the vanguard of progressive history according to a civilizational paradigm relegating women and people of color to a prior time in development. The narrative of adolescence spans human history from its oceanic beginnings to the final dusk of racial destiny in epic fashion, a plot through which "historicism [itself] entered the psyche" (Ross 374). Both moments-- evolutionary origins and millennial ends-- are inscrutable, not only in the sense that the future, as the outcome of the deep past, is open, but because the past will be fully understood only once the telos of human development has been realized. Indeed, the psyche itself is "a quantum and *direction* of vital energy" (emphasis added Hall 2:69) The figure of the adolescent, as a point of interpenetration between past and future-- in Hall's vision the potential superman containing the condensed script of racial history-- represents the *sine qua non* of development. If the child epitomizes evolutionary millennia, repeating in short form the struggles of the species to prolong and improve its existence, then the adolescent plots those chronicles and is to be read forward to the story's conclusion.

### **Chapter 3: “Administrators of the Future”: Maps of the Adolescent Imperium**

#### **I. Romance**

*Pushing to the Front, or, Success Under Difficulties* (1894), a self-help manual for boys which sold three million copies by 1900, contains a chapter titled “Nerve-- Grit, Grip, Pluck,” a collection of anecdotes illustrating and encouraging tenacity. Linking colonial quest to the *terra incognita* of youth, the author argues that the purpose of his book is “to spur the perplexed youth to act the Columbus to his own undiscovered possibilities” (Marden iii). Sensing a strong desire on the part of young Americans for instruction in the means to achieve success, and seeking to feed the appetites of an audience “hungry for stories of successful lives,” Marden offers an assemblage of tales culled from hearsay and history. The fables retailed in *Pushing to the Front* thus focus on individuals of some notable achievement, characters including not only significant historical figures like Caesar and Grant but ordinary heroes such as Kate Shelley, who rescued the victims of a terrible train wreck and was awarded “a gold medal for bravery” (Marden 324). In his effort to maximize the number of these inspiring anecdotes Marden compresses many of them so tightly that they are distilled virtually to adages. An injured Swedish boy refuses to cry out, at which King Gustavus observes he “would make a man for an emergency”-- a prediction later proven when the boy grows up to become “the famous General Bauer” (328). A penniless young Barnum tells his friend he intends to buy the American Museum. Asked how he will pay Barnum replies, “[With] brass... for silver and gold I have none” (324). When “a Spartan youth” complains that his “sword is too short,” his father responds, “Add a step to it then”(319).

The lessons *Pushing to the Front* teaches concern familiar themes of persistence, initiative, duty, and commercial and moral self-reliance.<sup>151</sup> Often such bromides echo what James Hart identifies as “the country novels” of the late nineteenth century such as Edward Wescott’s *David Harum*, a trend-setting story about “a quaint eccentric” rural banker inclined to a homespun philosophy combining republican values, ruthless business ethics, and rustic expression (*The Popular Book* 206). “Give a boy health and the alphabet,” Marden pronounces, “and it rests with him what his future shall be” (330). Yet military exempla predominate, and the dime novel tropes animating Marden’s manual constitute a narratology of adventure and romance modeling manhood for youth. His readers learn, for example, that

Pellisier, the Crimean chief of zouaves, became angry with a sub-officer of cavalry, and struck him across the face with a whip. The man drew a pistol and pulled the trigger, but it missed fire. “Fellow,” said the grim chief coolly, “I order you a three days’ arrest for not having your arms in better order” (322).

This last anecdote dramatizes the importance of duty by an unexpected narrative twist celebrating Pellisier’s commanding presence and *savoir faire*. It does so by mobilizing elements of adventure romance: physical violence, an exotic locale-- and the props of the man of action, including a pistol and whip. In this context romance becomes a medium of instruction, a mode of pedagogy surpassing the fictive pleasures of literary escape.

In *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885), Miss Kingsbury addresses the ends of romance in another register, remarking that a “perfectly heart-breaking” novel she

<sup>151</sup> And in this regard it simply updates earlier manuals such as Samuel Smiles’s tremendously successful *Self-Help*, first published in 1859 and reprinted 50 times by 1901. See Jeffrey Richards, “Spreading the Gospel of Self-help: G.A. Henty and Samuel Smiles.” *Journal of Popular Culture*, (16:2), 1982 Fall, 52-65.

has just finished-- *Tears, Idle Tears*-- features two young lovers ““who keep dying for each other all the way through and making the most wildly satisfactory and unnecessary sacrifices for each other”” (Howells 197.) Her remarks may be taken to be ironic-- after all, the novel in question is ““not quite *slop*””-- a tone the other members of her party overlook. Charles Bellingham, by contrast, seems to take Miss Kingsbury’s meaning, responding to her with his own irony by suggesting that ““we do like to see people suffering sublimely.”” Howells stage-manages this exchange as a means of establishing the superiority of realism, the genre which “paint[s] life as it is, and human feelings in their true proportion and relation,”” as Reverend Sewell asserts, concerned about the deleterious effects-- tantamount to “psychical suicide”-- of the wrong kinds of fiction. Such books are plainly ridiculous, he argues, because they allocate “divine honors”” to human emotions rather than recognizing them “as something natural and mortal.”” Romances obsess about love,

“the affair, commonly, of very young people, who have not yet character and experience enough to make them interesting. In novels [romantic love is] treated... as if it were... the sole interest of... two ridiculous young persons; and it is taught that love is perpetual, that the glow of true passion lasts forever; and that it is sacrilege to think or act otherwise.” (198).

Notably in Sewell’s estimation romance distorts the truths of experience rather than, as with Marden, fueling ambitions for success and maturity. Of course his opinion-- the notion that romance lacks ratio and thus undermines a “realist” perspective characteristic of everyday life-- has a long history, even if Howell’s need to ventriloquize this view through Sewell indicates the strength of the critical opposition. Beginning in the 18th century with the ascent of the Anglophone novel the romance came to be associated with a set of cultural values antithetical to the

rationalistic conceits of modernity. Initially the form was linked to the discarded remnants of the feudal order. though that identification gradually expanded to encompass “women, adolescents, aliens, the colonized, and the common people” (Duncan, *Encyclopedia of the Novel*). Certainly romance has not always been deemed a worthy analytical object, and such critical reluctance has encouraged the view that it is irredeemably sensational, reactionary, and aesthetically underdeveloped. Yet as Bruzelius suggests, “one could argue... that the adventure/romance, as a form that fully recognizes its own status as fantasy, is the one form in which writers self-consciously address the fictionality of fiction” (21). Such tacit self-awareness confirms its utility in engaging with the complexities of representing hard realities. Traveling along what Henry James called ““the beautiful circuit and subterfuge of our thought and desire”” romance produces knowledge and solves problems (James 11). As Marden and many others understood romance possesses practical applications as a narrative means to rational ends. Conceived critically as a representational strategy-- “a concatenation of both narratological elements and literary *topoi*”<sup>152</sup>-- romance ceases to function atavistically as realism’s archaic roots or to constitute its inferior obverse (Fuchs emphasis in original 9).

The pervasiveness of romance performance at the turn of the century indicates that it is neither simply residual-- the incoherent scraps of a prior cultural dominant-- nor a (second, post-Waverly) revival attempting to decorate a literary corpse. As a strategy romance was exploited by a literary-industrial mode of production and

<sup>152</sup> Among these Fuchs includes “idealization, the marvelous, narrative delay, wandering, and obscured identity” (*Romance* 9).

consumption categorically distinct from its predecessors due to the scale of its operations. Even so, this cultural commodity retained continuity with prior forms. Deliberately chosen by public intellectuals, politicians, novelists, and academics to narrate a dynamic, heterogeneous, yet massifying social world romance made ideological profits on its aesthetic investments. The dividends of this choice of strategies were at once political and cultural. Romance enabled explanatory visions absorbing the potentially troubling transformations wrought by incorporation and empire even as it functioned as a hedge against the mystifications of realism's demystifying pretensions.

The neutral territory separating romance from realism has been the source of a lengthy critical debate.<sup>153</sup> The divide was hypostasized by postwar critics such as

<sup>153</sup> The debate was initiated by Frederick Crews's "Whose American Renaissance?" (*New York Review of Books* 35, no 16 (October 27, 1988) 68-69) and taken up by Donald Pease ("New Americanists: Revisionist Interventions into the Canon" *boundary 2*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring, 1990)) who cited a number of challenges to the romance thesis as mobilized by Chase, Trilling, Miller and other scholars of the Myth and Symbol School of American Studies. Pease's references include Nina Baym ("Melodramas of Beset Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women Authors"; "Concepts of Romance in Hawthorne's America") and John McWilliams ("The Rationale for 'The American Romance'").

Because the stakes of the debate were perceived to be nothing less than the character of the discipline of American Studies itself-- a question viewed correctly as profoundly political-- those in contention expressed passionate, even generational antagonisms. For example to Marx's harsh assertion-- which echoes Alan Wolfe's overheated claims in the *New Republic* ("Anti-American Studies," *New Republic* (February 10, 2003): 25-32.)-- that New Americanists possess an "apparent hatred of America" (130), Lipsitz replies by implying that the field as it was constructed by an earlier generation of Americanists is deaf to the cries of starving African American children. It is with a great sense of relief, then, to read Kaplan's more measured response. [See George Lipsitz ("Our America"), Leo Marx (On Recovering the 'Ur' Theory of American Studies) and Amy Kaplan ("A Call for a Truce") in *American Literary History* 17.1 (2005)]. Donald Pease revisits the controversy in light of efforts "to reestablish the finished nature of a field [American Studies] that had been organized out of the values of American Exceptionalism" in "9/11: When Was 'American Studies After the New Americanists'?" (*boundary 2*. 33 : 3 (2006)).

For additional appraisals of this debate see Winfried Fluck, "The 'Romance of America' and the Changing Functions of the Imaginary." *New Literary History* 27.3 (1996) 415-457; Mary Esteve, "Nature's Naturalism" *American Literary History* 20.3 (2008): 530-538; and Jennifer Fleissner, "After the New Americanists: The Progress of Romance and the Romance of Progress in American Literary Studies" in *A Companion to American Literary Studies*. Caroline Levander and Robert Levine (eds.) Malden, MA: Blackwell. 2011.

Richard Chase and RWB Lewis, who manufactured an enduring consensus-- the “romance thesis”-- stipulating the primacy of romance as a distinctly American literary form. As Fluck notes, for an earlier generation of Americanist scholars the preeminence of romance was valued in divergent ways, alternately as an example of “a lingering American ‘immaturity’”-- evidence of the absence of a social complexity which might form the basis of a developed literary-realist tradition-- or as a “‘deep’ genre” challenging “an official ideology of American innocence” (417). The romance thesis assisted in the institutional formation of American literature though it also excluded and devalued texts that did not seem to fit into its schema of “flight from civilization and the claims of society... individual self assertion, often by a male character” (416). Trilling’s contention in “Morals, Manners and the Novel” that the American novel was not historically focused on “the social field” was intended as a clarifying gesture which would mark out the bounds of national literature and in the process establish a deeper claim about the American character (206). That concern with literary production and collective identity was more fully developed in Richard Chase’s *The American Novel and Its Tradition*, which advanced the argument that in distinction to the British context, romance served as a master trope in American letters, functioning in effect as a *tabula rasa* onto which generations of Americans might inscribe their sense of themselves, a kind of inverted mimesis in which nature

Criticism of the New Americanist position(s) on the romance thesis can also be found in Thomson and Link, *Neutral Ground* Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1999 and Johannes Voelz, *Transcendental Resistance: The New Americanists and Emerson’s Challenge*. University of New England Press. 2010. While the former challenges the revision of the romance thesis by marshaling contemporaneous evidence of romance’s salience as a functioning critical category, the latter does so on theoretical grounds. Gerald Graff’s. recently reissued *Professing Literature: An Institutional History*. Chicago: UC Press. 2007 is also useful, especially chapter 13.

was a mirror to the arts of self-representation. According to this perspective, the terrain of the continent itself elicited

an assumed freedom from... verisimilitude, development and continuity; a tendency toward melodrama and idyll; a more or less formal abstractness and... a tendency to plunge into the underside of consciousness; a willingness to abandon moral questions or to ignore the spectacle of man in society, or to consider these things only indirectly or abstractly. (Chase ix).

Against these claims by Chase came “an increasingly irritated challenge in the 70s... in view of the many significant exclusions his version of American literary history entailed” (Fluck 418). Indeed, according to Fleissner “the notion of a critical investment in romance as a protest against the limitations of a realist era... has seemed nearly impossible for politically minded Americanists to imagine” (“After the New Americanists” 181-2). The issue of canon formation-- and its relationship to social movements-- became central concerns for revisionist scholars, who sought to disestablish the disciplinary hegemony of Trilling’s *Liberal Imagination* by essentially putting into critical practice the New Left strategy of foregrounding the freedom struggles of historically marginalized people. Just as radical and student movements in the 1960s looked to the Third World for anti-imperialist political models, just as anti-racist activists viewed the fight against Jim Crow as lever which would flip the system, the decentering of a white, masculinist, bourgeois, heteronormative canon could be initiated by clearing the ground in the interests of writers of color and women authors. The next stage of this strategy, or another aspect of it, as Pease has indicated, sought to ensure that the acquisition of such representational power did not end up simply reinscribing a kind of liberal tolerance while leaving inequalities intact. The New Americanists therefore sought to dismantle



and reconstruct the “field imaginary” by demonstrating that the realist/romantic opposition was largely an invented tradition, the literary-critical equivalent of Cold War consensus.

In spite of the influence of the subsequent revisions of the romance thesis, *The American Novel and Its Tradition* remains if not unimpeachable then at least relevant for many critics, including Eric Sundquist, who retrofitted Chase’s assessment of romance by portraying the “failure” of realism as a rite of return to romantic roots. My purpose here, however, is not to intervene in the larger controversy so much as to appropriate a well-established strand of criticism arguing that “genre is essentially a socio-symbolic message” in which “form is immanently and intrinsically an ideology in its own right” (Jameson 141). Activated by various *fin de siecle* discourses and texts the strategy-genre of romance performs critical ideological labor in making sense of the symbolic connections between empire, nation and youth. The deployment of its formal conventions eases the transmission of a new social content, securing emergent realities by appealing to familiar and tested structures and tropes. The mechanisms and affects of romance-- the plot of quest and return; sensations of ambition, pluck, and excitement-- render commensurate totalizing dreams and subjective particulars. Like the protagonists of romance, its readers escape into fantasy along a path intended to route them back into the real.

## **II. Imperial Romance**

The vernacular origins of the term romance (from the Old French, *romanz*) seem to be echoed by its long-standing identification with popular taste. From this

basic observation it would be tempting to speculate about its political character and begin to extrapolate that apparently democratic genericity into an account of American literature, in effect reproducing the liberal-imaginary claims advanced by the Cold War Americanists. Such a circular narrative of the significance of the romance might then be read as evidence of the form's inescapable representational gravity-- for example as the deep structure of a national culture which tends to turn away from social realities. Such is one of the arguments William Dean Howells presents in "The New Historical Romance," an essay published in 1900 in the immediate (and on-going) aftermath of two conflicts: the "battle of the books" and the war with Spain. Perhaps "our race," he argues, "having more reason than ever to be ashamed of itself for its lust of gold and blood, is more than ever anxious to get away from itself, and welcomes the tarradiddles of the historical romancers as a relief from the facts of the odious present" (*Democratic Review* 935). Dismayed by "the welter of over-whelming romance" characterizing the literary marketplace, Howells suggests a series of provisional causes for its return. The first of these speculates that immediate social and political events have degraded the aesthetic sensibilities of American readers, that "the accumulation of riches has vulgarized and the explosion of wars has brutalized the popular mind and spoiled the taste" (936).<sup>154</sup> On the other

<sup>154</sup> Years later Carl Van Doren would offer a similar explanation:

Romance was in the air. Not all publishing enterprise which developed romances into 'best sellers' and distributed millions of copies could have done so but for the moment of national expansiveness which attended the Spanish War. Patriotism and jingoism, altruism and imperialism, passion and sentimentalism, shook the temper which had slowly been stiffening since the Civil War. Now, with a rush of unaccustomed emotions the national imagination sought out its own past, delighting in it, wallowing in it. (*The American Novel* 254).

hand, “our appetite for gross fable” might be the result of “the spread of athletics among us.” Could there be “an occult relation between the passion for golf, say, and the passion for historical romance”? Alternately the blame might lie with young female readers who have abdicated their assigned role as custodians of moral order in the arts because they have adopted “muscular ideals.” Breaking into “the rude sports and boyish games of men” New Women find their aesthetic sensibilities “coarsened.”

Amy Kaplan elaborates the linkage suggested by Howells between the popularity of the historical romance and the rise of “our imperial republic”<sup>155</sup> (Howells 938) arguing that such works “offer a cognitive and libidinal map of the geopolitical shift from continental expansion to overseas empire” (Kaplan 94). The primary ideological problem posed by imperialism lies in reconciling America’s identity as a nation founded in anti-colonialist struggle with the realities of extra-continental conquest.<sup>156</sup> The contradictions of American empire have been aptly formulated by Williams, who argued that in the final years of the 19th century the United States had adopted a policy of “imperial anti-colonialism” based in part on the principle of free international trade (19). This program of “informal empire” (47) is generally associated with US involvement in China, when “the policy of the open

Note that Van Doren’s interpretation bears some resemblance to Seelye’s critique of Kaplan, specifically that the war preceded the efflorescence of historical romance: “the romance revival followed the war, a result of the national euphoria aroused by the American victory” (*War Games* 6).

<sup>155</sup> Howells may be gesturing at James Fernald’s *The Imperial Republic*, first published in 1899, which attempts to reconcile republican virtue with imperial destiny by referencing a deep connection-- a “natural alliance”-- between the nations of the Anglophone world (98). In this scenario, “the English people of to-day and the English colonies of to-day are debtors to the Americans of ’76 and richer by their deeds.” Even further, in the present “the bonds of race, of language, of the rich literature that is our common heritage, of the glorious history of which we all alike are proud... are drawing us together” (98-99).

<sup>156</sup> The outright denial of imperial policies on the basis of anti-colonialist origins persists. For President Barack Obama “unlike the great powers of old, we have not sought world domination. Our union was founded in resistance to oppression. We do not seek to occupy other nations” (Dec. 1, 2009).

door was designed to clear the way and establish the conditions under which America's preponderant economic power would extend the American system throughout the world without the embarrassment and inefficiency of traditional colonialism" (50). The doctrine originated, as Wood observes, "by asserting the territorial integrity of China [and] its right to be free of foreign domination" (20). In other words, a nation composed of former colonies sought to exert its will beyond its own shores by effectively mandating China's trade relations under the rubric of self-determination, "imposing market forces and manipulating them to the advantage of US capital" (13).<sup>157</sup> Because the United States itself made extensive use of tariffs to defend its own growing economy<sup>158</sup> the contradiction was thereby compounded.

The relative invisibility of the projection of economic power does not lend itself easily to representation. Yet even the clearest evidence of American Empire in its earlier phases, such as the conquest of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, seemed to "disincarnate" the national body (Kaplan 96). A spatially unbounded Empire ostensibly without colonies-- based as much on diplomatic pressure and the demands of capital as on military force-- "disembodied" national power by separating it from "contiguous territorial expansion," even as it embodied "masculine identity... in the muscular robust physique" of the American male. Kaplan posits this "complex double discourse" (96) as the revision of the conventional interpretation of "both nationalism and masculinity physically revitalized by imperial conquest" (95).

<sup>157</sup> "When an advanced industrial nation plays, or tries to play, a controlling and one-sided role in the development of a weaker economy, then the policy of the more powerful country can with accuracy and candor only be described as imperial" (Williams 55).

<sup>158</sup> According to Ha-Joon Chang, after being raised to historical levels during the Civil War, "tariffs on manufactured imports remained at 40-50% until the First World War, and were the highest of any country in the world" (*Bad Samaritans* 54).

While, earlier in the century, American culture associated masculine identity with “character based on self-control and social responsibility,” by the 1890s it had corporealized masculinity (97). The trajectory of this shift has been charted in very similar terms by Bederman, who distinguishes between the concept of “manliness,” which valued masculine identity as a set of ethical virtues, and a *fin-de-siecle* obsession with primitive male vitality. In Kaplan’s reading asserting the physicality of the male body as representative of the nation is complicated by-- and attempts to compensate for-- the transition of the United States from a continental body whole unto itself to its extrusion into colonial enclaves in the Caribbean and the Pacific. The consolidation of this newly invigorated masculine self requires a *mise-en-scene* in which to perform its prowess, a dramaturgical space heavily inflected by nostalgia “where the essential American man could be reconstituted in his escape from modernity and domesticity” (99). Citing Hall’s contention that an audience of young women lends greater impetus to the adolescent male’s exercise of his own powers, Kaplan argues that masculine performance is effective only insofar as others witness it. The “primal man” of the era, then, is essentially a simulacrum, “artificially composed” for domestic consumption (99). If the nation has been figured as a male body via a “biological metaphor,” in other words, the presence of spectacle “destabilized” that body, rearticulating rather than resolving the contradiction between “nationhood and manhood.”

Despite the masculine figure’s constructedness, the appeal to its reinvigoration as a justification for the advent of imperialism functions effectively as a means of concealing any break with republican institutions, crucially by invoking

persistent and explicitly gendered racial traits. For Frank Norris, ““deep down in the heart of every Anglo-Saxon lies the predatory instinct of his Viking ancestors”” in spite of centuries of civilization, ensuring his ability to dominate the new frontier of imperial conquest (qtd. in Kaplan 98). According to Thompson, the historical romance, as an element of imperial discourse, ““is simply a young, strong, virile generation pushing aside a flabby one. The little war we had with Spain,”” he continues, ““acted simply as a faucet through which our vigor began to act”” (qtd. in Kaplan 100). Norris welcomed imperial contest in a global arena as a vindication of the half-life of primitive racial power.<sup>159</sup> For Thompson, on the other hand, the ““virile ancestry”” of the resurgent romance novel indicated not an anti-modern impulse but the promise of a progressive future (qtd. in Kaplan 100). The genre functions as a representational technology with which to circumvent “potential rupture with tradition” by “a return to a healthier, more authentic past” (Kaplan 100). These competing temporalities converge, then, in that each underwrites the present and guarantees the future by recourse to a past which is figured either as the origin of vitality or the point of return given “America’s new global role” (100).

Extending Kaplan’s reading of imperial romance, Hoganson explores the uses of “the national manhood metaphor” in its relationship to US ambitions for hemispheric hegemony by examining the political rhetoric surrounding the Spanish-American War (*Fighting for American Manhood* 156). The discourse informing her

<sup>159</sup> Via Larzer Ziff Kaplan quotes Norris’s *Moran of the Lady Letty*. The passage cited concerns Captain Kitchell and Wilbur’s discovery of the *Lady Letty*, dead in the water and apparently abandoned. Against the civilized practice of tax-paying, Norris juxtaposes a conflation of the common law of salvage rights with the red-blooded roots of the acquisitive instinct. The “return to a mythical origin” (98) Kaplan extrapolates from that quote, then, is already modern in the sense that the raw impulse of “the plundering instincts” mirrors the principle of capital accumulation (Norris 74).

analysis necessitates a shift in emphasis, from a focus on masculine adulthood to the male youth in a state of becoming-- a figure invoked repeatedly by the era's political class.<sup>160</sup> Likening nation and youth, the most energetic supporters and ardent antagonists of the new imperialism struggled to win the question of American identity-- republic or empire-- by crafting a bio-social rhetoric of national destiny drawn from popular conceptions of masculine development. Representing "the annexation of overseas colonies, as part of a natural growth process, the result of biological imperatives," promoters of imperial policy such as Albert Beveridge, "the boy orator"<sup>161</sup> of the Senate, personified the United States as an adolescent (Hoganson 158). Yet if this was true, given the promiscuities of signification so was its obverse: adollescening the nation converted youth into a territory.

Beveridge expresses the mutually constitutive relationship between youth and nation most explicitly in speeches given at party meetings and on the Senate floor. Speaking at Tomlinson Hall in the late fall of 1900 he extolled the virtues of the Republican Party as representing everything "harmonious with all those natural elements of youth, of progress, and of power" before addressing the issues of America's foreign policy and its national economy in similar terms ("Senator Beveridge Speaks" 3). Regarding the increasing domination of economic life by the

<sup>160</sup> As Hoganson demonstrates, such rhetorical gestures were part of a larger discourse shot through with "gendered and generational assumptions about the legitimate exercise of power" (166). While anti-imperialists often portrayed their opponents as "rebellious adolescents" (172) editorial cartoons in publications such as *Puck* and *Judge* often derided critics of empire-- among others, Mark Twain, William Jennings Bryan and Sen. George Hoar-- as "Aunties" (Ignacio 132). *Puck* artist John Pughe's "Our Busy Old Women," for example, represents gray-whiskered politicians dressed in skirts and bonnets, pulling down a statue of McKinley, Dewey, and Otis (140). Pro-imperialist caricature ran the gamut, with magazines depicting the Aunties as dwarves; jesters "enamored of the 'savage' ... Aguinaldo" (132); "American Filipinos"; minstrels; and snakes symbolizing the "copperhead of 1861" (141).

<sup>161</sup> A distinction he shared with William Jennings Bryan, who, as Dos Passos reminds us, was known as "the boy orator of the Platte" (*The 42nd Parallel* 134).

trusts, Beveridge argues that “these great enterprises give young men their opportunities,” and that the success of individual initiative is guaranteed because “there is just one element that these great concerns absolutely need, and that is young blood, young brain, young energy, and young nerve.” Against the criticism of anti-imperialists using the “shibboleths” of “militarism” and “imperialism,” Beveridge flourishes “the sacred banner of our faith in America’s mission and American might,” a devotional posture he encapsulates for his audience in the motto “American supremacy among the nations of the world.” To the objections of his opponents that colonial aggrandizement threatens the nation’s political fabric he appeals to youthful autonomy and empowerment, asking

Who can establish an empire, young men of America, without your consent? Where will come the soldiers who will set their bayonets at the throat of our free institutions, if you, young men of America, yourselves, do not become those soldiers? .... [W]ill you strike your colors to a fear, and that fear a fear of yourselves? Your future is in your own hands. Your fate is in your own hands.... [Y]ou, young men of America, are the administrators of the future.

The promises extended by Beveridge to the young men he seeks to enlist in the Republican Party’s political programs conjure a phantasmatics of identification. The rich earth of the incorporated landscape invariably yields young men financial success. They control their own destiny. Indeed, the future itself is theirs to possess. Yet Beveridge’s appeal to the multivalent conceit of *the youth of the nation* incurs a train of associations which effectively spatializes the young. “When a people reach its young manhood,” he announces, “they naturally look upon their boundaries for their energy and enterprise. The world becomes their field... an expulsive energy sends them outward to the ends of the earth” (qtd. in Hoganson). The horizon itself



propels youth forward in a quest for identity and fulfillment. Without question such a narrative draws upon romance.

The political discourse of the period yokes masculine development-- coming into manhood-- with the space-time of American empire. The active engagement of Anglo-Saxon vigor-- a racial bequest that entails obligations as well as energies-- promises to impel the nation and the youth into majority. In this sense Beveridge's insistence that the key phase of US development is specifically the young manhood of a people-- a condition that occasions an irresistible journey into extra-national space-- complements Kaplan's argument that the masculine American self could be re-appropriated only in foreign lands. This modification of emphasis from manhood to masculine youth enables a shift in analytical registers, from historical fiction to imperial politics to genetic psychology. All three of these contemporaneous discourses share a common geographical imagination even as each bears the marks of romance. Hall's use of recapitulation theory functions as a supplement to imperial masculinity by reformulating external settings into a primeval space explored and mastered by the adolescent. In this hypothesis, the romance protagonist leaves home in order to accrue masculine power in the manner of a recapitulant hero who temporarily exits modernity into the racial past in order to return, transformed and empowered, to the present. Accordingly, just as "the male hero's escape from domesticity makes the entire world a potential home and quells its menacing foreignness" the whole of phylogeny is appropriated in the quest for ontogenic development (Kaplan 106). The romance structures adolescent theory even as genetic psychology tacitly modernizes those cultural materials, routing them into the

narrative of adolescence and effectively giving them the sanction of scientificity. Reading Hall's *Adolescence* as a *genetic romance* in juxtaposition with Kaplan's thesis about the relationship between masculinity and empire, I argue that the individual adolescent annexes the terrain of race history and humanity's future.

### III. Genetic Romance

In his autobiography Theodore Roosevelt describes finding "a dead seal laid out on a slab of wood," displayed for sale at a local market (13). As a palpable sign of "romance and adventure" the animal provokes in him a powerful response, sensations he relates to his reading of Mayne Reid and other writers of adventure fiction. For days afterward he haunts the market, awkwardly measuring the seal with a folding ruler and recording the resulting "utterly useless" data. Rather than representing merely an isolated biographical detail Roosevelt's anecdote suggests the ways that romance and realism-- broadly speaking-- depend on each other, as well as how they are subsumed into an imaginary that-- because it is imaginary-- puts realism in the service of romance. The dead seal tokens adventure, a space-time of activity outside the quotidian that the young Roosevelt enters imaginatively by emulating the methods of a naturalist. Insofar as the pleasure of the game he plays consists in the fantasy of intellectual mastery over nature it rationalizes this signifier of romance. Yet what seems to be an effort to contain the romance-imaginary through calculation-- submitting the emblem of emprise to quasi-scientific procedures-- is already make-believe from the first.

Frank Cowperwood's misreading of a similar scene occurs in the opening pages of Dreiser's *The Financier*. Like Roosevelt Frank walks into the marketplace, only to be arrested by a glimpse of "odd specimens of sea-life" (3). Peering into a tank set in front of a fish stall he witnesses "a tragedy which stay[s] with him all his life"-- a mock-epic battle between lobster and squid. Over the course of several days the animals fight for dominance, the squid slowly losing the contest as parts of its body disappear. Returning to this miniature theater one evening, Frank finds the lobster alone with the partially eaten body of its opponent. From such an altogether predictable outcome Frank famously comes to the conclusion that the conflict reflects the fundamental organization of life: "Things lived on each other," Frank muses. "[T]hat was it" (5). Yet the lesson he extracts is erroneous. His view that the battle between these antagonists confirms social life as a zero-sum contest for survival depends on the fallacy that the scene of their struggle is natural. Far from it: in nature the animals could not be compelled to remain in such close proximity. Thrust together in artificially cramped quarters by the fish merchant they can do nothing other than fight. The operative principle in this scenario, then, is not that the forces of nature model those of society, but rather that the distortion of the natural world produces a violence which is ideologically naturalized after the fact. A product of artifice, the Social Darwinist narrative is a romance. Because the facts are already "storied" the organic analogy yoking natural and social worlds cannot be simply a story of the facts.<sup>162</sup>

<sup>162</sup> For a fuller discussion of "stories and developmental theories of life [as] related forms of knowledge" see Philip Thurtle, *The Emergence of Genetic Rationality: Space, Time and Information in American Biological Science, 1870-1920*. Seattle: University of Washington Press. 2007.

By the late nineteenth century the romance had been legitimated by Victorian romancers such as H. Rider Haggard, who linked the appeal of the form pseudo-anthropologically to human origins (Vaninskaya 67).<sup>163</sup> Derided by its opponents as juvenile-- riddled with “improbability, unnaturalness and fancifulness”-- the genre was in the same stroke redeemed by its putative childishness (68). The generalized perception of a meaningful connection between life cycle, civilizational stage and racial development granted a seriousness to the romance, one amplified by the fact that fiction writers, philologists and ethnologists alike viewed their sources in “‘the infancy of letters’.... as a quarry of primary material” to be excavated for narrative purposes (69). Stevenson and Kipling invoked the works of contemporary anthropologists in their defense of the romance, asserting its genealogical primacy. Charles Kingsley, whose first lecture at Cambridge on the subject of Roman and Teutonic society was entitled “The Forest Children” averred the “‘boy-nature’” of the proto-Germans. “‘It is but a theory,’” he remarked, “‘but at least our race had its childhood’” (qtd. in Vaninskaya 70). Interpreting the *Nibelungenlied* as an allegorization of Roman collapse, Kingsley argued that over the long term history ripens into romance: “‘and if it seem to any of you childish, bear in mind that what is childish need not therefore be shallow’” (qtd. in Vaninskaya 70).

<sup>163</sup> “[W]here the story originates is impossible to say. As well we might seek the origin of the race; for wherever primitive men are found, there we see them gathering eagerly about the story-teller. In the halls of our Saxon ancestors the scop and the tale-bringer were ever the most welcome guests; and in the bark wigwams of the American Indians the man who told the legends of Hiawath had an audience quite as attentive as that which gathered at the Greek festivals to hear the story of Ulysses’ wanderings. To man’s instinct or innate love for a story we are indebted for all our literature” (339). See William J. Long’s textbook *English Literature: Its History and Significance for the Life of the English-Speaking World*. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1909.

In this sense the scientificity of romance was tacitly accepted, yet romance in its Hallsean usage is not simply scientific. Rather it is imperial insofar as its foundations extend both temporally over a *longue durée* and spatially across a canon of great European works, cultural texts from non-Western literatures including the *Upanishads* and the *Koran*, and a variety of “savage public rites of initiation” (Hall 2:232). Hall cited a wealth of cultural artifacts and rituals in *Adolescence*, though significantly he did not value them equally. While the *Odyssey*, the *Nibelungenlied*, and the *Bible* underpin the concept of adolescence they also represent examples of a racio-cultural continuity which defines Western tradition, a “type of civilization... better in most... respects” even if “it by no means follows that the highest human perfectibility is along the lines we have thus far followed” (2:718). Non-Western texts, on the other hand, though also enlisted as further proof of the universality of adolescence, function as supplemental evidence translated and interpreted from without, framed within a Eurocentric perspective. Hall sharply contrasts both native literature and indigenous practices with the “classical ideals and customs” of antiquity, whose societies-- chief among them the Greeks-- “best represent[...] and underst[and] youth as no other age or race has done” (2:250). A reliance on the fieldwork of anthropologists, Orientalists, naturalists, travel writers, colonial administrators, and missionaries-- figures absolutely integral to the construction of imperialist knowledges and policies-- also underscores the imperial character of adolescence. Among many others, Hall references Lumholtz’s *Among Cannibals: Four Years’ Travel in Australia*,<sup>164</sup> Helen Hunt Jackson’s *A Century of Dishonor*, R.J.

<sup>164</sup> “[Indigenous Australians] are without a future, without a home, without hope-- a doomed race.... On

Wilkinson's "Education of Asiatics," O.T. Mason's *The Savage Mind in the Presence of Civilization*, and J. F. Bishop's *The Yang-ze Valley and Beyond* as useful insights into the condition and prospects of non-Europeans, and by extension the young.<sup>165</sup>

As the inclusion of *A Century of Dishonor* and other texts critical of colonialist policies indicates, Hall's "moderate" anti-imperialism pits itself against the overtly white supremacist violence of the period, such as the German extermination of the Herero in East Africa, the Belgian atrocities in Congo, and the American pacification of the Philippines.<sup>166</sup> Yet the desire to oversee the progress of primitive and colonized peoples according to a Eurocentric scheme of development drives his interest in adolescent races. "We should teach them," he writes of Filipinos, in order to "develop the best that is indigenous... adopting a long-ranged policy that does not forget that a century with a race is no more than a year with an individual" (2:666).<sup>167</sup> There is an echo here of Hall's favorite poet, Tennyson, whose Victorianized Ulysses bequeaths his son Telemachus the "labour, by slow prudence to make mild/ A rugged people, and through soft degrees/ Subdue them to the useful and the good" (80). Having explored the psychic imperium, the recapitulated self regenerates society and ultimately works for the betterment of the race.

the borders of civilization men would think as little of shooting a black man as a dog" (qtd. in Hall 655).<sup>165</sup> The student of turn of the century imperialism will find an impressive bibliography of sources in this chapter of *Adolescence*.

<sup>166</sup> "From our experience with Indians our soldier has learned severity, and from contact with the negro we have learned contempt for dark skins, and this is a bad preparation for dealing with the very intricate problem in these islands [i.e., the Philippines]" (2:662-3).

<sup>167</sup> See Ross's *The Psychologist as Prophet* for a brief account of Hall's anti-imperialist credentials. Though it is true that he aligned himself with others such as Henry James against US and other imperialisms-- he wrote publicly of his disagreement with US policy and was for two years president of the Kongo Reform Association-- I disagree with Ross that this in itself exempts Hall from what is fundamentally a "soft" imperialist perspective. Not only do numerous passages in *Adolescence* contradict Ross's assertion that Hall "urged that we allow the peoples in our charge to develop in their own way," the phrasing of her defense-- "in our charge"-- expressly indicates an unequal power relationship (414).

An imperial category because its sources and objectives encompass the whole of humanity, adolescence as it is narrated by Hall maps a space which is both “domestic” in terms of being psychologically internal to the individual, and “foreign” in the sense that it functions as the *terra incognita* of the racial past. That protean expanse bears a remarkable resemblance to the *mise-en-scene* of the imperial romance, the exemplars of which, as both Kaplan and McClure note, are often if not always marked by a similar rhetorical gesture. In each case the encroachments of the military, political, and capitalist order on the unmapped areas of the globe are held to deny the necessary theater for colonial adventure. In Kaplan’s rendering, modernization and all the social processes it implies have narrowed and routinized the field of activity to such a degree that the protagonist is compelled to depart the domestic sphere of the nation. For McClure, by the turn of the century the predicate of imperial romance, “a world at war-- starkly divided, partially wild and mysterious, dramatically dangerous” (3) has been diminished by cartographic advances and the expansion of trade, effectively denying the romance its “raw materials”-- an arena of disordered, unmapped regions (10). While pervasive at the century’s end, such a view was hardly original. Marx and Engels made a similar observation in 1848, arguing that capitalist relations and industrial technologies were in the process of transforming the spatial character of the world. “The rapid improvement of all instruments of production [and] the immensely facilitated means of communication,” they argued, “draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation” (225). According to this structural violence, “the cheap prices of commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls.” While Marx figures the

expansion of capital as a forced breach in local defenses, popular literature in the era of imperialism, particularly in the wake of the second industrial revolution, makes it seem as if space simply diminished of its own accord. In *The Lost World* Howard Malone, a reporter for the *Daily Gazette*, approaches his editor in search of a dangerous assignment only to be told "I'm afraid the day for this sort of thing is rather past.... The big blank spaces in the map are all being filled in, and there's no room for romance anywhere" (Doyle 13).<sup>168</sup> For Halford Mackinder the perception of spatial diminution was explicitly a matter of political power, one also experienced as a form of precocity: "The missionary, the conqueror, the farmer, the miner, and, of late, the engineer, have followed so closely in the traveller's (sic) footsteps that the world, in its remoter borders, has hardly been revealed before we must chronicle its virtually complete political appropriation" ("The Geographical Pivot of History" 421). Doyle's use of the passive voice, on the other hand, represents the citizens of empire as its true victims because they have been dispossessed of adventure by conditions that threaten to totalize the mystery and heterogeneity upon which romance depends.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>168</sup> This phrase may be the most-quoted passage from Conan Doyle's book. See Brantlinger, McClure, Dixon, and Daly, among others.

In any case, for Graham Greene half a century later, the anxiety of a dearth of blank spaces would have seemed overstated. In preparation for his walking tour of Liberia in 1935 Greene consulted two maps, one from the British General Staff, the other issued by the US War Department. The first of these "quite openly confesses ignorance" as to the Liberian landscape, representing "a large white space covering the greater part of the Republic with a few dotted lines indicating the conjectured course of rivers" (*Journey Without Maps* 45). The American map, on the contrary, seemed to have been drawn by a cartographer "Elizabethan in [his] imagination" (46). Rather than an unmarked expanse the great blank space is filled with words such as "Dense Forest" and "Cannibals." Greene thought this map "so inaccurate that it would be useless, perhaps even dangerous, to follow... one expects to find Eldorado, (sic) two-headed men and fabulous beasts."

<sup>169</sup> Thus Hall writes:

Accept baptism and the creed, refrain from certain open gross forms of vice, and the Hottentot is a christian. Add to these a few windy mouthfuls of effusive phrases, and the half illiterate southern negro becomes an exhorter, although the spirit of voodoo incantation dominates in both his own



A range of imperatives lies behind the impulse to map the world's "big blank spaces," including economic and political demands, the purposes of navigation, the consolidation of property rights and boundaries, and the interests of transportation and passage. Maps thereby reify the imagined reality of political entities, whether of empires or nation-states. Mapping is a form of control over nature, and in symbolizing the terrain it produces an object of knowledge as well as geographically-based identities. As a process of de- and re-territorialization, the imperial cartographer obliterates the "preceding significances" of colonial spaces, reconfiguring them according to the logic of administrative systems concerned with resources, commerce and demography (Harvey 252). In another register, biology and collateral disciplines such as anthropometry create a spatial sensibility which depends upon physiological structure, classifying species and human types according to their "native" habitats.

The overlap between these domains is instructive in light of the romance of adolescence's recapitulatory plot. As already noted, Kaplan argues that the writers of popular historical fiction in the 1890s cognitively mapped the external zone of imperial conquest "refiguring the relation between manhood and nationhood in a changing international context" and thereby annealing the rift between republicanism and imperialism (95). This reading posits empire as a core dynamic of US history--

soul and that of his hearers. It will be a dreary and monotonous world if the dreams of the jingoes of modern culture and uniformity are realized. As we travel around the world, everywhere we shall have steam and electricity; modernized costume and custom; the schoolhouse and the three R's; the Sunday church bell; the individuality of races slowly fading; their ideas growing pale in a common menstruum; possibly war eliminated by the parliament of man in a world federation; the food supply and population enormously increasing; no illiterates-- this is a millennium which has little charm for the biologist. (*Adolescence* 2:717).

despite its obfuscation under the rubric of expansionism-- modifying Lear's assertion that the romantic revival of the period was simply a "therapeutic" escape from modernity, whose unintended consequences include setting the cultural conditions of possibility for a project of US imperialism. According to Kaplan, empire is already present, and romance explicitly confronts the "anxiety about a world closed to expansion" by reconfiguring its coordinates (103). In the theory of adolescence, recapitulation-- operationalized by its literary-romantic sources as a psychic quest of encounter, struggle, and triumph-- constructs a dramaturgical space substituting for "contemporary exotic arenas of the colonized world" (101). Because Hall is not concerned simply with the nation but "the race," however, and the "limited universality" of "the race" implicitly identifies it as Western and white, the entity whose past is to be restored is racio-civilizational rather than national.<sup>170</sup> To recapitulate, in other words, is to enter a zone which like Kaplan's "world outside," is represented simultaneously as "a new frontier and a return to the lost past"-- though that space and time are created from the materio-racial memories of white men (94). Exceeding the national framework and claiming as its sovereign territory "the race" itself, the plot of the recapitulationist narrative consists of departing the quotidian realm of the present and entering the foreign territory of phylogeny.

G. Stanley Hall's genetic romance broadens "the national manhood metaphor" by which political figures imbued US imperialism with youthful qualities (Hoganson 156). Because that project was also abetted in popular fiction which dramatized

<sup>170</sup> "There is a patriotism of race as well as of country," Richard Olney writes, "and the Anglo-American is as little likely to be indifferent to one as to the other" (qtd. in Glazener 166). The racial dimensions of the concept of youth are discussed at greater length in the preceding chapter.

young male protagonists adventuring in the nation's elsewhere, the space of imperial contest itself came to shape the concept of youth as a figure representing America's coming-of-age according to a national narrative of territorial expansiveness and burgeoning geopolitical power. Boys' books published immediately after the summer of 1898 take up the issue of imperial adolescence most explicitly, dramatizing the space of empire by inserting young protagonists into a literary geography adapted from "the very latest and best reports" (*A Young Volunteer in Cuba* iv). Proffering a fantasy of potency to young readers, boys' adventure fiction seeks to direct them into an established circuit of power. By inserting characters into zones of conquest novels by Stratemeyer and others not only people foreign territories with American avatars thereby symbolically claiming those areas; they also open the geographical limits proper to youth, and spatialize youthful development.

#### **IV. Where the Boys Are**

As an "energizing myth of empire" (Green 4)<sup>171</sup> adventure relies on a geographical imaginary that thrusts the American into the "generative space" of exploration and conquest in order to slot him into a circular plot of development (Bruzelius 24). For Frank Norris, such a racially inflected spirit of adventure links modernity to history and the campus to a version of the frontier. "As soon as Commencement day is passed," he writes in "The College Man"-- one essay in a series for the *Wave* called "Western Types of Men"-- "there is great talk of guns and maps, and the portage weight of cameras, and portable tents and salmon flies" (*Apprenticeship Writings* 24). Adventure appeals to male American college students

<sup>171</sup> Green, Martin. *The Great American Adventure*. Boston: Beacon Press. 1984.

regardless of their regional origins. Because they prefer “shooting [to] dancing... the climbing of mountains to the leading of Germans” Westerner and New Englander alike are “lost to view” over the summer. Both of these regional types “would rather lie all night in the wet grass waiting to get a pot-shot at an elk than to pass an entire morning reclining in tennis flannels on the beach, talking to a girl, under a red parasol.” Rejecting romantic distractions with such a striking image surely signals a degree of ambivalence, but ultimately the lure of adventure-- and the accrued capital of practical experience-- leads Norris’s youth from campus to camping grounds and back. Discarding predictable, everyday rhythms he journeys to “the mountains, or, perhaps... the desert,” returning “with his hair long and his chin rough with an incipient beard, and the skin burnt off his nose”-- cosmetically altered though strangely the same. Significantly, the college man reappears bearing both physical marks and a narrative of life outside the confines of his normative social world, a dermatological and verbal record of “the fearful and wonderful times he has had.” Yet if such manly pursuits suggest exploration or even filibustering they are, after all, simply an interregnum in “college life,” and their protagonist comes back “to the serious business of the fall term, which is coaching the football team.”

On the other hand college football is one of the “vigorous manly out-of-door sports” promising to inculcate young men with “virtues which go to make up a race of statesmen and soldiers, of pioneers and explorers” (Roosevelt qtd. in Gorn 147).<sup>172</sup> As such, it is far from inconsequential as training for more serious conflict. In

<sup>172</sup> See Elliot Gorn and Warren Goldstein’s *A Brief History of American Sports*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 2004.

his account of the Rough Riders, Roosevelt praised recruits drawn from Ivy League universities such as Harvard's "Dudley Dean, perhaps the best quarterback who ever played on a Harvard eleven and... Bob Wrenn... whose feats rivalled those of Dean's" (*The Rough Riders* 14). From Yale came "men like Waller, the high jumper, and Garrison and Girard," while Princeton produced volunteers such as "Devereux and Channing, the football players... Larned, the tennis player... Craig Wadsworth, the steeple-chase rider... Joe Stevens, the crack polo player... [and] Hamilton Fish, the ex-captain of the Columbia crew" (15).<sup>173</sup> Each one of the Rough Riders, "officers and men, cowboys and college graduates... whatever their social position... possessed in common the traits for hardihood and a thirst for adventure" (21). William Cody concurred, stating that "the real courage and grit of true American valor may be found in the white-skinned clerk or city chap as well as the bronzed veteran of the plains" ("Roosevelt's Rough Riders" 344).<sup>174</sup> Given that the appellation "Rough Riders" was common currency in dime novels prior to being borrowed by Cody's *Wild West*, such traits are already inscribed into the regiment's name.<sup>175</sup> Emphasizing and then democratically ignoring social distinctions within the Rough Riders bespeaks an

<sup>173</sup> Though Roosevelt did not believe that college athletics alone were adequate training for combat. In "The American Boy," an essay published almost two years after the war in Cuba he wrote, "A soldier needs to know how to shoot and take cover and shift for himself-- not to box or play foot-ball" (*The Strenuous Life* 158).

<sup>174</sup> Indeed, Cody and Roosevelt's statements are almost exact:

The 'Rough riders' represent the two extremes of American life. The 'seasoned' riders of the West are supplemented by aristocratic and healthy young men of leisure from the East, to whom the dash of life on the plains has an irresistible fascination. They want something to stir the blood, and although their life is usually not one that would be thought of particular preparation for the campaigns of a rough rider, their reserve strength is accessible to draw upon. (344).

<sup>175</sup> See Richard Slotkin, "Buffalo Bills 'Wild West' and the Mythologization of the American Empire" in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*. Durham: Duke UP. 1993. "The term 'Rough Riders,'" Slotkin writes, "had been applied to Western horsemen in dime novels before 1880" though Cody and Roosevelt each claimed the name as his own (188).

aristocracy of racial stock and individual ability which forms the basis of an idealized homosocial polity self-consciously standing in for the national character.<sup>176</sup> Those soldiers belonging “neither to club nor college” (13) largely originate in the territories “most recently won over to white civilization” where the ethos and conditions of the frontier persist (21). Lacking significant wealth or elite status they nonetheless possess a form of property which certifies their genealogy: within their “veins the blood stirred with the same impulse which once sent the Vikings over sea,” Roosevelt writes (13). Mobilizing the imagery of adventure fiction, he describes his men as “splendid... tall and sinewy, with resolute, weather-beaten faces, and eyes that looked a man straight in the eye” (18)-- physical attributes evoking the “sunburnt” Hawk-eye of *Last of the Mohicans*, whose “every nerve and muscle appeared strung and indurated by unremitted exposure” (Cooper 21). Such attributes function as symbols of national virtue and masculine prowess, and the college men of the regiment are thereby incorporated into a fraternity of what both Norris and Roosevelt termed Western types, including “the cowboy, the hunter, and the mining prospector,” even as they maintain their ruling-class credentials (Roosevelt 18). To be sure there is hierarchy in this martial democracy. Yet military rank-- the distinctions between

<sup>176</sup> Though the “democracy” of the Rough Riders bears more than a passing resemblance to David Starr Jordan’s:

Democracy does not mean equality-- just the reverse of this, it means individual responsibility, equality before the law, of course-- equality of opportunity, but no other equality save that won by faithful service. That social system which bids men rise must also let them fall if they cannot maintain themselves. To choose the right man means the dismissal of the wrong. The weak, the incompetent, the untrained, the dissipated find no growing welcome in the century which is coming (6).

See *The Call of the Twentieth Century: an Address to Young Men*. Boston: American Unitarian Association. 1903.

enlisted and officer-- abolishes class differences as irrelevant on the basis of racialized masculine excellence. Roosevelt regarded 26 year old Allyn Capron as the most distinguished Rough Rider, representing him as a figure who seems to distill all those gifts and talents characterizing frontiersmen and college men alike. According to Roosevelt, Capron, a fifth generation soldier who was killed in the first days of the Cuban campaign, "tall and lithe, a remarkable boxer and walker, a first-class rider and shot, with yellow hair and piercing blue eyes... looked what he was, the archetype of the fighting man" (21).

While Roosevelt's description of his regiment presents its members as already finished, as naturally worthy of being Rough Riders, fictional imperial adventures such as Kirk Munroe's *Forward March* initially cast doubt on the sufficiency of their protagonists. In an opening scene that is virtually a ritual of adventure fiction, the reader first encounters Ridge Norris, the son of an affluent Louisianan family, in the parlor of his father's mansion "arranging a bowl of roses" (3).<sup>177</sup> Though Munroe is quick to assert Ridge's "manly... instincts," (5) Herman Dodley, Ridge's rival, calls him "a soft-hearted, Miss Nancy sort of boy... always coddling sick kittens," who lacks even "a drop of sporting blood" (3). The question of blood is significant, though not only because Ridge's father is an Anglo-Saxon New Englander and his mother a Franco-Spanish Southerner. The product of an ostensibly interethnic union, Ridge derives traits and abilities from both of his parents' lineages. He speaks Spanish, English, and French, for example, and after several weeks of intrigue and combat in Cuba he is shocked to see "how very Spanish" he looks (167).

<sup>177</sup> See, for example, Rafael Sabatini's *Captain Blood* or consider the name of Percy Blakeney's alter ego.

Mr. and Mrs. Norris suggest a version of Doris Sommer's "erotics of politics," which links nation (re)formation to heterosexual love, and *Forward March* dutifully expresses this theme in a redacted form relegated to the narrative's margins (*Foundational Fictions* 6). It might be expected that Munroe's novel would insert its young male protagonist into a love affair with a beautiful Cuban woman as a means of enfolding the "pearl of the Antilles"<sup>178</sup> into an emergent patriarchal-imperial order, but like many of the adventure romances of the period marriage tends to be the prerogative solely of characters of the same racial if not national identity.<sup>179</sup> Princess Yetive of Graustark marries the American Grenfall Lorry, yet the love of her Ruritanian counterpart Flavia is sacrificed by Rudolph Rassendyll to ensure the kingdom's political integrity. Munroe broaches and almost immediately withdraws the possibility of a transnational romance with the figure of Eva, "the bravest girl in all Cuba, and... a devoted patriot" (114). Ridge first sees her when she drops a note and a pair of "tiny steel saws" into the cell where he is detained by the Spanish

<sup>178</sup> Or, alternately, the "jewel of the Antilles." Both phrases have also been applied to Haiti and are attributed to Spanish explorers, though Antilles is a French word of uncertain derivation. In 1853 travel writers Francis and Theresa Pulszky revealed that a "semi-secret society... the Order of the Lone Star" had been founded "with the avowed aim of revolutionising and annexing 'the jewel of the Antilles' to the United States" (147). Though condemned as "Filibusteros by the Northern Whigs" those supporting this project viewed the outcome of the Mexican-American War as an "attractive precedent," one that "the enterprising and adventurous youth of the South" could not resist (148). See *White, Red, Black: Sketches of American Society in the United States*. New York: Redfield. 1853.

<sup>179</sup> This, as distinct from a trend in the popular fiction of a prior period. As Streeby notes, in George Lippard's dime novel *Legends of Mexico* the

fantasy solution to the conflict between [Mexico and the United States] is a marriage between a U.S. soldier and the mestiza Inez. This plot device recurs in much of the war literature, although most of the heroines are creoles. International romances between U.S. soldiers and elite Mexican women were often represented in the popular literature as a beginning form of imperial conquest or as an alternative to it: the romance plots of a good deal of cheap war fiction were echoed by contemporary calls to conquer Mexico by 'whitening' it through transnational heterosexual unions. (*American Sensations* 64).

I have chosen "transnational romance" rather than Streeby's "international romance" to further emphasize the unequal power dynamics such a relationship of necessity represents.



authorities (108). He escapes prison the next morning in the company of two cloaked riders, one of whom resembles “a slender youth,” but is of course Eva (114). These familiar narrative elements-- a mysterious woman, gender drag, and the revelation of disguise-- do not ultimately lead to a match between Cuban and US American lovers, however. Eva, it seems, is already affianced to the Cuban rebel Del Concha. Instead the marriage plot remains within boundaries: Ridge marries Spence Cuthbert, a distant cousin from Kentucky, while his sister Dulce becomes engaged to a comrade in arms, “the son of a well-known New York millionaire,” Rollo Van Kyp (19). It is this last pairing-- like the former, hardly developed beyond an initial exchange of admiring glances in the novel’s first pages-- which bears a potentially larger significance. Dulce and Rollo’s marriage will symbolically advance America down the road to reunion, annealing the lingering rift caused by the Civil War. The north-south axis personified by this couple (and Ridge’s parents) gestures at national reconciliation, a master trope of the period’s postbellum romances.<sup>180</sup> Because neither Mrs. Norris nor her daughter Dulce embody racial alterity-- given their creolized pan-European and American affiliations-- Otherness in this sense is located in Cuba, falling along a spectrum of identitarian essence complicated by national origin. On one end reside Cubans such as Eva and del Concha, and Spaniards like Lt. Navarro, all of whom are white ethnics. On the other extreme is the primitive guerrilla Dionysio, Ridge’s brutal, “coal-black” guide (119). Because he proves treacherous “the two white men,” Ridge and Navarro, unite against him-- even though

<sup>180</sup> See Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1993.

they are enemies (131).<sup>181</sup> The basis of their alliance depends upon not only race but national and family ties. Lt. Navarro is revealed to be the cousin of a Rough Rider: ““Maximilian Navarro of New Mexico!”” (129). The encounter between the United States and Cuba, then, is contained within the embodied experience of *Forward March*’s young male protagonists.

The blood Herman Dodley invokes implies an economy of character, one that may be largely symbolic or deeply implicated in the racial body. “Sporting blood” and its necessary counterpart, blood sport, suggest qualities of athleticism and nobility linked to aristocratic pursuits which are ultimately open to all who prove themselves worthy.<sup>182</sup> In various coming-of-age adventure stories at the turn of the century different locales-- the Grand Banks, the Bering Strait, Santiago de Cuba’s north coast<sup>183</sup>-- function as places of commerce and conquest where protagonists-- Harvey Cheyne, Humphrey van Weyden, Ridge Norris-- are transformed by action outside of the realm of “ignoble ease,” shedding the behaviors and personal tics which signify the softness of privilege (*The Strenuous Life* 20). In *Captains Courageous*, for example, Harvey first appears wearing “a cherry-coloured blazer, knickerbockers, red stockings, and bicycle shoes, with a red flannel cap at the back of his head,” (8)-- clothes whose cut and color mark him as a leisure-class dandy and evoke the “shore blood” which must be expunged so that he may become a man (21).

<sup>181</sup> Further complicating the novel’s representations of race is Munroe’s characterization of “the colored troops” of the US forces who possess “a steadiness and grim determination” in battle “that won for them undying fame, and answered forever the question as to whether or not the negro is fitted to be a soldier” (194). According to Gianakos there is an “almost universally favorable image of Negroes in the contemporaneous popular literature of the Spanish-American War” (36). See “The Spanish-American War and the Double Paradox of the Negro American” *Phylon*. V. 26, No. 1 (1965) pp. 34-49.

<sup>182</sup> As Rollo Van Kyp remarks approvingly, ““Teddy’s gone into this thing for blood”” (25).

<sup>183</sup> At the time of the Spanish-American War the province had not yet been re-named Oriente.

With a “pasty yellow complexion” marked by “irresolution, bravado, and very cheap smartness” Harvey initially brags about his unearned status as a millionaire’s son, an arrogance Disko Troop takes to be delusional fantasy, and which he responds to by punching Harvey in the face. The bloody nose Harvey suffers in consequence-- an injury that is really an ornament-- signifies his initiation into the world of men and labor, a domain of risk where sailors’ sea-craft is the primary defense against the power of nature. The *We’re Here*, a working home for Dan and the crew, serves Harvey as a school, a site of applied instruction whose teacher models mastery of the techniques of seamanship and moral comportment. It is also a vehicle for the promulgation of a fabled Yankee ethos, both spatially into the trans-Atlantic sphere and figurally into the developing characters of the next generation of American capitalists. Though the crew of the *We’re Here* belong to an already defunct tradition, Harvey, a bridge between epochs, internalizes its masculine values. Certainly the practical and moral experience he gains under Disko Troop’s direction within the harsh, demotic environment of the North Atlantic prepares Harvey for his role as a captain of industry. Yet in the new capitalist dispensation stock will no longer be bought with the pennies of “old annuitants, widows, fatherless children, and chancery wards,” as it was in Captains Bildad and Peleg’s Nantucket-- the lost world where the *We’re Here* belongs (Melville 81). The real romance of Kipling’s novel might be its conceit that any meaningful continuity is possible between the heroic epoch of the whalers-- of which Disko Troop’s fishermen are a dignified if belated, puny example-- and the coal-fired age of incorporation.

Such present dangers make the “larger atmosphere... on the outskirts of Empire” all the more necessary as a scene of youthful becoming because it provides “an ennobling and invigorating stimulus” preserving the young from “the morbid excitements of Western civilisation” (Curzon qtd. in Dixon 3). Unambitious, “indolent, [and] fastidious,” (*Forward March* 5) Ridge has been “somewhat of a disappointment to his family,” throwing over a banking job and lounging “in an atmosphere of luxury” at his father’s estate (4). Yet the *Maine*’s destruction interrupts this sabbatical and impels him to action. Impatient to join ranks, he forgoes a commission (to be arranged through family political connections) and leaves home to enlist as a private, an act which simultaneously severs his dependency and contradicts Dodley’s cynical belief that the US “is too busy accumulating dollars to fight over a thing of this kind” (8). In this respect Ridge embodies the righteousness of the national temper. In 1898 “the country was in a ferment,” the narrator editorializes.

For three years war had raged in Cuba, where the natives were striving to throw off the intolerable burden of Spanish oppression and cruelty. In all that time the sympathies of America were with the struggling Cubans... even to the extent of going to war with Spain.... With the destruction of the *Maine*... the people... demanded to have the Spanish flag swept forever from the Western hemisphere. (10).

The passage above fuses “the vogue of Cuba Libre”-- a genuinely popular, if ultimately dispensable, motive for intervention in the Cuban Revolution as the cynical re-interpretation of the Teller Amendment attests-- with a sense of US victimization and mission-- affective investments placed in the service of a hemispheric imagination structured by the Monroe Doctrine (Perez 29). In the process it not only obfuscates long-held ambitions to acquire Cuba such as those expressed in the Ostend

Manifesto,<sup>184</sup> but remaps the western hemisphere along perpendicular axes, clarifying the distinction between old and new worlds even as the relationship between north and south is revised.<sup>185</sup> The elements of this geographical story-- hemispheric integrity, Cuban patriotism, US empathy and aggrievement-- ideologically saturate the novel's diegesis. Ultimately, the world the narrative of *Cuba Libre* constructs seeks to conscript an agent to redeem the injured and press the demands of liberty so that the nation may be renewed within expanded geopolitical coordinates. According to *Forward March* the pivotal figure suited to such a task combines traditional talents and adaptive faculties with the rising energies of the young.<sup>186</sup>

In the view of one of his biographers these were characteristics Munroe possessed in abundance. Raised in mid-century on the frontier at Fort Howard, Wisconsin, Munroe left home at sixteen and worked as a surveyor for the Santa Fe Railroad before traveling across the Far West, where "he fought Indians, was wounded, met Kit Carson, desperadoes, and soldiers, and then worked for a time with an engineering crew in California" (Donelson, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*). In subsequent years he studied engineering at Harvard but then returned west without his degree to work for the Northern Pacific Railroad, becoming friends with William Cody and Gen. George Custer. After three years as an editor for *Harper's Young*

<sup>184</sup> "It must be clear to every reflecting mind that, from the peculiarity of its geographical position, and the considerations attendant on it, Cuba is as necessary to the North American republic as any of its present members, and that it belongs naturally to that great family of States of which the Union is the providential nursery." *The Ostend Manifesto* <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/hns/ostend/ostend.html>

<sup>185</sup> See Gretchen Murphy, *Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of US Empire*. Durham: Duke UP. 2005.

<sup>186</sup> In distinction to the eponymous hero of *Frank Reade, Jr., or in Cuba, Helping the Patriots With His Latest Air-Ship*, published by Tousey in 1896, who maintains a marginal role in events, representing Cuban rebels as adequate to the task of winning independence from Spain. See Brian Rouleau's essay "Childhood's Imperial Imagination: Edward Stratemeyer's Fiction Factory and the Valorization of American Empire" *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 7:4 (October 2008)

*People*, where he worked with William Dean Howells and several notable authors of juvenile fiction including James Otis Kaler and Howard Pyle, Munroe moved to Florida, exploring the Everglades in a canoe he named the *Psyche*.

Boys' books' authors had little interest in "young men born with knives in their brains" as Emerson once phrased it, and Munroe's views on youth match those of his contemporaries such as Roosevelt's in their emphasis on character over intellect ("Life and Letters in New England" 597). The ideal college graduate, he writes, acquires "a high ideal of honor [rather] than... honors... a reputation for honesty, pluck, and the prompt meeting of obligations [rather] than... a record for scholarship" (*School and College Days* xv). These convictions shaped Munroe's approach to fiction profoundly, and he viewed "the adventure book for boys" as a kind of character-building technology combining edification and entertainment. Like many romancers, Munroe considered adventure novels to be a natural expression of the primeval "instinct for a story,"<sup>187</sup> a narrative desire to be fed both for its own sake and in order to cultivate indispensable masculine (and national) qualities: self-reliance, sincerity, purity of resolve, dutifulness, and loyalty. The pleasures of narrative, he argues, as illustrated in the Middle Ages by "the strolling bard who held his rude audiences spellbound with tales... of high courage and mighty deeds," is the vehicle by which "the faint glow of knowledge and inspiration to better things...

<sup>187</sup> As Thayer writes in an 1894 polemic against "Epidermists" (realist writers) such as William Dean Howells: "the significant fact is that the public taste has turned, and that that instinct which is as old as the children of Adam and Eve, the instinct for story, has reasserted itself" (William Roscoe Thayer, "The New Story-Tellers and the Doom of Realism," *Forum* 18 (1894):470-80. 478). This quote has been referenced repeatedly in recent scholarship. See Glazener's *Reading for Realism* (1997), Elliot's *The Culture Concept* (2002) and Shi's *Facing Facts* (1996) among others.

dimly illumined the dark savagery of medieval ignorance” (“The Adventure Book for Boys” 267).

Sketching out a theory of reader reception, Munroe focuses on character, verisimilitude, and pedagogy. The protagonist of an effective boys’ book should “be somewhat in advance of the reader, just beyond present reach.... a little older, a little braver, a little stronger, a little wiser” in order to stoke young aspirations to maturity (268). Yet the reader must grow into adventure stories, surpassing “the credulous age... the season of make-believe” from the fourth to tenth years, and entering into a period in which childish illusions are “contemptuously discarded” and displaced by “violent exercise and strenuous out-of-door sports” (268). At some point in this latter phase, possibly during a bout of inclement weather or illness, the boy-reader sees an eye-catching book cover and “instantly the bait is seized.” He becomes “infatuated,” with “flushed face and sparkling eyes” (269); “the hour of the ‘adventure’ book has arrived!” (268). Crucially, this form of fiction models behavior as it stimulates the imagination, informing the reader of “difficulties and how to overcome them, of the rewards of truth, honesty, bravery, and right living, and of the bitter penalties attached to their opposites” (269).

On his way to enlist Ridge encounters a train at the station carrying three young men, volunteers traveling to the Rough Riders’ camp in San Antonio. They include collegian Mark Gridley, a “pupil in the art of foot-ball playing” (21); a “thin, brown, and wiry” (19) “bronco-buster” (21) named Silas Pine; and Rollo Van Kyp, “one of the most persistent and luxurious of the globe-trotters, who generally travelled in his own magnificent steam-yacht *Royal Flush*” (19). Rollo’s affluence

indicates that wealth itself is not necessarily enervating provided it is put to good use. Certainly the name of his yacht couples aristocratic pretensions with the successful manipulation of chance-- the kind of luck card players make at the table. More significantly, this trio of comrades-in-arms represent in microcosm the Rough Riders-- and by extension the US military. Like Dumas's three musketeers, each character embodies a particular set of virtues, and as with D'Artagnan Ridge will distill these traits into a single figure, thus confirming the triad. As the story progresses he combines and even exceeds the equestrian skills of Silas, the athletic prowess of Mark, and Rollo's sophistication and gallantry.<sup>188</sup>

Ridge accepts an invitation to join the friends, pilgriming west to a core American *lieu de memoire*,<sup>189</sup> "the world renowned Alamo," (26) where he meets Theodore Roosevelt and joins the ranks. As suggested by Silas, Mark, and Rollo, in aggregate his new comrades the Rough Riders are "heterogeneous but typically American," and, consonant with Roosevelt's memoir, the contrasts between them emphasize their unity of purpose (30).

Millionaire dudes and clubmen from the great Eastern cities fraternized with the wildest representatives of the far Western life. Men of every calling and social position, all wearing blue flannel shirts and slouch hats, were here mingled on terms of perfect equality. They were drilling, shooting, skylarking, playing cards, performing incredible feats on horseback, cooking, eating, singing, yelling, and behaving in every respect like a lot of irrepressible schoolboys out for a holiday. Here a red-headed Irish corporal damned the awkwardness of a young Boston swell, fresh from Harvard, who had been

<sup>188</sup> A numerology of the period would have to note the prevalence of threes: RH Davis's travel memoir *Three Gringos in Venezuela and Central America*; the dispatch boat the *Three Friends*, where Frank Norris and Stephen Crane meet; the three Russell brothers from Stratemeyer's *Old Glory Series*.

<sup>189</sup> See Pierre Nora and Lawrence Kritzman, *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*. New York: Columbia UP. 1996. "If the expression... must have an official definition, it should be... any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community" (xvii).



detailed as cook in a company kitchen; while, close at hand, a New-yorker of the bluest blood was washing dishes with the deftness gained from long experience on a New Mexican sheep-ranch.

His training completed within a few weeks the “sun-browned” (44) and newly promoted Ridge travels southeast by rail with his horse Senorita, an animal, as Lt. Col. Roosevelt remarks, of “almost human intelligence” (66).<sup>190</sup>

Going to Texas to get to Cuba emphasizes that the theater of the war against Spain will reproduce the western frontier. Yet *Forward March* encompasses even wider terrain, including the Norrises’ home on the outskirts of New Orleans, Ridge’s brief employment as a banker in Japan, his mother’s “Latin” heritage,<sup>191</sup> his father’s New England roots, and the summer house the family owns on Long Island. Finance, friendship, and family establish a network whose connections multiply with Ridge’s movements, enmeshing disparate spaces in the Americas and linking old and new worlds. As already noted, Ramon Navarro and Ridge form a bond on the basis of their dissimilarity from Dionysio, a link strengthened by Ramon’s disclosure that a recent visit to his cousin Maximilian in New Mexico has inspired him to become an American citizen. Returning to Spain to put his affairs in order, he is unexpectedly ordered to Cuba, compelled to fight, he laments, “those whom I already consider as my adopted countrymen” (129). Ridge views Navarro as an American simply by virtue of expressing his intention to become one, and their shared sense of American

<sup>190</sup> And one whose Hispanophone gender identity makes it hard to resist reading as a totem-surrogate for the beloved of the novel’s absent transnational romance.

<sup>191</sup> Though this aspect of her background is complicated by the fact that Latinity was largely invented as a French colonial ploy to assert France’s connection to the Americas.

identity as a matter of sentiment seals their alliance.<sup>192</sup> This connection takes on an uncanny aspect in the novel's coda, when Ridge stumbles over a mound of earth while charging toward the enemy-- an accident that saves his life. The Spanish bullets fired at him instead strike the man to his rear, who dies instantly. After the battle Ridge returns to this scene and locates both the obstruction that tripped him and, close by, the body of the fallen American soldier. Incredibly, Maximilian Navarro the Rough Rider was killed atop Ramon Navarro's grave. A cosmic irony this heavy-handed demands a moral, though it isn't clear that the one offered is adequate. "So the two, one from the New World and one from the Old...were united in death... they buried the young New-Mexican close beside his Spanish cousin, and the grasses of San Juan Hill wave above them both" (212).

A familiar convention of romance, such a set-piece provokes a sentimental response in its readers, who experience the symmetry of the Navarro cousins' deaths in an elegiac mode. That tone depends on the degree to which the trope of fratricidal *liebestod* departs from the realist imperative of probability. The passage's ideological content lies in its formalized-- even formulaic-- coincidence: the conjunction of civil conflict with the conceit of "dying heroes and their deathless deeds" (Sassoon

<sup>192</sup> Though their relationship to one another grows absurdly complex, as indicated by the narrator's description of Ramon as Ridge's "prisoner-friend" (180). Initially, Ridge treats Ramon as a prisoner of war on parole. Ramon agrees to help Ridge in order to join his cousin Maximilian and emigrate to the US. Continuing his mission disguised as a Spanish officer Ridge reconnoiters Spanish defenses with Ramon's help. Yet he is ashamed that his role in the conflict is not open but covert. In a similar vein, Ramon decides he can no longer betray his Spanish compatriots. Ramon rushes to warn Ridge that the latter is suspected of being an American spy and then announces that Ridge is his prisoner. "But do not forget," Ramon continues, "that I am also your prisoner, on parole.... [L]et us exchange prisoners... it has come to me... that I cannot desert my own people in this time of their need... Will you do as I ask?" (176-177). Ridge agrees, explaining that he had already decided to "give back [Ramon's] parole." Almost immediately after this exchange US ships begin to shell their position. Ridge escapes through the jungle to Siboney and soon after Ramon is mortally wounded

57).<sup>193</sup> Munroe's romance device thus reinscribes the pathos of the US Civil War even as it displaces that conflict onto the scene of American conquest in Cuba.

*Forward March's* protagonist is preserved-- of the three combatants Ridge alone survives-- and the fractious space of US national development is paired with Cuba's.

An affective mapping supplements a textual geography drawn from romance, reportage, and official military history. The map constructed begins at the very heart of domesticity, though in an ostentatious parlor tied to class privilege rather than the work zone of the kitchen. Rollo's private rail car, another symbol of affluence, redeems Ridge of his apparent passivity by setting him in motion within the Machine Age's master chronotope. Departing San Antonio, a staging ground for the Rough Riders resembling the arena of Buffalo Bill's Wild West, Ridge arrives in the city of Tampa, where his quest seems to decelerate, sidetracked into the humid lassitude of the rocking chair war. Singular circumstances are required to rescue him from this stasis. Chosen from many for his unquestionable gifts, his covert assignment requires deception and almost immediately provides a foretaste of danger. Indeed, he leaves the Florida coast under friendly fire, the target of the deluded Dodley's undisciplined pistol shots. But it is upon coming ashore in Santiago de Cuba, where he is confused by the unfamiliar terrain, that Ridge meets his first true reversal. Unpracticed, out of his element, he is captured and, soon after, escapes. In the process he masters one of the skills--evasion-- needed to fulfill his secret mission. Chafing under the need for dissimulation, at last Ridge emerges from behind his disguise to fight openly with his

<sup>193</sup> Needless to say a generation later Sassoon found such a notion fundamentally false. The speaker of "Remorse," remembering wounded German soldiers "screaming for mercy" and "our chaps... sticking 'em like pigs" thinks "there's things in war one dare not tell/ Poor father sitting safe at home, who reads/ Of dying heroes and deathless deeds" (57). *Counterattack and Other Poems*. New York: EP Dutton. 1918.

comrades. From that moment onward he follows a trajectory through Siboney, Las Guasimas, El Caney, Bloody Bend, and the San Juan Heights which matches the US army's advance. Victorious though fever-struck, it remains only for him to return to the United States aboard the *Royal Flush*, renamed the *Grey Nun* and now in service as a hospital ship. Yet his homecoming occurs not in New Orleans but Long Island, in the summer house where his family waits. Home, then, is not a particular region or city but the nation itself.

At the other end of empire the protagonists of two novels by Edward Stratemeyer-- Larry Russell of *Under Dewey at Manila, or the War Fortunes of a Castaway* (1898) and Oliver Raymond of *A Sailor-boy with Dewey, or Afloat in the Philippines* (1899)-- travel from San Francisco across the Pacific to the Philippines and Hong Kong on journeys influenced by economic concerns and chance. As with the majority of Stratemeyer's fiction, the texts in question are standardized, and it seems likely that for this reason he published *A Sailor-boy* under one of his many pseudonyms, Capt. Ralph Bonehill. Both novels tell the story of a male adolescent sailing in the western Pacific who by misadventure or act of nature becomes a castaway, experiencing various adventures in the Philippine Islands before joining the Asiatic Squadron. This scenario is so prevalent in juvenile imperial romances in the immediate aftermath of the Spanish-American War that it might be seen to constitute a subgenre, the Deweyade.<sup>194</sup> Still, there are several significant differences in structure between *Under Dewey* and *A Sailor-boy*, specifically in terms of the

<sup>194</sup> See, for example, James Otis's *When Dewey Came to Manila; or, Among the Filipinos* (1899) a story of "two Yankee lads from Boston" which follows a well-established circuit from San Francisco to Hong Kong to the Philippines (11).

protagonists' itineraries and trajectories. Larry Russell is a deckhand looking for work in Oahu after his ship, the *Rescue*, was damaged in a storm. He is, he tells a sympathetic interlocutor, ““what they call a rolling stone,”” an orphan who has run away from a miserly, abusive uncle (*Under Dewey* 6). Hopping a train in Buffalo, by a stroke of fortune he finds himself locked in a freight car and arrives in Oakland several days later. Penniless, with no immediate prospects, he crosses the bay and signs aboard the *Rescue* with Capt. Morgan.

Physically Larry and Oliver are of a type-- tall, strong, and sixteen years old-- though their origins share little in common. While Larry comes from a broken, *déclassé* family, Oliver is a recent business school graduate, the son of ““a rich merchant with offices at San Francisco, Hong Kong, Manila,... and several other points”” (*A Sailor-boy* 3). Upon graduation he travels to China to familiarize himself with the family business, a plan which pleases his father who suggests that Oliver return to San Francisco via Manila, where operations are faltering because of Spanish machinations. Making a new friend in Hong Kong, Dan Holbrook, Oliver books passage to the Philippines on a sail-driven ship, the *Dart*, commanded by an irascible drunk named Capt. Kenny. Almost immediately a dispute between Oliver and Kenny signals the novel's topicality. As their argument grows heated, the captain physically assaults Oliver, who knocks him unconscious. Though Dan recognizes Kenny's viciousness and incompetence he cautions Oliver, reminding him that ““a captain is king on his own deck, on the high seas”” (8). True enough, replies Oliver, but ““a brute can never be a king”” (8). In the context of US expansion into Spain's colonies

the exchange takes on an obvious significance, justifying intervention on the basis of a popular interpretation of natural law; the tyrant is by definition an illegitimate ruler.

Explicit references in both novels to the political context of the war with Spain merge with a textual geography emphasizing Pacific Rim commercial connections. When Oliver finally arrives in Manila after being shipwrecked and fleeing captivity by “Tagals,” he describes the city in terms of its “many quaint shops, not unlike those... in Hong Kong and in the Chinatown districts of San Francisco” (*A Sailor-boy* 104). Similarly, Larry’s search for work in Honolulu takes him into the business district, where the streets are “very much like those in a small American city” (*Under Dewey*). Beyond these domesticated spaces of American capital Stratemeyer maps the Philippines in terms of its natural features, human geography, and economic potential. Rev. Wells, a passenger aboard Larry’s new ship, the *Columbia*, tutors the young sailor, describing the islands as a repository of untapped wealth. “[O]n account of their volcanic origin,” the reverend explains, the Philippines are “full of precious minerals” and thus number “among the richest islands of the world” (142). His assessment echoes Brooks Adams’s, whose essay “The Spanish War and the Equilibrium of the World” notes the Philippines’ “rich, coal-bearing” terrain and its “fine harbors,” geological features that render the archipelago “a predestined base” for further American expansion (650). Brooks conceives of the Philippines not as a prize to be taken out of imperial greed but as the “inevitable” fruits of a national character governed by nature itself. “Nature is omnipotent,” he counsels, “and nations must flow with the tide.” That irresistible oceanic motion owes as much to commercial activity as to racial “vitality.” Where

“the exchanges flow,” countries such as the United States “must follow” or risk dissolution: “the civilization which does not advance declines,” Adams writes, confirming the analogy between life-cycle and racio-national development (651). If in the past “Anglo-Saxons... have been the most successful of adventurers” the Philippines represent a setting in which to determine whether “the race has preserved its ancient martial quality.”

In Stratemeyer’s version of this new proving ground, the flora and fauna of the islands provide exotic scenery and a series of obstacles. Oliver enters a world of giant bats, “buffalo bulls,” and odiferous flowers that stupefy unwary travelers (*A Sailor-boy* 218) while Larry encounters a large snake, wild boars, flurries of brilliant butterflies, and pigeons “of rather rank flavor” (*Under Dewey* 169). One of the most notable differences between the two texts occurs in this register in that the tests Larry faces are highly episodic and do not immediately participate within a geographical imaginary of the western Pacific as a space of colonial conflict. At each stop along the way Larry and his shipmates experience events having little to do with imminent war between Spain and the United States. Off the coast of Wake Island, for example, a sawfish attacks Larry and Luke Stryker, a slightly older though much more seasoned sailor, as they swim in a race around the *Columbia*. Days later, disembarking at the Marianas, the landing party is frightened by a python as they hunt sea turtles. Such simplified encounters not only lack explicit political content, they correspond to the linearity of Larry’s journey, confirming Johnson’s claim that the novel-- already in progress at the declaration of war-- was quickly restructured to

include contemporary events (*Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate* 70).

The pivotal moment in *Under Dewey* occurs on the second leg of the journey from Hawaii to Hong Kong, when Larry and Stryker are thrown overboard by a treacherous Norwegian seaman, Ole Oleson, in the vicinity of the Philippines. Washed ashore on an unknown island, they recapitulate in compressed form the basic contours of the Robinsonade, gathering food, exploring their surroundings, and constructing a rudimentary shelter-- a resemblance Larry himself notes when he tells Stryker that they have become ““Crusoes”” (171). Within two days, however, they discover and repair a derelict boat which they christen the *Treasure*-- reference to another adventure story intertext-- and then set sail for Luzon. After only a few hours their boat sinks, and by sheer luck they are sighted by a ship of the Asiatic Squadron and rescued by “a dozen bronzed jackies” (195).

While the first part of the novel plots a trajectory of adventure and initiation governed by “chance time”<sup>195</sup> and the vagaries of Pacific topography, the latter half inserts Larry into the institutional order of the US Navy as a sailor’s apprentice (Bakhtin 94). Stryker, who years before served as a gunner with Dewey, asks that he and Larry be allowed to enlist, a request that Dewey-- described in a lengthy hagiographical chapter covering his early history, the achievements of his self-made father, his religious disposition and psychological traits-- is happy to accommodate. Notably it is on the eve of battle that Larry’s adventures come to a halt. The larger share of the chapters that follow concern a discussion of technical matters such as

<sup>195</sup> “[T]he specific time during which irrational forces intervene in human life” (Bakhtin 94).



ships' tonnage, weapons systems, and command structure. Combined with a brief explanation of US motives in declaring war, this exposition anchors scenes of Larry's instruction in practical matters of navy life.

Stratemeyer's rationale for intervention closely shadows the arguments in favor of war found in *Forward March*, though significantly he lists the desire to stop human suffering as motive only after economic loss. "American capital amounting to millions of dollars was invested in Cuba, and this was rapidly being lost through confiscation and destruction of property," Stratemeyer explains (187). Yet these financial considerations are not in themselves cause for war:

What worried the people was the cruelty practised by the Spanish authorities against the insurgents, and when in the halls of Congress it was openly declared that through Spanish misrule tens of thousands of Cuban men, women, and children were actually starving to death, the people everywhere here cried out that this must stop, and if no other civilized nation would take a hand, the US must step in alone and do the work.

Perhaps aware that his readers might have trouble connecting Spanish abuses in Cuba with an invasion of the Philippines, Stratemeyer scripts a brief dialog between Larry, who is uncertain whether the looming conflict in the Pacific is "fair," and a sergeant of the marines (200). "Spain owns the Philippines," the sergeant explains, "and as she has chosen to go to war, why it's no more than right that we should endeavor to capture these islands." In this view the nature of war itself is responsible for events, though Stratemeyer's account of the Battle of Manila Bay seems oddly static. Confined to a gun turret aboard the *Olympia* as a powder monkey Larry sees almost nothing of combat, and instead listens to Stryker's shouted observations from his post at a portal. When the opportunity for heroism arises, Larry

acts, yet the deed he performs pales in comparison with his previous adventures as a castaway. Seeing that the gunner has failed to lock the gun breech properly, a potentially lethal mistake, Larry springs forward to correct him. Stratemeyer seems to recognize the incommensurability of the factory atmosphere of the battleship and its routinized tasks with the more anarchic space of the open sea and the islands. He compensates for this imbalance with a pair of metaphors describing Larry's role as a laborer-combatant. "He was working like a Trojan," Stratemeyer writes, "with the perspiration pouring from his whole body, and the smoke and soot had made him the color of a true African" (258). Elevated to a warrior of Western antiquity by the first figure, the invocation of Africa simultaneously races and primitivizes him. True, the latter gesture bears only the slightest resemblance to a later sea story of industrial atavism, Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* (1922), a play that dramatizes the imbrication of proletarianization and primitivization. Yet this single sentence suggests the promise of a transformative primal experience, even as it recuperates that possibility into the inflexible social order of the modern navy.

According to *Under Dewey* the core virtue of youth is obedience, a theme which boys' adventure stories of the Spanish-American War revisit repeatedly. In an anecdote recalling Marden's Crimean chief of zouaves, a sailor under Dewey's command refuses an order, arguing that the task assigned lies outside his duty. Dewey tells him his first duty is to obey orders and that if the sailor does not comply he will be summarily executed. Needless to say the sailor does as he is told with celerity, and "in the end there was no better hand on board... nor one that thought more of the 'old man'" (212). If this lesson seems brutal it does little to impeach the masculine figures

guiding Larry into maturity. In spite of Dewey's totalitarian assertion of hierarchy, the captains Larry serves under are never less than fatherly. In *A Sailor-boy*, however, such is not the case. Kenny, clearly unreliable and malicious, betrays his shipmates (and his racial identity) by attempting to murder Oliver and colluding with Chinese pirates. It is tempting to read this fracturing of moral authority in light of the fragmentation of national consensus as the Spanish-American War came to an end and the Filipino-American war commenced. The anti-imperialist movement which mobilized in the interim featured patriarchal public figures denouncing the imperial cause, though if Stratemeyer's second Deweyade absorbed this development it did not rearticulate it explicitly. Yet certainly his books are highly responsive to current events, and it is for this reason that *A Sailor-boy* features a highly convoluted plot and a much more erratic literary cartography.

The differences between the novels indicate the increasing complexities of the splendid little war as it gradually became clear that the next phase of operations would include colonial acquisition. Larry has no contact with Filipinos beyond what he learns in passing from Rev. Wells, who focuses not on ethnographic description but several anecdotes demonstrating the brutality of Spanish tyranny. By contrast *A Sailor-boy* represents the Philippines as an alien space of threatening heterogeneity and conflict, one with "a terribly mixed population of Tagals, Malays, Papuan negroes, Chinese, Japanese, and Caucasians, with half- and quarter-breeds without number" (40). "[T]he natives" are distinguished by their treachery and bellicosity, their laziness and incapacity for self-rule. The later text responds to the explicit ideological demands of its changing political climate by denigrating Filipinos and

promoting Oliver as a surrogate for national power. Yet notably this figure is one whose acquisitive instincts, technical proficiency, and entrepreneurial skills are set at a premium higher than simple patriotism.

The themes of captivity and compensation accompany many of the trajectory changes in *A Sailor-boy*, and Oliver is captured by hostile forces numerous times. Having escaped the Tagals who first imprisoned him he arrives in Manila and reunites with Dan Holbrook only to be arrested by Spanish troops who regard them as “rebel sympathizers” (104). Removing the bars of their prison cell with “an old fork and a rusty spoon” they flee to the docks where they book passage aboard the *Cardigan* for Hong Kong (113). Upon their return to that city Dan and Oliver learn of the looming conflict, a prospect with immediate consequences for the firm of Raymond, Holbrook, and Smith. Given the imminent hostilities, Dan’s father reasons, “the Spanish sugar planters who have bought machinery of us won’t pay a dollar now” (126). Motivated by the possible loss of 40,000 dollars, the recovery of some “business papers of great value” (54) and a strong desire to confront “those dirty Tagals” and “get square with those Spaniards,” Oliver plans another journey to Manila (127).

Later that evening the boys encounter a marine assigned to the Asiatic Squadron being robbed by three Chinese. Helping him to fend off his attackers, and escorting him to his ship, Oliver and Dan are introduced to Commodore Dewey. As it happens the commodore’s launch malfunctions and Oliver, who has already established himself as an expert “tak[ing]... naturally” to steam power technology, quickly repairs the engine (89). Praised as a genius by Dewey, his passage to the

Philippines is guaranteed. Aboard the *Boston* as guests rather than conscripts, Oliver and Dan watch as US ships go into battle with a “vigor that only the Anglo-Saxon race knows” (163). The encounter won, the friends head for shore, where there are already indications that the conflict will become an insurgency. A wounded Spanish soldier tells Dan that “the rebels... are worse than wild beats,” to which Dan responds, “[T]he fighting here isn’t half over” (167). Wandering beyond the outskirts of Cavite in the direction of Manila, the boys learn the truth of Dan’s words when they are taken prisoner by soldiers from the Manila Home Guard. In a sudden reversal the two friends escape when their captors fall into a rebel ambush. Oddly, the novel now arrives at the very point it had reached when Oliver and Dan were first reunited in Manila.

The last half of Stratemeyer’s novel relates a plethora of turns at an admirably dizzying pace. Oliver sneaks into Manila to find the branch office of his father’s firm under threat from looters, who wound an employee before being repulsed. On their way to the docks Dan and Oliver encounter a dying old man-- yet another victim of robbery-- who entrusts them with a letter to deliver to his son, the *Dart*’s second mate, Watt Brown. On their way to the last known location of the *Dart*-- which was washed ashore by the winds, it seems, rather than sunk-- the party defend themselves against water buffalos and are forced into hiding by the arrival of “six short, wicked-looking Tagals... jabbering in a native dialect” (221). Arriving at the beach where the *Dart* lies stranded in shallow waters they find Watt Brown, who has been asked to safeguard the ship by its owners. Within moments a Chinese junk with Capt. Kenny aboard appears on the horizon and initiates an attack. Gunfire erupts and the *Dart* is

boarded. Retreating below decks to make “a final stand” and locate his lost papers, Oliver’s party takes several casualties including Brown, who is mortally wounded (241). When the fog of battle clears, however, the Chinese pirates have been routed, leaving behind Kenny who lies dying, apparently the victim of his erstwhile allies, “terribly mutilated by knife-cuts” (247). The next day Watt Brown expires, though not before he offers his father’s written legacy to Oliver, who ascertains that the documents concern ““a treasure said to be buried somewhere on the Hawaiian islands”” (248). The *Dart* is leased to the United States government. Manila falls. All commercial transactions, matters of property, and contractual obligations are normalized and fulfilled. Indeed, in the aftermath of Oliver’s adventure and the conquest of Manila “business is booming with Raymond, Holbrooke, & Smith” (249).<sup>196</sup>

Yet the logic of this mass-cultural form of adventure compulsively promises that the resolution of conflict leads to further events. Dan and Oliver travel to San Francisco, and a month later Oliver’s father returns from Cuba with “a first-rate young fellow” named Mark Carter (the hero of Stratemeyer’s *When Santiago Fell; or, the War Adventures of Two Chums*). The three immediately become friends and prepare to go to the “recently annexed” islands of Hawaii in search of the treasure alluded to in the “strange document” bequeathed by Watt Brown (250). The “fiction factory” mode of production ensures there will be no rest for the young (Johnson

<sup>196</sup> The emphasis on business as a catalyst if not a form of adventure in the setting of the Philippines also occurs in Harrie Hancock’s *Aguinaldo’s Hostage; or, Dick Carson’s Captivity Among the Filipinos* (1900) which tells the story of Dick Carson, who, “seized by the Philippine fever,” travels to Manila to seek his fortune (25)

ix).<sup>197</sup> Though subsequent novels in the *Old Glory Series* brought Larry Russell and his brothers back to Buffalo, because Lee and Shepard insisted that all series consist of six volumes Stratemeyer sent the Russells away from home once more to the Philippines, where the final three novels transpire.<sup>198</sup>

Written by middle-aged men, these stories define youth from without in the interests of representing naked ideological interests rather than expressing an inside view of youthful subjectivity. At the same time, they conflate the fantasy of adventure and the reality of a militarized foreign policy. Certainly boys' books of the Spanish-American War shape the abstract space of adventure according to a geography of imperial politics. Rather than charting purely imaginary elsewheres the resulting map is composed by extant locales and historical events. Narrating the young American male into the colonial theater opens a space of identification in the text for readers, from which they may observe and assess the world according to a perspective equally congenial to individual and national power. Inserting their surrogates into the contact zone authors such as Munroe and Stratemeyer take pains to ensure that the experience of the colonial frontier does nothing to subvert the ideal-type of clean-cut, patriotic youth. The texts implicitly pledge that when young men go off to fight for colonies they will return improved by the chance to exercise their talents, though otherwise much as they left. The very formulaicism of the genre

<sup>197</sup> In his 47-year career Stratemeyer used 83 pseudonyms to author approximately 275 stories and outline a further 690 others.

<sup>198</sup> Ben is the protagonist of *A Young Volunteer in Cuba: or, Fighting for the Single Star* while Walter is the hero of *Fighting in Cuban waters; or, Under Schley on the Brooklyn*. The last three novels in the series are *Under Otis in the Philippines; or, A Young Officer in the Tropics; The Campaign of the Jungle; or, Under Lawton Through Luzon*; and *Under Macarthur in Luzon; or, Last Battles in the Philippines*. Yet another series, *The Soldiers of Fortune* would use new characters to narrate the US American relationship to the Pacific Rim, taking the Boxer Rebellion and the Russo-Japan War as settings. See Rouleau, noted above.

enables the authors to discipline not only the content of their stories but their audience. The emphasis on recuperating order out of adventure, of allotting the young their share of the action at the behest of patriarchal authority, lends itself to the project of reconsolidating the nation to encompass its new possessions. Yet the imaginative play of romance can risk undermining ideological fixities. Adventures at the verge of empire allegorize youthful development in ways that are potentially destabilizing for both the nation and its fictive and real world surrogates. Passage into the concrete space of the colonies inevitably raises the doubt that the borderland will transform the adventurer not after the manner of the now-sealed frontier of the American West but according to more obscure and anarchic forces.

## **V. The Turn: Frank Norris**

In 1889 G.A. Henty, famed author of 82 (frequently pirated) novels between 1871 and 1906, with sales of perhaps 25 million copies, published *Captain Bayley's Heir*. The novel concerns Frank Norris, a sixth form public school student in Westminster disgraced by the malicious accusation that he has stolen ten pounds. Unable to prove his innocence, he signs aboard a ship bound for New Orleans. The same year another Frank Norris crossed the Atlantic from the European east to the North American west. Arriving in San Francisco after a year's absence, he began writing his neomedieval long poem *Yvernelle* and the draft of a novel published only after his death, *Vandover and the Brute*. The trans-Atlantic trajectories of these two figures-- one fictional, the other historical-- reproduce the course of colonial settlement linking Old and New Worlds. Yet the first Frank embarks on a quest for



adventure and redemption while his real-life namesake travels home. Both are transformed by experiences accumulated in foreign lands. In this respect their journeys mirror one another, and if the Franks are not identical they share something in common. Each of them is bourgeois and comes from a broken home-- the Briton by virtue of the death of his parents, the American as a child of divorce. Yet if America is for one a romantic elsewhere-- a testing ground for nascent masculine virtues which will ultimately prove vindictory, ensuring the rewards of inheritance and social position upon his return-- for the other it is a point of embarkation and a site of inscription. Frank Norris the American author will leave the United States repeatedly in the years to come, touring not only Europe but several Anglo-American imperial zones.

Like the diffuse if self-conscious spread of the romantic revival, the genre of imperial romance developed trans-Atlantically, though not as a case of simple unidirectional transmission from Britain to the United States.<sup>199</sup> True, “American readers experienced it mainly in relation to British texts”-- particularly novels and stories by Haggard, Kipling, and Stevenson-- but the ubiquity of American romance as a genre, a mode, and a marketing trope could hardly be denied (Glazener 157).

While the pundits of magazine culture haggled over the literary value of romance

<sup>199</sup> The issue of genre again raises its head here, obviously, particularly in light of the sundry taxonomic distinctions formulated by various critics. As Murray notes imperial romance is one of numerous labels, including “adventure romance” (her preferred term drawn from Daly), “imperial gothic” (Brantlinger) “Victorian gothic” (Kosofsky) “quest romance” (Fraser) and “colonial romance” (Moretti). To this list should be added Harrison’s “mercenary romance” (*Agent of Empire* 53). While I appreciate Murray’s rationale for the adoption of “adventure romance”-- she argues that the term underscores prior formal elements which have “combined with a new space-time configuration to enable... new imperial content”-- I use “imperial romance.” Though it is a retrospective genre that has been defined as specifically British and confined to its historical moment and colonial setting, the category is useful in the context of US American Machine Age literary and cultural production and consumption as it emphasizes the quasi-colonial character of US imperialism, foregrounding dominion over settlement.

popular discourse circulated the idea promiscuously such that books having nothing at all to do with imaginative literature adopted its signifying power as a titular conceit. In the decades on either side of the turn of the century fields of endeavor as disparate as engineering and the arts and crafts produced romances of their origins and development. A sampling of such titles illustrates this claim: *The Romance of the American Navy* appeared beside *The Romance of Modern Astronomy* on bookstore and library shelves, in addition to romances of states (*The Romance of Oklahoma*), commodities (*The Romance of Steel*), industrial processes (*The Romance of Glass-making*), scientific theories (*The Romance of Evolution*), religious proselytism (*The Romance of Missionary Heroism*), professions (*The Romance of Life Insurance*), and animals (*The Romance of the Newfoundland Caribou*). Though until recently, as Nancy Glazener notes, twentieth century scholarship was inclined to ignore the romance revival, contemporary criticism was rife with denunciations and defenses of the form.

While *Captain Bayley's Heir*<sup>200</sup> was published in 1889, the novel is set forty years earlier in the immediate aftermath of a key moment in America's expansionist history, the Mexican-American War. Notably, Henty makes no mention of this event, though it occurred almost simultaneously with the gold rush (the *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo* was signed nine days after the discovery of gold deposits at Sutter's Mill).

<sup>200</sup> The precis of *Captain Bayley's Heir* provided by a catalog for Blackie and Sons' *Books for Young People* runs as follows:

A frank manly lad and his cousin are rivals in the heirship of a considerable property. The former falls into a trap laid by the latter, and while under a false accusation of theft foolishly leaves England for America. He works his passage before the mast, becomes one of the hands on a river trading-flat, joins a small band of hunters, crosses a tract of country infested with Indians to the Californian gold diggings, and is successful as both a digger and a trader. He acquires a small fortune, and at length returns home, rich in valuable experiences. (3).

Having traveled upriver from New Orleans Frank's decision to take the northern route from Omaha-- "the last point of civilisation"<sup>201</sup>-- across the plains to the goldfields allows Henty to suppress the issue of empire, locating the action in the north country, where the politics of conquest are represented as negligible (152). Conflict does not arise between warring nation-states there but takes the form of struggle against nature, with Native Americans portrayed not as political actors defending their sovereignty -- unlike Deadwood Dick and other dime no opportunity for parley arises-- but as one among many dangers characterizing the environment. Such events as do reach to the level of political contestation-- hostage negotiations, temporary alliances-- are related by Frank's hunter companions, Abe and Dick, who tell stories of their experiences almost without respite.

*Captain Bayley's Heir* depends heavily on dialogue, and often the most sensational occurrences are narrated to Frank, forming a part of his (and Henty's readers') education, one which also consists of practical knowledge such as how to pan for gold or build a trench fire with buffalo chips. In this regard Henty subordinates romance to utility, recuperating the adventure of his story into the novel's didactic ambitions. That scrupulous dedication to the facts as a means of edifying young readers can be seen when the party arrives in the mining camps. Henty (the authorial presence) breaks into the narrative to explain in detail the methods of placer extraction versus contemporary hydraulic techniques, a brief comparison which also implicitly reinscribes romance as a casualty of the age of

<sup>201</sup> A key chronotope of empire from Conrad's "Outpost of Progress" (1897) to Coppola's vision of the US military base at the Do Lung bridge in *Apocalypse Now* (1975).

mechanization. This in itself differentiates *Captain Bayley's Heir* and Norris's first published novel *Moran of the Lady Letty*; for while the latter mobilizes a nautical lexicon and textures the action with sailorly observations culled from conversations with Joseph Hodgson<sup>202</sup> it does so in order to accrue an effect of verisimilitude-- and thus authority to its author-- rather than to instruct.

*Moran of the Lady Letty* also lacks the sort of inter-cutting between settings which structures Henty's novel. In chapter XIV, well after Frank has arrived in California, Henty shifts back to Westminster, where one of the subplots of his novel begins to resolve. Like Frank's own story, this collateral narrative concerns property and family relations. Harry, a young man adopted as a foundling who lost the use of his legs after being run over by a cart, is revealed to be the son of Captain Bayley's estranged and now-deceased daughter. Meanwhile Barkley, the cousin whose treachery instigated Frank's flight, comes under increasing suspicion. By contrast, once Ross Wilbur is drugged and thrown into the hold of the *Bertha Milner* the focus remains on coastal Baja and Alta Californias. The rationale for these two distinct structures-- Henty's alternating foreign and domestic *mise-en-scenes*, which function together in a narrative unity, and Norris's undivided attention to the space of adventure-- can be inferred from the ends of both novels.

There is never any doubt that Henty's Frank Norris will travel back to Britain, and that all of his actions in America are for the sake of such a return. His increasing

<sup>202</sup> According to Walker's biography Hodgson considered himself to have co-authored *Moran* insofar as he provided the terminological and anecdotal materials Norris used in the novel. (Though Norris did not always reproduce that information correctly as when he refers to the "garboard streak" of the *Lady Letty* (61).) Indeed, Norris got quite a bit of mileage out of Capt. Hodgson's yarns. For example, his short story "The Dual Personality of Slick Dick Nickerson" (which also features a ship named the *Bertha Milner*) is based almost entirely on a story Hodgson told Norris about a Russian sealing camp.

fluency with the social and historical peculiarities of the unconsolidated though teleologically overdetermined US, his various character-building encounters, and his prudent, determined entrepreneurship (which is coupled with the ultimate acquisitive fantasy of striking gold) are each in the service of his natural role back home. Frank's coming of age represents development as a kind of psychological epigenesis-- the unfolding of what is already there and thus will inevitably appear-- rather than a Hallsean "fulminating dawn," largely because the drama of that growth is externalized.

By the time Frank returns to England he has not altered except insofar as he has become more fully himself. The romance of his sojourn in America thus converts into a kind of experiential capital-- as Blackie and Sons' advertisement phrases it Frank leaves America "rich in valuable experience"-- not because it forms him but because it demonstrates that if his inherited privilege was not earned at least it could have been. The specie capital Frank accumulates functions as the objective correlative of this principle even as it emphasizes the desirability-- the necessity-- of incorporating value into British society from without-- in other words as a tacit illustration of how empire is supposed to work. Vindicated by the revelation that his cousin Barkley is responsible for the theft of Dr. Litter's ten pounds, Frank evinces no regret for his three years in America, reassuring the headmaster

"I am happy indeed that I am cleared at last; and, after all, it has done me no harm. I have, of course, lost the University education which I looked forward to; but I think, after all, that the three years I have spent in America have in many ways done me more good than the University could have done." (382).

Moral accounts are further tabulated-- and explicitly yoked to the imperial zone-- when Captain Bayley disinherits Barkley, though the latter graduates from college and becomes a lawyer. Unable to create a successful career in England he accepts the offer of “a petty judgeship in India, and there, ten years later, he died, stabbed to the heart by a Mahomedan (sic) dacoit” (384). Frank marries Alice and assumes control of her inheritance, becoming a somewhat indifferent member of parliament who “can always be depended upon to vote with his party.” Yet his greatest reward is his fame “as one of the best masters of fox-hounds, one of the best landlords, and one of the most popular country gentlemen in England” (385).

## **VI. With Jameson in the Transvaal**

At twenty-six Frank Norris returned to San Francisco with white hair, a lingering fever, and a snake tattoo on his wrist.<sup>203</sup> Already prematurely gray,<sup>204</sup> the perennially boyish writer seemed aged by his contact with Africa; like Knox’s young colonial squaddie Norris had passed through an imperial zone and left weakened. Though the incipient conflict that drew him there -- the Jameson Raid, an abortive uprising by English settlers against the Boer republic-- lacked the racial manicheanism of the Matabele War two years before, it was nonetheless perceived to

<sup>203</sup> Marcossou identifies this ailment as “enteric”-- a form of typhus-- while Crisler and McElrath suggest it may have been dengue fever or malaria. Norris’s brother Charles considered the recurrent fever as “the complication” resulting in Norris’s early death (*Frank Norris* 9).

<sup>204</sup> From Juliet Tompkins’ preface to the 1928 edition of *The Pit*:

[Norris’s] romantic good looks-- thick iron-grey hair with a young, brown face; the stare that had always a widening of astonishment in it; the rather swaggering clothes--his hat was a broad-brimmed Stetson, his coat had a line at the waist, and the stick in his hand was telling the world as he took the Avenue. There was something of mousquetaire in him, of actor and romancer. We were all touched with Stevenson in those days, self-conscious adventurers who slept under the stars and strewed pennies to pay (vii).

be a matter of Anglo-Saxon manifest destiny. Where Richard Harding Davis later saw “the simple ruggedness” (Seeley 32) of the Boers-- bearded farmers of pious stock who might have peopled the American frontier-- Norris imagined a race of oxen, “sluggish, unambitious, unspeakably stupid” (qtd. in Crisler and McElrath 186). The metaphor is telling, signifying one aspect of the brute, a “consistent but also significantly variable” symbol within a literary-naturalist taxonomy favored by Dreiser, Norris, and London which distinguishes between the wolf and the herd animal (Howard 102). According to Howard these two degenerate figures express fears of proletarianization and the “ritual act of casting [them] out” takes the form of a plot of descent (103). When McTeague wrestles Marcus he “crash[es] down upon him like the collapse of a felled ox” prior to biting off his ear (Norris 233). Later at the Big Dipper mine McTeague eats from his “dinner-pail... with both hands... looking around him with a steady ox-like gaze” (387) an image repeated twice in reference to little Owgooste’s “fixed... expressionless” (171) “ox-like stare” (104) and underscoring Mac’s childish bestiality.

Norris’s first article for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, “A Californian in the City of Cape Town,” opens at night off the coast of southern Africa as the passengers of the *Norham Castle* crowd the decks, straining to see landfall. In the distance they observe “a very faint blur of golden light” which increases in intensity until “all at once, right at its core a light flashed out... and everyone cried out at the same time” (CW 212). They “thrill” to the sight. “It was Africa,” Norris rhapsodizes, “the great ‘Dark Continent,’ dark... under that moonless sky, stretching out... behind the horizon for so many miles of pathless forest and nameless desert” (212).

Norris uses the second person to describe Cape Town, attempting to establish a direct identification between correspondent and reader. "You had imagined that the oldest civilized town in South Africa would be at least a small city," he writes, but the town is so underdeveloped that its inhabitants "still speak with pride of the electric lights (212). As in "the Indian Territory," he observes, linking the internal frontier of one empire with another's periphery, "an electric light plant appears to be the great ambition." South Africa is full of surprises, not least the weather, which on his arrival is cold and wet rather than, as expected, baked by "a blazing vertical sun." Such realities rapidly dispel the fantasy of loitering "with a Panama hat... a palm-leaf fan... and an iced drink" impelling him to ask both himself and his readers rhetorically, "Why should things be invariably different from what you had imagined?" (213).

Norris repeatedly emphasizes the absence of motifs culled from adventure fiction, contradicting the clichés of colonial romance in order to reinscribe them. His tour of the city focuses on local color, including "the Colonial Englishman," a type he finds in most respects "the same... that you might meet in London... or in Kamchatka," and the "picturesque" Malays (213-214). Explaining to his audience that he has been actively seeking "Zulus, Kaffirs, and the like" Norris is disappointed at not yet having met a single "pure-blooded native." Though the town is "swarming with Negroes.... a mongrel race, Malay, Dutch, and Hottentot grafted upon the original Kaffir stock," they are, rather disappointingly "not at all unlike our own blacks." The arrogance of this posture depends in equal part on the common sense of white supremacy and an upper-class affectation borrowed from Richard Harding Davis and rehearsed in several short stories such as "Son of a Sheik" (1891). These



hybrid figures, he remarks dismissively, “have a language of their own, but what it is I am sure I don’t know.”

Yet this blase pose evaporates when Norris, again linking the American West with the African South, describes a “circus” venue where “the ‘Matabele War’” is reenacted in the style of “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West” (215). He visits the attraction with “a certain Major [later Sir Hamilton] Goold-Adams,” a veteran of colonial service who, Norris insists to his readers, is the patriotic equivalent of “Washington and Grant and Sheridan.” Extolling Goold-Adams’s heroism as the commander of the Bechuanaland border police, who “subjugated Lobengula and his 5,000 Matabeles,”<sup>205</sup> Norris’s account of “the representation” prefigures Mac and Trina’s family outing in San Francisco to the variety show. A “miserable, big-headed little boy of nineteen” watches critically as “seventy Matabeles (perhaps they were Matabeles... perhaps... only mongrel Malays)” dance, and the combat is performed in a flurry of “blood and powder smoke and clubbed muskets” until a climactic rendition of “God Save the Queen” (216). This ironical rendering of imperial spectacle-- “it was a sorry show.... [but] one can’t get Matabeleland and a two-months’ war into a forty-foot sawdust ring”-- further consolidates Norris’s credentials as a savvy witness who will not be gulled into romancing the events he reports. Even so, he admits self-deprecatingly, undercutting his initial stance, he may have seemed “silly and boyish” in repeatedly asking the major to judge the performance’s authenticity. ““Was it as bad as that on the Shangani River,”” he asks breathlessly, ““and did Wilson and his

<sup>205</sup> Norris fails to mention that Lobengula’s troops were “mown down” with machine guns (*Cambridge History of the British Empire* 537).

thirty-seven heroes die as bravely as these circus hands in their hired uniforms would have us believe?””

This first report from South Africa reads as black comedy, not least because Norris constructs himself as a character in the article, one in opposition to “the little, big-headed boy” who cavils against the sham history of the circus, calling attention to the way its dilapidated and disreputable setting impinges on the suspension of disbelief. We could interpret that comic antagonism of perspectives-- the cynical teenager and the reporter, just five years older, who finds himself seduced by this provincial colonial drama-- as a division within Norris himself, a narrative tactic he had already employed in his as yet unpublished first novel *Vandover and the Brute*. Certainly there is an element of the grotesque in “A Californian in the City of Cape Town,” one which depends for its force on the unexpected turn from the image of a “wretched little boy” deriding the evening’s entertainment to Goold-Adams, who is pictured by Norris as “breathing forty to a minute, tugging nervously at his mustache” (217). This inversion of expectation-- the veteran is absorbed in the spectacle, “as interested and excited as though he were any little child,” while the boy objects disgustedly to all “this... tommyrot”-- implicitly valorizes romance and provides a narrative twist. It pivots toward the story’s conclusion, radically reordering if not obliterating everything that preceded it. Leaving the circus behind, the major is subdued. “It took twelve hours,” he remarks quietly, in cadences too studied to be true.

“It took twelve hours,” said the Major thoughtfully....  
“What took twelve hours?”

“It took twelve hours to kill them all. Wilson’s party, you know. The Matabeles told me how it was afterward. And the last man, with both thighs smashed by the same bullet, crawled to an ant heap with his Martini and a handful of cartridges and-- ah well. It’s over and done with now. I declare I’m rather thirsty.”

Norris’s initial article narrates this episode of empire in Africa elegiacally though it does so in a manner which manages to establish both his realist-reportorial credentials and his receptiveness to romance. Of particular note is the way in which the speaker’s “boyish” excitement links him to the tested British colonialist and distinguishes him from the “big-headed boy,” whose cynicism paradoxically becomes a symptom of callowness. Romance is real in this sense, or, put another way, even the shabbiest representation has the power to conjure realities if placed in the frame of colonial contest.

A week later the *Chronicle* published his next account, “From Cape Town to Kimberley Mine,” in which Norris again relates the visual parallels between the American frontier and South Africa, including “the vast table” of the Karoo, which evokes the Utah landscape, and mud buildings in the area recalling “the adobe houses of the West” (218). Yet here resemblances end, and as the train advances “things unmistakably African” come into view such as ostriches, long-eared sheep and dust devils. Kimberley itself “is a dead town,” characterized by “incipient decay,” an atmosphere that Norris hyperbolizes as “forlorn[...] mournful, [and] God-forgotten” (219). In a sharp rhetorical turn the impression made upon Norris is one of “unspeakable hideousness, a hideousness, a rampant, shrieking deformity, an ugliness

beyond words,” remarks which seem oddly gothic-- even uncanny-- in their fumbling attempt to express the ineffable desolation of an alien environment.<sup>206</sup>

The sight of black Africans, “the real pure-blooded stock-- Kaffirs, Basutos, Shangans” rather than the “mongrel Hottentot-Dutch-Malay of the Cape” relieves the ennui of Kimberley’s empty, heat-blasted streets. Norris describes them as “splendid-looking,” a panoply of types “in all degrees of barbarianism,” from the mine workers playing “a curious and savage variation of checkers<sup>207</sup> ... to the little pickaninny.”

Restlessly seeking the picturesque, Norris’s gaze comprehends “all the extremes of civilization” in this “cosmopolitan place” (220). Such juxtapositions produce semiotic texture, a variegation of textual surface which offers readers the aesthetic pleasure of what may turn out to be exotic or comic contradictions. Witness to “a sight rarely to be met with nowadays,” the Zulu war dance, he teases his audience with the possibility that in the frenzy of the performance “the desire of killing will flash out all on a sudden, an assegai... will stream through the air with a long swish, and a man will drop, his knees bending under him, his head rolling on his shoulder” (“A Zulu War Dance” 238).<sup>208</sup> Yet the narrative concludes with a puckish tableau: even as the

<sup>206</sup> Compare this with his description of the derelict *Lady Letty*: “An air of abandonment, of unspeakable loneliness, of abomination hung about her. Never had Wilbur seen anything more alone” (63).

<sup>207</sup> Again, an echo of this image occurs in *Moran of the Lady Letty*: “On board, [the Chinese sailors] mingled forward, smoking opium and playing a game that looked like checkers” (37).

<sup>208</sup> Four months later, in a comic-grotesque piece written for the *Wave*, “A Salvation Boom in Matabeleland,” Norris would intensify this image. Transporting two “parlor organs” to a distant settlement, Otto Marks, a sergeant of the Salvation Army, stumbles across a Zulu “impi” (*Apprenticeship Writings* 18). His guide, aware of the imminent danger, tells Otto to play one of the melodeons in order to forestall an attack. Otto accompanies the dancing warriors-- “music-mad as only the Zulu race can be” (21)-- until he loses his nerve, “shrieking and laughing and banging his fists upon the keys” (22). In a moment, “an assegai struck him... full on the face and he spun about twice gripping at the air and then went over sideways upon the key-board of the organ, his blood splashing the dazzling white of the celluloid keys.”

Notably, Norris’s story features a fairly extensive Zulu vocabulary, including stanzas from the war song of Umzilikazi, which he may have borrowed from Bertram Mitford’s *The King’s Assegai* (1894).

warriors give voice to “a curious sound, precisely like that made by a child imitating the puffing of a locomotive, a strange sort of ‘Chu! chu! chu!’<sup>209</sup> (242) a number of ladies look on, “click[ing] kodaks... while not thirty feet distant... [lies] a vast pile of modern machinery manufactured by a firm in Chicago” (243).

In this instance modern industry and spectacular indigeneity collide within a regime of touristic consumption in a fashion not unlike Charles Eastman’s account of “the Big Issue” at Pine Ridge reservation in 1890 (79). According to Eastman, on the day of the distribution of rations Sioux warriors perform “a veritable ‘Wild West’” as they pursue a small “herd of beef cattle” (80) in a “good imitation of the old time buffalo hunt.” Standing at the sidelines, he relates, are “many white sight-seers from adjoining towns” drawn by the prospect of witnessing the hunt and the “horse-races and dancing” that follow (81). In both cases the effect of watching a ritual activity staged for consumption within a bounded space is ultimately to scopically contain the native, re-territorializing the physical presence, political contemporaneity and cultural traditions of Sioux and Zulus.

At the compound of the De Beers mine, Norris continues, “you are reminded of the Ashantee village at the World’s Fair” (“In the Compound of a Diamond Mine” 223). Interlacing popular spectacle with the real of colonial economics, his reminder compels “you” to bring into interlocking proximity two imperial zones. The production and consumption of the fairgrounds’ miniature village-- a metonym of Africa-- overlaps with the lived conditions of extractive capital in its most immediate materiality-- from the “enormous pit” (227) to the individual diamond miner “kept

<sup>209</sup> This sound is later echoed in both *Vandover and the Brute* and *The Octopus*.

practically a prisoner... by his contract” (225). Touring the site Norris thinks he has encountered “the Kaffir... in something approximating his original state” though he seems to have missed the mine’s significance as a primary cause of the looming Second Boer War.<sup>210</sup> By turns condescending of and intrigued by this exotic other, Norris confesses to the surprising discovery of the miners’ “cleanliness” (224). Unlike Chinese-Americans in San Francisco, he asserts, the Kaffirs are “wonderfully cleanly” (225). “Fancy eight hundred Chinamen huddled together,” he writes, “or even the same number of the lower class of almost any nationality. It would go hard if the place did not reek of vermin and disease, if one was not overcome with all manner of abominable smells” (224-225). Like the frequent use of the familiar “you” of his articles, Norris’s phrasing summons an implicitly white, middle-class readership to witness these marvels of (bad and good) hygiene. In doing so it consolidates a racial ideology strengthened in the aftermath of the closure of the American frontier which valorizes the “splendid” primitive at the expense of the urban immigrant other. “Think of the underground dens in our own Chinatown,” he encourages, “think of the condition of the tenements in which people who claim to belong to the civilized nations dwell.” He shares this observation with a European mine employee, who responds that ““the Zulus are a very superior race; they are much more intelligent than the Dutch Boers.””

The theme of Boer inferiority which runs throughout the series of articles is ultimately expressed in terms of their unfitness for the project of colonization. If they

<sup>210</sup> As Hobsbawm phrases it rather bluntly: “Whatever the ideology, the motive for the Boer War was gold” (*The Age of Empire* 66).

are “stupid,” as Norris insists repeatedly, in an area as fertile as Southern Africa this defect is as much a crime against progress as a constitutional flaw. In distinction to the stupendous productivity of the British Boers “grow only just so much produce as suffices their own wants” (“In the Veldt of the Transvaal” 231). “In any country but South Africa, any country not inhabited by the Boer,” he insists, “one would see all this land covered with seas of grain or broken up into pasture lands or farms or fruit ranches” (230). Complacent, implicitly lazy, they are, like their “bullocks.... slow, placid, content,” satisfied with a few “buildings of mud... tobacco... [a] rifle... and [a] wagon.” In this respect, according to Norris, Boers may be classed with “the Arab... the Eskimo... [and] the Sioux,” an odd taxonomy which categorizes Boers as somehow indigenous, even pre-literate-- “hardly able to read a newspaper” (233) in fact-- and thus trapped at the second civilizational stage of barbarism. Significantly, Norris is compelled to essentially allochronize these descendants of Dutch settlers as white primitives while praising Zulus as “splendid,” an ideological contortion which is not, finally, qualitatively different from a popular racial discourse in the United States which proliferated in the aftermath of the Plains Wars, venerating Native Americans while derogating Southern European immigrants.

Dramatizing the political situation in Johannesburg, Norris forecasts an imminent “state of siege” (232). The intolerable insolence of the Boers in exacting heavy taxes from Uitlanders while denying them the vote, Norris predicts, will ultimately be met with defeat as a result of “the old, indomitable Anglo-Saxon spirit now rousing up again... as it roused itself in the Puritan colonies in the days of 1776 over the identical question of taxation without representation” (233). Even further, “it

would not be at all surprising if [in] the next ten years a United States of South Africa embracing everything between the Cape of Good Hope and the Zambesi River should spring into existence” (233-234). These speculations were soon soon confuted when Jameson’s party-- rumored to have crossed the frontier accompanied by “600 men and eight Maxims”-- was defeated after five hours of fighting. Shortly thereafter Norris-- who had donned Uitlander “Kharkee” and even been fired upon-- was expelled from Johannesburg (“The Uprising in the Transvaal”).

Notably, Norris’s dispatches from Southern Africa fed directly into the composition of *Moran of the Lady Letty*. Blending facets of adventure fiction, the detailed realism of reportage, and a quasi-scientific rhetoric of race inflected by imperial politics Norris sketches out a landscape of encounter peopled by colonial types. The central figure in this *mise-en-scene*-- Frank Norris, the young reporter-- traverses strange terrain, observing its inhabitants, modern and primitive, heroic and abject. If Norris’s reports are sometimes ironical, this tendency is part of a performance, one indicating that the youthful protagonist of empire’s racio-political romance is perspicuous even as he remains susceptible to the sweep of its drama. For all of his often bizarre and comical contrasts, for all of his emphasis on the spectacular pleasures of colonial conflict, Norris-- a devoted adherent to the Anglo-Saxon compact-- represents the scene of Southern Africa as a stage of civilizational significance. The key here is both spatio-temporal and modal. Deploying a casual version of race science concepts already drafted into service by imperialism’s most vocal promoters, Norris routs the real through romance. Describing a trajectory between specific locales symbolizing the thrilling anachrony of urban modernity’s



clash with modern primitives Norris constructs youth-- embodied in the young adventurer-reporter-- as the figure of a developmental plot. Such a project depends absolutely on the convergence of naturalism at its broadest-- scientific, realistic, empiricist-- and the form that will story that knowledge: romance.

## **VII. Frank Norris and the Naturalist Romance**

Norris advertised his work as a hybrid of two overlapping and loosely construed modes of American fiction. The American novel would become true to its national-cultural context when realism's concern with mimetic accuracy fused with romance's search for the deeper human truths residing beneath social surfaces. As he indicated in several oft-cited short essays, Emile Zola modeled this synthesis-- though significantly Norris drew inspiration from Zola's novels rather than criticism such as "The Experimental Novel." In his seldom neglected aesthetic statement, "A Plea for Romantic Fiction," Norris nominates Zola as "the very head of the Romanticists" (216), an office he elevates well above the station of writers of "borrowed, faked, pilfered romanticisms" ("An American School of Fiction?" 196). The "mere sentimentalism" of the former, he asserts, their implicitly dishonest (and effeminate) literary domesticity, has been misidentified with romance proper (213). A genre with profound cultural-- even racio-civilizational-- significance, Norris argues, romance has been travestied, transformed into "a conjurer's trick-box" stuffed with "flimsy quackeries, tins and claptraps" intended merely "to amuse, and relying on deception" (214). In a gesture of repudiation comprehending both popular-historical

romances<sup>211</sup> and fictions propagating “false views of life,”<sup>212</sup> Norris clears the ground for American literature not in order to claim its autochthonous origins but on the contrary to execute an inheritance (“Responsibilities of the Novelist” 11).

Like Moran Sternerson of *Moran and the Lady Letty*-- or Flossie, Lloyd Searight, and Blix, for that matter-- “the muse of American fiction,” Norris writes, is an imposing, statuesque figure, both “robust” and with “red-arm[s]... as strong as a man’s (“Novelists of the Future” 209-210). In a conceit dating back to his namesake Benjamin Franklin, whose coonskin cap was intended to suggest to Parisian *salonnières* that they fraternized with a true rustic, Norris delights in appearing unfinished, in seeming the natural, in batting aside the idea that American letters could ever be less than crudely and heroically plebeian. Accordingly his muse “rough-shoulders her way among men and... affairs... find[ing] a healthy pleasure in the jostlings of the mob and a hearty delight in the honest, rough-and-tumble, Anglo-Saxon give-and-take knockabout that we call life.” In this prideful metaphor the personification of American literature dominates the coarse atmosphere of democracy’s birthplace, the street, where commerce is a form of confrontation. Indeed, the national muse

is a Child of the People... and the wind of a new country...has blown her hair from out the fillets that the Old World muse has bound across her brow, so that it is all in disarray. The tan of the sun is on her cheeks, and the dust of the highway is thick upon her buskin, and the elbowing of many men has torn the robe of her, and her hands are hard with the grip of many things. (209).

<sup>211</sup> “Not that one quarrels with the historical novel as such,” he observes in “The True Reward of the Novelist” (15).

<sup>212</sup> “false character, false sentiment... false emotions, false heroism, false notions of self-sacrifice”

Norris, who possessed an eye for contemporary fashion, chooses clothing which identifies the muse with ancient Greece and medieval Europe. Buskins were often worn by Greek actors while the fillet, a garland once associated with Hellenic athletes, became in the Middle Ages a headband indicating the woman wearing it was unmarried. If not precisely a vision of “the mighty American republic... as a helmeted queen among nations” in Norris’s portrayal the national muse is certainly the product of a retrospective Western tradition (Roosevelt 5). The embodiment of literary genius, the muse channels a strength drawn from antiquity and the age of *chansons de geste*. Pushing athletically through urban throngs and wandering country roads in a provocative state of dishabille, she personifies Jacksonian brashness and Whitmanian expansiveness.

Yet the value of true romance accrues by virtue of its discernment and didacticism. Its capacity to sound “the unplumbed depths of the human heart, and the mystery of sex, and the problems of life, and the black, unsearched penetralia of the soul of man” simultaneously biologizes and stylizes the human element (220). These remarks echo an 1896 review of Zola’s *Rome* where Norris notes not only the novel’s descriptive detail but the “red thread of passion run[ning] through the story” in the form of disappointed love, betrayal, knife-play, poisoning, and a dramatic death scene (“Zola’s Rome” 62). Counterposed to these dramatic events is Zola’s naturalistic emphasis on “hereditary instincts... the fierce passion of the race blazing out at the supreme moment” (63).

Later that year Norris defended Zola’s work in general, and thus the genre of naturalism as a whole, in his first sustained critical piece for the *Wave*, arguing that

“Naturalism, as understood by Zola, is but a form of romanticism” (“Zola as a Romantic Writer” 85). Again, Norris asserts a radical distinction between naturalism’s exceptional subject matter and a Howells-ean realism privileging “things... likely to happen between lunch and supper.” Though he derided realism’s gentility, Norris championed the aesthetic value of verisimilitude, and he praises Howells’s *A Parting and A Meeting*, with its “flesh and blood characters” (“Reality and Theory”). In comparison to Mrs. Jarboe’s *Robert Atterbury*, he writes, Howells “knew his real life better.” Norris was even more impressed by *A Modern Instance*, a text strikingly similar to *Vandover and the Brute* in terms of its plot of the protagonist’s gradual dissolution, judging it “great because it is true, relentlessly and remorselessly true to American life” (“What is Our Greatest Piece of Fiction?” 231). The strengths of *A Modern Instance*, he argues, are those traditionally associated with the realist novel: “a consistency and a plausibleness... convincing beyond any possibility of doubt, and... a thorough knowledge of the novelist’s trade.” Yet in the same article Norris elevates Lew Wallace’s *Ben Hur* “to the class of great novels [for] its vivid descriptions of dramatic action” (230) including a “sea fight with pirates [and] the chariot race” (231). The melding of what to him seemed to be the opposing literary modes of realism and romance, Norris repeatedly contended-- exemplified in the contrast between Howells and Wallace-- was the source of naturalism’s power. He saw evidence of this generic fusion in a now largely forgotten work by James Lane Allen titled *Summer in Arcady*, a courtship novel Norris also reviewed for the *Wave*. Allen’s novel struck him, again, as “relentlessly true” (108) because of its “naturalistic point of view,” (109) a perspective established by the careful rendition of

the protagonists, Daphne and Hilary, as “little better than natural, wholesome human brutes, drawn to each other by the force of Nature... moved only by an unreasoned animal instinct” (110). *Summer in Arcady*’s appeal for Norris, the cogency of its claims to truth, centered on its juxtaposition of a marriage plot so minimal it could be recapitulated in a single sentence-- (“Daphne and Hilary meet, fall in love... go through a short courtship and are finally married.”)-- and the theme of inexorable sexual forces surging beneath the calm of upper-class life (109). For Norris Allen’s novel had the impact of a minor epiphany. The diction he used to characterize those bourgeois brutes was, as Joseph McElrath observes, virtually the same language employed to describe the attraction between Trina and Mac in the “Dentist Parlor” scene in *McTeague*.<sup>213</sup> Here was a domestic-- if perhaps still too cautious and courteous-- version of Zola’s “vast and terrible drama that works itself out in unleashed passions” (“Zola as a Romantic Writer” 86).

Naturalism, specifically the work of Frank Norris, owes a profound debt to romance conventions and realist strategies. Such a claim-- that naturalism is characterized by the persistence of “the traces of other genres” (Howard x); that it is “internally discontinuous” (9)-- is already a commonplace. For example, in “The Country of the Blue,” Sundquist asserts that “romance, as Norris quite correctly saw, remained the visceral, spiritual essence of the real” (*American Realism* 14). Taking Norris at his word, Charles Walcutt, in *A Divided Stream*, avers the salience of “the romantic” in literary naturalism by arguing that the impossibility of realizing a naturalist conceit most often associated with Zola-- the project of elaborating a

<sup>213</sup> “(Benjamin) Frank(lin) Norris.” *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. 1982.

literature of absolute scientificity-- led writers in “a continual search for form” (22). In the absence of a clear-cut literary taxonomy-- a naive rendering of genre that posits it as a category-box into which appropriate texts may be dropped-- writers picked up epistemological and stylistic elements, combining them in various ways. For Walcutt, a primary tension characterizing literary naturalism lay between naturalism as a “philosophical orientation” and the “romantic [as] an attitude or quality-- an exuberance or intensity of approach, a sense of vitality or richness” (22). Congruent with this contention, Christophe Den Tandt’s *The Urban Sublime in American Literary Naturalism* identifies “naturalist romances” as “novels that articulate an explicit sociological message through romantic narrative strategies” (18). “The specificity of naturalism as a genre,” he concludes in his study, “resides in its handling of romance,” (246) by incorporating “non-positivistic forms of intuition expressed through romance motifs and imagery” (17) a process he defines elsewhere as “romance knowledge,” an auxiliary literary technology which operates via “a medium of social mapping” (*A Companion to American Fiction, 1865-1914* 110). To an extent Richard Lehan supplements these claims, acknowledging that vestiges of romance persist in the “realist/naturalist novel” (30) though he does so by establishing a kind of literary teleology which extends from “the pure fantasies of Bram Stoker and Rider Haggard to the more realistic fantasies of Kipling and Stevenson, to the naturalism of London and Norris” (31). Lehan argues that while “naturalism empties the romance and melodrama of its moral dimension” nonetheless the naturalist novel features “plots [which] share a narrative formula” with romance, including “the use of sensational incidents, virtuous protagonists versus villainous antagonists, forces at

work beyond a character's control, an inability to escape the past" (212). Though, like Lehan, he doubts the success of Frank Norris's attempt to realize a romantic-realist synthesis, George W. Johnson documents a tendency within literary production during the fin-de-siecle period which sought to graft realism's "attention to the norm rather than the variant, and its relatively comprehensive rendering of the details of a society... [onto] the romantic subordination of character to action" ("Frank Norris and Romance" 54).

In *The Vast and Terrible Drama* Erik Link rejects the taxonomic standard of naturalism as, in George Becker's phrasing, "pessimistic, materialist determinism" (qtd. in Link 11). This thumbnail sketch of the genre has had many adherents, such as Lars Ahnebrink, who defined naturalism as "a manner and method of composition by which the author portrays life as it is in accordance with the philosophic theory of determinism"-- further entrenching the notion that naturalism is simply the cruder, darker offspring of realism (qtd. in Link 12). The definition Link prefers focuses instead on the thematic treatment of scientific and philosophical naturalism, a looser construal which broadens the field of naturalist texts even as it renders irrelevant charges of authorial failure. In other words, the criteria suggested by Link depends on whether naturalist theory-- "the amorphous set of concepts emanating from philosophical and scientific naturalism"-- incorporated into a given novel, rises to the level of a theme or structure (19). Rather than weighing whether that novel succeeds at replicating Zola-esque techniques or evinces sufficient pessimism, Link argues that "it is theme, rather than genre, methodology, convention, tone, or philosophy, that qualifies a text for inclusion in the 'school' of American literary naturalism" (18).

The naturalist novel appropriates romance conventions in order to pursue a mimetic project of reconstructing the world in relation to naturalist theory. For Norris and London, Link argues, “the romance-novel is the *donnée* of American literary naturalism and one of the principle features of the naturalist aesthetic” (40). This condition of representational possibility, which is also an adaptive re-routing of literary energies, is neither confirmation of the centrality of romance nor a lapse of realist integrity. Instead, “the freedom of conception and construction in the romance” practically facilitated “the narratization and exploration of naturalist theory” more effectively than realism’s indexical aesthetic permitted. As a means of contending with all-comprehending abstractions of nature, society and economy, romance tropes-- including, in Norris’s language, “‘enormous scenic effects’... ‘the monstrous’ [and] the ‘tragic’”-- enabled the literary naturalist to conceive and communicate some version of a cosmos ruled by forces so massive they were, in effect, metaphysical (qtd. in Link 66). The naturalist romance in this sense is a representational strategy, a method of re-translation between the occult realm of X-rays. for example, which so perplexed Henry Adams, and a sense of imaginative and cognitive proportionality, an effort to establish “a common scale of measurement” between the “new universe” and the old (346). Even further, literary naturalism-- animated by its own romantic quest for an epistemological frame of reference sweeping enough to encompass the cosmic grid of “force”-- assembles its narrative components from various plots. Narratives of incline, decline, and recapitulation --structured by strands of philosophical and scientific naturalism such as Morel’s theory of degeneration, Spencer’s progressivist



evolutionism, and Haeckel's biogenetic law-- furnish the genre's foundations.<sup>214</sup>

Following this line of inquiry, I analyze Norris's first published novel and several of his short stories in order to assess the thematic debts and formal parallels between romance and naturalist theory. To varying degrees all of these works constitute an early synthesis combining adventure fiction, reportage, and popular-scientific notions of human development. My goal is to weigh the extent to which Norris contributes not only to the formation of "the postrealistic romance," but a *fin-de-siecle* youth concept (Link 38).

### **VIII. Moran of the Lady Letty**

In letters Norris referred to his first published novel as an experiment in fiction-writing, informing Isaac Marcossou that "When I wrote 'Moran' I was, as one might say, flying kites, trying to see how high I could go without breaking the string" (Marcossou 233). That apparently offhand and self-deprecating metaphor should be accorded its full weight because it suggests not only Norris's appreciation of the ludic possibilities of popular romance but his clinical interest in narratives' tensile strength. How far up would the kite fly? When did heightened effect tip into jejune pulp? Pushed to its limits would red-blooded adventure burst or dry up? The image also

<sup>214</sup> Or, alternately, as Lisa Long writes, naturalism as a genre is a victim of its own modality:

In the end, naturalism turns back on itself, becomes the uncategorizable category, precisely because the taxonomic and evolutionary tendency of literary history is naturalist in and of itself—concerned in its own way with determining what nineteenth-century critic Hippolyte Taine theorized as the ubiquitous 'race, moment, and milieu' that have produced literary naturalism and other generic categories. (172).

See Lisa A. Long, "Genre Matters: Embodying American Literary Naturalism" *American Literary History*, Volume 19, Number 1, Spring 2007. pp 160-173 (review)

raises the question of authorial control. Self-consciously engaging with romance in the form of an adventure story, Norris accepts a challenge issued decades before by Hawthorne, who argued that in undertaking romance, the writer ““is always, or always ought to be, careening on the utmost verge of a precipitous absurdity”” (qtd. in Pierce 69). The measure of an author’s proficiency, Hawthorne continued, ““lies in coming as close as possible”” to the edge ““without actually tumbling over.”” In another letter, written before the conclusion of *Moran*’s serialization in the *Wave*, Norris acknowledges a friend’s compliment of having written ““a corking good story”” and admits ““I’ve had more fun writing the yarn than anything I’ve got hold of yet”” (qtd. in Walker 162). ““My game,”” he continues, is to establish Wilbur Ross as ““a mere nit”” in order to ““bring Moran out in full value”” (qtd. in Walker 162-163). In fact, ““Moran is the only excuse for the yarn. Wilbur is just the protagonist (Mr. W.D. Howells he gimme that word)”” (qtd. in Walker 163). What was true at the moment of his correspondence, however, changed by the time Norris had completed the “yarn’s” eleventh installment. While Moran occupies a position of privilege in the first part of the novel, as McElrath notes, Wilbur takes center stage after he defeats her in battle.<sup>215</sup>

Briefly, Yale alumnus Ross Wilbur, a “clubman” accustomed to the frivolities of leisure class San Francisco, is shanghaied by a waterfront crimp and thrown drugged on the deck of the *Bertha Millner*, a shark-fishing schooner captained by a brutal old salt named Kitchell and crewed solely by Chinese-American sailors.

<sup>215</sup> Joseph McElrath, “The Erratic Design of Frank Norris’s ‘Moran of the Lady Letty’ in *American Literary Realism*. Vol. 10, issue 2 (Spring 1977); pp. 114-124.

During the course of his adventures Wilbur encounters a Norwegian wreck, the *Lady Letty*, and its sole survivor, the captain's daughter, Moran Sternersen. When Kitchell drowns while ransacking the *Letty* Moran is convinced to navigate the *Bertha*, and all hands sail south along the coast of Baja California to continue hunting sharks. Meeting with a junk manned by beachcombers, Moran and Wilbur discover a precious block of ambergris, and fight against the junk's crew to possess it. As these events unfold Moran and Wilbur fall in love. Returning to San Francisco with their treasure, Wilbur proposes to go filibustering to Cuba, but Moran is murdered by their prisoner, Hoang, the former leader of the beachcombers. In the final scene of the novel, Wilbur watches as the *Bertha*, loosed from its moorings, carries Moran's body out to the open sea.

This thumbnail synopsis of *Moran of the Lady Letty* glosses several significant incidents and overlooks Wilbur's ambivalent transformation from fop to freebooter. A closer examination of the plot of the story, its imagery, and its accompanying map of adventure, also illuminates the relationship between romance and recapitulation in the construction of a youth concept. Unlike the linear progress of Moretti's "colonial romance," Norris's novel follows a path of indirection and contingency-- but only up to a point (*Atlas of the European Novel* 62). The event that precipitates his adventure, shanghaiing, is unplanned but not entirely unavoidable, and the developments that follow emphasize this dialectic between chance and necessity, choice and instinct. From a house call on Nob Hill to a stroll to the docks to a cruise into the imperial zone of the Pacific, Wilbur navigates a range of spaces

symbolizing not only his own growth and the course of racio-civilizational development, but the geopolitical aspirations of a nation on the threshold of empire.

The novel begins at a “hen party” in a well-appointed house, where Wilbur arrives to pay his respects to debutante Josie Herrick (2). Initially Norris establishes both Wilbur’s effeminess and his latent masculine promise by focusing on his dress and body language. Though he naturally possesses “good height” his stature is accentuated “by his long coat and his high silk hat,” while as a former college athlete, “his tailor [is] not altogether answerable for his shoulders” (6). Most significantly, according to familiar physiognomic standards, “there [is] plenty of jaw in the lower part of his face.” This rudimentary description focuses on three aspects of Wilbur-- his shoulders, jaw, and height-- and in conjunction with other visible characteristics later indicated, including his clean-shaven face and parted hair, it suggests an almost exact correspondence to the type of the “Gibson Man” modeled after Richard Harding Davis.<sup>216</sup>

Seated in a window alcove beside Josie, Wilbur drinks cocoa and snacks on stuffed olives, “toeing-in in absurd fashion as he trie[s] to make a lap for his plate” (3) This explicitly awkward, unmanly posture provides one of a series of clues as to his overcivilized, even incipiently neurasthenic, condition. Wilbur and Josie discuss a dance planned for that evening, and the image of Wilbur scraping the last bit of sugar

<sup>216</sup> We might consider Gibson’s portrayal of Davis as a Machine Age Apollo Belvedere, functioning in a manner analogous to the celebrated Roman statue. Praised by Camper, Lavater and Winckelmann as a visual ideal type of the human male, the sculpture-- and, I would argue, the Gibson Man-- became a standard representing the pinnacle not only of artistic achievement but white masculine development, against which all other races and artifacts must be measured. See Fae Brauer, “The Transparent Body: Biocultures of Evolution, Eugenics, and Scientific Racism” in *A History of Visual Culture: Western Civilization from the 18th to the 21st Centuries*. New York: Berg. 2010. Jane Kromm and Susan Bakewell (eds.)

from the bottom of his cup with an “inadequate spoon,” and fussing over a dance card deepens the sense of his effete-ness. He is even, he suggests, frightened of women: not, ““one girl... but girl in the aggregate..... It unmans me”” (5). Such remarks are not intended altogether seriously. As a swell, Wilbur uses the light irony of badinage, the preferred social form of exchange between the sexes of his class. His satirical disposition is also echoed by the narrator’s explanation that because *Moran of the Lady Letty* tells “a story of a battle, at least one murder and several sudden deaths” it must of necessity begin with a “pink tea.. among the mingled odors of many delicate perfumes and the... smell of... roses” (1). The pose adopted by the narrator at the very start, then, is consonant with Norris’s burlesque of Richard Harding Davis’s *Van Bibber* stories titled “Van Bubbles” written the same year, and as such critically distances itself from its own generic identity.

“Setting his hat gingerly upon his hair so as not to disturb the part,” Wilbur leaves the Herricks’ for his club, where he finds a note announcing a friend’s imminent arrival by boat (5). Wilbur decides to stroll down to the harbor to “loaf” until his friend disembarks (7). There he sees a major node of international capitalism including “great grain ships consigned to ‘Cork for orders’ slowly gorging themselves with whole harvests of wheat from the San Joaquin Valley<sup>217</sup>... lumber vessels for Durban and South African ports... coal barges discharging from Nanaimo.... Italian whitehalls... [and] China steamships” (8-9). Yet the the attractions of the wharf are not simply commercial, but spectatorial and social. Wilbur is a flaneur in this space, intrigued by both the seething activity of transport and the global distances it implies,

<sup>217</sup> An image the reader of *The Octopus* will recognize.

as well as the perverse pleasures of slumming. Accepting an invitation to drink with Tuck, “a little, undersized fellow in dirty brown sweater and clothes of Barbary-coast cut,” Wilbur follows him to a waterfront dive (9).

Some time later, Wilbur wakes from drugged unconsciousness in a dory approaching the *Bertha Millner*, where he is deposited, still woozy, on the deck. Berated by the ship’s captain, Kitchell, as ““angel child,”” a ““Lilee of the Vallee,”” (16) and ““a toff”” (39) Wilbur attempts to protest but is knocked down into the hold, where sailor slops are thrown after him. Threatened with further violence, he suddenly elects to accept his situation, and in a moment “change[s] more than his clothes” (19). This is a critical juncture in the novel in spite of the author’s apparent refusal to take his story seriously. “It was more than a change,” Norris writes of Wilbur. “It was a revolution.” Yet the content of that revolution is uncertain. While Wilbur tumbles down the hatch “silk-hatted, melton-overcoated, patent-booted, and gloved in suedes,” returning topside bloodied and dressed in filthy oilskins, the effect on his identity seems ambivalent: “It was Wilbur and yet not Wilbur. In two minutes he had been, in a way, born again.” The reference to rebirth is repeated and initially linked to a sense of unreality. Not long after, “Wilbur the Transformed” (20) watches as the *Petrel*, a yacht owned by a wealthy acquaintance, Nat Ridgeway, slides past the *Bertha* “like a thing of life” with “spotless sails [and] immaculate flanks... clean, gleaming, dainty, and aristocratic” (21). While his wealthy peers stroll the decks dressed in white, drinking champagne as an orchestra plays, “Wilbur stare[s] at the picture... devoid of expression.”

Already, a break has occurred between his old life and the uncertain future now confronting him. And it is that experience of alienation, of looking at what should be familiar and perceiving it to be strange, which marks the beginning of his initiation-- both a physical journey and a process of psychic reconfiguration. Ridgeway's boat is "a thing of life" even as those aboard flatten into a "picture"-- a disordering of values that only grows more intense. The crew of the *Bertha* constitute a strange racial polity, a radically othered human landscape with a dislocative effect which induces a form of dissociation in Wilbur. They exhibit "absolute indifference," Wilbur thinks, attempting to read "the blankness of their flat, fat faces, the dullness of their slanting, fishlike eyes that never met his own... [It] was uncanny, disquieting" (24). As with the strange scene in Kimberley, Norris renders Wilbur's racist anxiety gothically, inscribing the *Bertha* as a ghost-ship, the alterity of her crew verging on the supernatural.

Like Harvey Cheyne, Wilbur adapts to a nautical version of the strenuous life and even manages to work his way into the captain's provisional good opinion, though his relationship to his fellow sailors is mediated by an Orientalist discourse which lingers on an iconography of "punk sticks" and the opium smoke that seeps up from their bunks (33). When warmer weather arrives with the lower latitudes, Wilbur exchanges his pocketknife "for a suit of jeans and wicker sandals," assuming a kind of racial and class drag which signifies his entry into an alternate symbolic economy (44). Stripped of the markers of privilege, he temporarily inhabits a structural position even lower than that of the sailors. Even Kitchell himself-- hired by the Chinese Six companies as a "dummy white' captain" to obviate laws forbidding Chinese from

commanding commercial vessels-- is not entirely what he seems (Lye 91). Yet “the only actual ‘coolie’ in the text is Wilbur,” Lye observes, “who is involuntarily indentured by the Chinese Six Companies-- until, that is, he internalizes his servitude as an adventure.”

The ocean itself is a space of potential wealth and the unexpected, radically open and treacherous, rich with “‘pickin’s” (*Moran* 46) and “day-bree,” as Kitchell says, while simultaneously a “manner of place... where you’re likely to run up afoul of so many things” (47). This combination of adventure and opportunity codes the Pacific as a frontier, a trope endlessly circulated in American political discourse, from the return of the *Empress of China* from Guangdong bearing a cargo of black tea to Mahan’s assertion in 1890 that “‘it is in the Pacific, where the westward course of empire again meets the East, that [the Anglo-Saxon’s] future... becomes most apparent” (qtd. in Takaki 269). Norris almost literally repeats these sentiments, particularly their stock phrasing, destinarian ideology and figural circularity, when he argues breathlessly that with the arrival of US marines in Peking

the Anglo-Saxon in his course of empire had circled the globe and brought the new civilization to the old civilization, and reached the starting point of history, the place from which the migrations began. So soon as the marines landed there was no longer any West, and the equation of the horizon, the problem of the centuries for the Anglo-Saxon was solved (*Responsibilities of the Novelist* 71-72).

In Norris’s interpretation of these historical events, arriving at the beginning does not dispel the West in its geographical sense so much as it universalizes it by a familiar conceptual maneuver which capsizes space and time into one another. After all, this “problem of the centuries” belongs to “the Anglo-Saxon,” invested in his



body and shaping the growth of his territories. The end-- the telos-- of Anglo-American power is to take possession of the origin point of civilization, but the character of that project is not “fixed” in the sense of seeking to annex terrain outright by founding settler colonies. Instead it is fluid and abstract according to the central myth of capitalist modernity, “the idea of open access and free trade” (Connery 301), even as it signals a return, one “read in nearly all registers of human temporality: in phylogenesis, in ego development, and in the political, social, and economic history of the West.” (293-4). Control is thereby rendered transparent and destiny becomes not a terminus but another, perpetually open, beginning guaranteed by the “greater logic of commerce and development” (301). Once concluded, the project of conquest and trade begins anew; the desire to extend and perfect the realization of destiny surpasses the concrete event of coming full circle. Back in San Francisco, Wilbur watches his peers dance in the ballroom of the Coronado hotel and can feel only “a strange revulsion” (*Moran* 271). In the aftermath of his adventure he cannot see any point to such empty social forms. Instead he hungers to reenter “the tremendous wheel of the ocean’s rim.”

The sea-frontier seems at times enchanted, a figuration which reinscribes the romance of empire by transforming its *mise-en-scene* into an undifferentiated space located beyond even basic dimensions:

Sometimes at high noon the shimmer of the ocean floor blended into the shimmer of the sky at the horizon, and then it was no longer water and blue heavens; the little craft seemed to be poised in a vast crystalline sphere, where there was neither height nor depth-- poised motionless in warm, coruscating, opalescent space, alone with the sun. (105-6).

This passage strikingly portrays the ocean as a realm of magic which is at the same time, given the realist attributes of the novel, understood to be simply a natural illusion. In this sense the description functions as an example of “the substituted codes and raw materials... pressed into service to replace the older magical categories of Otherness” which formed the basis of earlier romances but no longer operate effectively in an “increasingly secularized and rationalized world” (Jameson 131). The “vast crystalline sphere”-- paradoxically without height or depth-- represents empire’s circular course three-dimensionally, simultaneously bounded and without end. Yet it also resembles a fantasy-reward of conquest, a precious gem like the ““bright stones”” beloved of ““white men,”” as Gagool calls the diamonds concealed in the treasure chamber of King Solomon’s mines (Haggard 245).

Lacking ratio because of its mutability the ocean-- a “symbol of primitive potential power... of living barbarism”-- counterpoints the rationalized world of modernity (Auden 19). As Kitchell and Wilbur explore the wreck of the *Lady Letty*-- whose name itself signifies aristocracy, and by extension the medieval past-- a squall springs up “with the abruptness of a scene-shift at a play,” causing the Chinese sailors to “cower[...] to the decks.... paralyzed with fear” (*Moran* 90). It is at this point that Moran emerges from her stupor and reveals herself, entering the action as a daemonic figure with “flaming eyes [whose] thick braids whipped across her face and streamed out in the wind like the streamers of the northern lights” (91). She is, Norris enthuses, merging the vocabulary of his South African reportage with the language of myth,

“savage, splendid, dominant, superb in her wrath.”<sup>218</sup> Assuming command, Moran saves the *Bertha* with a masterstroke of seamanship, and all at once, “like the rolling up of a scroll the squall” vanishes (93).

The map of *Moran of the Lady Letty* incompletely recapitulates the trajectory of American empire in miniature, yet the drive west soon turns south, bound by the western hemisphere such that dreams of Asian wealth are realized only in distorted form, mapped onto the surrogate, racially impoverished bodies of the Chinese sailors. Moving out through the Golden Gate and into the Pacific, then longitudinally to “Lower California,” the scene of William Walker’s first filibustering expedition, the *Bertha* pauses in Magdalena Bay, once the proposed site for a US Navy coaling station, and later used by the Great White Fleet for gunnery practice in preparation for its global cruise. It is near this latter anchorage that the *Bertha* encounters “true” Chinese sailing a junk, an unwieldy craft built of bamboo significantly described as “the same shape as a caravel of the fifteenth century,” her prow painted with “two enormous red eyes” (139). Unlike the crew of the *Bertha*, the figures manning this atavistic vessel have not been incorporated into the political economy of California, an occasion for Norris to deploy further Yellow Peril caricature. The beachcombers, the narrator recounts, are chronologically incoherent, at once primitive and aged:

<sup>218</sup> Norris’s use of “splendid” in reference to Zulus has already been noted. G. Stanley Hall also describes “the best primitive races” as “splendid,” in terms of their musculature. Though the evidence is merely anecdotal, “splendid savages” seem to have abounded in the literature of the era. For example, the 1867 edition of Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* not only celebrated “myriads of youths, beautiful, gigantic, sweet-blooded” but also summoned “a race of splendid and savage old men” (381) to keep the republic honest. Nietzsche’s “splendid blond beast” lauded predatory aristocrats (“On the Genealogy of Morals” 476). Finally, in an excoriating essay written in 1900 Joseph Dana Miller referred to Theodore Roosevelt as a “splendid savage” (“Militarism or Manhood” 391).

The faces were those of a higher order of anthropoid apes: the lower portion—jaws, lips, and teeth—salient; the nostrils opening at almost right angles, the eyes tiny and bright, the forehead seamed and wrinkled—unnaturally old. Their general expression was one of simian cunning and a ferocity that was utterly devoid of courage. (142).

In this context the crewmen's facial features, unlike Wilbur's own large jaw, indicate prognathy, a deviation from the normative facial angle invented by Camper. The narrator counterpoints animalizing imagery with the implication of developmental anachrony, a primitivity that-- given Norris's sensational use of a version of race theory bowdlerized for popular consumption-- can be read simultaneously as symptomatic of racial senescence; primordial and thus "old"; and undeveloped and therefore "young" in the sense of not having matured to the level of whites. Set against these degraded ape-men, Moran is equally a type though one which according to the novel's paradoxical racial logic surpasses the Chinese sailors developmentally by millennia. Racially "older," Moran embodies the original vigor of the Norsemen while the Chinese represent the ontogenic wages of a civilization in decline. Wilbur himself lies distant by several civilizational removes from either of these extremes—his Anglo-Saxon stock has been tempered by a long history of conquest and culture, even if it seems to be neurasthenically compromised by his upper-class indolence. Like Wesley Shotover in "Thoroughbred," from Norris's "Outward and Visible Signs" series, Wilbur's class position identifies him as the product of generations of racial good health. In "Thoroughbred," in distinction to Jack Brunt's antecedents Shotover's ancestors spent centuries "framing laws, commanding privateers and making history generally in the days of the Constitution and the *Bonhomme Richard*" (CW 198). In spite of Shotover's vices-- he is a heavy smoker

who subsists on “chocolate nougats and French Vermouth,” and a flaneur who promenades “down Market and Kearny streets during the fashionable time of day”-- he stops the rioting Hop Sing Tong in its tracks (200). The narrator of “Thoroughbred” refuses to fully account for this phenomenon except to speculate that “perhaps he felt the old privateer blood... stir in him.” Recalling a key scenario of late imperial myth-- the single, lightly-armed European standing off a native horde by the force of his presence-- Shotover stands before his opponents in “tennis flannels” holding only a “dog whip” in such a manner his attackers “feel as if [it] were a machine gun” (207).

Norris expands and embellishes that earlier scenario in the conflict between the crews of the *Bertha* and the nameless junk. When it seems that the *Bertha*'s sailors are content to hurl insults “like tennis balls” rather than fight Wilbur rallies them to attack, shouting, “Come on now, get into them-- get into them now, everybody!” echoing not only a European officer in command of colonial troops but a team captain encouraging fellow athletes (*Moran* 211). Valorizing the effectivity of the bourgeois youth's privileged pursuits, Wilbur the “clubman and collegeman” (213) leads the *Bertha*'s “coolies”-- who are themselves “pampered and effete” compared to their animalized opponents-- in an assault on the junk's crew (141). If he had previously imagined combat to be something “like a college rush,” (207) however, the violence of battle is so intense that it transforms Wilbur yet again, releasing latent racial tendencies which overwhelm custom and habit:

[S]uddenly, at the sight of his smitten enemy rolling on the ground... the primitive man, the half-brute of the stone age, leaped to life in Wilbur's breast-- he felt his muscles thrilling with a strength they had not known

before. His nerves, stretched tense as harp-strings, were vibrating to a new tune. His blood spun through his veins till his ears roared with the rush of it. Never had he conceived of such savage exultation as that which mastered him at that instant. The knowledge that he could kill filled him with a sense of power that was veritably royal. He felt physically larger. It was the joy of battle, the horrid exhilaration of killing, the animal of the race, the human brute suddenly aroused and dominating every instinct and tradition of centuries of civilization. (215).

The unleashing of these primitive forces recalls the theme of atavism in two of Norris's earlier short works: "Lauth," published in 1893 in the *Overland Monthly*, and the previously mentioned "The Son of a Sheik." Characters in both texts experience similar responses to violence. In the "The Son of a Sheik," Bab Azzoun, "*Sous-chef-des-bureaux-Arabes dans l'Oran*," the owner of a race horse named "Crusader" who always "dressed in faultless French fashion," watches a battle in the desert with a group of correspondents (*The Third Circle* 135). "[T]ransplanted to France" at a young age, this "Parisianized Arab" graduated from a French university, authored several books, and became a French citizen, entering politics and establishing a career as a highly regarded diplomat (135-6). A debate on the possibility of Arab patriotism begins, and Bab Azzoun responds negatively, arguing that Arabs "are not sufficiently educated" (136) and offering a theory of the development of patriotism according to five stages, ascending from love of family to love of humanity. Bab Azzoun is a universalist, referring to the success of the French empire in "terrorising into submission a horde of half-starved fanatics" as unworthy of such a "vast and powerful government" (138). This declaration is immediately followed by a jaded yawn: "all of which is very bad-- very bad. Give me some more seltzer." Yet Bab Azzoun's cultivated indifference is not proof against the sight of blood, and the

narrator observes him observing the battle, clearly effected: “his nostrils quivered, and he shifted his feet exactly like an excited thorough-bred” (141). In an instant “long dormant recollections stirred in Bab Azzoun.... he was no longer the cold, cynical boulevardier of the morning. He looked as he must have looked when he played, a ten year-old boy, about the feet of the horses in his father’s black tent.” Bab Azzoun seems to recapitulate personal memories from childhood, imagining “the douars of his native home... the camels, and the caravan crawling toward the sunset... the women grinding meal... his father, the bearded sheik... the Arab horsemen riding down to battle” (142). In the twenty year old Norris’s rendering, abruptly Bab Azzoun’s lengthy and intensive education “was stripped away as a garment. Once more he stood and stepped the Kabyle. And with these recollections, his long-forgotten native speech came rushing to his tongue and in long, shrill cry, he answered his countrymen in their own language: ‘Allah-il-Allah, Mohammed ressoull Allah’” (142-3).

In contrast to Wilbur his change entails not only the reacquisition of racio-cultural characteristics which had hitherto been effaced but a loss of “civilized” traits. Wilbur’s experience of atavistic “exhilaration” is additive, complementing-- if “dominating”-- qualities which fundamentally remain intact. The difference between the two characters lies in their relative position with regard to the political content and racial substance of memory. Bab Azzoun is an Arab assimilated into a French identity so completely he has named his horse after the ultimate historical figure of Occidental and Oriental antipathy, the crusader. Politically, intellectually, and sartorially he is French, administering the affairs of subject Arabs as a colonial bureaucrat in the

interests of imperial France. His transformation, in other words, is more complex than Wilbur's not simply because he has crossed the fabled border separating his people-- allochronized as "barbarian"-- and a European identity standing in for "civilization," but because the "barbarism" in question is contemporaneous with Western modernity. His atavistic return to his roots occurs within the present, rather than, as with Wilbur, arcing across untold ages. Initially raised as a "modern primitive," Bab Azzoun enters and indeed fully inhabits European modernity, in Eurocentric parlance climbing the civilizational ladder over the course of his youth before regressing to the level of his natal culture.

Two issues, then, distinguish these characters: the temporality of their atavisms and the power of distinct racial essences. Because Wilbur, even at his most frenzied, retains his socialization-- doubting the justice of keeping the ambergris, for example, where Moran simply asserts freebooter's rights-- he is destined to return to modernity. Blooded by conflict, he descends into a semi-savage state only temporarily by virtue of his training and a racial makeup which is already held to be identical with a legacy of barbarian virtue and institutions of modern political ethics. Bab Azzoun, on the other hand, according to the unspoken logic of Norris's colonialist tale, surrenders to that which he already was and will always be. The nineteenth century convention of identifying language as a racial trait helps us to see into the future beyond the story as it implies that by speaking in his "long-forgotten" mother tongue Bab Azzoun races away from his companions, and civilization, forever. In this sense the opening conceit of the story-- an Arab who acts like a Frenchman!-- predetermines the plot's outcome. Wilbur's atavistic experience draws



dramatic force from its unexpectedness precisely because he is a white man of privilege while Bab Azzoun's transformation reads as a "reversion to type."<sup>219</sup>

Though removed from his native environment and thrust into deep racial history by conflict, Wilbur's contemporaneity with his moment seems to guarantee his re-entry into modernity. This plot of reversion and return also operates in "Lauth," though with several significant differences. Set in medieval France, "Lauth" records the death of its titular character and a series of experiments undertaken by several scholars to revive him. Gothic in the extreme, the story orbits around the somewhat desiccated question of whether the soul is necessary to life. McElrath argues that this tale is influenced by Norris' study with Le Conte, and in its spiritualized treatment of evolutionary theory this assessment seems to be accurate. Raised from the dead after his soul has departed, Lauth begins to regress, ultimately to a spongiform state, a grotesque process of degeneration paralleling, after a fashion, the gradual decline of Vandover in *Vandover and the Brute*. In terms of its connection to *Moran*, however, a single passage stands out. Lauth, a young student, joins a fierce street battle and convulsively fires his arbalest "at random into the crowd" (*CW* 119). He sees the projectile strike a man in the neck and

in an instant a mighty flame of blood-lust thrilled up through all Lauth's body and mind. At the sight of blood shed by his own hands all the animal savagery latent in every human being woke within him,-- no more merciful scruples

<sup>219</sup> Though the notion of reversion, as with so much of racial and developmental theory, may be put to other uses. In "A Reversion to Type," a floor-walker named Schuster unexpectedly goes on a spree, getting drunk at Cliff House where he pours champagne into a piano and assaults a waiter with a bottle of ketchup. Because his grandfather was a highway robber, and "Schuster, like all the rest of us, was not merely himself [but] was his ancestors as well" he is at the mercy of atavistic forces impelling him to criminal-- if comic-- misbehavior. "At the beginning of that evening," Norris writes, Schuster "belonged to that class whom policemen are paid to protect. When he walked out of the Cliff House he was a freebooter seven feet tall, with a chest expansion of fifty inches" (82).

now. *He could kill*. In the twinkling of an eye the pale, highly cultivated scholar, whose life had been passed in the study of science and abstruse questions of philosophy, sank back to the level of his savage Celtic ancestors. His eyes glittered, he moistened his lips with the tip of his tongue, and his whole frame quivered with the eagerness and craving of a panther in sight of his prey (emphasis in original).

In both scenarios, emotional responses materialize according to somatic reactions and the medium of racial memory. Wilbur *feels* “physically larger”-- he is “mastered” and “filled,” “aroused” and “dominat[ed],” “exulta[nt] and exhilarat[ed]-- and those sensations blur the distinction between psychology and physiology, mapping the obscure and uncanny terrain which functions as the repository of racial history. In a similar manner, Lauth’s eyes and lips dampen, his body “quiver[ing]” as he thrills, wakes, sinks and craves. Yet whereas the latter is explicitly equated with an animal predator, the former is anthropomorphic. Lauth inhabits the psychic space of one of his “savage Celtic ancestors,” but he behaves like a stalking panther. Wilbur, the “half-brute,” the “human brute,” assumes the ontogenic status of an animal only insofar as he remains one of “the race.” This variation in treatment suggests that during the roughly four years intervening between “Lauth” and *Moran* Norris refined his dramatic, pseudo-scientific narration of racial atavism, approaching more closely a recapitulationist version of human development accorded the status of common sense by the first decade of the twentieth century.

## **IX. Mate**

Some of *Moran of the Lady Letty*’s most memorable passages describe Moran Sternersen’s physical aspects, which are heavily invested with symbolic content.

When they discover her dressed in oilskins, semi-conscious from coal-gas poisoning on the wreck of the *Lady Letty*, both Kitchell and Wilbur mistake her for a boy of perhaps “two-and twenty” (68). She is “not pretty,” the narrator asserts more than once, in part because she is “quite as tall as Wilbur himself, and her skeleton [i]s too massive” (71). That lanky frame carries a heavy semiotic burden, including her coloring-- red face, white lashes, blue eyes-- which codes her racialized body as American. For Wilbur, the size and strength of her tattooed “biceps and deltoids” indicate a “coarse-fibred” quality that is at once physical and mental, a characteristic he suspects signifies “a primitive rather than a degenerate character” (72). Moran’s “rye-colored hair... braided in “long strands... the thickness of a man’s arm” resemble hawsers. They are, in fact, “splendid ropes” like those of a sailing vessel, and when viewed in combination with “her heavy contralto voice, her fine animal strength of bone and muscle (admittedly greater than his own)... her indomitable courage and self-reliance,” and her nautical skills they inspire Wilbur “with speechless wonder” (103-104).

Wilbur finds Moran oddly attractive because she embodies an anarchic force that defies the easy categories and relatively trivial knowledge of his own social sphere, where young men and women, like their counterparts in realist novels, focus their energies on “the amenities of an afternoon call or the formalities of a paper german” (104). Gender roles are scrupulously observed in this upper-class world, and because Moran lacks socialization and is “almost... without sex” she remains completely “outside of [Wilbur’s] experience” until the aftermath of their fight on the beach. Whereas Josie Herrick, dressed in “tulle, white satin, and high-piled hair,”

(247) appears as an icon of bourgeois femininity, Moran, her “neck... thick, strong, and very white, her hands roughened and calloused,” wears men’s clothes (104).<sup>220</sup> When Wilbur tells her she “ought to have been born a man,” she replies: “[A]t all events, I’m not a girl” (169). Initially Wilbur expresses his admiration for Moran by employing the language of flirtation specific to his class in a declaration Josie might have enjoyed. “I think you’re a ripping fine girl,” he declares. “You’re different from any kind of girl I ever met, of course, but you, by jingo, you’re-- you’re splendid,” an outburst which elicits nothing but scorn from Moran, who recognizes its emptiness and incongruity in the context of a shark-hunting expedition (101).

Wilbur’s initial misrecognition of Moran retains its signifying power in relation to a cluster of connotations regarding race, nation, and gender which implicate him and, more generally, youthful masculinity. She is, in one sense, profoundly American-- if not by right of citizenship then unconsciously, in the primeval whiteness of her body and those originative values associated with the frontier. This identification deepens when Moran is compared with Hoang, the captain of the beachcombers’ junk, whose racialized characteristics provide a sharp contrast with her own. While he is portrayed according to the limited semantic palette of Yellow Peril rhetoric-- “small, weazened, leather-colored, secretive... a strange complex creature, steeped in the obscure mystery of the East”-- Moran, an “Anglo-Saxon, daughter of the Northmen,” towers in opposition, “huge, blonde, big-boned, frank, out-spoken, simple of composition, open as the day, bareheaded” (148). These

<sup>220</sup> Whiteness here appears to have a variable function, from its traditional association with virginity to its obvious racial significance.

familiar Orientalist tropes establish the negative terms of a dichotomy which occidentalizes Moran and ultimately recuperates her into the territory of the American West: “Where else but in California,” Wilbur thinks to himself, “could such abrupt contrasts occur?”<sup>221</sup>

Norris recalibrates the exoticizing technique of creating visual disjunctures between modern and primitive he employed in his South African reportage to underscore the racial vitality of Moran as a surrogate figure of national superiority. If the ladies with kodaks enjoy the spectacle of the Zulu dance only to be consumed in their turn as part of a picturesque colonial contrast, the masculinized Moran, exhibiting the features of both the primitive and a dime-novel hero, is absorbed into Norris’s sense of what constitutes the national character. Moran is not only easy to read, but “unconquered, untamed, glorying in her own independence, her sullen isolation”-- the very embodiment of American myth (104).

And yet in the earlier version of the text serialized in the *Wave*, Norris explicitly marks Moran as someone other than an American. In addition to several redactions of her dialog,<sup>222</sup> the most significant changes made in Norris’s manuscript concern passages referring to the sinking of the *USS Maine*. In the first of these, Moran and Ross, docking at San Francisco, notice the American flag flying at half-mast. Ross hails a sailor on a passing fishing vessel, asking what has happened and is

<sup>221</sup> To which Larzer Ziff responds: in the fiction of Jack London.

<sup>222</sup> By way of example McElrath notes that while in the *Wave* installments Moran says “‘Oh, to hell with you and your coolies... Stand by...’” the first edition of the novel simplifies-- and sanitizes-- this to “‘Stand by...’” (qtd. in McElrath 256). Other colorful phrases which were excised include “‘from hell to Hackensack’ (p. 263) and ‘the schooner smells like a dead Jew’ (p. 112)” (qtd. in McElrath 256). “In short,” McElrath writes, “*Moran* was,... bowdlerized at all stages” (257). See “The Original Version of Norris’ *Moran*” in *Studies in American Fiction*. Vol. 11. 1983. pp. 255-59 from which the subsequent extracts are taken.

told that “the Spaniards have blown up the *Maine* in the harbor of Havana” (qtd. in McElrath 245).

Shocked at the news, Ross goes ashore where he discovers his upper-class peers and acquaintances enjoying a dance: “My God!” shouted Wilbur in disgust. “There’s about five hundred [men] at the bottom of Havana harbor now, and you men sit up here and talk of functions and german favors”<sup>223</sup> (257). Finally, leading up to his proposal to Moran-- not to marry, but to go filibustering-- Ross gives an elegiac account of the *Maine*:

He told her of the affair which had roused the nation as nothing since Sumter had done, told it between his teeth, his voice shaking with excitement.

“Why,” he added as he finished, “why, she was ours, she was mine, she belonged to every one of us. I saw her once in New York harbor, and I was so proud of her,” tears started to his eyes. “Such a queen she was, and white, snouts out of her turrets. She came up the harbor there, slow, you know, as though she was making a royal progress, and every little tug, and ship and ferry-boat dipped their colors and saluted her. Why, you just loved her, as though she was something alive, and now-- and now-- No,” he broke off, “you can’t understand, Moran, how can you? It’s no affair of yours-- you’re not an American.”

Moran’s coding as a ship-- already well established at this point in the narrative-- allows a substitution to be performed. The whiteness of the *Maine*, her aristocratic bearing and feminine gender--which is at once the mere convention and complication of her status as a man o’ war-- parallel many of the descriptions of Moran, who is likened to “Brunhilde... a shield-maiden, a Valkyrie, a bersirker and the daughter of bersikers” (*Moran* 216). Like the *Maine* itself, then, the symbol and instrument of national power, the character of Moran functions as a vessel and a

<sup>223</sup> Norris uses “german favor” and “paper german” repeatedly, terms that seem to indicate the practice of holding an impromptu dance to the accompaniment of street musicians.

vehicle, a repository of ancient racial virtues and a means to their full expression. Norris's assertion to a friend that the story was simply an excuse for Moran is significant in this context, even if his extra-textual remarks allow him to strike the pose of a working writer boyish enough to play a professional game. Commenting on the as yet unpublished installments of *Moran*, he revealed that "Moran and Wilbur have a most God-awful fight.... In the fight with the beach-combers, she gets to fighting 'Bersark,' crazy in the head y'know, and turns on Wilbur. He fights back like a good fellow and does her up. That breaks her spirit-- you see and then she begins to love him-- savvy" (emphasis in original Walker 163). The crude, even misogynist, libidinal economy casually praised by Norris is confirmed both by Moran's "pathetic... complete surrender of herself" to Wilbur and her crucial importance as the agent of his development (*Moran* 239).

Discussing Norris's rhetoric of violence in the short story "A Memorandum of Sudden Death," Maxwell Geismar notes a generalized "lust to kill" in early twentieth century fiction (47). "Wasn't it part of the hothouse barbarism and exotic virility of the sheltered middle class audience?" Geismar asks. "Or at best the pseudo-biological ethos of an industrial society trembling on the edge of world conquest and immeasurable profits-- the Nietzscheanism of a Teddy Roosevelt, as it were, or perhaps the merging of the master race and the boy scouts?" (48). If such questions are not meant to be answered they nonetheless underscore the centrality of the theme of regeneration through violence attributed for clear reasons to Norris's work, and *Moran of the Lady Letty* in particular.

Wilbur and Moran's subjective experience of the battle on the beach demonstrates the difference between their characters and ultimately suggests the racio-temporal logic of their separate fates. Though Wilbur approaches an ecstasy of violence, he nonetheless retains consciousness if not full self-possession; his senses are amplified rather than overwhelmed. Moran on the other hand, exhibits the same behavior as Bab Azzoun, breaking out in her mother tongue of "long-forgotten Norse," chanting "fragments of old sagas, words, and sentences, meaningless even to herself" (*Moran* 216). For a moment Wilbur loses memory, suddenly discovering that he holds a knife he does not remember picking up, but this momentary lapse dissipates with the intense self-perception of his dual nature as "clubman" and "human brute." In contrast, the combat so enraptures and deranges Moran that she attacks Wilbur "in a veritable frenzy, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, every sense exalted, every force doubled, insensible to pain, deaf to all reason" (216). Though at first he simply defends himself, realizing she is capable of killing Wilbur soon responds with overpowering force. "[T]he fury of her madness" (217) appears infectious and he "cease[s] to see things in their proportion" (217-8). But it is not Moran that Wilbur fights; instead he struggles "against her as some impersonal force that it was... imperative he should conquer" (218). The conflict between them becomes "a question... as to who should master the other" and thus Wilbur attacks not Moran, but "her force, her determination, her will, her splendid independence."

Punching Moran "squarely between the eyes," in an effort to stun her, Wilbur becomes cognizant of the fact that she has passed out of "her bersirker rage" and is now perfectly aware it is him she fights (219). They grapple and he throws her to the



ground, pinning her with his knees, when abruptly she smiles at him: “‘Ho! mate,’ she exclaim[s]; ‘that was a tough one; but I’m beaten-- you’re stronger than I thought for’” (220). The short scene that follows vexes any reader who would take the novel at face value. “[W]eak as a kitten,” Moran submits to her conqueror: “She looked at him admiringly. ‘What a two-fisted, brawny dray-horse it is! I told you I was stronger than most men, didn’t I? But I’m the weaker of us two, and that’s a fact. You’ve beaten, mate-- I admit it; you’ve conquered me, and... and, mate, do you know, I love you for it’” (221).

We should read this ludicrous development neither as an unintentional gaffe nor as a mere concession to the romance form but as a willfully ironic performance which attempts both to satisfy the narrative expectations of the genre even as it satirizes them by a strategy of excess. More than a hardier exemplar of the New Woman, Moran represents a force of nature, though not according to the standard patriarchal mystification which would identify her with her ovaries. Nature in this context indicates Moran’s racialized attributes, which also possess cultural dimensions. Certainly her presence is linked to the natural world and is even fundamentally generative, though if she births anyone ultimately it is Wilbur. Like the looted ambergris, which emits “a pungent... and spicy odor... an aromatic smell.. sweet as incense... delicious as a summer breeze” (150) Moran “exhale[s] a fine, sweet, natural redolence” (105). More importantly, Wilbur effectively acquires his power at her expense, and in the chapters that follow his presence commands. Norris’s depiction of this new found authority is for the twenty-first century reader more than simply hyperbolic: “All that was strong and virile and brutal in him seemed

to harden and stiffen... and a sense of triumph, of boundless self-confidence, leaped within him, so that he shouted aloud in a very excess of exhilaration” (222-223).

From being “a strange, lonely creature... not made for men... nor for other women either” Moran finds her mate (166). Having lost a physical contest and become romantically entangled as a result, the character of Moran recedes into the background as if fatally weakened. She seems to recognize this debility, telling Wilbur, “I’m not Moran any more. I’m not proud and strong and independent, and I don’t want to be lonely... I’m just a woman now, dear-- just a woman that loves you with a heart she’s just found” (238). Coming from someone who recently tortured a prisoner for information by filing his teeth to the gum line, this is an unexpected admission, though perfectly consonant with the novel’s gender and racial logic. If Moran was once a “sea-rover, [a] virgin unconquered, without law, without land, without sex,” her romantic attachment to Wilbur strips her of these negative attributes (167). So recalcitrant she seems “blind to all danger” (159) in the theft of the ambergris-- a bit of larceny Wilbur recognizes as such, reasoning that most if not all of it belongs to Hoang “by right of discovery”-- Moran becomes Wilbur’s dependent (158).

Wilbur attributes Moran’s singularity to the fact that she is “a thing untouched and unsullied by civilization .... born out of season, lost and unfamiliar in this end-of-the-century time,” a suggestive characterization which invokes the trope of the lost race embellished by Haggard, Doyle, and others (166). Her anachrony stems from the fact that while she is contemporary with Wilbur, she is also entirely governed by the forces of the racial past. In distinction to the junk’s crewmen or the *Bertha*’s sailors,

who in varying degrees embody the principle of degeneration and are thus not strictly speaking primitive, Moran represents a tendency toward the reversion to type.

Watching her torture Hoang, Wilbur, who retains his modern ethics, cannot “conceive of her as a woman of the days of civilization. She was lapsing back to the eighth century again-- to the Vikings, the sea-wolves, the berserkers” (197). Such reversion is not in itself undesirable, as demonstrated by Wilbur’s violent metamorphosis on the beach. There are, however, limits to the depth of reversion if development is to proceed. Moran models the vigorous life in all its immediacy, a life, as she says, of “doing things, not... thinking things, or reading about what other people have done or thought” (114).<sup>224</sup> She excels at seamanship and acts with conviction. Yet ultimately her inability to control the barely-submerged tendencies contained in her “Norse fighting-blood” renders her vulnerable. Wilbur’s superiority in this context is not entirely (and predictably) a function of gender ideology but rather of his implied racial advancement. As his teacher, Joseph Le Conte, wrote in *Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought*, “True virtue consists, not in the extirpation of the lower [nature], but in its subjection to the higher” (338).<sup>225</sup> What Le Conte’s formula implied, Larzer Ziff argues, was not simply greater restraint but superior instincts.

<sup>224</sup> It is also an apt if excessively condensed epitome of Norris’s theory of literature and the author.

<sup>225</sup> Le Conte, brevetted as a major in the Confederate States Army and placed in command of the Niter and Mining Bureau, a department crucial to the production of explosives, moved to California in 1869. Twenty-three years later, well-established at Berkeley, he defended “the race-line” in an essay titled “The Race Problem in the South” (1892). Acknowledging that “many blacks [are] more capable of intelligently directing the policy of the State than some whites” he went on to explain that though the race line might be seen as

unjust and irrational... are not all lines more or less artificial? Can there be anything more artificial than the age-line? Are there not many persons under twenty-one more capable than many over twenty-one? In this case, it is true, the admitted injustice will be speedily removed by advancing age. But so in the other, also, the admitted injustice will, we hope, be removed, though not so speedily, by race-growth, race-education. In both cases it is an age-line-- in the one case of the individual, in the other of the race. The one is no more unjust than the other. (365).

Wilbur's connection to Moran may supply the necessary catalyst to his development, a process which also requires open terrain for conflictual encounter, but she cannot survive outside that space because Wilbur's social world operates according to another temporality. Moran's purity, her status as one "without sex" who lacks social ties, is impossible there. It is the "purity of primeval glaciers" which while it thrives even in the lawless subtropics of conquest and primitive accumulation is doomed to dissolve in San Francisco's hothouse environment.

Before they depart from Magdalena Bay Wilbur and Moran take a last look, encompassing "the curve of the coast with a single glance," mapping each feature of the terrain in terms of a catalog of their experiences:

There was the point near by the creek where he and Moran first landed to fill the water-casks and to gather abalones; the creek... where he had snared quail; the sand-spit, with its whitened whale's skull, where he and Moran had beached the schooner; and there, last of all, that spot of black over which still hung a haze of brown gray smoke, the charred ruins of the old Portuguese whaling-cabin, where they had outfought the beachcombers. (*Moran* 235-6).

Narrativizing the landscape in this fashion concretizes action and perception, and produces a sense of anticipatory nostalgia, of longing for what is to be left behind. As the site of her transformation, the bay resonates sharply for Moran. "It was here that I first knew myself," she tells Wilbur, "and after that... you were a man and I was a woman" (237). Yet the self-knowledge that Moran has acquired in this territory uncouples her from the strengths derived from her Norse heritage and thus strips her of her role as an avatar. The change which actually concerns Norris is Wilbur's, who functions as the narrative's final cause. His maturation presupposes Moran's surrender because in order to attain full development he must absorb the

energies she embodies and master them. And what is appropriated from her is also inscribed on a space which initially Wilbur does not even recognize as foreign at all, as when he remarks that he had forgotten that Lower Baja was part of Mexico. This defect of memory, a kind of imperial amnesia, is complemented by the absence of a single Mexican and the obliteration by fire of the only trace of prior human inhabitants, the Portuguese whaling cabin. In this sense Magdalena Bay is virtually an “Adamless Eden” of the sort Norris invoked in an 1896 piece for the *Wave*, “A South-Sea Expedition.” A concept with currency at the turn of the century, the Adamless Eden signifies the dream of an unpeopled-- and thus ownerless-- natural space, a fantasy-investment expressing the late imperial hunger for a scene of adventure mentioned above with reference to *The Lost World*. The phrase became something of a journalistic cliché with the ill-fated voyage of the Brotherhood of South Seas Colonists, who sailed in “a two-stick trading brig” the *Percy Edwards* (later, under new ownership, implicated as a slaver)<sup>226</sup> to the Southwest Pacific (*The Apprenticeship Writings of Frank Norris* 252).<sup>227</sup> Intrigued by the possibility of a tropical frontier, in that article Norris waxes eloquent on the racial dimensions of the Brotherhood’s search for empty land, portraying the colonists as

<sup>226</sup> From the September 29, 1897 edition of the *New York Times*, this squib: “It is reported here that the brig *Percy Edwards*, which sailed from this port last February with 100 South Sea colonists, is now engaged in the slave trade. The colonization scheme was a failure, the men fell to quarreling, and after selling their vessel, scattered in various directions.” See also an earlier article in the *NYT* from July 11, 1897: “Adamless Eden a Myth.”

<sup>227</sup> For an interesting account of the expedition see Hugh Laracy’s “Quixotic and Utopian”: American Adventurers in the Southwest Pacific, 1897–1898 in *Pacific Studies*, Vol. 24, Nos. 1/2—March/June 2001 which notes that the phrase “Adamless Eden” subsequently came to be used almost solely with reference to single-sex organizations and institutions for women, as when “in 1908 the *New York World* headed its report of an Independence Day function at the normally women-only Martha Washington Hotel to which 125 men had been invited with the dramatic announcement, ‘Men Actually Enter an Adamless Eden’” (54).

the types of that sturdy shouldering Anglo-Saxon race that, from the time of its first exodus from the salt marshes of Holland, have been steadily, stubbornly pushing west, pushing west, pushing west-- sometimes in the dragon-beaked snekkjas of marauding vikings, sometimes in the blunt-nosed, high-sterned packets of the Puritan fathers, sometimes in the trundling, creaking prairie-schooners of the Pioneers.

Yet *Moran of the Lady Letty* is not a robinsonade and Magdalena Bay no deserted island. True, in its physical configuration the bay retains an oblique feminine coding consonant with the notion of virgin land. As a natural opening into the continent the bay resembles a key topographical feature of “the romance landscape” of Scott’s novels, where the “generative spaces” of watery caves and “deep glens” suggest the female reproductive system (Bruzelius 42). Still, the drama enacted there requires opposing forces. As non-whites it falls to the Chinese sailors to perform the role of natives, and in deference to a well-established convention of the lost-race romance, those figures form a racial nation polarized by civil war. While the distinctions elaborated between the *Bertha*’s sailors and the beachcombers amount to a difference in degree rather than kind, it is clear, given Norris’s white supremacist logic, which group appears more alien and thus poses a greater threat. If the crew of the *Bertha* are the object of racist caricature, their status as Californian Chinese renders them “friendly,” superior to the grotesquely abjected “half-naked Chinamen” of the junk, who possess “ape-like muzzles and twinkling eyes” (205). The source of antagonism between the ships’ crews extends beyond their dispute over booty and racial variance into the realm of tong politics. The Six Companies’ employees are “Sam Yup” while their “blood enemies” belong to “the See Yups” (186).

By siding with the Sam Yup tong Wilbur and Moran function characterologically in the same manner as the heroic travelers of lost-race fiction who enter an exotic society “already riven by internal conflicts” and ally with one faction against the other (Reider 41). According to Reider the lost-race romance dramatizes a poetics of militarism characteristic of popular fiction at the turn of the century which operates within “a mode of pacification and education,” scripting the encounter between explorer and native simultaneously as intervention and conquest. This trope promotes the imperial project as fundamentally humanitarian and thereby forms the basis for the resolution of “the basic problem of ownership” incurred by imperialist expansion. The motif is completed by representing the explorer-protagonist’s entry into a foreign world as acts of both discovery and return. “[A] fragment of [the explorer’s] own history” or a figure apparently of the same race establishes the ethical motives of the protagonists who now possess a meaningful connection to the land and thus a rightful claim to it. According to this narrative logic, Moran’s purpose is to ensure that Wilbur’s adventure is experienced as just such a return. She is the indispensable “Lost European” without whom Wilbur’s appropriation of the terrain and his own racial history would be impossible (Moretti 62). Even further, in order to take what belongs to him by right of his white male privilege Magdalena Bay and Moran must be domesticated in sequence. Together Wilbur and Moran re-territorialize the terrain by exploits responsibility for which Moran is subsequently deprived. The acquisition of a new possession which is at once “virgin territory” and populated by surrogate natives requiring Western intervention is repeated, though this

time Moran herself constitutes the landscape which has “become insensibly dear to him” (*Moran* 235).

The effects of encounter and conquest on the now re-fashioned Wilbur can be fully highlighted only in contrast with the social world from which he was separated. Sighting “the outpost of civilization,” Point Loma (an appellation he later applies to Fort Mason), he races to the Coronado hotel where he is received like an athletic hero with “a patriotic air” and the Yale “yell” (251). Dressed in “a Chinaman’s blouse and jeans” and bearing all the marks of a semi-civilized outsider-- beard, long hair, scars, sun-darkened skin and grimed hands-- he is lifted onto the shoulders of his peers.

Though in its novel form the story drops references to the imminent Spanish-American war, the existential significance of Wilbur’s adventures retains a political charge in its critique of upper-class masculinity. In the quieter company of a few friends that night Wilbur relates recent events, extolling their impact on him: “Why, man, I’ve fought... with a naked dirk... with a coolie who snapped at me like an ape.... It wouldn’t do some of you people a bit of harm if you were shanghaied yourselves.... [I]f it don’t do anything else, [it] knocks a big bit of seriousness into you” (257-8). In spite of this testimony Jerry, one of his intimates, seems skeptical, suggesting that within three years Wilbur, “a born-and-bred city man” will tire of “life as an amateur buccaneer” and reenter society, using the proceeds from the ambergris “to pay your taxes and your tailor, your pew rent and your club dues” (259). The fundamental tension in play here concerns Wilbur’s enthusiasm for action outside the confines of his social status and Jerry’s certainty that this role is bred into Wilbur’s “blood and bones” and thus cannot be abandoned entirely. Norris expresses his ambivalence on



this point in two ways, qualifying Wilbur's perceptions and incorporating a plot development which is also intended to provide narrative closure. First he emphasizes the subjectiveness of Wilbur's views of his experience and his plans for the future, explaining that "the new man that *seemed* to have so suddenly sprung to life within him... *believed* that he could see nothing to be desired in city life" (emphasis added 271) and that "Wilbur honestly believed that he was changed to his heart's core. He thought that, like Moran, he was henceforth to be a sailor of the sea, a rover" (272). Though Wilbur appears convinced of his altered destiny, and is anxious to explore "the horizon that ever fled before his following prow," the narrator qualifies this desire emphatically: "so he told himself, so he believed." The "new man" in this version of events appears unstable if not the product of adolescent fantasy.

Moran's unsuitability for a life of "dancing and functions and german favors" is also significant, because Wilbur literally cannot imagine her as his companion in the context of his life in the city (257). She is "by nature a creature unfit for civilization," after all, a point Norris insists upon, one that creates a dilemma for Wilbur that is solved only with her death (263). Even in the midst of their journey he worries over what to do with Moran. Early on when it seems that the *Bertha* will collect her cargo of shark liver oil and leave Magdalena Bay immediately, he responds to Moran's first evidence of approval of him with an abortive romantic impulse. In the fo'castle, reflecting on her smile, he finally concludes, "But, of course *that* is out of the question" (emphasis in original 133). The stated reason for this decision is the fact that "within a fort-night he would be in San Francisco again -- a tax-payer, a police-protected citizen once more," a prospect that becomes the

occasion for another recapitulation of the story thus far. He “r[uns] over the incidents of the cruise,” one of several moments in the text when key events are reiterated in condensed form. Upon arrival in San Francisco, where he faces the problem of Moran anew, the plot is synopsised twice more and a possible future is mapped in advance. “He had known romance,” the narrator rhapsodizes, “and the spell of the great, simple, and primitive emotions; he had sat down to eat with buccaneers; he had seen the fierce, quick leap of unleashed passions, and had felt death swoop close to his nape and pass like a swift spurt of cold air” (272). This abbreviated sequence is revised and repeated yet a third time when Wilbur mulls his doubtful friend’s skeptical remarks, “scene by scene review[ing] the extraordinary events of the past six months” (278).

While in its serialized version such synopses perform the practical work of reminding his readers of what has already transpired (and enabling new readers to catch up), at a more general level they reenact the process of short-form repetition which structures the growth of both Norris’s protagonist and Hall’s adolescent. At issue here is the presentation of the core theme of youthful development in terms of emplotment, a form of “storied knowledge” which spans discourses and thus renders pervasive its explanatory power (Thurtle 187). Both Hall and Norris insist on the centrality of reversion and return as a narrative dynamic which explains the nature of youth and can then be extrapolated to the broader levels of the nation, “the race,” and finally, if inchoately, “the West.”

Ultimately, Wilbur confronts a choice between an epic of adventure and the difficult task of integrating Moran into his city life. In his vision of the former,

They would have the whole round world as their playground; they held the earth and the great seas in fief; there was no one to let or to hinder.... Once outside the Heads again, and they swept the land of cities and of little things behind them, and they two were left alone once more; alone in the great world of romance. (*Moran* 272).

The very extravagance of the passage's phrasing-- and its invocation of the world as a space of play-- suggests Wilbur's plans are unrealistic. And yet the possibility of remaining together in San Francisco seems even more dubious. According to Wilbur's class-specific beliefs-- and modernity's socio-temporal logic of development-- Moran, who cannot "be kept a secret," disallows domesticity by the mere fact of who she is. The issue revolves around the matter of juxtaposition, and, crucially, in which spaces certain contrasts are permitted. Though a shocking counterpoint to the debased "coolies" of the *Bertha* and the junk, "Moran in Magdalena Bay was consistent, congruous, and fitted to her environment" (276). The narrator-- and perhaps Norris the author, in a passage that agonizes over the challenges of plot and closure as much as the details of this specific story-- crystallizes the problem:

But how-- how was Wilbur to explain her to San Francisco, and how could his behavior seem else than ridiculous to the men of his club and to the women whose dinner invitations he was wont to receive. They could not understand the change that had been wrought in him; they did not know Moran, the savage, half-tamed Valkyrie so suddenly become a woman.

The atavistic elements the modern encounters in confronting the racial past must be incorporated and their significance reconfigured into a new set of identitarian coordinates. In this sense *Moran of the Lady Letty* replots and respatializes a process G. Stanley Hall represented temporally as occurring in the uncertain physio-psychological landscape where phylogeny intersects with ontogeny. In Norris's

rendering the arc of (plot and character) development passes through the imperial arena of littoral Baja and the “negative continent” of the Pacific where civilizational and racial opposites merge in combat (Gilroy mindgap.org). Once removed from that zone, however, and returned to the metropole of San Francisco, those elements are of necessity restored to their former domains. Hoang escapes with the ambergris and fades into the crowded corridors of Chinatown, signaling that in spite of his difference from the *Bertha*'s sailors racial identity remains overdeterminate. Wilbur appears on the verge of reassuming his station among the city's sports and belles. With no suitable environment to inhabit Moran dies alone, stabbed in the throat, a crime Norris portrays, almost certainly ironically, as the precondition of a restorative act. Her sprawled corpse drifts out to sea on the derelict *Bertha*, the currents “enfold[ing] her, h[olding] her close, and dr[awing] her swiftly, swiftly out to the great heaving bosom, tumultuous and beating in its mighty joy, its savage exultation of possession” (292).

This grotesque and sentimental denouement occurs in the shadow of Fort Mason, “the very threshold of the western world,” a spatio-temporal figure with several developmental valences. “Threshold” designates an ambiguous interstice between physical locales and stages, while in its conception of itself “the western world” is coterminous with modernity (277-8). Moran never arrives in the city. And if it remains unclear whether Wilbur follows his dream of further roving and perhaps even filibustering-- a career Norris would pursue, after a fashion, as a journalist for *McClure's* covering the invasion of Cuba-- there is no doubt that she has been sacrificed to Wilbur's development.

## Appendix 1: Boy and Race Epochs

From George Walter Fiske's *Boy Life and Self-Government*. New York: Association Press, 1912.

BOY EPOCHS				RACE EPOCHS			
No.	STAGE OF BOY LIFE	AGE LIMITS	CHARACTERISTICS	WILL-PROGRESS	RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT	ALLEGIANCE	RACIAL PROTOTYPE
0	Infancy	Years 0—3	(Before Self-Consciousness)	Self-Discovery		(Blind)	Pre-Historic Period
1	Early Childhood	3—6	The Self Period	Self-Control	The Religion of Instinct	Father	<i>Patriarchal Period</i>
	Later	7—11	The Clique Period			Chum	<i>Savage Kinship Clan</i>
2	Boyhood	10—14	The "Gang" Period	Comradeship	The Religion of Habit	The "Gang"	The <i>Tribal Period</i> Limited Democracy to Monarchy 1—W. Council Braves 2—Federated Tribes Chieftain by Prowess
3	Early Adolescence	13—15 Grammar School Age	The Chivalry Period	Personal Loyalty (Obedience)	The Religion of Sentiment	The Hero	The <i>Feudal Period</i> Monarchy
4	Middle Adolescence	14—18 High School Age	The Self-Assertive Period	Self-Reliance (Through Struggle)	The Religion of Will	The Ego	The <i>Revolutionary</i> Period of the Constitutional Monarchy
5	Late Adolescence	17—24 College Age	The Cooperative Period	Leadership (Resourcefulness)	The Religion of Thought	The State	The <i>Republic</i> : Social-Democracy in a Self-governing State

## Appendix 2: Romances of the Spanish-American War, a Selected Bibliography

In addition to Stratemeyer and Munroe's texts (and 44 dime novels by Upton Sinclair under various pseudonyms), there are many novels explicitly treating the Spanish-Cuban-American-Filipino War written either during or immediately after the conflict (1898-1908). The list below represents a narrow sample. For additional bibliographical information see Free Library of Philadelphia, Wagner Institute Branch, *A Contribution to the Classification of Works of Prose Fiction* (1904); Ernest Baker, *A Guide to Historical Fiction*. New York: Burt Franklin (1969 Reprint); Christian Thomson Woodruff, *The Spanish-American War in American Literature* (unpublished diss. 1962); and Anne Cipriano Venzon, *America's War with Spain: a Selected Bibliography*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2003. (Though there are a number of errors of fact in this last reference work. Charles King's *Comrades in Arms*, for example, was first published in 1904, not 1913. In the case of *Estrella, the Little Cuban Rebel* Venzon does not note that this text was published prior to US/Spanish hostilities in serialized form or that its author, Edna Winfield, was in fact Edward Stratemeyer writing under a pseudonym.)

Allen, Willis B. *Cleared for Action: A Story of the Spanish-American War of 1898*. New York: Dutton, 1899. Print.

Atherton, Gertrude. *Senator North*. New York: John Lane, 1900. Print.

Barnes, Anna M. *Marti: A Story of the Cuban War*. Elgin, Ill.: D.C. Cook Publishing Co., 1899. Print.

Bonesteel, Mary G. *The Young Colorguard*. New York: Benziger Brothers, 1902. Print.

--. *The Two Stowaways*. New York: D.H. McBride, 1900. Print.

- Bonsal, Stephen. *The Golden Horseshoe*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1900. Print.
- Brereton, Frederick. *Under the Spangled Banner. A Tale of the Spanish American War*. London: Blackie and Sons, 1903. Print.
- Bridgmen, Raymond L. *Loyal Traitors*. Boston: J.H. West, 1903. Print.
- Brooks, Elbridge S. *In Defense of the Flag: A Boy's Adventures in Spain and the West Indies During the Battle Year of Our War with Spain*. Boston: Lothrop Publishing Company, 1900. Print
- . *With Lawton and Roberts: A Boy's Adventures in the Philippines and the Transvaal*. Boston: Lothrop Publishing Company, 1900, Print.
- Cantwell, Frederick Spangler. *The High Commission: A Romance of the Spanish-American War*. NY: F. Tennyson Neely, 1899. Print.
- Cleveland, Harold. *John Sloan, Private of the Tenth Pennsylvania: A Brave Coward*. Chicago: Chicago and North Western Railway Co., 1899. Print.
- Crosby, Ernest. *Captain Jinks, Hero*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1902. Print.
- Dean, John Martin. *The Promotion: A Story of the Philippine War*. Griffith and Rowland, 1906.
- Drysdale, William: *Cadet Standish of the St. Louis*. Boston: Wilde & Co., 1899. Print.
- Finely, Martha. *Elsie's Young Folks in Peace and War*. New York: Dodd Mead and Co., 1900. Print.
- Fox, John W., Jr. *Crittenden: A Kentucky Story of Love and War*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900. Print.
- Gunter, Archibald. *Don Balasco of Key West*. New York: Home Publishing Co., 1898. Print.
- . *Jack Curzon*. New York: Home Publishing Co., 1898. Print.
- Hains, Thornton J. *The Wreck of the Conemaugh*. Philadelphia: JB Lippincott, 1900. Print.
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- . *Chuggins, The Youngest Hero in the Army*. Philadelphia: Henry Altemus Co. 1904. Print.
- Hartt, Irene. *On the Charleston*. New York: The Abbey Press, 1900. Print.
- Hyatt, Stanley Portal. *The Little Brown Brother*. New York: Henry Holt, 1908. Print.
- Ide, Francis O. *Loyal Hearts and True*. New York: FA Stokes Co., 1899. Print.
- Jones, Douglas C. *Remember Santiago*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1899. Print.
- Kaler, JO: *Off Santiago with Sampson*. Boston. D. Estes and Co., 1899. Print.
- . *When Dewey Came to Manila*. D. Estes and Co., 1899. Print.
- King, Charles. *Comrades in Arms, a Tale of Two Hemispheres*. New York: Hobart Co., 1904. Print.
- . *A Conquering Corps Badge and Other Stories of the Philippines*. Milwaukee, WI: LA Rhoades and Co., 1902. Print.
- . *Found in the Philippines, the Story of a Woman's Letters*. New York: F. Tennyson Neely, 1899. Print.
- MacMillan, Jude. *A Random Shaft*. Boston: CM Clark, 1908. Print.
- Musick, John. *Cuba Libre: A Story of the Hispano-American War*. Ann Arbor: RH Whitten, 1906. Print.
- Morrison, Harry Steele. *The Adventures of a Boy Reporter*. New York: World Syndicate Publishing, 1900. Print.
- Pendleton, Louis. *Carita: A Cuban Romance*. Boston: Lamson, Wolffe, Co., 1898. Print.
- Rathbone, St. George. *Miss Fairfax of Virginia: A Romance of Love and Adventure Under the Palmettos*. New York: Street and Smith, 1899. Print.
- Richards, Laura E. *Rita*. Boston: Dana Estes, and Co., 1900. Print.
- Stables, WG: *Fighting the Dons*. Philadelphia: GW Jacobs and Co., 1898. Print.



Stoddard, WO: *Despatch Boat of the Whistle*. Boston: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1898. Print.

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