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WESTERING KNIGHTS: AMERICAN MEDIEVALISMS AND CONTESTATIONS OF MANIFEST DESTINY

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

LITERATURE

by

Scott Riley

June 2019

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ABSTRACT

Westering Knights: American Medievalisms and Contestations of Manifest Destiny

by Scott Riley

This Dissertation explores the abiding American fascination with the European Middle Ages, that nebulous historical periodization spanning roughly the Fall of Rome (410 CE) to Columbus's arrival in the New World (1492 CE). Recent research in the field of postcolonial medievalism, when brought to bear upon canonical works of American Literature such as Edgar Allan Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher," Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, reveals the extent to which American medievalisms exist as creole medievalisms, simultaneously sublimating modern European colonial contestations and subverting those contestations by reinterpreting the history and literature of the Middle Ages in terms of a non-European and modern spacetime. This ideological ambivalence is especially apparent in the associations developed between these medievalisms and the western frontier. The American tendency to present the western frontier as akin to medieval Europe both romanticizes the American West and treats that region as un-Modern, in need of development. American medievalisms demonstrate how the discourse of Manifest Destiny relies upon not only a spatial but also a temporal contestation, especially the medieval/modern divide outlined by theorists of postcolonial medievalism, and a project that compares contemporary research on the

Middle Ages, especially works in the nascent field of global medieval studies, with American literature can unsettle this spatiotemporal colonial contestation, by emphasizing the continuities that link America to and the discontinuities that distinguish America from the Middle Ages.

Introduction

The historical Middle Ages—that famously slippery periodization spanning, roughly, the Fall of Rome (410 CE) to Columbus's arrival in the New World (1492 CE)—exists as a poignant and remarkably persistent preoccupation of American cultural productions, but the possible reasons for and effects of this centuries-long fascination with the medieval remain largely unexplored. Extant studies of American medievalisms have largely confined themselves to specific periods and places within U.S. history—with particular attention given to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and to either the American South or the American North.[1] Relying upon recent scholarship in postcolonial medievalism—an interdisciplinary field developed over the last two decades by scholars such as Kathleen Davis, Nadia Altschul and Bruce Holsinger—this project proposes a more wide-ranging, *longue-durée* approach that considers the extent to which American figures of and narratives about the Middle Ages repeatedly "flash up," to use Walter Benjamin's phrase, throughout U.S. history, revealing how this imagined medieval past functions within a variety of American cultural contexts.[2]

Emphasizing the central importance of the "medieval/modern divide" to modern cultural productions, postcolonial medievalism critiques the binary that rends modernity from its "un-Modern" past, interpreting medievalisms as disclosures of the repressed spatiotemporal modality upon which modernity itself depends.[3] The medieval, in this sense, becomes not so much a bygone historical epoch as

modernity's uncanny twin, and such an understanding of the medieval as, at least in part, a modern cultural construction accentuates how contemporary scholarship exploring the historical Middle Ages can subvert or unsettle modernity's tendency to subject the Middle Ages to "recurring cycles of demonization, romanticism, gothicization, obfuscation, and dismissal."[4] Such a comparative method that links American medievalisms to contemporary research in medieval studies affords a tactic for grappling with this transoceanic and transhistorical cultural exchange and specifically with the question of whether "the medieval can speak," for this comparative emphasizes "the 'epistemic violence' enacted upon the period" by American medievalisms, all the while recognizing that the medieval is not wholly legible to modern interpreters.[5]

Kathleen Davis's recent reading of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (c. 731), for instance, in which Davis interprets Bede's historiography as remarkably similar to the purportedly secular, chronological temporality utilized in much modern historiography, affords a hermeneutic that upends the medieval/modern divide upon which U.S. history, like other national histories, rely. Davis's analysis suggests that our conception of the Middle Ages as ahistorical, unbeholden to chronological notions of temporality and antithetical to modern notions of time, is insupportable with respect to the textual and archeological evidence currently available to us. Thinking of Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* (1992), Davis argues that both the medieval and modern periods are riddled through with a variety of temporalities, including the temporality that rends the modern from the medieval, and

an analysis of American medievalisms reveals something similar; references and allusions to the Middle Ages made by early American authors such as Thomas Jefferson and Hugh Henry Brackenridge reveal at least two distinct temporalities: one messianic, one narratological—and neither resembling the secular, chronological temporality supposedly distinct to modernity.

Postcolonial Medievalism

The "fundamental contribution," as Carol Symes deems it, that Kathleen Davis has made to modern historiography with *Periodization and Sovereignty* brings into question a whole host of concerns regarding how academic institutions divide, hierarchize and delineate space and time.[6] If we see the periodization of history and the division of geographical territories into colonies as coeval, intertwined with the development of secular modernity more generally, academic demarcations of period and place are imbricated within this modern world-system that leverages historical periodization and geographical territorialization to support the uneven distribution of capital and labor so central to that system.[7] At issue is not only the modern world-system as a whole, with its construction of peripheral and central economies and its contestation of a premodern period radically distinct from modernity, but also the disciplinization of academia into discrete schools, disciplines, fields and subfields.[8]

Gayatri Spivak in *Death of a Discipline* (2003) articulates a succinct response to this predicament, promoting a "new comparative literature" that prioritizes "a care for language and idiom," espousing a cultural studies approach that simultaneously follows any given figure wherever it leads—across disciplines, languages and

media—and accepts that such analyses are neither definitive nor canonical. Indeed, that a preoccupation with canonicity is indicative of the very colonial discourses that Davis's and Spivak's scholarship critiques.[9] Scholars of subaltern studies, like Spivak, and medieval studies, like Davis, have been at the forefront of this world-comparative development, for when we recognize the extent to which academia is riddled through with colonial contestations—including the conception of academia itself as a discrete cultural institution supposedly cordoned off from the rest of society—we also recognize the extent to which attention to the Global South and to the "un-Modern" can challenge these contestations by foregrounding cultures and periods often peripheralized by modern academia, not to mention by the modern world-system itself.[10]

It is in this sense that John Ganim, Sharon Kinoshita and Kathleen Davis, among others, have connected medievalism with Orientalism, noticing the way that even Edward Said himself in his "trenchant critique of Orientalism" tends to treat the un-Modern, especially the medieval, as necessarily inferior to modernity, as if Said's critique of Orientalism were "bought at the price" of a historiography that contradistinguishes the modern and the un-Modern.[11] A postcolonial medievalism that engages these questions of historiography emphasizes the way, "whether glorified as the cradle of Europe and its nations or as the barbaric past that they left behind, 'the medieval' has—at various times and in various circumstances but nonetheless with consistency—supplied a spatiotemporal baseline for many dominant [modern] narratives."[12] Like Spivak's assertion that "the agency of change" within

the modern world-system is "located in the insurgent or the 'subaltern,'" scholars of postcolonial medievalism theorize the medieval—that nebulous historical category constructed in large part by nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians—as a site for resituating and rethinking modernity itself.[13]

The relationship between nationalism and modern representations of the medieval is, in particular, a wellspring for postcolonial medievalism because, as Patrick Geary in *The Myth of Nations* (2002) contends, modern nation-states and territorialities have defined themselves in large part in terms of an imagined medieval past. Nationalist discourses that present Anglo-Saxons or Carolingian Franks as central to a given nation-state's identity avoid recognizing that such communities were cobbled together of indigenous populations that, over time, came to consider themselves descended from a single, often mythological or mythologized figure.[14] In turn, these nationalist discourses frame their imagined national ethnicities as incommensurate gestalts, often leveraging those representations in support of regressive, ethnonationalist projects.

While Geary's research focuses on European nation-states, something similar has been said of non-European territories. In *Creole Medievalism: Colonial France and Joseph Bédier's Middle Ages* (2011), Michelle R. Warren discusses how Joseph Bédier (1864-1938), a scholar of medieval French who grew up in Reúnion, developed a "creole medievalism" that "challenges the traditional binarisms of imperial discourse […] join[ing] a myriad of […] strategies for representing postcolonial society."[15] As figurations and narratives that inscribe European history

and culture onto colonial territories, these creole medievalisms "can never veer too far from the[ir] imperial conditions," but, at the same time, "creative claims on the Middle Ages hold out the possibility of moving beyond colonial dualities (civilization/savagery, inclusion/exclusion, etc)."[16] In her study of Chilean-Venezuelan grammarian and scholar Andrés Bello (1787-1865), meanwhile, Nadia Altschul "argue[s] for the simultaneous presence of both creole Occidentalism and creole resistance in Bello's work."[17] Borrowing Warren's term, Altschul sees Bello's creole medievalism—especially his interpretation of the medieval poem that would become, during the long nineteenth century, Spain's national epic, *Song of El Cid*—as framing Hispanic America simultaneously as an extension of Europe and as a territory in its own right, free to pursue its own interests.

This same ambivalence is present in much American medievalism, which often not only justifies a variety of colonial or imperial projects, including western expansionism, but also constructs alternative histories that challenge those colonial or imperial contestations. When Rip Van Winkle, in Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle," returns from the Catskills to find the portrait of King George III replaced with a portrait of George Washington, or when Mark Twain bemoans the South's "medieval chivalry silliness" in *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), or when Shevek, in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1974), finds refuge from the government of A-Io—a society distinctly similar to the twentieth-century United States—in Terra's embassy, a remodeled, medievalized castle, the United States and the Middle Ages interlap uncannily, unsettling the medieval/modern divide upon which much U.S.

national historiography—like the national historiographies of other Global North nations—rely.[18]

What is a Medievalism?

The question of what defines a medievalism—as well as what defines the medieval itself—is a longstanding concern of medieval studies. As David Matthews puts it in *Medievalism: A Critical History* (2015), "It is simple enough to say that medievalism is the study of the Middle Ages after the Middle Ages, but very difficult to discern a precise method [for such a study] [….] like cultural studies, medievalism has proved difficult to house within traditional disciplines."[19] Leslie Workman, who founded the academic journal *Studies in Medievalism* in 1979, defines medievalism as the "*process* of creating the Middle Ages," distinguishing it from "medieval studies," understood as the study of "the medieval period itself," but, as Matthews argues, such a distinction quickly "breaks down" because, "[w]hile medieval studies might be concerned with the medieval period, *all* such study of the Middle Ages (by definition) has gone on after the Middle Ages."[20] Matthews, instead, promotes an "expanded medieval studies" that "mov[es] beyond the purview" of Workman's conception of medieval studies to include not only the study of medievalisms themselves but also "global histories that extend to the European Middle Ages and beyond."[21]

Since the 2005 edition of *Studies in Medievalism*, titled "Postmodern Medievalisms," scholars, with this question of what defines a medievalism in mind, have regularly pluralized the term, thinking of "medievalisms" as "disparate" and "polyphonic," surreptitiously echoing the pluralism of "the Middle Ages" itself.[22]

Such a pluralized conception clarifies the plurality of ways in which the modern allusions and references to, as well as studies of, the medieval period reveal the medieval/modern divide as a persistent trauma of modern cultural imaginaries—trauma itself understood as "a temporal process that is located, not in one moment alone, but in the relation between two moments."[23] As Kathleen Biddick argues in *The Shock of Medievalism* (1998), "medievalism inhabits medieval studies as an abiding trauma," and she traces the ways in which nationalism and imperialism, so dominant in nineteenth-century constructions of medieval studies, remain central to much contemporary research on the Middle Ages.[24] Biddick, who is particularly critical of the "fabricated rupture between an authoritative, 'scientific' medieval studies and nonscientific medievalism," the latter understood as "a fabricated effect of this newly forming medieval studies, […] its despised 'other,' its exteriority," describes how medievalisms have been treated by medieval studies as "sentimental," "idealized" renderings of the Middle Ages, and her work illustrates the extent to which the field of medieval studies continues to imagine itself as an exclusive discipline, at odds with these nonscientific, romanticized renderings of the Middle Ages.[25]

By thinking of medievalism in terms of historical trauma, Biddick reconciles this dilemma, arguing that the Middle Ages and medievalism are inextricably linked in the sense that "medievalism […] intimately inhabits medieval studies," seeing both medievalism and medieval studies as attempts to abreact that abiding historical trauma.[26] In turn, Biddick, like Matthews, petitions for medieval studies to "broaden"

its scope to include a variety of academic fields, especially anthropology and cultural studies, in order to avoid medieval studies' tendency toward exclusivism.[27] Understood as disclosures of an abiding historical trauma, medievalisms become reckonings with the medieval/modern divide, understood as the "universal traumatic change" that dislocates modernity from the un-Modern.[28] The medieval/modern divide functions as "a regulating principle" for modern historiography, a means of "postulat[ing] historical breaks as fully 'achieved' and outside politics," a rupturing of history into discrete periods that creates the abiding trauma that Biddick diagnoses. In particular, according to Kathleen Davis, the medieval/modern divide connects the medieval with a variety of monoliths, especially religion, feudalism and the undeveloped, while modernity is connected with the monoliths of secularism, capitalism, and development. Medievalism, Davis concludes, thinking of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of territorialization, "becomes the method for countering a colonial politics of knowledge precisely because this politics instantiates the medieval/modern divide as a form of territorialization."[29] Necessarily entwining the modern and the medieval, medievalisms disrupt the presumed separation of modernity from the medieval, disclosing the repressed trauma enacted by a colonialist temporality that rends history into discrete periods just as a colonialist spatiality rends the earth into discrete geographical territories.

The Time Machine in the Garden

To date, the field of postcolonial medievalism has not been brought to bear upon American Studies, with research on American medievalisms revolving

especially around the late-nineteenth or early-twentieth centuries and the North-South divide—taking notions such as the "medieval" largely for granted. In *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (1981), for instance, T. J. Jackson Lears takes the Northern bourgeoisie as his "dramatis personae" in order to emphasize the extent to which the Middle Ages, as well as Native American and Eastern cultures, existed for *fin-de-siècle* Northern writers, artists, architects and politicians as an "escape from the rigors of bourgeois adulthood," especially the increasing industrialization and modernization of the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century United States.[30] Like their Southern counterparts mourning the Lost Cause as the death knell of chivalry, these Northern writers turned to the Middle Ages for a bygone epoch of "purity and honor" that dramatized and clarified a particular conception of the present as inferior to that imagined past.[31] In "Varieties of American Medievalism" (1982), meanwhile, Peter Williams sees the American fascination with the Middle Ages in terms of the influx of Catholic immigrants, especially the Irish, in the late-nineteenth century, while "Medievalism in North America" (1994), the sixth volume of Leslie Workman's *Studies in Medievalism*, includes essays focused largely on late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century figures like Toby E. Rosenthal (1848-1917), Edwin Austin Abbey (1852-1911), Edgar Rice Burroughs (1875-1950), and Roger Sherman Loomis (1887-1966).

Even recent scholarship concerned with elements of postcolonial medievalism have maintained this focus on the late-nineteenth or early-twentieth centuries and on

the Atlantic seaboard. Elizabeth A. Emery, in an essay published in Altschul and Davis's *Medievalisms in the Postcolonial World: The Idea of "The Middle Ages" outside Europe* (2009), interprets the postcolonial Gothic style of two Episcopal Cathedrals—the National Cathedral in Washington and the Church of St. John the Divine in New York City—as emblematic of the fraught relationship between the United States and its imagined medieval past, illustrating how, as Henry James famously declared in *The American Scene* (1907), "the multitudinous sky-scrapers [that] like extravagant pins in a cushion already overplanted" have come to supersede cathedrals as the prototypical American architecture.[32] In *Queer Chivalry: Medievalism and the Myth of White Masculinity in Southern Literature* (2013), meanwhile, Tison Pugh has outlined the extent to which the "myth of southern masculinity" relies fundamentally upon a "medieval chivalric ideal," which Pugh poignantly rereads as not only a "historical myth" but "a queer one at that."[33] Engaging with the recognition, famously discussed by Mark Twain in *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), that "[t]he South has not yet recovered from the debilitating influence of [Walter Scott's] books," Pugh sees this Southern medieval chivalric ideal as a decidedly homoerotic figuration, surreptitiously reframing "the southern men's appropriation of medieval chivalry" as disclosures of "queer anxieties" underlying these exaggeratedly patriarchal narratives and images.[34]

This attention to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century and to either the American North or the American South resembles the way, as Henry Nash Smith argues in *Virgin Land* (1950), nineteenth-century U.S. historians framed U.S. history

itself in terms of the Civil War—a dialectic Smith uses to favorably interpret Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis.[35] Since Lynn White, in "The Legacy of the Middle Ages in the American Wild West" (1965), outlined how the "essential equipment" of U.S. western expansionism—from the Conestoga wagon and the log cabin to gunpowder, barbed wire and the windmill—"was very largely the culture of the mediaeval lower classes," a similar reframing of American medievalisms has occurred, with scholars over the last half century—albeit intermittently and often unaware of each other—noticing the extent to which U.S. western expansionism is fraught with medievalisms.[36] In the only book-length study of these frontier medievalisms, Milo Kearney and Manuel Medrano, in *Medieval Culture and the Mexican American Borderlands* (2001), have outlined how the Mexican American borderlands "cannot be fully understood without knowledge of [the] medieval underpinnings in both Castile and in England."[37] Kearney and Medrano interpret these medieval "influences," as they deem them, as illustrations of the deeply connected histories of both Mexico and the United States, but while Kearney and Medrano's research constructs a genealogical argument focused on tracing the medieval "roots" shared by both Mexican and U.S. cultures, a postcolonial medievalism that critiques the entire medieval/modern divide would see these shared medieval underpinnings of the Ibero-American south and the British-American north as indicative of a shared historiography—namely, one that situates the Middle Ages, in the paradoxical logic of colonialism, as both "the cradle of Europe and its nations" and "the barbaric past that [those nations] left behind."[38] Kearney and Medrano, in

other words, continue to think of the medieval as a coherent spatiotemporal referent rather than, as scholarship in postcolonial medievalism suggests, a contestation of the modern colonial world-system.

Interpreting American medievalisms in terms of the western frontier, rather than the Civil War, illustrates the extent to which these medievalisms are inculcated within the logic of New World colonization more generally. English colonist William Byrd (1674-1744), describing his expedition that rendered the dividing line between the English colonies of Virginia and North Carolina, describes how the frontiersmen and -women, coming across his troop of soldiers and aristocrats, "lookt upon us as a Troop of Knight Errants, who were running this great Risque of our Lives, as they imagin'd, for the Public Weal."[39] Even the use of the sobriquet "pilgrim," as Kim Ileen Moreland has suggested, to describe the early English settlers of New England is a kind of medievalism, presenting these colonists in terms of the popular medieval practice of pilgrimaging *à la Sainte Terre*—a motif that, over two hundred years after the Mayflower landed, Henry David Thoreau would take up in the opening paragraphs of "Walking" (1860) as a suitable prototype for his Transcendentalist Walker-Errant.[40] The Spanish Conquest of the New World, meanwhile, has long been understood in relation to the Spanish *Reconquista* (722-1492 CE), the "Reconquest" of the Iberian peninsula from the Moors; playing on the fact that both the fall of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada and Columbus's "discovery" of the New World occurred in 1492, Eduardo Subirats, in *Continente vacío* (1994), argues that the Spanish conquest of the New World functions as the "culmination" of the *Reconquista*.[41] For

Subirats, the same "rationale" fuels both the *Reconquista* and the conquest of the Americas, especially one that presented Spain as responsible for civilizing both the Iberian Peninsula and the New World.[42] King James I, in turn, in issuing the Charter of 1606 to the Virginia Company for land rights along the eastern coast of North America, frames the establishment of the Virginia Colony as a "noble" task to be undertaken for the "propagat[ion] of Christian Religion" by "Knights […] Esquires [and] loving Subjects" of the throne, recapitulating Pope Eugene III's "Summons to the First Crusade" (1154), which called on "those who are of God, and, above all, the greater men and the nobles [to] manfully gird themselves […] that the dignity of the Christian name may be increased in your time."[43]

The consistent overlaying of discourses of chivalry onto New World exploration "mythologizes" the Americas, transforming the New World into the proper site for "a quest, a pilgrimage, a crusade, or some other form of expedition."[44] An analysis of that mythologizing of the Americas reveals the extent to which medieval European history and literature serve as source texts for European explorers', cartographers' and writers' understanding of this (so-called) New World; "[i]n the New World," Lynn White writes in his study of the "medieval equipment" of western expansionism, quoting U.S. historian Lewis Mumford, himself paraphrasing the scholarship of Mexican historian Luis Weckmann, "the medieval order renewed itself, as it were, by colonization."[45] The medievalisms of the Mexican American borderlands that Kearney and Medrano notice, in this context, illustrate not only a shared medieval past yoking Mexican and U.S. cultures but also the coevality

of frontiers and anachronous temporalities themselves—the way the spatial contestations of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis are coeval with temporal contestations that present, in the case of the New World, the Middle Ages in monolithic terms. Whether it is the blow to the head that renders Hank Morgan, in Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), an inhabitant of Camelot or the space shuttle in Ursula K. Le Guin's *Rocannon's World* (1966) that transports Semley off her medievalized world and into the near future, American medievalisms connect the medieval with both frontiers and non-chronological temporalities. Indeed, we could say that American medievalisms themselves, as modern representations of the Middle Ages, are necessarily explorations of displaced spatialities and non-chronological temporalities, integrating images and narratives from an anachronous historical period and displaced regions into purportedly modern texts or contexts.

The associations among the Middle Ages, time travel and the western frontier indicate the uneven, occluded continuity between the European colonization of the New World and the Middle Ages. Texts like Hugh Henry Brackenridge's *Modern Chivalry* and Owen Wister's *The Virginian* reveal how U.S. conceptions of the western frontier as an Edenic paradise, a "virgin land" of "rustic plenty, remote from the contagion of popular vices," render western expansionism itself as not only a spatial but also a temporal voyage—a journey back through time to an earlier, un-Modern past.[46] Leo Marx's recognition that these idyllic representations of the western frontier imply a necessity to modernize that landscape presumes not only a

vehicle of geographic transport—for Leo Marx, exemplified by the train—but also a vehicle that makes of time a traversable medium—a time-machine, so to speak. Annette Kolodny's *The Lay of the Land* (1975), which rereads Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land* through a variety of feminist hermeneutics and so describes the way that the conception of the western frontier as a virgin land feminizes the landscape, constructing patriarchal contestations regarding western expansionism and the discourse of Manifest Destiny, can be supplemented by a postcolonial medievalism that notices the extent to which these patriarchal contestations—as well as their related racial contestations—are dependent upon an understanding of the Middle Ages as Eurocentric and deeply inscribed with a historiography that counterdistinguishes the Middle Ages and modernity.

American medievalisms puncture chronological conceptions of time just as they puncture fixed conceptions of space, and it is in this sense that American medievalisms can be seen as a response to the U.S.'s preoccupation with historical narratives of progress and decay and geographical representations that prioritize political sovereignty. The American jeremiad, as Sacvan Bercovitch has deemed it, and the American myth of progress unite, underpinned by a "secular theology of time," as Kathleen Davis deems it, for which "time runs smooth," and space as defined solely by political sovereignty; while the time machine—be it the crowbar that sends Hank Morgan to Camelot or the draught that sends Rip Van Winkle into the future—exists in the American cultural imaginary as an escape hatch from these univocal, chronological temporalities and fixed, monosemous conceptions of space.[47]

An understanding of western expansionism as a temporal as well as a spatial contestation recasts the "closing of the frontier" as the occlusion of not only the spatial fix but also the temporal fix so central to capitalism, which is, as it turns out, precisely how David Harvey discusses the concept in *The New Imperialism* (2003): the "spatio-temporal fix," Harvey argues, involves the construction of both spatial markets, beyond the purview of central economies, and future markets, for which capital, in the form of profits, is saved or to which capital, in the form of debts, is pledged.[48] American medievalisms, as explorations of non-chronological temporalities and displaced spatialities, conjure what happens to space and time when this spatio-temporal frontier is occluded, revealing in particular that the closure of the frontier is coeval with the closure of a historiography that organizes history in dualistic terms—especially, those of the medieval/modern periodization.

Can the Medieval Speak?

Rephrasing Gayatri Spivak's famous quandary—"Can the subaltern speak?"—Carol Symes has recently wondered whether "the medieval [can] speak," asserting that, "[w]hile innovative scholarship always holds out hope that new ways of reading sources will reveal new truths about the past, a perspective more closely aligned with that of Spivak suggests that no methodological move can make medieval voices discernable—regardless of whether 'medieval' is a marker of radical alterity or essential affinity."[49] One approach, Symes goes on to say, of reckoning with the indiscernibility of the historical Middle Ages attends to "the 'epistemic violence' enacted upon the period itself" by modern medievalisms, "tracing 'the Middle Ages'

through recurring cycles of demonization, romanticism, gothicization, obfuscation, and dismissal."[50] Another tactic for dealing with this indiscernibility, employed by Bruce Holsinger in *The Premodern Condition* (2002), has been to focus on allusions and references to the medieval made in contemporary postmodern and postcolonial scholarship, arguing, for instance, that "the critical discourse of postwar France [can] be reconceived in part as a brilliantly defamiliarizing amalgamation of medievalisms that together constitute the domain of the avant-garde premodern."[51] Thinking especially of the work of Georges Bataille, Holsinger sees "[t]he diachronic imagination of the *nouvelle critique* [as] reach[ing] across a millennium to embrace a distant epoch as a foundation for its own intellectual work while elaborating a diverse and often perplexingly self-contradictory vision of the Middle Ages and their legacy to modern theoretical reflection."[52] For Holsinger, the premodern, especially the medieval, becomes that to which postmodern philosophers turn for images and narratives that elucidate their philosophies—from Foucault's representation of medieval spatiality to André Gide's notion of the medieval heraldic term *mise en abyme*, Holsinger outlines how French postmodern philosophy is deeply indebted to these idiosyncratic medievalisms, themselves indebted to postmodern philosophers' own historical moments.

Another tactic for grappling with the indiscernibility of the historical Middle Ages would be to utilize contemporary scholarship on the Middle Ages as heuristics for the interpretation of modern cultural productions. Such a methodology, indebted to Spivak's assertion that a "new comparative literature" ought to consider subaltern

literatures as not only primary but also secondary texts, understands contemporary scholarship on the Middle Ages as hermeneutics in their own rights, thinking of such scholarship as akin—although certainly not identical—to subaltern literatures in that both archives concern themselves with cultures that have been largely deemed by modern historiography either peripheral or antecedental to canonical literatures.[53] Such an approach resists assuming that the medieval can necessarily speak, instead using contemporary scholarship—necessarily colored by its own historical moment—as ways of interlocuting modern cultural productions—in this case U.S. cultural productions—with that admittedly indiscernible past, while, at the same time, resisting recapitulating the exoticization of the medieval so endemic to Romantic and post-Romantic medievalisms that treat the medieval as fundamentally inaccessible to modernity.

Particularly important for such an approach is the so-called "global turn" in contemporary medieval studies. From the Anglo-Saxonism that continues to thrive in twenty-first century U.S. politics to the "Crusader aesthetics" rampant in much contemporary literature, film and video games, American medievalisms tend to foreground Eurocentric and patriarchal figures in their representations of the Middle Ages, even while contemporary research in the field of medieval studies emphasizes the extent to which Europe, as a modern geographical construct, is not a suitable territoriality for thinking about the (so-called) Middle Ages.[54] Particularly dominant in the field of medieval art history, this global turn resists thinking of the Middle Ages in terms of either Europe or a particular modern European nation-state, focusing

instead, for instance, on how Islamic-Christian relations affected virtually every aspect of life throughout the medieval Mediterranean or on how the Medieval Warm Period (c. 950-1250) can be understood as an impetus for the burgeoning of cultures throughout the world during that epoch—and so connecting the Carolingian Empire to the Mississippian mound-building civilization.[55] A comparative that connects global medieval studies to American medievalisms accentuates how U.S. conceptions of the Middle Ages are often grounded upon an understanding of that period that simply does not hold up to textual or archeological evidence currently available to us and so affords creative reinterpretations of American cultural history in terms of a broader, more global understanding of the Middle Ages. Such a comparative, in this sense, supports the "worlding" of American Studies, proposed by scholars such as Susan Gillman, Kirsten Silva Gruesz, Rob Wilson, and John Carlos Ransom, that "foreground[s] the multilingual and multicultural realities of social life and economic opportunity in any of the Americas" or, indeed, globally, in terms of a "global American studies" that, like global medieval studies' eschewal of "Europe," rejects the notion that American cultural productions can be bound by either geographical or temporal markers. The reliance on the Middle Ages by such canonical authors as Thomas Jefferson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ezra Pound and Ernest Hemingway illustrates the transoceanic and transhistorical nature of their works, necessitating a reconsideration of how a multicultural American studies must grapple with not only inter- and intranational but also transhistorical cultural interactions.

In an Anachronous Land

In his introduction to *Reframing the Transnational Turn in American Studies* (2011), Donald Pease argues that "Knowledge produced within the field of transnational American studies emerged within a split temporality," asserting that the transnational turn both "described a factual state of affairs," in the sense that globalization had made transnational interactions more a norm than an outlier, and "required the addition of cultural norms" to the extent that many contemporary cultural norms remain largely oblivious to the transnational interactions fundamental to a good deal of, if not all, contemporary cultural productions.[56] Missing from Pease's analysis, though, is awareness of the medieval/modern divide; the "split temporality" he notices is not simply a split in transnational approaches to American studies but also symptomatic of the tendency of American studies to support the territorialization of the Middle Ages as a bygone historical epoch. This temporality is split not only between "a factual state of affairs" and "cultural norms" but also between a concept of modernity as monolithically associated with the nation-state and a concept of the "un-Modern" (narrated as either premodern or postmodern) as monolithically associated with the transnational, multinational, post-national or pre-national. A "rooted," "partial cosmopolitanism," such as Günther Lenz, quoting Kwame Anthony Appiah, proposes in the final essay in *Reframing the Trans-national Turn in American Studies*, would eschew not only Euro-North American geographies but also Euro-North American temporalities—especially those that treat either modernity or the medieval in monolithic terms.[57]

Such an eschewal necessitates not so much a transhistorical American studies as a multitemporal American studies that experiments with different temporalities; just as the multicultural American studies Lenz imagines would think of cosmopolitanism as always rooted necessarily in a particular spatiality, a multitemporal American studies would think of any given history as similarly partial, rooted in a particular temporality—itself predisposed to accentuate certain historical events and geographical regions over others. As Kathleen Davis puts it in *Periodization and Sovereignty* (2008), "[t]he medieval/modern divide is so stubborn because it describes not a passage, but an aporia," and specifically an aporia that "accounts for the disappearance of feudal historiography from the temporalization of subjection."[58] Her critique is levelled at modern historiography's tendency to treat the medieval and the modern as "monoliths," connecting the medieval with terms like "religious" and "feudal" and modernity with terms like "secular," "capitalist" and "developed."[59] In the final chapter of *Periodization and Sovereignty*, Davis focuses on Bede's understanding of time, as it is presented in *Ecclesiastical History* (c. 731), comparing Bede's text to Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* (1992), a semi-autobiographical ethnography that intertwines a twentieth-century Indian scholar's journey to the Nile Delta with the biography of a twelfth-century Jewish merchant, in order to challenge these monolithic conceptions of medievality and modernity. For Davis, Augustine's *Confessions* and *The City of God* too often "exercise magnetic charm" over modern understandings of medieval thought processes, "overshadow[ing] other 'medieval' conceptions of time," such as Bede's.[60] "While

Augustine had little need to theorize a place and time for Christian kingship and political history," Davis explains, "in eighth-century Britain the very existence of the Church was precarious, and in Bede's estimation it required active kings as much, sometimes more, than monks and monasteries."[61] In turn, Bede, the first known author to use the *anno domini* dating system in a political history—a dating system that, Davis reminds us, links Christ's incarnation to political time—"elaborated what we could call a secular theology of time, whereby the necessary, ongoing calculation of time becomes a regulating practice, a way of living that in turn generates the history of the world."[62]

The historiographic binary that represents medieval thinkers, following Augustine, as having little need to theorize about space and time—Foucault's contention that "medieval" space was a "space of emplacement" seems to be in Davis's crosshairs here—and modern thinkers as necessarily political and historical is, Davis contends, simply not in keeping with the textual evidence we have from the Middle Ages.[63] Bede's conception of time closely resembles the (supposedly) modern, secular conception of time for which "time runs smooth," and so suggests that our monolithic conceptions of the Middle Ages as unbeholden to history or chronology are demonstrably insupportable by the textual evidence available to us. Moreover, by tying this discussion of Bede's concept of time to the medievalisms in *In an Antique Land*, Davis suggests that modernity itself is rife with a plurality of temporalities, some of which are political, some historical, some neither. Even if, as Davis suggests, Ghosh "sometimes gets caught" in the "arrogation of history as

entirely 'modern' and European" and so does not utterly abscond with Orientalism or the medieval/modern divide, by juxtaposing *In an Antique Land* with Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, Davis reveals how both texts integrate temporalities that are at odds with the (supposedly) dominant temporalities connected to modernity and the Middle Ages by the modern/medieval periodization.

American medievalisms could well be taken as a corollary to Ghosh's *In an Antique Land*. Like Ghosh's novel, American medievalisms connect medieval (or pseudo-medieval) figures tenuously to the modern United States and, in so doing, open up "alternative historical trajectories" that reframe U.S. culture in a plurality of ways.[64] While many American medievalisms are less multicultural than Ghosh's novel's, even overtly ethno-nationalist medievalisms—such as those that, as in the opening intertitles of *Gone with the Wind*, present Southern Secession as a chivalric task or contemporary celebrations of the "Anglo-American heritage" of U.S. law enforcement agencies—weave medieval history or cultural productions into U.S. history thwarting chronological or teleological conceptions of time even as they bemoan—or, alternately, celebrate—particular historical narratives.[65]

Attention to the temporalities at play in American medievalisms reveals this plurality of temporalities present in even the purportedly canonical texts of U.S. history and literature. On the title page of the proceedings of the first Constitutional Congress, for instance, is an image of twelve arms—signifying the twelve colonies—reaching to support a column, at the base of which is scrawled "Magna Carta." The Magna Carta, throughout the American Revolution, as David Starkey has recently

demonstrated, played an outsized role in the Founders' thinking about how to assert their rights against an oppressive regime, and the language of the Magna Carta is invoked in a number of state constitutions as well as in the Bill of Rights itself.[66] A charter, written by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1215 CE, between King John and barons who believed themselves to be unfairly treated, the Magna Carta essentially proved inconsequential in its own time.[67] Neither King John nor the barons accepted the terms of the charter, and the disagreement eventually led, at least in part, to the First Barons' War of 1215-17 CE. The charter was taken up again, after the war and used throughout the late medieval period as a means of adjudicating payments to the Crown. This relatively marginal text became important in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Britain—through what Anthony Musson deems the "Magna Carta effect," "the appropriation of widely revered legal documents as symbolic of fundamental law"—because it functioned as the basis for an imagined Anglo-Saxon constitution that delineated individual freedoms, such as the freedom from unlawful seizures or the right to a speedy trial, asserting, in the meantime, that after the Norman Conquest of Britain this constitution was lost.[68] None of this conjecture holds up to contemporary textual evidence, as Musson contends in his study of the Magna Carta and its political and social contexts, but that did not change the fact that the Magna Carta existed, in the minds of the English, and especially the English colonists, as a constitution that would protect an individual against a repressive regime.[69]

The Founders' interest in the Magna Carta, imagined as a pre-Norman constitution, speaks to a vision of history directly connected to the nascent Anglo-

Saxonism that, as Reginald Horsman has shown, came to dominate antebellum U.S. cultural productions, as well as to the central role the Battle of Hastings plays in the early U.S. cultural imaginary.[70] In his "Summary View of the Rights of British America," Jefferson refers on several occasions to "our Saxon ancestors," imagining them as an egalitarian society for which "feudal holdings were certainly altogether unknown": "Our Saxon ancestors held their lands, as they did their personal property, in absolute dominion, disencumbered with any superior, answering nearly to the nature of those possessions which the feudalists term allodial."[71] According to Jefferson's historiography, the Saxons lived within an egalitarian, non-hierarchical society that was transformed, after the Norman Conquest, into a feudal society reliant upon a hierarchical power structure. Framing these Saxons as "our ancestors," Jefferson presents U.S. citizens as necessarily of British ancestry, withholding citizenship from other European immigrants, Native Americans, African Americans and other non-Europeans, at the same time as he promotes an egalitarianism in which serfs and nobles are purportedly alike, all similarly Anglo-Saxon.

The temporality that undergirds such an understanding of history, as Hannah Spahn has recently argued in her study of Jefferson's historiography, is "one in which the present did not flow smoothly from the past but was sharply dissociated from it by violent events that 'cut' life 'in two.'"[72] History exists for Jefferson not in the way modern historiography's temporality supposes—with "time run[ning] smooth"—but as a series of messianic moments with which the world is utterly transformed.[73] This "peculiar temporality," Spahn argues, is fundamental to how Jefferson interpreted the

American Revolution; the French Revolution; his own presidency; and even seemingly trite, personal events like the loss of his niece's possessions in a shipwreck, and it is similarly visible in his rendering of the Middle Ages in terms of the Norman Conquest of England.[74] The Battle of Hastings, according to Jefferson's messianic temporality, was world-transformative, not so different from how modern colonial historiography imagines the separation of modernity from the medieval. Indeed, as Kathleen Davis illustrates in her discussion of Giorgio Agamben's notion of "messianic time," the medieval/modern divide itself stands at odds with the temporality practiced (supposedly) by "modern" historiography, proposing a fundamental, messianic transformation from a medieval/religious/feudal/ undeveloped period to a modern/secular/capitalist/developed period. Such a messianic temporality, in this sense, might be understood as at least as endemic to modern historiography as one for which time runs smooth.[75]

If Jefferson's messianic temporality frames the founding of the United States as a world-transformative moment, ushering in a *novo ordo seclorum*, the temporality developed by Hugh Henry Brackenridge in *Modern Chivalry* (1792-1815) illustrates the complexity of historiographical thought present in the early United States. In his best-selling, idiosyncratic adaptation of *Don Quixote*, Brackenridge presents Captain Farrago, an American aristocrat who dutifully rectifies the various dilemmas that the bumbling, uncouth western Pennsylvanian frontiersmen he encounters concoct for themselves, as a practitioner of "modern chivalry," adapting the figure of Don Quixote into an honest-to-goodness knight-errant. As with Jefferson, who famously

imagined the yeoman farmer as the prototypical American, Brackenridge imagines the western frontier as populated by medievalized people, but while this is a compliment coming from Jefferson, it is decidedly not coming from Brackenridge, for whom history itself is akin to "romance": in a rambling digression on the celebration of the Fourth of July, Brackenridge asks rhetorically, "which is the most entertaining work, [Tobias] Smollet's History of England, or his Humphrey Clinker?," comparing the eighteenth-century Scottish author's history to one of his picaresque novels.[76] "For as to the utility, so far as that depends upon truth, they are both alike," Brackenridge contends, before going on to declare that "History has been well said to be the romance of the human mind, and Romance, the history of the heart."[77] Brackenridge sees history itself as a narrative construction, modelled after the chivalric romance, prefiguring by nearly two centuries Hayden White's contestation that history is "narrative prose discourse" following particular forms of emplotment.[78] Brackenridge's conception of temporality as a narratological construction presents time not as a chronological sequence of events or defined by specific, world-transformative moments but as a matter of narration, especially connected to literary production.

Early in the 1792 edition of *Modern Chivalry*, during a discussion among the Pennsylvanian frontiersmen regarding a particularly libelous press, a "bookish taylor," remarks:

> Men will bear from the buffoon or jester, things they would not take from a friend, and scarcely from a confessor. It was on this principle that in the middle ages of Europe, a profession of men was indulged in the houses of the great,

> called the Joculators. So late as the time of James I, we had one of these of the name of Archy. The Duke of Buckingham having taken offence at something that he said, had him whipped. It was thought beneath a man of honor to have taken notice of it and inflicted punishment. I consider the bulk of our editors as succeeding to the joculators of the early periods; and as the knights of character and dignity of those times were not bound to notice the sallies however gross of jesters; so now a gentleman is not bound to notice the defamation of gazettes.[79]

The "middle ages of Europe" are invoked in a discussion of the press, just as Washington Irving in a discussion of "The Art of Book Making" printed in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819-1820), describes how in the British Museum, he opened a door that "yielded to my hand, with all that facility with which the portals of enchanted castles yield to the adventurous knight errant" and through which he found "a spacious chamber, surrounded with great cases of venerable books."[80] Thinking of the American conflation of time travel and the Middle Ages, we could say that this connection between books and the "middle ages of Europe" suggests an understanding of books themselves—as well as other media—as mechanisms that transport the reader to other worlds, temporally anachronous and geographically displaced—a connection that is taken up in more detail in chapter four's discussion of science fiction's medievalisms. Brackenridge's understanding of history as essentially "romance" satirizes historiography, integrating medievalisms—such as the title—into a U.S. cultural context that does not separate modernity from the un-Modern so much as entwine the two. For Brackenridge, who models *Modern Chivalry* after not only *Don Quixote* but also *Tristram Shandy*, the United States is a thoroughly un-Modern territory, an anachronistic land, we might say, thinking of

Ghosh.

Both Jefferson and Brackenridge do not simply interpret time as “run[ning] smooth” or as “homogenous and empty.” Indeed, they do not even see the medieval itself in similar ways, with Jefferson focusing on the Battle of Hastings and Breckenridge on literary production, and with this in mind these two authors concisely summarize two central elements of American medievalisms: Jefferson, like James Fennimore Cooper, Owen Wister, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot and contemporary American neoconservative politicians, turns to the Middle Ages for clarity, authenticity and truth, presenting that un-Modern epoch—like the title page of the proceedings of the first Constitutional Congress—as the foundation of this (purportedly) modern nation-state or as a stay against the disorientation and confusion of modernity. For Brackenridge, as for Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain, William Faulkner and Ursula K. Le Guin, meanwhile, the Middle Ages exist largely—or at least in part—as a cultural production of modernity, an uncanny fixation that bespeaks modernity’s repressed anxieties and desires. These writers’ medievalisms do not distance the medieval from the modern or treat that imagined un-Modern past as the foundation of modernity but rather integrate the medieval and the modern, entwining and synchronizing the two in a way that demonstrates their uncanny, uneven coevality.

The following chapters explore the elements of these dual strands of American medievalisms, integrating that exploration with contemporary research on

the Middle Ages. In Chapter One, the early nineteenth-century medievalisms of James Fennimore Cooper and Edgar Allan Poe are taken up with respect to research on the cultural hybridity of early medieval Britain. If we see Jefferson's and Brackenridge's medievalisms as emblematic of the Enlightenment's tendency to grapple with the late medieval period as a "dark age" of ignorance and cultural decay, Poe's and Cooper's medievalisms are more in line with a Romantic medievalism that, following Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819), grapples with the medieval through fantasy and fiction. Both Poe's and Cooper's medievalisms are developed not through engagement with the events of the historical Middle Ages but through novels and short stories that, like *Ivanhoe*, fantasize and fictionalize the Middle Ages. While Cooper's medievalisms function in large part to uphold the figure of the Anglo-Saxon as both a promotion and delimitation of a diverse, multiethnic culture, Edgar Allan Poe's medievalisms foreground the repressed death wish latent within such an attempt to delimit the diversity of a democratic republic. Poe sees in Romantic medievalism a monstrous disavowal of alterity, and it is in this sense that, following Robert T. Tally Jr.'s framing of Poe as subverting "that optative mood" so endemic to U.S. literature, I read Poe's medievalisms as subversive figurations that critique the use of the modern/medieval divide in Euro-American historiography.

In Chapter Two, I explore the medievalisms of Mark Twain, comparing *Connecticut Yankee*, *Joan of Arc* and "A Medieval Romance" with recent translations and interpretations of medieval apophatic theology. Mark Twain, like Poe, twines the medieval and the modern, emphasizing the extent to which the two spacetimes are in

large part coterminous. Twain's subversive medievalism, in turn, is juxtaposed with the medievalisms of Owen Wister, the author of the first Western novel, *The Virginian* (1902); Wister, who saw the cowboy as a modern-day chivalric knight, frames the western frontier as the site for chivalric quest, continuing the colonial contestation that links an undeveloped spatiality to an un-Modern temporality. In this second chapter, I discuss the ways in which the medieval/modern divide are integrated into the discourse of manifest domesticity adumbrated by Amy Kaplan and use recent translations of apophatic theologians such as Meister Eckhart and Pseudo-Dionysius as a means of grappling with the overdetermined binaries inscribed within the discourses of Manifest Destiny, western expansionism and modern colonialism more generally.

Chapter Three attends to the medievalisms of American Modernists, especially T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and William Faulkner. Using Ingrid Rembold's recent research on the Carolingian invasion of Saxony, I argue that early twentieth-century medievalisms can be read as intimately entwined with the Industrial Revolution, rather than, as T. J. Jackson Lears contends, a rejection of it. Eliot and Pound present the medieval as the storehouse of images with which the modern reader must be familiar in order to understand his or her present moment. This pedagogical medievalism transforms Wister's cowboy-knight into a scholar-knight, the proper bearer of civilization, and that these medievalisms are often entwined with references to East Asia once again connects the medieval with a (supposedly) undeveloped spatiality. William Faulkner's medievalisms, meanwhile, are often

inscribed in the very psyches of his characters. Like Poe and Twain, Faulkner grapples with the medieval as a modern contestation, noticing the extent to which the Southern aristocracy after the Civil War inscribed the antebellum South with a Romantic medievalism that both exaggerated the distance between their own moment and the antebellum past and connected that past with the nostalgia so endemic to Romantic medievalism as a whole. Thinking of Gramsci's concept of the organic intellectual, in turn, I situate Faulkner as using a kind of organic medievalism, distinct from Eliot's and Pound's pedagogical medievalism, that presents the Middle Ages not as the site of true knowledge or wisdom but as a predictable cultural construction of an industrialized, (purportedly) secular culture, a supplement to, not a departure from, modern industrial society.

In Chapter Four, I shift to the late-twentieth-century medievalisms, using recent research on medieval fantasy as a means of grappling with how feminism and technological innovation are, in the decades after World War II, associated with the Middle Ages. Recent scholarship on medieval spectacle, especially with respect to the Lancastrian ascendency of the early fifteenth century, is useful in this investigation, especially since George R. R. Martin's *Song of Ice and Fire* (1991-), the basis for HBO's wildly popular television series *Game of Thrones* (2011-), is based on the War of the Roses between the House of Lancaster and the House of York. If we understand these medieval spectacles as a means of uniting disparate political territorialities, the spectacles of the post-World-War-II era, so often inscribed with medievalisms, speak to the ways in which medievalisms have become inculcated

within a society of the spectacle, as Guy Debord deems it in *Society of the Spectacle* (1967).[81] Late-twentieth-century medievalisms are presented not so much as pedagogical tools as spectacles to be consumed—in video games, fantasy and science fiction novels, television shows and blockbuster films—and these spectacular medievalisms have been taken up by American politicians in support of a contemporary ethno-nationalism that has, in turn, been leveraged in support of military conflicts such as the Cold War, the War in Afghanistan and the Iraq War. The medievalisms of Ursula K. Le Guin, especially those in her Hainish novels, meanwhile, connect the medieval less with spectacle than with technology and feminism, as if modernity's continued preoccupation with the Middle Ages extrapolates upon an emergent culture, imagined, for instance, in *The Dispossessed* (1974) as an anarcho-syndicalist society for which gender is non-binary and technology supports egalitarianism. Connecting Le Guin's Hainish novels with recent research on Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies*, this fourth chapter considers the extent to which the materiality of texts can upend American ethno-nationalism's use of spectacular medievalisms; after all, if we foreground the materiality of texts, as Le Guin does in her Hainish novels, we also foreground the extent to which ideologies, such as ethno-nationalism, are constructed materially by means of specific cultural artifacts—a notion that, in turn, can upend essentialist contestations, such as contemporary American Anglo-Saxonism, by demonstrating the processes by which such essentialism is culturally produced. Le Guin, then, rethinks the society of the spectacle as an ideological contestation that can be

upended by attention to the materiality of cultural productions, especially, for Le Guin, books—cultural artifacts that she sees as remarkably resistant to hegemonic enframings.

The history of American medievalisms involves such movements back and forth between subversion and imperialism, colonialism and independentism. There is not so much a chronological narrative, then, so much as entwined strands—some reliant upon the medieval/modern divide, others that subvert such a divide through critique, satire and fantasy. In the concluding chapter, therefore, I think about these strands of American medievalisms in not historical but spatial terms, especially those of Leslie Fiedler's North, South, East and West *topoi* of American literature. Such a spatial interpretation recapitulates the diversity and preponderance of medievalisms throughout the cultural contexts of the United States and also affords a chance to think broadly about what happens to American studies when the modern/medieval periodization is unsettled, in particular arguing that such an unsettling requires that we see medievalisms as not antimodernist figurations, as T. J. Jackson Lears argues, but thoroughly, almost prototypically modern—the site where modern cultural fantasies can be explored and, perhaps, sublimated. As Gilles Deleuze intimates in his discussion of Fiedler's four American literary *topoi*, the great boon of American literature, especially that of the American West, is the emphasis on lines of flight and border-crossings, the sense in which adaptation, reproduction and remembrance are always necessarily productive, generative of new cultural productions. The trauma of the medieval/modern divide, in this sense, becomes a site of cultural production, to be

foregrounded, while American medievalisms, as explorations of that trauma, become always already subversive in that they complicate our notions of national and historical belonging, making American culture both multicultural and transhistorical, unbeholden to strictures of space and time, let alone binary contestations such as developed/undeveloped, religious/secular and medieval/modern.

Notes

[1] See, for instance, Peter W. Williams, "The Varieties of American Medievalism," *Studies in Medievalism* 1, no. 2 (Spring 1982), 7-20, and Karl F. Morrison, "Fragmentation and Unity in 'American Medievalism,'" in *The Past before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States*, ed. Michael Kammen (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 49-77, as well as T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
[2] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Shocken Books, 1968), 255.
[3] Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 12. Carol Symes, "When We Talk about Modernity," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 3 (2011), 715.
[4] Symes, "When We Talk about Modernity," 718.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, 1. For a discussion of the uneven distribution of capital and labor in capitalism, see: Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 108-110.
[8] I borrow the term "disciplinization" from Liesbeth Brouwer, "The disciplinization of historiography in nineteenth-century Friesland and the simultaneous radicalization of nationalist discourse" from *Narratives of Low Countries History and Culture: Reframing the Past*, ed. Jane Fenoulhelt and Lesley Gilbert (London: UCL Press, 2016), 153-162.
[9] Gayatri Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 71, 3-4.
[10] I borrow the term "un-Modern" from Carol Symes, "When We Talk about Modernity," 715.
[11] Sharon Kinoshita, "Deprovincializing the Middle Ages," in *The Worlding Project:*

Doing Cultural Studies in the Era of Globalization, ed. Rob Wilson and Chris Connery (Berkeley: North Atlantic, 2007), 67. Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 1. Also see: John Ganim, *Medievalism and Orientalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 3.
[12] Kathleen Davis & Nadia Altschul, "The Idea of 'The Middle Ages' outside Europe," in *Medievalisms in the Postcolonial World: The Idea of "The Middle Ages" outside Europe*, ed. by Kathleen Davis & Nadia Altschul (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 1.
[13] Gayatri Spivak, "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography," in *Selected Subaltern Studies*, ed. Ranajit Guha, et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 3.
[14] Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 37.
[15] Michelle R. Warren, *Creole Medievalism: Colonial France and Joseph Bédier's Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota press, 2011), xii.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Nadia Altschul, *Geographies of Philological Knowledge: Postcoloniality and the Transatlantic National Epic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 136.
[18] Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (New York: Signet Classics, 1883/2009), 209-210. Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (New York: Signet Classics, 2008), 48, 288.
[19] David Matthews, *Medievalism: A Critical History* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 2015), 18.
[20] Matthews, *Medievalism: A Critical History*, 18. For more on this discussion see: Richard Utz, "Speaking of Medievalism: An Interview with Leslie Workman," in *Medievalism in the Modern World: Essays in Honour of Leslie J. Workman*, ed. Richard Utz and Tom Shippey (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 439.
[21] David Matthews, *Medievalism*, 180. Other discussions of medievalism have defined the term as akin to Orientalism, with Sharon Kinoshita, for example, arguing that Said's "trenchant critique of Orientalism […] is bought at the price of what we might call 'Medievalism'—itself a widespread phenomenon." For Kinoshita, "Medievalism"—she capitalizes the term, echoing Said's capitalization of Orientalism—is synonymous with the infantilizing and othering of the medieval period by modernity. Kinoshita, "Deprovincializing the Middle Ages," 67.
[22] Paul Murphy, "Disparate Medievalisms in Early Modern Spanish Music Theory," in *Postmodern Medievalisms*, ed. Richard Utz, et. al. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 17-19.
[23] Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism*, 10. With respect to the importance of a plural definition of "medievalisms" in postcolonial scholarship, see: Tison Pugh and Angela Jane Weisl, *Medievalisms: Making the Past in the Present* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 3.
[24] Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism*, 11.
[25] Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism*, 2.

[26] Ibid.
[27] Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism*, 230.
[28] James Muldoon, "Introduction," in *Bridging the Medieval-Modern Divide: Medieval Themes in the World of the Reformation*, ed. James Muldoon (New York: Routledge, 2016), 7.
[29] Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, 117.
[30] T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), xvi, 146.
[31] T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 101.
[32] Elizabeth A. Emery, "Postcolonial Gothic: The Medievalism of America's 'National' Cathedrals," in *Medievalisms in the Postcolonial World: The Idea of "The Middle Ages" outside Europe*, ed. Nadia Altschul and Kathleen Davis (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 237-264. Henry James, *The American Scene* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1907), 74.
[33] Tison Pugh, *Queer Chivalry: Medievalism and the Myth of White Masculinity in Southern Literature* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 102.
[34] Mark Twain, *Life of the Mississippi* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1901), 290. Tison Pugh, *Queer Chivalry*, 6.
[35] Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: American West as Myth and Symbol* (New York: Vintage, 1950), 250.
[36] Lynn White, Jr., "The Legacy of the Middle Ages in the American Wild West," *Speculum* 40, no. 2 (April 1965), 193.
[37] Milo Kearney and Manuel Medrano, *Medieval Culture and the Mexican American Borderlands* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2001), 1-2.
[38] Kathleen Davis & Nadia Altschul, "The Idea of 'The Middle Ages' outside Europe," 1.
[39] William Byrd, III, *History of the Dividing Line and Other Tracts*, vol. 1 (Richmond: 1866), 3, 30.
[40] Kim Ileen Moreland, *The Medievalist Impulse in American Literature: Twain, Adams, Fitzgerald, and Hemingway* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 103.
[41] Eduardo Subirats. *El continente vacío: la conquista del Nuevo Mundo y la conciencia moderna* (México D.F.: Siglo XXI, 1994), 81: "…*históricamente la conquista de América significa la culminación de la Reconquista y esgrime sus mismos valores ético-militares, su mismo ideario de un universalismo represivo y su misma racionalidad*."
[42] Ibid.
[43] Francis N. Thorpe, ed. *The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America*, Vol. 3 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1909), 1827. French and Dutch discourses on New World exploration

and colonization employ similar tropes. King Francis I, in a 1540 order to the Lieutenant General of New France, Jehan Francois de la Rocque, presents New World exploration as "[f]or the enlargement and increase of our Holy Christian Faith," while the Directors of the New Netherland Company framed their colony as for "the propagation of the true, pure Christian religion, in the instruction of the Indians in that country in true learning, and in converting them to the Christian Faith." James Baxter, et al., *A Memoir of Jacques Cartier* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1906), 323.
[44] Jennifer Robin Goodman, *Chivalry and Exploration, 1298-1603* (New York: Boydell, 1998), 54.
[45] Lynn White, Jr., "The Legacy of the Middle Ages in the American Wild West,"192n2. See also: Luis Weckmann, "The Middle Ages in the Conquest of America," *Speculum*, XXVI (1951), 130, as well as Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt, 1961), 330.
[46] Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: American West as Myth and Symbol* (New York: Vintage, 1950), 197.
[47] Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978). Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, 10.
[48] David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 65.
[49] Carol Symes, "When We Talk about Modernity," 718.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Bruce Holsinger, *The Premodern Condition: Medievalism and the Making of Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 4.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Gayatri Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, 16.
[54] I borrow the term "Crusader aesthetics" from Lev A. Kapitaikin, "Sicily and the Staging of Multiculturalism," in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Finbarr Barry Floot and Gulru Necipoglu (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell Press, 2017), 392.
[55] For a summary of this global turn, see: Christina Normore and Carol Symes, *Re-Assessing the Global Turn in Medieval Art History* (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2018).
[56] Donald Pease, Introduction to *Reframing the Transnational Turn in American Studies*, eds. Winfried Fluck, Donald Pease and John Carlos Rowe (Lebanon: Dartmouth College Press, 2011), 14.
[57] Günther Lenz, "Politics of American Transcultural Studies," in *Reframing the Transnational Turn in American Studies*, eds. Winfried Fluck, Donald Pease and John Carlos Rowe (Lebanon: Dartmouth College Press, 2011), 415
[58] Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, 42.
[59] Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, 2.
[60] Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, 104.

[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité*, trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacriticis* 16.1 (1986), 22-27.
[64] Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, 104.
[65] Marwa Eltagouri, "Jeff Sessions spoke of the 'Anglo-American heritage of law enforcement.' Here's what that means." *Washington Post*, Feb. 12, 2018.
[66] David Starkey, *Magna Carta: The True Story Behind the Charter* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2015), 10-12.
[67] Roger L. Kemp, ed. *Documents of American Democracy: A Collection of Essential Writings* (New York: McFarland & Co., 2010), 12.
[68] Anthony Musson, *Medieval Law in Context: The Growth of Legal Consciousness from Magna Carta to the Peasents' Revolt* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), 254.
[69] Anthony Musson, *Medieval Law in Context*, 18.
[70] Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1981), 1-2.
[71] Thomas Jefferson, *A Summary View of the Rights of British Americans* (Brooklyn: Historical Printing Club, 1892), 27.
[72] Hannah Spahn, *Thomas Jefferson, Time, History* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press), 2.
[73] For more on "messianic time," see: Giorgio Agamben, *The Time that Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 64.
[74] Hannah Spahn, *Thomas Jefferson, Time, History*, 2. Jefferson famously lobbied that Hengist and Horsa, the legendary brothers who supposedly led the Angles, Jutes and Saxons' conquest of Britain in the sixth century CE, be featured on the Great Seal of the United States.
[75] Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, 160. For more, see: Agamben, *The Time that Remains*, 64.
[76] Hugh Henry Brackenridge, *Modern Chivalry* (Richmond: Johnson & Warner, 1815), 163.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in 19th-century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).
[79] Brackenridge, *Modern Chivalry*, 109.
[80] Washington Irving, *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (New York: Putnam, 1854), 96.
[81] Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Ken Knabb (London: Rebel Press, 2002).

CHAPTER ONE

American Gothic:

American Anglo-Saxonism as Cultural Fantasy and Poe's Subversive Medievalism

Robert T. Tally Jr., in *Poe and the Subversion of American Literature: Satire, Fantasy, Critique* (2014), espouses Edgar Allan Poe's "poetics of descent," understood "as a critique of all things lofty" and, in turn, a challenge to "that optative mood […] that held sway over so much popular rhetoric in mid-nineteenth-century American letters."[82] Poe's medievalisms offer salient examples of this poetics of descent, especially when juxtaposed with the medievalisms of other mid-nineteenth-century U.S. authors; Poe leverages the medieval not in support of an Anglo-Saxonism that simultaneously extols the erasure of feudal castes and excludes non-Anglo-Saxons from the U.S. cultural imaginary but in satire of such attempts to represent, in positive terms, a U.S. national identity.

Perhaps the clearest example of this subversive medievalism appears in "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), in which the unnamed narrator reads a chivalric romance to calm Roderick Usher's nerves, presaging the appearance of Roderick's sister, Madeline, from the family crypt and the subsequent destruction of the manor. The presence of a medieval chivalric romance in a canonical nineteenth-century American short story suggests a comparative reading that connects mid-nineteenth-century American medievalisms, especially the rampant Anglo-Saxonism of the

period, with recent research on the medieval romance tradition. In particular, Geraldine Heng's *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (2003) prompts a re-reading of "The Fall of the House of Usher" as the disclosure of the cultural anxieties latent within American Anglo-Saxonism.[83]

American Anglo-Saxonism

In a series of lectures from "Permanent Traits of the English National Genius" (1835) to "The Anglo-American" (1855), Ralph Waldo Emerson, recapitulating Jefferson's Norman/Anglo-Saxon binary, depicts Americans as akin to Anglo-Saxons, understood as brawny, masculine outdoorsmen, sharply contrasted with the Celts, who Emerson associates derisively with the "slow, sure finish" of the English.[84] In these lectures, particularly "The Anglo-American" (originally titled "The Anglo-Saxon"), Emerson depicts the prototypical American as a frontiersman, grappling with both the hardships and furor of western expansionism: "The wild, exuberant tone of society in California is only an exaggeration of the uniform present condition of America in the excessive attraction of the extraordinary natural wealth […] the radiation of character and manners here, the boundless America, gives opportunity as wide as the morning."[85] Emerson's Anglo-Saxonism, as Reginald Horsman has shown in *Race and Manifest Destiny* (1981), is part of a larger movement, spanning the early nineteenth century, that portrayed the prototypical U.S. citizen as Anglo-Saxon: "The debates and speeches," Horsman writes, "of the early nineteenth century reveal a pervasive sense of the future destiny of the United States, but they do not have the jarring note of rampant racialism that permeates the debates

of mid-century [….] By 1850 the emphasis was on the American Anglo-Saxons as a separate, innately superior people who were destined to bring good government, commercial prosperity, and Christianity to the American continents and to the world."[86] This American Anglo-Saxonism, Horsman contends, was integral to the discourse of Manifest Destiny as a whole as it interpreted the western frontier as available specifically to Americans who either were or imagined themselves to be of Anglo-Saxon descent, and such use of medievalism to bolster ethnonationalist projects such as western expansionism, it turns out, is a long-standing motif of modern nationalist discourses more generally.

Nationalist discourses of modern European nation-states in particular have turned repeatedly to premodernity, especially the Middle Ages, for figures and narratives that present a given nation-state in monolithic terms: this "pseudo-history," Patrick Geary argues in *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (2002), "assumes, first, that the peoples of Europe are distinct, stable and objectively identifiable social and cultural units, and that they are distinguished by language, religion, custom, and national character, which are unambiguous and immutable;" moreover, such pseudo-history—albeit with real, material consequences—suggests that "[t]hese peoples were supposedly formed either in some impossibly remote moment of prehistory, or else the process of ethnogenesis took place at some moment during the Middle Ages, but then ended for all time."[87] While Geary focuses on European nation-states, Nadia Altschul and others interested in postcolonial medievalism have recognized the extent to which this ethnonationalist medievalism

transfers easily to other, non-European territories' nationalist discourses, especially those of territories colonized by Western European powers. In *Geographies of Philological Knowledge: Postcoloniality and the Transatlantic National Epic* (2012), for instance, Altschul illustrates how nineteenth-century Chilean grammarian Andrés Bello's interpretation of the medieval Castilian epic poem *Song of El Cid* framed Hispanic America simultaneously as an extension of Europe and as a territory in its own right, free to pursue its own interests.[88]

That medieval European figures and narratives provide non-European nation-states with a unified sense of national identity illustrates particularly well how the medieval/modern divide is central to such ethnonationalist contestations, both in Europe and abroad. After all, such creole medievalism—the term coined by Michelle Warren in *Creole Medievalism: Colonial France and Joseph Bédier's Middle Ages* (2011)—necessarily relies upon not geographical but historical contiguity with medieval Europe; the medieval/modern divide, connecting the medieval with such monolithic terms as "religion" and "feudalism" and modernity with "secularism," "capitalism," and "development," constructs a temporal period supposedly unmoored from history, politics, and geography, an "ahistorical," "evacuated 'Middle Ages'" upon which "the periodization of historical time" is, counterintuitively, "base[d]."[89] "This globalized Middle Ages," as Kathleen Davis puts it in *Periodization and Sovereignty* (2008), "operates in two conflicting ways. On the one hand, literary and political history […] is increasingly organized" in terms of the medieval/modern divide, and, on the other hand, the Middle Ages becomes "a mobile category,

applicable at any time to any society that has not 'yet' achieved modernity or, worse, has become retrograde."[90]

American Anglo-Saxonism exists as a clear instance of this creole medievalism, deploying the figure of the Anglo-Saxon to represent the prototypical U.S. citizen. Emerson, in contrasting the figure of the "Anglo-American" with the figure of the Celt, emphasizes America's superiority over Britain, all the while using a figure of medieval Britain to do so, just as Thomas Jefferson, in "A Summary View of the Rights of British America," deploys the figure of the Anglo-Saxon to emphasize British America's separation from Norman England, all the while connecting the soon-to-be nation with Saxon England. As a form of creole medievalism, American Anglo-Saxonism utilizes figures from European medieval history not only to justify European colonization of the New World but also to present the prototypical American as "unambiguous and immutable," simultaneously an indigene of premodern Europe and a settler of the New World. In a chapter titled "Medieval American Literature" in *The Global Remapping of American Literature* (2011), Paul Giles has emphasized the extent to which writers like Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, William Cullen Bryant and Herman Melville inculcate both medieval European cultures and pre-Colombian American cultures into this quest for national identity. With respect to the medieval/modern divide, this concatenation of medieval European cultures and pre-Colombian American cultures makes sense, for that uneven, hybridizing cultural analysis bespeaks the nation's desire for a stable, ahistorical figure that might represent in singular terms this democratic republic. It is

no coincidence, then, that early nineteenth-century U.S. writers, "brooding uneasily on the nation's fractious relationship with the past," developed an American ethnonationalism that deployed the hybrid figure of the "Anglo-American"—part medieval, part modern; part colonizer, part colonized; part European, part American—to both acclaim and delimit the possibilities of a U.S. national identity.[91]

The ambivalent relationship that American Anglo-Saxonism maintains with Europe mirrors the ambivalent relationship that U.S. nationalist discourses maintain with polyvocal notions of national identity more generally. "Emerson," Horsman writes, "although shunning extreme racial arguments, accepted the idea of inequalities among the different races and saw particular merits in the English race. He thought of this race as 'Saxon,' but he believed it had its origin in a mixture of races and had hybrid strength."[92] American Anglo-Saxonism inherits from Europe more than simply an imagined medieval past but also the conception of a "sentimentalized imagining of the paternalistic medieval […] developed in popular culture from the Romantic [European] comprehension of the past."[93] The central role European Romanticism plays in the development of these ethnonationalist medievalisms, including creole medievalisms, signifies that even the purportedly anti-European thrust of much creole medievalism is itself indebted to European intellectual history—or, conversely, as Altschul puts it, "the paradox of searching for a nationalist-inflected medieval studies highlights the difficulties of placing non-European medievalist engagements within global European parameters."[94]

On both sides of the Atlantic and especially with respect to an English-language readership, the American reception of Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1820) clarifies this paradoxical, implicitly Eurocentric historiography, for the novel "is not just a reconstruction of the past but a re-visioning of the past that attempts to install a more desirable future," especially one that features "virtuous flaxen-haired Saxon maidens and sturdy, blue-eyed Saxon yeoman."[95] *Ivanhoe*, one of the most widely-read English-language novels of the nineteenth century, popularized this alternative history that rendered the Middle Ages as a sentimentalized reimagining to such an extent that Scott's reimagining came, at least in part, to stand in for the historical Middle Ages themselves. Scott did not create this alternative history *ex nihilo*; his rendering of the Middle Ages has clear antecedents in Spenser and Petrarch, as well as in Tasso, Ariosto and Chaucer, but *Ivanhoe*'s Romantic medievalism, developed at the same time that history itself was developing into a discrete field of study, has, through the novel's popularity and numerous adaptations and imitations, become inextricably linked with post-Romantic conceptions of what the historical Middle Ages were or might have been.[96]

The popularity of *Ivanhoe* in the United States is difficult to overstate. Scott's novels were so popular in the U.S. that they gave rise to entirely new textual distribution networks in Boston, New York and Charleston, while a variety of "Southron reenactments of Scott appropriated the novelist's fascination with ethnic differences and with honour-based aristocratic cultures […] and used this as an imaginative tool with which to articulate Southern distinctiveness against the

background of a growing gap between Northern abolitionists and Southern slave-owners."[97] After the Civil War, the Northern bourgeoisie, as T. J. Jackson Lears has argued, took up Scott's Romantic medievalism as a cornerstone of an "antimodernism," creating "a group of overlapping mentalities" associated with this imagined medieval past such as "[p]ale innocence, fierce conviction, physical and emotional vitality, playfulness and spontaneity, an ability to cultivate fantastic or dreamlike states of awareness, [and] an intense otherworldly asceticism."[98] Perhaps it is Henry Adams's *Education* (1907), though, that summarizes the effects of Scott's Romantic medievalism on the American cultural imaginary most succinctly, describing how, for a young man raised in the nineteenth-century United States, history itself was "less instructive" than Scott's novels.[99]

Throughout the early nineteenth-century United States, moreover, this Romantic medievalism was integrated with a pseudo-scientific racial hierarchy espousing "Teutonic greatness": the "burgeoning medievalism," Horsman writes in his discussion of the history of American Anglo-Saxonism, "which had its immediate origins in the late eighteenth century" blended the "gentle, Romantic medievalism" of Walter Scott's novels with the "German search for racial roots" that relied upon a "new racial interpretation of Anglo-Saxon destiny."[100] This notion of Teutonic greatness, in Germany, England and the United States throughout the early nineteenth century, was contrived via a complex, often contradictory set of pseudo-scientific, religious and political contestations, derived in large part from eighteenth-century German nationalism, itself coeval with German Romanticism.[101] In the United States,

these twin strands of European Romanticism—Scott's Romantic medievalism and the racial hierarchy that promoted Teutonic greatness—merged into an Anglo-Saxonism that was leveraged in support of the slavery of African Americans, the genocide of Native Americans, the Mexican-American War, the exploitation of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants, anti-Semitic and patriarchal systems and contestations, and understandings of "Gypsies, the North American Indians, [and] the negroes of St. Domingo [as] wholly incapable of civilization," among other repressive ideologies and policies.[102] These intersected racial, gender, historical and religious hierarchies are, moreover, by no means dead and gone; in a speech to the National Sheriffs' Association, Attorney General Jeff Sessions recently spoke of the "Anglo-American heritage of law enforcement," seeing "the office of sheriff [as] a critical part" of that heritage, and, as Dino Buenviaje has recently argued, "Anglo-Saxonism is crucial […] to understanding the foreign policy of the United States" throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; "[d]uring the 1920s, Anglo-Saxonists lobbied to restrict immigration to the United States to northern Europeans to prevent American society from becoming diluted by immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, coinciding with the brief revival of the Ku Klux Klan," while that Anglo-Saxonism was also deployed to "justify interventions for less-than-noble reasons in Latin America and other parts of the world throughout the twentieth century."[103] "Even today," Buenviaje continues, "the unlikely victory of Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election could […] be tied to Anglo-Saxonism [in that] Trump courted disaffected working-class whites by promising them a way of life that they and their

ancestors once knew by 'making America great again.'"[104] As discussed in chapter four, medievalisms continue to permeate American political discourse, especially that of conservative politicians, propagating a monolithic conception of the prototypical American citizen as white, Christian and male—as if America itself were a bygone spacetime that must be resurrected and, as both Ronald Reagan and Donald Trump proclaim, "made great again."

The irony of this use of American Anglo-Saxonism to bolster monolithic conceptions of U.S. identity is that medieval Britain—especially early medieval Britain, when the Anglo-Saxons flourished—was markedly diverse. As the hyphenated term "Anglo-Saxon" itself suggests, the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Francs and Frisians, among others, who invaded (or, depending on the historiography, "conquered," "settled," or "defended") the British Isles in the early medieval period were themselves not monolithic cultures—not to mention a single Anglo-Saxon culture—but "a coalition of indigenous groups" with distinct languages and cultures coalescing for particular, material purposes, and the Britons, Picts and Gaels—to use Bede's terminology—were similarly diverse, grouped together largely by language groups.[105] As Jeffery Jerome Cohen has shown, this "ethnic hodgepodge of the island's invaders"—not to mention the diversity of the Brits, Picts and Gaels—were consolidated by Bede into "three impossibly neat groups: Angles, Saxons, and Jutes"—a categorization system that served to consolidate the island under one rule: "Bede's formula of 'Angles, Saxons and Jutes' became 'Angles and Saxons' (as in Asser's [c. 909] description […]), then to *Angli* or English."[106] Terms like "Anglo-

Saxon," "Teuton," "Celt" and "Jute" are emblematic not so much of purity or uniformity as difference and hybridity, and it is in this sense that the medieval/modern divide, with its penchant for interpreting both the Middle Ages and modernity itself in monolithic terms, is integral both to Romantic ethnonationalism and to American Anglo-Saxonism more specifically.[107] The medieval/modern periodization "evacuate[s] a sense of history from 'the Middle Ages,'" treating the Middle Ages as both ahistorical and apolitical—and, in turn, modernity as historical and political—a historiography that reinforces similarly monosemous conceptions of nation, space, time, race, ethnicity, gender, religion and culture.[108] Developed by nineteenth-century European and European American historiography, the "territorialization" of the Middle Ages—to use Kathleen Davis's terminology—as a distinctly European epoch is integral to the development of modern ethnonationalism itself, including American Anglo-Saxonism, but such territorialization only succeeds to the extent that the "Middle Ages" remains monolithic, defined monosemously with terms like "religion" and "feudalism" or connected necessarily with an ahistorical, evacuated spacetime.[109]

When the Middle Ages are understood as plural, fragmented, multicultural or polysemous, the predicates of modern ethnonationalist discourses also fragment, bespeaking the plurality, fragmentation, multicultural exchanges and the "non-hegemonic position" of Western European powers.[110] Indeed, if, following Norman O. Brown, we understand the antecedents of European Romanticism as arriving from Islam rather than Christianity ("…the fundamental nature of Protestant radicalism,"

Brown writes, "is to eliminate angels altogether [.…] In the West […] [t]he prophetic angel passes over into literature as it withers in the Church. In Dante and in Blake. And Muhammad is the bridge between Christ and Dante and Blake"[111]), then European ethnonationalism, relying upon a Romantic conception of the past, is itself evidence of this *convivencia* of cultures and historical periods—the medieval Castilian term Stephen O'Shea resuscitates to accentuate the "coexistence and commingling" of Islam and Christianity throughout the medieval Mediterranean. In this sense, the Romantic medievalism endemic to creole medievalism, like the hybridity of the term "Anglo-Saxon" itself, demonstrates the very plurality and diversity that ethnonationalist discourses occlude.

American Anglo-Saxonism as Cultural Fantasy

The "cultural fantasy" constructed by medieval romances such as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* (1136), as Geraldine Heng interprets that text in *Empire of Magic*, can be brought to bear upon such hybrid figures as the Anglo-Saxon and the Anglo-American.[112] In the same way that "Geoffrey's exemplar materializes […] a transnational militant pilgrimage during which Latin Christian crusaders did the unthinkable—committing acts of cannibalism on infidel Turkish cadavers in Syria, in 1098," American Anglo-Saxonism materializes a transnational and transoceanic "militant pilgrimage" during which Europeans and European Americans instantiated the unthinkable genocide of Native Americans and Africans throughout the Atlantic and Americas. Perhaps nowhere is this use of American Anglo-Saxonism to anesthetize New World Conquest more evident than in James

Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* (1823-1841), which, like *Ivanhoe*, grapples repeatedly with questions of genocide and the death of entire cultures. [113] Known as "The American Scott," Cooper was "a reader of Sir Walter Scott's novels, to which he turned when writing his own first novel, *Precaution*, in 1820." [114] "Like Scott," David Marion Homan argues, "Cooper chooses for his novels a time in which an old order is giving way to a new one—in the *Leatherstocking Tales*, the time when the wilderness is giving way to the settlements. Like Scott's heroes, Natty Bumppo is caught between two worlds—that of the pioneer and that of the settler, [and] [l]ike Scott's heroes and heroines, Leatherstocking is the victim of historical progression rather than the author of it."[115] Thinking of the *longue-durée* of the medieval romance tradition, we might add the figure of Geoffrey of Monmouth's King Arthur to this comparison, who, as "an obscure military hero," was "plucked [by Geoffrey] from the distant past [and a peripheralized territoriality] to serve the present."[116] *Leatherstocking Tales*, with its similarities to *Ivanhoe*, itself deeply indebted to medieval romances like Geoffrey's—themselves, according to Heng, grapplings with crusader cannibalism—creates a kaleidoscopic network of texts, cultural fantasies and cultural anxieties, suggesting, in particular, the way that Geoffrey's British/Anglo-Saxon binary, obscuring, as Heng argues, the Christian/Muslim binary so central to the medieval romance tradition more generally, transfers to Scott's Anglo-Saxon/Norman binary, itself obscuring the Christian/Jewish binary central to that novel's plot—which, in turn, transfers to Cooper's Native American/European binary, occluding the Black/White racial divide that, according to Kwame Anthony Appiah,

is integral to Cooper's understanding of America: "In Cooper's racial scheme," Appiah writes in his essay on "Race" in *Critical Terms for Literary Studies* (1995), "the Indian is below the 'white man' but above the 'Negro': Indians in Cooper are sometimes 'Nature's gentlemen,' blacks almost always evoke contempt. We could argue that the Negro, in Cooper, plays the same sort of role as the Jew in *Ivanhoe*: the main plot in each case pits one race (Anglo-Saxon, redman) against another (Norman, white man)."[117] Read in this light, *Leatherstocking Tales* becomes a means of making visible the American cultural anxiety surrounding the genocide of not only Native American cultures but also African cultures, just as the medieval romance makes visible the anthropophagic atrocity of crusader cannibalism through its demonization and monstrification of Muslims.

American Anglo-Saxonism, in turn, can be read in terms of not only western expansionism but also New World Conquest, itself long understood as the "culmination" of the *Reconquista* and other medieval Christian Crusades.[118] As Anouar Majid has recently argued, if we notice the extent to which the figure of the Moor exists as the "residual prototype of Gypsies, Native Americans, Africans, Jews, Hispanics, and, in general, the West's undesirables since 1492," this overlaying of the chivalric romance onto New World Conquest becomes all the more coherent.[119] In the same way that the medieval romance's crusader cannibalism is covertly admitted to in medieval romances, Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* acknowledges—albeit obliquely, through omission or peripheralization—the European and Euro-American anxiety surrounding both the slave trade and Native American genocide endemic to New

World Conquest. D. H. Lawrence, in his chapter on *Leatherstocking Tales* in *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923), argues that Cooper is concerned primarily with death and specifically the death of the Anglo-Saxon, imagined as "the great white race of America."[120] For Lawrence, who devotes two chapters to Cooper, one on Cooper's earlier "Anglo-American Novels" and another on *Leatherstocking Tales*, reads Cooper as transforming from a decidedly Romantic writer—an imitator of Scott—to a writer concerned primarily with the "ultimate mystic consummation into death."[121] *Leatherstocking Tales*, for Lawrence, revolves around this "final" concern: "there is no physical mating for [Cooper]—only the passage and consummation into death. And this is why Deerslayer must live in peril and conflict, live by his death-dealing rifle."[122] Related to this concern with death, moreover, is the death of cultures themselves—the Mohicans in *Last of the Mohicans*, the Pawnee in *The Prairie*, the Hurons in *The Deerslayer*, the extinction of the frontiersmen themselves, as well as, according to Appiah, the complete erasure of African Americans. Lawrence sees in *Leatherstocking Tales* a recognition that "the great white race in America [is] keenly disintegrating, seething back in electric decomposition, back to that crisis where the old soul, the old era, perishes in the denuded frame of man, and the first throb of a new year sets in"—a new year that Lawrence associates, utilizing a cyclic temporality patterned after the seasons, with Edgar Allan Poe, and American Anglo-Saxonism, in this regard, becomes the cultural fantasy enacted by a society fixated upon notions of ethnic identity, and cultural productions like Cooper's novels reveal the sense that, distanced from the un-Modern by the medieval/modern divide, citizens of a

purportedly modern nation-state like the United States imagined themselves to be severed from their (imagined) indigenous roots, understood—following the logic of the medieval/modern divide—as timeless, eternal and "authentic."[123] Citing Kathleen Davis's *Periodization and Sovereignty*, Ligia López López has recently argued in *The Making of Indigeneity, Curriculum History, and the Limits of Diversity* (2017) that the invention of indigeneity itself can be seen as coeval with the development of the medieval/modern divide; along with monolithic terms like "feudalism," "religion" and "undeveloped"," López suggests, "indigeneity" is similarly connected with the medieval, while "colonizer" or "settler" is connected with the monoliths of "development," "secularity," "capitalism" and "modernity."[124] The hybridic, overdetermined figure of Natty Bumppo, conjoining the medieval knight and the modern frontiersman, as well as the colonizer and the colonized, illustrates the Gordian knot Anglo-Saxonists weave in order to simultaneously lay claim to indigeneity and justify the colonization of the New World and the concomitant exploitation of Africans and other non-European colonial subjects, framing European Americans as something like colonizing indigenes—a blatant oxymoron if we understand that "the meaning of indigeneity cannot be separated from [its] colonial situation."[125]

Edgar Allan Poe's medievalisms are not so much opposed to Cooper's Anglo-Saxonism as they are more complex explorations of the cultural fantasy that American Anglo-Saxonism bespeaks. In his "The Gold-Bug" (1843), an early

example of detective fiction and the most popular of Poe's short stories during his lifetime, Poe, for instance, includes a cryptogram that, once decoded, reads:

> A good glass in the bishop's hostel in the devil's seat
> twenty-one degrees and thirteen minutes northeast and by north
> main branch seventh limb east side
> shoot from the left eye of the death's-head
> a bee line from the tree through the shot feet out.[126]

The central interpretive hurdle for William Legrand, the protagonist attempting to make sense of this cryptogram, revolves around the phrase "the bishop's hostel," which both the unnamed narrator and Legrand struggle to interpret:

> "It left me […] in the dark," replied Legrand, "for a few days; during which I made diligent inquiry, in the neighborhood of Sullivan's Island, for any building which went by the name of the 'Bishop's Hotel'; for, of course, I dropped the obsolete word 'hostel.' Gaining no information on the subject, I was on the point of extending my sphere of search, and proceeding in a more systematic manner, when, one morning, it entered into my head, quite suddenly, that this 'Bishop's Hostel' might have some reference to an old family, of the name of Bessop, which, time out of mind, had held possession of an ancient manor-house, about four miles to the northward of the Island. I accordingly went over to the plantation, and reinstituted my inquiries among the older negroes of the place. At length one of the most aged of the women said that she had heard of such a place as Bessop's Castle, and thought that she could guide me to it, but that it was not a castle, nor a tavern, but a high rock."[127]

"Hostel," which Legrand deems "obsolete," had been revived as a term in 1808, along with "hostelry," by Walter Scott, who had likely noticed the term in Chaucer's "The House of Fame," Langland's *Piers Plowman*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* or *Merlin*.[128] The term, as an antiquated form of "hotel," is consistently used by mid-nineteenth-century U.S. writers as a kind of medievalism; Washington Irving uses the term in his description of the Alhambra, while Melville's opening canto in *Clarel* (1876), a long, epic poem about a theology student's loss of faith and his travels

through the Holy Land, is titled “The Hostel.” Poe’s use of the term, especially juxtaposed with “bishop’s” and “devil’s,” bespeaks a medievalized world of religiosity and antiquated English, and such medievality is further implied when Legrand discovers that “Bishop’s Hostel” refers to a place called “Bessop’s Castle,” connecting the locale with not only the obsolete term “hostel” but also “castle,” with all of its medieval European associations. (It is interesting also to note Poe’s association of the medieval with the “older negroes of the place”; this is an early illustration of the conflating of the nonwhite-white binary of Manifest Destiny discourses, noted by Amy Kaplan, onto the medieval-modern binary—a subject that is discussed further in Chapter Two.) The process for finding the chest of gold in “The Gold-Bug” requires that Legrand first decipher the cryptogram, then travel to “Bessop’s Castle,” which turns out to be the site of an ancient manor—correlating the medieval castle, as Faulkner does, with the Southern plantation; Legrand must then look through a telescope using the bearing denoted by the cryptogram to spot “death’s head”—a skull—hanging from a tree branch. Finally, by dropping a weight through the left eye of that skull, Legrand finds the location of the buried treasure.

Of death instincts (*Todestriebe*) Freud says that the pleasure principle is overridden by the “compulsion to repeat” a traumatic experience—this “urge in organic life to restore an earlier state of things” amounts to a “pressure towards death […] whose function is to assure that the organism follows its own path to death.”[129] The American compulsion to repeat medieval narratives and figures, the subtle connections Poe draws between the medieval and death suggest, speaks to something

like an unconscious "compulsion to repeat" the trauma that severs modernity from the un-Modern; while most mid-nineteenth-century U.S. authors present this connection between the death wish and the medieval obliquely (Thoreau's allusion to the Crusader, in "Walking," for example, suggests implicitly the specter of death in combat, while Emerson, in "Nature," reinterprets the "medieval associations of the worm with physical corruption and decay" as a "positive image [of] development, both evolutionary and cultural"—for Hawthorne, meanwhile, all three of the main characters of *The Scarlet Letter* are, by the conclusion of the novel, dead, and all that remains of them is the medieval figure of the escutcheon, carved upon Hester and Dimmesdale's joint tomb), Poe stands apart in his foregrounding of this "necro-sensibility" of American medievalism.[130] Here is a poem, entitled "Eldorado," published six months before Poe's own death and inspired, at least in part, by the California Gold Rush:

> Gaily bedight,
>   A gallant knight,
> In sunshine and in shadow,
>   Had journeyed long,
>   Singing a song,
> In search of Eldorado.
>
>   But he grew old—
>   This knight so bold—
> And o'er his heart a shadow—
>   Fell as he found
>   No spot of ground
> That looked like Eldorado.
>
>   And, as his strength
>   Failed him at length,
> He met a pilgrim shadow—
>   'Shadow,' said he,

'Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'[131]

Poe is remarkably aware of the futility of the California Gold Rush and satirizes the "search of Eldorado" as the errantry of a "gallant knight" who, though he has "gr[own] old" and lost his strength, remains as "bold" as ever. Poe presents this knight as decidedly optimistic about the prospects of discovering Eldorado; he is "gaily bedight" and "singing a song" but, when his strength fails him, meets a "pilgrim shadow," who suggests that Eldorado is a pipe-dream—on the dark side of the moon, "Down the Valley of the Shadow.". Poe, satirically in this case, confronts Manifest Destiny's "pilgrim shadow;" like Legrand being instructed to drop the weight through death's head in "The Gold-Bug," the knight in "Eldorado" is instructed by this shadow to pass through "the Valley of the Shadow"—a reference to Psalm 23, invoking the religion-medieval association—and this shadowy figure casts a pall over the western expansionist ethos, connecting the western frontier less with opportunity and wealth without labor than with fruitless action and death.[132]

Poe's suggestive associations between death and the Middle Ages are further developed in "The Fall of the House of Usher," in which, immediately prior to Madeline's reappearance from the family crypt and Roderick Usher's death, a chivalric romance entitled *The Mad Trist* is read by the unnamed narrator. *The Mad*

Trist, invented by Poe for the story, is first described as "one of [Roderick's] favourite romances," and at the point when the chivalric romance is first referenced, the narrator has gone to Roderick's bedroom to weather a powerful storm; the two characters have been agitated since interring Roderick's sister several days prior, and the intention for reading the story is said to be to "pass away this terrible night together."[133] After his initial introduction of the text, the narrator reneges and emends his earlier assertion, admitting, "I had called [the romance] a favourite of Usher's more in sad jest than in earnest; for, in truth, there is little in its uncouth and unimaginative prolixity which could have had interest for the lofty and spiritual ideality of my friend."[134] The narrator's description of the book is no idealization of the chivalric romance (which is "uncouth" and "unimaginative") but renders the book as simply "the only book immediately at hand," a convenient choice. The narration continues:

> I had arrived at that well-known portion of the story where Ethelred, the hero of the Trist, having sought in vain for peaceable admission into the dwelling of the hermit, proceeds to make good an entrance by force. Here, it will be remembered, the words of the narrative run thus:
>
> "And Ethelred, who was by nature of a doughty heart, and who was now mighty withal, on account of the powerfulness of the wine which he had drunken, waited no longer to hold parley with the hermit, who, in sooth, was of an obstinate and maliceful turn, but, feeling the rain upon his shoulders, and fearing the rising of the tempest, uplifted his mace outright, and, with blows, made quickly room in the plankings of the door for his gauntleted hand; and now pulling therewith sturdily, he so cracked, and ripped, and tore all asunder, that the noise of the dry and hollow-sounding wood alarummed and reverberated throughout the forest."[135]

The narrator describes the chivalric romance as "well-known" and assumes the reader is familiar with it, reiterating its convenience. He suggests that "the words of the

narrative […] will be remembered" by the reader and skips over any background information regarding who Ethelred is, let alone why he is attempting to gain entrance to a hermit's dwelling. Sir Launcelot—the imagined author of this imagined text—says Ethelred has "a doughty heart;" Sir Launcelot's speech is deliberately antiquarian, with phrases like "in sooth," "gauntleted," and "alarummed," allowing Poe to foreground not only the textuality of the book but also the archaic language so often associated by American authors with the medieval; speaking through this invented, antiquated language, Poe reminds his nineteenth-century readers of the protean nature of English, and such use of English allows Poe to present *The Mad Trist* as both thoroughly familiar—a narrative everyone knows—and archaic and unfamiliar, just as Freud says of the uncanny (*unheimlich*) that it is simultaneously "familiar and agreeable" and "concealed and kept out of sight."[136]

Concluding his reading of *The Mad Trist*, the narrator "started, and for a moment, paused; for it appeared to me (although I at once concluded that my excited fancy had deceived me)—it appeared to me that, from some very remote portion of the mansion, there came, indistinctly, to my ears, what might have been, in its exact similarity of character, the echo (but a stifled and dull one certainly) of the very cracking and ripping sound which Sir Launcelot had so particularly described."[137] The world in which the narrator finds himself merges with the chivalric romance; the sounds of the breaking door become the sounds of Usher's disintegrating home. This uncanny synchronism between text and world intensifies as the narrator reads the chivalric romance, until he finally "leap[s] to [his] feet" and "rush[es] to the chair in

which [Usher] sits." Usher says: "Not hear it!—yes, I hear it, and have heard it long-long-long many minutes, many hours, many days […] many, many days ago."[138] Time itself is collapsing in this excerpt; the narrator repeatedly emphasizes the synchronicity of the reading and of the cracking, collapsing sounds of the house, and, finally, Roderick's confession at the close of the short story culminates with the "many minutes, many hours, many days" that he has endured those sounds, anticipating and, in a sense at least, inducing Madeline's appearance at the bedroom door, which soon bursts open.

The narrator of "The Fall of the House of Usher" does not offer an interpretation of these anachronistic mergings of the chivalric romance and the events of the story. Famous for his out-of-space-time tales, Poe dislocates Usher's house, stripping it of identifiable geographical or historical markers. Poe's medievalisms, in turn, are unique among mid-nineteenth-century American authors' for their tendency to be embedded within, rather than extratextual to, a given text. Cooper does not overtly discuss Bumppo's similarities to Ivanhoe, and it is in Emerson's lectures, not his poems, that Emerson develops his concept of the "Anglo-American." Poe, though, incorporates medieval or medievalized figures and texts into his works, using those figures and texts not as prototypes for his characters or templates for his stories but as actual persons or artifacts in his tales and poems—as the names of Southern plantations, as questing knights, and as actual books, recited in the present of the text.[139] While for Emerson and Cooper, the medieval exists as a historical antecedent to the modern United States, Poe presents the Middle Ages as a world that haunts the

present, and his medievalisms emphasize the sense in which America's preoccupation with medieval Europe is uncanny—understood, in the Freudian sense, as that which "abreacts" repressed desires such as the death wish and the incest desire from the unconscious. As D. H. Lawrence intimates in his reading of Poe, the repressed desires explored in "The Fall of the House of Usher," with its recitation of an (imagined) medieval romance, suggest specifically a relationship between those psycho-sexual anxieties and American Anglo-Saxonism. Lawrence's discussion of Poe comes on the heels of his discussion of Fenimore Cooper, and Lawrence begins his chapter on Poe by linking Cooper, Poe and the question of race in the United States: "It seems a long way from Fenimore Cooper to Poe," Lawrence admits, "[b]ut in fact it is only a step. Leatherstocking is the last instance of the integral, progressive soul of the white man in America," while Poe, for Lawrence, explores not simply the movement "towards" death, as Cooper does, but death itself, "the process of the decomposition of the body" as well as the "living disintegration" of the psyche: "Poe shows us the first vivid, seething reduction of the psyche, the first convulsive spasm that sets-in in the human soul, when the last impulse of creative love, creative conjunction, is finished."[140] Read in this light, "The Fall of the House of Usher" becomes "lurid and melodramatic," exploring "a symbolic truth of what happens in the last stages of [an] inordinate love, which can recognize none of the sacred mystery of *otherness*, but must unite into unspeakable identification, oneness in death."[141] Roderick's rejection of otherness, for Lawrence, is connected to a fundamental human desire for "unspeakable identification" that "aris[es] inevitably when man, through insistence of

his will in one passion or aspiration, breaks the polarity of himself," and such an identification based on sameness maps fairly clearly onto American Anglo-Saxonism, for which the "unspeakable identification" is Northern European ancestry, imagined, as Poe imagines the Ushers, as an "ancient and decayed race."[142]

While Cooper hints at the "disintegration" of the "great white race of America," Poe places that disintegration front and center, and the destruction of the House of Usher becomes, in turn, the destruction of monosemous identity itself, including attempts to represent national identities in singular terms—even by hybridic terms like "Anglo-Saxon" or "Anglo-American." To say that unconscious desires such as the death wish and incestuous desire are latent within American Anglo-Saxonism, then, is simply to notice that American Anglo-Saxonism and, by extension, western expansionism propose a national identity based on sameness, on consensus and similarity—an identity that has "broken the polarity of itself." Recognizing that the term "Anglo-Saxon" is itself hybridic can be useful for unsettling such a contestation, but if we notice the way that American literature tends to deploy hybridic figures, such as Natty Bumppo, in the representation of American identity, we also notice the extent to which such hybridic figurations necessarily exclude certain figures from the American cultural imaginary—in the case of Cooper, both Native Americans and, to a larger extent, African Americans. Poe's construction of a world in which the medieval appears seemingly unbidden, in a "moment of danger," to use Benjamin's language, destroying strictures of filial identity and patronage, demonstrates how the medieval can be an integral site for dismantling

such ethnonationalist contestations.[143] This dismantling, however, requires that the medieval be foregrounded, read aloud, as it were, in the present of the text rather than exist as an extratextual template upon which a story is based or a character patterned, and the medieval, from this vantage point, becomes not so much a historical antecedent of the (purportedly) modern United States so much as, as Heng says of medieval romances, an American "cultural fantasy," something Roderick Usher concocts with his "lofty and spiritual ideality."[144]

Notes

[82] Robert T. Tally, Jr. *Poe and the Subversion of American Literature: Satire, Fantasy, Critique* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 1-2, 56.
[83] Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 2.
[84] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Selected Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, eds. Ronald A Bosco and Joel Myerson (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 190. Along with "Permanent Traits of the English National Genius" (1835) and "The Anglo-American" (1855), Emerson's Anglo-Saxon lectures include "The Genius and National Character of the Anglo-Saxon Race" (1843) and "Traits and Genius of the Anglo-Saxon Race" (1852). For more on this history, see Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 184-190.
[85] Emerson, *The Selected Lectures*, 202.
[86] Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 1-2.
[87] Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 11.
[88] Nadia Altschul, *Geographies of Philological Knowledge: Postcoloniality and the Transatlantic National Epic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 136.
[89] Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty: How ideas of Feudalism & Secularization Govern the Politics of Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 15.
[90] Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, 5.
[91] Paul Giles, *The Global Remapping of American Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 70.
[92] Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 177.
[93] Elizabeth Fay, *Romantic Medievalism: History and the Romantic Literary Ideal* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 2.

[94] Altschul, *Geographies of Philological Knowledge*, 26.
[95] Fay, *Romantic Medievalism*, 2; Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 41.
[96] For more on the history of Romanticism, see Carmen Casaliggi and Porscha Fermanis, *Romanticism: A Literary and Cultural History* (New York: Routledge, 2016), also Henry Augustin Beers's canonical *A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Holt, 1899) and *A History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Holt, 1918). For more on History as an academic field, see: Daniel Woolf, *A Global History of History* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2011), 345-363. For more on the reception history of *Ivanhoe*, see: Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Race," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study, Second Edition*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 281.
[97] Emily Todd, "Walter Scott and the Nineteenth-Century American Literary Marketplace: Antebellum Richmond Readers and the Collected Editions of the Waverley Novels," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 93:4 (1999), 495-517. Also see: Ann Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott: Memory on the Move* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 116.
[98] T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), xvi, 142.
[99] Henry Adams, *Education of Henry Adams* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1918), 301.
[100] Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 36, 75.
[101] It is not a coincidence that white supremacists even today, in both Europe and North America, continue to disseminate Nazi symbolism to represent their organizations, for even the swastika itself is a kind of medievalism: when Heinrich Schliemann discovered nearly two thousand representations of a four-armed symbol in the Hisarlik mound near ancient Troy, the German businessman and amateur archeologist noted the symbol's similarity to a number of designs found in artifacts from medieval Germany, surmising that the "swastika"—a term which he transliterated from the Sanskrit—was a "significant religious symbol of our remote ancestors." Heinrich Schliemann, *Troy and its remains* (London: Murray, 1875), 119-120.
[102] Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 146.
[103] Marwa Eltagouri, "Jeff Sessions spoke of the 'Anglo-American heritage of law enforcement.' Here's what that means." *Washington Post*, Feb. 12, 2018. Dino Buenviaje, *The Yanks Are Coming Over There: Anglo-Saxonism and American Involvement in the First World War* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 2017), 6. The remarkable popularity of "Anglo-Saxon team games," such as football and baseball, as William Gleason has further argued, is itself indebted to "play reformers," who, during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries argued that "the latest immigrants, particularly those from southern and eastern Europe" ought to engage in sports as a kind of "social training [of] the team experience, which play

theory understood as a specifically Anglo-Saxon inheritance." William Gleason, *The Leisure Ethic: Work and Play in American Literature, 1840-1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 112-113.
[104] Buenviaje, *The Yanks are Coming*, 6-7.
[105] Geary, *The Myth of Nations*, 67.
[106] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles* (New York: Palgrave, 2016), 51-52.
[107] See, for example, the essays in: Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ed., *Cultural Diversity in the British Middle Ages: Archipelago, Island, England* (New York: Palgrave, 2008).
[108] Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, 114.
[109] Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, 17. The term "mediæval," which was not coined until 1817, when British antiquarianist T. D. Fosbroke, in a study of British monasticism, "profess[ed] to illustrate mediæval customs upon mediæval principles"—the antiquated, Latinate spelling functioning to invoke Europe's pre-Reformation past—was in circulation in the United States by at least the middle of the nineteenth century, when Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., in a poem entitled "Nux Postcoenatica" (1844), used the term to describe how the poem's speaker is convinced by a "mediæval gentleman in semilunar smalls" to leave, momentarily, his staid, academic life in order to attend a party—the speaker, in the process, comparing himself to the "young Lochinvar," a knight-errant depicted in Walter Scott's poem "Marmion" (1808). Fosbroke's neologism was an allusion to the argument, first proposed by Petrarch, that the period prior to the burgeoning of Western European cultures was an "Age of Darkness," a *medium aevum* or *media tempestas*, between two ages of light, and that Petrarch himself is now often classified as a poet of the High Middle Ages points not so much to the difficulties of defining the precise time when or place where the "Middle Ages" give way to modernity as to the rhetoricity of historical periodization itself—the extent to which historical periodizing schema construct narratives about their particular subject matter even without remarking on that subject matter itself. T.D. Fosbroke, *British Monachism; or, Manners and Customs of the Monks of England*, ed. 2 (London: M.A. Natalie, 1817), vi. Emerson, meanwhile, in *Representative Man* (1850), compares Plato's works to "the mediaeval cathedrals, or the Etrurian remains" in that they "require […] all the breadth of human faculty to know [them]." R. W. Emerson, *Emerson's Complete Works: Representative Man* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1883), 77. Robert C. Galkins, *Monuments of Medieval Art: Issues 51-65* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1979), ixx.
[110] Jonathon Martineau, *Time, Capitalism and Alienation: A Socio-Historical Inquiry into the Making of Modern Time* (Boston: Brill, 2015), 85.
[111] Norman O. Brown, *The Challenge of Islam: the Prophetic Traditions* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2009), 44. Stephen O'Shea, *Sea of Faith: Islam and Christianity in the Medieval Mediterranean World* (New York: Walker & Co., 2006), 9. For more on the relationship between Islam and European ethnonationalism, see: Scott Riley, "Anachronous Antipodes: The Island of California, the Medieval Mediterranean and the Modern Pacific," *The Medieval Globe* 4.2 (2018).

[112] Heng, *Empire of Magic*, 3.
[113] Heng, *Empire of Magic*, 2.
[114] Kerry Dean Carso, *American Gothic Art and Architecture in the Age of Romantic Literature* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2014), 76. Cooper, in fact, met Scott in Paris in 1826, and "[w]hen asked if he thought *Ivanhoe* lacked historical truth, Cooper answered that *Ivanhoe* was not intended to be a work of history, but rather a 'work of the imagination.'" Scott was "an irresistible model [for Cooper] because [Scott] was […] a major figure in the English literary tradition—with his roots in Shakespeare—and a highly successful spokesman for a quite different national culture." George Dekker, *James Fenimore Cooper: The American Scott* (New York: Barnes & noble, 1967), 21.
[115] David Marion Homan, *A Certain Slant of Light: Regionalism and the Form of Southern and Midwestern Fiction* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 29.
[116] Heng, *Empire of Magic*, 41.
[117] Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Race," in *Critical Terms for Literary Studies,* 2nd ed., ed. By Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 281.
[118] Eduardo Subirats. *El continente vacío*, 81.
[119] Anouar Majid, *We Are All Moors: Ending Centuries of Crusaes Against Muslims and Other Minorities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 173.
[120] D. H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, Vol. 2, eds., Ezra Greenspan, Lindeth Vasey and John Worthen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Z-29.
[121] Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, Vol. 2, Z-28.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, Vol. 2, Z-29. Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 150.
[124] Ligia López López, *The Making of Indigeneity, Curriculum History, and the Limits of Diversity* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 240n18. Also see: Shona N. Jackson, *Creole Indigeneity: Between Myth and Nation in the Caribbean* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 65. Theodore Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, vol. 1 (New York: Verso, 1994). Aime Cesairé, *The Discourse of Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 50.
[125] Olaf Kaltmeier, "Politics of Indigeneity in the Andean Highlands: Indigenous Social Movements and the State in Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru (1940-2015)," in *Indigeneity on the Move: Varying Manifestations of a Contested Concept*, ed. Eva Gerharz, Nasir Uddin and Pradeep Chakkarath (New York: Berghahn Books, 2018), 174.
[126] Edgar Allan Poe, *The Collected Tales and Poems* (London: Wordsworth Editions, 2004), 91.
[127] Poe, *Collected Tales and Poems*, 92.

[128] "Hostel, n.1". OED Online. June 2017. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com.oca.ucsc.edu/view/Entry/88755?rskey=wv6SBG&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed November 11, 2017).
[129] Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," in *On Metapsychology*, ed. Albert Dickson (New York: Penguin, 1991), 311.
[130] Ingrid Fernandez, "Necro-Transcendence/Necro-Naturalism: Philosophy of Life in the Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson," in *Death Representations in Literature: Forms and Theories*, Adriana Teodorescu, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 122. For more on Hawthorne's medievalisms, see: Charles Fiedelson, Jr., *Symbolism and American literature* (Chicago, U. of Chicago Press, 1953), 88.
[131] Poe, *Complete Tales and Poems*, 748.
[132] Stephen Innes, "Introduction. Fulfilling John Smith's Vision: Work and Labor in Early America," in *Work and Labor in Early America*, ed. Stephen Innes (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 13.
[133] Poe, *Complete Tales and Poems*, 181-182.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 123.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Poe, *Complete Tales and Poems*, 183.
[139] Poe's concept of "totality," which argues that texts should be self-contained, sensible in and of themselves, and his medievalisms, embedded within his stories, is a useful means, perhaps, of thinking of how he embeds the medieval within the present of the text, rather than peripheralizing it to some distant past or future. Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition," *Essays and Reviews* (New York: Library of America, 1984), 15.
[140] Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, Z-29.
[141] Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, Z-38.
[142] Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, Z-37-39.
[143] Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 255.
[144] Poe, *Complete Tales and Poems*, 182.

CHAPTER TWO

Frontier Medievalisms:

Owen Wister, Mark Twain and Medieval Apophatic Theology

The figures of Natty Bumppo, Emerson's Anglo-American and Jefferson's Saxon farmer present an image of who the prototypical American citizen is—namely, a middle-class, middle-aged, Christian male of western European descent. After the U.S. Civil War, this ethnonationalist contestation gets ratcheted up to such a degree that it becomes, throughout the postwar United States, an overt topos of American medievalism. While Cooper, Emerson and other antebellum U.S. writers characterize the U.S. citizenry in terms of ethnicity, gender, age and class, U.S. writers throughout Reconstruction, the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era use medievalisms to both promote and critique these identity politics. Medieval apophatic theologians like Pseudo-Dionysius, John duns Scotus and Meister Eckhart, especially as they have recently been translated and interpreted by contemporary scholars such as Bernard McGinn and Fran O'Rourke, complicate this aspect of American medievalism, emphasizing the essential namelessness of abstract concepts; these apophatic theologians' writings—utilizing a negative theology that attends to the indefinability of the divine—demonstrate the extent to which American medievalisms' construction of a specific, gendered and racialized national identity is always already an act of cataphatic interpretation, and when compared with canonical texts of American

literature like Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* or Owen Wister's *The Virginian*, these medieval apophatic texts suggest that the American conception of medieval Europe as a singular, definable spatiotemporal world has always already given way to an American-situated image of medieval Europe as polyvocal and multisemous.

Complicating the tendency to present medieval Europe as a monoethnic society, contemporary global medieval studies has only recently begun to push back against the resurgent White Supremacist and ethno-nationalist agenda of American medievalism. At the July 2017 International Medieval Congress at Leeds, entitled "The Mediterranean Other and the Other Mediterranean: Perspective of Alterity in the Middle Ages," attendees, including keynote lecturer Vincent W. J. van Gerven Oei, noted that an overwhelming majority of the panelists "discussing 'otherness' were white, European men."[145] This recognition has spurred reflection regarding how medieval Europe has been increasingly deployed in White Supremacist circles throughout the United States in the first decades of the twenty-first century. A variety of alt-right websites use language and imagery from the Crusades, most consistently the *Deus vult* meme, which features the battle cry—"God wills it"—to promote violence and white hate speech against nonwhite individuals. This blatantly racist discourse is based upon an ethnic nationalism, developed throughout the long nineteenth century, which prevails upon our understanding of the Middle Ages to such an extent that, even if we avoid defining medieval cultures overtly by these imagined ethnicities, we often organize medieval cultures in terms of languages and

geographies, themselves fraught with nineteenth-century ethnic nationalism.[146] To reference Anglo-Saxons or Carolingian Franks without pointing out that such communities were cobbled together of diverse populations that, over time, came to consider themselves descended from a single, often mythological figure is to sublimate these imagined ethnicities into monolithic, incommensurate gestalts that have been leveraged in the support of any number of regressive, nationalist projects.[147]

By remaining grounded in medieval texts themselves, research on American medievalisms and their production of a national identity can help avoid and subvert such ethnonationalism. Attending to the ways in which, say, Bede refers to collectivities in *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (c. 731 CE) reveals the kaleidoscopic set of cultural idealities at play in American medievalisms—idealities that include not only modern ethnic nationalism but also medieval understandings of communal identity. Bede writes in the early pages of his *History*: "*Haec in praesenti, iuxta numerum librorum, quibus lex diuina scripta est, quinque gentium linguis, […] Anglorum uidelicet, Brettonum, Scottorum, Pictorum et Latinorum*."[148] Even recent translations of Bede's phrase "*quinque gentium linguis,*" literally translated as "five languages of peoples," have been rendered as "five nations," even though the excerpt does not include the Latin word *nationem*, "birth, origin; species; tribe." Indeed, even if Bede had used the noun *nationem*, the modern English translation of that word would immediately invoke modern conceptions of the nation-state as a geographical spatiality with reified borders, rather than a community bound largely by its language

and economy. There are no easy correlatives in this transhistorical, multilingual and multicultural comparative; however, there are texts that reveal, however fragmentedly, glimpses into these two remarkably distinct worlds: medieval Europe and the modern United States. And in those glimpses we see, in our own historical moment, the complex nexuses of cultural-political vectors that give connotative and denotative meanings to terms like "American," "white," "Anglo-Saxon," "modern" and "male."

"Come Back to Camelot Ag'in, Huck Honey"

In an essay entitled "Evolution of the Cow-Puncher," published in the September 1895 edition of *Harper's*, Owen Wister, author of *The Virginian* (1902), often considered the first western novel, writes: "In personal daring and in skill as to the horse, the knight and the cowboy are nothing but the same Saxon of different environments."[149] *The Virginian* incorporates this understanding of the cowboy-knight into its narrative, describing the Virginian as an "unrewarded knight," honorable and humble, and willing to risk his life for any would-be damsel in distress.[150] Indeed, many American Realist texts refer or allude to medieval European literary and historical texts, especially the chivalric romance, as if these medieval texts presented one-dimensional, idealized protagonists, when in fact medieval literature and histories, including the chivalric romance, are rife with complex, often flawed characters—Sir Sagramore, for instance, a knight of King Arthur's Round Table known for his powerful fits of rage; El Cid, who, while remembered in *El Cantar de Mio Cid* for his defense of Valencia from the Moors, fought for the Moors

from 1081-1087 and carved out his own fiefdom in Valencia in 1090 with an army of both Christians and Moors; and Sir Lancelot, who, even in the more anesthetized versions of the Arthurian Cycle, has a prolonged affair with the wife of the king to whom he has sworn fealty, an affair that ultimately leads to that king's death. These are no flat characters à la the Virginian, whose only flaw seems to be that others do not recognize how remarkably winsome, strong and honorable he is.

In the first description of the Virginian, the narrator of Wister's novel, presenting himself as a classic tenderfoot arriving by train in Medicine Bow, Wyoming, recounts watching several cowboys attempt in vain to rein in a disobedient horse "rapid of limb" with an "undistracted eye."[151] The image bears a resemblance to the opening chapters of Mark Twain's semi-autobiographical travel book *Roughing It* (1872), in which the narrator begins his story by recounting his trip by stagecoach westward along the Overland Trail. Twain's narrator, in those early chapters, describes himself as a naive tenderfoot, unsure of the rules of the frontier and laden with an imagination full of childish dreams of "Indians, deserts and sand bars."[152] *Roughing It*, like Wister's novel, follows the narrator's transformation from an innocent tyro to a veteran of the western frontier, familiar with its lingo and customs. While both texts superimpose medieval Europe onto those western landscapes—Twain's narrator compares the walls of Echo Canyon to the turrets of "mediaeval castles," while Wister, by his own account, models the Virginian after a medieval chivalric knight—these texts' narrators slowly become acclimated to the western frontier.[153] Part of the cultural work that such frontier medievalisms perform is to

frame the western frontier as the province of Euro-Americans, creating an ideology that would reinforce material actions and various sublimated colonial settlements—the Indian Wars, the Homestead Act, among others—that made the western frontier open to, as the Naturalization Act of 1790 put it, "free, white persons."

One of the principle ironies of this correlation of the cowboy and the Anglo-Saxon is that the figure of the cowboy derives from the Spanish *vaquero* tradition, dating back to the *encomienda* system of medieval Spain.[154] As in the Americas, cattle herders in medieval Spain had to traverse large swathes of land to feed their cattle and therefore took to horseback for easier commute; the tradition of horse-mounted herders born from this practice—itself deeply indebted to Iberia's Moorish cattle traditions, such as the use of stirrups, spurs and a solid-treed saddle—was transported to the Americas in the sixteenth century as Spanish Conquistadors brought their cattle and cattle herders to the New World. Wister's assertion that "the knight and the cowboy are nothing but the same Saxon" tends to occlude the hybridity of not only Anglo-Saxon ancestry but also the cowboy (not to mention the fact that medieval knight-errantry is by no means solely, or even mainly, an Anglo-Saxon practice, but derives from the "Davidic ethic," shared among Norman, Frankish, Moorish, Hebraic and Spanish cultures, among others).[155] Nevertheless, this ideological concatenation of the cowboy with the westering, white frontiersman has had profound and lasting effects, casting the violent invasion and cooptation of Native American lands as not only necessary but chivalrous. After several cowboys attempt to rein in the disobedient horse, described in the opening chapter of *The*

Virginian, the narrator "notice[s] a man […] on the high gate of the corral, looking on, [who] now climbed down with the undulations of a tiger, smooth and easy, as if his muscles flowed beneath his skin [….] I did not see his arm lift or move […] but like a sudden snake I saw the noose go out its length and fall true; and the thing was done."[156] As a relatively clear instance of the homoeroticism latent within much American literature, famously adumbrated by Leslie Fiedler in "Come Back to the Raft Ag'in, Huck Honey" (1948), the narrator's description of the Virginian sexualizes the cowboy, highlighting the undulations of his muscles and connecting him with a phallic image ("a sudden snake"). This eroticization continues in the second description of the Virginian: after the narrator, in prototypical tenderfoot fashion, loses his luggage and becomes enthralled with the local argot of Medicine Bow, he sees "[l]ounging there at ease against the wall […] a slim young giant, more beautiful than pictures. His broad, soft hat was pushed back; a loose-knotted, dull-scarlet handkerchief sagged from his throat; and one casual thumb was hooked in the cartridge-belt that slanted across his hips." The image resembles Walt Whitman's portrait, featured on the frontispiece of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*—the soft-rimmed, tipped cap; leaning, loafing at his ease—but the Virginian keeps, in lieu of an enlarged, "lapped" phallus, a holstered pistol at his hip.[157] This initial depiction of the Virginian, in other words, evinces the homoerotic love between a nonwhite man (as in Jim or Queequeg) and a white boy or man (as in Huck or Ishmael) that Fielder adumbrated in 1948, thinking especially of *Moby Dick* and *Huck Finn*; in the case of *The Virginian*, though, it is the love between the mestizo figure of the *vaquero*-

cowboy and the white, tenderfoot narrator—a romance set not on the High Seas or the Mississippi but the western frontier.

The connection between the chivalric knight and the Virginian adds another element to Fiedler's homoerotic American topos: the homoerotic love between men is not only interracial but also transhistorical. One can see this in the Ishmael-Queequeg relationship: in the chapter entitled "Knights and Squires," shortly after the Pequod has set sail, Ishmael explains how Starbuck "selected [Queequeg] for his squire," and overtly compares the act of harpooning to a medieval jousting match.[158] Jim, meanwhile, "becomes for Tom," by the conclusion of *Huck Finn*, "'the hero of a historical romance, a peer of the Man in the Iron Mask or the Count of Monte Cristo,' complete with a coat of arms because 'all the nobility' has one."[159]

The association between nonwhite persons and the European Middle Ages, in other words, reveals the extent to which these homoerotic romances are grappling with the possibility of love not only across races and within genders but also across historical epochs. There is something almost necrophilic about American medievalism—a sense in which references and allusions to medieval Europe are a form of the polymorphous perverse, the gratification of a desire for belonging, projected onto a displaced and anachronous spacetime. As Norman O. Brown explains it, polymorphous perversity is akin to "play" in that "the polymorphously perverse body of infantile sexuality […] delight[s] in the activity of all of its organs."[160] One of Brown's principle critiques of Freud in *Life Against Death* (1959) is Freud's use of the psycho-sexual stages, including the stage of polymorphic

perversity, to read history as a "process of growing up": "The psychoanalytical model for understanding history is not neurosis but the process of growing up; or rather, maturity is envisaged not as a return of the repressed infantile neurosis but as the overcoming of it."[161] As if prefiguring Hayden White's *Metahistory* (1973), Brown's soon-to-be colleague in the History of Consciousness Department at UC Santa Cruz, Brown thinks of historiography itself as a kind of play, and while we might critique *Life Against Death* for not formally exemplifying this argument, Brown's *Love's Body* (1966), with its anarchic structure and willingness to prioritize play over coherency, eventually demonstrates his theory convincingly and—more to the point—playfully.

Owen Wister, Melville and Twain are also playing whimsically with history, unscrupulously weaving the medieval into their modern novels and so demonstrating the arbitrariness of historical periodization. Along with race and gender, that is to say, the historical imagination serves as an important schema for U.S. national identity formation, and the European Middle Ages, in particular, have played an important role in that figuration. With respect to postcolonial medievalism, the importance of an imagined medieval in U.S. self-historicization is of note because that historical imaginary relies heavily upon an understanding of time as progressive and chronological. As discussed in the introduction, this "secular theology of time" presumes that modernity is defined, at least in part, by a chronological temporality, markedly distinct from the Middle Ages, defined by its ahistorical temporality, unmoored from any progressive conception of time. Such a binary, however,

dismisses the variety of temporalities that might be classified as "ahistorical" or unbeholden to a progressive temporality. Basing their work on the Mutakallimun—that group of Islamic scholastic theologians of the tenth through the thirteenth centuries C.E.—a number of fourteenth-century Latin Scholastics, especially Nicolas Bonet and Gerard of Odon, argued not for a chronological or political conception of time, nor for a cyclic temporality but for an atomistic understanding of time and movement: "a time is composed of several times that are not themselves divisible into several other times," Bonet, according to Roger Ariew's 1985 translation of Pierre Duhem's *Medieval Cosmology*, writes, "by itself time is composed of several realities capable of constituting it (*realitates temporis*), of which none keeps either the name or [the] definition of time."[162] This atomistic understanding of time was at odds with the Aristotelian understanding of time as "a number of motion with respect to the before and after"—that is, while for Aristotle (and Aquinas) time is a means of measuring motion and, therefore, does not exist apart from motion, for the Mutakallimun, as for Bonet and Gerard of Odon, time is essentially indivisible, "enclosed between two instants (*nunc*)" and, therefore, succession or continuity is merely "accidental" (*per accidens*), not essential (*per se*).[163]

Such an atomistic understanding of time is instructive to an analysis of U.S. medievalism because it reminds us that the medieval/modern divide so endemic to the American cultural imaginary homogenizes all ahistorical, apolitical or non-chronological temporalities, and an atomistic conception of time is especially appropriate, in turn, because that temporality negates any supposed historical link

between two given spacetimes and instead foregrounds the anachronous, uncanny fusion of worlds—a temporality that makes of American medievalisms not imitations or reimaginings of some previous or alterior world but worldings unto themselves.

Such an atomistic temporality that cross-cuts spacetime bears at least some resemblance to Walter Benjamin's notion of historical materialism, in the sense that, for Benjamin, "to articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize 'how it really was' [but rather] to seize hold of a memory as it flashes in a moment of danger."[164] He continues: "Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to a man singled out by history at a moment of danger."[165] The Mutakallimun's and their Western scions' atomistic conception of time, in other words, undercuts not only American historicism's tendency to treat time as homogenous and progressive but also the colonial contestation that the medieval and modern are divided by two distinct temporalities. Instead, modernity's (supposed) secular theology of time becomes merely one of a plurality of temporalities, suggesting that the entire Western apparatus for conceiving of history—its nomenclatures and historical periodizing schema—rests, like Huck and Jim's raft, upon an unstable, fluid substratum.

Medieval Domesticity

Amy Kaplan, in "Manifest Domesticity" (1998), not only affirms previous scholarship on fictions of frontier settlement and domestication that illustrates the extent to which "the sharp separation of spheres between men and women in nineteenth-century America" has been constructed rhetorically but also argues that

this notion of a separation of spheres "leaves another structural opposition intact: the domestic in intimate opposition to the foreign."[166] This understanding of the domestic, as opposed to the foreign, "unite[s] men and women in a national domain and […] generate[s] notions of the foreign against which the nation can be imagined as home."[167] This recalibration of the relationship between the discourses of gender and Manifest Destiny accentuates how the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny separates not only men from women but also U.S. citizens of Anglo-Saxon descent from all other races and ethnicities, be they citizens or no: "[Sarah Josepha] Hale's writing makes race central to woman's sphere by not only excluding nonwhites from domestic nationalism but also seeing the capacity for domesticity as an innate, defining characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon race."[168] While manifest domesticity has become something of a catchword for how the discourses of Manifest Destiny carve out the domestic sphere as a space for women and segregate the public sphere as a space for men, the brunt of Kaplan's argument explores the intersectionality among the discourses of Manifest Destiny, gender and race. In particular, she recognizes how the discourse of Manifest Destiny deploys racial categories to distinguish between U.S. citizens and noncitizens and overlays a racialized distinction between citizen and foreigner onto the gendered distinction between private and public spheres.

Attention to American medievalism, however, reveals a third function of this discourse of Manifest Destiny: the separation of the medieval from the modern. The association of the frontier with medieval Europe constructs a temporal divide; it overlays onto the foreign-domestic distinction a medieval-modern distinction that

associates the United States with modernity and the foreign with medieval Europe. The gendered division of the private and public spheres becomes a means of dividing, via racialized and gendered figuration, the domestic from the foreign and, via progressivist historicism, the modern from the medieval. When Sarah Josepha Hale writes that "The Anglo-Saxon peoples […] represent home-life," she is not only excluding nonwhites from domestic nationalism but also reconstructing medieval history in the light of modern gender and racial norms.[169] As the name itself suggests, "Anglo-Saxon" is not a singular ethnicity but a hybridic construction of nineteenth-century U.S. ethno-nationalism. This is not, of course, to say that race is completely a construct of the nineteenth century; medieval Europe certainly developed its identities, partially at least, in terms of skin pigmentation, but these discussions of race and ethnicity were not univocal: in medieval Europe "dark skin does not always indicate the same thing, in that some dark-skinned people have admirable qualities, such as the black Saint Maurice," while, in other cases, "dark skin is closely linked to class [as in] the twelfth-century French tale of Aucassin and Nicolette."[170] The nation-state, however, with its univocal geographical borders, constructs similarly univocal borders to demarcate particular ethnicities, genders and temporalities: nation-state borders function as the geographical corollary to the gendered separation of spheres, progressivist or Jeremaic historicism, and ethnonationalism as a whole. Manifest Destiny, as a discourse, reifies these ideologies, consolidating them into a supposedly coherent set of narratives and figures that justify the militaristic, economic and legal practices that materially drive western expansionism.

Critical engagement with American medievalisms, as figurations ratifying the discourse of Manifest Destiny, reveals the incoherence and contradictions latent within both discourses. Frontier medievalisms cast the U.S.'s western borderlands as both Edenic and undeveloped just as Manifest Destiny frames the public sphere as a site of masculine productivity and as a province of non-white persons and/or the medieval. A Marxist interpretation of these contradictions is fairly convincing: in order to promote the spatiotemporal fix necessary to stave off overaccumulation, capitalist marketers, witting or no, situate the western frontier as both paradisiacal and undeveloped and, at the same time, reinforce that ideological contestation with material assistances (like the Homestead Act) and endeavors (like the Indian Wars) to further promote western expansion. U.S. frontier medievalisms of this ilk are prototypical capitalist cultural productions, taken up by the American culture industry and its various genres to foster and sublimate the continued reinvestment of surplus capital.

At the same time, however, in the medievalisms of Mark Twain for example, these frontier medievalisms parody themselves: contrasting the medievalism of *Don Quixote* with that of *Ivanhoe*, Twain writes: "A curious exemplification of the power of a single book for good or harm is shown in the effects wrought by *Don Quixote* and those wrought by *Ivanhoe*. The first swept the world's admiration for the medieval chivalry silliness out of existence; and the other restored it. As far as our South is concerned, the good work done by Cervantes is pretty nearly a dead letter, so effectually has Scott's pernicious work undermined it."[171] Twain's medievalisms

suffuse at least elements of the Cervantes tradition into the U.S. cultural imaginary, repeatedly foregrounding the absurdity of America's obsession with medieval Europe. Even a work like *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896), lampooned by Bernard DeVoto as "mawkish," can be read as a send-up of the pseudo-scholasticism of nineteenth-century American medievalists, who treat their translations of medieval texts as de facto facsimiles of a presumed original.[172] "To arrive at a just estimate of a renowned man's character one must judge it by the standards of his time, not ours," the "Translator's Preface" begins, simultaneously mocking the phallocentrism of the historicist and problematizing, via the persona of his fictional translator Jean Francois Alden, as well as that of the fictional author Sieur Louis de Conte, notions of originality and authenticity. Twain blurs the line between the modern and the medieval, making it unclear to which epoch this text properly belongs, even as he insists that "the standards of [medieval] time" are fundamentally distinct from "ours."

Twain's binary distinction between Scott's "pernicious work" and Cervantes's "good work," somewhat counterintuitively, recapitulates a Manichaean worldview—decidedly popular in U.S. cultural productions to this day—that was something of a whipping boy in much medieval European theology. Manichaeism, a religious movement founded by the Iranian prophet Mani in the third century C.E., promoted a dualistic cosmology that saw the world as essentially a struggle between the world of matter—understood as evil—and the world of light—understood as good and righteous. Augustine, who left Christianity to practice Manichaeism in his early

adulthood before returning to Christianity in 386, wrote his famous polemic against Manichaeism as a means of both denouncing the religion and promoting his vision of the Christian Church as a City of God. Augustine's epistle is aimed at not debunking Manichaeism so much as encouraging Christians to "more gently deal with" practitioners of what he saw as a heretical cult—and, in so doing, developed his own dualistic vision of creation as divided into a City of God and a City of Man. A theologian who more directly critiques Manichaean dualism is the early sixth-century Syrian theologian Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, sometimes deemed the founder of apophatic or negative theology. A student of the Neoplatonist Proclus, Pseudo-Dionysius argued that all things "reveal in themselves the hidden goodness and are angels because they proclaim the divine silence and, as it were, present clear lights which interpret that which is in secret."[173] As it has been adumbrated by R. Baine Harris in *Neoplatonism and Contemporary Thought: Part Two* (2002), Pseudo-Dionysius's argument, as outlined in *Mystical Theology*, contends that the only appropriate means of discussing the divine is through negation, for when purportedly divine names are negated, "divine silence, darkness and unknowing" ensue: "We worship with reverent silence, the unutterable truths and, with the unfathomable and holy veneration of our mind, approach that mystery of godhead that exceeds all mind and body."[174] Pseudo-Dionysius's apophaticism sees all things as "reveal[ing] the hidden goodness"; as a Neoplatonist, he denies the reality of evil altogether and, in doing, resists seeing the world as a dualistic battle between opposites.

Such an apophatic, non-binary hermeneutic is useful for considering American medievalisms, for while there may be a tendency to read, like Twain, American medievalisms as bifurcated into the “pernicious work” that follows Scott and the “good work” that follows Cervantes, engagement with American medievalisms reveals that such a binary is simply inadequate: American medievalisms, like other postcolonial medievalisms, are always already weaving and interweaving these and other strands into their works, and Twain’s medievalisms, ironically, illustrate this ambivalence more so than just about any other American author’s. In *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*, Twain both lampoons and romanticizes the medieval past; his mockery of “the magic of fol-de-rol,” over and against the “magic of science,” frames medieval England as a world of foolishness and ignorance, all the while suggesting that modern science is itself a kind of magic. In the apocalyptic ending, when Hank Morgan uses Gatling guns to massacre some thirty thousand knights, the novel mocks both the idiocy of the medieval chivalric knight and the callousness of modern warfare, promoting what T. J. Jackson Lears has deemed an “antimodern aesthetic.” This ambivalence is crucial to understanding American medievalism as an entire discourse apparatus, which more than one author, including Lears, has described as “Janus-faced”: “The antimodern quest for authenticity wore a Janus face,” writes Lears, reading the American “medieval unconscious” as both an idealization of the premodern and a fetishization of what he calls “real life”—that “ever-elusive” sense of authenticity that modernity allegedly withholds. Referring to Sidney Lanier’s *The Boy’s King Arthur* (1880) and James

Branch Cabell's *Chivalry* (1909), Lears writes that, "Wearied by struggles with religious doubt, impatient with the vagueness of liberal optimism, Americans hailed the 'childlike faith' of the Middle Ages 'in the reality of the visions that peopled the heavens and the earth"—emphasizing, in particular, "the key word [of] 'reality.'"[175]

This focus on the "Janus-faced" quality of U.S. medievalisms retains a latent dualism; it implies that there exist precisely and only two opposing movements of American medievalisms, an implication that reifies the Manicheism endemic to ethno-nationalist thinking.[176] The question of what precisely the domestic (derived from the same Proto-Indo-European root as "home": *tkei*-, "to settle, dwell") is reveals a more basic critique of this Manicheism—namely, notions of what it means to settle or dwell in a particular place as a collective people or emergent nation-state. Long before Heidegger would popularize the question of *wohnen*, "dwelling," Meister Eckhart, the late-thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century Monist German theologian and philosopher and reader of Pseudo-Dionysius, used the term in his vernacular German sermons, recently translated by Bernard McGinn: "Therefore you have to be and dwell [*wohnen*] in the essence and in the ground, and there God will touch you with his simple essence without the intervention of any image," he declares in his first extant sermon, concisely summarizing his pre-Reformation understanding of what a personal relationship with the divine looks like.[177] For Eckhart, as with Heidegger, "to be" [*sein*] and "to dwell" [*wohnen*] are intimately linked, especially in relation to what Eckhart calls "the ground" [*grunt*]: "*Hie ist gotes grunt mîn grunt und mîn grunt gotes grunt*" ("Here, God's ground is my ground and my ground God's

ground").[178] For Eckhart, such living/dwelling has always already rectified any supposed binary thinking: "the eye with which I see God," Eckhart famously declares, "is the same eye with which God sees me"—for Eckhart, the supposed distinctions between "my ground" and "God's ground" or between "the eye with which I see God" and "the eye with which God sees me" are fundamentally illusory. Thinking of postcolonial medievalism, we might rewrite Eckhart's claim: "the eye with which modernity sees the medieval is the same eye with which the medieval sees modernity"—the simplistic binaries between public and domestic spheres, masculinity and femininity, medieval and modern temporalities fall apart when we think of these distinctions as fundamental to our dwelling or being-in-the-world.

Louis Althusser, in "Contradictions and Overdeterminations" (1962), famously deploys the Freudian notion of overdetermination to critique a Hegelian conception of history, which "is regulated by the dialectic of the internal principles of each society, that is, the dialectic of the moments of the idea."[179] Althusser's argument is that, while contradictions rely on dualistic, Hegelian dialectics, overdeterminations rely on complex nexuses of relations, "tangles" as he calls them. If we think of the various binaries constructed by the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny in relation to the anti-Manicheaenism of medieval theologians like Pseudo-Dionysius or Meister Eckhart, these supposed contradictions become an overdetermined concatenation of cultural constructs tangled together in a Gordian knot of supposed binaries. Such anti-Manicheaenist writers, it turns out, were particularly adept at unraveling similarly complex discourses, especially regarding questions of theology

and logic. One of the more troubling Christian doctrines for Scholastic theologians of the thirteenth century revolved around the Virgin Mary's conception. Explaining their faith through reason, these theologians grappled with the question of reproduction and where the "active source" of generation resided: "What is the purpose of the seed?," John duns Scotus asks rhetorically, "Is it for generating, as the active source of generation?"[180] Duns Scotus was engaging in a debate that had gone back at least to John of Damascus (c. 675-749 CE), who was in turn interpreting the medical theory of Galen (129-c. 200 C.E.) in terms of the Immaculate Conception.[181] Galen, in a rejection of Aristotle's male-oriented explanation of reproduction—according to which the "male seed" was solely responsible for conception—argued that both sexes contributed equally during conception.[182] Duns Scotus, using Galen's theory, argued that the Immaculate Conception—Anne's conception of Mary—was jointly performed by God and Anne, suggesting that Mary was not exempt from original sin and, therefore, needed to be redeemed by Christ. This interpretation stood in contrast to those of other Scholastic theologians who, basing their theories on Aristotle's male-oriented explanation of reproduction, struggled to explain why Mary, the direct offspring of God and, therefore, sinless, needed Christ's redemption. Basing his theory on Galen's work, Duns Scotus saw Mary as having inherited, through Anne, humanity's original sin and, therefore, was in need of that Christological redemption. If we think of ethnonationalism, following Hannah Arendt among others, as the original sin of liberal democracies, Duns Scotus's argument suggests that redemption from ethnonationalism arrives, counterintuitively, through or from its progeny; it is in

the overdetermined network of apparent contradictions constructed by ethnonationalism's binary oppositions that a diverse body politic is born.[183] Comprised of a multiethnic, multilingual citizenry, itself composed of many genders, classes, religions and age groups, a liberal democracy like the United States can ground its identity in binary oppositions only so long; sooner or later those binary oppositions transmute into polymorphic, kaleidoscopic mosaics, overdetermined networks of cultural elements that leave us, like Pseudo-Dionysius thinking of the divine, speechless.

Toward Polyvocal National Identities

Central to the question of how a modern liberal democracy constructs its national identity is the question of how it represents the un-Modern. The United States's national identity, throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, relies upon an Anglo-Saxonism to construct this identity; with the Civil War and the enfranchisement of African-Americans, this Anglo-Saxonism loses some of its juridico-political power but retains much of its ideological power. Indeed, if anything, the Middle Ages, in post-Civil War literature, takes on even more overtly a White Supremacist ideology. Here is an excerpt from Sidney Lanier's wildly popular *A Boy's King Arthur* (1880):

> And then they [Sir Beaumains and lady] came to a black lawn, and there was a black hawthorn, and thereon hung a black banner, and on the other side there hung a black shield, and by it stood a black spear and a long, and a great black horse covered with silk, and a black stone fast by it.
>
> There sat a knight all armed in black harness, and his name was the Knight of the Black Lawns.[184]

We need hardly mention that this Knight of the Black Lawns proves himself the enemy of Sir Beaumains, who goes on to slay this black knight in single combat. Here is a more overt example from Frank O. Ticknor, a poet mourning the Lost Cause:

> I sometimes fancy that, were I king
> Of the princely Knights of the Golden Ring,
> With the song of the minstrel in mine ear,
> And the tender legend that trembles here,
> I'd give the best on his bended knee,
> The whitest soul of my chivalry,
> For "Little Giffen," of Tennessee.[185]

The poem mourns the death of a young soldier—"Little Giffen"—from Tennessee and so celebrates the Lost Cause; the reference to the "princely Knights of the Golden Ring" invokes the Knights of the Golden Circle, a mid-nineteenth-century secret society in the United States that endeavored to create a "golden circle" of slave states around the Caribbean and Gulf Coasts. The medievalisms of the post-Civil-War period are deeply connected to the Jim Crow South as a whole. They grapple repeatedly, in differing, often contradictory ways, with what the prototypical U.S. citizen is or might be. The well-documented American obsession with race and racial categories shifts as the Darwinian conception of evolution comes into vogue, suggesting that "heredity transmit[s] physical and genetic dispositions, not only moral and historical exemplars," which, in turn, transform "the old pride in ancestry" from a moral directive into a physiological imperative.[186] This American fascination with ancestry speaks to one reason why U.S. writers of the late nineteenth century, especially those of European descent, fixated so consistently on medieval Europe;

Anglo-Saxonism, as Reginald Horsman points out in *Race and Manifest Destiny* (1981), took root in the United States throughout the first half of the nineteenth century: "By 1850 American expansion was viewed in the United States less as a victory for the principles of free democratic republicanism than as evidence of the innate superiority of the American Anglo-Saxon branch of the Caucasian race."[187] This racialized conception of the U.S. citizenry, after the Civil War, was challenged directly by the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which, respectively, prohibited slavery, instituted equal protection and citizenship laws, and prohibited the government from denying a citizen the right to vote based on "race, color, or previous condition of servitude," and, therefore, the representation of medieval Europe in these post-war decades became a primary ideological battleground on which to engage this conflict over national identity.

Central to the debate is, unsurprisingly, Mark Twain, whose works explore the "medieval chivalry silliness" of the South, the antimodernism of the Northern bourgeoisie and the racism of U.S. cultural productions in general.[188] Works in which Twain utilizes medievalisms range from overt satires of Sir Walter Scott ("An Awful—Terrible Medieval Romance") to critical engagements with the limits of the historical imagination (*Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*). "An Awful—Terrible Medieval Romance," a short story published in 1870 and set in a Brandenburg castle in the thirteenth century, tells of a lord who, sonless, raises his daughter as a boy so she might one day reign as duke. Ethnicity, historical periodization, class, gender and age all play a part in the story: Conrad (as the

daughter is called) is born in Klugenstein, a fictional town near Brandenburgh, Germany; she is ethnically German, of an elite class, female by birth, male by right, and twenty-eight years old at the time of the main events of the story. The story recounts how Conrad's nephew, Constance, unmarried and with child, declares Conrad the father of her child before the royal court. Unsure how to respond, Conrad swoons and falls from his/her ducal chair, at which point the narrator of the story, interrupts the narration:

> [The remainder of this thrilling and eventful story will NOT be found in this or any other publication, either now or at any future time.]
>
> The truth is, I have got my hero (or heroine) into such a particularly close place, that I do not see how I am ever going to get him (or her) out of it again—and therefore I will wash my hands of the whole business, and leave that person to get out the best way that offers—or else stay there. I thought it was going to be easy enough to straighten out that little difficulty, but it looks different now.[189]

So ends the story. Twain admits that he simply cannot devise a suitable resolution so leaves the story's plot unsettled; he cannot bring himself to compose the miracle required by the chivalric romance tradition and, by resisting this resolution, transforms the story into a parody. While he has laid the groundwork for an *Ivanhoe* imitation—a medieval European setting; questions of regal succession; a central, heroic figure in disguise—Twain does not devise a means for his hero/heroine to exhibit his/her heroic qualities; there is, in other words, no hero to this story at all, only an unsettling feint, punctuated by a resolute declaration that the conclusion "will NOT be found."

Like so many of Twain's other forays into medievalism, this story ends abruptly. In avoiding a clichéd conclusion, Twain constructs the quintessential *deus*

ex machina: the author's hand, quite literally, abruptly intervenes to resolve the dilemma. Twain resists the obvious conclusion to the story—the unmasking and concomitant demise of Conrad—in favor of having the author of the story assert himself, "leav[ing Conrad] to get out the best way that offers." It is in the final chapters of *Huckleberry Finn*, meanwhile, that the duke and king, those imposters of feudal royalty, appear, and it is in these final chapters that Tom also insists Jim make himself an escutcheon. In the *Prince and the Pauper* (1882), it is the Great Seal of England, that symbol of monarchy and feudal rule, that proves Edward the true king, and, as David Vanderwerken has argued, the conclusion to *Pudd'nhead Wilson* amounts to "the triumph of medievalism" in that "[t]hrough the story of Wilson's rise from a pudd'nhead to a 'made man' Twain questions the very possibility of democracy in America."[190] This resonance between Twain's medievalisms and his unexpected, often haphazard endings suggests something about historiography itself—namely, that the writing of history is similar to the writing of Realist fiction in that both bestow narrative order upon historical or proto-historical events, themselves necessarily overdetermined. The one text that avoids such a sudden, inchoate conclusion is the book that Twain himself "like[d] […] best of all [his] books," for, according to him, "it is the best; I know it perfectly well"— the novel almost universally panned by Twain scholars, *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896). The conclusion to that text, which recounts Joan of Arc's trial and death, is fraught with both wit and sarcasm; Joan is compelled during her trial to discuss the "Voices" that famously directed her actions: "The University decided that it was blasphemy for

Joan to say that her saints spoke French and not English, and were on the French side in political sympathies." Louis de Conte goes on:

> I think that the thing which troubled the doctors of theology was this: they had decided that the three Voices were Satan and two other devils; but they had also decided that these Voices were *not* on he French side—thereby tacitly asserting that they were on the English side; and if on the English side, then they must be angels and not devils […] You see, the University being the wisest and deepest and most erudite body in the world, it would like to be logical if it could.[191]

Twain's dry humor, overpowered throughout much of the text by an oversweet admiration for Joan of Arc, pierces through the personas of the novel at this point, just as Joan stands trial and prepares for her martyrdom. It is in these final chapters that Twain comes into his own, incorporating a sarcastic, Cervantesesque tone, and uncharacteristically resisting a *deus ex machina* resolution.

The necessary partiality of Realist narration, in other words, is consistently connected in Twain's works with the medieval. Perhaps the clearest examples of this are two of the texts set overtly in medieval Europe: *Connecticut Yankee* and *The Mysterious Stranger*. Once the narrator finishes reading the manuscript prepared by Hank Morgan in *Connecticut Yankee*, Morgan attempts to compose one more "effect" but dies before doing so; this truncated conclusion only serves to hammer home the point that is made wildly clear in those last chapters—the "transposition of epochs" considered in the preface defies logic, makes of reason a farce and narrative cohesion an impossibility. That Twain never finished *The Mysterious Stranger*, set, in its most widely-read version at least, in fifteenth-century Austria, only drives this point home with even more precision. Twain's original manuscript—as opposed to the edition

published by Albert Paine in 1916—concludes with Satan musing about reality itself as a "Dream":

> It is true, that which I have revealed to you: there is no God, no universe, no human race, no earthly life, no heaven, no hell. It is all a Dream; a grotesque and foolish dream. Nothing exists but You. And You are but a *Thought*—a vagrant Thought, a useless Thought, a homeless Thought, wandering forlorn among the empty eternities!"
>
> He vanished, and left me [August Feldner] appalled; for I knew, and realized, that all he had said was true.[192]

According to Satan, history, like literature, is a dream and identity a thought. That Feldner "realize[s] that all [Satan] said was true" only affirms that we are not to read these parting words sarcastically but as an earnest appraisal of reality. That this confession is made in medieval Europe, moreover, only illustrates once again that Twain's medievalisms entwine with an understanding of reality itself as fragmented, non-chronological, impossible to complete except via a *deus ex machina* flourish.

The conclusion to *Huckleberry Finn* adds another layer to this discussion, suggesting that the connection Twain draws between the essential arbitrariness of historical narration and the Middle Ages functions to cast the United States itself in the mold of a feudal power. That *Huckleberry Finn* is deeply indebted to *Don Quixote* has long been recognized, albeit not often discussed in the world of Twain scholarship. As early as 1922, Olin Harris Moore published "Mark Twain and Don Quixote" in *PMLA*, citing the connections between Twain's novels, especially *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*, and *Don Quixote*: "For the man Don Quixote Mark Twain substitutes the boy Tom Sawyer," Moore declares, going on to explain: "Tom is a romantic youth, who has read a great many exciting tales and desires to

play the roles of his heroes […] In attempting [these] roles […] Sawyer falls into frequent altercations with Huck Finn, which resemble closely the arguments between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza."[193] To illustrate his point, Moore cites the exchange, in chapter three of *Huck Finn*, when Huck recounts how Tom convinces Huck and their gang to ambush what Tom declares to be an invading army of "Spaniards and A-rabs" mounted on the backs of elephants:

> When we got the word we rushed out of the woods and down the hill. But there warn't no Spaniards and A-rabs, and there warn't no camels nor no elephants. It warn't anything but a Sunday-school picnic and only a primer class at that. We busted it up, and chased the children up the hollow; but we never got anything but some doughnuts and jam [...] I didn't see no di'monds, and I told Tom Sawyer so. He said there was loads of them there, anyway; and he said there was Arabs there, too, and elephants and things. I said, why couldn't we see them, then? He said if I warn't so ignorant but had read a book called Don Quixote, I would know without asking. He said it was all done by enchantment. He said there was hundreds of soldiers there, and elephants and treasure, and so on, but we had enemies which he called magicians, and they turned the whole thing into an infant Sunday-school, just out of spite. I said, all right; then the thing for us to do was to go for the magicians. Tom Sawyer said I was a numskull.[194]

Twain's direct reference to *Don Quixote* serves to confirm what is already, without that reference, relatively overt: the relationship between Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer is demonstrative of the relationship between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. To further confirm his point, Moore cites Tom's repeated chastisements of Huck—"If I was as ignorant as you I'd keep still" or "How *you* talk, you better say; you don't know anything at all"—and compares these to Quixote's critiques of Sancho Panza—"How little thou knows about it" or "I have told thee already, Sancho, that on the subject of adventures thou knows little."[195]

Moore's essay speaks clearly to the extent to which *Don Quixote* has affected American literature and especially Twain's *Tom Sawyer* and *Huck Finn*. Stanley Williams cites Moore's essay in *The Spanish Background of American Literature* (1955), which traces the various ways U.S. novelists have been influenced by Cervantes, while M.F. Heiser, in an essay titled "Cervantes in the United States" (1947), cites Moore in his discussion of the various ways Cervantes has been adapted, translated and reimagined in U.S. novels.[196] More recently, the influence of Cervantes on Twain has been taken up to consider the controversial issue of the conclusion to *Huckleberry Finn*, with Pedro Javier Pardo García arguing that *Huck Finn* intertwines the picaresque with the quixotic in order to establish Huck as an American Adamic figure, while Aaron Derosa focuses on how the quixotism of *Huckleberry Finn* is fundamentally undermined by Twain's attention to the deeply fraught issues of racism and slavery.[197] These discussions of the American *Don Quixote* ignore an important element of this reception history—namely, the American medievalism activated by this connection. The resemblances between Huck and Tom's relationship and Don Quixote and Sancho Panza's that Moore notes can, in this light, be seen as recapitulations of the tried-and-true bifurcation of the medieval and the modern. Huck and Sancho represent the pragmatism of modernity, while Tom and Don Quixote represent a hackneyed, medieval ethos. Meanwhile, the element that Derosa notices—i.e. the way Twain's engagement with racism and slavery in *Huckleberry Finn* subverts that text's quixotism—suggests a more nuanced understanding of the medieval-modern divide—one that notices the irony of placing the pragmatic Huck as

the protagonist in a quixotic romance, playing the part of Don Quixote. Finally, García's notion that Huck unites the characters of "the pícaro and the quixote" makes Huck not so much or not only an American Adamic figure as a figure who connects the modern to the medieval. Huck finds himself in relationship with both the quixotic Tom Sawyer and Jim, deemed by Tom a member of "the nobility." Unlike Panza's resigned, placating responses to Don Quixote, Huck's response to Tom's quixotism is to "go for the magicians"; Huck is not incredulous of Tom's whimsy but adamantly convinced of it. This is an important distinction because it illustrates that Huck is not so much a figure of modernity, like Sancho Panza, but a dyophysitic character, so to speak—part modern, part medieval. The modern-medieval polarity, in *Huck Finn*, is portrayed less by Jim and Huck and more by Jim and Tom, while Huck finds himself caught between the two epochs; if we follow García's argument and see Huck as an Adamic figure of the U.S. this betweenness reasserts Twain's notion of the United States as a strange amalgam of the modern and the medieval; as the conclusion to *Pudd'nhead Wilson* suggests, the Gilded Age United States continues, after the Civil War and Emancipation Proclamation, to maintain a caste system largely organized around racial and gender categories, and Twain's medievalisms reveal the United States for what it is: a socially stratified country, ruled by wealthy elites, democratic in name alone.

Such a representation of the United States stands in stark contrast to the Anglo-Saxonism of antebellum U.S. medievalisms; while that Anglo-Saxonism employs a medievalism to promote an egalitarianism among white men, Twain

employs medievalisms to reveal the ways in which racial and gender categories function as covert means of stratifying a purportedly egalitarian democratic republic. In *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, *Joan of Arc*, "An Awful—Terrible Medieval Romance," and *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain emphasizes how racial and gender categories limit one's opportunities, and, in so doing, he grapples with the limits of U.S. egalitarianism. As opposed to the Anglo-Saxonism of the early nineteenth century, Twain's medievalisms incorporate both women and non-white individuals, but his conclusions, especially in later works like *Mysterious Stranger* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, are deeply pessimistic: as Satan's final monologue and Pudd'nhead Wilson's eventual reinstitution of Dawson's Landing's racial hierarchy suggest, Twain is skeptical of the United States' ability to integrate women and people of color into its national identity in a way that fully dismantles the deep-seated systems of racism and patriarchy.

It is in this sense that the medieval apophatic tradition speaks directly to post-Civil War notions of U.S. national identity; Pseudo-Dionysius, Meister Eckhart and Duns Scotus remind us of the overdetermined nature of abstract concepts like identity. "[O]ne must never imagine or judge concerning the general terms [*terminis generalibus*] such as being, unity, truth, wisdom, goodness and such like, according to the mode and nature of accidents," writes Meister Eckhart in *Prologus generalis in Opus tripartium*, arguing that such *termini generales* are necessarily inexpressible in accidental terms.[198] Abstract concepts—or "general terms" in Eckhart's Scholastic discourse—cannot be imagined in terms of accidental properties such as quantity,

relation, time or location; to represent such concepts in accidental terms is to specify them, to negate their abstract, general nature. This is the central dilemma that Twain exposes at the close of *No. 44*: "You are but a *Thought*," Satan insists and so renders identity itself an abstraction, "vagrant" and "useless," "homeless […] wandering forlorn among the empty eternities;" Twain's Realism requires that he represent reality in accidental terms, but such representations make of abstract concepts dogma. Twain's suggestion that the United States exists as a kind of feudal society, with race and gender as its social markers—in lieu of the three estates of the medieval monarchical system—gestures toward a recognition that Realist portrayals of national identity—like Owen Wister's Virginian—also operate upon this fundamentally monarchical conception of the nation-state, represented as a kingly, heroic figure, singular and monovocal.

Global medieval studies affords an opportunity for undermining such a patriarchal and monarchical conception of the nation-state by complicating our conception of what the Middle Ages were or might have been. By foregrounding the polyvocality of the Middle Ages—the extent to which seemingly singular political territorialities like Charlemagne's Francia or Anglo-Saxon Britain are, on closer inspection, inchoate entities more aptly understood as loose amalgams of diverse peoples and territories—we can unsettle fixed, singular conceptions of what terms like "Anglo-Saxon," "white," and "European" mean; in turn, to cast the modern nation-state in the mold of medieval political entities becomes to portray nation-states

apophatically, as loose amalgams of diverse territories and persons, human and nonhuman alike, indefinable in singular, univocal terms—even “dissensus.”[199]

Notes

[145] J. Clara Chan, “Medievalists, Recoiling from White Supremacy, Try to Diversify the Field,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 16, 2017, accessed September 29, 2017. http://www.chronicle.com/article/Medievalists-Recoiling-From/240666.
[146] Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003), 15-18.
[147] Geary, *The Myth of Nations*, 115.
[148] Leo Sherlye-Price’s translation, for example, in the Penguin Books 1990 edition, reads: “At present, this island includes, like the five books of the divine law, five languages and four nations—English, British, Irish and Picts. Each of these have their own language; but all are united in their study of God’s truth by the fifth—Latin—which has become a common medium through the study of the scriptures.”
[149] Owen Wister, “The Evolution of the Cow-Puncher,” *Harper’s* (September 1895), 606.
[150] Owen Wister, *The Virginian* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1902), 119.
[151] Owen Wister, *The Virginian*, 1.
[152] For more on this argument, see Henry Nash Smith, *The Development of a Writer* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 52-70.
[153] Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (New York: Signet Classics, 1883/2009), 209-210. Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (New York: Signet Classics, 2008), 48.
[154] For more on this history, see Lawrence Clayton, Jim Hoy & Jerald Underwood, *Vaqueros, Cowboys, and Buckaroos* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001).
[155] John France, *Mercenaries and Paid Men: The Mercenary Identity in the Middle Ages* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 24.
[156] Owen Wister, *The Virginian: A Horseman of the Plains* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1902), 2.
[157] Whitman “had the representation of his own lapped penis enlarged in successive versions of the frontispiece,” according to Matt Miller, *College of Myself: Walt Whitman and the Making of Leaves of Grass* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2010), 75.
[158] Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (Boston: St. Botolph Society, 1892), 115.
[159] Moreland, *The Medievalist Impulse in American Literature*, 68.
[160] Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 48.
[161] Ibid., 14
[162] Pierre Duhem, *Medieval Cosmology: Theories of Infinity, Place, Time, Void, and the Plurality of Worlds*, trans. Roger Ariew (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 338.

[163] Aristotle, *Phys.* 219b1-2. Duhem, *Medieval Cosmology*, 336-338.
[164] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Shocken Books, 1968), 255.
[165] Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 255.
[166] Kaplan, Amy. "Manifest Domesticity." *American Literature*, vol. 70, no. 3, 1998, pp. 581.
[167] Ibid., 582.
[168] Ibid., 596
[169] Sarah Josepha Hale, *Manners: Happy Homes and Good Society All the Year Round* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1889), 6.
[170] Lynn T. Ramey, *Black Legacies: Race and the European Middle Ages* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014), 28.
[171] Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (New York: Signet Classics, 1883/2009), 209-210. Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (New York: Signet Classics, 2008), 48, 288.
[172] Harold Bloom, *Mark Twain* (New York: Chelsea House, 1986), 18.
[173] R. Baine Harris, *Neoplatonism and Contemporary Thought: Part Two* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 143.
[174] Lois Malcolm, ed., *God: The Sources of Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 83-86.
[175] T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 150. Thinking of Sidney Lanier, as well as Howard Pyle, we could add another binary constructed by the discourse of Manifest Destiny—namely, the distinction between child and adult. Similar to the masculine-feminine distinction, childhood, in these discourses, is peripheralized in favor of adulthood in a similar way that the medieval is peripheralized in favor of the modern. The irony that Kaplan points out is the contradictory roles that domesticity plays in this system. The domestic sphere, as a synonym of home life, is peripheralized in favor of the public sphere, whereas the domestic sphere, understood as a synonym of the sphere of the nation-state, is given preference over and against the foreign. The Anglo-Saxonism that Horseman identifies in the antebellum United States similarly complicates these various, entwined binaries; Emerson's promotion of the American as the proper descendent of the Anglo-Saxon functions to upend the bourgeoisie-proletariat binary by suggesting that all white men, rich and poor alike, share in the nation's governance (or, as Senator John C. Calhoun put it, "With us the two great divisions of society are not the rich and poor, but white and black; and all the former, the poor as well as the rich belong to the upper class, and are respected and treated as equals"). At the same time, however, this Anglo-Saxonism clearly reifies both the white-nonwhite and masculine-feminine binaries, justifying why white men were the only full-fledged citizens of the United States.
[176] Thoreau's argument, in "Walking," places wildness at the center of human civilization ("in wildness," the essay begins, "is the preservation of the world"), and

he employs medieval figurations to make this argument, overturning the medieval-modern binary as well; however, this disruption or unsettling of binary distinctions becomes infused, as the essay progresses, with a historiography that sees "the West [as] but another name for the Wild." In "Walking," Thoreau disrupts the human-nonhuman binary, describing the wild as central to the preservation of the world, but he also reifies the notion of the West as superior to or more desirable than the East ("Eastward I only go by force; but westward I go free"). In *The Education of Henry Adams* (1907), Henry Adams famously takes the dynamo as the artifact *par excellence* of modernity, while Dante's Virgin functions, for Adams, as the proper symbol of an Edenic medieval Europe; Adams's turn to the medieval amounts to an adoration of medieval Christianity, while Twain's *Connecticut Yankee* unsettles the white-nonwhite binary (at one point having Hank Morgan and King Arthur sold into slavery and narrowly escaping a hanging) and brings into question an essentialist conception of gender with its apocalyptic shootout among men (their pistils drawn), but reifies both the modern-medieval and childhood-adulthood binaries by framing the medieval as enamored with "childish, idiotic, chuckle-headed, chicken-livered superstitions." Even if we read the strange, inchoate conclusion to *Connecticut Yankee* as a critique of progressivist historicism, Morgan's lampooning of Merlin and medieval pseudo-science clearly affirms the notion that Enlightenment science and rationalism have improved the human condition.

[177] Eckhart, "Sermon One," from *The Complete Mystical Works of Meister Eckhart*, trans. Bernard McGinn (New York: Herder & Herder, 2009), 32.

[178] Bernard McGinn, *The Harvest of Mysticism in Medieval Germany* (New York: Crossroad, 2005), 533.

[179] Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. by Ben Brewster (New York: Verso, 1969), 107.

[180] Father Christiaan W. Kappas, *The Immaculate Conception: Why Thomas Aquinas Denied, While John Duns Scotus, Gregory Palamas & Mark Eugenicus Professed the Absolute Immaculate Existence of Mary* (New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate, 2014), 10.

[181] Ibid.

[182] S.M. Connell, "Aristotle and Galen on sex difference and reproduction: a new approach to an ancient rivalry," in *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 31: 3 (2000), pp. 405-427.

[183] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jersualem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 3-7.

[184] Sidney Lanier, *A Boy's King Arthur* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1880/1895), 106-107.

[185] Burton Egbert Stevenson, ed., *Poems of American History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1908), 460.

[186] François Weil, *Family Trees* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 115.

[187] Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1981), 1.

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CHAPTER THREE

The Persistent Medieval:

Modernist Medievalisms and Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*

"The major deviations from orthodoxy" that Ezra Pound made in his "grotesque mistranslations" of Chinese poetry, Hugh Kenner argues in *The Pound Era* (1971), "represent deliberate decisions of a man who was inventing a new kind of English poem and picking up hints where he could find them."[200] Pound, T.S. Eliot and other Modernists turned to Chinese and non-Western literary and aesthetic traditions for these "hints" but also to medieval cultural productions. Set largely in modern London, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) begins with a dedication to Ezra Pound, described as *il miglior fabbro*, "the better craftsman," echoing Dante's tribute to the twelfth-century Provençal poet Arnaut Daniel in Canto 26 of the *Purgatorio,* and Pound himself, in *The Cantos*—the title itself serving as an allusion to *The Divine Comedy*—consistently refers to both Asiatic schools of thought, especially Confucianism, and European medieval history, poetry and art. The "persistent east" that Kenner notices in the history of western thought, we could say, is supplemented by a persistent medieval that, like the persistent east, affords Modernists—Europeans and European Americans alike—with an "alien poetic" that could be "made new" by Modernism.[201]

The adaptation and fusion of Asian and medieval cultural productions in many modern American cultural productions have been the subject of much recent scholarship in postcolonial medievalism. Following the work of Patrick Geary in *The Myth of Nations* (2002), John Ganim in *Medievalism and Orientalism* (2016) traces the "twinned association of medievalism and Orientalism," by nineteenth-century western authors, historians and anthropologists, who imagined the Middle Ages as "the White Orient," a "foreign land" in which western thinkers were, paradoxically, "always at home."[202] Ganim sees "the idea of the Middle Ages" as symptomatic of "an identity crisis [regarding] what the West is and should be," and by linking medievalism and Orientalism, he illustrates how the modern colonial system constructs not only spatial but also temporal systems to justify that colonialism.[203] As Kathleen Davis puts it, many contemporary medievalisms "paradoxically claim […] the Middle Ages as the immature stage from which modernity developed, and as an inert, temporal space incapable of change," and she illustrates how even "contemporary critical examination of Orientalism—led by Said's groundbreaking *Orientalism*—reinforces rather than disrupts [this] Westernizing temporal logic."[204]

The links between the European Middle Ages and Asiatic cultures developed in early twentieth-century American literature resonate saliently with a number of medieval texts that themselves describe Asian cultures, perhaps the most well-known being Marco Polo's *Livres des Merveilles du Monde* or *The Book of Marvels of the World*, written by Rustichello da Pisa at the turn of the fourteen century and based on Marco Polo's travels through

Asia in the late thirteenth century. As Syed Islam has recently argued, *The Book of Marvels* "registers the originary process through which the modern discourse of othering emerged in the West, its narrative discloses the ambivalence that subsequent discourses of othering so resolutely hide."[205] Central to this discourse of othering, Syed argues, is Polo's prologue, which frames Armenia as a threshold territory that separates "Christendom" from the "Orient" and so precipitates what today, following Edward Said, we would deem the discourse of Orientalism.

Syed's narrativizing of the Western discourse of othering reveals the perils of such a discussion; by asserting that Polo's prologue exists as "the originary process" by which the West constructed its discourse of othering, Syed himself excludes non-Western discourses with which Rustichello da Pisa and Marco Polo were in dialogue. This is the same critique Sharon Kinoshita has levied against Edward Said, when, in *Orientalism*, he takes Henri Pirenne's rendering of the Middle Ages "not as symptomatic of [Pirenne's] time and discursive space but as a transparent account of Muslim-Christian relations from the seventh century forward;" Said's "trenchant critique of Orientalism," Kinoshita goes on to assert, "is bought at the price of what we might call 'Medievalism'—itself a widespread phenomenon."[206] Like Said, Syed interprets *The Book of Wonders* in terms of its relation to modernity without considering how that historicization renders the un-Modern as always already peripheral to modernity; meanwhile, as Kim Phillips has recently

discussed in *Before Orientalism: Asian Peoples and Cultures in European Travel Writing, 1245-1510* (2014), one could just as easily see works like *The Book of Wonders* not as "originary" of any particular process but as engaged in deep, multicultural exchanges, albeit rendered in biased, eurocentric terms.

Unlike Syed, Phillips argues that "a distinctive European perspective on Asia [developed] during the era c. 1245-c. 1510"—a perspective that "mov[ed] away from tendencies to create a homogenous 'India' of marvels and monsters yet [was] little touched by the colonialist mentalities that would emerge through the early modern era and dominate the modern;" instead, the distinctive European perspective on Asia during this period—including the perspective taken up by *The Book of Marvels*—sees "desire for information and for pleasure [as] two chief impulses guiding late medieval readers' interest in travel writing on Asia."[207] Something similar happens with the American medievalisms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; while early nineteenth-century American medievalisms are dominated by expansionist mentalities and late twentieth-century medievalisms turn to fantastical, otherworldly realms, the medievalisms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are, like late medieval Orientalism, more focused on education and pedagogy: Bulfinch's *Mythology*, Twain's *Joan of Arc*, Sidney Lanier's *Boy's King Arthur*, Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Pound's *Cantos*—the texts of this period take up medieval texts and figures as if they were pedagogical tools for the modern person's edification, as if medieval history

and literature contained some essential truth crucial to one's comprehension of or participation in the modern world. Such an understanding of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American medievalisms reframes the antimodernism that T. J. Jackson Lears diagnoses in *No Place of Grace* as itself endemic to modern industrial society; these pedagogical medievalisms make of ideology itself an anachronism, treating modernity as always already unideological, purely materialistic—a contestation that, as Georg Lukacs argues in "The Ideology of Modernism" (1962), makes of modern humanity solitary and asocial beings, alienated even from abstract thought. In William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, though, another approach to American medievalisms is taken up, especially one that sees the Middle Ages not as a discrete historical epoch but as an unconscious fantasy that permeates modern Americans' *Weltanscchauung*, their "view of the world."

Pedagogical Medievalisms

The Waste Land (1922) leverages medieval European literature and Eastern religions in the presentation of modernity itself as a wasteland devoid of meaning. As Eliot himself acknowledges in the poem's footnotes, "Not only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem was suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston's book [*From Ritual to Romance* (1920)]," which examines the sources of the Holy Grail legends and their connection to both paganism and Christianity. Of particular interest to Weston is the motif, present in Irish mythology and French Arthuriana, of a

Waste Land—a desolate, arid land, the barrenness of which is tied to a curse that must be lifted by a hero: "I believe," Weston writes, "that the 'Waste Land' is really the very heart of our problem; a rightful appreciation of its position and significance will place us in possession of the clue which will lead us safely through the most bewildering mazes of the fully developed tale."[208] The "Waste Land," according to Weston, is a "clue" that will "lead us," modern readers, to an understanding of the Holy Grail myth, and Eliot transposes that argument, seeing the motif of the Waste Land as also the central clue to a full understanding of modernity itself.

In Chrétien de Troyes's twelfth-century telling, the story of the Grail revolves around Perceval's encounter with the Fisher King and his crippled father, who survives on a single Mass wafer served to him on a grail. Weston's work connects this legend with the nature cults of Wales, the Alps and the Vosges, among other localities—her argument being that the Grail myth has as its basis "a ritual performance celebrating the renewal of the seasons."[209] Eliot takes up this connection between the Grail myth and the ritual renewal of the seasons, famously beginning the poem with an allusion to the opening lines of *The Canterbury Tales*:

> April is the cruelest month, breeding
> Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
> Memory and desire, stirring
> Dull roots with spring rain.[210]

The title of this first section, "Burial of the Dead," connects the poem with a ritual event—burial—just as the opening line remakes Chaucer's April, with its "shoures

soote," into "the cruelest month," alluding to the medieval vernal ritual of pilgrimage. The central questions of the poem are clear from the opening lines: what are the rituals of the modern world, and how, if at all, are these rituals inscribed with meaning? Like D. H. Lawrence discussing James Fennimore Cooper and Edgar Allan Poe, Eliot turns to the seasons in response to these questions:

> Winter kept us warm, covering
> Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
> A little life with dried tubers.
> Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
> With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,
> And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
> And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
> Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.
> And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke's
> My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,
> And I was frightened. He said, Marie,
> Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.
> In the mountains, there you feel free.
> I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.[211]

Winter and summer, in the modern world, entwine; the images of summer—the colonnade, the sunlit Hofgarten—merge with a winter sled-ride at the arch-duke's mountain chalet. The seasons no longer correspond with their appropriate activities; they merge and converge just as Marie's monologue offers fragmented, muddled narratives. The final declaration that Marie "read[s], much of the night, and go[es] south in the winter," amounts to a paradoxical admission that now her annual ritual is a refusal to participate in such rituals; the sublime, with its terror and beauty, is withheld from her now, existing only as a dull, fragmented memory of which the spring cruelly reminds her.

Marie's declaration—"I am not Russian at all; I come from Lithuania, pure German"—suggests another of the poem's concerns: the slipperiness of ethnonationalist identity. Marie is from Lithuania, yet considers herself "pure German;" as the cousin of the arch-duke, she is also royalty—the poem, in its grappling with modern ritual practices, comes up against questions of ethnonationalism and the nostalgia of the European aristocracy. These concerns, meanwhile, are overlaid onto a medieval narrative, the story of the Fisher King, which provides narrative cohesion to the poem; like the American medievalisms of the nineteenth-century, Eliot's Modernist medievalisms connect the anxiety regarding the social order in a democratic republic to the question of how such a government can construct its national identity, and Eliot adds to these concerns a preoccupation with the rituals that bind modern society itself together: he is interested in the rites that define modernity, and in this first stanza he searches futilely for these rites among an aging, indolent aristocracy; the seasons of the year; and a convoluted, muddled ethnonationalism that breeds war, and the remainder of "The Burial of the Dead" moves among these topics, focusing on the nostalgia of the aristocracy in the second stanza ("You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;/They called me the hyacinth girl."), the superstitions that masquerade, albeit often convincingly, as modern rituals in the third stanza ("Madame Sosotris […] with a wicked pack of [tarot] cards" an allusion to the fraudulent fortuneteller of that name in Aldous Huxley's *Crome Yellow* (1921)), and the brutality of war in the final stanza, which imagines dead bodies as seeds to be planted ("That corpse you planted last year in your garden,/Has it begun

to sprout?").[212] The opening section of the poem, in other words, recapitulates the three topics alluded to in the opening stanza, continuing to overlay these concerns on a medieval European literary figure, the Fisher King's Waste Land. In the second portion of the poem, "A Game of Chess," the synthetic quality of the room, in which "[t]he Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,/Glowed on the marble," imagines the world of modernity as unnatural and vapid.[213] That this description rests upon the medieval narrative of the Fisher King again illustrates succinctly the way Eliot presents the medieval as the spatiotemporal baseline of modernity, the essential element that one must understand to fully comprehend the modern world. Just as the superficiality and baroque aesthetic of the room in "A Game of Chess" is inscribed upon a medieval literary narrative, modernity seems, for Eliot, to be inscribed upon the Middle Ages, understood as fundamental, something like Lacan's "real."[214]

This is, it turns out, a common trope of early twentieth-century American literature more generally; in *The Medievalist Impulse in American Literature: Twain, Adams, Fitzgerald and Hemingway* (1996), Kim Ilene Moreland notes the way both F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway turn to the medieval for "an alternative worldview, a set of standards against which [they] could compare [their] own day."[215] For Fitzgerald this fascination with the medieval is clear in his portrayal of Henry Adams in *This Side of Paradise* (1920) as "the Honorable Thornton Hancock, of Boston, ex-minister to the Hague, author of an erudite history of the Middle Ages and the last of a distinguished, patriotic, and brilliant family."[216] The Middle Ages become for Fitzgerald a way to emphasize "the destructive aspects of twentieth-

century life," while Hemingway, in an interview, describes *The Sun Also Rises* as "a fishing expedition in the Pass of Roland" and, like Eliot, uses titles and "pseudomedieval epigraphs" to construct a "chivalric suggestiveness."[217] That F. Scott Fitzgerald, in "Phillipe, Count of Darkness," portrays Hemingway himself as a ninth-century French aristocrat only drives home these connections between the medieval and authenticity more directly.

All three authors—Eliot, Hemingway and Fitzgerald—use the Middle Ages to accentuate the sense of disorientation and dislocation modern life bestows, and in this sense their medievalisms function as pedagogical tools, framing the medieval as a spacetime about which modern readers must be familiar if they are to fully comprehend modernity, and such a contestation resembles the kind of "traditional" pedagogy the Italian Marxist theorist Anthony Gramsci critiques in his *Prison Notebooks* (1947): "traditional intellectuals," Gramsci argues, "put themselves forward as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group" and so buttress an "imperial intellectual cosmopolitanism" that separates intellectuals from "non-intellectuals"— a group that, to Gramsci, does not actually exist.[218] American Modernists' penchant for pedagogical medievalisms serves to separate Eliot, Hemingway and Fitzgerald from modern society, presenting them as "autonomous and independent" by nature of their knowledge of medieval cultures, and, as Gramsci makes clear, such intellectualism serves to support imperial interests: "It is necessary to go back to the Roman Empire and to the first concentration of 'cosmopolitan' ('imperial') intellectuals it produced," Gramsci writes in a letter to his sister-in-law

Tatiana Schucht, thinking about how "a real program of study and work" that analyzed the long history of European intellectualism is simply impossible to render in any comprehensive manner: "[O]ne has to study the formation of the Christian-Papal organization of clerks which shaped the legacy of imperial intellectual cosmopolitanism into the form of a European caste, etc., etc." he goes on, linking traditional intellectualism with, first of all, a pre-eighteenth-century "cosmopolitanism," which he equates with "imperialism" (his own periodizing schema is apparent here), and, second of all, an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century nationalism, that treats the nation itself as a totality.[219] In both cases, Gramsci insists, traditional intellectualism buttresses these hegemonic enterprises promoting an ideology that transforms ideology itself into the purview of an elite, separate caste.

As Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease have illustrated in *Cultures of U.S. Imperialism* (1993), Americanists have often overlooked U.S. imperialism by focusing, sometimes tacitly, on "American uniqueness;" instead, Kaplan and Pease foreground "the multiple histories of continental and overseas expansion, conquest, conflict and resistance which have shaped the cultures of the United States."[220] Their project, which includes essays on the Wild West, Native Americans, the Philippines and seventeenth-century European emigration, could well include a discussion of American medievalisms as another means by which American culture frames itself as the latest instantiation of the *imperium*, and perhaps the work that connects this Modernist preoccupation with empire, pedagogy and medievalism most

succinctly is Ezra Pound's *The Cantos* (1915-1962). As Daniel Swift, quoting Frank Kermode, has recently shown in his study of Pound's years living in St. Elizabeth's hospital after World War II, "the modernist poets—[…] Eliot, Pound and Yeats—'seek a historical period possessing the qualities they postulate for the image.' They dream of a historical moment which has the hard unity and clean lines of a poetic image."[221] Modernism, foregrounding fragmentation, searches for a historical moment that possesses the unity and cohesion of the image, using the Middle Ages—as well as non-Western cultures—as storehouses of these coherent, totalizing images, albeit necessarily fragmented in a fallen, modern world. The implication of such a postulation, though, is pedantic, imperial; it suggests that the poem's speaker has knowledge of a gestalt that is necessarily withheld from non-intellectuals.

Pound's medievalism in *The Cantos* begins before any reference is made to the historical Middle Ages; "Canto 1," published in 1925, opens with a loose translation of Book 11 of *The Odyssey*—Odysseus's descent into the underworld—in which Pound uses markedly Anglo-Saxon diction:

> And then went down to the ship,
> Set keel to breakers, forth on the godly sea, and
> We set up mast and sail on that swart ship,
> bore sheep aboard her, and our bodies also
> Heavy with weeping, and winds from sternward
> Bore us out onward with bellying canvas,
> Circe's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess.[222]

"Down," "ship," "keel," "breakers," "forth," "sea," "sheep," "weeping," "sternward," "bore," "bellying," "craft," "trim-coifed"—Pound uses almost

exclusively nouns and verbs of an Anglo-Saxon etymology, and the consistent use of caesura, alliteration and a four-beat, non-iambic line—not to mention the nautical theme—bears a strong resemblance to Pound's translation of "The Seafarer" (1911), which almost singlehandedly piqued the twentieth-century fascination with Anglo-Saxon verse. An imaginative retelling of *The Odyssey* especially one appearing in a text titled *The Cantos*, meanwhile, alludes not only to Homer's epic but also to Canto XXVI of Dante's *Inferno*, in which Odysseus, dwelling in the eighth circle of hell, tells of how he fled Circe in order to explore the world, rather than to return to Penelope. In "Canto I," "Circe's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess"—Circe becomes, for Pound, the very ship in which the poem's speaker and his crew sail; in Homer's telling, she gives Odysseus the ship, as well as the wind that "bellies" its sails, but, in Pound's rendering, Circe becomes, according to Hugh Kenner's reading of "Canto I," the *psyche*—the soul—of not only the ship but also the poem itself, the breath of the poem's speaker.[223]

Like "The Waste Land," with its allusion to *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Cantos* begins with religious imagery that regards the sea as "godly" and Circe as "the trim-coifed goddess," animating not only Odysseus's ship but also Pound's poem; Circe exists as the muse of "Canto I," we might say—and, by extension, *The Cantos* more generally—the goddess to whom the poem's speaker turns for inspiration, and this concern with deities speaks yet again to the way medievality is associated in American cultural productions with

religiosity. to an important motif of Modernist medievalisms more generally—namely, a pseudo-secularism that subtly interprets modernity in terms of medieval Europe and especially medieval Christianity. In his *Companion to the Cantos*, Carroll Franklin Terrell argues that *The Cantos* is, at core, "a great religious poem," but Pound's religious beliefs cohere not around a particular creed but around an understanding of divinity—or, as Pound deems it, "intimate essence"—as "operat[ing] through the persona continuously as a state of mind," and that Pound turns to a medieval theologian like John Scotus Eriugena to develop this conception of divinity speaks clearly to the Neoplatonic vein running through *The Cantos*, as well as to the way the poem reifies the medieval-religious association so endemic to the modern/medieval periodization.

As Mark Bryon has recently adumbrated, Eriugena affords Pound with "specific ideas," especially "on light as a kataphatic expression of divinity, on the celestial hierarchy [and] on the flame of civilization kept alive in the transmission of Greek in the Carolingian Age;" this neo-Scholasticism illustrates particularly well the imperialist ideology undergirding much of *The Cantos*, utilizing as it does a syncretism that melds eastern religious traditions like Buddhism and Confucianism with paganism and medieval Christianity. [224] As John Ganim has argued, "Romanticism obviously equated the Middle Ages and the Orient, but it kept them by and large on parallel tracks […] the Medieval is accorded a direct connection to modernity, explaining the origin

of national and civil identity, while the Orient is a living museum of the past, bracketed off from modern development or even excluded from the potential for development."[225] By the early twentieth century, however, this distinction has eroded, and the medieval and Asia converge to the point that Eliot can conclude "The Waste Land" with the conclusion to the *Upanishads*, "shantih shantih shantih," and Pound can, in the *Pisan Cantos*, interlace Scholastic theology, Tu Fu and Chinese ideograms:

> the great scarab is bowed at the altar
> the green light gleams in his shell
> plowed in the sacred field and unwound the silk worms early
>   in tensile
> in the light of light is the *virtù*
>   " sunt lumina " said Erigena Scotus
>   as of Shun on Mt Taishan
> and in the hall of the forebears
>   as from the beginning of wonders
> the paraclete that was present in Yao, the precision
> in Shun the compassionate
> in Yu the guider of waters[226]

Asian and medieval cultures, for Pound, exist as origin points for modern Western national identity; they are not on "parallel tracks" but amalgamated. This early-twentieth-century fusion of the medieval and East Asian cultures reflects a growing cosmopolitanism that rejects simplistic east-west binaries but also treats East Asian cultures as un-Modern, casting those non-Western cultures as antecedental to modern Western life—a clearly Western colonial historiography.

Such colonialist historiography bears some interesting resemblances with the imperialism that characterized the Christianization of western Europe

throughout the early medieval period. The monopolization of medieval historiography by Christian historians has resulted in the framing of the Christianization of Europe as a sudden transformation, rather than a centuries-long, syncretic process, occurring unevenly across space and time.[227] The Christianization of Saxony, as Ingrid Rembold has recently argued, is particularly illustrative of this process, for "[i]n its progression from an undeveloped, pagan and hitherto disunified territory to a Christian region of the Carolingian polity, Saxony represents an important test case for the nature of Christianization and Christian reform in the early medieval world."[228] In particular, she argues, "the brutality of the Saxon wars did not preclude acceptance of Christianity and Carolingian rule;" instead, the Christianization of Saxony, a nebulous territoriality corresponding "roughly to the German federal state of Lower Saxony (Niedersachsen), [along] with significant portions of North Rhine-Westphalia (Nordrhein-Westfalen), Schleswig-Holstein and Saxony-Anhalt (Sachsen-Anhalt)," occurred haphazardly and intermittently, with "great emphasis" placed on the Christian baptism of the Saxons in the wars of 772-785 but little emphasis placed on Christian baptism in the wars of 792-804.[229] The Christianization of the Saxons, in other words, was not synonymous with the conquest of Saxony by the Carolingian Empire; indeed, as Rembold takes pains to point out, the notion that Christian baptism immediately and irrevocably transformed the Saxons into Christians is itself a construct of Christian historiography. Even the notion that Saxons were

“pagan” is a Christian historiographical construct: “Paganism,” Rembold writes, “is fundamentally a Christian construct, a polemical term used to group together non-adherents to Christianity.”[230] Similarly, Christianity itself is such a construct: “the categories ‘pagan’ and ‘Christian’ were applied to a broad spectrum of belief and practice, without doing justice to the countless shades of grey.”[231] The Christianization of Saxony illustrates the complexity of these cultural changes, inscribed as they are with both ideological and material causes and consequences.

Central to Rembold’s argument is the *Stellinga*, those Saxon freemen who rebelled against their lords in the mid-ninth century C.E.; while this movement is often interpreted as a “pagan movement,” Rembold, summarizing recent research on the subject, concludes that “[t]he *Stellinga* were not attempting to revert to paganism, nor were they seeking to unravel the changes which had followed Carolingian conquest and incorporation […] they were not even a class-based movement which rallied around the destruction of elite privilege. Rather, they are better understood as a guild or horizontal association, which—in addition to a myriad of other functions—participated in the dispensing of customary justice.”[232] Something similar could be said of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American medievalisms. While T. J. Jackson Lears sees the medievalism of Twain, Adams and the Modernists as a “rejection of urban artifice,” one could also see this figuration “as a phenomenon born of its time, rather than as an

aberration," as Rembold says of the *Stellinga*—that is, we can see the pedagogical medievalisms of Eliot and Pound—not to mention Henry Adams, Twain, Hemingway and Fitzgerald—as symptomatic of modernity's industrialization, not a rejection of it.[233] Lears himself seems to recognize this complexity in that he sees antimodernism as related to the "longing for psychic harmony" which was "the profoundest symptom of [the] late-nineteenth-century cultural crisis;" at issue is the term "antimodernism" itself, though, which suggests that the medievalisms of Twain, Adams and the Modernists are definable by their critique of industrialization rather than by any positive, constructive element of their cultural productions. Lears's conception of U.S. antimodernism, in other words, bears resemblance to the historiographers of the Saxon Wars that Rembold critiques; just as those interpreters frame the Christianization of Saxony as a dualistic battle between paganism and Christianity, Lears frames Twain's, Adams's and the Modernists' medievalisms as entrenched within a battle that pits modernism against antimodernism. Rembold's interpretation of the Christianization of Saxony argues for a pluralistic conception of this cultural transformation; she wants us to see that process not as a simplistic movement from paganism to Christianity but rather as an overdetermined, multi-vector shift, recognizing that both Pre-conquest Saxony and Post-conquest Saxony "lacked any unity as a region, either in terms of politics, religion, ethnicity or material culture."[234]

Such use of network theory complicates Lears's notion of antimodernism, for if we understand concepts like modernization and industrialization as neither static nor singular, we also understand their antitheses as similarly polysemous, protean. In the same way that Rembold frames the *Stellinga* as primarily a "guild," we can see Lears's so-called antimodernists as a "horizontal association" of writers, architects and artists engaging with the modernization and industrialization of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in the terms upon which that modernization and industrialization rely; to deem them "antimodernists" only perpetuates this enframing, when we could, just as easily, see these pedagogical medievalisms as the fantasies of a horizontal association of individuals imagining themselves to be Gramsci's traditional intellectuals, divorced from a non-intellectual society.

In the same way that the medieval undergirds both *The Waste Land* and *The Cantos*, the medieval haunts the psyches of William Faulkner's characters themselves. Like many of Poe's and Twain's works, Faulkner's novels reckon with medieval Europe less as pedagogical tools and more as templates for his characters' imaginations. Put another way, Faulkner grapples with the representation of the medieval as a totality itself, treating the Middle Ages as, at least in part, a figment of the modern American imagination. In a discussion of *Go Down, Moses* (1942) at the University of Virginia in 1959, Faulkner claimed of Miss Sophonsiba, Hubert Beauchamp's unmarried sister,

that she "lived on Walter Scott, probably, and she had nothing to do, and she would read the fine, flamboyant tales of chivalry where the maiden cast the veil to the knight in the tournament."[235] The medieval, in Faulkner's novels, appears as a kind of psychic structure for his characters, too intimate to even be discussed—perhaps even noticed. Faulkner's medievalisms exist almost tacitly, undergirding his characters' actions and thought processes, and in this sense his medievalisms present the medieval, as Rembold says of the *Stellinga*, "as a phenomenon born of its time," disclosing a much more startling *mise-en-abyme* than do those of other Modernists.

Faulkner's Organic Medievalism

Rather than use the Middle Ages as a template for his texts or as a supposedly unfragmented whole toward which modernity yearns, Faulkner treats the medieval as basically illusory and so diagnoses the medieval as an American unconscious fantasy, and his medievalisms, therefore, interlocute well with recent research on fantasy in medieval British literature, especially the work of Aisley Byrne, who, in *Otherworlds: Fantasy and History in Medieval Literature* (2016), notices the way that the "otherworlds" described in medieval British texts like *Sir Orfeo* (c. 1330) and *Visio Tnugdali* (c. 1149) offered, to a medieval European readership, "an experience analogous to fiction itself [...] an extra perspective from which to view reality."[236] While much recent scholarship on the otherworlds of medieval literature accentuates these worlds' "strangeness and alterity," Byrne's interpretation frames such

attention to the strangeness and alterity of medieval otherworlds as “relative rather than absolute;” in other words, modern scholarship often oversimplifies medieval distinctions between fiction and nonfiction: “Th[e] relationship [between reader and text] might be expressed by borrowing and extending J. R. R. Tolkien’s formulation where the reader’s own world and the world of the fictional text are envisioned as ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ worlds respectively. In this perspective, otherworld realms in narratives may be considered ‘tertiary’ worlds,” Byrne argues.[237]

In turn, the medieval in Faulkner’s novels suggest a further extension of Tolkien’s formulation, existing as what we might call a quarternary world—not so much an otherworld disclosed within the text as a world that informs and populates the tertiary worlds that Faulkner’s characters construct for themselves. Describing a gate at Hubert Beauchamp’s plantation in “Was”—the first story in *Go Down, Moses*—the narrator says, “this was what Miss Sophonsiba was still reminding people was named Warwick even when they had already known for a long time that’s what she aimed to have it called, until when they wouldn’t call it Warwick she wouldn’t even seem to know what they were talking about and it would sound like she and Mr. Hubert owned two separate plantations covering the same area of ground, one on top of the other.”[238] In naming the gate outside her brother’s plantation “Warwick,” Miss Sophonsiba reveals her tendency to interpret the antebellum South through her readings of Walter Scott, historicizing her family’s station

in a similarly Romantic light—the Beauchamp family had served as Earls of Warwick throughout the late Middle Ages, so Miss Sophonsiba's naming connects her family to those historical figures and allows her to revel in a fantasy of aristocratic belonging.

A similar rendering of the medieval is present in *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), which is organized largely around Holy Week—the first section occurring on Holy Saturday, the third section on Good Friday and the fourth section on Easter Sunday. Faulkner is not immune to framing his narratives around medieval or medievalized titles (one of his later short stories, about the county attorney Gavin Stevens, is titled "Knight's Gambit," while *The Sound and the Fury* itself refers to *Macbeth*, itself a reimagining of medieval Britain—not to mention Faulkner's tendency to deploy religious diction in titles like *Go Down, Moses* and *Absolom, Absolom!*). This pedagogical medievalism, though, is supplemented by what we might call, thinking of Gramsci's distinction between traditional and organic intellectuals, an organic medievalism that, in *The Sound and the Fury*, appears throughout all four sections of the book, with each narrator disclosing the extent to which his or her own otherworld is populated by medieval or medievalized images and tropes. The first section, narrated by Benjamin Compson, the mentally disabled and youngest son of Jason Compson III and Caroline Compson, begins with a description of a golf game that Benjy and Luster, an African-American servant, are watching from behind a fence:

> Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting. They were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence. Luster was hunting in the grass by the flower tree. They took the flag out, and they were hitting. Then they put the flag back and they went to the table, and he hit and the other hit. Then they went on, and I went along the fence. Luster came away from the flower tree and we went along the fence and they stopped and we stopped and I looked through the fence while Luster was hunting in the grass.
>
> "Here Caddie." He hit. They went across the pasture. I held to the fence and watched them going away.[239]

The golf course Benjy is observing had been sold by the Compson family in order to finance his sister's wedding and Quentin's Harvard education; the fence separates Benjy from the game that he loves, as well as from "Caddy"—the name of his beloved, older sister now expelled from the family for her infidelity. This opening scene is one of longing for an imagined past—the pasture which the Compsons sold and where, now, the golf course resides was deemed "Benjy's pasture" because he loved it dearly, and he still, in the above passage, tends to see it as "a pasture" not a golf course. A clear sense of nostalgia permeates these opening lines. Benjamin casts the game of golf—with its flags and repeated "hitting"—as a kind of jousting match from which he is cruelly withheld, entwining the South's "chivalry-silliness," as Twain deemed it, with his family's own lost fortune. After watching the golf match, Benjy follows Luster through a "broken place" in the fence, where he snags himself on a nail. Immediately, chronological time is broken, and Benjy remembers how Caddy, years ago, "uncaught" him from that nail just as Luster has done. Marked by italics, these breaks from the "primary world" of the text—the date given by the title of each section—are, for Benjy at least, marked with a clear religiosity, a sense of belonging and beauty. "Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through," Benjy writes in

this first flashback, going on to describe how Caddy cared for him, the garden they walked through: “You dont want your hands froze on Christmas, do you,” he recalls her asking. Breaking through that fence becomes a key motif for Benjy’s flashbacks, repeated in three of the first five; breaks in temporality, we might say, are coeval with breaks in territoriality in this section—the traversal of the fence coincides with breaks from the primary world of the text, and these ruptures in spacetime are populated with flowers, Caddie, being cared for, Christmas, pigs being slaughtered, fire, weeping: primal, elemental figurations to Benjy. These are moments of authenticity that, like the medieval in *The Cantos* and *The Waste Land*, suggest to Benjy a totality that is, in the primary world of the text, decidedly lacking.

Another disclosure of this organic medievalism is present in the section narrated by Quentin, who, as Lynn Gartrell Levins argues in an analysis of *Absolom, Absolom!*, “re-creates Judith, Bon, and Henry as protagonists of a contemporary medieval romance.”[240] But while Levins focuses on the way “Faulkner’s characters function within the framework of the chivalric romance,” expostulating on Faulkner’s own pedagogical medievalism, Faulkner more subtly inscribes his characters’ thought-processes—their “otherworlds”—with medievalisms. In a study of Faulkner’s preoccupation with innocence—a concept that T. J. Jackson Lears connects with American antimodernism—Lawrence Bowling points out that Herbert Head, Quentin’s brother-in-law, describes Quentin as a “half-baked Galahad,” when Quentin refuses to take a newly-minted fifty-dollar bill for fear of Herbert’s “unidealistic practicality;” “in *The Sound and the Fury*,” Bowling summarizes,

"Quentin views himself as the one whose fate it is to retrieve the family honor," a self-identification that Herbert Head lampoons as "identifying Quentin with the noblest and purest knight of the Round Table whose fate it was to retrieve the Holy Grail."[241] Quentin's narration begins with a meditation on temporality:

> When the shadow of the sash appeared on the curtains it was between seven and eight o'clock and then I was in time again, hearing the watch. It was Grandfather's and when Father gave it to me he said I give you the mausoleum of all hope and desire; it's rather excruciatingly apt that you will use it to gain the *reducto absurdum* of all human experience which can fit your individual needs no better than it fitted his or his father's. I give it to you not that you may remember time, but that you might forget it now and then for a moment and not spend all your breath trying to conquer it. Because no battle is ever won he said. They are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools.[242]

As with the opening sentences of Benjy's narration, these lines construct a binary opposition; they meditate on the difference between living "in time" and "forget[ting] it." While Benjy divides reality into a longed-for past and a vacuous present, Quentin, remembering his father's ominous advice, divides reality by the presence and absence of temporality. We could say, thinking of Kathleen Davis's adumbration of the medieval/modern divide, that Quentin distinguishes between secularity—understood, as the Latin root intimates, with "everyday time," the temporality of his father's watch—and religious time—atemporality, the "moments" (ironically) when he "forget[s]" time.[243] Quentin's memory of his father's advice connects this atemporality with battlefields, fools, and *reductio ad absurdum* (playfully "reducing" the term to "*reducto absurdum*")—concepts that invoke, respectively, medieval European warfare, court jesters (an important theme throughout Faulkner's *oeuvre*, especially in *The Sound and the Fury*[244]) and Scholastic theology. Quentin continues:

"You can be oblivious to the sound [of a clock] for a long while, then in a second of ticking it can create in the mind unbroken the long diminishing parade of time you didn't hear. Like Father said down the long and lonely light-rays you might see Jesus walking, like. And the good Saint Francis that said Little Sister Death, that never had a sister."[245] As with Poe and Twain, Faulkner connects a medieval figure—Saint Francis, in this case—with death and non-chronological temporality, and his mention of "a sister" remembers Caddy, with whom, later in the chapter, Quentin will claim to have committed incest.[246] Echoing D. H. Lawrence's reading of Roderick Usher "breaking the polarity of himself," John T. Irwin, discussing Quentin's narcissism and repressed incestual desire, points out that "the internal narrative of [Quentin's] last day, clearly the narrative of someone who has gone insane, is dominated by Quentin's obsessive attempts to escape from his shadow, to 'trick his shadow,' as he says."[247]

While Pound and Eliot deploy the medieval as templates upon which their texts depend, Faulkner grapples with the effects of such a pedagogy—namely, the extent to which such pedagogical medievalisms peripheralize the present both spatially and temporally. Quentin—like Hank Morgan and Roderick Usher—is circumscribed within a world within which time does not flow smoothly and space becomes less a Cartesian coordinate plane than a mysterious network where his life in the South interweaves with his life in Cambridge, and Quentin's narration—like *Connecticut Yankee* and "The Fall of the House of Usher," as well as "Rip Van Winkle"—recounts Quentin's gradual separation from the primary world of the text, the narration becoming increasingly nonsensical and unmoored from the "primary

world" of the text. Like Hank Morgan's death, Rip Van Winkle's ostracization from his family and the fall of the House of Usher, the decline of the Compson family brings into stark relief the extent to which these lives and institutions rely upon a decidedly irrational fixation upon medieval Europe—a fixation that, when grappled with in a sustained fashion, bespeaks the repressed cultural anxieties latent within this tradition of Euro-American male authors.

If Quentin's narration exemplifies the medievalisms of the Northern bourgeoisie, connecting the medieval with antimodernism and "industrial ennui," the third section of *The Sound and the Fury*, set on Good Friday, 1928 and narrated by Quentin's younger brother, Jason, connects the medieval with the Southern aristocracy, sublimating the Southern white patriarchy and demeaning all else, especially African Americans, Jews and women (he begins his narration declaring of Miss Quentin, "Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say").[248] While Benjy's and Quentin's narrations are riddled through, respectively, with vivid descriptions and interior monologues, Jason's narration is almost completely told in dialogue, and the "otherworld" constructed by his narration is defined by a deep, residing resentment of Quentin, Caddie and Miss Quentin. This resentment, legible from the very first sentence of the narration, becomes displaced onto all manner of individuals and groups. Obsessed with wealth and women, Jason narrates in the voice of Realism; if Quentin, as Howard Bloom opines, mimics Stephen Daedulus, Jason mimics Huck Finn—but crueler, a resentful double of Twain's "American Adam."[249] Jason's anti-Semitism is perhaps the clearest example of how the otherworld of his imagination

has been populated by pedagogical medievalisms. “I give every man his due, regardless of religion or anything else,” Jason condescends, speaking to a man outside the shop where he clerks. “I have nothing against jews as an individual [….] It’s just the race. You’ll admit that they produce nothing. They follow the pioneers into a new country and sell them clothes.”[250] As Richard Utz in *Medievalism: A Manifesto* (2016) argues, “medievalists have an ethical obligation to investigate and historicize religion and theology,” and, in a sense, this is precisely what Faulkner is doing, embedding within *The Sound and the Fury* a Southern, racist, sexist and anti-Semitic ideology. As Jonathon Adams and Richard Frankel, among others, have recently outlined, modern anti-Semitism, with all of its connections to modern ethnonationalism, has clear “continuities” and “discontinuities” with the anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism of medieval European Christianity: American anti-Semitism “consist[s] of echoes of medieval Europe in the form of imagery and associations that would resonate in American society and culture, at least in part through religion, and for quite different purposes.”[251] In the case of Jason’s anti-Semitic rhetoric, these echoes of medieval Europe are also connected with the western frontier. After Jason describes Jews as those who “follow the pioneers into a new country to sell them clothes,” his interlocuter—presumably Jewish—declares himself “an American,” to which Jason says, “So am I […] Not many of us left. What I’m talking about is the fellows that sit up there in New York and trim the sucker gamblers.”[252] Jason’s overt resentment of Quentin and Caddy becomes entwined with Southern resentment writ large, which itself—at least since Twain—has been

recognized as entwined with the “Southern chivalric silliness” of Lost Cause nostalgia. That Jason adds to this overdetermined network of cultural associations the “pioneers” of the western frontier only illustrates once again the extent to which the frontier, as an “undeveloped” territory, is embedded within the American cultural imaginary as a spatiotemporal world akin to medieval Europe and non-Western cultures—that is, a world of “authenticity,” as Lears puts it, where people and things are as they appear (unlike, say, Miss Quentin, who Jason maligns for “gobbing paint on her face,” or Quentin, whose Harvard education taught him only “how to go for a swim at night”).[253]

The final section of *The Sound and the Fury*, set on Easter Sunday, is the only section not narrated by a first-person narrator. Focalized largely around Dilsey, the elder, matriarchal figure among the Compson’s African-American servants, this section sees Dilsey take Benjy to her black church for Easter Sunday services, and this religious setting constructs an ethos of fervor—or, to use Lears’s language, “sacred passion.”[254] Dilsey weeps openly throughout the church service and, thinking of the Compsons, imagines that she has “seed de first en de last;” “I seed de beginnin, en now I sees de endin,” she reiterates to a fellow parishioner; religious diction, African American community, the Jim Crow South, non-standard English, the demise of a Euro-American estate: while the medieval is not mentioned overtly, the characters grapple openly in this section with the effects of a society constructed upon an ideology that bifurcates the world into black/white, religious/secular,

medieval/modern, South/North, developed/undeveloped—a society that, like Roderick Usher, has “broken the polarity of itself.”[255]

The final paragraphs of *The Sound and the Fury*, which revolve around Dilsey, Luster and Jason calming Benjy’s bouts of hysteria, speaks to the heart of the matter: the arbitrariness endemic to any proposed social order. “The broken flower drooped over Ben’s fist,” the unnamed narrator says, describing the carriage passing a statue of a Confederate soldier outside the town’s white cemetery, “and his eyes were empty and blue and serene again as cornice and façade flowed smoothly once more from left to right, post and tree, window and doorway and signboard each in its ordered place.”[256] The “ordered place” ascribed to each thing is a matter not of place but of perspective. Luster had taken the carriage to the left of the statue, upsetting the normal route Benjy takes to the cemetery, and Benjy simply cannot withstand such disorder. He throws a fit and only when Jason arrives to turn the carriage around and take the accustomed route does Benjy become “serene again.” Dilsey, Luster and Jason—although especially Dilsey and Luster—work to keep Benjy calm and serene, and such serenity is dependent upon a constancy of perspective. The organic medievalisms that populate the otherworlds explored in *The Sound and the Fury* speak to the extent to which American cultural productions remain fixated upon a historiography that rends the modern from the un-Modern and, in turn, the extent to which American medievalisms might be symptomatic of not only American imperialism but also an American neurosis.

"America," as Gilles Deleuze famously diagnosed, "is a land of perversion," "a land without fathers;" the persistent American turn to the European medieval amounts, at least in part, to a search for those father figures—the quintessential task of Oedipus.[257] Deleuze begins his essay "On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature": "To leave, to escape, is to trace a line of flight," alluding to D. H. Lawrence's discussion of *Moby Dick*; "it is always one's father or mother (or worse) that one finds again on the voyage," Deleuze writes, still thinking of Lawrence's reading of *Moby Dick*.[258] American medievalisms exist as clear instances of such lines of flight; they are not merely symptomatic of loss but are productive figurations, creating from their desire for belonging hybridic, monstrous figures—transhistorical, multicultural and transoceanic. While Modernists like Pound and Eliot, searching for a gestalt with which to "make new" society, weave the medieval and Eastern cultures into their texts, treating those non-Western and un-Modern worlds as the totality Western modernity lacks, Faulkner—at least at moments—weaves the medieval into the very psyches of his characters—not so much using medievalisms as lines of flight as having his characters enact such lines of flight, and, in turn, *The Sound and the Fury*—as well as *Absalom, Absalom!*, whose medievalisms could just as well be explored—becomes a text concerned not with the historical Middle Ages so much as American medievalism itself, the American construction of an imagined medieval past.

That Faulkner, like Twain, was fascinated with *Don Quixote* (Faulkner claimed to reread the novel every year, arguing that Cervantes's attention to

character, rather than plot, was essential to the advent of the novel[259]) makes particular sense in this regard. Rather than following Sir Walter Scott's tradition of "chivalric silliness," Faulkner utilizes what James Parr has deemed Cervantes's "subversive discourse" that "distances [the author] from his chosen chronicler […] spatially and temporally."[260] The deployment of the medieval as a quarternary world that populates his characters' otherworlds illustrates one way that Faulkner, like Cervantes, constructs such a subversive discourse; this quarternary world is inherited but not as a static, fixed essence but, as Deleuze and Guattari say of the "rhizome," "from the middle, through the middle, coming and going rather than starting and finishing."[261] Pedagogical medievalisms lose sight of the creativity and arbitrariness inherent in such inheritance, framing the medieval as a static totality, something capable of being rotely taught or learned. Faulkner, like Twain, Poe and Cervantes, presents the medieval more often as an invention, and to see this tradition of "Anglo-American Literature" as founded upon such an invented past is perhaps, at least in part, what endears Deleuze to this tradition despite its clear inculcation within "the imperial barbarian formation" of modern Western colonialism.[262]

Notes

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[201] Kenner, *The Pound Era*, 195.
[202] John Ganim, *Medievalism and Orientalism* (New York: Palgrave, 2016), 3, 107.
[203] Ganim, *Medievalism and Orientalism*, 3.
[204] Kathleen Davis, "Time Behind the Veil: The Media, the Middle Ages, and Orientalism Now," in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 107.

[205] Syed Islam, *The Ethics of Travel: From Marco Polo to Kafka* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), 118.
[206] Sharon Kinoshita, "Deprovincializing the Middle Ages," in *The Worlding Project: Doing Cultural Studies in the Era of Globalization*, ed. Christopher Connery & Rob Wilson (Berkeley: North Atlantic, 2007), 65.
[207] Kim Phillips, *Before Orientalism: Asian Peoples and Cultures in European Travel Writing, 1245-1510* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 2.
[208] Jessie Laidlay Weston, *From Ritual to Romance* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1920/1997), 60.
[209] Ibid.
[210] T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts, Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound* (New York: Harvest Book, 1971), 135.
[211] T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 135.
[212] Ibid.
[213] T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 137.
[214] Jacques Lacan, *...Or Worse: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 6-8.
[215] Kim Ileen Moreland, *The Medievalist Impulse in American Literature: Twain, Adams, Fitzgerald and Hemingway* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 1996), 120.
[216] F. Scott Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise* (New York: Scribner, 1920), 26.
[217] Ibid., 120, 176, 175.
[218] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 3-23.
[219] Antonio Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, vol. II, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: University Press, 1994), 52.
[220] Amy Kaplan, "'Left Alone with America': The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture" in *Cultures of U.S. Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University, 1993), 4.
[221] Daniel Swift, *The Bughouse: the Poetry, Politics and Madness of Ezra Pound* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017), 139.
[222] Ezra Pound, *The Cantos* (New York: New Directions, 1996), 3.
[223] Hugh Kenner, "Blood for the Ghosts," in *New Approaches to Ezra Pound*, ed. Hesse, 332.
[224] Carroll Franklin Terrell, *A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound,* vol. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 568n166. Mark Bryon, *Ezra Pound's Eriugena* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 30.
[225] John M. Ganim, *Medievalism and Orientalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 87.
[226] *The Cantos*, LXXIV, 449.
[227] For a discussion of Christianization and syncretism, see Wim Blockmans & Peter Hoppenbrouwers, *Introduction to Medieval Europe, 300-1500* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 76-79.

[228] Ingrid Rembold, *Conquest and Christianization: Saxony and the Carolingian World, 772-888* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 3.
[229] Rembold, *Conquest and Christianization*, 5, 39.
[230] Rembold, *Conquest and Christianization*, 191.
[231] Rembold, *Conquest and Christianization*, 191.
[232] Rembold, *Conquest and Christianization*, 116.
[233] Ibid.
[234] Rembold, *Conquest and Christianization*, 2.
[235] William Faulkner, *Faulkner in the University* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1959/1995), 135.
[236] Susan Isaacs, "The Nature and Function of Phantasy," in *Developments in Psychoanalysis*, ed. Joan Riviere (London: Karnac, 1952/1989), 81. Aisling Byrne, *Otherworlds: Fantasy and History in Medieval Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 23.
[237] Byrne, *Otherworlds*, 18-19, 27.
[238] William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), 11.
[239] William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (New York: The Modern Library, 2012), 3.
[240] Lynn Gartrell Levins, *Faulkner's Heroic Design: The Yoknapatapwha Novels* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1976/2008), 116.
[241] Lawrence E. Bowling, "Faulkner and Innocence," *Kenyon Review* 20:3 (1958), 468-469.
[242] William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 82.
[243] For more, see Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007), 718-719.
[244] See, for instance, Joy Farmer Shaw, "The South in Motley: A Study of the Fool Tradition in Selected Works by Faulkner, McCullers, and O'Connor" PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1978.
[245] William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 73.
[246] The incest motif in *The Sound and the Fury* is explored further in: Constance Hill Hall, *Incest in Faulkner: A Metaphor for the Fall* (Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press, 1986), 43-48.
[247] John T. Irwin, *Doubling and Incest/Repetition and Revenge: A Speculative Reading of Faulkner* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 35.
[248] Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 173.
[249] R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 100.
[250] Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 184.
[251] Richard E. Frankel "The Deeper the Roots, the Deadlier the Antisemitism? Comparing Images of Jewish Financial Control in Modern Germany and the United States" in *The Medieval Roots of Antisemitism: Continuities and Discontinuities from the Middle Ages to the Present Day*, ed. Jonathon Adams, et al. (New York: Routledge, 2018).

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[252] William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 220.
[253] Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 138.
[254] Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 136, 138.
[255] Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 297, 301.
[256] William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 309.
[257] Gregg Lambert, *Who's Afraid of Deleuze and Guattari* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 97.
[258] Gilles Deleuze, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 36-39.
[259] Lynn Gartrell Levins, "Faulkner's Use of the Chivalric Romance" in *Faulkner's Heroic Design: The Yoknapatawpha Novels* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1976), 115.
[260] James Parr, *Don Quixote: An Anatomy of Subversive Discourse* (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 1988), 79.
[261] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (New York: Continuum, 1987), 27-28.
[262] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 211.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Spectacle of the Medieval:

Postmodern Medievalisms & Ursula K. Le Guin's Hainish Cycle

In the second half of the twentieth-century and into the early twenty-first century, American medievalisms have become increasingly imbricated within a multimedia landscape for which, as Guy Debord says in *Society of the Spectacle* (1967), "images detach […] from every aspect of life [and] merge into a common stream in which the unity of that life can no longer be recovered."[263] Late-twentieth-century American medievalisms exist as clear instances of these spectacles in that they, as T. J. Jackson Lears argues with regard to *fin-de-siècle* medievalisms, exist as figurations that bespeak an authentic, bygone "reality."[264] Walt Disney films like *Snow White*, *Cinderella* and *The Sword in the Stone*; television series like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Game of Thrones* and *Mists of Avalon*, as well as massively multiplayer role-playing games like *World of Warcraft* and *The Elder Scrolls*, rely consistently upon such figurations to constitute their fantastical worlds, which are, in turn, leveraged within a capitalist system for which "fragmented views of reality regroup themselves into a new unity as a separate pseudo-world that can only be looked at."[265]

When read through contemporary scholarship on medieval spectacle, especially research on the Lancastrian ascendancy of the early fifteenth century, these

late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century spectacular medievalisms can be seen to deploy a hermeneutic that imagines the un-Modern as utterly divorced from modernity. Films like *Braveheart* or television series like *Game of Thrones*, as well as the discourses of American politicians like Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush and Donald Trump, associate the medieval with war, opulence and the fantastic, sublimating the medieval as the proper site for the spectacular and modernity as the proper site for the non-spectacular, the mundane; other cultural productions, meanwhile, such as Ursula K. Le Guin's Hainish novels, consider this encounter between the spectator and the medievalized spectacle itself, exploring the way that spectacular commodities function within the modern world-system—eventually presenting the act of reading as a means of subverting an ideology that distances the spectacular from lived experience, the wealthy elite from the masses, and the medieval from the modern.

Spectacular Medievalisms

Like so many cultural productions of the post-World-War-II United States, contemporary medievalisms are presented largely as spectacles of splendor and violence. The popularity in the United States of films like *Braveheart* (1995) and *Excalibur* (1981), as well as of book series—often written by British authors—like J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Ring* (1954), George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Fire and Ice* (1991-), J. K. Rowlings's *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007), C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956), and Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* (1995-2000)—not to mention the various cinematic adaptations of those series—speaks to

the remarkable profitability of representations of the medieval in the modern marketplace; the worlds created by these and other cultural productions function as settings for seemingly endless adaptations, retellings and reimaginings, making the construction of such worlds an engine of not only ideologies but also material profits.

These medievalisms exist as clear instances of spectacles, as Guy Debord defines the term in *Society of the Spectacle*: "Understood in its totality, the spectacle is both the result and the goal of the dominant mode of productions. It is not a mere decoration added to the real world. It is the very heart of this real society's unreality. In all of its particular manifestations—news, propaganda, advertising, entertainment—the spectacle represents the dominant model of life."[266] The medieval exists in late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century America as "this real society's unreality," alienating citizens from history itself by simultaneously making of history a pseudo-world of dragons, castles, magic and enchantment and selling that pseudo-world back to those citizens as "spectacular commodities."[267]

Recent scholarship on medieval spectacle can deepen our understanding of the function of these spectacular medievalisms, especially demonstrating how these spectacles function to unify (at least momentarily) a disparate, diverse society. In "Configurations of the Community in Late Medieval Spectacles: Paris and London during the Dual Monarchy," published in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (1994), Lawrence M. Bryant argues that royal spectacles, such as processions, religious and guild dramas and popular festive practices, during the Lancastrian ascendancy of the early fifteenth century utilized a "political inventiveness" that

"opened new spaces for political expression and thought at a time when the customary political vocabulary was in disarray and incapable of addressing the malaise and near anarchy of existential conditions."[268] These spectacles gave the appearance of unity during a period of upheaval, when King Henry VI reigned as both King of England and the disputed King of France during the latter half of the Hundred Years' War. "Rather than one grand spectacle of a mystical union," Bryant writes, "these urban/royal encounters consisted of a series of minispectacles, each of which was produced by miscellaneous groups from town prostitutes to the highest officials. The king alone, like the thread in a necklace of many stones, connected spectacles that had foundations in different traditions and social groups."[269] These spectacles allowed King Henry VI to bolster his reign over England and France by inscribing himself within various ceremonies, pageants and festivals, French and English alike, and this Lancastrian political inventiveness, as Bryant argues, thinking of Claude Lévi-Strauss, functioned as a kind of bricolage, "a 'game' that begins with the presumption of equality among participants."[270]

Bryant's conception of Lancastrian spectacle coheres well with Debord's notion of modern spectacle: both forms of spectacle are a means of unifying a diverse, fragmented society, and it is fitting, then, that HBO's *Game of Thrones* (2011-), an almost paradigmatic instance of Debordian spectacle, adapts the War of the Roses (1455-1487), a war between the House of Lancaster and the House of York—reimagined, respectively, as the House of Lannister and the House of Stark.[271] *Game of Thrones*, based on George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, recalls the

Lancastrian political inventiveness of the fifteenth century—even presenting battles among royalty for power as a "game"—and so imbricates such Lancastrian spectacles within the modern society of the spectacle, integrating computer-generated spectacles of splendor and violence, as well as a good deal of nudity and sex, into its hour-long episodes.[272]

Game of Thrones' spectacles of wealth and opulence, focalized around the Lannisters, and its spectacles of violence, focalized around the Starks, join the twin strands of Romantic and Enlightenment renderings of the Middle Ages, respectively. The opulence and pageantry of the Lannisters romanticize this pseudo-medieval world, while the cruelty enacted upon the Starks presents that world as a "dark age" of brutality and death, and Bryant's notion that "minispectacles" afford a means of tying together loosely connected political territorialities, therefore, becomes a useful means of understanding Martin's protean, overdetermined representation of the Middle Ages; like Pound's scholar-knight, Cooper's frontiersman-knight, and Wister's cowboy-knight, *Game of Thrones*' reimagining of the War of the Roses sublimates a single, overdetermined figure—namely, the pseudo-medieval world itself, which, like Debord's "pseudo-world" of the spectacle, can only be gazed at, not lived.

Such spectacular medievalisms, moreover, are often leveraged within a regressive, patriarchal and racially-fraught political ideology that, like nineteenth-century American Anglo-Saxonism, presents the medieval Christian man as the prototypical American citizen. As Tom Henthorne writes in "Boys to Men:

Medievalism and Masculinity in *Star Wars* and *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*" (2004), "it is no coincidence that the popularity of such films [*Star Wars* and *E. T.*] peaked during Ronald Reagan's first term as president; neomedievalism and neoconservatism were both reactions to the supposed excesses of the late sixties and early seventies, particularly those associated with the feminist and other liberation movements."[273] Henthorne sees *Star Wars* and *E. T.* as "neomedieval romance[s]" that "affirm the conservative call for a return to older, simpler times and traditional values," and it is not difficult to trace this medievalism in the discourse of contemporary American politicians such as Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush and Donald Trump: "The United States is proud of your democracy," Ronald Reagan said in a speech to the German Bundestag in 1982, "but we cannot take credit for it. Heinrich Heine, in speaking of those who built the awe-inspiring cathedrals of medieval times, said that, 'In those days people had convictions. We moderns have only opinions.'"[274] The Middle Ages exist for Reagan as a time of wonder and beauty, of awe and conviction, whereas modernity is a time of "opinion"—the implication being that we ought to return to that earlier, idealized epoch, a sentiment reiterated by George W. Bush within a week of the September 11 attacks: "This crusade, this war on terrorism is going to take a while," Bush famously declared, framing the Afghanistan War, as well as the eventual 2003 Invasion of Iraq, as a medieval Christian Crusade against Muslims.[275] Donald Trump, meanwhile, in the second debate of the 2016 presidential election, responded to a question about his alleged sexual assault by pivoting to a denunciation of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS): "when we have a world where you

have ISIS chopping off heads, where you have—and, frankly, drowning people in steel cages, where you have wars and horrible, horrible sights all over, where you have so many bad things happening, this is like medieval times. We haven't seen anything like this, the carnage all over the world."[276] The Middle Ages exist for these American politicians as an epoch associated with war, conviction, violence, the Crusades and carnage—with beheadings, "awe-inspiring cathedrals" and the Fall of the Twin Towers: spectacles of violence and/or splendor. Even more recently, meanwhile, in promoting a proposed border wall along the Mexico-U.S. border, President Trump has spoken of the wall as "medieval," an almost paradigmatic instance of how medievalisms can be leveraged in support of a thinly-veiled contemporary ethnonationalism with particular poignancy in the Mexican-U.S. borderlands.[277] After all, if, following Debord and Bryant, we see such medievalized spectacles as a means of unifying a disparate society, we can see the ways in which these neoconservative medievalisms deploy the medieval as a means of codifying support among a specific citizenry—namely, white Christians. Like Cooper's Anglo-American, neoconservative medievalisms delimit the possibilities of U.S. national identity, integrating the rhetoric of American Anglo-Saxonism with that of Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations," and so recapitulating the longstanding use of Christian-Islamic relations in the figuration of New World social relations.[278]

These neoconservative medievalisms also have clear connections to what Umberto Eco has deemed the "new feudalism" of the late twentieth century:

> [T]here is no special reason for amazement at an avalanche of pseudo-medieval pulp in paperbacks, midway between Nazi nostalgia and occultism. A country

> able to produce Dianetics can do a lot in terms of wash-and-wear sorcery and Holy Grail frappe. It would be small wonder if the next porn hit stars Marilyn Chambers as La Princesse Lointaine (if Americans have succeeded in transforming Rostand's *Chanteclair* into the *Fantastiks*, why not imagine the Princess of Tripoli offering the keys of her chastity belt to a bearded Burt Reynolds?). Not to mention such postmodern neomedieval Manhattan new castles as the Citicorp Center and Trump Tower, curious instances of a new feudalism, with their courts open to peasants and merchants and the well-protected high-level apartments reserved for the lords.[279]

The new feudalism, epitomized for Eco by "postmodern neomedieval Manhattan new castles" such as Trump Tower, utilizes "pseudo-medieval pulp" as spectacles to subtly, almost imperceptibly, separate labor from leisure and the elite from the masses—as well as modernity from the un-Modern. Spectacular medievalisms populate contemporary cultural productions—films, television shows, pulp fiction, video games—that in turn consume the leisure time of an increasingly socioeconomically-unequal citizenry.[280] These medievalisms are not antimodern, in this sense, so much as ultramodern, means of simultaneously impoverishing citizens—and so staying overaccumulation by deploying leisure time as yet another iteration of the spatiotemporal fix—and isolating those citizens from ideology itself—as if culture, ideology and the arts were by definition un-Modern, available to the modern individual only via spectacle, not participation, and such alienation functions to support a neoconservative ideology that endorses the unchecked burgeoning of corporate capitalism, understood, via a Marxist hermeneutic, as the direct descendant of the modern colonial system.

Postmodern Medievalisms

Neoconservative medievalisms, with their celebration of "awe-inspiring" medieval cathedrals and their demonization of Muslims, themselves exist as instances—leveraged in support of a contemporary ethnonationalism—of a postmodern medievalism that sublimates the dialectic between the Enlightenment's disparagement and Romanticism's celebration of the Middle Ages. As Bruce Holsinger has demonstrated in *The Premodern Condition: Medievalism and the Making of Theory* (2005), postmodern philosophers, such as Goerges Bataille, turn to the Middle Ages for figures and narratives that bespeak the "crisis of representation" famously diagnosed by Jean-Francois Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition* (1979).[281] These postmodern medievalisms neither romanticize nor demonize the Middle Ages but present the period(s) as a historical referent for postmodernity's critique of grand narratives and epistemological objectivity.

Postmodern philosophers, however, have, in their critiques of grand narratives, continued to rely on the medieval/modern divide, itself a grand narrative, and such an aporia can serve to sublimate, however subtly, uneven social relations, including anti-Semitism. "[Frederic] Jameson's famous dictum—'always historicize'—," writes Kathleen Biddick in *The Typological Imaginary: Circumcision, Technology, History* (2003), thinking about the extent to which twentieth-century philosophers "have regarded typological (also known as figural) thinking as one of the great achievements of late antique and medieval scriptural exegesis," "is based on and draws its power from a figural move. Medieval figural thinking becomes with Jameson the figure of promise that his historicism fulfills. Yet,

the richness of figural thinking so advocated by Auerbach, de Lubac, White, and Jameson constitutes for other scholars its unsettling historical problem"—namely, that of Christian supersessionism, with all of its inherent anti-Semitism.[282] Even postcolonial medievalism, when it presents the medieval as a "spatiotemporal baseline" of modernity risks developing a pedagogical medievalism that sees the medieval as fundamental to modernity, and the antidote to such a tendency, as both Biddick and Holsinger demonstrate, is to think comparatively between modernity (or postmodernity) and the medieval, taking the Middle Ages not as a spatiotemporal baseline or figural trope of modernity so much as an interlocutor with modernity, neither identical nor radically distinct.

As Diana Fuss notes in *Essentially Speaking* (1989), even theorists who espouse "anti-essentialist" theories tend to sublimate essentialist thinking by considering essentialism itself as having an essential nature.[283] Something similar might be said of postcolonial medievalism: even in our attention to the modern cultural construction of the Middle Ages, we can easily present the Middle Ages as singular, coherent and monolithic. In her Hainish novels, Ursula K. Le Guin, for one, manages to avoid such essentialism by interweaving medievalized ideologies and figures like feudalism, castles, quests and kingdoms with (purportedly) modern ideologies and figures like feminism and technological innovations like spacecrafts and computers. Her science fiction, in turn, plays imaginatively with historiography itself, interweaving un-Modern figures, premodern and postmodern alike, into a single world—or, rather, a single universe, and such bricolage manages to unite the

modern and the un-Modern in a way that does not define either by monoliths; indeed, the modern and the un-Modern, in Le Guin's Hainish novels, are inseparable, untraceable—and such a cohesive vision of history serves to subvert colonialist and patriarchal contestations, including neoconservative ethnonationalism, that rely upon the "deification of newness" endemic to the modern world-system.[284]

Ursula K. Le Guin's Mundane Medievalisms

The French resistance to Lancastrian rule, Bryant suggests in his discussion of Lancastrian spectacle, is associated especially with women like Joan of Arc and Christine de Pizan. Indeed, Joan of Arc's rise, according to Bryant, was itself one of the impetuses for the spectacles of Lancastrian power: "Because the unexpected coronation and the role of the maiden warrior, Joan of Arc, threatened to undermine the dual monarchy, plans were made for Henry VI to travel to France in order to restore the aura of majesty and legitimacy to his French crown."[285] That a "maiden warrior" would lead the resistance to a political system founded, at least in part, upon spectacles that tie together disparate communities and cultures seems particularly apropos with respect to spectacular medievalisms, especially if we see, as Henthrone does, that those medievalisms are a response to nineteen-sixties feminism. As Bryant discusses, the French resistance to Lancastrian rule was aided by a notion that "the problems of bad times were placed at the Lancastrian door and contrasted with the imaginary virtues of former kings as put forth by such capable publicists as Christine de Pisan."[286] While Bryant does not discuss the implications of this notion that Lancastrian rule was buffeted by women authors and soldiers like Christine de Pizan

and Joan of Arc, recent scholarship on Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies* (c. 1405) becomes particularly poignant in exploring means of resisting a "fundamentally spectaclist" society.[287]

Pizan's text, which tells of how the narrator, reading a work by Matheolus Perusinus, begins to "wonder why on earth it was that so many men, both clerks and others, have said and continue to say and write such awful, damning things about women and their ways," as the title—*The Book of the City of Ladies*—intimates, constructs a complex allegory, in which the book itself exists as the revelation of a city of ladies, housing the lives of famous women throughout history.[288] The text itself, as Jane Chance argues, acts as the material manifestation of this city:

> The discursive strategy de Pizan employs to defend her narrator is the allegory of the city of women, a fantasy citadel that combines the visual image of a moated, gated castle with the retrieval of women's history (actually, legend and hagiography)—which produces for her the inhabitants of the city—and the text of the *Book of the City of Ladies*. De Pizan's genre of fantasy (visionary allegory) allows her to create her own space, not that of the male scholar alone in his study.[289]

Fantasy literature interacts with feminism both metonymically and metaphorically, according to Chance; on the one hand, fantasy literature constructs worlds that "anticipate alternative cultural and political possibilities" and, on the other hand, relates directly to the history of the patriarchy, offering overt feminist critiques in the process.[290] De Pizan's text is itself the manifestation of the fantasy depicted in it; the text creates a space where women are recognized and esteemed; this visionary allegory does not so much relate the patriarchal world of late medieval France to an imaginary sphere where women are lauded as it relates that fantasy world where

women are lauded to the text itself.[291] De Pizan, as Chance puts it, "inverts" allegorical interpretation, thinking of the textuality of the book as a world unto itself, and such an inversion is "subversive" not only with respect to its feminist reinterpretation of society but also with respect to its "fantasization," its willingness to disregard the primacy of one particular historiographical interpretation.[292]

Chance's own text, titled *The Literary Subversions of Medieval Women* (2007), emphasizes the extent to which the advent of the printing press allowed women such as de Pizan, Marie de France and Margery Kempe to enunciate subversive, feminist enframings of the world, and such a subversive tradition links well with the tradition of subversive medievalisms in American literature. This tradition, linking Poe, Twain and Faulkner, is taken up in the postwar United States by Le Guin, who, like de Pizan, constructs in her fantasy and science fiction "extrapolations," as Le Guin calls them, alternative histories or visionary fantasies that reveal particular aspects of the present; or, as Le Guin herself puts it in her introduction to *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), these works grapple fundamentally with "the imagination":

> All fiction is metaphor. Science fiction is metaphor. What sets it apart from older forms of fiction seems to be its use of new metaphors, drawn from certain great dominants of our contemporary life—science, all the sciences, and technology, and the relativistic and the historical outlook, among them. Space travel is one of these metaphors; so is an alternative society, an alternative biology; the future is another. The future, in fiction, is a metaphor. A metaphor for what? If I could have said it non-metaphorically, I would not have written all these words, this novel; and Genly Ai would never have sat down at my desk and used up my ink and typewriter ribbon in informing me, and you, rather solemnly, that the truth is a matter of the imagination.[293]

For Le Guin, fictional representations of the future are metaphors just as, we might extrapolate, fictional representations of the past are metaphors; "for what?," she wonders, and her answer is the "here-and-now," the same phrase, coincidently, used to translate Benjamin's neologism "*Jetztzeit*" in "Theses on the Philosophy of History."[294] Le Guin continues:

> This book is not about the future. Yes, it begins by announcing that it's set in the "Ekumenical Year 1490-97," but surely you don't *believe* that? Yes, indeed the people in it are androgynous, but that doesn't mean that I'm predicting that in a millennium or so we will all be androgynous, or announcing that I think we damned well ought to be androgynous. I'm merely observing, in the peculiar, devious, and thought-experimental manner proper to science fiction, that if you look at us at certain odd times of day in certain weathers, we already are. I am not predicting, or prescribing. I am describing.[295]

The past and the future converge in Le Guin's fiction; the universe created in the Hainish novels is an extrapolation of Le Guin's here-and-now, just as de Pizan's *City of Ladies*, according to Jane Chance, is an extrapolation of de Pizan's own here-and-now—not so much anticipatory as revelatory.

Le Guin's medievalisms, with this in mind, frame the medieval not as modernity's historical antecedent or as a possible future reality, either utopic or dystopic, but as a heterotopia, to use Michel Foucault's terminology, a "simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live."[296] As Bruce Holsinger has suggested in *The Premodern Condition* (2005), Romanticism's utopic vision of the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment's dystopic vision of that epoch give way, with postmodernity, to a heterotopic vision of the medieval, in which the medieval exists as an inchoate, disunified spacetime, a proper corollary to Lyotard's "postmodern condition."[297] Foucault's own discussion of heterotopias, in

fact, is fraught with medievalisms: "One could say, by way of retracing this history of space very roughly, that in the Middle Ages there was a hierarchic ensemble of places: sacred and profane places: protected places and open," and he uses this notion of "medieval space"—"the space of emplacement"—as a model for his concept of heterotopias, "counter-sites" that "enact" utopias, themselves understood as "sites with no real place."[298] Foucault argues that, in the latter half of the twentieth century, "heterotopias of crisis are disappearing" in favor of "heterotopias of deviation;" heterotopias of which everyone, presumably, would partake—his example is the "honeymoon trip"—have given away to "those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed."[299]

If we understand the medieval as one of modernity's repressed spatiotemporal modalities, then the use of medievalisms to populate literary and cinematic heterotopias constructs heterotopias of deviation, in which the deviant—in this case, the un-Modern—is emplaced. At the same time, however, if we understand this engagement with the medieval as an engagement with the trauma that rends the modern from its deep past, this heterotopia of deviation is, in fact, a heterotopia of crisis, one that grapples with that central historiographical trauma of modernity. In turn, Foucault's various examples of "heterotopias of deviation"—"rest homes and psychiatric hospitals"—can be seen as themselves heterotopias of crisis, grappling with crises such as death and madness. Seeing medievalisms as announcements of heterotopias, in other words, complicates Foucault's "systematic description" of heterotopias, revealing in particular the way heterotopias of crisis and heterotopias of

deviation are, at least in part, coeval: “The last trait of heterotopias,” Foucault writes, “is that they have a function in relation to all the space that remains. This function unfolds between two extreme poles. Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory (perhaps that is the role that was played by those famous brothels of which we are now deprived). Or else, on the contrary, their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled.”[300] Foucault’s own medievalisms, we might say, reveal the extent to which his own systematic diagnosis of heterotopias is itself “jumbled.”

In any case, Foucault’s concept of heterotopias shifts our focus from any presumed referent of medievalisms to the matieriality of the texts that produce and reproduce those medievalisms, and such a shift is precisely how Le Guin incorporates medievalisms into her imagined worlds. Le Guin’s mundane medievalisms make of the medieval not an antecedent to modernity but a central, albeit often overlooked, spatiotemporal modality to some of her worlds, themselves extrapolations of Le Guin’s here-and-now. The universe described in “The Dowry of Angyar,” the short story that precipitated Le Guin’s Hainish novels, is depicted in clearly un-Modern terms: “She [Semley, the protagonist of the story] was of an ancient family, a descendant of the first kings of the Angyar, and for all her poverty her hair shone with the pure, steadfast gold of her inheritance. The little people, the Fiia, bowed when she passed them, even when she was a barefoot child running in the fields, the light and

fiery comet of her hair brightening the troubled winds of Kirien."[301] Like many science fiction and fantasy universes, the one depicted in the Hainish novels includes both futuristic technologies—the term "ansible," Le Guin's early imagining of an internet-like communication system, is coined in *Rocannon's World* (1966)—and medievalisms: princes, kings, castles, dwarves, swords and bronzed armor. Un-Modern figurations—futuristic and medieval alike—blend, placing aircars, computers, spaceships and gender-fluid societies alongside kingdoms, castles and knights in gleaming armor. Indeed, "The Dowry of Angyar," often noted for its similarities to "Rip Van Winkle," reveals the extent to which Irving's short story stands as an early example of this motif that unites the distant future and distant past: Semley encounters a strange, dwarf-like people, who help her to travel through space and time to recover her lost necklace, but, when she returns, what seemed to her "one long night" was in fact nine years; her husband has died, and her daughter is now a grown woman, just as Rip Van Winkle returns from the Catskills to find his wife dead and his son an adult (and King George's portrait replaced with George Washington's).[302] In *Rocannon's World*, the first of the Hainish novels and an expansion of "The Dowry of Angyar," Rocannon's exploration of that world—to which he is a foreigner—reveals the ruins of castles; deeply prejudiced, stratified societies; and knight-like warriors, while Genly Ai's exploration of Winter, in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, reveals a similarly stratified, medievalized world of villages "like […] ancient castle[s] of Earth," complete with kings and armored warriors. Perhaps the clearest example of Le Guin's medievalism, though, occurs in *The*

Dispossessed (1974), which imagines the journey of Shevek, a scientist from the planet Anarres, to the world of Urras. Anarres, a moon of Urras, had recently been colonized by the Odonians, a radical, egalitarian sect of anarcho-syndacalists that seek to develop a truly equitable society upon the desolate world of Anarres. Shevek travels to Urras, a world closely resembling Le Guin's own postwar world, complete with a Cold War between a highly stratified, capitalist country and a totalitarian, socialist country. During Shevek's travels throughout Urras, he takes particular pleasure in travelling to various castles "from the times of the kings," a deep history that his own world of Anarres lacks. Shevek is captivated by these medieval spectacles, finding them much more alluring than the spectacles of consumerism that predominate in modern A-Io, the capitalist country where he dwells and that closely resembles the postwar United States.

As Faulkner embeds his organic medievalisms within the very psyches of his characters, Le Guin embeds her medievalisms within her extrapolated worlds as spectacles to her characters, not spectacles to her readers. *Rocannon's World*, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, and *The Dispossessed* all revolve around an alien figure—Rocannon, Genly Ai, and Shevek, respectively—exploring a strange world with a deep history that resembles, at least in part, medieval Europe's feudal system. That deep history is legible to those characters as spectacles—Semley's necklace; ruined castles; armored, chivalrous men—and these medievalisms enchant her protagonists, exploring the ways in which medievalisms become spectacles rather than presenting those spectacles for the consumption of her readership. Like de Pizan's *City of*

Ladies, which inverts the male/female binary, Le Guin's Hainish novels invert the medieval/modern divide, making the medieval a mundane presence in her postwar world, not its alienated other.

Le Guin's Techno-Medieval Feminism: In Defense of Books

Understood as visionary allegories, moreover, Le Guin's Hainish novels point to a bricolage that connects medievalisms, technological innovations and feminism. While the late nineteenth century saw the publication of works like *The Boy's King Arthur*, designed for the edification of boys, postwar medievalisms, especially in the United States, often focalize around women; whether it is Le Guin's "The Dowry of Angyar" or Marion Zimmer Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon* (1983), which places Morgan le Fay and other female characters at the center of the Arthurian myths, these feminist medievalisms often situate women at the center of their narratives, albeit in contexts that reify conventional gender norms. The concatenation of gender play and medievalism is evident, for instance, in *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), which is set on a medievalized planet where gender identity is fluid. As the fourth novel published in Le Guin's Hainish Series, *The Left Hand of Darkness* explores Le Guin's alternative history, in which human civilization evolved on a planet named Hain, eventually settling a variety of nearby planets, including Terra (Earth). Genly Ai, the protagonist of the novel, finds himself an envoy to a world the inhabitants of which are androgynous, living as nonsexual beings for three out of every four weeks, before going into "kemmer," a period of sexual drive during which the individual might take on male or female characteristics during copulation.

This gender play is set within a world that is unaware of other planets. Genly Ai is the first envoy to Winter, which he hopes to usher into the League of All Worlds, and it is the existence of his spaceship, circling Winter's sun, that eventually serves to convince Winter's inhabitants of the veracity of his claims. Gender, technology, world-transformative moments and medievalisms cohere, illustrating once again the way the medieval/modern divide is inscribed within the modern world-system's ideology that bifurcates nature/technology, North/South, male/female, developed/undeveloped. In *The Dispossessed*, meanwhile, Shevek's exploration of Urras instills in him a sense that Anarres still has a long way to go to achieve its goal of an anarcho-syndicalist utopia. Anarres exists as an "ambiguous utopia," as the book's subtitle contends, that should no longer remain detached from the other worlds of the League of All Worlds but engage with them. In this sense, *The Dispossessed*'s connections to Le Guin's notion of the ansible is of note. First coined in *Rocannon's World*, the ansible provides instant communication among worlds, and it is this device, in *The Dispossessed*, that allows for communication among the worlds of The League of All Worlds—communication that, at the close of the novel, affords Shevek safe passage back to Anarres. This world of radical equality, founded by a woman, not without its imperfections, and especially connected with the world of Urras, itself a clear extrapolations of Le Guin's late-twentieth-century world, is organized around not a monarch but a woman's writings, the precepts of Odo. These precepts guide the community, and we might say that the subversive tradition in American literature—at least in terms to its medievalisms—can be associated in this sense not only with

Cervantes but also with that subversive tradition of medieval women writers esteemed by Jane Chance. De Pizan, among others, subverts her patriarchal world by inverting it, just as writers like Poe, Twain, Faulkner and Le Guin overturn the modern/medieval divide by illustrating the extent to which the purportedly modern nation-state of the United States often more closely resembles a feudal society than an egalitarian one.

Central, though, to such an understanding of Le Guin is a recognition of the primacy she places on the textuality of books, the way, as with Chance's de Pizan, a book exists as a world unto itself, a heterotopia that is simultaneously real and mythic. In one of Le Guin's lesser-read Hainish novels, *City of Illusions* (1967), published two years prior to *The Left Hand of Darkness*, a totalitarian civilization, the Shing, has invaded Terra, reducing Terra's indigenous population to a handful of nomadic tribes and rural communes. As with other Hainish novels, the plot revolves around an alien—named Falk, in this case—exploring an unknown planet—in this case Terra/Earth—and that exploration reveals the deep history of the planet. In particular, Terra's deep history involves its take-over by the Shing, and Falk's expedition across the dystopic landscapes of North America leads eventually to his escape from the planet, which, in turn, leads to the planet's liberation. The plot is remarkably similar to those of *Rocannon's World* and *The Left Hand of Darkness*—both of which revolve around an alien liberating a given world from some form of totalitarian control, but, in the case of *City of Illusions*, the main struggle is not a physical voyage but Falk's overcoming of the erasure of his memory by the Shing.

The Shing hope to indoctrinate Falk with a historiography that frames their reign on Terra as benevolent, as if the Shing were kind overseers of a utopic paradise—a historiography that, the Shing hope, Falk will communicate to his own home world of Werel in order to bolster the Shing's claim to Terra.

If we see this work as an "extrapolation" of Le Guin's own here-and-now, Le Guin's argument is relatively clear: earth's liberation from totalitarianism revolves around the ability to resist believing in and perpetuating totalitarian historiographies, and such resistance is aided by texts. Throughout his travels, including his capture by the Shing, Falk keeps a book with him—the *Tao Te Ching*—that reminds him that the Shing are, indeed, a totalitarian regime. A translator and long-time reader of the *Tao*, Le Guin embeds this fourth-century B.C. Chinese text into *City of Illusions*, taking particular care to emphasize the way that this text discourages dualistic thinking: "*The way…*[Falk] looked from the book to his own hand that held it. Whose hand, darkened and scarred beneath an alien sun? Whose hand? *The way that can be gone is not the eternal Way. The name…*He could not remember the name; he would not read it. In a dream he had read those words, in a long sleep, a death, a dream. *The name that can be named is not the eternal Name*. And with that the dream rose up overwhelming him like a wave rising, and broke. He was Falk, and he was Ramarren. He was the fool and the wise man: one man twice born."[303] There is certainly some hints of Pound's pedagogical medievalism here—deploying an un-Modern Asian text as a bearer of truth—but, with Jane Chance's reading of de Pizan in mind, we can also see the way that the presence of the *Tao Te Ching* in *City of Illusions*

foregrounds the materiality of texts. It is the reading of an actual book that goads Falk to remember his forgotten identity, which, in turn, allows him to unite the seemingly opposed personalities—Falk and Ramarren—constructed from the erasure of that memory.

The ability to evade or overcome indoctrination, according to *City of Illusions*, involves reading; just as de Pizan's narrator comes to her vision of a City of Ladies through reading Matheolus or, in *The Fall of the House of Usher*, the narrator's reading of *The Mad Trist* coheres with the collapse of the House of Usher, Falk recalls that the Shing are in fact a totalitarian empire by means of reading the *Tao Te Ching*. These texts act as heterotopias, both real and mythic, and only an ideology unbeholden to particular nation-states or political systems can grapple coherently with such ambivalence: "In Europe, one can perceive through the Middle Ages," Le Guin wrote in an essay on the "alleged decline of reading" for *Harper's Magazine* in 2008, "a slow broadening of the light of the written word, which brightens into the Renaissance and shines out with Gutenberg. Then, before you know it, slaves are reading, and revolutions are written on paper called Declarations of this and that, and schoolmarms replace gunslingers all across the Wild West, and people are mobbing the steamer delivering the latest installment of a new novel."[304] Le Guin sees the book as especially powerful in a capitalist world-system because "contemporary, corporation-owned publishing compan[ies] […] think they can sell books as commodities," when, she argues, "reading is active, an act of attention, of absorbed alertness [….] a book is a challenge: it can't lull you with surging music or deafen

you with screeching laugh tracks or fire gunshots in your living room."[305] Books are "complex and extremely efficient," "reliable," "a thing, physically there, durable, indefinitely resusable," and they are, therefore, according to Le Guin, something of a problem child for corporate capitalism, which, she argues, only promotes book publishing with the hope that corporations might "control what's printed."[306]

Thinking of the medieval/modern divide and Debord's society of the spectacle, we might say that books, so central to medieval Mediterranean theology, politics, history and philosophy, are remarkably resilient in their promotion of subversive discourses, for they require the attention—"absorbed alertness"—that such discourses both engender and demand—rather than the extravagance and violence endemic to the society of the spectacle. These cultural artifacts, simultaneously modern and un-Modern, blur the line between leisure and labor, imagination and literality, fiction and reality, and such blurring demands a complex historiography that does not insist upon one particular spatiality or temporality but revels in anachronism and displacement.[307]

Le Guin's titular "City of Illusions," Es Toch, is defined by its fixation upon a single historiography—namely, one that upholds Shing hegemony—while de Pizan's City of Ladies is imagined in response to the narrator's abhorrence of Matheolus's *Lamentations*, necessarily cognizant of the possibility of multiple historiographies. A complex historiography that sees the medieval as a repressed spatiotemporal modality of modernity constructs a world more akin to the City of Ladies, one that does not insist upon a single historiography or periodizing schema but revels in the

possibilities open to us when we treat historiography as a visionary, creative task. As theorists from Jean Baudrillard to Donna Haraway have argued, the genres of science fiction and fantasy can be thought of as intimately tied to feminism itself. Jenna Wolmark, summarizing these theoretical connections in *Aliens and Others: Science Fiction, Feminism and Postmodernism* (1994), says that "[t]he task of science fiction, which is also the task of theory, is to re-invent the real as fiction," and she goes on to discuss how, because "[t]he privileged realms of authenticity and high art are reserved for the masculine," feminism intersects with this "reinventing [of] the real as fiction."[308] Le Guin's novels, especially those set in the Hainish universe, bring together these vectors of late-twentieth-century thought: postmodernism, medievalism, feminism, fantasy, the Space Age and the digital revolution—suggesting that science fiction and fantasy are also intimately tied to exploring the medieval/modern divide.

While cultural productions like HBO's *Game of Thrones* and discourses like that of American conservative politicians present the medieval as spectacles for the modern—Christian, white, male—consumer, Le Guin's Hainish novels invert such a contestation be presenting the medieval as mundane, boring even. Le Guin's merging of past and future, male and female, utopia and dystopia, "the real and the unreal" (as she titles one of her short story collections, echoing the phrase Foucault himself uses to describe heterotopias), reveals her preoccupation with demonstrating that supposed opposites are not so much opposed as coeval—the result being an understanding of her texts themselves—nonfiction and fiction alike—as material manifestations of a

non-patriarchal, anarcho-syndicalist present, just as de Pizan, at least as Jane Chance reads her, situates *The Book of the City of Ladies* as the embodied, emplaced worlding of de Pizan's City of Ladies.

Notes

[263] Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Ken Knabb (London: Rebel Press, 2002), 7.
[264] Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 150.
[265] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 7.
[266] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 8.
[267] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 18.
[268] Lawrence M. Bryant, "Configurations of the Community in late Medieval Spectacles: Paris and London during the Dual Monarchy," in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. Barbara Hanawalt and Kathryn Reyerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 3.
[269] Bryant, "Configurations," 4-5.
[270] Bryant, "Configurations," 5.
[271] Brian A. Pavlac, *Game of Thrones versus History: Written in Blood* (New York: Wiley/Blackwell, 2017), 20.
[272] For a discussion of spectacle in *Game of Thrones*, especially with respect to gender studies, see: Valerie Estelle Frankel, *Women in* Game of Thrones*: Power, Conformity and Resistance* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2014), 5, 35.
[273] Tom Henthorne, "Boys to Men: Medievalism and Masculinity in *Star Wars* and *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*" in *The Medieval Hero on Screen: Representations from Beowulf to Buff*y, ed. Martha W. Driver & Sid Ray (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2004), 74.
[274] Henthorne, "Boys to Men," 82. Ronald Reagan, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1982* (Washington D.C.: Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 1982), 754.
[275] George W. Bush, *The George W. Bush Foreign Policy Reader: Presidential Speeches and Commentary*, ed. John W. Dietrich (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2005), 41.
[276] Katherine Haenschen, Michael Horning and Jim A. Kuypers, "Donald J. Trump's Use of Twitter in the 2016 Campaign," *The 2016 American Presidential Campaign and the News: Implications for American Democracy and the Republic*, ed. Jim A Kuypers (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 69.
[277] Matthew Gabriele, "Trump says medieval walls worked. They didn't." *Washington Post*, January 10, 2019.
[278] Chiara Bottici and Benolt Challand, *The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 2-5. Also see, Majid, *We Are All Moors*, 178-179.

[279] Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyper Reality: Essays*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), 62.
[280] For a discussion of increasing inequality, see: Joseph Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Society* (New York: Norton & Co., 2012).
[281] Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1979), vii.
[282] Kathleen Biddick, *The Typological Imaginary: Circumcision, Technology, History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2003), 5-6.
[283] Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 40.
[284] Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein, "Americanity as a Concept, or the Americas in the Modern World-System," *International Social Science Journal* 44.4 (1992): 551.
[285] Bryant, "Configurations," 14.
[286] Bryant, "Configurations," 15.
[287] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 10.
[288] Chrstine de Pizan, *The City of Ladies*, trans. Rosalind Brown-Grant (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 5-6.
[289] Jane Chance, *The Literary Subversions of Medieval Women* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 15.
[290] Alison Lewis, *Subverting Patriarchy: Feminism and Fantasy in the Works of Irmtraud Morgner* (Washington D.C.: Berg Publishers, 1995), 212.
[291] Chance, *The Literary Subversions*, 15.
[292] Chance, *The Literary Subversions*, 10-11.
[293] Ursula K. Le Guin, "Introduction," *The Left Hand of Darkness* (New York: Penguin Books, 1969/2016), xxvii.
[294] Le Guin, "Introduction," xiii.
[295] Le Guin, "Introduction," xxvi.
[296] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité*, trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacriticis* 16.1 (1986), 22-27.
[297] Holsinger, *The Premodern Condition*, 197.
[298] Michel Foucault, "Of other spaces," 23.
[299] Michel Foucault, "Of other spaces," 24.
[300] Foucault, "Of other spaces," 27.
[301] Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Unreal and the Real: The Selected Short Stories of Ursula K. Le Guin* (New York: Saga Press, 2012), 339.
[302] Le Guin, *The Unreal and the Real*, 340.
[303] Ursula K. Le Guin, *Hainish Novels & Stories*, Vol. 1 (New York: Library of America, 2017), 361.
[304] Ursula K. Le Guin, "Staying Awake: Notes on the alleged decline of reading," *Harpers Magazine* (Feb., 2008), 34.

[305] Le Guin, "Staying Awake," 37-38.
[306] Ibid.
[307] Nadia Altschul, "Transfer," in *Medievalism: Key Critical Terms*, ed. Elizabeth Emery and Richard Utz (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014), 239-245.
[308] Jenna Wolmark, *Aliens and Others: Science Fiction, Feminism and Postmodernism* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1994), 15-16.

CONCLUSION

> In the East, there was the search for a specifically American code and for a recoding of Europe (Henry James, Eliot, Pound, etc.); in the South, there was the overcoding of the slave system, with its ruin and the ruin of the plantations during the Civil War (Faulkner, Caldwell); from the North came capitalist decoding (Dos Passos, Dreiser); the West, however, played the role of a line of flight combining travel, hallucination, madness, the Indians, perceptive and mental experimentation, the shifting of frontiers, the rhizome (Ken Kesey and his "fog machine," the beat generation, etc.). Every great American author creates a cartography, even in his or her style; in contrast to what is done in Europe, each makes a map that is directly connected to the real social movements crossing America.
>
> —Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*[309]

American medievalisms function as figurations for each of what Leslie Fiedler, in *The Return of the Vanishing American* (1976), describes as the four *topoi* of American literature, connected with one of the four cardinal directions: North, South, East, and West.[310] As interpreted by Deleuze and Guattari, Fiedler's reading of American literature foregrounds the cartography created by U.S. authors, and when we think of these *topoi* in terms of their medievalisms, we see how the literatures of the American North and American South are connected by a shared concern for socioeconomic systems, while the literatures of the American East and the American West share a concern for transnational cultural exchanges, and these North/South and East/West transactions, in turn, can be compared with and explored through

contemporary research on medieval socioeconomics and the medieval Mediterranean, respectively.

The American South, the American North & the Late-Medieval Judas

When explored for their medievalisms, Fiedler's Northern and Southern *topoi*, the former exploring the "decoding" of capitalism and the latter the "overcoding" of the slave system, exist as two distinct means of interpreting U.S. socio-economics, and their similar framing of the medieval as directly opposed to industrial capitalism demonstrates the extent to which the decoding of capitalism is necessarily entwined with the decoding of race and racism. The American authors that Deleuze and Guattari connect with the Northern *topoi*, Dreiser and Dos Passos, for instance, engage with the medieval by framing advocates of workers' rights as chivalric knights, battling industrial capitalism. In *The 42nd Parallel* (1930), in a section focalized around J. Ward Moorehouse, a corrupt salesman from Delaware, Dos Passos describes the "feudal conditions" of the steel mills in Pittsburgh:

> [A] strike came on at Homestead and there were strikers killed by the mine guards and certain writers from New York and Chicago who were sentimentalists began to take a good deal of space in the press with articles flaying the steel industry and the feudal conditions in Pittsburgh as they called them, and the progressives in Congress were making a howl, and it was rumoured that people wanting to make politics out of it were calling for a congressional investigation.[311]

The Northern vector of American medievalism is deeply indebted to Marx, but that Marxism is couched so as to distance the texts' protagonists from outright Marxist proselytizing. It is the "sentimentalists," not Moorehouse himself, who describe the working conditions as feudal, just as Theodore Dreiser, in *Sister Carrie*, presents the

Brooklyn street-car strikes, organized by the "Knights of Labour," in decidedly equivocal terms: "Hurstwood at first sympathized with the demands of these men," Dreiser writes of George Hurstwood, Sister Carrie's disgruntled lover. "'They're foolish to strike in this sort of weather,' he thought to himself. 'Let 'em win if they can, though.' The next day there was even a larger notice of it. "Brooklynites Walk," said the 'World.' 'Knights of Labour Tie up the Trolley Lines Across the Bridge.'"[312] The similarities between these two passages are striking: both are written from a third-person perspective and focalized around a disaffected, middle-class, white man; both portray late nineteenth-century U.S. labor strikes, and both utilize medievalisms in that portrayal, with Dos Passos alluding to the "feudal conditions" of the Pittsburgh steel mills and Dreiser quoting a newspaper headline that references the Knights of Labour, the labor organization (with its medievalized moniker) founded in 1869 by Uriah Stephens. Dos Passos, meanwhile, couches Moorehouse's assertion that the working conditions in the steel mills are feudal as the discourse of "the progressives in Congress," implying that Moorehouse no longer views the conditions that way, just as Dreiser couches the reference to the Knights of Labor as a headline in the *New York World*, not Moorehouse's own view of the subject. Dos Passos and Dreiser, in other words, both suggest that modern chivalry, to use Brackenridge's phrase, involves opposing industrial capitalism, but both authors do so in a markedly taciturn way; Dos Passos presents this idea through the eyes of a disgruntled marketing man, clearly skeptical of the progressives in Congress, while Dreiser presents this assertion

through a newspaper headline, read by a man who "at first sympathized" with the protestors but goes on to serve as a scab.

Discussing how "Middle English devotional literature imagines the pursuit of salvation as an economic endeavor, intertwined and coextensive with the pursuit and use of worldly wealth," Rosemary O'Neill has recently discussed how the figure of Judas is presented in a number of Middle English texts and how those representations construct "two models of salvation economics," which she deems, respectively, "stewardship" and "*commercium*."[313] "Stewardship," she explains, "is here coterminous with the culturally embedded relationships of vicarious responsibility and trust that give rise to such positions as 'steward,'" while *commercium* involves "the ethos by which we might accept gain at others' expense, or reward from a disproportionate exchange."[314] For O'Neill, in Middle English devotional literature, "Judas is often used to demonstrate the spiritual dangers of economic conservatism," suggesting that Judas is not, as other scholars have argued, a figure who "represents anxiety about economic change" but rather one that supports, albeit in a reflexive fashion, the turn to an economics of *commercium*.[315] In her reading of the late medieval ballad "Judas" (c. 1300), for instance, O'Neill notices the way Judas is portrayed as "profoundly sympathetic," "[h]is central motivation [being] not profit or greed but a desire to […] disguise a failure as a steward":

> In the ballad, Judas is once again the purse-bearer, but his role in the story transforms when Jesus gives him a special mission [to go to Jerusalem to buy a silver platen]. Judas […] finds the coins [for the platen] stolen from him after a mysterious encounter with a "sikele wimon" described as his "soster." This leads him to strike a bargain with Pilate, exchanging Jesus for the original platen. The poem then cuts to the Last Supper, where Jesus declares "Ic am

> iboust ant isold today for oure mete." The poem ends cryptically, with a protest from Judas that "I nas neuer a pe stude per me pe euel spec" but no suicide and despair, before the last lines turn to Jesus's prediction that Peter will forsake him [….] Far from the greedy embezzler of the other vernacular versions, he is instead the innocent victim of a robbery, desperate to discharge his duty as a steward but blocked by factors beyond his control.[316]

Judas is, in this fourteenth-century ballad, a sympathetic figure who remains beholden to an ethic of stewardship, focused single-mindedly upon carrying out the command of his master, even at the cost of his master's life, and something similar could be said about the medievalisms of the American South and the American North; far from opposing industrial capitalism, the South's "chivalry silliness" and the North's "antimodernism" bolster industrial capitalism by constructing a spatiotemporal fix—namely, the pseudo-medieval world—that presents modernity as simultaneously developed and in need of further development, a stay against overaccumulation. The figures associated with the Middle Ages are not antithetical to so much as promoters of modernity in that they portend an exaggerated, hyperbolic ulterior reality to which modernity is necessarily contradistinguished, just as the figure of Judas in "Judas" is used to promote an ethic of *commercium* by presenting him as an absurd adherent to an ethic of stewardship.

Dreiser, earlier in *Sister Carrie*, titles one of his chapters, "The Machine and the Maiden: A Knight of To-day," implying that Charles Drouet, the travelling salesman, is the "knight of to-day," who, in the course of the chapter, takes Carrie out for a nice meal and provides her with some much needed money—the implication being that a knight of today is one who does not horde capital but gives it away generously, a concept antithetical to industrial capitalism. Drouet, however, presumes

that, by virtue of his generosity, Carrie is indebted to him, and the means by which she repays that debt is through her devotion to him: *Sister Carrie* considers what happens to courtly love and filial piety in a thoroughly capitalist world-system, musing on what happens to virtue and vice when wealth supplants feudal estates as the primary measure of social class. When Drouet discovers Carrie's affair with George Hurstwood, then the manager of a high-brow Chicago hotel, Drouet feels betrayed:

> "I've got the right of this thing. You oughtn't to have done anything that wasn't right after all I did for you."
> "What have you done for me?" asked Carrie blazing, her head thrown back and her lips parted.
> "I think I've done a good deal," said [Drouet], looking around. "I've given you all the clothes you wanted, haven't I? I've taken you everywhere you wanted to go. You've had as much I've had, and more too." […]
> "Did I ask you to?" she returned.
> "Well, I did it," said Drouet, "and you took it."[317]

Drouet thinks he has done a "good deal" for Carrie because he has bought her clothes, taken her out on the town and paid for her apartment, but, as Carrie points out, she never asked for any of those things; Drouet thinks that, because she accepts these gifts, Carrie necessarily owes him something—namely, her fidelity—as if human interactions were akin to monetary transactions.

A similar interaction occurs at the close of *Sister Carrie*, when Carrie leaves Hurstwood to pursue stardom. Hurstwood, who by the close of the novel has fallen into destitution, takes a job as a scab during the Knights of Labor trolley-car strike, and it is at this point that Carrie finally leaves Hurstwood, placing a twenty-dollar bill alongside her farewell note. In pursuit of capital, Hurstwood performs the

dishonorable act—crossing the picket line—and it is at this precise moment that Carrie leaves the relationship, playing the part of the generous knight-errant herself in the process; the power dynamic flips, and their romance, founded upon a traditional, patriarchal dynamic in which Hurstwood provides for Carrie, collapses. The devastating conclusion to *Sister Carrie* amounts to Carrie's realization that capital has no bearing whatsoever on honor, happiness or love; the novel critiques the long-standing conflation of wealth with these abstract ideals and so engages, in its final pages, with what Paula E. Geyh, thinking of Deleuze and Guattari, has deemed Carrie's schizophrenia.[318]

Like Rosemary O'Neill's distinction between an ethics of stewardship and an ethics of *commercium*, much contemporary scholarship on American medievalisms emphasizes the Janus-faced quality of these creole medievalisms—a quality that itself mimics the schizophrenia endemic, according to Deleuze and Guattari, to capitalist societies. The same year Henry Adams's *Education* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize German psychologist Viktor Tausk published an article in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* titled "On the Origin of the 'Influencing Machine' in Schizophrenia" (1919). Tausk's essay outlines the consistent delusion among schizophrenics of an "influencing machine" that "serves to persecute the patient and is operated by enemies […], the latter are exclusively of the male sex [and] are predominantly physicians by whom the patient has been treated."[319] The literature of the American North, especially with respect to its medievalisms, engages with this figuration as well; as the title of Dreiser's chapter—"The Machine and the Maiden: A

Knight of To-day"—suggests, especially when we note its similarity to Henry Adams's distinction between the virgin and the dynamo in his *Education*, the medieval is often placed in direct opposition to industrial capitalism. The antimodernism T. J. Jackson Lears notices among the Northern bourgeoisie, in this sense, is symptomatic of a schizophrenia that, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is coeval with capitalism itself. The medieval exists as a pristine, Edenic paradise, a metonym for the schizophrenic's sense of self, itself always already controlled by an industrial machine, a dynamo.

The schizophrenia that Deleuze and Guattari diagnose, in this sense, relies upon the medieval/modern divide, with the medieval standing in for the schizophrenic's subjectivity, and modernity standing in for the "influencing machine" that controls the schizophrenic's thoughts and actions. Indeed, this association is recapitulated in many Southern medievalisms as well, which, like Dos Passos's and Dreiser's, connect modernity with industrial capitalism, but, instead of connecting the medieval with workers' rights movements, Southern medievalisms connect the Middle Ages with slavery and Southern plantation life. Faulkner's medievalisms, explored in Chapter Three, demonstrate the extent to which the South's chivalric-silliness, as Twain deemed it, was embedded within the very psyches of his characters, with Miss Sophonsiba, for example, connecting the Beauchamp's plantation with Warwick Castle. Along with Faulkner, Deleuze and Guattari include Erskine Caldwell in their *topos* of the American South, and Caldwell's novels, as Andrew Leiter puts it in his essay on Erskine's *Trouble in July*, "shred […] any

pretensions of white chivalry in the South."[320] *Tobacco Road* (1932), for one, begins with the Lesters stealing Lov Bensey's turnips, and much of the plot revolves around Jeeter Lester refusing to work in an Augusta cotton mill, even though his family is destitute, insisting that, "It wasn't intended for a man with the smell of the land in him to live in a mill in Augusta."[321] Jeeter is enamored with an ethic of stewardship, to use O'Neill's phrase, thinking it ordained by God that he remain on his family's property, and he uses that ethic to avoid participating in industrial capitalism. In *Tobacco Road*, written and set during the Depression Era, the South's preoccupation with chivalry is directly connected with Northern antimodernism, with Jeeter connecting a nostalgia for plantation life with an antimodernism that sees life in a city like Augusta as opposed to God's will. The South's preoccupation with chivalry and Northern antimodernism both romanticize a pre-Industrial world, associating that world with agrarianism and a stratified social structure, but while Northern antimodernism romanticizes the world of feudal kings and knights-errant, the South integrates the antebellum world into that Romantic medievalism.

With Deleuze and Guattari's work on schizophrenia and capitalism in mind, this romanticized vision of pre-Industrial life is not so much opposed to industrial life, as Lears's discussion of antimodernism implies, but coeval with it. An unattainable idyllic world, produced and reproduced by cultural productions, offers an inaccessible spacetime that industrial capitalism can invoke as a spatiotemporal fix for capitalism's contradictions. The medievalisms of the American South and American North exist as pressure valves, so to speak, for the anxieties of an increasingly

alienated population, simultaneously buttressing and exposing the contradictions latent within industrial capitalism, in the same way that, as Rosemary O'Neill puts it, the figure of Judas serves as a "fulcrum between stewardship and commerce, illustrating the pitfalls and possibilities of both systems."[322] The literature of the American South and American North tie the medieval to U.S. economic systems—be it capitalism or a plantation economy—and the medievalisms of writers like Dos Passos, Dreiser, Faulkner and Caldwell decode that connection, framing advocates of worker's rights as chivalric knights or Southern whites as poor, dishonest and unchivalrous.

These figurations, like the framing of Judas as a proponent of *commercium*, hint at an emergent historiography that thinks of the medieval and the modern as coterminous, rather than as antagonisms or, as with Marx, increments in a progressive historicism. As Howard Brick has outlined, early- and mid-twentieth-century U.S. theorists from Thorstein Veblen to Margaret Mead, articulating a "postcapitalist vision," saw the term "capitalism" as inadequate to describe contemporary Western societies.[323] The associations Dos Passos, Dreiser, Faulkner and Caldwell make between the medieval and American economic systems disclose a rupture in economic thinking during the early twentieth century, especially one that extrapolates—to use Le Guin's term—upon that postcapitalist vision, for which the capitalism-feudalism distinction is itself a capitalist contestation. As Susan Reynolds argues in *Fiefs and Vassals* (1994), following on the work of E. A. R. Brown and C. van de Kieft, "feudalism can mean a lot of different things" and that "[a] good many

medievalists have […] continued to maintain that, whatever the difficulties of describing medieval society in general as feudal, there is a narrow, technical, more precise sense to feudalism which retains its utility."[324] To pluralize concepts like feudalism and capitalism is to complicate socioeconomic historiography, including Marxist historiography, recognizing in particular the ways in which feudalism and capitalism are not distinct increments along a progressivist timeline, so much as entwined, uneven systems: a recognition that, in turn, illustrates how the capitalist decoding of writers like Dreiser and Dos Passos is necessarily entwined with the decoding of the slave system by writers like Caldwell and Faulkner—slavery and capitalism being, as Eric Williams diagnosed them as early as 1944, intersectionally related.

The American East, the American West & Border Crossings

To shift from the North/South transaction to the East/West transaction is, as Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis intimates, to grapple with the U.S.'s inculcation within the European colonization of the New World.[325] The medievalisms of the American East and the American West are concerned with more transnational or transoceanic vectors than are those of the American North and American South. The medievalisms of authors like Pound, Henry James and Jack Kerouac connect the medieval to non-U.S. territories, especially East Asia and, for Kerouac, Mexico and the Ottoman Empire, and such an association between the European Middle Ages and non-U.S. territories interlaps well with recent research on the Medieval Mediterranean, understood as a spatiality that better encapsulates the intercultural

interactions at play during that historical epoch than that of "Europe"—itself, in large part, a modern spatial construction. A thalassological approach that foregrounds the Mediterranean Sea emphasizes the extent to which the Middle Ages are characterized by the conflicts and coexistence of Islam and Christianity from the seventh to at least the fifteenth centuries, and such an interpretive shift suggests an understanding of the medievalisms of the American East and the American West as explorations of multicultural and transoceanic vectors of cultural exchange, utilizing medieval Christian-Islamic relations as a hermeneutic with which to interpret a variety of intra- and international conflicts.

"All sorts of explanations," Anouar Majid writes in *We Are All Moors: Ending Centuries of Crusades Against Muslims and Other Minorities* (2009), thinking of Europe's and the United States's "mounting anxiety over coexisting with Muslims and the seemingly unstoppable waves of illegal and nonassimilable immigrants," "have been offered about the […] twin elements fueling the global crisis […] but no one seems to be reading the intense debate over immigration and minorities who resist assimilation as the continuation of a much older conflict, the one pitting Christendom against the world of Islam."[326] In turn, Majid demonstrates the extent to which Western European and U.S. cultures alike have developed discourses that cast minorities, especially non-white minorities, as Moors and the white majority as akin to Christian knights, recapitulating a crusader rhetoric—the irony being that "secular, liberal Western culture and Islam were never really parted, […] they have been traveling together since (at least) 1492, despite all attempts to

demarcate, first, zones of Christian purity and, later, national homogeneity."[327] Majid's understanding of Christian-Islamic relations as integral to not only medieval but also modern national histories reveals the extent to which the modern world, including U.S. history, has been framed in terms of those relations, and the medievalisms of writers like Pound, Henry James and Jack Kerouac can be seen as grappling—sometimes subversively, sometimes monolithically—with these associations that link non-white, non-U.S., non-Christian and un-Modern peoples with the Moors and, in turn, white, U.S. and modern peoples with Christian crusaders.

As Gayatri Spivak, thinking of Jacques Derrida, himself thinking of Emmanuel Kant, reminds us, "crossing borders […] is a problematic affair," and the medievalisms of writers like Pound, James and Kerouac, in thinking about the medieval in largely transnational and transoceanic terms, certainly illustrate that point.[328] Pound, as discussed in Chapter Three, connects medieval Scholastic theology consistently with Confucianism and the poetry of Tu Fu and leverages each of those discourses in support of an idiosyncratic ethno-nationalism. Jack Kerouac envisioned *On the Road* (1957) as "a quest novel like Cervantes's *Don Quixote* or John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*," framing Mexico in particular as an un-Modern territory open to exploration by the likes of Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty.[329] "My first impression of Dean," Paradise proclaims early on in *On the Road*, "was of a young Gene Autry—trim, thin-hipped, blue-eyed, with a real Oklahoma accent—a side-burned hero of the snowy West."[330] Like Wister's Virginian, Kerouac's Dean Moriarty is a cowboy-knight, albeit riding not a wild stallion but a '49 Hudson

Commodore. Gene Autry, the so-called "Singing Cowboy," began his career with the Western variety radio show *Melody Ranch*, which, as Katherine Barnes Echols has argued, relies heavily on "the chivalric code of the American cowboy": "The cowboy-knight is so much a part of the American psyche that the announcer for Gene Autry's *Melody Ranch* commented that boys and girls had at one time probably imagined themselves as knights dressed 'in shining armor, astride a powerful charger, thundering through adventure and hardships, to a romantic rescue.'"[331] Like so much American medievalism, Sal Paradise's description of Moriarty as a young Gene Autry enacts an adaptation of an adaptation of an adaptation, resituating the cowboy-knight—an adaptation of the chivalric knight, itself an adaptation of the Davidic soldier—as a "thin-hipped, blue-eyed" Oklahoman driving across the vast landscapes of the American West. Moreover, Moriarty's overdetermined character mirrors the diverse landscapes through which Paradise and Moriarty travel—Denver, San Francisco, New York, Wyoming, Texas and, eventually, Mexico: "the finale of the novel [is] the trip to Mexico that the trajectory of Part One prefigures," Hassan Melehy, thinking of both Deleuze and Mary Louise Pratt, writes in *Kerouac: Language, Poetics, and Territory* (2016): "The contact zone," Melehy writes, "between the United States and Mexico, which includes parts of each country, presents the greatest challenge in *On the Road* to the ideology of complacent, sedentary culture. The broadness of the zone, beginning in San Antonio with such signs as houses and streets indicating a cultural shift, is underscored by the six pages

that the narrative takes to traverse it [….] Dean presents the border crossing as the terminus of all that has become familiar to him and Sal."[332]

The various land- and cityscapes through which Sal and Dean travel are as sundry as the typologies upon which the novel's characters rely, and the departure from America and "all that they know" amounts to a departure from such typological thinking itself: the first thing Sal says when they cross the border into Mexico is that it "looked exactly like Mexico."[333] Mexico is a place not of façades—like those Main Streets in rural Wyoming—but of reality, where things are as they seem, and such authenticity is clearly imbued with a kind of religious awe for Sal and Dean: "It was only Nuevo Laredo but it looked like Holy Lhasa to us."[334] The medievalisms in *On the Road* are not only formal; while the text, according to Ann Charters, reenacts the medieval quest narrative, Sal's description of Mexico is also rendered in clearly un-Modern, non-Western terms: "Old men sat on chairs in the night and looked like Oriental junkies and oracles," Sal writes as they walk through the streets of Laredo, and it is while driving through Gregoria that Paradise famously "learn[s] [himself] among the Fellahin Indians of the world":

> The boys were sleeping, and I was alone in my eternity at the wheel, and the road ran straight as an arrow. Not like driving across Carolina, or Texas, or Arizona, or Illinois; but like driving across the world and into the places where we would finally learn ourselves among the Fellahin Indians of the world, the essential strain of the basic primitive, wailing humanity that stretches in a belt around the equatorial belly of the world from Malaya (the long fingernail of China) to India the great subcontinent to Arabia to Morocco to the selfsame deserts and jungles of Mexico and over the waves to Polynesia to mystic Siam of the Yellow Robe and on around, on around, so that you hear the same mournful wail by the rotted walls of Cádiz, Spain, that you hear 12,000 miles around in the depths of Benares the Capital of the World.[335]

Sal's globe-trotting vision resembles Walt Whitman's description in "Passage to India" (1871) ("Passage to India!/Cooling airs from Caucasus far, soothing cradle of man/The river Euphrates flowing, the past lit up again"); both Whitman and Kerouac imagine transoceanic vectors of cultural exchange, and intrinsic to that imagining is historiographic play, including an exploration of the medieval.[336] For Whitman, a journey around the world remembers Marco Polo, Batouta the Moor, and other "medieval navigators," just as, for Kerouac, that voyage remembers the "Fellahin Indians"—the term "Fellahin" referring to an agricultural laborer of East and North Africa during the Ottoman Empire.[337] Both visions are certainly fraught with colonialist contstations—the implication being that the entire world is open to white, globetrotting men—but those visions are also fraught with a sense of global, transnational camaraderie, portrayed in particular in the coalescing of Moors and Europeans or Euro-Americans. Kerouac's Fellahin Indian resembles Jefferson's Yeoman farmer in its medievalism and agrarianism, but Kerouac deploys, in lieu of a figure of medieval Christian Europe, a figure of the medieval Mediterranean—namely, the Fellah—subverting the discourse that casts the American as a Christian knight, albeit still associating that figure with Native Americans, again illustrating the tendency among Europeans and Euro-Americans, outlined by Majid, to associate medieval Muslims with nonwhite minorities.

Such a subversion, however, is important, for it reimagines a U.S. citizen as the antithesis to the medieval Christian knight, just as the "recoding of Europe" by writers like Pound and James subverts the transatlantic voyage—making of it an

eastward, rather than a westward, expedition. Rather than resituate an archetypal figure like the chivalric knight into a "Fellahin Indian," the medievalisms of Pound and Henry James involve a reimagining of Europe itself as a site not of chivalric quests but of the mundane, the quotidian. Discussing *The Golden Bowl* (1904), Johnathon Ullyot writes that "James was developing the ideas for and writing his own unique version of the Grail story, which would differ sharply from the Victorian moralizing of Tennyson's version or the decadent and dreamy medievalism reflected in the art of the Pre-Raphaelities."[338] Instead, Ullyot continues, "[t]he characters in *The Golden Bowl* are preoccupied with the interpretation of an object that appears to be solid gold but turns out to be crystal gilded by some 'beautiful old process'—a product of a 'lost art' reflecting a 'lost time.'"[339] Like Eliot's *The Waste Land*, James's *The Golden Bowl* is distinct from the Victorian's and Tennyson's adaptation of the Grail myth—not to mention the medieval versions—because, as Ullyot puts it, the "people no longer believe in sacred relics."[340] Pound's *The Spirit of Romance*, a work of literary criticism that advocates an approach to literature that could "weigh Theocritus and Yeats with one balance, and which will judge dull dead men as inexorably as dull writers of today," contends that "[a]ll ages are contemporaneous": "It is B.C., let us say, in Morocco. The Middle Ages are in Russia […] This is especially true in literature, where the real time is independent of the apparent."[341] This Modernist approach to temporality—Pound presents medieval romance throughout *The Spirit of Romance* as the "inauguration of modernity in European literature"—takes as its texts largely medieval poetry like *The Divine Comedy* and

Percival.[342] Kerouac, Pound, James and Eliot all connect the medieval to a non-U.S. territory, accentuating the extent to which U.S. national identity is often defined in terms of the medieval/modern divide in the same way that Northern and Southern medievalisms accentuate the extent to which modern economics are often rendered in terms of the medieval/modern divide. Both transactions, though, mourn the (imagined) loss of a sedentary life; for the South, that sedentary life is the antebellum U.S., imagined as an agrarian, medievalized world, while for the North, that sedentary life is the preindustrial world of enchantment and agrarianism. For the East, that sedentary life is the medieval academy or the medieval church, imagined as the refuge of the few, while for the West that sedentary life is the life of the Fellahin Indians, "that essential strain of the basic primitive, wailing humanity"—with all of the problematic primitivizing of such a figuration.

If we think of the longing for sedentary life, however, as itself a symptom of nomadism, we can also see this consistent preoccupation of American literature with medieval literature and history as a prolonged engagement with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of nomadology, and the polarity between imperial literatures and subversive literatures can be rethought, in turn, as a matter of the imagination. The subversive medievalisms of Poe, Twain, Faulkner and Le Guin imagine a conclusion to America's preoccupation with the (imagined) sedentary life of the Middle Ages; the fall of the House of Usher, the collapse of Hank Morgan's Camelot, the demise of the Compson family and Winter's revelation that it is a world among numerous other worlds are intuitive reckonings with the longing for sedentary life—reckonings that

involve both destruction and revelation, the collapse of fixed notions of identity and the birth of reimagined, polyvocal identities. The medievalisms that buttress, rather than subvert, monolithic contestations simply do not imagine the conclusion to such monolithic thinking. Jefferson's yeoman farmer, Wister's cowboy-knight, Pound's scholar-knight and neoconservative medievalisms—to varying degrees—come up short in extrapolating, to use Le Guin's term, the extent to which America's preoccupation with the Middle Ages reveals how modern American culture is constituted by non-American and un-Modern cultural productions. If, however, following Le Guin, we extrapolate for ourselves the effects of America's fascination with the Middle Ages, this longstanding preoccupation reveals the extent to which the medieval, like any other cultural production perhaps, is nomadic, ranging over temporal and spatial borders, augmenting, disappearing and reappearing—just as the U.S., as well as modernity itself, changes and augments.

Notes

[309] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (New York: Continuum, 2004), 571n18.
[310] Leslie Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American* (New York: Stein and Day, 1976), 16.
[311] John Dos Passos, *The 42nd Parallel* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1930/2000), 200.
[312] Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (New York: Bantam Books, 1900), 323.
[313] Rosemary O'Neill, "Judas and the Economics of Salvation in Medieval English Literature," in *Money, Commerce, and Economics in Late Medieval English Literature* (New York: Palgrave, 2018), 11, 14.
[314] O'Neill, "Judas and the Economics of Salvation," 17, 24.
[315] O'Neill, "Judas and the Economics of Salvation, 12.
[316] O'Neill, "Judas and the Economics of Salvation," 21.
[317] Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, Chap. XXIII.

[318] Paula E. Geyh, "From Cities of Things to Cities of Signs: Urban Spaces and Urban Subjects in *Sister Carrie* and *Manhattan Transfer*," *Twentieth Century Literature* 52, no. 4 (2006), 422.
[319] Victor Tausk. "On the Origin of the 'Influencing Machine' in Schizophrenia," trans. Dorian Feigenbaum, *The Psycho-Analytic Reader*, ed. Robert Fliess (London: Hogarth Press, 1950), 55.
[320] Andrew Leiter, "Sexual Degeneracy and the Anti-Lynching Tradition in Erskine Caldwell's *Trouble in July*, in *Reading Erskine Caldwell: New Essays*, ed. Robert McDonald (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2006), 219.
[321] Erskine Caldwell, *Tobacco Road* (Levelland, TX: Laughing Dog Press, 1932/2017), 57.
[322] O'Neill, "Judas and the Economics of Salvation," 11.
[323] Howard Brick, *Transcending Capitalism: Visions of a New Society in Modern American Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2.
[324] Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 1.
[325] Here I am following Henry Nash Smith's reading of the Frontier Thesis: Smith, *Virgin Land*, 250.
[326] Anouar Majid, *We Are All Moors: Ending Centuries of Crusades Against Muslims and Other Minorities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 2-3.
[327] Majid, *We Are All Moors*, 3.
[328] Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, 16.
[329] Ann Charters, "Introduction," in *On the Road* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), xiv.
[330] Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Penguin Books, 1957/1991), 2.
[331] Katherine Barnes Echols, *King Arthur and Robin Hood on the Radio: Adaptations for American Listeners* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2017), 137.
[332] Hassan Melehy, *Kerouac: Language, Poetics, and Territory* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 74.
[333] Kerouac, *On the Road*, 274.
[334] Ibid.
[335] Kerouac, *On the Road*, 275, 280.
[336] Walt Whitman, *Passage to India* (New York: Smith & McDougal, 1870), 10.
[337] Mahmoud Yazbak, "'Left Naked on the Beach': The Villagers of Aylut in the Grip of the New Templers," in *Struggle and Survival in Palestine/Israel*, ed. Mark LeVine and Gershon Shafir (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 30.
[338] Jonathon Ullyot, *The Medieval Presence in Modernist Literature: The Quest to Fail* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 19.
[339] Ullyot, *The Medieval Presence*, 19.
[340] Ullyot, *The Medieval Presence*, 20.
[341] Ezra Pound, *The Spirit of Romance* (New York: New Directions, 1952/2005), 6.
[342] Richard Sieburth, "Introduction," in *The Spirit of Romance* (New York: New Directions, 1952/2005), vii.

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