LOST WORLDS

Latin America and the Imagining of Empire

Kevin Foster

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For William

'We read, really, to find out what we already know'
V.S. Naipaul

PREFACE

LOST WORLDS

This book is concerned with how British – and to a lesser extent American and Australian – writers and cultural commentators have conceived and made use of Latin America in the re-imagining of their own countries. It will examine how, from the early nineteenth to the late twentieth centuries, Latin America played a key role in addressing, mediating or resolving differing crises of national identity in the English-speaking west. In Britain it will examine how Latin America affords a physical and discursive sanctuary within which the complex of anxieties arising from the extension, consolidation and recession of empire can be anatomised and resolved. It is here that the moral legitimacy of empire can be examined, the capacity of the nation's leaders to manage its imperial possessions can be questioned, the genocidal dirty business of colonial conquest can be conceded and the guilt it occasions addressed and mediated. In Central America, the end of the Empire, even the destruction of Britain itself, can be imagined and played out, while through this admonitory catastrophe the means to the defence and preservation of the homeland can be identified and propounded. It is in the distant South, far removed from the drabness of everyday life, that the nation's political and moral failings can be identified, responses to them proposed and rehearsed, and an ideal society imagined and attempted. This book will demonstrate that when Britain confronted its shifting imperial fortunes and measured their impacts on the nation's domestic identity; when Americans in the 1950s rebelled against the stifling conformism of the post-war; or when Australia's late nineteenth-century true believers set sail in search of a working man's paradise, each of them found in Latin America a mental or physical space within which responses to these crises and the

needs they embodied could be imagined or enacted. This book will examine why Latin America came to occupy such a prominent role in these processes of cultural self-fashioning; how it was used by a broad selection of writers and thinkers, in widely dispersed places, at distinct periods, in quest of differing resolutions to varying national crises; and how these cultural interventions have affected our perceptions of Latin America and ourselves.

One prominent effect of Latin America's subordination to the cultural imperatives of the English-speaking west is clear. Neil Larsen has noted how

> With the fall of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua in 1979, and the subsequent round of massive U.S. military involvement in the region, Central America was transformed from a blank space on the conceptual map of most North Americans into a familiar landmark along the routes of the world-as-we-know-it on television screens and the pages of daily and weekly newsprint. (Larsen, 1995: 39)

Thus Nicaragua was endlessly reconstructed by the cultural warriors of left and right as the last frontier in the fight against Soviet totalitarianism, a genuine people's revolt against capitalism and imperialism, liberation theology in action, Godless Communism personified, and so much more. As a consequence of this sedulous process of cultural inscription, the more the country and its people were held up as emblems of western political preoccupation, the more they were made to signify all things to all people, the more insignificant, the less material they became in and of themselves. Likewise, in the early nineteenth century when Spanish rule over Latin America suddenly broke down and the continent was opened up to the rest of the world, 'Spanish America, in Northern Europe, was a virtual *carte blanche*' (Pratt, 1992: 117). A horde of 'advance scouts for European capital', merchants, miners, economic opportunists as well as a steady stream of travellers from the English-speaking west descended on the country, discovering in it a mirror of their own particular anxieties and preoccupations and inscribing on it a range of responses to them (Pratt, 1992: 146). Mary Louise Pratt argues that 'The end of Spanish colonial rule entailed a full-scale renegotiation of relations between

Spanish America and Northern Europe – relations of politics and economics, and with equal necessity, relations of representation and imagination' (Pratt, 1992: 112). Yet this renegotiation of cultural and economic relations, like many that followed it, was less a matter of free exchange than an opportunity for the dominant North to impose its values and vision on the South, leaving the Latin Americans with an unhealthy cultural deficit. As a result of the political and cultural ends that Latin America has been made to serve in Britain, the United States and Australia, its provision of a symbolic site through which various lost or threatened incarnations of 'home' might be defended, reclaimed or re-imagined, the continent and its people have been lost and Latin America remains a blank space on the mental map of much of the English-speaking west. Denied '*historicity*', as Neil Larsen puts it, 'except insofar as the land itself is about to become the site of the heroic exploits' of the foreign visitors, its people too are 'without History', their 'active life' and 'fundamental social relations' reduced to a static set of symbolic forms, valued and employed only to the extent that they help celebrate or redeem the imperilled homeland (Larsen, 1995: 43–4).

As a consequence of the west's narrowly functional understanding of its cultural relations with Latin America and the distorted vision of it that this has fed, Jimmy Burns has noted, as recently as 1989, that 'South America remains the world's least discovered continent' (1989: xiv). It is a point that has been made before by European and North American writers, though more often by Latin Americans themselves, labouring under the condescension conferred by the English-speaking west's self-interested responses to the continent (see Paz, 1990). I make this point at some length because I am conscious that in the process of exploring this curious sub-branch of cultural imperialism this book is in peril of replicating the very cultural trope that it critiques – the wilful or accidental disappearing of Latin America. I want to make it clear that my purpose here is not to contribute to the debate about what Latin America *really* is, but to explore how in their literature and popular culture the British, and to a lesser extent the Americans and the Australians, have portrayed and used it, how as a result

of these uses it became a lost world and why it has remained so. Accordingly, this book is actually concerned with a number of lost worlds: the various British, American and Australian worlds, lost to or menaced by a range of real or imagined threats to their existence, and the Latin American world, sacrificed in the cause of defending or redeeming them.

The book will take a roughly chronological approach to English literature's representations of Latin America from the immediately pre-Independence period (1805) up to the end of the twentieth century, with more narrowly focused analyses of American and Australian responses to the continent. It will begin by examining how, at the time that the Latin American republics were fighting to establish or maintain their independence, the continent provided an ideal context within which British writers could question the legitimacy of the nation's imperial expansion, its capacity to sustain such an enterprise and examine how the running of the empire might provide a model for the management of political and social unrest at home. It will consider how the Jesuit missions of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Latin America provided an ideal context within which the late nineteenth-century quest for utopia could be analysed and the impediments to its attainment critiqued. The second chapter will look at how Latin America was employed in British adventure fiction of the nineteenth century as a safely quarantined environment within which contentious issues of national self-doubt, fears of metropolitan collapse and guilt over the liquidation of indigenous peoples at the sharp end of colonial contact could be addressed and the anxieties they engendered be assuaged. Chapter 3 will consider how, at the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth century, there was a widespread feeling in Britain and Australia that the essential identity of each nation was disappearing. It will trace the literary and cultural expressions of this fear and the various movements established to promote the preservation of the nation and its iconic forms. It will examine how in Britain, from the turn of the century to the 1940s, Latin America was used by a number of writers to address, critique and propose remedies to the causes of national decline. As a point of comparison it will also consider how the utopian

working man's colony established by expatriate Australians in late nineteenth-century Paraguay has been used to critique the contemporary nation's successes and failings. The fourth chapter will examine the discursive relations between the United States and Latin America with a particular focus on the 1940s and 1950s. It will consider how, in the context of the fraying of the post-war dream of suburban contentment, radical shifts in the roles and expectations of America's women, the McCarthy witch hunts and the massive social and political changes that marked the decade, Latin America was employed by American writers, then and now, to explore what it meant, indeed whether it was possible, to be an American and still be oneself. Chapter 5 will shift the focus from literature to popular culture and consider responses to Britain's post-war, post-imperial decline as they are articulated through the medium of football. It will examine how contrasts between football and society in England and Brazil were employed to critique, first the slow pace of social change in Britain, and later its seemingly irresistible acceleration. Chapter 6 will examine how novelists, journalists and cultural commentators in Britain and the United States have used the social and political turbulence of Latin America from the late 1960s to the present to explore and critique decline or division at home and in the process to justify, promote or condemn a range of domestic political and social innovations. It will examine how Latin America has been used to furnish an admonitory model of social fission against which the relative security and stability of Britain and the United States might be measured, as well as providing an arresting example of what Britain might look like should it fail to halt its political, economic and social decline.

Area studies scholars are warned. I have used the terms Latin and South America interchangeably and with some liberality throughout the text. I have used them to refer to all mainland territories south of the Rio Grande – Brazil included, so this is Luso as well as Latin America. I have excluded Cuba and the Caribbean from the study, though for reasons that will become clear the Falkland Islands do find a place in my analysis and conclusions.

INTRODUCTION
THE HALF-LIGHT

In the closing days of the Falklands War, as photographs and footage of the conflict began to arrive in the UK, the completeness of Britain's triumph was advertised through a series of iconic images which focused on the abjectness of Argentina's defeat. Three images in particular were widely distributed at the time of the conflict and have since appeared in a range of histories, memoirs and other accounts of the war, images which, taken together, offer a concise British narrative of Argentina's defeat and despair. The first of these depicts Captain Alfredo Astíz, Argentine military commander of Isla San Pedro or South Georgia – better known, perhaps, as *el rubio*, the Angel of Death, or the Butcher of Cordoba, for his enthusiastic participation in the rounding up, torture and disappearance of 'subversives' during the dirty war – signing the document surrendering the Argentine garrison on South Georgia.[1]

The second – and there are many versions of this – portrays lines of ragged conscripts surrendering a mountain of rifles to British troops.

The third shows furious Argentine civilians rioting in the Plaza de Mayo when news of the surrender of the garrison on the Malvinas was made public – the same square they had packed ten weeks earlier to acclaim the recovery of the islands and the military leaders who had ordered it.

As compelling as these images are, their implied narrative of the war is so reductive as to be fundamentally misleading. It is a narrative which says nothing about Argentina's brilliantly executed operation to recover the islands; nothing about the heroism of the air force pilots, or the often staunch resistance

Figure 1   Captain Alfredo Astíz surrenders the Argentine garrison on South Georgia (IWM. Photo: FKD 60)

put up by Argentine land forces, many of them conscripts; and nothing about the many underlying causes of their ultimate defeat – poor training, poor leadership, poor lines of supply. What we see instead is a familiar procession of stereotypical Latinos – cowardly torturers, deflated braggadocios and mobs of unruly civilians behaving with a predictable disregard for decorum. Indeed, what we see in these pictures is less an historical record of Argentina's doomed endeavour to recover the islands than the projection of an ongoing and deeply rooted set of British prejudices about Latin America, its peoples, their histories and cultures. Little wonder that these images say so little about the Argentine experience of the war as it is British perceptions of and responses to it that they principally record.

What do they say about these perceptions and responses? The British popular press's reaction to the outbreak and conduct of the conflict was comprised largely of triumphalist cheerleading, neatly summarised in the *Sun*'s most infamous headlines. Alongside the infamous 'GOTCHA!' which greeted the sinking of the Argentine cruiser, *General Belgrano*, these included 'IT'S WAR!' 'WALLOP',

Figure 2   Argentine soldiers surrender their weapons in Port Stanley
(IWM. Photo: FKD 1111)

'WE'LL SMASH 'EM' and 'STICK IT UP YOUR JUNTA' (*Sun*, 1982: 3.5.82; 5.4.82; 27.5.82; 3.4.82; 7.4.82).[2] The media's full-speed advance on the South Atlantic, all headlines blazing, left little scope, and few column inches, for the expression of some of the genuine anxieties raised by the nation's precipitate commitment to recover the islands – anxieties about the military's preparedness, expertise and equipment; anxieties about the political pitfalls

Figure 3   Argentine civilians rioting in the Plaza de Mayo (Photo: Jorge Rilo)

of what seemed to be an anachronistic gesture and the public's willingness to support it; anxieties about the legitimacy of Britain's continuing status as a world power, the fear that, as the Prime Minister of the day Margaret Thatcher put it, 'Britain was no longer the nation that had built an Empire and ruled a quarter of the world' (quoted in Barnett, 1982: 150). While the British press, with the exception of the *Guardian* and the *Financial Times*, remained conspicuously silent about such concerns, parliamentarians from both sides of the House gave vent to their anger over what had happened, and so betrayed their trepidation over what was yet to come. As the Tory grandee, Sir Julian Amery, indignantly observed in the first Emergency Parliamentary Debate called in response to Argentina's seizure of the islands: 'The third naval power in the world, and the second in NATO, has suffered a humiliating defeat' (Barnett, 1982: 38). Patrick Cormack, also from the government benches, noted that humiliation not only engendered the determination to redeem the situation and restore the nation's credibility but also excited the fear that this might not be possible. Indeed, Edward du Cann wondered if the nation

could ever stand up for itself again: 'For all our alliances and for all the social politenesses which the diplomats so often mistake for trust, in the end in life it is self-reliance and only self-reliance that counts' (Morgan, 1982: 10).

In the context of these kinds of remarks, it is clear that while the representation of Argentina, its military and its public in these photographs may offer a reductive record of some of the significant events of the conflict, their primary purpose was to embody and exorcise what the British themselves most feared in the South Atlantic – political humiliation, military collapse, public outrage and social division. From this perspective the Argentines played a subordinate, largely symbolic role in the conflict. They were there to demonstrate that what Britain was confronting in the South Atlantic was less enemy forces or the hostility of the elements than itself. Long-standing British anxieties about the identity and destiny of the nation in its post-imperial phase found a focus in its fears about its moral, military and political adequacy in the modern era. The Argentines served firstly to catalyse and embody these anxieties, and then, through their defeat, to signify their dissolution. Instead of acknowledging the ingenuousness of Argentine convictions over the Malvinas and the tenacity with which they pursued them, official British accounts of the conflict not only questioned the significance of the enemy's opposition to the British position, it denied them their substantiveness and all but removed them from the battlefield. From this perspective, it wasn't that the Argentines lost the Falklands War, they had never even contested it: the British had been fighting themselves all along.[3]

The nature of the British response to Argentina during the struggle for the Malvinas, its determination to identify it as both the locus and the proxy for its collective anxieties, continues a long established pattern of discursive relations between Latin America and Britain. J.H. Elliott identifies its precedents in the earliest European responses to the New World. Surveying a wide array of texts from the late sixteenth into the seventeenth century, Elliott observes:

it is difficult not to be impressed by the strange lacunae and the resounding silences in many places where references to the New World could reasonably be expected. How are we to explain the absence of any mention of the New World in so many memoirs and chronicles, including the memoirs of Charles V himself? How are we to explain the continuing determination, right up to the last two or three decades of the sixteenth century, to describe the world as if it were still the world as known to Strabo, Ptolemy and Pomponius Mela?...

The reluctance of cosmographers or social philosophers to incorporate into their work the new information made available to them by the discovery of America provides an example of the wider problem arising from the revelation of the New World to the Old. Whether it is a question of the geography of America, its flora and fauna, or the nature of its inhabitants, the same kind of pattern seems constantly to recur in the European response. It is as if, at a certain point, the mental shutters came down; as if, with so much to see and absorb and understand, the effort suddenly becomes too much for them, and Europeans retreat to the half-light of their traditional mental world.

There is nothing very novel about the form of this sixteenth century response. Medieval Europe had found it supremely difficult to comprehend and come to terms with the phenomenon of Islam...Nor is this a matter of surprise, for the attempt of one society to comprehend another inevitably forces it to reappraise itself...This process is bound to be an agonizing one, involving the jettisoning of many traditional preconceptions and inherited ideas. It is hardly surprising, then, if sixteenth-century Europeans either ignored the challenge or baulked at the attempt. There was, after all, an easier way out, neatly epitomized in 1528 by the Spanish humanist, Hernán Perez de Oliva, when he wrote that Columbus set out on his second voyage 'to unite the world and give to those strange lands the form of our own'. (Elliott, 1970: 13–15)

Elliott's vision of sixteenth-century Europeans dazzled by the prodigality of the New World, retreating to 'the half light of their traditional mental world' from where they seek to understand 'those strange lands' by imposing on them 'the form of our own', furnishes a key image for the processes determining Britain's cultural relations with Latin America and the persistence of its

seemingly perennial ignorance about the continent. The British, as Alan Knight observes, have a long and venerable 'tradition of denigrating Latin America and its inhabitants' (Knight, 1994: 4). In 1850, Palmerston grouped South America with China and Portugal as

> half-civilised governments...[that] require a dressing down every eight or ten years to keep them in order. Their minds are too shallow to receive any impression that will last longer than some such period and warning is of little use. They care little for words and they must not only see the stick but actually feel it on their shoulders before they yield to that argument that brings conviction. (Miller, 1993: 51)

That Palmerston should have harboured such opinions is no surprise when one examines the public and private pronouncements of the diplomats who served in Latin America and whose reports crucially shaped British perceptions of the continent. Sir Robert Ker Porter, the British Consul General in Caracas in the 1820s, found its populace 'ignorant, lazy and full of vice...the manners and usages of the people resemble truly the general appearance of their city...fair remains...choaked up...with rank weeds' (Gregory, 1992: 130). Charles Milner Ricketts, the British consul in Lima during the same period, thought the Peruvian Indians 'amiable enough but uneducated, slavish, feeble and inert and moreover hopelessly "priest-ridden"' (Gregory, 1992: 75). Though neatly dismissed by Alan Knight as the usual round of 'smells, bells and lazy natives' these stereotypes survived well into the twentieth century and are still widespread (Knight, 1994: 4).[4] When, between the wars, W. Osbaldeston Mitford left London to take up a diplomatic posting in Mexico City, the members of his London Club, well-travelled men whom he considered 'of a high standard of general education and tolerably well informed on world affairs', warned him that 'if you ever venture outside the capital you will be made to occupy a cannibal's stewpot or be sacrificed on some pagan altar to an Indian God' (quoted in Knight, 1994: 5). The pomp and panoply of empire may be gone, but the attitudes that characterised and sustained it have turned out to be more enduring and as a result, as Knight ruefully reflects,

'the incomprehension and stereotypes remain, even where least expected' (Knight, 1994: 5).

David Cannadine's *Ornamentalism* (2001) helps to further explain the persistence of the intellectual half-light that spawns such stereotypes. It is Cannadine's aim in *Ornamentalism* to correct the approach of British and foreign scholars who had traditionally regarded British imperial history 'as if it were completely separate and distinct from the history of the British nation'. On the contrary, he contends, 'Britain was very much a part of the empire, just as the rest of the empire was very much part of Britain', the two comprising an 'entire interactive system', one 'vast interconnected world' (Cannadine, 2001: xvii). Indeed, Cannadine argues that the empire was literally inconceivable in isolation from the metropolitan centre, in that the domestic environment furnished a model by which the broader populace might think of and so understand the empire. What this meant in practical terms for those Britons struggling to 'conceive of these diverse colonies and varied populations beyond the seas' was that they began 'with what they knew – or what they thought they knew – namely, the social structure of their own home country' (Cannadine, 2001: 3–4). Through the heyday of the Empire, from the mid nineteenth century to the end of the Second World War, 'Britons generally conceived of themselves as belonging to an unequal society characterized by a seamless web of layered gradations…which extended in a great chain of being from the monarch at the top to the humblest subject at the bottom…and it was from that starting point that they contemplated and tried to comprehend the distant realms and diverse society of their empire' (Cannadine, 2001: 4).[5] As a result, the people's perception of the empire

> was not exclusively (or even preponderantly) concerned with the creation of 'otherness' on the presumption that the imperial periphery was different from, and inferior to, the imperial metropolis: it was at least as much (perhaps more?) concerned with what has recently been called the 'construction of affinities' on the presumption that society on the periphery was the same as, or even on occasions superior to, society in the

> metropolis. Thus regarded, the British Empire was about the familiar and domestic, as well as the different and the exotic: indeed, it was in large part about the domestication of the exotic – the comprehending and the reordering of the foreign in parallel, analogous, equivalent, resemblant terms. (Cannadine, 2001: xix)

Consequently, one of the central if unforeseen functions of the empire was its provision of a powerful 'mechanism for the export, projection and analogization of domestic social structures and social perceptions' (Cannadine, 2001: 10).

Cannadine's assertion that the empire was dedicated to the domestication of the exotic through parallel, analogy and equivalence is, of course, a calculated rebuttal of the theories of Edward Said. Said's reading of the British Empire conceived of it as a bureaucratic and discursive system designed to 'other' and thereby legitimate the oppression of its subject peoples (Said, 1978; 1993). Cannadine contends that this approach is 'too simplified' and is not alone in his recognition that for all his moral forcefulness – if not because of it – Said's understanding of the relations between coloniser and colonised wanted subtlety, that it was unable to acknowledge 'the extent to which empire was about collaboration and consensus as well as about conflict and coercion' (Cannadine, 2001: xvi).[6] Where the British Empire was concerned, the imperative to analogisation rescued the nation's vision of its far-flung possessions from trite reductivism, producing a sophisticated understanding of its structural complexities and a genuine responsiveness to the lives of the individuals who constituted it. Yet when this same sense-making system was applied to British visions of Latin America it rendered a disappointing array of familiar stereotypes.[7] Where one promoted knowledge through identification, the other seemed to foster only ignorance. Why was it that an identical process resulted in such contrasting outcomes?

One explanation resides in the cognitive processes involved in making sense of the unfamiliar. If 'acts of perception are really acts of recall', then what the British saw in India, Africa, Latin America and elsewhere was crucially determined by what they remembered of or had read or heard about equivalent prior

experience and the preconceptions they fed (Bartlett, 1972: 14). The effort to understand new experiences, to absorb and evaluate unfamiliar situations involves a combination of what cognitive scientists term 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' processing. Bottom-up processing involves 'building up a composite meaning on the basis of our perception of its component parts'; top-down processing, as its name implies, draws on the 'expectations, assumptions and prior knowledge' of the interpreter – Said calls this the '*textual* attitude' [italics in original] (MacLachlan and Reid, 1994: 70; Said, 1978: 92). While regular contact between Britain and its colonies served to demystify many of the empire's exoticisms, to convert a raft of top-down assumptions into the embodied evidence of bottom-up observation, ongoing ignorance about Latin America necessitated a primary – and thereafter habitual – recourse to top-down processes, within which experience and observation might be ordered and explained.[8] Like 'Darkest Africa', Britain's popular imagining of South America might have had its origins in geographical ignorance, but as Philip Curtin remarks, it was subsequently 'adhered to out of cultural arrogance' (Curtin, 1964: 293).

Elliott observes that a society engaged in a genuine effort to comprehend another must undergo an often agonising self-appraisal in which many 'traditional preconceptions and inherited ideas' have to be jettisoned.[9] This is not a process that any community will undertake lightly, and when it does take place it is driven not by altruism or a disinterested desire for greater knowledge of others but by a combination of compulsion and self-interest. In the case of the Spanish conquest of Latin America:

> it was the stimulus of practical considerations – the need to exploit the resources of America and to govern and convert its peoples – which compelled Europeans to widen their field of vision (sometimes in spite of themselves) and to organize and classify their findings within a coherent frame of thought.
>
> Officials and missionaries alike found that, to do their work effectively, they needed some understanding of the customs and traditions of the peoples entrusted to their charge…The *visitas* of royal officials to Indian

localities therefore tended to turn into elaborate inquiries into native history, land tenure and inheritance laws; and the reports of the more intelligent and inquiring of these officials…were in effect exercises in applied anthropology, capable of yielding a vast amount of information about native customs and societies. (Elliott, 1970: 32–3)

The eagerness of the British to conquer and then exploit their imperial possessions, particularly in India, gave rise to practical considerations of government, commerce and comparative religion comparable to those that the Spaniards had confronted in the New World and that, albeit involuntarily, enforced a corresponding extension of the conquerors' cognitive boundaries.[10] Yet in Latin America, while the British had extensive resources to exploit they had, beyond the thinly scattered populations of Guyana and Belize, no people to govern and so no need to pretend to an interest in or concern for the locals and their cultures, or any mission beyond the extraction of profits or the exercise of influence. They were, as William Yale put it, at liberty 'to secure [their] imperial interests without assuming the invidious burden of colonial rule' (quoted in Buchan, 2003: 14).[11] Freed from most of the 'practical considerations' which might demand an uncomfortable cohabitation with the other, the British had no need to expand their settled patterns of thought and perception to make room for the challenges posed by contact with Latin America or its people, and so no reason to subject themselves to a painful process of reappraisal. While Latin America remained of largely commercial interest to the British their established perceptions of it and the prejudices they fed could survive undisturbed, and the vision of Britain they reflected back remain untarnished.

This suggestion that these stereotypical constructions reveal as much about Britain as they do about Latin America implies a further explanation for their persistence. They survive because they continue to perform a valuable function: they express the nation's 'political unconscious'. According to Frederic Jameson, it is the purpose of the political unconscious to restore 'to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of [the nation's] fundamental history' (Jameson, 1981: 20). British stereotypes of

Latin America restore to the surface of the narratives that preserve them, voices previously unacknowledged in or consciously excised from the nation's fundamental history. These voices are significant because instead of extolling the glories of the empire they articulate the anxieties inherent in its extension, management and loss. The consolidation and further expansion of the British Empire in the early nineteenth century coincided with the rapid expansion of the revolutionary liberation movements of the Latin American republics. As the British were coming to terms with the moral and practical dilemmas arising from the extension of their dominion across the globe, the peoples of Latin America were, with varying degrees of success, throwing off the yoke of colonial government and for the first time enjoying the rights of free men. As a result, at that point and perennially thereafter in the world of British literary culture (and far beyond), Latin America became inextricably intertwined with a range of efforts to understand and mediate the burdens of empire.[12] Narratives set in or centred on Latin America ostensibly concerned with the experience of imperial subjugation can thus be seen as endeavours to address the effects of the exercise of imperial power. Patrick Brantlinger notes that while 'Empire involved military conquest and rapacious economic exploitation', it was also characterised by 'the enactment of often idealistic although nonetheless authoritarian schemes of cultural domination. The goal of imperialist discourse is always to weld these seeming opposites together or to disguise their contradiction' (Brantlinger, 1988: 34). Latin America furnished an ideal symbolic space, free from the complications of 'official' rule, within which narrative fiction might unpack and illuminate the contradictions of imperialist discourse. Here the 'buried reality' of imperial affirmation could be exhumed and held up for examination. Here the anxieties of the Empire might be articulated, assuaged or indulged. The resulting re-interpretation of these texts in terms of a 'deeper, underlying and more "fundamental" narrative', their recovered status as excavations of the 'buried reality' of colonial anxiety, transforms them from prejudicial travesties into 'cultural artefacts' whose value lies in their status as 'socially symbolic acts' (Jameson, 1981: 20, 28). When British literary

responses to Latin America are seen as a contribution to and not a refuge from the broader record of the experience of empire; when narratives ostensibly concerned with Latin America are recognised as symbolic treatments of Britain, the United States or Australia; when they are accepted as earnest endeavours to engage with the contradictions of imperial discourse and the anxieties they reflect, these narratives restore a range of formerly repressed perspectives to the mainstream of both imperial and domestic cultural history and enrich our understanding of Latin America's hitherto neglected place in each.

In what follows, through an examination of British, United States and, to a lesser extent, Australian literary and popular cultural responses to Latin America, I will endeavour to analyse some of these buried realities of empire; to illustrate the ways in which they illuminate our understanding of the anxieties engendered by traumatic social and political change at home; and to demonstrate how the mediations of these anxieties have framed our cultural relations with Latin America while boldly reshaping our perceptions of ourselves. In the process of doing this, a further, necessary aim of this book will be to re-read these illustrative texts, to consider how, through their responses to Latin America and the critique of their own cultures, they can be read within and as part of a broader tradition of cultural criticism and re-appraised accordingly.

1

NEWS FROM NOWHERE

Leadership and Legitimacy

In the late 1780s, Britain and Spain went to the brink of war over possession of the north-west coast of North America. The crisis had its focus on Nootka Sound, one of the bays carved out of the coast of Vancouver Island. During the 1780s Nootka had become a centre for fur and fisheries and Russian, French, American and British traders flocked to exploit its natural bounty. Their arrival was greeted with consternation by the Spaniards, who claimed exclusive sovereignty over the whole continent from the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494).[1] In 1789, in a belated effort to assert their authority, Spanish ships entered Nootka Sound and seized four vessels belonging to the British adventurer, Captain John Meares. When Meares turned to his government for assistance, Britain's Prime Minister William Pitt responded with alacrity. In the throes of imperial expansion abroad and economic and military reform at home, Britain was eager to recover the political momentum it had lost after the humiliation of the American War of Independence. Pitt saw in Nootka Sound the opportunity to balance the losses on the east coast of the continent with new gains on the west, and thereby restore national pride. Troops were dispatched, the Royal Navy prepared for action and the destabilisation of the broader Spanish imperium set in train, to which end: 'Francisco de Miranda was summoned' to lead the 'liberation of South America' (Williams, 1979: 4). Though the crisis soon passed, the Nootka incident did have a lasting effect on the course of Latin American independence. Francisco de Miranda, the father of Latin American liberation, came when he was called. From 1789–92 and 1801–5, '*El Precursor*' lived in London, travelling

widely in Europe in the intervening years.[2] He immersed himself in national and European politics, met monarchs and statesmen, philosophers and economists, cut a dash in polite society and pursued a number of notorious love affairs, all the while seeking to advance the cause of Latin American independence. The impact of his two extended periods of residence in Britain on the imagining of the independent republics of Latin America can hardly be overstated. For more than two decades after he brought his 'continental consciousness-raising campaign' to London, 'disaffected Spanish Americans from all regions of the empire' beat a path to Miranda's door at 27 Grafton Way in Bloomsbury (Racine, 2000: 4). The list of his visitors – Bernardo O'Higgins, Andrés Bello, the Mexican Friar Fray Servando Teresa de Mier, Simón Bolívar, José de San Martín, his friend and rival Carlos María de Alvear, and Bernardino Rivadavia – is a who's who of the Latin American liberation struggle.

Britain had obvious attractions for the 'independence generation'. Not only had its opposition to Napoleon's continental expansion and its denunciation of Spain's commercial monopolies made it a *de facto* proponent of Latin American liberation. Its own programme of political, economic and industrial modernisation made it both a model and an ideal partner for the continent's projected republics: 'Although the United States and France both offered fascinating experiments for Spanish Americans' consideration, it was early nineteenth-century Britain, the home of Adam Smith and the Industrial Revolution, that most captured their collective imagination' (Racine, 2000: 3–4). Like most modern visitors to London, the fathers of Latin American liberation mixed business and tourism with shopping and the pursuit of pleasure.[3] Soliciting financial aid, political recognition or military assistance, in search of generals, bureaucrats, teachers, printing presses and the odd constitution, these 'purposeful travellers' took time out to dine with Jeremy Bentham, visit Robert Owen's model farms and factories and discuss the merits of the monitorial system of education with one of its founders, Joseph Lancaster (Racine, 2000: 5).[4] Accordingly, when they made their way back to South America, whatever goods they stowed in the ship's hold, it was

their mental baggage, their vision of Britain as a 'free society of law, order and material progress' that exercised a more pervasive influence over the subsequent forging of the Latin American republics (Racine, 2000: 5).[5]

When Napoleon's 1808 invasion of Spain precipitated the abdication of Charles IV and the fall of the Bourbon monarchy in Madrid, the resulting crisis of imperial legitimacy triggered revolutionary uprisings throughout South America as Royalists and Republicans struggled for control of the colonies.[6] During the Peninsular campaign of 1808–13, Britain fought side by side with loyalist Spaniards to dislodge the French and restore the monarchies to Spain and Portugal. After Napoleon's surrender and exile to Elba in 1814, Britain intervened more directly in Latin American affairs, capitalising on the opportunity to extend its influence in the continent at the expense of its erstwhile ally. Soon after Ferdinand VII reclaimed his father's throne in Spain, he focused his resources on subduing his rebellious Latin American colonies and the nascent republics suffered a series of reverses. The first Venezuelan Republic fell as early as 1812 and in the succeeding years Spain launched a series of vigorous counter-attacks in the Viceroyalties of Peru and New Granada.[7] At this juncture, just as the republics had looked to Britain for inspiration and example as they struggled to establish themselves, they now looked to her for arms and assistance as they fought for their survival. Numerous missions crossed the Atlantic to sue for moral support, materiel and manpower. The timing of these appeals was uncommonly propitious. 'The end of the Napoleonic Wars resulted in large numbers of underemployed troops in Europe, and many newly discharged British soldiers jumped at the opportunity to fight in America' (Racine, 2000: 7).[8] Britain's first recruits left London for Venezuela in December 1817 followed over the next three years by a further 50 sailings carrying more than 8,000 men, most bound for Venezuela, some destined for Chile and Peru.

This influx of British military personnel and their families into Latin America engendered intimate contacts between the two cultures at all social levels, providing a beachhead from which British goods, manners and ideas could spread their influence

through the continent: 'the most visible influence of the increasing British presence in Spanish America was the introduction of new kinds of machinery, weapons and consumer goods to everyday usage'. Of longer lasting significance, however, were 'the tastes, habits and preferences formed in Europe' that these men and women brought with them and which subsequently exercised such a profound influence over 'local consumption and design patterns' (Racine, 2000: 16–17). The local elites adopted British innovations in architecture, interior design, table manners, dress, recreation, education and print publications. In doing so,

> the patriotic creole upper classes literally wore their allegiances on their person; English-manufactured calicoes and jerseys, Irish linens and Scottish woollens…Even the poorer classes, who admired some of the exotic imported colours they were not able to produce locally, purchased Manchester flannel, picked it to pieces, respun the wool yarn and wove it sparingly into their own hand-produced fabrics to approximate the desired colour. (Racine, 2000: 20)[9]

While British and European models exercised a pervasive influence through Latin American society, Mary Louise Pratt claims that 'By the 1820s, the South American revolutions…had become a source of immense interest in Europe', a claim echoed by David Sinclair, who observed that 'newspapers and magazines' throughout Britain 'were full of news, opinion and optimistic forecasts about the future of South America' at this time (Pratt, 1992: 146; Sinclair, 2003: 49). However, the evidence suggests that beyond the press, the coffee houses and the stock exchange, neither the continent nor its liberation struggles 'preoccupied the British consciousness' at any deeper level (Watts and Davies, 1979: 44). Despite Sinclair's claim that in Britain 'There was much airy talk of the cause of liberty and republicanism' and that 'leaders of the independence movement…were fêted as heroes in London', English literature of the period yields not a single portrait of a liberation hero – indeed hardly any mention of Latin America at all.[10] Thus, the greatest revolutionary movement of the century left scarcely a mark on the imaginative culture of early mid nineteenth-century Britain.

Why was this? V.S. Naipaul suggests that the liberation of the Latin American republics, most specifically Venezuela, was more a basis for uncomfortable self-reflection than a cause for celebration among the British, who were busy in the Caribbean, and elsewhere, establishing colonies 'remarkably like the Spanish province' they were helping to liberate (Naipaul, 1973: 333–4).[11] From this perspective it was less the emergence of the independent republics than the decline of the Spanish empire that exercised Britain. A further explanation arises from the fact that British forces were engaged on multiple fronts at the time, combating the French on land and at sea, fighting a brief war with the United States of America and consolidating power in India through wars against Nepal and the Rajput states. With so much of the nation's military resources engaged elsewhere, it is hardly surprising that the British had little time for events that seemed to lie far beyond their material interests. The only occasions on which South America occupied the nation's collective imagination was when Popham and Whitelocke's raids on Buenos Aires, in 1806 and 1807 respectively, ended in humiliation for the British forces.[12] Thereafter, 'Britain in the main avoided formal empire in Latin America', preferring to 'exercise a kind of informal paramountcy' through its domination of trade and commerce (Knight, 1994: 4). One of the central consequences of this reluctance to take on an overtly political role in Spanish America was, as already noted, the entrenchment of British ignorance about the continent and its peoples. The imperial condescension this expresses, and the lexicon of disparagement it underwrote, further explains the failure of British literary culture to engage with Latin America in the early nineteenth century. While it was felt that Spanish America lay beyond the sphere of British interest, it was believed that there was little there to sustain cultural engagement. Ironically, the conviction that Latin America was an irrelevance gradually brought it into the British cultural mainstream. Signifying nothing, Latin America could be made to mean just about anything.[13] Britain's refusal to engage with the origins or processes of the republics' rebellions against Spanish colonial rule made Latin America the ideal locus for examining its own transformation into

an imperial power. Robert Southey's epic poem, *Madoc* (1805), offers an instructive, if early, case in point, as Southey uses his eponymous hero's adventures in the New World to address the anxieties raised by Britain's expanding imperial role in the early nineteenth century.

On the death of his father, King Owain of Gwynedd, Madoc gathers a band of followers, takes ship and leaves Wales, in search of 'Some happy isle, some undiscovered shore,/ Some resting place for peace' (Southey, 1909: 471). After crossing the Atlantic, the Welsh discover an Edenic country inhabited by a defeated and demoralised people, the Hoamen. Subject to their warlike neighbours, the Aztecs, they are compelled to surrender an annual tribute of children for human sacrifice. Madoc determines to end this savage practice, liberate the Hoamen and establish a new world of peace and plenty. When battle is joined, divine favour and superior leadership ensure a Welsh victory. Under the resulting peace treaty the Aztecs pledge to abandon human sacrifice, the worship of their idols and to free the Hoamen. His work of pacification complete, Madoc returns to Wales to collect more settlers for the colony. However, on his return to North America he finds that the Aztecs, coerced by their priests, have broken their compact and returned to idolatry and human sacrifice. A series of climactic battles ensues. The Welsh once again vanquish the Aztecs, whose defeat is compounded when a volcanic eruption and accompanying earthquake devastate their settlements. Abandoning their homes, the survivors head south to Mexico, leaving the Welsh and the Hoamen to prosper in this new Eden.

If this seems a rather expansive precís it is worth noting that the poem itself comes in at a little under 9,000 lines, a narrative stretch which even Southey's more sympathetic critics felt 'unjustified' (Curry, 1975: 161). Other reviewers derided the poem as 'interminable'; one thought it 'as long a labour as any twelfth-century Atlantic crossing' (Williams, 1979: 189, 195). Southey's epics did go on. When Shelley made the pilgrimage to Greta Hall to visit his idol, he reportedly 'slipped beneath the table, unconscious with boredom, during Southey's rendition of one of his own epics' (Storey, 1997: 213). *Madoc*'s critical

reception mixed panegyric with disdain. The *Imperial Review* felt that the poem 'would hardly yield to *Paradise Lost*' (quoted in Madden, 1972: 105). The classical scholar, Richard Porson, was an intemperate admirer, affirming that '*Madoc* will be read – when Homer and Virgil are forgotten' – 'and *not till then*', Byron reputedly added (quoted in Carnall, 1971: 14). For the prosecution, John Ferriar lamented 'The dull tenor of mediocrity' which characterised the poem. In *Madoc* 'we behold the author mounted on a strange animal, something between a rough Welsh poney [*sic*] and a Peruvian sheep' (quoted in Madden, 1972: 103–4). The *Eclectic Review* thought the poem 'grossly improbable…considerably too long' and disgraced by 'sundry [linguistic] fopperies and singularities' (quoted in Madden, 1972: 107). Time has done little to soften such opinion. Contemporary critics have found it uninteresting, bloated, contradictory and ideologically inconsistent, with its protagonists dismissed as 'mere righteous ciphers' (Franklin, 2003: 83).[14]

Ironically, the poem's inadequacies have come to be regarded as its greatest strength. Caroline Franklin has noted that the 'discordant voices' which render *Madoc* an 'artistic failure' also make it 'a poem of great interest to the cultural historian' (Franklin, 2003: 70, 71).[15] Composed through the years of Southey's extended grappling with the effects of the French revolution on British liberty and his resultant transformation from Jacobin firebrand to establishment imperialist, the poem celebrates the nation's expanding colonial role while addressing the anxieties to which it gave rise.[16] As Linda Colley notes, Britain's successes in the Seven Years War (1756–63) vastly extended its imperial power and enhanced its international prestige. However, 'having acquired too much power too quickly over too many people' its success also had a profoundly destabilising effect (Colley, 1996: 110–11). As the eighteenth century drew to a close Colley reflects, 'like the frog in the Aesop fable which exploded in trying to compete with the ox' Britons 'made nervous and insecure by their colossal new dimensions…were left wondering if they had overstretched themselves' (Colley, 1996: 109). The story of Madoc addressed these concerns, having itself 'entered history as an instrument

of imperial conflict' (Williams, 1979: 67). First appearing in Sir George Peckham's *True Reporte* (1583), 'a pamphlet *written by an Englishman* to promote a British colonization of America', it arose from Elizabethan England's struggle with Spain over possession of the New World (Williams, 1979: 35). Two hundred years later, as the two countries squared-off over Nootka Sound, Madoc was once again invoked in support of British title to North America. The intermittent prominence of the Madoc myth has clearly rested on its serviceability to British imperial and cultural ambitions. As these have shifted so Madoc has drifted in and out of the cultural mainstream, tracing 'the ebb and flow of imperialism, trade rivalry and colonial settlement' while also helping to manage the anxieties that they have occasioned (Williams, 1979: 67). The specific anxieties that Southey addresses in *Madoc* focus on two questions that preoccupied Britons at the time. Does the nation have the personal and collective qualities to conquer and run an empire – can we do it? And, is it a morally defensible exercise – is it right? While the second of these arose from an ongoing debate about the moral and political grounds for colonial rule, a crisis of legitimacy, the former addressed what seemed to be a matter of more immediate concern in Britain in the late eighteenth, early nineteenth century: a perceived crisis of leadership.

In the closing years of George III's reign, the many scandals involving the royal family, the casual corruptions of political life with its rotten boroughs and 'septennial bribes', fed widespread distaste for the country's governing classes (Crabbe, 1905: 123).[17] Having so recently lost its American colonies it was widely questioned whether the nation's traditional rulers could be relied upon to defend the nation's interests elsewhere in the empire and run the state efficiently at home. A popular explanation for the dissolution of standards among the ruling order was the baleful influence of the eastern empire on the nation's moral fibre.[18] As trade between Britain and the east burgeoned, a corresponding conviction took hold that domestic corruption was the product of moral contamination contracted in the east. Tim Fulford notes:

> Viewing immorality as a colonial import was in one way reassuring: it assuaged Britons' fear that the 'infections' of moral and political corruption

> were endemic to British character. It allowed them to imagine the 'infections' as diseases that threatened the nation from without. Displacing them to the east helped recast…the anxieties of the domestic realm as 'anxieties of empire'. Extermination of the supposed sources of infection in the colonies then became a mission by which Britons assured themselves of their own purity. (Fulford, 1999: 168)

In the early years of the nineteenth century the responsibility for national purification began to shift, as it was felt that the nation's traditional aristocratic governors could no longer be entrusted with the task. Literature, biography and more straightforwardly propagandist tracts of the period, increasingly identify the nation's finest qualities with the gentry, the professional classes and the navy: 'In the years between Trafalgar and the accession of Queen Victoria romantic portraits of the navy provided moral exemplars for the domestic and imperial spheres. They promoted the chivalry of the ocean when the chivalry of the land was in doubt' (Fulford, 1999: 162).[19] Southey played a key role in engineering this shift in public attitudes to the military and the aristocracy through his massively popular *Life of Nelson* (1813). Nelson's qualities, initiative, courage, dutifulness, devotion to country and absolute selflessness had taken a mere parson's son to national prominence and demonstrated that he and those like him were

> fitter to govern than the landed classes, who currently held (and abused) power and privilege…The biography of Nelson, which began as an article in the conservative *Quarterly Review*, was…intended to show the public how the social order could be preserved by a return to the virtues of a Nelson. (Fulford, 1999: 162, 173)

These virtues and the ideal of leadership they enshrined also had a purpose in Britain's role as an emerging colonial power:

> In constructing his myth of the imperial hero, Southey was performing an influential service for a Britain in the process of defining itself as an imperialist nation. Reviving the code of chivalry, he defined British authority in terms of paternalism, duty, and disinterestedness tested in battle. He shaped the image of the gentleman as one who commanded effectively because he had a self-command that made him resist Oriental luxury and

> the feminization of culture. It was a powerful image, because it offered a solution to the anxieties that beset the imperial nation at home and abroad – the solution of war. It is in battle that Nelson redeems the national character: Southey shows his readers that the salvation of Britain and Britishness lies in its military role. The moral fiber necessary for proper government is found in imperial conflict: the empire is necessary as a training ground for government at home. (Fulford, 1999: 177)

Victorian leaders and the public enthusiastically embraced Southey's prescription for domestic and imperial captaincy. The *Life* sold in large numbers, publishing 13 editions in the four decades after its publication. It remained a popular schoolbook in the late Victorian period, admired for its character-forming example, and was re-issued in a 1916 'khaki' edition for young officers with an introduction by Sir Henry Newbolt. In *Madoc*, published eight years before the *Life of Nelson*, we can see Southey working towards this position on the nature and qualities of leadership through a focus on imperial conquest as the testing ground of personal and national character. Though nobly born, Madoc turns his back on the privileges of preferment, making his way in the New World as a free man. Hence the loyalty that he inspires in his followers rests on his personal qualities, high principle, intelligence, courage and piety that are brought out in his struggle with the Aztecs. He is, as such, carefully tailored to alleviate the anxieties inspired by the crisis of leadership. With men like Madoc directing its imperial ventures, the nation can rest easy.

Yet his individual virtues are complicated by apparent contradictions in his motivations and behaviour. In flight from civil strife at home, in quest of peace and in defence of civilisation, he hacks, hews and spears a path to political and spiritual concord. He declares his civility but acts with breathtaking brutality. He presents himself as the representative of a more sophisticated polity and a more enlightened religion, but proves himself no less prepared to dictate, no less willing than the Aztecs to see the sacrifice of his people on the altars of his Gods. These inconsistencies are less a mark of slipshod craftsmanship on Southey's part than a reflection of his struggle to unravel the ideological

tensions inherent in his celebration of British imperialism, tensions which find a focus in *Madoc* in the presence of the Aztecs. That it is the Aztecs who constitute his prime adversaries in the New World is a significant point in itself, in that they occupy only a minor and contentious part in the myth of Madoc. One account of Madoc's journey puts his landfall on the coast of Mexico and identifies the Welsh as the distant ancestors of the Aztecs. Yet the mainstream version which fired the Welsh with emigration fever in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries locates his first contact with the New World in Mobile Bay Alabama, from where he sailed south-west before heading up the Mississippi. As a consequence the late eighteenth century saw a number of expeditions to the upper reaches of the Mississippi, the Missouri and their tributaries, in search of the descendants of Madoc's people, the so-called White or Welsh Indians.[20] Numerous tribes were identified as hopefuls but discounted on closer examination, until attention focused on the most easterly of the plains Indians, the Mandans of North Dakota. Sadly, the tribe was almost completely wiped out in a smallpox epidemic of 1781, but not before their distinctive architecture, suggestive mythology, lightness of hair and fairness of skin had sent explorers, ethnologists and Welsh nationalists into an orgy of optimistic speculation.[21] From our perspective the significant point about the Mandans is not their putative ancestry but the fact that when Southey needed a sufficiently savage antagonist for Madoc he overlooked the claims of the locals and imported the Aztecs. Why? It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Aztecs were drafted into the poem specifically to justify their own subjugation, advance the cause of British imperial intervention and so resolve the crisis of legitimacy. Though noble and disciplined, they are in moral and spiritual terms a fallen people, suborned by superstition, fear and a self-serving priesthood into human sacrifice and the service of false gods.[22] Southey's lurid descriptions of their religious impedimenta, the smoke-blackened idols, the gore-greased 'pabas', 'Hooded with sable, [their] half-naked limbs/ Smear'd black', the sacrificial stone, the flint knives, the palpitating hearts, are all calculated to make the moral case for Madoc's conquest of them clear-cut

(Southey, 1909: I 479). Their rites are powerfully suggestive of the sorts of sacrificial practices – sati (suttee), jauhar, thugee killings and weekly child offerings to Kali – current in the Rajput states of India that the British were busy subduing at the time Southey was composing the poem. The Aztecs' religious practices, and by extension those of the Indians and any number of other heathen tribes, thus emblematise the sort of pagan barbarity that not only vindicates but demands the further extension of Britain's imperial sway and its civilising mission.

Yet in the process of celebrating Britain's civilising mission the poem also functions as a manifesto for conquest and expansion. When Madoc meets the Aztec king Coanocotzin to plead for the liberty of the Hoamen, he reassures him that he has no designs on his territory: 'I come not from my native isle/ To wage the war of conquest, and cast out/ Your people from the land which time and toil/ Have rightly made their own' (Southey, 1909: 487). It is entirely in keeping with the double logic of imperialism, its promotion of the expropriation of foreign lands as principled possession and the subjection of their peoples as the highest form of liberty, that this is exactly what happens. The further the British extended their empire, the more they denied self-government to people whose lands they coveted, the more they affected to treasure freedom. At the very moment that Southey employed this myth of Welsh cultural survival to celebrate the imperial benevolence of the British, they were busy in Wales violently repressing political and cultural independence movements and so driving new waves of migrants across the Atlantic.[23] As a proponent of imperialism, in celebrating the nation's capacity to sustain and extend its empire, Southey cannot help but exacerbate concerns about its moral legitimacy.

Genocidal Fantasies

In the years after Napoleon's invasion of Spain, as the liberation movements sweeping Latin America gathered pace and British recruits enlisted in their thousands to fight in Venezuela, Bolivia and Peru, events on the far side of the Atlantic began to feature

more prominently in Britain. David Sinclair notes that once the volunteers arrived, news of their exploits filled the newspapers:

> On occasion, as much as one whole page out of the customary four in the daily papers might be devoted to details of battles – usually many weeks after they had taken place – and to political events, profiles of the republican leaders and military men

which in turn 'stimulated an almost feverish demand for information on every aspect of South America' (Sinclair, 2003: 49).

The more Southey read about what was happening in Spain's former empire the less he liked it. Where news of the early revolts in Venezuela and the Rio de la Plata had left him 'perplexed', disdain soon gave place to dyspepsia (Storey, 1997: 236). Writing in 1814 he found little to choose between the recently proclaimed revolutionary government in Buenos Aires and 'the wicked conduct of that beast Ferdinand [VII]' newly installed on the Spanish throne in Madrid: 'Alas, that the despotism of the old country, & the republicanism (how is that name polluted!) of the new should be equally blind, equally bloody, & almost equally detestable' (quoted in Storey, 1997: 236). In Southey's opinion the *criollos*' struggle to free themselves from Spain's imperial stranglehold was not merely premature, it was grossly presumptuous: 'if our own Americans were unfit for independence', he wrote to his friend John Rickman, 'how much more unfit are these!' (quoted in Storey, 1997: 235). As late as 1814 he was of the view that Latin America's revolutions should be crushed and the native peoples of the new world annihilated – incapable of self-government they were fit only for 'extermination' (quoted in Storey, 1997: 235).[24] Even his staunchest allies acknowledge that these views could have 'no defence'. In mitigation, Mark Storey proposes 'one can only assume that the news of incipient revolution in South America, coming so hard on the heels of the end of the tragedy he associated with the French Revolution, filled him with such terror that he was prepared to countenance anything that would prevent another such tragedy' (Storey, 1997: 235).[25] By early 1825, though 'conscious that he should be attending to events in Spanish America … he was too busy to do so', his

attention focused instead on 'more immediate concerns', not least the restive political situation at home (Storey, 1997: 308–9). The consequences of this focus on matters of local politics, law and order are drawn out in Southey's second ostensibly South American poem, *A Tale of Paraguay* (1825) which, though published in 1825, was begun ten years earlier. Here we find Southey giving concrete form to the genocidal fantasy he had first sketched out a decade before in his letter to Rickman, liquidating whole tribes of native Paraguayans in order to advance a series of arguments about the state of British democracy.

The poem itself is remarkably slight. Though Geoffrey Carnall thought it the 'most pleasing of [Southey's] longer poems', he conceded that it was 'not resilient enough' (Carnall, 1971: 23). An 1825 reviewer in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* dismissed *A Tale of Paraguay* as 'an exceedingly poor poem, feeble alike in design and execution' (quoted in Madden, 1972: 323). Uncertain of what to make of a panegyric to the Jesuits from one of the nation's most inveterate anti-Catholics, critics have gone to unusual lengths to avoid analysing it. Most recently, having noted that *A Tale of Paraguay* is 'a very strange poem', Mark Storey insists that its 'chief interest, now, lies in its opening paean to the virtues of Edward Jenner' – an appraisal which makes reading a book by its cover look like the height of hermeneutical complexity (Storey, 1997: 306). Storey is in retreat from the poem because, like critics over the past century and a half, he has failed to recognise what its chief concerns actually are, that as a species of 'mediation' it is concerned less with 'the appearance of things', less with Paraguay, than it is with the 'underlying reality', the political situation in Britain that shapes the surface (Jameson, 1981: 39). Taken as a portrait of life in Paraguay, an account of Guarani customs, or even as an affecting tale of romance, faith and redemption, there is little here to reward serious analysis. The tone is a cloying mix of the sentimental and the moralistic, the settings are half-drawn, the life and customs of the Guarani travestied, the Jesuits all but beatified and the main characters mere ciphers. Yet as with *Madoc*, the poem's failings are also a record of its key operational forms, a reflection of its semiotic

function, a clear demonstration of the fact that its focus is on neither the Guarani, nor Paraguay, but on Britain and its restive, reform-minded populace. The Guarani, the Jesuits and their Missions, are emblems which mediate Southey's engagement with 'more immediate' domestic 'concerns', his ideas about the bases and principles of good government and the benign social order it accords. The poem thus employs the native inhabitants of Paraguay, and the Jesuits' endeavours to convert and settle them, to make a series of points about British politics and society – to caution against the rising tide of liberty that Southey believed would sweep away all that had made Britain great and good, and to commend the strong hand of order in defence of the nation and its most cherished ideals.

The smallpox epidemic with which the poem opens separates the survivors, Quiara and Monnema, from the customary practices of the tribe, establishing them, like Adam and Eve, as the only inhabitants of an Edenic wilderness, the potential progenitors of a new race. This device enables Southey to advertise the benefits of monogamy and the nuclear family, propounding its fixed hierarchies and their attendant responsibilities as the basis of any happy and stable social order. Yet while isolation frees the family from barbarous custom, it also denies them the boon of society and the fruits of its highest social and spiritual expression, Christianity. The arrival of the Jesuits thus marks a kind of Ascension for the Guarani, from ignorant solitude to the familial bliss of Catholic community and its promise of eternal life:

> O happy day, the Messenger of Heaven
> Hath found them in their lonely dwelling place!
> O happy day, to them it would be given
> To share in that Eternal Mother's grace,
> And one day see in heaven her glorious face
> Where Angels round her mercy-throne adore!
> Now shall they mingle with the human race,
> Sequester'd from their fellow-kind no more;
> O joy of joys supreme! O bliss for them in store.
>
> (Southey, 1909: 686)

Southey was an outspoken opponent of Catholic emancipation. As such, the sympathetic portrayal of the Jesuits in the poem confounded many critics. His endorsement of the order was, however, carefully circumscribed. It was not the 'erring' creed of the Jesuits that impressed him but the social organisation of their Missions (Southey, 1909: 681). Here, hierarchy, discipline, the firm benevolence of the leaders and the unquestioning obedience of the led, seemed to provide an ideal model for British society. As he worked on *A Tale of Paraguay* between 1815 and 1825, the levelling reverberations of the French revolution were still ringing through Britain. Agitation for electoral reform was growing while often violent rumblings against the Corn Laws, the hardships attendant on increased industrialisation and a host of local disputes all added to a sense of crisis in which the established order was felt to be under imminent threat.[26] Southey was a staunch defender of the constitutional status quo, regarding even modest parliamentary reform or any extension of the franchise as 'the direct road to anarchy' (Storey, 1997: 195). He believed in the 'absolute necessity of discipline' at both the personal and the national level (Storey, 1997: 320). The broader populace, 'that beast the people', he regarded with genial contempt. Like a wayward nag it needed a firm hand: 'always submissive enough to a good rider [it] only becomes vicious when it feels a timid & inexpert one in the saddle' (Storey, 1997: 328). Southey argued that only the uncompromising defence of the established systems would keep Britons 'the prosperous, the powerful, the free, the happy people that we are' (Storey, 1997: 195). Confronted with increased pressure for political and social reform, Southey declared a preference for 'more order, more discipline...less liberty to do ill; – more encouragement – more help – to do well…to impress both upon the Rulers & the People a sense of their respective duties' (Storey, 1997: 303). Accordingly, the disciplined hierarchy of the Missions, the willing servitude of the Guarani, the selfless – but no less authoritarian – paternalism of their Jesuit fathers seemed to Southey to embody an ideal model for social organisation among his own people – a truly Utopian polity, part penitentiary, part nursery.

> Content and cheerful Piety were found
> Within those humble walls. From youth to age
> The simple dwellers paced their even round
> Of duty, not desiring to engage
> Upon the busy world's contentious stage,
> Whose ways they had been wisely train'd to dread:
> Their inoffensive lives in pupilage
> Perpetually, but peacefully, they led,
> From all temptation saved, and sure of daily bread.
>
> <div align="right">(Southey, 1909: 687)</div>

What makes the Missions so attractive to Southey is his Orwellian conviction that freedom is captivity, and captivity freedom, that the liberty so prized by those agitating for reform in Britain actually constituted a kind of servitude, while the childlike submissiveness of the Guarani, content to leave the responsibility for all concerns in the hands of their quasi-parental leaders, made them truly free (see Southey, 1909: 688).

Clearly, Southey's ideal state was peopled not by free and equal citizens, nor by rulers and their subjects, but by a parent-priesthood and its dutiful flock. His endorsement of the Jesuit orthodoxy is reflected in the unworldliness of his Guaranis. So entranced are they by the attractions of the afterlife that they seem almost indecently eager to quit this one, hurling themselves towards paradise like Catholic kamikazes in the squadrons of the righteous. No sooner are they within the gates of the Mission than they are on their way to its cemetery.[27] In the eyes of the Jesuit fathers this rapid progress from innocent solitude through faithful service to the rewards of paradise, marks the family out as divinely favoured: 'This was, indeed, a chosen family,/ For Heaven's especial favour mark'd, they said;/ Shut out from all mankind they seem'd to be,/ Yet mercifully they were visited,/ That so within the fold they might be led,/ Then call'd away to bliss' (Southey, 1909: 694). Thus has the logic of repression brought us to the point where isolation, ignorance, disease and death are the markers of special providence. This logic reflects not only Southey's conviction as to the certainty of heavenly

reward for the virtuous, but more contentiously, it embodies a manifesto specifically shaped by the social and political turbulence of early to mid nineteenth-century Britain. It is a doctrine that promotes a politics of quietude while threatening violence against those who refuse to bend the knee. The only choice for Britain's restive working classes, as Southey sees it, is obedience or the 'fierce freedom' of rebellion (Southey, 1909: 679). Yet the choice is illusory, as the outcome of each is identical – one promises the living death of servitude and self-denial, the other the violent sanction of a repressive regime. Death, it would seem, is the best that these people can hope for.

In his defence, Southey's bark was worse than his bite. While he may have fantasised about violent retribution against the mob, *A Tale of Paraguay* reveals that what he actually longs for is the obedience of the restive classes, not their obliteration. His dream is of the people's return to a state of innocence, a childlike tractability that leaves their elders and betters free to play God. Southey's heaven, unlike that of the Jesuits in their Missions, is determinedly temporal and inescapably political. It is the dictator's heaven of mass submission, of the cowed and regimented collective, the society of the beehive that promises little more than the life of a drone. In *A Tale of Paraguay*, the Guarani are born, brought into the imaginative world of the British and killed off in short order so that the virtues and rewards of Southey's totalitarian utopia might be more effectively promoted. Thus they die that the greater portion of the British people might continue to live in servitude.

Mission Statement

Patrick Brantlinger pointed out the close links between the sort of domestic repression advocated by Southey, imperialism and the quest for utopia, when he noted: 'If imperialism often served as an ideological counterweight to domestic liberalism, providing conservative ballast even for forms of radical opinion, it also served as a reservoir of utopian images and alternatives that helped energize reform impulses at home' (Brantlinger, 1988: 28). In the late nineteenth century, as the proud boasts of

imperial mission were found to be hollow and the oppression and exploitation on which the nation's colonies rested were brought to light, the quest for an ideal society to match the idealising rhetoric of colonial improvement gained a new urgency.[28] The 20 years between 1871 and 1891 saw 'an explosion of utopian writing' as writers and thinkers faced up to the failures of the industrial revolution at home and the unpalatable truths about colonial brutality abroad (Kumar, 1987: 66). R.B. Cunninghame Graham's history of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay, *A Vanished Arcadia* (1988/1901), is both a contribution to this literature of social imagining and a reflection on the reasons for the failure of the communities it envisioned. Graham, like Southey, was impressed by what the Jesuits had achieved in Latin America, for different reasons. It was not the rigid hierarchies but the tolerant egalitarianism of the Missions, their combination of cultural high-mindedness with a social organisation shaped by a moral and not a profit-driven agenda that inspired Graham. The Jesuits, Graham observes, 'strove to teach the Indian population all the best part of the European progress of the times in which they lived, [while] shielding them sedulously from all contact with commercialism' (Graham, 1988: xxii). While he concedes that 'the Jesuits were unpopular' in 'every portion of America' he argues that it was not their 'wealth and power' which made them so but 'their attitude on slavery' (Graham, 1988: 259–60). The Spanish settlers in eighteenth-century Paraguay were determined to exploit the natural and human resources of the country – particularly those monopolised by the Jesuits who, committed to protect the Guaranis from the corruptions of secular society, steadfastly opposed the settlers' plans to enslave them. The Paraguayan Missions thus furnished the ground on which the shock troops of eighteenth-century secularism and the pious but under-gunned legions of the Church joined in battle. The ruined Missions that he visited in the late nineteenth century were, in Graham's eyes, eloquent testimony to the competing forces at play in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Paraguay – the yearning to empower one's fellow man, the contrary stimulus to exploit him and the inevitable outcome of their struggle. The toppled

steeples and their gaping belfries, the degenerate livestock, the once productive land returned to scrub, the high ideals that all of these embodied, had been devastated by selfishness and greed, reduced to a wilderness of weeds by the irresistible forces of unimproved nature:

> On every side the powerful vegetation had covered up the fields. On ruined church and chapel, and on broken tower, the lianas climbed as if on trees, creeping up the belfries, and throwing great masses of scarlet and purple flowers out of the apertures where once were hung the bells. In the thick jungles a few half-wild cattle were still to be found. The vast *estancias*, where once the Jesuits branded two and three thousand calves a year, and from whence thousands of mules went forth to Chile and Bolivia, were all neglected. Horses were scarce and poor, crops few and indifferent, and the plantations made by the Jesuits of the tree (*Ilex Paraguayensis*) from which is made the *yerba maté*, were all destroyed. (Graham, 1988: 9)

It would be a mistake, however, to take this evocation of a lost world of moral idealism and social equality as an uncritical affirmation of the Jesuit model of utopia. Elsewhere Graham condemns the Jesuits' paternalism, while his sly allusion to the presence of 'twelve pair of fetters' in a Mission inventory implies his recognition that there was more (and less) to this utopia than either Southey or the Jesuit propagandists were prepared to divulge (Graham, 1988: 196). What looks like an endorsement of one specific vision of utopia is actually the vehicle through which Graham interrogates a range of contemporary issues, most notably the forms and failings of the British political system, for which utopia serves as a convenient proxy.

When Graham wrote *A Vanished Arcadia*, the debate about utopia, how it might be brought into being and what it might look like was reaching a new crescendo. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries the most popular visions of utopia, heavily influenced by Thomas More's defining description of the ideal society, *Utopia* (1516), had centred on the model of the regulated communal order, a sort of secularised monasticism. The central principle of such communities was to restrain the passions and foster the cultivation of modest needs – to eliminate inequities

and so forestall social discord.[29] Attractive as this might seem, its defining characteristic is stasis: this vision of utopia seeks to refine the ideal elements of an essentially dormant polity. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries western societies were experiencing unprecedented transformation as, 'stimulated by developments in geology and biology, European thought was increasingly penetrated by concepts of change, evolution and progress' (Kumar, 1987: 42). The industrial revolution seemed to embody this new spirit. Its seismic effects on established political and social forms gave rise to an entirely new way of thinking about time, 'one that took it out of religious fatalism and rationalist scepticism', producing a new understanding of the engines and objects of history (Kumar, 1987: 42). Where Enlightenment thinkers had conceived of history as a cyclical process, the mid eighteenth century onwards embraced the triumph of progress, the belief that 'history was the record of the growth and progressive fulfilment of humanity' (Kumar, 1987: 43). The resulting doctrine of ineluctable perfectibilism was first famously propounded by Turgot in two discourses delivered at the Sorbonne in 1750:

> We see the establishment of societies and the formation of nations which one after the other dominate other nations or obey them. Empires rise and fall; the laws and forms of government succeed one another; the arts and sciences are discovered and made more perfect. Sometimes arrested, sometimes accelerated in their progress, they pass through different climates. Interest, ambition, and vainglory perpetually change the scene of the world, inundating the earth with blood. But in the midst of these ravages man's mores become sweeter, the human mind becomes enlightened, and the isolated nations come closer to each other. Commerce and politics reunite finally all the parts of the globe, and the whole mass of the humankind, alternating between calm and agitation, good and bad, marches constantly, though slowly, towards greater perfection. (quoted in Kumar, 1987: 43)

By the early nineteenth century this doctrine had been stripped of its implicit theological lagging. Progress and the perfection it brought were, it was argued, not attributable to divine Providence but the natural outcome of a historical principle whose laws, like

those of nature, were discoverable though enquiry, observation and analysis. History, as Condorcet put it, was 'a science to foresee the progression of the human species' (quoted in Manuel and Manuel, 1966: 211). Accordingly, by the early nineteenth century utopia was regarded not as the gift of a benevolent deity or 'the deliberate conscious construct of a wise monarch or legislator', but 'the impersonal working out of dynamic historical forces, which was guiding humanity to the realization of its full potential in the modern socialist or scientific utopia' (Kumar, 1987: 45). Hence Zygmunt Bauman's claim that 'Socialism has been and…still is *the* utopia of the modern epoch' (Bauman, 1976: 58).

Despite his background, born into a privileged family with ancestral estates in Scotland, Graham was an early and vociferous advocate for many of socialism's central causes. Elected to Parliament in 1886 as the Liberal member for Blackfriars (Glasgow), his first question in the House drew attention to the plight of the Lanarkshire miners. Over the next six years he used the chamber to press for the reduction of the working day to eight hours, to oppose female labour in the pits, to advocate women's suffrage and to condemn exploitative labour practices in the metal industry.[30] When accused in Parliament of promoting 'the tenets of pure unmitigated Socialism', Graham happily admitted the charge (Hansard, 1889: col 1089). Through his friendship with William Morris, Graham had a close association with the Social Democratic Federation and the Socialist League, the forerunners of the Labour Party, and in 1888, with Keir Hardie, he helped establish and served as the first president of the Scottish Labour Party.[31] In 1890 he was a delegate to the International Workingmen's Conference in Paris, the origin of the Second International.[32] Yet even as he was laying the ground for a future revolution in British parliamentary politics, Graham's confidence in the capacity of socialism to deliver real change was waning. After four frustrating years in the House, painfully aware of how little he had been able to achieve in advancing the interests of working men and women, he hungered for evidence that his faith in Socialism had not been misplaced. As he noted in an 'Open Letter to Kropotkin': 'I am a believer in the theories

of Karl Marx to a great extent, but, both as regards Christianity and Socialism, I care more for works than mere faith' (Graham, 1888: 13). Graham's scepticism coincided with the late nineteenth-century efflorescence of utopian fictions, among them some of the most influential and enduring expressions of the form: Edward Bulwer Lytton's *The Coming Race* (1871), Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward, 2000–1887* (1888), William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890), and Theodor Hertzka's *Freeland, a Social Anticipation* (1891). According to Kumar, the popularity of these fictions reflects a radical shift in the perception of socialism in the late nineteenth century. Socialism at this time,

> was becoming, in effect, a religion – a religion, moreover, that was increasingly showing its Churchly rather than sect-like aspect. Its adherents no longer had the clear-eyed confidence of its founders, such as Saint-Simon and the young Marx, that the achievement of socialism was certain and imminent. Just as the belief of the early Christians in the imminence of the Second Coming gave way to the indefinite expectation of the Augustinian church, so the socialists of the 1880s came to place their faith in the Party and the Movement as the vehicles of regeneration in some distant future. The fervency of belief remained, but the concrete goal was displaced to a remote time which none could predict. The language of socialism became correspondingly consolatory and inspirational, couched in the terms and tones of traditional religion. (Kumar, 1987: 66)[33]

It was in this context of waning faith in the efficacy of socialism that Graham wrote *A Vanished Arcadia*. Dedicated to the provision of an historical record of the Jesuit Missions in Paraguay from 1607 to 1767, the book arose from a series of journeys that Graham had made to the ruined Missions in the 1870s and 1880s when he lived in Argentina. That it was more than 20 years before he wrote up these journeys demonstrates that the motive and function of the book reside not in the theological concerns of seventeenth- or eighteenth-century South America but in the political and social issues of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain. Indeed, as Cedric Watts has noted: 'Graham was never more contemporary than when re-creating that remote American past' (Watts and Davies, 1979: 191, 207).

The fate of the Jesuit Missions provides Graham with a case study against which the more Panglossian prophecies of his contemporaries might be measured and corrected. For example, his sober description of the squalid conditions in which Cradley Heath's metal workers earned their daily bread implied that the conviction that history is ineluctably bringing a better world into being was not merely a fantasy but a species of political quiescence.[34] Indeed, the fate of the Missions and the enlarging social inequalities of the industrial age would seem to imply that history is the engine not of moral advancement but of its irresistible regress. Similarly, the meliorist orthodoxy advanced by Turgot, Condorcet, Kant and others, the conviction that, in Condorcet's words, 'the perfectibility of man is indefinite', is categorically contradicted by the events in Paraguay (quoted in Manuel and Manuel, 1966: 209).[35] After all, Graham asks, in what ways did the enslavement and brutalisation of the Guarani propel the Spanish settlers along the path of moral betterment – and how did their bondage and degradation help the Guaranis fulfil *their* moral destiny?

Disillusioned by the orthodox endorsement of imperial expansion and the assurance that the capitalist economy would help wean the ignorant millions from their horrid ways, Graham reached out to the Jesuit Missions of Latin America for evidence that a better way of living once existed. Yet all he finds there are echoes of his present-day disenchantment. In the Jesuits' doomed defence of collaboration over competition, happiness over self-enrichment, fellowship over exploitation, Graham identifies not only a courageous and humane social experiment, but a doomed precursor of the socialism that he and other like-minded activists were struggling to bring into being. His point is clear. The same forces that banished the Jesuits from Paraguay, desecrated their chapels, degraded the land and enslaved the Guarani persist today. *A Vanished Arcadia* is a book about a disappointed society, ever yearning for a better way of living and ever thwarted in its hopes by the perennial enemies of justice and equality – greed, prejudice and hypocrisy. Truly the good place, *eutopos*, its realisation has been checked at every turn, consigning it, and all men's dreams of a better world, to *outopos* or nowhere.

2
ADVENTURES AND ANXIETIES

Fantasy Land

For the greater part of the nineteenth century Latin America was not only unable to render an ideal society, it struggled to muster a stable one. The republics may have won their independence but their victories came at the cost of 'perennial instability' (Williamson, 1992: 234).[1] Latin America was increasingly identified as the one place where man could find refuge from the imperative to principled action. For British readers the chaos in Latin America offered a fantasy world of liberation. If, as Lord Curzon observed, the Empire provided an escape from 'the sordid controversies and…depressing gloom of our insular existence', how much more did Latin America offer (quoted in Bennett, 1953: 356–7)? Here, free from moral anxiety or legal restraint, personal and collective fantasies of power and fulfilment might be indulged and enjoyed. As a consequence, for the greater portion of the British public, by the late nineteenth century Latin America had all but ceased to exist as a substantive geographical entity – if it had ever 'existed' for them in the first place. A massive continent, peopled by millions, with a complex and extended history of sophisticated civilisation, Latin America had come to signify little more than moral regression, endemic political instability and the promise of adventure and escape.

In *A Man of Mark* (1885), Anthony Hope demonstrates that by the late 1880s these assumptions about Latin America were so deeply entrenched in Britain and the United States that subtle manipulations of their standard forms could be relied upon for comic effect and the articulation of sophisticated social critique.[2] The narrator is coy about the precise location of the novel's

setting, the republic of Aureataland, conceding only that it lies somewhere 'on the coast of South America, rather to the north – I mustn't be more definite' (Hope, 1885: 1). As it is his intention to map a moral and not a geographical landscape, Hope has no need to be more definite. His purpose in *A Man of Mark* is less to recount events than to critique the convictions that underlie their motive forces – the belief, pervasive by this time in Britain and the United States, that provenance is the key determinant of character and behaviour, that those who live in Latin America are inevitably contaminated by it. In appearing to endorse these views, Hope satirises the ways in which such received thinking has been used by westerners to excuse their own unconscionable behaviour, revealing thereby how Latin America has come to function as an alibi for western cupidity.

The principal attraction of Latin America for Hope's protagonists is that while the traditional decencies of polite society hold firm, the restraints on public and private behaviour that they imply do not. The veneer of civility is a sham, barely concealing a society where, for the westerners who occupy its principal posts, anything goes. As long as they uphold their public role in the pantomime of social respectability each is free to indulge his or her most intimate desires. While the President, Marcus W. Whittingham, an American, affirms his determination to transform Aureataland into 'a truly modern state, instinct with the progressive spirit of the Anglo-Saxon race' it is the pursuit of his own instinct for personal enrichment that occupies him, plundering the treasury to line his pockets (Hope, 1885: 2). He is enthusiastically abetted in his malfeasance by the other pillars of Aureataland society, the narrator, Martin, an English banker; McGregor, a Scot, second-in-command of the national army and the leader of the political opposition; and the woman they are all hungrily pursuing: the mysterious Signorina, also putatively of English extraction. Each upholds the ethics of business, the honour of the military and the decency of polite society by, respectively, embezzling, bullying and fucking their way to riches, power and prestige. Yet their single-minded pursuit of self-interest fails to satisfy them and as their plans go awry they turn on one another and plot their rivals'

downfall. They seek to effect this not like men (or women) of honour, but by recourse to archetypally South American methods. Presenting their private desires as public needs, they summon the mob to advance their interests by means of insurrection.[3] Revolution in Aureataland, Hope thus demonstrates, is less a symptom of native immoderation or the expression of an irresistible will to anarchy than a means by which unscrupulous westerners might enrich themselves.

The novel's comic functioning rests on the assumption that the moral incontinence of the protagonists can be explained by their environment, that while one might expect treachery, lies and violence from the locals, such behaviour from the Anglo Saxons is a measure of how the country has contaminated them. This view of Latin America underpins a complacent confidence in the social and moral superiority of the west and it is Hope's aim to expose this racist posturing by laying bare the lust and venality that lurk beneath the surface, 'instinct with the progressive spirit of the Anglo Saxon race'. When Martin reflects on the lies and threats that his financial and political ventures have engendered, ruefully conceding that 'these things are incidental to revolutions – a point of resemblance between them and commercial life', Hope's point is clear (Hope, 1885: 108). Aureataland may magnify the moral degeneracy of its leading citizens, but it does not explain it; it may provide a context for their excesses, but it does not cause them. Accordingly Hope demonstrates that it might be more appropriate to regard Latin America as a mirror for the west's failings and not an alibi for them, that it is less an ethical no man's land than a detailed chart of our own moral vacuity.

In *Savrola* (1957/1897) Winston Churchill saw Latin America as a fantasy land of proleptic fulfilment. Ostensibly concerned with events in the mythical republic of Laurania where 'a liberal leader', the eponymous Savrola, deposes 'an arbitrary government only to be swallowed up by a socialist revolution', it is the setting which lends significance to this otherwise unremarkable tale. Indeed whether *Savrola* can be regarded as a 'South American' novel at all is a moot point. The text makes a number of references to Laurania's geographical position in relation to Europe, Africa

and the Mediterranean, but, as in *A Man of Mark*, its specific location remains imprecise. Why it was so difficult to put Laurania on the map was explained in Churchill's autobiography, *My Early Life* (1930), where, looking back on his composition of the novel 30 years earlier during his time as a subaltern in India, he
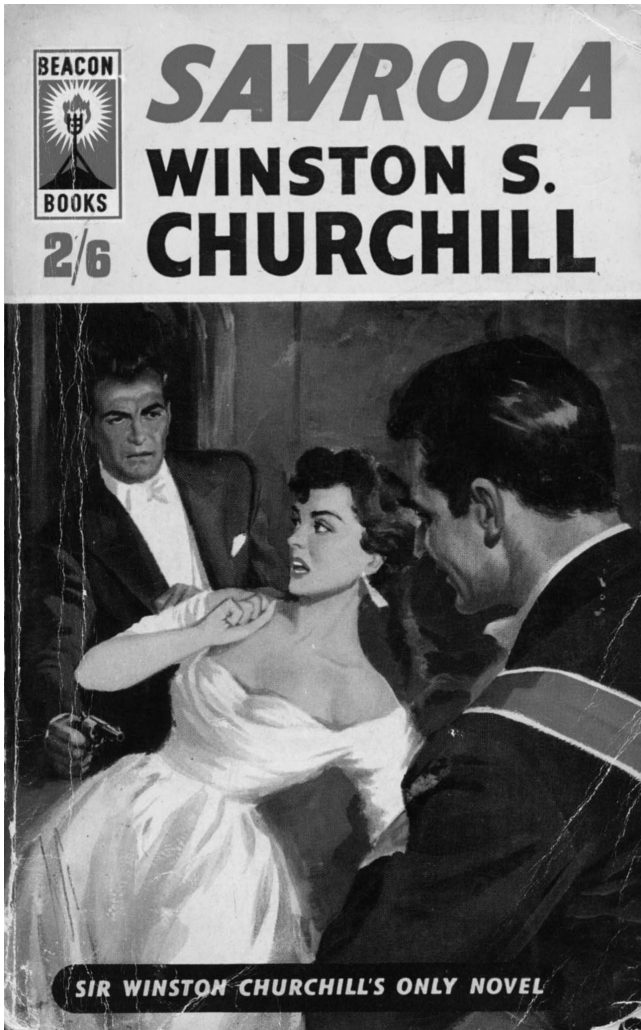

Figure 4 Winston Churchill's *Savrola* (1958 edition)

remembered having set it 'in some imaginary Balkan or South American republic' (Churchill, 1930: 161). South America and the Balkans may be geographically distant, but by the late nineteenth century when Churchill wrote the novel, no less than the early 1930s when he recollected the experience, it is clear that they were in political, social and moral terms scarcely distinguishable from one another – each a byword for Machiavellian politics, tribal antagonism and perpetual revolution.[4] Laurania represents less a state than a state of mind. In this regard Churchill is typical of other British writers of his day: South America furnished him not with a precise geographical locus for events but an enabling narrative landscape within which his fantasies of political and personal fulfilment might be realised.

In pursuit of his political ends Savrola aims to make the Lauranian public the servants of his will. His success in doing so is described in terms of a sexual conquest, with oratory the medium of their intercourse, the political platform the place of its consummation and Savrola's voice and intelligence the emblems of his virility.[5] Having roused the crowd with his opening sallies, Savrola asserts his command by denying his audience the immediate fulfilment they crave, withholding from them 'the outburst of fury and enthusiasm they desired' (Churchill, 1957: 103). The test of his potency lies in his capacity, by pure power of speech, to bring the masses to the point where they identify his desires as the expression of their own most intimate needs and gratefully surrender themselves to his will:

> He had held their enthusiasm back for an hour by the clock. The steam had been rising all this time. All were searching in their minds for something to relieve their feelings, to give expression to the individual determination each man had made. There was only one mind throughout the hall. His passions, his emotions, his very soul appeared to be communicated to the seven thousand people who heard his words. (Churchill, 1957: 104)

Only at this point does he grant the people their collective release, as, 'resonant, powerful, penetrating…he let them go', each of the short verbal thrusts marking the climax of his speech 'followed by wild cheering', as the 'excitement of the audience

became indescribable' and the 'inevitable conclusion' was 'greeted
with thunderous assent' (Churchill, 1957: 104). Yes! Yes! Yes!
Savrola's own response to this heroic feat of service is no less
orgasmic. 'The strain had been terrific. He was convulsed by
his own emotions; every pulse in his body was throbbing, every
nerve quivering, he streamed with perspiration and almost gasped
for breath' (Churchill, 1957: 104). The relationship, however,
is an exploitative one and neither party respects the other in
the morning. Savrola may pretend to serve the people but he is
driven by a calculating assessment of what it is they can do for
him (see Churchill, 1957: 37). When the people realise this, the
socialist agitator Kreutze turns them into a marauding mob and
it all ends in tears.

Yet even at this juncture the Lauranian public continue to serve
Savrola's quest for personal fulfilment. Savrola's discussions about
the army's African campaign with the dashing young cavalry officer,
Lieutenant Tiro, have awakened in him a feeling of inadequacy
for which no amount of political power can compensate:

> Savrola felt as if he had looked into a new world, a world of ardent, reckless,
> warlike youth. He was himself young enough to feel a certain jealousy. This
> boy had seen what he had not; he possessed an experience which taught
> him lessons Savrola had never learned. Their lives had been different;
> but one day perhaps he would open this strange book of war, and by the
> vivid light of personal danger read the lessons it contained. (Churchill,
> 1957: 74)

The fateful day comes sooner than Savrola had anticipated, when,
having engineered the downfall of the dictator, the people turn
against him and the republic slides towards chaos. Savrola fights
his way to the presidential palace in an effort to avert the massacre
of his former political foes. The people who had so recently served
to objectify his mastery now, through violent resistance to his
advance on the palace, afford him the thrill of battle and the
masculine fulfilment this brings.

Churchill employs a neat inversion to dramatise this process
of self-realisation and in doing so makes an important autobio-
graphical point. He first saw action, and proved his valour, as

a young cavalryman in the mid 1890s in skirmishes along the Mamund Valley in the North West Frontier (Churchill, 1930: 141–54). Soon after returning from these manoeuvres, bored by the deadening routines of garrison life and dreaming of a brilliant future, he wrote the novel. Clearly, the Churchill of 1897 has far more in common with Lieutenant Tiro than he does with Savrola. If Tiro is the man that Churchill was in 1897, then Savrola is an ideal projected self. Yet there would be little narrative purchase, and less scope for romance or adventure, in detailing Tiro's attainment of a position of high political office. Hence, Churchill inverts the sense of incompleteness that he feels – it is not military but political distinction he really pines for – projects this sense of inadequacy on to Savrola, and then has him attain private fulfilment in the Lauranian civil war. His success thus comprises both a parable and a proleptic fulfilment of Churchill's vision of combining personal courage with public fame. However, for a junior cavalry officer in the British Empire of the late nineteenth century, even one as impeccably connected as Churchill, the opportunities to combine military distinction with political pre-eminence, to cut a swathe on the field of war whilst also carving a path of influence through the corridors of power, were virtually non-existent. Hence his recourse to a South American setting, where the unlikely elements of this unique exercise in autobiography might find plausible consummation.

Anxious Empire

Yet not all adventure writing of the period was so self-absorbed or satirical. Adventure fiction was widely employed during the nineteenth century to address serious questions of politics and morality, particularly those arising from the nation's imperial responsibilities. The nineteenth-century adventure tales that argued for the extension of empire, while formalising the prime medium of its celebration, were, in Martin Green's well-worn phrase: 'the energizing myth of English imperialism'. Green continued: 'They were, collectively, the story England told itself as it went to sleep at night, and, in the form of its dreams, they

charged England's will with the energy to go out into the world and explore, conquer, and rule' (Green, 1979: 3). By the mid nineteenth century, however, some of these adventure narratives, particularly those set in Latin America, were less likely to bring on a reassuring slumber than to engender nightmares of self-doubt before waking the sleeper with a nasty start. At a time when the popular literature of empire was slavishly hero-worshipping or blindly propagandistic, and high culture all but refused to acknowledge the existence of an imperial frontier, Latin America furnished a unique critical and intellectual space within which the political, social and moral consequences of empire might be thought through.[6] Brantlinger argues that in Britain, serious 'Social doubt' about the aims and morality of imperialism 'emerges in many ways from the 1870s onward' (Brantlinger, 1988: 33). Adventure fiction set in Latin America reveals, however, that 'defensiveness, self-doubt, worries about "fitness", "national efficiency", and racial and cultural decadence' do not suddenly and unexpectedly surface at 'the end of the century', but are a consistent presence in the fictional treatment of imperialism from the mid nineteenth century onwards (Brantlinger, 1988: 33). They arise from a fundamental contradiction at the heart of the nation's imperial vision. Despite the position espoused by 'Palmerston and many of his contemporaries' that 'British overseas interests should be secured wherever possible without formal imperialization', the mid nineteenth century witnessed an exponential growth in the nation's overseas possessions (Brantlinger, 1988: 20). Edward Said calculates that while European powers were 'in occupation of approximately 35 percent of the earth's surface' in 1815, by the end of the First World War this had more than doubled to 85 per cent, and a significant proportion of this territory was in British hands (Said, 1983: 222). While denying an interest in formal empire, Britain continued to conquer, dispossess and expropriate. Adventure fiction set in non-imperial regions like Latin America provided a space within which the nation's lust for possession might be balanced against its no less prominent ambivalence about conquest and control. Here, the moral and political tensions implicit in these contradictory impulses could be

conceded, while the anxieties they engendered might be addressed. The moral and critical licence that freedom from political ties to the continent granted enabled the writers of adventure fiction set in Latin America to do three things: it enabled them to reveal, or at least hint at, the unpalatable truths about the nation's conduct on its imperial frontier; it enabled them to explore what this conduct implied about the well-being of the imperial centre; it enabled them to express ambivalence about the moral defensibility and practical sustainability of the imperial enterprise as a whole.

For the greater part of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, through the glory days of imperial expansion and consolidation, the British were uncomfortable with the idea of themselves as an imperial power. Though the Seven Years War had set in train a reappraisal of British overseas power, the myth that its empire was, uniquely, 'the beneficent creation of a liberty-loving and commercial people' somehow survived (Colley, 1996: 109). Indeed, as Patrick Brantlinger observes:

> Even among those historians who treat empire-building as a continuous economic and political process, the idea still seems prevalent that the early and mid-Victorians were not imperialists in the ideological sense because they were not highly conscious of the Empire as a problem – in other words, because they were not jingoists. (Brantlinger, 1988: ix)

The *Oxford English Dictionary* entry for 'imperialism' notes that its primary signification, 'the rule of an emperor, esp. when despotic or arbitrary' was the common usage in the mid nineteenth century and that it retained this pejorative sense until well into the 1890s (COED, 1991: 821).[7] It was, as Green notes, 'Austria and Russia, and France under Napoleon, that were empires in the opprobrious sense. England was essentially a trading nation, and the home of liberty' (Green, 1979: 145).[8] As a consequence of this diffidence about its true political status and ambitions, for many years the British scarcely owned up to the existence of their own imperial frontiers, let alone the possibility that less than civilised practices might take place there. As Walter Prescott Webb noted, the term 'frontier'

has meant something different in America from what it has in Europe. In the latter it has been a line between two powers, to cross which means danger; in the former it has been an area that invites entrance and promises opportunity and riches. But this difference in usage is deceptive. Europe, without acknowledging it, has had the same experience as America, because it has had new worlds as its frontier ever since the fifteenth century... America is the most notable case, but the Boers in South Africa, and the English in Australia, etc., also lived on a frontier. The difference is that Europe's high culture kept the experience at arm's length, did not name it or know it, did not acknowledge the frontier. (Webb, 1952: 280)

In Britain, the domestic or courtship novel carried the literary tenor in the high-cultural chorus of frontier-denial. While the domestic novel emerged as a distinct form at around the same time as the adventure tale, in the early eighteenth century it 'developed into a much more serious literary genre' earning a 'status for itself which the adventure novel never equalled' (Green, 1979: 57). It attained such cultural centrality, Green argues, because its themes – courtship, the right choice of partner for the heroine, 'manners taken seriously and marriage taken solemnly' – were central to 'the close alliance that was forged in the early eighteenth century between literature and the religious-moral-sexual interests of Puritanism' (Green, 1979: 61–2). The Puritan revolution

redirected spiritual intensity toward home life, marriage, and sex; away from older objects of devotion, like the liturgical life of the church, and the cults of the aristomilitary caste. When the spirit of religion came out of the monastery, to adapt a famous phrase, it settled in the home as well as in the marketplace, making its altar the bedroom and the bed. Indeed, as far as the serious novelists were concerned, it was the home and *not* the market that was important...

The colonial enterprise did not attract the participation of Brahmin seriousness, so it did not undergo the imaginative transformation that serious writers gave to family life in the courtship and domestic novel. Serious writers facing the colonial theme felt an inhibition or a prohibition, from which they turned away, to the courtship theme. (Green, 1979: 63)

The resulting conviction that the adventure tale was an inappropriate context for the analysis of serious matters of morality or politics made it the ideal medium for the examination of these very concerns, especially those deemed too controversial for more socially invested fictional forms. The fact that adventure fiction 'had always supported the status quo', that 'the arguments it advanced for continued and extended imperial activity were aimed at awakening desire' for further territorial expansion 'rather than countering any real opposition' furnished an ideal camouflage beneath which white-hot issues of social or political dispute might be addressed, the unthinkable thought through and the unspeakable given voice (White, 1993: 82). Adventure narratives set in the nineteenth-century never-lands of Latin America lent writers a further layer of discursive insulation, permitting an even greater degree of frankness in their treatment of contentious questions. After all, in a place where, as Lord John Roxton remarks in *The Lost World* (2001), 'anythin' was possible – *anythin'*', little was likely to be probable and anything might be imagined (Conan Doyle, 2001: 61). If Britain had little to do with and nothing to learn from Latin America, then just about anything might be said and done in works set there with a commensurately diminished fear of accountability. Latin America thus furnished British writers of adventure fiction with a secure intellectual and political space within which they might pronounce upon the most explosive issue of the day – the moral and political economy of imperialism.

The Enemy Within

Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* (1855) provides a fine case in point. A Victorian bestseller, *Westward Ho!* was reprinted 38 times in the 40 years after it was first published. Its popularity rested in large measure on its enthusiastic celebration of the principal values of British imperialism – free trade and militant Protestantism – and the military and moral virtues that had overseen their export across the globe. It was, for almost half a century, a *vade mecum* for the Anglican mujahedin. Yet for all

its sectarian jingoism, the novel also betrays what Alan Sandison has called 'a quite antithetical stream of feeling' about the destiny of the empire: 'underlying the optimism and confidence – where these were present – there was to be discerned uneasiness and fear which grew as the century progressed' (Sandison, 1967: 17).[9] *Westward Ho!* not only celebrated the nation's imperial successes, but assuaged the uneasiness to which they gave rise.

A range of domestic and international crises had led to anxiety about the conduct of the empire around the time of the novel's composition: 'the sense of national emergency which was registered during the Napoleonic Wars was reawakened by a series of cholera epidemics, by the threat of French invasion in 1853' and most notably by the nation's involvement in the Crimean War (Vance, 1985: 2).[10] Though deeply discomfited by the idea of themselves as imperialists – a term which in the mid nineteenth century still smacked too tartly of brutal overseers and cringing serfs – the Crimean conflict was an irrefutably 'imperial war' which allied Britain with one reviled imperial competitor, France, in opposition to another, Russia, in defence of a less savoury third, the Ottoman Turks (James, 1998: 182). More than any preceding war, it underscored Britain's role as a world power with interests extending far beyond the sphere of its trade relations or religious mission.

Any misgivings about these alliances, or what they implied about the nation's self-interestedness, were soon forgotten in the outcry over the mismanagement of the campaign. Its organisation and direction were calamitous – the ineptitude of the military commanders exceeded only by the maladministration of finances, supplies and medical services (see Ponting, 2004; Woodham-Smith, 1953). In the failings of the Crimea, Kingsley descried a warning of what had gone wrong with the country and the empire and a clear signal of what was needed to restore them to their proper course. The correctives he prescribed rested on a return to the moral, social and political values, militarism, meritocracy and monarchism, that had underpinned the nation's first imperial efflorescence under Elizabeth. Indeed, Larry Uffelman claims that 'Kingsley welcomed the Crimean War for the opportunity

it provided of recalling to an increasingly materialist and profit-conscious England heroic qualities which he believed had made the nation great' (Uffelman, 1979: 96).[11] Looking back on how the Elizabethans had marshalled their forces in time of peril, Kingsley pondered:

> (now that our late boasting is a little silenced by Crimean disasters)… whether we have not something to learn from those old Tudor times, as to how to choose officials, how to train a people, and how to defend a country…Well it was for England then that her Tudor sovereigns had compelled every man (though they kept up no standing army) to be a trained soldier. Well it was that Elizabeth, even in those dangerous days of intrigue and rebellion, had trusted her people enough, not only to leave them their weapons, but (what we, forsooth, in these more 'free' and 'liberal' days dare not do) to teach them how to use them. Well it was that, by careful legislation for the comfort and employment of the 'masses' (term then, thank God, unknown), she had both won their hearts, and kept their bodies in fighting order. Well it was that, acting as fully as Napoleon did on 'la carriére ouverte aux talens,' she had raised to the highest posts in her councils, her army, and her navy, men of business, who had not been ashamed to buy and sell as merchants and adventurers. Well for England, in a word, that Elizabeth had pursued for thirty years a very different course from that which we have been pursuing for the last thirty.
> (Kingsley, 1855: 617)

While the dangers of deviating from the practices of the Elizabethan period, when 'her Majesty's service' was free from 'absurd rules of seniority' and 'a brave and a shrewd man was certain of promotion, let his rank or his age be what they might', were implicit in Britain's Crimean failings, the disastrous results of putting etiquette before efficiency were clear from the fate of Spain. The Spaniards' 'suicidal pedantry', their mistaken identification of lineage with leadership, had catastrophic consequences for their fighting forces. Not only had their technology fallen behind, their ships 'heavy and unwieldy', but the crews who manned them were organised, led and deployed in ways 'utterly fatal to their prowess and unanimity, and which made even their courage and honour useless against the assaults of free men'.

This, Kingsley explains, was because the Spaniards, 'had allowed their navy to be crippled by the same despotism, etiquette, and official routine by which the whole nation was gradually frozen to death in the course of the next century or two' (Kingsley, 1855: 419). The absurd name and androgynous appearance of the principal Spanish actor in *Westward Ho!*, Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto, may advertise his aristocratic pedigree, but they also imply the inbreeding and effeteness which have so enervated his nation.

Kingsley's English, by contrast, are 'the fiercest nation upon earth' and the hero of the novel, Amyas Leigh, a west-country Hercules, is a fitting emblem of their elemental energies. These energies had fired the nation's originating imperial push and it was Kingsley's belief that modern Britain would do well to reconnect with them if it was to arrest the political and military drift evidenced in the Crimea and return to its position of dominance (Kingsley, 1855: 420). As he told his undergraduates at Cambridge, England could only hope to avoid the collapse that had befallen its imperial predecessors by preserving something of the natural, innocent barbarism of its Teutonic forebears.[12] To lose touch with the primary sources of individual and national vitality, to surrender the struggle for mastery over oneself and one's competitors, to renounce the moral invigoration this breeds, he argued, is to yield to self-indulgence, hasten physical and moral degeneracy and to guarantee that tomorrow's Britain will be today's Spain.

In Kingsley's vision, militant Protestantism and the moral order it enshrines is threatened not only by its sworn enemies without, Catholicism and Spain, but also by forces closer to home, both domestically and psychologically, which have their focus in Amyas' own family. Amyas himself, it is important to recall, is half Catholic. His father was a Catholic and some of his relations remain so. His decent but weak uncle, Thomas, is a principal casualty of the competing loyalties of religion and politics. His endeavours to remain true to his faith while honouring the allegiance he has sworn to Queen Elizabeth make him easy prey for the less scrupulous of his co-religionists, not least his son, Eustace, and he unwittingly finds himself an accessory to a Catholic invasion

of Ireland. His efforts to serve two masters render him unable to offer absolute loyalty to either. His family divided, his good name besmirched, his loyalty in question, he is left a broken man, the emblem of Kingsley's assertion that when the country and the cause of religious reform are in danger, as they were in Elizabeth's time and are now again, one cannot be a Catholic and a patriot. As the Jesuits exercise an ever greater influence over Eustace, he moves from half-hearted secularism to Catholic fundamentalism, from a brief flirtation with love, through a walk-on part in the Irish rebellion, to zealous collaboration with the Inquisition and a direct role in the deaths of Amyas' older sibling, the courtly Frank, and the object of Eustace's own lust, Rose Salterne. An Elizabethan quisling, Eustace embodies the ills that the Protestant nation must guard against in order to realise its moral wholeness and the imperial destiny this promises. His uncle, his cousin, and the example of Spain itself, each serve to demonstrate to Amyas and his Victorian admirers that the most inveterate obstacles to fulfilment lie within. As such, for the greater part of the novel, Amyas is not only the battleground on which virtue struggles against weakness and superstition, he also embodies the prize for which they contend. Amyas is not merely battling the Spaniards for empire, Queen and country, but perhaps most urgently, he is struggling with himself for the salvation of his soul.

This conflict is given specific focus by Amyas' physical and psychological duel with his Spanish nemesis, Guzman. If Eustace throws Amyas' qualities into sharper relief then Guzman is the hidden, negative self, the *doppelgänger* who objectifies the weaknesses and temptations against which Amyas must strive. Little wonder that at their first meeting 'Amyas shrank from him instinctively' (Kingsley, 1855: 255). Throughout the novel the English can scarcely mention the Spaniards without falling into invective. They are 'Papist cowards', 'Spanish dogs', 'bullies', 'idolatrous rascals' who 'pray to a woman' and 'fight like women' (Kingsley, 1855: 5, 380).[13] The ferocity of these 'pathological tirades' implies a revulsion against qualities the English recognise and struggle against within themselves (Sandison, 1967: 6). It is apposite that it is Guzman who brings Amyas to Latin America

after he elopes with Rose. When Amyas' efforts to recover her end in failure, with the loss of Frank to boot, 'like Cortes of old' he 'burn[s] his ship', turns from the coast, and with his men heads into the heart of the continent (Kingsley, 1855: 460).[14] Though ostensibly in quest of 'the golden country of El Dorado, and the city of Manoa' and the pre-eminence its riches will bring the court of Elizabeth and the cause of Protestant reform, this is principally a psychological journey, as Amyas' faith and character are tested by the experience of Latin America.

   After three years criss-crossing the Amazon, the *altiplano* and the Andes, little more than half of those who set off with Amyas on the quest for El Dorado remain. Of the 40 lost along the way, surprisingly few have fallen foul of hostile natives, the rest having been killed off by the environment – the extremes of the elements, and the casual predations of the native wildlife. Yet it is less the overt hostility of nature than its unimproved unregenerateness and the response this evokes that proves the greatest threat to Amyas and his followers. If, as Frederick Pike asserts, it was widely believed from the late seventeenth century onwards that 'In the confusion and imperfection of uncorrected nature abided sin and even Satan himself', then what Amyas and his colleagues confront in the Amazon is not merely physical danger but mortal spiritual peril (Pike, 1992: 1). They safeguard their souls with a regular diet of religion supplemented by a strict regime of racism. The South American Indians who pose no immediate threat to them are dismissed as hopeless primitives, ignorant sinners to whom the light of truth has not yet been revealed and who could scarcely be relied upon to comprehend it when it was. It is in this context that they first encounter the beautiful priestess who rules over one of the distant tribes, Ayacanora, 'The Daughter of the Sun'. Evidently of superior genetic stock, Amyas sees in her traces of the immortal Greeks or the hand of God Himself: 'She must be the daughter of some great cacique – perhaps of the lost Incas themselves. Why not? And full of simple wonder, he gazed upon that fairy vision; while she, unabashed in her free innocence, gazed fearlessly in return, as Eve might have done in Paradise' (Kingsley, 1855: 479–80). Yet where Eve persuaded Adam to

forgo paradise, Ayacanora tempts Amyas to return to it. It is an attractive prospect that proves too enticing for some among Amyas' crew. Two men in particular, Ebsworthy and Parracombe, their tenure of service to Amyas complete, turn their backs on the civilised world and set off, their Amazon Eves in tow, finding in the unspoilt jungle their own Eden.[15] When Amyas tracks them down to their Elysian encampment, ready to reproach them, he is compelled to acknowledge not only the seductiveness of their surrender to the senses but its biblical underpinnings:

> Amyas stood silent for a while, partly from noble shame at seeing two Christian men thus fallen of their own self will, partly because – and he could not but confess that – a solemn calm brooded above that glorious place, to break through which seemed sacrilege, even while he felt it a duty. Such, he thought, was Paradise of old; such our first parents' bridal bower. Ah! if man had not fallen, he too might have dwelt for ever in such a home. With whom? He started, and shaking off the spell, advanced sword in hand. (Kingsley, 1855: 499–500)

Ebsworthy and Parracombe furnish Kingsley with two eloquent mediums through whom the blandishments of the continent are given voice. Preaching a permissive gospel of self-fulfilment and social reform, they confront Amyas not as deserters but as advocates of an alternative polity, further emboldened by their certainty that the life they have embraced is superior to the one they left behind, bringing them closer to God (see Kingsley, 1855: 500–1). Invited to follow their lead, Amyas is subjected to a temptation in reverse. It is not expulsion from the garden that he has to fear but the moral and political consequences of his return there. And he very nearly succumbs. 'His eye glanced upon Ayacanora…Oh, how beautiful she was! Might not the renegades have some reason on their side after all?…Did they not all need rest? What if they each sat down among the flowers, beside an Indian bride?' (Kingsley, 1855: 503–4). That it is divine intervention which recalls Amyas to his senses and returns him to the straight and narrow path of tribulation is an implicit admission of the persuasiveness of the runaways' arguments. A life of self-denial and ceaseless struggle can offer

nothing comparably seductive to the arguments advanced by Ebsworthy and Parracombe. In this light it is clear that if, as Kingsley implies looking at Amyas' faithful followers, 'with the quiet fire of English courage burning undimmed in every eye, and the genial smile of English mirth fresh on every lip' there is some corner of the Amazon that is forever England, then it is true also that there is within each Englishman some uncultivated patch of Latin America, some wilderness whose seductive power he cannot ignore but must daily resist (Kingsley, 1855: 467).

Shaken, Amyas leaves the Amazon paradise and puts as much distance between Ayacanora and himself as he can. That she refuses to be left behind, that she interposes herself between his duty and his self-control all the way back to England, exemplifies Amyas' (or any other man's) inability to triumph entirely over his innate frailties. He is destined never to escape her. Despite his discovery that she is half-Spanish, a living reminder of his obsessive enmity for all things Catholic and the private pain that fires it, he cannot deny his love for her. When at the conclusion of the novel they settle down to breed the new Elizabethans, the distant forefathers of Kingsley's own manly Victorian heroes, the message is clear. Our strengths and weaknesses, the passions, instincts and emotions, good and bad, that make us what we are cannot be separated out from one another. To be truly human is not to deny our failings but to master them. Just as half-Catholic Amyas must accept and love half-Spanish Ayacanora as she is, so their offspring, Kingsley's vigorous Victorian imperialists, and all who would defend the England that Amyas and his contemporaries built, must daily struggle with their inherent weaknesses. Human frailty is bred in the bone: we must all learn to subdue the Latin America within.

Dead Heart

Less than half a century after Amyas Leigh returned from the Amazon, fired with the generating energies of English imperialism, H. Rider Haggard went back to Latin America to imagine a very different future for Britain and its empire. Where Amyas had

overcome the temptation to surrender to the irresistible forces of nature, it was Haggard's aim in *Heart of the World* (1894) to carry through and lend concrete form to the nightmare of degeneracy and decline that Kingsley had hinted at and to flesh out its physical, social and moral consequences for Britain. The decades between these two fictional journeys to Latin America had seen a significant shift in British perceptions of the status of the empire and the moral and political certainties it enshrined, a shift which exercised a profound influence over Haggard's gloomy vision of the future. As David Cannadine has noted:

> Despite the pomp and circumstance of Queen Victoria's Golden and Diamond Jubilees, late-nineteenth century Britain was in many ways an anxiety-ridden nation…Britain may have been the heart of the world's greatest empire, but during the 1880s and 1890s, and on into the Edwardian era, there was growing concern among the educated classes that that heart was neither healthy nor sound. (Cannadine, 2002: 225–6)

Cannadine's felicitous phrasing makes it clear that although Haggard's novel is set in Mexico, it is Britain's heart that he examines there and Britain's moral health that gives him such cause for concern.

While Alan Sandison has suggested that the roots of imperial anxiety in Britain stretch far back into the early decades of the nineteenth century, the critical shift in Britain's imperial self-confidence identified by Cannadine can be attributed to military and economic developments in the later nineteenth century.[16] The Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1, aggressive American expansion in the Caribbean and South East Asia and Japan's emergence in the Far East ushered on to the international stage an array of emerging imperial powers whose economic protectionism and aggressive armaments programmes undermined Britain's faith in its political and material pre-eminence.[17] In the 1860s, as Norman Etherington has observed, Great Britain had been 'the only superpower of the age':

> She led the world in industrial production. Her empire girdled the globe. Her navy was unchallenged and unchallengeable. According to her most

prestigious political and economic philosophers, she was leading the world into an unprecedented golden age of peace and free trade. Events confounded these optimistic predictions. First America, then Germany, France, and Japan achieved the industrial capacity required to break Britain's stranglehold on their marketplaces. The newcomers scorned the doctrine of free trade, preferring instead to surround themselves with high tariff walls to keep out the products of their competitors. This trend toward national exclusiveness caused businessmen and economists in many countries to worry about the future. Where were they to find customers and raw materials in years to come? Increasing attention was paid to dismal prophets who preached that only armed force could guarantee secure futures for industrial and commercial nations, force to win new areas and to hold old ones. When Germany embarked on a new program to build a first-class navy, when the United States went to war against Spain in two Oceans, and when Japan emerged from nowhere as a dominant power in the Far East, these predictions appeared to be coming true.

Against this background of threats and uncertainties, late-Victorian imperialism in Britain displayed a defensive state of mind. (Etherington, 1984: 95–6)

Back in Britain, hostile economic conditions compounded by a run of bad weather and poor harvests in the mid to late 1870s precipitated a broader crisis centred on the state of British agriculture. As William Ashworth noted, though most people regarded the wet summers and poor harvests of the late 1870s as

no more than a temporary trial which could be expected soon to pass away [there were] signs that more permanent influences were beginning to operate. In the past, farmers had found themselves more or less compensated for a bad harvest by the higher prices which smaller supplies induced in the following year. Now this no longer happened; prices tended downwards in spite of the series of bad harvests. Contemporaries rightly attributed this new phenomenon to foreign competition but looked on it as largely a matter of luck…They were a little slow to recognize that new conditions were making it possible for foreign suppliers permanently to undercut many British farmers, whatever the weather. (Ashworth, 1960: 53–4)

The efforts of landlords and farmers to adapt to the new economic order merely exacerbated the crisis. By shifting their resources from intensive arable production into pasture and cropping, farmers were able to trim their workforces and reduce their costs. But the oversupply of labour that resulted exerted downward pressure on wages and pushed many farm workers off the land. The result of these shifts in production and population in the countryside was the slow but certain decline of British agriculture.[18]

A squire's son and the landlord of Ditchingham in Norfolk, Henry (H.) Rider Haggard was an unstinting advocate of the moral and spiritual benefits of British agriculture. He regarded the decline in the rural population not merely as an unfortunate side effect of economic modernisation but a challenge to Britain's imperial status and aspirations. Agricultural and national good health was, in his view, indivisible. A healthy agricultural sector and the hearty yeomanry it bred were the keys to national vigour.[19] For him the population drift from the countryside to the towns and cities threatened national ruin: 'behind the agricultural question lies the national question. What will be the result of this desertion of the countryside and of the crowding of its denizens into the cities?...It can mean nothing less than the progressive deterioration of the race' (Haggard, 1902: II 541). Disturbing evidence that Haggard was right was evident in the calamities suffered by the British Army in the Boer War where 'most of our reverses...were due to the pitting of town-bred bodies and intelligences, both of officers and men, against the country-bred bodies and intelligences' of the Boers (Haggard, 1902: II 568). Convinced that urban life debilitated its captives, Haggard was involved in a range of projects whose aim was to reverse the migration from country to city, return large numbers of people to the land, restore the nation's vigour and so enable it to reassert its military and political primacy.[20]

Haggard's assertion that late Victorian England and its people were caught in an irresistible decline was a key motif in his fiction, where its most forceful spokesman was his imaginary alter ego, Allan Quatermain.[21] Quatermain is deeply disillusioned with the effeteness of contemporary England, finding evidence of the

nation's weakness not only in the 'stiff formal manners, and…
well-dressed crowds' of the city, but also in the 'prim English
country, with its trim hedges and cultivated fields' (Haggard,
1887: 14). What England lacks, he argues, is not mere contact
with the earth but the enlivening atavism to which this should
give rise. Despite the conviction that the nation has forever left
behind the primitivism of its savage ancestors, that its cultivated
manners reflect an ingrained civility, Quatermain contends that
it is merely ignorant of its essential identity. 'Ah! this civilisation,
what does it all come to?' he asks.

> For forty years and more I lived among savages, and studied them and their
> ways; and now for several years I have lived here in England, and have in
> my own stupid manner done my best to learn the ways of the children of
> light; and what have I found? A great gulf fixed? No, only a very little one,
> that a plain man's thought may spring across. I say that as the savage is,
> so is the white man. (Haggard, 1887: 14)[22]

In moments of crisis men look to civilisation to rescue them,
but in doing so, Quatermain argues, they deny their essential
identities, impede the only means of their recovery and compound
the process of degeneration. Only when the nation embraces its
ineradicably savage self can it remedy the failings that its mistaken
faith in no-other-God-but-civilisation has bred, failings that
threaten the future of the empire and the survival of the nation
itself (Haggard, 1887: 16).

It is this conviction that underpins *Heart of the World*,
Haggard's admonitory tale of national degeneracy and the
destruction it brings. Set in Mexico, the novel centres on the
efforts of its narrator and protagonist, Don Ignatio, to restore
indigenous rule over Central America. Directly descended from
the last Aztec emperor, Guatemoc, Ignatio's royal lineage is
confirmed by the amulet he wears. One half of a jewel reputedly
worn by Quetzalcoatl when he dwelt among the Aztecs, it was
divided in two after he abandoned them. When its two halves are
joined again and the jewel is made whole, then 'the Indians will
once more be a mighty nation, and drive those who oppress them
into the sea' (Haggard, 1894: 62). Yet despite his tireless efforts,

Ignatio's hopes of Aztec regeneration are thwarted at every turn. His plans for a great uprising betrayed by his wife, his confederates scattered, his dream of national renewal in ruins, Ignatio is a disillusioned man when news reaches him that the missing half of the jewel has surfaced in the south of the country. Accompanied by his stalwart English comrade, James Strickland, Ignatio locates its bearer, the prophet-priest Zibalbay and his daughter Maya, and with them journeys through a classic adventure fiction landscape of haunted haciendas, ancient temples, arid plains, fathomless caverns and snow-tipped sierras, to the lost City of the Heart, where Zibalbay rules.[23]

Sitting on an island at the centre of a lake, surrounded by an impassable mountain range, for centuries the City of the Heart has, by chance, nature, and the edicts of its rulers, been isolated from the outside world and the tides of history. Spared the Spanish conquest, the city and its people have remained undefiled, their treasures secured, their bloodlines protected, an Aztec time capsule in nineteenth-century Mexico. However, the isolation that shielded them has also sown the seeds of their destruction. Cut off from the currents of history, its people have been insulated from the most fundamental of nature's laws, never having had to struggle for their survival. Its proto-Communistic economy requires only three months labour per family per year to replenish the common store that feeds the populace, the other nine months given over to rest and recreation. Denied the incentives that reward ambition, the people are torpid and weary. Sequestered by nature, they are further isolated by superstition and fear of outsiders, which dictate that 'no man or woman may leave our territories to seek a husband or a wife'; 'the blood of the people grew old', the birth rate plummeted and the city and its culture seem doomed (Haggard, 1894: 135).

Ignatio has journeyed to the City of the Heart on the promise that, in return for his half of the sacred jewel, he will be granted sufficient treasure to arm his followers, raise a revolution and secure the return of Aztec rule. Zibalbay has welcomed him and the amulet he bears in the belief, enshrined in 'an ancient prophecy', that 'when once more the two halves of the symbol

of the Heart are laid side by side in their place upon the altar in the Sanctuary of the holy city, then from that hour she shall grow great again' (Haggard, 1894: 135). Maya has embraced the newcomers having fallen in love with Strickland. But she is not nearly so optimistic about the future of the city or the prospects of its people. Centuries of isolation have not only enervated the bloodline, she argues, they have also stunted the people's curiosity. The glories of the past are much preferred to the mundane routines of the present, or the uncertain promise of the future. She responds bitterly to Strickland's enthusiastic vision of the City:

> my people are a jealous people, and the name of a stranger is hateful to them…They do not desire new things, they have little knowledge of the world beyond their walls, and seek for none; they wish to live as their forefathers lived, careless of a future which they will never see…this home of mine, of which you are so fond of talking, is nothing but a great burying-place, and those who dwell in it are like ghosts who wander to and fro thinking of the things that they did, or did not do, a thousand years before. It was their ancestors who did things, not they, for they do nothing except plot against each other, eat, sleep, drink, and mumble prayers to a god in whom they do not believe. (Haggard, 1894: 139, 142)

A backward-looking people, safe on their island fastness, stupefied by comfort, revelling in past glories but fearful of what the future might hold, the City of the Heart and its people are unmistakably modelled on, and intended to address, the concerns of the people of late nineteenth-century Britain who, as Patrick Brantlinger notes, 'After the mid-Victorian years…found it increasingly difficult to think of themselves as inevitably progressive' and 'began worrying instead about the degeneration of their institutions, their culture, their racial "stock"' (Brantlinger, 1988: 230). They articulated these concerns through a new fictional form, the 'Imperial Gothic', whose blending of imperial promotion and the mysteries of the occult was specifically tailored to express anxieties about 'the weakening of Britain's imperial hegemony'. Most of these narratives focused on tales of 'individual regression or going native' or 'an invasion of civilization by the forces of barbarism or demonism'. Haggard's anxieties, however, centred not on the

decline of civilisation but the catastrophic consequences of its over-refinement, 'the diminution of opportunities for adventure and heroism in the modern world' that this brought and the resulting loss of contact with an enlivening barbarism (Brantlinger, 1988: 230). In this regard, Haggard joins Ruskin and J.A. Hobson, interpreting 'in terms of regression much that their contemporaries understand as progress' (Brantlinger, 1988: 236).[24]

Seen in this context, for all its imperial Gothic trappings, its bejewelled priests and their dread oaths, *Heart of the World* has a serious, admonitory purpose. It offers a vision of what the fate of a nation like Britain, urbanised, enfeebled and emasculated, cut off from the rejuvenating savagery of the frontier, may yet be in a ruthless world of competing imperial powers; it expresses Haggard's greatest fear, that the country 'will decline and fall' (Etherington, 1984: 65).[25] By projecting this vision of British degeneration on to Latin America, Haggard is able to liberate himself from local issues and take aim at the bigger picture, to denounce urban life and its corrosive effects. Through the gentlemanly reticence of Don Ignatio, Haggard can articulate a social critique of modern Britain that his blunt-spoken fictional alter ego, Allan Quatermain, can only gesture at.

Haggard makes it clear that where the people of the Heart have only ancient prophecy on which to hang their hopes of renewal, the British have more accessible and efficacious sources of reinvigoration, and so less excuse for ignoring them and sinking into torpor. The dominions and colonies, where the sons of empire had fought for and secured extensive territories in the face of hostile natives and extreme climatic conditions, promised a ready supply of the vigorous new blood needed to remedy the effects of urbanisation, rejuvenate the nation and recharge its imperial mission.[26] Like Ruskin, Haggard believed that Britain might once again become 'a royal throne of kings; a sceptred isle, for all the world a source of light' by tapping the human wealth of her empire. By reminding her colonists, as Ruskin advised, that 'their chief virtue is to be fidelity to their country, and that their first aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and sea', Haggard believed that the power at the peripheries of the empire

might renew the centre and that the heart of the world might be restored to its former vigour (Ruskin, 1905: XX 42). Ignatio and Zibalbay's dreams of a return to national greatness hinge on the reconstitution of the sundered nation, albeit in symbolic form, through the restoration of the jewel. The reconciliation of antagonistic principles, war and peace, sword and plough, blood sacrifice and nature worship, will, they believe, bring about a return to the Golden Age when Quetzalcoatl dwelt among the people. In the same way, Haggard implies, only when the sophisticated urbanity of the imperial centre is reconnected with the atavistic vigour of the colonies can Britain again be whole, and its imperial destiny be affirmed and extended.

The City of the Heart's failure to remedy the palpable deterioration in its fortunes and prospects is, Haggard asserts, not only folly, but wilful and impious. Accordingly, he subjects its people, and symbolically thereby the docile masses of Britain, to a biblical retribution befitting their waywardness, a punishment uniquely reserved for those who have neglected the teachings of their Lord, denied their destiny and pursued their own misguided ways into wickedness. Inundated by the waters of the surrounding lake when Maya opens the sluice gates in the Sanctuary, and, as in the biblical flood, 'all the outlets of the vast body of water beneath the earth burst open', all evidence of the city and its people having ever existed, is wiped out (Genesis 7: 11). Alongside this uncompromising biblical judgement the novel also offers a stern Darwinian lesson. Alan Sandison argues that Darwinian ideas exercised a 'seminal…influence on Haggard's rendering of the imperial idea' (Sandison, 1967: 41). From this perspective, the fate of the City suggests that to wilfully neglect the bases of one's survival, to deny the savage instincts that drive one's participation in the daily struggle, as the people of the Heart had done and the British are doing now, is to invite extinction. As Ignatio reflects:

> One short hour had sufficed to sweep out of existence the ripe fruit of the labour of centuries, and with it the dwindling remnant of the last pure race of Indians, who followed the customs and creeds of my forefathers. Doubtless their day was done, and the Power above us had decreed their

fall; still, so vast and sudden a ruin was a thing awful to behold, or even to think upon. (Haggard, 1894: 295)

Was Britain's power in terminal decline? Were its people, too, to be swept out of existence by progress or the divine hand? Ignatio's reflections on the fate of the lost people of Mexico and their fabled City were calculated to send a shiver of nervous recognition through every late Victorian Briton alarmed at the state of the nation and the fate of the empire, while proposing the means by which this awful fate might be avoided.

Helping Them on Their Way

Haggard's uncompromising treatment of the people of the Heart, along with his musings in his other works on the unfortunate primitives washed away on the tide of history, led Sandison and others to argue that he should be esteemed not only as an outstanding exponent of romantic fiction, but also for the contribution he made to late nineteenth-century debates on evolution and imperialism, as 'a Darwinian materialist' (Etherington, 1984: 118).[27] Haggard's exhortations to civilised man to find strength in the land and the rejuvenating savagery it engenders were his response to what, by the final decades of the nineteenth century, had become the increasingly querulous questioning of Britain's capacity to sustain its imperial mission. The berserker aesthetic he celebrated, however, led to a more pointed interrogation not of the nation's capacity to rule, but of the genocidal consequences of its doing so. It is to these debates that Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* (1912) makes a signal contribution.

By the time of Conan Doyle's birth in 1859, 'the conviction that "inferior peoples" were by nature condemned to extinction' was, as Sven Lindqvist has shown, 'a major element in the European view of mankind' (Lindqvist, 1997: 10). Prominent thinkers in biology, anthropology, race and evolutionary theory had separately concluded that the extermination of primitive peoples by their more civilised brethren was the irresistible law of nature. 'It seemed obvious', from the fact that white men all over the

globe were decimating the darker skinned peoples they came into contact with, 'that some racial natural law was at work and that the extermination of non-Europeans was simply a stage in the natural development of the world' (Lindqvist, 1997: 115). If by the mid nineteenth century genocide was regarded as an 'inevitable byproduct of progress', the key question for modern man was not whether to condone or condemn it, but how to arrive at some sort of moral accommodation with it (Lindqvist, 1997: 123). It was the moral responsibility of civilised man not to protest against the eradication of primitive peoples, but to ensure that they were taken off in the most humane fashion. Restraint or mercy in this context, Eduard von Hartmann argued, was not charity, but a species of cruelty:

> As little as a favour is done the dog whose tail is to be cut off, when one cuts it off gradually inch by inch, so little is their [*sic*] humanity in artificially prolonging the death struggles of savages who are on the verge of extinction...The true philanthropist, if he has comprehended the natural law of anthropological evolution, cannot avoid desiring an acceleration of the last convulsion and labor [*sic*] for that end. (von Hartmann, 1970: 12)

As early as 1850 Herbert Spencer had proposed that the eradication of the unregenerate was not a matter for moral vacillation, but a religious obligation: 'The forces which are working out the great scheme of perfect happiness, taking no account of incidental suffering, exterminate such sections of mankind as stand in their way...Be he human or be he brute – the hindrance must be got rid of' (Spencer, 1850: 461). In this context, instead of wringing their hands over the plight of the unfortunate victims, it was believed that 'the true compassion of the superior races consisted in helping them on their way' (Lindqvist, 1997: 10).

Not everybody was convinced that the extinction of primitive peoples was inevitable, or regarded genocide as a species of Christian charity.[28] Surveying the catastrophic results of modern man's endeavours to improve his primitive brothers, John Howison argued that the real savages were closer to home and that it was civilised man himself who was most in need of moral reform:

> The continent of America has already been nearly depopulated of its
> aborigines by the introduction of the blessings of civilisation. The West
> Indian archipelago, from the same cause, no longer contains a single family
> of its primitive inhabitants. South Africa will soon be in a similar condition,
> and the islanders of the Pacific Ocean are rapidly diminishing in numbers
> from the ravages of European diseases and the despotism of self-interested
> and fanatical missionaries. It is surely time that the work of destruction
> should cease; and since long and melancholy experience has proved us to be
> invariably unsuccessful in rendering happier, wiser, or better, the barbarians
> whom we have visited or conquered, we may now conscientiously let them
> alone and turn a correcting hand towards ourselves and seek to repress...our
> avarice, our selfishness, and our vices. (quoted in Lindqvist, 1997: 122)

In *The Lost World* it is Conan Doyle's aim to strip away the
lagging of respectability that science and religion had afforded
genocide, to expose the ugly truths about colonial dispossession
and to explore thereby Howison's theories about the complicated
relations between civilisation and savagery. Conan Doyle projects
his analysis of empire on to an imaginary Latin American
landscape. Here he can illustrate what happens when civilised man
finds his pursuit of land, loot or security obstructed by his more
primitive brothers, and how he justifies the bloody consequences
of his actions. As such, his central concern in *The Lost World* is
to offer an allegorical critique of the moral landscape of British
imperialism, to use Latin America to explain a society in which
obscure matters of scientific dispute occasion outrage, while the
eradication of whole peoples passes without comment.

The fictional premise that underpins this analysis rests on
maverick Professor George Edward Challenger's discovery of an
isolated plateau in Brazil where, cut off from the modern world,
ancient life forms co-exist with more developed species. When
Challenger presents these findings to a meeting of the Zoological
Institute in London, they provoke uproar. Undaunted, he invites
the Institute to dispatch a party to the area to test his claims.
This group, comprising a Professor of Comparative Anatomy,
Summerlee, the gentleman adventurer, Lord John Roxton, and
the journalist and narrator, Edward Malone, is duly elected,

dispatched and later augmented in the upper reaches of the Amazon by Challenger himself. The party heads inland, ascends the plateau and the adventure begins. For all the primeval glamour of this lost world, its central lake bubbling with amphibious proto-life, antlered herds, swooping pterodactyls and the lumbering Jurassic bestiary, the narrative centres on the struggle for dominion between the plateau's competing hominid groups – the 'ape-men', primitive, simian and savage, and the more evolved Indians, 'small men, wiry, active…Their faces…hairless, well-formed and good humoured' (Conan Doyle, 2001: 151, 163).[29] Despite their evolutionary advantages, the Indians are barely holding their own against the ape-men and when the adventurers encounter them are fighting for their survival. The opposing groups' differing conduct of the struggle implies a good deal about each. If violence is, for the Indians, an unpalatable means to the higher end of peace and progress, for the ape-men the slaughter of their enemies is an entertaining end in itself. The ceremonial centrepiece of their society is a bizarre and entirely purposeless sacrificial rite in which, to their evident delight, the hapless victim is flung off the plateau to his death. When the adventurers are attacked and brutalised by the ape-men they take an active role in the conflict and play midwife to evolution (Conan Doyle, 2001: 153–4). Contributing their more advanced military strategy and greater force of arms to the Indians, in a final confrontation they help them defeat and all but exterminate the ape-men. Fresh from the massacre, Challenger observes that it has been their privilege

> to be present at one of the typical decisive battles of history – the battles which have determined the fate of the world. What, my friends, is the conquest of one nation by another? It is meaningless. Each produces the same result. But those fierce fights, when in the dawn of the ages the cave-dwellers held their own against the tiger folk, or the elephants first found that they had a master, those were the real conquests – the victories that count. By this strange turn of fate we have seen and helped to decide even such a contest. Now upon this plateau the future must ever be for man. (Conan Doyle, 2001: 174)[30]

Yet for all his evocation of the historical moment, Challenger's orthodox vindication of the evolutionary process does nothing to mitigate the horrors at its sharp end. As Malone notes:

> It needed a robust faith in the end to justify such tragic means. As we advanced together through the woods we found the ape-men lying thick, transfixed with spears or arrows…driven back to their city, they had made a last stand there, once again they had been broken, and now we were in time to see the final fearful scene of all…As we arrived the Indians, a semi-circle of spearmen, had closed in on them, and in a minute it was over. Thirty or forty died where they stood. The others, screaming and clawing, were thrust over the precipice, and went hurtling down, as their prisoners had of old, on to the sharp bamboos six hundred feet below. (Conan Doyle, 2001: 174)

The particular manner in which the last of the ape-men are dispatched is highly suggestive, not least in its biblical allusion to the Gadarene Swine. More pertinently, and more topically, it alludes to a method known to have been employed by white settlers in Australia to dispose of aborigines with whom they were in conflict over land or natural resources.[31] Further, the strange clicking talk of the ape-men recalls the languages of the Nama and Herero people of South West Africa, now Namibia, who after rebelling against the cruelty of the colonising Germans were almost entirely exterminated in a twelve month period during 1904–5.[32] These parallels drive home Conan Doyle's point that though the superior beings may claim to be accidental witnesses to the working out of a natural law, here and across the globe they have shown themselves to be active participants in the extermination of their fellow men. Furthermore, their reasons for participating in the slaughter suggest that they aren't nearly as civilised as they believe themselves to be. Challenger may portray himself as no more than a fortunate witness to an irresistible natural process, but when Malone and Roxton come across him in the final stages of the massacre of the ape-men he has abandoned all pretence to scientific detachment and is 'strutting about like a gamecock', his eyes 'shining with the lust of slaughter' (Conan Doyle, 2001: 174). If Challenger's regressive savagery comes as a shock, Lord John Roxton's coldly rational determination to

settle a personal 'score' with the ape-men – the 'filthy beasts' had 'fingered [him]…all over' – by 'wiping them off the face of the earth', is more deeply alarming (Conan Doyle, 2001: 153, 170). Increased refinement, Conan Doyle demonstrates, brings not a transcendence of savagery, merely a greater facility in justifying its employment. In their efforts to demonstrate their superiority over the brutal primitives of the plateau, the adventurers only reinforce their commonality with them. The ape-men's sacrificial rites may revolt Roxton but they also fascinate him: 'It was horrible – but it was doocedly interestin' too' (Conan Doyle, 2001: 154). When Malone fires on the ape-men he is less the well-drilled territorial marksman than a blood-crazed berserker, 'cheering and yelling with pure ferocity and joy of slaughter' (Conan Doyle, 2001: 159).

Yet as Conan Doyle points out, in this regard there is nothing extraordinary about the members of the party. By turns suave, savage and coldly scientific, the adventurers are fitting emblems of their society and the brutality that bristles beneath its civilised exterior. Malone reflects 'There are strange red depths in the soul of the most commonplace man' (Conan Doyle, 2001: 159). Indeed the behaviour of London's intellectual elite is at times scarcely distinguishable from the frenzy of the ape-men. Conan Doyle lavishes considerable detail on the two Zoological Institute lectures which bookend the party's journey to South America and how each descends into brawling. He notes how, during the first lecture, the roar of the audience was 'a frightful outburst of sound', less like the expression of reasoned debate than 'the uproar of the carnivora cage when the step of the bucket-bearing keeper is heard in the distance' (Conan Doyle, 2001: 47). The second meeting is *preceded* by 'a prolonged *mêlée* in which several people were injured' (Conan Doyle, 2001: 193).

The key figure linking the seemingly antithetical extremes of civilisation in the novel is the 'splenetic scientist', Challenger (Fraser, 1998: 66). His formidable intellect is strangely yoked to a pathological incapacity to restrain himself – he is forever 'effervescing with fight' (Conan Doyle, 2001: 26). He meets scepticism with an immediate recourse to physical assault. After

his attack on Malone, his exasperated wife describes him as 'a brute' (Conan Doyle, 2001: 28). Every description of Challenger emphasises his squat simian bulk: he is 'a stunted Hercules whose tremendous vitality had all run to depth, breadth, and brain' (Conan Doyle, 2001: 25). His affinity with the ape-men is first implied in a glint of teeth. Immediately before he launches an assault on Malone his 'black moustache lifted and a white fang twinkled in a sneer' (Conan Doyle, 2001: 26). This brief glimpse of Challenger's fangs has an important echo later in the novel when Malone is throttled by an ape-man. Drifting into uncon-sciousness, he recalls that as 'the creature felt me grow limp in his grasp, two white canines gleamed for a moment at each side of the vile mouth' (Conan Doyle, 2001: 166). Little wonder that when the adventurers are captured by the ape-men, while Summerlee and Roxton are humiliated and brutalised, in Challenger they recognise and revere a more advanced specimen of their own kind, bearing him aloft like 'a Roman emperor' (Conan Doyle, 2001: 152). The uncanny likeness between the scientific *übermann* and the degenerate apes makes explicit what is only hinted at in Challenger's temper and Malone's frenzy. For all the smug assurance of his evolutionary advantages, modern man has not left his more primitive self behind but carries his primordial savagery within him, and the least provocation might bring it to the surface and betray him. This insistence on the fellowship between civilised man and his primitive forebears demolishes the orthodox vindications of genocide, exposing the uncomfortable truth that for all its cant about civilisation, progress and mission, colonialism involved the dispossession and destruction of men, who, whatever their physical or cultural differences, were inescapably our kin, if not our brothers.

Conan Doyle's moral point here has an important political dimension. Having rescued a number of Indians from certain death at the hands of the ape-men, Challenger is gratified by the grovelling obeisance they display towards the adventurers: 'They may be undeveloped types', he observes, 'but their deportment in the presence of their superiors might be a lesson to some of our more advanced Europeans' (Conan Doyle, 2001: 169).

Challenger's remarks point to the degree of anxiety among the British about a perceived falling off in the deference that they felt was due to them from their European competitors. This, in turn, resulted from a relative decline in Britain's power and prestige in the decade before the First World War. Conan Doyle's message is clear. If the British wish to retain their pre-eminence, if they are not to find themselves at the sharp end of political and military evolution, they will have to draw on all of their instinctual resources to conquer their competitors, to fight harder than ever to prove their superior civilisation: 'Only by learning to be more like Challenger can they hope to ensure their continuance' (Jaffe, 1987: 98). Genocide, in this context, is less a moral issue than an arresting reminder of the contingent nature of national superiority and a demonstration of what, in more hostile circumstances, their plight might yet be. The novel thus condemns the brutality of the colonial frontier while conceding its indispensable role in ensuring the survival and integrity of the nation. As Jacqueline Jaffe put it:

> Doyle is not advocating a return to the bestiality of the ape-men. Rather, he is suggesting that as life in a post industrial, materialistic society has led to a spiritual and moral decline, a salutary look at a time when people had to fight to survive and life was worth fighting for would not come amiss. Challenger, the ape-man/scientist, is a perpetual reminder of qualities that the middle class had forgotten ever existed. (Jaffe, 1987: 97)

What is most ironic about this muted call for an appreciation of cultural relativism is the manner in which Conan Doyle articulates it by drawing on and reinforcing a range of orthodox visions of Latin America. He grounds his call for cultural understanding on a discursive bedrock of prejudice and received opinion. Though at the outset of the novel Malone's editor laments that the 'big blank spaces on the map are all being filled in, and there's no room for romance anywhere', the succeeding action demonstrates that where Latin America is concerned quite the contrary is the case (Conan Doyle, 2001: 15).[33] If elsewhere in the world the routine processes of exploration, mapping and settlement are held to be inimical to romance, in Latin America the reverse is in force. As

Roxton points out to Malone, the more one fills in the blank spaces on the map of Latin America, the more one multiplies both the opportunities and the appetite for adventure:

> if you take it right through from Darien to Fuego, it's the grandest, richest, most wonderful bit of earth upon this planet…The more you know of that country, young fellah, the more you would understand that anythin' was possible – *anythin'*. (Conan Doyle, 2001: 60–1)

Anything might be possible, but what actually happens in Latin America is inevitable. The novel may pose some awkward questions about colonialism, but as a model of narrative imperialism it is hard to beat.

Conan Doyle's Latin America is imagined and constructed purely as a means of addressing what were, for the British, determinedly domestic anxieties. As the British grappled with the burdens of imperialism, Conan Doyle employed Latin America to imagine the nation's darkest fears, rehearse its guiltiest secrets and exorcise its most shameful fantasies. What the British most feared and desired – absolute power: what they could do with it, and what might happen to them were they to lose it – is given substance in the personal and political engagements played out on the plateau. While the anxieties that this depiction of Latin America addresses are resolved or shift focus, while the moral questions lose their relevance as the world changes, Conan Doyle's portrait of Latin America as a landscape of polarities and extremes, of entrenched antagonisms, conquest and subjection, degeneracy and cultivation, beasts and men, remains constant. It is this very constancy that has made it so useful to British writers and has thus reinforced its stubborn unchangingness. Latin America's failure to develop, its petrification, furnishes a handy measure of how others have evolved. For Conan Doyle, Haggard, Kingsley, Churchill, Hope and many others like them, the ossification of Latin America, its continual revisiting of irreducible antagonisms and the age old struggles they breed, is less a matter for moral or political condemnation than it is an indispensable deep structure which enables their differing responses to the perilous state of contemporary Britain.

Welcome to Lilliput

To some extent this paradox, whereby a critique of colonialism serves to advance its most fundamental values, is a direct result of the writers' choice of genre. While adventure fiction's implicit endorsement of political orthodoxy, particularly where imperialism was concerned, may have furnished an ideal context for the articulation of unpopular views about contentious issues, the 'special status' it enjoyed as a species of 'reliable reporting', the point that adventure narratives were widely 'perceived as primarily factual', meant that the negative vision of Latin America they advanced was also taken as truthful (White, 1993: 40, 42).[34] As a consequence, adventure fiction served to entrench the very imperial views that it ostensibly critiqued. Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo* (1904) offers an exemplary demonstration of how a denunciation of imperialism can also draw on and advance the views and values of empire.[35]

Unquestionably complex in its structure and narration, *Nostromo* offers a correspondingly sophisticated analysis of historical and political process: 'the novel is concerned repeatedly to question "readings", whether of history or of individuals. It embodies questions about the very activity of making sense of life' (Watts, 1990: 69). It has enjoyed more than a century of critical acclaim, not least for its faithful rendering of Latin America as British readers imagined it to be. At the time of its publication, Cunninghame Graham, Edward Garnett, John Buchan and Arnold Bennett each lauded 'the creative richness with which Conrad had created so convincing a historic landscape' (Watts, 1990: 94). For F.R. Leavis, *Nostromo* was a principal exhibit in his case that Conrad was 'among the greatest novelists in the language' (Leavis, 1962: 211). While social conservatives like Leavis approved Conrad's 'marked moral intensity', left-wing critics were equally impressed by his radical reading of history and economics (Leavis, 1962: 211). Arnold Kettle drew attention to the fact that Conrad's view of history faithfully echoed that advanced by Engels (Kettle, 1967: 69). More recently, postcolonial critics have found much of merit in the novel. Edward Said thought it a groundbreak-

ing critique of imperialism: 'There was no work of European fiction until *Nostromo*, no authorial vision, that so piercingly and unsparingly captured the imperialist project in Latin America' (Said, 1988: 72). The Kenyan novelist, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, identified *Nostromo* as his 'favorite' novel, its multiple viewpoints, disrupted chronology, delayed transmission of information and the narrative destabilisation they effect, providing an object lesson in how to write back against the centre (Ngugi, 1986: 76).[36]

While each of these critics praised *Nostromo*'s truthfulness, its fidelity to the complexity of lived experience, none with the exception of Said saw fit to question its breathtakingly complacent vision of Latin America. Conrad's Costaguana arises out of and reproduces the same imperial vision that he rails against elsewhere in the book. It is the persistently professed opinion of the narrator and the novel's protagonists that Costaguana, its people, if not the whole continent, are irredeemable, sunk in 'moral darkness' and incapable of governing themselves (Conrad, 1996: 294). Their efforts to establish civilised organs of state seem only to worsen their situation. Father Román's experience of the republic's turbulent history has led him to conclude that 'political atrocities' were not a departure from the norms of public administration in Costaguana but a natural feature of government:

> The working of the usual public institutions presented itself to him most directly as a series of calamities overtaking private individuals and flowing logically from each other through hate, revenge, folly, and rapacity, as though they had been part of a divine dispensation. (Conrad, 1996: 330)

In the context of this cycle of pillage and oppression, the lexicon of political idealism mocks the high ideals each petty tyrant espouses but signally fails to realise: 'The words one knows so well have a nightmarish meaning in this country. Liberty, democracy, patriotism, government – all of them have a flavour of folly and murder' (Conrad, 1996: 337). It is not only European values that deteriorate in Costaguana, but Europeans themselves. Despite Anthony Hope's mockery, Conrad seems to suggest that Latin America corrupts those who absorb its unwholesome vapours. When the Chief Railway Engineer, recently arrived in the republic,

enthuses at the prospect of Sulaco's secession, the narrator observes: 'It was as if something subtle in the air of Costaguana had inoculated him with the local faith in *pronunciamientos*' (Conrad, 1996: 264).[37]

In the light of this, it is clear that *Nostromo* teaches us as much about Latin America as *Heart of Darkness* does about Africa. Despite the insistence of critics that the novel was an accurate representation of Latin America as it was and a prophetic account of how it would remain, it is clear that the novel was not intended to reveal any significant truths about South America, since, 'like all of Conrad's memorable writing, it derives its perspectives, characters, and themes from the experience of European imperialism' (Said, 1988: 70).[38] To this end, Conrad constructed Costaguana as 'a synthetic product', a composite vision of the continent, 'a S. Am^{can} state in general', employing its history of republics and revolutions as the basis for a study of the contrasting political systems of Britain, France and Italy (Barringer, 1969: 21, 23). '*Nostromo*'s initial strategy', Peter Smith notes, was 'to transfer the ideas of Europe to a sort of Lilliput, whose abstraction is concealed by some Latin American local color, and then to watch them operate under laboratory conditions' (Smith, 1984: 189). The effect of this was to superimpose on Latin America the political and social imperatives of the west and in doing so to disappear the continent, its people and their concerns. As a consequence, in seeking to critique the arrogance of imperial intervention *Nostromo* has become a landmark in its narrative extension:

> Conrad writes as a man in whom a *Western* view of the *non-Western* world is so deeply ingrained that it blinds him to other histories, other cultures, other aspirations. All Conrad can see is a world dominated by the West, and – of equal importance – a world in which every opposition to the West only confirms its wicked power. What Conrad could not see is life lived outside this cruel tautology. He could not understand – or so we would have to conclude from reading him – that places like Latin America (and India and Africa for that matter) also contain people and cultures with histories and ways not controlled by the gringo imperialists and liberal reformers of this world. (Said, 1988: 70)

Despite *Nostromo*'s avowed disdain for the extension of Anglo-American power in South America, Said concludes that Conrad was

> both an anti-imperialist and an imperialist – progressive when it came to rendering the self-confirming, self-deluding corruption of the West's colonial drive; reactionary in his inability to imagine that Costaguana could ever have had a meaningful existence of its own, which the imperialists had violently disturbed. (Said, 1988: 71)

For all its contradictoriness, or perhaps because of it, Conrad's vision of Latin America has also proved powerfully influential in the twentieth century. While it has engendered the 'severe view of Western imperialist illusions' that we find in the works of Greene, Naipaul and an array of black African writers, it has also played a crucial role in legitimating the broader assumption that 'all significant action and life' are located in the west and that 'the outlying regions of the world have no life, history, or culture to speak of, no independence or integrity worth representing' (Said, 1988: 72). It can thus be seen that the great achievement of what many critics still regard as English literature's definitive treatment of Latin America, has been to shrink the continent to the dimensions and significance of a Lilliput. It has been Conrad's legacy, and that of adventure fiction more broadly, to suggest that if Latin America does indeed exist, the continent, its troubled history and the insignificant hordes who swarm across its surface, matter only in so far as they illuminate the concerns of the west.

3

THE LAST OF ENGLAND

In Search of England

Little more than a month before he died, broken by the failure of his dream of pan-American union, Simón Bolívar declared in a valediction to his former ally, General Juan José Flores: 'America is ungovernable. Those who have served the revolution have ploughed the sea' (Bolívar, 1950: III 501).[1] The turbulent history of Latin America's republics through the nineteenth century suggests that Bolívar's pessimism was well founded. The chaos that marked the failure of the independence generation's dreams of stable and enlightened government furnished, as we have seen, an ideal context within which Britons, jaded by the security of their lives, might indulge their fantasies of escape and adventure.[2] Yet as the anarchy in Latin America beckoned, there was a growing sense at home that the settled order Britons had taken for granted was not nearly as stable as they had thought. As the nineteenth century drew on, there was increasing anxiety that the nation's imperial gains and industrial advances were being achieved at the cost of its essential identity.[3] There were complaints in Parliament, the press and the humble English village, that the people, places, buildings, trades and traditions that embodied the nation's unique identity were being washed away on the tide of progress – that England itself was slowly but certainly disappearing. This emerging sense of cultural imperilment was reflected in the proliferation of voluntary bodies and publishing ventures, established from the mid nineteenth century onwards, with the express aim of 'recovering, preserving and celebrating various aspects of Britain's cultural and environmental heritage' (Cannadine, 2002: 225). Up to the outbreak of the Second World War these included the Commons,

Footpaths and Open Spaces Preservation Society (1865), the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (1877), the National Footpaths Preservation Society (1884), the *Dictionary of National Biography* (1885), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (1889), the National Trust (1895), *Country Life* (1897), the Survey of London (1900), the *Victoria History of the Counties of England* (1900), the Ancient Monuments Society (1921), the Council for the Care of Churches (1922), the Council for the Protection of Rural England (1926), the National Trust for Scotland (1931) and the Georgian Group (1937).[4]

The mixture of pride in the nation's development and anxiety over its effects on the country's physical and cultural heritage, hints at a more deep-seated ambivalence among Victorians about the consequences of the industrial revolution and the progress it brought.[5] Lincoln Allison has noted how, among the British, from the mid nineteenth century onwards, 'progress' was a uniquely ambiguous term, connoting 'tendencies that we accept, even formally approve, yet of which we are privately suspicious' (Allison, 1978: 358). This ambivalence towards development found expression even at the Great Exhibition, which, as Martin Wiener notes, is generally regarded as 'the high-water mark of educated opinion's enthusiasm for industrial capitalism' (Wiener, 2004: 28). Between May and October 1851 more than 6 million visitors to Hyde Park pored over the acres of machinery and manufactures housed in Joseph Paxton's vast hangar of iron and glass, the Crystal Palace. Though ostensibly showcasing the works of industry of all nations, the Great Exhibition was principally a celebration of British progress and innovation, a demonstration of its pre-eminence in manufacturing and production and a bold declaration of 'the new ideals that seemed to have become the national ideals of Victorian Britain' (Wiener, 2004: 28). Little more than a decade after the Exhibition the nation had become so closely identified with its industries, their manufactures and the great engineers responsible for them, that Samuel Smiles could sincerely ask: what was Britain 'without its tools, its machinery, its steam-engine, its steam-ships, and its locomotive. Are not the men who have made the motive power of the country, and immensely

increased its productive strength, the men above all who have …
[made] the country what it is?' (Smiles, 1904: I xxiii).

Smiles' conviction, that Britain owed not merely its prosperity
but its identity to the architects of its industrialisation, was not
universally shared. In fact, by the time he advanced this opinion
the 'trajectory of admiration for material progress' was in slow but
certain decline as 'currents of thought and sentiment began to flow
in another direction' (Wiener, 2004: 30). Increasing discomfort
with the effects of progress, rural depopulation, industrial blight,
urban poverty and a degraded working class, led to a wholesale
'reappraisal of the Industrial Revolution. Instead of being seen as
something which had made Britain pre-eminent as the workshop
of the world, it was re-evaluated as a regrettable and disastrous
phenomenon, which had brought – and was still bringing – human
suffering and environmental degradation (Cannadine, 2002:
225–6). This gave rise to a more wide-ranging reassessment of
what it meant to be British which, within a few years of Smiles'
confident association of the nation's identity with its tools and
machinery, almost entirely excluded industrialism from its vision
of authentic Englishness. From the 1860s onwards:

> The idealization of material growth and technical innovation that had been
> emerging received a check, and was more and more pushed back by the
> contrary ideals of stability, tranquility, closeness to the past, and 'nonmateri-
> alism'. An 'English way of life' was defined and widely accepted; it stressed
> nonindustrial noninnovative and nonmaterial qualities, best encapsulated
> in rustic imagery…This countryside of the mind was everything industrial
> society was not – ancient, slow-moving, stable, cozy, and 'spiritual'. The
> English genius, it declared, was (despite appearances) not economic or
> technical, but social and spiritual; it did not lie in inventing, producing,
> or selling, but in preserving, harmonizing, and moralizing. The English
> character was not naturally progressive, but conservative; its greatest task
> – and achievement – lay in taming and 'civilizing' the dangerous engines of
> progress it had unwittingly unleashed. (Wiener, 2004: 5–6)

David Cannadine has noted how, as the nineteenth century
progressed and 'the economic importance of the rural world
diminished, its cultural importance significantly increased'

(Cannadine, 2002: 226).[6] Over this period it was argued that the 'green and pleasant land' of England's rural south was the locus not merely of authentic national identity, but of life itself. In which light, if, as Ruskin proposed 'THERE IS NO WEALTH BUT LIFE', it was clear that to reside in England's industrial towns or cities was not merely to live in irremediable poverty, but hardly to live at all (quoted in Warner and Hough, 1983: 67).[7] But it was not only Britain's cities that were being despoiled by the industrial revolution. Mark Girouard has noted how, from the 1860s, 'the whole English rural tradition began to seem increasingly precious and threatened', an architectural tradition that included 'not only medieval churches and barns, but sixteenth- and seventeenth-century farmhouses, red brick early Georgian houses in the market places and back streets of country towns, in short the whole English vernacular tradition' (Girouard, 1971: 42). On a journey through the Cotswolds in the summer of 1876, William Morris was appalled by the sight of the Norman church at Burford 'being pulled down' (Henderson, 1967: 194). The letter of protest which he composed, though never sent, was the basis for the founding of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).

Where SPAB was committed to the conservation of the nation's architectural heritage, the founders of the National Trust were 'primarily concerned with preserving open spaces of outstanding natural beauty which were threatened with development or spoliation'. That the 'national heritage which they sought to preserve was natural rather than man-made, rural rather than urban', resulted from the fact that, like Ruskin, Morris and 'many of their contemporaries, they believed that the essence of Englishness was to be found in the fields and hedgerows, not in the suburbs and slums' (Cannadine, 2002: 227). It was important to protect these sites, they argued, not only for what they were but for what they signified and for the benefits they brought. A repository of the nation's 'spiritual values', they were, G.M. Trevelyan argued, a vital antidote to the 'base materialism' of the day (quoted in Cannadine, 2002: 231–2). In the face of 'the inexorable march of bricks and mortar' and the 'full development of motor traffic' that were laying waste to the English countryside,

the National Trust was 'an ark of refuge', safeguarding the nation's most prized physical heritage and the bodies and souls of its human cargo from the rising waters of materialism and despair (quoted in Cannadine, 2002: 231–2).

Despite the extension of the road network and increasing private ownership of cars, from 200,000 registrations in 1918 to 'well over one million' in 1930, physical distance and economic hardship meant that 'Deep England' remained inaccessible to the majority of the nation's urban population until well into the 1920s (Taylor, 1975: 217; Wright, 1985: 81). Over this period, the rural nostalgia once most prevalent among working class refugees from the countryside became an increasingly prominent feature of middle class culture. Better educated with greater leisure time and financial resources at their disposal, this army of sentimental ruralists provided a ready market for a new consumer phenomenon – the commodification of the English countryside and the values it ostensibly embodied. Literary critics have noted a dramatic upsurge in rural nostalgia in writing from the 1880s onwards.[8] Alongside fiction and poetry romanticising the rural world, a new kind of travel writing emerged around the turn of the century. In *Haunts of Ancient Peace* (1902), the Poet Laureate, Alfred Austin, described a journey through 'Old England' as a cultural pilgrimage in quest of surviving vestiges of the nation's essential identity, 'or so much of it as is left' (Austin, 1902: 18).[9] Austin's was an early example of what, by the 1920s and 1930s, had become a 'boom market…in books about the national character, traditions, and antiquities, usually to be found in the country' (Wiener, 2004: 73).[10]

By the 1920s, it was clear that a great many books purported to know what England was, where it might be found and which parts of it needed to be rescued from the rising tide of industrialism. Arguably the most popular book of this kind was H.V. Morton's *In Search of England* (1927). First appearing as a series of articles in the *Daily Express* in 1926, in the two and a half years between its publication, on 2 June 1927, and the end of the decade it went through nine editions, 23 by 1936, and is still in print today. In his introduction to the 1930 edition,

Morton ingenuously proposes that the book was simply 'the record of a motor-car journey round England…written without deliberation by the roadside, on farmyard walls, in cathedrals, in little churchyards, on the washstands of country inns, and in many another inconvenient place' (Morton, 1927: vii). Yet as this list of impromptu compositional sites implies, and a quick glance at the map of his journey confirms, the England that Morton went in search of was overwhelmingly rural or coastal, and most iconically embodied in the historic village, ancient town or cathedral city of the Midlands or south.[11] Not only is Morton's England notably pre-industrial, it has also been radically reshaped, the south and Midlands broadened and elongated, while the north has been comically compressed. Having tootled around the south and west of England at a leisurely pace – it takes him 185 pages of my 280-page (1930) edition of the text to get from London, via the south coast, Cornwall, the Cotswolds and the Welsh marches, to Chester – the moment he reaches the Cheshire/Lancashire border we have lift off. He rockets through the northern counties, from Warrington to Carlisle (with a side trip to Gretna Green), Carlisle to Durham and Durham to Lincoln in a dizzying 30 pages. He then dedicates the final 65 pages to a leisurely passage through Norfolk and the east Midlands, before bringing his journey to a close in an unnamed village in the heart of England, somewhere between Stratford upon Avon and Warwick. In percentage terms, Morton dedicates 89 per cent of the text to the south and Midlands with only 11 per cent given over to his time in the north. In the light of this it is clear that despite Morton's claims to the contrary, the book was composed with the greatest deliberation, its construction driven by a specific cultural agenda – to assuage widespread anxiety that burgeoning industry and suburban sprawl had despoiled the nation's sacred sites and killed off its essential identity. Morton was not in search of England but reassuring himself that it was still there. His purpose was not to discover the country but to confirm a vision of it that he and millions of others cherished, a vision that he could sustain only through the radical distortion of its physical and human geography.[12]

If it was Morton's triumph to provide the English with a vision of their ideal imagined home, it was his tragedy that his portrait of it hastened the devastation of the cultural survivals he celebrated and sought to preserve. In his introduction to the 1930 edition he happily acknowledges that a new enthusiasm for the nation's history and heritage is abroad and that 'never before have so many people been searching for England'. He goes on to laud the 'remarkable system of motor-coach services which now penetrates every part of the country [and] has thrown open to ordinary people regions which even after the coming of the railways were remote and inaccessible' (Morton, 1927: vii). Astonishingly, as the waiting charabancs roared their engines and the village greens of England enjoyed their last hours of tranquillity, he failed to make the obvious connection between these cultural and social phenomena or take any measure of their potential consequences. Morton's 'motoring pastoral' not only alerted the barbarians to the existence of the nation's hidden treasures; it furnished them with a route map for their pillages (Matless, 1998: 64).[13]

The new-found popularity of England, the swarm of day-trippers slouching towards Barnstaple that this brought, and the 'vulgarization' they purportedly visited on sites sacred to the nation's identity and values, convinced some commentators by the outbreak of the Second World War that parts of the country 'had been lost forever and in these no one should expect to find the traditional nation at all' (Morton, 1927: viii; Wright, 1993: 87). These unwelcome social developments were, as John Betjeman recognised, potently embodied in the creeping suburbia of the new towns and the despoliation of the countryside they brought:

> Come, friendly bombs, and fall on Slough!
> It isn't fit for humans now,
> There isn't grass to graze a cow.
> Swarm over, Death!
>
> (Betjeman, 1937: 4)[14]

The onward march of a hundred Sloughs and the social levelling they symbolised bred a renewed interest in the possibility of recreating traditional English life abroad. In *The House that*

Berry Built (1945), Dornford Yates follows the fortunes of the Pleydell family whose ancestral home, White Ladies, has been handed over to the crown in lieu of taxes and is now employed as 'an official retreat for the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs' (Yates, 1945: 10). Leaving England until the political climate improves, the Pleydells cross the channel and withdraw to the bracing heights of the Pyrenees. Here, on a 'mountain lawn… plucked from the English countryside', they build a bigger and better White Ladies which boldly restates ideals of taste, class and breeding that the degraded soil of Britain could no longer sustain (Yates, 1945: 40).[15]

Death on the Pampas

Disillusioned by the surrender of the nation's symbolic heartland to suburban sprawl or the depredations of touring parties, dismayed by the nation's increasingly democratic tenor, convinced that Britain was an ever more foreign land, an influential minority of writers, like Morton, hunted out forgotten corners of the kingdom where its traditions might still be found, or else, like the Pleydells, looked abroad. Latin America was not only a popular setting in which responses to these crises of cultural identity might be attempted, it was also a key locus through which the underlying notion that the countryside was a repository of authentic national values, of LIFE itself, might be interrogated. In their search for England, in their efforts to examine the changing nature of the nation's principal values and the essential identity they enshrined, British writers persistently present Latin America as a place of death – a place where the particular qualities of life in Britain might be examined.

   In the late nineteenth century, the writer and naturalist W.H. Hudson was an influential interpreter of Anglo-Latin American cultural relations. Born in Argentina in 1841 and raised there on his parents' *estancia*, he came to Britain in 1877 where he lived until his death in 1922. His upbringing not only gave him a privileged perspective on Britons' misapprehensions about Latin America, it also afforded him a critical distance from their

instinctual valorisation of their own country: 'He writes so well about English rural life', Jonathan Bate claims, 'because it seems strange to him, because he sees it with the unsentimental eyes of an outsider' (Bate, 2000: 57). The most conspicuous consequence of Hudson's cultural distance from his adopted country was his resistance to the mythopoeic inscription of rural England so prevalent among cultural critics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He retained an unsentimental vision of the land and its people. Where Morton and his disciples saw in the forgotten hamlets and ancient croplands of deep England a unique repository of the nation's history, Hudson found there not a measure of what the nation possessed but an inventory of the qualities it had already lost. The tidy hedgerows of rural England suggested to Hudson that the civilisation the British so prized was slowly but certainly throttling them. Cut off from their fellows by the 'hateful subdivisions' of class, denied the rough tutelage of nature by the constraints of culture and education, spared the struggle for survival, the people were losing their elemental vigour and the whole country was stiffening into rigor mortis (Hudson, 1927: 335).

He illustrated this point in his first novel *The Purple Land* (1927/1885) where, ostensibly in search of work, his English-born narrator travels through the wild countryside of the Banda Oriental, modern-day Uruguay. This journey is the pretext for a crash course in the country and its culture, experienced through a range of picaresque adventures in which the narrator duels with gauchos, takes part in an abortive revolutionary uprising, rescues a damsel in distress and in the process meets a cross section of Uruguayan society. These adventures are bookended by set-piece speeches from the summit of Montevideo in which the narrator surveys the country. In the first of these, before he sets out on his journey, he reviews the state of the land, lamenting the failure of its people to exploit it:

> 'Whichever way I turn,' I said, 'I see before me one of the fairest habitations God has made for man: great plains smiling with everlasting spring; ancient woods; swift beautiful rivers; ranges of blue hills stretching away to the

> dim horizon. And beyond those fair slopes, how many leagues of pleasant wilderness are sleeping in the sunshine, where the wildflowers waste their sweetness and no plough turns the fruitful soil, where deer and ostrich roam fearless of the hunter…?' (Hudson, 1927: 11)

Preoccupied with politics, the locals' failure to develop the land has all but ruined it. Short of a general extirpation of the people – which at this point the narrator favours – the country's only hope lies in its incorporation into the British Empire:

> Oh, for a thousand young men of Devon and Somerset here with me, every one of them with a brain on fire with thoughts like mine! What a glorious deed would be done for humanity! What a mighty cheer we would raise for the glory of the old England that is passing away! (Hudson, 1927: 12–13)

The narrator's succeeding adventures and his overwhelmingly positive experience of the people he encounters lead him to revise these views. When, near the close of the novel, he again ascends the hill to pass judgement, it is not to commend British rule but to concede how its imposition would stifle the native qualities that so enrich the country:

> I cannot believe that if this country had been conquered and recolonised by England, and all that is crooked in it made straight according to our notions, my intercourse with the people would have had the wild, delightful flavour I have found in it. And if that distinctive flavour cannot be had along with the material prosperity resulting from Anglo-Saxon energy, I must breathe the wish that this land may never know such prosperity. (Hudson, 1927: 333)

The key condition of health and happiness, he concludes, is fidelity to the promptings of nature. Disorder and the uncertainty it breeds are not to be feared but embraced. It is the tenuousness of life that gives it value and meaning. One does not invite misfortune; but a life in which 'folly, crime' and 'sorrow' have been legislated out of existence is no life at all, merely a rehearsal for 'the dreamless sleep of the grave' (Hudson, 1927: 338). He concedes:

> I do not wish to be murdered, no man does; yet rather than see the ostrich and deer chased beyond the horizon, the flamingo and black-necked swan

slain on the blue lakes, and the herdsman sent to twang his romantic guitar in Hades as a preliminary to security of person, I would prefer to go about at any moment to defend my life against the sudden assaults of the assassin. (Hudson, 1927: 333–4)[16]

Hudson's conviction that death is a positive presence, the foil that gives life its form and light, was a theme that he audaciously returned to 30 years later, during the darkest days of the First World War. Bewildered by the scale of the slaughter in France, British writers had, by early 1916, rejected death's once automatic association with nobility and sacrifice, regarding it instead as the principal emblem of modern purposelessness.[17] Hudson took a different, quite heretical view of death. Thinking back over 'the past two or three dreadful years', while recovering from a serious illness over the winter of 1915–16, Hudson found his only point of reference for the carnage in France in his memories of his childhood in South America (Hudson, 1918: 330). Approaching Buenos Aires from the south, he recalled, one passed through the 'Saladero, or killing grounds, where the fat cattle, horses and sheep brought in from all over the country were slaughtered every day'. When the volume of livestock exceeded the capacity of the buildings:

> you could see hundreds of cattle being killed in the open all over the grounds in the old barbarous way the gauchos use, every animal being first lassoed, then hamstrung, then its throat cut – a hideous and horrible spectacle, with a suitable accompaniment of sounds in the wild shouts of the slaughterers and the awful bellowings of the tortured beasts. (Hudson, 1918: 286–7)

In the face of events on the western front it was hardly surprising that Hudson's reflections should turn to the suffering and death of the terrified herds at the Saladero. Paul Fussell notes that 1915, 'had been one of the most depressing years in British history' (Fussell, 1975: 11). At Ypres, Festubert, Neuve Chappelle and Loos, tens of thousands of men had been butchered in battles which brought negligible territorial gain that even the *Official History of the First World War* dismissed as a 'useless slaughter

of infantry' (quoted in Liddell Hart, 1970: 267). French soldiers being marched to the front protested at their inevitable fate by baaing loudly, 'in imitation of lambs led to the slaughter' (Watt, 1964: 194). The British High Command harboured a correspondingly contemptuous view of its own largely conscript army. The staff officers responsible for planning the attack on the Somme 'assumed that these troops – burdened for the assault with 66 pounds of equipment – were too simple and animal to cross the space between the opposing trenches in any way except in full daylight and aligned in rows or "waves"' (Fussell, 1975: 13). Treated like dumb animals, the men could do little to avoid dying like them. At dawn on 1 July 1916, as the barrage which opened the British assault lifted, the German infantrymen climbed from their dug outs, set up their machine guns and began

> hosing the attackers walking toward them in orderly rows…Out of 110,000 who attacked, 60,000 were killed or wounded on this one day, the record so far. Over 20,000 lay dead between the lines, and it was days before the wounded in No Man's Land stopped crying out. (Fussell, 1975: 13)

In Wilfred Owen's view, the manner and scale of these deaths spoke not of the battlefield but the abattoir: 'What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?' (Owen, 1963: 44). By the time Owen's poems were published, in 1920, the war was over and criticism of its aims was widespread, even fashionable. Hudson, however, composed his narrative when the nation's ideological investment in the war was as absolute as was its political and military commitment and when to oppose the fighting was to invite abuse or prosecution.[18] As a consequence, he articulated his outrage by camouflaging it as a fond reminiscence of his childhood in Argentina. While his memoir might have looked like an escape from the disasters unfolding across the channel, it actually constituted a trenchant critique of their bloody consequences. The particular consequence that he sought to redress was the cheapening of life that the slaughter had engendered. He sought to do this, paradoxically, by dignifying death, restoring it to its rightful place in the natural order and so re-consecrating the value of life.

Though recovering from a 'very serious illness' while he composed *Far Away and Long Ago* (1918), Hudson remembered his convalescence as 'a happy time!' (Hudson, 1918: 3). This was because his recovery brought on a 'rare state of mind' in which long-forgotten memories resurfaced and he was granted 'a wonderfully clear and continuous vision of the past' (Hudson, 1918: 2). Through this vision, Hudson was able to revisit his childhood and recover the intense communion he had felt with the Argentine pampas, where he grew up. It is hardly surprising that so many critics have responded to *Far Away and Long Ago* as an unaffected celebration of a life regained. Yet as in *The Purple Land*, its affirmation of life is articulated through a focus on death. From the demise of Caesar, the family dog, through the loss of his mother, to his own near fatal illness as an adolescent and his necessary habituation to the prospect of his sudden extinction, it is death and not life around which the narrative orbits. His memories of his first visit to Buenos Aires are haunted by death and the menace of its unexpected irruption. On his first trip out of the house, transfixed by the press of the crowds and the cacophony of the streets, he loses his way and is rescued by a policeman 'with brass buttons on his blue coat and a sword at his side' (Hudson, 1918: 94). The weapon was no affectation as the city was plagued by lawlessness, 'infested' by a 'multitude of beggars' who, as Hudson remembers them, were 'the most brutal, even fiendish, looking men I had ever seen'. A rag tag band of convicts, criminals and old soldiers, the beggars lived 'like carrion-hawks on what they could pick up'. Scornful of a polite refusal to give alms, the beggar's response to rudeness was deeply threatening: 'he would glare at you with a concentrated rage which seemed to say, "Oh, to have you down at my mercy, bound hand and foot, a sharp knife in my hand!"' (Hudson, 1918: 100).

Though the threat of death is all-pervasive, when it finally reveals itself it turns out to be oddly alluring. Walking along the sea wall, Hudson takes note of a young man of 'wonderfully fine appearance' who

> holding a pebble in his right hand…watched the birds, the small parties of crested song sparrows, yellow house sparrows, siskins, field finches, and other kinds, and from time to time…would hurl a pebble at the bird he had singled out forty yards down below us on the rocks. (Hudson, 1918: 102–3)

Teased by Hudson over his inaccuracy, the stranger, 'with a slight smile on his face…putting his finger and thumb in his waistcoat pocket…pulled out a dead male siskin and put it in my hands'. Hudson's response to the bird is rapturous, almost reverential, as death brings out the otherwise hidden facets of its beauty:

> its wonderful unimagined loveliness, its graceful form, and the exquisitely pure flower-like yellow hue affected me with a delight so keen that I could hardly keep from tears…After gloating a few moments over it, touching it with my finger-tips and opening the little black and gold wings, I looked up pleadingly and begged him to let me keep it. He smiled and shook his head…and taking it from my hand put it back in his waistcoat pocket. (Hudson, 1918: 103–4)

Death has many faces in Hudson's narrative. Whether it is a source of 'terror', an act of God, a whim of man, a gesture of kindness or a mark of evil, it is never less than 'a strange, exciting spectacle' (Hudson, 1918: 40). It is also a constant presence in the child's life on the pampas, so much so that he recalls 'there was seldom a day on which I did not see something killed' (Hudson, 1918: 40). Death is seen as a natural feature and its place in the cycle of the seasons is accepted. When a wild hailstorm sweeps over the family *estancia* laying waste to the vegetation, he recalls that it also killed 'Forty or fifty sheep', three cows and 'an old loved riding-horse' (Hudson, 1918: 74). Similarly, when after the downfall of the dictator Rosas, gangs of desperate men roamed the pampas bent on plunder, Hudson saw the evidence, not the act itself, of only a single killing – though an awful one at that. Death on this scale and in this context, though no less feared or lamented, is more comprehensible than that of the nameless millions swallowed up in the mechanised slaughter of the First World War. At the very moment that Europe was descending into mass butchery,

Hudson turned to South America, where, through his memories of daily life on the pampas, he found safe ground from which he might return death to its human scale, reaffirm its place in the environment and so condemn the criminal disregard for life that the war exposed. Though the Argentina of his childhood was, by his own admission, a still wild land of 'battle, murder, and sudden death', it was, as a consequence, a place where the proper value of life might be gauged – an exercise clearly beyond the capacities of civilised Europeans at the time (Hudson, 1918: 35).

Deaths and Entrances

For D.H. Lawrence, the First World War 'gave a catastrophic force to an analysis he was already making of European culture' (Bell, 1992a: 101).[19] The establishment's endorsement of the carnage on the western front led him to 'a crucial breach with his own contemporary culture', convincing him that 'civilised' Europe had lost any sense of the value or purpose of human life (Bell, 1992a: 195). In the aftermath of the war, Lawrence argued, civilised man was so alienated that he could not see that the life he prized was a travesty of authentic experience, that though upright and breathing he was spiritually dead. He dealt with his experience of this period autobiographically in his Australian novel, *Kangaroo* (1950), in which his protagonist, Richard Somers, confesses that as a result of the war 'the meaning had gone out of everything for him. He had lost his meaning. England had lost its meaning for him' (Lawrence, 1950: 286). In *The Plumed Serpent* (1987/1926), another of his works 'in which the central figures leave Britain' in an effort to 'digest the meaning of the war for European life', Lawrence proposed that Britons might find a remedy for the spiritual crisis engendered by the war by revisiting death, by rethinking their understanding of it and by looking at the example of Mexico for the benefits that this might bring (Bell, 1992a: 133).

   Hence it is fitting, if ironic, that the action of the novel opens at the bullring where, hoping for a noble spectacle the protagonist, Kate Leslie, is appalled by the slaughter she witnesses. She feels

the whole performance owes more to the squalid brutality of the knackers yard than the courage of the gladiatorial arena: 'There was no glamour, no charm', the toreadors, 'four grotesque and effeminate-looking fellows in tight, ornate clothes' seemed 'about as gallant as assistants in a butcher's shop':

> She had still cherished some idea of a gallant show. And before she knew where she was, she was watching a bull whose shoulder trickled blood goring his horns up and down inside the belly of a prostrate and feebly plunging old horse. The shock almost overpowered her. She had come for a gallant show. This she had paid to see. Human cowardice and beastliness, a smell of blood, a nauseous whiff of bursten bowels! She turned her face away. (Lawrence, 1987: 14, 16)

Where Kate is disgusted by what she sees, one of her American companions, Owen, is thrilled: 'this was life. He was seeing LIFE' (Lawrence, 1987: 19). That this debased slaughter can be mistaken for meaningful experience demonstrates how much damage the war had done, how profoundly it had alienated modern man from his moral and spiritual purpose – a point driven home by Lawrence's allusion to Ruskin. Lawrence's quest for a world redeemed from brutality brought him, like Hudson, to Latin America. Just as the omnipresence of death on the pampas had renewed Hudson's faith in the value of life, so the all-pervasiveness of death in Mexico did much to restore Lawrence's hope for the future. His responsiveness to death and the redemption it presaged was not an isolated enthusiasm. It came at the moment when artists and intellectuals in Europe and America were showing a reinvigorated interest in 'destruction as an act of creation', but when the wider public seemed to have lost touch with its significance as a regenerative force (Ecksteins, 1989: 126). This failure to recognise the redemptive possibilities of death seemed to Lawrence to reflect Europe's broader inability to appreciate the purpose of life. Yet this was not the case in Mexico where, as Kate Leslie notes, the Meso-American death cult that had dominated pre-Colombian culture had remained the ruling principle, the normative state against which all life was played out: 'Kate could so well understand the Mexican who said to her: *El Grito Mexicano*

es siempre el Grito del Odio. The Mexican shout is always a shout of hate…Death to this, Death to the other, it was all death! death! death! as insistent as the Aztec sacrifices' (Lawrence, 1987: 50). Unlike Europeans, Mexicans had never lost sight of the oblivion that death brings to all and by embracing it they had been able to transcend it. Where 'White men had had a soul, and lost it' due to their spiritual pusillanimity, the Mexicans' 'pure acknowledgment of death, and their undaunted admission of nothingness kept them…erect and reckless' (Lawrence, 1987: 78). Living 'without hope, and without care' they live authentically, and despite their inevitable fate no power and no creed has been able to subdue their spirit (Lawrence, 1987: 76). As Ramón Carrasco explains to Kate: 'the men in Mexico are like trees, forests that the white men felled in their coming. But the roots of trees are deep and alive, and forever sending up new shoots' (Lawrence, 1987: 80). Death here is not an ending but the stimulant of new growth.

In *The Plumed Serpent* the indigenous renaissance that Don Ramón leads takes the form of a resurgent primitivism with its centrepiece a renewed passion for Aztec worship. In an effort to renew the broken link between Mexicans and their Gods, to return to the people 'a religion that will connect them with the universe', Don Ramón assumes the physical form of Quetzalcoatl, the Aztec God of priestly wisdom (Lawrence, 1987: 264).[20] In Europe, Lawrence notes, Christianity has severed the link between men and their universe because 'it encourages the self's disintegration', promoting not a life-giving devotion but 'a sort of numbness and letting the soul sink uncontrolled' (Beede Howe, 1977: 115–16). This is not the case in Mexico where the purpose of the new religion is to restore man, morally and spiritually, through his contact with God. In order to effect this, Don Ramón explains, man needs a new means of identification with Him, hence his assumption of the form of Quetzalcoatl:

> God is always God. But man loses his connection with God. And then he can never recover it again, unless some new Saviour comes to give him his new connection…the people have lost God, and the Saviour cannot lead

them to him any more. There must be a new Saviour with a new vision.
(Lawrence, 1987: 166–7)

Central to this vision is a renewed veneration for death and its regenerative power.

In Ramón's prescription for the spiritual regeneration of Mexico, Lawrence identified a cure for Europe's ills – old Gods and a primitive system of beliefs bringing a new connectedness with the earth and a renewed spiritual life. Lawrence proposes that in the catastrophic destruction of the preceding decade Europe might discover not the negation of its values but the means to their recovery. As he reflected in the Foreword to *Women in Love* (1920), written during the war:

> We are now in a period of crisis. Every man who is acutely alive is acutely wrestling with his own soul. The people that can bring forth the new passion, the new idea, this people will endure. Those others, that fix themselves in the old idea, will perish with the new life strangled unborn within them.
> (Lawrence, 1987: 496)

The primitivist resurgence in Mexico lays bare a truth that materialism and shallow sophistication have obscured in Europe, that death constitutes not a state of dissolution, not a place of loss or finality, but an opportunity for new beginnings.[21] In Mexico's Aztec renaissance, Lawrence identifies the existential and spiritual truths about death and life that Europe had long since forgotten and in doing so has sown the seeds of its collective cultural breakdown. Only by returning to 'a Mexico within', he argues, can Britain renew its authentic self (Bell, 1992a: 171).

With characteristic immodesty Lawrence offered himself as guide for this journey into darkness. Little wonder that few chose to follow him. In *The Plumed Serpent* he transforms Hudson's sober reappraisal of the value of life into an ostentatious rejection of the moral cornerstones of western culture. Convinced that adherence to them has reduced their devotees to moral and spiritual paralysis, that LIFE as we know it in the west is not worth living, Lawrence recommends their wholesale renunciation and promotes in their place an outlandish veneration for nihilism.

Hence his protagonists spend the novel flouting the most sacred values of western society: Jesus is taken down from the cross, churches are desecrated, murder sanctified, cultural regression promoted as a species of sophistication and female subjugation celebrated as the last word in emancipation.[22] Mexico's historical associations with human sacrifice and cultural genocide may have made it an ideal context within which the future of the west might be radically re-imagined, but Lawrence never gets that far. What he offers in *The Plumed Serpent* is not a coherent plan for the rejuvenation of the west but a sensationalist rejection of its orthodoxies. Lawrence's Latin America is less a plausible setting for social and spiritual critique than it is the alibi for a command performance in blasphemy and invective.

Last Rites

Lawrence's excesses help explain the contempt with which Latin America was regarded in British literary culture of the 1920s and 30s. While it was widely recognised that the First World War had grievously damaged Britain and that something had to be done to restore it to its former health, any suggestion that that special something might be found in South America was greeted with disbelief. For Orwell, Mexico registered on the average Englishman's mental map only as an emblem of geographical and historical obscurity: 'a mysterious country a long way away, which once had a revolution, the nature of which has been forgotten' (Orwell, 1968b: 173).[23] The rest of Latin America, if it figured at all, was seen as an embodied image of nowhere where nothing had ever happened. For Evelyn Waugh, writing in 1933, British Guyana was, as a 'large map' of the country demonstrated, a patchwork of 'blanks and guesses', chiefly distinguished by what it was not:

> gradually a vague, general idea began to take shape in my mind of a large empty territory stretching up three great rivers and their tributaries to shadowy, undefined boundaries; most of it was undeveloped and unsurveyed, large areas quite unexplored; except for a trace of grassland

> on the Brazilian frontier, and an inhabited fringe along the coast, it was all forest or swamp; there was no railway or road into the interior...the greater part of the colony had no permanent inhabitants...except on the coast there had been practically no European settlement and little enough there. (Waugh, 1986: 13)[24]

The physical and conceptual emptiness that Latin America embodied struck a chord with British writers struggling with the moral vacuity of their own society. For John Buchan, writing in 1929, the post-Versailles political crisis in Europe raised fears about the rise of extremism and whether the west, drained by the First World War, had the will or the physical resources to counter it. Keen not to irritate Italy, where Mussolini had attained dictatorial powers in the early 1920s, in *The Courts of the Morning* (1929) Buchan transplanted his charismatic despot and the slavish populace he ruled over to South America. Here, in the fictional Republic of Olifa, Buchan envisioned the west's first confrontation with a fascist state, a conflict most notable for its conduct through ideology and force of argument rather than armaments. In retrospect, Buchan's Panglossian assurance that fascism might be bested by the idealism of his decent young democrats was cruelly mocked by the blasted landscapes of war-ravaged Europe. Olaf Stapledon, writing only a year later, was well ahead of him. Latin America furnished an ideal setting for Stapledon's vision of the end of civilisation, its geographical and historical vacancy calculated to excite Britons' fears about their future. Despite Brian Aldiss' insistence that Stapledon's *Last and First Men* (1930/1963) was not a 'prophecy' but 'a work of philosophic speculation', its doomed Patagonians who 'knew civilisation only as a legend', and whose 'squalid' living conditions made the myths of 'past glory...more extravagant', would have had a powerful resonance for Britons in the 1930s, facing their future with a mixture of trepidation and despair (Stapledon, 1963: 9, 100, 101). More commonly depicted as a far off land of the far-fetched, this was one vision of Latin America that, for the British, seemed far too close to home.

Yet for most British writers of the 1920s and 30s, Latin America's place in the narrative of national decline made it the natural province of black comedy. As a result it was commonly portrayed as a farcical nowhere land, fit only for the poisoners, pornographers, white slavers, and assorted comic-book villains who were punished for their sins with a spell in its purgatorial wastes. The fate of Arthur Norris, the eponymous anti-hero of Christopher Isherwood's *Mr Norris Changes Trains* (1935), affords an exemplary illustration. While Norris's sexual deviance – he is a boot fetishist and flagellant – is unremarkable in the hedonism of post-Weimar Berlin, it is his ideological promiscuity that brings about his exile from Germany. His amoral endeavours to play off the Communists against the Brownshirts antagonises all parties, alienates his closest friends and compels him to flee the country. That his only refuge is Latin America offers a measure of how desperate his situation has become:

> 'I much regret to say,' Arthur regarded the buttons on his boot despondently, 'that it will have to be Mexico.'
> 'Good God!'
>
> (Isherwood, 1935: 173)

For all his initial distaste, Norris soon warms to the idea of Mexico. As the natural home of the congenitally crooked, he regards it as a land of limitless opportunity and anticipates a return to the petty larcenies that are his stock in trade. However, with the sudden irruption of Schmidt, his nemesis from Berlin, determined to exact revenge for untold wrongs, Mexico is transformed from a landscape of possibility into an imprisoning vacancy. For all Norris's efforts to blend in with the crowd, Schmidt unfailingly tracks him from one hideout to another, from Costa Rica to Lima to Valparaiso, where, blackmailed into submission, he is compelled to follow him to Buenos Aires and do his bidding. The 'protesting employer-prisoner' becomes one of the hapless dupes he had formerly preyed upon (Isherwood, 1935: 192). The anonymity from which he had hoped to profit thus becomes the ultimate expression of his defeat. Having lost his friends, his home and his livelihood, he finally loses himself. Sentenced to South

America, Norris suffers its ultimate sanction and is swallowed whole by it.

Evelyn Waugh could imagine no worse a fate. Yet there is little in his early treatments of Latin America to hint at the darker purposes it would serve later in his work. He employs it instead as a suggestive comic trope, redolent of sexual and criminal depravity, an association it never entirely lost for him. In *Put Out More Flags* (1942), Basil Seal's bona fides as an endearing opportunist are bolstered by his South American connections. Periodically compelled to quit 'the civilized area' due to scandals of his own making, Basil returns from these periods of exile with tales of his adventures in Africa or South America 'to which no one attached much credence' (Waugh, 1942: 49). Among the more celebrated of his escapades was his claim to have once 'worked for the secret police in Bolivia'. Though less charitably interpreted by his brother-in-law as 'living in a gin palace in La Paz and seeing generals shoot one another', the experience, however fictional, only lent further lustre to his raffish aura (Waugh, 1942: 16). In his first novel, *Decline and Fall* (1928), Latin America furnishes an ideal provenance for Margot Beste-Chetwynde, a beauty rumoured to have poisoned her first husband. In her capacity as head of 'The Latin American Entertainment Co., Ltd' she combines a prominent role in London society with a career as a white slaver (Waugh, 1928: 143).[25] That she is able to pursue each role without detriment to the other drives home a point that Waugh – echoing Anthony Hope in *A Man of Mark* – would later enlarge on, namely, that while polite society is obsessed with manners it is indifferent to morals, it is an ethical no-go zone where the good man, by his very nature, is in constant peril.[26] In his early works, Latin America is one among a number of fictional tropes enabling Waugh's amused scrutiny of 'the pervading savagery of civilized life' (Cunningham, 1988: 53). However, after the sudden breakdown of his marriage to Evelyn Gardener in mid 1929 and a period of exile from Britain, 'a shocked refugee from English social savagery and marital casualness', Waugh's perspective on polite society shifted from mordant detachment to disgust (Cunningham, 1988: 82).[27] Thereafter, Latin America served his articulation of

an increasingly excoriating view of the civilised order. No longer a comic nowhere land whose moral and spiritual otherness valorised the norms of civilised society, he employed it instead to expose the hypocrisy of these norms and to condemn their corrupting influence on society. He did this most notably in *A Handful of Dust* (1934), his account of the decline and fall of Tony Last.

Tony, the Lord of Hetton, is a man born out of his proper time. His proud stewardship of his house and land, and his principled observance of the duties they impose, are in stark contrast to the self-indulgent pleasure seekers of 1930s London. While Tony's failure to move with the times may make him an object of pity and ridicule to his contemporaries and critics of the novel – one famously dismissed him as 'an amiable half-baked schoolboy living in a world of arrested development' (Stannard, 1986: 361) – it also marks him out as an emblem of the traditional values that fired the nation's civilising mission and underpinned its greatness. Explaining to his wife, Brenda, why so much of their income goes on the upkeep of the house he observes: 'We've always lived here and I hope John will be able to keep it on after me. One has a duty towards one's employees, and towards the place too. It's a definite part of English life which would be a serious loss…' (Waugh, 1934: 18). Iain Littlewood proposes that if, at times like these, Tony is 'a slightly absurd figure', this is because 'he is also "the civilized man", and his attachment to the values of civilization is inseparable from the romanticism that makes for his absurdity' (Littlewood, 1983: 97). The last bastion of the ideals that made Britain great, Tony's personal tragedy is both an allegory and an explanation of the nation's collapse.

Brenda is Waugh's salutary model of where the abandonment of traditional values might lead. She does not share Tony's sense of responsibility to the estate, detests the house and is frustrated by the drain they impose on their finances. Instead, she hankers after the events that crowd the social pages. Bored by life in the country she arrives at the point where she can no longer resist the urge to self-gratification. David Lodge is right to note that the reader's 'compassion is never entirely withdrawn from Brenda' and that 'Tony's responsibility for the breakdown of the marriage

is not overlooked' (Lodge, 1971: 26; Stannard, 1986: 361). Notwithstanding that, Waugh makes it clear that her betrayal of Tony and the tragedy it precipitates have their origins in nothing more profound than greed and vanity. Her moral vacuousness is confirmed when she embarks on an affair with John Beaver, who is a striking choice. An indolent parasite, still living at home with his grasping mother, even Brenda dismisses him as 'second rate and a snob' (Waugh, 1934: 51). His squalid opportunism is the antithesis of Tony's principled purposefulness and Brenda's choice of him represents a calculated rejection of everything that Tony stands for. Good manners determine that though everybody is talking about the affair nobody can tell Tony. Unrestrained by such reticence, Tony and Brenda's six-year-old son, John, comprehensively damns Beaver after a single, brief meeting with him. The child's frankness lays bare the hypocrisy of polite society while demonstrating the folly of blind reverence for traditional social forms. The society which fails to examine its traditions, that holds to established forms for no other reason than that they are established while every man pursues his own desires is, Waugh affirms, a society collapsing into savagery, a society bound for oblivion. To drive home the point that this is where Britain is heading, Waugh condemns Tony to South America.

John's death in a riding accident brings Tony and Brenda's unravelling marriage to a crisis. Brenda petitions for a divorce whose financial terms would compel Tony to sell the estate. For Tony, the death of his son, the collapse of his marriage and the prospect of losing Hetton, shatters his faith and pitches him into a world of 'all-encompassing chaos' (Waugh, 1934: 138). His adolescent fantasy of decency in ruins, Tony determines to leave England for a time, because 'it seemed to be the conduct of a husband expected in these circumstances, because the associations of Hetton were for the time poisoned for him, because he wanted to live for a few months away from people who would know him or Brenda, in places where there was no expectation of meeting her' (Waugh, 1934: 157). While his desire for isolation and anonymity are granted in ways he could never have imagined, his determination to flee Hetton and Britain proves futile. A chance

meeting at his club with the saturnine Dr Messinger, anthropologist, gunrunner and explorer manqué, determines both the object and the nature of his journey. Recently returned from the Amazon, Dr Messinger is raising funds to go back there in quest of El Dorado. While Messinger claims to know what he's looking for and where it is, it is not certain that he will recognise 'the City' should he ever find it. He explains to Tony:

> Every tribe has a different word for it. The Pie-wies call it the 'Shining' or 'Glittering', the Arekuna the 'Many Watered', the Patamonas the 'Bright Feathered', the Warau, oddly enough, use the same word for it that they use for a kind of aromatic jam they make. (Waugh, 1934: 159)

By contrast, if Tony has little sense of where he is going or how he will get there – the whole thing is arranged over lunch – he knows exactly what it is that he is seeking and what it will look like should he find it:

> For some days now Tony had been thoughtless about the events of the immediate past. His mind was occupied with the City, the Shining, the Many Watered, the Bright Feathered, the Aromatic Jam. He had a clear picture of it in his mind. It was Gothic in character, all vanes and pinnacles, gargoyles, battlements, groining and tracery, pavilions and terraces, a transfigured Hetton, pennons and banners floating on the sweet breeze, everything luminous and translucent. (Waugh, 1934: 160)

Tony's journey to the heart of the Amazon is not an escape from Britain but a quest for the values that enshrine its essential identity but can no longer be found there. It is, Waugh implies, a fruitless pursuit. He has as much chance of locating these values in Latin America or Britain as Messinger has of discovering El Dorado.

Tony's first experiences of Latin America clearly indicate that he has come to the wrong place in search of civilisation. The sea journey is represented by Waugh as a Conradian passage into the primordial past and the darkness of human origins.[28] Our first view of the explorers at their jungle base camp implies not progress towards some higher condition of being but a fundamental evolutionary regression (Waugh, 1934: 168). The expedition is a disaster. The confidence that Messinger projected

in London is stripped away by the jungle. When Tony is stricken with a debilitating fever, Messinger's incompetence is fatally exposed. On his way to fetch help he capsizes his canoe, tumbles over a waterfall and drowns – an apposite illustration of how far out of his depth he has been all along. Alone in his jerry-rigged shelter, when Tony spills the last of the kerosene and collapses into hopeless tears as the lamp fails, the triumph of darkness seems complete. Soon afterwards, however, feverish and deranged, he sees 'the ramparts and battlement of the City' rear up before him in the jungle (Waugh, 1934: 203). Abandoning his supplies, he lurches into the scrub, led by an illusion of light ever deeper into the darkness.

It is not Waugh's aim in *A Handful of Dust* to contrast Latin America with Britain, but to demonstrate how each illuminates the other. He enables this at a structural level by inter-cutting Tony's ordeal in the jungle with scenes from London, where Brenda confronts the disillusioning consequences of her infidelity. As Tony's grasp on reality slips, the formerly discrete worlds of Britain and Brazil merge. Like Lear on the heath, the figures responsible for the destruction of his happiness appear before him and the events of the past months, phantasmagorically transformed by his fever, are revisited. As a consequence Tony emerges from the jungle like a prophet from the wilderness, armed with an urgent truth:

> I will tell you what I have learned in the forest, where time is different. There is no City. Mrs Beaver has covered it with chromium plating and converted it into flats. Three guineas a week, each with a separate bathroom. Very suitable for base love. (Waugh, 1934: 207)

Today's Britain, Waugh suggests, is hardly less wild than Brazil, a moral jungle where the innocent and unprincipled must adapt or perish.[29] In this context, the assurance that his friend, Jock Grant-Menzies, offers to Brenda, that no harm can come to Tony in Brazil because 'The whole world is civilized now', seems less a cause for comfort than grounds for genuine alarm (Waugh, 1934: 172).

The interconnectedness of civilisation and savagery is further drawn out in Tony's experiences 'Du Côté de Chez Todd'. Having

stumbled into the clearing occupied by the sinister Mr Todd and his family, he is nursed back to health and required in recompense only to read daily to his host a passage from Dickens. Though initially grateful for Mr Todd's ministrations, as he regains his strength Tony grows restless and, with impeccable civility – 'I have already imposed myself on your hospitality far too long' – expresses his eagerness to return to civilisation (Waugh, 1934: 211). Mr Todd responds in kind, offering polite evasions each time Tony raises the question of his departure. A battle of wills ensues and though no voices are raised, this is unmistakably a fight to the death. Tony attacks with the only weapon at his disposal: silence – declining to perform his daily reading. Mr Todd counters by withholding Tony's rations and laying a shotgun next to his plate. With no further means of resistance Tony concedes defeat. Iain Littlewood has noted that Tony's fate is not only apposite but illustrates the continuity between his present and former lives: 'Reading Dickens among savages is a sardonic image of what Tony has been doing anyway in his attempt to maintain Hetton within the context of contemporary society' (Littlewood, 1983: 96). The parallels between his current role as high priest in the pagan cult of Pickwick and the earlier scenes at Hetton where he read to John, Brenda and in church, are not intended to promote civilised society by contrasting it with the primitive order of Todd's camp. Latin America here furnishes not a debased model against which Britain might measure its civility, but a mirror in which it might ponder the reflection of its own debasement.

Tony's gentlemanly self-effacement is complete when Todd conceals him from a rescue party, sending them off with personal effects which seem to confirm his death. With Tony at the close of the novel as dead as the values he has so fruitlessly endeavoured to uphold, Waugh's choice of setting is further vindicated. After all, if Latin America was every Briton's model of physical and moral oblivion in the 1930s, where better to envision the symbolic eclipse of a once great and civilised society, where better to dramatise and decry the last of England?

Workers' Paradise

It was not only the British who looked to Latin America to reflect on the state of their values or recover an imperilled ideal of essential identity. In the latter years of the nineteenth century, working class Australians too saw on the far side of the Pacific an opportunity to resurrect the nation's originating ideals. First conceived as a penal colony, Australia was by the mid nineteenth century entreating emigrants to help open up the country and develop its burgeoning industries. By 1850 more than 150,000 free settlers had made their way to Australia from Britain, many attracted by the projection of the country as a 'workingman's paradise' where as the editor of the *Victorian Review* observed, 'No working man, who is prudent, temperate and industrious, need occupy a house that is not his own' (White, 1981: 29, 41; Franklyn, 1881: 36). By the end of the century, however, the promise was wearing thin. The early 1890s in Australia was a period of economic hardship and industrial turmoil that saw an increase in the frequency of labour disputes and a significant shift in their origins: 'Before 1890 the causes of strikes had been attempts by unions to raise wages, to resist any increase in working hours, or to resist the dismissal of a man for holding a position in a trades union. In 1890 a series of strikes began in the eastern colonies that raised the question of the rights of unionism, and in doing so it led to a direct clash between capital and labour' (Clark, 1987: 171). In the early 1890s a prolonged drought, a dramatic fall in the wool price and a crisis in the finance sector combined to produce 'an economic depression of unparalleled severity' (Souter, 1968: 13).[30] As workers saw their pay and conditions deteriorate and their dreams of a brighter future fade, the workingman's paradise began to look uncomfortably like the old country.

Disillusioned, large numbers sought to cut themselves off entirely by establishing communities founded on alternative principles of governance. Between 1894 and 1900 more than 22,000 people inhabited a patchwork of co-operative settlements in Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. Others looked further afield. The most prominent of

these voluntary exiles was William Lane. The editor of Australia's first trade union-owned newspaper, the *Worker*, Lane 'sometimes wrote about co-operative village settlements which he hoped would lead Australia to a better way of life' (Souter, 1968: 10). From the time he arrived in Brisbane, in June 1885, Lane made no secret of his desire to establish a communistic colony enshrining the principles of fellowship and equality, where 'the first duty of each' was 'the well-being of all and the sole duty of all…the well-being of each' (quoted in Souter, 1968: 23). But for all his advocacy of local communal settlement, Lane planned to establish a utopian community of his own in South America. He was convinced that the success of such a community depended on severing all ties with the old country – hence the attraction of Paraguay. Its remoteness, he believed, would not only dissuade the hesitant from making the trip, but it would bind the pioneers together once there and foster a true spirit of comradeship: 'We must go where we shall be cast inwards...where we shall be able to form new habits, uninfluenced by old social surroundings, where none but good men will go with us' (quoted in Souter, 1968: 16).

Yet the central purpose of the settlement, enshrined in its proposed name, New Australia, was fundamentally at odds with this discourse of innovation. It was Lane's aim in Paraguay not to establish a new Australia but to resurrect the old one. The de facto constitution of the settlement, the Basis for Communal Organisation, reveals that making a clean break from 'old social surroundings' was not as easy as may have been envisioned. While it proposed certain radical arrangements – 'communal ownership of all the means of production and distribution, communal conduct of production and distribution, communal maintenance of children under the guardianship of their parents, and communal saving of capital' – in other regards it advocated the values of monogamist, chauvinist, closed-shop, white Australia, with a heavy dash of wowserism thrown in (Souter, 1968: 23).[31]

The community's most cherished principles can be discerned from the list of those groups denied membership. Barred from New Australia was any person:

> not knowing English so as to understand and be understood; any person
> of colour, including any married to persons of colour; any living together
> otherwise than in lawful marriage; any of questionable reputation; any
> objectionable by reason of past disloyalty to the Labour movement or of
> such other actions as are clearly opposed to the common good.

Further, one of the community's Articles of Association required
that 'members shall pledge themselves to teetotalism until the
initial difficulties of settlement have passed and the constitution
has been established' (quoted in Souter, 1968: 24). Whatever its
economic radicalism, the new settlement was clearly marked by
the determination of its founders to preserve a vision of Australia
as white, wholesome, sober and straight – more a sociable than a
Socialist paradise. In his assurance of the racial superiority of his
fellow Anglo-Saxon Australian males, Lane was less a monster
than a man of his time. What set him apart was his conviction
that in the face of the steady dilution of the nation's racial stock,
the emerging national type, 'The Coming Man', was unlikely to
sustain the moral or mental vigour of his forebears if he stayed
in Australia (White, 1981: 77). In addition to its radical political
attainments then, New Australia would be the one place where
the future race might flourish.

In the longer term, however, it seemed that Lane's efforts had
been fruitless. In the mid 1960s when journalist Gavin Souter
travelled to Paraguay to track down the surviving colonists,
he was struck by how they had become indistinguishable from
the locals (Souter, 1968: 229). Anne Whitehead returned to the
Australian colonies in Paraguay 30 years later and, in contrast to
Souter, found that the manners, attitudes and social forms of late
nineteenth-century Australia had survived among the descendants
of the colonists:

> I had a curious sense, on meeting these men and women, that I'd slipped
> into a time-warp, that I was talking with Australian bush-people of the
> 1890s, confronting the values and traditions, preserved almost intact,
> from my grandparents' generation. I was granted a rare picture of my own
> people's past, a living one. (Whitehead, 1997: 6)

Figure 5   'Who Washes Up?' New Australia,
The Bulletin, 13 May 1893 (Cartoon: ACP)

Whatever its objective accuracy, Whitehead's conviction that vestiges of Australia's essential identity could still be found in Latin America, a means of direct contact with the late nineteenth-century locus of its most significant mythic narratives, underpinned her narrative purpose in *Paradise Mislaid* (1997).[32] Like the founders of New Australia, in her journeys to Paraguay it was Whitehead's aim to resurrect a vision of authentic Australia. Yet where Lane and his fellow colonists sought to preserve the nation's essential identity, Whitehead set out to determine how it had evolved over the century. She travelled to Paraguay in pursuit of an image of Australia as it was against which she could more clearly appraise what it had become. Only in South America could she truly know Australia.

Accordingly, in her portrait of New Australia she identifies the origins of the contemporary nation's most salient failings. In their endeavours to right the wrongs of the old world, the colonists preserved and in some cases extended a range of discriminatory social practices that they had brought with them, notably in relation to gender and race. In keeping with the social norms of nineteenth-century Australia there was a clear, gendered division of labour in the community (see Whitehead, 1997: 237). While the men cleared and fenced the land, constructed the settlement buildings, tended the cattle and busied themselves with political infighting, the women were largely confined to domestic chores. Though the small number of single women enjoyed the right to vote in electing members of the community's executive body, their married sisters were denied the privilege – this being reserved for the male head of household. While in 1893 this was an unremarkable reflection of the chauvinism of the day, by 1902, when women in three of Australia's six states had attained suffrage, 'the married women of Cosme', New Australia's loyalist splinter community, 'still had no vote in the colony's affairs' (Souter, 1968: 203).[33] New Australia's regressive gender politics show how little progress has been made since the 1890s in the broader emancipation of Australian women. Over the succeeding century women may have been accorded equal rights, but they have remained culturally marginalised.

In a land originally envisioned as 'the workingman's paradise', whose self-anointed prophet of national maturity was 'the Coming Man', what role was there for the women of Australia? The great flowering of cultural nationalism in the late nineteenth century, almost exclusively fashioned by male writers, editors and painters, celebrated an image of the nation in which women could occupy no more than a subsidiary role as servants or helpmeets. The post-war ideal of 'the Australian Way of Life', white, comfortable, consumerist, continued to deny the majority of the nation's citizens a genuinely participatory role in its cultural identity well into the 1970s: 'Men had many outlets in "the Australian Way of Life", as workers, fathers, sportsmen, beer-drinkers, home handymen. Women were part of it only as full-time housewives and mothers' (White, 1981: 165). The anachronisms of New Australia's gender politics help demonstrate what has made Australia the country it is today and the progress it still needs to make in addressing its gender inequities.

In matters of race relations, the colonists' treatment of the Paraguayans, and in particular the native Guarani, was in many regards painfully reminiscent of European attitudes towards Australia's aboriginal people. When, in anticipation of an influx of new arrivals, the colony at New Australia established a fresh settlement its leaders had no compunction about uprooting a number of local families who had occupied homes there for many years (see Whitehead, 1997: 226). On her journey through Paraguay a century after these expulsions, Anne Whitehead bears witness to the consequences of more concerted campaigns of land seizure and eviction. She is struck by how many of the Makka, Guayaki and Guarani Indians, displaced from their lands and denied their traditional livelihoods had, like Australia's aborigines, seen their tribal, clan and family structures collapse, fallen into alcohol abuse and indigence, and were forced into forms of cultural prostitution to survive.[34] Having taken their land, the Australian colonists, as far as was practicable, excluded the Paraguayans from their communities and their consciousnesses. In the colony school, a 'many windowed, wooden building with a bungalow

roof…furnished with the ordinary fittings of Australian schools', under the tutelage of Mary Cameron, the future Mary Gilmore, the children were subjected to a rigidly Australian education cleansed of any reference to the people at their doorstep. 'The curriculum', she proudly noted, 'was our own, as we kept in every way non-Paraguayan' (Whitehead, 1997: 284).

Though these views are offensive, Whitehead puts the complacent chauvinism of New Australia into perspective through an implicit comparison with the more committedly racist precepts of another utopian scheme attempted in Paraguay less than a decade before Lane's arrival. Nueva Germania was established in central Paraguay, near the modern town of San Pedro, in 1886 by Doktor Bernhard Förster, his wife Elisabeth Nietzsche, sister of the philosopher, and 14 peasant families from Saxony. While racism was an entrenched if uncensorious aspect of the radical nationalism that the Australians brought with them, for Förster it was the *raison d'être* of the German colony. Dismissed from his teaching post in Berlin for racist views that, in *The Times*'s view made him 'the most representative Jew-baiter in all Germany', Förster saw in Paraguay the ideal laboratory 'for an experiment in biological purity', the breeding of 'an Aryan master race' (quoted in Macintyre, 1992: 111; Whitehead, 1997: 415). Here, 'uncontaminated by Jewry', he believed he could found 'a New Germany, where Germans would be able to cultivate the genuine German *geist*' (Macintyre, 1992: 3). But his hopes of Aryan renewal were in vain. Nueva Germania was a disaster. The crops failed, its living conditions were primitive and its disgruntled inhabitants turned on one another. After four years of fruitless struggle, Förster took his life and his wife returned to Germany.

Förster and Lane had each harboured high hopes for their colonies. While Lane had dreamt that the success of New Australia would 'set such an example and excite such determination in other States that a world-wide revolution would speedily be brought about', Förster was convinced that Nueva Germania 'would be the nucleus for a glorious new Fatherland that would one day cover the entire continent' (Souter, 1968: 21; Macintyre, 1992:

3). Though neither man's dreams of revolutionary transformation came to fruition, it was Förster's vision of an ethnically purified Fatherland that, with catastrophic consequences for Europe and its Jews, shaped the philosophical development of National Socialism and came closest to realisation. In Germany through the 1910s and 20s, Elisabeth Nietzsche drew on the beliefs of her late husband in her role as the custodian of her dead brother's legacy. In doing so she extensively amended Nietzsche's work, transforming him from an outspoken detractor of anti-Semitism into the prophet of resurgent German militarism.[35] The links between the racist vision that underpinned the founding of Nueva Germania and the principles of National Socialism were cemented when, in 1934, the first branch of the Nazi Party outside Germany was established close to the Paraguayan settlement. The Nietzsche archive at Weimar became the spiritual home of National Socialism and Elisabeth was treated with great deference by Hitler on his pilgrimages there.

Whitehead's implicit comparison here presents Nueva Germania as the darker shadow self of New Australia. Under a less compromising leadership, with a more rigorous application of its racist foundations, she suggests, New Australia might have taken a similar path. But it was another biological imperative which proved that the racial purity so prized by Lane and Förster was more a malignant dogma than a realisable objective. When the *Royal Tar* set sail for Montevideo from Sydney on 16 July 1893, of the 220 colonists bound for New Australia aboard ship, 44 were unmarried men and 43 unmarried women, yet only seven of these women were over the age of 16. As the colony's numbers were occasionally boosted in succeeding years, the numbers of marriageable men continued to far exceed the supply of available women. At the same time, as a result of Paraguay's catastrophic War of the Triple Alliance (1865–70), which had all but eradicated three generations of Paraguayan men, the country was teeming with single women.[36] Though fraternisation with native women was punishable by exclusion from the community, all those lonely men surrounded by all those single women ensured that the colour

line was crossed so often that it soon faded from view and that New Australia would be remembered not as an emblem of Aryan exclusivity but of healthful hybridity.

The failure of New Australia's endeavours to sustain its racial purity is contrasted with the success of another immigrant community in Paraguay. Fleeing persecution in Russia the first Mennonite settlers negotiated a charter that 'guaranteed them practical self-government' and took up the offer of land in the Chaco, a thinly populated scrub land which covers most of the western part of Paraguay from the Rio Paraguay to the foothills of the Andes (Whitehead, 1997: 436). After initial hardships their co-operative farms prospered and developed into a large and powerful collective such that, by the mid twentieth century, with 15,000 or more of their co-religionists living in the villages around their capital, Filadelfia, the Mennonites had established themselves as 'the country's most successful colonists' (Whitehead, 1997: 437). Yet the 'success' of their colony, as Whitehead observes, has rested on their isolation from their neighbours and the modern world.[37] Sequestered from the rest of the country by geography, defended from state intrusion by the provisions of their charter, they maintain their identity by rejecting innovation from without and resisting evolution from within. They preserve their culture by quarantining it. Defying biology, denying history, enduring isolation and slow but certain degeneracy, the Mennonites' success is at best qualified and offers a living example of what New Australia might have looked like had it survived.

In *Paradise Mislaid*, through her evocation of authentic nineteenth-century Australia, Whitehead proffers not only an analysis of the contemporary nation's failings but also a parable detailing the origins and effects of its most salient successes. Just as the settlers' commitment to racial purity compromised their vision of equality, so the modern nation has had to repudiate the doctrine of White Australia in order that it might progress. The same forces that put paid to New Australia, the natural instinct to couple and the cultural promiscuity this bred, powered modern Australia's social successes in the 1980s and 90s when Whitehead was

researching and writing the book and the multicultural Australia of the Hawke and Keating Labor governments welcomed migrants from all over the world. The emblematic failure of the Paraguayan colonies thus underpins modern Australia's healthful diversity, its triumph of biology over bigotry. Though Lane would hardly recognise it, and would no doubt disapprove, this is the New Australia he helped to nurture and build.

4

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

The Wilderness Within

The proximity of North to Central and South America, and the long history of political and social intermingling this has fostered, has produced a complex network of discursive and cultural relations between the nations in the region.[1] The development of North American fiction suggests, however, that greater familiarity with the lands and peoples south of the border has not translated into a deeper sensitivity to their values. Through an analysis of three North American novels dating from or set in the 1940s and 50s, this chapter will show how Mexico serves North America – as we have already seen it serve Britain – as a physical and psychological space within which pressing concerns and the anxieties they engender might be addressed. In the United States, the post-war years sharpened an array of tensions arising from the conflict between the promptings of instinct that the war had endorsed and the reflexes of restraint that its aftermath required. The resulting tensions between the instinct to indulge and the imperative to comply, the urge to flight and the pressure to settle, freedom and orthodoxy, widely reflected in *films noir* of the period, suggested the growing sense of a dissociation between self and society in post-war America.[2] This found expression in an insistent interrogation in the popular culture of the period of what it meant to be an American, indeed whether in the late 1940s and early 1950s it was possible to be an American and still fully be oneself. It is to these concerns that the texts I will examine seek responses south of the border. Mexico matters to the Americans in these novels in so far as it serves to objectify, embody and illuminate their own society and its anxieties. James Naremore

has noted that 'when classic Hollywood's noir characters travelled to Latin America, they took all their neuroses with them, and in a sense they never really left home' (Naremore, 1998: 230–1). The deeper they penetrate into Mexico, the closer they come to the heart of America.

There is, of course, nothing novel about this cultural trope (see Elliott, 1970). The use of America as a vehicle for the re-imagining of Europe is as old as the discovery of the New World itself. Yet where Europeans looked west for the salvation and renewal of the old world, Americans increasingly looked south for the re-imagining of the new. In 1524, four years after the fall of Tenochtitlan, twelve Franciscan friars landed at Veracruz to begin the task of religious conversion made possible by the defeat of the Aztecs. Their number, 'chosen to commemorate the twelve apostles of Christ, reflected the idealism which inspired the undertaking: the Spanish missionaries set out in the hope of recovering the purity and simplicity of the primitive Church in their evangelization of the American Indians' (Williamson, 1992: 98–9). Three centuries later, European migrants to the New World shifted their quest for millennial fulfilment further north, seeking it not in the religious conversion of the Indians but in their dispersal. They too were convinced that the westerly thrust of American civilisation and the seizure of native land it entailed would complete the spiritual journey begun in Palestine and usher in Christ's thousand year reign on earth. As Crévecouer saw it, 'Americans are the western pilgrims...carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigour and industry which began long since in the east. They will finish the great circle' (Crévecouer, 1997: 44). However, the labours required to open up the American West did little to encourage refinement among their artificers:

> A people that have had to subdue the wilderness, to tunnel the mountains, to bridge rivers, to build railways and telegraphs and factories, to dig wealth out of the bowels of the earth, may be pardoned if they have somewhat neglected the worship of the beautiful in eager quest of the useful. (Vedder, 1894: 3)

The 'pilgrims' who laid open the country for successive waves of migrants were not the missionaries of Crévecouer's imagination in quest of moral and spiritual renewal, but hardy labourers in pursuit of material prosperity and the social advancement it brought. Critics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries lamented that Americans had forsaken the worship of beauty and the path to spiritual improvement it promised and turned instead to the immediate gratifications of the useful. If the wilderness had once coarsened America's civilising spirituality, the materialism with which the nation's advances was increasingly identified posed an even greater threat to its improving ideals. Americans in the 1920s, novelists and critics affirmed, were a lost people:

> in the morning of their lives, [they] have deserted the hearthstone of the human tradition and have set out for a distant treasure that has turned to dust in their hands; but having on their way neglected to mark their track they no longer know in which direction their home lies, nor how to reach it, and so they wander in the wilderness, consumed with a double consciousness of waste and impotence. (quoted in Sprague, 1968: 187)

In Willa Cather's 1925 novel, *The Professor's House*, all the signs are that the completeness of the pioneers' conquest over the wilderness has merely ensured its ultimate triumph. The spiritual impoverishment of her characters and the America they embody is marked by their material abundance. The more goods the professor's family accumulate, the less substantial they seem to be. Cut off from a rejuvenating encounter with nature, denied the means to define themselves through meaningful human endeavour, Americans, she laments, have lost their moral and spiritual purpose.

From the earliest years of European settlement in the New World, the newcomers struggled to maintain a healthful balance between the invigorating forces of the wilderness and the comforts of cultivation. Many of the early attitudes to nature that influenced later responses to the American West and the new lands to the south came with the first European settlers from England.[3] They had their origins in the kind of Renaissance pastoralism popularised by Francis Bacon in the *Novum Organum* (1620), where he asserted

man's duty to establish dominion over nature, and beyond that in the Bible, where God commanded Adam to 'Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control' (Genesis I: 28). In the later seventeenth century *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) played a pivotal role in popularising Christian hostility to untamed nature, summarising 'the prevailing viewpoint of wilderness as the symbol of anarchy and evil to which the Christian was unalterably opposed' (Nash, 1967: 34). As a consequence of these views, during the early centuries of European settlement Americans struggled against the wilderness as against the devil himself, regarding the cultivation of the land as a national and a Christian duty. For a people who measured progress by their ability to 'conquer the wilderness and convert it to economic use', a key symbol of their achievements was the tree stump and by the late eighteenth century 'America had become a land of stumps, and that was good' (Pike, 1992: 4).

In the eyes of European settlers, the inability of America's Indians to appreciate the significance of the tree stump legitimised their loss of their territories:

> In the purview of the new arrivals, virtue and its fruits of property ownership and economic aggrandizement all depended on continuing, systematic, concentrated exploitation of the land…The failure of 'savages' fully to exploit the natural resources of the land they claimed justified the actions of civilized men as they seized Indian property. (Pike, 1992: 4)

The economic imperatives that drove the seizure of Indian land were bolstered by a range of moral arguments. The red skin of the native American Indian, it was argued in the eighteenth century, was not merely the result of long exposure to the sun and the application of herbs and berries to the skin, but a visible indication of a dark and debased nature (see Vaughan, 1982). This was manifest in the laziness and promiscuity of the Indians which, in the eyes of Mary Eastman, reflected their failure to have attained 'the greatest victory' that white Europeans had achieved, 'the conquering of one's self' (quoted in Pearce, 1965: 117–18). The Indians provided a convenient surrogate for the white settlers' anxieties about their own moral continence and the effects on it of

the land they coveted. Subduing or where necessary exterminating the Indians enabled the settlers to reassert their authority over the most dangerous terrain of all – the wilderness within. Hence the vehemence with which Indians were denounced. After all, the 'dirty, lousy...thieving, lying, sneaking, murdering, graceless, faithless, gut-eating skunks' whom the settlers confronted, objectified the weaknesses and failings skulking at the frontier of their own psychological certitudes (quoted in White, 1968: 42).

Paradoxically, Americans increasingly came to believe that they owed their distinctive national character to the same wilderness they were busy annexing. Frederick Jackson Turner argued in 1893 that westward expansion, 'with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish[es] the forces dominating American character' (quoted in Moore, 1957: 243). The West was where the nation might rediscover itself, it was 'a magic fountain of youth, in which America continually bathed and was rejuvenated' (Smith, 1950: 254). Theodore Roosevelt believed that the nation's singular character had been shaped by the fact that so many of its political, business and cultural leaders had spent their formative years contending with 'the wild forces of nature'. These experiences bred a 'vigorous manliness for the lack of which in a nation, as in an individual, the possession of no other qualities can possibly atone' (White, 1968: 124). However, as the railroads, farms, settlements and cities pushed ever westward through the mid to late nineteenth century, the frontier seemed increasingly imperilled. When Americans came to recognise the significance of the wilderness in the formation of their national character their attitudes towards it and the native peoples who inhabited it began to change. Nature was progressively valued more as a repository of fundamental truths, while those who occupied, honoured and kept it safe from the corrupting influence of civilisation seemed ennobled by their close contact with it.[4] As the Great Plains and the land between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific was mapped, cleared and fenced, the towns and cities of the West founded and settled, more and more Americans looked south for the experience of untamed nature.

Nineteenth-century travellers in Latin America described an abundance of wilderness where Americans might experience nature in its primal state and reap the spiritual renewal this promised. Travelling through Brazil in 1865, the philosopher William James believed he had found the 'original seat of the Garden of Eden' (Lears, 1987: 88–9). In Mexico, at around the same time, the poet William Cullen Bryant found the scene no less impressive and the promise of redemption equally encouraging, the 'panoramic glories' of the land hinting at a 'new, natural world' (Danto, 1988: 533). Yet these and similar responses to Central and South America were crucially shaped by events in the United States. James and Bryant had gone south of the border largely to escape the Civil War. What they found there was arguably more a response to the political and moral conditions in the north than it was an objective representation of the landscape in the south. This vision of Latin America as an escape from the failings of home was a familiar response with a lengthy pedigree. The Franciscan mission to New Spain in the early sixteenth century was driven as much by the crises in the European Church as it was by any concern for the spiritual welfare of Latin America's natives. The Indians of Mexico and Central America 'were regarded as simple souls whose existence had latterly been revealed by God so that Christianity might renew itself in the New World' (Williamson, 1992: 99).[5] The resulting tendency to idealise them was a further response to the crisis in European religion. If the Indians were the raw material on which the newly purified Church would be built, then it was vital that they, and the land they occupied, should be as innocent as the apostolic faith they were required to embody.

Likewise, nineteenth-century responses to Latin America were framed by North Americans' experiences of their Western frontier and the perceived deficiencies of their society. It was in this context that 'Anglo-Americans who crossed the border and viewed Mexico either before the war [of 1846–8] or, as soldiers, during it', that is to say Anglo-Americans engaged in a policy of aggressive national expansion, 'had little doubt that Mexicans and Indians were pretty much one and the same' (Pike, 1992: 100). Indeed, many Americans found it difficult to distinguish

between the two. Indians and Hispanics were regarded as 'similar in racial background, language and religion', while the roll call of Latino vices – indolent, lascivious, undisciplined, un-enterprising – provides a striking echo of the purported failings of the Indian (McWilliams, 1968: 80). Mexican social elites were outraged at the manner in which they 'were lumped together with Indians and blacks as an inferior race' (quoted in Horsman, 1981: 213). This readiness to tar all Mexicans with the brush of degeneracy revealed more about America's hemispheric ambitions than it did about the intricacy of Latino societies where, since colonial times, the social landscape had been shaped by a complex system of 'pigmentocracy' (Lipschütz, 1944: 75). The failure of the Mexicans to exploit the territories they occupied, Americans asserted, entitled them 'to the employment of all the rights which do not interfere with the obvious designs of Providence, and with the just claims of others' (quoted in Horsman, 1981: 202). Latin Americans could thus expect no better treatment than the Indians they purportedly resembled. As one American soldier in the Mexican War noted, 'like the...Indian the Mexican is doomed to retire before the more enterprising, energetic Anglo-Americans. The fertile plains north of the Rio Grande will soon know him no more' (McClintock, 1930–1: 157). Clearly, the Americans invented the type of Mexicans that their designs on their land and the doctrine of manifest destiny demanded.

Yet to many Americans, Mexico offered the vision of a societal and spiritual concord unattainable at home. Throughout the 1920s and 30s, Americans in flight from shallow materialism and the Great Depression discovered what Helen Delpar calls, an 'atmosphere of authenticity and harmony' in Mexico's Indian and peasant communities, among a people who appeared to have found fulfilment in the rituals, folk traditions and communal life of the village (Delpar, 1992: 56). In *Mexican Maze* (1931), Carleton Beals compared life in the impoverished village of Milpa Alta with the daily lives of ordinary New Yorkers, much to the disadvantage of the latter. Where 'The American lives in compartments of uncorrelated action', his working and social lives discontinuous, 'The Mexican peasant's life is one texture. Work is pleasure; and

pleasure is work. The day, for him, is woven into a unity, satisfying in its completeness' (Beals, 1971: 117). Not every American visitor to Mexico envied the peasants' lot. Joseph Freeman regarded the works of Beals and his contemporaries Stuart Chase, Anita Brenner and William Spratling, as 'well-intentioned but harmful distortions of the brutal reality of contemporary Mexico'. By 'romanticizing the poverty, ignorance and superstitions of the Mexican masses', they were strengthening the hand of the imperialists who exploited the country and its people (Delpar, 1992: 72).[6] It is a revealing irony that for the writers Freeman names and many of their contemporaries, the attraction of Mexico was the escape it seemed to offer from the brutal economics of imperialism. The representations of Mexico furnished by the political and economic pilgrims of the 1920s and 30s clearly suggest far more about the disillusionments of depression era America than they reveal about daily life in Mexico.

Such was the determination of Americans to find the resolution to their problems south of the border that the same Mexican environment seemed able to satisfy radically contrasting needs. Cather's professor, Godfrey St. Peter, and his protégé Tom Outland, respond entirely differently to the Indian cliff city that Tom 'discovers' in New Mexico. Spending a winter tending cattle in the far south-west, Tom finds an ancient Indian settlement carved into a canyon wall at the centre of a seemingly impenetrable butte, the Blue Mesa:

> Far up above me, a thousand feet or so, set in a great cavern in the face of the cliff, I saw a little city of stone, asleep. It was as still as sculpture – and something like that. It all hung together, seemed to have a kind of composition: pale little houses of stone nestling close to one another, perched on top of each other, with flat roofs, narrow windows, straight walls, and in the middle of the group, a round tower. (Cather, 1981: 201)

What impresses Tom about the city is its solidity, the commitment it expresses to a settled life and social and religious values – more than a vision of order it is a model of original American civility. Godfrey's memory of the cliff city could hardly be more different. Neither the buildings nor their imagined occupants feature in

his account of his visit there (see Cather, 1981: 259). He recalls the settlements only as a minor feature in a longer horseback exploration of the south-west. For Godfrey the journey is the destination, satisfying his ambition to retrace the steps of the region's earliest European explorers, the subjects of the history that has been his life's work as an academic. After 22 years at his desk, tied to the routines of the teaching year, while doing his best to dodge the responsibilities of domestic life, the south-west offers him the opportunity to live the masculine adventures he has only ever written about. For Tom, the child of 'mover people', orphaned as a baby, it is not adventure that he dreams of but a home life (Cather, 1981: 115).[7] Tom finds in the Blue Mesa an idealised image of the nation's collective origins, both a personal and a symbolic national home. Tom and Godfrey's differing responses to the cliff city and its former occupants thus tell us less about Mexico and the peoples who inhabited it than they do about the preoccupations of contemporary America. They take from Mexico what they find lacking in their own lives, discovering in its communities and open spaces the satisfaction of their most intimate wants. In that regard they are truly men of their time and men of their country.

Un-American Activities?

Assessing the impact of the New World on Renaissance Europe, J.H. Elliott proposed that 'In discovering America Europe had discovered itself. The military, spiritual and intellectual conquest of the New World made it aware of its own power and achievements' (Elliott, 1970: 53). The same conclusion might be drawn from America's responses to its southern frontier. Mexico played a vital role in America's interrogation of its moral contradictions and social failures as well as its power and achievements. Through its cultural relations with Mexico, America addressed pressing matters of national concern. This process is exemplified in American representations of Mexico which date from the relations between the two societies in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In the decade after the Second World War, at a time when America

was undergoing profound changes at home, while assuming a position of dominance on the global stage, Mexico occupied a significant if largely symbolic role in American cultural life. Over this period, and perennially thereafter, it provided America with a physical and imaginary space within which it could manage the anxieties arising from its new domestic landscape and international responsibilities.

One of the powerhouses of America's transformation in the post-war period was the Serviceman's Readjustment Act, better known as the GI Bill of Rights (1944), which among its provisions offered returning veterans a $2,000 home loan deposit. This simple measure had far-reaching consequences for the pattern of post-war American life. By granting millions the opportunity for first time home-ownership, the GI Bill stimulated 'an unprecedented building boom' in the new suburban communities which surrounded the nation's metropolitan centres (Chafe, 1995: 113).[8] The flight to the suburbs represented one of the most significant mass movements of population in history: 'At the height of the great European migration in the early twentieth century, 1.2 million new citizens came to America in a single year. During the 1950s the same number moved to the suburbs every year' (Chafe, 1995: 117). This migration was made possible by a vast expansion of the road network. Under the Interstate Highways Act (1956), Congress appropriated $32 billion to build 41,000 miles of roads, legislation which, Hugh Brogan argues, did 'more to shape the lives of the American people than any other law passed since 1945' (Brogan, 2001: 611). Paradoxically, while the expansion of the American road network dispersed the population it also united the country, ensuring accessible links from coast to coast and everywhere in between. Yet it was the expansion of television that gave post-war Americans the most immediate experience of their new, national connectedness. The number of television stations after the war grew from six in 1946 to 442 within a decade. In 1947 a total of 7,000 television sets were sold nationwide, by 1950 that figure was 7 million. By 1955, 66 per cent of all American homes had its own set. Television played a central role in driving the consumer boom of the 1950s as

consumer industries generated demand for their products through the unprecedented national penetration that the new medium achieved. At a cultural level, television brought together a nation otherwise chiefly marked by its diversity. In the process of bringing America together, television inevitably worked to smooth over its innate differences, reinforcing 'the conservative, celebratory values of the dominant culture', and playing a key role in shaping the Eisenhower years as 'ones of comfortable lethargy' (Chafe, 1995: 130; Brogan, 2001: 612). The resulting cult of conformity bred alarm among American cultural critics. Arthur Schlesinger feared that the homogeneity generated by post-war prosperity, the spiritual suburbanisation of America was turning the whole country into 'one great and genuinely benevolent company town – the bland leading the bland' (quoted in Chafe, 1995: 142). As the 1950s progressed there was a growing sense, as there had been in the 1920s, that American prosperity was having a deleterious effect on the national character: 'the new loyalty', Henry Steel Commager declared, 'is, above all, conformity. It is the uncritical and unquestioning acceptance of America as it is' (quoted in Chafe, 1995: 141).

Yet this vision of the 1950s as a decade of soporific contentment is misleading. The apparent consensus of the 1950s 'obscured mounting conflict and controversy' (Chafe, 1995: 142). At the cultural vanguard of this conflict, was the Beat Generation of writers, poets and cultural critics, and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957) was their manifesto and *cri de coeur*.[9] According to Ann Charters, though it had not been Kerouac's aim in *On the Road* to 'Challeng[e] the complacency and prosperity of postwar America', he had, nevertheless, 'created a book that heralded a change of consciousness in the country' (Kerouac, 1991: xxviii).[10] Changing consciousness is, of course, the central concern of the novel, as Kerouac's narrator and projected self, Sal Paradise, spends the greater part of it shambling after his hero and alter ego, Dean Moriarty, convinced that his authentic consciousness and the instinctual feel for life this gives him 'will finally take us to IT!' (Kerouac, 1991: 266). If, as Gary Snyder has argued, Moriarty embodies America's untamed essential self, 'the energy

of the archetypal west', then Sal's rejection of a life of college and domestic conformity, his pursuit and emulation of Dean, reflects the fact that the nation's quest for 'the energy of the frontier' went on despite the creeping suburbanisation of the post-war period (quoted in Kerouac, 1991: xxix). Seen in this context, it is appropriate if not inevitable that the novel and the quest should culminate in Sal's trip south, with Dean, to Mexico, where they attempt 'to get beyond the American patterns' that have thwarted their search for 'IT' (Hunt, 1996: 61). What they seek in Mexico is 'an escape from their Americanness', a refuge from game shows, TV dinners and deadening consensualism, a renewing encounter with the wild and the heightened consciousness they hope it will bring (Hunt, 1996: 62). Waiting to cross the frontier, Sal remarks: 'We couldn't take our eyes from across the street. We were longing to rush right up there and get lost in those mysterious Spanish streets. It was only Nuevo Laredo but it looked like Holy Lhasa to us' (Kerouac, 1991: 274). Yet as their journey progresses, Tibetan references gradually give place to images of El Dorado as the pleasures that Mexico delivers prove to be more carnal than cosmic. What they find there, in fact, as the quest for transcendental truth routinely descends into the oblivion of sex, drugs and drink, is less the experience of authentic than that of semi-consciousness.

This response to Mexico should come as no surprise as the ground for it has been laid earlier in the novel. Sal's previous meetings with Mexicans lay bare the preconceptions that frame his subsequent responses to the land and its people. His first Mexicans are both women, and while ordinarily retiring in the presence of the opposite sex, he has little hesitation about making advances here. This is because he feels himself to be on safe ground – he is emboldened by the cultural stereotypes that not only encourage him to initiate but dictate the pattern of any subsequent relationship. American literature has immemorially represented the *chicana* as innately promiscuous, projecting on to her its fantasies of libidinous abandonment while employing her to police its moral anxieties, a pattern faithfully adhered to in Sal's responses to the Mexican women he encounters while still

in the United States.[11] The first of these, a waitress in a Chayenne restaurant, gives him a good natured brush off. The second, Teresa or Terry, takes him on and is promptly accused of being a whore. Though Sal knows this to be false he is constrained to make the charge because it embodies a ritual reaffirmation of the purpose of the relationship and their designated roles in it (see Kerouac, 1991: 81–102). As a result of such views Sal's journey south offers not an escape from his American-ness but the reinforcement of his sense of who and what he is. It is not a voyage into the unknown but a faithful pilgrimage to the known and familiar. It is a journey which owes as much to traditional American responses to 'nature' as it does to the particular discontents of the 1950s.[12]

Together, Sal, Teresa and her son Johnny head to the fruit-picking communities of central California. Here, the mostly migrant labourers have carved out a mini-Mexico where Sal savours his return to a life of instinctual immediacy. While he believes he is ennobled by this experience, his descriptions of it do little to dignify the Mexicans. They are portrayed as feckless and pungent, their social organisation more animal than human, their streets 'rat alleys' and their homes bursting with improbable numbers of adults and children who 'jabbered' away to one another in their colourful patois (Kerouac, 1991: 87, 89). Among the fruit pickers Sal feels the reawakening of the Mexican within which he embraces when he takes a job as a cotton picker. 'I knew nothing about picking cotton', he confesses:

> I spent too much time disengaging the white ball from its crackly bed; the others [mainly Blacks and Okies] did it in one flick. Moreover, my fingertips began to bleed...My back began to ache. But it was beautiful kneeling and hiding in that earth. If I felt like resting I did, with my face on the pillow of brown moist earth. Birds sang an accompaniment. I thought I had found my life's work...I forgot all about the East and all about Dean and Carlo and the bloody road. Johnny and I played all the time; he liked me to throw him up in the air and down in the bed. Terry sat mending clothes. I was a man of the earth, precisely as I had dreamed I would be...There was talk that Terry's husband was back in Sabinal and out for me; I was ready for him. One night the Okies went mad in the roadhouse and tied a man to a

> tree and beat him to a pulp with sticks…From then on I carried a big stick
> with me in the tent in case they got the idea we Mexicans were fouling up
> their trailer camp. They thought I was a Mexican of course; and in a way I
> am. (Kerouac, 1991: 96–7)

Yet as this passage demonstrates, the return to nature was no less a sham than the quest for authentic consciousness. As he and Terry fall into a parody of domestic bliss and take on its strict division of labour, its financial anxieties and routine family tensions, it is clear that in fleeing the deadening conformity of American suburbia and heading west Sal has merely exchanged one orthodoxy for another.[13] While Martin Green has observed that 'no Nineteenth century writer or reader could be quite at ease as an American until he had passed through being an Indian', by the mid twentieth century it would seem that no American could truly be himself until he had passed through being a Mexican (Green, 1984: 80).

In becoming a 'Mexican' Sal learns what it means truly to be an American. It is only when he crosses the Rio Grande that he comes into his heritage. Sal's moment of cultural revelation is not hard-won by philosophical enquiry or the product of a drug-induced epiphany but comes within five minutes of his being in Mexico when he puts his hand in his pocket and finds that, courtesy of the mighty US dollar, he is, for the first time in his life, a comparatively wealthy man:

> We bought three bottles of cold beer…for about thirty Mexican cents or ten
> American cents each. We bought packs of Mexican cigarettes for six cents
> each. We gazed and gazed at our wonderful Mexican money that went so
> far, and played with it and looked around and smiled at everyone. Behind
> us lay the whole of America…We had finally found the magic land at the
> end of the road and we never dreamed the extent of the magic. (Kerouac,
> 1991: 275–6)

The magic that Sal and Dean find in Mexico lies in a financial and not a spiritual revelation. Their American money may not buy them the enlightenment that they have pursued, but it will furnish more than enough booze, dope and sex to create an engrossing

approximation of it. While they may appear to be in flight from their American-ness, Sal and Dean's self-indulgences in Mexico are bankrolled by the same purchasing power driving the consumer boom at home and their pleasures are indistinguishable from the cheap dissipations in which suburban America finds its escape. What Sal and Dean discover in Mexico is not a new and better way of being but how difficult it is 'to strip away old cultural and social identities' and the orthodoxies they enforce (Hunt, 1996: 66). The further into Mexico their quest carries them, the closer they come to home.

Fugitive Impulses

In the immediate post-war period, as millions of women on either side of the Atlantic returned to their homes from the factories and fields where they had laboured in the war effort, agitation for equality reached a new crescendo.[14] The 'New Woman' was on the march and the American public was deeply perturbed by her steady advance (see Friedan, 1965: 34–6). While *Time Magazine* pondered whether it was true that 'Americans may no longer believe that a woman's place *is* in the home', American cinema of the late 1940s 'spoke to wider fears present in the culture about women's "place"' (quoted in Costello, 1986: 367; Chafe, 1995: 133). In a raft of Hollywood productions from the late 1940s women were portrayed as 'unpredictable, possessed of a mysterious power – rooted in their sex and their personality – that eluded control'. These films suggested that even if such women might be 'persuaded to settle down to domestic fulfilment', their menfolk and the broader culture were haunted by the 'tantalising' fear that they 'would break away from convention into passionate rebellion' (Chafe, 1995: 133). Yet just as the 'New Woman' was 'soaring free' into career fulfilment and independence she was brought crashing back to earth by the reassertion of a set of 'deeply embedded social beliefs about gender roles' (Friedan, 1965: 36; Costello, 1986: 365).[15] There has been considerable debate about how willingly at the end of the war millions of American women laid down their rivet guns and once again took

up the saucepan. Feminists have argued that they were the victims
of a confidence trick intended to return them to roles in which
they might be more readily ruled by men (see Friedan, 1965). In
response, it has been proposed that:

> The fact that many women responded so rapidly and eagerly to the revival
> of the myth of fragile femininity may have been less to do with their
> seduction by the so-called feminine mystique than with the exhaustion
> of a large percentage of the female population after their wartime burdens.
> Anxiety and deprivation made a retreat to post-war domesticity a very
> attractive option for many women. The notion that somehow they were
> tricked out of the freedom they had won during the war raises questions
> about just how 'liberating' their wartime experience really had been and
> how far it had redefined the individual woman's attitudes to their unique
> role of wife and mother. (Costello, 1986: 369)

Whatever the reasons, a series of striking demographic facts
ensured that for a generation after the war the American
home and the women who presided over it would be regarded
as the touchstone of individual and national well-being. Two
thirds of returning servicemen were single and once demobbed
unprecedented numbers of them hurried to the altar.[16] Not only
were more people getting married than ever before but they were
marrying at a younger age.[17] These trends had an explosive effect
on the nation's birth rate which jumped from 19 per 100,000 in
1939 to 25 per 100,000 in 1956, when America's population
growth briefly matched that of India. Tied to the responsibilities
of the kitchen and the nursery, the new ideal of feminine fulfilment
was no longer focused on a career and the world beyond the home
but was embodied in the ideal of the suburban housewife:

> In the fifteen years after the Second World War…Millions of women lived
> their lives in the image of those pretty pictures of the American suburban
> housewife, kissing their husbands good-bye in front of the picture window,
> depositing their stationwagonsful of children at school, and smiling as
> they ran the new electric waxer over the spotless kitchen floor. They baked
> their own bread, sewed their own and their children's clothes, kept their
> new washing machines and dryers running all day…and pitied their poor

> frustrated mothers, who had dreamed of having a career. They gloried in their role as women, and wrote proudly on the census blank: 'Occupation: housewife'. (Friedan, 1965: 16)

The modern woman's return to the home was reflected in cinema in the renewed celebration of suburban contentment.

Yet as Chafe observes, there was something 'profoundly suspicious' about the 'frantic' energy with which social commentators sought to promote the satisfactions of the housewife (Chafe, 1995: 125). Through the 1950s the American home was increasingly a focus not for the celebration of traditional gender roles but for debate about their effects on women. When one consults the same magazines which trumpeted the satisfactions of suburban domesticity one finds these pieces cheek-by-jowl with articles repeatedly returning to the question: 'what is the trouble with women?'.[18] Despite seeming to have it all, the shiny front doors of suburbia concealed 'uncounted thousands of American housewives who suffered alone from a problem that suddenly everyone was talking about'. At the very moment that women were seeking a more stimulating engagement with the world to balance their domestic roles and responsibilities, 'No other road to fulfilment was offered to them' (Friedan, 1965: 23). The consequences of these conflicting desires and the frustrations they bred were measurable in the increased rates of alcoholism, tranquiliser consumption and divorce.[19]

While American women were grappling with the burdens of femininity and motherhood, the paranoiac anti-communism of the House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) brought into focus for men and women the issue of what it meant to be an American in the decade after the Second World War. In the view of the Committee and its blustering Chair, Senator Joseph McCarthy:

> If you supported day care you must be against the family and, after all, the Russians were against the family. If you believed in Civil Rights you were critical of America's racial customs and, therefore, an ally of those who – from abroad – also criticized American racism. If you liked modern art you were giving aid and comfort to those who wished to introduce disorder and

chaos into American culture – something the Russians were expert at. And if you protested the politics of anti-communism, you must be, in Joseph McCarthy's words, one of those 'egg-sucking phoney liberals', one of those 'communists and queers', one of those 'pinkos'. Machismo, patriotism, belief in God, opposition to social agitation, hatred of the Reds – these were the definitions of true Americanism. (Chafe, 1995: 108)

The HUAC hearings not only did incalculable damage to the reputation of the US Government, they also 'devastated' the lives of countless ordinary Americans (Brogan, 2001: 600).[20] As a result of the hunting out of 'Communist sympathisers' in all sectors, a 'sort of panic spread through American' society, eventually resolving itself into a 'grey fog of timid conformity' that 'settled over American middle-class life' in the 1950s (Brogan, 2001: 601). The tyranny of authentic American values that the HUAC witch-hunts instituted thus inflamed the existing crises of American identity by illuminating and so exacerbating the inherent tensions between public appearance and private behaviour.

It is against this background of conflict, paranoia and duplicity that James Ellroy's *The Black Dahlia* (1993) sets out, in Chris Petit's words, to re-chart the nation's 'history, myth and psyche', to explore the disjunction between America as it would wish to see itself and America as it is, and to weigh the psychological burdens imposed by the resulting imperative to self-deception (Petit, 2001: 16). Ellroy's concern with the tension between the visible world of respectability and denial and the nether world of violence and corruption finds a focus in his vision of the familiar noir landscape of post-war Los Angeles 'the great wrong place' (Wolfe, 2005: 40).[21] Here, just as the 'official narrative' of 'development, projected by [the city's] power elite, is perpetually haunted by counter narratives of a secret and disintegrative social history', so at a personal level individuals grapple with the 'doubled logic of civilization and barbarism', struggling to balance the private urge to transgress against the public imperative to conform (Cohen, 1997: 170). Convinced that 'the tabloid/crime format is the only true way of reading this history' of repression, guilt and hypocrisy, Ellroy explores whether in the immediate post-war period it was

possible to be an American and at the same time to honestly be oneself (Petit, 1991: 16).[22] Mexico plays a central role in the interrogation of this dilemma, as Ellroy contends that constrained at home by the imperative to dissemble their most private urges, Americans could be most honestly themselves south of the border. It is no coincidence then that, as James Naremore has noted, 'During the 1940s, noir characters visited Latin America more often than any other foreign locale, usually because they wanted to find relief from repression' (Naremore: 1998: 229).

The origins of the conflicts inherent in American society are made clear from the outset of the novel when its narrator and protagonist, Los Angeles police officer and ex-boxer Dwight 'Bucky' Bleichert, is drafted with his colleagues to quell the Zoot Suit riots of June 1943:

> The week before, sailors had brawled with zoot suit wearing Mexicans at the Lick Pier in Venice. Rumor had it that one of the gobs lost an eye. Skirmishing broke out inland: navy personnel from the Chavez Ravine naval base versus pachucos in Alpine and Palo Verde. Word hit the papers that the zooters were packing Nazi regalia along with their switchblades, and hundreds of in-uniform soldiers, sailors and marines descended on downtown LA, armed with two-by-fours and baseball bats. (Ellroy, 1993: 11)

Issued with First World War tin hats, the reinforcements are ferried to the battleground in ex-army 'personnel carriers' (Ellroy, 1993: 11). Once there, any pretence of restoring 'order' is dispensed with as the police lay about them, attacking servicemen and Mexicans alike. Unnerved by the anarchy Bucky takes to his heels, blindly fleeing down the nearest street. He is restored to his senses by an old man whose cackling reflection on the surrounding chaos – 'Kinda hard to tell who to put the cuffs on, ain't it?' – focuses the source of his fear. It is not the mayhem on the streets that unsettles Bucky but his realisation that in their efforts to restore 'order' he and his colleagues are in fact compounding its further violation – his recognition that 'the good guys were really the bad guys' (Ellroy, 1993: 12). Through this episode Ellroy indicates that America's understanding of order is wilfully misleading. Bucky's experience demonstrates that order is not constituted

by the repression of disorder, but that order is merely another expression of disorder. That is to say, order and disorder are not immutable, antithetical principles but cultural constructions whose legitimations and proscriptions are purposed to manage the energies that drove the aggressive expansion of the country and are now an ineradicable feature of the national make up. The Second World War has unleashed these energies and provided a demonstration of their contradictory qualities. As the Zoot Suit riots show, the same energies that powered the military in its fight against genocidal intolerance in Europe and Asia have bred anarchy at home, turned its white majority against the minority communities that live among it and dispatched its Japanese citizens to America's own concentration camps. The energies that have validated America's authority overseas are regarded as a threat to order at home. As a consequence, Ellroy portrays post-war America as a society divided. The vision of home as an ordered polity, dutiful to authority and respectful of moral principles barely conceals the irresistible urges to excess and violence that seethe beneath suburban respectability.[23] America's response to the interdependence of these contrasting principles is to enforce their separation by promoting the demonising of those fugitive impulses it can neither control nor countenance. It does this by projecting them on to the nation's racial minorities and social outcasts where they can be censored and vigorously policed.[24] Ellroy contends, regardless of the defeat of the Axis powers, VJ Day and a million happy homecomings, as long as America promotes a vision of its moral purity and denies its conflicted nature, it will remain a society at war with itself.

The demons that these inner conflicts breed are brought to the surface by the case of Elizabeth Short, alias the Black Dahlia. When her body is found cut in two, her internal organs removed, her face and torso bearing the signs of prolonged and brutal torture, the media, the public and the police department descend into a collective frenzy of voyeuristic arousal, guilt and fear. Bucky and his partner, another ex-boxer, Lee Blanchard, are detached from their normal duties to investigate the case. For Blanchard, one of Ellroy's archetypal 'fucked-up hard-cases',

'riddled with pain and regret', the crime and its investigation unearth a personal and yet powerfully emblematic trauma (Tayler, 2001: 34; Goldstein, 1995: 1). The Black Dahlia's ordeal embodies Blanchard's worst imaginings about the fate of his younger sister, Laurie, who was kidnapped as a nine-year-old and has never been seen since. Unusually close to her in adolescence, teased by his girlfriends that 'she was my real sweetheart', Blanchard grew to resent her privileged status and the role of protecting thug it imposed on him (Ellroy, 1993: 92). Leaving her behind when he should have been looking out for her, he was revenging himself, 'thinking ugly things about her' while 'screwing' a local 'floozy' at the moment she was kidnapped (Ellroy, 1993: 93). In later years, tormented by his neglect of her, he anaesthetises his pain and compounds his guilt by picturing her 'growing up wrong' (Ellroy, 1993: 60). The discovery of Elizabeth Short's corpse brings Blanchard's complex of guilt and grief to crisis point. By catching the Dahlia's killer he feels that he can at last atone for his neglect and mental violation of Laurie. Yet in the light of the fact that he holds himself responsible for what happened to Laurie he also identifies with the kidnapper-killer of the Black Dahlia. As a consequence, his quest for justice and absolution becomes a nightmare journey into his darkest fears of exposure. That his nobler impulses are so inextricably corrupted by his baser drives makes Blanchard an archetypally conflicted figure, an allegorical emblem of middle-America's anxieties of moral anarchy.

The discovery of a 'stag' film starring the Dahlia drives home the connection between Blanchard's burden of repressed sexual guilt and America's fear of moral incrimination. Both the location of the LAPD's screening of the film, City Hall, and the ambiguous responses of the men who attend it, imply the extent to which it projects wholesome America's transgressive fantasies of sex, power and submission – the pornographic subtext to every respectable suburban marriage.[25] Watching Elizabeth Short reluctantly play her part in a low-budget lesbian fantasy, Bleichert is as sensitive to the responses of those around him as he is unsettled by his own (see Ellroy, 1993: 180). If, for Blanchard, sex is inextricably bound up with feelings of guilt and shame, for Bleichert its primary

associations are with violence and power. A once promising light-heavyweight, for Bleichert brief and brutal congress with a 'fight give-away girl' was the customary climax to victory in the ring, 'the eleventh round of a ten-round fight'. As a consequence, he reflects, 'sex' ever afterwards 'tasted like blood and resin and suture scrub to me' (Ellroy, 1993: 44). Following up a routine lead, Bleichert discovers the scion of a distinguished California family, Madeleine Cathcart Sprague, who picks up men for casual sex by dressing like the Dahlia. Aroused, Bleichert is rocked by the violence of his response when he sleeps with her and momentarily mistakes her for the murdered girl:

> The first time it happened accidentally. We were making love, both of us close to peaking. My hand slipped off the bed rail and hit the light switch on the wall, illuminating Betty Short below me. For just a few seconds I believed it was her…When my lover was Madeleine again, I reached for the switch, only to have her grab my wrist. Moving hard, springs creaking, light glaring, I made Madeleine Betty – made her eyes blue instead of hazel, made her body Betty's body from the stag film, made her silently mouth, 'No, please'. (Ellroy, 1993: 210–11)

Clearly, the crime has released a taste for violence that neither Bleichert nor his community can control. While efforts to contain these rogue energies focus on the detection of the killer, it is plain that *The Black Dahlia* is no straightforward police procedural – its focus is 'not on crime as much as the degenerative effect of corruption' (Schwartz, 1990: 4). In pursuit of a better understanding of the origins of this corruption and how to manage its degenerative effects, the investigation ineluctably leads south of the border. The stag film appears to have been shot in Mexico, and when Blanchard goes missing there while ostensibly following up leads on the case, Bleichert sets out in search of him.

Mike Davis has described the US–Mexican border cities of San Diego and Tijuana as 'siamese twins' (Davis, 2001: 25). One effect of the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), he notes, was to erase and even reverse the divisions once traditionally marked by the frontier:

> Whereas twenty years ago the most striking aspect of the border was the startling juxtaposition of opposites (Third World meets First World), today there is increasing interpenetration…Just as rows of ultramodern assembly plants now line the south side of the border, so have scrap wood and tar paper shantytowns become an increasingly common sight on the US side of the border. (Davis, 2001: 31–2)

Where Davis notes the cross-border congruences fostered by the economics of globalisation, Ellroy lays bare the unacknowledged moral affinities of half a century earlier and the common energies to which they owe their origins.[26] What Bleichert finds in Mexico's border towns is a concentrated experience of America's corruptions. The deeper he digs into the rotten surface the greater the corruption he discovers beneath. In Ensenada, the policing of would-be migrants heading north demonstrates how thoroughly the ethics of the marketplace have penetrated the practices of law enforcement in Mexico:

> It was the most blatant shakedown I had ever seen. Rurales in brownshirts, jodhpurs and jackboots were walking from peasant to peasant, taking money and attaching tags to their shoulders with staple guns; plain clothes cops sold parcels of beef jerky and dried fruit, putting the coins they received into changemakers strapped next to their sidearms. (Ellroy, 1993: 260)

Free from press surveillance and unhindered by accountability, south of the border market forces ensure that law and order is regarded not as a social imperative or a moral duty but a lucrative business opportunity – its primary goal not the defence of a just order but the pursuit of profit. Law enforcement north of the border may appear to be a more principled process but Bleichert has few illusions about the nature of the justice he serves or its susceptibility to the rules and practices of the marketplace. He works for the pushy Deputy District Attorney, Ellis Loew, enforcing the warrants and tracking down the criminals whose prosecution will best advance his political ambitions. Loew serves justice only in so far as he and his connections in the press define it, and it serves them. They may not be issuing receipts north of the border, but Ellroy makes it clear that the guardians of law

and order in America are no less driven by the profit motive than their Mexican counterparts.

A reported sighting of Blanchard sends Bucky to Club Satan where America's basest instincts are laid bare. Not only is the club's clientele overwhelmingly American and military, but its various acts constitute a calculated parody of the Las Vegas floorshow. The sexual suggestiveness of the scantily-clad dancers, the risqué double entendres of the MC, and the approving response of the well-lubricated audience at Circus Circus or Caesar's Palace are revealed for what they truly are, the sublimations of an irresistible urge to excess which America battles to deny:

> The bar was a urinal trough. Marines and sailors masturbated into it while they gash dived the nudie girls squatting on top. Blow jobs were being dispensed underneath tables facing the front of the room and a large bandstand. A guy in a Satan costume was dicking a fat woman on a mattress. A burro with red velvet devil horns pinned to his ears stood by, eating hay out of a bowl on the floor. To the right of the stage, a tuxedo-clad gringo was crooning into a microphone: 'I've got a rich girl, her name's Roseanne, she uses a tortilla for a diaphragm! Hey! Hey!'…The 'music' was drowned out by chants from the tables – 'Donkey! Donkey!'. (Ellroy, 1993: 264–5)

Bleichert's journey leads to the beach south of town where, in a shallow grave beneath a tattered stars and stripes, he finds his partner's mutilated and decomposing corpse. The beach and the tattered flag suggest the many battlefields in Europe and the Pacific, where countless young Americans died in the name of US power. Here on the beach among the rotting corpses, in the smut clubs of Ensenada, amid the lines of illegal immigrants paying their way north, is the world their sacrifice has secured, a world where the pistol and the jackboot ensure that lust and greed hold sway. Thus has America's defeat of tyranny made the world safe for its imposition of its own brand of brutality. The nation's mythic narrative of the war, that it was the triumph of good over evil, cannot accommodate this admission and so Americans are compelled to repudiate the energies that gave them victory. In outlawing the full expression of these energies America not only denies its authentic self, it renounces its heroes while vaunting

its hypocrites. Hence it is apposite that a single burning cross illuminates the burial site. The soldier Christ has suffered and made his sacrifice for the nation, and now the thieves are busy reaping the rewards.

Once Mexico has laid bare the repressed lusts of middle America, the corpses and crimes uncovered there lead back to the symbolic heart of the American establishment, the Cathcart Spragues. Here Bleichert finds not only the solution to the Dahlia case and Blanchard's murder but also the truth about the nation's conflicted relationship with law and disorder.[27] The Cathcart Spragues are a fusing of the mythic forces that made America: its original pioneering spirit, '*the* California land grant Cathcarts', combined with the rags-to-riches immigrant archetype, '*the* Emmett Sprague', whose single-minded pursuit of the American dream via Hollywood and the underworld made him a modern American 'robber baron' (Ellroy, 1993: 210). As emblems of social distinction they are peculiarly well-suited to drive home the uncomfortable truth that when America confronts its essential self, as it does in Mexico, it sees that the qualities that its respectable, suburban, post-war order cannot accommodate are the same forces that have shaped its distinctive identity. Mexico holds up a mirror to America's unmediated self, but few can bear to confront what they see there.

Cowboy Blues

If, as Ellroy asserts, America could hardly bear to look at itself in the 1940s and 50s for fear of what it might be forced to admit, a novel set in the late 1940s suggests that a more determined concentration on the world around and America's place in it would offer no more grounds for comfort. Once again, it is a journey into Mexico which focuses this realisation. Cormac McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* (1993) opens in the small west Texas town of San Angelo in late 1949 with the disinheritance of its protagonist, John Grady Cole. Born and bred on his grandfather's ranch, Cole has been raised to the life of a cowboy and can imagine no other. However, the old man's death, his

parents' divorce and his mother's determination to sell the ranch and pursue a career in the theatre not only deny him his destiny, they also precipitate a crisis of self-identity.

An intelligent if unreflecting young man, even in the traditional environs of late 1940s Texas, Cole is an anachronism.[28] Hardly a teenager in the traditional sense, and certainly no rebel, Cole's heroes are cowboys and horses. His admiration is reserved for the respectful observance of traditions and the values they uphold. He is a Tony Last in a ten-gallon hat. But the traditions he values count for little in post-war America where progress is the new religion.[29] The case of Cole's father, Wayne, hints at the disorienting effects of this rupture with a stable past. His crash course in the dissociations of modernity has come via the Second World War where his experiences as a prisoner of war have left him broken and bewildered. A sick man without hope or illusions, he recognises that Texas offers not a refuge from anomie but the new frontier in its irresistible advance (see McCarthy, 1993: 23). Though less able to read the signs, Cole is surrounded by evidence that the old world and the values in which he invests so much of his self-identity are in terminal decline. The interstates and their semi-trailers, the gates and fences, the fields of nodding pumpjacks, indicate that the once open country and the freedom it promised is being replaced by a 'landscape that is commodified and fenced off into private estates and oilfields' (Holloway, 2002: 61). In the face of this relentless carving up of the land, Cole and his friend Lacey Rawlins head south to the mythic cowboy country of Mexico and the promise of its wide open spaces, where they hope to recover the authentic identity no longer available to them at home. This journey, as Robert Jarrett has observed, is as much temporal as it is spatial, a progress 'back in time to confront the historical and cultural roots of their identities' (Jarrett, 1997: 98).

The possibilities embodied by Mexico are clearly marked on its charts. An American 'oilcompany roadmap' of the border region shows 'roads and rivers and towns on the American side of the map as far south as the Rio Grande', beyond which 'all was white'. While Cole points out that this is not a map *of* Mexico, the more

detailed chart he produces merely confirms the accuracy of the oil company original:

> Rawlins came back with the map and sat on the ground and traced their route with his finger. He looked up.
> What? said John Grady.
> There aint shit down there. (McCarthy, 1993: 34)

Though they tell us nothing about Mexico these maps suggest a great deal about America, detailing the cultural assumptions that have driven Cole and Rawlins south in the expectation of finding there an older, more authentic America. They chart the conviction that Mexico is no more substantial than America's dreams of cultural dominion might render it.
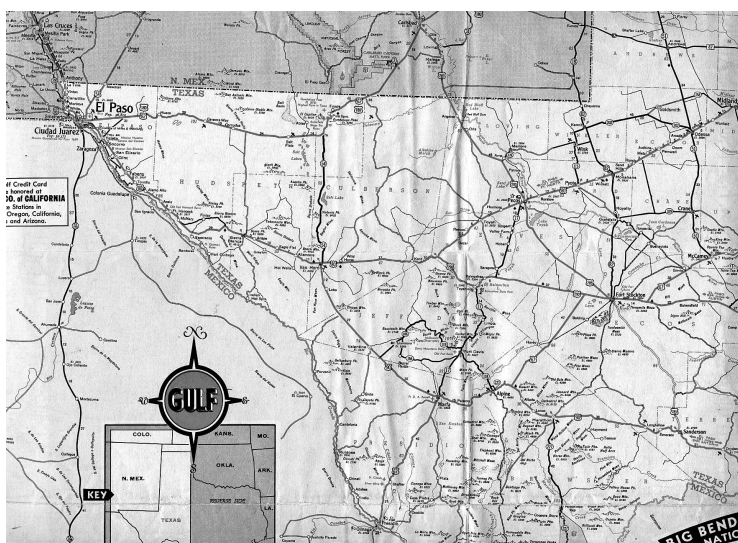
Figure 6   'There aint shit down there.' The Texas–Mexico border. (Gulf Oil Road Map, 1948: The University of Texas Libraries)

On the hacienda of Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción it seems that the Americans' dreams of a return to a golden age of ranching and the authentic selfhood it promises might yet be realised. Yet it is notable that their vision of the ranch as an emblem

of collective cultural salvation is not shared by the *hacendado*, Don Héctor Rocha y Villareal. While sensitive to his nation's mythic past, Don Héctor is the model of a modern Mexican, respectful of his heritage but alive to the demands and possibilities of the present. His love of horses, unlike Cole's, is neither sentimental nor symbolic. It is not a retreat from the modern world but, through the industrial scale 'breeding program' that he runs at La Purísima, the means of his engagement with it (McCarthy, 1993: 101). For Cole, horses provide a means to utopia, 'a leap beyond the commodified present' into a 'precapitalist enclave that promises reconnection with the unfenced "open country" he dreams up from an imagined past' (Holloway, 2002: 612). Just as he is most attuned to the horses that he is breaking or has tamed, so he is most responsive to Mexico when it faithfully conforms to his vision of how it ought to be, when it furnishes a passive *mise en scène* for his fantasy of mythic self-realisation. However, as his control over his environment and his freedom of action run bewilderingly out of his control, Cole is compelled to concede that whatever the assurance of the charts he carries in his saddlebags and the cultural assumptions they encode, Mexico is neither a physical nor a cultural blank space on which he can inscribe the destiny he chooses for himself, but a densely mapped social and historical terrain that, however he tries, he can not shape to his will.

That Mexico is more complex than Cole and Rawlins had ever imagined it could be is made clear to them in its increasingly violent resistance to their efforts to impose themselves upon it. This is evidenced by their unexplained removal from Purísima at the point of a gun, their return to Encantada where they are brutalised at the police station, and finally in the jail at Saltillo. Here, Cole finds that the values he had been brought up to regard as absolute are relative, contingent on circumstance and the shifting demands of culture, history and society. When Cole argues that he and Rawlins are innocent of the crimes of which they stand accused, the prison papazote, Pérez, responds with amused tolerance:

> We never committed any crimes.
> Perhaps not yet.
> What does that mean?
> Pérez shrugged. They are still looking. Your case is not decided. Did you
> think your case was decided?
> They wont find anything.
> My goodness, said Pérez. My goodness. You think there are no crimes
> without owners? It is not a matter of finding. It is only a matter of choosing.
> Like picking the proper suit in a store. (McCarthy, 1993: 193)

Guilt or innocence is not an absolute state but the function of
cultural or political need. Cole's relationship with the *hacendado*'s
daughter, Alejandra, has offended Don Héctor who exercises his
influence to ensure that the American is locked up until he can be
more permanently removed. Cole's guilt is cultural. His refusal
to concede this fact, his continuing insistence on an individual's
adherence to absolute principles as the only measure of their
worth, his rejection of the moral relativism that the prison
magnifies, where all principles are subordinate to the imperatives
of survival, exasperate Pérez and he sees in them the marks of a
common western malaise:

> Even in a place like this where we are concerned with fundamental things
> the mind of the anglo is closed in this rare way. At one time I thought it was
> only his life of privilege. But it is not that. It is his mind…It is not that he is
> stupid. It is that his picture of the world is incomplete. In this rare way. He
> looks only where he wishes to see. (McCarthy, 1993: 192)

By looking only where he wishes, Cole ensures that his values and
the vision of the world they sustain remain unchallenged. However,
his experiences in prison compel him to confront the world he now
inhabits and re-evaluate his vision of it and of himself. When he is
forced to take a man's life in order to save his own, he is obliged
to recognise the contingency of his values and the truth of Pérez's
disheartening disquisitions on moral relativism.

The lessons that began in prison are completed when Cole
returns to La Purísima in search of Alejandra. He discovers
from Alejandra's great aunt, Alfonsita, that just as the economic

imperatives of modern Mexico render his quest for an unfenced utopia of open country an anachronistic fantasy, so his parallel romantic conviction that where he and Alejandra are concerned, *amor vincit omnia*, is equally unworldly. As the *hacendado*'s daughter and a member of the Mexican aristocracy, Alejandra is no more at liberty to choose her partner than Cole is to walk out of the jail in Saltillo. Both are prisoners of their society and the traditions that express them. Alfonsita acts as the agent of these forces. It is she who is responsible for Cole's release, revealing to him that this was the result not of his youth or innocence but her niece's solemn vow to give him up. Cole thus discovers that his value is not a measure of his integrity but is contingent on what he can be exchanged for – in this case Alejandra's freedom. His worth is not existential but economic. However selfish Alfonsita's motives, it is clear that they are bound up with Mexico's turbulent political history and the disappointments this has brought her. In particular they arise out of her discovery, through her experience of the Madero brothers' doomed endeavours to modernise Mexico, that however noble one's motives, one cannot withstand the inertia of culture and history.[30] Faith in one's autonomy is, Alfonsita demonstrates to Cole, mere fantasy:

> In the end we all come to be cured of our sentiments. Those whom life does not cure death will. The world is quite ruthless in selecting between the dream and the reality, even where we will not. Between the wish and the thing the world lies waiting. (McCarthy, 1993: 238)

What Alfonsita teaches, Alejandra later confirms. Whatever their love for one another they cannot live by their own code. Cole leaves Mexico a wiser but a defeated man. He may have recovered the horses confiscated by the corrupt captain in Encantada, but he has lost faith in the utopia they once embodied for him. Struggling north across the border into Texas they now imply the burden of disillusionment. In his efforts to escape America's alienating modernity he has found in Mexico not a refuge from disorienting anomie but a concentrated experience of it.

José Limón argues that while critics have made much of the text's treatment of cowboy mythology they have failed 'to historicize

[its] narrative events in the novel's time or in ours' (Limón, 1998: 199). That is to say, they have largely failed to consider how its physical and temporal location articulate its broader cultural critique. Its contemporary resonances, and much of what it has to say about the relations between the United States, Latin America and the rest of the world, reside in its precisely observed historical setting. McCarthy is as specific about the temporal location of the novel's events as he is about their physical terrain. The Grady ranch house, he observes, was built 77 years earlier in 1872. As the brass calendar on the grandfather's desk, presumably marking the date of his death, 'still said September 13', so the events depicted in the novel begin in mid September 1949 (McCarthy, 1993: 6). This date lends Cole's experiences a vital level of symbolic functioning. Little more than two weeks before the grandfather's death, on 29 August 1949, the Soviet Union ended the United States' nuclear monopoly when it successfully detonated its first atomic device.[31] The cultural effects of this event were as profound as its scientific and military ramifications, as in its wake Americans struggled to come to terms with a new feeling of vulnerability. 'Never again', Hugh Brogan observed, would they 'be able to rely, as they always had, on the wide oceans to keep them reasonably safe from attack' (Brogan, 2001: 586).[32] Cole's father gives voice to the uncertainty that the Soviet nuclear test sowed in the hearts of ordinary Americans, the fear that they would go the same way as the people they had displaced in their own drive westwards, the anxiety that they were a culture in terminal decline: 'People dont feel safe no more, he said. We're like the Comanches was two hundred years ago. We dont know what's going to show up here come daylight' (McCarthy, 1993: 25–6). No longer able to threaten the world into compliance with its dictates, the loss of its nuclear monopoly meant that the United States had to accustom itself to a new sense of exposure.

Seen in this context, Cole's journey to Mexico assumes an unmistakable allegorical dimension – no less topical in the new world order of 1993 when the novel was first released than it was in 1949. It critiques the complacent confidence of America's imperial reach while dramatising the disillusioning effects of its

engagement with a world of moral and political relativism. When Cole leaves Texas the imperial underpinnings of his quest are clear – it is his aim to remake the world in his and America's own image.[33] What he finds in Mexico is a world insistent on the primacy of its own traditions and he is given a brutal lesson in cultural relativism. Clearly, the attitudes that empowered Americans to open up and exploit the West have made much of that world uninhabitable. Power, in the context of nuclear deterrence and mutual assured destruction, does not grow out of the barrel of a gun but rests on compromise, the trading off of ideals and principles in return for security and a measure of control. In this regard Cole and America could learn a great deal from Don Héctor who, with his aeroplane and his hunting dogs, his billiard room and his hired assassins, his worldly sophistication and his jealous rage, straddles the contradictions of his own society while comfortably inhabiting a modern world marked by its deceptions. Disappointed in his quest for a stable order, Cole is lost and bewildered at the close of the novel, grimly holding on to the world he knows as the tide of history seems set to sweep it aside, just as it swept away the Mexicans and native Americans who so recently occupied the west Texas plains. Standing at the grave of his Mexican *abuela*, Cole feels this unseen tide as a palpable physical force:

> for a moment he held out his hands as if to steady himself or as if to bless the ground there or perhaps as if to slow the world that was rushing away and seemed to care nothing for the old or the young or rich or poor or dark or pale or he or she. Nothing for their struggles, nothing for their names. Nothing for the living or the dead. (McCarthy, 1993: 301)

The challenges of the late 1940s – the need to check imperial arrogance and show tolerance for the views and values of others – McCarthy suggests, are not unlike those of the early 1990s when the book was published and when, with the collapse of Communism and its triumph in the First Gulf War, the United States seemed suddenly to recover the power and authority it had lost with the advent of nuclear parity. Without careful self-management, he cautions, the first casualty of this new

imperium is likely to be the United States itself. More than a decade later, confronted with the hooded inmates of Camp X-Ray, the numberless victims of extraordinary rendition and the Bush administration's apparent subversion of human rights and the rule of law, McCarthy's gloomy prognostications have been borne out. Mexico is thus once more the place where America's fears and failings are given physical form, where, through the representation of the country at a key historical juncture, it is able to articulate its anxieties about its place in the world and the moral costs of defending it.

5

DREAMING OF PELÉ

30 Years of Hurt

On 11 February 1952, five days after the death of King George VI, the Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill rose in the House of Commons to honour the late monarch, praise his successor, Princess Elizabeth, and take stock of the nation she was preparing to reign over and the world it hoped to lead:

> A fair and youthful figure, Princess, wife and mother, is the heir to all our traditions and glories…and to all our perplexities and dangers never greater in peacetime than now. She is also heir to all our united strength and loyalty. She comes to the Throne at a time when a tormented mankind stands uncertainly poised between world catastrophe and a golden age. That it should be a golden age of art and letters we can only hope – science and machinery have their other tales to tell – but it is certain that if a true and lasting peace can be achieved…an immense and undreamed of prosperity, with culture and leisure ever more widely spread can come…to the masses of the people. (quoted in Weight, 2002: 211)

Churchill was not alone in his hopes. As the British slogged it out with the Communists in Korea and confronted yet another financial crisis at home, the coronation, on 2 June 1953, was accompanied by a crescendo of voices proclaiming the dawn of a 'New Elizabethan Age' (Sandbrook, 2005: 45).[1] This efflorescence would restore confidence to a nation battered by war and blighted by austerity. The coronation was the key symbolic rite in this declaration of national renewal. The consecration of 'a Christian contract between the Crown and the people…sealed in a grand act of national communion', the Archbishop of Canterbury asserted,

would reaffirm national unity and so help 'make Britain great again' (Weight, 2002: 228).

The nation was desperately in need of such reassurance, as in the early 1950s it continued to struggle with the fallout from the Second World War. While its solitary stand against the Germans 'might have been a triumph for the national spirit… it had been a catastrophe for the power of the Empire' (Sandbrook, 2005: 44). Moral vindication had come at the cost of material ruin. On top of the casualty figures:

> half a million houses had been destroyed; and the Treasury was utterly exhausted. Churchill and his ministers had borrowed $30 billion from the Americans under the Lend–Lease programme, owed the rest of the Empire almost £3 billion, and by the end of 1945 had run up a balance of payments deficit of £1 billion. Almost a third of the entire wealth of the country had been wiped out; and only by importing more food and raw materials from abroad was Britain keeping itself afloat. (Sandbrook, 2005: 44)[2]

When the Americans abruptly cut off Lend–Lease after VJ Day, Britain was faced with a set of stark alternatives – 'to beg, borrow or starve' (Clarke, 2004: 227). While starvation was not an option and it was humiliating to beg, it was hardly less costly to borrow. J.M. Keynes, 'confident of his mendicant skills' negotiated a loan of $3.75 billion from the United States by undertaking that the British government would make sterling freely convertible with the dollar by the summer of 1947: 'when the time came, many investors rushed to change their pounds into dollars, wiping out most of the loan and forcing the government to backtrack and suspend convertibility' (Clarke, 2004: 228; Sandbrook, 2005: 45).

For most ordinary Britons the end of the war brought no relief from their hardships. Susan Cooper notes that on the first anniversary of VE Day 'the mood of the British was one not of festivity but of bleak resignation, with a faint rebelliousness at the restrictions and looming crises that hung over them like a fog' (Cooper, 1986: 30). As always in Britain the weather only got worse and fog soon gave way to snow and ice. The winter of 1947 was the coldest of the century. Insufficient stockpiling

of coal precipitated a fuel crisis, which 'meant that the country was virtually shut down for weeks' and existing shortages were intensified (Clarke, 2004: 229). By 1948 food rations were below those that had prevailed in wartime.[3] After such hardship it is hardly surprising that, when the last foodstuffs were taken off rationing in 1953, so many were eager to believe that with a youthful monarch on the throne Britain was at last ready to reclaim its place among the leading nations of the world.

As the symbolic emblems of a reinvigorated nation, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip took a leading role, through their patronage of the arts and the promotion of science and technology, in projecting a vision of Britain as youthful, dynamic and fully engaged with the modern world. Prince Philip's tireless lobbying and his insistence that greater investment in science and technology was needed if the nation 'was to be a world leader and not simply muddle through', coupled with the reassurances he offered to the public 'that science was not a "black art" but a boon', were central in dragging the nation towards the 'white heat' of the scientific age and helping the British to 'see themselves as a progressive people' (Weight, 2002: 236).[4] In her Christmas broadcast for 1953, the Queen acknowledged that the talk of a New Elizabethan Age reflected a widespread desire to see the glories of the past balanced by present achievements and a general optimism about the nation's future. Conceding that while she did

> not feel at all like my great Tudor forebear, who was blessed with neither husband nor children…there is at least one very significant resemblance between her age and mine. For her kingdom, small though it may have been and poor by comparison with her European neighbours, was yet great in spirit and well endowed with men who were ready to encompass the earth. Now, this great Commonwealth of which I am proud to be the Head, and of which that ancient kingdom forms a part, though rich in material resources, is richer still in the enterprise and courage of its peoples. (Fleming, 1981: 73–4)

Confirmation of this fact had arrived, through a combination of providence and careful media management, on the morning of her coronation when news broke that a British-led expedition

had been the first to conquer the world's highest peak, Mount Everest. This, the *Daily Express* remarked, was 'a stroke in the true Elizabethan vein, a reminder that the old adventurous, defiant heart of the race remains unchanged' (quoted in Sandbrook, 2005: 42). Within a year another of her subjects, Roger Bannister, was the first person to run a mile in under four minutes, while later in the summer the England cricket team capped off the celebrations by reclaiming the Ashes from the Australians for the first time in 19 years. With good reason, it seemed, the Queen had described her coronation as 'not a symbol of a power and splendour that have gone but a declaration of our hopes for the future' (quoted in Weight, 2002: 232).

However, among the crowned heads and dignitaries gathered for the coronation, one humble Dutch historian left Westminster Abbey on 2 June 1953 with a less optimistic appraisal of the future that awaited Britain:

> I found myself jerked back to the reality of the times we lived in by the cold shower that, only too symbolically, poured down on the patiently waiting subjects of her with whose Coronation we had just inaugurated the second Elizabethan age…I grieved for the British because during those unforgettable hours in the Abbey, I had understood…their belief that history would not deal with them as it had dealt with all other nations that had strutted their brief moment of power and glory on the world's stage…sitting side by side with their Colonial subjects who had come from the four corners of the globe…how could these English help but feel that [their] power [was] a reality warranting the highest expectation of the glories that yet lay in store for it?…But the more sympathetic comprehension one had for the high hopes with which they embarked on the second Elizabethan era, the more acutely one realized what a painful era it would be for them, how rich in disillusionment, frustration and humiliation. (Huizinga, 1958: 207–9)

If the nation's sporting triumphs had, early in 1953, seemed to signify the return to a golden age of national glory, the fortunes of the national football team later that year and through the 1950s and 60s offered an apposite emblem of just how false was this dawn. Indeed, the humiliations that marked the broader experience of British decline find concentrated expression in

England's footballing fortunes over this period. Football provides an uncannily sympathetic register of the nation's inability to adapt to the changed conditions of the post-war, its hankering for the glory of the past, its stubborn reliance on the tactics of a lost age while the fleet-footed continentals ran rings around them. As England's star dipped that of Brazil rose meteorically, providing football writers and social commentators with a model against which the nation's sporting and social failures might be examined.

In the late afternoon of Saturday 30 July 1966, when England captain Bobby Moore accepted the Jules Rimet Trophy from the Queen after the host-nation's 4–2 victory over West Germany in the World Cup Final, it seemed, to the English at least, that the natural precedence of European football – if not world order – had at last been restored.[5] England's triumph was welcomed as an overdue resumption of normal service after some embarrassing moments in the preceding decade. While a loss to the Republic of Ireland, the defeat by the USA in the 1950 World Cup and a number of other reverses on the continent could be put down to local conditions or lapses in fortune, England's reputation rested on its form at home where it remained undefeated.[6] At a time when 'the absence of serious competition between the British teams and those of FIFA' left the question of their relative quality largely 'unresolved', England's unbeaten record at Wembley was trumpeted as evidence of its rightful place among the first-ranking football nations (Murray, 1994: 148). However, if British teams 'had possibly lost [their] mastery by the 1930s', it was clear by the 1950s that 'England's position as the most powerful nation in world football had long been on borrowed and often disputed time' (Murray, 1994: 148; Fox, 2003: 11).

The hollowness of England's claims to the status of a footballing superpower were laid bare in November 1953, when Hungary exposed the home side's lumbering physical game, shattering its unbeaten record at Wembley in a display of skill that ended 6–3 to the visitors. As a result of this defeat, 'England not only lost their home invincibility', they also lost confidence in the quality of the domestic game: 'The whole team and all of the football

writers of the day were left with the thought that the defeat could have been even worse' (Fox, 2003: 21). Six months later their nightmares were realised when Hungary doubled the margin of victory, winning 7–1 in the return game in Budapest.[7] 'The gap in skill' between the two teams, Norman Fox noted, 'could be measured not in goals but years' (Fox, 2003: 21). In a further blow to national self-esteem, television had arrived just in time for the England–Hungary games to be screened nationally, though few homes had sets at the time. Eurovision further advertised 'the local product...in a less favourable light' and 'gave credence to what the more acute commentators had been saying for years, that the British game was behind the times' (Murray, 1994: 148–9). This was precisely the point that Barcelona's coach, Hellenio Herrera, made to British journalists in 1960, the day after the Catalan side had thrashed the English champions, Wolverhampton Wanderers, in the European Cup: 'You in England...are playing now in the style we Continentals used so many years ago, with much physical strength, but no method, no technique' (quoted in Burns, 1999: 178). The new world order was emerging, and in football, as in politics, military and economic power, England was inexorably slipping down the league table.

The 1950s and early 60s had been difficult times for Britain: years of imperial retreat, political capitulation and economic hardship. The humiliation of Suez, the retreat from the East, the numerous sterling crises, and in particular 'the collapse of the Empire between 1958 and 1963...confirmed the impression that the nation was in serious decline' (Sandbrook, 2005: 283). If Evelyn Waugh's assertion that 'England as a great power is done for' was to be expected, it was more of a shock to find the nation's foremost Conservative commentator, Peregrine Worsthorne, conceding that Britain in the late 1950s was 'a second-class power on the decline' (Waugh, 1976: 661; Worsthorne, 1959: 426). By the time of Churchill's death in January 1965, the feeling that 'with the great man gone, all that remained was the gloomy reality of national decline', was palpable (Sandbrook, 2006: xv). Looking around him in St Paul's Cathedral as Churchill's funeral service took place, Richard Crossman was struck by the 'faded,

declining establishment' that surrounded him: 'Aged marshals, grey, dreary ladies, decadent Marlboroughs and Churchills. It was a dying congregation gathered there…It felt like the end of an epoch, possibly even the end of a nation' (Crossman, 1975: 142–3). In this context England's World Cup win in 1966 was as much a relief as a triumph, and its significance reverberated far beyond Wembley. After 20 years of disappointment and humiliation, here was confirmation that England was back. Victory over Germany seemed to distil a new sense of optimism. Not only did it 'set the seal on the resurgence of Britain in the 1960s' and establish the players 'in the pantheon of a new pop culture' alongside The Beatles, Mary Quant and Ossie Clark, it also pointed the way ahead to an age of youth, exuberance and the bright future they promised (Critcher, 1994: 80; Williams, 1993: 18). As David Thomson saw it, England's victory 'was a great emotional release…It was a moment in the early, heady 1960s, when real freedoms seemed at hand, of saying, this could be a new Britain, classless, unburdened by modesty and the need to be "gentlemen", and ready to be men who win!' (Thomson, 1996: 186). In Bill Murray's estimation the World Cup triumph was one small gust in 'the winds of change that blew' through the 60s (Murray, 1996: 108). Murray's image alludes to British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's 'wind of change' speech, heralding the unstoppable forces of African nationalism, delivered to the South African parliament in Cape Town in February 1960. Yet the renaissance that this image implied proved as elusive for the British as it was for most African states. By 1966 Macmillan and his South African counterpart, Verwoerd, were both gone, but by then it was clear that the wind of change Macmillan had forecast had proven an ill-wind for Britain, stripping away the last vestiges of its pretensions to superpower status and plunging the economy into renewed turmoil. A sterling crisis in November 1966 exposed the extent of the nation's continuing economic dependence on the United States, while Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson's efforts to broker a peace in Vietnam via the Soviet Union ended in failure and humiliation.[8] When its application to join the European Economic Community was rejected for a second time

in November 1967 it became clear that far from being a world power, Britain could scarcely lay claim to a position of influence in Europe. The demise of swinging London, symbolically marked in the collapse of Carnaby Street, captured a growing sense of gloom, further registered in the flight to the United States of some of the nation's more precocious artists.[9] Victory over Germany and the intemperate celebrations it occasioned did not, in hindsight, herald a sporting or cultural resurgence, merely a brief detour from the remorseless trajectory of Britain's decline.

Worse still, if England's World Cup triumph temporarily distracted attention from national decline, in strictly footballing terms its consequences were disastrous. After disappointing performances in the early stages of the tournament, England's manager, Alf Ramsey, abandoned any further use of wingers, opting to pack the midfield instead.[10] The host nation may have lifted the trophy, but their dour approach won them few admirers. Further, while the coaching blueprint endorsed by victory brought a certain degree of success, in the longer term it engendered tactical cretinism resulting in decades of disappointment. Chas Critcher argued that the national team's refusal to move with the times made football a key site in which the country's embattled insularity, its resistance to modernisation, might be articulated, and where its resulting failure to accept its new place in the world might be witnessed:

> What above all, victory in the World Cup was taken to mean was a triumph of traditional English virtues. We did not, at least so we pretended, triumph by trying to play the opposition at their own game; we played it our way, to our traditional strengths: pride, determination, organisation…The ideals which the triumph of '66 confirmed are precisely those which now stand in the way of the needed transformation of the game – and indeed the inability of British society more generally to adjust itself to the modern world. As long as there is a sustained belief that foreigners have little or nothing to teach us, that sport is an arena for the realisation of a recalcitrant sense of masculinity and that football should express the values of a class once nurtured on the experience of hard manual labour, then English football

will not be able to take what should be its rightful place amongst the top nations of the world. (Critcher, 1994: 86–7, 90)

The 1966 tournament is also remembered for its brutality, though quaintly the violence was largely confined to the pitch. According to Bill Murray the games were marked by 'violent play' and distinguished by some 'appalling tackling' (Murray, 1994: 143). Gifted individuals and skilful teams were too often afforded inadequate protection by dilatory match officials. Most notably, the winners of the two previous World Cups, Brazil, and their star player Pelé, were muscled out of the competition. Manhandled by the Bulgarians, Pelé was hacked at every time he went near the ball against Portugal, while 'the indulgent, flaccid English referee, George McCabe' waved for play to continue (Glanville, 1984: 145). When Pelé was 'lamed' by the Portuguese defender Morais, he was soon followed by the rest of the Brazilian team, 'some shirtless, some limping, most in tears', who 'walked in distress from the Goodison Park pitch' and out of the World Cup (James, 1966: 36). The joy that had greeted England's victory was 'tinged with sadness at the passing of a great team' and a sense of disappointment that brutal tactics had denied the public the opportunity to see more of the reigning champions and the world's finest player at the peak of their talents (Henderson, 1966: 36).

The Beautiful Game

Long before Bobby Moore lifted the World Cup, critics had drawn unflattering comparisons between the English and Brazilian games. As early as 1949 the journalist Tomás Mazzoni noted a few of the salient contrasts:

The Englishman considers a player that dribbles three times successively a nuisance; the Brazilian considers him a virtuoso. English football requires that the ball moves faster than the player; Brazilian football requires that the player be faster than the ball. In English football, discipline comes first and the players last; in Brazil the players come first and discipline last. The Englishman goes on to the field disposed either to win or to lose; the Brazilian either to win...or to blame the referee. (Mazzoni, 1950: 8)

The origins of the style described here by Mazzoni are much disputed. The former Brazilian coach, João Saldanha, proposed that it resulted from the unique combination of four factors: the climate, the nation's poverty, the varied ethnic composition of the population and the status of the game as a genuine popular passion. Tony Mason contends that this account of Brazilian supremacy is not only indefensible, it is racist – an echo of the argument propounded in newspapers at the time of the World Cups of 1958 and 1962, that Brazil owed its successes 'to the "animal suppleness" of the blacks and the "amazing flexibility of their ankles"' (Mason, 1995: 122).[11] The unique Brazilian style, Mason argues, owes more to the place and purpose of football in Brazil. In a society 'in which people got on because of their family or because they knew someone with influence or even by Presidential decree', football was one of the few oases of democracy. Here, 'A man's rise or fall depended on competence alone and not on personal relationships'. In a society where one's life chances were closely bound up with one's race, football's increasing colour blindness lent it a genuinely mass popularity. It was this factor that influenced the style in which football was played in Brazil. From the first decades of the twentieth century, when, on the field at least, the game was taken over by blacks, mulattoes and the poor, it 'quickly developed a reputation for "spontaneity" and "surrealism", especially compared to the more organised physicality of the Europeans' (Mason, 1995: 123). According to Gilberto Freyre, Brazilian football was distinguished from the European game 'through a conjunction of qualities of surprise, guile, astuteness, swiftness, and at the same time the brilliance of individual spontaneity' (Freyre, 1945: 421).

This emphasis on spontaneity and improvisation hints at a further distinguishing feature of the Brazilian game: a widespread readiness to celebrate style as an end in itself. As the Brazilian poet Mário Chamrie put it, 'even if the goal is the real aim of the game, it means less to us than the show' (quoted in Mason, 1995: 124).[12] From this perspective, football should be an artwork ceaselessly in progress. During the 1950 World Cup, the *Gazetta Dello Sport* described Brazil's outstanding striker, Zizinho, as a

Leonardo da Vinci of the football field, 'creating works of art with his feet on the immense canvas of the Maracanã pitch' (quoted in Bellos, 2002: 48). Roberto Da Matta accounts for the Brazilians' unique approach to soccer in his distinction between sport and games. For the Brazilians, he argued, football was not a sport, as it was for the Americans and the English, but a game: 'in Brazil the term football is always put together with game, as in *Jogo de futebol*, a game of football. Unlike in English, game in this context has connotations not only of competition, but also of luck and destiny' (quoted in Humphrey, 1994: 68).[13] Brazil's greatest players have been those for whom football has been a game and not a sport, for whom style and not victory has been the highest goal and none has shone more brightly than Pelé.

From his spectacular arrival on the international scene, aged 17, in the 1958 World Cup in Sweden, Pelé not only revived popular appreciation for an individualistic, 'dionysian' style of play, he also assumed a broader cultural significance (quoted in Levine, 1980a: 458). His rise from obscurity through sheer natural talent was taken in Britain to reflect an egalitarian society far removed from the calcified order of the old world. The son of an itinerant semi-professional, Pelé was born in poverty in Tres Corações, Minas Gerais in 1940. After brief spells at Palmeiras and Corinthians, Pelé signed for Santos with whom he enjoyed 19 phenomenally successful years before moving to New York Cosmos in 1975. At 16 his goals led his country to victory in the South American Championships, the *Copa Río Branco*, over Argentina, and the next year he played a starring role in Brazil's first World Cup triumph. Coveted by clubs the world over, a million dollar offer from Italy in 1960 prompted the National Congress to declare him a 'nonexportable national treasure', with private sponsors, the Brazilian Coffee Institute among them, subsidising the wages he could not go abroad to earn (quoted in Murray, 1996: 120). Off the field, his 1965 marriage to a white woman, Rosemeri Cholbi, was promoted by the government and the media as a ringing endorsement of Brazil's multi-racial democracy. The significance of the marriage can be inferred from the level of international publicity it received:

before the event, mixed marriages at the level of the elite were rare, and almost never between a white woman and a black man. Now a poor black could attain the highest social level and retain his black identity; indeed, it could be broadcast to the world. (Levine, 1980b: 244)

Despite his wealth and fame, Pelé remained affable, open and endearingly modest, a magnet for the nation's affection and an embodiment of its highest virtues – in the words of Aldemar

Figure 7   Pelé in 1966: the 'good son, the loyal friend, the patient idol' (Photo: Rafael Dias Herrera)

Martins, he was the 'good son, the loyal friend, the patient idol' (quoted in Levine 1980a: 460).[14] A perfect role model for young black Brazilians, Pelé was an emblem to all of the healthy functioning of Brazil's athletic meritocracy.

What is significant about this mythic representation of Pelé, and the enthusiasm with which it was embraced in Britain, is how much more it tells us about British perceptions of the failings of their own society in the 1950s and 60s than it does about Brazil.

Artists and Artisans

Before the TV-rights-replica-kit-prawn-sandwich-led recovery of the 1990s, English football's last period of growing public popularity came between 1945 and 1949 when, 'as the nation tried to shrug off its wartime restraints and drabness and to return to the pleasures and pursuits familiar in more peaceful times…It is easy to understand why the game seemed so attractive' (Walvin, 1986: 10). In the straitened economic circumstances of post-war Britain, 'Young and adult males...found in soccer a cheap and exciting way to pass their free time' (Murray, 1996: 88). Attendances peaked during the 1948/49 season when over 41 million people passed through the turnstiles to watch football. It was not uncommon for as many as 30,000 fans to find themselves locked out of high profile fixtures. Yet from this high-water mark, attendances steadily declined through the 1950s until by the 1960/61 season attendances had fallen to 28.6 million, a drop of more than 30 per cent in little more than a decade. Walvin sees in these declining numbers evidence of a 'popular shift in general leisure interests and an overall transformation in popular cultural habits among the British people', both to a large degree resulting from the increased affluence of the 1950s and 60s:

> the greater material benefits for many, the more varied material offerings of a rapidly transforming economy, have served to expand the leisure prospects and the aspirations of many millions of people. There are, quite

> simply, many more (and for some people, more attractive) spare time alternatives to the local football ground. (Walvin, 1986: 12–13)

Yet football's diminishing popularity through this period cannot be accounted for solely by factors external to the game. The product itself, its management and administration, and the context in which it was endured also contributed to its waning fortunes. The majority of England's football clubs were founded between 1880 and 1914, at the same time as a host of other national institutions. Yet where the two world wars and the forces of modernisation wrought massive changes in the latter – new housing for old, churches, chapels and cinemas refitted for use as mosques, temples, or bingo halls, industrial premises bulldozed or adapted to changed economic demands – the professional football club of the 1950s and 60s had scarcely altered from its Victorian or Edwardian origins. While inadequate shelter, Augean sanitation and barbarian catering were significant hazards in themselves, the precipitous terracing, inadequate means of access or egress and flammable construction materials of the nation's stadia were, as the numerous post-war football disasters demonstrated, accidents waiting to happen.[15]

It wasn't only the plant that was stuck in the last century, so too was the employers' approach to industrial relations and the conditions of the workforce. At a time when the 'disruptions of war...strengthened the solidarity and self-awareness of the working class' and brought about significant improvements in its 'status and bargaining power', the professional footballer's wages seemed miserly and his employment conditions medieval (Marwick, 1990: 38). By the mid to late 1950s as the economy powered ahead and the average worker enjoyed new levels of affluence, professional footballers were worse off than they had ever been. As Murray notes: 'For the entertainers on the soccer field...the share of this expanding cake was getting smaller, and the average player was earning less in comparison not just with other entertainers but with ordinary workers' (Murray, 1996: 112). 'This situation', as Wagg notes, 'obtained at most clubs' where it underpinned a disturbing degree of 'social control…if a player displeased his club

in some way would he forfeit his club house? … Could he forget the offer of a loan to buy a car or the promise of a part-time job?' (Wagg, 1984: 105).[16] In a speech to Trades Union Congress in 1955 the Secretary of the Professional Footballers' Union, Jimmy Guthrie, pleaded with delegates to help free 'the last bonded men in Britain – the professional footballers' who, 'bought and sold like cattle', were labouring under conditions 'akin to slavery' (Guthrie, 1976: 70).[17] Their status as bondsmen was enshrined in the two key conditions governing their employment, the retain and transfer system – through which clubs retained the exclusive and indefinite rights to a player's services – and the maximum wage.

The employers' determination to root out all challenges to their authority, to keep the players in their place as an exploitable and expendable resource not only blighted the careers of some fine professionals, it also had a profound effect on the way the game was played in England.[18] Just as individual initiative and assertiveness among the playing staff were unwelcome off the field, so flair and artistry were mistrusted on it. Herbert Chapman, the manager of Arsenal, England's most successful club side in the 1930s, and 'arguably the most influential manager in the history of the English game' (Russell, 1997: 86), reflected the wariness with which the gifted but perhaps undisciplined individual has been regarded, when he observed that

> a manager…should see his team as a working unit and take care not to engage anyone who might jeopardise its smooth functioning; 'one of the first enquiries I make when contemplating the engagement of a man is: "How does he behave; What sort of life does he lead?" Unless the answers are satisfactory I do not pursue the matter further.' (Wagg, 1984: 49)

Alf Ramsey's omission of Jimmy Greaves from his World Cup teams was, according to Brian Glanville, a product of the same thinking: 'Players like Greaves, whose immense natural talent allowed them to do in a flash what other players could not achieve with endless effort, clearly worried Ramsey' (Glanville, 1984: 135). As we have seen, England's victory in the final vindicated Ramsey's faith in the efficacy of compliance, endorsed his mistrust of individual expression and thereafter entrenched the 'myths of

"athletic football", "work rate", the elevation of the labourer above the artist', which have so shaped the style of English football since (Glanville, 1984: 185). Julie Burchill regards the expulsion of the artists and their replacement by 'artisans', the well-drilled drones of the modern game, as a key measure of how English football has declined. This process was most strikingly embodied in the fall of the last and most celebrated of the artists, George Best, and the corresponding rise of football's *homo Newboltiensis*, Kevin Keegan:

> George Best was used as a bogeyman to scare the trusting children of football into a good living off the field. The ironic corollary of this was that it became unacceptable even to attempt to *play* in the Best fashion. Flair was outlawed, resulting in a generation of drones, drilled into the ground by their coaches. The Goody-Goody Artisan syndrome was embodied by Kevin Keegan, a credit to his game…he was the *only* annotation in the profit margin of this new ethic that gripped the game. Of course, Mr Keegan's game had flashes of brilliance – and Best's work-rate and tackling were the two most underrated facets of his game – but when George hung up his boots, the fundamentals of the sport changed for ever. *Après* Best, football players, instead of striving to be artists, were not only content but expected – ordered! – to be workmanlike artisans. (quoted in Redhead, 1987: 127–9)

If the apparent democracy of the Brazilian game underwrote its popularity and contributed however indirectly to it its style, then it is not difficult to trace a connection between the paternalism of English football's administration in the 1950s and the generally stodgy fare served up on the field. Treat your players like slaves and that's how they'll play.

Kevin Keegan, and all that he represented, was no sudden phenomenon. He was the faithful son of the sweatshop ethic that dominated the management of the game and its performative outcomes on the pitch, the logical consequence of an approach that put sweat before spectacle and the team before its players. Keegan was the domestic game's original assembly-line superstar, 'English football's first clone', the finest product of the more scientific approach to the game, which occupied an increasingly

central role in the selection, preparation, and performance of players from the end of the Second World War (Wagg, 1984: 145). The ascendancy of coaching in the English game had its origins in the changing geopolitical landscape of the Cold War. In the autumn of 1945, on a brief trip to Britain, Moscow Dynamo F.C. played a series of games against Chelsea, Cardiff City, Arsenal and Glasgow Rangers. They won two and drew two, impressing all who saw them with their rapid passing game and outstanding ball control. Shaken by the Russians' manifestly superior skills, journalists and football administrators pressed for improvements in these and other areas of the domestic game, emphasising that not only sporting pride but national eminence was at stake. In the face of Britain's diminishing role in world affairs, football accrued new significance as an emblem of the nation's prestige:

> In the immediate post-war years the British press took up ever more stridently the theme of national honour through sport…The greatness of British football…was a metaphor for the greatness of Britain herself – and *both* were, to say the least of it, in doubt…with the Empire ebbing away, it was important for the national football team – football being the national game – to acquit itself well, especially perhaps against opposition from Communist countries. (Wagg, 1984: 87, 70–1)

In response to these pressures, in 1946 the Secretary of the Football Association, Stanley Rous, appointed former Manchester United half-back, Walter Winterbottom, to two newly created posts, Director of Coaching and Manager of the national team. In doing so, Rous stressed Winterbottom's technocratic expertise and its positive outcomes. At first, the coaching campaign met with resistance. The press gave prominent coverage to the opposition of no-nonsense directors, managerial martinets and even some established international players, who disdained the notion that they had anything to learn from self-styled experts. Yet most professionals welcomed the new regime. Not only did it formalise an already prevalent system of *ad hoc* team talks, but the managerialist discourse in which its aims were couched lent the game an unaccustomed degree of respectability. This aspirational lexicon closely linked the professional footballer

and his quest for respect with other skilled artisans struggling for improved status in a system apparently hostile to the idea of meritocratic advancement.

If, as Wagg argues, these developments reflected the fact that through the 1950s and 60s football was increasingly 'becoming part of "real" life', it is clear that the game's image problem and the consequent decline in its popularity rested in part on what conditions at the grounds of the football league revealed about the nature of 'real life' in England during that time (Wagg, 1984: 83). With its strict division of the proletarians on the terraces from their betters in the covered seating areas, its insistence, on (and off) the field, that hard work, respect for one's masters and obedience to their dictates were the only means to success, football in the 1950s and early 60s was far too piquant a reminder of the disappointments of real life, too redolent of the atrophied order of social privilege. At a time when new educational opportunities and greater affluence were straining the parameters of the class system, professional football offered a theatre of class inequality, a reminder of the older days and older ways that war and the prosperity it had brought were supposed to have banished forever. Its declining popularity in England through the 1950s can thus be linked to its increasing identification as an emblem of social inflexibility and collective demoralisation. Football in this context, as James Walvin notes, was 'political in the broadest sense' (Walvin, 1986: 110).[19]

If football's image problem in Britain in the late 1950s lay in the proof it afforded of the negligible pace of social change, in the mid to late 1960s its image continued to suffer and its popularity to decline, but for quite different reasons. The end of the maximum wage and the retain and transfer system in the early 1960s ushered in a period of full-blown commercialisation that brought into the management, promotion and playing of the game more and more of the ethics and practices of modern business and politics. As a consequence, if football in the late 1950s had been too closely identified with the inequalities of the past, its crisis in the 1960s lay in the unseemly eagerness with which it abandoned its traditions, embraced the moral relativism

of the present and provided a showcase for the questionable ethics of consumer capitalism. According to Alvin Gouldner, the late 1950s and early 1960s in Britain saw the shift, 'from an older economy centred on production to a new one centred on mass marketing and promotion' (Gouldner, 1971: 381). The principal product of this new economy was perceptions, the fashioning of images that were used to sell everything from soap powder to social policy. This new order ushered in a radical rupture with established moral norms: 'For the inhabitants of this new bourgeois world...many of the conventional moral distinctions of middle-class life no longer applied. The distinction, for example between truth and falsehood in commercial practice was made redundant by advertising' (Wagg, 1984: 70). The new freedom of movement enjoyed by players in the early to mid 1960s, their greater earning power and the growing links these sponsored between the worlds of sport, entertainment, advertising and the media at a time of increasing commercialisation in all aspects of the game, brought about significant changes to the way in which it was played. From the late nineteenth century onwards, professionals regarded football 'within a long-established working-class tradition' in which the values of the game and one's own integrity as a sportsman mattered more than its outcome: 'Winning was important, but not at any price' (Wagg, 1984: 148). While aggression, intimidation and robust physical play were all accepted features of the game, sharp practice was not. Though such practices had always existed they had never been 'assimilated into the conventional wisdom of the game' and were 'not sanctioned in its ideology' (Wagg, 1984: 149). Accordingly, Nat Lofthouse's assertion in the mid 1950s that 'you can be a sportsman and win' was still faintly echoed in the late 1960s in Martin Peters's denunciation of sharp practice and its cowardly operators: '"Cloggers" I can stand as long as they can take it as well as give it. But I loathe these players who try to take sneaking underhand advantage, by sly provocation and over-acting when injured' (quoted in Wagg, 1984: 149; Peters, 1969: 58).

Despite the disgust of Peters, from the mid 1960s onwards what had formerly been regarded as sharp practice came to occupy an

increasingly central place in the English game as the imperative
to victory sanctioned the pursuit of advantage by any means. The
growing prevalence of such amoral practice through the 1960s
was registered in the displacement of the conventional vocabulary
of robust fair play by a new, technocratic lexicon of professional-
ism centred on 'the job' and its demands – 'ruthless', 'efficient',
'calculated', 'tactical' and the like. This new discourse reflected
a further departure from the orthodoxies of the immediate post-
war, a cultural context in which 'play and sport were no longer
to be seen as less important than, or different in kind from, work.
From now on they would be just one more area of life where you
had to win' (Wagg, 1984: 70). In 1977, Tom Stoppard's television
play, *Professional Foul*, launched a broadside against the 'yob-
ethics' of professional football, ascribing them to the corrupting
power of 'financial greed' (Stoppard, 1978: 84–5). Yet as Jimmy
Hill pointed out almost 20 years earlier when he took over as
Secretary of the PFA, in a world where the bedrock of traditional
values was giving place to a new and less stable ethical landscape,
it would be unfair to single out professional footballers for special
moral censure. After all, if as was repeatedly claimed through the
1960s, football was big business, 'it follows that there will be a
tendency for business ethics and gamesmanship to extend from
the board room to the field of play' (quoted in Wagg, 1984: 150).
Hill's point was that while football reflected the broader crisis of
values in Britain it was not their source. This was more readily
traceable to the nation's boardrooms and parliamentary lobbies,
newspaper editorial rooms and television production companies,
where the ethics of the mass market had taken a firm grip. As such:
'when a professional footballer convinces a referee that he has
been tripped in the penalty area when he hasn't, he has no qualms.
Why should he? He inhabits the same moral universe as the Prime
Minister, the CBI [Confederation of British Industries] and the
Independent Broadcasting Authority' (Wagg, 1984: 154).

The working class football spectator thus had every reason to
feel as disenchanted about his experience of the game in the 1960s
as his uncles and older brothers had felt a decade earlier. If football
in the 1950s had symbolised the worst of the class prejudice which

denied him equality, the deceptions which had become such a central feature of the game in the 1960s were a painful reminder of the duplicitous practices of modern politics and the mass market, which promised him so much, but delivered so little.

Football Utopia

It is in this context that Pelé and Brazilian soccer assumed a social as much as a sporting significance for British football fans of the 1950s and 60s. At a time when black players were 'rare, exotic sights' on English football grounds, and regularly the targets of racial abuse when they did appear, Pelé's rise to wealth and fame, and the dazzling skills that had taken him there, constituted an eloquent condemnation of the unreflecting Victorianism which blighted the English game and the society it so depressingly mirrored (Walvin, 1986: 70).[20] A decade later, as the technocratic ascendancy was throttling the last gasps of individualism out of English football, Brazil seemed to be the final outpost of a natural untutored game. According to Eduardo Galeano, Brazil's triumph in Mexico in 1970 demonstrated that in spite of the crabbed professionalism of the modern game it was still possible to play beautiful football and win:

> Brazil played football worthy of her people's yearning for celebration and craving for beauty. All the world was suffering from the mediocrity of defensive football, which had the entire side hanging back to maintain the *catenaccio* while one or two men played by themselves up front. Risk and creative spontaneity weren't allowed. Brazil, however, was astonishing: a team on the attack, playing with four strikers, Jairzinho, Tostão, Pelé and Rivelino, sometimes increased to five and even six when Gerson and Carlos Alberto came up from the back. (Galeano, 1997: 137)

Brazil's victory over Italy in the final occasioned scenes of wild jubilation, 'a joyful, dancing invasion of fans milling around their victorious players' in which Brian Glanville detected an affirmation of the Dionysian approach to the game, 'a reflection of the way Brazil had played; and played was, indeed, the word. For all their dedication, all their passion, they and their country

had somehow managed to remain aware that football was, after all, a game; something to be enjoyed' (Glanville, 1984: 184–5). As seductive as these descriptions are, they suggest more about the global yearning for a celebratory style of football than they tell us about the history of the game in Brazil:

> In Britain and around the world, there is a need to believe in Brazil as the repository of football's soul. If Brazilian football did not exist, you feel it would be necessary to invent it. In the process the reality of Brazilian football can be hard to discern behind the myth. (Taylor, 1998: 15)

What this representation of football in Brazil fails to acknowledge is its place in the nation's complex ethnic mix and its resulting role as a locus for disputes about national identity. Despite the efforts of British commentators to portray Brazil as a football utopia, the social functioning of the game there is similar to its role in Britain, with matters of race imbricated over relations of class.

The struggle between opposing styles and philosophies of play in Brazil offers a mirror image of the British experience. Brazil's distinctive identity, Freyre argues, has come from its uniquely varied racial heritage, which has made it a 'tropical hybrid (European technology infused with Amerindian and African psychic forces)'. These diverse characteristics are visible on the football field where their struggle for supremacy is reflected in the form of contrasting and alternately dominant styles of play, one 'dionysian', spontaneous and individualistic, closely associated with blacks and mulattoes, the other 'apollonian', centred on teamwork, tactics, strength and organisation, closely linked with European dominance of the game in Brazil (Freyre, 1964: vii–viii). Robert Levine notes that:

> The first Brazilian team to tour Europe, São Paulo's Paulistano in 1926, represented the old, fascinating spectators with its fluid, ballet-like play and its elegance; but by the mid-1930s fluid spontaneity began to give away [*sic*] to European training methods and more 'scientific' forms of strategy. (Levine, 1980a: 455)

This change of style was linked to the professionalisation of Brazilian football in 1933–4 which, while it brought more poor,

black players than ever before into the game, also reinforced their economic and tactical subjection to the Europeanised elite who ran Brazilian soccer (see Taylor, 1998: 82, 84). In the decade after its professionalisation the dominant figure in Brazilian football was not any of its galaxy of black stars but Flamengo's Hungarian coach, Dori Krieschner, the high priest of a disciplined, apollonian style. Uncompromising and autocratic, Krieschner demanded absolute obedience from players whom he regarded with genial contempt. He routinely referred to his black players as 'crioulos' or 'moleques', Brazilian approximations of 'nigger'. Brazilian football, he pronounced, had great promise, but it would achieve international success only when its raw (black) talent was harnessed to (white) European tactics and discipline (see Levine, 1980a). This sort of racism exercised a considerable influence over the selection of the Brazilian national team until well into the 1950s. Robert Levine notes that the *Confederação Brasileiro da Deportes* (Brazilian Sports Confederation)

> displayed nervous interest in the racial composition of teams chosen to represent Brazil abroad. The *Seleção* chosen for the Rio Branco Cup (the South American Championship) always seemed to have more non-white players than the Brazilian teams sent to compete with the Europeans…At the World Cup matches in France [in 1938] the two best blacks, Leonidas and Tim (Elba Vargas Lima), were without explanation kept out of the semi-finals against Italy, and Brazil lost 2–1…In 1950, the *Seleção*'s loss to Uruguay was blamed on three of its black players (Barbosa, Juvenal, and Bigode) and, as late as 1958, the CBD hesitated before fielding a predominately [*sic*] non-white squad. Both Pelé and Garrincha, in the end the heroes of Brazil's first World Cup championship, were added to the *Seleção* only at the last minute by worried officials. (Levine, 1980b: 239)

The successes in Sweden, Chile and Mexico compelled the Brazilian football establishment to acknowledge the centrality of the Dionysian style to the national game and embrace its mainly black exponents. Celebrated by the media, intellectuals and the dominant classes, football emerged as one of the few genuinely integrating forces in the vast geographical and ethnic sprawl of modern Brazil, a vital agent 'for bridging social distance

and encouraging national pride...heightening local identity and reducing intra-class hostility' (Levine, 1980b: 248).

Yet as Ilan Rachum has shown, football's status as an emblem of unity did little to alter the conditions of most of its black professionals. Football continued to reflect

> more of the old than the new. Coaches lacked authority and were subject to the whims of the club directorates. The paternalistic *come e dorme* tradition persisted: athletes were housed in special barracks and kept under surveillance lest they partake in drinking or *macumba* rituals, practices believed common to (and harmful for) the lower classes. Salaries remained low. (quoted in Levine, 1980b: 241)

Despite the official celebration of Pelé, and of football itself as an emblem of egalitarianism and national integration, the racist attitudes which had shaped the administration of the game in Brazil remained largely unchanged, rudely surfacing whenever the team failed to meet the high expectations of officials, the media and the public:

> When the 1966 *Seleção* began to play sloppily, it was subjected to a barrage of attacks, ranging from allegations that its members were ugly and too fat to a published remark that the team was the 'best ever – since not a single case of syphilis was discovered among the players'. (Levine, 1980b: 247)

Clearly, football in Brazil was no model of meritocracy. It served instead, as in England, to reinforce the established structures of power and was consistently used 'by the elite to bolster official ideology and to channel social energy in ways compatible with prevailing social values' (Levine, 1980b: 233). In the late 1960s, with his popularity waning, Brazil's President, General Emiliano Garrasatzu Medici, developed a sudden taste for football. He attended Flamengo's home games, took a close interest in the training and selection of the *Seleção* and personally intervened on the eve of the 1970 World Cup to fire its outspoken coach, João Saldanha. After its victory the whole team was flown directly from Mexico City to Brasilia where Medici received them, appearing on the balcony of the President's official residence with Pelé and the Jules Rimet Trophy. The regime identified the team's slogan,

'In sport as in life, integration brings victory' with its own efforts to foster national development through discipline. Indeed the team's song, '*Pra Frente Brasil!*' (Forward Brazil!), was brazenly appropriated by the military and used as the theme tune at political rallies and even in television commercials.[21] Pelé was shamelessly used by the football establishment, itself an arm of the military regime as of 1970, to endorse its doctrines, embody its values and to rally national pride. Not that he needed much persuasion. A vociferous patriot, when questioned by a Uruguayan journalist in 1972 about his country's military dictatorship, Pelé observed: 'There is no dictatorship in Brazil. Brazil is a liberal country, a land of happiness. We are a free people. Our leaders know what is best for [us], and govern [us] in a spirit of toleration and patriotism' (quoted in Levine, 1980b): 244). Meanwhile he counselled that his poor black brothers should in no way aspire to the wealth he enjoyed, for God himself had made them poor and black, just as he had given Pelé unmatched athletic prowess so that he might bring them joy.[22]

These facts are well known and widely documented, yet they play no part in popular British accounts of Pelé and Brazilian football. This is because for British critics it is not the objective accuracy of accounts of Brazilian football that matter but the uses to which they might be put – their purpose is functional and not representational. When in 1516, stirred by early accounts of the New World and its exploration, Sir Thomas More published his account of an ideal commonwealth off the coast of America, his Utopia was not intended to propose a blueprint for the foundation of any such society. More's *Utopia* (1516) was a vehicle by which he might critique the shortcomings of the political and social order within which he lived. He invented the Utopia that his society's failings demanded – its functioning systems and enlightened policies a subtle accounting of his own society's deficiencies.[23] Similarly in the 1950s and 60s, English fans and the media invented the Pelé and the Brazil, the football Utopia they needed, to critique the dourness of the domestic game and the prejudice which impeded broader social progress. Pelé served both as a stick with which to beat the administration of the domestic game

and as an ideal of what local potential, freed from the shackles of bigotry, might look like should it ever be realised. Pelé and the football he championed thus serve as the locus for a muted protest against the disappointments of Britain in the 1950s and 60s, whose public, promised a brave new world of equality and plenty by its post-war leaders, found itself still chafing against the restrictions of the old world. If the Beats railed against the orthodoxies of 1950s America by hitting the road and the bottle, the British registered their disappointment at the negligible pace of social change in post-war Britain more passively, by standing in the rain at a football match and dreaming of Pelé.

6

FEARFUL SYMMETRY

Back to the Future

For more than 30 years, politicians and academics have debated the long-term consequences of the moral, cultural and social revolution that the 1960s brought.[1] While the decade saw profound transformations in patterns of production and consumption, Arthur Marwick, 'the dean of sixties historians', has argued that the most 'fundamental and historically significant' of its changes arose from the subversion of 'the authority of the white, the upper and middle class, the husband, the father, and the male generally'. This brought about 'Upheavals in race, class, and family relationships' and a new concern for 'civil and personal rights' whose consequences reverberated through all levels of society. Advances in science and technology, most notably the development and widespread availability of 'the contraceptive pill', further drove this process. The 'general sexual liberation' it initiated and the 'striking changes in public and private morals' that resulted were manifest in new 'modes of self-presentation', a rejection of 'the old canons of fashion, and a rejoicing in the natural attributes of the human body' (Sandbrook, 2005: xvi; Marwick, 1998: 16–20). While their proponents have argued that these changes brought improvements in 'material conditions, family relationships, and personal freedoms for the vast majority of ordinary people', conservative critics have asserted that they visited 'misery, decadence and ignorance' on the secular west (Marwick, 1998: 15, 16; Hitchens, 2000: 369). Whatever their material outcomes, in Britain the 1960s concentrated attention on the fading of the nation's power, furnishing a language through which anxieties about national decline could be articulated and

a means of exploring how Britain could live in the present while still holding on to the past.

In *Travels With My Aunt* (1969), Graham Greene offers a response to these anxieties. The 1960s and the painful readjustments they brought seem to have entirely bypassed the novel's protagonist, retired bank manager Henry Pulling. Southwood, where he lives, is a timeless community of ancient admirals and dyspeptic majors, 'where one read of danger only in the newspapers and the deepest change to be expected was a change of government' (Greene, 1969: 201).[2] On closer inspection, Southwood's insulation from the anarchic energies of the age seems less a matter of chance than an act of will. When at Christmas lunch Henry's neighbour, Major Charge, asks him to feed his goldfish while he spends a few days with a study group, Henry quizzes him:

> 'What kind of a study group?'
> 'The problems of empire,' he replied, staring at me with eyes enlarged and angry as though I had already made some foolish or unsympathetic reply.
> 'I thought we had got rid of all those.'
> 'A temporary failure of nerve,' he snapped and bayoneted his turkey. (Greene, 1969: 202)

Seen in this light, Southwood is no suburban backwater, curiously sheltered from the rising tide of change, but a militant outpost of the old order, doggedly resisting its advance. In refusing to let go of the past and surrender themselves to the uncertainties of the present, Southwood and its hidebound habitués have stiffened into emblems of morbidity. Henry is rescued from rigor mortis by his Aunt Augusta who, after a 50-year absence, emerges at his mother's funeral, 'dressed rather as the late Queen Mary of beloved memory might have dressed if she had still been with us and had adapted herself a little bit towards the present mode' (Greene, 1969: 10). Having attuned herself to the present mode she conducts Henry from 'the child's security' of the past to 'the adult world' of the here and now via a crash course in sex, crime and travel (Sharrock, 1984: 264). Their journey leads from the stagnation of Southwood, via the intrigues of post-war Europe, to

the lawlessness of Latin America where, in the comic kleptocracy of Stroessner's Paraguay, they find a balance between the certainties of the past and the challenges of the present.

Henry's experience of travel demonstrates that for all its novelty and excitement, the dynamism of the present is profoundly unsettling, that the freedoms it brings come at the cost of the reliable norms on which cultural and psychological stability rest. Speeding through Europe aboard the Orient Express, accompanying his aunt on the first of her mysterious adventures, the rapid fire crossing of frontiers that gives him a 'feeling of elation merely at being alive' also leaves him dizzy and disoriented (O'Prey, 1988: 124). Yet if the present threatens bewilderment, the past has only death and dissolution to offer. When he quarrels with his aunt in France and makes his way back to Southwood, Henry finds that:

> Like a waiter on his day-off I passed virtually unrecognized. It was an odd feeling for one who had been so much in the centre of Southwood life. As I went upstairs to bed I felt myself to be a ghost returning home, transparent as water…I was almost surprised to see that my image was visible in the glass. (Greene, 1969: 196)

It isn't only Henry or Southwood that seem to be dematerialising; the whole country looks set to disappear beneath a fog of gloom as the mythic energies of the age are dissipated in a thousand petty disputes:

> England lay damp and cold, as grey as the graveyard, while the train lagged slowly from Dover Town towards Charing Cross under the drenching rain… In the opposite corner a woman sneezed continuously while I tried to read the *Daily Telegraph*. There was a threatened engineering strike, and the car industry was menaced by a threatened stoppage of cleaners in some key factory which turned out windscreen-wipers. Cars in all the BMC factories waited without wipers on the production line. Export figures were down and so was the pound. (Greene, 1969: 194)

There can be no going back for Henry, and when his aunt summons him to Paraguay he promptly follows.[3]

While Henry's arrival in Asunción might look like a final break with the past, he finds there not an escape from Britain but the still faintly beating heart of its essential identity, a living remnant of 'the Victorian world where I had been taught by my father's books to feel more at home than in our modern day' (Greene, 1969: 316). Here he can imaginatively re-inhabit the nation's heyday while still living in the present. Likewise Aunt Augusta. Dancing with her long lost lover, Mr Visconti, she looks 'like the young woman in my father's photograph pregnant with happiness', transported back to a time and a place where, always one step ahead of the law, life was a hazardous adventure, the only passport you needed was cash and indifference to the values of others was not a crime but a Briton's birthright (Greene, 1969: 318). What Henry and his aunt discover in Paraguay then is neither the anarchy of the new world nor the decay of the old, but a perilous balance between them, a place of permanent contingency. Although Henry ends the novel an expatriate smuggler betrothed to the teenage daughter of Asunción's Chief of Police, it is clear that he has never been more authentically British or more at home. Reciting Tennyson to his adolescent bride-to-be while paying off her father, he has one foot in past, the other in the present and for the first time in his life, is fully alive.

Through the 1960s and 70s Latin America's dependable provision of a world of anarchy and adventure continued to furnish British readers with a simpler past where they could take refuge from the anxieties of the present. In *Up, into the Singing Mountain* (1960), the sequel to Richard Llewellyn's *How Green Was My Valley* (1939), his protagonist, Huw Morgan, finds among the Welsh settlers in Patagonia a Wales twice removed from the 1960s – once by distance and once by time. While Britons were embracing new freedoms of thought, expression and love, and managing the moral and social upheavals they brought, Llewellyn's Welsh Patagonians held fast to the traditions of the preceding century, their lives revolving around work, worship and home. While Morgan denounces the backwardness of these communities, he treasures the biblical simplicity of life there. The pioneering struggle to tame the land and the moral invigoration

it brings return him to the values of the imperial past. When, via politics and war, the complexities of the modern world intrude on Morgan's idyll, in a further sequel, *Down Where the Moon is Small* (1966), he moves back into the simplicities of the old world again, leaving Welsh Patagonia for a grant of land in the Andes.

Political violence in Latin America registered a new intensity in the late 1960s and early 70s as an array of revolutionary groups from across the continent struggled to wrest power from the military strongmen who governed. Graham Greene saw in these events a topical context where he might return to the obsessive subject of his serious fiction, the quest for redemption in a fallen world. As such, while he is quite specific about the physical and temporal location of *The Honorary Consul* (1973), in and around Corrientes in northern Argentina in the early 1970s, it is clear that its events map a moral and psychological rather than a geographical or political terrain. Indeed, its significant landmarks – temptation, weakness, cowardice, betrayal, failure, guilt, and despair – are so well-known to readers of Greene's fiction that they have been identified as an autonomous fictional province, 'Greeneland', an environment in which the 'landscape is distorted as in a heat haze by the view of life projected onto it', its salient details 'selected and placed in order to contribute to what one might call the prevailing Greenery' (Spurling, 1983: 62).

The Santiago Model

If, by the 1970s, Greene saw in Latin America's political turbulence an emblem of the deeper disenchantments of the modern age, many in Britain found in it more immediate causes for concern. As the decade unfolded and Britain grappled with the effects of long-term economic and military decline, the stock images of anarchy and decay which had once reinforced Latin America's irreducible otherness, came to look more and more like a portent of where Britain itself was heading. The vision of Latin America as a place of violence that, in the late nineteenth century, had served to assert (and critique) British self-confidence was employed by

writers a hundred years later to articulate the collapse of that confidence and address the fears to which it gave rise.

Britain in the early 1970s was a nation displaying all the marks of terminal degeneration. With its imperial possessions mostly gone and its military in retreat, its once formidable clout on the world stage was now more of a petulant slap. At home, with its uncompetitive manufacturing industries, soaring inflation, balance of payments deficits, fissile industrial relations and deeply entrenched antagonisms of race and class, the kingdom was disunited and Britain, patently, no longer great.[4] In 1973, Edward Heath's Conservative government was battered by industrial action. When power cuts forced the country on to a three-day week, Heath called an election. His principal campaign slogan, 'Who Governs?' reflected the urgent questioning in 1970s Britain of where power in the country resided – in parliament or with the unions (Clarke, 2004: 339). Heath's narrow defeat at the polls in February 1974, followed by a second loss in October and the return to power of a Labour government under Harold Wilson with a bare majority left many feeling that the central question addressed in the election had not been satisfactorily resolved. Nevertheless, the nation's manifold economic and social problems required a radical response and the Wilson government appeared ready to rise to the challenge. Within weeks of its election it placated the unions with the promise of pay rises, increased corporation tax to fund more generous social security benefits and set up the National Enterprise Board to take over failing private companies. While these modest measures brought respite to welfare recipients and struggling businesses, they sparked panic among right-wing commentators who had found even Heath's conciliatory conservatism a cause for concern. To at least one observer, the *Daily Mail*'s Santiago correspondent, Labour's reforms echoed the radical policies instituted in Salvador Allende's Chile where, twelve months earlier, in the final year of his presidency, inflation had topped 304 per cent, the middle classes had revolted and the military had seized power. Allende's experiment had 'pointed up the dangers a relatively prosperous country faces when it seeks to reform overnight', dangers, the

Mail's man in Santiago cautioned, that Britain would do well to heed (quoted in Beckett, 2002: 116).

The suggestion that 1970s Britain might learn something useful from events in Chile underlines Andy Beckett's claim that over the past half a century the two countries have functioned 'as each other's political subconscious', where the most cherished fantasies or deepest anxieties of each might be realised or resisted (Beckett, 2002: 13).[5] Through the 1930s and 40s as civilian and military governments of the right and left attempted various radical policy experiments, observers came to realise that Chile

> offered the full kaleidoscope of politics, in a country small and centralised enough for every ideology to have hopes of success. Its narrow test tube of territory, its concentrated population of less than ten million, its perpetually bubbling inflation and European-style consumer booms and slumps, its endless elections…seemed to make it an ideal laboratory for new notions from abroad. (Beckett, 2002: 88)

It was also an exporter of influential ideas. When Eduardo Frei was elected to the presidency in 1964 he set out to redress the extreme disparities of wealth that marked Chilean society. In an effort to broaden economic participation, spread the wealth and ensure decent provision for the poor, he launched the Revolution in Liberty, a moderate programme of state planning of the economy and land redistribution. His policies were hailed by democracies around the world and especially admired in Britain. From the mid 1960s into the early 70s politicians, public servants, community activists and student revolutionaries made the journey south to learn, first from Frei's reforms and, after his election in 1970, to absorb the lessons from the more radical experiments pursued under Salvador Allende's administration.

As Allende's policies polarised Chile and the economy descended into chaos, right-wing commentators in Britain wrung their hands in consternation. Though delighted by the prospect of Allende's failure, they were convinced that the Wilson government's fidelity to 'the Santiago Model' was taking the country the way of Chile (Beckett, 2002: 190). The military coup of 11 September 1973, which put an end to Allende and his regime, sharpened debate

in Britain over how best to respond to the deepening crises at home, recasting political and economic challenges as questions of patriotism and loyalty. The right argued that just as Allende's economic and social policies had all but ceded control of the country to the Soviet bloc, so the Labour party's support for Chile brought its loyalty to Britain into question. When in the late 1960s two Czechoslovakian defectors 'named a series of Labour MPs and trade unionists as successful recruits' to the communist cause, MI5 concluded that 'there almost certainly was Soviet penetration of the Labor Party' (Wright and Greengrass, 1987: 364). More extreme elements within the security services spread the rumour that Wilson was a Russian agent, intent on selling out the country to the Kremlin.[6] Former British intelligence officer Peter Wright recalls how, immediately prior to the 1974 general elections, he was approached by 'a wealthy industrialist' and his colleagues who, 'worried about the future of the country', were 'working to prevent the return of a Labor government to power', convinced that this would 'spell the end of all the freedoms we know and cherish' (Wright and Greengrass, 1987: 367–8). It is a measure of the social and political crises of the day that, by 1974, the contention that the Labour government posed a threat to the nation's values and traditions had spread beyond the shadowy world of espionage and into the mainstream press. In September 1974 the *Financial Times* columnist, Samuel Brittan, predicted the collapse of the British parliamentary system within a lifetime, while *The Times* warned of what it called a 'last chance Parliament' (quoted in Beckett, 2002: 187). A year later Robert Moss, a former director of the Economist Intelligence Unit, published *The Collapse of Democracy* (1975). For Moss, Britain in 1974 was a mirror-image of pre-coup Chile, perched on the same political precipice that the Chileans had toppled over in 1970 when they elected Allende (see Moss, 1974; Moss, 1977: 148–61). Britain now, like Chile then, was 'suffering a crisis of structures and beliefs' as 'disciplined minorities moved by radical ideologies and an equally radical contempt for the past' were working to subvert 'the conventions of the great majority' and 'knock away the bases for a free society' (Moss, 1977: 12–13, 20). Their success

in Britain, Moss contended, rested on 'the disproportionate influence of communists and others who are openly dedicated to the overthrow of the free society within the British trade union movement – and…the special links between that movement and the Labour Party' (Moss, 1977: 15). As a consequence, he cautioned, 'the threat from totalitarian movements and ideologies' of the kind embodied by the unions and the Labour government 'must be counted as one of the primary threats to democracy in Britain today' (Moss, 1977: 13). Peregrine Worsthorne was equally alarmed by the similarities he detected between pre-coup Chile and contemporary Britain. After a ten-day visit to the country in March 1974 he was struck less by the repressive conditions of Pinochet's Chile than the policies that had brought it into being. While he conceded that 'a military dictatorship is ugly and repressive' he expressed the ardent desire that

> if a minority British Socialist Government ever sought, by cunning, duplicity, corruption, terror and foreign arms, to turn this country into a Communist State, I hope and pray our armed forces would intervene to prevent such a calamity as efficiently as the armed forces did in Chile. (quoted in Beckett, 2002: 185–6)

The threat was clear. Without a radical rethink in political direction, tomorrow's Britain would look like today's Chile.

That change of direction came when Wilson resigned in 1976 and was replaced by the more pragmatic James Callaghan for whom, as Peter Clarke notes, 'Fidelity to socialist dogma…was simply not [a] priority' (Clarke, 2004: 351). Under Callaghan's leadership the economy struggled back on to its feet, the Government and unions arrived at an uneasy compact, inflation was gradually reeled in and with that the extreme right's principal bases for anxiety and agitation evaporated.[7] More importantly, twelve months before Callaghan's accession to power, Margaret Thatcher was elected to the leadership of the Conservative party, where, she made it clear, 'ideas from Britain's radical Right' and those disgruntled by Edward Heath's placatory corporatism would find a warm welcome (Beckett, 2002: 200). In the first instance it was economic radicalism that caught her eye. Through her adviser, Professor

Alan Walters, she kept a close eye on the free market reforms instituted in Pinochet's Chile, where a group of Milton Friedman's former students, the 'Chicago Boys', were given the opportunity to put his monetarist theories to the test and rebuild the Chilean economy. Their reforms included deep cuts in public expenditure, increases in interest rates, the removal of tariffs on imports and price controls on local goods thereby exposing industries unaccustomed to competition to the full blast of market forces. Their 'shock treatment' very nearly killed the patient. The price of staple goods rose, unemployment soared and wages plummeted. With the sudden loss of so much state revenue the welfare system virtually collapsed. However, once the economy had bottomed out, it first tentatively recovered before prospering: interest rates fell, productivity rose and economic growth far outpaced the United States and Europe.[8] The Chilean economic miracle confirmed that monetarism worked. When Margaret Thatcher was elected prime minister in 1979 and Britain embarked on its own economic revolution following the blueprint set by the Chicago Boys, Chile once again returned to the mainstream of British media and political debate. As in the days of Frei and Allende, enthusiastic visitors queued up for the guided tour, though on this occasion it was right-wing politicians, neo-liberal economists and state-modernisers who came to sit at the feet of the country's economic gurus. No longer an admonitory example of the strong medicine that Britain might need to swallow, Chile was now a shining example of the good health of the patient subjected to such a course of therapy and a model for the nation's own recovery. Back in Britain, in a reversal of roles from the preceding decade, it was the left's turn to lament the irresponsible extremes of Chile's radical economic and social experiments. Under the structural reforms of the 1980s, British manufacturing industries collapsed, interest rates spiralled, unemployment mushroomed and access to social security was restricted, while labour market flexibility was enshrined in law and a whole array of once-sacrosanct public enterprises privatised. When the workers resisted the reforms the government showed its readiness to use violent confrontation to drive home its policy agenda. The message was clear: those who

resisted the triumph of neo-liberal economics would be legislated or beaten into submission. The Santiago Model was dead. Long live the Santiago Model!

For British politicians and commentators, events in Chile from the 1960s to the 1980s provided a language through which reforms being attempted in Britain could be analysed and debated. While Allende's experiments offered a vehicle by which the radical right might critique the leftward drift of British politics in the early 1970s, the transformation of the economy under Pinochet enabled the right to push its own agenda for reform at home. At the same time, while Allende's Chile provided the left with a realised utopia of wealth redistribution and land reform, in the wake of its dismemberment by the military it furnished a durable myth of viable socialism. Used as a proxy for the enactment of British political debates, it is hardly surprising that Chile looks more like a perennially polarised landscape of moral extremes than a complex polity with a sophisticated history of social compacts, class antagonisms and associations.[9]

This vision of Chilean politics was given further impetus by the arrest of General Pinochet in London in October 1998. As the decision whether or not to extradite him to Spain dragged through the British legal system, pro- and anti-Pinochetistas took up their places outside the court, toting flags and hurling abuse at one another. Here the British public was given a graphic demonstration of what local and foreign commentators averred passed for political debate in Chile.[10] This appraisal not only resurrected the old certainties of imperial condescension, it also helped deaden the echo of other, shriller notes of class and cultural antipathy still ringing around the inner city. Less than a decade earlier, in March 1990, the streets of central London had seen running battles between the police and demonstrators when a mass protest against the introduction of a 'community charge' or poll tax had turned violent. The prime minister's determination to press ahead with this deeply unpopular policy not only precipitated her downfall later the same year, it set the north of the country against the south, local against central government and the poor against the rich.[11] Outraged by this divisive and unjust impost,

rioters targeted its principal beneficiaries, the inner city elite. With central London looking more like the streets of 1970s Santiago, the poll tax riots demonstrated that the entrenched antagonisms of Chilean politics were not a contrast to but a projection of Britain's own unresolved divisions of class and region. No wonder Chile reminded so many observers of Britain: in its tribal divisions they could identify and confront their own political primitivism, the 'thing of darkness' lurking within which, however reluctantly, every Briton must acknowledge and own (Shakespeare, *The Tempest*: V ii 276).

Dark Places

In the mid 1970s, while Chile struggled with the transition from democratic socialism to military rule, on the other side of the Andes Argentina was suffering its own spectacular social collapse. Over the preceding decade, as the established social and ideological divisions within Argentine society had assumed a more violent caste, armed guerrilla movements had battled one another, the police and the military for control of the country. By the mid 1970s Argentina was living through a reign of terror as armed insurrection, kidnappings and assassinations brought the state to the verge of dissolution.[12] When a military junta took power on 23 March 1976, its strategy for restoring order to the country, 'the process of national reorganisation', or *el proceso*, focused not merely on the annihilation of armed opposition groups but the decimation of those who gave them aid, comfort, intellectual support or even passive solidarity.[13] After all, as the new President General Jorge Videla observed: 'A terrorist is not just someone with a gun or a bomb; he can also be someone who spreads ideas that are contrary to Western and Christian civilization' (Simpson and Bennett, 1985: 81). Hence the burden of repression fell on ordinary Argentines, workers, students, trade unionists, journalists, teachers, academics, psychiatrists, priests, welfare workers, even schoolchildren and housewives. While upwards of 20,000 people were arrested, imprisoned, tortured and later released and almost 2 million people went into exile during the

course of *el proceso*, according to human rights figures more than 9,000 people were abducted and 'disappeared', never to be seen again.[14] The repression was at its worst between 1976 and 1979, a period now known as *la guerra sucia* or the dirty war. Thereafter the assassinations and disappearances gradually tailed off until the collapse of military rule in the wake of the Falklands debacle and the restoration of civilian rule in December 1983.

Between 1972 and 1979, V.S. Naipaul was commissioned to travel to Argentina and report on the spectacle of a once-prosperous society descending into anarchy. He wrote five essays for the *New York Review of Books* reflecting on these journeys, two in 1972, two in 1974, and one more in 1979.[15] In 1980, these articles were collected, along with other pieces on the West Indies, Africa, and an essay on Conrad, and reissued in a single volume, *The Return of Eva Perón with The Killings in Trinidad* (1980). Judging by the frequency with which Naipaul's pronouncements on Argentina have been proffered – and accepted – as authoritative opinions on the nation's history, politics and culture, the uncanny regularity with which *The Return of Eva Perón* has furnished epigraphs for and been cited in popular and scholarly accounts of the country, it is clear that since the Second World War, no writer and no single text have exercised a greater influence over popular British perceptions of the country.[16] While it is surprising that one writer and a handful of essays should exercise such dominance, that it should be this writer and these essays is positively alarming. Writing in the *Buenos Aires Herald*, Clive Petersen argued that Naipaul's essays weren't even about Argentina, that his depiction of the country was not the product of observation or analysis but the projection of an established vision of the world, instantly familiar to readers of his fiction: 'As a novelist he has created his own motherland, to which all parts of the globe can be comfortably annexed. Naipaul's world is inhabited by alienated, frustrated outsiders, yearning to be someone else somewhere else, obsessed with the precariousness of their situation'. As a consequence, 'It is scarcely surprising that his Argentina is bleak and haunted by angst, and his Argentines are desperate to escape from a country like a huge lunatic asylum'

(Petersen, 1977: 8). Worse still, Petersen recognised that as these essays had 'appeared in *The New York Review of Books* and the *Sunday Times* of London', where they were read by 'a considerable portion of the educated people' in Britain and the United States, most readers would take their 'partial synopsis' of the country as objective history:

> Naipaul's Argentina is now their Argentina. Had he been writing about France or England his vision would have been one among many, and its interest would have lain in the light it throws on a very interesting mind. But Argentina is on the fringe of the Anglo-Saxon imagination; it is a far away country about which little is securely known. These two prestigious papers may publish nothing more about Argentina for many years. Most of their readers will have had, at best, a hazy personal vision of Argentina to measure against Naipaul's. His brilliant essay will have had more effect on their minds than a decade of government communiqués or a century of purely local self-assertion. (Petersen, 1977: 8)[17]

Naipaul's aim in the pieces he wrote on Argentina was not to describe the country but, through the provision of a 'hugely partial synopsis' of it, to demonstrate how it endorses his vision of the world (Mustafa, 1995: 139).

Yet Naipaul's apparent indifference to Argentina highlights one of the key concerns of his essays, the questioning of whether the country, as it was perceived by the majority of its people, had ever actually existed.[18] Naipaul was not the first to pose this question. The Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset noted how, during the years of mass migration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Argentina was for many of its immigrants a largely imaginary place, the product of their fantasies of fulfilment:

> Everyone arriving on these shores sees, first of all, the 'afterwards': wealth, if he be *homo oeconomicus*; successful love, if he be sentimental; social advancement, if he be ambitious. The *pampa* promises, promises, promises. The horizon is forever making gestures of abundance and concession. Here everyone lives on distances. Scarcely anyone is where he is, but in advance of himself. And from *there* he governs and executes his life *here*, his real,

present life. Everyone lives as though his dreams of the future were already reality. (Ortega y Gasset, 1930: 154)

Naipaul argues that the Argentines have always occupied an imaginary cultural space and that the nation they believe they inhabit bears little relation to its actual conditions. Interviewing Borges he is struck by the disjunction between the great man's vision of the country as an 'epic world' of historical significance and cultural solidity, of 'battles fought, the fatherland established, the great city created', and the shabby reality that the visitor to Buenos Aires experiences:

> the city itself is in decay…The white and pale blue Argentine flag that hangs out into Mexico Street from the balcony of Borges's office in the National Library is dingy with dirt and fumes. And consider this building, perhaps the finest in the area…There is beauty still in the spiked wall, the tall iron gates, the huge wooden doors. But inside, the walls peel; the windows in the central patio are broken; farther in, courtyard opening into courtyard, washing hangs in a corridor, steps are broken, and a metal spiral staircase is blocked with junk. This is a government office, a department of the Ministry of Labour; it speaks of an administration that has seized up, a city that is dying, a country that hasn't really worked. (Naipaul, 1980: 125, 126)

The country's failure, Naipaul contends, can be traced to the origins and nature of its settlement. Between 1850 and 1914, its population swelled from a little over 900,000 to more than 8 million. What distinguished the colonisation of Argentina from other, more successful mass migrations over the same period was that the migrants came not to civilise the land but to populate the cities, particularly Buenos Aires. Finding work on the railways, in the abattoirs and meat packing plants that surrounded the great port, they came, in time, to constitute 'a restive urban proletariat and an insecure lower middle class, neither of which felt any bonds of allegiance to the powerful lords of the pampas' (Williamson, 1992: 459–60). Hostile towards the rural caudillos, the urban masses were no more inclined to establish bonds of allegiance between themselves. The suddenness and magnitude of Argentina's immigration bred not common

cause but competitiveness and enmity, and it is this that explains the arrogant individualism of the present day and the atomised society it has spawned. Denied the opportunity to settle, work and humanise the land, Argentines failed to establish meaningful links with or any affection for it either. The pampas may have been the source of the people's collective prosperity, but as their Midas touch failed in the changed economic circumstances of the post-war period, their vast empty spaces reflected only the poverty and isolation of those marooned there.[19] In the face of their anomie, the scattered communities of the pampas, Italian, Spanish, British, cling to the traditions of their lost homelands, thus further entrenching their alienation:

> The ancestral culture fades, and Argentina offers no substitute. It offers only the land, the cheap food and the cheap wine. To all those people on the road from Córdoba to La Rioja it offers accommodation, and what had once seemed a glorious freedom. To none does it offer a country. (Naipaul, 1980: 147)

The political consequences of this broader social failure have been catastrophic. Confused and desperate, the people of Argentina sought 'a larger faith…some knowledge of a sheltering divinity' to save them from the madness of isolation and abandonment, and in the decades after the Second World War many found this faith in Peronism (Naipaul, 1980: 103).[20] Writing from Panama soon after the 1955 coup that had ousted him, former President Juan Perón berated those who had sent him into exile and proscribed the political movement he had founded and led, predicting anarchy in Argentina (see Naipaul, 1980: 100–1). Sixteen years and eight presidents later, with the economy in meltdown ('The peso has gone to hell'), the state in ruins and the social fabric in tatters, his animus had assumed the quality of prophecy (Naipaul, 1980: 96). In their hour of need the people remember the largesse of the early days and 'suddenly nearly everyone is Peronist' (Naipaul, 1980: 96). In its responsiveness to the needs of all Argentines, only Peronism offers a rallying point and a resolution for the people's unnumbered, and often conflicting, grievances. Hence, as Argentina collapses into chaos

the *caudillo* returns to lead his people out of the wilderness and 'resanctify the land' (Naipaul, 1980: 104). Yet in providing a focus for their disputes, Naipaul presciently observes, Peronism will not resolve the people's antagonisms but become ground zero for their detonation. The New Jerusalem it promises is leading the country straight to hell.

Figure 8   'Argentina' (Cartoon: David Levine)

Martin Amis has observed that Naipaul's books put 'nation states on the psychiatrist's couch' and offer 'a reading of their mental health' (Amis, 2001: 263). Seen in these terms his analysis of Argentina is pitiless, and the only treatment he offers the patient looks like a recommendation to suicide. Yet there is nothing novel about this, it is a prescription he has issued to many patients before in his assaults on former colonies, the delusions they subsist on and the despair they breed.[21] Indeed, by the late 1970s he had propounded his opinions about 'degenerate' societies so often in his writings that they had come to constitute what Fawzia Mustafa calls an 'established Naipaulian commentary', with its own distinctive lexicon – 'bogus', 'mimicry', 'colonial', 'second-rate', 'plunder', 'frenzy' (Mustafa, 1995: 138).[22] His constant recourse

to these terms in his descriptions of Argentina demonstrates that his response to and understanding of the country had been profoundly influenced by his earlier experiences of the West Indies, Africa and India.[23] Consequently, it is clear that what attracts Naipaul to Argentina is not the singularity of its social catastrophe but its exemplary qualities. Argentina furnishes him with a sensational vehicle through which he can extend to the first world the conclusions he had reached about the parlous state of the third. Its collapse into anarchy demonstrates that exile, homelessness and disaffection are no longer the preserve of the rootless post-colonial subject but are increasingly the essence of the modern condition, the common experience of 'a world developing through history towards dereliction and loss…a world undoing itself' (Hughes, 1988: 17).

The particular focus of Naipaul's anxiety in this regard, the nation whose inexorable progress towards dereliction and loss most troubled and intrigued him, was not India or Trinidad but his adopted homeland, Britain. By the mid 1960s, Naipaul asserted, Britain was not the place that he had come to as a student in 1950. No longer 'the country that led the world in industry and in law' it was now looking increasingly like the colonial periphery it had once ruled over, 'a country of second-rate people – bum politicians, scruffy writers and crooked aristocrats', 'a world of waste and appearances' (Gussow, 1976: 9; Naipaul, 2004: 27). In an article written for the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1967 Naipaul lamented that 'The cause is all but lost', that Britain was already 'in the midst of a decay that is social as well as economic' (quoted in French, 2008: 266).[24] In *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987), the account of his return to Britain in the 1970s and his period of residence in the grounds of Waldenshaw, a country estate in Wiltshire, Naipaul traces the symbolic origins of the nation's decline to his landlord's withdrawal from the world and measures its effects in the reversion of his ancestral lands to wilderness. The rot had set in, Naipaul adjudges, around '1949 or 1950': the same year that 'I had left my own home island' and

made my roundabout journey to England…was when [the landlord] had given orders that the ivy was not to be touched. Up to that time the garden laid out by his parents had been more or less tended, in spite of everything, in spite of the war. Four or five years later, going by the evidence of the rings on my disc of cherry wood, the ivy had taken; and twenty-one years after that the choked, strangled tree had collapsed and became part of the debris of the garden, the debris of a life. (Naipaul, 1987: 197)

The image of a healthy tree choked by weeds, a land that 'was once trained and tamed' reverting to 'overgrown and savage life' has, Peter Hughes observes, 'a special horror for Naipaul' (Hughes, 1988: 22). What appals him about it is less the material evidence of degeneration than the failure of will it implies and the inevitable 'undoing' of civilisation that this augurs. While images of tidy farmland reverting to bush had long been standard figures in Naipaul's representations of the half-made societies of the third world, the ivy-choked tree and the ruined garden at Waldenshaw indicate that by the 1970s, evidence of the collapse of civilisation could now be found in its originating imperial sites.[25] Thus, Britain itself has come 'to repeat the larger disorder that is the subject of [Naipaul's] books set in Africa, India, South America and the West Indies' (Hughes, 1988: 21).

As the rot sets in at Waldenshaw, Britain begins to look more and more like South America: 'The boat-house creek, widening or simply shifting, had caused the boat house to collapse on one side. The angle of collapse, the rotting timber, the black-looking water, the rusting corrugated iron suggested a tropical river ruin, somewhere on the Orinoco or Amazon' (Naipaul, 1987: 188). It is no coincidence that Naipaul wrote his pieces on Argentina while he was living on the estate at Waldenshaw. Sitting in his country cottage with a ringside view of Britain's symbolic degeneration, his responses to the meltdown in Argentina were clearly framed by what he saw happening around him. Thereafter, the events in Latin America furnished him with a language through which he could sketch out a first draft of his concerns about Britain's inexorable movement towards dereliction and loss, concerns later detailed at length in *The Enigma of Arrival*.

Disappearing Acts

Where Naipaul saw in Argentina's chaos a model by which he might chart the trajectory of Britain's decline, Lawrence Thornton descried in the collapse of social order, and particularly in the kidnapping of suspects and the subsequent fate of the disappeared, the raw material for an allegory of authentic American healing. In *Imagining Argentina* (1989) he seeks to recreate the experience of the dirty war so that he might invoke the broken bodies of the disappeared. Yet while the disappeared are the ostensible focus of Thornton's analysis, he is interested in them as symbolic rather than as actual victims. That is to say that they matter to him only in so far as they are of use to the identification, analysis and resolution of the trauma of his own society.

Imagining Argentina tells the story of Carlos Rueda, a playwright at the National Children's Theatre, whose journalist wife, Cecilia, is disappeared after writing articles critical of the military. The shock of her abduction unlocks Carlos's hidden gift as a medium. He discovers that he is able to see the disappeared and to visualise their eventual fate. A chance encounter with the mothers of the disappeared leads him to the realisation that not only can he put his gift to the service of others, but that he might also be able to recover his lost wife. So begin the weekly séances conducted in his garden where, stirred by the voices of those left behind, Carlos renders a detailed account of their experiences. His friend, Martín Benn, the narrator, recalls Carlos's voice 'filling the garden with prisons, houses in the pampas, abandoned buildings near the port where people languished in cells, or screamed from torture' (Thornton, 1989: 46). This is, in fact, an unrepresentative summary of Carlos's visions in that while it implies the horror of abduction, torture and execution, most of his narratives withhold these details. Detail is reserved for the portraits of survival, reconciliation and reunion, which predominate in the novel.

There is little question that Carlos and Cecilia will eventually be re-united. Not only do the novel's romance tropes tilt firmly in the direction of a happy homecoming, but more importantly the disappeared in this book demonstrate a dogged resistance to

dematerialisation. Not only do they keep turning up, either in person, or communicating through Carlos from the sanctuary they have achieved, but from what we see or hear of them it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they have positively benefited from the experience of abduction and torture. Silvio Ayala, Carlos's colleague from the Children's Theatre, is a case in point. Cynical, self-interested, apolitical, he is picked up because of his association with Carlos, tortured and eventually dropped out of an aeroplane into the sea, half-alive. Though his only act of rebellion is to scrape a testament on to the wall of his cell: 'I AM SILVIO AYALA, AN ARGENTINE. WE ARE LEGION', Carlos insists that through his experiences Silvio has attained new depths of self-knowledge; though his body 'will float far out to sea…his spirit will be at rest in ways none of us who knew him would have supposed' (Thornton, 1989: 142). Carlos remarks that the experience of imprisonment and torture 'split[s] the real person open' with 'remarkable' results: cynics find new faith, the young are matured, the meek are made strong and the restless find peace (Thornton, 1989: 141). By retracing their steps, tracking their movements, locating and stubbornly resurrecting the victims of the dirty war in the service of romance, Thornton refuses to accept that the disappeared are just that.

The dirty war and the human suffering it occasioned serve in *Imagining Argentina* as the context for an improbable celebration of hope and survival. Cruelty, brutality, the anguish of not knowing, the elements that distinguished this particular conflict are mere background here. Implied about others but never confronted, they are the *mise en scène* for a war in which everybody knows the worst, in which one way or another everybody finds some kind of closure. It is this which most clearly demonstrates that *Imagining Argentina* is not a novel about the dirty war, or even about Argentina. While the origins of Argentina's sickness are plain, the dream of collective healing that Thornton dramatises and the means he proposes for realising it are intended for another people and another nation. The novel's specific focus is hinted at in Martín Benn's account of his experiences in Vietnam. A foreign correspondent posted to Saigon after the death of his son

and the collapse of his marriage, Benn is nearly another casualty of the war there:

> By the time I left Asia my mind was filled with indelible images…Back in Argentina I found that I could look at awful things and remain unmoved even after writing about them, when emotions have a habit of creeping in. I knew I was in trouble, and it was then that Cecilia and Carlos dove into that murky water and brought me up to a different world, restoring me by simply being who they were. (Thornton, 1989: 19)

Benn is quite clear about the basis of his salvation: it is not merely the solicitude that Carlos and Cecilia show to him but their readiness to take him into their family. For him the particular horror of the dirty war is not its attack on human rights but its assault on the family. The reconstruction of Argentina, Benn argues, can only begin with the restoration of its families: only when its lost children are returned can the nation be whole. This is a trope familiar to us from the cultural production of North and not South America, in the films and books that have centred on the prisoners of war (POWs) and those missing in action (MIAs), the men purportedly left behind in Vietnam after the American withdrawal. The war in Vietnam traumatically divided America.[26] After a decade of denial from the White House, the Pentagon, and the State Department about what had happened in South East Asia, American cinema conducted a sustained campaign against the truth for many more years, doggedly evading an honest accounting of what the experience of Vietnam had done to America's fighting men and the effects this had had on the society that had sent them there.[27] The election of Ronald Reagan to the US Presidency in 1980 ushered in a new mood of aggressive nationalism, underpinned by a revisionist reading of the war there. The POWs and MIAs occupied a crucial role offering, as Louis Kern notes, 'a patriotic way of approaching a most unpopular war' (Kern, 1988: 44–5). Hollywood came to realise that the POWs and MIAs afforded an opportunity to reclaim in California what had been so traumatically lost in South East Asia, that they could be used to provide the 'missing key to closure on [America's] understanding of the war' (Bowen, 1990: 228). The early to mid

1980s saw a raft of films in which returning to Vietnam to reclaim their lost men, the Americans were given the opportunity for a second go at the Vietnamese, the opportunity to finally win the war. In defeating the Vietnamese and liberating its lost sons, America might not only reclaim its honour and rediscover its sense of pride, it could also heal the deep social wounds opened by the conflict and so make the nation whole again. As Kevin Bowen put it: 'these films seek to discover and redeem what has been "lost" in America's lost war' (Bowen, 1990: 231). Their narrative logic thus moves inexorably towards the discovery of the MIAs, embodied evidence that what was feared lost is now found and can be reclaimed and repatriated.[28]

This movement towards the return of the disappeared drives the trajectory of Thornton's novel, first published in 1987 at the high-water mark of Reaganite revisionism. That *Imagining Argentina* is a determinedly American romance is evident in its insensitivity to, if not its complete ignorance of the significance of the continued absence of the disappeared in the cultural politics of Argentina. As Marguerite Feitlowitz has noted: 'Relatives of the missing were devoured by the sensation that *they themselves* were lost' (Feitlowitz, 1998: 163). Andew Graham-Yooll identifies fantasies of return among Argentines as psychoses of denial (see Graham-Yooll, 1982: 118). The nation's most prominent human rights group, *La Asosiación Madres de la Plaza de Mayo*, insists that until the men responsible for the abduction and killing of their children are brought to justice Argentina cannot begin to think about healing the wounds of the past. As its president, Hebe da Bonafini, noted: 'Until there is justice we will never accept that our children are dead. They are forever disappeared' (Bone, 2002: 11).[29] In this context it is imperative that the disappeared remain just that. Dreaming of America all along, Lawrence Thornton's Reaganite romance can never convincingly imagine Argentina. In that regard, if no other, it shares its vision of Latin America with almost 200 years of western literary constructions of the continent which, fixated by their own needs and crises, remained wilfully ignorant of the world they were ostensibly exploring.

CONCLUSION

SOUTHWARD HO!

In *A Dance to the Music of Time* (1951–75), his epic, twelve-volume treatment of the lives of Britain's 'upper-middle and upper classes' through the twentieth century, Anthony Powell casts an occasional, penetrating glance towards Latin America and its cultural engagement with Britain (Bergonzi, 1970: 145). Specifically, he examines how Latin America's perennial role as a vehicle for the mediation of British anxieties has survived for so long and why it shows no signs of changing. He probes this question through the colourful figure of Colonel Flores. Powell's narrator, Nicholas Jenkins, first meets Flores, the new military attaché from an unnamed South American republic, at the Victory Day Service in St Paul's Cathedral at the end of the Second World War. A 'handsome Mediterranean type', Flores's film star looks are matched by his charm and intelligence (Powell, 1968: 219). With an impressive 'psychological grasp of the British approach' and a 'surprising mastery' of the language, he exudes sophistication and Jenkins warms to him at once (Powell, 1968: 220). That he owes his appointment in London to an unexplained 'change of Government' at home is as predictable as his eventual fate when, many years later, having returned to his homeland and attained the status of a 'near-dictator' he is 'killed by urban guerrillas' (Powell, 1968: 235; 1975: 233, 234). The suave Latino, the ruthless dictator, the bloody denouement: so far, so stereotypical. Yet it turns out that this is not their first meeting. Fifteen years earlier waiting to meet a friend, Jenkins is distracted from his winter gloom by 'a large party of South Americans', one of whom is Flores, 'grouped picturesquely' around the tables in the café, their vivacious chatter evoking 'life in warmer cities, far away

from London' (Powell, 1955: 37). Labouring at that juncture over 'a novel about English life' Jenkins has weightier matters on his mind and the South Americans are cursorily dismissed as a standard collection of exotics (Powell, 1955: 38). Though this casual encounter tells us nothing about the South Americans it elicits from Jenkins a revealing attestation of the assumptions that inform his writing and have long shaped British constructions of that far off continent and its peoples:

> Those South Americans sitting opposite, coming from a Continent I had never visited, regarding which I possessed only the most superficial scraps of information, seemed in some respects easier to conceive in terms of a novel than most of the English people sitting round the room. Intricacies of social life make English habits unyielding to simplification, while under-statement and irony – in which all classes of this island converse – upset the normal emphasis of reported speech. (Powell, 1955: 38)

When Jenkins later meets Flores at St Paul's and is dazzled by his charm and wit it is clear that under the pretext of artistic convenience British writers have perpetuated wilful ignorance about Latin America. Yet while Jenkins can acknowledge Flores's sophistication and, by extension, hint at the intricacies of the society that produced him, he is unable to offer any meaningful representation of them. South America's presence on the mental map of the west rests on its ready yielding to simplification, its continuing provision of a reliable set of received ideas. The more remote, the more two-dimensional, the more immaterial Latin America can be made to appear, the more material it is to British or American writers and commentators. Whatever the intricacies of South America, western culture can accommodate only a travestied version of it, a reductive simplification purposed principally to promote its relative sophistication or to compensate for its evident decline.

Long before Margaret Thatcher's strategic withdrawal from 10 Downing Street to an address in Surrey, the legacy of her eleven and a half years in office was clearly in evidence on the streets of Britain. By the late 1980s, 'British society was more polarized than at any time since 1939' and 'the country was clearly a disturbed

place in which to live' (Marwick, 1990: 366, 392). Thatcherism brought about revolutionary change in all areas of British life, so much so that according to John Gray of the London School of Economics, it swept away the very institutions, ideals and self-image that the Conservative party had traditionally embodied and pledged itself to defend:

> Thatcher was possessed by a vision of a country whose institutions had been ruthlessly reshaped but whose character remained miraculously unaltered. Markets were injected into hospitals and universities, council tenants were chivvied into buying their homes, public services were scorned as feckless repositories of unthinking compassion, and job insecurity was intensified for a host of occupations and professions. No corner of British life was left undisturbed.
>
> Despite all the social dislocations that these policies produced, the conservatives imagined Britain would still somehow be the place mocked in post-war Ealing films, a nation of stoical conformists bicycling impassively around changeless village greens.
>
> This picture may have had a faint semblance of reality in the Britain of the 1950s and 1960s that had been moulded into something approaching one nation by the reforming Labour government of 1945. By the time [John] Major left office [in May 1997] it was little more than a confection of the Tory media. In combination with vast changes in the world economy, Conservative policies had undone the social and family structures that underpinned pre-Thatcher Britain. (Gray, 1997: 12)

The more profoundly Thatcherism changed the face and deeper structures of national life, the more Britons pined for the certainties of a lost past (see Wright, 1985). When the Argentines invaded the Falkland Islands in April 1982, Britain was unexpectedly confronted with a vision of its ideal pre-industrial self, a community of hardy rural yeomen rudely menaced by a tide of invading machinery (see Barnett, 1982). Here was an opportunity to turn back the tide on 200 years of despoliation. In defeating the Argentines and reclaiming the islands Britain could strike a blow against the varied forces that had conspired over the preceding decades to reduce its power and diminish its status. As such, it was not only politically imperative that the government should

dispatch the Task Force, it was historically inevitable that it would do so. For more than two centuries British writers had journeyed to Latin America in quest or defence of the nation's essential identity. Presented with such a clear symbol of this elusive ideal in the Falkland Islands, the whole weight of the nation's history and culture drove the Task Force south. The Argentines weren't just resisting Britain's military elite, they were battling the nation's most powerful cultural myths. Standing between the British and the embodied evidence of their essential identity, the poor bastards never stood a chance. But then they never did. In pursuit of a vision of authentic selfhood, lost or imperilled at home, British, American and Australian writers have projected their dreams of honour redeemed or glory attained on to the last great blank space on the mental map of the west. In the process they have reduced Latin America to its most simplified forms, ensuring that, fixated on their own needs and desires, neither they nor we might know it better.

NOTES

Introduction

1. For more on Astíz's career during the dirty war see Simpson and Bennett, 1985.
2. For more on the media's response to the prospect of fighting, and its acclamation of Britain's victories, see Foster, 1999; Morrison and Tumber, 1988; Adams, 1986; Harris, 1983.
3. For more on Argentina's symbolic role in British accounts of the conflict see Foster, 1999: 130–56.
4. See Cilauro et al., 2006.
5. For a more detailed discussion see Cannadine, 1998.
6. Bhabha criticised Said's promotion of a static model of colonial relations in which 'colonial power and discourse is possessed entirely by the coloniser', and where there is no room for negotiation, compromise or change (Bhabha, 1983: 200). See also Ahmed's claim that Said offers an homogenised representation of 'the West' and Porter's assertion that Said's reduction of East–West relations to an entrenched system of binaries overlooks the nuances in their shifting relations over a vast historical stretch (Ahmed, 1992; Porter, 1983). See Dutton and Williams for an analysis of how Said's arguments might be applied to non-western populations and cultures (Dutton and Williams, 1993). See Loomba 1998 for a synopsis of these debates.
7. Hence Alan Knight's longing for a 'New World equivalent of Edward Said's "Orientalism"' (Knight, 1994: 2).
8. In *The Courts of the Morning* (1929), Sandy Arbuthnot regards the once exotic East as now hopelessly suburbanised: 'Go to Samarkand, and you will get the chatter of Bloomsbury intellectuals. I expect in Lhasa they are discussing Freud' (Buchan, 1929: 15).
9. As Peter Winch noted: 'Seriously to study another way of life is necessarily to seek to extend our own – not simply to bring the other way within the already existing boundaries of our own, because the point about the latter in their present form, is that they *ex hypothesi* exclude the other' (Winch, 1967: 30).
10. Cannadine (2001) advances the case for India's contribution to the making of Britain. See Pratt, 1992: 172–97, for Latin America's role in the invention of Europe.

11. Brantlinger observes: 'Palmerston and many of his contemporaries believed that British overseas interests should be secured whenever possible without formal imperialization' (Brantlinger, 1988: 20).
12. Mediation, Jameson notes, 'aims to demonstrate what is not evident in the appearance of things but rather in their underlying reality' (Jameson, 1981: 39).

Chapter 1

1. The Treaty of Tordesillas, signed on 7 June 1494, was intended to preclude disputes arising between Spain and Portugal from the discovery of the New World. Under its provisions Spain was granted all newly discovered territories west of 49 degrees west of Greenwich. The treaty was amended in 1506 to grant Portuguese sovereignty over the coast of Brazil and everything to the east of the line 311/312 degrees east of Greenwich.
2. For more on Miranda's adventures in Europe in the 1780s and 90s see Harvey, 2000a: 19–46.
3. In the spare time left to them they cut a dash with the local ladies. De Miranda, Andrés Bello, Juan García del Río and Vicente Pazos Kanki all married British women. Bernardo O'Higgins, Chile's first Supreme Director, was forced to return to South America without his beloved, Charlotte Eels, who later sickened and died. For more on her relationship with O'Higgins see Balborín and Opazo Maturano, 1974: 102–5.
4. In 1810 Jeremy Bentham drafted a 'Proposed Law for securing the Liberty of the press against persons having exclusive command of the printing presses of a new country when small in number' which he gave to Miranda on his return to Venezuela.
5. Bolívar's political vision for South America, constitutional republics with an elected lower house, an hereditary upper house and a quasi-monarchical President elected for life, was clearly modelled on the government of Great Britain.
6. See Williamson's account of the collapse of Spanish rule in Latin America, 1992: 210–32.
7. For more on this see Harvey, 2000b; Williamson, 1992: 195–232; Pendle, 1963: 84–116. Miranda was betrayed and captured, dying in a Cadiz gaol in 1816. See Harvey, 2000a: 197, Thorning, 1952.
8. In 1818, *Bell's Weekly Messenger* reported 'the South American mania' sweeping London, and newspapers were awash with advertisements from merchants keen to cash in on the resurgent demand for military kit (Racine, 2000: 9). See also CoI, 1982; Lynch, 1973. The most notable of these British recruits was Admiral Lord

(Thomas) Cochrane, 10th Earl of Dundonald, recruited by O'Higgins to establish and lead a Chilean naval force. For further information on Cochrane's extraordinary career see Harvey, 2000a; Grimble, 1978; Thomas, 1978.

9. See Racine, 2000: 14–28 for a detailed account of British influence on Latin American life and culture in the liberation period.

10. David Sinclair notes that a portion of Gustavus Hippisley's *The Siege of Barcelona: A Poem in Three Cantos* (1842) was dedicated to the dubious Latin American exploits of 'Sir' Gregor MacGregor (see Sinclair, 2003: 30–1). Edmund Burke, Jose Blanco White and Robert Southey all made passing reference to events in South America in their letters and political writings, and Byron named his yacht *Bolívar*. But McCalman (1999) contains not a single entry dedicated to South America. By contrast one of the first great works of Latin American independence, the *Repertorio Americano*, 'an attempt to contribute knowledge and vision to the task of founding the new American republics' was published in London and mostly written by Andrés Bello, who lived there for 19 years (Pratt, 1992: 172). In making 'himself a conduit and a filter for European writings that might be useful to the nationbuilding process there' the *Repertorio* offers a model for the one-way intellectual and cultural traffic between Europe and Latin America at this time (Pratt, 1992: 172).

11. In an interview with Ronald Bryden, Naipaul noted the use of Trinidad 'as a base for South American revolution – this recurring dream of Europe – then the revolution going wrong, the base of the revolution becoming a slave island' (Bryden, 1973: 367).

12. For more on the British 'invasion' of Buenos Aires see Rock, 1985: 71–3; Pendle, 1963: 88–91.

13. It was this circumstance which so assisted 'Sir' Gregor MacGregor's Poyais scheme. A convicted fraudster, MacGregor invented a non-existent Central American country, Poyais, and persuaded hundreds of Britons to invest, purchase land in or settle it. See Sinclair, 2003. Poyais offers a pure index of British hopes and desires about what South America had to offer. I am indebted to my former colleague, Dr. Robert Dingley, for this observation.

14. For contemporary critical opinion on *Madoc* see Curry, 1975: 160–1; Madden, 1972: 5; Carnall, 1971: 14.

15. For an account of the features of each of the four drafts of the poem see Pratt, 1996: 149–61. See also Franklin, 2003: 80–1.

16. For more detailed analysis of Southey's conversion see Mahoney, 2003: 1–33, 123–42; Franklin, 2003: 60–84; Carnall, 1971: 8–10.

17. The royal scandals included the Prince of Wales's bigamous marriage, his gambling, and gluttony, and the Mrs Clarke affair, in which the

Duke of York's mistress accepted bribes and sexual favours from military officers in return for preferment. See also Colley, 1996: 231; Fulford, 1999: 166–8.

18. The East increasingly displaced France as the prime source of moral and spiritual corruption. From the 1740s onwards, 'poets, playwrights and pamphleteers accused' the governing classes 'of corrupting the nation from within by their indolence, luxury and rampant Francophilia' (Colley, 1996: 94). See also Newman, 1987: 63–122. In 1803 the Whig reformer, Henry Brougham, published *An Inquiry into the Colonial Policy of the European Powers* in which he argued that those sent out to rule the empire returned to Britain sunk in 'luxurious habits…[and the] corruption peculiar to Oriental society' (quoted in Fulford, 1999: 170). See also Leask, 1992. The prime symbol of domestic corruption, the Prince of Wales, had a taste for the oriental. Contemporary satirists often portrayed him in his favourite architectural folly, the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, as a Sultan disporting himself among his harem. See Fulford, 1999: 170; Musgrave, 1959.

19. Colley refers to the emergence of a 'new cult of elite heroism' over this period (Colley, 1996: 195). See also Fulford, 1999: 162.

20. The most notable of these odysseys was John Evans's epic journey 1,800 miles up the Missouri. See Williams, 1979: 140–89.

21. See Williams, 1979: 11. John Evans's opinion on the existence of this mythical tribe was unequivocal: 'having explored and charted the Missouri for 1,800 miles and by my communications with the Indians this side of the Pacific Ocean from 35 to 49 Degrees of Latitude, I am able to inform you that there is no such People as the Welsh Indians' (Williams, 1979: 183).

22. See the portraits of Coanocotzin, Ocellopan and Tlalala, Southey, 1909: 480–3, 561–5, 607–8.

23. Madoc's refusal to participate in Wales' twelfth-century civil strife or, later, to live under Saxon domination, made him a symbol of national liberty and, through the legend of his American settlement, the last hope of a pure Welsh cultural survival. According to Williams, the Madoc legend reached 'a second great climax' in the late eighteenth, early nineteenth centuries (Williams, 1979: 84). At the very moment that Madoc was being pressed into the service of imperial expansion in the Nootka crisis, he was also the central figure in resistance to the further advance of British dominion in Wales. 'In a Wales in which…a colonial economy was yielding to a modern form of capitalism, and in which political life was blanketed by the violent cultural reaction to the French Revolution' this resistance found expression in 'a surge of emigration to America under the banner of

Madoc' (Williams, 1979: 111). Here, legend had it, the descendants of those who had crossed the Atlantic with Madoc 600 years earlier might be found. By leaving Wales when they did, Madoc's Welsh-Americans had 'preserved their liberty, language and some traces of their religion' and had thus continued to live, unlike their subjugated kin at home, as 'a free and distinct people' (Williams, 1979: 88). The name and the legend of Madoc thus served to rally a movement whose aim was 'nothing less than the birth of a new Welsh nation' (Williams, 1979: 88).

24. Defending this immodest proposal, Southey conceded that 'If the guilt of misery attendant upon such a process be objected, I feel the weight of the objection; but am, at the same time, satisfied that it resolves itself into the great question of the origin of evil' (quoted in Storey, 1997: 235). Within half a century, his literary fantasies found concrete expression in the genocidal atrocities that marked the colonisation of South West Africa, the Congo, North Africa, Tasmania and elsewhere. For more on this see Lindqvist, 1997.

25. This argument overlooks Southey's enthusiastic endorsement elsewhere of violence in defence of the social order. His letters and journalism are larded with calls for bloody reprisals against Irish nationalists, Catholic emancipists, Chartists and other troublemakers, while his epic poems revolve around battles in which the enemies of Christian order suffer just and genocidal retribution. See Storey, 1997: 117, 216, 280, 292, 294, 303, 314–15, 329, *passim*.

26. The headline acts of agitation around the time Southey was composing the poem included the Spa Fields Meetings of 1816, the Derbyshire rising of 1817, the 'Blanketeers' of the same year, the Cato Street Conspiracy and the Peterloo Massacre of 1819. The so-called 'Six Acts', rushed through Parliament in the aftermath of Peterloo, further codified the regulations and extended the sanctions relating to public order. See Richards and Hunt, 1965: 89–97.

27. Within 30 stanzas of their arrival at the Mission, Monnema and her children, Mooma and Yeruti, are all dead.

28. David Morel's campaign to expose the Belgians' excesses in the Congo, and the reflections this bred on British brutality in its own colonies, are illustrated in Hochschild, 1998.

29. Frank Manuel has described such societies as 'utopias of calm felicity' (Manuel, 1973: 72).

30. He also lent his support to a range of environmental causes, including the preservation of the albatross and the humane treatment of pit ponies. See Watts and Davies, 1979: 1–177.

31. For more on Graham's relationship with Morris see MacCarthy, 1994; Henderson, 1967; Thompson, 1977.

32. Engels argued that in advocating 'the nationalisation of all means of production' Graham's political affiliations were 'Communist, Marxian' (Liebknecht, 1963: 304). The Second International, established in Paris in 1889, was an international organisation of socialist and labour parties. It advocated a range of socialist causes from 1889 until its dissolution in 1916.
33. Morris declared his 'single-hearted devotion to the religion of Socialism' (quoted in Kumar, 1987: 67).
34. For the descriptions of Cradley Heath see Watts and Davies, 1979: 53–4, 82–4.
35. See Kant, 1983.

Chapter 2

1. See Williamson, 1992: 233–84 for an account of the origins of this instability. For more on the example of Argentina see Romero, 2002: 59–255; Shumway, 1991: 24–168; Rock, 1985: 79–152.
2. It cost Hope £50 to publish the novel – which was largely 'unnoticed' – earning him only £13 in royalties (Ousby, 1993: 450). See Hoppenstand in Hope, 2000: ix.
3. At differing points in the novel Martin foments revolutionary uprisings to spare himself the shame of financial disgrace, win the hand of the Signorina and get his revenge on his rivals.
4. Goldsworthy (1998) surveys British literary constructions of the Balkans from the nineteenth century to the 1950s, identifying a number of parallels between its representation and that of Latin America.
5. Churchill was not always regarded as a great orator. In *A Ragged Schooling*, Robert Roberts points out that early in his career Churchill was considered 'a shifty and mediocre speaker with a poor delivery', hence the intensity of this fantasy of oratorical virtuosity (Roberts, 1976: 52).
6. Green refers to a 'literature of promotion' stretching 'from the poems of Marston and Chapman to the Twentieth-century pamphlets of the Canada Office in London' whose centrepiece was the work of imperial mythopoeists like Scott (Green, 1979: 119).
7. In its earliest uses it is employed as a synonym for 'jingoism'. The first use of the term in the more favourable sense of 'The principle or spirit of empire…seeking, or at least not refusing, an extension of the British empire in directions where trading interests and investments require the protection of the flag' was recorded in 1895 (COED, 1991: 821).

8. The view that the British Empire was a happy accident was famously propounded in Sir John Seeley's claim that 'We seem...to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind' (Seeley, 1971: 12).

9. Brantlinger notes the shift from the 'quite typical early Victorian optimism about the colonies and the civilizing mission of British commerce' to the 'numerous examples of late Victorian pessimism' (Brantlinger, 1988: 32).

10. See Vance, 1985: 87 for an account of the persecution of Genoese Protestants in 1853, the emergence of Napoleon III and the perceived threat from France in 1852–3, which preceded the outbreak of the Crimean War and contributed to a sense of crisis in Britain.

11. Kingsley's sense that the country was on the slide owed much to his reading of Coleridge. As early as 1829, 'Coleridge was sure that recent material advances had damaged rather than fostered the welfare of the country as a whole. The majority suffered to procure the benefit of a plutocratic minority and the very idea of the nation as an integrated commonwealth of interests was destroyed. This vision of society prepared the way for the Christian socialism of his disciples Kingsley and Hughes in the next generation' (Vance, 1985: 50). The Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny triggered a resurgence in public sympathy for military virtues. See Hichberger, 1988: 59–73; Vance, 1985: 28.

12. These lectures were later published as *The Roman and the Teuton* (Kingsley, 1864). 'Kingsley's message is always to cultivate the barbaric qualities in the individual and the nation' (Green, 1979: 219).

13. Hartley notes how *Westward Ho!* 'teems with defamatory remarks about Roman Catholics' (Hartley, 1977: 114).

14. Cortes was a cult hero among nineteenth-century British colonialists. For more on this see Green, 1979: 25–32.

15. For a description of the Amazon Elysium see Kingsley, 1855: 498–9. Ebsworthy and Parracombe are not the first to succumb to the wilderness in *Westward Ho!* John Oxenham and his retainer, Salvation Yeo, later Amyas' right hand man, at different times but with equally fatal consequences, renounce their Christian duty and surrender to the wilderness. See Kingsley, 1855: 162–3, 175.

16. By the early 1830s Carlyle was lamenting that where once 'action...was easy, was voluntary, for the divine worth of things lay acknowledged', now 'doubt storms in through every avenue' (quoted in Sandison, 1967: 17).

17. This period is known as the age of New Imperialism. See Etherington, 1984: 95–6.

18. Ashworth notes that the numbers of hired agricultural workers in England and Wales declined from 988,824 in 1871 to 665,258 in 1911 (Ashworth, 1960: 63–4). He concluded from these trends that: 'The late nineteenth century was the true period of large-scale rural decline in England, the time when the countryman ceased to be a representative figure and the long-standing traditions of village society began to crumble' (Ashworth, 1960: 69).

19. In this he echoed Richard Jefferies' famous portrait of rural society, *Hodge and His Masters* (1880) whose original title was *The Heart of England*.

20. He supported the introduction of tariffs on agricultural imports to protect British farmers, he proposed the subdivision of large estates into smaller farms, he was an advocate of the Garden City Movement, a proponent of Salvation Army labour colonies in Canada and an early advocate of Soldier Settlement schemes. For more on this see Katz, 1987: 18–19; Etherington, 1984: 96–7. For the Garden City Movement see Meacham, 1999; Ward, 1992b; Buder, 1990; for the Salvation Army Labour Colonies see Hardy, 1979; Coutts, 1978; for Soldier Settlement see Nicholls, 2007; Duder, 1993; Lake, 1987; Powell, 1977, 1981.

21. Haggard claimed in his autobiography that Quatermain was 'only myself set in a variety of imagined situations, thinking my thoughts and looking at life through my eyes' (Haggard, 1926: II 85–6).

22. 'Haggard…found that his contact with those subject races which metropolitan attitudes so decried left him more conscious of affinity than disparity' (Sandison, 1967: 34).

23. The travellers are pursued, impeded and assisted in their quest by a standard issue cast of villainous half-breeds, self-sacrificing retainers, noble patriarchs, scheming sorcerers and fiery señoritas. See Orwell, 1962b: 187–8 for more on British perceptions of Spaniards, Mexicans and other 'foreigners' in the early mid twentieth century.

24. See Brantlinger, 1988: 42. Andrea White notes that 'by the second half of the [nineteenth] century, settling in the empire's outposts was being spoken of as a kind of duty for the best representatives of all classes, but increasingly for the upper-middle classes' (quoted in Lang, 1968: 158; see also White, 1993: 43). In cautioning his Cambridge undergraduates 'against the corrupting effeteness and frivolousness of contemporary life in England', Kingsley lauded the example of his son who 'is now working with his own hands at farming, previous to emigrating to South America, where he will do the drudgery of his own cattle-pens and sheepfolds; and if I were twenty-four and unmarried I would go out there too, and work like an Englishman, and live by the sweat of my brow' (White, 1993: 43;

qtd, Lang, 1968: 158). For more on Hobson see Brantlinger, 1988: 236–8; also Allett, 1981.

25. The novel offers 'a cautionary tale of what might become of the English should they lose contact with their empire and devote themselves to selfish vanities and pleasures – they will decline and fall' (Etherington, 1984: 65).

26. The New Zealand historian, Sir Ronald Syme, made exactly the same point in 1958. Though ostensibly writing about the renewal of the Roman Empire under Augustus, his assertion that 'The strength and vitality of an empire is frequently due to the new aristocracy from the periphery' clearly had a contemporary message, as Britain sought to reconstruct itself in the aftermath of the Second World War (Syme, 1958: 13).

27. For more on this see Fraser, 1998; Katz, 1987: 103–6; Etherington, 1984: 107–10, 117–19; Sandison, 1967: 25–47.

28. After an enquiry into the extermination of the Tasmanian aborigines the Aborigines' Protection Society was founded in 1838 'with the aim of putting an end to the extermination of native peoples' (Lindqvist, 1997: 124).

29. For a description of the ape-men see Conan Doyle, 2001: 130. For more on their status as the 'missing links' see Fraser, 1998: 70–4.

30. Challenger refers here to Edward Creasy's Victorian bestseller (see Creasy, 1952). I am indebted to Dr Robert Dingley for pointing this out.

31. See Schlunke, 2005; Elder, 1988; Reynolds, 1982.

32. See Conan Doyle, 2001: 152, 156, *passim* for the clicking language. For the German massacre of the Herero see Cocker, 2001: 269–371.

33. In *The Courts of the Morning*, Archie Roylance confesses that 'he had always had a romance about [South America], and he understood that it was the only place which still held some geographical secrets' (Buchan, 1929: 16).

34. At a time when imaginative fiction was 'a frowned-upon frivolity', adventure fiction enjoyed an 'elevated status', arising from 'societal approval of its…claims to be educational and inspirational' (White, 1993: 40–4). It 'generally announced itself as fact' and 'often came equipped with the same appurtenances of fact as travel writing – appended maps, scholarly footnotes and explanatory prefaces' (White, 1993: 42, 45).

35. Cedric Watts notes that 'Conrad's works often incorporate, though they usually sophisticate, some elements of popular adventure-novels' (Watts, 1990: 87). While *Nostromo* itself has few of the 'appurtenances of fact' that adventure fictions like *The Lost World*

sport, respected critics of the novel, among them Cedric Watts and Ian Watt, have gone to extraordinary lengths to establish a factual bedrock for the novel, furnishing detailed maps of the novel's main sites and elaborate timelines for its events. See Watt, 1988: xii–xv; xviii; Watts, 1990: 60–6.

36. Ponnuthurai Sarvan notes that 'Conrad is an inspiration to the African writer who ventures to express himself through a foreign linguistic medium' (Sarvan, 1990: 153). See Ashcroft et al., 1989, for writing back against the centre. For a recent survey of postcolonial responses to Conrad see Collits, 2005.

37. Dr Monygham, the long-serving British medical officer, suggests that his countrymen's disdain for him arises from his having 'lived too long in Costaguana' (Conrad, 1996: 291).

38. Travelling through South America soon after the Second World War, Christopher Isherwood regarded Conrad's novel as a reliable guide-book to the continent, noting that '*Nostromo* is still, after forty-five years, a wonderfully lifelike picture of a backward South American state – never mind which' (Isherwood, 1949: ix). Cedric Watts was struck by the novel's 'prophetic features': Conrad's 'analysis of the plight and problems of the South American republics has held good, to a surprising extent, for that area in the twentieth century' (Watts, 1990: 89).

Chapter 3

1. Flores was one of the founding fathers of Ecuador. For more on him and his relationship with Bolívar see Williamson, 1992, 197–232; Harvey, 2000a: 60–278.

2. Sandy Arbuthnot offers a cameo of such a caged adventurer in Buchan, 1929: 19–21.

3. My use of the term 'essential identity' draws on Patrick Wright's work. See Wright, 1985.

4. Bodies dedicated to the preservation of the nation's physical and cultural heritage established since the Second World War have included: the Vernacular Architecture Group (1952), the Civic Trust (1957), the Victorian Society (1958), the Landmark Trust (1963), The Thirties Society (1979), the National Piers Society (1980), the Railway Heritage Society (1985) and the Historic Farm Buildings Trust (1985). English Heritage, a statutory authority, was established by Act of Parliament in 1983.

5. See Clayre, 1977, for a survey of the origins and expressions of these contradictory responses to the industrial revolution. My arguments

in the subsequent discussion of Britain's ambivalence towards industrialism draw on Wiener, 2004.

6. Raymond Williams made the same point. See Williams, 1973: 248.

7. For a critique of the cultural burdens of British provincialism see Horne, 1969: 37–42.

8. For more analysis of literary representations of the countryside see Giles, 1995; Gervais, 1993; Cavaliero, 1977; Keith, 1965; Haddow, 1957; Hamilton, 1946.

9. Austin was appointed to the Laureateship in 1896 'to general mockery' (Ousby, 1993: 46). The association of writers with the nation's essential identity was reflected in the increasing popularity of literary pilgrimages (see Thomas, 1980).

10. Longmans began its 'English Heritage' series in 1929, introduced by Stanley Baldwin, with volumes on 'English humour, folk song and dance, the public school, the parish church, [and] wild life'. A year later Batsford launched its series on 'English Life' with volumes on 'the countryside, Old English household life, inns, villages, and cottages' (Wiener, 2004: 73–4).

11. Morton's biographer, Michael Bartholomew, notes: 'The route through England that Morton's narrator followed looks somewhat haphazard, but it has a pattern of sorts, for its nodal points are cathedral cities' (Bartholomew, 2004: 105).

12. See, for example, Morton's treatment of Wigan, which, through the agency of history, and a dedicated programme of selective vision, he transforms from 'the apex of the world's pyramid of gloom' into 'an old-fashioned country town' (Morton, 1927: 187, 188).

13. Matless suggests that Morton should be thought of as the founder of the 'motoring pastoral' (Matless, 1998: 62–7).

14. For more on middle class hostility to the suburbs see Cunningham, 1988: 256–9.

15. Yates thought the country had been 'rendered uninhabitable by political manipulation, betrayal, and the parliamentary rise of the Labour Party' (Wright, 1993: 78). His novel was published in January 1945, almost simultaneously with *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), Evelyn Waugh's lament for the destruction of the country house and the values and traditions it embodied. Waugh concurred with Yates's view of the nation's decline. See his diary entry for 23 November 1946, in Waugh, 1976: 663.

16. In *Green Mansions* (1916), Hudson details the failed attempt of its protagonist, Abel, 'to return to Eden by means of a willed primitivism' to recover this wild unmediated state through his relationship with

the bird-girl, Rima (Bate, 2000: 58). For an analysis of why Abel's project fails see Bate, 2000: 58–62.

17. For more on Britain's literary response to the losses in the First World War see Featherstone, 1995: 1–115; Fussell, 1975; Silkin, 1972.

18. For more on this see Hynes, 1991: 57–96. Ferguson notes that 'In December 1915…two men received six-month sentences for publishing a leaflet which set out the Christian doctrine on war according to the Sermon on the Mount' (Ferguson, 1998: 186, see also 174–211).

19. For Lawrence, 'as for most of the great imaginative writers of the time, the historical catastrophe was only part of a great revolution of sensibility' (Hough, 1956: 1). See also Delany, 1978.

20. For more on Quetzalcoatl see Clendinnen, 1991; Lawrence, 1987: 553–9. The novel has been condemned for its 'sentimentally projective misuse of the ancient cultures of Mexico and the American South West', and 'universally and rightly' dismissed as 'artistically unsuccessful and misguided in its central ambition' (Bell, 1992a: 165, 167).

21. Graham Greene made much the same point 15 years later in *The Power and the Glory* (1971/1940) through the traditional Christian rites of sacrifice, death and resurrection. The whisky priest chooses death not only as a means of cleansing his own sins but also of imitating Christ's sacrifice, asserting his living presence and so keeping faith alive in hostile circumstances. Despite the best efforts of the secular administration, the Christian God is not dead and cannot be killed. He lives on and is renewed in the suffering of his servants and the piety of the people. They do not worship a dead God but, through their embrace of death, affirm his continuing life.

22. If sacrilege was enough to outrage moral sentiment in the 1920s, half a century later nothing less than cannibalism would suffice. Latin America provided the setting for a number of narratives in which this last taboo featured as the ultimate, authentic human experience and an affirmation of the Christian mysteries of sacrifice and redemption. See, respectively, Schneebaum, 1969, and Read, 1974.

23. Orwell is referring to Russia here, though he makes it clear that his remarks are equally applicable to Mexico. Latin Americans do earn one further reference in Orwell's article on 'Boys' Weeklies', where he notes that 'as a rule it is assumed that foreigners of any one race are all alike and will conform more or less exactly to the following patterns … SPANIARD, MEXICAN etc.: Sinister, treacherous' (Orwell, 1962b: 188). Johns (2004) offers a fine cast of stereotypical Latinos in this vein.

24. The journal that Waugh kept during his journey through Guyana and Brazil, now in the collection of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, indicates that despite his presentation of his time in Georgetown as vacant and dispiriting in his travel book, *Ninety-Two Days*, it was busy and even pleasurable. The journal entry for 1 January 1933 indicates that he did far more in and around Georgetown than the published account would suggest (see Waugh, 1932–3). Anticipating complaints from the locals that he had misrepresented Georgetown he admits in an apologetic note: 'I have nothing against the amenities of the place. Just the reverse, that it is disappointing to travel a long way and find at the end of one's journey, a well-laid-out garden city' (Waugh, 1986: 21).

25. For more on the Latin American Entertainment Co., Ltd see Waugh, 1928: 134, 143–7. Once the focus of moral panic in parliament and the press, white slavery had, in Britain by the 1920s, assumed the status of a comic institution, as Waugh's determinedly cheerful treatment of it in *Decline and Fall* (1928) and *Vile Bodies* (1930) makes clear. Mary S. Lovell notes how white slavery was a running joke throughout the Mitford sisters' childhood. See Lovell, 2001: 99. While, from the other end of the social spectrum, Robert Roberts sardonically notes how, 'after articles in the Sunday papers had "exposed" [the white slavers'] activities, in revenge they seemed to make a dead set at Salford' (Roberts, 1976: 152–3). Nobody took them seriously and they provided fantasy fodder only for the lubricious or the desperate. See also Fleming, 1964: 369 for a further comic dismissal of the trade.

26. See the fate of Paul Pennyfeather in Waugh, 1928.

27. For more on the breakdown of Waugh's marriage see Sykes, 1977: 138–43.

28. Among the trade goods that Messinger brings is 'a twenty dollar Belgian gun', an oblique but unmistakable allusion to *Heart of Darkness* (Waugh, 1934: 172).

29. For the worst periods of Tony's delirium and the hallucinations that accompany them see Waugh, 1934: 201–7. For comparable passages in *King Lear* see Act III, scene vi in Shakespeare, 1972.

30. For more on the economic depression of the 1890s see Ward, 1992a: 200–1; Clark, 1987: 169–71.

31. Contemporary critics of the venture were sensitive to its ideological contradictions and foresaw the reasons for its eventual failure. For more on contemporary Australian responses to New Australia see Souter, 1968: 60–1.

32. During the late nineteenth century, 'just as "The Coming Man" was coming into his own, a conscious attempt was being made in

Australia to create a distinctively national culture'. The result of this was 'a new image' of the country 'which was to prove more powerful than any other. It was essentially the city dweller's image of the bush, a sunlit landscape of faded blue hills, cloudless skies and noble gum trees, peopled by idealised shearers and drovers' as 'the "real" Australia' (White, 1981: 85, 99, 101–2). See Serle, 1973; Turner, 1968; Ward, 1958.

33. Writing in *Cosme Monthly*, one unnamed female contributor described women's suffrage as one of the 'political and social evils of the times' and 'the voting woman' as 'another form of the highly diseased state of city life'. She rejoiced in the colony's rejection of these dangerous innovations: 'The Cosme woman knows that her position and welfare are too well assured to trouble her head about voting' (quoted in Souter, 1968: 203). For more on the community's chauvinism see Whitehead, 1997: 216, 268–70. For an account of the separation of the settlers into the opposed communities of Cosme (royalists) and New Australia (rebels) see Souter, 1968: 69–225.

34. See Whitehead, 1997: 462 for an account of the fate of the Makka.

35. For Elisabeth Nietzsche's revision of her brother's works see Macintyre, 1992: 119–201.

36. The *Encyclopaedia Americana* claims that the male population of Paraguay was 'virtually exterminated' in the War of the Triple Alliance. 'Of the Paraguayan population of 1,200,000 at the beginning of the war, it says, 200,000 women and only 28,000 males survived – largely returned exiles and boys' (Cawthorne, 2003: 277). For an account of the War of the Triple Alliance see Warren, 1978.

37. The Mennonites reject many of the amenities of modern life, plumbing, radio, television and in some cases electricity and motor vehicles.

Chapter 4

1. This has been comprehensively examined in Pike, 1992.

2. C.L.R. James noted how gangster films were calculated to resolve these tensions, to 'satisfy the mass, the individual seeking individuality in a mechanized, socialized society, where his life is ordered and restricted at every turn' (James, 1993: 127). See also Rabinowitz who notes: 'The heroes of these films are often returning vets, out of place in the newly scrubbed world of home appliances and of women's shoulder-padded assertiveness. After the violence of war,

they encounter a new world not of their making and strangely dangerous beyond imagination' (Rabinowitz, 2002: 4–5).

3. For my succeeding analysis of American responses to the wilderness I am indebted to Pike, 1992.

4. For American worship of its frontier figures see Green, 1979: 129–63; also Green, 1984, Slotkin, 1973.

5. 'Despairing of the corruption of Europe and its ways, it was natural that certain members of the religious orders should have seen an opportunity for reestablishing the primitive church of the apostles in a New World as yet uncorrupted by European vices' (Elliott, 1970: 25).

6. See Spratling, 1964; Chase, 1931; Brenner, 1929.

7. For Tom 'There was evidently something enchanting about the atmosphere of the [professor's] house to a boy who had always lived a rough life' (Cather, 1981: 124).

8. Between 1950 and 1960 more than 13 million homes were built in America, more than 11 million in new suburbs. This building boom was made possible by the development of the 'reverse assembly line construction' process pioneered by Levitt and Sons Inc. For more on the Levittown phenomenon and the suburbanisation of America see Baxandall and Ewen, 2000; Jackson, 1987; Gans, 1967.

9. The definition of 'Beat' has generated a vast and largely inconse-quential outpouring, see Theado, 2000: 53–4. For a synopsis of the evolution of the term see Charters, 1992: xvii–xxiv.

10. Park Honan thought otherwise. He claimed that Kerouac's 'project' in *On the Road* was 'America *then*, with its House Un-American Activities Committee, witch-hunts, regimentation of the average person, censorship of artists and film-makers, and Cold War (soon to be a hot war in Korea and Vietnam)' (Honan, 1987: xvi). William Burroughs also felt that the Beats had taken on the establishment and achieved meaningful cultural change: 'There's no doubt that we're living in a freer America as a result of the Beat literary movement' (quoted in Charters, 1992: xxxi).

11. For more on western visions of the *chicana* and *chicana* responses to them see Pike, 1992: 1–10; also De La Torre and Pesquera, 1993. For the broader representation of Latinas see Melhuus and Stølen, 1996.

12. As Tim Hunt notes, for all their hipster jive, Sal and Dean's responses to Mexico are strikingly orthodox: 'They see Mexico as primitive. Its people live in a manner so old and fundamental that they are before history and timeless' (Hunt, 1996: 62).

13. Theado notes that 'Women in American literature frequently represent the imposition of civilizing influences over the frontier pushing males' (Theado, 2000: 59).

14. In Britain, a Royal Commission on Equal Pay considered whether equal pay for women should be written into the nation's post-war industrial policy, while in America the US Senate debated whether or not to submit the Equal Rights Amendment Act of 1923 to the States for ratification. See Anderson, 1976; Chafe, 1972.

15. The Royal Commission on Equal Pay rejected equal pay for women and though in late 1945 the US Senate passed the Equal Rights Amendment Act, it did so by a mere three votes, thus ensuring that it could not go forward to the individual states for ratification.

16. Marriages in 1946 were 50 per cent above pre-war levels and remained 20 per cent up for the rest of the decade.

17. 'By the end of the nineteen-fifties, the average marriage age of women in America dropped to 20, and was still dropping, into the teens. Fourteen million girls were engaged by 17' (Friedan, 1965: 14).

18. These magazines included *Harper's Bazaar*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *McCall's*, *Mademoiselle*, *Marriage for Moderns*, *Redbook* and *Woman's Home Companion*.

19. For more on divorce rates and delinquency see Chafe, 1995: 436–7; Friedan, 1965: 171–2, 236–7, *passim*.

20. Hugh Brogan claimed that 'The State Department collapsed under the McCarthyite attack' (Brogan, 2001: 603). For more on the effects of the McCarthy years on America see Caute, 1978.

21. Ellroy's vision of Los Angeles is an extended homage to Chandler, not least in his title, which recalls the 1946 noir thriller *The Blue Dahlia*, for whose screenplay Chandler received an Academy Award nomination.

22. Oliver and Trigo note that the 'existential angst' and moral ambiguities of film noir are the 'symptoms of concrete anxieties over race, sex, maternity, and national origin that threaten the very possibility of identity by undermining its boundaries' (Oliver and Trigo, 2003: 14).

23. Paul Schrader offers an explanation of the origins of this representation of US society in the post-war period, see Schrader, 1996: 53–63. See also Krutnik, 1991: 56–72.

24. Both Rabinowitz, 2002 and Naremore, 1998, offer complex analyses of how film noir works to resolve the tensions of race, class, gender and geography that the Second World War uncorked.

25. Ellroy's novels repeatedly 'divulge the danger and eroticism hidden in ordinary life' (Wolfe, 2005: xii).

26. In doing so he draws on Orson Welles's film *Touch of Evil* (1958) which, Oliver and Trigo note, 'visually and narratively insists on inverting the racial equation predominant during the forties and fifties in the United States that constructed North American whites as superior to so-called coloured races' (Oliver and Trigo, 2003: 118).

27. Jane McLoughlin notes that the novel 'becomes very diffuse towards the end' and the solution of the case is not well handled (McLoughlin, 1988: 72). See Wolfe, 2005: 152–3.

28. 'the cowboy and rancher already were outmoded in the West's economy…as early as the 1890s' (Jarrett, 1997: 99).

29. 'The gulf between mother and son is historical, between two versions of the contemporary Texan: the modern (the mother) who repudiates her ranching past for art, and the historicist (John Grady as son) who seeks to revive and repeat that past' (Jarrett, 1997: 101).

30. For an account of the rise and fall of the Madero government see Williamson, 1992: 381–3.

31. The detonation of this device, 'Joe I', personally witnessed by Beria, took place at Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan at 0700 local time, 29 August 1949.

32. At a cultural level, the sense of insecurity this bred was most prominently represented in the wave of alien invasion films produced by Hollywood from the early 1950s onwards where the nation's anxieties about attack and colonisation were pandered to and assuaged in almost equal measure. See Booker, 2001; Hendershot, 1999; Seed, 1999; Lucanio, 1987; Slusser and Rabkin, 1985. Arthur Marwick notes that 'Theatre programs dating from 1956 give instructions on what to do "in the event of an air-raid alarm"' (Marwick, 1998: 31).

33. Discussing his companion's first interview with Alfonsita, where he had been politely warned off Alejandra, Rawlins makes it clear that the true object of Cole's infatuation is obvious, not the girl but 'the spread'. See McCarthy, 1993: 137–8.

Chapter 5

1. The financial crisis gripping the country at this point was a budget deficit of £700 million, fuelled in part by the Korean War. Gibbs's book, *The New Elizabethans* (1953) was released to coincide with the coronation.

2. The British casualty figures included 60,000 civilian and 300,000 service personnel dead. J.G. Ballard has noted that: 'It was only on a

technicality that we could be said to have won the war; in many ways we'd lost it. Financially we were desperate' (Ballard, 2006: 16).

3. 'The average adult in 1948 was entitled to a weekly allowance of thirteen ounces of meat, one-and-a-half ounces of cheese, six ounces of butter, one ounce of cooking fat, eight ounces of sugar, two pints of milk and one egg' (Sandbrook, 2005: 45).

4. Weight describes Prince Philip as 'a Prince Albert for the jet age' (Weight, 2002: 236). The 'white heat' image is taken from Harold Wilson's address to the October 1963 Labour party conference. For more on this see Pimlott, 1992.

5. The national media have traditionally described sporting contests between England and Germany, particularly football matches, in terms drawn from the polarities of the two World Wars. For the national media response to Euro 1996 see Poulton, 2004: 437–55; Macguire et al., 1999: 439–54.

6. The defeat to Eire came at Goodison Park but did not count, as 'the Irish were not really "foreigners"' (Fox, 2003: 11).

7. A result described by Fleet Street in terms reminiscent of battlefield disasters from the Second World War. The *Daily Mirror* described the loss in Budapest as the 'Disaster on the Danube' (Wagg, 1984: 86).

8. Peter Clarke notes how a comment recorded in a White House transcript at the time, '"we don't give a goddamn about Wilson", captures the reality of the special relationship, which thereafter resumed its steady decline' (Clarke, 2004: 313). For a fuller account of the government's economic and political travails of the mid 60s see Clarke, 2004: 235–6, 263, 310–13.

9. David Hockney had left for Los Angeles as early as 1964.

10. Brian Glanville described the matches against Uruguay, Mexico and France as, respectively, 'dreadful', 'weary', and 'tiresome' (Glanville, 1984: 142, 145).

11. It wasn't only ignorant journalists who trotted out this line. The Czech coach Karel Kolsky claimed in 1961 that the black player 'has far greater natural ball sense than a white man; greater flexibility; more elasticity and needs considerably less training to develop and maintain good physical condition' (Kolsky, 1961: 9).

12. This is not a universally held opinion in Brazil, where disputes between the devotees of *futebol arte* and those committed to *futebol resultados*, victory at all costs, repeatedly return to the fate of the *Seleção* of 1982. Widely regarded as 'one of the greatest teams never to win the World Cup', the team, according to one of its stars, Zico, is regarded in Brazil simply as 'a losing side' (Taylor, 1998: 118). Washington Rodrigues explained the reasons for this view

and in doing so summarised the manifesto of *futebol resultados*: 'The '82 team was one of the best teams that Brazil produced, but it didn't have a philosophy of play compatible with the evolution of football...They had marvellous technical skill, but it wasn't well used...the important thing today is to win. You have to find the best way. If the best way was to put on a show, fine. But if not, if the important thing is the result, you have to play for the result. That's what Brazil did in '94...What's important is winning, not taking part. You always have to win. And Brazil played to win in '94 and won. In '82 we played to put on a show and lost' (quoted in Taylor, 1998: 118).

13. Football in Brazil, Da Matta argued, 'is born as a plaything, as playing with a ball, and later play is not given up but is associated with dexterity...It is exactly because Brazilians live under the imperative of play that carnival and football are national passions' (quoted in Mason, 1995: 124).

14. Pelé's status as a Boy's Own hero was confirmed by his appearances in comic strips. In Brazil he had a comic strip entirely dedicated to his exploits, *Pelézinho*, while in Britain he was featured in the popular boys' comic, *The Hornet*, in June 1971. For more on this see Pelé, 1990: II 482.

15. Some regarded discomfort and primitive sanitation as essential features of an authentic football experience (see Redhead, 1987: 47–9). For more on the Hillsborough Disaster and its consequences for the re-design of the nation's football grounds see Taylor, 1989 and 1990.

16. Eamon Dunphy, a former professional, noted that the player 'was bound as surely as any serf' to his club (Dunphy, 1991: 157).

17. In 1958 'in a moment of linguistic inspiration', the Professional Footballers' Union changed its name to the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) (Russell, 1997: 148). For more on the PFA and its predecessors see Harding, 1991. Guthrie's activism led Fleet Street to dub him 'the ball game Bulganin' (Wagg, 1984: 104).

18. Cornelius 'Neil' Franklin of Stoke City and England was one of several players who from the late 1940s onwards broke their domestic contracts and accepted lucrative offers to play in Colombia. At the time, Colombia was not a member of FIFA so, although the retain and transfer system applied in all FIFA registered countries, it did not apply in Colombia. When Charlie Mitten of Manchester United joined Club Independiente de Santa Fe de Bogota he received an initial signing-on fee of £5,000, a guaranteed £5,000 per year salary, £40 per week plus an extra £35 for a win or £17 for a draw. At Manchester United, Mitten and the other players were on a maximum of £750 per year including bonuses: 'The signing-on fee

plus the first year's salary was equivalent to a lifetime's earnings in Britain' (Dunphy, 1991: 158). By comparison, Arthur Seaton, the protagonist of Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) earns almost exactly the same as a capstan lathe operator in a bicycle factory (see Sillitoe, 1994: 60–1). When Mitten returned to Manchester United after Colombia joined FIFA he was fined £250, suspended for six months and thereafter transferred to Fulham. Dave Russell notes that '*pour encourager les autres*,' when Franklin returned from Colombia he 'was banned from English soccer for a year and suspended from the England side indefinitely for his breach of contract' (Russell, 1997: 148).

19. Football was embraced by schools in the first decades of the twentieth century where it had 'important instrumental consequences among the working-class young – those boys who would grow up into the future labour force...it involved the development of a sense of team play' central to which 'was the unquestioned acceptance of authority; obedience to the orders of captain, schoolmaster, or anyone in immediate team authority'. As such, football played a central role in 'securing among successive generations of working-class boys an acceptance of codes of conduct and discipline which were important in themselves and, perhaps more crucially, as an element in the broader discipline required of the labour force' (Walvin, 1986: 109–10).

20. For an overview of the history of black footballers in Britain see Back et al., 2001; Vasili, 2000. For more on racism in English football see Greenfield, 1996.

21. In 1978 the CBD (Confederação Brasileiro da Deportes), under military control like the rest of the country, appointed ex-army captain and physical training specialist Claudio Coutinho as coach of the *Seleção*. Coutinho ran the team like a military squad. He decked out the training camp with patriotic banners and described his players as a 'light armoured unit' (Coutinho, 1978: 56–7). See also Coutinho, 1977: 100–2.

22. On arriving in Calcutta with the New York Cosmos in September 1977, Pelé observed: 'I am against the color bar with all my heart, but I cannot personally do anything about it' (Pelé, 1990: II 727). This lent a certain irony to his appearance in Osvaldo Sampaio's film *A Marcha* (The March) (1971), where he played a rebel slave who fights to free his people.

23. As J.H. Elliott noted, More's account demonstrated how 'the overseas discoveries [of the late 15th and early 16th centuries] could be used to suggest fundamental questions about the values and the standards of a civilisation which was perhaps beyond reform' (Elliott, 1970: 26).

Chapter 6

1. Although Sandbrook (2005 and 2006) argues that the truly radical social changes attributed to the 1960s really took place a decade later.
2. Brian Thomas notes that 'the dominant image associated with' Southwood 'is that of imprisonment' (Thomas, 1988: 174). Henry looks back on his years in the teller's cage in the bank, while all around, most notably in Miss Keene, there is emotional and sexual repression.
3. His presence in Paraguay is permanently provisional: 'I needn't make up my mind. I can go next week, or the week after. We can wait and see how things go' (Greene, 1969: 307).
4. For the economic difficulties of the early to mid 1970s see Clarke, 2004: 358–400; Bernstein, 2004: 157–228; Marwick, 1990: 184–392. The state of the British economy at this time is summarised in the title of Dell, 1991: *A Hard Pounding*. The most dramatic economic emergency of the period, the sterling crisis of 1976, is dealt with in Burk and Cairncross, 1992. Historical responses to the 1970s were marked by a sense of the decade's crises. The title of Jeremy Seabrook's study of working people and the idealism of the labour movement was *What Went Wrong?* while Calvocoressi's *The British Experience 1945–75* was in large measure 'a tale of hopes deflated by failures' (Marwick, 1990: 8).
5. Chile was not always so prominent in British culture. 'In the 1930s, sub-editors at *The Times* famously held a competition to construct the most boring headline imaginable. The winner was "Small Earthquake in Chile. Not Many Dead"' (Beckett, 2002: 87).
6. The allegation that Wilson was a Soviet agent came from James Jesus Angleton, the CIA's chief of counterintelligence. For more on the intelligence community's campaign against Wilson see Leigh, 1988.
7. Beckett offers a synopsis of the speculative rumblings among extreme elements in the army, disaffected businessmen and the Tory right wing, which in the mid 1970s came to focus around General Sir Walter Walker (see Beckett, 2002: 182–202).
8. For more on the free market economic experiment in Chile see Congdon, 1985; Hurtado, 1983. For a critical view of its consequences see Cooper, 2001: 82–111.
9. In an otherwise sober analysis of Anglo-Chilean cultural relations, Beckett repeatedly insists that political loyalties in Chile have their origins in 'instinctive, almost tribal' allegiances (Beckett, 2002: 107).

10. Ariel Dorfman found himself 'transported back to my country without having to leave London' seeing in the crowds outside Bow Street, 'a deformed mirror of the same fractured Chile whose divided camps have been confronting each other over the last decades' (Dorfman, 2002: 119).

11. The 'flagship of [the Conservative Party's] legislative programme after 1987', the poll tax came to be seen as 'Thatcher's nemesis' (Clarke, 2004: 396).

12. By early 1976 there was a political assassination in Argentina, on average, every four hours (Simpson and Bennett, 1985: 37). For more on the chaos of the late 1960s and early 1970s in Argentina see Romero, 2002: 173–215; Williamson, 1992: 473–7; Rock, 1985: 347–66; Simpson and Bennett, 1985: 33–42.

13. For more on *el proceso* and the dirty war it instigated see Romero, 2002: 215–54; Rock, 1985: 366–76.

14. The figures on the number of disappeared are highly contentious. 9,000 is the figure from CONADEP, 1984. For more on the experiences of the disappeared see Feitlowitz, 1998; Mohr, 1998; Partnoy, 1998; Taylor, 1997; Simpson and Bennett, 1985; Timerman, 1982; Amnesty International, 1977, 1980a, 1980b. For the experiences of those perpetrating the kidnappings and disappearances see Verbitsky, 1996.

15. 'The Corpse at the Iron Gate', 1972b; 'Comprehending Borges', 1972c; 'A Country Dying on its Feet', 1974a; 'Argentina: The Brothels Behind the Graveyard', 1974b; 'Argentine Terror: A Memoir', 1979b. He published two further essays on Argentina, also in *The New York Review of Books*, in 1992: 'Argentina: Living With Cruelty', 1992a, and 'The End of Peronism?', 1992b. Naipaul's journeys also included a trip to Montevideo.

16. See Williamson, 1992: 145–9, 459–69; the epigraph to Andersen, 1993; the epigraph to France, 1998.

17. O'Connell notes that 'starved by the British press of reliable information on Latin America' readers would take Naipaul's writings on Argentina 'as fiction in the realistic tradition' (O'Connell, 1972: 1). Patrick French notes that Naipaul's long-time Argentine mistress, Margaret Gooding, thought he had got the country 'completely wrong' (French, 2008: 452).

18. One of the first entries in Naipaul's notebooks from Argentina states: 'Artificial society. Perversely I have the feeling that in a way Argentina doesn't exist' (Naipaul Archive: Box 3, Folder 7).

19. See Naipaul, 1980: 145. Richard Garay, the Anglo-Argentine narrator of Tóibín's *The Story of the Night* (1996) takes a similar view of the negative influence of the land on the people and their relations

with one another. He notes 'the strange lack of contact we have with each other here' acknowledging that though 'our ancestors…came in search of vast tracts of land: we have never trusted each other here, or mixed with each other. There is no society here, just a terrible loneliness which bears down on us all' (Tóibín, 1996: 6–7).

20. For more on 'Justicialism', the philosophical expression of Peronism, see Rock, 1985: 262–5; Blanksten, 1967: 276–305.

21. See Naipaul, 1971, 1975, and 1979a; Feder, 2001: 184–234; King, 1993: 83–135; Weiss, 1992: 87–214; Kelly, 1989: 103–63; Cudjoe, 1988: 94–226.

22. Cudjoe refers to Naipaul's 'repetitions', while Weiss, examining 'The Corpse at the Iron Gate' notes that 'readers of Naipaul's works have already heard the themes of this essay before in other contexts' (Cudjoe, 1988: 161; Weiss, 1992: 143). Naipaul could advance his opinions with such certainty because they were immune from contradiction: 'observation for [Naipaul]', Theroux observed, 'was about drawing conclusions' (Theroux, 1998: 103). For more on this see Theroux, 1998: 50. Edward Said claimed that 'there isn't any real analysis in his essays, only observation' (quoted in Didion, 1980: 21). Mustafa too makes derisive reference to Naipaul's 'tone of unassailability' (Mustafa, 1995: 139). In an interview with the *Buenos Aires Herald* Naipaul admitted: 'I don't engage in arguments because everything I write I have really thought a long time through. I've done all the arguing with scores of people before. After that I don't argue because that would be going back and beginning the article again. The only thing I do acknowledge are mistakes or errors of fact' (Anon, 1972: 8).

23. Compare Naipaul, 1972a: 45 with Naipaul, 1980: 144; Naipaul, 1972a: 49 with Naipaul, 1980: 114; Naipaul, 1972a: 48, 50 with Naipaul, 1980: 115, 148.

24. Reflecting on British indifference to the expulsion of Uganda's Asians in 1968, Naipaul expressed the belief that 'a very special chaos was coming to England' (quoted in French, 2008: 276, see also 278). 'During these last fifteen years', Karl Miller observed in 1976, 'the West may be thought to have let [Naipaul] down by declining, diminishing, to the condition of the West Indies: by becoming a backwater, with its Watergate and Ulster, its economic arrests and somnambulist states of emergency' (Miller, 1975: 4).

25. For images of bush reclaiming once civilised areas in Africa see Naipaul, 1971: 166; Naipaul, 1979a: 32–3, 268–9; Naipaul, 1980: 183. Images of the degeneration of civilised forms also feature prominently in Naipaul's depiction of South America, see his description of the unfinished Palace of Justice in Montevideo, 1980:

129. Naipaul's 'unrelenting' accounting of 'the placid collapse of the old colonial ruling culture' earned a special mention in the Swedish Academy's press release announcing his award of the 2001 Nobel Prize for literature (quoted in French, 2008: 430).

26. There is a mass of material on how the Vietnam War divided America. Two key texts are Beattie, 1998 and Capps, 1990.

27. The key texts dealing with this period of Hollywood's vision of Vietnam are Dittmar and Michaud, 1990 and Adair, 1981. See also Louvre and Walsh, 1988: 1–49 for a discussion of Hollywood's endeavours to avoid the war.

28. According to Rick Berg, these films showcase America's 'cultural obsession with "returning"' (Berg, 1990: 62).

29. 'Officially, a *desaparecido* was neither living nor dead, neither here nor there', its status 'totally vague and resoundingly final' (Feitlowitz, 1998: 49).

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