THE FIN-DE-SIÈCLE WORLD

Edited by MICHAEL SALER

THE FIN-DE-SIÈCLE WORLD

This comprehensive, beautifully illustrated collection of essays conveys a vivid picture of a fascinating period in history, the *fin de siècle*. Featuring contributions from nearly fifty international scholars, this book takes a thematic approach to a period of huge upheaval across all walks of life and is truly innovative in examining the *fin de siècle* from a global perspective. The volume includes pathbreaking essays on how the period was experienced not only in Europe and North America, but also in China, Japan, the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, India, and elsewhere across the globe.

Thematic topics covered include new concepts of time and space, globalization, the city, and new political movements including nationalism, the "New Liberalism," socialism and communism. The volume also looks at the development of mass media over this period and emerging trends in culture, such as advertising and consumption, film and publishing, as well as the technological and scientific changes that shaped the world at the turn of the nineteenth century, such as novel forms of telecommunications, new transport systems, and developments in the natural and human sciences. *The Fin-de-Siècle World* also considers issues such as selfhood through chapters looking at gender, sexuality, race, and class, and considers the importance of different religions, both old and new, at the turn of the century. Finally the volume examines significant and emerging trends in art, music, and literature, including realism, children's literature, fantasy, science fiction, the supernatural, symbolism, and aestheticism.

This volume conveys a vivid picture of how politics, religion, "mass" and "elite" cultures, social practices, and scientific endeavors fitted together in an exciting world of change. It will be invaluable reading for all students and scholars of the *fin-de-siècle* period.

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THE ROUTLEDGE WORLDS

THE
FIN-DE-SIÈCLE
WORLD

Edited by

Michael Saler

To Benson, Joyce, Chun, Erin, and Omar

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INTRODUCTION

Michael Saler

Just as the plash of a pebble in a pond produces expanding concentric circles, studies of the *fin de siècle* have become steadily more encompassing since they first appeared in the early twentieth century. *The Fin-de-Siècle World* represents the Third Wave of approaches to this fascinating, complex, and transitional historical period between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The *fin de siècle* has most often been studied as a Western phenomenon and cast as a distinct yet amorphous interval spanning late "Victorianism" and early "Modernism". This volume both continues and departs from that tradition. In order to explain how and why, we need to briefly survey earlier scholarship that navigated its slippery contours and charted some of its most glistening features.

THE FIRST WAVE

Contemporaries began to memorialize the period, accounting for the First Wave of writings on the *fin de siècle* prior to World War I. They defined it largely in terms of the new aesthetic movements in Western Europe and North America of the 1890s that challenged traditional cultural norms and practices, and located its epicenters in Paris and London. First Wave interpreters claimed that the *fin de siècle* expressed a contradictory *Zeitgeist* peculiar to its chronological moment: the "Spirit of the Time" emphasized both cultural decline and spiritual rebirth. Some artists exalted "Decadence," bolstered by the impending end of a century that many critics decried as narrowly materialistic and insufferably bourgeois. Others, however, welcomed the new century for its promise of political, social, and spiritual renewal. Revealingly, many – like the novelist M. P. Shiel, whose "Decadent" fictions could also herald the Übermensch – did both.

These overlapping themes of "decline" and "rebirth" were not central to the 1888 French play *Fin de Siècle* by F. de Jouvenot and H. Micard, but its terse title soon became a catchphrase among artists – including the ever-quotable Oscar Wilde (Teich and Porter 1991: 3). By 1893, "*fin de siècle*" had become a generational label sported by those who rejected earlier Victorian cultural moral codes and trumpeted new aesthetic and social possibilities. As a writer for the English

journal *The Art Critic* explained to his perplexed audience in "What is the Fin de Siècle?":

> All . . . who rush head over heels with new ideas towards the 20th century are hommes et femmes *fin de siècle*. Who are its leading representatives? Young authors and artists with an indescribable enthusiasm . . . who assert without exception that they are the prophets of something (nobody knows what) glorious to come.
>
> (1893)

It soon became clear, however, that the *fin de siècle* of the 1890s had both illustrious antecedents and significant successors. The radiating circle encapsulating it needed to encompass its roots in the 1880s, even the 1870s, and its continued developments until the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. Holbrook Jackson, one of the earliest to capture the floating-butterfly features of the aesthetic *fin de siècle*, broadened its chronology; others followed his lead. Jackson's 1913 account – entitled *The Eighteen Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* – acknowledged that "the Eighteen Nineties were unique only in method and in the emphasis they gave to certain circumstances and ideas. The Eighteen Eighties and late Seventies had been even more 'artistic' than the Nineties" (Jackson 1913: 24).

THE SECOND WAVE

The Second Wave of scholarship after the war tended to confirm this loose periodization of the *fin de siècle* from 1870 to 1914, with some accounts plumping for its origins in the 1880s, and a few holding firm for the 1890s. It also significantly expanded the period's remit from an aesthetic movement within late Victorian culture to a socio-cultural moment within the larger story of Western "modernity." Carl Schorske cast the first pebble in this direction in his *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, an influential 1980 collection of essays. (Several had been published during the previous two decades, generating intellectual ripples of their own; the volume itself produced a cascade.) Schorske examined the artistic and intellectual innovations emerging from the hothouse environment of late nineteenth-century Vienna to demonstrate that "The fertile ground of the cultural elements, and the basis of their cohesion, was a shared social experience in the broadest sense" (Schorske 1980: xxiii).

This conjunction of aesthetic modernism with the processes of modernization soon became the norm for studies of the *fin de siècle* in Europe and the United States. Scholars now demonstrated that the cultural movements discussed by First Wave scholars, such as Aestheticism, Impressionism, Decadence, Symbolism, Realism and Naturalism, both expressed and fostered wider changes in the political, social, intellectual, economic, religious, and scientific milieus of turn-of-the-century Europe and North America. All of these domains were interlinked elements of this complex period that needed to be comprehended holistically. How could one discuss aesthetic "Decadence", let alone the German critic Max Nordau's influential 1893 screed *Degeneration*, without also discussing Eugenics, Social Darwinism, the "New Physics", or the bellicose stance of the European "New Nationalism"? Or understand

the latter without reference to the "New Imperialism," itself abetted by the "New Journalism" and the threat to traditional notions of masculinity by the "New Woman"? The *fin de siècle* was now perceived in terms of intersecting kaleidoscopic patterns, wherein social and cultural facets of the modern West might collide, collude, or simply co-exist, depending on the circumstances. The overarching themes of decline and rebirth remained constant: "Decadent" and "New" retained their pride of place in most discussions.

Thus, in addition to the elite artistic and intellectual expressions chronicled by First Wave analysts, Second Wave scholars focused on the disparate social, economic and political changes emerging during this novel "age of the masses." One volume dedicated to the period surveyed mass production, mass culture, mass politics, mass sport, large corporations and cartels, telephones, phonographs, film, radio, electricity, automobiles, aviation, genetics, and the scientific study of the unconscious (Teich and Porter 1991: 3). Another considered the critique of Judeo-Christian beliefs and the search for alternate sources of spirituality; the manifold changes wrought by the "Second Industrial Revolution" of electrochemical and light industries; the greater integration of the global capital market, accompanied by intensified financial speculations; the more prominent international roles assumed by the United States and Japan; and the dramatic heightening of nationalism and expansion of imperialism around the world (Bayly 2003: 457–62).

Of course, the dizzying experience of flux and change many ascribed to the *fin de siècle* was in certain respects an acceleration of the instabilities common to the West following the French and Industrial Revolutions. Marshall Berman brilliantly analyzed how Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's two-part version of *Faust*, composed between 1770 and 1831, limned the inherent dynamism and self-creation of the modern individual, just as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) described the creative-destruction of bourgeois modernity in terms familiar to later "hommes et femmes" of the *fin de siècle*: "All that is solid melts into air" (Berman 1981). Second Wave scholarship, however, insisted that the *fin de siècle* represented a distinct period of socio-cultural change, which many contemporaries no less than later scholars identified as the "crucible of modernity" itself (Bayly 2003: 456).

Readers of the volume will find ample evidence supporting this assertion. This short Introduction can only generalize, at the risk of oversimplification, about a few of the overarching features of the period. First, *fin-de-siècle* culture was distinguished by a pervasive recognition of "double consciousness," a phrase initially deployed by mid-Victorian psychologists to denote human self-reflexivity. The period tended to accept and promote the early Romantics' emphasis on the pluralistic nature of human consciousness, in contrast to the penchant of many Victorian thinkers to represent the self as rational, unified, and stable. Numerous *fin-de-siècle* writers not only extended the Romantics' model of the psyche, they also promoted the Romantics' valorization of the Imagination as a faculty that was equal, rather than subordinate, to reason. This widespread recognition of the duality (if not multiplicity) of the self was explored in such notable works as Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), and W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) (which explicitly invoked "double consciousness").

Further, *fin-de-siècle* writers often presented these dualities as complementary in nature, juxtaposing oppositions without necessarily resolving their contradictions. Many thinkers rejected starker binary distinctions and entertained antinomies; essentialist, "either/or" ontologies were increasingly confronted by hybrid, "both/and" perspectives. This shift was partly a product of the processes of modernization during the late nineteenth century, which brought more individuals and cultures into contact than ever before. Incessant exposure to new ways of being could challenge habitual assumptions and provoke searches for more integrative modes of understanding. In addition, the challenges to traditional religious belief resulted in a more general questioning of all previous certainties, including that of human subjectivity and the nature of being; as Max Saunders has shown, the late nineteenth century witnessed a peculiar merger of fiction and non-fiction in life-writing, resulting in the hybrid genre of "Autobiografiction" (Saunders 2012). The *fin de siècle* was thus a period in which traditional, hierarchical oppositions – rational and irrational, masculine and feminine, fiction and non-fiction, disenchantment and enchantment, and so on – were re-examined and often found to be coterminous, existing in tense equilibrium within a broader field (Saler 2012).

Charles Baudelaire expressed this new emphasis on complementarity as early as 1863 when he defined modernity as "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and immutable" (Baudelaire 1995 [1863]). Modern art and literature of the *fin de siècle* (including the new art of film) regularly resorted to non-hierarchical juxtapositions, particularly through new aesthetic techniques of collage and montage. Similarly, H. Stuart Hughes identified the prevalence of complementarities in contemporary social thought. He stressed the double-minded consciousness of the period, observing that political theorists acknowledged the role of the irrational as well as reason in political behavior; sociologists noted the constitutive role of religion within "secular" modernity; psychologists studied the powerful influence of the unconscious on conscious life (Hughes 1958). Emily S. Rosenberg presented a related argument in her overview of transnational exchanges and networks between 1870 and 1930, observing that apparently oppositional ideas and practices were in fact "complements that operate in creative tension with each other . . . seemingly binary poles emerge as coproductive counterparts that make up the landscape of modernity" (Rosenberg 2012: 25).

Several essays in this volume highlight the effects of this double-minded, complementary outlook. Describing *fin-de-siècle* thought and culture in Russia, Olga Matich finds they exemplify "the fluidity and essential in-betweenness of *fin-de-siècle* temporality," just as Peter Mandler locates a similar "divided consciousness" in the new social sciences of the period, "torn between 'science envy' and ethical convictions, between the new authority of the [professional] university and the older authority of public service." Vincent Pecora, in his account of secular forms of thought, reminds us that the newly minted term "agnosticism" expressed a suspended attitude between belief and disbelief. T. H. Huxley's neologism may have been a direct response to the controversies between religion and science over Darwin's theory of evolution, but it also bore the peculiar stamp of *fin-de-siècle* double consciousness. This was also true of philosophy at this time. In her discussion of the "radical reformulation of knowledge" at the *fin de siècle*, Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen maintains that many philosophers, "instead of seeking a static, universal view of 'the

world,' . . . fostered instead a habit of mind attentive to the dynamic, pluralist *worlds* of philosophy."

In addition to fostering complementary and perspectivist outlooks, the period represented a tipping point in ordinary perceptions of time and space. The nineteenth century was already notable for its expanding "techniques of the observer" (Crary 1992). Yet the *fin de siècle* witnessed a particular synergy between novel and pre-existing technologies of transport (railroads, steamships, bicycles, automobiles) and communications (telegraph, telephone, radio, film, mass literature) that affected the phenomenology of high culture and everyday life in original ways. The essays by Andreas Killen, Stephen Kern, and Andrew Denning, among others in this volume, demonstrate that the accelerated pace and complex interconnections of ordinary experience could induce a vertiginous apprehension of temporal simultaneity and a leveling of spatial hierarchies.

This unsettling *fin-de-siècle* phenomenology was accompanied by other challenges to conventional understandings of self and the world. These included innovative interpretations of the unconscious among psychologists, philosophers, and artists; syncretic forms of spirituality that at times incorporated non-Western traditions and/or scientific aspirations; controversial explorations of sexual practices and gender definitions; and a new paradigm in physics that replaced a mechanistic understanding of the cosmos with an electro-dynamic one. Helge Kragh's essay reveals that this paradigm itself had a short life, to be replaced after World War I by the acceptance of relativity and quantum mechanics. However, these latter paradigms were based on certain counter-intuitive discoveries and theories publicized at the turn of the century, which joined the multiple challenges to habitual ways of experiencing that distinguished the *fin de siècle*.

Such prismatic perceptions in turn incited a backlash of ideas and practices aimed at restoring tradition and normativity, including scientific racism, integral nationalism, aggressive imperialism, virulent anti-Semitism, and a recrudescence of traditional gender norms. Double-minded consciousness, complementary outlooks, and a heightened awareness of the constructed nature of self and world were all fundamental keynotes of the *fin de siècle* – but that is only half the story. These new cognitive habits, and the processes of modernization that engendered them, fueled reactionary responses. Traditional binary oppositions and essentialist outlooks not only persisted, they were accentuated during these turbulent decades – and well beyond them.

THE THIRD WAVE

The Third Wave of *fin-de-siècle* studies is captured by the title of this book: the period is beginning to be examined in global terms rather than being artificially confined to Europe and North America. This outlook reflects the broader turn by scholars in the humanities and social sciences to transnational networks. (In addition to Bayly and Rosenberg, see Gagnier 2010; Wollaeger and Eatough 2013; Moyn and Sartori 2013; Osterhammel 2014.) The *fin de siècle* is ideally suited to this transnational moment in scholarship, precisely because it was itself inherently global. As we have noted, the period featured expansionist imperialism, the deployment of worldwide communications and transport networks, large migrations of populations (many to rapidly growing cities, as Peter Fritzsche's essay relates),

and the wider diffusion of mass production and mass culture to all parts of the world. (Silent films had a global impact, as Tom Gunning discusses in his essay.)

While the West retained a preponderant influence over non-Western cultures at this time, their interchanges were not always asymmetrical. The dynamism of the *fin de siècle* was as much a consequence of rapid, multifarious, and global exchanges as it was of local challenges to traditional political, social, and cultural norms. At times, similar transnational phenomena arose less from direct cultural contacts between "metropole" and "periphery" than as a result of more intangible global processes. Regenia Gagnier's essay, for example, reveals that "Decadence" as a cultural movement was global in nature, fostered by broad forces of modernization. In other instances, specific ideas, artifacts, and practices were diffused through cosmopolitan networks and reconfigured to suit local needs. In his essay, Andreas Killen notes that inhabitants of Tokyo no less than London feared the modern condition of "neurasthenia," and Gary Lachman points to the varied movements for personal and political independence that arose from the mutual interchanges between South Asian Buddhists and the Theosophical Society. Similarly, the "double consciousness" or heightened self-reflexivity that many have seen as a hallmark of the West during this period could be found nearly everywhere else. Nietzsche and Buddhism, Wagner and Hokusai, Freud and Tagore – all were part of a syncretic conversation throughout the world. The essays in *The Fin-de-Siècle World* thus support John Jervis's contention that the period should be understood, in part, as "a globalizing mode of sense-making whereby countries and cultures reflect on each others' experiences". The rapid interchange of diverse concepts and experiences drawn from disparate cultures, coupled with the challenges and possibilities these posed to traditional ways of life, mark the *fin de siècle* as a transitional period for peoples throughout the globe, at once fructifying and destabilizing.

A *fin de siècle* cast in global terms also reveals the surprising fact that its Western chronological underpinning need not be among its determining features. From a First or Second Wave perspective, the *fin de siècle* was inextricably associated with the death of one century and the birth of another (Briggs and Snowman 1996). One might reasonably assume that this fundamental understanding of the *fin de siècle* would have little purchase on other cultures that followed a different time scheme. Maura Dykstra and Jeffrey Wasserstrom's essay, however, demonstrates that China had its own preoccupation with "decline" and "rebirth" alongside that found in the West, even though "the year 1900 did not exist in the mind of the average Chinese individual" – until the early twentieth century, the Chinese calendar followed cycles of 60 years rather than the West's cycle of 100. In his essay, Jens Hanssen illuminates the "competing temporalities" of the Middle East during the *fin de siècle*, with Muslims, Christians, and Jews often oriented by different calendars. Nevertheless, related conceptions of the end of the old order and the promise of the new galvanized critics and revolutionaries in the non-West no less than the West. Cast in a global perspective, the *fin de siècle* merits its appellation as the "crucible of modernity" in its widest sense: its alchemical changes were generated and experienced worldwide.

While the global challenges to tradition often bore common patterns, the essays in this volume detail their unique trajectories. *The Fin-de-Siècle World* reveals that the pronounced globalization of this period was matched by enhanced localism;

together, both trends produced "differentiated commonalities" throughout the globe (Rosenberg 2012: 23). The Third Wave investigations of the *fin de siècle* establish that confrontations and collaborations between the traditional and the modern, the particular and the global, were emblematic of the world between 1870 and 1914: yet another instance of the period's complementary nature. We witness the complex entanglements of *fins* and *nouveaus* irrespective of cultural calendars or geographic settings.

The Fin-de-Siècle World features essays on many of the most important dimensions of this multifaceted era. While capacious, it is not intended as an encyclopedic survey; ideally, this volume will stimulate further research into the topics and locales it was unable to include. Contributors were encouraged to situate their discussions within a global milieu. While this was not always possible – some topics were less amenable than others to this approach, and some writers preferred to pursue deeper rather than broader excavations – the essays as a whole illuminate global linkages alongside local problematics. They also suggest that many of the currents arising from the *fin de siècle* still sway us today, testimony to the sustaining buoyancy of an effervescent period in human history.

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PART I
OVERVIEWS

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GLOBAL LITERATURES OF DECADENCE

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Regenia Gagnier

 One traditional understanding of Decadence in the European *fin de siècle* is as an intensification of Aestheticism characterizing the 1890s, one that was severely challenged in Britain as a result of the Oscar Wilde trials, and one recoiling in France, Germany, and the United States from the backlash against discourses of degeneration. In this view, following World War I Decadence was reduced to a circumscribed movement periodically revived with, for example, the Gothic, but essentially confined to pre-Modernism. This chapter will argue that Decadence and modernization are mutually constituting, global, and subject to ongoing renegotiations that have their own varying rhythms when viewed geographically. Its aim is to broaden the meaning of Decadence in wider literary circulation, to begin to consider global literatures of decadence.

DECADENT TEMPORALITY

In 1979 Richard Gilman described decadence as "an epithet that relies entirely on the norm it implicitly calls up and points to no substantive condition" (Gilman 1979), and others have also concluded that we should understand decadence as a textual and social strategy (Gagnier 1986; Constable, Denisoff, and Potolsky 1999; Stetz 2010). European and most Western terms for "decadence" derive from the Latin *de+cadera*, meaning to fall away from, and in most traditions decadence is used to mean cultures that have declined from robust civilizations: in the age of modern empires and nation building, Europeans called Ottomans decadent, Latin Americans and Slavs called Europeans decadent, Europe called Rome decadent, France called America decadent. In more internal struggles, dictators and authoritarian regimes attempt to purge decadents from the state or polis. And, using negative stereotypes in a positive, affirmative sense, rebels and revolutionaries often nominate themselves as decadent with respect to the status quo. If literary genres generally designate a temporality—the time of fear (Gothic), the time of memory (elegy), the time of the domus (domestic fiction), the time of seasons (pastoral), and so forth—literatures perceived, or self-nominated, as decadent designate a temporal category of the decline away from established norms. Rather than appear as the last,

effete gasp of declining civilizations, Decadent literatures often appear in societies in which local traditions are in contact, and often in conflict, with the forces of modernization, less products of modern Europe and North America than effects in most cultures undergoing similar processes of change.

One of the greatest British critics of decadence, Holbrook Jackson understood this tension or anxiety about change when he described the 1890s, the typically decadent decade in Britain, as "A decade singularly rich in ideas, personal genius and social will," whose "central characteristic was a widespread concern for the correct—the most effective, most powerful, most righteous—mode of living" (Jackson 1914: 12, 17). In *The Decadent Movement in Literature* (1893) Arthur Symons wrote that it typically appeared at the end of great civilizations, e.g. the Hellenic or Roman, and was characterized by intense self-consciousness, restless curiosity in research, over-subtilizing refinement, and spiritual and moral perversity. It often appeared, he said, as a new and beautiful and interesting disease. In the age of empire, it was obsessed with the local and minute. In the age of Romantic nature, it turned to the mysteries of the urban. In the age of purposiveness, productivity, and reproduction, it was in praise of idleness, critical reflection, sterile contemplation, even sexual excitement largely mental (Symons 1893).

Yet if decadence was, as Symons thought, "a disease of truth," it was a new and beautiful and interesting disease, often appearing as egoism, feminism, or naturalism in relation to hegemonic forces and norms. It sought out the particular perspective against the dominant whole, studied the details with a dedication to the empirical truth of the senses, and often looked so objectively at the data that it made no evaluative distinction between health and disease. Against the dominant ideology of progress, the decadent saw the pathology of everyday life. Freud became one of the two key philosophers of European Decadence (with Nietzsche) because, contrary to Enlightenment reason—the belief in the mind's ability to discern and act upon one's interests—he saw that humans were equally subject to irrationality and self-destruction; that subjectivity was based on a relationship with others; and that individualism—the psychosomatic drive toward self-assertion—was always confronted with the presence of others. The New Woman writer George Egerton (Mary Chavelita Dunne) captured the intellectual spirit of the age in Europe—and this as her protagonist was confronting her lover—with "I was analysing, being analysed, criticising, being criticised" (Nelson 2001: 30).

Decadence by definition is a time of change, a falling away from an experienced organicism into a splintered or factious temporality. In Britain, the *fin de siècle* showed the rise of giant corporations, mass production, and consumption, the development and distribution of electrical energy ("iron lilies of the Strand" meant streetlights in Richard Le Gallienne's "Ballad of London" [1888] where London is the "Great city of Midnight Sun") and aviation and motor vehicles ("ever-muttering prisoned storm/ the heart of London beating warm" in John Davidson's "London" [1894]). In Western science, evolution, genetics, and the "New Physics" transformed knowledge of time, life, matter, and space. In politics, the people became the masses in the age of mass parties, mass media, and sport. The first modern Olympics were held in Athens in 1896 with the motto of *citius, altius, fortius*: faster, higher, stronger, proclaiming the dream of progress through competition. These changes gave rise to the concomitant fears of Taylorization, that the individual would be mechanized,

routinized, massified. The German Ferdinand Tönnies developed the theory of *Gemeinschaft* (Community) as distinguished from *Gesellschaft* (Society) and the French Émile Durkheim theorized modern societies in terms of anomie and suicide.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, 80 percent of the British population were rural; by 1900, 80 percent lived in the cities. Social crowding revealed divisions and ethnicities often against the background of global or imperial economic formations, as with the Irish Literary Renaissance (also known as the Celtic Twilight), and the revival of Cornish, Welsh, and Gaelic languages against the dominant Anglophone. In terms of gender, the perspectives of women became prominent in the so-called New Woman literature, which often counterposed traditional, ideal forms of femininity against modern women's worldly perspectives. Men's and women's relationships were said to be "between two centuries." The novelist Thomas Hardy wrote in *Candour in English Fiction* (1890): "By a sincere school of Fiction we may understand a Fiction that expresses truly the views of life prevalent in its time. . . . Life being a physiological fact, its honest portrayal must be largely concerned with . . . the relation of the sexes, and the substitution for such catastrophes as favour the false colouring best expressed by the regulation finish that 'they married and were happy ever after' [by] catastrophes based upon sexual relations as it [sic] is" (Hardy 1890). New Woman literature is less about woman's traditional role of reproduction than about the production of creativity and ideas. Babies are more often ideas or symbols, not children in themselves.

Charles Baudelaire summed up the paradoxes of Decadence as early as 1857 ("Further Notes on Edgar Poe") when he described it as a sunset of astonishing illumination, its degenerations turning into generations of new possibility: "The sun which a few hours ago was crushing everything beneath the weight of its vertical, white light will soon be flooding the western horizon with varied colours. In the changing splendours of this dying sun, some poetic minds will find new joys; they will discover dazzling colonnades, cascades of molten metal, a paradise of fire, a melancholy splendour . . . And the sunset will then appear to them as the marvellous allegory of a soul, imbued with life, going down beyond the horizon, with a magnificent wealth of thoughts and dreams" (Baudelaire 1992: 189).

GLOBAL DECADENCE

The tensions and anxieties of change in Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gave rise to the most famous European definition of Decadence, first penned by Désiré Nisard in 1834 and taken up by Paul Bourget, Nietzsche, and Havelock Ellis at the *fin de siècle*, as a decomposition or deformation of the relationship between the part and the whole:

> The individual is the social cell. In order that the organism should perform its functions with energy it is necessary that the organisms composing it should perform their functions with energy, but with a subordinated energy, and in order that these lesser organisms should themselves perform their functions with energy, it is necessary that the cells comprising them should perform their functions with energy, but with a subordinated energy. If the energy of the cells becomes independent, the lesser organisms will likewise cease to subordinate

their energy to the total energy and the anarchy which is established constitutes the decadence of the whole. The social organism does not escape this law and enters into decadence as soon as the individual life becomes exaggerated beneath the influence of acquired well-being, and of heredity. A similar law governs the development and decadence of that other organism which we call language. A style of decadence is one in which the unity of the book is decomposed to give place to the independence of the page, in which the page is decomposed to give place to the independence of the phrase, and the phrase to give place to the independence of the word. A decadent style, in short, is an anarchistic style in which everything is sacrificed to the development of the individual parts.

(Ellis 1932: 52 [1889], see Gagnier 2010)

According to this definition, an exemplum of Decadent style is Joris-Karl Huysmans's description of the Crucifixion in *Là-Bas* (1891). Here the reader is increasingly distanced from the event—the holiest moment in Christendom—first by the fact that it is mediated through a work of art, Matthias Grünewald's *Crucifixion*, and then by the heightened artificiality of the language itself, in which "the unity of the book is decomposed to give place to the independence of the page, in which the page is decomposed to give place to the independence of the phrase, and the phrase to give place to the independence of the word":

> Purulence was setting in; the seeping wound in the side dripped thickly, inundating the thigh with blood that was like congealed blackberry juice; a milky pus tinged with pinkish hue, similar to those grey Moselle wines, oozed down the chest and over the abdomen with its rumpled loin-cloth. The knees had been forced together, twisting the shins outwards over the feet which, stapled one on top of the other, had begun to putrefy and turn green beneath the seeping blood. These congealing spongiform feet were terrible to behold; the flesh swelled over the head of the nail, while the toes, furiously clenched, with their blue, hook-like horns, contradicted the imploring gesture of the hand, turning benediction into a curse, as they frantically clawed at the ochre-coloured earth, as ferruginous as the purple soil of Thuringia.
>
> (Huysmans 2001: 3–14 and Gagnier 2010: 170–71)

To introduce such profane stylistic intrusions as "blackberry juice," "Moselle wines," "spongiform feet," and "ochre-coloured earth, as ferruginous as the purple soil of Thuringia" into the sacred scene—such decompositions or deformations of the relationship between part and whole were characteristic of Decadent literatures of the *fin de siècle*.

   Offering a survey of diverse literatures from the late nineteenth to the late twentieth century, this chapter will show that the factors contributing to the rise of the Decadent Movement in France and England—the decline of economic, social, religious, political, ethnic, regional, and gendered traditions under the forces of modernization that disrupted numerous relations of part to whole—have had similar effects elsewhere, giving rise to similar literary strategies. Literary decadence did not simply spread from Europe to other countries as a cultural movement, but it arose repeatedly and distinctly in response to changes or crises *within* various nations and

cultures. While many of the writers targeted or self-identified as decadent were familiar with European Decadence, others evidently responded to similar socio-political conditions with similar literary tactics. Even when ostensibly translated from European Decadent authors, translations were creative interventions within their own specific environments, with self-directed goals. In exploring a wide survey of literatures from an extended period of time, our references will often necessarily be cursory; in the early stages of this kind of transcultural research, they are provisionally intended to engage with deeper research in each literary tradition and to foster dialogue on global literatures of decadence.

Most discussions of Decadence at the *fin de siècle* begin with ancient Rome in the fifth century, yet Chinese literati were also formulating deviations that they called decadent as early as the sixth century, the late Tang period (Wu 1998; Owen 1992). Praise and blame were the two functions of poetry in ancient China, praise for moral influence and blame for the decadence of the morally fallen state (Zhang Longxi). Under the Confucian system, poetry was cast as sincere expression; its function was to serve the State and its moral and social concerns. Confucians and Daoists valued spontaneity and naturalness and distrusted overly sophisticated speech. Tang Palace Style poetry of the Southern Dynasties, as in Xu Ling's (507–83) *New Songs from Jade Terrace* on women at court, showed the poet's fascination with aesthetic, technical, formal qualities or Wen 文, and was called a decadent literature that had brought down a nation, both for its preoccupation with style and its unconventional subject matter, i.e. women. In "On Insect Carving," Pei Ziye (469–530) wrote, "In ancient times poetry consisted of Four Beginnings and Six Principles. It formed the moral and political atmosphere of the whole nation and displayed the will of gentlemen . . . Writers of the later age paid attention only to the leaves and branches; they adopted florid style to please themselves . . . From then on writers followed only the sound and shadow and gave up the correct model . . . If Jizi heard this he would not have regarded it as the music of a thriving nation; and Confucius would never have taught such poetry to his son. Xun Qing once said that 'in a chaotic time the writing is obscure and florid'" (Wu 30–31). The great aesthetician Liu Xie (5th century) wrote of the "Decline from the simple to the pretentious; literary style becomes more and more insipid as it approaches our own time" ("Wenxin diaolong" Wu 32). The politician, scholar, and calligrapher Yu Shinan (558–638) wrote, "His Majesty wrote a poem in the Palace Style and ordered Yu Shinan to match it. He said, 'Your Majesty's poem is indeed artful, but its style is not proper. When a monarch likes certain things, his subjects below will like them in the extreme. I fear that if this poem is passed around, the customs of the entire empire will become decadent. Thus I dare not accept your command'" (Wu 34). A thousand years later, in *Record of the Decadent Chalice* (1584) the Ming Minister Wang Shizhen continued to write of "governments of the time, retaining ancient names without ancient principles," concluding that "If government do not obtain the Way, nothing can be accomplished" (Hammond 1998: 36). Wang equally condemned decadent practices such as the improper granting of titles, the political influence of eunuchs, the erosion of the power of the literati (*shidafu*, Confucian scholar-officials) as arbiters of taste, the distortion of aesthetics by the marketplace, and the four-six style of ornate and flowery language suitable only for slander and flattery. The contemporary Syrian-Lebanese critic Adūnīs (Alī Ahmad Sa'īd) writes that it

was similar with classical Arabic, in which the Bedouin style was praised for its sincerity above that of the city (Adūnīs 2003).

In the modern period, the May Fourth movement from 1919 was arguably the greatest rejection of tradition in world history, the French Revolution paling in the face of China's critique of its 3000 years of culture. The May Fourth movement "grabbed" (拿来主义, *nalai zhuyi*) in Lu Xun's term what they wanted from the West in order to reform China, and deplored or ignored what they could not use in that service. What interested them about the West in contrast to their own Confucian tradition was its science, technology, and democracy; what they did not admire was its materialism and will to power at the expense of other cultures. The reforming literati explicitly admired authors identified with the European Decadent Movement such as Oscar Wilde, whose Salomé represented to them individual resistance against decadent authorities, both emperor and parent. They also admired Decadent illustrator Aubrey Beardsley, who died at 25; the poets Ernest Dowson, who died at 32, and John Davidson, who suicided at 51; and playwrights Henrik Ibsen and George Bernard Shaw, especially for their revisioning of gender roles. They often used two terms, *tuijiadang*, a transliteration from the French *décadent*, and, as the movement developed, *tuifei* 颓废, meaning dejected, abject, or downcast, with connotations of libidinal excess.

In the turmoil of early twentieth-century China—the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, power struggles between warlords and then between nationalists and communists, war with Japan, devastating flood and famine—literary interlocutors with those Yeats called the Tragic Generation often came to similar ends: Bai Cai (白采) made multiple suicide attempts and died at 32; Gao Changhong (高长虹) suffered mental breakdown; Wang Yiren (王以仁) suicided at 24; and Gu Zhongqi (顾仲起) suicided at 26 (Shih 2001; Liu 1995). Yu Dafu (郁达夫) wrote about suicide and the tragic generation in China of the 1920s–30s; his "Silver Grey Death"'s Chinese protagonist in love with a Japanese restaurateur's daughter transparently drew on the life of Ernest Dowson, whose unrequited love for the Polish restaurateur's daughter had become myth. Yu translated *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in 1922 and wrote on the *Yellow Book* in 1923. The reformers' self-consciously anti-Confucian, subjectivist literature included—like European, Russian, and Norwegian Decadent literatures—secluded, alienated, and even physically marked protagonists who were sickly, tall, or thin, with deep-set eyes and high protruding cheekbones. Emotionally and mentally unstable, they lived in obscure, dimly lit, unheated rooms; they moved with prostitutes on the streets, as in Knut Hamsun's *Hunger*. Yet their stories were set in Beijing or Japan, where many Chinese youths studied and were humiliated by China's fallen state. In "Sinking" (1921, in Lau and Goldblatt 2007: 31–55) Yu Dafu writes, "A rumor circulated among his Chinese friends that he was mentally ill. When the rumor reached him, he wanted as much to avenge himself on these few Chinese friends as on his Japanese schoolmates. He was finally so alienated from the Chinese that he wouldn't even greet them when he met them in the street . . . [43] . . . They call us *shinajin* Chinamen Oh China, my China, why don't you grow strong? [51–52] . . . China, my China, you are the cause of my death . . . Many of your children are still suffering [55]." Yet despite such evidence of self-hatred and humiliation in a culture in crisis, many of these writers were perplexed by their own ambivalence toward the new social movements; like the European

Decadents, they found themselves still attracted to their own repudiated ancient and exquisite material cultures (wen wu 文物)—porcelain, lacquerware, paper, fans, mirrors, vases—and traditions, a contradiction epitomized by the superb aesthetic writing in *Imperfect Paradise* and *Gazing at Rainbows* of Shen Congwen (1902–88) (Shen 1995).

Such contradictions led to an exacerbated relationship of part to whole. In "What is fin-de-siècle literature?" (1935), Yu Dafu defined decadent literature as an "individual struggling against the bonds of tradition in an age of rapidly developing material civilization," and he turned to the "problem fiction" of those excluded from traditional literary representation (Shih 123). While most modern Chinese literature did not ultimately focus on the decadent individual but rather on the decadent state and "worrying about China" under conditions of extreme and widespread upheaval, pain, and humiliation, the isolated and forlorn individual came to be a literary type, as it had in Europe. In *Dog* by Ba Jin (1931, Lau and Goldblatt: 110–15) the abject protagonist envies a dog:

> I don't know how old I am or what my name is. I'm like a stone that was cast into this world one day and came alive. I have no idea who my parents are. I'm like a lost object that no one ever bothered to come look for . . . I'm just one in the multitude and am destined to go on living among them.
>
> (110)

> I began to wonder if I really was a human being at all.
>
> (111)

> I stuck a sign on my back to show that I was for sale.
>
> (111)

> I had a vision of that white puppy snuggling up against those beautiful legs. I saw his comfortable life in a mansion with good food and warm blankets, smothered with tender loving caresses. Jealousy snaked into my heart. I crawled on the ground, rolling my head around, wagging my hindquarters in the air, and barking. I was trying my best to see if I could pass for a dog.
>
> (113)

> It bit me, and I bit it back . . . Immediately following . . . came a kick to my head from that beautiful leg. I held on to the dog and rolled on the ground . . . Hands were pulling at me, hitting me, but I held on to the little white dog with all my might.
>
> (115)

Kicked by the dog's owner, the protagonist is treated less humanely than the dog, reinforcing his self-image as less than human. Clinging desperately to another living organism, trying to become that organism, he is not so much an individual rebelling against his place, or lack of place, in the whole society, as a subject de-formed and re-formed by the conditions of a culture in crisis. Lydia Liu and Shu-mei Shih have argued that many of the libidinal and erotic tropes in the literature are to the ailing

nation or China itself, as in Yu's "O China, my China" above, and that much of the tension was between a desire for cosmopolitanism and loyalty to the struggling nation. Yet whether or not the term "nation" can be applied to China in this wartorn era, the extreme literature of individual and cultural humiliation is rife with the part/whole tensions that the early critics saw as characteristic of European Decadence.

If European Decadence, as in *À Rebours* or *Salomé,* often showed the individual developing at the expense of the whole, and in China it showed the exclusion of the masses of the poor and women, and China's weakness in relation to Japan, in Japan, decadence appeared in the form of excessive resistance to the collective imposition of identity. From the ninth century, there were many terms for cultural twilight, degeneration, downfall: *taito, taihai, tanbi, uto, noto, darak* (Karaki 1964), and the great intellectual historian Junzo Karaki identified these with fallen aristocrats of corrupt regimes, "beautiful in decadence and ethical in their independence" (Amano 2007). By the nineteenth century, Japanese literati were considering Japan's lost pre-eminence and working toward national unification through the apotheosis of the Emperor in the Meiji Restoration. In the 1860s the Meirokusha, the modernizers of the Meiji, were repudiating Confucianism and studying utilitarianism, rationalism, and militarism in their journal *Meiroku Zasshi* (Meiroku Journal, 明六雑誌). "Just as single-cell organs develop into multi-cell bodies, individuals join together into groups and ultimately develop into organic States" wrote Social Darwinists within the Meirokusha (Hane 1969: 364). This contributed to internal worries about totalitarianism, the struggle between the rights of the individual, and his or her duty to the state.

Ikuho Amano has argued that in the period 1905 to 1920—when the French term *décadent* was imported into Japanese and the Literary Group *Pan no Kai* (1908–12) appropriated *l'art pour l'ar*t in their magazine *Subaru* (*Pleiades*)—a "decadent" movement formed that recognized excluded subjectivities, a style of individualism, and the voices of many outside official history (Amano 2007). The "I-Novels" of the Meiji through the first half of the twentieth century, from their original roots in Naturalism to more recent postmodern forms, experimented with the intense self-consciousness and alienation from the mainstream that was characteristic of decadent literatures.

In Latin America also, a decadent literary movement developed first in relation to Europe but then to the writers' own indigenous and local structures. In Havana, the Parnassian, symbolist, and decadent Julián del Casal was obsessed with Gustave Moreau, dedicating sonnets on Moreau's paintings entitled "Prometeo," "La Aparicíon," "Venus Anadyomena," and so forth under the title "Mi museo ideal" and signing himself Moreau's disciple/lover "le plus obscure et le plus petit, mais le plus fervent, le plus sincere, le plus fidèle et le plus loyale de vos admirateurs and de vos serviteurs" (Glickman 1972/73; Nunn 1940). A precursor to the more critical Rubén Darío, Casal was an imitator of Europe who introduced modernism under the guises of love of beauty, exoticism, misery, aristocracy of art, and personal feeling. The Colombian José Asunción Silva is often compared to Casal. Casal died at 29 from tuberculosis. Silva—an explicit imitator of Poe—who was rumoured to have an incestuous relationship with his sister (see especially his "Día de Difuntos" [Day of the Dead] and "Nocturno") suicided in 1896. Their peer the Salvadoran Díaz Mirón (1853–1928) killed a man in self-defense and was imprisoned (see Franco 1994: 119–57).

By 1890, the Parisian journalist Max Leclerc (*Lettres du Brésil*, 1890) reported on France's cultural conquest of Brazil: Haussmannization, a socialist Left, a nationalist Right, French in taste, *boêmios/boêmia*. Many of the modernizing *jacobinos* (radical rationalists) were self-consciously Parisian (Needell 1983). Under the patrician engineer Francesco Periera Passos, the Haussmann of Rio, the city was modernized, but the modern was the decadent French while traditional customs were seen as "un-" or, in stadial theory, "pre-civilised." Both European modernity and its technique of self-criticism were absorbed, and by 1900 young Brazilians were dissatisfied with a decadent Europe and an imitative Brazil, and they sought for a Brazilian modernity. Another celebrated journalist, João do Rio, compiled collections on cinema, urban psychology, and the *Vida Vertiginosa* (1911), including "When will the Brazilian Discover Brazil," describing the metamorphosis from local traditions to impersonality, moral collapse, and servile attachment to foreign styles.

One of the greatest modernist writers confronted what Octavio Paz called modernity as the deprivation of a world-image in the magnificent *El Reino de Este Mundo* (1949). Borrowing from Franz Roh's study of African arts, Alejo Carpentier (1904–80) returned from Paris and defined the *real maravilloso*, magical realism, as the conflict between local traditions and the juggernaut of modernization in his Prologue to *The Kingdom of this World* (Carpentier 1949). The novel is set in Haiti, Cuba, and Jamaica after the liberation from France and under the rule of the black King Henri Christophe. It includes long passages reminiscent of Huysmans on toxic flora and olfactory liqueurs, magical Madingue heroes "with testicles like rocks," a mausoleum of a decadent king built with bull's blood, decadent erotomania for slave girls, ruins of plantations and planters, falls of civilizations, yet is nonetheless revolutionary and democratic. Also influenced by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (Ortiz 1940; 1947 English trans.), who coined the term "transculturation" in his brilliant *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*, Carpentier and his contemporary Miguel Angel Asturias in *Hombres de maíz/Men of Maize* (1949) depicted decadent Europe, indigenous and European mixed races, and cultures deprived of their world-images within local contexts of sugar, gold, oil, and revolution (Reid 1939). The Black Cuban poet Regino Pedroso borrowed the European form of *ritornellos* to show the cycles of suffering and self-contempt characteristic of much decadent literatures (Lancaster 1943: 84). Addressing mixed races, the Haitian poet Jacques Roumain excoriated whites:

> And the white man who made you a mulatto
> Is merely a flake of scum, far off, forsaken,
> Like saliva spat in the face of the river.

<div align="right">(Lancaster 84)</div>

And the Brazilian Cruz e Souza used Baudelaire and the French Symbolists to sing of a "bronze Christ" tempted by women and war:

> Nailed to the rough, harshest cross,
> The bronze Christ sings of sin,
> The bronze Christ laughs at lust.

<div align="right">(Lancaster 85)</div>

In a study of representations of Wilde's trials, Sylvia Molloy has shown how Latin American Modernists struggled between identification with the artistic styles of Decadence and their gender implications (Molloy 1999). She shows fascination with Wilde's anachronistic style of hair, costume, and even with his corpse on the part of Guatemalan Enriqué Gomez Carrillo, Cuban José Martí, and Nicaraguan Rubén Darío, even while she shows repudiation of the Europeans. Uruguayan José Enriqué Rodó rejects Darío's experimental *mollítas* (from the time of Ovid meaning soft or effeminate); Darío repudiates Wilde's excesses, Rachilde's gender-bending, and Verlaine's homosexuality; Martí repudiates Whitman's homoeroticism. Rodó wrote of Darío's poetry: "Voluptuousness at the very soul of these verses . . . Voluptuous softness . . . If there were an imminent war, I would forbid them" (Molloy 1992: 197). Camilla Fojas has also shown the internal struggles of the Latin American modernists with their simultaneous attraction to and repulsion from the European Decadents (Fojas 2005).

Yet Darío turned from his European-inspired *Los Raros* (*The Eccentrics* 1893–96) on Poe, Verlaine, *et al.* and *rarización* (making strange) to national and racial themes, aligning with the positive organicists (c. 1860–1900) to become radical on behalf of Indians, slaves, and workers. We see this reorientation of relations of part to whole away from Europe toward indigenous units in the work of Miguel Samper on Bogotá, Joaquín Capelo on Lima, and Juan A. García on Buenos Aires (Morse 1978). More entangled and sophisticated than North American debates on country versus city, these writers emphasized the African influence in Brazil, Cuba, and Venezuela and that of Indians in Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador. They also turned to the relation of regionalism to internationalism (Pym 1992). The critic Luis Oyarzun summarized it thus: "[In Latin American poetry] there is always a feeling . . . of the large geographical extensions yet unconquered, vibrating with a natural life more alive than the European one . . . [Humankind] wonders at the meaning of its life and of its relation to the creatures which surround it. An expression of an instinctive refusal of individualism and the unconscious hope for a life founded on an equilibrium between solitude and communion" (Oyarzun 1963: 435). Carleton Beals wrote of the Peruvian writers of the early twentieth century, "All born of the varying schools of decadence, modernism, skepticism, individualism, aestheticism . . . Being mostly mestizos, they have better insight into both cultures; but are frustrated in that their psychological outlook does not represent the political, social and intellectual amalgamation which they biologically embody . . . The mestizo does not feel that he *is* Peru . . . But he is perhaps better equipped to synthesize the significance of Peruvian life than either white or Indian writers" (Beals 1934: 376). The telluric epic fiction that developed into magical realism (Gonzalez 1943), with the conflicts of modernity between local tradition and foreign impact, also greatly influenced modern Chinese and Arabic fiction, as in Mo Yan's magnificent historical fiction of modern China *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* (1996).

The Mexican Revolution took place 1910–17, the fall of the Qing in 1911, and the Russian Revolution in 1917. Probably with the Japanese, the most extreme literature of Decadence was that of Russia during the imperial wars with Japan and the revolutionary periods immediately following. This remarkably painful literature shows extreme depictions of the will to change as a visceral force (Vitalism) and a

will to dominance, sadism, masochism, torture, necrophilia, and suicide, especially the suicides of children. The decadents in this literature are not rebels—though the Bolsheviks considered them so—but rather isolated, alienated, and motivated by perverse physiological drives (see Leonid Andreyev, Valery Briusov, Fyodor Sologub, and Zinaida Gippius, who may have been an hermaphrodite (Maslenikov 1952; Grossman 1983). Nature is not outdoors but indoors, within tortured psyches.

The immediate pre-history of Russian Decadence is in the contradictions of the Hebrew Revival and Slavophilia from the 1860s. Jewish writers were torn between a national literature devoted to a romantic ideal of Russia, often expressed in symbolist forms, and a desire to be cosmopolitan, European, and fashionably pessimist. They both read and feared (as did Gabriele D'Annunzio in Italy) the decadence of Wilde, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. Ya'akov Steinberg, H. D. Nomberg, Uri N. Gnessin, Micha Yosef Berdytchevsky, and Chaim Nachman Bialik were all influenced by the European Decadence, which they associated with individualism against Nationalism's unconscious vitalism and revolutionary hopes for Russia (Bar-Yosef 1994).

Like that of the European Decadents, the Russian literature in Hebrew was replete with affect of ennui (*shimamon*), boredom (*shiamum*), and emotional desolation (*shemama*). The protagonists expressed desperation, nausea, longing for death, social alienation, emotional indifference, consciousness of evil, and, in love, exaggerated cruelty and egoism. An early example is Bialik's *Ha'einayim Hare'evot* ("Those Hungry Eyes"):

> For a short moment I knew boundless joy and I blessed
> The hand that bestowed on me that sweet pain of pleasure
> And in a short moment of delight, of happiness and joy
> My entire world was destroyed—how high was the price I paid for your flesh.
>
> (1893–97 Trans. Naomi Sokoloff in Lodge 2007: 173)

More extreme is the Russian "Because she hadn't studied hard," Fyodor Sologub's Swinburnian sadistic revision of the relationship between Abelard and Héloïse:

> And, surrounded by joyous cherubim,
> A winged god smiles down at them,
> At the struggling, shapely legs,
> At the flashing, naked heels,
> At the fiery, scarlet weals,
> At the body where roses blaze.
>
> (1910 Lodge 137)

The conflict, as in the May Fourth or New Culture writers in China, between the will to change the world and individual, subjective will, afraid of what will come in the clash of empires, appears in Valery Briusov's "The Last Martyrs" (1906): "It is an era of new life, which will unify our entire epoch into a single whole with the Russo-Japanese War and Charlemagne's campaigns against the Saxons. But we, all of us who are caught between two worlds, will be ground into dust on those gigantic millstones" (in Lodge 23).

In Briusov's classic meditation on the Revolution, "The Republic of the Southern Cross" (1905), a perfectly ordered, successful society is destroyed by an outbreak of irrationality called "Contradiction" that undermines all efforts at social planning:

> The disease ["Contradiction"] got its name from the way its victims constantly contradict their own desires, wanting one thing, but saying and doing another. . . . It usually begins with rather weakly presenting symptoms, primarily in the form of a peculiar aphasia. An infected person says "no" instead of "yes"; wanting to say some tender words, he instead showers his addressee with invective. In the majority of cases, the patient begins to contradict himself in his actions as well; intending to go to the left, he turns right; thinking he will raise his hat so he can see better, he pulls it down over his eyes. As the disease develops, these "contradictions" begin to fill the entire physical and mental life of the patient—manifesting, of course, in infinite variety according to the particularities of each individual . . . An infected doctor prescribed an unquestionably lethal medication to a little girl, who subsequently died. Then two nannies at the kindergarten slit the throats of forty-one children. Then two men with the disease rolled a machine gun out of the building that housed the city police and sprayed the peacefully passing crowd with a hail of bullets.
>
> (in Lodge 56–58)

In Briusov's "Now that I'm awake", the protagonist's greatest pleasure is giving pain; he learns to torture in his dreams (he sleeps all the time) and brutally murders his wife. In Sologub's "The Sting of Death", adults are worthless, children are corrupted, and two boys commit suicide. In Andreyev's "In the Fog", a boy with syphilis (from Huysmans on, an apparently universal decadent trope) murders a prostitute then self-murders. Gippius's "Moon Ants" (1910), after H. G. Wells's *The First Men in the Moon* (1901), is a diary set in 1909 about the "Years of Transformation," in which everyone is killing themselves for no reason except that they are also being killed. In Andreyev's "Story of Sergei Petrovich" (1906), an ordinary member of the herd, without talent, reads Nietzsche and begins to act on the basis of profound *ressentiment*. He reflects on the usefulness of the proletariat: "I don't want to be mute material for the happiness of others; I want to be happy, strong and free myself, and that is my right" (in Lodge 300). The will to change the world is opposed to extreme individual will; the new socialist world is opposed to that of ancient art and tradition. Lu Xun included Andreyev in his and his brother Zhou Zouren's 1909 *Collection of Fiction from Abroad* (*Yuwai xiaoshuo ji* 域外小说集) of minor, oppressed, injured, and emergent global narratives.

After the Napoleonic invasions, the Ottoman state undertook an auto-genetic political and administrative reorganization called the Tanzimat whose goal was to create an efficient modern state. Traditional communalism and modes of commodity production and exchange were perceived as "backwards." The necessary ideological component of the Tanzimat was *Al-nahdah*, the cultural renaissance or Risorgimento, which involved first an encounter with the West and, subsequently, a retrospective into the Arab-Islamic past. This was not the recent "decadence" (*inhitat*) of the Ottomans, but an idealized "classical" era of some seven centuries earlier (Allen 1998; Hourani 1967; Hanssen 2005). Though opposed in their

attitudes to the West, the conservatives and the westernized Arab-Muslims came to find common ground in the history of Arab peoples and Islamic culture. The rights of the individual, constitutionalism, distribution of wealth, freedom of expression, and equality of the sexes were seen to be part of long-established Arab-Muslim institutions. In Egypt from the 1880s to WWII, women's literary salons produced liberal fiction; the Arab Academy of Damascus was established in 1919 to regenerate Arabic language and history.

The State replaced all Ottoman social, political, and cultural institutions with Western models, including replacing the Arabo-Persian alphabet with Latin phonetic orthography; yet writers often clung to symbolism and nostalgia. The enforced modernization process produced the Arabic Romantics, who reacted to Al-nahdah's positivism with symbolism, transcendentalism, nationalism, and spiritualism. The Lebanese critic, activist, and littérateur Amin Rihani (1876–1940) in *The Book of Khalid* (1911), the Egyptian Muhammed Husayn Haykal (1888–1956), Kahlil Gibran (1883–1931) in *The Path of Vision* (1921) and *The Prophet* (1923), and Mikhail Nu'ayamah in *The Book of Mirda* (1948) desired power without Western decadence and employed self-orientalizing to criticize Western selfishness and materialism. Influenced by French Symbolists, American Transcendentalists, and the English Pre-Raphaelites, they expressed the crisis of modernization, in which Al-nahdah criteria condemned the native subject to perpetual catch-up with the West. Rihani is fascinated with the arabesques of the Fauvist Kees Van Dongen's decadent women who "are essentially Parisian, Baudelairian – powdered, painted, passionate, nervous, lascivious . . . marvellous eyes made more mysterious with kohl; seductive, destructive mouths made more voluptuous with rouge; lithe limbs made more fascinating in satanic undulations of limbs and curves . . . adorable and dangerous women who combine the latest Paris manner, gesture, and social disease with the most primitive elemental instinct" (in Sheehi 2006: 87). Yahya Kemal's *inkiraz* or decadence consists in admitting the impossibility of restoring the past as a whole; Turkish conservatism struggles with the Republican regime (as in the Russian literatures). In Muhammad Iqbal's (1877–1938) prose poem *Javidnama* (1932), Nietzsche enjoys a station at the gate of the Garden of Paradise for his subtle negotiation between modernism and Islam; lacking knowledge of God, he still seeks to transcend reason and philosophy. This leads Nergis Ertürk to conclude that Turkish modernization took the form of spiritual interiors, heterogeneous street languages, and marginalized peoples emerging as an effect of engagement with a spiritualist-modernist "foreign" (Nergis Ertürk, "Modernism Disfigured: Turkish Literature and the 'Other West'" in Wollaeger and Eatough 2012: 529–50).

Similarly in the Balkans, the symbolism of romantic nationalism was often opposed to the social realism of communists in Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania (Sanja Bahun, "Balkans Uncovered" in Wollaeger and Eatough 25–47), giving rise to perverse, extreme, or hallucinatory literatures. In 1933, the Futurist Benedikt Livshits called the landscape of Chernianka in the area of the Black Sea known as Hylaea "a mytheme that gives wing to the will" (Harsha Ram, "Futurism between Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism" in Wollaeger and Eatough 326). As in Briusov's decadent masterpiece, the courtly love novel *The Fiery Angel* (1907) (Briusov 2005), these works are replete with mystic-pantheistic images, archaisms, neologisms, with modernist parts in tension with traditional wholes and the reverse, spiritual or ethnic traditions in tension

with modern forms (see Lasgush Poradeci in Albania). In Bulgaria, symbolist aesthetics, Eastern philosophies, occult, indigenous pagan sects, and mystic individualism are in tension with communist nationalism. In Romania, polyvocality is in tension with socialist realism. Sanja Bahun calls such forms Balkan "Modernisms," but the actual literature reads very similar to that in the Russian Decadence: ambivalence and stress between the activist-progressive and national-organic-regressive; between the heteroglossic, linguistically adventurous and the locally conservative or defensive; between cosmopolitanism as a formal and a substantive choice; between the poles of progress/optimism/hope and nostalgia/resentment/melancholy.

I conclude with an example of how the frame of part to whole can make sense of literatures that might otherwise seem to be merely decadent in superficial senses. Because of the preoccupation of "worrying about China" (Davies 2007) that was central to modern Chinese literature before the founding of the PRC, the extreme Decadent versions of egotism, sadism, pessimism, and so forth were infrequent in comparison with Russia and Europe. There is one author, however, whom reviewers typically brand as decadent. Here are some typical quotations from Su Tong's 1990s novel *Rice:*

> The subtle fragrance of raw rice and the strong scent of a woman's sex achieved a wondrous unity on the palms of his grimy hands.
>
> (Su 1995: 78)

> Rice enveloping feminine flesh, or feminine flesh wrapped around rice, always drove him into a state of uncontrollable sexual desire.
>
> (129)

> Whoring was his great pleasure. And wherever he went he carried a small cloth bag filled with raw rice; at the critical moment, he would take out a handful and cram it inside the woman.
>
> (159)

Reviews of *Rice* in both the Asian and Anglophone press—here randomly selected from the internet—responded with condemnations of its decadence: "Disgusting"; "Graphic perspective on the psyche of cruelty"; "Sadistic"; "extreme egotism"; "There is no reprieve, no justice and no individual triumph. At the end, the reader is just left exhausted; as having gone through a dark tunnel of despair and wickedness only to perversely yearn for more"; "All of his peasants are ignoble; all of his capitalists are corrupt; and there's no redemption in sight." One review, in the *New York Times* (20 Nov. 1995), makes the novel sound like Dostoevsky. Although Dostoevsky is much more than Decadent, his readers will know that he also frequently exhibits the concerns and characteristics of Decadent writers of the later nineteenth century. The *Times* reviewer could be writing of *The Brothers Karamazov* (1878–80) transposed to 1930s' Shanghai: "The Great Swan Rice Emporium is turned into a minor sort of hell. There are loose women, gangsters, sexual predators, gamblers, weaklings, tyrants, prostitutes—the whole ill-favored, deformed human family."

Yet in our view, in *Rice,* Su Tong was following the events of China in the 1930s and showing typical decadent patterns of relation of part to whole: civil war between

communists and nationalists; war with Japan, in which torture was rampant and many were betrayed by collaborators; catastrophic flood and famine; widespread venereal disease; and "the Food Problem" around rice, the traditional symbol of Chinese civilization and heaven's bounty. In the novel, rice is food, rice is wine and vinegar to drink and bathe in (as relief from syphilis), rice is a bed to sleep and have sex on. Rice fills the vaginas of wives and prostitutes and is a murder weapon to smother, and a tool of suicide to strangle, children. Rice gives people their names like Rice Boy, and it is the only source of wealth.

For those of us interested in the relation of literary forms like Decadence to social formations, it is significant that rice is the geopolitical commodity *par excellence*. Providing 23 percent of the world's calories, in the 1930s it manifested itself as the Food Problem and the nationalists tried desperately to regulate its balance of trade, while, partly in response to the Food Problem, Chairman Mao conceived of the Great Leap Forward of the 1950s. The 1930s were an era of war and modernization, in which China arguably became a modern national economy through a regime of social surveys and quantification, in part in response to the Food Problem (Lee 2010). The zeal for science and technology was so intense, due to the Food Problem, that high-ranking members of the Guomindang proposed that Chinese universities should stop admitting students of humanities and laws for a decade in order to promote science and technology exclusively.

My point is that rice, the decadent fetish in the novel—Freud also defined fetishism as a repressed relation between part and whole (Freud 1927)—is the geopolitical commodity as decadent fetish, representing the protagonist's lost home and lost mother, the only source of consolation/compensation for extreme loss and subsequent lives of humiliation. "Settling finally on the storeroom, he rolled up his mat and fell asleep naked on a mound of rice. It was rice, and rice alone, that had a calming, cooling effect on him; all his life it had comforted him" (241). The last lines of the novel show the relation of part to whole at that moment in China's history, "RICE— His head moved toward the mound of rice as he uttered one last word . . . He knew only that he had been an orphan ever since he could remember, and that he had fled Maple-Poplar Village during a catastrophic flood. The last image he ever saw was of himself floating on the surface of a boundless expanse of water, moving farther and farther away, like an uprooted rice plant" (266). Rice represents the whole that is lost as the uprooted, abject, migrant individual must find his way in a shattered world.

The factors that instigated the rise of the Decadent Movement in France and England—the decline of economic, social, religious, political, ethnic, and gender traditions under the forces of modernization—seem to have had similar effects elsewhere, resulting in diverse literatures of decadence. The characteristics of Decadent literatures thus appear at different times in different cultures, but typically at those moments of cultural transition, when local traditions meet the forces of modernization. Although writers were often aware of European Decadent literatures, literary Decadence did not merely spread from France and Britain to other countries as a cultural movement but arose repeatedly and distinctly in response to changes and crises within various nations and cultures, and these underwrote formal resemblances.

And these "expressions" have often elicited similar formal responses from dominant powers, often in the form of ideological slogans used politically to target noncompliance with the contested norms. Elsewhere I have shown how decadent writers

across cultures will subvert ideological memes through processes of what Guy Debord called the revolutionanry style of diversion (Gagnier 2011). In the twentieth century alone, the rhetoric of purgation of decadence indicated ideological targets under Hitler, Stalin, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution 1966–76, the Khmer Rouge, Viet Nam Democratic Kampuchea 1975–79, Idi Amin's Uganda, Neo-Conservatives and the fundamentalist Right in the United States, and on and on. Those who see themselves as decadents, and those who target others as such, echo each other across cultures while continually reinventing decadent literatures.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE CITY AND URBAN LIFE

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Peter Fritzsche

"They were nearing Chicago." Among the travellers on the train in August 1889 was Caroline Meeber, who had left Columbia City, Wisconsin, to find a better life in the city. Out the window she could already see the fringes of the city: "lines of telegraph poles stalking across the fields," followed by "big smoke stacks towering high in the air," and, closer to the railway terminal, "dingy houses, smoky mills, tall elevators" alongside "vast net-works of tracks." "Bells clanged, the rails clacked, whistles sounded afar off," until the brakeman slammed open the door and called out: "Chicago!–Chicago!" The sights and sounds of this first arrival continued to resonate. Carrie was irresistibly drawn to the movement on the streets outside her sister's modest house on the West Side and to the crowds outside the restaurants, theaters, and department stores along Chicago's boulevards downtown. As Theodore Dreiser described it in his 1900 novel, *Sister Carrie*, the young woman would have to find and keep a job, and pay the rent, but she also hoped that the lights of the city that had been so obviously "set for dining" would turn out to have been set "for me" (Dreiser 1981: 9–11).

Dreiser and his character, Carrie, followed thousands of men and women to Chicago. From places like Columbia City, Wisconsin, or Terre Haute, Indiana, Dreiser's own hometown, immigrants streamed into cities around the world, making urban life a fundamentally new and increasingly commonly shared experience at the turn of the twentieth century. "Between 1789, when Gen. George Washington set out from Mount Vernon for New York City to be sworn in as the nation's first president, and 1889, when Jane Addams set out from Rockford, Illinois, to open a settlement house in a Chicago slum, America's urban population had increased more than one hundred times, while the total population had multiplied only sixteen times," writes Donald Miller (Miller 1996: 181). New York City was the largest city in the United States in 1900, with over 4 million inhabitants, but Chicago's population had grown at a truly incendiary rate. It had exploded from 30,000 in 1850 to half a million in 1880 only to more than triple in size in the next twenty years.

What occurred in the United States was a global process. In 1900, one in seven people in Wales and England lived in London, the world's largest metropolis with

over 6 million inhabitants. Between 1848 and 1905, the population of Berlin leaped from 400,000 to 2 million; suburbs ringing the city added another 1.5 million. Like Berlin, St. Petersburg was a modestly sized imperial capital in 1800 but a hundred years later emerged as a teeming industrial settlement, the eighth-largest city in the world with 1.5 million inhabitants. Shanghai was also unremarkable for much of the nineteenth century, but the establishment of the international concession in the 1840s provided the foundation for a city of 1.3 million by 1910. Older cities such as Tokyo tripled in size in the fifty years after the Meiji Restoration; 1.6 million people lived there in 1908. Much smaller cities such as Cracow, Beirut, and Pittsburgh grew rapidly as well. But the growth of population was only one register of urbanization. Industrialization, commercialization, and colonization (or Westernization) fundamentally altered how places from maritime Beirut in the Ottoman Empire to conservative Chengdu in late Qing China operated. Both established residents and unsophisticated newcomers encountered new forms of life and calibrated themselves to rhythms that no longer collapsed in cycles of rise and fall but seemed to move insistently forward. Cities incorporated the future tense: as Carrie's travelling companion remarked, "Chicago is getting to be a great town" (Dreiser 1981: 10). There were new streets to life in a figurative as well as a literal sense. In the nineteenth century, two global trends combined: more and more people lived in cities and cities became more and more the crossroads of unprecedented cultural, economic, and political change that was at once perilous, opportune, and spectacular. No matter how it was experienced, city life demanded considerable adjustment on the part of city people old and new. Across the world, the door was slammed open to a call that was very much like what Carrie heard in 1889: "Chicago!–Chicago!"

With her "cheap imitation alligator skin satchel" and "yellow leather snap purse," items which attested to the ways in which Chicago commodities had reached places like Columbia City, Carrie appeared outfitted for the city, but not when compared to the man she met on the train, a travelling "drummer" for an up-and-coming manufacturing house and a "masher" when it came to appreciating young women. His brown wool business suit, cut in a "striped and crossed pattern" that was "very popular at that time," the high white collar, the gold watch chain, the broad-soled tan shoes, and, of course, the grey "fedora" all indicated that he stood at the center of a "dim world of fortune" about which Carrie could only dream (Dreiser 1981: 3, 5–6). She might have been "the best and dearest girl in half the world," but, as the novelist Henry Blake Fuller described one of his heroines who had also just arrived by train in Chicago, "all her experiences have lain between Sandusky and Omaha" (Fuller 1894: 5). The urbane "drummer" did not just have clothes, he also had an "air" about him which suggested his ability to make his way in the train stations, broadways, and entrepôts of the city—"Chas. H. Drouet" read his business card. "It felt different for individuals to live in this new urban zone," writes Robert Alter: to "walk the city streets, to enter into the urban crowds, to be exposed to the exponential increase of noise and bustle" (Alter 2005: xi). To arrive in the city was to enter an astonishing construction site—"Bareheaded, Shoveling, Wrecking, Planning, Building, breaking, rebuilding," is how Carl Sandburg described Chicago and its settlers (Starkey and Guzman 1999: 123–24). (Sandburg was born in Galesburg, Illinois, in 1878, and resided in the streetcar suburbs of America's "second city" after detours in Denver and Omaha.) City people experienced

enormous new freedoms, and reorganized their sense of self, but they also took enormous risks. Cities made it imperative for individuals to find their way, which was often confounding, and cities made it possible for them to make their own way, which was not always easy.

The city was overwhelming to newcomers; the doors slammed open. To ascend the 346 steps of the Doric column called the Monument, which commemorated the Great Fire of 1666, earned tourists the privilege of seeing the unfurled panorama of the great city of London. "At the foot of the Monument . . . were the warehouses, offices, and banks of the City or Square Mile . . . immediately to the south, the docks and wharves lining the Thames . . . to the east were 'miles of mean streets . . . smokey, dirty, unbeautiful.' This was the East End of London . . . To the west, in the immediate foreground, was the massive dome of St. Paul's Cathedral and beyond that the spires of Westminster, while above and past the Houses of Parliament London's West End contained the 'familiar succession of terraces, parks and gardens, upon which are concentrated the most lavish display of wealth and ostentation at present manifest in the world.' To the north were the grimy streets of working-class Holborn, Clerkenwell, Kings Cross, Finsbury, and Islington, above them the greener leafier reaches of Hampstead [and] Highgate" (Schneer 1999: 4). Actually London was particular for offering a panorama; in many cities it was difficult to get a point of orientation, a bewilderment that was a constituent part of modern urban life. Indeed, the "shifting, insubstantial mists" of London's famous fogs "baffled [the] eye" as much as the Monument might have enlightened it. The fog was an appropriate setting for Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and for the "changing identities and secret lives" of the city itself. "For a moment, the fog would be quite broken up and a haggard shaft of daylight" would reveal "a dingy street, a gin palace, a low French eating house," but "the next moment the fog settled down again" and cut the observer off "from his blackguardly surroundings" (Stevenson 2003: 13, 23).

If traditional cities were constructed like houses to offer shelter, and were surrounded by high walls, the nineteenth-century city extended along streets that broke up the encasement. "In the space of a generation," writes Peter Carroll about *fin-de-siècle* Suzhou, "city walls were transformed in the popular imagination from useful protective structures into encumbrances that clogged traffic and impeded commercial development" (Carroll 2006: 90). The movement of things and people on the streets, the commonplace encounter with strangers, and the insistent juxtaposition of new and old and rich and poor—all this registered the immensity of the city as much as its expansiveness. Indeed, the panorama from the Monument was quite misleading because it suggested that the city had a definitive order about it—East, West, South, North—when most city people could hardly avoid feelings of disorientation and sensations of shock and surprise. The streets, with the whirl of constant circulation, suggested that everything in the city was in transition—"the family, history, politics, and above all, consciousness itself." To become part of the *fin-de-siècle* city was to take the measure of circulation and movement, of wreckage and reconstruction, "of doors opening and shutting" (Alter 2005: 95).

An average of 164 people migrated to Chicago every day in the twenty years before the turn of the twentieth century. Like Sister Carrie, most of them arrived by train. The city's railway terminals handled more than 1,000 trains a day in this

period, an extraordinary volume of traffic especially in light of the fact that railway lines started and ended in Chicago so that cross-country travellers often had to stay overnight, which added to the curbside bustle around hotels and restaurants. Three million travellers got on and off trains at Tokyo's Shimbashi Station in 1907 (Seidensticker 1983: 229). Around the world, train stations were the physical point at which the urban machinery was set in motion. The very term "Grand Central Station," which opened for business in Chicago in 1890 and New York City in 1913, suggested the station's functional role in circulating goods and people. The stations were also grand because they were opulent: Bombay's Victoria Terminus offered visitors "a fantasy of domes, turrets and spires, pointed arches and rose windows littering with stained glass" (Smith 2012: 22). Indeed, the famous Oyster Bar in Grand Central Station in New York has been open continuously since 1913.

The *fin de siècle* around 1900 was characterized by the installation in cities of systems to move around people and transport commodities. Nothing better indicates the gospel of development and commerce than the replacement of city walls with traffic arteries as was the case in Paris (the *Périphérique*), Berlin (the *Stadtbahn*), and Vienna (the *Ringstrasse*). Of course, development enhanced the dual roles of the city as capital and metropolis; great administrative complexes, new palaces such as Istanbul's Dolmabahçe Palace, and public gardens burnished the capital. But what really changed the face of the city and the quality of urban life was the reconstruction of the metropolis as a nodal point of commerce: bigger train stations, post offices, factories, and department stores, wider streets, and more extensive intra-urban transportation lines. More than anything, the street, its quotidian usefulness in the production and consumption of goods and services, as well as its recreational aspects, defined the development of the new city. Indeed, transport over, under, through, and between streets became the very symbol of the new city, whether the example is the subway in New York (Duke Ellington's 1941 "Take the 'A' Train" "to go to Sugar Hill way up in Harlem"), the double-decker buses in London ("the way to see London is from the top of a bus," said the many-serving Prime Minister Gladstone), the ferries in Istanbul (companies such as *Şirket-i Hayriye* competed for the loyalty of customers who, in turn, wrote poems celebrating or mocking the ferry boats), or the rickshaws in Shanghai (an iconic city type, the embodiment of the precariousness of urban existence, the "rickshaw boy" became the subject of a famous 1937 novel by Lao She). Two machines, in particular, circled the globe and put their stamp on cities around 1900: the streetcar and the bicycle. They became global commodities alongside cigarettes (and cigarette cards), movies, Singer sewing machines, postcards, and the fedora like the one "Chas. H. Drouet" wore.

Streetcars are an efficient index of urban development. They required capital and an interface with a central city administration and they indicated the metropolitan scale to activities in the city, first and foremost the separation of work and home, and the wherewithal of common people to spend streetcar fare, which Sister Carrie, for one, was reluctant to do. By 1892, Chicago had almost 1000 miles of streetcar track, all fully electrified (Miller 1996: 177). Streetcars arrived in Beirut the same year. After the turn of the century, they appeared in Cracow and Shanghai. Wherever streetcar lines were laid, they quickly became a fixture in urban life, a scary thing at first perhaps—the cars rumbled down the track "like a drunk," remembered Cracow's Eleonora Gajzlerowa; "I always had the impression they would leap off

the track"—but soon entirely everyday, so much so that early in the morning or late in the afternoon streetcars passed Berlin's suburban stations every twenty seconds (Wood 2010: 130; Fritzsche, 1996: 62). And on Sundays, as many as 1.2 million Berliners—almost half the able-bodied city—stepped onto the *Grosse Berliner* for an outing, which indicates that most people could afford to pay the fare. That was not the case in St. Petersburg where many workers found the cheapest ticket at forty-two kopeks, twice the fare of Berlin, too dear. As a result, the intra-urban mobility of the work force lagged behind in the Russian capital. Not even the rich commuted; only one of St. Petersburg's bankers worked more than 5 kilometers from home at a time when commutes of up to 19 kilometers were not uncommon among Pittsburgh's (Bater 1976: 334, 402). And without streetcars or streetcar riders, no "streetcar suburbs."

Bicycles were also a new-fangled invention of the late nineteenth century and, like streetcars, they required modern paved roads. Most bicycling was recreational; at the end of the nineteenth century, most city people still walked to work or they rode the streetcar. It was not until the 1950s that Beijing or Shanghai became a bicycling city of blue-smocked commuters. Even so, the cycling fashion spread quickly among men and then women; Chicago, the home of Arnold, Schwinn & Co., boasted 500 bicycle clubs by 1895 (Spinney 2000: 86). Bicycles were popular because they were a symbol of the independence that came with mobility. In Cracow, the freedoms female cyclists allowed themselves earned them either rebuke ("Miss, your panties are showing") or an invitation ("give me a kiss") (Wood 2010: 197). But the satisfaction of learning to ride a bike was real. Franz Göll was over thirty when he learned: "I couldn't believe that I was really sitting on a bicycle and riding out into the world." "Of course," the Berliner added, "at first I had to pay my 'dues,'" but he quickly turned out to be "a jaunty Sunday cyclist," reaching a speedy tempo, negotiating turns and crossing streetcar tracks, and responding alertly to obstacles on the street (Fritzsche 2011: 103–04). Given these achievements, advice books at the turn of the century recommended bicycling as a way to discipline the body and reduce the nervous agitation that city life had heightened.

Yet there were reasons to be nervous. Portrayals of urban life repeatedly and pointedly described the dangers of city traffic. Every new technology of transportation introduced into the city initially raised fears: the railroad came with "railroad spine"; automobiles added extraordinary speed and mass to the streets and the thousands of rickshaw pullers in Shanghai or Beijing came to despise them; even bicyclists lost control of their vehicles and collided with pedestrians. Big-city newspapers were full of the reports of accidents from the occasional horse-carriage mishaps on Chengdu's new Chang Gate horse road to the daily toll of mangled bodies along Chicago's grade crossings—alone forty-three lines of track spread out south and west into the city's neighborhoods from the stockyards. Indeed, it became a typical feature of turn-of-the-century journalism to stand on a street corner and count the traffic that served as an index of metropolitan progress but also a reminder of how difficult it had become to cross the road. On one day in New York in the 1880s, "over 22,000 vehicles passed the intersection of Broadway and Fulton between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.," one every two seconds. London was just a little less busy. In 1897, the junction of Cheapside and Newgate "was passed by an average of twenty-three vehicles a minute during working hours." For one hour in
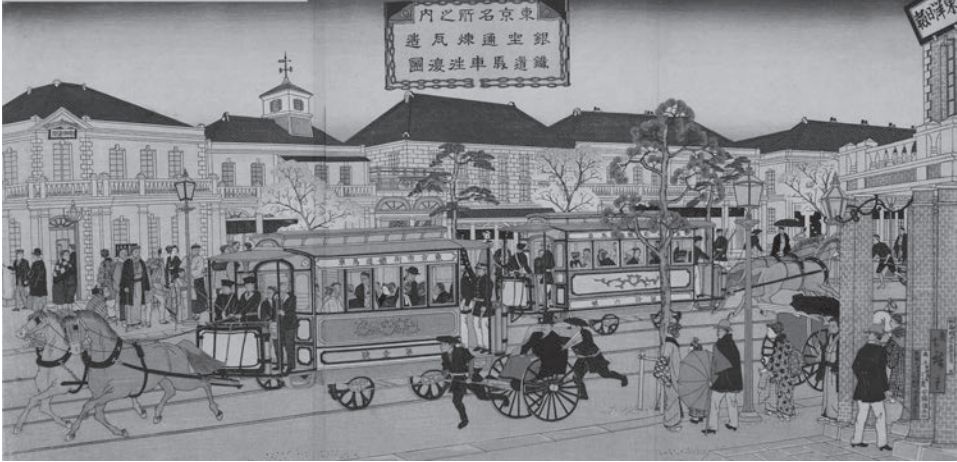
Figure 2.1 Illustration of a railway coach on Ginza Brick Masonry Street in Tokyo (Utagawa Kuniteru II 1882) © 2012 Tokyo Metropolitan Library. All rights reserved

October 1900, a reporter for *BZ am Mittag* counted "416 streetcar wagons, 146 omnibuses, 564 carriages and automobiles, 538 other vehicles, 54 coaches, and 138 three-wheelers" crossing Berlin's Potsdamer Platz. The "average census of traffic passing at the junction of Nanking Road and Kingsu Road" in Shanghai at the end of February 1918 was as follows: "rickshaws 14,663; pedestrians 30,148; carriages 942; motor-cars 1,863; wheel-barrows 2,582, handcarts 527; bicycles 772; pony-carts 129; tram-cars 754" (Smith 2012: 118; Ackroyd 2001: 592; Fritzsche, 1996: 190; Lee 1999: 16). Of course, congestion was at its worst during "rush hour," a term which dates from the 1890s and insinuated itself as far as streetcar-commuting Tokyo as the novels of Natume Soseki confirmed (Soseki 1972: 12).(Observers also became the subjects of city mayhem as the term "traffic jam" eventually succeeded the more literal "traffic block" a few years later.) Accidents could only be avoided if city people were "drilled into the new system of 'hurrying up'" (Dobson 1910: 116).

In the United States, the newly platted city streets were generally wide enough to accommodate the new traffic, but the railroad lines circumscribed the direction of growth. In Chicago, for example, the business district between the Chicago River and Lake Michigan was hemmed in on three sides, which "drove up city-center real estate prices and caused businesses to build into the sky to maximize land use" (Miller 1996: 184). In time, downtown emerged as a bustling financial and service center by day, into which the "cliff-dwellers" (as Henry Blake Fuller called them in his 1893 novel) who worked in the "skyscrapers" (a term which entered Maitland's *American Slang Dictionary* in 1891) commuted, and a lively entertainment district filled with restaurants, theaters, and hotels by night (Smith 2012: 193). Fewer and fewer people actually lived downtown. Elsewhere, the narrow alleys lined with tiny shops and stalls were paved and widened as in Shanghai or torn down altogether as in Beirut. In Chengdu and Suzhou new gates bored into the city walls facilitated the more efficient movement of goods and people. Wherever new roads were built, as was the case with the horse road in Suzhou or Nanjing Road in Shanghai, commercial

enterprise boomed, as did the turnover of business in teahouses and restaurants. In the late Qing novel *The Nine-Tailed Turtle* (1906), as Peter Carroll describes it, "the ne'er-do-well Zhang Qiugu travels less than a day from his home in nearby Changshou County to a fantastic and unusual place, Suzhou's first and only improved macadam street." The traffic was sensational as well: "carts flowed like water and horses flew like dragons. It was really hopping" (Carroll 2006: 23). Electrification at the beginning of the twentieth century added to the spectacle and pulled commerce and entertainment into nighttime hours.

Of course, not everyone used the amenities of the downtown districts. But thousands of people did travel to the new centers even in the colonial "double towns" which segregated European from "native" districts. In Chengdu, the Center for Promoting Industry and Commerce opened in 1909. It was basically a shopping mall covering 150 shops attracting shoppers as well as spectators. One day, "a reporter from *Popular Daily* counted 33,756 men and 11,340 women visitors to the Center" (Di 2003: 113). In Shanghai, department stores such as Sincere and Wing On which had opened on Nanjing Road in the 1910s and 1920s attracted great crowds of Chinese residents who rode up the "escalators leading to variegated merchandise on different floors" and enjoyed the attractions of "dance halls and rooftop bars, coffeehouses [and] restaurants" (Lee 1999: 13). In Beyoğlu, the 'foreign' quarter of Istanbul, the most crowded place was the department store, the Bon Marché, an import from Paris. Fixed prices and annual events such as Bon Marché's "exposition du blanc" further enhanced business. Tokyo's department stores well understood their powers of attraction as the advertising jingle "Today the Imperial [Theater], tomorrow Mitsukoshi" indicated. However, Mitsukoshi's growth was initially limited by the custom of checking footwear at the door and receiving special slippers, tens of thousands of which were kept ready (Seidensticker 1983: 113).

Just moving about the city became a sensual experience of sight and sound. "To see a little of the city," Sosuke decided to board a Tokyo streetcar in Soseki's 1909 novel *The Gate*. "Overhead, filling every available space," were advertisements: "It's easy if you leave the moving to us" read one, offering service of a transport company, or the "white letters on a red background," announcing a theater adaptation of a Tolstoy novel. Along the street, Sosuke browsed the stores with their displays of gold watches, stylish cravats, and silk hats, and around the corner he saw a man in a derby hat selling giant balloons: "Buy a balloon for the kiddies" (Soseki 1972: 12–16). On 10 July in the same year, Berlin's *Morgenpost* invited readers to enjoy the "Strassenbahn-Ausblicke" by taking a ride on streetcar line Number 74. From affluent Schöneberg over Potsdamer Platz and Alexanderplatz, to proletarian Friedrichshain, the journey exposed the variegated physiognomy of the city: sleek automobiles, dusty trucks, quiet gardens, busy intersections, pounding factories (Fritzsche 1996: 103). Of course, many of the sights that cities offered were imperial and national. It was not so long ago that a generation could still remember that no trip to Wilhelmine Berlin was complete without a stroll down Unter den Linden to catch a glimpse of the Kaiser in his castle. Itineraries in London always included Trafalgar Square and the 176-feet high column commemorating the naval hero Lord Horatio Nelson at its center. But most city people were drawn to the commercial sights, the new horse road in Suzhou, the Center for Promoting Industry and Commerce in Chengdu, Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, the Eiffel Tower in Paris,

Figure 2.2   Café Josty in Berlin © Tropea, Robert/Landesarchiv Berlin

the Union Stockyards in Chicago, and Broadway, which "in straight New York . . . runs riot."

Turn-of-the-century advertising jingles—my favorite is "No Kiss is True Without Odol," a German mouth freshener—indicated the degree to which the spectacular city enabled city people to possess common metropolitan sentences, perceptions, and ultimately experiences. Even working-classers who snacked in the chain restaurant Aschinger, treated themselves to an evening in the cavernous hall of the Rheingold near Potsdamer Platz, and danced under the electric lights at Lunapark (a kind of global archipelago of space trips founded in Coney Island, New York, in 1903, but quickly transplanted to Berlin in 1909 and soon thereafter found all over the world from Cairo to Lima to Melbourne), participating as they did in the novel rhythms of an emerging metropolitan culture. Thousands of Berliners also took an "*Ausstellungsbummel*" to the annual automobile show (25,000 on a rainy Sunday, 4 November 1906), the sports' convention (some 40,000 on Sunday, 28 April 1907), or the agricultural exhibition (exactly 118,229 on Sunday, 17 June 1906) (Fritzsche 1996: 164).

Common metropolitan experiences bred shared metropolitan loyalties. In the United States, city people from all social stations went to baseball games that were organized around city-centered teams. In Europe, it was football rather than baseball that created distinctive metropolitan ties. Cracow, for example, had three clubs, Cracovia, Wisla, and Makkabi (a Jewish squad), which played clubs sponsored by other cities across central Europe so that an urban network criss-crossed national boundaries. Since Cracovia even put the Jewish goalkeeper Jozef Lustgarten on its

roster, football could break down the otherwise sturdy divisions of ethnicity to which the existence of the Jewish Makkabi team attested (Wood 2010: 197). Local boulevard newspapers reported on the matches, fanned inter-city rivalries, and oriented readers to the everyday aspects of the city. Even in impoverished St. Petersburg, eight out of every ten citizens could and did read one of the 555 newspapers and magazines published in the capital (Lincoln 2000: 214). At the turn of the twentieth century, the mass media, like sports clubs or streetcar lines, operated on an unmistakably metropolitan rather than on a national or global scale; with a circulation of 2 million, *Le Petit Parisien* was the biggest newspaper in the world at this time.

With streetcars, ball parks, and the boulevard newspapers that appeared two or three times a day, there was a new step to the modern city. As Peter Ackroyd notes, London around 1900 was, "in a phrase of the period, 'going ahead.' Where in the late nineteenth century, wrote the author of *The Streets of London*, 'it had been rich and fruity, it was becoming slick and snappy.'" Tea shops had become "corner houses" and "maisons." There were also "picture domes and prize fights and soda fountains and cafés and revues," and *thés dansants*, tangos and waltzes and the Blue Hungarian bands all set the tune to this "fast" city (Ackroyd 2001: 721). Zhang Qiugu had said as much about Suzhou half a world away.

Emblematic of the new quality to time were the clock towers that shot up in the colonial cities, setting schedules, announcing commerce, and demanding industriousness. Completed in 1899, the 25-meter high clock tower was the tallest structure in *fin-de-siècle* Beirut. Chengdu's clock tower was built on the roof of the Center for Promoting Commerce and Industry in 1909; as Wang Di describes it, the tower set "standard time," replacing the "roosters crowing in the morning, the position of the sun during the day, and the night watchmen's beating of drums or bamboo boards at night" (Hanssen 2005: 246; Di 2003: 128). If posters, kiosks, and show windows invited metropolitans to stop and linger, streetcar schedules, clock towers, and the forth-and-back movement of traffic along the streets urged them to move on. Pedestrians were constantly being taken up, deposited, and retrieved by the city. There were "four standard speeds" to turn-of-the-century Berlin, remembered Walter Kiaulehn: "pedestrians five, streetcars fourteen, omnibuses sixteen, and subways twenty-five kilometers per hour" (Fritzsche 1996: 162–63). In Chicago, shopkeepers put up signs: "Closed for Lunch—Back in Ten Minutes," as "they sat on stools, bellied up" to the bar, and then "charged back to work." It was very important for city people to learn how to negotiate traffic, make way for passers-by, and keep time. A guidebook to new non-English-speaking immigrants in Chicago included this hard but valuable lesson (Spinney 2000: 66–68):

> I look at my watch.
> It is half past four.
> I am sure my watch is right.
> Last week I took my watch to the jeweler.
> It ran too slow.
> It lost five minutes every day.
> It made me late to work.
> The time-keeper docked me for lost time.
> I had less pay, because I lost time.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the city had truly become a settlement where strangers were likely to meet, which is Richard Sennett's very fine definition of a city (Sennett 1976: 39, 47). Metropolitans bumped into tourists who increasingly crowded the cities; by the middle of the nineteenth century, Paris was attracting more visitors than any other city in the world, more than 1 million a year, although Chicago boasted the largest daily number of visitors when an astounding 751,026 people entered Jackson Park to see the Ferris Wheel, Buffalo Bill's "Wild West" show, and the rest of the Columbian Exposition on Monday, 9 October 1893. The old record held by Paris from the days of the exposition of 1889 had been shattered (Larson 2003: 319–20). Indeed, Chicago brimmed with sights: as many as 10,000 people took in the stockyards every day, others gawked at the gigantic mail-order operation at Montgomery Ward's (Spinney 2000: 57). "Here we are": over a million picture postcards were posted from Berlin's 1898 Trade and Industrial Exhibition (Steward 2008: 261). Elsewhere, tourists were drawn not to the modern and gigantic but to the old-fashioned and quaint, what Vienna assiduously cultivated as *Gemütlichkeit*.

For many people, the Bohemians, dandies, and metropolitan types like "Chas. H. Drouet" who promenaded the new sense of the modern and fashionable might as well have been visitors from another world. Istanbul's Ahmed Rasim made fun of the *alafranga* fashions in Beyoğlu. "You can refer to this list," he said, to make sure shoes were properly polished, shirts starched, moustaches pomaded, fezes arranged just so along with the accessories of pocket watches, canes, and the bourgeois *étui* (Boyar and Fleet 2010: 303–04). In Chengdu, the press also made fun of readers who worshipped the West by wearing bowler hats, leather shoes, and even eye-glasses in order to "pretend to be students." In "The True Story of Ah Q" (1921–22), the writer Lu Xun would later popularize the Chinese term *jiayangguizi* or "fake foreign devil." Japanese men too took quickly to "Western-style" haircuts. By the early 1870s, about a third of all men in Tokyo had a *jangiri* or "random crop-ping" cut. "By 1888 or 1889 only the rare eccentric still wore his hair in the old fashion." *Jangiri* was modern, but somehow not un-Japanese: "'If you thump a *jangiri* head,' went a popular ditty of the day, 'it sounds back "Civilization and Enlightenment,"'" the order of the day (Di 2003: 126; Seidensticker 1983: 93). Newspapers often prepared elaborate physiognomies to keep track of fashions, much as Bill Cunningham's photo spread "On the Street" portrays New Yorkers today in the Sunday *Style* section of the *New York Times*. But anyone could sketch what Baudelaire referred to as "the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent." If you found yourself riding on the "Halsted Street Car," Chicago's poet Carl Sandburg urged, "Take your pencils/And draw these faces" (Starkey and Guzman 1999: 125). Like the "spices, herbs, teas and coffees, animal hides, furs, [and] feathers" unloaded on the London docks or the vehicles, carts, and rickshaws across the Nanjing Road, pedestrians on the street or commuters on the streetcar constituted an endless met-ropolitan inventory that could be copied, recopied, and incarnated with astonishing variety (Schneer 1999: 7).

However, it was the insistent arrival of women in the new public sphere of the spectacular city that elicited the most commentary. As Jane Addams, the founder of Chicago's Hull House, remarked about sisters like Carrie, "Never before in civilization have such numbers of young girls been suddenly released from the protection of the home and permitted to walk unattended upon the city streets and

Figure 2.3 Chicago traffic jam, circa 1910. Courtesy of the Chicago History Museum

to work under alien roofs" (Larson 2003: 11). Already in the 1880s, women were strolling Chicago streets, milling about hotel corridors, and buying tickets to ride in "horse-carts, omnibuses, excursion boats, [and] railroad trains," making city life, in the words of Henry James, "so much more down-towny." It is hard to believe, but Marshall Field's estimated that 99 percent of the purchases made at its State Street department store were made by women! (Miller 1996: 263–64). Although China's tea houses remained segregated by sex—the Elephant Garden in Chengdu began to admit female patrons only in 1906—newly built public streets such as Chengdu's Chang Gate horse road attracted male and female flaneurs alike. Indeed, in his 1909 *Investigation of Chengdu*, the social critic Fu Chongju estimated that "90 percent of Chengdu women liked watching local plays; 80 percent liked playing mahjong; and 70 percent liked visiting temples," public behaviors he considered very lamentable "bad habits" (Di 2003: 176). The expansion of prostitution, a big problem in the quasi-colonial conditions of early twentieth-century China, contributed to the troubling sexualization of the street. Even in Berlin, fathers warned their daughters about *Strassenbahnbekanntschaften*, which resulted simply because strangers on the move were increasingly apt to meet each other (Fritzsche 1996: 156–57). Through newspapers and popular love stories discussions about free or arranged marriages, dating habits, and other aspects of social dutifulness circulated as freely as city people did themselves. Whether distributing thousands of copies of the "Don't-Bind-Feet

Song" along Chengdu's Jade Dragon Street in the year 1904 or demonstrating in London's Hyde Park in June 1908 to demand suffrage or strolling on Berlin's Opernplatz with trouser-like dresses, the so-called *Hosenrock*, initially adapted for bicycle riding, in February 1911, women in the city pushed against the boundaries of traditional space (Di 2003: 209; *BZ am Mittag*, 1911).

The appearance of the *Hosenrock* might have been shocking or scandalous, but was not basically uncomfortable or unsettling as were so many encounters with the poor. So-called "street arabs," unwillingly enlisted in the "army of homeless boys," frequently accosted the rich, glancing with insolent eyes, asking the question, "Give us a penny, will you, Guv'nor?", or stealing the purse that turns the play within the play in Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (Ackroyd 2001: 654). A frisson of danger charged the whereabouts of William Dean Howells' newcomers to New York City in *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890); after the murderous events in London in 1888, New York, Berlin, and even Cracow reported frightening "Jack the Ripper" incidents (Wood 2010: 81). But the problem on the streets was not so much the crime that threatened the rich as it was the poverty that enveloped the poor.

The railroad that brought Sister Carrie to Chicago created the "wrong side of the tracks," both figuratively and literally. Cities teemed with the poor. Carrie herself took work for 4½ dollars a week at a shoe factory when she first arrived, which made her wages some months later as a chorus girl at 10 dollars a week look quite grand. In New York, the going entry-level wage at the turn of the twentieth century was even less substantial: 2 to 4½ dollars for young women, slightly more for men. A study of "Packingtown," the "back" of the Chicago stockyards in 1911, found that "the average weekly wage for male heads of households was just over $9.50, while the estimated minimum weekly expenditure needed to support a family of five was $15.40" (Riis 1970: 154). The result was that wives worked and children left school early. The meat packing business boomed after the invention in 1879 of "refrigeration cars," which opened up national and international markets to Chicago's food giants such as Armour and Swift. But the economies of scale in the yards, the "speed up" on the assembly line, the practice of using every part of the pig "but the squeal," and the reliance on seasonal and unskilled immigrant labor made "Packingtown" "the vilest slum" in the city (Miller 1996: 215–16, 218). Sister Carrie's unhappy brother-in-law, Hanson, lived in "Packingtown" and woke up at half past five every day to clean refrigeration cars.

Most cities had slum districts. The Lower East Side of New York was perhaps the worst slum in the United States. "A mixture of new five- and six-story tenements" and shacks and shanties in the alleys created extraordinary over-crowding. The worst wards (10, 13, and 11) had densities of 522, 429, and 386 persons per acre (Warner 1970: xvii). Most families lived in rooms without windows or ventilation and worked long hours in jobs that barely paid the rent. "The Tenement-House Exhibition of 1899" introduced New Yorkers to "the appearance of an actual block . . . bounded by Chrystie, Forsyth, Canal, and Bayard streets. It includes thirty-nine tenement houses, containing 605 different apartments for 2,781 persons. Of these 2,313 are over five years of age, and 466 under five years . . . There are only 264 water closets in the block. There is not one bath in the entire block. Only forty apartments are supplied with hot water. There are 441 dark rooms [with] no light or air except that derived from other rooms.

There are 635 rooms getting their sole light and air from dark, narrow airshafts" (Veiller 2002: 425).

Miserable living conditions were compounded by miserable working conditions. A fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory on Washington and Greene on 25 March 1911 claimed the lives of 146 garment workers, mostly Jewish and Italian. More than half a million New Yorkers marched in the funeral procession a little more than a week later. Working life was punctuated by periods of unemployment but also by strikes, often big ones like the one that stopped railroad traffic and meat packing in Chicago in 1894 or the dockers' strike in London in 1900 or the garment workers' strikes in New York in 1910; usually the bosses held out and won. However, after the world socialist congress of 1891, workers around the world demonstrated their political will on the streets on May Day. Labor unrest increased in the years before the Great War.

St. Petersburg indicates just how sick the turn-of-the-century could be. "As the tell-tale smokestacks grew in number along the Schlüsselberg Road in what had once been outlying parts of the city," writes Bruce Lincoln, "slums spread around them like mushrooms sprouting from the stumps of rotting trees . . . A black-orange-greenish-yellow pall hung over" the city. Twice as many people lived in the crowded rooms of the St. Petersburg's slums than in Vienna or Berlin (Lincoln 2000: 150, 154). Without an adequate supply of water, which was not introduced as a municipal service until after the Russian Revolution in 1917, thousands of workers still hauled water from wells in the shabby tenement courtyards or directly from the Neva River. Inhabitants remained vulnerable to cholera, typhus, typhoid, and smallpox at fearsome rates. In 1908, infectious diseases accounted for nearly 50 percent of the deaths in the metropolis; that same year, cholera claimed 3,553 deaths (Bater 1976: 351). Elsewhere in Europe, municipal utilities introduced sewage and water systems and mortality rates dropped, but not so quickly that Gustav Mahler's "Kindertotenlieder," which he composed between 1901 and 1904, just four years before the death of his own daughter from scarlet fever, did not resonate with city people who knew that children remained especially vulnerable. In Berlin, at the turn of the century, children under the age of five made up 57 percent of all deaths; for London the figure was 41.2 percent, for Amsterdam it was 43.8, and for Boston it was 37.1. In Cracow, fully one out of every four homicides was an infanticide (Wood 2010: 37, 40).

The encounter with the "eyes of the poor" often invoked a sense of dread and disorientation. "Who are these strange people . . . who have so unexpectedly revealed themselves?" asked one St. Petersburg writer: "They're not even savages . . . Savages are visionaries, dreamers, with shamans, fetishes, and incantations, while here . . . all we have is some sort of hole of nonexistence" (Lincoln, 2000: 208). The reference to "savages" indicates how the global movements of colonists and imperialists structured apprehensions of the global city. "As there is darkest Africa, is there not also a darkest England?" asked Charles Booth in the 1890s about London's East End, "May we not find a parallel at our own doors, and discover within a stone's throw of our cathedrals and palaces similar horrors to those which Stanley has found existing in the great Equatorial forest?" (Ackroyd 2001: 582). To be on the wrong side of the tracks in the city was similar to being on the wrong side of the color line in the colonies. Indeed in St. Petersburg, signs prohibited

dogs, soldiers, and peasants from many public gardens; "No Chinese or Dogs Allowed" was posted at the entrance to the gardens of the international settlement in Shanghai (Bater 1976: 382; Lee 1999: 29).

But Booth was also emblematic of reform efforts. The seventeen volumes of his *Life and Labour of the People in London*, published in 1903, not only spurred reformers but introduced East Enders in a sympathetic fashion. Streets like Brick Lane, which had housed German Huguenots in the eighteenth century, Eastern European Jews at the end of the nineteenth, and Bengali immigrants a hundred years later, were brought to life in Arthur Morrison's *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894) just as they would be in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003). By the time George Bernard Shaw wrote *Pygmalion* in 1912, Professor Henry Higgins could both phonetically and affectionately pin the "Cockney" flower girl Eliza Doolittle down to Lisson Grove (Porter 1995: 303). In New York, Jacob Riis presented the public with his report on *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), his pen sharpened by work at the *New York Tribune*, which since 1881 had sponsored the "fresh air fund" to offer poor city children summer vacations in the countryside, an effort which continues to this day at the *New York Times*. American realist novels of the time frequently featured "do-gooders" such as Gerty Farish in Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905) or Margaret Vance in William Dean Howells' *A Hazard of New Fortunes*. Cities provided rich soil for social reform and social reformists from Fu Chongju in Chengdu to Jane Addams in Chicago to Jacob Riis in New York. But such characters were set against the hard-luck stories of Dreiser's Hurstwood, Carrie's lover, who ended up in a poorhouse in New York City or Wharton's Lily Bart who tumbled down the entire social register to work for a living stitching gloves or Lao She's "Rickshaw Boy" whose vehicle was stolen and his savings squandered. For most people, city life was an unending "struggle for existence," a struggle against "hard facts" (Fisher 1985). An editor at the Paris financial weekly magazine *Le Fin de Siècle* suggested that the most emblematic *fin-de-siècle* character was simply the "struggle for life" (Hanssen 2005: 14).

Writers found no single authoritative metaphor to contain the city at the turn of the century, not even the "struggle for life." For some the metropolis was a brilliant sexual and economic emporium or a "brawling marketplace," for others it was an "exotic human and architectural wonderland," and others yet regarded it as a "battle-field" or simply an "inferno" (Alter 2005: 5). For the most part, however, observers agreed when they reported on the new settlements as something startlingly new and radically protean—hence all the probing fiction and madcap diction. Everything was for sale, as Wharton brilliantly pictured the city in *The House of Mirth*; real estate development showed no deference to age, refinement, or history. Whether in Suzhou, Beirut, or Berlin even cemeteries and the memories of the dead associated with them gave way to urban development. (On the other hand, municipal libraries with "life-giving contents" advanced into city neighborhoods [Fritzsche 2011: 16].) Urban inventories seemed to be the play of "accident and then exigency"—the "features of the frantic panorama" of Howells' New York City (Howells 1965: 160). Around the world, the scale to this "building, breaking, rebuilding" inevitably transformed "the street of my youth" into the "street without memory" (Eloesser 1919; Kracauer 1964: 19–24). What Karl Scheffler summed up about Berlin, which was fated "always to become, but never to be", applies to the *fin-de-siècle* city in

general (Scheffler 1910: 267). In Tokyo, ceaseless urban transformations made poignant the part played by the *hinomi*, the "firewatcher," who took great pleasure in his connoisseurship of fires and fire-fighting methods as he watched for a "good fire" which quickly burned the frail wooden houses and even threatened to spread across the city as was the case in the Ginza fire of 1872 or the Yoshiwara fire of 1911. Since Tokyo had three fire companies, *hinomi* were sometimes spectators as well to the fistfights that broke out among firefighters. Watching the old houses and neighborhoods burn—"bridges were rebuilt, there were evictions after fires, narrow streets were widened"—the novelist Tayam Katai lamented how "day by day Edo was destroyed" (Seidensticker 1983: 65, 67, 84). Daily the city rebuilt itself, continued to evict its residents, and widened its step on their lives. Daily, immigrants like Sister Carrie arrived. Daily, the conductor shouted out "Chicago!–Chicago!"

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THE SECOND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

—◆—

Andreas Killen

You can reproduce the identity of a woman?
She will be a thousand times more identical to herself . . . than she is in her own person!

<div align="right">(Villiers de l'Isle-Adam 1886)</div>

Writing in 1913, on the eve of the Great War, the Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin celebrated the civilizing and hygienic value of sports. In the eyes of Coubertin, the prime mover behind the revival of the Olympic Games in 1896, sports represented an antidote to what he called "the universal neurosis of modern life," a remedy for the degeneration and loss of vitality that afflicted contemporary mankind. Caught up in the mechanical routines of the modern world, modern individuals suffered from a depletion of energy. Against this, he argued, sports served as the best possible means of restoring "virility." Moreover its virtues went far beyond the purely physical, for sports also represented an exemplary "psychic instrument" and means of will-training (Nye 1982).

In his other writings, Coubertin wove numerous variations on this theme, stressing the benefits of a kind of identification with the machine. He extolled, for instance, the possibilities of self-knowledge to be gained through studying film footage of the body performing athletic feats. Close study of the "mechanical figure," he argued, yielded important insights into the capacities and limits of the "physiological ensemble." Knowledge of the factors of the "bodily economy" or its "positive" or "negative coefficient" conferred on the individual significant advantages not just in the arena of sports but – given the "fertile instability of modern society" – in the struggle for success in all arenas (de Coubertin 1930).

Coubertin's search for a "social therapeutic" to offset a perceived process of decline, as well as his mobilization of technical resources and metaphors, were widely echoed at the turn of the century. In the memoir she published in 1910, New York doctor Margaret Cleaves addressed the condition of universal neurosis that Coubertin diagnosed from a medical standpoint. She described the class of invalids that made up the majority of her clientele as suffering from a peculiar condition of

nervous exhaustion. Cleaves' *Autobiography of a Neurasthene* identified its author as one of these invalids and provided a meticulous record of the symptoms associated with this condition. Along with the periodic "electrical storms" such invalids experienced in their nerves, she singled out as the major hallmark of this condition the fact that it brought them "constantly face to face with life's most interesting problem, the conservation of energy." In her recourse to such language, Cleaves placed this disease picture within a larger set of scientific, medical, and social themes that had emerged over the second half of the nineteenth century. Among these were the intense demands made on the human organism by new technologies and new types of physical and mental labor, as well as by the sheer volume and multiplicity of stimuli unleashed by the modern world. But Cleaves' account made clear that hovering over all these considerations was the problem of energy, its conservation and loss – nothing less than the great thermodynamic principle that had, since its first enunciation in the 1840s, moved to the center of scientific, social scientific, and political thinking. In the body and mind of the neurasthenic the laws of this abstract principle were made vividly manifest. Tellingly, the most common treatment Cleaves prescribed for this condition was electricity.

From around 1870 onward, accounts such as Cleaves' multiplied across the industrial world, documenting the anxieties produced by accelerated social change. If it was true that thermodynamics, as Cleaves implied, represented a form of destiny, then this fact had ramifications not just for individuals but for contemporary civilization as a whole. The trials of the nerve invalid represented an extreme form of the extreme fatigue that plagued the modern industrial laborer and that had accordingly become the object of investigation by teams of scientists who strove to unravel the enigmas of the relation between work and efficiency. Central to these investigations was a novel image of the human body as a motor or thermodynamic system, traversed by flows of energy and marked by new possibilities of heightened output but also of its inverse, pathological exhaustion or nervous breakdown. It became one of the major enterprises of late nineteenth-century society to unlock these possibilities, while at the same time establishing a new scientific understanding of the limits of the body and corresponding norms of productivity.

The metaphor of body as machine thus linked the problems experienced by the solitary nerve invalid with those associated with the fatigued industrial worker. Both were comprehended within this new model, a model that, although it bore the distinct imprint of processes of social and industrial transformation first experienced in the Western world, made its impact felt everywhere these changes were occurring. The modernization process embarked upon in post-Meiji Japan brought with it a new awareness of the "civilizational disorder" neurasthenia, with accounts of this disorder multiplying especially after the 1904–5 war with Russia (Hill 2009). As elsewhere, Japanese writers seized upon the diagnosis neurasthenia as a heuristic by means of which to assess the human costs of accelerated social change. At the same time, in its search for a "social therapeutic" Japanese society turned to new discourses of bodily performance and efficiency, notably those imported from the United States under the rubric of "scientific management." (Takehiko 2002)

What Bayly (2004) calls the "great acceleration" that marked the *fin de siècle* included a process of increasing standardization of body practices and forms of bodily comportment across the globe. As fewer parts of the earth remained untouched

by Western expansion, new value orientations and norms of health and performance became part of the habitus of increasing numbers of people around the world. This period served as incubator of many aspects of the "modernity" that would encompass the earth, and this was true not least in the realm of body practice. New scientific forms of medicine emerged to combat age-old maladies as well as more recent "diseases of civilization"; at the same time, a range of techniques of human improvement and engineering – time-and-motion studies, scientific management, gymnastics – emerged as features of a concerted strategy designed to break the hold of traditional attitudes toward work, performance, and health. Through the medium of popular hygiene manuals, scientific exhibits, social insurance plans, and sports events, these discourses were transmitted to ever-broader sectors of the public, who under their influence learned to scrutinize themselves in new ways.

Encompassing a wide range of practices with regards to the body, modernity as such became both a descriptive and a normative term laden with a host of assumptions concerning efficiency, productivity, and health. This normative dimension underlying Western attitudes toward the body and efforts to make it commensurate with the demands of the modern age has been treated skeptically in recent historiography. There are good reasons for doing so: as Joseph Conrad ironically noted, the civilizing mission that accompanied the late nineteenth-century conquest of Africa smashed one set of idols only to set up another, no less magical belief system based on "the devotion to efficiency." (Conrad 1990: 4) The notions of traditionalism or backwardness against which the apostles of efficiency sought to do battle – laziness, idleness, pre-modern time consciousness – were in many respects discursive constructs, whose ritual invocation served to flatter industrializing societies about the degree to which they had broken with the pre-modern past and with obsolete attitudes toward work and time. Such invocations became themselves part of a set of conventions according to which modern individuals and societies measured their distance from geographic and racial others, as well as from their own recent past (Adas 1989: 241; Bayly, 2004: 80). Implicit in the views of Coubertin was the belief that close knowledge of the "physiological ensemble" conferred a kind of moral superiority on more advanced societies. Such judgments became part of a larger system of cultural exchanges: as Indians once considered incorrigibly lazy by their British masters learned to adapt to the disciplines of work, they internalized the view of the African as archetypal "lazy native." (Adas 1989: 270) Yet tendentious as they undoubtedly were, these emerging bodily and perceptual norms were also highly productive: they opened a new discursive horizon against which it became possible to imagine the self differently, and thus to modify it in accordance with influential new ideals of behavior and performance.

This was, to be sure, always a fragile achievement, as accounts like that of Cleaves attested. In the illness narratives associated with neurasthenia, modern society was confronted by an ambivalent specter, a protest against the ideology of efficiency. On the one hand, such maladies served as a stimulus to personal transformation, to new ideals of health and "care of the self." In this respect the *fin-de-siècle* anxiety about illness and loss of vitality belongs to the *longue durée* of modern self-formation that extended back to the Enlightenment, and was now recast in the language of energy, efficiency, and hygiene (Sarasin 2001). On the other hand, such narratives revealed the limits of that project. In moments of extreme personal or social crisis, the process

of self-formation could suddenly and disturbingly break down: the outer layers of the new self stripped away to reveal a human organism permeated both by remnants of its atavistic, pre-modern past or, conversely, by apparatus-like elements. The body-as-machine could become a frightening or uncanny apparition, literally a symptom of madness, as it did in the literary fantasy of Villier's *Tomorrow's Eve*.

THE GREAT ACCELERATION

A defining characteristic of the period from 1880–1914 was the experience and consciousness of accelerated change. Contemporaries aware of living through a time of rapid social transformation frequently noted that new technologies and the systems associated with them had reconfigured the physical and social geography of the late nineteenth-century world. It was also not lost on observers that similar transformations were occurring at the level of the body. Siegfried Giedion (1969: 100) noted one such transformation when he later identified the year 1895 as a key threshold in this process of epochal change. Giedion tied this moment to the discovery of a new capacity (aided by the invention of cinematography and the X-ray) to investigate the "inside of processes," referring specifically to the first publications of both F. W. Taylor and Freud. Implicit within the new disciplines of scientific management and psychoanalysis was the task of understanding and calibrating the human organism's adaptation to its new technological environment.

The changes noted above were brought home to observers with particular force at international events like the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 or the Paris International Exhibition of 1900. Such events served as occasions to display the fruits of a prodigious outpouring of inventions, new industrial machinery, and energy sources. As Walter Benjamin later noted, these events also provided occasions for training visitors in how to interact with complex new machinery. If a standard lament of the time was the failure of man's senses and organism to keep pace with the changes occurring in the contemporary world, then world's fairs helped calibrate this process of adjustment and adaptation to the rhythms of industrial modernity.

Cumulatively, this wave of innovation gave birth to a world quite different from that conjured up a half-century earlier at London's Crystal Palace Exhibit (1851), the first such event to take the measure of those "potentialities slumbering within nature" unleashed by capitalism (Marx 1976: 283). This new phase heralded what, in contrast to the first phase of industrialization, came to be known as the second industrial revolution. Its hallmarks were a new generation of machines and devices – incandescent lighting, telephones, internal combustion engines – whose diffusion over succeeding decades dramatically altered the urban and industrial landscape. As had the earlier age of industrialization, this too had its heroes, inventors, and industrialists like Werner Siemens and Thomas Edison, the latter of whom in particular acquired the status of a near-deity. From his invention factory at Menlo Park, Edison poured out a flood of new devices, acquiring over 1000 patents.

Central to this second wave of industrialization was the emergence of a new constellation of energy sources as well as systems of production, transportation, consumption, and communication. While inventions like incandescent lighting were the most visible symbols of this process, the truly revolutionary development of this period was the systems allowing such devices to be fully exploited. Thomas Hughes

(2004) argues that whereas the railway had been the emblematic machine of the first industrial revolution, by the end of the nineteenth century the machine as such had been replaced by the *system*. As steam-power gave way to electricity and chemicals, new networks of electrical light and power transmission and new industries harnessing advances in chemistry became the leading sectors of industrial society. So extensive were the resulting changes that by 1900, writes Hughes, they had given birth to a completely man-made world – a development most vividly realized in the new "electropolises" Chicago and Berlin (Hughes 1993; Killen 2006).

These epochal changes were accompanied by a consequential shift in the inner organization of capitalism. The resources required for financing the creation of systems of such scale and complexity resulted in the emergence of increasingly large corporate entities, whose system-building endeavors required new forms of management. By 1900 companies like GE and Westinghouse in the US or AEG and Siemens in Germany had begun implementing new techniques for the reorganization and rationalization of factory production. These novel managerial strategies drew heavily upon research in a variety of scientific fields, and were advertised as part of a modern and rational search for a solution to the problems of mobilizing and harnessing social resources, including human labor power. They formed part of a cluster of developments concerned not simply with maximizing productivity and profit but with laying the foundations of a new, more stable social order, superior to that of the early nineteenth century: one in which the twin goals of productivity and social harmony and security would be balanced.

HOMO THERMODYNAMICUS

Among the energy sources mobilized by late nineteenth-century society, human labor power remained vitally important, even as the new technologies of the era brought about significant changes in the nature of the work it performed. What emerged over the last third of the century, as Rabinbach (1990) has shown, was a historically novel conception of the "human motor" – a new paradigm of the body as dynamic system or field of forces to be investigated, measured, and, where possible, augmented. The roots of this model lay in physiological research conducted in the 1840s and 1850s that resulted in breakthroughs in the understanding of the physical and chemical processes that made up the body's economy of forces. Armed with a battery of instruments and devices – many closely related to key technologies of the second industrial age – scientific and medical experts obsessively pursued this research over subsequent decades. By the end of the nineteenth century the results had borne fruit in a number of overlapping areas of scientific and medical inquiry.

Central to this new image of the body was the discovery of the law of the conservation of energy, first articulated by the German physiologist Hermann von Helmholtz in 1847. Helmholtz's announcement that the quantity of energy in the universe was fixed and unvarying ushered in a scientific era devoted to exploring the implications of this law in numerous realms of inquiry. For contemporaries such as Karl Marx, the implications were little short of staggering: Helmholtz's work gave rise to a wholly new conception of human labor power as a manifestation of a cosmic process of endless conversion of force from one state to another. Embraced by conservatives and socialists alike, the thermodynamic principle seemed to promise

a scientific solution to the bitter labor conflicts that had plagued the early decades of industrialization. By transforming work into a problem of physiology, of the muscles and nerves, this new paradigm focused attention on a set of apparently irrefutable "laws of the human motor." Knowledge of the body's capacities became the basis of a new science of the workplace, one in which a proper appreciation of the body's limits and of problems like that of fatigue assumed cardinal importance. In the eyes of European scientists and social reformers, fatigue represented "a greater threat to the future of a modern industrialized nation than either rapacious capital or the atavistic worker lacking in discipline and time-sense. . . . Consequently, a rational solution to the labor problem could be found in physiology, not politics. Labor power was seen as a purely physiological issue, a single instance of the more general problem of energy conservation and its transformation into work." (Rabinbach 1990: 121) This new paradigm spawned a huge academic and scientific industry dedicated to unlocking the laws of the human organism and its functions. Particular attention was paid to the implications for work of the so-called "law of least effort," the principle that nature always sought the most efficient means of achieving its ends, and that efficiency was thus inscribed in the natural order. In this principle, a generation of researchers found inspiration for their quest to achieve maximum efficiency in the deployment of human labor power. Cast in these terms, the model of the human motor became central to a new doctrine – "social Helmholtzianism" – that seemed to answer the Enlightenment dream of a true science of society.

The thermodynamic conception of the human organism also presupposed an important epistemological shift in the image of the body. Its usage reflected a new faith that the body, understood as a system of physical and chemical processes, could be analyzed, measured, and made knowable according to the tenets of a purely materialist or mechanist model. In its elimination of the need for any vital principle this model had major implications, for it meant that in principle there was no discontinuity between the processes of the human organism and the physical and chemical processes operative in the rest of the universe. For Helmholtz, organic and inorganic systems could be comprehended within the same framework.

This implied equivalence exercised a tremendous fascination over the late nineteenth-century imagination. It engendered many analogies, one of the most common being that of the nervous system as telegraph system. In an era in which the nerves and their role in regulating bodily and psychic functions moved to the forefront of research in physiology and medicine, this analogy became a recurring motif of scientific and cultural discourse. The German philosopher of technology Ernst Kapp developed a theory of "organ projection," according to which the telegraph represented an externalization of the human nervous system, and offered his reader diagrams illustrating the structural similarity between telegraph wires and nerves. Much of the rhetorical power of such notions was derived from the sheer modernity and charisma of the telegraph as technological system. The role that electricity played in both was undoubtedly also a factor. But this materialist analogy also had a substantive basis, given the fact that instrumentation in one field, telegraphy, provided the preconditions for the other. The devices employed by Helmholtz and other scientists of his generation to measure the speed of nervous conduction were borrowed from devices first developed in the field of telegraphy. Advances in the field of communication thus provided both material and conceptual resources integral to

advances in the field of physiology and its offshoots in psychology and related disciplines (Rabinbach 1990).

In this respect the model of "man as machine" broke through significant epistemological barriers and yielded up a wealth of new facts. By enabling a new approach to problems that had frustrated previous generations of investigators, this model illustrates how metaphorical constructs can become transformed into normative or regulative truths, capable of generating powerful reality-effects. Though it came to be seen as reductive by later generations of thinkers, in its original form this metaphor and the style of scientific inquiry it authorized was little short of revolutionary, emancipating the body and its organs from the grip of vitalist dogma (Canguilhem 1992).

One important implication of the body's emergence as object of materialist science, its new identity as "machine," was the loss of its status as site of epistemic certainty. Transformed into an object of novel forms of scientific and medical inquiry – the science of nutrition, time and motion studies, industrial hygiene – the body became an endlessly rich source of information. At the same time it was increasingly seen as an unreliable witness. In elaborating new observational paradigms and conventions for extracting knowledge from the body, scientists freed themselves increasingly from dependence on the testimony of the body's own senses. The scientific ideal that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century was most fully realized in the work of figures like Étienne-Jules Marey, the French physiologist whose invention of chrono-photography and of a host of methods of graphical inscription enabled him to make visible processes – like the phases and dynamics of the body in motion – that had formerly remained imperceptible to the naked eye. Marey expressly disqualified the body and its senses as sources of knowledge. In the work of such figures, scientific certainty came to rest in instruments and experiments, in a host of methods asserting the claims of "mechanical objectivity." (Daston and Galison 2007; Rabinbach 1990)

This privileging of new forms of objective over subjective evidence was often cast in ambivalent terms. In the view of the German sociologist Georg Simmel, it became symptomatic of a wider condition afflicting late nineteenth-century society: the hypertrophy of "objective" over "subjective culture." As such it reflected a profound crisis of the human organism associated with the demands of living in a time of "great acceleration": a world of increasing mechanization and speed, of new forms of work, of incessant exposure to novel opportunities and risks. By necessity, a new culture of experts emerged as guides to this strange world, claiming an authority vested in their experimental methods and claiming specialized knowledge of body and self. The German psychologist Hugo Münsterberg, who taught at Harvard and founded the field of industrial psychology, put it this way: "The rapidity of movement of electrical machines upsets subjective rhythmic experience . . . [thus] turning the factories themselves into one big laboratory," in which the problem of fatigue could be "studied by practical experiments" (Münsterberg, 1913: 98).

SCIENCES AND FICTIONS OF HUMAN ENGINEERING

Cast in this form, the "body as machine" became the object of innumerable projects of social, industrial, and human transformation, as well as of fantasies concerning

the mutual adaptation of bodies and machines in the modern era. In their concern with following certain lines of technological innovation to their logical conclusion, the authors of such fantasies both commented on and anticipated many of the discoveries that characterized research in physiology, electricity, chemistry, and related fields. Breakthroughs in these fields contributed to a Promethean sense of aspiration that generated both fascination and dismay.

As noted earlier, one such line of investigation led to a large body of research on the problem of fatigue. Whereas earlier discourses of workplace discipline had focused on combatting the moral scourges of laziness or idleness, fatigue – in keeping with a new scientific appreciation of the body's limits – now emerged as the primary concern for efficiency experts. Researchers like Angelo Mosso turned fatigue into a scientific object of crucial importance in the modern calculus of labor power. Analysis of the consequences of fatigue – physical exhaustion, nervous breakdown, workplace accidents – spawned an enormous literature. Investigations of fatigue and monotony led to experiments on the effects of better nutrition, shorter hours, rest pauses, physical exercise, and other improvements in work conditions. Fatigue and its management became a direct object of social policy. In addition to specifying the body's limits, however, scientists of fatigue also searched for ways to go beyond them in an effort to realize the tantalizing, even utopian, possibility of a "body without fatigue." Scientists also looked for remedies by drawing attention to factors such as the importance of rhythm in helping workers cope with the remorseless tempo of the modern workplace. In a major work published in 1896, Karl Bücher identified rhythm as a central component of the physiology of human labor power. Bücher drew on ethnographic research documenting the importance of rhythm in pre-modern societies, where he found evidence that singing and other rhythmic accompaniments helped "automate" the labor process. He envisioned a future society in which the rhythms of the machine and of labor would be as perfectly regulated as they were among so-called *Naturvölker* (Rabinbach 1990).

Other lines of investigation flowed from advances made in the 1880s and 1890s in the technical reproduction of life – in the ability to capture movement and thus to analyze more closely the "inside of processes." Marey's studies had yielded new insights into the phases and dynamics of the body in motion, and these insights were later extended in Frank and Lilian Gilbreth's cinematic studies of time and motion in the workplace. Following in the footsteps of Taylor, the apostle of scientific management, the Gilbreths conducted extensive motion studies of bricklaying, recording individual motions in increasingly small increments of time. As part of a quest to discover how far the human body "can be transformed into a mechanism," they were led "deeper and deeper toward the inside of human motion and its visualization."(Giedion 1969: 101)

Together with the stopwatch and the metronome, cinematography allowed researchers to study the relation between time and motion in the performance of work tasks with a hitherto unknown degree of precision. The use of such apparatus in the workplace represented one aspect of a larger process of increasing standardization of time (Kern 1983). Time consciousness and discipline became increasingly central to the process of adjustment to mechanical routines and the new patterns of everyday life. The absence of such attributes was held up as a sign of the recalcitrance of certain categories of people to the demands and rhythms of the modern world.

Taylor himself, who initially studied athletic performance, undertook his first time-and-motion studies in the early 1880s, using a stopwatch to time workers' movements and to identify unnecessary or wasted effort at each step of the production process. These studies laid the foundation for a step-by-step restructuring of workplace processes that strove to optimize the laborer's physical capacities and to maximize output. In 1911 he published his landmark text *Principles of Scientific Management*. The impact of the Taylorist manifesto was nothing short of sensational, inspiring figures across the political spectrum with its vision of a scientifically grounded new order of efficiency and productivity. No less a figure than Lenin gave it his imprimatur. Its impact was truly global; in the wake of the publication of Taylor's book, scientific management emerged as a transnational discourse of self-improvement, now recast in the language of thermodynamics.

Scientific management was embraced with particular rapidity in Japan. There it was popularized in the form of a book that was published in 1913 and became a bestseller. Written by Ideka Toshira and titled *Secrets to Omit Useless Procedures*, it tells the story of a boy who grows from apprentice to efficiency engineer, eventually taking a post at the so-called "Efficiency Research Station." From this post he dedicates himself to promoting the gospel of time consciousness as bodily and moral discipline. Inefficiency is treated in this text not just as a problem of the workplace but as symptom of a larger problem, a veritable disease that threatened the future advance of civilization. A *Bildungsroman* of the technological age, *Secrets to Omit Useless Procedures* describes a civilizing project carried out on the body. As in other modernizing nations, scientific management became rapidly integrated into Japanese industry after World War I (Takehiko 2002).

THE SECOND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION OF THE MIND

As noted earlier, the emergence of the model of "man as machine" coincided with significant changes in the nature and organization of work in the late nineteenth century. Efficiency experts had long stressed the importance within the body's economy of forces of the so-called "law of least effort" – the tendency to displace effort to smaller muscle groups so as to minimize energy expenditure. This became an increasingly important consideration for work scientists as they awoke to the fact that progressive mechanization lessened physical labor and placed growing importance of new forms of "mental labor." Experts recognized so-called "brain-work" as a highly taxing form of labor in its own right, one that emphasized attention and concentration, often amid positions of great responsibility. The growth and complexity of new systems of transportation, production, and communication, and the dire consequences of breakdowns within such systems, alerted researchers to the importance of analyzing the functions and responsibilities of those who operated such systems. Much energy was devoted to understanding the laws of mental labor and its place within an energeticist calculus of the workplace. So-called "brain workers" made up a significant part of the clientele of the turn-of-the-century nerve doctor: initially, doctors, businessmen, and other representatives of the professional and managerial classes, but soon also other new categories of employees belonging to the so-called "new white collar classes."

Medical accounts repeatedly stressed the role of the "nerves" within the new human economy of the second industrial revolution. A guide to Europe's private convalescent institutions published in 1889 cast this role in the following terms:

> In the age of the machine, in which physical strength and handwork increasingly diminish in value, in which only intelligence and mental capacity enable mastery of the enormous claims of social life, in which the demands on the activity and performance of the brain increase along with the expansion of knowledge and the flood of information, in which the tranquility and contemplation of the good old days have long since disappeared, overstimulation and agitation of the nerves and central organs of the nervous system, the brain and the spinal column, have increased to a hitherto unknown extent. We live in the age of nervous disorders.

Such accounts strove on the one hand to acknowledge their readers' fears that living in the "age of the machine" posed the risk of serious bodily and mental crisis, while on the other to flatter readers' sense of their own modernity, of their enlightened (if unhappy) distance from "the good old days." The guidebook stressed the virtues of electrotherapy and work therapy in repairing injuries to brain and nervous system (Killen 2006: 66–7).

In an era preoccupied with the effects and meaning of new forms of mental labor and over-exertion, certain classes of employee attracted particular attention. Among them were telephone operators, who became subjects of special fascination to scientific psychologists, industrial hygienists, and physicians. Amid the scenes of technological and nervous breakdown that littered late nineteenth-century medical accounts, telephone exchanges figured prominently. Even as it facilitated new forms of communication and efficiency, the exchange also engendered new possibilities of overload and dysfunction. This new workspace became the site of a cluster of anxieties and fantasies concerning the relation between technology, gender, and changes in the social organization of work.

Integrated into ever-expanding networks of communication, operators conjured visions of a future society in which human and technical resources would become increasingly intermeshed. The telephone exchange's distinctive arrangement of female bodies in space, performing highly regimented functions and speaking in standardized, clipped syntax, made it a symbol of the rationalized world. "Whoever has once seen the long line of white arms waving back and forth in front of the switchboard lights must feel that he has looked upon the very pulse of the city's life," wrote an American observer in 1910 (Casson 1910: 156).

Yet if the telephone exchange was often envisioned as hub of a national nerve system, then the weak link in the system was the operator, particularly her nerves. These employees, as medical and other experts recognized, performed at the very outer limits of the human organism's capacities. At times of maximum traffic, the tension in the exchange could lead to outbreaks of hysteria. During the financial panic of 1907, according to one account, "there was one mad hour when almost every telephone in Wall Street was being rung up by some desperate speculator. The switchboards were ablaze with lights. A few girls lost their heads. One fainted and was carried to the rest-room. . . . " (Casson 1910: 156)

The monitoring to which these women were subjected, one study noted, further intensified the already inhuman conditions under which they worked: "The consciousness of being under unremitting surveillance of this character is admittedly a contributory element in the nervous strain of operators." (U.S. Bureau of Labor 1910: 55) Prompted by such considerations, officials sought recourse in the insights of industrial psychology. On the basis of his analyses, the German-American psycho-technician Hugo Münsterberg developed measures for optimizing switchboard operators' performance. His work drew on a report issued by the U.S. Department of Labor that was prompted in part by a strike carried out by Bell Telephone operators. One finding of the investigation was that many of these women suffered from severe nervous strain. In contrast to those who attributed the problem to the female constitution or worker militancy, Münsterberg stressed the need to establish a scientific determination of operators' "breaking point" and to tie working hours to objective norms. He believed that, with the right incentives, workers could be trained to internalize these norms, benefiting both themselves and the public. Münsterberg saw in the telephone exchange's assemblage of technology and personnel an image of a collective brain, suitable for conducting experiments on memory, attention, and other mental functions. Yet like the brain, it was subject to periodic convulsions that could throw the entire system into disarray: "It is only natural that such rapid, yet subtle, activity under such high tension . . . can be carried out only by a relatively small number of human nervous systems. The inability to maintain one's attention for a long time under such tense conditions leads . . . to exhaustion and finally to nervous breakdown of the operator and confusion in the exchange." (Münsterberg 1913: 98).

THE EDISON SYNDROME

That nervousness was the occupational hazard of employees in such branches of the modern workforce – that it was the price of progress in science, business, and industry, in short, of "modernity" – was a theme heard in many variations at the turn of the century. The most influential formulation of this thesis came from neurologist George Miller Beard, who in a series of publications dating from the early 1870s described what he called neurasthenia or "American nervousness." Drawing heavily on the thermodynamic principle, he identified a new disease picture characterized by disorders of exhaustion and over-stimulation. In neurasthenia, Beard claimed, the technologies of the modern era imprinted themselves deeply on the nervous system of the chronically over-taxed self.

Beard's writings offer evidence of a deep fixation on the figure of Thomas Edison. He argued that Edison's incessant "experiments, inventions, and discoveries" had contributed enormously to the speeding up and complexity of modern life, and thus to the present-day imbalance between the demands placed on the nervous system and the capacities of all but the most heroic individuals to withstand those demands. Yet in electricity, that charismatic energy source so closely linked with Edison's name, Beard also found the surest remedy for this modern condition. Following publication of his writings, electrotherapeutic treatment became the stock in trade of a generation of practitioners, many of them private physicians administering to the needs of a growing class of nervously over-wrought "brain-workers" (Rabinbach 1990; Killen 2006).

Neurasthenia emerged as the master-pathology of the second industrial revolution, a chronically renewed sacrifice exacted by the Edisonian gods of progress. Although Beard, with his electrical cure, remained confident that civilization itself offered a remedy for this condition, many contemporary observers felt less sanguine about such an outcome. The further advance of civilization remained haunted by the specter of nervous exhaustion. At its core, the very possibility of suffering a nervous breakdown attested to a deep anxiety about technological and civilizational breakdown. If in the railway accident or other calamities man's machines seemed to turn against him, then, in the psycho-physical consequences of such incidents, the body and nervous system – having now acquired distinctly machine-like elements – seemed to turn uncannily against the invalid.

These disturbing possibilities, and their connection to the numerous contemporary fantasies and anxieties inspired by the figure of Edison and the world of technical inventions he had spawned, serve as the basis for Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's fantastical novel of 1886, *Tomorrow's Eve*. It centers on the efforts of a scientist named "Edison" to reproduce life in the form of a mechanical woman, the android Hadaly. Edison's endeavors are motivated by a desire to save his friend Ewald, who reveals to him his initial passionate love for and then utter disenchantment with the real woman who serves as Hadaly's model. The android is intended as an improvement on the original, and thus as a remedy against the world-weary Ewald's desire to end his life. "My name is Electricity," announces Edison sublimely to his friend, and like a *fin-de-siècle* nerve doctor, he implores Ewald to "tell the whole story to the doctor who will cure your sickness." (Villiers de l'Isle-Adam 2001: 74) Edison's labors bear fruit in the creation of the beautiful, intricately constructed Hadaly, whose interior is imagined as a maze of electrical circuitry, with electromagnetic motors, phonographs, and other contrivances taking the part of her bodily organs.

One technique Edison draws on for assistance in his labors is the reproduction of life in the form of serial photography. This enables him perfectly to capture the movements of the woman who serves as Hadaly's original before transferring them to the android:

> A long strip of transparent plastic encrusted with bits of tinted glass moved laterally along two steel tracks before the luminous cone of the astral lamp. Drawn by a clockwork mechanism at one of its ends, this strip began to glide swiftly between the lens and the disk of a powerful reflector. Suddenly on the wide white screen within its frame of ebony flashed the life-size figure of a very pretty and quite youthful blonde girl. . . . [who] wore a spangled costume as she danced a popular Mexican dance.
>
> (Villiers de l'Isle-Adam 2001: 117)

Here Villiers ties his fantasy to the pre-history of the cinema, another of the inventions that only a few short years later would become associated with Edison's name, and that owed its origins in part to contemporary physiological research.

The resulting "electro-human creature" is a perfect simulacrum of the original, lacking only one vital element. The story deepens as we learn another aspect of the android's creation, namely its relation to prototypical late nineteenth-century illness narratives. If the project's genesis is rooted in Ewald's malaise, its completion – the

spark needed to bring the android to life – is provided by a figure named Anny Sowana, who is herself deeply marked by illness. The recently widowed Sowana, we learn, suffered a debilitating nervous collapse following her own husband's death by suicide. Since then she has existed in a twilight state of hysteria and cataleptic trance, while Edison treats her by means of hypnosis, which, he reminds Ewald, operates through "various currents of nervous influence [that] are no less a fact than are currents of electricity" (Villiers de l'Isle-Adam 2001: 209). By means of the rapport he has established with Anny, Edison is able to transfer her vital force to the inanimate form of the android and thereby bring it to life. Thus while Villiers' fantasy draws freely on advanced research in physiology, electricity, and neurology, at the novel's end we find ourselves in a world of more occult sciences, including animal magnetism, hypnosis, and clairvoyance.

Villiers' novel makes clear the extent to which the sense of uncanniness emanating from the "man-as-machine" paradigm stemmed from anxieties concerning a feared loss or crisis of masculinity. This anxiety emerged in response to the new technological and social arrangements of the second industrial revolution: the transformation of work; the shift to new forms of mental labor and female employment; and the consequent re-ordering of traditional gender roles (Sarasin 2001: 432). In Villiers' fantasy, the anxieties bound up in the ambivalent notion of man as machine are displaced onto the overtly uncanny figure of woman as machine, anticipating such iconic later narratives as that of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. Yet if Villiers and Lang explored the dark, transgressive side of this fantasy, other contemporaries stressed its rather more optimistic potentials. They emphasized not simply the transformation and reduction of man into an object of scientific knowledge or workplace regimentation but the possibility of a new kind of self-knowledge and subject-hood. A major leitmotif of nineteenth-century hygienic discourse, as Sarasin reminds us, was the injunction to "know thyself," and for those who embraced this injunction, the image of the body as thermodynamic system recast this axiom in light of the demands of a more vigorous, yet also enlightened, age: enjoining individuals to learn the natural limits of the body, to manage its energies rationally, and to tap into hitherto unsuspected reserves (Sarasin 2001).

Such was the message of Pierre de Coubertin, father of the modern Olympics, who in an article titled "Know Thyself" wrote of the myriad possibilities of self-knowledge to be gained from studying cinematographic footage of the body engaged in athletic feats. Coubertin placed the re-discovery of civic virtue that he associated with the athletic competitions of antiquity in a modern context in which geopolitical realities were understood in thermodynamic terms. He diagnosed French defeat in 1871 as a result of German "energy," and attributed the expansion of British Empire to a national "vitality" that flowed from the nation's love of sports. The revival of the Olympics represented not least the expression of a project of restoring national vitality.

Writing 30 years after the 1896 games, and only shortly after the release of Lang's *Metropolis* had given celluloid form to Villier's haunting figure of the female android, Coubertin (1930) celebrated another invention of the *fin de siècle* – the cinematograph. If the pedagogical virtues of sports events lay in their role in teaching lessons in performance and efficiency, then nowhere could these lessons be better learned than in cinematic study of the body in motion. Like Marey and Gilbreth before him, Coubertin stressed the benefits of close study of the "mechanical figure" and the

knowledge thereby gained concerning the capacities and limits (which were never absolute) of the "physiological ensemble." Rather than the alienation that Villiers and Lang saw in the figure of the body-as-machine, Coubertin envisioned a recuperation of human agency through identification with the machine. He stressed that knowledge of factors such as the body's "positive or negative coefficient," the law of least resistance ("that most important factor of bodily economy"), and of "the curve of his technical defects" contained the key to an existence of "productive efficiency." Moreover, given what he called the "fertile instability of modern society" such knowledge was an essential precondition of success in all arenas including – as he noted in reminding his reader of the crucial role played by sports in preparation for the trials of 1914–18 – that of war. Quite undisturbed by the darker modernist imaginings of Villiers and Lang, Coubertin's vision of the body-as-machine preserved the programmatic Enlightenment dream of the perfectibility of man in all its optimistic faith.

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THE MODERNITY OF THE *FIN DE SIÈCLE*

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John Jervis

The very vagueness of the term 'end of century' – used by some people at the time and many others when reflecting on it in the aftermath – is intriguing, suggesting the possibility of a crisis in a culture positioned strongly in linear time, with 'end' as both ending and also goal or climax, yet also conveying a hint of the latent, disavowed element of repetition underlying the sense of uniqueness. Mapped on to controversies about 'modern civilization' itself, this is also central to that mix of the grandiose and the pessimistic that characterizes the *fin-de-siècle* 'structure of feeling'. After an initial exploration of these themes, we proceed to identify three cultural motifs that lead, in turn, into a final section where we elaborate the implications of the patterns displayed here for our understanding of the late nineteenth-century cultural imaginary, particularly through the conjunction of the themes of artifice and reflexivity embedded therein.

As themes and issues emerge into cultural prominence, they emerge *as* themes and issues; they may have been 'there' for a while, even a long time, but in an important sense it is only in this process of 'emergence' as visible, as shown, as talked about, that they become 'real'. And by the late nineteenth century, an awareness *that* this is the case, a reflexive awareness, is *itself* emergent. This reflexive awareness is, in turn, centrally embodied in the understanding that the culture has of itself as 'modern': a culture becomes 'modern' when it manifests a degree of understanding of how its own processes intervene in the world, exhibiting the cultural power of the means of classification and control. Modernity thereby reveals itself as not just contingently, but inherently, reflexive, just as it thereby reveals the element of construction, of artifice, in its claims to 'know' its world. By the *fin de siècle*, this reflexive awareness is increasingly turned inward as well, on to the self, producing an increasing sense of crisis. The bounded, rational self, 'inside' the body, in some mysterious fashion, yet able to govern it, in the light of rational goals, now seems increasingly threatened by it, by an 'irrationality' that testifies to its own inscrutability under its own self-examination, and the artifice whereby self-examination comes to entail self-construction. What comes more clearly into view is the fantasy structure of a supposedly cohesive self: the space of rational selfhood and its transgressive possibilities.

These interlinked features of *fin-de-siècle* culture are aspects of a 'cultural globalization' that indeed marked the *fin de siècle* as a world phenomenon. In effect, what we find is a globalizing mode of sense-making whereby countries and cultures reflect on each other's experiences, past and present, and then reflect on each other's reflections. Nor is this process narrowly intellectual; the reflexive dimension is implicit in, and encouraged by, widely diffused cultural artefacts, whether postcards, newspapers, or film, embedded in the new communication technologies. This is the age when theorists of modernity and modern civilization, including the major thinkers of early sociology – Tönnies, Simmel, Durkheim, Veblen, and Weber – were turning their attention to their own world and formulating theories of its distinctiveness.

Let us now turn to the notion of 'modern civilization', so central to the Western view of itself. As such, the modern project of transforming the world in the light of rational precepts embedded in the practices of science and technology coexists with the problematical inheritance of the Enlightenment, which comes into focus as a relatively self-conscious continuation of that conjunction of manners and morals that has been called the civilizing process; in effect, Enlightenment transforms 'civilizing' into a project, one in which the state itself is involved in programmes of social betterment. Rationalism, Enlightenment, and the potential for imperialism come together here. Enlightenment becomes a mission, intolerant of otherness; and this otherness is *internal* as well as external, coded in essentially temporal terms, the past still troublingly present within both self and culture.

The apparent triumphs of the Victorian apogee of this inheritance never conceal the underlying tensions, however. The West has always had a troubled awareness that 'civilization' seems to be inherently plural: whether or not there can be a linear 'civilizing process', there have certainly been 'civilizations', and these have always been historically limited and specific. Each comes into being, and passes away, and the stream of findings of explorers, archaeologists, and historians, during the nineteenth century, intensifies this sense of transience, of rise and decline. 'Civilization' becomes a gamble on history: can one's own civilization be presented as the latest manifestation of 'the' civilizing process, and thereby claim some trans-historical significance, some lasting contribution to human progress? The West, too, is 'merely' a civilization, and all its pretensions to universality cannot conceal this underlying truth: it repeats the pattern of life, decline, and death, it is doomed to perish, either because its own specificity and particularity inevitably undermine its pretensions, or because if there were any universal ('Progress') embedded here this would increasingly empty it of its own historical moorings anyway. The cultural configuration of the *fin de siècle* occurs when a crisis induced by mapping these notions of linearity and progress on to ideas of civilization as cyclical is, in turn, superimposed on to fears about the emptiness, the hollowness of the pretensions to civilization itself, given an awareness of the gap between manners and morals, ideals and practices, and the diminution of confidence in the background reassurance offered by religion.

With Oscar Wilde – a key theorist and critic of modernity – we encounter the suggestion that life is art, not ethics; that it is manners, not morals, which keep society civilized. Morals are both socially authoritarian and individually restrictive: it is not that morals restrain or repress our 'nature', but that they inhibit creativity, the play of possibilities that constitutes the theatricality of modern social life. Manners should be aestheticized, not moralized. For John Sloan, *The Importance of*

Being Earnest is a 'supreme comic vision of a world irresponsibly free of guilt and shame', and the play's conclusion 'marks the defeat of moral earnestness by earnest imagination' (Sloan 2003: 163). One can add that aestheticizing morals is not the same as abolishing them; rather, it implies an acceptance that they can be embedded in the forms of everyday life, in the little gestures of civility itself.

Wilde's position here, on the cusp of *fin-de-siècle* theorizing about the possibilities and limitations of the civilizing process, reveals the fundamental tensions present in the *fin-de-siècle* cultural imaginary. 'Manners', one might say, constitute the very core of civilization; they are forms that shape our activities and our 'nature', our presentation of ourselves, and hence possess an inherently conventional character. This does not make them unimportant; far from it. The word 'form' here is significant. Wilde makes the point eloquently: 'Form is everything. It is the secret of life. Find expression for a sorrow, and it will become dear to you. Find expression for a joy, and you will intensify its ecstasy.' (Wilde 1994: 1149) The way this is exhibited, with an element of aesthetic consistency, is *style*. Conversely, moral codes introduce the element of control, of repression, constructing 'nature' as the 'other' we need to repress, and calling on absolute systems or codes of value to provide justification for this. And the over-development of these universalizing, rationalizing systems of moral constraint may even result in denouncing manners and style as themselves among the evils of the modern world, irredeemably linked to the froth of mindless consumerism and the dissipations and excesses of decadence. It is not, for Wilde, repression *per se* that produces 'evil', but the conjunction of this with the guilt and shame that result from internalizing these self-punitive, rationalizing moral systems. It is this that, in the end, makes life unbearable for Dorian Gray. 'To have a capacity for a passion and not to realise it, is to make oneself incomplete and limited', Wilde proclaims; overall, then, 'What is termed Sin is an essential element of progress. Without it the world would stagnate, or grow old, or become colourless.' (1116–17, 1121).

If, for Wilde – along with Blake and Nietzsche – it is the *restraint* of desire, and its accompanying features, that result in evil, for more conservative critics of decadence and the 'modern spirit' it is *lack* of restraint that is the problem. The civilizing process thus reveals a tension between will, desire, and passion, and how they are manifested, shaped, and controlled. For a tradition of thinkers running from Schopenhauer and Baudelaire, evil can be linked to unfettered will and infinite desires, and indeed the Durkheimian concept of 'anomie' had, as 'anomia', been used in the past to refer to sin (Mestrovic 1991: 44–45). This was, in turn, exacerbated by the rapid social and economic change found in modernity itself. Durkheim could claim that 'The entire morality of progress and perfection is thus inseparable from a certain amount of anomie' (364), but it is made worse by the rampant individualism of unregulated capitalism. Thus 'Enlightenment restricts emotional life at the same time that it expands the horizon of objects of desire', as Mestrovic puts it (187), in that the repression and control of the body through reason goes hand in hand with the relativism and multiplication of goals in an age of consumerism, resulting in the frustration of emotional life and the resulting anomie.

What we find here, then, is a conflict between two divergent models of the civilizing process, a conflict with profound implications in *fin-de-siècle* thought, and beyond. 'Civilization' becomes either an attempt to subjugate these natural energies, or to shape them, develop them, in this sense mimicking their diversity through the

very fact of culture's own difference, as that aspect or facet of nature that goes 'beyond' it, diffusing and dispersing it. Civilization is either a repression machine or a diversification machine, either a programme for improvement through a 'self-discipline' that is the ascetic regime of the body, or a practice – and a celebration – of the artifice that 'exceeds' nature while depending on it in its very moulding of it. One can see how terms like dissipation, dispersion, and dissolution can be used with widely differing implications in *fin-de-siècle* discourse, allowing for radically divergent positions to be occupied in the ideological terrain of the time. If the first model presents these in negative terms, as a collapse of social organization and discipline with dehumanizing consequences for the individual, the second presents it in more positive terms, as the endless diversification of cultural forms and individual styles, along with an implicit critique of essentializing and universalizing theories of science and ethics that try to restrain the dispersive forms of affect (sensation, feeling) and style (form, artifice). But this has already led us into the first motif.

ENERGY AND ITS DISSIPATION

Jane Goodall suggests that the late nineteenth-century sense of a 'crisis in modernity' can be seen as an 'energy crisis' in which fears of degeneration were linked to 'radical misgivings about the strength and directions of the life force' (2002: 186), and this is worth developing. In effect, the new discourse of thermodynamics, especially an interpretation of the second law, was superimposed on the conventional assumptions about the 'civilizing process'. In particular, the conjunction of 'civilization' and 'entropy' had dramatic implications, producing that characteristic *fin-de-siècle* perspective on civilization as ultimately enervating, leading to exhaustion as entropic processes drain energy away. A precarious resolution of this problem could be found through accepting that the energy concentrated in the civilizing process necessarily entailed an entropic cost elsewhere: as Barri Gold argues, 'There must be difference if work is to proceed, so it becomes necessary to define an *outside* . . . The dependence on a differential is not only the energetic principle that drives evolution and, of course, the steam engine, but also that which will secure global domination' (Gold 2010: 111). This 'outside' could be reinforced by an 'outside' discovered 'inside', as it were; hence, in the British context, the *fin-de-siècle* duplication of 'Darkest Africa' in the slums of 'Darkest England'.

Looked at from this angle, modern civilization produces its precarious order at the cost of social conflict and a mania for imperial expansion that in turn produce individual neurosis and dis-ease, from neurasthenia to anomie. In the end, it seems the 'outside' is never enough. The luxuries of civilization emerge as a dissipation of energy, its extravagance as self-destructive: civilization itself may be degenerate, with the products of work, the achievements of the arts and sciences, merely the symbols and manifestations of this decline, this drive towards exhaustion, this death-drive.

Hence energy is 'dissipated', and this is a word that captures these several super-imposed aspects. Dissipation refers to 'the wasting of a substance, a form of energy, through continuous dispersion' (*Shorter English Oxford Dictionary*), a dispersion that involves a scattering or breaking up of complex entities into homogeneous, undifferentiated ones, but also includes the two extra implications of wastefulness and gratification, which can readily be superimposed: over-indulgence, excess, in the

pursuit of pleasure. In short, ideas associated with entropy are well suited to the pro-
duction of a cultural energy that drives debates and anxieties at a time when the fate
of civilization itself is coming into question. Consumerism can readily be presented
as a wasteful diffusion of products that are endlessly but trivially differentiated and
hence endlessly the same: 'dissipation' as pleasure *and* dissatisfaction, excess of
energy *and* its diminution, as waste. Something of this clings to the concept of
anomie: in Durkheim, this can refer variously to absence of normative regulation, to
conflict of norms, and to the unrealizable norms of limitless ambition for goals, mate-
rial, or other ('infinite desires'). Whether too much or too little, energy that is not
expended through work for meaningful, limited goals is energy dissipated, producing
enervation, stress, and social tensions (Durkheim 1951: 246–56, 288–89).

One can readily see that an important part of this 'energy' is produced by internal
friction, tension between the classes, but it also seemed credible that it was precisely
the *less* civilized who might be more fit, physically energetic, while the civilized
middle and upper classes were increasingly afflicted with nervous debility and the
fashionable complaint of neurasthenia. A graphic illustration of the logic of this can
be found in the Eloi and the Morlocks, in the H. G. Wells fantasy of the future *The
Time Machine* (1895). Civilization develops out of, and against, 'barbarism' and the
'primeval', yet needs this as its energy source, just as this primeval energy can
inoculate against the neurasthenic consequences of that same civilization. When it is
condemned, the 'unruly crowd' becomes 'primeval', read as atavistic, the terrifying
threat of regression; when seen in positive terms, it is dangerous, yet energy-giving,
reinvigorating, the 'primeval' as the very source of energy itself, the reservoir for
replenishing it against the threat of dissipation and exhaustion. Thus we see here the
theme of a battle between the civilized and the uncivilized fought across the terrain
of both body and society, and a battle in which the adversaries seem to connive in
their very need for each other, just as we also see a battle of the rival discourses of
civilization.

Much the same logic is involved in the cultural discourse of 'perversion' as it
becomes entrenched in the increasingly sexualized aspects of the *fin-de-siècle* cultural
imaginary. Once again, linear time and progress are both affirmed and denied. On
the one hand, argues Rita Felski, 'the ubiquity of perversion is seen to derive from
the over refined and oversophisticated nature of modern urban life, the exhausted
endpoint of a protracted civilizing process'; yet, conversely, 'perversion is coded as a
form of regression, signalling the resurgence of instinctual and uncontrolled libidinal
forces' (Felski 1995: 177). So if the time of repetition subverts linearity again, such
'repetition' can figure modernity not just through being a result of exhaustion, but
in positive terms: after all, central to all forms of 'perversion' was the sundering of
the link between sexuality and reproduction, its opening to the possibilities of artifice
and experiment, of novel experiences – which could, in turn, be seen as a powerful
form of dissipation, 'the pursuit of pleasure as excess', and as 'a defiant celebration
of the deviant' (95), hence a recognition that individual creativity, even a sense of
individuality itself, called on a necessary element of rule-breaking, of transgression.
Hence the 'perversion' inherent to individualism itself: through the element of
transgression, self-realization strives to establish its own distinctiveness, defying the
uniformity of conventional morality – in turn a theme of that most characteristic and
influential of *fin-de-siècle* popular cultural forms, the music hall.

While the term 'decadence' itself may be used more loosely, or applied more broadly, one can suggest that, at its core, decadence can be mapped on to this sense of the modern lived as excess, seen as 'dissipation' in all its several senses, as pleasure, *ennui*, exhaustion, and transgression. The decadent is always the enjoyment of corruption and impurity, the wallowing in life as exile, as dissolution, embracing life as old, grotesque, sick. Decadence testifies to the lateness in the modern, the modern as over-ripe, rotten, the culmination that draws on nature experienced as the 'other' side of life, pointing towards death, the exploration of sickness and death as themes in culture that effect a spiritualization of the latter. The decadent is only ever half alive, pale and shadowy, evanescent yet intense, with a strangely spectral aspect, hence complementing the physicality of transgressive excess with a parallel 'spectral' excess. But here, we are encountering the second motif listed above.

SPIRITS, THE SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT, AND ETHEREAL TECHNOLOGY

We can observe, to begin with, that the boundaries between reality and representation, and life and death, no longer seemed so secure, particularly in the light of the technological innovations that, beginning with the photograph earlier in the century, were reaching a crescendo at the end, with telephone, phonograph, radio, and film all being invented within a decade or two of each other, and all suggesting that forms of recording and simulation could point beyond the conventional limitations of space, time, and life itself.

But let us initially take something simpler: the display of the body. The dancer, especially female, could become ethereal, trancelike, as if constantly on the edge of spiritual transcendence in death. For Goodall, such dancing could be said to reveal 'underlying tensions between the animal and the ethereal' (194); and such a 'quantum leap into insubstantiality' could be seen as 'a sublimation of the evolutionary process itself' (192), suggesting the next stage in evolution as the transcendence of the limitations of nature itself, of materiality. Here we begin to encounter the possibility of that fertile zone of convergence and coalescence between science, spiritualism, technology, and the civilizing process that is so characteristic of *fin-de-siècle* culture, and is described here in terms of 'dematerialization', the realm of the ethereal, the 'ether' itself being a nebulous term, hovering between the material and the spiritual, the scientific and the imaginary.

It is worth lingering with the ether. In the popular appropriation of science, ether was 'a transformative and connective medium rippling with undetermined energies', as Bruce Clarke puts it (Clarke 2001: 164) so that 'light and electromagnetic radiation were to be understood as waves' in the ethereal 'cosmic sea' (163, and see 163–67). Clarke explains its cultural resonance: 'the rarefaction of the ether to the point of absolute impalpability primed it for a parallel, parascientific career as a medium of subtle and penetrating vibrations emitted from and received by prophetic and sensitive psyches' (163).

However, if the faint, pale image can 'spiritualize' the natural, the continuity with spiritualism reveals a converse process; thus Felski can suggest that: 'The supernatural was thereby naturalized, as references to atoms, ectoplasm, electromagnetism, and various other forces and substances were used to substantiate the language of faith

and revelation.' (133) And the soul itself could perhaps be seen as 'the natural force produced by harnessing the internal motion of matter' (Gold 2010: 90), perhaps as pulsations within the ether. Whether all this can be said to naturalize the soul or spiritualize the physical may seem to come to much the same thing, but there does seem to be some warrant for seeing this whole arena of the ethereal as a means whereby 'mere' matter can attain its own transcendence, an other-worldly quality that remains physically based yet pushes beyond through the very imagery that gives sense to, or makes sense of, the world of transient material and organic entities and complexities, an 'idealizing' tendency within science and popular culture. It is as if a paradoxically platonic world of images sustains the illusory shadow play of matter.

This is also the sphere of aestheticism, of Walter Pater's presentation of the artist as 'evanescent shade', whose work manifests a thread, or edge, of 'pure white light', testifying to a 'mind of taste lighted up by some spiritual ray within', an 'entire transparency of nature' that can shine through the external veneer (Pater 2010: 139, 137, 138). This is a world of ontological assumptions that the aesthete, the scientist, and the spiritualist, can draw on in their distinctively differing ways. Röntgen's X-ray photos (1895), after all, hardly seemed all that different from the widely circulated photos of ghosts. And one might observe that if culture emerges as the purification or transcendence of nature, revealed in paleness or whiteness as the spiritualization or idealization of the material body, then this can all too readily suggest darkness as its most appropriate 'other', the black body as signifier of the primitive and the animal.

By the end of the century, flickering images would take on a powerful new resonance, in cinematography: the darkness of the environment would be illuminated, partially, by the projected images. Cities, too, began to be affected by this process, this time through electric lighting. Indeed, it is the conjunction of the innovations in image technology, involving photo and film, along with the harnessing of electrical energy, that constitute the material underpinnings of this consciousness of the ethereal. The photo too, after all, mediates the real and the simulacral, reality and representation, life and death. Sound and visual images, and the energy of their transmission, can become mutually transformable; it is as though there is a further law of thermodynamics, the transformation of minimal pulses of energy into images to which the human sensorium is uniquely receptive. Electricity itself strengthened 'the romantic illusion of biological transcendence through dematerialisation', as Goodall suggests; it thus produced 'its own strange hybrids, born of the cross between science and fantasy, illusion and technological design' (Goodall 2002: 213, and see 212–20). And here, we can return to dance. For Rhonda Garelick, it was the spectacular dancer Loie Fuller who most perfectly exemplified the performance of this *fin-de-siècle* spectacle: Fuller, the 'electricity fairy', who designed her own performances, crucially including the stage lighting, giving her a 'dreamy, ethereal quality' (1998: 102, ch. 4).

All this goes hand in hand with a subtle transformation in the place of death in the culture. The relative diminution of religious influence had the paradoxical consequence that death no longer seemed so clearly separated, as an 'afterlife'. The boundary became problematical, subject to scientific and popular speculation: the dead can 'return' as partially alive (ghosts, revenants, photographic images), and the alive can be already nearly dead (decadents, neurasthenics, pale virgins dying of TB). This is

Figure 4.1   Portrait of Loie Fuller, 1902 © Lebrecht Music & Arts

made all the more powerful in the cultural imaginary through an intriguingly parallel spectralization of the self, originating in the eighteenth century, when the spiritual was internalized into projections of mind, into images that could indeed seem to have their own lives, independent of conscious control, as the raw material of a newly empowered faculty of imagination. These came to constitute a spectral theatre of images, of self and other. And although this theatre of imagination occurs in – or as – 'inner space', these boundaries are no longer so secure, nor indeed can this 'inner theatre' be manifest save in the external features of self-presentation, its manifestation *as* 'image'. Life, death, and the image come together in this strange configuration, with images as real *and* unreal, both or neither, reinforcing their spectral potential.

As we move through the nineteenth century we find a greater awareness of the productive power of mind in developing and elaborating these images, which accompanies the innovations of the camera and photography. It is as though 'depth', seen as some obscure realm where mind and body are not clearly differentiated,

comes to be figured as the 'darkroom', the interior devoted to the production of images (with the mind furnishing narratives to link them). This 'darkroom' comes to be seen increasingly as an unconscious dimension of mind which – just as with the photographic darkroom – is quite essential to the production of the resulting images, even though exactly *how* this occurs is impenetrable to consciousness (just as, in photography, the technology seems mysterious to the uninitiated). In short, the mind becomes conscious of its unconscious (which it could not be, when spectres were positioned as clearly *external* in origin, rather than being at least potentially or partially involved in the work of mental processes), and attempts to discipline the recalcitrant images that result from its own activities yet threaten its rational pretensions. In doing this, what the mind 'fixes' in the image is both construction and projection, as with the camera itself.

Whether with mind or photograph, then, it is the processes of construction and reconstruction that come to the fore. It becomes apparent that the photographed world is reproduced as much as represented, simulation *preceding* 'reality', however 'real' the effect might seem to be. For Wilde, we see in nature what we put there; this is one aspect of his claim that 'Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life' (1082; see also 1078, 1086). Felski in turn suggests that 'nature' is no longer so secure a foundation: in this period, 'the authority of nature is exposed as nothing but art, reality as mere simulation, as everyday life takes on ever more of the characteristics of imaginative representation' (99). The fact that this could also be true of the self helped reinforce the problematic sense in which the surface had its own 'reality', hence could be seen neither as simple reflection of depth nor as guarantee of it. Mind and camera become mechanisms for image production, whether producing spirit photos, spirits, or mental images. The mind is positioned as constitutive of the self, but only in this 'darkroom' where the obscure pulses of energy have to be somehow harnessed and directed by an 'agent' that is also, in part, subject to them, in its efforts to focus or figure them as images that can be rendered accessible to the narratives of rationality. The self thus becomes a matter of artifice, a self that exists only through its own 'cultivation', its appearances in the world – including the world of fashion and spectacle, returning us to the civilizing process and the experience of the modern. But by now, we are already involved in the third motif.

ART, ARTIFICE, AND THE
SELF-SHAPING OF THE MODERN

It will already be apparent that this appreciation of agency, of the work of production, in constructing both the imagery of selfhood and the photographic image, has significant implications for the understanding of creativity in the arts. The art in art, the artistry, is difficult to separate from its 'artfulness'. The motivation to do so doubtless stems from the slightly negative sense that clings to the latter, as though art should be able to spring fully formed from the artist, hence his 'genius': the dream of Romanticism, that the element of work, elaboration, revision, could somehow sink to zero. With the *fin de siècle* we encounter the full realization that, unless the artless becomes artful, it will not produce art, merely its ineffectual promise: the doomed Romantic youth who could be said to prefigure, at one end of a process, the decadent, for whom the artful has become all-encompassing, the fruit

always corrupted in the picking, the realization of promise never enough, always soiled or destroyed by the very processes of its own elaboration and fulfilment.

What can also be apparent is that there are parallels to the fate of the modern itself. The ascetic model of disciplined work in which goals can be given a reasonably precise meaning, in limited, rational terms, so that needs can be specifiable, attainable, and satisfiable, is rendered increasingly problematical by the consumerism and individualism that resulted from modernity and the civilizing process. A world where progress is defined as a combination of moral improvement and the satisfaction of material needs is threatened by a world in which the satisfaction of material needs becomes inseparable from their mode of presentation, endlessly available for seductive elaboration. This is a world in which style, artifice, and fashion increasingly redefine civilization as the mass consumption of objects and images beyond the need, or even the possibility, of any rational or moral justification for them beyond their own existence, their own self-sufficiency in the cycles of repetition and contingent excesses of the mass culture that carries its own autonomous tensions and pleasures within itself.

We can return here to aestheticism, to point to ways in which its programme – and its consequences – can be seen as homologous to the project of modernity. The aestheticist pursuit of pleasure was intended as a pursuit of the refined, purified pleasure of aesthetic sensation, which could hence serve as an indicator of the quality of a person's existence, and their unique individuality; it was as though this could represent the highest point of the civilizing process itself. Felski aptly draws the parallel: 'In this yearning for self-domination through self-discipline, aestheticism clearly reveals its underlying similarity with the rationalist and ascetic world-view against which it ostensibly defines itself.' (108) Oscar Wilde himself argues that 'self-culture is the true ideal of man' (1140). And just as the modern orientation produced something rather different from what might have been expected, as it were, so did aestheticism. If art purports to be separate from commodity culture, can the art object nonetheless escape becoming a commodity? Can the aesthetics of pleasure be separated from the pleasures of consumerism, in an age when capitalism has developed to the point where the key features of mass production and mass culture have already loomed clearly into view? After all, aestheticism itself became a mass cultural fashion . . .

At this point, we can offer Garelick's characterization of the central features of the *fin de siècle* as an appropriate summary of these trends: '. . . the industrialization of culture in the form of music halls and eventually cinema; the fascination with the public, commercialized personality; the great rise of mass-produced goods and entertainment; and a concomitant concern for the decay of high culture' (5). In this emerging culture of sensation and celebrity, art and mass culture converge as 'artifice'. And we can return here to 'art for art's sake'; for if indeed art becomes its own sufficient justification, so this is also true of mass culture, in that it satisfies the desires that it itself generates. As suggested above, there is also a strong sense in which this becomes true of modernity too, as 'progress' becomes a self-justifying notion, rather than one that appeals for justification to some higher end that the process purports to serve.

It will be readily apparent that all this can be situated in gendered terms; indeed, 'gender' is a key focus of tension at the *fin de siècle*. If the project of modernity can

itself be mapped on to masculinity, emphasizing self-determination, self-discipline, and self-mastery, linked to purposeful goal orientation, the priority of agency over experience, and a strong, well-bounded sense of self, then it can be suggested that masculinity as the purposeful realization of one's 'inner nature' or 'character' in the form of 'personality' nonetheless results in a style that becomes difficult to separate from a dandyesque aesthetic, one in which the self becomes an 'unnatural' construct of style and appearance, and the lines between identity and desire become blurred. Wilde in effect theorizes this tradition of the dandy, and positions this as a distinctive, and indeed irreducible, strand in the theoretical traditions of the modern. As Felski points out, 'a recurring trait of the feminized male is his transformation of everyday life into an aesthetic project, his tireless attention to the minutiae of lifestyle as performance.' (96) The self becomes a work of art, a cultural performance. Ruth Vanita points out that for aesthetes like Pater and Wilde, whatever the differences between them, homoeroticism could be seen as 'crucially definitive of Western civilization' (Vanita 1996: 166). Thus does artifice imply a certain devaluation of (natural) procreation in favour of cultural production or creativity, which has ramifications for the problematical positioning of gay and lesbian identities in the culture, and the cultural politics of gendered creativity in the arts.

There is, in short, a narcissism at the heart of the modern project, existing as it does in a deeply problematical relation to dimensions of artifice and experience that it produces, reproduces, and disavows, as an unacceptable side of the masculinity that it presents as its own face; and it is within the intersection of these dimensions that a space emerges that can be defined as 'gay'. The threat of narcissism in male homosexuality is that it presents the temptation of the same in the cult of agency itself, the potential for its own self-inflicted 'corruption', just as this temptation can also be presented as the ultimate *refinement* of the masculine: homosexuality as the apogee of modern masculinity, or its stigmatised other. In lesbianism, conversely, the threat of narcissism is that it presents a self-sufficiency of the feminine itself, in its alarming independence of the masculine project (yet oddly parallel to it).

Kelly Hurley points to the way the feminine itself is positioned at a point of oscillation between opposites, hence 'identifying women as dangerously defined by their bodies on the one hand, and ethereal, essentially disembodied creatures on the other' (Hurley 1996: 10). But we can go further, for 'the feminine' is also available to carry the burden of artifice when it is presented as mass culture, the world of mass reproduction and copying, artifice as the potential for the endless – and endlessly trivial – reproduction of culture itself, as the excess beyond the rational project, yet an excess that is also its implication and its result. And here we find the aestheticist appeal again, and the heart of the challenge it poses: for it seems to represent the embodiment of refined, civilized masculinity *and* the purity of art that is a crucial aspect of this refinement, just as, for its critics, it drags *both* down, into the corruption of narcissism and artifice that pollutes the masculine with the feminine and art with commodification and consumerism. If Wilde is the quintessential figure of the *fin de siècle*, it is because he knowingly embraces these paradoxes and – celebrity *as well as* artist – brings them into the focus of public attention, a focus that ultimately produces his own abject humiliation and propels modern culture into the modernism whereby it will yet again embrace its own novelty to itself and disavow the repetition of its own varied forms of blindness.

Thus does artifice testify to the aesthetics of a reality that exists through the style of its presentation: it is 'making through art', an art of making, that is also 'artificial', that dissimulates a reality it simultaneously produces, and inserts into time as fashion, into history as the eternal return of the here and now, the death and rebirth of the present. Artifice is central to the cultural politics of the decorative, the 'second nature' that is both 'unnatural' and a reproduction of nature by 'other' means. Spelling out the implications of all this, Dennis Denisoff argues that by the end of the *fin de siècle*

> actual aestheticist and decadent works had become so entangled with their critiques, parodies and self-analyses that it was no longer useful to accuse the art and literature of artifice and superficiality. The surface façade had become the main site of meaning, and this challenge to the depth model of identity threatened to leave critics with no ethical foundation on which to build their accusations.
>
> (Denisoff 2007: 48)

In all these respects, it is as though artifice has become the self-parody of the civilizing process, as well as its culmination, its essential mode of manifestation or realization. Civilization as self-betterment becomes civilization as self-satisfaction, the pleasures of consumerism reinforced endlessly in the very dissatisfaction that is the inescapable other side.

THE *FIN-DE-SIÈCLE* CULTURAL IMAGINARY

We have seen that the *fin de siècle* manifests a growing reflexive understanding of the way classificatory systems of knowledge become multiple, pragmatic, not so much reflecting or representing the world as organizing it. To this extent, the structure or form of the world seems to become a matter of human convention and contrivance; thus, 'scientific facts reveal their closeness to artifacts', as Gold puts it (258). Our knowledge of the world can never be independent of our intervention in it. Forms proliferate, since 'form' itself is poised indecisively between being a property of the object and an aspect or result, an artefact, of our systems of classification. The forms of 'perversion', for example, multiply endlessly in the typologies of the new science of sexology. Thus the forms of classification, and the formal properties of the objects that result, are not only interrelated aspects of one process, but thereby manifest 'style' just as surely as do the parallel artistic modes of engagement with the objects that are shaped, formed, depicted, or expressed – the artist's subject 'matter'. Knowledge and art alike emerge as practices of shaping, forming, of trans- and de-formation. For Wilde, argues Lawrence Danson, society is 'a text to be rewritten', and nature is a cultural construction; we forget this, so 'In quest of the natural we spend our lives imitating an imitation' (Danson 1997: 81). Essentialist discourses of nature and culture miss the way these very concepts are factitious rather than fact; they make and unmake, they 'fabricate', the realities they purport to uncover. Such discourses are always projections, constructions, that ignore their own reflexive nature, their factitious status; and hence the *fin-de-siècle* critique of absolute knowledge, whether in science or ethics. And all this, of course – both

developing out of, yet also challenging, the received certainties of orthodox science and Victorian self-confidence – can be deeply troubling, whether this in turn results in panic disavowal or creative engagement with the possibilities of these disturbing forms themselves.

Furthermore, we see that this is the way nature itself works: entities are forever made and unmade, artificial composites, endlessly in process of evolution and dissolution; like a work of art, a work of organic nature shows the sinews of its composition. For post-Darwinian biology, suggests Hurley, we find that 'Matter is no longer subordinate to form' and 'bodies are without integrity or stability' (9). The principle of ongoing metamorphosis sweeps away the apparent stability of species boundaries. Hence such bodies are inevitably a collection of fragments and survivals of earlier evolution, precariously defying entropy, grossly corporeal in their metamorphic plasticity – and dramatically available for the excesses of the Gothic imagination. For Liz Constable *et al.*, we can see 'this "perennial decay" of boundaries – the insistence on at once mobilizing and undermining boundaries and differences – as a central quality and effect of decadent writing' (1999: 21). 'Nature' emerges as the alarming *potential* for form, but also its subversion, as the un- or de-formed, raw material as energy or life. Thus is nature criss-crossed by the struggle that marks our relation *to* it as a relation *in* it, a relation either of abjection, at the negative pole, or sensation, at the positive; and, either way, one that positions experience in the mode of intensity. And the 'survival of the fittest' emerges as merely the surface effect, the ideological emanation, of these dimensions of the underlying cultural imaginary.

How can we grasp the endless flow, the process of change endlessly productive of new forms that are themselves difficult to categorize, composites and complexes that render problematical the very categories of classification? In particular, how can we pin down the powers or forces that energize the flow, the processes of transformation themselves? In Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, terms like *dynamis* (capacity, potency) and *energeia* (activity, work; how something functions) are not amenable to proper definition since they refer to invisible propensities and processes of flux that can be observed in their outcome but can only be grasped *as such* by example or analogy (1048a). The very notion of 'metaphor', after all, includes this idea of crossing over boundaries, or evolving between different states. Energy and metaphor connect directly in the work of one of the founders of thermodynamics, Rudolph Clausius, who coined the word 'entropy' (1865) from the Greek for 'transformation' as the root of 'trope', hence suggesting, in Gold's words, 'a continuity between the metaphoric capacity of language and that of matter itself' (52). She concludes that 'Transformation – refiguration – characterizes both poetic and scientific ways of knowing, because its structures inhere in the natural world that both seek to know.' (53)

For a further idea of what this might involve we can take what Des Esseintes, the hero of the influential decadent novel by Joris-Karl Huysmans, *À Rebours*, tells us about cosmetics. Perfumes, he asserts, are hardly ever drawn from the flowers whose names they bear; the art of perfumery is necessary so that perfumes 'deserve' the names they carry and that their relation to the real be more than just 'a distant, very vulgar analogy' (1979: 119). Distilling the 'essence' would give only a poor result, lacking truth and style; better to accept that just as the original was a complex combination, so the scent based on it can do it more justice by *recombining* these and other elements, so that it is the *relation between* these elements, as they impact

the senses, that gives a more meaningful 'analogy', justifying the use of the name of the plant for the perfume. Hence the artificial is 'not merely a copy that announces itself as copy, but a cosmetic improvement upon the original', as Barbara Spackman puts it, in her discussion of this example (1999: 44). Artifice – and the artifice of language – insist on the difference that is also an addition, an alteration, a figuration that unsettles the dualisms of nature and culture, truth and fiction. And this returns us to Aristotle, for whom art can indeed be a 'power of realization', a form of *energeia*, running alongside those of nature (1049a).

It is as though language becomes the reflexive mode of nature itself: nature as matter is manifested in the materiality of language whereby nature comes to self-awareness; yet since nature as energy is simultaneously manifested in the *act* of intervention in the world whereby language achieves this, it cannot offer any summa, any seamless unified totality. The very act of self-awareness is unable to avoid the fracturing, the effect of the intervention of language *in* the world in the very act of appropriating, stepping outside, reflecting *on* the world; hence metaphor, as figuration, is both a manifestation of the world and productive of it, in its attempts to grasp its own flow and flux. In the context of modernity, this once again emphasizes the fact that our *experience* of change can never be reducible either to our attempts to grasp it or copy it, whether in scientific knowledge or artistic representation, or to organize it purposefully in pursuit of our goals. If autogenesis emerges as the true project, the goal or fantasy aspiration of modernity, its logical end, with art as its formal principle, and technology as its material one, then reflexivity, embedded in this self-shaping, is also productive of the dissipation or dispersion that results.

Concentrated evidence of the tensions here is a feature of the late nineteenth-century cultural imaginary. Metaphor, inherently trans-categorial, gives us a sense of a world that cannot be grasped in the nets of classification: metaphor becomes both productive and reflective of disorder, both challenging and subverting systems of knowledge. It is at this time, argues Hurley, that it becomes increasingly apparent that 'the sum effect of this drive towards organization is disorder: a proliferation of competing paradigms' and 'rupture of classificatory systems . . . no longer able to do their proper work of separating anomalous from normative realities' (26, 28); hence the emergence of *fin-de-siècle* Gothic as a celebration of 'morphic chaos' (156). Any 'struggle for survival' within nature is reflected in the 'struggle for survival' within the categories and systems whereby we try to 'capture' nature, *and* in the relations between the two.

Hurley reminds us, with particular reference to Gothic, that the plastic qualities of organic matter, its tendency towards 'organization' but in a way that is ever unclear, ill-defined, render it available to be 'molded according to a limitless number of narrative possibilities' (156). Thus 'dissipation' once again carries the potential for weakened strength through diffusion of energy, *and* the promise of fecundity, of the artifice of cultural multiplication; and just as natural selection provides diversity of natural forms, so the modern city breeds a variety of human forms and interactions, and hence narratives. 'As one moves randomly through the city . . . it generates a strange variety of elaborate stories, but these stories lead nowhere, "mean" nothing, produce nothing but sensational affect.' (160) These experiences are always in excess of attempts at rational appropriation and disciplinary control.

The consequences of modern experience and reflexive paradox converge in this intensification of fragmentation and diffusion, whether coded as negative, as decay and decline – 'decadence', to its critics – or as the material of creative imagination, to Wilde and others.

We are in effect suggesting that the *fin de siècle* may be the point at which the modern, becoming self-aware, brings about its own postmodern mode, instituting itself as both repetition and distance – in which case, the *fin de siècle* is the very incarnation of the modern, in all its mix of radicalism and exhaustion, not some prelude to it; and some later forms of modernity and modernism might well emerge as paradoxically conservative, stabilizing forces, blocking exploration and awareness of the more troubling issues raised.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CHANGING CONCEPTS AND EXPERIENCES OF TIME AND SPACE

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Stephen Kern

Interpreting the culture of any epoch is a formidable challenge. This essay interprets an exceptionally dynamic period that involved a spectrum of revolutionary cultural developments: most notably, Nietzsche's announcement of the death of god; Einstein's relativity theory; Mendelian genetics; Freudian psychoanalysis; atonal music; formal innovations in art such as cubism, abstraction, and collage; and formal innovations in the novel such as seemingly trivial subject matter, weak plots, stream of consciousness, unreliable narrators, and unresolved endings. A further challenge is to relate these high cultural developments with mass culture and material aspects of everyday life such as urbanism, imperialism, and World War I as well as developments in technology. I interpret the *fin de siècle* through concepts and experiences of time and space that were reinterpreted in high culture, reworked by new communication and transportation technologies, and palpably manifest in everyday life (Kern 1983, 2011). That focus is at the foundation of human experience, which is necessarily grounded in these dimensions. While this transformation began in Europe and America, it had global implications.

Elements of time and space are universal, as, for example, the way all human beings experience distances as near or far. What seems near or far varies historically according to new technologies that mediate time and space. In this period, new trains, automobiles, telephones, and wireless contracted the sense of distance between Berlin and Paris. Commentators interpreted such changes in terms of the time it took to travel or speak between those cities. Evidence that contemporaries interpreted the period in terms of time and space—often as an "annihilation of time and space"—suggests that these concepts provide a solid foundation for a cultural history of period, because all human experience takes place in these dimensions, and so any development in high culture can be analyzed in a framework based on them. Among all those developments that I sketch, this essay emphasizes three of the most important: (1) a new sense of simultaneity, (2) an acceleration of the pace of life, and (3) a leveling of spatial hierarchies.

TIME: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

The new sense of time was manifest in modes of past, present, and future and was evinced in changes from material developments in technology and social organization to innovations in painting and the novel. Two inventions brought the past into the present more directly than ever before. The phonograph, invented by Thomas Edison in 1877, could register a voice as faithfully as the camera could a form. The two inventions made it possible to retain the historical past with unprecedented vividness. In 1897 the English created the National Photographic Record Association, while in 1900 phonographic museums opened in Paris and Vienna. The new cinema, invented between 1893 and 1896, was also used to record events and even shape the course of history, when it began to be used for propaganda during World War I. Early silent movies drew an international clientele to theaters because understanding language was not a divisive issue.

Psychologists and philosophers theorized ways that the past affected the present. Some thought that memories are locked in living tissue as "organic memory, a cumulative residue of bodily processes and voluntary experiences". In *Matter and Memory* (1896) Henri Bergson argued that the past collects in fibers of the body as it does in the mind. He insisted that the public time of clocks is a "bastardized" spatial time. Real time, or *duration*, cannot be spatialized as on a clock; it can only be experienced immediately as it is lived, unmeasurable and indivisible. Sigmund Freud made five claims about the past distinctive to psychoanalytic theory: that the most distant past of childhood is the most important, that the crucial experiences are sexual, that the most important memories are repressed and not just forgotten, that all dreams and neuroses have their origin in childhood, and that all experiences leave some memory trace. As Charles Darwin had earlier assumed that remnants of the past are indelibly inscribed in organic matter and triggered in the proper order to allow embryos to recapitulate what has evolved before, so Freud maintained that every experience, however trivial, leaves a trace that shapes repetitions throughout life.

The great historicist systems of the nineteenth century by Hegel, August Comte, Karl Marx, and Darwin hypothesized how theories, social forms, and species evolved out of their antecedents and were destined to recapitulate what had gone before. The present was thus smothered by the past. Artists and intellectuals in the *fin de siècle* were critical of this overbearing historicism. The Italian futurists were the most vocal, but others also protested. As the historical past began to lose authority as the preferred interpretive framework, the personal past began to attract a variety of prominent formal thinkers and novelists who analyzed and dramatized it with unprecedented care and insisted that an understanding of it was essential to a full life. Freud insisted that access to the past was essential for mental health. Bergson held that only a life fully open to the fluid moment of duration had access to an essential source of freedom. For Marcel Proust in the 3500 pages of *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913–27), the past surfaced in flashes of involuntary memory and was the richest source of joy and artistic inspiration.

For these thinkers and artists the historical past was the foundation of institutions that had lasted for centuries and limited their autonomy. They did not want to recapitulate that past or imitate its art, and they did not want to be regulated by its

social conventions over which they had no control. They celebrated the personal past, because it was a richer source of vivid subject matter than the remote past of the historical record and was a unique source of identity over which they might gain some control. They broadened and deepened understanding of the way the past persists in muscle tissues and memories, dreams and neuroses, history and religion.

Several new technologies transformed the experience of the present: the telephone, wireless, newspaper, cinema, and large city. They shaped a historically distinctive experience of simultaneity—the sense of being in, or having access to, two or more places at the same time. The telephone, invented in 1876, allowed people to talk across great distances. Personal exchanges and business transactions, diplomatic communications and battlefield commands became instantaneous and simultaneous instead of protracted and sequential. In 1879 sermons went over telephone lines in the United States. In 1893 a telephone news service in Budapest went to the homes of 6000 subscribers. In 1894 Guglielmo Marconi invented a wireless device to transmit and receive electromagnetic waves through space. The first wireless distress signal was sent from a ship at sea in 1899. In 1912, the sinking *Titanic* sent distress calls over the wireless, which were received by dozens of ships and eventually transmitted to Canada and America, and from there to London, creating an international communications network across the North Atlantic region even before the ship sank. This simultaneous drama was the first time that an event was experienced across such a vast stretch of the globe. Modern newspapers created their own simultaneity. In 1904 Paul Claudel noted how newspapers offer a sense of "the present in its totality" while an editorial in *Paris-Midi* of 23 February 1914 characterized headlines as "simultaneous poetry" (Bergman 1962: 23).

Cinema was a new art form that evoked simultaneous experience with quick cut editing ("montage"). The philosopher Hugo Münsterberg noted that cinema could take viewers from one place to another instantly and achieve the effect of being "simultaneously here and there" (Münsterberg 1916: 14). In 1916 the Italian futurists hailed the ability of cinema to "give the intelligence a prodigious sense of simultaneity and omnipresence" (Flint 1970: 130). The poet Henri-Martin Barzun celebrated the modern world as an age of crowds and democracy that only a "simultaneous poetry" could render. He called on poets to capture city life in a way that provided "proof of the existence of simultaneous realities" in the chant of simultaneous voices (Barzun 1913: 24–26).

Modernists captured simultaneity as new technologies provided the means by which the idea of simultaneity came into prominence, and the experience of it became an everyday reality. James Joyce was especially responsive to these technologies as *Ulysses* (1922) references wireless two times, gramophones seven times, telephones eight times, newspapers eighteen times, and telegraph twenty times.

The Wandering Rocks episode offers the most historically distinctive rendering of urban spatiality of the modernist period. For it Joyce draws on a dozen innovative techniques that include montage, collage, and stream of consciousness to capture the multiplicity of simultaneous events taking place in Dublin. These techniques also include repetitions of the same event that the narrative had sketched previously. Interpolations introduce simultaneous events that occur elsewhere in the city and have a similar function, such as Leopold Bloom buying a soft porn novel for his wife Molly while at the same time Blazes Boylan, who will soon cuckold Bloom, buys

Molly some fruit. Other interpolations introduce dissimilar simultaneous events. Many people observe the same thing simultaneously as two cars of tourists view the Bank of Ireland, itself an institution that simultaneously serves thousands of the city's population. Other groups hear simultaneously an ambulance speeding through Dublin or the last lap bell of a bicycle race. The race is sequential but still suggests simultaneity, because the riders go all around the city, as does the river Liffey. Joyce invokes its unifying function by periodically tracking a floating handbill that Bloom tosses into it. Simultaneity is also suggested by journeys that begin and end the episode. While these are sequential, Joyce suggests the simultaneous interaction of individuals making them with numerous Dubliners. Father Conmee's journey through Dublin by foot and tram suggests the ubiquitous role of the Church around the city as he exchanges perfunctory greetings with various Dubliners. The Viceroy's cavalcade through Dublin initiates a sequence of interactions between him and Dubliners who disrespect this symbol of British imperialism as they forget to salute, can't see, smile coldly, just miss, and gaze down as he passes.

These journeys unite Dublin with these various simultaneous exchanges regarding the oppressive institutions of church and state that they symbolize. The modern big city was a historically distinctive space, reconfigured by crowding and new communication and transportation technologies along with structural transformations of growing governmental and economic bureaucracies, all of which generated a historically distinctive sense of simultaneity. The new technologies that created the sense of simultaneity plus artistic and literary renderings of it led one historian to interpret the period as "an age of simultaneity" (Bergman 1962: x).

New technologies also changed how people experienced the future. The new assembly line at Henry Ford's Highland Park factory in Detroit in 1913 transformed the future for worker and owner. While products made individually involved the worker in the manufacturing process, the conveyor-belt eliminated challenges and surprises as products moved along with every step worked out beforehand. Once uncertainty about the future was eliminated by the assembly line, it became possible to streamline the production further by observing every stage, determining the minimum movements necessary to complete tasks, and instructing workers to follow them. These guidelines were the achievement of Frederick Taylor's time and motion studies that accelerated production by regulating workers' movements. Fordism and Taylorism diminished the factory worker's control over the immediate future in production and relegated him to an expectant mode waiting for the future to come along the line and at the same time increasing the manufacturer's control of the future.

The cluster of future-oriented technologies that revolutionized communication, transportation, and production inspired science-fiction stories, futurist images, and philosophical speculation. From the 1860s, Jules Verne's *voyages extraordinaires* popularized science fiction with projections from current science and technology, and in the 1890s H. G. Wells became ever more imaginative with his "tales of space and time." The protagonist of his 1895 classic *The Time Machine* travels into the distant future and discovers degeneration of living beings and the entire planet when tidal drag has done its work and the earth has ceased to rotate. The story is a compendium of futurist speculation that includes growing social stratification and a leveling of sexual differentiation. *Fin-de-siècle* preoccupation with decadence, summarized in Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1892), is represented by the helpless

and self-indulgent Eloi and the physically degenerate and cannibalistic Morlocks. Darwin's theory is working somehow in reverse—a devolution of the species from human beings back to giant crabs and before that to "a round thing" with tentacles trailing behind it.

In *Anticipations* (1901) H. G. Wells predicted a future from present trends. As railroads dominated the nineteenth century, the "explosive engine" will dominate the twentieth century. There will be paved roads with "conspicuous advertisements" beside them, and there will be traffic jams as cars replace pedestrians. By the year 2000 there will be a continuous city from Washington to Albany. Improvements in the telephone and postal service (if he only knew) will make possible a diffusion of talents to the suburbs. The future will alter the "method and proportions" of human undertakings and the "grouping of character" in society. He also predicted the future of warfare with tanks, airplanes, and machine guns that will spray "almost continuous bullets." At times Wells wrote as though he could smell the exploding shells of 1914: "for eight miles on either side of the firing lines—whose fire will probably never altogether die away while the war lasts—men will live and eat and sleep under the immanence of unanticipated death" (Wells 1902: 184).

Futurists depicted primarily current technologies, although they theorized those images into the future. Marinetti's "Founding Manifesto" of 1909 set the tone. "Why should we look back, when what we want is to break down the doors of the Impossible? Time and Space died yesterday." Futurists will surge into the future at full throttle—innovative and challenging. A manifesto of 1910 elaborated their futuristic orientation: "The triumphant progress of science makes profound changes in humanity inevitable, changes which are hacking an abyss between those docile slaves of past tradition and us free moderns, who are confident in the radiant splendor of our future" (Apollonio 1973: 24–25).

The pace of life itself seemed to accelerate. The most famous futurist pronouncement by Marinetti celebrated speed, especially that of automobiles: "We say that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty; the beauty of speed. A racing car . . . is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*" (Flint 1970: 41). His statement is the centerpiece of a broad cultural response to new technologies such as bicycles, automobiles, telephones, electric trams, electric chairs, high-speed rotary presses, and motion pictures that accelerated life, affecting history in many ways from cooking and entertaining to commerce and killing.

Technological innovations made possible the "bicycle boom of the 1890s" that liberated courting couples from chaperones and made it easier for workers to get to work. One observer speculated that the bicycle "quickened the perceptive faculties of young people and made them more alert." The popular French writer Paul Adam wrote that the bicycle created a "cult of speed" for a generation that wanted "to conquer time and space" (Baxter 1892: 449–50).

The automobile captured the imagination in the 1890s and became a major means of transportation in the early twentieth century. Horse-drawn vehicles predominated at the start of World War I, but by the end of it automobiles had surpassed them. The first electric tram was in Berlin in 1879; the first in America ran between Baltimore and Hampden in 1885. The electrified London underground was completed in 1890, and in the following decade there was a proliferation of electric rails everywhere. Visitors to the 1900 World Exhibition in Paris were impressed by

the new Otis escalator and a moving pavement. The great generating station that opened at Niagara Falls in 1895 converted the rush of water into an even faster rush of electric current that quickened the pace of life. While some tried to use electricity to accelerate life, others used it accelerate death. In 1890 the New York Prison authorities first used an "electric chair" to execute a murderer, although it proved to be far slower than expected, as it took several jolts over eight minutes to kill the man. The telephone accelerated business transactions and enabled Wall Street to become a truly national, and eventually international, financial center by increasing the speed of corporate fundraising. J. P. Morgan averted a financial panic in 1907 when, over the telephone, he extended $25 million credit to several major banks threatened with excessive withdrawals.

New technologies also affected news reporting. The telegraph encouraged using few and unambiguous words to avoid confusion. Adverbial phrases at the beginning of a sentence were especially "dangerous," because they might be confused with the preceding sentence, and writers were advised to use the simplest syntax and minimal punctuation. The need for speed, clarity, and simplicity shaped a new "telegraphic" style (O'Brien 1904: 464–72). Hemingway's simplification of language was partly a consequence of his experience as a foreign correspondent obliged to transmit articles over the Atlantic cable. On 12 February 1887, a reporter for the *Boston Globe* used a telephone for the first time to report a speech made by Graham Bell in Salem, Massachusetts.

One name for the new medium of cinema identified its accelerating effect— moving pictures. With creative editing action could move as fast as it did in D. W. Griffith's last-minute rescues. The story could change settings from local to international as rapidly as the instant between frames. News coverage accelerated in 1911 when an express train outfitted with a dark room was used to develop and transport a film of the investiture of the Prince of Wales at Caernarfon at four o'clock in the afternoon and have it ready to view in London at ten o'clock. These "rushes" dazzled audiences who were fascinated by moving subjects: horses jumping hurdles, workers exiting a factory, a train pulling into a station. Some inexperienced viewers ducked in their seats to avoid an approaching train. Already in 1899 the Kinescope made its way into a novel, as Frank Norris's McTeague was "awestruck" at an approaching cable car on the screen.

The French cubist painter Fernand Léger identified the effect of the cinema and of technology in general on the aesthetic sensibilities of artists and the viewing public. In 1913 he observed that life was "more fragmented and faster moving than in previous periods" and that people sought a dynamic art to depict it. "The few working class people who used to be seen in museums, gaping in front of a cavalry charge by M. Detaille or a historical scene by M. J. P. Laurens, are no longer to be seen; they are at the cinema" (Fry 1973: 121).

While many celebrated the new speed, and the futurists worshipped it, the barrage of new speeds also brought out threatening prognoses. In 1881 George M. Beard, who coined the psychiatric category of neurasthenia (nervous exhaustion), published *American Nervousness*, which set the tone for literature on the nefarious consequences of the increasing tempo of life. The telegraph, railroad, and steam power, he complained, have increased competition and the pace of life, causing an increase in neurasthenia, neuralgia, and nervous dyspepsia. The German cultural alarmist Max

Nordau saw the new speed increasing crime, madness, and suicide. He did not follow Beard in assuming that man is capable of just so many sensory impressions per time unit. He believed that people can respond if there is time for adaptation, but the onset of modernity came too fast. "No time was left to our fathers. Between one day and the next, with murderous suddenness, they were obliged to change the comfortable creeping gait of their former existence for the stormy stride of modern life, and their heart and lungs could not bear it" (Nordau 1968: 37–62). Others welcomed the new speed as a magnification of the possibilities of experience, of vitality. The French psychiatrist Charles Féré argued that active and challenged minds became more resistant to nervous breakdown and better able to cope with diverse stimuli precisely as they become more complex. Mental breakdowns occur after long years of hard work when one is suddenly idle, and the mind deteriorates more from lack of use than from overuse, more from ignorance than from a surfeit of culture (Féré 1896: 400–13).

Some missed the slower pace of a lost past. Octave Uzanne recorded missing the rhythmic clopping of horses along the road, their heavy breathing pulling up hills, but he was still carried away by the "fever of speed." In that spirit, he noted how the automobile had broken class barriers and reduced provincialism. Magnificent long railway lines such as the Berlin–Baghdad and the Trans-Siberian promoted international understanding. "The citizen is a mole in his undergrounds; he is an antelope, thunderbolt, cannon ball with his automobiles; he is an eagle, sparrow, albatros with his airplanes." Modern life is undergoing a "stupefying transfiguration" that generates plenitude and intensity." The torrent of new stimuli that Beard thought pathogenic, and Nordau, too fast to assimilate, Uzanne saw as liberation from the impoverished routines and wearisome repetition of daily life (Uzanne 1912: vi–vii, 304).

Despite all the mixed feelings about the value of the new speed, its reality was beyond question, as the new speed shaped daily life and played a decisive role in the history of the period. A prime example was the breakdown of diplomacy during the critical period known as "The July Crisis," from the Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28 June to the official outbreak of war on 4 August 1914. Between 23 July and 4 August there were five ultimatums with ever-shorter time limits (48, 18, 12, 12, 5 hours), all threatening war if demands were not met. The diplomats who drafted these ultimatums as well as those who received them were under pressing requirements of mobilization time-tables and battle plans that were critically dependent on telephone and wireless communication facilities as well as railroad time-tables. Diplomats, accustomed to the calming effect of a slower pace in their negotiations, were not properly trained to deal with the new speedy electronic communication, more efficient transportation with railroads and auto-mobiles, and pressures intensified in the larger population by the rapid flow of jingoistic rhetoric in daily newspapers. They lost their bearings in the hectic rush paced by flurries of telegrams, memos, telephone conversations, and press releases. Hard-boiled politicians broke down and seasoned negotiators cracked under the pressure of tense confrontations and sleepless nights, agonizing over the disastrous consequences of their snap judgments and hasty actions. A great many factors led to the breakdown of peace, but the sheer rush of events was itself a cause that catapulted Europe into war.

SPACE

The physical space of nineteenth-century physics as well as everyday life is that of Euclidean geometry and Newtonian physics, based on two fundamental ideas—that there is only one space and that it is empty and inert. A number of thinkers and artists challenged the concept of only one space. Biologists explored the space perceptions of different animals, while sociologists analyzed the spatial organization of different cultures (Uexküll 1909). Cubist artists dismantled the uniform perspectival space that governed painting since the Renaissance and crafted objects seen from several perspectives. Critics could not resist linking the multiple perspectives and light sources in cubism to the growth of an increasingly democratic and pluralistic society. Novelists suggested multiple perspectives with character narrators telling sequential parts of a story (Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* [1900]). Nietzsche elaborated a philosophy of "perspectivism," which argued that there are as many different spaces as there are points of view, while in 1916 the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset applied that philosophy to politics in his journal *El Espectador*, which held that World War I was caused by the narrow-mindedness of nations that lacked a broader outlook of multiple perspectives (Ortega y Gasset 1916: 10ff). Ortega's perspectivism lined up with pluralism and a democracy guaranteeing minority rights and opinions against monism, monarchy, or the "revolt of the masses." His philosophy implied that the voices of many are a desirable check on the judgment of a single individual or class.

The traditional view that space was an empty and inert void gave way to a view of it as full and active. Art critics describe the subject of a painting as positive space and the background and space around it as negative spaces. The term "positive negative space" implies that conventionally negative elements have a positive, constitutive function. In the *fin de siècle*, dynamic voids all across the arts took on such a positive function. The inventions of electric lighting (1879), reinforced concrete (1892), and air-conditioning (1903) liberated architects from restrictions imposed by the requirements of illumination, load-bearing walls, and ventilation and enabled them to think more freely in terms of creative, constitutive interior spaces rather than conventional empty rooms. Frank Lloyd Wright characterized his Larkin Soap Company building in Buffalo (1904) as "the original affirmative negation" that showed "the new sense of 'the space within' as reality" (Kaufmann 1960: 314). Starting in 1907 cubists gave the space between objects as much pictorial substance as the subjects and backgrounds of their paintings. Georges Braque identified that generative function: "The fragmentation [of objects, space, and background] enabled me to establish the space and the movement within space, and I was unable to introduce the object until I had created the space" (Vallier 1954: 15–16). Sculptors crafted the space around and within pieces as part of the work, sometimes substituting empty space for crucial features such as the face as in Alexander Archipenko's *Woman Combing Her Hair* (1915). Poets made the white paper part of their poems along with freely lined words. The framework of the poem, wrote Stéphane Mallarmé, is present "in the space that separates the stanzas and in the white of the paper: a significant silence, no less beautiful to compose than the lines themselves." At the end of a page, he added, "the blanks unfailingly return; before, they were gratuitous; now they are essential" (Cook 1956: 33). These constitutive spaces

subverted and reworked the institutions of Western culture that were based on hier-archical distinctions between valued and degraded spaces—between the sacred spaces of religion where god is present and other profane, godless ones; between the privileged sanctuaries of the upper classes, especially those of the hereditary aristoc-racy, and the vulgar locales of the masses; and between the locus of sovereignty among those who could participate in government and that of the disenfranchised masses. These spatial rehierarchizations accelerated a broad cultural leveling that I refer to metaphorically as the democratization of space, in that what formerly did not count (or vote) now had a constitutive function. The American literatus Gertrude Stein made explicit that connection between politics and space in the arts. In contrast to traditional paintings in which the subject was more important than the background, she argued, in Cézanne "each part is as important as the whole." Stein's work adapted this formal shift in art to literature. She rejected aristocratic hierarchy in explaining that "to me one human being is as important as another human being". She affirmed democratic politics in explaining how she "threw away punctuation" to level out the importance of words in sentences and achieve "this evenness of everybody having a vote" (Scott 1990: 502–03). Hierarchies of creative accomplishment were to be celebrated, but those based on religious dogma, aristo-cratic privilege, or political oppression were anathema to her. She sought to demol-ish their authority by undoing the way conventional syntax was used to sustain traditional hierarchies.

This rehierarchization is evident in the modernist novel where an increasingly textured space takes on a dynamic function that resituates authorities based in privileged locations of churches and parliaments. In the realist novel spaces are rendered most concretely as rooms that reflect the events that take place in them. Thus, for several pages of *Bleak House* (1853) Dickens inventories the many halls, staircases, rooms, and furnishings of Bleak House that mirror the network of confusing social, legal, and family dynamics among those whose lives are affected by them (Chapter 6). Modernist novelists also attend to the generative function of rooms but give more substance to space itself. Empty rooms are one subject of Woolf's novel *Jacob's Room* (1922), as she noted in a diary entry of 15 April 1920 about her main formal intention in the novel—"that the Room will hold it together." Marcel Proust affirmed the power of important as well as seemingly unimportant rooms. Marcel's innocuous hotel room, he reports, "was full of things which did not know me, which flung back at me the distrustful glance I cast at them." The distances were wrong, the objects unfamiliar. He was tormented by the strange bookcases and shut out of the "conversation" between the clock and the curtains (Proust 1913–27: vol 1, 717).

The most potent and menacing modernist spaces are in Kafka. In *The Trial* (written in 1914, published in 1925) hallways are interminably long and confusing, stairways are dark with excessively narrow walls and long flights, doors do not fit right, windows do not let in light and air but allow for threatening surveillance, walls do not divide space rationally but either open unexpectedly or constrict movement, ceilings are too low or too high, and rooms are vacant or overcrowded. The protagonist Josef K. is frequently lost in buildings, and in one of them he spends eight pages searching anxiously for an exit. In the room for his first interrogation the ceiling is so low that observers have to crouch and put cushions on their heads so as

not to rub their scalps raw on the ceiling. The interior space of the local cathedral is equally threatening with a vaulted roof and overall size that "seemed to border on the limits of human endurance" (Kafka 1998: 211). The labyrinthine complexity of Kafka's spaces mirrors the labyrinthine impenetrability of the law that confounds him.

While castles ring with vitality in historical novels, they are largely absent from realist novels, the very definition of which tends to exclude them. When they do appear, they are at the margins of action and in decline. In Zola's *Nana* (1880), Count Muffat has access to the court of Emperor Louis Napoléon, but that proximity only underscores the depths of his degradation in the hands of the prostitute Nana. Against this background, the prominence of the castle in Kafka's novel *The Castle* (written in 1922, published in 1926) is historically significant for its un-castle-like role. But its larger significance is the potent ambiguity of the space it occupies in the life of the villagers. It dominates everything in the village but apparently nothing in particular from a space that is the center of action but impossible to access. Even the people who work in it or for it are not certain what it is or where it is. Its appearance shifts from moment to moment, but unlike Monet's Cathedral that changes perspectivally in different seasons and light, Kafka's castle changes ontologically in its very nature because it is nothing specific, rather a projection of the villagers' need for regulation by an authority that has no legitimate ground and therefore occupies no clearly identifiable space. It does not so much exist in space as float in it, and in that manner generates the forms, distances, and directions of space that structure village life.

The potent inaccessibility of Kafka's castle is emblematic of the changing function of space itself in the modernist novel. His evanescent castle dominates the villagers just as a variety of constitutive negativities rework the spaces of a spectrum of human experiences that make up a broad cultural historical development centering on the affirmation of positive negative space. The challenge of this generation to the notion that the subject was more important than the background spread in ever-widening circles, contesting traditional hierarchies in politics, society, and religion. Following this line of reasoning, there were to be no special individuals enfranchised by laws, no special classes ennobled by kings, and no special materials anointed by priests. Henceforth, valued spaces would be determined by creative human endeavors, not by traditional institutions or sacred texts. In identifying the constitutive function of space itself, modernists opened the entire range of values and institutions associated with a hierarchically structured world for creative revision, one that artists were exceptionally well trained and highly motivated to undertake.

New technologies and techniques also transformed the sense of distance to span a global reach. The keynote literary work that announced the beginning of a global consciousness was Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873), a compendium of global travel that was actually taking place by means of new transportation technologies, especially improved railroad travel and steamships coordinated by the telegraph. That story underscored the need for a rational system of times around the entire world. Around 1870, if a traveler from Washington to San Francisco set his watch in every town he passed through, he would set it over two hundred times. The railroads attempted to deal with this problem by using a separate time for each region. However, in 1870 there were still about 80 different railroad times in the United States alone (Howse 1980: 121). The foundation for a

global communication and transportation network began with the establishment of World Standard Time. It was set up in principle in 1884 when representatives of twenty-five countries convened at the Prime Meridian Conference in Washington and proposed to establish Greenwich as the zero Meridian, divide the earth into twenty-four time zones one hour apart, and fix a precise beginning of the universal day. It took almost thirty years for those nations to fully implement the project. Finally, on 1 July 1913, the Eiffel Tower sent a time signal that was transmitted instantaneously around the world, making it possible, for the first time in history, to know precisely what time it was anywhere in the world.

The fame of Verne's novel made eighty days the time to beat. The first to do it was the American journalist Nellie Bly, who in 1889–90 took seventy-two days. George Train got it down to sixty days in 1892. With scheduling facilitated by the introduction of World Standard Time and the inventions of the telephone and the wireless, the time got shorter. Verne's novel projected a new sense of world unity that became ever sharper in the decades that followed as the railroad, telephone, automobile, and cinema revolutionized terrestrial distances, while the building of steel-frame skyscrapers that began in 1885 and the invention of the airplane in 1903 revolutionized the up–down axis.

As noted earlier, the telephone, invented in 1876, was a distinctively *fin-de-siècle* technology that greatly expanded the range, mobility, and contact points between which messages could be sent, drawing ultimately billions of people into an instantaneous communications network. By 1914 the United States had approximately 10 million telephones that made roughly 19 billion calls a year. Otto von Bismarck was the first leader to grasp the telephone's political potential to unify the disparate German nation. In 1877 he ran a line 230 miles between Berlin and his farm at Varzin. By 1885 there were thirty-three cities linked with Berlin. The first international line was between Paris and Brussels in 1887, and overseas telephony began in Europe in 1891 with the laying of the first underwater telephone cable between England and France.

The "annihilation of distance" noted by many observers was not a science-fiction fantasy but the actual experience of masses who quickly used telephones to schedule trains and steamships, raise money, sell wheat, make political speeches, signal storms, prevent log jams, report fires, or just talk across ever-increasing distances. In 1896 the new wireless made it possible to send code over airwaves to many places simultaneously, including ships at sea, completing the world-wide communications network. Then, for the first time, it was possible to know precisely what time it was at any point on the globe.

While some saw telephones as compressing space, others saw its expansive potential, as one contemporary noted: "The telephone changes the structure of the brain. Men live in wider distances, and think in larger figures, and become eligible for nobler and wider motives" (Lee 1913: 65). Thus, telephones had a dual impact. They could disperse businesses from single-trade neighborhoods or concentrate it. They permitted people to buy and sell from afar without leaving their offices and at the same time expanded their territory and forced them to reach out ever farther. They brought people into close contact but obliged them also to "live in wider distances" while also creating a palpable emptiness across which voices seemed disembodied and remote.

Railroads, steamships, and electronic communication made possible the imperialism of the last third of the nineteenth century. The English and French who first staked out empires and the Germans and Americans who came later shared the same assumptions, values, and fears—that the new technology had greatly facilitated the exploration and seizure of vast empires, that the command of territorial space was essential to national greatness, that such command was morally defensible, and that the imperialist scramble would eventually lead to war, especially after all the "virgin land" had been taken. Internationalism and imperialism coiled around the staff of the new technology and around one another like the snakes of a caduceus.

This world-wide transformation was the focus of new geopolitical theorizing, such as that of Sir Halford Mackinder in a famous essay of 1904. With the closing of the frontiers, the development of world-wide electronic communication, and the extension of railroad networks, it had become necessary to view the world as a single organism that would respond as a whole to power shifts anywhere on the globe. "For the first time we can perceive something of the real proportion of features and events on the stage of the whole world, and may seek a formula which shall express certain aspects . . . of geographical causation in universal history." For the first time there was also a potential for an "empire of the world" dominated by whoever controlled the pivotal "heartland" area of Euro-Asia (Mackinder 1904: 422, 436).

Critics reacted to the conquest of distance and the acceleration of experience with wild enthusiasm and mournful jeremiads. Globalism could lead to understanding and fruitful exchanges as with the impact of primitivism on modern art (e. g., the African masks in Picasso's *Les demoiselles d'Avignon* [1907]), or to misunderstanding and conflict, as with nationalist chauvinism leading to war. Already in 1891 the editor of *Revue scientifique* wrote that "to say that there are no longer distances is to utter a banal truth." In 1901 H. G. Wells noted that "the world grows smaller and smaller, the telegraph and telephone go everywhere, wireless telegraphy opens wider and wider possibilities to the imagination." Technology demolishes "obsolescent particularisms" such as national boundaries and will someday create a "world-state at peace with itself." That same year the Russian internationalist J. Novicow speculated that electronic communication made possible a vital unity of nations and that the expansion of mental horizons would lead to a Federation of Europe. The International Association of Seismology was formed in 1903 to study earthquake activity, and in 1904 an International Committee for the Map of the World was founded. An enormous number of such organizations were created after the turn of the century—119 from 1900 to 1909, and an additional 112 in the 5-year period prior to the war. Hopes for international cooperation ran high when forty-five nations sent representatives to the second International Conference at The Hague in 1907. Although their four months of meetings failed to make substantial progress in the major areas of discussion—disarmament, arbitration, and laws of war—it was, like the outbreak of war in 1914, a collective failure on a global scale.

Among these many changes in time and space three were most significant and can be suggested by symbolic objects: simultaneity by telephone wires, speed by a sculpture, and positive negative space by a building.

The new sense of simultaneity was symbolized by the miles of telephone wire that criss-crossed the Western world and eventually went global. They carried signals for

Figure 5.1 *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (1913) by
Umberto Boccioni © Mattioli Collection, Milan, Italy/The
Bridgeman Art Library

World Standard Time and the first public "broadcasts"; revolutionized courting, farming, newspaper reporting, business transactions, and crime detection; accelerated the pace of life and multiplied contact points for varieties of lived space; leveled hierarchical social structures; facilitated the expansion of the suburbs and upward thrust of skyscrapers; complicated the conduct of diplomacy as leaders of the Western world struggled unsuccessfully to keep the peace in 1914.

The acceleration of life can be symbolized by Umberto Boccioni's futurist masterpiece *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (1913), a mixture of man, energy, and machine. It fulfilled the futurist goal to create a new beauty of speed. The head is a montage of skull, helmet, and machine parts with a sword hilt for a face. The forward thrust of the figure is balanced by calves that are shaped like exhaust flames, suggesting propulsive energy and speed of movement. Its thigh muscles are contoured for strength and aerodynamic efficiency. The torso is armless, but the shoulders fan out like budding wings, suggesting another source of continuous movement.

The chest is shaped to withstand air pressure and must have been the inspiration for Marinetti's 1915 vision of the superhuman man of the future, who will be "built to withstand an omnipresent speed . . . he will be endowed with unexpected organs adapted to the exigencies of continuous shocks . . . [There will be] a prow-like development of the projections of the breastbone which will increase in size as the future man becomes a better flyer" (Martin 1968: 172). The body has the pliability of a wing and the hardness of steel; it is driven by muscle, machinery, and fire. With this sculpture the culture of speed made a significant and eloquent statement.

The affirmation of positive negative space is embodied in the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright and forcefully expressed in claims he made about its historical significance. As he boasted, his Larkin Soap Company building in Buffalo (1904) was "the original affirmative negation" that showed "the new sense of the space within as reality." Its interior spaces were carefully designed to conform to human needs and were to be the rationale for the entire structure. Space was also the basic element in his design for Unity Temple in Oak Park, Illinois (1906), which had a simple cubical interior that was visible on the outside of the building, constructed with simple blocks of cement and an unadorned concrete roof.

His initial conception, he claimed, was "to keep a noble ROOM in mind, and let the room shape the whole edifice." Although this account used traditional terminology that conceived of space in terms of rooms, the sense of it was modern, as Wright went on to maintain with his conception of the positive function of space: "The first conscious expression of which I know in modern architecture of the new

Figure 5.2   Unity Temple, Oak Park, Illinois, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright
© Nikhilesh Haval

reality—the 'space within to be lived in'—was Unity Temple in Oak Park. True harmony and economic elements of beauty were planned and belong to this new sense of space-within . . . In every part of the building freedom is active. Space [is] the basic element in architectural design" (Kaufmann 1960: 314, 76, 313). Wright's claim is of course overstated. Churches, for example, were very much the conscious expression of a meaningful space. But Wright's boasting about his originality nevertheless enlists a new architectural rhetoric and sense of the active, positive role of empty space. His achievement was part of a spectrum of developments that leveled hierarchies all across the cultural historical record from class and politics to art and religion. The key word in his historical claim is *freedom*, an active freedom, symbolized by empty space.

New ideas about time and space and the new concrete experiences that those ideas engendered define the metaphysical foundation and material substructure for the *fin-de-siècle* period.

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PART II
PLACES

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FRANCE

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Mark S. Micale

Paris was the world capital of the *fin de siècle*. The very term "*fin de siècle*" is of course French, as are the key words "Art Nouveau," "avant-garde," "beau monde," "belle époque," "boulevard," "cabaret," "café," "façade," "flâneur," "parvenu," "promenade," and "vaudeville." Paris is where the *fin de siècle* achieved its purest, most paradigmatic forms, radiating outward to other parts of France, across Europe, and worldwide. The movement's principal precursors were French. Time and again, *The Fin-de-Siècle World* documents that there were many varieties of *fin-de-siècle* experience; to a significant degree, these varieties were versions of a proto-Parisian phenomenon.

In its broadest chronological parameters, the world of the French *fin de siècle* runs from 4 September 1870, when the French Third Republic was declared after the abdication of Emperor Napoleon III, until the late summer of 1914, when the beginning of the First World War brought the so-called long nineteenth century to an abrupt, bloody close. We now have exactly a hundred-year perspective on the end of the period, and from this vantage point it is possible to discern at least three major strands of *fin-de-siècle* civilization that formed in the French capital during this remarkably rich and eventful half-century.

FUN AND FESTIVITY AT THE *FIN DE SIÈCLE*

When, early in the autumn of 1870, the French people embarked upon their third historic experiment with republican democracy, Paris had just undergone a radical makeover. Louis Napoléon – or as he had been known since the successful coup-d'état of December 1851, Napoleon III – had undertaken a massive modernization of the capital city. Under the direction of Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann, the powerful Prefect of the Department of the Seine, Paris throughout the 1850s and 1860s was one massive construction site both above and below ground, and especially on the northern or Right Bank of the Seine River. By the end of the Second Empire in 1870, the French capital boasted broad boulevards, punctuated by formal parks and squares, with long impressive vistas, lined by trees with wrought iron grills and elegant street lamps, and bordered by beautiful residential buildings with

ornamental doors and balconies. This congested accretion of stone, iron, and masonry soon earned a reputation as the most beautiful city in the world.

But just as "Haussmannization" was nearing completion, a seismic shift in the nation's government brought a great historical irony: the stunning new city would serve not to glorify the emperor's imperial greatness, as it was intended to do, but as the stage for a new French Republic and the expanding democratic, especially middle-class, masses that underpinned it. What "the new Paris" offered above all was places and spaces for leisure and entertainment. Paris was imagined as a playground, a vast and extravagant stage for every old and new form of fashionable fun and stylish festivity. The modern metropolis gave birth to a new type of city dweller. The *flâneur*, a sort of *fin-de-siècle* hero, was a professional spectator who strolled the streets and neighborhoods in chic attire while observing and absorbing the sights and sensations that the urban kaleidoscope had to offer. The male dandy sported a cane and black top hat and coat with groomed facial hair; the *flâneuse* was decked out in parasol, corset, and dress hat (see Figure 6.1).

The visual landscape of Paris at the *fin de siècle* was nothing if not colorful. As Hazel Hahn reminds us elsewhere in this volume, this was an age of frantic consumption: shopping at boutiques, arcades, and department stores became a favorite pastime, and modern advertising was making its debut in the myriad magazines, journals, and newspapers demanded by the growing mass reading public. Overstuffed with goods and attracting throngs of shoppers, the new *grands magasins* became temples of consumption, equated to the cathedrals of the past.

One of the most distinctive elements of this new consumerist universe was the poster. The modern poster as we know it today dates back to about 1870, when the printing industry perfected color lithography and made possible the mass production of more colorful, eye-catching posters. In large format and visually striking, French *fin-de-siècle* posters hung outdoors on walls and kiosks as well as indoors where they would attract the attention of passers-by, enticing them to attend a particular event or encouraging them to purchase a particular service or product. By 1890, posters were recognized as an art form. A number of noted French artists created poster art, foremost among them Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Jules Chéret, and Pierre Bonnard. Posters transformed the newly broadened thoroughfares of Paris into "the art galleries of the street."

What the pub is to London, the coffeehouse to Vienna, and the beer hall to Berlin, the café is to Paris. With less government surveillance during the democratic republic than under Napoleon's Empire, café culture in the French capital flourished during the last two decades of the 1800s. By 1895, Paris counted between 35,000 and 40,000 cafés, depending on the description and definition of the establishments. Cafés are the single most common setting for French Impressionist paintings depicting cities. These socialization sites usually attracted a loyal clientele based on location, occupation, politics, type of beverages served, and entertainment staged. Most cafés had views onto the street and the passing social scene; large elite cafés, like the Café Flore, offered sidewalk seating several rows deep. By the turn of the century, many modern French cafés came equipped with zinc or marble counters, newspaper racks, dance floors, pool tables, electrical lighting, live music, flush toilets, and a telephone.

Evidently included among the expanded rights for citizens of the early Third Republic was the right to self-intoxication. The amount of drinking per capita rose

Figure 6.1 *On the Boulevard Montmartre* by Jean Beraud (1880) © Musée de la Ville de Paris, Musée Carnavalet, Paris, France/Giraudon/The Bridgeman Art Library

quantifiably during this period, and the French, it was claimed with some documentation, drank more per person than anyone else in Europe. Wine, of course, is the French beverage par excellence, but beginning in the 1880s a severe epidemic of the fungal disease phylloxera wiped out much of the national wine crop. In its place, French men and women turned to mixed distilled drinks and to liqueurs or rich, sweet-flavored alcohol, many of them with French brand names. Absinthe is especially associated with belle-époque café culture. Served typically in a cone-shaped glass with a shot (or two) of syrupy absinthe in the bottom, the liquid magically changes color to an emerald green when a carafe of water is poured through a slotted spoon and lump of sugar placed across the top of the glass. The absinthe itself, distilled from the coarse wormwood bush, was three-fourths alcohol! An aggressive advertising campaign marketed the beverage as socially glamorous, creatively inspiring, and erotically empowering. In poster prints, absinthe was often incarnated as a female seductress clad in green clothes. The late afternoon got dubbed "the green hour."

Cabarets, *café-concerts*, and *café-chantants* were other "pleasures of the belle époque." These establishments consisted of cafés, nightclubs, or restaurants with an

elevated stage, featuring music, comedy, song, dance, and drama, usually performed informally and allowing ample opportunities for audiences to interact boisterously with performers. The *Moulin Rouge* in the red-light district of Pigalle, *Au Lapin Agile* in Montmartre, the *Folies Bergère* near the opera house, and *Le Lido* on the Champs-Élysées became internationally renowned cabarets featured in the tourist literature of the day – and in the films of our own time.

More traditional, higher-brow types of cultural entertainment also flourished during the *fin de siècle*. In his classic account of the age, Eugen Weber states that half a million men and women weekly attended some sort of dramatic performance in Paris during these years. Sarah Bernhardt (the stage name of Rosine Bernard) reached the height of her fame in the 1890s. Bernhardt's signature qualities were her boundless energy and impassioned style of acting. Her many amorous relationships were gossiped about by *tout Paris*. During a half-century career, she performed leading roles in over 70 plays, mostly classics of French theater. By the turn of the century, the historian Mary Lou Roberts has reminded us, "the Divine Sarah" was the most acclaimed female artist in all of Europe.

Opera and ballet were regarded as the most refined cultural pastimes of the day – and the most expensive to attend. Part of the attraction was the world-famous venue. In January 1875, the new Opera House was inaugurated. Designed by Charles Garnier and built on the orders of Napoleon III, the construction work lasted fifteen years, from 1860 to 1875. The colossal building stands at the end of the newly cut Boulevard de l'Opéra and seats nearly 2,000 spectators. Its foyer is richly decorated with gilt detail, the grand double stairways are masterpieces in marble, and the chandeliers of the main auditorium rival anything seen at the Palace of Versailles (see Figure 6.2). Grand, gorgeous, and gaudy, the new Opera House symbolizes one side of the age. For theatre-goers who found high opera beyond their financial reach, more accessible and affordable versions of theatrical entertainment were available: operettas, comic operas, one-act studio plays, musical plays, musical comedies, and burlesque plays abounded. Although vaudeville reached its greatest popularity in America, in Paris the genre combined a series of short, separate acts into a single evening's performance, often including singers, instrumentalists, dancers, comedians, magicians, acrobats, impersonators, and one-act plays.

Part of the atmosphere of "*fin-de-siècle* aesthetic spectatorship," as Martin Jay has called it, involved new, more *outré* forms of entertainment, too: the Musée Grévin, or Paris waxworks, opened in 1882 along the *grands boulevards* and featured wax dioramas of celebrated personalities, historical scenes, and sensationalistic crimes in the nation's history – a kind of cross between today's Madame Tussauds and the tabloid newspapers. Magic shows, light and shadow demonstrations, magic lantern slide displays, and horror shows were also popular attractions, sometimes drawing a surprisingly respectable clientele. The Grand Guignol was a particular Parisian oddity: opening in 1897 on the edge of Montmartre, the Théâtre du Grand Guignol specialized in gory scenes and short plays performed in an amoral, naturalistic style and using life-like (and often death-like) special effects. Early in the twentieth century, these marginal, macabre forms of theater served an unexpected cultural function: for the world of early French filmmaking, they provided a community of actors, technicians, and directors who first learned their stagecraft in these popular theatrical environments and then transferred this knowledge to the

Figure 6.2 The grand staircase of the Opéra-Garnier,
1860–75 © Giraudon/The Bridgeman Art Library

new art of moving-picture production. Best-known today in this mold was Georges Méliès, the great French film innovator, who began his career in the 1890s as an illusionist and director of a small theater where he produced magic shows using trick photography, fantastic lighting effects, and mechanical papier-mâché props.

The social and cultural life of Paris as well as the city's magnetic international appeal are also closely connected to another characteristic event of the *fin de siècle*: the great expositions. These occurred at eleven-year intervals, in 1867, 1878, 1889, and 1900, each one grander than its predecessors. These gigantic fairs consisted of hundreds of exhibitions that were intended to display for all the world to see the current state of material progress and the central role that the host country played in that story. An extraordinary mix of people from all parts of the globe gathered to view these vast inventories of contemporary civilization – oftentimes to glimpse the latest technological inventions and the future they portended. Also featured each decade at these big expositions were "colonial pavilions" displaying (in ways that seem deeply patronizing today) the garb, artefacts, and even entire reconstructed villages of France's African colonies. Gustave Eiffel's newly completed 1,000-foot tower served as the entrance gate to the 1889 exposition, held on the Champs de

Mars on the Left Bank near the Seine River (see Figure 6.3). Intensely controversial while it was being built, Eiffel's vertiginous "symphony in iron" was embraced by the people after completion, rather quickly becoming (and remaining) the most famous building in France.

The exposition that year marked the centennial of the 1789 revolution of which the Third Republic, then nearly twenty years old and continuing to solidify, was the direct heir. Eiffel's Tower, as it was originally called, was a perfect symbol for the times: it was the tallest building in the world; it was constructed industrially out of man-made iron (rather than stone or wood); its creator was a hybrid engineer-architect; and a meteorological station flying the republican tri-colored flag capped the vertical structure. Unlike a cathedral, or palace, or tomb, it served no practical purpose except to demonstrate the sheer technical capacity of modern capitalist industry. It was in effect a monument to the burgeoning, secular, science-based Republic and a marvel of mass tourism that long outlasted the event it was constructed for.

Figure 6.3   Bird's-eye view of the Eiffel Tower at the time of the opening of the Paris Exposition of 1889 © Universal History Archive/UIG/The Bridgeman Art Library

As these expositions revealed, science and technology were fundamental to the French *fin de siècle*, without a doubt the greatest sources of innovation. In 1910, the poet and cultural critic Charles Péguy observed that "civilization has changed more in the past 30 years than it has since the time of Christ." Transformative *fin-de-siècle* technologies included electric lights, street trams, the wireless telegraph, land-line telephones, house plumbing, building elevators, and four-wheeled motor vehicles. By the later decades of the nineteenth century, a national network of train lines allowed ever more French men and women from the suburbs and countryside to travel cheaply to Paris for the day (and, centrifugally, for Parisians to vacation at the Atlantic seaside). Trains also reliably supplied a greater volume of food to nourish a ballooning urban populace. The 1900 Paris exposition showcased the opening of the first underground subway line – the so-called metropolitan or *métro*. Experiments with flight were underway from the 1890s, and on 25 July 1909, Louis Blériot became the first person to successfully pilot across the English Channel, from Calais to Dover, in a "monoplane." By and large, these technological innovations involved communication and transportation; cumulatively, they changed how many French city-dwellers experienced their daily lives, which now seemed busier and faster-paced than before, more exciting but also more stressful.

Perhaps most strikingly, new technologies of vision spawned entirely new mass cultural practices. In addition to posters and the burgeoning popular press, the stereoscope amused and informed millions. Largely forgotten today, the stereoscope was a device for viewing simultaneously left-eye and right-eye views of the same scene as a single three-dimensional image with the illusion of depth. From the 1860s on, a variety of camera contraptions had been marketed, and many families maintained collections, or entire libraries, of the signature stereoscopic cards, especially scenes of exotic, faraway places. Most consequentially, it was on 28 December 1895 that the brothers Louis and Auguste Lumière, the owners of a Lyon-based photographic firm, for the first time ran a celluloid film with segmented images through a hand-cranked light projector in the basement of a studio building on the Boulevard des Capucines as a small public audience looked on in astonishment. From 1897 onward, *cinemathèques*, many of them set up in old theaters, offered the newest form of technology-based entertainment to enraptured, rapidly growing crowds.

Powering most of these new machines was the great energy force of the day, electricity. Electricity made possible trams, car motors, elevators, escalators, telegraph machines, and telephones. It lit up outdoor spaces across the city, including newly designed streets, parks, and squares. Altering daily rhythms, it allowed the very idea of "night life" to emerge. Replacing oil or gas lamps with safer electrical lights allowed the world of cafés, restaurants, bistros, brasseries, and dance halls to flourish for hours after sunset. The Impressionists painted scores of illuminated cafés at night, and nearly all the famous stage acts of the day employed electricity. The city's monuments and landmarks were now lit up for the first time for viewing after hours, and tourists came by the millions. And for sheer visual dazzle, what could surpass the eye-popping spectacle of "Eiffel's Tower" illuminated by high-intensity beacon lights? When, around the end of the century, Paris began to take on the moniker "ville lumière – the city of lights," this was a quite literal description.

THE MAJOR CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

Since, upon first inspection, the themes of fun and festivity are so visible, it is easy to judge the entire *fin-de-siècle* age in France as superficial – a mecca for dilettantish tourists and frivolous sensualists. But this would be a serious misappraisal. Beneath the protracted party atmosphere, *fin-de-siècle* Paris was also the site of multiple revolutions in the arts, thought, and science. As scholars have long noted, one looks in vain during this period for a political or military figure akin to Napoleon Bonaparte, De Gaulle, Lafayette, Talleyrand, or Louis XIV. But the *cultural* glories of France during this half-century are quite astonishing and rank it among the very greatest periods in European cultural and intellectual history. The sheer number of cultural fields that underwent creative transformation during the years 1870–1914 is remarkable, as are the horizontal cultural interconnections among developments in the arts, sciences, and philosophy.

If the British *fin de siècle* was principally literary/poetic, and the Austrian and German *fins de siècles* were heavily philosophical and psychological, French *fin-de-siècle* culture was first and foremost visual/aesthetic. Impressionism created a genuine revolution in the artistic perception and representation of the external world, and art historians generally date the onset of aesthetic modernism to the movement. Beginning in the later 1860s, this group of Young Turk painters, working predominantly in Paris, pursued a fundamentally new epistemology of painting: their goal would no longer be to depict a landscape, still life, or human figure with maximum realism but rather to capture on the canvas a fleeting impression of a scene as perceived by the individual artist/viewer. The classic Impressionist style deployed a pastel palette with small dabs or short strokes of bright, unmixed paint applied quickly, and usually out of doors, creating a rough surface that became visually coherent only when viewed at a distance. Quick, *plein air* painting using this "broken brush technique" replaced the centuries-old practice of applying long brush strokes of paint with great care in a studio in order to produce a smooth, shellacked surface. Furthermore, whereas conventional "academic painting" had privileged portraits of wealthy elites, historical epics, and classical mythology that often conveyed idealized, moral messages, the self-styled Impressionists were "painters of modern life": their favored subjects were the everyday contemporary world, especially the modern metropolis and its characteristic actors and activities.

Between 1874 and 1886, the first Impressionist painters – Édouard Manet, Gustave Caillebotte, Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Berthe Morisot, Alfred Sisley, Mary Cassatt, Jean Renoir, and Edgar Degas, among others – presented their artwork in eight independent exhibitions open to the public. These events were separate from the yearly Salon show sponsored by the French government that displayed "official" styles of art. By the mid-1880s, the movement had reached an expressive peak as more and more artists explored the impressionist project in greater depth, eventually spreading beyond France into a world movement. Included in its ranks were several important "women Impressionists."

Not surprisingly, the public and critics misunderstood the new style of painting and during the 1870s and 1880s attacked the Impressionists. But this critical reception, it turned out, gave rise to yet another feature of the *fin-de-siècle* world: the avant-garde. Originally a French military term, the avant-garde emerged during

the last three decades of the nineteenth century as an ever-changing community of artists who fashioned themselves as the creative vanguard but whose work was so radical, so provocative, and so unprecedented that it evoked anger, derision, and incomprehension from the cultural establishment. In some cases, self-consciously avant-garde artists actually sought to shock audiences – "the lure of heresy," Peter Gay has called it – in affirmation of their cutting edge status. Over time, art that was originally avant-garde gained acceptance and became part of the cultural canon. This was the case for French Impressionism by around 1900. Up until the mid-twentieth century, Paris remained the epicenter of the world avant-garde, and although numerous individual artists in this mold predated the Third Republic, Impressionism was the first avant-garde movement.

Perhaps the most remarkable features of the French artistic revolution of the *fin de siècle* are its duration and variation. The period from the mid-1880s to 1914 and beyond witnessed a phenomenal succession of artistic "isms": neo-Impressionism (Seurat, Signac), post-Impressionism (Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne), Symbolism (Moreau, Redon), Fauvism (Matisse, Derain, Vlaminck), and Cubism (Picasso, Braque, Delaunay) all developed in pre-war Paris. Furthermore, many non-French artists who embraced the avant-garde relocated to Paris during these years in order to pursue their careers – among them, Vincent Van Gogh from the Netherlands, Edvard Munch from Norway, Amedeo Modigliani and Gino Severini from Italy, and Pablo Picasso and Juan Gris from Spain. Entire foreign movements, like Italian Futurism, were headquartered for years in France. Long into the twentieth century, the French capital was the magnet for artistic émigrés.

The *fin de siècle* was a golden age of French sculpture, too; here, however, the greatest achievements were accomplished by a single artist rather than a school or movement. "The Age of Rodin" is as good a name as any for this period. Auguste Rodin's artistic career parallels the *fin de siècle*, running from the mid-1870s until his death in 1917. Unlike the Impressionist painters, Rodin did not set out deliberately to overturn traditional sculptural aesthetics. Although his work was controversial, he received many commissions from the French state, and by the turn of the century he had achieved worldwide success. Rodin's mature style is rough, unidealized, and naturalistic, at times brutally so. This approach contrasts dramatically with the cool, polished style of neo-classical art previously so prominent in nineteenth-century Europe. Sculpting in bronze and marble, Rodin restored and modernized the tradition of the heroicized human body, often nude, that is associated with ancient Greek art and the work of Michelangelo. His vast lifework includes portraits of prominent recent and contemporary figures, historical/mythological topics, existential themes, erotic motifs, and religious subjects (see Figure 6.4).

Design was yet another realm of high creativity during the decades on either side of 1900. Short-lived but exquisite, the Art Nouveau movement peaked in Paris and Brussels around the turn of the century and is generally considered a total design aesthetic: architecture, interior design, graphic art, furniture, tapestries, vases, jewelry, textiles, lighting, and household utensils as well as the fine and decorative arts were all cast in the Art Nouveau style. Conceived as an alternative to the heavy, regimented, geometric style of Haussmann, Art Nouveau was inspired by the flowing, curvilinear lines in nature, especially those found in plants and flowers.

Figure 6.4   Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) seated beside his work in his studio © Archives Larousse, Paris, France/Giraudon/The Bridgeman Art Library

We have already noted two key works of *fin-de-siècle* architecture: Garnier's Opera House and Eiffel's Tower. To these iconically Parisian structures should be added the total reconstruction of the new Hôtel de Ville, or City Hall, in the French Renaissance style (1873–92), after its destruction in the Paris Commune; completion of the restored Notre Dame Cathedral on the Île de la cité; and the building of the Sacré-Coeur Basilica on Montmartre hill. Four other masterworks in the Beaux-Arts style rose up during these years, in close proximity to one another in preparation for the 1900 exposition: the Gare d'Orsay, situated along the Seine across from the Louvre; the Grand Palais and Petit Palais at the base of the Champs-Élysées; and the Alexandre III Bridge, which spans the Seine at the Invalides and is sometimes praised as the most ornate and elegant bridge in the world.

The gallery of greats in the cultural history of the French nation at this time also extends to the literary realm. The *fin-de-siècle* years encompass several major literary styles, primarily late realism, naturalism, symbolism, the decadent style, and early literary modernism. (See also Chapters 43 and 45 of this volume.) Gustave Flaubert wrote until the end of his life in 1880. When Victor Hugo died on 22 May 1885, at the age of 83, more than 2 million people lined the streets of the capital for the funeral procession. Émile Zola's twenty-volume Rougon-Macquart series of novels (1871–93), which chronicled in dark detail "the natural and social history of a family

during the Second Empire," became the central literary enterprise of the 1870s and 1880s. In poetry, the symbolist aesthetic of the late nineteenth century used suggestion to evoke rather than precise statements to describe. Symbolists experimented with the subtle effects of words, repeated sounds, and the cadence of verse, especially free verse. Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, Paul Claudel, Arthur Rimbaud, and Paul Valéry are among the most gifted and imaginative of its practitioners.

Belle-époque France was also Marcel Proust's world. Proust (1871–1922) was born with the Third Republic and matured artistically with the age. His monumental novel cycle *In Search of Lost Time* (*À la recherche du temps perdu*) is the landmark work of French literary modernism, judged by some literary historians to be the most brilliant sustained prose narrative in world literature. The work first appeared in seven parts published between 1913 and 1927; but Proust set out to gather the material incorporated into his epic in the 1890s and began formal composition of his masterpiece in the summer of 1909. Furthermore, the universe of human interactions that Proust's narrator reconstructs – with family and friends, artists and lovers, dandies and decadents – is drawn from the author's childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. In other words, the *temps perdu* that he conjures across thousands of pages, through the use of long sequences of free associative memories and sensations, is the antebellum world of formal banquets, literary Salons, and refined conversation with a cultured wealthy elite that are here recollected and recreated at their moment of disappearance.

There was also a musical *fin de siècle*. Inevitably, Germany and Austria figure most prominently in accounts of modernism in classical music, but a community of French composers during the late 1800s and early 1900s more than held its own. This musical collective includes Camille Saint-Saëns, Jules Massenet, César Franck, Édouard Lalo, Vincent d'Indy, Paul Dukas, Gabriel Fauré, Eric Satie, Claude Debussy, and Maurice Ravel. Soon after the creation of the new Republic, Saint-Saëns co-founded the Societé Nationale de Musique, intended to promote new, specifically French music. The greatest works of French opera in the generation after 1870 include Bizet's *Carmen* (1875), Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* (1877), Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* (1881), Delibes' *Lakmé* (1883), Massenet's *Manon* (1884), and Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902). Debussy (1862–1918) in particular is one of the most radical composers in Western music history. In symphonic poems – such as the ethereal *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* (1894) and the gorgeous *La Mer* (1905) – as well as in keyboard music, operas, ballet music, songs, and chamber music, Debussy broke totally new ground, combining a rich new harmonic language and a looser, more expressive use of time with a refined French structural sensibility. His inventive use of tone and color, particularly in his small piano pieces, earned him the sobriquet "musical impressionist."

Just as in the world of painting, Paris also served as a center of international music. Despite the Franco-German cultural rivalries of the day (we will investigate these shortly), by the mid-1880s many French artists and intellectuals were self-confessed fans of Richard Wagner's theatrical mega-operas; the *Revue wagnérienne*, edited by the French writer Édouard Dujardin, became an important venue for debates about modernism in the arts. Following the formation of the Franco-Russian Alliance in 1894, which ended the diplomatic isolation of France and countered the ascent of Germany, an intense interest developed in Russian culture of all sorts.

Setting up residence in central Paris beginning in 1908, the Russian impresario Sergei Diaghilev for several years offered extensive programs of Russian song, opera, and ballet. One of the most experimental and influential dance companies of the twentieth century, Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* premiered one groundbreaking performance after another in pre-war Paris and featured unprecedented collaborations among composers, choreographers, writers, and painters, including Satie, Picasso, Michel Fokine, Anna Pavlova, Jean Cocteau, and Guillaume Apollinaire. On 29 May 1913, the newly completed Théâtre des Champs-Élysées witnessed probably the most notorious episode in the history of both ballet and the musical avant-garde: the debut of the Russian-produced ballet *The Rite of Spring* (*Le Sacre du Printemps*), with music by Igor Stravinsky, choreography by Vaslav Nijinsky, production by Diaghilev, and sets by Nicholas Roerich. In this fabled confrontation between a hostile, horrified audience and radical, bohemian artists in music, dance, drama, design, and architecture, avant-garde and avant-guerre merge. Here, with *Le Sacre du Printemps* – cleverly dubbed by one critic *Le Massacre du Printemps* – the avant-garde desire to shock reached a historical breaking point.

The *fin de siècle* in France also brought entirely new disciplines of knowledge into existence. Émile Durkheim, along with his German counterparts Max Weber and Georg Simmel, laid the foundations for modern sociology during these years. Durkheim's lifework, stretching from the 1880s until the Great War, was to create a systematic, rationalist, and "value neutral" study of society as an analytical enter-prise. A French Jew brought up in Alsace, Durkheim taught social science at the University of Bordeaux from 1887 until taking up a newly created professorship at the University of Paris in 1902. He produced pioneering studies on the sociology of work, the family, economics, and religion, and he was fundamental in creating soci-ology as an academic subject, setting out the subject's methodology, founding the *Année sociologique*, establishing a university degree-granting program, and orga-nizing international conferences in the fledgling field. Durkheim's vision was as new as Impressionist aesthetics or Eiffel's architecture, and as consequential.

Finally, French science must be included in any cultural portrait of the *fin de siècle*. This is especially true of the physical sciences, which, as Stephen Kern and Helge Kragh have shown elsewhere in this volume, provided profoundly new ideas of space and time during this generation. Louis Pasteur in chemistry, microbiology, and immunology; Pierre Boutroux, J. L. F. Bertrand, and Henri Poincaré in mathe-matics; Marcellin Berthelot in thermochemistry; Louie de Broglie in nuclear physics and quantum theory; Henri Becquerel in the physics of electricity; and Marie and Pierre Curie in several areas of chemistry and physics: these are only the best-known of the world-renowned French scientists during the *fin de siècle*. Between 1901 and 1914, the French won eighteen Nobel Prizes in all five fields of the award, including physics, chemistry, and physiology/medicine.

In the life sciences, Pasteur (1822–95) was by far the most famous French scientist of the early Third Republic. Because of the direct, practical applications of his work, he became something of a French scientific superstar: he isolated the causes of cholera and anthrax in farm animals that were plaguing French agriculture, and, in the face of great skepticism, he championed the counter-intuitive idea of treating rabies in humans, which had long terrorized the French countryside, through inoculation with a partial, attenuated, or dead virus – one of the great scientific

controversies of the age. Pasteur's counterpart in the physical sciences was Marie Curie (1867–1934). Born in Warsaw, Poland, the 24-year-old Marie Sklodowska moved to Paris in 1891 to take up science studies at the Sorbonne where foreign women (unlike their French counterparts) were allowed to enroll. She married her physics professor, Pierre Curie. Working together in the late 1890s, the Curies discovered the new chemical elements polonium (Po) and radium (Ra), both highly radioactive metals, and in 1903 they shared the Nobel Prize in Physics for the discoveries. Marie was the first woman to win that international honor. In 1911, after her husband was killed in a traffic accident, she won an equally historic second Nobel Prize, this time in chemistry, in recognition of her work on the process of radioactivity, a term that she coined.

It should be clear by now that during the *fin-de-siècle* era European science enjoyed the peak of prestige. Streets and squares throughout France were named after doctors, mathematicians, chemists, physicists, and explorers. Science education in public schools expanded, and at the university level many new departments, programs, laboratories, and journals were founded, all funded by the state. What is more, as readers may have noticed, many of the artistic accomplishments cited above included a scientific element: Zola argued for "the experimental novel," which took the interacting elements of society as a subject just as the chemist conducts laboratory experiments. Georges Seurat derived his "chromoluminarism" theory of painting from the latest physics of light. Contemporaries regarded Eiffel's buildings and the Lumières' films as much as technological marvels as artistic creations; and early Durkheimians sought to create a literal *science* of society. Not surprisingly, this was also a great age of science popularization. Led by the ambitious science publisher Camille Flammarion and the prolific science writer Louis Figuier, the popular science press in France grew enormously during these decades. And no chronicle of French cultural history during the *fin de siècle* can avoid mention of Jules Verne (1828–1905). Verne, it turns out, was the single most translated French writer of the late 1800s. Published between the 1860s and the early twentieth century, his famous novels – such as *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*, *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*, and *Around the World in Eighty Days* – were immensely popular.

THE DARKER SIDE

French *fin-de-siècle* society also had a third and darker side, one that was deeply complicated both culturally and psychologically. Beneath the pleasant, pastel scenes featured in Impressionist paintings and the carefree cabaret dancers cavorting to Offenbach's music ran deep counter-currents of fear, anxiety, and pessimism. For many French men and women of the day, the atmosphere of self-confidence and self-congratulation discussed above was merely a kind of surface rhetoric that concealed other dreadful, downward tendencies of the time. The age of decadence, decline, and degeneration complemented the French *fin de siècle's* optimistic celebration of progress.

Beyond the generic tendency of people to fret about the future, what were the French so distressed about during these heady years? In fact, a great many things, and their sources of anxiety seemed to many contemporaries to reinforce one another. If the French Third Republic was born on 4 September 1870 and proved to

be comparatively long-lived, the birth itself was sudden and highly traumatic. The condition for the creation of the Republic was the swift and humiliating military defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. With a superior artillery army that was more accurate and mobile, Prussia demonstrated to the world that it now possessed the most powerful standing army on the European continent, and the will to deploy it. The new government of the French Republic was also forced to pay a hefty war indemnity. And, gallingly, Chancellor Otto von Bismarck of Prussia used the war not only to declare the unification of the North German Confederation of States with the southern tier of German-speaking territories into a single German nation, he also staged the unity ceremony, on 18 January 1871, at the Palace of Versailles, the very heart of royalist France.

The most enduring source of French resentment toward their conquerors, however, was the loss of Alsace and Lorraine. Alsace-Lorraine is the frontier territory separating the two countries along the Rhine River, which had been contested terrain since the time of Charlemagne in the ninth century but had been firmly under French control since the seventeenth century. Germany now annexed Alsace-Lorraine (Elsass-Lothringen in German), which was rich in iron ore and included the sizeable cities of Strasbourg, Nancy, Mulhouse, and Metz. Consequently, from 1871 until the First World War, the French remained acutely aware of "the lost provinces," which they regarded as a kind of anatomical dismemberment of the national body (see Figure 6.5).

At the outset of the new French Republic, then, a number of disturbing new realities were unmistakably clear: the diplomatic and military balance of power

Figure 6.5 *The Black Stain* by Albert Bettanier (1887). Courtesy of the Deutsches Historisches Museum

across Europe established at the Congress of Vienna in 1814–15 had been shattered. The Napoleonic legacy of French national grandeur and glory was gone, possibly forever. And the French now had to grapple with a newly formed nation in the center of Europe that boasted great military, economic, industrial, and technological might as well as the fastest growing population in Europe.

The war loss in 1870–71 aroused a great deal of self-questioning in the French nation, some of it rational and constructive, but much of it exaggerated, self-destructive, and even pathological. Why had France – historically *la grande nation* with the best standing army in Europe – collapsed so precipitously? Had the French people lost the will to survive and thrive? Would the country now "decline and fall" like the great Mediterranean empires of ancient times? Was the French "race" itself beginning to die out? It was in the late nineteenth century that the idea first formed that French cultural excellence was a substitute for greatness in politics, the economy, and on the battlefield. It was also in this context that the stereotype of the French as military losers began to circulate. Along the same lines, socialist critics of the Republic's imperial undertakings at this time asserted that the nation's colonial campaigns in poor, far-flung locations – equatorial West Africa, Madagascar, Indochina, and the South Pacific – were substitutes for military victories at home in Europe.

At times, this self-lacerating debate was cast in terms that were dramatically gendered: French manliness, some opinion-makers charged, was modish and refined, cultivated in the cities, and wholly civilian. This contrasted detrimentally with the more martial masculinity of men in Prussia and Brandenburg. More generally, some people wondered if modern France was by nature a feminine/feminizing/effeminate nation. The French embrace of athletics during these decades was partly intended as an agency of re-masculinization. And, truth be told, one of Baron Pierre de Coubertin's main motivations for reviving the Olympics in the nineties was to attempt to re-instill the virile competitive virtues in young French males. Powerful emotions of anger and insecurity pervaded the *fin-de-siècle* period, and the French-German rivalry is key to understanding these sentiments.

Across the political spectrum, most French people shared this anti-German animus. Other sources of French millennial angst, however, were experienced variably, depending on one's personal cultural politics. They were part of what Frederick Brown has called the "culture wars" of *fin-de-siècle* France. France between 1870 and 1914 was riven ideologically. Roughly speaking, the spectrum of possible political ideologies encompassed royalism, Bonapartism, and clericalism on the right, various pro-republic or liberal-constitutionalist positions in the middle, and socialism, syndicalism, communism, and anarchism on the left. Each ideology had its own worldview, its own vision of what France should be and do.

As a consequence of this splintering, when a government was in power other than the one a person favored, there were widespread criticisms, including accusations of dire mismanagement and national decline. The phenomenon of "revolving door governments" – the longest cabinet and prime ministership of the Third Republic ran for only three years – seemed to reinforce partisan charges of administrative ineptitude. Anti-republican intellectuals such as Maurice Barrès and Charles Maurras argued that the Republic was boring and bourgeois, a recipe for mediocrity, and precisely not the way to recover national greatness. The entire French Right, as well as parts of the Left, were "enemies of the Republic" that sought the demise and

replacement of electoral representative democracy as a form of government. During the seventies, eighties, and nineties, fears of a coup-d'état, especially of a Caesarist takeover from the Right, remained strong. And in the mid-1880s, these fears were nearly realized by General Georges Boulanger in a brief authoritarian movement that threatened to topple the Republic. In a classic study of the question, the British historian David Thomson reached an important conclusion: it was only around 1900 that a majority of French adults came to believe that a republic was likely the best, stablest, and most successful form of government for their country.

This being France, national politics were intimately associated with religion throughout the *fin-de-siècle* period. A core component of French republicanism since the 1790s, anti-clericalism figured prominently in the ideological program of the Third Republic. During the 1880s, the anti-clerical agenda achieved major legislative gains. In a series of far-reaching laws the republican parliamentarians succeeded in wresting control of schooling from the Catholic Church and establishing secular institutions of primary, secondary, and higher education. "Laicization" was the common term for this bitterly contested process. In one public arena after another during the final two decades of the century, the power of the Catholic Church diminished, culminating in December 1905, in the aftermath of the Dreyfus Affair, with the legal separation of the church and state, after which time the French government ceased to provide any financial support for the Church. Proud latter-day Voltaireans, pro-Republican citizens hailed these changes as progressive; cultural traditionalists of various stripes, however, were appalled. For 1,500 years, they felt, France had been profoundly Catholic, and to abandon, at the same time, both church and king was to destroy the twin pillars of Latin European civilization. The "conservative republic" of the early 1870s had initiated construction of the bulky Sacré Coeur basilica on the summit of Montmartre, glaring down on the entire city, as official atonement for the nation's sins that were believed to have underpinned the war loss to the Prussians, the Paris Commune of 1871, and the Second Empire.

In both reality and perception, this tidal wave of anti-clerical reforms especially affected French women. Scholars continue to debate whether there was "a belle époque for feminism." Shockingly, French women would not secure the right to vote in national elections until the end of the Second World War. However, in 1880, the historic Camille Sée Law for the first time guaranteed secular, secondary education for girls. Despite furious opposition, the Naquet Law of 1884 legalized divorce and overturned aspects of Napoleon Bonaparte's sweeping, misogynistic Civil Code of 1804. From the 1880s onward, explicitly feminist newspapers, journals, organizations, and congresses flourished in France as never before. Hubertine Auclert was probably the best-known of an entire community of French feminist activists who lobbied on many fronts for women's rights in politics, law, education, the job market, and reproductive health (see Figure 6.6). One of their greatest successes at this time was overcoming historic barriers to professional careers, including medicine and the law.

Here, too, though, what today looks to be admirable advances in gender equality were viewed with fearful disapprobation by some contemporaries, especially Catholics. Tremendous anxiety ran through *fin-de-siècle* France about the traditional French family. In contrast with Germany and America, the national population in France remained stagnant—today we would say "steady state." A major reason,

Figure 6.6   Anonymous photograph of Hubertine Auclert, leading
French feminist and campaigner for women's suffrage, 10 April
1848–4 August 1914 © Leemage/Lebrecht Music & Arts.

cultural conservatives believed, was "the new woman," who was much less inclined,
at least in young adulthood, to assume the historic roles of wife, mother, and lifelong
family supervisor. How could the much-needed regeneration of the *patrie* take place
under these circumstances?

In response to these secularizing trends, French Catholics were hardly silent
during these years. From the so-called "Catholic Revival" among literary intellectuals
to the immensely popular cult of Lourdes, in south-western France, *fin-de-siècle*
Catholic culture continued to thrive in ways old and new – and often quite
consciously in reaction against what many perceived to be the cold and comfortless
atheism of the modern, materialistic world.

To interpret what it saw as these negative developments, the European cultural
Right of the late nineteenth century came up with a remarkable concept: degeneration.
Originating in mid-century French psychiatry, the theory of degeneration expanded
during the last three decades of the century into a general social and cultural
category. Drawing on the historic precedent of the ancient Roman fall, and reinforced
by Old Testament themes of sin, punishment, and death, *fin-de-siècle* degenerationist
discourse served as critique of an emerging mass society that was modernizing,

democratizing, and liberalizing. Degenerationist thinking was the converse of the theory of evolution and the ideology of progress: might humanity regress or "de-volve" back down the ladder of civilization? Could science, technology, and the city also be sites of decline and agents of destruction?

Indeed, an atmosphere of cultural pessimism pervaded French society during the *fin de siècle*. In his Rougon-Macquart novels, the greatest literary saga of the 1870s and 1880s, Émile Zola chronicled the fatalistic, hereditary deterioration of two interconnected families into crime, poverty, insanity, drunkenness, and disease. Only intermarriage with the untainted peasantry could prevent this atavistic collapse. Although set in the Second Empire, Zola's anti-Romantic epic was widely read as a self-diagnosis of the present. In the 1890s, *Degeneration*, written by the Hungarian physician and art critic wannabe Max Nordau, extended the paradigm to the cultural arts: in this hugely influential study, Nordau interpreted the constantly morphing artistic avant-garde around him as the sign of a crazy, incoherent, and fragmented culture.

By the turn of the century, cultural degenerationism itself came under criticism, but a general "sense of decadence in nineteenth century France," as Koenraad Swart called it, endured until the war's outbreak. Regenia Gagnier has shown in Chapter 1 in this volume that a collection of writers and artists loosely referring to themselves as Decadents amplified this idea further throughout the globe. Inspired by Charles Baudelaire at mid-century, poets and novelists such as Huysmans, Lautréamont, Mirbeau, Rachilde, and Verlaine embraced the pejorative label as an aesthetic reaction against Zolan literary naturalism and a provocative cultural pose intended to offend the hidebound bourgeoisie.

One social manifestation of decadence centered on sex. Sexual libertinage was rampant in Third Republic France. The extroverted social life of the new Paris encouraged romance and eros, and, then as now, many young people flocked to the city on weekends for its hot nightlife. Paris in particular was famous for its secret sexual underworlds catering to every taste. The world of commercial sex was extensive, ranging from the high-class courtesans who might accompany their male patron in public to the opera, to petit-bourgeois cabaret *cocottes*, to the down-and-out, streetwalking strumpets along the Rue St. Denis. Most of this activity was legal. Across the nineteenth century, French governments saw prostitution as a regrettable necessity: state-controlled and medically supervised brothels, known as *maisons de tolérance*, thrived. The loosened censorship laws of the Republic also allowed pornography, an invention of eighteenth-century France that could now be printed in color, to flourish as never before. And cabaret entrepreneurs, competing for business, sponsored ever less-inhibited displays of nudity onstage during nighttime performances.

Racheting up the level of social anxiety still higher was "the venereal peril." Estimates today cite as much as 13 to 15 percent of the adult male population of Paris infected with syphilis, and up to one-third of the population of municipal asylums at the century's turn were victims of "general paralysis of the insane," or spinal and cerebral syphilis. Because its contraction was deemed shameful, its incubation period was so long, its advanced forms were so awful, and because there was no cure, dread of the disease was high among anyone with a wayward youth – or a promiscuous partner or spouse. Furthermore, the venereal peril peaked just as

Pasteur's new germ theory was spreading. Fears of life-threatening diseases carried by unknown and invisible agents were irrational but real and widespread.

At this same time, homosexuality, both male and female, achieved greater public visibility than ever before. What in retrospect looks like rudimentary gay communities began to form in several European cities during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. In *fin-de-siècle* Paris, Berlin, London, Amsterdam, and St. Petersburg, an increasing number of venues – bars, cafés, cabarets, restaurants, and salons – with a predominantly gay clientele were publicized during these years, and the urban geography of homosexuality, which included meeting grounds for men in parks, along quays, and at bath facilities, became common knowledge. Several leading men of letters featured homosexual characters in their novels, and a "Sapphic" subculture emerged, with women sporting formal menswear, including tuxedos, or displaying an androgynous style that rejected traditional, male-pleasing standards of female beauty. Coined by a scientist a generation earlier, the terms "homosexuality" and "homosexual" became popular in the 1890s. Unlike in Britain and Germany, where same-sex acts in public or private were formally outlawed, they were not illegal in France, although laws against "acts of gross public indecency" could easily be extended to include them.

As many people experienced it, then, traditional morality was under siege in the culture wars of the *fin de siècle*. Self-styled guardians of the nation's welfare were sufficiently concerned that they organized special leagues to promote social and moral purity. Sports activities and campaigns to reform boys' public schools were launched as strategies for maintaining healthy, heterosexual masculinity among young French males. As Andrew Aisenberg has shown, these organizations were oftentimes supported by French scientific experts and government elites who shared their underlying anxieties about the times.

Alcohol, there should be little doubt, lubricated much of *fin-de-siècle* daily life. But "the banquet years," as Roger Shattuck christened them, witnessed a deep change in sensibility about drink and drinking. In the 1860s, the term "alcoholism" was coined, and during the following decades people came increasingly to distinguish "ivresse" or drunkenness from "alcoolisme." The former was occasional and recreational whereas the latter was a sickness, a long-running, out-of-control pathology, and a problem for drinker, family, and community. By the 1880s, some French people, and not all of them teetotalers or reactionary rightists, began to pose questions that would have been unthinkable previously: were all the cafés across Paris a sign of the vibrancy of social life in the capital or an indication of excess and addiction? Did France, as a nation, have a drinking problem? Beverages of the beau monde, no less than more ordinary inebriants, came under scrutiny in the later nineteenth century. By the 1890s, more and more people had come to realize that 70 percent-proof absinthe was not a colorful café intoxicant. Increasingly, this quintessentially *fin-de-siècle* libation was viewed as a national toxin. Temperance campaigns and anti-alcohol leagues formed. In March 1915, several months into the First World War, the French government outlawed the drink altogether as a virtual poison – the crack cocaine of its day – that undermined national military preparedness.

Crime was yet another destabilizing force in *fin-de-siècle* society. But were crime rates actually on the rise, as they seemed to be, or was crime just more visible with the concentration of greater numbers of people in the swelling cities, and better

reported? Whatever the answer, Robert Nye has demonstrated that many alarmed citizens believed that *fin-de-siècle* criminality was not just a matter of isolated acts to prevent or punish but a threat to the social order itself. As a result, conservative law, medicine, and the social sciences joined forces in order to name, classify, describe, condemn, and control urban crime. Anti-social acts motivated by a special "criminal psychology" now received scientific-sounding names, like kleptomania and pyromania. The nascent field of criminology posed a set of questions that could be debated by experts and the populace alike: were criminal offenders born or made? Should wrongdoers be punished or reformed? What were the comparative roles of free will and compulsion in the commission of crimes? And ultimately were criminals bad, mad, or sick? Other medical and legal elites pondered how crime in France was gendered. Female "crimes of passion – *crimes passionnels*," which usually involved stylized assaults by women on unfaithful lovers or adulterous husbands, became a means of negotiating tensions between the sexes in this still deeply patriarchal society. Late Victorians were equally intrigued with solving crime and introduced new crime-fighting technologies, including mug shots, fingerprinting, and ballistics. Alphonse Bertillon's police laboratory, with its vast archive of biometric images and crime scene photographs, was celebrated.

For sure, French people on the ideological Right were most strongly inclined to hyperventilate about all of these social problems, but it would be misleading to think that only moral conservatives were anxious. The case of Émile Durkheim makes this point. Secular, Jewish, and pro-Republic, Durkheim's best-known book was *Suicide*, a landmark study in modern sociology published in 1897. Along with divorce, crime, and mental illness, Durkheim interpreted suicide as one of the "social pathologies" of the day. In his analysis, loneliness and alienation were the flip sides of urban gaiety. For all of its glamour, modern Parisian life worshipped individuality and independence at the expense of older bonds of the family, parish, village, and region, which had been central to how French people lived since primitive times. In the great sociologist's reading, the result of this disintegration across the nineteenth century was "social anomie" or a lack of belonging to any larger community than the all-consuming self. Without a shared worldview to generate values and meaning, contemporary city dwellers often fell into disappointment, unhappiness, and depression, in extreme cases taking their own lives. Durkheim's groundbreaking *fin-de-siècle* work was only the first in a stream of studies, appearing right up to our own time, that bemoan the loss of a more stable, traditional society and warn of the destructive effects of the modern metropolis on the human mind.

Reference to Durkheim touches on yet another ugly feature of the age: anti-Semitism. The French Revolution of the 1790s and the Napoleonic period had launched a process of "Jewish emancipation," liberating members of the Jewish faith living in France from their ghettos, rescinding many old anti-Jewish prohibitions, and establishing relative equality for French Jews. The French republican ideal of universalism interpreted all men and women above all as equal citizens, regardless of class, race, or region. In this noble spirit, even the approximately 40,000 Jews living in French Algeria were granted French citizenship in 1870.Shockingly, however, the last two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a powerful outburst of Catholic anti-Semitism: Édouard Drumont founded the Antisemitic League of France, published his slanderous diatribe *La France juive* (1886), and launched the racist

newspaper *La Libre Parole* (1892). Drumont's *La France juive* (*Jewish France*) simultaneously attacked Jews in France – which constituted less than 1 percent of the national population! – as an economic, religious, and racial community. Absurdly, it charged that all of France's national problems, from the military loss to the Prussians and republican secularism to the failure of the French wine crop and the latest avant-garde art, were Jewish-led conspiracies. A compendium of old and new racist stereotypes, Drumont's screed, disturbingly, became a bestseller, going through scores of editions by the turn of the century. This resurgent wave of historic anti-Semitism served as backdrop to the infamous Dreyfus Affair (1894–1905) in which a French-Jewish captain in the army was accused falsely of passing military secrets to the German high command, convicted of treason, and jailed for years at Devil's Island before eventually being exonerated at the turn of the century. *L'Affaire* was without a doubt the single most divisive event in French domestic history during the second half of the 1890s, highlighting endemic French racism for all the world to see – and providing impetus for a new Zionist movement among Jews across Europe.

Finally, we come full circle back to the world of politics. From the array of ideologies present in Europe during the final quarter of the nineteenth century, one strand of French revolutionary activism elicited special fear and anger among contemporaries and that was anarchism, or the belief in no government at all. Building on the French heritage of the 1790s, 1830, 1848, and the Paris Commune of 1871, and galvanized by the writings of certain Russian and French radical political theorists, anarchists believed in a stateless society in which no unit existed larger than individuals in local freely formed associations. Most people who flirted with anarchism during the *fin de siècle* shared a general anti-government, anti-property, anti-establishment attitude. A tiny minority of adherents took the movement further; they forged the idea of "propaganda by the deed" or the use of direct violent action in public to advance their goals. From the 1870s on, political dissidents had attempted assassinations of several monarchs across Europe. But in the first half of the 1890s – the so-called golden age of French anarchism – a sudden outbreak of bomb-throwing rocked the French capital. The final climactic episode of anarchist terrorism occurred on 24 June 1894 in the stabbing to death of the popular President Sadi Carnot, while he attended the Exhibition of Arts, Sciences, and Industries in Lyon. Outraged, the government, police, and press united after Carnot's murder, and a massive campaign of repression ended the anarchist movement in France. Numerous people interpreted these attacks as yet another symptom of *fin-de-siècle* moral decadence.

For many French people a century or so ago, these sources of social chaos and cultural nihilism reinforced one another in ways that were all too evident. In this pessimistic perspective, *fin-de-siècle* France was politically divided, militarily disgraced, territorially dismembered, economically lackluster, demographically stagnant, religiously lapsed, psychologically unanchored, socially unstable, sexually deviant, and artistically fragmented. For those so inclined – by ideology or temperament – there was plenty to worry about.

THE BEST OF TIMES, THE WORST OF TIMES

The obvious question at the conclusion of this historical review is: how today can we possibly reconcile the three apparently discrepant strands of culture that

formed in France during the *fin-de-siècle* epoch? If this essay is intended as the "portrait of an age," we might logically expect such an account to offer a single, coherent, and comprehensive interpretation of that historical period. At the least, can we rank these three dimensions in order of importance? Was the true essence of the age the pursuit of urban pleasure, or revolution in the arts, or anti-modern resentment and resistance?

In fact, we cannot reconcile these different dimensions, nor should we try. That would be to impose a false and simplified unity onto the period. Even to reduce the *fin de siècle* to three simultaneous narratives – sometimes separate, at other times interconnected – is to generalize about these decades to a degree that almost certainly would have been alien to contemporaries at the time. How someone experienced these years depended on a tremendous range of factors. People's engagement with their culture evolved during the course of their lifetimes, as did the culture itself. And an individual whose worldview tended strongly in this or that direction might well embrace elements of a contrasting or contradictory outlook in certain areas. Time and again throughout his event-packed career, Zola advanced a tough-minded populist and progressivist mindset, yet he opposed women's rights, on natalist grounds, and shared with Catholic conservatives a belief in the sanctity of the traditional family. There were countless such cases. In the final analysis, there were as many subjective *fin-de-siècle* experiences as there were participants in the era.

To claim that divergent perceptions of the time coexisted, however, is still not quite sufficient. Much like our own time, this past world witnessed an unprecedented phalanx of forces that brought modern society, thought, and culture into being. These forces were variously complementary, conflicting, and contradictory, but it was their *combined* action, and interaction, that was so powerful. These new forces were especially operative in the major European metropolises around 1900. In the big picture, *fin-de-siècle* France offers a historical case study of how modernity was conceived, created, consumed, and contested in one place and time.

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BRITAIN

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Nicholas Daly

On 1 January 1877, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Maharajas of Mysore, Gwalior, and Kashmir, the Khan of Khelat, and other Indian leaders assembled at the Imperial Durbar in Delhi to mark the proclamation of Queen Victoria (in absentia) as Empress of India. Medieval in theme, and with costumes and decor designed by Rudyard Kipling's father, Joseph Lockwood Kipling, the extravagant display was presided over by Lord Lytton, the viceroy (Codell 2013). Not everyone was happy with such theatrics, and the *Pall Mall Gazette* was by no means alone in its view that "a tinsel title has been proclaimed with a tawdry and theatrical display of magnificence", that the extravagance was unlikely to impress the native princes, and that it was inappropriate at a time of famine in Southern India (*Pall Mall Gazette* 1877). Nonetheless, such pageantry was the ceremonial expression of a geopolitical reality: that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Britain was on top of the world, notwithstanding continuing and emergent rivalries with other powers. There was plenty more of this kind of pageantry to come: in 1887 and 1897 kings, princes, and other leaders from all over the world gathered in London to celebrate Victoria's Golden and Diamond Jubilees. The Queen was an Empress, and London was not just a national capital, but an imperial capital that directly or indirectly controlled vast swathes of the globe, from Australia and New Zealand to parts of Africa, Asia, and North and South America.

If the growth of Britain's overseas territory had not always been in accordance with a long-term plan, clearly by the late nineteenth century it was increasingly self-aware about its imperial status. Apart from state pageantry, such awareness registers in the political sphere in, for example, the policies of the pro-empire Liberal Unionist party, but it also left its imprint in the cultural realm, in self-consciously imperial literature, music, and fine art, from adventure yarns to imperial marches, to paintings of Roman opulence. However, less comfortable forms of national self-consciousness were also apparent. For example, there was a growing perception that Britain was falling behind such countries as Germany and the U.S. both economically and technologically. Similarly, some commentators realized that Britain was one power among others both in Europe and in the imperial scramble, and warned that Britain itself could easily succumb to invasion. In the cultural realm,

while some writers embraced international influences, others were distrustful of what they saw as unhealthy imports: naturalism, symbolism, and decadence, for example. Thus at a time when we might expect supreme confidence, we see as much self-doubt as self-assurance. These are metaphors of course: nations are complex, contested, and partly imaginary constructs, rather than individuals, and perhaps should not be ascribed feelings. But for heuristic purposes we can usefully see some tendencies as indices of confidence and national assertion, where others suggest an inward and anxious turn. In this chapter I want to look at *fin-de-siècle* Britain as an imperial centre, and to consider some of the reasons for those expressions of anxiety.

LONDON, IMPERIAL CAPITAL

In Chapter 1 of Arthur Conan Doyle's first Sherlock Holmes tale, *A Study in Scarlet*, Dr Watson, who has been wounded in the shoulder in Afghanistan, is sent back to England to recuperate his health on an invalid's pension. As he tells us, "Under such circumstances I naturally gravitated to London, that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained" (1888: 6). It is not something we can imagine any of, say, Dickens' characters saying, and is one of many indications in the literature of the period that London was now seen less as a national capital than as an imperial metropolis. In the physical fabric of the city we can see signs of the same imperial mood, which easily outlived Victoria. In 1905, a wide new street, Kingsway, was opened between Holborn and Aldwych. The imperial connotations of its broad sweep were captured in a Kiplingesque song written by Caroline Elgar, to accompany a melody by her husband, Edward:

> The newest street in London town,
> The Kingsway, the Kingsway!
> The newest street in London town,
> Who'll pace it up and pace it down?
> The brave, the strong, who strive and try,
> And think and work, who fight and die
> To make their England's royal way
> The King's Way, the King's Way!

> (Elgar 1905)

The song envisages the street as the bricks-and-mortar embodiment of an invisible road that links London to "England's sons across the sea", a message not so very different from *Land of Hope and Glory*, Elgar's earlier imperial anthem, part of the *Coronation Ode* composed in honour of Edward VII in 1902.

Other capitals had fine, wide streets and imperial buildings too, of course, and empire was in the air more generally. As Eric Hobsbawm notes, "gigantic monuments to national self-congratulation and imperial propaganda . . . filled the new German Empire" as well as Britain, and "statuomania" was the tendency of the age (Hobsbawm 1989: 222). But London dwarfed other capitals in terms of sheer size. By 1900 the population of Greater London stood at 6.5 million, which was about one fifth of the total population of England and Wales. This was more than twice the size of Paris, and even New York trailed far behind, at around 3.4 million; it was in

fact a greater population than quite a few European countries. Outside of Europe and North America, no city was anywhere close to London in size – Tokyo had some 1.5 million inhabitants, and Bombay and Calcutta were close to the million mark (Lampard 1973: 9). In Peter Hall's terms, London was a world city, not just a very large centre of population, but a major hub of political power, commerce, finance, consumption, and information-gathering and dissemination, among other things. Its extraordinary size was, perhaps, to be expected of a country that had long embraced urban life, and that had seen phenomenal growth of population. Already by 1851 more Britons lived in towns and cities than in the countryside, a shift that took place elsewhere only in the twentieth century. Moreover, Britain's overall population had surged more generally, from around 8 million in 1800 to 32 in 1900; in the same period the population of France grew from 29 to 38 million, nothing like as dramatic an increase. Even more remarkable, perhaps, was that this population growth had taken place while Britain was sending out significant numbers of emigrants to its Anglophone settler colonies and the United States, as well as exporting imperial soldiers and administrators. Unlike the settlers, of course, the latter categories tended to return: Dr Watson's route to London via Afghanistan was by no means atypical.

THE HOME FRONT

At a time when Britain ruled directly or indirectly vast tracts of the globe, some feared that it was about to be eclipsed. Such feelings ranged from concerns that Britain might be outstripped economically by Germany and America to fears that the country was about to be invaded by hostile continental powers. The latter prospect underwrote a wave of "invasion narratives", from Sir George Tomkyns Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking; Reminiscences of a Volunteer* (1871) to Erskine Childers' *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903), as well as more fantastic tales, like *Dracula* (1897) and *The War of the Worlds* (1897). Such invasion fiction evolved in the 1900s into the anti-German propaganda of journalist, novelist, and self-appointed "spy-hunter" William Le Queux, author of such volumes as *The Invasion of 1910*, serialized in the *Daily Mail* in 1906, and *Spies of the Kaiser: Plotting the Downfall of England* (1909). Nor did invasion-anxiety issue in print only: just as fears of French invasion had led to the formation of the volunteer movement during the reign of Napoleon III, at the *fin de siècle* similar concerns underpinned the formation of such bodies as the National Service League, the Legion of Frontiersmen, and even Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts (MacDonald 1993: 5).

Other threats loomed closer to home. Irish MPs in Westminster, led first by Isaac Butt and later by Charles Stewart Parnell, had pressed for Home Rule for Ireland from 1870, and unsuccessful Home Rule bills were introduced by the Liberals under William Gladstone in 1886 and 1893 (Jackson 2003). Those Liberals who were hostile to Gladstone's plans split from the party to become the Liberal Unionists under Joseph Chamberlain. But it was not only the Home Rulers who dominated the headlines: the Irish Republican Brotherhood (or "Fenians") demanded an independent Irish republic rather than some measure of Home Rule, and they were committed to extra-parliamentary methods to achieve their goal. Having seen the failure of open rebellion, its leaders turned to the methods of modern urban terrorism. Indeed, this was also international terrorism insofar as the IRB had considerable support from

Irish Americans. London's transport and administrative centres were targeted in the early 1880s, with bombs detonated at Paddington, Victoria, and Gower Street stations; Whitehall, the House of Commons, and the headquarters of the Criminal Investigation Department of the police, among other locations. Deaths and injuries were relatively low, given the number of devices used. But these attacks, together with those of anarchists in the same period, showed that the heart of the empire was far from being invulnerable, and writers from Robert Louis Stevenson to Joseph Conrad were quick to explore the symbolic significance of such actions (Ó Donghaile 2010).

Direct action – though not dynamite – also came to be used by another group who felt their political rights were being ignored: women. The campaign for female suffrage in Britain was conducted by such bodies as the National Society for Women's Suffrage, the Women's Franchise League, and the Women's Social and Political Union (Smith 2009). It was the last group under the leadership of Emmeline Pankhurst (two of whose daughters, Christabel and Sylvia, were also major figures in the campaign) that stepped up the campaign from 1905, and from 1908 pioneered the use of window-smashing and later arson, bombing, and hunger strikes to highlight their cause. The treatment of women demonstrators, and the use of force-feeding in prisons in 1909, made it evident that, whatever its chivalric rhetoric, the state was prepared to use violence against women when it felt under threat. Nonetheless, the movement prevailed: in 1918 for the first time women achieved a qualified measure of suffrage; by 1928 women could vote on the same terms as men. The movement was less successful, perhaps, in achieving broader changes to the way in which gender operated in politics and society (Smith 2009: 3).

While most suffrage activists were Liberals, Emmeline Pankhurst had attempted to forge links with the Labour movement, and Sylvia Pankhurst became as committed to socialist politics as to women's suffrage, leading the East London Federation of Suffragettes. For these were also the years of the rise of Labour, against a background of growing discontent with working conditions: the Match Workers' Strike of 1888 and the London Dock Strike of 1889 put the spotlight on the grim conditions of many workers. The gradual extension of the franchise (for men) over the course of the century meant that by the 1890s the working class had some actual political muscle. Former Scottish miner Keir Hardie was elected as an "Independent Labour Candidate" for West Ham South in 1892, and founded the Independent Labour Party the following year. The modern Labour Party grew out of the Labour Representation Committee, formed in 1900 with Hardie as Chairman, to bring together the trades unions and socialist parties. The emergence of Labour as a party radically altered the political landscape of Britain, which had long alternated between Conservative and Liberal rule. By the 1920s Labour would displace the Liberals as the main opposition party, and in 1923 it would form its first government, in coalition with a section of the Liberal Party.

The campaign for women's suffrage and the rise of Labour were national movements, but they both took place in an international context too. Hardie, for example, was a committed internationalist, and active in the Socialist International. He toured the settler colonies as well as India and Japan to promote the cause of Labour, and tried to make common cause with German socialists against the arms race. He was thus placed in a difficult position when working-class voters in Britain joined in the national enthusiasm for war. Emmeline Pankhurst toured the U.S. and Canada,

and attracted enthusiastic crowds eager to hear about the campaign for suffrage, but when war came her loyalty was to Britain, and she committed the movement to supporting the war against Germany; Sylvia Pankhurst, like Hardie, took a different view, and campaigned against conscription – after the war she was a leading voice in international socialism. Another feminist and socialist campaigner of these years, Annie Besant, became a very different sort of international figure. Long a critic of Britain's role in India, as President of the Theosophical Society she moved to Adyar, Madras, home to the organization's headquarters. She became actively involved in politics, and was elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1917.

CULTURE

The realm of culture did not float free of the political and social concerns of the period. In fine art, Britain's martial exploits – and reversals – had long been a source of pictorial subjects, and this strain was continued in the work of such artists as Elizabeth Thompson, Lady Butler (*Scotland Forever!* [1881]); the Irish-born George William Joy (*The Death of General Gordon* [1893]); and Charles Edwin Fripp (*The Battle of Isandlwana* [1885]). No visitor to the annual exhibitions of the Royal Academy could fail to notice that Britain saw itself as a military power with extensive overseas interests (Lambourne 1999: 412–37). We can see a somewhat different imperial imagination at work in the lush classical interiors of the Dutch-born Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, who turned late-Victorian Britain into decadent Rome in such paintings as *In the Tepidarium* (1881) and *The Roses of Heliogabalus* (1888). But in this period British art was also beginning to move away from the narrative-driven paintings of the Academy. A reaction had set in as early as the 1860s in the work of the American-born (but London- and Paris-based) James Abbott McNeill Whistler, who insisted that painting was not about telling stories. His canvases asserted the importance of composition rather than theme with such titles as *Arrangement in Pink, Red and Purple* (1883–84). Whistler's ideas were echoed in much of the aesthetic philosophy of the 1890s, including that of Oscar Wilde.

In the literature of this period, we can see a bifurcation between "Hearties" and Aesthetes. It is a very loose division – the literary coteries of this period sometimes overlapped, and some writers were "non-aligned" – but it nonetheless has a certain explanatory usefulness. Insofar as the labels correspond to real social and literary behaviour, the "Hearties" were more likely to be part of the "Henley Regatta" as Max Beerbohm described it, the informal circle that gathered around the editor and poet W. E. Henley, including, at times, H. G. Wells, R. L. Stevenson, J. M. Barrie, Rudyard Kipling, and others, though few of these shared Henley's dislike of "Decadence". The more aesthetically inclined were likely to be regular attenders at the Cheshire Cheese pub in Fleet Street, home to the Rhymers' Club, a group of poets that included Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, Ernest Rhys, T. W. Rolleston, and W. B. Yeats (Beckson 1992: 71–94; Buckley 1945). Yeats was one of the club's founders, and his friend, the prominent Fenian, John O'Leary was a regular visitor, which suggests that nationalism as well as aestheticism was a component of this literary culture. These were not the only coteries in London, of course. The aesthetic poet and critic Alice Meynell, for example, had her own literary salon, and through her literary column in the *Pall Mall Gazette* wielded considerable influence (Schaffer 2000: 159–96).

Wilde favored the Rhymers, but was not a regular visitor, and did not appear in the anthologies of the Rhymers that appeared in 1892 and 1894. He was already by then a well-known figure, and had played a crucial role in popularizing the ideas of aestheticism through, for example, his public talks and journalism and his own self-presentation. His novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* appeared in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* in 1890, before appearing in revised form in 1891, with a Preface that set out a number of Wilde's artistic maxims. Readers were assured that "there is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all" and that "Vice and virtue are to the artist instruments of an art" (Wilde 1890: 4). Yet, in the *Picture*, a moral seems to be offered, and Walter Pater's idea that our all-too-brief lives should be a search for new sensations is turned into a sort of Gothic parable: Dorian lives a life of refined debauchery, but it is his portrait – and the people around him – who pay the price of his actions.

Among the Hearties, the Anglo-Indian Kipling was the one most likely to extol the virtues of the active, imperial life in strident, public poetry. Thus in 1899 he was urging the United States in verse to "take up the white man's burden" in the London *Times* of 4 February. In the year of Victoria's Diamond Jubilee he warned Britain that it should be more humble in its divinely inspired imperial might:

> If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
> Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe –
> Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
> Or lesser breeds without the Law –
> Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
> Lest we forget – lest we forget!

> (Kipling 1897)

"Recessional", from which these lines come, was clearly public poetry too, appearing first in the London *Times* – this is the voice of Britain's unofficial imperial poet laureate writing to his people. Such pieces are the more sombre corollaries of the slang-filled celebrations of the imperial legions in such poems as "The Absent-Minded Beggar" and "Gunga Din". It was the latter Kipling, the author of *Barrack Room Ballads and Other Verses* (1892), that Robert Buchanan had attacked in an essay in *The Contemporary Review* in 1899, "The Voice of the Hooligan", which reminds us of the hostility as well as adulation that the imperialist poet generated among his contemporaries (Attridge 2003: 70–91). The Rhymers' work for its part appeared in anthologies published with small print runs, and was bought by a coterie audience – many of them other poets, one assumes. *The Book of the Rhymers Club* (1892) makes the occasional humorous sally, as in T. W. Rolleston's "Ballade of the 'Cheshire Cheese' in Fleet Street":

> The modern world, so stiff and stale,
> You leave behind you, when you please,
> For long clay pipes and great old ale
> And beefsteaks in the Cheshire Cheese

> (Rolleston 1892)

But for the most part this is private poetry: the regulars at the Cheshire Cheese were interested in interiority, in the evanescence of consciousness, in love, in the city, and above all else in literary form. Ernest Dowson, for instance, wrote neo-classical love poetry with a decadent flavour – crying for "madder music and for stronger wine" to rid himself of the fatal lure of the "pale, lost lilies" of his old love, Cynara (Dowson 1891). Others wrote about spiritual doubts, or, as in Yeats's case, celebrated the supposed non-modernity of the Celtic fringe in incantatory poems like "The Lake Isle of Innisfree". Despite their obvious differences the Hearties and the Aesthetes had certain things in common, in particular an interest in re-energizing English literature by bringing into it global material. While Kipling injected new energy into English literature by taking empire as his raw material, Arthur Symons and others were hoping to renew English poetry using French Symbolism; Rhys and Yeats drew on the Celtic fringe, and Yeats would later try to create a new form of poetic drama by studying, inter alia, Japanese Noh theatre.

We can recognize a similar division between an outward/imperial and an inward look in prose fiction, though again there are also areas of overlap. On the one hand, there was a "revival of romance", on the other, a literature of consciousness along continental lines began to develop (Daly 1999). On the side of romance are the Edinburgh-born Robert Louis Stevenson and H. Rider Haggard, both promoted, like Kipling, by Henley, who edited the *Scots Observer* and later the *National Observer*. In their work we see a new cathexis around space, graphically represented by the treasure-maps of *Treasure Island* (1883) and *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), which link the idea of overseas adventure to fabulous wealth. Neither novel is straightforward propaganda for empire, of course, but in them we do see an investment in exotic space as dangerous but exciting and rewarding. Targeted at "big and little boys", as the dedication to *King Solomon's Mines* puts it, these tales of homosocial adventure are part of the dreamworld of an increasingly imperial society. Nonetheless, they are far from naïve artefacts. Haggard had spent some time in South Africa, and his African characters are sometimes complex figures: Billali, a leader of the Amahagger people in *She* (1887), is a more developed character than the handsome English hero, Leo, for example. At the time, Haggard and Stevenson's work was taken up and given a literary defence by folklorist and proto-anthropologist Andrew Lang, who argued that the English novel needed to be rejuvenated by tapping the wells of primitive narrative – it needed to get away from domestic plots and embrace the action-driven narrative of epic (Daly 1999: 18–19).

The "romance" school was in self-conscious reaction against not only the older domestic fiction of Dickens and Eliot, but the contemporary influence of French naturalism, and the more formalist fiction of consciousness that was beginning to gain ground. One of the pioneers of that fiction of consciousness was the American-born Henry James (naturalized as a British citizen in 1915), who was formulating his own very different ideas about the novel in the years of the "revival of romance". For James, renewal in the novel could only come through a greater awareness of literary form: treatment, not content, was the key. One should not exaggerate the extent to which James was immune to the appeals of dramatic content. *The Princess Cassamassima* (1886) is, after all, a novel about terrorism in London, which was, as we have seen, very much in the news at the *fin de siècle*, even if James's narrative largely focuses on the same issues of moral choice that preoccupy the protagonists

of his more domestic tales. Nor was he uninterested in securing powerful readerly effects, and his ghost stories, including *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), are among his most successful works.

James's closest ally in the reformation of the novel in English was a fellow immigrant, a Pole, Joseph Conrad (Jozef Teodor Konrad Nalecz Korzeniowski), who became a British citizen in 1886. But if Conrad shared James's commitment to literary form, his twenty years of experience at sea gave him a very different store of raw material on which to draw, and the ability to conjure up versions of South America, South-east Asia, and West Africa as readily as he could London, however European his perspective might remain. In Conrad, the imperial imagination of Stevenson and Rider Haggard undergoes a sea-change into something at once more stylized and more phobic: the African cornucopia of *King Solomon's Mines* and the all-powerful Queen Ayesha of *She* (1887) return in nightmarish form in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), where Africa allows Europeans to play out fantasies of absolute power and enormous wealth, but at the cost of turning them into monsters like Kurtz. Yet Conrad's sophisticated vision is scarcely less Eurocentric, even if in his work the exotic spaces of empire become a backdrop for European disintegration and self-questioning rather than for manly adventure and treasure-hunting. Despite their imperialism, Rider Haggard's work is rather more inclined to recognize Africa's actual presence outside of the European imagination, perhaps because he had lived for some years in Natal, and had considerable respect for the war-like Zulu people.

Naturally, these twin tendencies of "romance" and proto-modernism were not the only ones at work in these years. The "New Woman" was a term introduced by the novelist Sarah Grand to describe the woman who has "proclaimed for herself what was wrong with Home-is-the-Woman's-Sphere" (cited in Christensen Nelson 2000: ix). The term was quickly taken up in the journalism of the period, and the educated and independent New Woman became a contested figure: an ideal for some, but a figure of fun for those who were happier that women kept to their sphere. In fiction the term "New Woman" writers has been used to describe, among others, Ella Hepworth Dixon, George Egerton, Sarah Grand, Mona Caird, and Netta Syrett. The term thus encompasses authors relatively traditional in their approach to fiction as well as the more experimental. Insofar as there is an underlying unity it is provided by their shared political interest in the place of women in society, and their relative frankness about sexual topics. Among the more experimental, Egerton (Mary Chavelita Dunne Bright) drew on her knowledge of European fiction – she translated Knut Hamsun's *Hunger* in 1899 – to produce stories that are remarkable for compression, elision, and the use of stream of consciousness to represent her characters' interiority. Her first collection of stories, *Keynotes* (1893), was published by John Lane as the first volume in the Keynotes Series, which provided a showcase for a number of women writers. Lane, with Elkin Mathews, also published the iconic *fin-de-siècle* journal the *Yellow Book*, which also featured the work of many women writers (Christensen Nelson 2000: xiii). For those who felt that Britain was facing some kind of cultural collapse the frankness and experimentalism of the "New Woman" writers were, of course, seen as symptomatic.

Egerton's Scandinavian influences should remind us that one of the most celebrated fictional "New Women" was Henrik Ibsen's Nora in *A Doll's House*, which premiered in Copenhagen in 1879, though it was not performed in English

translation for another ten years. The play's representation of a woman who turns her back on her husband and her assigned domestic role sent shock-waves through international drama and literature. Ibsen's most faithful disciple in Britain was the Irish playwright and critic George Bernard Shaw, who wrote *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* in 1891 to explain the work of the Norwegian to an Anglophone audience, and to advance his own social critique. In his plays, Shaw borrowed both Ibsen's willingness to deal with difficult and even taboo topics and his rejection of the melodramatic conventions that still dominated the theatre of the day. There are no last-minute rescues; the "action" is talk, and often the main effect aimed at is not to thrill the audience, but to leave them less sure of their preconceptions. *Mrs Warren's Profession* (written in 1893, but not performed until 1902, and then privately), for instance, never mentions that profession by name, and we see neither brothels, nor weeping fallen women; instead Shaw highlights the hypocrisy of a society that pays women starvation wages for factory and service jobs, but affects to be outraged when women choose sex work instead. The play was more or less unperformable given Britain's censorship of the stage; on tour in the U. S. it was hugely controversial, and a 1905 New York production was stopped by the police for a period, though the principal objections were probably to the play's references to incest, not prostitution – one review described the play as "illuminated gangrene" (Harrington 1997: 50). Faced with official censorship and the indifference, or hostility, of the larger paying public, the work of dramatists like Ibsen and Shaw depended to a considerable degree on the venues provided by the emergent private theatre societies. These included Jacob T. Grein's Independent Theatre Society in London and the Irish Literary Theatre Society, one of the forerunners of Dublin's Abbey Theatre.

In the early years of the twentieth century, when Ibsenism seemed rather dated, a new wave of foreign influence manifested itself in London's literary bohemia, as Ezra Pound began to make his presence felt (Brooker 2007: 52–71). With the appearance of his edited anthology *Des Imagistes* in 1914 international, or at least transatlantic, modernism came more clearly into focus: contributors included the English writers F. S. Flint, Ford Madox Ford, and Richard Aldington; the Americans H. D., William Carlos Williams, and Amy Lowell; the Russian-born John Cournos; and the Irishman James Joyce. But this new departure also had Victorian roots. Pound befriended the residual Rhymers when he arrived in London in 1908; and some of the other Imagists had come from the Poets' Club, a group that was linked to the Rhymers' Club (Beckson 1992: 93; Brooker 2007: 46).

For the majority of the population of the *fin-de-siècle* world the work of the Rhymers and Imagists was very remote stuff indeed, and even H. Rider Haggard may not have played too large a role in their experience of culture. Popular culture in the sense of that which was enjoyed by the working-class majority of the population was something else again. The music halls represented one facet of this other world, and such figures as Marie Lloyd (Matilda Alice Victoria Wood) and Dan Leno (George Wild Galvin) were familiar to many who were not readers of books. Lloyd is still remembered for her racy humour, her bitter-sweet songs about the lot of working-class women, and for her occasional clashes with the Social Purity movement. Leno started as a clog-dancer and "Irish" comic vocalist, but became known for his comic monologues. He was making £250 a week at the height of his earning power according to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*,

and was well known enough to colonize print culture by lending his name in 1898 to his own halfpenny comic, *Dan Leno's Comic Journal*, which ran for 93 issues.

Both Lloyd and Leno survive for us on film, the second industrial revolution's major contribution to culture: Lloyd in such later pieces as *Marie Lloyd at Home and Bunkered* (1913); and Leno in *Dan Leno's Day Out* (1901), *An Obstinate Cork* (1902), and quite a few other comic shorts. The Lumières had put on their first films at the Grand Café in Paris in December 1895, and two of Britain's film pioneers, R. W. Paul and the American-born Birt Acres, developed their own motion-picture technology at much the same time. At first film was no threat to older forms of entertainment, and was to some extent seen as just another visual novelty, folded into existing music hall and travelling fair entertainments. Its ability to bring home to British audiences such distant events as the Boer War helped it through this early phase. Eventually, it would become established enough to lure performers away from music hall, vaudeville (in the U.S.), and the stage. Charlie Chaplin, the one-time clog-dancer who first appeared on the music hall stage in the 1890s, is probably the best-known of these figures; Stanley Laurel [Arthur Jefferson] followed a similar trajectory.

THE ECONOMY, MIGRATION, AND TRANSATLANTIC TIES

Britain continued in this period to be a major manufacturing economy, though the second industrial revolution saw the United States and Germany make major advances. Some commentators worried that Britain was about to lose its competitive edge, and blamed such factors as deficiencies in scientific and technical education, and the denigration of industry and commerce by a social system that still looked to land-ownership as the basis of prestige. On the other hand, if there were reasons to fear the nation's being eclipsed in manufacture, there was little doubt that Britain, and especially London, had consolidated its position by century's end as a major hub – perhaps the major hub – for financial services: "The City" would loom ever larger in London's vision of itself (White 2008: 3).

1873 to 1896 were the years of the "long depression" in many parts of the world, and Britain was not immune to its effects. But insofar as this affected food production, its effects were relatively limited, since Britain had ceased to be primarily an agricultural nation, and had become a net importer of food. Grain came from the mid-western states of the U.S.; by the end of the century refrigeration meant that meat could be imported from as far away as Australia, New Zealand, and South America. As Eric Hobsbawm notes, in Britain only one sixth of the workforce worked on the land, a much lower figure than elsewhere in Europe (1989: 20), and a much lower figure than in Ireland, where industrialization was relatively under-developed outside the North. (There the Land War of the 1880s was in part caused by the agricultural downturn.) Scotland had followed England and Wales towards urbanization and industrialization; the numbers employed on the land plummeted, as the production of coal, iron, and ships grew dramatically.

If the general tendency was for people to move from the country to the towns, some went a good deal further in search of work, or more lucrative work, or a better life. We are familiar with this narrative in the case of Ireland and Scotland, but

England and Wales were also exporting millions. Between 1815 and 1924 some 25 million people emigrated, with numbers reaching their zenith in 1913, long after the years of greatest population growth; even allowing for the human flows in the other direction, this still leaves a net emigration figure of 18 million (Belich 2009: 126, 129, 142 n. 133). As James Belich notes, economic explanations alone are probably insufficient to account for this massive transfer: it is by no means clear, for example, that the majority of migrants were displaced farm workers, and the very poor were a minority (2009: 128–29). For the most part this was emigration to the Anglophone settler colonies of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, and of course the former settler colony of the United States.

There were also inward population flows. Along with returned imperial sojourners came an increasingly diverse immigrant population: German metal-workers, Irish labourers, Jewish garment workers from Russia, Chinese sailors, Indian missionaries, and many others made Britain, and especially London, their home. Some of these immigrants found the imperial metropolis a good place from which to see empire steadily and whole. A former temperance lecturer from Dominica, Celestine Edwards, organized the first Pan-African Conference in London in 1900, and London, like Paris, became a place where anti-imperial movements grew (White 2008: 151). But flows of people, if not of ideas, met formidable obstacles. In response to fears that Britain was absorbing too many "alien" elements – Jews in particular – the first modern legislation to control immigration appeared in 1905, and harsher measures were to follow (Glover 2012).

Some immigrants were given a much warmer welcome. From the 1870s on a very intimate version of the "special relationship" between Britain and the United States was developed by marriages between moneyed Americans and titled Britons. When hotel heiress Minnie Stevens married Captain Arthur Henry Paget, the grandson of the Marquis of Anglesey in 1878, the *New York Times* noted that among the guests at St Peter's in Eaton Square were several "American beauties who have become allied by marriage to the English nobility" (Anon. 1878), including Lady Randolph Churchill (née Jeanette Jerome), Viscountess Mandeville (née Consuelo Iznaga y Clement), and the Honourable Mrs Carrington (née Warden). In some cases at least, it was not so much American beauty that was in demand as American money, and the *fin-de-siècle* "dollar princess" became a much-discussed phenomenon. There were no less than nine of these alliances of cash and titles in 1895, the most high-profile of which was that between Consuelo Vanderbilt and the Duke of Marlborough (MacColl and McD. Wallace 1989). Other marriages that year included that of department-store heiress Mary Leiter and Lord Curzon; and that of street-car heiress Pauline Whitney and Almeric Paget, later first Baron Queensborough, and brother-in-law of Minnie Stevens. The trend continued into the Edwardian period: in 1903, for example, real-estate heiress Mary ("May") Goelet married the Duke of Roxburghe, and Alice Thaw (coal heiress) married the Earl of Yarmouth. Sometimes there was money on both sides, as with the marriage in 1906 of Nancy Langhorne (the divorced Mrs Robert Shaw) to William Waldorf Astor, later the 2nd Viscount Astor, one of an Anglicized branch of the American Astors, whose money had originally come from the fur industry; Nancy Astor would go on to become the first female member of parliament. There were so many of these transatlantic matches that a publication called *Titled Americans* appeared to update interested readers on

those heiresses who had secured titled husbands (Anon. 1890). On both sides of the Atlantic audiences could see a musical-comedy version of such financial marriage plots in *The Dollar Princess* (1909), adapted by George Grossmith Jr (New York version) and Basil Hood (London version) from the German *Die Dollarprinzessin* (1907) by A. M. Willner and Fritz Grünbaum. Long before then we see a fictional index of the greater prominence of Americans in British affairs – and not just romantic ones – in the form of the heroes and heroines of Henry James, and the characters of Bram Stoker and Arthur Conan Doyle, e.g., Quincey Morris (*Dracula*) and Irene Adler ("A Scandal in Bohemia").

THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA

While the Empire was still expanding, there were also setbacks. The most famous of these, perhaps, was the second Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), which Britain won, but at enormous cost. A detailed account of the war's origins is beyond this brief survey, but the principal factors included the fierce struggle for control of the mineral wealth of South Africa's Boer states, ongoing geopolitical rivalries with Germany, and the participation of such ardent imperialists as Cecil Rhodes. Britain encountered fierce resistance from the Dutch settlers of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and the death-toll reached levels that Britain had not seen since the Crimean War: some 22,000 troops died, many of them killed by disease, and inadequate medical treatment of non-fatal wounds. As Thomas Pakenham notes, in financial terms the conflict was the most expensive to the British state since the Napoleonic wars, at a cost of some £200 million (Pakenham 1979: 512). For some commentators the war in South Africa was a lesson in how ill-prepared Britain was for major warfare, and it focused anxieties about the decline of the national "stock": modern city life was producing a race of men who were less fit for combat than their forefathers. Max Nordau's *Entartung* had appeared in English translation as *Degeneration* in 1895, part of a whole corpus of works about the deleterious effects of modern life. The crisis rhetoric around the Boer War fitted neatly into such accounts, even if the Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration (1904) eschewed the term degeneration itself (Pick 1993: 185). For the general public, the distant war was made vividly present by the expanding news industries, and by new media technologies. Britain's first halfpenny daily paper, the *Daily Mail*, appeared in 1896, and the *Daily Express* followed in 1900 – the war in South Africa helped them reach an enormous readership. The Box Brownie camera, which appeared on the market in 1900, enabled the most inexpert of photographers to capture images from the war zone. More importantly, perhaps, the fledgling film industry brought the war home in a way that had never been possible before: audiences came to see troops boarding ships for South Africa, arriving in South Africa, and even some long-range battle scenes, though the guerilla warfare of the Boers did not lend itself to being successfully filmed. To meet the appetite for more exciting footage, film companies recreated war scenes at home. Sometimes these were passed off as real war footage, leading to charges of "photo-faking". So closely were the new medium and the war aligned that the cinematograph was advertised as the "Boerograph" and "Wargraph" (Daly 2004: 62, 65). The war in South Africa was not just a modern, industrial one in terms of the means with which it was fought, then, but also in terms of the way

in which it was relayed to the non-combatants at home. In this respect it looked forward to the conflict that would decisively end the long nineteenth century, the First World War.

CONCLUSION

There is no single national "mood", or even structure of feeling, in *fin-de-siècle* Britain. Cultural historians are more likely to be struck by the intimations of anxiety, since in the most ebullient of adventure romances there are moments of doubt; and even Kipling saw fit to warn Britain that it might yet be at one with the ruined cities of Nineveh and Tyre. And yet, in the political sphere there is abundant evidence of imperial confidence. Late Victorian imperial pomp did not end with Victoria, any more than the British empire itself did, and the Delhi Durbars of 1903 to mark the coronation of Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, and of 1911 to mark that of George V and Queen Mary, were extended and elaborate affairs. Indeed, Britain was still adding territory to the empire in this period. If the Boer War sent shudders through the military and political establishment, it would be some time yet before Britain began to lose its empire, and its position as a "superpower" *avant la lettre*.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

CENTRAL EUROPE

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Suzanne Marchand

If Paris, as Walter Benjamin once claimed, was the capital of the nineteenth century, Central Europe surely has good reason to consider itself the heartland of the *fin de siècle*. Characterized by the vivid and sometimes violent interplay of multi ethnic populations and the clash of retrenched traditionalism with absurdly accelerated modernization, Central Europe in the decades preceding 1914 exerted greater cultural impact on the world than ever before or since. Here, four massive and multi-ethnic empires – the German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman – met, clashed, and collaborated in an era of unprecedented prosperity and unusually long-lasting peace, before throwing themselves on the social, political, and economic pyre that was the Great War. Each of the empires was an ethnic and linguistic crazy quilt, but the patches were uneven, and so were the fortunes of the inhabitants of these states who became, over the course of the period, increasingly aware of their need to define themselves in national terms. Differences abounded here; but all four of our empires did undergo similar, extremely accelerated processes of economic, social, and cultural modernization, and engage in unprecedented numbers of exchanges of words and things. All experienced, in some way, the kind of interplay of rationalizing imperial, liberal, and bourgeois surfaces and chaotic, destructive depths that the region's most archetypal *fin-de-siècle* man, Sigmund Freud, made characteristic of the human psyche as a whole. It was in this rich and dangerous cauldron that many of the ideas and artworks that we now think of as characteristically *fin de siècle* were brewed – and from it (arguably) that many of the political pathologies that would shape the future of Europe and the world in the twentieth century would be served.

Though all four of the empires mentioned above made crucial contributions to the politics and culture of the *fin de siècle*, the focus of this chapter, and especially its cultural sections, will fall on the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the state which ruled the lion's share of the region. It can be argued that though Ottoman collapse and Russian and German aggressive expansionism and modernization laid the foundations for the Great War, events in Austria-Hungary precipitated that conflict. Culturally, too, in a time of efflorescence in so many places Austria-Hungary distinguished itself, in part because it combined the levels of literacy, liberty, and prosperity comparable (in its

cities, at least) to those of France with the cultural and ethnic diversity of the other multiethnic empires of the East. Austrian diversity – where we have to deal with ten official linguistic groups and at least six major religions – equaled the diversity of the Ottomans, and far outstripped that of the Germans or the French; it is telling that while Paris in 1900 had only 6.3 percent foreigners, Vienna had more than 60 percent. Central Europe would never be so richly diverse again – as of 1991, for example, Czechs and Slovaks made up 94.2 percent of Czechoslovakia's population and Hungary was 97.9 percent Hungarian – and its culture never spoke again so appealingly to the world as it did before the apocalypses of the twentieth century (Csáky 1999: 45, 53). Some 35 years ago, Carl Schorske made Vienna, the empire's administrative center, virtually synonymous with the birth of the modern in Europe; in this essay, we widen our scope far beyond Vienna, and survey other developments, but retain Schorske's conviction that there was something symptomatic about the Habsburgian *fin de siècle*.

When to begin the story of the Central European *fin de siècle* is a difficult question; a good case, for the political sphere, can be made for 1878, the year the Ottomans lost the Russo-Turkish War, allowing Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria to obtain full independence, and inciting Austria to occupy Bosnia Herzegovina to frustrate Serbian expansionism. This was also the year of major diplomatic and domestic shifts in German politics, as German opposition to Russian annexations ended Bismarck's policy of placating the Czar; German-Russian friendship would never fully recover, opening the way for Russia's eventual alliance with the French. The Iron Chancellor also used the pretext of two assassination attempts against Kaiser Wilhelm I to outlaw the expanding socialist movement, and of the death of Pope Pius IX to end his campaign against the Catholics. Neither suppressing the socialists nor conciliating the Catholics worked, however, and by the time Bismarck left office in 1890, vigorous mass socialist and Catholic organizations had been formed. But the main victims of Bismarck's altered course in 1878 were the liberals, whose elitist, vaguely Protestant, free market values were increasingly challenged by socialists, hyper-nationalists, mobilized Catholics, and well-organized conservatives. It can be said that the so-called 'crisis of liberalism' began at this moment.

1878–9 was something of a turning point in the Austro-Hungarian and Russian worlds as well, in rather different ways. In Austria, changes followed on the heels of the empire's according of Hungary nearly complete autonomy in the Compromise of 1867. After this point, Kaiser Franz Joseph did try to extend the protections inscribed in the state's constitution to all of his subjects, beginning a process that incensed the previously dominant German population as well as the third largest (and second most vocal) ethnic group, the Czechs. In 1879 Franz Joseph appointed the Czech noble Count Eduard Taaffe as Minister President, marking the eclipse of the German liberal power. During the next fourteen years, Taaffe turned repeatedly to his supporters among the Czechs, Poles, and Catholic parties to outflank the Austrian liberals. In Russia, the violent *suppression* of liberalism of any sort created a throng of rebellious Poles, student socialists, and bomb-throwing anarchist 'demons' – as the great Slavophile novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky called them – one of whom would succeed in assassinating Czar Alexander II in 1881. This event, in turn, triggered serious anti-Jewish pogroms in the West, and efforts at Russification throughout the empire. The effect would be mass emigration, of Jews and other subjects of the

Czar; at least 5 million of these (usually poor) migrants coursed through *fin-de-siècle* Central Europe, bringing new ideas and practices, but also putting a strain on urban infrastructures and sometimes tipping delicate ethnic balances.

All of our empires paid homage to an inherited monarchy of some type – though those 'types' were very different. While the hotheaded German Kaiser Wilhelm II (r. 1888–1918), pontificated on all possible subjects – sometimes causing diplomatic crises – and fawned on his increasingly bellicose military, his shy and steady Austrian counterpart, Franz Joseph I (r. 1848–1916) largely avoided the political limelight and worked through his imperial bureaucracy in ever-more frustrating attempts to negotiate between minority groups. The suicide of his son, Crown Prince Rudolf, in 1889, and the assassination of his beloved Empress, Elizabeth, in 1898, cast a maudlin pall over the imperial family even as courtly operations continued to be lavish, frequent, and highly ritualized. Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876–1909) attempted to win foreign friends by offering concessions to European religious and economic interests, while trying to convince his own ruling class that he was a great champion of Islam and of Turkish hegemony. His foreign 'friends' and creditors gradually undermined his sovereignty, however, and then his progressive-minded Turkish subjects wearied of the weakness and corruption of his regime. They overthrew him in the Young Turkish Revolution of 1908. Czar Nicholas II (r. 1897–1917) had to confront the shame of losing a war to the Japanese in 1904–5, and the outbreak of revolution in 1905; but his rapidly industrializing nation was expanding its power, and he kept his throne until 1917, despite the continuing landlessness of the former serfs and the powerlessness of even the liberals, not to speak of the radicals, whose choices, on the whole, amounted to exile in the West, a Siberian prison camp, or the hangman's noose.

None of these states were democracies, but the degree to which each of them accommodated to the coming of the age of mass politics varied enormously. The Russians and Ottomans made the fewest concessions, and indeed both acted to suppress grass-roots movements, some of which adopted increasingly violent slogans and tactics. The Russians finally got a national parliament (Duma) in 1906, but it had little power. Dysfunctional for most of the period (Abdul Hamid II disbanded it in 1878), a multiethnic Ottoman parliament led by westernizing progressives implemented an impressive series of reforms beginning in 1908, but was suspended in 1912 for the First Balkan War. When the Ottoman parliament resumed in 1913 it was much less multiethnic, and much more bellicose. By 1914 the state was in the hands of a Germanophile Turkish junta; in this it resembled the Ottoman successor states on its borders – most notably Serbia, but also Romania and Bulgaria – except that those were Russophile, and the former was almost pathologically Austrophobic. In these lightly industrialized places, workers' rights and welfare received little attention; the far more crucial issue (and one at which both empires failed) was land reform. The concentration of the good land in the hands of the Turkish or Russian overlords in a time of demographic boom and repeated agricultural crises set the stage for violent peasant uprisings and some incidents that resemble grass-roots ethnic cleansing in the years before the war. Literacy expanded and censorship relaxed, making it possible for more to express their grievances. But literacy – especially for women – remained low, and repression (especially of minority groups), high.

In the German Empire, by contrast, by the 1890s social welfare legislation protected the basic rights and safety of many workers, most of whom now worked a 10- rather than a 14-hour day. Similar legislation in the Austro-Hungarian Empire passed in 1887, though implementation and oversight remained spotty. By this time, both places – and especially their capital cities, Berlin and Vienna – were home to growing socialist movements. By 1910, Germany had the largest one in Europe; the SPD (Sozialistische Partei Deutschlands) held the most seats of any party in the Reichstag. Bismarck himself had introduced universal manhood suffrage (for everything except elections in Prussia) in the North German Confederation in 1867, and in the German Empire in 1871; Austria-Hungary waited to make this move until 1907. The Austrian Emperor, and his bureaucracy, remained suspicious of democracy; they preferred to impose reform from above, and to do so gradually. Even in Vienna, Franz Joseph waited for two years before recognizing the election of the populist Christian Socialist Karl Lueger as mayor – in part because Lueger won the hearts of the German lower middle classes by bashing 'Jewish' capitalism and Magyar hubris, and in part because Lueger promised, and subsequently delivered, the expansion of public services that the Emperor and the laissez-faire liberals had failed to offer. Extending tram, electricity, and sewer lines, Lueger pioneered what has been called 'municipal socialism' – though his supporters remained, for the most part, lower-middle class bureaucrats and shopkeepers, church-goers and faithful supporters of Franz Joseph, and hostile to the 'real' socialists and their working-class base. For their part, the Hungarian ruling elites jealously protected their many privileges, and actively suppressed the rights and wishes of their minority populations, including the Slovaks, Croatians, Romanians, and Ukrainians.

Every one of these polities – like Europe more broadly – harbored anarchists and nationalist extremists. Some of the latter were inspired by grand, cross-regional movements such as Pan-Slavism or Pan-Germanism, both of them directed at the mobilization of ethnic groups across national borders. The Austrian Pan-German leader Georg von Schönerer, who would prove (along with Lueger) to be one of Adolf Hitler's role models, saw himself as the champion of the rights of the Germans, threatened by the rising power of the Slavs and the Jews; in 1887 he presented the first anti-Semitic legislation to the Austrian parliament. But – the age of liberal toleration and imperial protection of minority rights lingering – it was soundly defeated. The Pan-Slavic movement appealed to the increasing (but still small) number of literate Slavs in Hungary and Serbs in Bosnia, who felt aggrieved by centuries of subordination to the Hungarians, Ottomans, or Austrians. In Russian Poland, in particular, nationalists radicalized by the violent suppression of the 1863 insurrection and by increasingly intense cultural attempts at the Russification of the region joined underground groups such as 'Young Poland.' 'Young Bosnia' was perhaps even more violent, its membership composed heavily of students who spent their days reading radical newspapers in the dingy cafés of Sarajevo and Belgrade and romanticizing martyrdom for the cause. The Russian anarchist became sufficiently ubiquitous to become a stock figure in novels, and his terror tactics imitated by Indians, Japanese, Serbs, and Poles. The Bolshevik elite, living in Swiss exile, furiously penned insurrectionary pamphlets. Assassins regularly targeted leading politicians and heads of state, and succeeded in taking the lives of (among many others) Empress Elizabeth, Czar Alexander II, King George of Greece, and finally, on a summer's day in 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

In comparison to the blood-soaked decades to follow, the *fin de siècle*, in retrospect, seemed remarkably peaceful and its politics genteel. But this is not at all how it felt to those who lived it. Against the backdrop of the pogroms of the 1880s and the violently contested Dreyfus Affair, Theodor Herzl concluded that the Jews would never be safe in Europe; against the backdrop of increased socialist militancy, Vladimir Lenin demanded that a vanguard of terrorists be trained to incite a real revolution, and a Bosnian militant, on hearing of the Archduke's assassination, wrote: "Blood, blood, blood is what saves . . . !" (Quoted in Okey 2007: 211.) This is the world in which Nietzsche declared God dead, and many chose new gods instead; doctors wrung their hands about 'degeneration' and writers regularly committed suicide. Perhaps the overall decline in mortality contributed to making the subject of death more intriguing to writers and artists, such as Arnold Böcklin, prints of whose *Isle of the Dead* became ubiquitous in bourgeois sitting rooms (even the leftwing journalist and later French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau had one; ever bourgeois in his tastes, Hitler later hung the painting in his Chancellery; see Figure 8.1). Similarly, war may have been romanticized by generations who had experienced little of it, and certainly the *fin de siècle* witnessed much writing about the need for revitalizing and purifying bloodshed. Politicians and military officials talked of it constantly, and the Germans and Russians, in particular, engaged in vigorous, and bellicose, military buildup, especially between about 1905 and 1914. The Ottoman Empire – fatefully – went to war in 1912, and suffered something on the order of 450,000 dead or wounded in two back-to-back Balkan Wars. Historians often forget that *outside* of Europe there were bitter conflicts in this era – including the Russo-Japanese War, The Boer Wars, Germany's semi-genocidal campaign against the Herero in southwest Africa, and colonial conflicts in Dutch-ruled Indonesia. But on the continent, the period 1878–1914 was, for the most part, a

Figure 8.1   *Isle of the Dead* by Arnold Böcklin © akg-images

period of peace. It was this peace that allowed Central Europe's population to burgeon, its greater and lesser cities to boom and to modernize, and its innovators to enjoy unprecedented freedom, status, and access to the world's cultures and markets.

ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic developments lie behind many of Central Europe's transformation in this period. The combination of no significant wars, improved nutrition, and fewer epidemics caused populations across the region to burgeon, putting new pressure on the land, and bringing millions to the new cities. The German Empire, in particular, grew, causing consternation in neighboring (and less fertile) France; there had been approximately 47.6 million Germans in 1865, and by 1914 there were more than 70 million. But minority, as well as majority, populations were growing elsewhere, too, in Polish areas of eastern Germany, in western Russia, and in the Habsburg lands, provoking anxiety among nationalists who longed to carve out regions of ethnic purity. As Pieter Judson has described, the counting of the Austrian population by language groups in the 1880 and 1890 censuses helped these nationalist organizers to identify 'threatened' areas where Czechs had begun to outnumber Germans (or vice versa). Taking advantage of the 1867 constitution's provisions for the building of schools for communities of 40 or more school-age children, these activists sought to erode what Judson has called 'national indifference' and to make formerly bi- or trilingual Austrians into single-minded Germans or Czechs (or Ruthenes or Hungarians; see Judson 2006). Population growth, thus, did not diminish social conflicts, but tended to exacerbate them, as newly mobilized groups set about seizing the good land, the good jobs, and the right to dictate terms to the others.

The importance of land reform – or lack thereof, in Russia and the Ottoman lands – was mentioned above; but it bears repeating that in western Central Europe improvements in agricultural efficiency and the greater wealth and mobility of the peasantry laid the foundations for modernization and for urbanization. While Russia remained overwhelmingly rural, Germans – some 36 percent of whom had been urban-dwelling in 1871 – by 1914 mostly (60 percent) lived in cities (Torp 2012: 351). By this time, Berlin had nearly 4 million residents and Vienna (and suburbs) 1.9 million, up from 843,000 in 1869; metropolitan Budapest too had surpassed the million mark. St. Petersburg and Istanbul also ballooned, though the empires around them remained overwhelming rural; on the peripheries, Krakow, Beirut, Odessa, and Lviv boomed as well. By the period's end, Krakow had 70,000 residents, Sarajevo 52,000, and Salonica 158,000. Expansion made some cities, like Vienna, more diverse; others, like Budapest, grew less so, as the numbers of rural Hungarians migrating to the city made the older German population of the city an increasingly tiny minority (Blau 1999: 14). Living cheek by jowl did not necessarily result in the creation of 'melting pots,' and tensions between classes and religious or linguistic groups increased during periods of economic hardship.

Recognizing the unfitness of older infrastructures, governmental authorities poured vast quantities of capital into planning new suburbs and thoroughfares, imitating Baron Haussmann's attempts to modernize and beautify Paris. These improvements ranged from sewer systems and parks to public buildings such as museums, libraries, and theaters. As city walls came down, railways came in, linking

not just the major cities but the smaller ones as well. In the course of improvements, Vienna got its famous Ringstrasse, a wide avenue populated by an eclectic array of public buildings and fancy apartment houses and shops; Lviv leapt across the Poltava; Buda and Pest grew together across the Danube to form modern Budapest. On the periphery, once-sleepy frontier towns such as Odessa, Zagreb, Bucharest, and Trieste boomed. Great medieval cities – Prague, Krakow, Augsburg – had their faces lifted and their spirits raised by the influx of new migrants, new money, and ambitious and talented young architects and planners.

This was the age of capitalist consolidation and the rise of big firms, such as Siemens electrics, Krupp steelworks, and Albert Ballin's Hamburg-America shipping line. The Central European 'Second Industrial Revolution' was concentrated in Germany, but Katowice (western Poland) and the Sudetenland (northern Bohemia) also attracted heavy industry. Fortunes were made in sugar beet processing, in banking, in publishing, and in the manufacturing of chemicals and dyes. Increasingly, nature was harnessed to provide industrial power; engineers began exploiting the rich oil fields of Galicia and Romania, and, at the end of our period, the Caucasus. Hydro-electrical plants sprang up virtually everywhere. The Danube and the Rhine, and many other smaller rivers, were straightened to make for swifter, cheaper transport, and ports were dredged to permit the entry of larger steam-powered ships.

Capitalism had different faces in different places. In Germany, banks such as Mitteldeutsche Kreditbank (founded 1856), modeled on France's Crédit Mobilier, provided businesses long-term credit and stock holders rich (if somewhat insecure) dividends (Brophy 2012: 187). In Austria-Hungary, the stock market crash of 1873 severely damaged the banking business, leaving the state to finance many of the larger infrastructure projects, especially on the (relatively) poorer periphery. Ottoman modernization was hampered by the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, which the empire was compelled to establish in 1881 to ensure that French and British creditors creamed the top off of the empire's tax receipts. As most aristocratic Russians remained land-rich and cash-poor, would-be entrepreneurs in this empire, too, struggled to accumulate sufficient funds to build competitive businesses. But even here, moneyed elites began to challenge landed nobles for prestige, a social process that remained incomplete throughout the region in 1914.

There were, of course, places where many fewer modern and foreign ways penetrated into the older world, and we cannot forget that most Central Europeans continued to live on the land, and to be dependent on landowners and the weather for their wherewithal. Mecklenburg and Bulgaria were entirely unlike the industrial, urbanized Ruhr Valley. In the Balkans, women tended sheep inside age-old stone fences, and Russian and Polish peasants used their grandparents' scythes to harvest grain. Yet even on the land things were changing at the *fin de siècle*, as expanding production and swifter transportation worldwide resulted in falling prices for staples, and a long-lasting agricultural depression ensued. Landowners increasingly employed wage laborers and targeted production to international markets; even Silesian weavers – whose poverty Gerhart Hauptmann highlighted in his play of 1892, *The Weavers* – produced linen and cotton to be exported to India, the Ottoman Empire, and the Atlantic world, and those able to afford them managed also to procure some reciprocal imports (such as Singer sewing machines and 'oriental' carpets). The romanticization of folk music, of rustic wooden architecture, of

rural craft traditions and of hometown values beginning already in the 1870s occurred against the background of a world rapidly leaving its older ways behind.

Economic change in Central Europe entailed new contact with producers and consumers across the globe. The Germans entered the colonial race in 1884, and became aggressive pursuer of territories in Africa and Asia; it has been said that Austria treated Bosnia Herzegovina, which it officially annexed in 1908, as a quasi-colony. In neither case were these annexations politically astute, or economically profitable, at least for the states involved. But middle and upper class Central Europeans in particular did become consumers of many colonial wares, including ivory, diamonds, tea, sugar, and chocolate. What would Viennese or even Zagrebian culture have been like without coffee for their cafés? Those with goods to sell also thought increasingly about doing so far beyond Central Europe's borders, and bombarded the German and Austrian trade ministries with pleas to force open new markets in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Many entrepreneurs were especially hopeful about the Ottoman Empire, particularly after the Germans got the concession to build the 'Berlin to Baghdad' (and Istanbul to Mecca) rail lines. But Central Europeans' most fruitful trade remained internal and interdependent, just one reason for the difficulties faced by the hyper-protectionist nation-states in the 1920s and the iron-curtain divided region of the post-1945 period.

ARCHITECTURE AND THE ARTS

The most expensive and public of the arts, architecture, enjoyed a particularly impressive efflorescence in *fin-de-siècle* Central Europe. This was, again, closely linked to demographic and economic factors. As the young and the ambitious (as well as the unemployed and the bored) flocked to Munich, Krakow, and Prague, cities also came increasingly to define cultural life. With new funds available – often thanks to the selling off of state-owned land – city fathers poured cash into the building of schools, hospitals, post offices, museums, and libraries. Private insurance firms and banks established headquarters. The booming rental market enticed builders to throw up new apartment buildings at lightning speed; in 1895 alone, Budapest acquired nearly 600 new apartment buildings, with some 12,783 rooms (Lukas 1988: 54). Architects and decorators were needed urgently to design and beautify the new spaces, and the fact that they had a diverse and discerning set of patrons gave them the opportunity to experiment – and to argue over the proper way to be modern.

Of course, many patrons wanted to impress rather than to innovate, and the overwhelming majority of buildings erected during this period still sought to evoke the greatness of one or another past epoch, a style we call historicism. Historicism should not be mocked, for mastering its smorgasbord of stylistic offerings – from Alhambra 'orientalism' to 'Germanic' Gothic – required considerable talent, and many of the historicizing confections of this era remain quite beautiful today. But in the 1880s, some architects began to object to what they termed stylistic chaos, and to oppose a historicism that increasingly seemed artificial and insincere. One of the most prominent of these was the Viennese architect Otto Wagner, who learned to detest historicism right at home, by viewing the rise of Ringstrasse eclecticism. Architects, Wagner argued, should aim at 'a harmonization of art and purpose' (Schorske 1981: 79); materials and technology deserved to be showcased in his view,

Figure 8.2   The Secession Building in Vienna, designed
by Joseph Olbrich © lucarista/Shutterstock

and not swathed in plaster decorations. In this way, the architect could avoid being enslaved by history and construct rational and useful buildings. Wagner was one of those who led the Viennese 'Secession,' or oppositional movement that criticized the conventional art practiced by the academies and patronized by the bourgeoisie. Apart from designing some of Vienna's iconic modern structures – such as the Postal Savings Bank – Wagner produced numerous important students, one of whom (Joseph Olbrich) provided the design for the Secession's headquarters (see Figure 8.2). Wagner preached simplicity and utility, but he did not object to some ornamentation, unlike his contemporary Adolf Loos, who took anti-historicism to its extreme in a polemical pamphlet titled 'Ornament and Crime' (1908).

Wagner and his fellow Secessionists drew heavily on French and Belgian 'Art Nouveau' (Henry Van de Velde spent much of his career in and around German artists), on local woodworking and other artisanal cultures, on Persian and Turkish carpet designs, and remained in conversation – and competition – with the German creators of Jugendstil (so-called after the flowing, organic ornamentation favored by the Munich journal *Jugend*, or *Youth*). Their work as architects and interior designers belonged to the larger 'arts and crafts' movement, first championed by William Morris and John Ruskin in Great Britain; this movement, in turn, incorporated grand dreams for the reintegration of communities damaged by proletarianization, mass production, and urban anomie. These aims resounded in the ears of Olbrich and Josef Hoffmann, founders of the Wiener Werkstätte in 1903, and of Hermann Muthesius and Walter Gropius, the leading spirit behind the forming of the Deutscher Werkbund in 1907. Gropius's 1911 glass and iron design for the Fagus Shoe Factory

Figure 8.3   The Fagus Factory in Alfeld, Germany, designed by Walter Gropius.
This is an important example of early modern architecture in the world
© Takashi Images/Shutterstock

exemplified their call for honesty in the use of modern materials, and provided a key model for what would later be called Bauhaus modernism (see Figure 8.3).

On the Austrian periphery, architects and reformers sought to blend modernist styles with distinctive national or local 'folk' elements, reinforcing (as did burgeoning local arts and crafts museums) the sense that each region had its own, distinct heritage. Artistic nationalism was perhaps most powerful in Budapest, where the city fathers opposed turning their expanding city into a second-rate Vienna, and opted to modernize in a specifically Hungarian way. It was there, for example, that the Hungarian architect Ödön Lechner built his most famous structures, including the weirdly orientalizing decorative arts museum (Figure 8.4). Believing the Magyars to be descendants of the (Aryan) Indians (Achleitner 1999: 109), Lechner was only one of many non-Viennese Habsburg architects searching for a means to be modern, loyal to the local, *and* economically successful. The Polish craft reformer Józef Czajkowski envisioned 'Poland with thousands of new businesses, carpentry workshops, rug and tapestry factories, weaver's shops and dye-houses; Poland with smoking kilns, metalworks and glassworks; Poland of sculptors working in wood and stone, glove- and purse-makers, bookbinders, graphic artists, embroiderers and toy makers' (Kozakowska 1999: 37). Czajkowski may not have gotten his 'thousands' of successful workshops, but Polish revivalism did work in the spa town of

Figure 8.4   The Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest © Irina Bondareva/Shutterstock

Zakopane, where architects and interior designers resurrected the tradition of decorating in wood. Their mission was to both preserve local craft traditions and create a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a coherently designed environment for a new, more tasteful and less alienated form of life (see Figure 8.5).

To attempt to survey all of *fin-de-siècle* Central European painting would be folly, but we can trace a basic movement from historicism to symbolism to abstraction, echoing the general flow of avant-garde styles elsewhere. In 1890, the most beloved 'German' painter was probably the Swiss symbolist Arnold Böcklin, whose appeal reached members of the avant-garde as well; traces of his influence are visible in often darker and misogynist works of Franz von Stuck and Max Klinger. Over the course of the next two decades, however, Böcklin had been replaced, among the avant-garde, with the French modernists, and with homegrown avant-garde movements such as *Die Brücke* (The Bridge; founded in 1905) and *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider; founded in 1911). In Austria-Hungary, the appeal of the historicizing court painter Hans Makart waned after the 1880s, as was also the case with the Hungarian impressionist Mihály Munkácsy and the Polish history painter Jan Matjeko. Make no mistake: as in architecture, in art the older styles continued to please the middle-class public. But here, too, the Secessionists and the modernists began to explore new avenues for artistic representation, and to seek to penetrate polished surfaces in order to conjure up new depths.

We focus here on just a few figures: Gustav Klimt, whose distinctive decorative genius linked him powerfully to the arts and crafts movement, even though his subjects often strayed into mythology, and Vassily Kandinsky, a Russian émigré who made the full leap away from representational painting to what was known as

Figure 8.5 House in mountain style, Zakopane, Poland © Janusz Pienkowski/Shutterstock

expressionism. Mention should also be made of Max Liebermann, Germany's leading impressionist, who produced widely admired (and widely reviled) naturalist images of rural workers as well as genteel renderings of bourgeois settings, and of the Austrians Oskar Kokoschka and Egon Schiele, who ventured far beyond Liebermann and Klimt into modernist, and deeply anti-bourgeois, styles of art. Others, too, such as the Swiss-born Paul Klee and the German-American Lionel Feininger, the Czech Cubist Antonin Prochazka and the north German expressionist Emil Nolde, borrowed, mixed, and experimented with new forms of abstraction and color, breaking sharply with the academy, and creating a rich, modernist vocabulary.

Focusing on Klimt and Kandinsky, however, allows us to note two related attempts to venture beyond and beneath the high bourgeois infatuation with historicism and naturalistic representation. The son of a goldsmith and an accomplished mural painter and decorator in his youth, Klimt in about 1890 turned against historicist painting in favor of exploring mythological subjects, such as Athena, or Hygeia, the Greek priestess, who was meant to symbolize medicine in the mural cycle Klimt designed for the University of Vienna in 1900–1 (see Figure 8.6). Klimt's paintings meant to evoke the Schopenhauerian world of suffering and erotic energy beneath all human endeavors, while also calling attention to the artificiality of surfaces by covering his paintings with gold-encrusted, abstract motifs (Schorske 1981: 225–78). Vassily Kandinsky moved even farther away from traditional ideas about painting. Born in Odessa, Kandinsky spent the *fin de siècle* in Bavaria, where he was a central figure in the movement known as 'expressionism.' For Kandinsky, a great colorist, the function of art was to express spiritual forces, not to represent nature. The exhibitions and journal projects in which he participated (most

Figure 8.6 Detail from *Medicine* by Gustav Klimt © akg-images

importantly as part of the group called 'The Blue Rider') were essential in promoting the full break from representational art we call abstraction (see Figure 8.7).

LITERATURE, MUSIC, AND DRAMA

There is simply no summing up possible of the enormous variety of Central European accomplishments in these areas. A beginning list of novelists, poets, and dramatists would need to include Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Robert Musil, Stefan George, Thomas Mann, Rainer Maria Rilke, Arthur Schnitzler, Stefan Zweig, Franz Wedekind, Gerhart Hauptmann, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, Ferenc Molnár, and Franz Kafka, but these writers were in dialogue with their counterparts elsewhere, including (just to give a very brief list), Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy, and Stéphane Mallarmé. Nor could we understand *fin-de-siècle* literature without recognizing its deep debts to philosophy, especially to the works of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, and its deep engagements with the music of Richard Wagner and his many and divergent successors. This was an interconnected world, linked together

Figure 8.7 *Composition No. 7, 1913*, by Vassily Kandinsky. Courtesy of the
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia/The Bridgeman Art Library

in part by the cafés, bookstalls, and concert houses they frequented, and in part by
women, such as Alma Schindler, who studied painting with Klimt, was painted
herself by (her lover) Kokoschka, and then made husbands of, sequentially, Gustav
Mahler, Walter Gropius, and the poet Franz Werfel.

If we look for generalities in the literary realm, we find some commonalities with
the arts, and some common themes. Here, among those at the Germanic center, we
can trace a general trend away from the romantic and descriptive poetry toward
more symbolic and freer compositions. We might think of the way in which Hugo
von Hofmannsthal moved away from the complex lyrical poetry that made him a
sensation at age 16; despairing of language's ability to capture deep emotions,
Hofmannsthal turned to mythological subjects, and to writing operatic libretti, in
the hopes that the music would fill in the gaps left by mere words. His German con-
temporary Stefan George continued to cultivate the mystical and complex, forming
his own homoerotically charged circle of acolytes who referred to him as 'master' of
what they believed to be a gestating Germanic Renaissance (see Norton 2002). In
their work, as in the world of painting, mythological themes generally displace
'realist' ones, and an aestheticizing, decadent stance in opposition to bourgeois
banalities is cultivated. Dreams and death, Satan and Salomé, youthful rebellion and
sybaritic old age recur again and again, as they do also in the early works of Thomas
Mann. There are more than echoes of the French decadence here, heard as far, too,
as Poland, where the writer Stanislaw Przybyszewski became the nucleus of the aes-
thetic movement. Known as 'sad Satan,' Przybyszewski championed mythology,
symbolism, and aestheticism in the studios, cafés, and salons in Krakow after 1898.

As for novelists, Thomas Mann made his mark with *Buddenbrooks* (1900), a half-ironic, half-melancholy account of the financial and moral decline of a Hanseatic, haute-bourgeois family. His short story of 1912, *Death in Venice*, again treated the topic of bourgeois degeneration in a tale about an elderly professor's febrile obsession with an Adonis-like young boy. Mann played here with the opposition between Apollonian and Dionysian elements Nietzsche had made central for the richness (and melancholy) of Greek culture; in Mann's story, the professor's admiration for the beauty of the boy's Apollonian, sculpture-like body is undercut with a Dionysian, self-annihilating eroticism that ultimately both thrills and destroys him. Mann's 'decadent' works sold, but not so well as those of contemporaries such as Schnitzler, Theodor Fontane, or his own more socially-critical brother, Heinrich Mann, not to mention popular novelists such as Gustav Frenssen, and (for adventure-loving boys) Karl May.

Most striking in the musical world is the immense and, for nineteenth-century tastes, devastating influence of the works of Richard Wagner, who accustomed avant-garde audiences to dissonances, to mythological emplotments, and to the mesmerism of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Wagner made opera a deep, emotional, and sometimes erotic experience, casting his enormously talented but more old-fashioned contemporary Johannes Brahms into the position Makart and Munkácsy played in comparison to Klimt and Kandinsky. Among the great admirers of Wagner were the Austrians Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss, both of whom tried to equal Wagner's experimental dissonance while replicating his lyrical beauty. Their younger contemporary Arnold Schoenberg ultimately abandoned the latter challenge, and in 1912 developed the '12 tone system,' breaking with 'bourgeois' harmonics. Wagner's hero Schopenhauer, and his erstwhile champion Friedrich Nietzsche, figured prominently in the reading lists of these musicians, who were also well schooled in the dramatic downers of Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg. Richard Strauss proved especially adept in transfiguring philosophical and literary works into music. In addition to his many operatic collaborations with Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Strauss composed a tone poem titled 'Also Sprach Zarathustra' after Nietzsche's famous treatise, and an opera entitled 'Salomé' (based on Oscar Wilde's play by the same name) that managed to outdo even Wagner in its decadent eroticism. But the Germans and Austrians were by no means alone in their Wagnerism, which by 1900 had become a Europe-wide cult. Devotees included, for example, the impresario Sergei Diaghilev and his Ballets Russes, which took Paris by storm after 1905. Diaghilev, together with his set designers, singers, and dancers, created his own, highly influential, forms of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, exposing audiences – not all of them grateful – to the erotic modern dancing of Alexei Nijinsky and the harsh tones of Igor Stravinsky's 'Rite of Spring.'

On the Austro-Hungarian periphery, in music as in architecture, modernism was often combined with the 'folkish' revivals to inspire works both modern and in some way 'national.' This might be said to the be the case for the work of Bedřich Smetana, the Czech creator of 'Má Vlast' ('My Country'), 'The Moldau,' and other pieces based on Czech history, landscape, and myths. But the younger Czech composers Antonin Dvořák and Leoš Janáček and the Hungarian Béla Bartók managed to integrate folkloric elements with a more modern sound.

SCHOOLS, SCHOLARSHIP, AND SCIENCE

Again in scholarship and science, we have no hope of even properly surveying a landscape dotted with figures as intensely studied and widely influential as Sigmund Freud, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Albert Einstein, Max Weber, Georg Lukács, Martin Buber, C. G. Jung, Ernst Mach, Joseph Schumpeter, and Adolf von Harnack. Some of those listed above remained essentially liberals, and continued to believe in science, Christianity, capitalism, and the rational ego; but many – such as Max Weber – took on board the challenges posed by Nietzsche, Marx, and the age of mass politics. In some respects, even more powerfully felt was the influence of Nietzsche's obstreperous, pessimistic, and anti-bourgeois predecessor, Arthur Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer's work was instrumental in drawing attention to the artificiality of conventions and constructs, such as language, numbers, time, and even the self. For some, like the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein and the other forerunners of the school of 'logical positivism,' the conclusion to draw was that only the constructs actually mattered; for others, like Freud, the answer was to break the surfaces, and to plunge into the inchoate and pre-rational world beneath.

If we examine developments in scholarly research overall, we see a world heavily dominated by the German universities, now at the summit of their productivity and global influence. Though the natural sciences had gained considerable clout, and many new resources, the humanities remained king, and the Germans set the pace in the most prestigious of them, classics, theology, history, archaeology, oriental studies, and philosophy. By this time, the German seminar system had been imitated by many fledgling universities across the world, and libraries everywhere overflowed with German books. The Austro-Hungarian universities lagged behind somewhat, but shared in this scholarly flowering, excelling especially in art history and economics. The Russians, Ottomans, Americans, and Japanese hired scores of German-trained experts to run their museums and laboratories, as well as to fill their professorial chairs. But there were also numerous Russians, Croatians, Czechs, and Poles – many of them of Jewish descent – who managed to ascend into the ranks of the 'German' professoriate. Examples here would be the great Croatian linguist Vatroslav Jagić, who held positions in many parts of Central Europe before obtaining his Viennese professorship in 1886, or Mark Lidzbarski, an orientalist scholar born in a Polish shtetl. Like many Jews, Lidzbarski suffered discrimination, and waited a long time for his professorship, but, perhaps because he was willing to convert, he did get one, at the University of Kiel, in 1907.

Just because German speakers dominated the university systems didn't mean there were no controversies here; on the contrary, there were conflicts aplenty. Some of them were political, and were generated by the desire of under-represented groups, including socialists, Catholics, Czech speakers, Italian speakers, and women, to obtain admittance to the lecture halls and the lectureships. Some of them were institutional, as fledgling disciplines such as sociology and prehistorical archaeology struggled to gain seats at the professorial tables. And some were intellectual and ideological, such as the venomous 'Babylon and the Bible' controversy that pitted the anti-Semitic Assyriologist Friedrich Delitzsch against orthodox defenders (some of them anti-Semites as well) of the Christian scriptures (see Marchand 2009: 244–51).

While wealth and prestige in the Ottoman and Russian empires remained (largely) in the hands of the traditional, landed elite, to the West it became increasingly obvious that education was the ticket necessary to rise into the middling classes. This meant that battles over schools and schooling grew fierce, at the same time as controversies raged over the degree to which an overly cerebral civilization destined itself to degeneration and death. In Germany, controversy raged over whether or not to admit into the universities students who had not passed the *Abitur*, a school-leaving test that only those with excellent Greek and Latin skills could pass. Kaiser Wilhelm II tried to break the classicists' stranglehold, insisting in 1890 that he wanted his country to educate young Germans, not young Greeks and Romans; but still the universities continued to strongly favor the products of the classicizing secondary schools (*Gymnasien*), even in choosing students for the natural sciences. Already by the 1890s many students felt their schools and universities had lost touch with 'real life,' and complained, following Nietzsche, that creativity and virility were being suffocated by the dead hand of positivist scholarship. The vitalist reactions that began in the Gymnasien spawned developments such as the *Wandervögel*, a sort of neoromantic Germanic scouting movement, which gloried in hiking and guitar playing, and in the formation of vegetarian and nudist organizations. Elsewhere, as in Bosnia, vitalism took the form of hyper-politicization; radical socialism and nationalism, here, thrived not in the impoverished countryside, but in the cafés frequented by *Gymnasium* students.

Many of these discussions about degeneration involved debates about women and Jews, the supposed 'dominance' of whom was often blamed for European civilization's coming collapse. The most popular of racist histories, Houston Stewart Chamberlain's *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1899), was the work of an English Wagnerite who became a passionate Germanophile. Jews, Greeks, and Romans, Chamberlain claimed, took unfair credit for Europe's achievements; in fact, Jesus hadn't been (ethnically speaking) a Jew, the Greeks had borrowed much from the 'Aryan' Indians, and the Germanic 'barbarians' had actually *saved* European civilization by destroying an already degenerate Roman Empire. The nineteenth century's problems, he concluded, were the result of 'Aryan' permissiveness, gullibility, and intermarriage with Jews and other 'Semites'; it was time to turn the clock back on what Chamberlain called 'mongrelization.' Chamberlain was by no means the only gentile to hint at Jewish biological inferiority and conspiracy; indeed it was Central Europeans, probably Russian anti-Semites, who began circulating the forged 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion,' a document supposedly demonstrating a Jewish conspiracy to seize control of the world economy, in about 1905. But Jews, too, participated centrally in debates about degeneration. Already in 1892, the Hungarian-Jewish writer Max Nordau had authored a book with that very title (*Degeneration*), in which he pinned blame for the affliction on pessimists from Ibsen and Wagner to Tolstoy. Nordau ended the book with the recommendation that Europeans abandon purely cerebral pursuits and strengthen their bodies and root themselves in the soil instead: a vitalist program he would carry over into the Zionist movement. The founder of that movement was another Hungarian journalist, Theodor Herzl, who decided, after seeing the Dreyfus Affair unfold in France, that the Jews would never be a safe and healthy people until they had their own state. After penning the book that would become the Zionist bible, *The Jewish*

State, in 1896, Herzl attempted to convince the Ottoman Sultan to donate Palestine to the Jews. He failed, of course, but avoided falling into the despair experienced by the Viennese Jew Otto Weininger, author of the highly influential but deeply misogynic and anti-Semitic *Sex and Character*. Weininger identified both women and Jews as biologically lascivious and materialistic, and hence the eternal enemies of healthy, idealistic, modern manhood. Tormented by the belief that he and his society could not escape pollution, Weininger took his own life shortly after the publication of his book in 1903 (Johnson 1972: 158–62).

We conclude this essay with Sigmund Freud, whose name is virtually synonymous with the Central European *fin de siècle*. Freud knew Weininger, as he knew many of the movers and shakers of his day. His clients, like Klimt's sitters, came disproportionately from the Jewish upper middle classes; Freud's work reflected many of their concerns. Would the rational-liberal ego – and the constitutional monarchy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire – hold, in the face of the destructive tendencies of the Id, and of mass democracy? Could the Empire – and the individuals within it – learn to confront the traumas of the past without allowing history to overwhelm the needs of the present? In the course of his psycho-analytic and cultural studies, ranging from *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) to *Moses and Monotheism* (1937), Freud returned again and again to the problem of surfaces and depths, of the intractable clashing of Dionysian and Apollonian forces. He remained, in many ways, a liberal, but as a man of the *fin de siècle* he understood deeply the Id's longing for chaos, even if he, like Klimt, Max Weber, or, in his own way, Emperor Franz Joseph himself, devoted himself to the struggle to tame it.

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RUSSIA

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Olga Matich

In the retrospective words of poet Anna Akhmatova, the new century in Russia began on New Year's eve of 1913, which turned out to be the eve of the Great War and suggests that the Russian *fin de siècle* began belatedly (Akhmatova 1976: 53). It then spilled over into the 1917 Revolution, meaning that it lasted longer than elsewhere in Europe. Symbolist poet Vyacheslav Ivanov and literary scholar Mikhail Gershenzon, while recuperating from exhaustion in a Moscow sanatorium three years after the Revolution and a bloody Civil War, exchanged letters on the fate of humanism that included history, revolution in social and utopian terms, and especially the fate of the individual in post-revolutionary society. They discussed them in relation to the end of Russia's *fin de siècle* that instantiated truly radical political and socio-economic change.

The at-times contentious dialogue was published in the Soviet Union in 1921 as *A Correspondence from Two Corners*. In it Ivanov gave a posthumous assessment of *fin-de-siècle* decadence, describing it as "the awareness of one's subtlest organic bonds with the lofty cultural tradition of the past combined with the feeling, both oppressive and exalting, of being the last in a line. [. . .] decadence is memory benumbed, its capacity to initiate [the next generation into cultural tradition] gone." It is "the lofty cultural tradition of the past" that Ivanov remembered and reminded himself and Gershenzon to keep alive through memory (Gershenzon and Ivanov 1979: 42). Yet he identified with the "exalting" feeling of "being the last in a line," as if welcoming the revolution that would erase his generation. The conflicted feeling reflected the kind of paradox that characterized Russia's *fin de siècle* as in-betweenness.

Russian intellectual and artistic life of the early twentieth century flourished no less than in France, England, or Germany; the Russian cultural elite, to which Ivanov and Gershenzon belonged, was equally at home in Paris as in Petersburg or Moscow. Yet, decadence in the arts, initially the hallmark of the *fin de siècle* in France, arrived in Russia belatedly, and it wasn't until the first decade of the twentieth century that Russian artists joined the global art world as equals, with Stravinsky and Kandinsky being essential to the development of modernist or avant-garde European painting and music.

In the political and socio-economic spheres, however, Russia was backward, political reform and capitalism arriving very belatedly. The Russian empire remained an absolute monarchy until the Revolution of 1905, marked by worker strikes, peasant revolts, and military mutinies, which challenged its existence. In an effort to maintain power, Nicholas II introduced political reforms among which were the country's first constitution, though limited; a multi-party system that included Nationalists, Constitutional Democrats, and various revolutionary parties; an elected parliament, called the State Duma, still weighted in favor of the propertied classes and was subject to dissolution by the tsar; and almost full freedom of the press. The reforms slowed down revolutionary momentum, while freedom of the press contributed to it. But they were too little, too late. Rural and urban poverty was rampant, in part product of rapid industrial development and growth of the urban working class in the 1890s and especially in the years preceding the Great War.

The belatedness of political reform and thriving capitalist development led to the 1917 Revolutions, also the product of Russia's disastrous conduct of the Great War and its general deleterious effects at home. The February Revolution deposed Nicholas and established a provisional government, under Alexander Kerensky, that introduced democracy; the Bolshevik Revolution took place in October. The unique, though brief, democratic interlude between tsarist and communist Russia represented political in-betweeness, which also characterized the period as a whole. Needless to say, it was different from *fin-de-siècle* in-betweenness: paradox and ambivalence didn't characterize the revolutionaries' vision that was totalizing in its affirmation of the new and rejection of the old.

If decadence celebrated death, politically the *fin de siècle*, characterized by mounting revolutionary activity, differed radically from other Western countries by literally ending a way of life. Despite Marx's view that socialist revolution would first take place in societies of mature capitalism, Russia, essentially agrarian, was the first country to instantiate it. As a result of belated capitalism, Russian revolutionaries were originally inspired by populist ideas, viewing the peasantry as a revolutionary class and maintaining that Russia would skip capitalism and move directly to socialism. In fact, the populist Socialist-Revolutionaries remained more numerous through the October Revolution than Marxist Social-Democrats of all orientations combined: it was because of its discipline and organization that the minority Bolshevik party seized power. Yet Russia's socio-economic belatedness induced Lenin and the Bolsheviks to substantially revise Marxist theory of historical development, including adoption of some Socialist-Revolutionary concepts.

The writers and artists of the *fin de siècle* who are the subject of my essay sympathized with the 1905 and February Revolutions, but only Alexander Blok and Andrey Bely welcomed October. As we know, the Soviet government would soon require identification with the state, making it impossible for the individual to choose among different political parties as well as political disengagement. Like many Russian poets, artists, philosophers, and scholars that emerged in the *fin de siècle*, Ivanov in the end chose to emigrate, severing all ties with his homeland, and thereby brought *his* in-between state to an end. It was also this act that firmly relegated him to the Soviet ashbin of decadence. As elsewhere in its time "decadent" was typically an epithet of opprobrium, but it became an exclusively derisive

qualifier in the Soviet Union and was applied to all texts that depicted the old way of life positively or even neutrally.

Returning to Ivanov's assessment of decadence, it evoked Nietzsche's claim in *Ecce Homo* that he is "at once a decadent and a beginning." In Russia, this feeling was associated with the coming of the "new man" after the apocalyptic end of history that preoccupied the *fin-de-siècle* generation, including the revolutionaries although in a very different philosophical sense. Yet Trotsky, Lenin's ally in 1917 who was familiar with Nietzsche and Vladimir Solovyov (see below), wrote that the new Soviet man would be "a higher biologic type, [. . .] a superman" that will master the environment as well as reproduction and the purposefulness of his body (Trotsky 1925: 254–56). These were utopian claims that resembled those of Ivanov's generation.

Ivanov's simultaneous nostalgia for the past and exaltation of the future suggested a profound anxiety of being in-between historically that revealed the fluidity and essential in-betweenness of *fin-de-siècle* temporality.

* * *

As in France, decadence in Russia was associated with the Russian symbolist movement, and as in France, it came to characterize the spirit of the *fin de siècle* that in Russia spilled over into the twentieth century. Belatedness had some favorable aesthetic consequences: according to the premier formalist critic Victor Shklovsky, for instance, the late development of the novel in Russia produced a genre that, instead of imitating, parodied – in the formalist sense – West European prose fiction, resulting in a renewal of the novelistic genre (Shklovsky 1966, 2: 3–5). In the case of Russian symbolist poetry, belatedness resulted in grafting a utopian sensibility by the younger symbolists onto the older decadence, producing a palimpsest of sorts. For those whom I have labeled "decadent utopians" (see below), belatedness offered a new beginning that renewed literary production.

Textbook definitions of Russian symbolism distinguish two generations, with the first emerging in the 1890s, the second, in the 1900s. According to traditional literary historians, the older decadents assumed a stance of aesthetic individualism against the earlier realists, especially those espousing progress, positivism, and social consciousness; the second rejected the aesthetics of decadence in favor of apocalyptic mysticism. As all such chronological divisions, the boundaries between the two generations were fluid.

Chronologically, decadence in Russia was a response to the literary "stagnation" of the 1880s when the radical ideals of social progress and positivism of the so-called men of the 1860s were in a state of decline. By the early 1880s the great Russian novelists were dead, creating a vacuum to be filled by authors that rejected the socially conscious fathers; in the case of Tolstoy, he renounced his earlier writing. If the decadent symbolists were indeed aesthetes and individualists first and foremost, then the second-generation symbolist visionaries were mystics who turned to a new collective ideal. In actuality, however, both bore the taint of decadence in the sense of falling away from a previous state of strength, although it was also the aesthetic culture around them that they considered in a state of decline. This view was expressed by Dmitry Merezhkovsky in the first *fin-de-siècle* manifesto, *On the Causes of the Decline and on the New Trends in Contemporary Russian Literature* (1892),

that articulated the end of nineteenth-century Russian literature: "contemporary people stand face to face with ineffable darkness, unprotected, at the border of light and shade [. . . and] the terrifying cold blowing from the abyss" (Merezhkovsky 1994: 170). Metaphorizing the in-between, the abyss was that which the *fin-de-siècle* generation strove to overcome by crossing it from the old shore to what Merezhkovsky called divine idealism. The younger symbolist Andrey Bely and author of the premier Russian modernist novel *Petersburg* posthumously applied the same metaphor: "The decadents were those who found themselves at the downfall of culture without the possibility of leaping over [the abyss]; wings for the decadents were those of the aeronaut Lilienthal who proved the impossibility of aviation [his glider crashed and he was killed]. The decadents and symbolists became conscious of the necessity of flying away from culture: decadents didn't see the instantiation of flight; the symbolists, so-to-speak, created tests in aviation" (Bely 1990: 535).

Decadent symbolism in Russia was an import from France. The critic Zinaida Vengerova first introduced the French symbolists to the reader, especially in her article "The French Symbolist Poets in France," which appeared in *Messenger of Europe* in 1892. The article offered Russian writers a readymade vocabulary from French to express the new sensibility. Vengerova's article and Max Nordau's *Degeneration*, published the same year and translated into Russian in 1894, made this poetry available to those seeking new modes of writing, with the difference that she was sympathetic to their writing whereas Nordau considered it the pathological product of the *fin de siècle*. *Degeneration* was widely discussed in the Russian press, with socially conscious intelligentsia critics finding it enlightened.

An unexpected Russian source of European decadent writing was Tolstoy's *What Is Art?* (1898). Though published later than *Degeneration*, it was conceptualized around the time of its original publication and bore an uncanny resemblance to it despite Nordau's disparaging chapter on late Tolstoy as degenerate novelist. Besides lambasting early modernist writing, music, painting, and philosophy from similar points of view, strikingly both quoted some of the same authors, even the same French poems, attributing to them unhealthy, immoral concerns.

While *What Is Art?* refers to Dostoevsky as one of the great nineteenth-century authors of religious writing, whom Nordau curiously doesn't mention, Merezhkovsky names him among Russian precursors of the new trends in literature: "Dostoevsky depicts people only in a state of morbid tension, [. . . with] psychological experience lit by an unnaturally bright light," writes Merezhkovsky. "Dostoevsky was possessed not by fear, but by love of the abyss, tearing off the veils from it with audacious curiosity" (1994:177–80). I would add that he offered images that prefigured decadence. Perhaps the most florid example appears in the scene from *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) in which young Lise, suffering from what Freud would label hysterical paralysis, finds erotic pleasure in an utterly perverse imaginary. She describes a series of tableaus that become increasingly decadent; the last depicts a fantasy of a four-year-old boy crucified by a Jew, suggesting the vicious anti-Semitic blood libel. Moreover, the child cries and moans while Lise eats pineapple compote – a decadent parody of Christ's crucifixion that, I would suggest, traveled to Fyodor Sologub's thoroughly decadent 1906 novel The *Petty Demon* in which its sensual heroine dreams of crucified Christ whose body is covered with droplets of blood. "It is greatly to be deplored that no Dostoevsky lived in the neighborhood of this most

interesting decadent [Christ] – I mean someone who would have known how to feel the poignant charm of such a mixture of the sublime, the morbid, and the child-like," wrote Nietzsche (2007: 121). Clearly, he hadn't read *The Idiot* – the eponymous hero Prince Myshkin fits his characterization almost to a tee.

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Ivanov's description of decadence as characterizing the feeling of being the last of a series may be said to evoke Nordau's view of heredity in the *fin de siècle*: "the French ascribe their own senility to the century, and speak of the *fin-de-siècle* when they ought correctly to say *fin-de-race*" (Nordau 1968: 2). It revealed Nordau's taking degeneration theory out of the psychiatric hospital and applying it to early modernism. The end of the race as product of bad heredity characterized the premier Russian symbolist poet Alexander Blok's view of himself as offspring of a degenerate bloodline. Shortly before his wedding he recorded in his diary: "I am a degenerate from the Blok family," implying that he represented the end of the family line (Blok 1965: 50–51, 53); Blok suffered from venereal disease, which according to medical science of the time was hereditary and precluded healthy offspring. His wife, daughter of Dmitry Mendeleev, famed *fin-de-siècle* chemist and author of the Periodic Table, wrote in her posthumous memoirs that physical and psychopathological illness characterized her husband's genealogy on both sides. Using *fin-de-siècle* medical discourse, she associated it with "gentry degeneration and impoverishment of the blood line." Listing several examples of tainted heredity on Blok's side, she claimed that contemporary psychiatry would describe his genealogy as exhibiting extreme "marginality" (L. D. Blok 1977: 80–81).

Blok's unfinished narrative poem *Retribution* was an attempt to recount the history of both sides of his family, which he described in the "Introduction" as his version of *Les Rougon-Macquart*, Zola's series of novels about the genealogy and degeneration of a family. The "theme" of the poem, wrote Blok, is the development "of the links in a single family chain" (Blok 1960, 3: 297). He described the persona's father as a vampire who insinuates himself into the maternal side of the family and so corrupts its blood. (Blok's maternal grandfather was Alexander Beketov, Russia's leading botanist in the *fin de siècle*.) An outsider in the liberal upper-class gentry family, the father resembles a sinister, sickly romantic who wants to fill his dying body with living blood ("As if he wanted to pour into the corpse/Live playing blood"); this act, represented metaphorically as rape, marks the persona's conception as the product of vampiric coupling: "This was love/In that vampiric century," which the poet proclaims as "damned" and "wretched" (Blok 1960, 3: 323–25).

The space of historical betweeness, which characterized Russians affiliated with the *fin de siècle*, may be interpreted in this instance as the result of tainted heredity. Blok, the last member of the Blok family, owned a copy of Huysmans's *À rebours*, whose arch-decadent Des Esseintes is the last scion of an old aristocratic family – its decline produced male offspring that were "progressively less manly" and sickly. Instead of lamenting that he is the end of a family line, as did Blok, Des Esseintes takes pleasure in occupying the liminal space between life and death, a state that could be described as keeping death alive. He does this against nature – by seeking the most refined, yet enervating, artificial pleasures to stimulate his vitiated senses. The naturalist version of the space between genealogy and rupture was captured by

Zola's *Rougon-Macquart* series, which Huysmans attempts to overcome in *À rebours* by offering his version of heredity – one that produces a heightened aesthetic sensibility in the last of the line. Historical betweeness is transformed through the imagination into perpetual presentness of being on the verge of death.

The taint of heredity characterized the last scion of the Romanov family that had reigned in Russia since the beginning of the seventeenth century. The son of Nicholas II, heir to the Russian throne, suffered from a hereditary blood disease. The perception was that the Romanov dynasty was doomed by hemophilia, which is transmitted through the female bloodline but infects only men. Rhetorically, it may be described as a decadent disease, especially if we consider it in relation to the bane of degeneration and the blood trope of decadence, not to speak of the myth of feminine evil in the *fin de siècle*. What could be a more eloquent symptom of degeneration that fits its medical, rhetorical, and ideological criteria found at the pinnacle of political power? This and the insinuation of the monk Grigory Rasputin into the royal family by convincing the tsarina that he could contain the son's hemophilic attacks exacerbated the symbolic significance of the royal disease. Although the monarchy manifested other symptoms of decrepitude, the blood taint as emblem of biological decline was the Romanovs' most striking exemplar of degeneration, contributing to the downfall of the ruling house in 1917.

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The family novel was in crisis in the 1880s, the decade of stagnation in Russian literature. It was the subject of Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin's *The Golovlyov Family* (1880), which expressed a positivist view of biological determinism, representing the downfall of three generations of a landed gentry family suffering from degenerate heredity. The main environmental cause of its death, however, was not modernity as in *The Rougon-Macquart*, but serfdom. It was precisely Saltykov-Shchedrin and his generation's politics of culture and society, especially positivism and social and political engagement, which the decadents rejected, even though *The Golovlyov Family* was a prime example of gentry decadence as represented by the fathers of the 1860s to 1870s and by Russian naturalism in the manner of Zola. Scion of the Golovlyov family, the central character is dubbed "blood-sucker": like a vampire, he deprives all around him, including his children, of vitality. The novel was Russia's *Rougon-Macquart*, though set in a dreary provincial landscape, not a city, and contrary to decadent writing, it represented the suffering of the exploited peasants instead of aestheticizing decline and the family's degeneration.

A Russian novel in which naturalism verged on decadence, as in French literature, was *The Petty Demon*, whose author wrote around 1899 that "decadence was the development of the veritable principles of naturalism" (Pavlova 2004), by which Sologub meant Zola, although I would add Saltykov-Shchedrin *sans* moralism to the mix. It is as if *The Petty Demon*'s decadent hothouse of erotic dreams, images of "blooming flesh," colors, and perfume, evoking the exuberance of synesthesia in *À rebours*, had been grafted onto the naturalist representation of the depraved sensuality and morals of the inhabitants of a provincial town.

If decadence was premised on the transcendence of difference, then synesthesia as practiced by symbolists everywhere did so at the sensible level. Socially, the most important erasure of difference in the *fin de siècle* had to do with gender treated in

similar terms in decadence and the women's movement. Both inscribed gender construction, which in decadence was an aesthetic ideal whereas for the new woman it represented equality with men in the social and economic spheres. *The Petty Demon*'s schoolboy cross-dressed as geisha represented beauty at a masquerade ball that brings the naturalist and decadent plotlines together, but his gender performance that parodies the novel's gender norms results in destruction.

Gender performativity characterized the social and literary subjectivity of the *fin-de-siècle's* most original female intellectual and symbolist poet. Strikingly beautiful, Zinaida Gippius performed dandyism and cross-dressing, same-sex eroticism, as well as used a male persona in poetry and wrote criticism under male pseudonyms (see Figure 9.1). As a new woman, she insisted on an equal role in the intellectual sphere with men and "a room of one's own," which Virginia Woolf would later articulate in her famed essay. Yet, Gippius expressed disdain for *écriture féminine* (and frequently for feminized women as well as Russia's women's movement) for focusing on social instead of spiritual concerns. Instead, she identified with the transcendence of gender in Vladimir Solovyov's sense of conflating male and female (see below) in life and writing. Her self-representation as female dandy was made famous by Léon Bakst of the World of Art, many of whose members were gay, practicing Wildean dandyism that was affiliated with decadence.

Figure 9.1 *Zinaida Gippius* by Léon Bakst, 1906. © The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia

* * *

Belatedness generally informed Russian historicity. If the Romantic philosophy of history found a place only for gifted nations, then what special aptitude or original idea could backward Russia offer to European society? This question was raised in the 1830s by philosopher Peter Chaadaev, famously proclaiming Russia "a blank sheet of paper" on which Peter the Great wrote "Europe and Occident" and suggesting that Russia had no history and therefore was destined to borrow invented ideas and practices from Europe (Chaadaev 1969: 246). This was the first philosophical articulation of Russian historical belatedness that had dogged the intelligentsia for several decades – whether a backward country lacking cultural memory could have any purpose in history other than to imitate Europe. It was only in the *fin de siècle* that Vladimir Solovyov, the most important nineteenth-century Russian philosopher, offered another reading of the blank page: that Russia, unencumbered by history and memory, would write a new apocalyptic word on it as a way out of history.

A historical paradigm premised on decadence was proposed somewhat earlier by Constantine Leontyev, a political reactionary and opponent of progress. Trained as a medical doctor, he considered himself a pathologist of contemporary society, applying to history the laws of biology, as would Oswald Spengler many years later. As early as 1875, in *Byzantism and Slavdom*, Leontyev argued for a biological phenomenology of history that consisted of three stages: "primitive simplicity"; "exuberant growth and complexity"; "secondary simplification" as the stage of decay and death (Leontyev 1993: 19–118). His theory of cultural "blossoming" and subsequent "degeneration" may be seen as an analogue of the naturalism/decadence relationship – in the sense that naturalism represented the overripe fruit marking the onset of degeneration and decadence. Leontyev, however, also associated decline with the rise of democracy, which he viewed as the pernicious consequence of European liberal thought that promoted bourgeois mediocrity. In 1880, he wrote that "Russia must be frozen a little so that it wouldn't rot" like Europe, prolonging the stage of cultural blossoming (Leontyev 1996: 246). He railed against the rotting West while praising sweet-smelling Orthodox monasticism and Byzantism.

For the symbolist generation, Solovyov's phenomenology of history became the most influential *fin-de-siècle* alternative to biological determinism and history representing progress. *The Meaning of Love* (1892–94) proclaimed an apocalyptic future that would end nature's cycle that inscribed the inevitability of death that, according to Solovyov, had to be overcome. Like Nietzsche, he believed that man is unfinished and must be surpassed, but his terms were radically different. Solovyov perceived post-history as the reconstitution of primordial unity in the image of eternal God-manhood, suggesting a phenomenology based on *Revelation*. Instead of the superman, he postulated the God-man who would unite spirit and flesh as divine matter embodied by Divine Sophia, goddess of wisdom. The goal was the apocalyptic immortalization of the collective body after the end of history.[1]

Time as a category of the infinite and timeless was mostly the purview of philosophers, although poets sometimes attempted to render it; decadent poets like Constantine Balmont and Valery Bryusov exalted capturing the fleeting moment instead. Blok's "The Stranger," one of his most celebrated poems, conflates the two

temporalities: a mysterious streetwalker "breathing perfumes and fogs" whose silks "waft ancient tales" sits alone at a bar window. As the funereal ostrich feathers on her hat begin to sway in the inebriated persona's head, he is transported beyond her veiled visage to her bottomless blue eyes timelessly "blooming on a distant shore." But instead of transcendence, the timeless moment is produced by the "truth of wine" (Blok 1960, 2: 185–86). Though originally inspired by Solovyov, Blok demythologizes his vision.

Symbolists influenced by Solovyov – Gippius for instance – espoused the seemingly paradoxical sensibility of "decadent utopianism," an oxymoronic designation suggesting a causal relationship between their sense of doom and utopian dreams (Matich 2005: 3). Even though *The Meaning of Love* is known primarily as a philosophical text, it also addressed the concern with genealogy and the *fin-de-siècle* biological taint. It suggested an escape from "genetic continuity" by means of bodily transfiguration in the form of the androgyne that would overcome death and immortalize the living body. As Eugenio Donato writes, "the end of time is the abolition of differential traits" (Donato 1993: 43). If decadence disavowed nature and aestheticized the in-between, then the androgyne represented the essential hybrid that would nullify biological determinism and thereby end history.

Solovyov's story of the biological development of the species offered a model in which reproductive instinct exists in reverse relation to sexual love, which the lowest biological organisms lack almost completely. He proclaimed non-reproductive sexual love as the most powerful form of love, not as consummation of the sex act and its reproductive surplus leading to death, but as an economy of desire premised on abstinence. The energy of the sex drive would, so-to-speak, be stored until its expenditure in the birth of the utopian androgyne. *The Meaning of Love* ends with a "chemical" union that "liberates real spiritual-physical currents that gradually gain control of the material environment, animate it and incarnate in it different images of total unity – living and eternal likenesses of absolute humanity. The power of this spiritual-material creativity in man is merely the transmutation or turning inward of the very same creative power that in nature, being turned outward, produces the flawed infinity of the physical reproduction of organisms" (Solovyov 1966: 60).[2] Such was Solovyov's thoroughly delirious philosophical answer to the totalizing power of death! Chemical union, suggesting alchemy, refers to the grand union of one and all heralding the age of androgyny that would reconstitute the originary whole before the Fall.

The most radical attempt to reify Solovyov's utopian theory of overcoming procreation and gender difference was Gippius's "life-creation" project that fused philosophical writing, literary creativity, and life practice. The sublimated erotic energy of her triangulated family, consisting of her husband Merezhkovsky (their marriage was never consummated physically) and gay Dmitry Filosofov of the World of Art, was to instantiate "erotic utopia" in which Gippius played the pivotal performative role between men, with the fluidity of gender of all three. Needless to say, the project failed, but its desire to transform life represented the most ambitious attempt to put to practice Solovyov's androgynous collective body (see Matich 2005: 162–211).

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The *fin-de-siècle* generation everywhere was torn between a melancholy nostalgia for the whole and an obsession with the fragment, or synecdoche, the trope of fetishism and modernity. Linking wholeness with the "unnatural" body of the androgyne, Solovyov replaced the "natural" whole with an artificial one, as if revealing preference for artifice and fetish objects, cornerstones of decadence as well as its subsequent instantiations: modernism and post-modernism.

Charles Bernheimer wrote that decadence "is a stimulant that causes a restless movement between perspectives, the goal being the attainment of a position outside decadence that would enable one to judge it as such," suggesting that the author exists both inside and outside decadence (Bernheimer 2002: 27). Applying Bernheimer's claim to *The Meaning of Love*, we could say that its androgyne positioned the new man cum woman to stand outside nature and history, whereas the androgyne of decadence remained inside historical time. Gippius in this regard stood inside while striving to be outside and transcend decadent solipsism in an apocalyptic body. Moreover, movement between perspectives, fragmentation of image and narrative in the verbal and visual arts, including in a fetishist sense, would characterize modernism in its various iterations.

While no decadent, Solovyov – quite self-consciously – devoted several pages to fetishism in *The Meaning of Love*, both as an alternative to procreative sex as well as a contemporary "perversion," referencing Alfred Binet's "Le fétichisme dans l'amour." Solovyov cites the case of a masturbating apron fetishist from Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* as an example. In *The Meaning of Love*, however, the object of criticism is not so much fetishism as current therapeutic practices of treating it. Although there is no evidence in *Psychopathia Sexualis* of therapies that use pornographic pictures of naked women, Solovyov accused psychopathologists like Krafft-Ebing of using such tools to "cure" what they considered to be deviations from the norm that encouraged their patients to visit brothels: "the more successful this kind of therapy becomes, the more likely that the patient will need to turn his attention from one medical specialty to another, and that the psychiatrist's triumph might cause the dermatologist considerable trouble" (Solovyov 1966: 36).

What becomes clear from Solovyov's discussion of fetishism is his movement between perspectives: while chastising the apron fetishist, he also implies that for hygienic reasons his sexual practice is superior to that of the brothel visitor. Despite the ironic tone, the underlying suggestion may very well be that fetishism – refusal of the "natural" in favor of "artifice" – is superior to sex that leads to procreation. Quoting Bernheimer, we could say that it is "the dynamics of paradox and ambivalence which sets in motion" (Bernheimer 2002: 5) Solovyov's evaluation of fetishism and its slippage to the brothel.

According to Paul Bourget in 1881, "One law governs both the development and the decadence of the organism which is language. A style of decadence is one in which the unity of the book breaks down to make place for the independence of the page, in which the page breaks down to make place for the independence of the sentence and in which the sentence breaks down to make place for the independence of the word" (Calinescu 1987: 170). Nietzsche in *The Case of Wagner* wrote that decadence is the revolt of the part against the whole, a revolt that disperses and displaces it (Nietzsche 1967: 170). This revolt may be said to describe

fetishism. The severed head of John the Baptist, celebrated fetish of decadence, as desired by Salome, represented the trope of poetry for Blok:

> A cold wind from the lagoon.
> Silent coffins of gondolas.
> On this night, young and ill,
> I lie prostrate at the lion's column.
>
> On the tower a cast-iron song,
> The giants strike midnight.
> Mark drowns his ornate iconostasis
> In the moonlit lagoon.
>
> In the shadow of the palace arcade,
> Barely lit by the moon,
> Lurks Salome, passing by
> With my bloody head.
>
> All sleep—palaces, canals, people,
> Only the gliding step of the phantom,
> Only the head on a black platter
> Stares with melancholy into the surrounding gloom. (1909)[3]
>
> <div align="right">(Blok 1960, 3: 102–03)</div>

The poet's decollation invokes the *fin-de-siècle* master plot of castration, but instead of Salome, a mere trace in the poem, Blok focuses on the poet and his dismemberment, with the disintegration of the whole suggesting an increased autonomy of the part; instead of center stage, Salome represents the fleeting moment exalted by symbolists. The poet's bloody head as fetish object that releases the poet's voice figures in the Prologue of Blok's unfinished "Retribution". As in the Venice poem, bifurcation of the persona's voice into first and third persons, though affiliated with Salome, here a nameless dancer who delivers the poet's head to the tsar, introduces a shift between perspectives, a view of the poet from inside and outside, that fragments narrative. The severed head lying on the charger in "Retribution" metamorphoses into a scaffold as locus of poetry, with the head symbolizing the poet's voice. Instead of castration, it represents the modernist victory of the fragment and its fetishistic relation to language, here figured as male decapitation that produces poetry. The poet's retribution against the vampiric nineteenth century differs remarkably from Wilde's Salome who seals the lips of the prophet to silence his voice. Blok's Salome, instead, resembles Mallarmé's Herodiade in the "Cantique de Saint Jean" (published posthumously only in 1913) in which the decapitating muse liberates the voice of the poet.

Even though repressed in the text, trickling down only into the subtext, decollation in "Retribution" produces blood, a binding trope of poetic language for Blok. Historically, the trope was associated with the bloodshed of the Russo-Japanese war, 1905 and Bolshevik Revolutions and Civil War, as well as First World War. The head *is* poetry in fact, as we read in the lines "He lays down [slagaet] his head/There, on the black scaffold" (Blok 1960: 3: 303), evoking also the widespread government

executions of revolutionaries, with whom Blok identified. The verb *slagat'* (lay down) is used in the collocation *slagat' stikhi*, which means to compose poetry. The representation of the bifurcated body by means of grammar reflects Blok's desire to inhabit not only the lyrical voice of the poet but also the voice of history. Familial and national history is, after all, the theme of "Retribution" – transcending the vampiric century by means of poetry: "But a song will always remain a song,/In the crowd, someone will still sing. [. . .] Here, his poetry is branded/As shameful . . . But I sing,/Yours is not the last judgment,/It is not for you to seal my lips!" (Blok 1960, 3: 303)

If the fetish became the *fin-de-siècle* fragment of choice, acquiring aesthetic power of its own, it also informed fragmented narrative, modernism's signature rhetorical strategy. And if in Bourget's terms, narrative fragmentation signaled deviation from the norm, its mastery by Andrey Bely in *Petersburg* (1913) marked the novelistic highpoint of Russian modernism. (Vladimir Nabokov considered *Petersburg* one of the four greatest twentieth-century prose works alongside *Ulysses*, "The Metamorphosis," and *In Search of Lost Time*, all of which were written later.) Fragmentation and disjuncture are the novel's defining representational principles: body parts displace the body whole; fragments of the cityscape, the city whole; fragments of narrative, including the fetishistic repetition of fragments, the narrative whole. The novel's young terrorist moreover, a sexual fetishist, proclaims that "in Satanism there is a vulgar worship of the fetish" (Bely 1981: 292).

Bely's city novel represents the nexus of modernism, fragmenting modernity, and the *fin de siècle's* characteristically overstimulated senses and nerves, source of synesthesia culturally. The exploding bomb – motor of the plot – and its imaginary and real aesthetic shock reify the simultaneously terrifying and fascinating aspect of modernity that fragments and dissolves representation and narrative, which can be described as an anarchist sublime that exceeds representation. *Petersburg* was based on the famous assassination of the hated minister of interior Vyacheslav von Plehve in 1904 by bomb-throwing political conspirators, while also deploying the bomb as a metaphor of writing. Elsewhere Bely proclaimed: "My creative work is a bomb that I throw; life inside me is a bomb that has been thrown at me" (Bely 1994: 200).

The highly publicized assassinations of government officials in *fin-de-siècle* Russia also came to inform the epoch's European fiction inscribing anarchist terror, for instance Zola's *Germinal* and later Joseph Conrad's *Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*, as well as G. K. Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday*, all of which have a terrorist of Russian origin. Bely's *Petersburg* and the last three resembled each other not only in content but also stylistically, as if the anarchist novel had certain characteristics in common.

Petersburg's image of the imperial capital and its inhabitants is that of a dying, apocalyptic city. One of the novel's shadowy characters claims that Karl Baedeker misleads the visitor by keeping mum about the "fact" that the capital city belongs to the world of the spirits, not of the living. *Petersburg* is about the transience of life ("man is just slime sewn up in skin") and the novel's anxiety about sex represents Solovyov's assessment of biological life as well as Freud's theory of the life and death instincts. Like late Freud, *Petersburg*, a novel about a powerful father and "degenerate" son, gives precedence to Thanatos, with the son representing the end of the family line.

* * *

Turning briefly to the other arts, they reflected some of the same characteristics as those in verbal language. Returning to synesthesia, among its celebrated practitioners were the mystical synesthetes Alexander Scriabin in music and Kandinsky in painting. Both, like Bely, had been influenced by theosophy and anthroposophy, which emphasized the dematerialization of matter. For Bely's *Petersburg* and Kandinsky's paintings, these spiritual movements inspired their move to abstraction (Matich 2010, 83–120). Kandinsky's claim in *On the Spiritual in Art* that abstract forms channel the sounding inner spirit manifested a theosophical cum anthroposophic sensibility. Scriabin developed a color organ that was used in the performances of *Prometheus: Poem of Fire*; Kandinsky discussed Scriabin's synesthetic music in *On the Spiritual in Art*.

As the modernist arts were becoming increasingly global at the beginning of the twentieth century, Kandinsky became a European artist whose development as painter, in fact, took place mostly abroad. Yet he channeled Russian folk themes as well as *fin-de-siècle* apocalyptic anxieties, having been influenced by Solovyov and Merezhkovsky. Like symbolist writing, Kandinsky's Munich paintings, which introduced a new visual language of expressive lines and abstract shapes to render the apocalypse, was informed by *Revelation*. Moreover, like Bely's *Petersburg*, his paintings rendered explosions, representing what Kandinsky called "the collapse of the atom" that he associated with the apocalyptic disintegration of the whole world.

Synesthesia as *Gesamtkunstwerk* was the hallmark of Sergey Diaghilev's famed *Ballets Russes*, an offshoot of the World of Art movement that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. *Ballets Russes* influenced ballet everywhere, becoming one of the first truly international artistic enterprises. Some of the World of Art painters, especially Bakst and Alexandre Benois, became the company's principal stage and costume designers; later Diaghilev engaged among others the avant-garde painters Natalia Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov, as well as Picasso and Jean Cocteau. Besides Debussy, Ravel, Darius Milhaud, and others, the company's most important composer was Stravinsky who, like Kandinsky, would work primarily in the West; yet his ballets for Diaghilev, who "discovered" Stravinsky, all inscribed Russian thematics. Even though *Ballets Russes* essentially didn't perform in Russia, it exported a new kind of ballet to the West.

Ballets Russes' repertory capitalized on the French image of Russia as Orient, which came to be known as *le style russe*. It was translated into orientalist fashion in décor and dress, e.g. in Paul Poiret's clothing, and became popular at the beginning of the twentieth century. Even though decadence came to Russia from France, the representation of the *femme fatale* by French decadent novelists, such as Joséphin Péladan and Claude Lorrain, inscribed what they perceived as the mysterious, Sphinx-like Russian woman – masculinized, depraved, and of the East. Perhaps it was originally Leopold Sacher-Masoch that introduced *l'âme slave* as mysterious and orientalized, best known from *Venus in Furs*, although Mario Praz claimed that the image was borrowed from Dostoevsky (Praz 1978: 209). (Masoch came from what used to be Poland and today is Ukraine.) The stereotype continued into the twentieth century, e.g. in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* and Thomas Mann's Madame Chauchat in *The Magic Mountain*.

During the first Paris season (1909), the androgynous, exotic Ida Rubinstein performed the oriental *femme fatale* role of Cleopatra in the eponymous ballet, and,

Figure 9.2 Fokine/Rubinstein/Nizhinsky, *La Maison des Danseuses* © akg-images

in 1910, Zobeide in *Scheherazade*, both times opposite the great, equally androgynous Vatslav Nizhinsky. Rubinstein's dance of veils traveled from Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, which she attempted to stage and perform in Petersburg the previous year, to her representation of Cleopatra in Paris. Rubinstein enchanted European audiences, among them the Parisian dandy Count Robert de Montesquiou, prototype of Huysmans's Des Esseintes, and Jean Cocteau. In the words of Montesquiou's biographer, he envisioned her Cleopatra as Salome "hurling at society of Tout-Paris decapitated 'good taste' as though it were the head of John the Baptist, and the blood from it spattered Poiret's dresses and lacquered Dunand's [art-deco] furniture" (Jullian 1967: 223). Such was the reception of exported Russian decadence. Stravinsky's strikingly innovative *Rite of Spring* (1913), with the subtitle "Pictures of Pagan Russia," was another example of self-orientalization for export, in this instance in a primitivist style.

If for no other reason than that it was located in Europe and Asia, Russia as Orient was part of its national identity. In the 1900s and 1910s, primitivist self-orientalization characterized some of the writings of the decadent symbolist poets Valery Bryusov, Blok, and Bely, who variously called themselves Huns, Tatars, and Scythians, representing Russians as violent savages. Here is how Blok figured the revolution directed against European civilization in *The Scythians*: "Yes, we are Scythians!/Yes, Asians—with slanted, greedy eyes!" (Blok 1960, 3: 360). Revolution, which Blok identified with the spirit of music, was associated with Russia's primitivist Asian heritage in the writings of all three, including Bely's *Petersburg*. The numerous archaeological discoveries of this heritage in the *fin de siècle* in fact offered Russia

Figure 9.3   Costume for Ida Rubinstein as Cleopatra
by Léon Bakst, 1909 © akg-images

an indigenous antiquity that also inspired many in the post-symbolist generation of writers and artists as they were seeking an alternative antiquity to ancient Greece and Rome. Russia's Asian heritage informed the poetry of the most original futurist poet Velemir Khlebnikov, as well as the striking paintings of Pavel Kuznetsov, Nikolay Rerikh, Alexander Shevchenko, and the Armenian artist Martiros Saryan. Except for Rerikh, these artists are virtually unknown in the West.

<p align="center">* * *</p>

Foregrounding decadence, symbolism, and Solovyov, my argument has focused on the striking coexistence of decadence, apocalyptic utopianism and its fantasy of transcending gender, self-orientalization, and revolution in *fin-de-siècle* Russia. While in very different terms, it could be claimed that the sense of doom meant to be overcome by apocalyptic utopia would be realized by the Bolshevik Revolution,

whose aftermath is well known. In these respects, the Russian *fin de siècle* was certainly very different from its Western counterparts. Posthumously, this period in all the arts became known as the Silver Age, referring to their rapid development and remarkable innovation before and right after the Revolution. The term emerged in emigration, not in the Soviet Union, where much Silver Age production was suppressed by the late twenties and recuperated only at the end of the twentieth century. But in 1918, Blok and Bely, though somewhat ambiguously, celebrated the Bolshevik Revolution in their respective narrative poems *The Twelve* – one of Blok's best – and the rather mediocre *Christ Has Risen*. They both remained in the Soviet Union, unlike Gippius and Merezhkovsky, who went to Paris. Blok's death in 1921 is generally considered the end of the Silver Age and Russian *fin de siècle*.

NOTES

1   The Russian émigré Alexandre Kojève (Kozhevnikov) developed his theory of the end of history in part under the influence of Solovyov, about whom he wrote his doctoral dissertation. His famous 1930s Paris seminars contributed to the reintroduction of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* into French thought.

2   One of the Russian sources of Solovyov's contra nature stance was the even more delirious fantastic theory of the nineteenth-century Russian thinker Nikolay Fyodorov who proposed the resurrection of the fathers – a utopian project of annihilating death by transforming nature. Solovyov espoused Fyodorov's pseudo-scientific "Common Task," which slips seamlessly from natural history into fantasy, as did his project of applying nature's laws to revivifying the dead figured as a union that embraces the cosmos. The intertwinement of fantastic science and erotic desire in a backward-looking utopia would project nature's procreative impulse to resurrecting the ancestors.

3   My translation.

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CHAPTER TEN

ITALY

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Walter Adamson

To understand what was distinctive about the *fin de siècle* in Italy, one must begin with the larger post-Risorgimento context as well as the particular character of élite culture as it emerged in nineteenth-century Italy, partly prior to and then very much in response to that context. The Risorgimento itself had proven anti-climactic as ecstatic images of a genuinely populist national 'resurgence' were replaced by the sober realities of Cavourian realpolitik, and when a unified Italy emerged almost by accident in 1861, its political and intellectual élites saw an 'age of poetry' giving way to an 'age of prose' (Croce 1953: 2). The transition was contentious and anxiety-laden in the extreme. It provoked four years of civil war in the South in which perhaps as many as 150,000 people died. It witnessed a tragic battle at Aspromonte ('bitter mountain') in 1862 in which the foremost hero of the Risorgimento, Giuseppe Garibaldi, and troops loyal to him faced off against the new Italian (formerly Piedmontese) army – a battle from which Garibaldi emerged wounded both in body and spirit. And the nation would wait more than nine years before its historic and mythic centre – Rome – was finally annexed, and then, humiliatingly, only as the result of France's defeat by Prussia. The negative symbolism in these events would become a virtual obsession among Italian nationalists of the next several generations.

Yet, well before 1861, prominent Italians were expressing doubts about what centuries of foreign rule and Counter-Reformation culture (among other factors) had done to the Italian national character. In a remarkable essay of 1824, for example, Giacomo Leopardi wrote that while the Italians are as 'philosophers no less reasonable and geometric than the French or any other nation' and, as a 'people, perhaps more so than any other nation,' they lack 'any moral foundation and every real social bond and preservative principle for society.' As a result, 'the upper classes in Italy are the most cynical among all their counterparts in other nations . . . and the Italian lower classes are the most cynical of all lower classes' (Leopardi 1989: 131, 142). These dire sentiments were recouped in the post-Risorgimento period by the literary critic and moral educator, Francesco De Sanctis, who concluded his monumental *History of Italian Literature* with a passionate tribute to Leopardi's social and historical 'skepticism' and echoed his assessment of the Italian 'educated

classes' who, after the Council of Trent, 'had resigned themselves to a hypocritical life with the same facility as they submitted to foreign servitude and domination.' Likewise, 'the lower classes vegetated, and it was in the interest of their superiors who watched over them to leave them in their blessed stupidity.' Over the subsequent centuries, their mutual 'decadence' had become 'incurable' given what all Italian social classes continually lacked: 'sincerity and the force of conviction' (De Sanctis 1958: II: 650, 905). For this reason, in De Sanctis's view, for a modern Italy worthy of the name to be built, the fundamental requirements were neither economic nor political, but broadly moral and civic: above all, an education that would impart such virtues as 'moral courage, sincerity, initiative, and discipline' (De Sanctis 1972: 339).

Very little about the social and political experience of the 1870s and 1880s proved encouraging to such hopes, however. Indeed, the problems of the new nation appeared both overwhelming and intractable: the resolute opposition to the new state by the Church; the high levels of illiteracy and lack of interest in education, especially among the peasantry and in the South; corruption in the political élite; regional antagonisms and a pronounced gap in economic development between North and South; an antiquated agricultural system; rampant mismanagement in the railroads and banks; staggering governmental debt; multiple foreign policy defeats, above all of the imperialist policy in Africa. Hence, it is hardly surprising that the Italian self-preoccupation with their national character and its deficiencies continued on into the 1880s, most famously in Carlo Collodi's *Adventures of Pinocchio* (1883) which, as Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg (2007: 19, 2) has reminded us in her important study, was written in accordance with a 'De Sanctian pedagogy' that reflected the pervasive 'anxiety . . . [of] the post-1860 moment.' Moreover, Collodi's symbolic portrayal of the pleasure-loving Italian male who does not want to grow up found corroboration in the contemporaneous study of the Neapolitan sociologist, Pasquale Turiello (1994), who offered a Leopardian argument that the national character was defined primarily by its *scioltezza* – a 'looseness' of mind and body that reflected a resistance to authority and an inclination to an intense, self-interested individualism, even as those very same individuals experience inner emptiness. Because of their disabling *scioltezza*, Italians tended to refuse civic engagement, cultivate personalised networks of power, and approach economic life in hopes of finding easy schemes for money-making, thereby sidestepping the need for sustained industry. The culture of *scioltezza* also tended to accent style over substance and, in particular, to encourage a rhetoric of excess, hyperbolic gestures (both self-exalting and self-deprecating), and a self-presentation based on theatrical posturing.

The preoccupation with national character remains an important theme in recent historiography, which has also connected it with a certain mode of imagining the nation's economic modernisation. Most provocatively, Silvio Lanaro (1979) has argued that while significant economic development occurred in post-Risorgimento Italy and especially in the period from 1896 to 1914, it was always compromised by strong state control that discouraged active entrepreneurship as well as by a cultural traditionalism that favoured the persistence of precapitalist social relations (e.g. paternalism) within economic organisation, conceived work as a necessary form of drudgery or – at best – as artisanship, and therefore concentrated industry in the countryside where labour was cheap, abundant, and deferent. Hence, among Italian

élites, even those most intent upon forging a 'modern' Italy tended to harbour nostalgic fantasies based on incorporating at least some aspects of *Gemeinschaft* within their visions (Lanaro 1979: 20–21, 43, 103–16).

Given this context, the fact that Italy underwent an especially acute *fin-de-siècle* crisis amid the humiliating defeat of its army in Ethiopia (1896), working-class riots in Milan (1898), and the assassination of King Umberto I by an anarchist's bullet (1900) comes as no surprise. Arguably, Italy's crisis was even more acute than in Germany, which Modris Eksteins (1985: 11) has put forward as having suffered the most turbulent crisis of *fin-de-siècle* Europe, given the rapidity of its 'transition from a feudal agrarian past to a modern industrial existence.' For although Italy did not industrialise as fully as Germany did in this period, it also lacked the German self-confidence in their ability to meet modern challenges, even as it shared a deep ambivalence about modernity itself. Among intellectuals too, Italy's *fin-de-siècle* crisis ran at least as deep as Germany's, involved many of the same issues, and drew upon some of the same sources (e.g. Nietzsche's assessment of European civilisation and its future).

According to a number of recent European historians, the accelerating experiential transformations of the *fin de siècle* – in population growth, modes of transportation, new technologies of communication, urbanisation, the commodification of culture, imperialist competition – in combination with a heightened sense of anomie, vulnerability, and risk, produced a transformation in historical consciousness from one based on a straightforwardly progressive evolution (an Enlightenment sense of 'time pushing forward,' in George Gurvitch's terms) to one in which evolution implies simultaneous disintegration.[1] To put the point using imagery suggested by Peter Fritzsche, history is no longer imagined as a 'long corridor' representing 'progressive advance', but as a 'shifting configuration of clusters and nodes' representing 'one emergency following upon another as wave follows upon wave.' History becomes an expanse in which 'contingency abounds and has to be managed' and in which 'chaos is about to take over and has to be negotiated.' The result is to stimulate an aesthetic and political mentality that not only encourages 'social experimentation' but that actually conceives 'the future as a vast site for experimentation' (Fritzsche 1996: 1, 2, 13, 12). In this sense, a new Janus-faced understanding of history undergirds a 'modernist' penchant for experimentation functioning in both aesthetic and political domains, which in some ways come to be fused.

One finds this sort of thinking in Ferdinand Tönnies who, in presenting his research to an audience of French sociologists, argued that modern European history 'presents a double character. . . . Social evolution from one point of view can be conceived as having arrived at this end in the following way: one thinks in terms of intimate social groups, classes, customs, and ideas. From another point of view, social evolution takes the form of spontaneous disintegration' (Tönnies 1895: 246). And, as we will see, one finds very similar formulations in the work of the Italian historical sociologist Mario Morasso (1871–1938), upon whom the remainder of this essay will focus.

Morasso may seem an unlikely choice for close study. He wrote one well-known book in 1905, which was widely credited with anticipating (or even establishing) the futurist machine aesthetic, and his importance has long been appreciated by Italian historians and critics. However, except for the one book, he was a shadowy figure

little known to a wider public and, after 1905, almost seems to have wanted to be forgotten, a wish that largely came true. Most of his time during the period was spent as the editor of a Milanese journal devoted to the world of sport – *Motori, Cicli & Sports* – and he wrote little of real intellectual substance until, devastated by World War I, he penned two poignant laments regarding its destructive power and savagery. Yet, between 1897 and 1905 – the years of his greatest productivity – he was a serious theorist and an original thinker who in some ways anticipated Freud and who deployed insights from Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Marx with polemical brilliance. Moreover, his ambivalences about modernity and the 'artificial optimism' with which he regarded it perfectly reflect his generation and his epoch. In other words, not least among his virtues is that he is one of those thinkers who tell us a great deal about the time and place in which they wrote.

There are also a number of more specific reasons why Morasso makes an excellent tour guide to the Italian *fin de siècle*. First, as Lanaro has suggested, Morasso is 'the most attentive interpreter of the climate in which the *Wille zur Macht* is born within the Italian bourgeoisie' (Lanaro 1979: 37). Second, he offers one of the first and most expansive articulations of the 'New Right individualist' perspective that will prove so central to so many of the most important Italian intellectuals born in the 1870s and 1880s. Third, while his occasional poetic production and general outlook remain firmly wedded to Italian aestheticism, he also anticipates avant-gardes such as F. T. Marinetti's futurists and the Florentine circle around *La Voce* in the way he invents a new vocabulary for understanding and promoting a new culture of modernity and, albeit sporadically, in his use of manifestos and even a proto-Sorelian form of myth. Fourth, he offers us a typically ambivalent perspective regarding Italian modernity – pressing forward aggressively in its favour, yet also seeking to recoup aspects of *Gemeinschaft*. Fifth, he gives us a glimpse into what I will later suggest is a postmodern consciousness *avant la lettre* – one that the next generation, in its far greater optimism, will decisively reject. Finally, as already suggested, Morasso offers a paradoxical vision that combines evolution and disintegration in ways that remind us of Tönnies, yet that also connects with our own more recent *fin de siècle* and its aftermath in which a lingering, seemingly permanent sense of crisis has come to be experienced as the new normal.

MORASSO'S INTELLECTUAL WORLD

Born in Genoa in 1871, Morasso studied law, and much of his early published work involved investigations in criminal psychology. The young Morasso also published poetry inspired by French Symbolism, and he was part of the Florentine circle around *Il Marzocco*, one of the most important aestheticist journals in Italy after its début in 1896. Soon he would also be writing essays on art criticism, on popular culture, and on what Italians call *modernolatria* (modernity worship). As a result, critics have cast the overall character of his writing in various ways. Paola Zanetti (1976) labels him a 'cultural anthropologist' and Cecilia Mattii (1989: 40), a 'sociologist,' while Roberto Tessari (1973: 92), Edoardo Sanguinetti (1966: 274), and Virgilio Vercelloni (1970: 5) all call him simply a 'polygraph', with the accent on both *modernolatria* and *macchinolatria* (machine worship). Ugo Piscopo (1974) sees him as a proto-futurist, while Piero Pieri (1993: 14) casts him as the 'precursor'

of contemporary 'mass-media oriented philosophers and sociologists' such as Gianni Vattimo and Francesco Alberoni. Given the range such diverse characterisations suggest, it would be impossible to do justice to all of Morasso's work in a single essay. In treating his work as a lens through which to view the Italian *fin de siècle*, our focus will be on his view of modernity and its relation to his understanding of history and the politics he advocates to address it, which turn heavily on his concept of myth and his pursuit of a 'new myth' for a modern Italy.

Morasso's contributions to the early issues of *Il Marzocco* have several distinguishing features. First, they are all manifesto-like in the way they seek to rally a group around a call to action, although there is no detailed programme or list of points, just an indication of the ideals in play and a marked interest in finding a new cultural vocabulary. One of those ideals is generational – an appeal to 'those born after 1870.' Second, this focus also permits Morasso an outpouring of post-Risorgimento angst as the 'conquest of Rome' is compared with the 'French defeat.' Finally, and most importantly, Morasso sets out a first indication of his philosophy of history, one very much inspired by Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*.

In Morasso's view, 'primitive societies' are all about war; hence these societies naturally divide into two classes (the 'victors' and the 'defeated'), from which derives the political division of leaders and led. But when 'the orientation of souls and desires moves from the earth to heaven' (presumably, with the rise of Christianity), social divisions become more religious in character and the new 'political divisions, less barbarous and more ideal than the ancient ones.' In this more peaceful atmosphere, men gradually become less preoccupied with politics and more with their 'moral and material well-being.' This concern in turn produces 'new appetites,' which tend to expand to the point where they have 'become the strongest and most anxiety-provoking preoccupation' that contemporary societies face. Indeed, so dominant does material well-being – and in that sense 'society' – become over 'politics' that politics itself is reconstituted such that the political class is no longer the warrior class (the 'victors') but the leading class in society. Although Morasso concedes that this is merely a 'crude picture,' he draws major political consequences from it. For as social divisions become the source of political divisions (rather than the other way round), politics becomes divided between those who would retain the traditional social order and those who would reconstitute society in a new order – in other words, between clerical and other traditional conservatives on the one hand, and democrats and socialists on the other. This new social division of politics leads to 'degradation and confusion' because all 'purely political parties are liquidated' (Morasso 1990: 98–104).

From this analysis it is but one small step to Morasso's own new political ideal: the individualism he calls 'egocracy,' in order to emphasise the contrast with 'democracy.' What is needed to combat socialism is not a conservative party linked to religion and the past but a new radical individualism linked to a 'truly political' party oriented towards 'the future' in the hopes of restoring 'the well-being and happiness of mankind' in that future (Morasso 1990: 98–104). Forging such a politics is clearly the great challenge of engaged intellectuals facing 'modernity,' although Morasso is not yet articulating very much about how he understands the latter. What he does do, in what is certainly his most important theoretical work, is to set out the larger historical and anthropological framework in which his view of modernity and the politics allied with it can be understood.

Uomini e idee del domani (1898) is one of those sprawling, nineteenth-century books that is impossible to summarise briefly, and we will have to content ourselves with a few remarks about some of its central notions. Let us begin with politics. A 'truly political' order implies a class division into victors and defeated – hence also the competition and war that produce that division. Yet in the book Morasso says very little about élites and masses or superiors and inferiors; rather he comes off as a defender of anarchism, even if he does not explicitly endorse egalitarianism (Morasso 1898: 204–05). His main point about politics is that, when it is 'truly' instituted, it provides an important source of human self-realisation rather than being – as *fin-de-siècle* intellectuals imagine – something from which we need to run (Morasso 1898: 220–21). More broadly: in order for humans to flourish, we need a truly political order, which in turn means that the narrow pursuit of 'material well-being' must be 'dissolved.' In this sense 'liberation' implies (social) 'disintegration' or 'dissolution,' and the latter implies progress. Herbert Spencer and 'all the evolutionists' are wrong, because they believe that 'disintegration' is 'regressive' and that 'progress' is a matter of ever more complex social integration (Morasso 1898: v–vi). On the contrary, Morasso maintains, progress is a matter of regaining a collective order of looser social bonds where greater individual happiness is possible. Hence – and here lies a major surprise – in contrast to the tradition that runs from Leopardi through De Sanctis to Collodi and Turiello, Morasso thinks that the main problem of contemporary European societies (including, of course, Italy) is not that the '*vincolo sociale*' (social bond) is too loose but that it is too tight. In a sense, Morasso advocates *scioltezza*, but he thinks that there is a 'genuine' *scioltezza* that can lead to a nation's greatness and that does not suffer the consequences Turiello saw in it.

The main anthropological thrust of the book turns on Morasso's concept of 'energy.' For Morasso, human energy comes in two primary forms, which he calls – in a formulation remarkably similar to Freud's more fully developed theory of the same period – 'love' and 'work.' Love for Morasso is akin to what Freud calls libido: it is 'sexual instinct' directed towards pure individual pleasure rather than driven by utilitarian, socially oriented motives such as procreation. Work, in contrast, is 'the product of that quantum of energy that the individual does not employ directly and immediately to satisfy desires and egoistic needs, but which the individual renounces for the existence of the collectivity and is then absorbed by it.' Work also involves 'acts that are undertaken in pursuit of social necessity not biological or sexual exigency' (Morasso 1898: 262). For Morasso, then, there is a strong division between the 'biological' (bound up with sexual and egoistic energy) and the 'social' (bound up with energy directed to collective need). Indeed, he goes so far as to say that 'where there is society there is work, and where there is no society work does not exist and cannot be.' And this idea leads him to a striking conclusion: just as men 'during that whole primitive period in which they were not socially organised' did not 'work' in the social sense, so too 'they will no longer work when every social constraint is broken, when liberated from the mutilations that society imposes, man reappears whole, sole master of himself and of the world before the golden light of the future sun' (Morasso 1898: 264).

In effect, Morasso has discovered that there exists a psychic-biological personality underlying individuals as we perceive them in society, an idea variously formulated by Schopenhauer, Freud, and Henri Bergson. And he foresees a future in which

this unfettered personality will reign such that individual creative action will be entirely directed by individual pleasure-seeking. However, to avoid the implausible idea that this disintegration of present-day society will produce a world in which humans will not need to expend any effort at all, Morasso puts forward the category of 'natural work' in contrast to 'social work,' which is work as he initially defined it in relation to 'necessity.' His idea, then, is rather similar to Marx's distinction between hitherto existing class societies governed by a 'realm of necessity' and a future (communist) utopia governed by a 'realm of freedom,' although, unlike the mature Marx, the young Morasso does not seem to believe that any residual realm of necessity will persist into the future realm of freedom. This future, however, seems to be only a distant one, as Morasso also writes that 'for now, any hope of change is a utopia' (Morasso 1898: 191).

Despite this quasi-Marxism, however, Morasso believes that the advance of socialism runs directly contrary to any hope of human liberation, since under socialism 'no individuality is any longer respected, no individuality can express itself fully and be enjoyed for itself' (Morasso 1898: 268–69). For although socialism claims to abolish the reified labour of capitalism, it intensifies the labour process per se which, for Morasso, runs contrary to the need to abolish 'social labour' altogether. No less than Pinocchio, Morasso is a relentless critic of 'work,' but he believes that there is a natural form of work, corresponding to a human essence and evident in primitive forms of *Gemeinschaft*, that is congruent with pleasure-seeking and to which we must return.

How then does Morasso propose to build a popular movement in support of his alternative 'egocracy' based on natural work? While he does not address the question directly in *Uomini e idee*, he does offer an analysis of 'myth' that bears strong similarities to the account of political mobilisation through myth that Georges Sorel will offer in support of socialism in his *Reflections on Violence* (1908). At the outset of his chapter on 'the dynamic symbol of Rome', Morasso (1898: 125) writes:

> As much within individual consciousness as within the collective consciousness of nations and humanity, there gradually form determinant nuclei of ideas and sentiments, which nowadays have such an active force and emotional colouration as to influence in a very powerful way the conduct both of individuals and the masses. Such psychic nuclei are just abstractions – intellectual syntheses – of a strong and lively series of impressions that act for a more or less long period on men.

Similarly, Sorel (1950: 41–42) argues that myths like the syndicalist general strike or Marx's revolution are 'groups of images' with both emotional and intuitive content that, 'taken as a whole,' make it possible for 'men who are participating in a great social movement . . . [to] picture their coming action as a battle in which their cause is certain to triumph.' In this formulation, Sorel is building on Bergson's claim that, although intuitions cannot be 'represented by images . . . , many diverse images . . . may by the convergence of their action, direct consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to be seized' (Bergson 1955: 27–28).

Although Morasso does not specifically accord a role to 'images,' his account of how myth works is otherwise much the same: 'psychic nuclei' based on fused ideas

and sentiments operate to motivate the masses much as 'intuitions' which fuse mental and emotional content do. Or, to put the point more concretely, the 'psychic nucleus' that is Morasso's Rome operates much as does the 'intuition' that is Sorel's general strike. However, unlike Sorel, Morasso thinks of myth as a 'fated influence' resulting from a 'gradually' imposed formation rather in the more instrumental, self-conscious, wilful, and politically programmatic way that Sorel imagines it (Morasso 1898: 125, 127). Hence, he does not take the step that Marinetti will take in 1909 – in my view, very much under Sorel's influence – when he weds a concept of the 'future' to the project of forging an avant-garde movement linked to a specific myth ('futurism' in Marinetti's case).

However, Morasso does experience a change of heart later in 1898 – perhaps as a result of the rioting in Milan – which leads him to write a much shriller, more polemical book that appears in 1899. Here he confesses that 'I have come to understand that continuing to design plans for an ideal future was just to exile oneself from life.' Hence he has decided to shift his politics from 'the most uniarchist individualism that has ever been thought' to 'the opposite system, that of conservative reaction, to the practical and real despotism of the superior classes' (Morasso 1899: x). However, he stresses that he has not changed his mind: 'My faith in that system of pure individualism which I sketched and called egocracy remains intact; it is the only one that makes complete happiness possible for man. But present conditions are such that to look up to the superb heights that touch the sky is worth nothing; indeed they invite us to turn around and to look below at the turbid swamp of the crowd so as not to be swept away and so to lose the modest heights that have been achieved' (Morasso 1899: viii). Particularly surprising is the lack of any discussion of the political, cultural, and aesthetic ideal that will animate much of Morasso's work from the fall of 1902 through 1905, that of 'imperialism.'

The problem that Morasso faced in 1899, and that may explain his relative silence over the next three years, is that he cannot reconcile the psychological account of human instinct that he developed in *Uomini e idee* with any political ideal other than one dedicated to individual pleasure-seeking. There is but one 'natural' instinct – the 'love' that expresses itself in sexual pleasure. Human 'happiness' can therefore only be achieved in a political community that fully gratifies this instinct, which for Morasso is egocracy. Of course he does have an account of historical development based on the notion that 'primitive' societies – in his view, those most closely linked to natural impulses – are warlike, but this fact cannot be explained by his theory of instincts. This problem is resolved for Morasso only in 1902 (or thereabouts) when, after reading Nietzsche's account of the will to power in *Beyond Good and Evil*, he hits upon the idea of recasting 'natural instinct' in two dimensions: as both love and domination (*dominio*). That reading is presented for us in the closely argued final chapter of *L'imperialismo artistico* (1903).

For Morasso, Nietzsche's 'originality' lies not so much in his notion of the *super-uomo* and allied ideas of superiority and inferiority. Rather it lies in his 'method' which, Morasso says, 'depends upon his whole theory of the reversal of moral values' – a point which certainly connects with the use he made of Nietzsche in the historical account of *Uomini e idee* (Morasso 1903: 313). Morasso's Nietzsche is a philosopher who aims to subvert the established order, a ruthless critic of stable dogmas. But the key point for Morasso is that the historical revaluation of morals

effected by Christianity is a move away from an original nature or human psychological essence and its 'fundamental instincts' (Morasso 1903: 323). To support this essentialist reading, he references such phrases in *Beyond Good and Evil* as 'physiological demands' (*postulati fisiologici*) and 'the preservation of just such beings as we are,' and he takes note of Nietzsche's bold claim that '*life itself* is will to power' (Morasso 1903: 322, 325).[2] He then seeks to contextualise the latter idea by arguing that, in his notion of 'life as struggle,' Darwin had already captured the 'passive aspect' of Nietzsche's conception of a will to power, which Nietzsche 'completed' by 'discovering its positive aspect' and arriving at the fuller notion of a 'struggle for domination.' Morasso then posits 'domination' or the 'will to domination' as a 'natural instinct' which, he claims, undergirds Nietzsche's political ideal of a 'new oligarchy of dominators' (Morasso 1903: 327–28, 332). It thus appears that, by 1903, Morasso has moved beyond his earlier concept of 'natural instinct' as 'love' or 'enjoyment' (*godimento*) and now sees it in a double form – as both 'enjoyment' and 'dominion' (*dominio*), a formulation that is directly confirmed in his *La nuova arma (la macchina)* (1905a: 238).

The strategic import of this expanded theory of natural instincts is substantial, for it allows Morasso to develop a new vocabulary of terms – primarily, 'speed' (*velocità*), the 'machine' (*macchina*), and 'imperialism' (*imperialismo*) – which simultaneously offer a description of major features in modern experience as he now sees it *and* a prescription for the cultural underpinnings of a new political ideal for modernity that is – in his eyes – both realistic and one that, no less than egocracy, makes 'complete happiness' possible. As one would expect, much about his account of these new features of the modern landscape is triumphalist, adorned with wide-eyed descriptions of modern velodromes, international auto races, and long-distance balloon flights. Yet there are more subtle aspects of it as well. One is his presentation of the machine as the 'modern monument': the 'explosion of work' that was bound up with the industrialisation process has produced a 'monument to work – the machine – which is the only true modern monument' (Morasso 1903: 199–211). Like ancient monuments such as the Pyramids, which illustrated the importance of the afterlife for the ancient Egyptians, the modern monument also illustrates what its society celebrates as its highest ideal – in this case, technically advanced work. And in both cases, the monuments are anonymous creations through which 'the limits of the enormous' appear to be reached (Morasso 1903: 201, 204, 206). Hence, by means of the machine as monument, modern life has finally found a way to express its own inner sense of its greatness in a way that reconnects it with the glories of the ancient world, thereby both overcoming the vapidity of democratic culture and restoring a vital connection to a primal way of life.

A second and even more important subtlety in the account of modernity that Morasso develops between 1902 and 1905 is that he remains at least partially gripped by a deep ambivalence regarding his understanding of modern industrial society. On the one hand, he is sharply critical of the strong interconnections between industrialism and a democratic culture, at least as they have developed in the West; on the other, he is an enthusiastic admirer of the aggressive imperialism that Western technological supremacy has made possible. This ambivalence is fully evident in the structure of *Nuova arma*, which begins with two chapters that focus on the negativities that permeate a society obsessed with speed for its own sake. 'Modern

man,' he writes, 'seems to have no goal other than to hurry up [*far presto*], to do everything at maximum speed, to get business done in the least time possible so that another bit of business can begin, to do today in five minutes what yesterday took ten, to cover ten kilometers in the time it used to take to cover five. This mania is general and extremely intense,' because today's democratic world is all about 'saving time and abbreviating space' in a frenzied obsession with working ever harder and harder merely for the sake of working hard (Morasso 1905a: 5).

As we read further into the book, it becomes apparent that the problem with modern speed and the machines to which it is linked has mostly to do with the 'exterior' (materialist) mode in which actually existing bourgeois societies apprehend them. For speeding machines to be pychologically satisfying for us, they must be made 'beautiful,' and they can be beautiful only when they present themselves as 'forms . . . eminently indicative of power and robustness. . . . We therefore desire that the machine reveal to us its enormous vigor in an exaggerated, even fear-producing manner, that we experience its invincible resistance in ever sharper tests; we want the monster, the colossus of terrifying energy that can satisfy our voracious desire for flight, that can give us a feeling of omnipotence' (Morasso 1905a: 38, 40). It is this inner 'feeling of omnipotence' that we experience as we watch the speeding motorcycles in the velodrome – and that we sense vicariously when a trium-phant Joseph Chamberlain returns from South Africa (Morasso 1905a: 45–50; and Morasso 1990, 151–55). And it is a feeling that we experience with special intensity when the 'spectacle' before us involves a 'great and continuous risk of death' – hence the appeal of the Spanish bullfight or the ancient Roman gladiator, as well as the modern race-car driver (Morasso 1905a: 50).

The machine, then, has 'arrived just in time, like a salvation, opening a passage way for constricted energies to emerge vibrant from their repressed state' (Morasso 1905a: 73). Yet it is worth emphasising that the modern machine, even as it presents an unprecedented spectacle of power, functions most importantly to bring us back in touch with repressed primal instincts. That, no doubt, is why Morasso – at the same time as he is developing his vocabulary of modernity – is also living in Venice as an unredeemed *passatista*, writing article after article for *Il Marzocco* celebrating its artistic traditions and touting its many glories. Even when, in the final chapter of *Nuova arma*, Morasso presents his proto-Sorelian, mythic incarnation of the modern hero – '*il Wattman*' – we are not surprised to find that he is a 'rebel . . . hot after every conquest and unsatisfied by any possession. . . . . He does not think and he has no reason to think. . . . He does not understand his own strength. . . . He is the absolute master of every explosive device and of speed' (Morasso 1905a: 223, 224, 227). Yet if he is in some sense both man and machine, he also makes possible the realisation of the 'human essence . . . which is about to flourish again and to extend itself in terms of its natural ends: domination and enjoyment' (Morasso 1905a: 238). The Wattman symbolises the coming age, which will be one in which machines provide the weaponry for imperial expansion that will recall the glories of Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon.

Yet none of this means that the future will unfold in a predictable pattern. Morasso has another surprise for us when we reach the end of another immense book he published in 1905, an inquiry into 'the imperialism of the twentieth century,' which concludes with what he calls a 'new philosophy of force' (Morasso 1905b). Here we enter into what seems like a familiar argument: Spencer's evolutionism 'has

been categorically proven wrong by new research and new discoveries'; indeed Spencer's own recent death in December 1903 reminds us 'that his system was dead in large part before he was.' Spencer had grasped the importance of 'energy' as a first evolutionary principle, but, like Darwin before him, he had only succeeded in theorising it in a negative way, since his ultimate goal for it was to vindicate a democratic philosophy based on 'the peaceful fraternity of men and the cessation of every violent imposition' (Morasso 1905b: 397, 403). But then, rather abruptly, Morasso introduces an unexpected element into the discussion: the recent discovery of radium and its 'extraordinary properties.' Radium, for him, seems to function as a symbol of the indeterminacy and non-solidity of the materiality of the universe, hence not only as working against evolutionary views based on ordered, determinant, law-like unfoldings, but also in favour of a universe understood as 'a succession of commands and violent acts on the one hand, and submissions on the other, as in a vertiginous and terrifying palestra' (Morasso 1905b: 403, 405). In other words, Morasso in 1905 appears to adopt an understanding of history quite similar to the one Fritzsche and other historians have identified as increasingly prevalent in the early twentieth century: a view of historical unfolding not as a straight track running forward towards a distant vanishing point but as a field of energy in which spontaneous acts of will push things into the future but in wholly unpredictable directions.

Morasso's 'philosophy of force,' then, is far from being simply about military force. It stands for something larger, for the sense that history – and especially, it seems, future history – is not about orderly progression but about spontaneous, unpredictable explosions of energy. From this point of view, 'imperialism' is not simply a policy or an activity but a metaphor for the need to seize the day and make things happen. It would seem, then, to licence a certain free-form experimentalism – an '*imperialismo artistico*' – although Morasso never moves beyond vague gestures towards what he might have in mind in this regard. Moreover, he himself never accepts the activist orientation suggested by his own philosophy of history. Indeed, although he will contribute an article on the 'mechanical artillery man' for Marinetti's journal *Poesia* in 1906 and write one further book in this period devoted to the myth of the machine, Morasso largely retreats from public intellectual engagement after 1905 and even puts forward views suggesting he has returned to a stance of aestheticist withdrawal that he had wholly repudiated in 1897.

MORASSO, ITALIAN FUTURISM, AND WORLD WAR I

Before turning to this final chapter in Morasso's intellectual itinerary, it may be helpful to draw some brief comparisons between Morasso's public posture and the avant-garde stance that Marinetti will adopt in 1909. Although we tend to think of Morasso as part of an aestheticist generation and Marinetti as having grown up in it only to forcefully rebel against it, partly on generational grounds, the two men were born only five years apart. Moreover, there is much about their public personae that is quite similar. Both of them were given to the hyperbolic gesture and other displays of rhetorical excess quite in keeping with what Turiello predicted will be the case in a culture of *scioltezza*. Both of them championed the machine as a symbol of modernity and developed an allied machine aesthetic. Both developed specific myths that might advance their images of modernity – *il Wattman* and futurism itself. And

there is no question but that Marinetti took many of his early ideas and even specific imagery from Morasso. The best-known example of such a 'borrowing' is Marinetti's image in 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' of the 'race car . . . that is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*,' an image (as critics have duly noted) taken directly from *La nuova arma* (1905a: 61).

Yet, whatever the connections and the debts, the public stances that the two men adopted could not have been more different. Even while his early contributions to *Il Marzocco* came with avant-garde flourishes, Morasso ultimately remains what Gramsci called a 'traditional intellectual.' Although Marinetti arguably assumes the same role until 1909, after that his views of both art and politics turn entirely around the contributions they can make to forwarding an avant-garde movement, which is precisely why traditional intellectuals of the next generation who briefly joined the futurist movement, like Giovanni Papini, ultimately broke with it in 1914. Similarly, while Morasso may claim connections between his early 'egocracy' and the anarchist movement, he never acts upon them or even theatrically stages the role of the artist-as-hooligan (*teppista*) that Marinetti will so enjoy playing during his 'evening performances' (*serate*). Moreover, as already noted, while Morasso comprehends myth much as Sorel does and can formulate a modern myth like the Wattman, he shows no inclination to deploy it as a political mobiliser, as Marinetti will deploy 'futurism.' Finally, Morasso shows no inclination to believe that his own intellectual formulations or his art will fundamentally change Italy or Italy's position in the world, as Marinetti (1969: 24) does when he writes to a friend in 1911 that 'our futurist movement . . . will soon dominate Italy intellectually – and from Italy, the world.'

Nonetheless, it is difficult to escape a feeling of surprise, even perplexity, when one discovers that, in precisely that same year, Morasso wrote a review of recent developments in art in which he portrayed Marinetti as essentially an old-school symbolist poet. Marinetti, he suggested, 'represents the last sprout, the extreme point of the branch that comes off the symbolist and libertarian trunk.' Of course the futurist movement is acknowledged. Yet he then argues that Marinetti should not be judged by 'these formal, merely external excesses, which are aimed at provoking a bit of noise in the bourgeois world. No, Marinetti is something more and better, as a poet, than this futurist gospel.' Despite his largely favourable assessment of Marinetti as poet, however, it is clear that the poetry Morasso champions in 1911 is the pensive, bucolic, softer, more interiorised, and more spiritualist verse of poets following in the tradition of Giovanni Pascoli, such as Guido Gozzano and Ada Negri. Indeed, we seem to be a long way from Morasso's own efforts at 'provoking a bit of noise in the bourgeois world' represented above all by 'artistic imperialism' and the Wattman myth of *Nuova arma*. And so, even before Morasso is forced to respond intellectually and emotionally to the guns of August 1914, one detects in what he does write – and even more perhaps in his large silences – something of a proto-postmodernist qualification to his own earlier 'external excesses.'

In 1914, Morasso published a curious book, the title of which played on his best-known work from 1905: *La nuova guerra: Armi, combattenti, battaglie*. The book is largely a rather abstract, near reverent celebration of the virtues – partly aesthetic, partly technological – of modern mechanised weaponry. Indeed, if one did not read the introduction and the epilogue, one might well conclude that the book was written entirely before August, since its tone contains hardly a trace of anxiety or tragedy.

One imagines that Morasso is adjusting a previously composed, overly optimistic analysis to present realities, perhaps with the thought – famously widespread at the time – that the new war would last only a matter of weeks or, at most, a few months.

This impression gains strength when one considers another shorter piece that Morasso published in *Il Marzocco* during the final days of August 1914. Here the horrors of war are clearly acknowledged, if still rather coolly listed: 'spies, summary executions, prisoners of war, towns in flames, cities razed to the ground, hostages, the exodus of entire citizenries, poisoned wells, ships sunk, soldiers who shoot behind trenches full of cadavers, requisitions' (Morasso 1990: 295). But it is also clear that the war has not yet much affected Morasso's own life, which he continues to regard as 'normal.' And the title metaphor for the article – 'coins in circulation' – is suggestive of precisely this contrast, which leaves him, he confesses at the outset, with a 'strange impression.' In characterising this impression, Morasso compares it to the feeling one would get if, 'all of a sudden, among the coins and banknotes that one exchanges on a daily basis, there were to appear monies from past centuries and of ancient minting, monies from now extinct nations and from coinages no longer in use, which had been conserved as curiosities in the museum.' In short, his life is outwardly 'normal' but also contains a touch of the unreal and the fantastical; it is inhabited, he says, by 'ghosts' (Morasso 1990: 295–96).

Nothing can quite prepare us, however, for the article on the war that Morasso published in April 1915, the last serious piece of journalism he ever wrote. At once mournfully contemplative and bitterly despairing, it depicts a modern culture that has entirely lost its way. We had confidence in science, he laments, but it does not help. For while it can sometimes predict the future, it does not allow us to control the future; hence its knowledge just increases anxiety. We thought wars were over, and now we are witnessing 'the biggest and most ruinous war ever to shake the earth.' 'Modern life' is a 'bitter school.' We cannot live in the present because we have lost all feeling in it; we can only seek 'to take refuge from it as we do from ourselves.' 'There is no minute farther from us than the one that touches us.' We no longer feel the earth we walk on. 'We no longer live.' Our existence is all wrapped up with what is to come, yet we are powerless before it. We are in Oedipus's position: we not only know our future and cannot prevent it, we also reinforce its necessity with our every act. For us the future is an 'impalpable chimera' and the present, 'a place we cannot reach.' Yet until yesterday we thought of ourselves quite differently than we were. The war has played a 'Socratic role' for us. It has brutally torn away all illusions and revealed to us who we really are. We are not 'adventurous explorers,' not 'pioneers'; we are just people who are 'homesick.' We deceived ourselves. Our 'modern, boastful restlessness' to get to the 'other shore,' is only an 'unsated and insatiable desire.' 'Our impatience with delay, our exasperation with any slowness, our mania for everything new' – these have diverted us from the 'inaccessible mystery that now envelops us' (Morasso 1915). It is as though we stand 'before a closed door' (the title metaphor of the article) that forbids us to see the space beyond.

FIN DE SIÈCLE, MODERNISM, POSTMODERNISM

Whether the excitement about modernity embedded in the myth of *il Wattman* survived much beyond the year of its formulation is hard to say, but it clearly did

not survive even the first months of the Great War, as Wattman gave way to Oedipus. Morasso had never before considered the potential costs of what he had advocated. Even in 1915, he himself takes no responsibility for the tragedy he so poignantly evokes, although the signs of retreat from previously held positions are everywhere – as with his 'calm' and 'serene' primitives. Nonetheless, as we have repeatedly seen, Morasso's quest for an Italian modernity had always come with deep ambivalences.

Morasso had celebrated the power of modern machines and the grandeur and exhilaration of the modern metropolis, but he was also always nostalgic for the sumptuous and magnificent life of the aristocratic past. His Paris had always been balanced by his Venice. Moreover, even within his enthusiasm for an ideal modernity, he was always somewhat wary of its frenzy and potential to elude human control. Thus while he had appreciated the way the machine 'monster' satisfies us because of the fear – and the corresponding 'feeling of omnipotence' – it arouses within us, he also came increasingly to fear the fear itself and to appreciate quieter virtues. The inebriating joy of new possibilities also always harboured anxieties about impending calamity. And these ambivalences in what we might call his ideal modernity were also accompanied by his strong distaste for actually existing bourgeois modernity. To register his contempt for this superficial 'society' – devoted to pointless, endless toil and to 'saving time' – he used words like 'exterior' and 'materialist.' His embrace of modernity was always conditional upon its ability to bring us back in touch with our true 'happiness' by reconnecting us with those primitive instincts that bourgeois modernity had so severely repressed. Hence he had accepted industrialism only when it led to imperialism – and away from the shallowness and impotence of humanitarianism and 'democracy.'

From within these Janus-faced attitudes, and stimulated by mysterious discoveries such as radium, Morasso comes to see the future as something like a 'vast site for experimentation,' yet his faith in modern machine civilisation as an 'effective educator of human society' seems precarious, and increasingly so. This is the sense in which I see in Morasso something like a postmodernist *avant la lettre*. While I appreciate the bewildering multiplicity of the senses in which the latter term is used, I mean something reasonably specific here. Modernism, as I understand it, was born out of a deep sense of crisis in the narrative of historical progress dominant within nineteenth-century European culture (Adamson 2007: 1–76). But the modernist movements that arose in European avant-garde culture beginning around 1905 responded to their sense of crisis with a spirit of radical experimentation and pursued new modes of understanding cultural creation, new symbolic representations, and new cultural-political initiatives, programmes, and institutions. And this modernist openness to experimentation was typically accompanied by some confidence, however 'artificial,' that experiments can have positive effects – if not a full overcoming of crisis, then at least some radically creative departures within it. In my view, what changes when this confidence begins to erode in the post-World War II period is not so much a diminution in the will to experiment as in the expectations for what such experimentation can accomplish. Thus the postmodernists who come to the fore after 1970 very much retain the will to experiment but are much more sceptical about the nature of the results that can issue from it. In particular, they no longer register the modernist sense that experimentation might actually lead us beyond a world governed solely by power. At the postmodernist extreme, creative experiment becomes reduced to a will to subversion.

What Morasso's work suggests to my mind is that there were forebodings of postmodernism in this sense already in the *fin-de-siècle* period and, perhaps then too, as a subterranean current within modernism itself. Many of Morasso's attitudes were of course extreme. In particular, the kind of historical thinking expressed in his 1905 chapter on the 'philosophy of force' is certainly not typical of the Italian *fin de siècle*. Yet the ambivalences we find in Morasso were quite widespread in the Italian *fin de siècle*, even if most representatives of that intellectual culture were much more reticent than Morasso in the way they envisioned modernity, as well as in how they conceived the proper role of the intellectual in relation to emerging mass politics and culture. If we take Morasso, then, not as somehow typical of the Italian *fin de siècle* (an impossible requirement) but as broadly representative of a complex cultural environment, one question that invites some examination is how the Italian *fin de siècle* fits within the broader context of the intellectual traditions of post-Risorgimento Italy.

As indicated at the outset of this essay, the dominant mood within the Italian post-Risorgimento, particularly within political and intellectual élites, was that 1860 had given birth to a new 'age of prose.' And the kind of prescription for how to move forward that De Sanctis set forth when he advocated a political culture based on virtues of moral courage and individual and collective discipline was how many within those élites saw the new Italy's main hope. Writing a quarter of a century after De Sanctis, Morasso still participated in the same mood, but he sharply rejected their source of hope. For Morasso, moral courage and discipline were aspects of a suffocating bourgeois culture and society that stood as the greatest obstacles ever erected against human happiness and that must therefore be overcome rather than achieved. Of course, Morasso's longings were also widely shared within post-Risorgimento Italy. Morasso certainly saw work as drudgery, just as Lanaro argues is characteristic of the cultural traditionalism to which Italy remained attached as it pursued industrial development. And Morasso seemed to entertain fantasies involving at least a partial restoration of *Gemeinschaft*, as for example in his advocacy of 'natural work.' Yet at least equally powerful, as we have seen, was his fantasy that labour can be reoriented towards an imperialist-oriented industry that will hook workers into their 'natural instinct' for conquest and fulfil their psychological needs in that way.

Perhaps then our question might be rephrased as follows: why did Morasso seek to reorient the Italian sense of the cultural virtues by loosening the social bond, and was this reversal of the De Sanctian tradition in some sense indicative of the Italian *fin de siècle*? The personal reasons behind Morasso's move should be clear. While he shared Italian post-1860 anxieties and fervently hoped for a stronger Italy, he had a much deeper contempt for the Italian bourgeoisie than did the more immediately post-Risorgimento generations. Moreover, he was much more influenced by Germanic culture, and particularly by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, than those earlier generations had been. Both of these differences help to explain his reversal, and I would argue that both were also common features of the *fin-de-siècle* cultural terrain, even if one hesitates to call them characteristic of it. Certainly the perceived failures of Italian parliamentarism and the national political system in general had been accentuated by the many crises of the 1890s – from scandals in the banking industry to the military defeat in Ethiopia. Then too, the rise of the Italian socialist

party, formed in 1892, and allied trade-union movements as well as an identifiably new working-class culture, provoked widespread fears, thereby greatly intensifying longstanding national anxieties. Yet I would argue that there was something more specific to Morasso's reversal than just the broad cultural trend it represented.

Consider what Prezzolini says in his 1904 review of *La nuova arma*: 'Mario Morasso wants to be modern; and to me he seems more like an ancient. He knows well that his contemporaries live and tend to live ever more quickly, that to devour space is for them a sign of progress. . . . Nowadays we eat in a fury, read at a gallop, make love under pressure. . . . Why then does Mario Morasso, so enamored with action, act so rarely? . . . I have never seen his name in an automobile race and I am told that, far from having a car, he does not even own a lowly motorcycle. Morasso, then, for those who don't know, is the latest Italian Petrarchist; just as Petrarch loved Laura in sonnets, and Italy in songs, so too Morasso drives a car in his articles' (Prezzolini 1904: 37). Certainly one senses here a playful rivalry between the more established figure and the young upstart. Yet there is something deeper at stake as well. Prezzolini and his circle in Florence, who would soon create the leading activist journal of prewar Italy, *La Voce*, took the De Sanctian tradition with great seriousness and were dedicated to building a modern Italy in its image. In their eyes, Morasso was merely toying with ideas in a way fully detached from contemporary realities, and his vision of modernity did not deserve serious discussion.

The outlook expressed by Prezzolini and his friends indicates to my mind that the De Sanctian tradition was alive and well in modernist Italy, hence that it must somehow have survived the *fin de siècle*. But it did not survive the *fin de siècle* unchallenged. Morasso's thinking presents many puzzles in its many twists and turns, and there was always plenty of room to debate how seriously to take his many writings. Yet, as I hope this essay has shown, they engaged important issues in a lively and sometimes brilliant way that reflected much about the world in which Morasso lived. I believe that they also inaugurated a tradition in Italian intellectual life, of which F. T. Marinetti and the futurists would be the most celebrated followers. Much as Prezzolini may have wanted his dismissal of Morasso to relegate his thinking to a *fin-de-siècle* dustbin, in fact it was one of the first registerings of the division in Italian modernism between those who followed in the De Sanctian tradition and those who aimed for something bolder, something that did not aim simply to resolve Italy's post-Risorgimento deficits in an instrumental way but that, however impractically, cut deeper in an effort to understand more about what was at stake in 'modernity' itself.

NOTES

1 Among the historians who suggest such a transformation of historical consciousness are: P. Fritzsche (1996), R. Schleifer (2000), and M. Eksteins (1985).
2 The translations are taken from Nietzsche (1966: 11, 21).

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SPAIN

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Lara Anderson

On 31 December 1900, from the cusp of the new century, Britain's *Daily Mail* issued a jubilant 'Golden Extra' – a commemorative newsprint supplement printed in gilded ink, glinting as though in anticipation of the era to come. Yet, despite its own optimism, the *Daily Mail* was aware that 1901 would not dawn evenly across all nations; that the occasion's golden hue would in fact not even extend to all of Western Europe. As Asa Briggs has observed, the same supplement relayed a dispatch from Madrid reporting that 'the nineteenth century had not been kind to this country', in response to which the tabloid's 'prayers [were] universally offered . . . that the twentieth century may be more felicitous' for the Spanish (Briggs 1970: 337). Thus, as Briggs goes on to note, the *fin de siècle* in Spain was marked by an awareness that it had fared very badly in the nineteenth century, especially when compared to other European countries such as France and England. The nation's sense of disillusionment with its position can be seen as arising from a series of factors: loss of empire, relatively slow processes of modernization and industrialization, a failure to achieve technological sophistication and its miring in a political system that all but violated the very principles of democracy. Measured by European standards, Spain at the turn of the nineteenth century was, as one scholar writes, 'an impoverished nation where one-half of the adult population was illiterate' (Núñez 1992: 89–164); furthermore, to its shame, 'far from catching up with its principal international rivals [Spain] continued to fall further and further behind' (Harrison 2000a: 2).

Notwithstanding the very real perception that *fin-de-siècle* Spain had come to find itself excluded from modern Europe, a growing number of historians since the 1990s have questioned the dominant account of late nineteenth-century Spain's failed modernity. Greatly colouring scholarship on the period has been attention to the renowned *Generación de 1898*, or the Generation of 1898 – a host of intellectuals whose major works, published in or around 1898, decried the perceived sociopolitical decrepitude as the moral crisis of a decadent Spain. Though it has certainly reaped invaluable historical insights, the scrutiny given to this group is such that it can have the effect, on the one hand, of precluding recognition of the fact that the Generation of 1898's concerns had been germinating since significantly earlier on

and, on the other hand, of hiding from view alternative contributions made to public debate within Spain during this period on the topic of its struggling modernity, particularly those contributions regarding women's role in modernization. In either case, as we shall see, the disbelief felt by most Spaniards at their country's diminishing status in the world, as well as debates about the role of the transnational encounter in reversing this decline, attest to the importance of the global in any consideration of *fin-de-siècle* Spain.

DECLINE AND DEBATE

The loss of the last remnants of Spain's empire in 1898 had a particularly disastrous effect on the national psyche, producing a severe post-imperial crisis among sections of Spanish society. Many Spanish intellectuals and writers were left asking: 'Why, at the moment when other Europeans were building empires, had Spain lost hers?' (Carr 2000b: 224). In this era of imperialist expansion and social Darwinism, the possession of colonies was believed to be the mark of a vigorous nation, and thus Spain's ceding of her old colonies was seen as an example of a weaker power giving way to the stronger in the forward march of civilization (Balfour 1996: 107–8). The loss of empire also strengthened separatist sentiment in Spain as it became clear to the country's more industrialized regions that 'Spain was not the dependable European nation [they] were banking on' (Martí-López 2005: 155). The empire, even in its attenuated form, provided a market for a range of Spanish exports. The loss of this market in 1898 was detrimental for the Catalan and Basque economies with, for instance, more than thirty companies collapsing in Catalonia by as early as September 1900, leaving some 60,000 workers without jobs. Many Catalans and Basques began to fervently question their allegiance to the Spanish state. Moreover, as Noel Valis explains, '[after] the loss of Cuba the sense of having come undone nationally coexisted with another feeling: the growing suspicion that the nation had never really coalesced ideologically or historically' (Valis 2003: 138).

On all sides of the political spectrum, Spanish intellectuals 'delved into the reasons for Spain's decline and the nature of its identity' (Balfour 1997: 64) – a preoccupation that quickly led to discussions about national regeneration or revitalization. Spaniards were divided on how to 'cure' their flagging nation. For most progressive liberals, it was clear that Spain needed to look towards Europe, hence their almost all-consuming treatment of fashionable topics such as 'Europeanization' and 'modernization'. The more conservative factions of Spanish society, on the other hand, believed that Spain's decline was the result of its failure to remain closed off to these very forces, attributing the prevailing decadence to a 'failure to uphold the ideals which had led to the creation of the Empire – unity, Catholicism, hierarchy' (Balfour 1997: 67). These reactionaries, or integrists, associated Spain's past grandeur with the concept of heroic protection against foreign heresy, for it was at the time of the *Reconquista* that Spain's empire was at its greatest.

Such discussions on the role of the transnational encounter in Spain's socio-cultural regeneration also made reference to Latin American countries, with a number of Spaniards debating the pros and cons of continued contact with their nation's former colonies. Although many intellectuals and writers saw travel to Europe as a means to invigorate Spain's socio-cultural regeneration, more recent

scholarship on *fin-de-siècle* Spain has also looked at the perceived role of transnational encounters with Latin America. Paul Bowker, for instance, notes that historian Rafael Altamira (1866–1951) saw contact with Latin America as crucial for Spain's revival. According to Bowker (2014), Altamira believed that nation-building initiatives in Spain's former colonies, spearheaded by Spanish emigrants, could provide evidence that Spain's national soul was as capable of thriving in the modern environment as its European neighbours.

While this national enquiry gained in urgency in the light of Spain's newly acquired post-colonial condition, many late nineteenth-century Spaniards were also disillusioned by the country's lacklustre industrialization and their political leaders' violations of the basic principles of democracy. In 1875, after the 1868 revolution and the subsequent seven-year period of political turmoil, Conservative politician Antonio Cánovas del Castillo (1828–97), who would go on to serve six terms as Spanish prime minister, instituted a political system 'that could function without the aid of the army by providing for the peaceful and automatic rotation of two parties in office' (Boyd 1979: 4). This alternation of power, achieved through election rigging and political clientelism, came to be known as the *turno pacífico*, and clearly represented a complete disregard for democracy.

THE REGENERATIONISTS IN 1898

Amid this widespread concern with the state of the nation, a group formally known as *los Regeneracionistas*, or the Regenerationists, aimed to provide an objective and scientific study of the causes of Spain's decline as a nation and to propose remedies. Without doubt, the most important author (and political figure) of the Regenerationist movement was Joaquín Costa (1846–1911). The son of poor smallholders from Huesca, Aragón, Costa went on to become a politician, lawyer, economist and historian, thus representing, according to Joseph Harrison, 'that rare phenomenon in nineteenth-century Spain, a self-made intellectual of peasant stock' (Harrison 2000b: 56). In *Agrarian Collectivism* (1898), Costa laid out his programme of agrarian reform, which aimed to modernize an un-dynamic agrarian sector still specializing in out-dated methods of dry farming. Summarizing Costa's proposed reforms, Balfour writes that Spain was in need of 'a comprehensive programme of public works to create the infrastructure of a modern economy', of which the most urgent task would be 'the realization of irrigation schemes to boost agricultural productivity', as well as 'the setting up of the agrarian credit schemes [and] the extension of communication and distribution networks (more canals & railway lines)' (Balfour 1997: 70). Not surprisingly, given Costa's belief that Spain should look towards Europe, his regeneration of the Spanish countryside took France, Britain and Germany as its model. Costa was also critical of the country's ruling classes; his *Oligarchy and caciquism as the current form of Spanish government* (1901) called for 'a thoroughgoing political revolution from the seat of power in order to rid the country of the old corrupt politics' (Harrison 2000a: 6). He was, as is to be expected, highly critical of his country's anti-democratic Restoration settlement.

Costa was concerned with the mentality of the Spanish people, insisting that widespread apathy in the face of the country's decline could only be overcome if Spaniards accepted the reality of their diminished empire. He, along with another

important Regenerationist, Damían Isern (1852–1914), argued that Spaniards needed to let go of the grandeur of their past and acknowledge the abyss between fifteenth-century and *fin-de-siècle* Spain. Indeed, Romantic myths about Spain's greatness and its historical mission to be set apart from Europe were, according to these Regenerationists, to be replaced by industriousness and a strong work ethic, which would help Spain to prosper and integrate into Europe as a modern nation state. Costa's call to his fellow citizens to look to the present notwithstanding, he was acutely aware of the importance of linking his vision for a renovated Spain to the past. Employing the figure of El Cid, hero of the great Spanish epic dating from c. 1140, he provided Spaniards with a motif from their past, whose words and actions he interpreted as 'pointing to constitutional monarchy, separation of Church and State [and] social justice' (de Unamuno 1921: 474).

Like many other fellow Regenerationists, Costa employed pathological figures and imagery to describe the state of society: indeed, at one point he called for an iron surgeon who would operate on the body of the sick nation. In the use of this trope he was not alone. The Regenerationists' use of the language of medicine to describe the symptoms of and remedies for national decline was, as it were, endemic. Making explicit use of metaphors of sickness, their goal was to discover the nature of Spain's ailment. And of all of the Regenerationists' writings about *fin-de-siècle* Spain, it was perhaps the use of this language of sickness to talk about the nation's ailments that had the biggest impact on the wider population, extending, in fact, beyond the turn of the century to later commentators, notable among them José Ortega y Gasset. Indeed, politicians, novelists and journalists alike wrote about Spain's decline as if it were a sickness of sorts, as can be evidenced, for instance, in conservative politician Francisco Silvela's famous article 'Without a pulse', which was published in *El Tiempo* on the 16 August 1898, just after he was elected president. Written to decry the apathy of the Spanish people on the morrow of defeat, Silvela's article echoed Lord Salisbury's often quoted Albert Hall speech of 4 May 1898, in his reference to Spain as 'a moribund nation' (Harrison 2000a: 5). Here, Silvela famously opined that: 'the heart that ceases to beat and that leaves cold and unfeeling all the body's parts is an announcement of decomposition and death to even the most ignorant' (translation mine; quoted in Harrison 2000a: 6).

DIS-EASE PRIOR TO 1898

Yet, although the Regenerationists and others that would come to be retrospectively grouped under the label *Generación de 1898* are most typically associated with discussions of Spain's decline, there are a number of scholars who agree that, in reality, an atmosphere of pessimism about the national condition had prevailed in Spanish society since the 1880s (see Carr 2000b: 226). From as early as the 1890s, essays appeared denouncing the corrupt political system; their criticism of their country's leaders would only intensify in the face of the defeat of Spain's technically obsolete military in the Spanish-American War (25 April to 25 August 1898). Lucas Mallada's *Los males de la patria y la futura revolución española* (1890) is the most well known of these earlier Regenerationist works, and is considered 'a point of reference for *fin-de-siglo* regenerationism' (Harrison 2000a: 6). Listing no fewer than thirty-three ills (*males*), Mallada puts most of the blame for the perceived

failure to modernize the country's backward infrastructure on 'ruinous political parties' in his criticism of absentee landowners and the excessive number of officers in Spain's armed forces.

In addition to his focus on the ruling classes' failure, and anticipating the pathologization soon to predominate public discourse, Mallada also sees the supposed physical inferiority of the Spanish people as somehow linked to Spain's backwardness or failed modernity in comparison with its more advanced neighbours. Mallada's discussion of physical inferiority invokes theories of social Darwinism in vogue at the time, which posited that, in contrast to the industrious historic races of Northern Europe, the less advanced races of Southern Europe were degenerate, less-evolved types. For many Regenerationists like Mallada, Northern Europe held the key to Spain's national regeneration because the North was strongly associated with lifestyles, beliefs and attitudes typically identified as specific to modern identity, while correspondingly the South was seen as a repository of lingering traditionalism. Mallada's racial comparison, however, describes a divide more complicated than merely North/South because of other accompanying 'implied cultural juxtapositions, included among them a clear-cut notion of cultural hierarchy ("superior" versus "inferior" "civilized" versus "barbaric")' (Nunley 2007: 125). The way in which *fin-de-siècle* Spaniards used this geographical and cultural schema in their writing about their country's decline varied from writer to writer. However, the impact of this type of intra-European orientalism on *fin-de-siècle* Spaniards' self-representation should not be underestimated. The apparent exclusion of Spain from European modernity also affected the way foreigners viewed the Spaniards, which as we shall see has contributed to the exclusion of Spain from considerations of global modernism.

In addition to anticipating the preoccupation in *fin-de-siècle* Spain with social Darwinism and this North/South divide, Mallada's extensive list of ills paved the way for Joaquín Costa's scathing critique. So too did Ricardo Macías Picavea's (1847–99) *El problema nacional* of 1891, an example of the extent to which the trope of illness pervaded the work of these early reformists. Dividing his analysis of his nation's lamentable condition into diagnosis and remedy, he asks, 'Where hides the injured organ or organs? In what does the injury definitively consist? How and why has it come about? How intense, how advanced is it? Is there room left for remedy and cure?' (Macías Picavea 1979: 11). Picavea represents Spanish history since the sixteenth century as 'a general infection of the whole organism', that had led to a 'chronic illness' (quoted in Balfour 1997: 67).

Benito Pérez Galdós (1843–1920), one of late nineteenth-century Spain's most prominent authors, also indicted Spain's degeneration. His criticism of the country's corrupt government, ineffective middle class and lacklustre modernization is manifested in novels that are replete with sick individuals. According to Peter Bly (1998: 41), the unwell youth in Galdós's fiction from the 1880s and 1890s are a sure sign of this eminent novelist's negative forecast for his country:

> These embryos of adults, who will be middle-aged during the decade of the Disaster, are forced to represent the most perturbing vision Galdós presents of his countrymen, since it is these youths that carry the most permanent and tragic marks of the spiritual defects of their parents' generation – marks externalised in illnesses or weaknesses either physical or moral.

Madness, for instance, is central to *La desheredada* (1881), which, like many of Galdós's novels from the end of the nineteenth century, deals with the endemic emulation of the aristocracy by the nascent middle class and subsequent persistence of old regime values and ideology in Spain. The horrifying opening scene in Santa Isabel de Leganés – Madrid's most infamous psychiatric asylum – can be seen as a reflection of Galdós's pessimism about his country, for, as the narrator explains at the novel's outset, the illnesses from which the inhabitants in the asylum suffer are nothing more than an extreme version of the intellectual and moral peculiarities of the general population. Delusions of grandeur and envy of the rich are, according to one of the employees of this institution, one of the most commonly seen types of mental illness. The subsequent degeneration, both mental and moral, of the offspring of one of the patients throughout the novel points to the importance of hereditary illnesses in Galdós's taxonomy of disease. The prevalence of hereditary illnesses is significant because these diseases did not 'disappear with the death of the subject, but were transmitted to their progeny' (Campos Martín and Huertas 2001: 179) and thus threatened to cause or worsen national degeneration.

DISCOURSES ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Another Spaniard of note to draw on these metaphors of an ailing body in extensive essays about *fin-de-siècle* Spain's decline was Restoration author Emilia Pardo Bazán (1851–1921). Celebrated as the only late nineteenth-century Spanish woman writer to be admitted into Spain's national canon, Pardo Bazán wrote works in every major genre, publishing 20 novels, 21 short novels, 7 plays, nearly 600 short stories and 16 volumes of non-fiction (including travel writing, history, literary criticism, feminist essays and two cookbooks). In her travelogues, penned around the time of Spain's decline from nation-empire to nation-state, Pardo Bazán condemns her homeland's failure to catch up to Europe's more progressive nations; Spain is ill, she writes, and it is only by travelling abroad that the nation will be able to find the medicine or remedy that will restore the ailing body to good health.

Travel throughout Europe accorded more liberal, free-thinking intellectuals and writers like Pardo Bazán the opportunity to make first-hand observations about the sort of social and political changes that Spain would need to undergo in order to integrate into Europe as a more modern nation-state. Although discussions about the Generation of 1898 have traditionally not included the work of Pardo Bazán, recent scholarship has considered her turn-of-the-century travel writing to be congruent with this project. Ordóñez notes that '[ultimately] Pardo Bazán joins forces with younger writers of the Generation of 1898 by linking travel with "la europeización" and modernization' (Ordóñez 2007: 18).

Travelling to Belgium at the height of Regenerationist fervour in Spain, she wrote about the possibilities she saw for national revitalization in Belgian social Catholicism, discussing in detail interviews conducted with high-level Catholic figures and visits to important social works supervised by the Church. She argued that Spain would do well to embrace the enviable example of the energetic, socially driven and progressive Belgian Catholic Church in its journey towards national regeneration. In Belgium, Pardo Bazán found the example of a nation that, unlike

her own, was at once Catholic and progressive. In addition to citing the social work carried out by the Catholic Church in Belgium, Pardo Bazán wrote admiringly of a Catholicism that did not oppose progress as a matter of principle. She also commented on the large number of priests with whom she met during her time in Belgium who were receptive to the scientific advances of the time and supportive of female suffrage. Indeed, in her comparison of Belgian and Spanish Catholicism, Pardo Bazán had a number of opportunities to criticize the Spanish Catholic Church's ideas about women's role in society, which she believed made it difficult for a political women's movement to take root in Spain.

In contrast to most of the other European countries that Pardo Bazán writes about, women's political and social groups did not exist at this time in Spain. Her arguments for women's rights often invoked nineteenth-century liberal values and language, with frequent allusions to human rights and to a belief in the individual capacity for improvement and, accordingly, Pardo Bazán used her travelogues to draw attention to the unjust conditions suffered by Spanish women. In *Cuarenta días en la Exposición* (1901) for example, her steady stream of complaints about Spain's myriad failings are made in tandem with a very clear condemnation of the lamentable situation of Spanish women, even when compared to women from more 'backward' nations, such as Russia and Japan. Pardo Bazán wrote about how Russian women had the same access to an education of substance as their male counterparts, and who, as such, were able to make an invaluable contribution to the ambitious project in Russia of bringing 'civilisation' to the outlying population through education and culture. This issue of the role played by Russia's women in assisting the progress of the nation was clearly meant to strike a chord with Pardo Bazán's Spanish readers, whose quest for national renewal and revitalization should have led them to question why their nation's women were not more involved in their own national project.

The fact that feminist vindication features so predominantly in Pardo Bazán's travel writing comes as little surprise when we consider that her travelogues were penned at the height of her feminist activism. Indeed, in the 1890s she wrote at least a dozen extended essays in which she criticized aspects of gender roles in Spain, such as the sexual double standard, the restriction of women to the private sphere and their exclusion from social and public life, and education. Pardo Bazán's central argument in these essays – that as long as Spain's women are held hostage to the past they will constitute a political and social drag against the new, modern Spain in formation – caught on among fellow progressive liberals. Indeed, many showed public support for her view that the transformation of women's roles was crucial to overcoming Spain's weakness and backwardness. According to Susan Kirkpatrick (2000) the debate that took place in the national press about Spanish women in response to Pardo Bazán's critique of the state of Spanish women shows that '[the] question of women's place in modernity, then, was very much part of the discussions about Spain, its identity and its future, in 1898 and its aftermath' (149).

THE GENERATION OF 1898 VERSUS MODERNISM?

It was not just the Regenerationists who were so preoccupied with Spain's post-colonial condition. The Generation of 1898, named as such by Azorín (José Martínez

Ruiz, 1873–1967) in 1913, originally included the writers Ramón Valle Inclán, Miguel de Unamuno, Jacinto Benavente y Martínez, Pío Baroja y Nessi, Ramiro de Maeztu, Rubén Darío and Azorín himself, though the list has since been emended to include Ángel Ganivet García, Antonio Machado, José Ortega y Gasset, Ramón Pérez de Ayala and Gregorio Marañón. The group was deeply affected by its country's 1898 defeat in the Spanish-American War, an event that surfaces as a major preoccupation in their fiction. These authors were also enormously dissatisfied with the Spanish literary and educational establishments, which they understood to be characterized by conformity and ignorance. Harbouring an intense dislike for the Restoration Movement that was underway in Spanish government, they agreed on the urgency of rescuing Spain from its increasingly catatonic state. For many of these writers, Spain was in need of nothing short of a moral and cultural rebirth.

One of the most important contemporary issues to consider in relation to the Generation of 1898 is the continuing debate in scholarship over the existence of a clear distinction between these writers and modernism. Although deeply concerned with Spain's backwardness, the writers of the Generation of 1898 were also, according to Roberta Johnson (2003), 'modernists in the European sense of the word, concerned with the effects of modern life on society and the individual, and they found in the novel a means to express their anxieties' (155–6). Indeed, Delgado *et al.* (2007) explain that the position taken by progressive intellectuals generally was 'marked by a rhetoric of lack and metaphysical anguish', a perspective that Marshall Berman observes as 'characteristic of modernism in non-dominant nations' (107–8). Stylistically, too, these writers, like modernists, experimented with new forms, and, according to Johnson, 'privileged individual consciousness over the detailed studies of social contexts we associate with the Realist and Naturalist novel of the end of the nineteenth century' (2003: 136). However, despite such modernist characteristics, there have been a number of influential scholars who have argued that it is completely separate and different from Spanish modernism. Guillermo Díaz-Plaja's 1951 study, *Modernismo frente al noventa y ocho*, for instance, provides perhaps the most thorough and systematic account of this distinction, concluding that in contrast to the Generation of 1898, who wrote mainly in prose about the decadence of contemporary Spain in virile, highbrow novels, modernists explored in poetry or prose-poetry an exotic ivory-tower dream world. For Díaz-Plaja and other Francoist scholars, 'modernism was a Latin American movement that constituted an "effeminate" and escapist artistic practice mostly limited to the poetic models of French parnasianism and symbolism' (Pérez-Simón 2012: 16).

Many scholars and critics have taken issue with this division. Some twenty years after Díaz-Plaja's influential study, Ricardo Gullón rejected this distinction, which he argued gave 'a far too provincial idea of a country that at the turn of the century was not isolated from the wider crisis of modernity' (Harrison 2000a: 11). In her study of Spanish modernism, Mary Lee Bretz (2001: 20) also criticizes this division as arbitrary. She argues that the Francoist inward-looking, xenophobic redefinition of national culture led scholars from this time, such as Díaz-Plaja, to

> recuperate the great writers of early twentieth-century Spain as part of an unbroken heritage, and to this end, they [divided] Spanish culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries into two discrete movements, the

so-called "Generation of 1898" (corresponding to the patriarchal, Castilian tradition that they esteem) and *modernismo* (representing a disparaged reaching out to international currents).

For Bretz, however, responsibility for the exclusion of *fin-de-siècle* Spanish culture from considerations of global modernism does not just lie within Spain. She argues that the insistence on 'othering' Spain has restricted the extent to which Spanish modernist explorations can be articulated with studies of European and global modernism. Spain's proximity to Africa, its loss of empire and assumed 'backwardness' compared to other, more industrialized European nations has meant that Spain has been subject to a type of intra-European orientalism. Bretz's claims about Europe's perceptions of Spain at the end of the nineteenth century are corroborated by other important scholars working in this area, who write that 'in the eyes of dominant European nations (namely England, France and Germany) Spain's cultural location was that of a feminized, somewhat exotic and definitely marginal Other' (Delgado *et al.* 2007: 107). Spain's location 'outside' of Europe, then, would also be responsible for the exclusion of Spanish *fin-de-siècle* culture from the category of modernism. Roberta Johnson, too, stresses the importance of situating Spanish modernism within wider European cultural trends, making the point that the modernist novel in Spain arose in 1902 – that is, 'somewhat earlier than in the rest of Europe' (Johnson 2003: 156).

As well as failing to note the precociousness of the Spanish modernist novel, foreign critics – who cite the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955) as an important theorist of modernism – seem, according to Bretz, to forget that Ortega y Gasset was actually Spanish. Living for many years outside of Spain between 1905 and 1945, including time spent as a university student in Germany, Ortega y Gasset was highly critical of his homeland's backwardness and certainly advocated the Europeanization of Spain. After contributing in the first decade of the twentieth century to the Regenerationist debate, Ortega y Gasset went on in the twenties and thirties to write about the modern age, the philosophy of history and literary theory, and it is with these later texts that he earned himself a name as an important theorist of modernism in the English-speaking world. According to a number of scholars who contributed to a recent revisionist volume on Spanish modernity/modernization, Ortega y Gasset's Euro-centric criticism of Spain's failed modernity must also be seen as a reason for his inclusion within considerations of global modernism. It is precisely, they write, his 'Eurocentric critical gaze and his (mis)recognition of the absences that anchored Spanish cultural production firmly in the location of the "not-modern" [that] secured his place in Anglo-American literary theory' (Delgado *et al.* 2007: 110).

Writing their fiction well before Ortega y Gasset's theoretical treatises, there were a number of authors of the Generation of 1898 whose texts can be seen as evidence that Spanish modernism certainly did exist. Without a doubt one of the better-known of these authors, Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936) was one of the intellectual leaders of 1898. As Johnson (2003) explains, he 'shared themes and forms with the major European and American modernists' (136) and, like his contemporaries, he was intent on creating a new art form that broke with Realism and Naturalism. Unamuno's original version of the novel – which he called *nivola* – shifted from an

artistic style dominated by mimesis to one heavy with internal and external dialogue in which the author is free to express his inner self. The term *nivola* appeared for the first time as a subtitle for Unamuno's third, full-length novel, *Niebla*, which although written in 1907 was not published until 1914. The novel tells the story of Augusto Pérez's unrequited love for Eugenia, leading to his suicide. In addition to rejecting the idea that the author must copy reality, Unamuno introduces metafictional elements into the novel, such that 'the characters discuss the process of novel writing [and] the author appears as a character who engages in an important conversation with Augusto' (Johnson 2003: 157). As well as penning a large number of novels, Unamuno was also an important essayist; one of his most important turn-of-the-century essays, *¡Adentro!*, argues for 'a reorientation of the collective psyche away from the material, scientific, technological aspects of life to the internal and spiritual' (Johnson 2003: 155).

Ramón M. del Valle-Inclán (1866–1936) is another important Generation of 1898 modernist author who wrote a large number of novels, volumes of poetry and plays between the turn of the century and his death at the outset of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. His early novels, such as *Femeninas* (1895) and the *Sonatas* (1902–5) are exemplary of decadent writing in Spain, and can be read 'alongside narratives like Huysmans' *À rebours* (1884) and Zola's *Le Rêve* (1888), drenched in symbolism and escapism' (Valis 2003: 141). Valle-Inclán was critical of the dull mediocrity of the middle class and found an escape from this world in his early novels' idealization of an aristocratic Galician past. The loss of empire is also a key image in Valle-Inclán's plays and narratives. By the second decade of the twentieth century, Valle-Inclán's decadent style and aesthetic creed had become much more experimental and, like Unamuno, he was 'aware that he was creating a new kind of literature' (Johnson 2003: 158). In spite of Valle-Inclán's efforts to subvert the traditionalism of Spanish theatre and his important contribution to the development of modernist drama in Spain, he is, according to Andrés Pérez-Simón, only 'briefly mentioned, if not omitted altogether, in recent works on European modernist theatre' (Pérez-Simón 2012: 17).

Pío Baroja Nessi (1872–1956) – a key novelist of the Generation of 1898 – wrote his best novels, according to most critics, between 1902 and 1912. Educated as a physician before settling on a career as a writer, he maintained a keen interest in medicine and science, as can be seen in the focus on poverty, disease and the limitations of science in his trilogy *La lucha por la vida* (1904–8), *El árbol de la ciencia* (1911) and *El mundo es así* (1912). Baroja's first novel *Camino de perfección* (1902) is also celebrated for its eschewal of traditional plot development. As Johnson explains, Baroja believed novels should be 'porous (loosely structured) and thus conform more to life's unstructured path than to the traditional pattern of beginning, middle and end' (Johnson 2003: 159).

Antonio Machado (1875–1939), another important writer of this period, observed first-hand developments in global modernism during his regular trips to Paris from 1899 onwards, where he not only met French authors, such as Paul Fort and Paul Verlaine, but also got to know other key international literary figures such as Rubén Darío and Oscar Wilde. Machado's earlier poems (see for instance *Soledades* [1903] and *Otros Poemas* [1907]) are very much influenced by an elaborate modernist style. Accordingly, writers like Machado and Ortega y Gasset, who spent significant periods

of time outside of Spain, provide salient examples for a number of Francoist critics who wish to deny the significance of Spanish modernism in a genealogy of contemporary Spanish literature. In the eyes of these critics, rather than a manifestation of an autochthonous literature or literary theory, modernism was a foreign movement that had seeped its way into the culture via the excessive affection of some intellectuals for foreign influences and the corruption they provoked.

These examples of early Spanish modernist writers highlight that *fin-de-siècle* Spain was not at all isolated from international trends. As we have seen in this chapter, a key feature of the *fin-de-siècle* rhetoric about Spain's position in the world was its *difference* from Europe and/or the rest of the Western world. For progressive Regenerationists, who believed that travel and the transnational encounter should be central to their nation's programme of reform, Spain's problem as it transitioned between centuries was its 'divergence from the parameters set by hegemonic European nations' (Delgado *et al*. 2007: 107). Contrasting with this view, the more conservative Regenerationists believed that, in order to recapture the grandeur of their nation's past, Spain needed to remain isolated from the corrupting forces of the nineteenth century. Thus, difference from Europe (either as the cause of Spain's problems or the cure for them) was a central component of national debate about Spanish modernity. Because Francoist histories of this period – which, more often than not, presented a justification of the dictator's policies of autarky – were dominant for so long, the belief that the Generation of 1898 was separate from global literary trends has prevailed. Recent scholarship insists, however, that writers, such as Valle-Inclán, Unamuno and Machado, were modernists in the European sense of the word and that the existential crisis brought about by Spain's post-imperial crisis actually induced the early arrival of the modernist novel in Spain.

Indeed, just as revisionist accounts insist that Spain was not as isolated from the wider crisis of modernity as has commonly been believed, there is an emerging tendency in scholarship on this period to view Spain's post-imperial crisis itself as part of a wider global process. The very acute national sense of catastrophe brought about by the Disaster of 1898 notwithstanding, scholars remind us that this event 'was not an isolated event but part of a global process of colonial redistribution in a new era of expansionism which had begun in the 1870s' (Balfour 1999: 14). Recent scholarship on peripheral countries such as Spain also highlights the importance of not viewing the modernity of these 'less developed' countries as incomplete or lacking solely because it was different from the modernity of hegemonic nations, such as France and England (see, for instance, Delgado *et al*. 2007). Thus, while many *fin-de-siècle* Spaniards were completely absorbed by their nation's declining position in the world and exclusion from the perceived *raison d'être* of the age, a retrospective view shows Spain to have been not as isolated from Europe as has been commonly believed.

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THE UNITED STATES

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Richard Cándida Smith

In 1897, a newspaper reporter in Cincinnati interviewed Salvador Camacho Roldán, a Colombian intellectual visiting the city, about his impressions. Camacho Roldán expressed admiration for everything he saw in the United States except racial segregation, which he considered immoral. His account otherwise emphasized the admirable model the United States provided other countries:

> I have seen that indeed the prosperity of the United States is due to its liberal institutions; to the division of undeveloped land into small farms, accessible to practically everyone; to the many products made for export; to immigration from around the world; to public schools; to the absence of a permanent standing army; to a system for rapid communication between towns that has made transportation inexpensive and opened up the interior of the country to commerce; to the years of peace that you have enjoyed.
>
> (Quoted in Camacho Roldán 1898: 598–99)

The greatest failing of the United States, he reiterated, was racial separation in the southern states and the vicious treatment of Chinese immigrants in the West. Camacho Roldán had fought to end slavery in his own country, and he believed that in Colombia, each individual was treated according to his personal abilities without respect to race. The Colombian attitude was more sensible—recognize individuals for their contributions, encourage everyone to do better. The U.S. obsession with humiliating non-whites contradicted the principles underlying the country's extraordinary accomplishments.

Camacho Roldán was one of thousands of Latin American and European liberals in the nineteenth century who traveled to the United States to see the wonders of a better world to come. Other visitors saw a future they did not want. Paul Groussac, the dean of Argentinean letters at the end of the nineteenth century, wrote after traveling through the United States that North Americans were "impermeable" to anything civilized or refined (1894). Newspapers, theater, conversation, clothing, jewelry, parades, food—all were "mammoth" and in bad taste. The famous elevated trains in Chicago blocked out the sunlight and were so loud that friendly conversation

was impossible in the city's commercial center. But Chicagoans' busy schedules left them no time for either quiet or reflective exchange. As he moved from city to city, Groussac reported his deepening physical and emotional distress. Groussac wrote for the land-owning oligarchy that dominated Argentinean society, and among the horrors in his account of the United States was observing ignorant working men having a say in government because of voting rights and political organization, in the economy because land ownership was widespread, and in culture because commercial media pandered to popular taste. It was a world turned upside down, though in fact Groussac's language was similar to Julián Martel's description of modernizing, commercializing Buenos Aires in his famous novel from 1891 *La Bolsa* (*The Stock Exchange*). Groussac identified the United States with the character Caliban in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, precisely because brutish working men were in charge. The French philosopher Ernest Renan had already identified the modern, liberal era as the age of Caliban, and Groussac's extension of the idea to the United States was reasonable to the degree that the country exemplified the logic of modern, liberal life, a proposition that progressives like Camacho Roldán and reactionaries like Groussac both accepted as self-evident.

Books and magazine articles generally expressed the perspectives of educated elites, but in 1902, journalist Hamilton Holt decided to find out how immigrants saw the United States. The interviews he published in *The Independent* became a national sensation, and thousands of "humbler" Americans sent Holt their stories for a series that continued for four years. Holt selected sixteen of the accounts for a book, *The Life Stories of Undistinguished Americans as Told by Themselves* (1906). A Lithuanian working in Chicago's stockyards told of escaping the Russian Empire, whose leaders were "man-wolves" impressing young men into their army to fight Muslims in the Caucasus. He soon learned that business leaders and politicians in the United States were also "man-wolves," addicted to graft and money. The major difference, he asserted, was that workers could form unions and fight back. "You must get money to live well" in the United States, "and to get money you must combine" (Holt 1906: 33). A seventeen-year-old Jewish girl who emigrated from Poland to work in New York City's garment sweatshops gaily talked of breaking with old country customs. She had learned how to read and write at night school, despite older women at work and in the neighborhood insisting education was a waste of time for a woman. She spent some of her hard-earned money on nice clothes, and she went out dancing with other young women at ballrooms, which her family thought was too fancy for humble workers. She was meeting young men, but to have a good time, not to find a husband. She wanted to marry eventually and have children, but life in America had taught her that to be a good wife and mother, she must develop her own interests. A French dressmaker spoke of coming to the United States because American women craved French fashion and paid generously for her services. The dressmaker had done very well in New York, but the selfishness of U.S. society dismayed her. Speaking of the independent American women who were her customers, she had said, "All that is given to them they take as their due . . . They love, but it is only themselves" (Holt 1906: 133). She planned to return to France once she had saved enough money to retire comfortably. For a young German woman who worked as a nursery maid, there was no question of ever returning home. The United States was too exciting. Coney Island was the most wonderful

Figure 12.1   Woman kneeling on her bed to turn out the light of a gas lamp,
her clothes on a chair, from the "New York City Life" series, 1905. Courtesy of
Kraushaar Galleries, New York/Image © Trustees of the British Museum

place in the world, she continued, "it is just like what I see when I dream of heaven"
(Holt 1906: 140).

The stories Holt selected for his book conveyed his view that Americans, native-
born and immigrants, were energetic workers. Poverty was a problem in the cities,
but for most people it was a temporary condition that ended when they found work.
The problems the country faced came from too much concentrated wealth. The
moral standards of the country's leaders were lax. While the well-to-do and their
middle-class sympathizers complained about having to control the lower orders, the
independence of American working people put a needed check on the greed of the
wealthy, a position underscored in the stories of racial minorities he included. They
were as hardworking as other Americans, but lack of civil rights made it difficult to
defend themselves. An African American farmer in Alabama was trapped in peonage,
working for subsistence as a contract laborer to pay off debts he owed a local mer-
chant who was also the county sheriff. Using his legal authority, the sheriff arrested
men that owed him or other community leaders money for vagrancy or another
trumped-up charge and had the judge sentence them to unpaid hard labor on the
sheriff's farm. A young man from the Mohawk nation in upstate New York had
gone to school to learn a skilled trade, doing what white people recommended
for Indians to advance, but when he finished, the jobs he wanted were always
for "whites only." He survived as a manual laborer, returning to the reservation
whenever he grew weary of working at a job far below his skill level. A Japanese

immigrant spoke of coming to California to attend an American university. The school promised a scholarship, which proved to be working without wages as a houseboy for a family of wealthy donors. Through these stories, Holt's readers could see that if American men of property succeeded in destroying trades unions or disenfranchising working-class voters, they would quickly turn the United States into a nation of slaves.

Instead, persistent labor shortages left industrialists dependent on their workers and kept wages in the United States the highest in the world. The demand for skilled, professional, and white-collar positions expanded at a faster rate even than the ferocious demand for unskilled labor. The middle class saw their disposable incomes triple between 1880 and 1910, while skilled workers' income doubled. Wages rose for unskilled laborers at slower rates, but increased in most industries and trades. For most corporate employers, high wages were a fact of life, and investing in new technologies that lowered the unit cost of goods was the best strategy for reducing the cost of labor per product. From this practical dilemma came the vaunted technological superiority of the United States and a flood of new inventions. Smaller business owners and industrialists working in areas such as textiles, where technological innovation did not make them more competitive, ruthlessly lowered labor costs by relying on child labor or hiring migrant workers of color that trade unions refused to represent. Most Americans understood that these areas of the economy were backwaters that did not represent the genius of the country for revolutionizing work and leisure (Bensel 2000; Montgomery 1987).

Given the demand for skilled labor and for white-collar employees, men who wanted better-paying, more prestigious jobs could realistically hope to advance, provided they stayed in school longer. White-collar opportunities increased for women as well, though social custom continued to dictate that women leave the paid labor force with their first pregnancy. Some women continued to work because they enjoyed their jobs or their families could use the money, but there remained the suspicion that her husband was not much of a provider. The close of the nineteenth century saw a continuous, often steep decline in prices, particularly for goods important in everyday life such as food and clothing. Most Americans could afford to buy more goods, even products that might not be necessary, but, like the Jewish garment worker's nice dresses, the modest "luxuries" that American workers increasingly enjoyed were evidence that hard work did lead to a better, more enjoyable life.

The presidential election of 1896 developed as a contest between the new corporate-dominated economy, personified in Ohio governor William McKinley, candidate of the Republican Party, and an older agrarian ideal espoused by William Jennings Bryan, the candidate of the Democratic Party. McKinley stood for high protective tariffs to keep out foreign goods, as well as a conservative fiscal policy based on maintaining the gold standard. The powerful National Farmers Alliance had swept Bryan, a thirty-six-year-old congressman from Nebraska, into the nomination of his party. He argued for ending the gold standard and letting the value of the dollar inflate, which could benefit many farmers by devaluing debt. He stood for low tariffs, and heavier regulation of banks, railroads, and commodities merchants. Standard Oil and the railroads financed McKinley's campaign. Republican supporters distributed 200 million pamphlets in fourteen languages to the country's

15 million eligible voters with the simple message that McKinley was the agent of prosperity. Support for industry and corporate growth was presented to the working classes and to the unemployed as the best path to "a full dinner pail," McKinley's chief slogan in the election. Bryan's message was simple: the corporate economy the Republicans promoted was unstable and unfair. Bryan promised government policies focusing on the needs of working people and helping them become independent producers, or independent, self-employed tradesmen. No white American man should be dependent on another for employment or for the ability to get the products of his labor to market. Bryan's campaign stressed the importance of every American who could becoming a freehold farmer. His acceptance speech was considered a masterpiece of American oratory and its most famous lines were widely quoted for many decades:

> You come to us and tell us that the great cities are in favor of the gold standard; we reply that the great cities rest upon our broad and fertile prairies. Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country . . . We answer the demand for a gold standard by saying: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.
>
> <div align="right">(Bryan 1896)</div>

McKinley won in a landslide, securing the first decisive electoral victory of a presidential candidate since Ulysses Grant's reelection in 1872. The Northeast, the Midwest, and the Pacific West Coast voted solidly for McKinley. Bryan carried the South, inevitable given the region's enmity to the party of Lincoln and the Democratic Party's support for Jim Crow. Bryan also carried the sparsely populated Great Plains and Mountain states, where farmers and miners formed an uneasy alliance against "eastern capital." McKinley succeeded in assembling a broader political coalition. Industrialists were for him, but so was the American Federation of Labor, which wanted high tariffs that protected American industry from goods produced by more poorly paid European workers. Union members liked anti-inflationary monetary policies that protected workers' earning power. Responding negatively to nativist undertones in Bryan's rhetoric, urban immigrants voted heavily for McKinley, including Catholic and Jewish workers who normally voted Democratic but were uncomfortable with Bryan's evangelical Protestant fervor. Already well integrated into global markets, prosperous farmers in the Great Lakes and Pacific Coast states also voted Republican. They were less concerned about how railroads, commodity merchants, and banks took advantage of farmers than in protecting their ability to sell their goods abroad at the advantageous prices that conservative monetary policy allowed. Bad wheat harvests in India, Australia, and Argentina also hurt Bryan's chances. Grain prices rose, and 1896 turned out a spectacularly good year for American farmers. Those who had invested in farm technology, irrigation, and scientific agricultural practices were able to produce a good crop despite facing the problems that had ruined harvests in other countries. The American agricultural commodities market, already the largest in the world, proved as well to be the most stable and predictable.

From McKinley's election to the crisis of 1929, with three relatively minor downturns, the economy continued expanding, the real wages of the majority of Americans improved, prices declined, and the work week fell from sixty to forty-five hours. Health statistics indicate that during this period there were significant increases in the height and weight of children, as well as an increasingly younger age for the onset of menstruation. People married at a younger age, evidence that young men and women had greater confidence in their ability to become self-supporting (Modell 1991). There were still many problems, including persistent poverty and high levels of violence permeating labor, race, and interethnic relations. The United States had the highest industrial accident rate in the world, and there was no social safety net. Workers who lost their jobs, were injured, or fell ill, had no one to turn to other than extended family, church, or an ethnically based mutual aid society, a reality that reinforced the racial and ethnic divisions permeating every aspect of U.S. society.

Deep poverty shadowed prosperity, and commentators insisted that, except for the South where poverty was a legacy of slavery, the development was new. Was poverty a by-product of economic development or imported into the nation by backward foreigners? One of the most widely read books of the period, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward, 2000–1887* (1889), argued that the nation's problems grew from the selfishness driving entrepreneurs and working men alike. The excessive individualism of business life in the United States undermined republican self-government. New national leadership had to emerge, and Bellamy looked to the middle class being formed in colleges and universities, principally but not exclusively composed of members of older North American families like his own. Bellamy argued that the dependence of U.S. enterprise on technological innovation proved that knowledge was the foundation of progress, not capital, nor labor. Bellamy understood that an economy based on small family businesses was incompatible with industrial progress. "The restoration of the old system," he wrote, "were it possible, might indeed bring back a greater equality of conditions, with more individual dignity and freedom, but it would be at the price of general poverty and the arrest of material progress" (Bellamy 1889: 76). Bellamy's book offered an alternative path for social development, based in the professional, educated middle class, trained in rational problem solving.

Cooperation was the key word in Bellamy's conception of a renewed national life. Bellamy's work was readable to his contemporaries because they agreed that cooperation was at the heart of church life and Christian spirit. Cooperation was also associated with family life, and the congregation was the family of Christ assembled under one roof. Bellamy's leap was to think of the nation itself as potentially a family that could operate as a household. Publication of *Looking Backward* came as middle-class reformers shifted their focus from individual moral renewal to goals such as Prohibition achievable only through government action. The book was widely read, perhaps by one in three Americans, in part because, across the country, women's clubs, temperance societies, farm groups, trade unions, and other reform movements distributed *Looking Backward* free to their members. Bellamy's ideas, stripped of the controversial proposition that the government, as representative of the national family, should own all property other than items for personal use, inspired reformers in both major parties to make rational planning directed by educated professionals integral to all aspects of U.S. life (Thomas 1983).

Demands to deploy managerial expertise to curtail the negative consequences of economic success increasingly characterized the United States at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries (Wiebe 1966). Pure food and drug legislation spread across the country before Congress passed national legislation mandating food inspection in 1906. The "City Beautiful" movement succeeded in convincing many cities to adopt uniform standards for municipal services, so that working-class neighborhoods gained the same lighting, water, and sewer service as middle-class districts. Zoning-law advocates worked to separate the toxic industrial environments from residential districts, while conservation of natural resources developed into a patriotic cause (Wilson 1994).

Alongside reform activity, however, was a dramatic quickening in efforts to deprive racial minorities of their citizenship rights, epitomized in the Jim Crow laws of the South. In 1889, Tennessee became the first state to disenfranchise its black citizens. By 1915, every southern state had passed legislation mandating racial separation and stripping African Americans of their voting rights. The lynching epidemic that swept the South became an international scandal. Over 1400 men were hanged or burned alive in the 1890s, the majority killed for "not knowing their place," testifying in court against whites, or having a "bad reputation." Black organizations appealed to the federal government for assistance, but southern senators filibustered every bill introduced to address the reign of terror African Americans confronted.

In 1898, a particularly grizzly series of lynching episodes turned into a campaign against the black middle class. In Wilmington, North Carolina, a mob murdered a black postmaster, part of concerted efforts to terrorize black federal employees throughout the South. Southern senators had been chastising President McKinley for violating the social norms of the South by continuing to appoint blacks to positions that southern whites wanted for themselves. White mobs in Palmetto, Georgia, tortured and killed a successful black farmer. After roasting the farmer's body, 2000 men, women, and children fought over pieces of his flesh as souvenirs. Violence against African Americans with good jobs, education, and property continued over the next decade. In 1906, a mob of 10,000 white men in Atlanta pillaged the post office, the train station, and any white-owned business that employed blacks in any capacity other than menial labor. Black employees were pulled from their hiding places and beaten. Gunfights broke out as mobs invaded black middle-class neighborhoods. Twenty-six African Americans and six whites died in the rampage. A few weeks later, voters in Georgia overwhelmingly elected a new governor who promised to disenfranchise Georgia's black voters. In Mississippi, politicians, responding to mobs that had gathered in front of several prominent black-owned businesses, pledged to shut down black storekeepers, businessmen, and land-owning farmers so that no white man ever need be ashamed that a colored man had done better in life than he (Brundage 1993).

Congressional gridlock prevented the federal government from addressing the campaign against black civil rights. Defenders of citizenship rights faced strong feelings in the North that the nation could not exercise the global leadership it deserved until whites put aside their regional differences.

The Republican Party advocated that the country develop military capabilities commensurate with its global economic power. In particular, Republicans wanted to increase U.S. influence over Latin America and the Pacific. Expansionist policies led
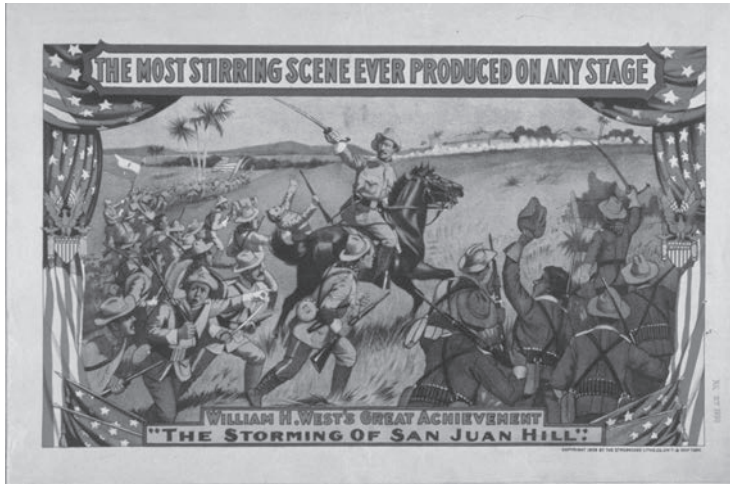
Figure 12.2 "The Storming of San Juan Hill," poster for William H. West's Big Minstrel Jubilee, circa 1898. Courtesy of The Library of Congress

to the declaration of war against Spain in 1898. McKinley justified the war as a humanitarian intervention to protect the Cuban people fighting for their country's independence from Spain since 1895. At first American troops performed poorly. Spanish soldiers were more disciplined and battle-hardened, while their Yankee opponents sweltered in tropical heat wearing woolen uniforms the war department issued them because woolens manufacturers had been important contributors to President William McKinley's election campaign. Relations with Cuban insurgents were confused, often hostile, largely because U.S. military leaders dismissed the humble, mostly black independence fighters as undisciplined rabble (Smith 1999).

Despite heroic moments such as the charge of Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders up San Juan Hill, U.S. naval superiority, based in the country's industrial and technological power, proved the decisive factor in the war. At the beginning of the war, Admiral George Dewey's flotilla destroyed Spain's Pacific fleet stationed in Manila. Two months later, U.S. ships annihilated Spain's Atlantic fleet off Cuba. The U.S. navy lost one sailor, while over 300 Spaniards perished. The survivors, including the commanding admiral, were taken prisoner. The Spanish government, unable to reinforce or resupply its forces in Cuba, agreed to end the war on U.S. terms. The United States acquired the Spanish colonies of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam, while simultaneously annexing Hawaii and the eastern half of Samoa. Cuba became a protectorate governed by the U.S. military from 1898 until 1902, when it became a formally independent republic, though still subject to U.S. oversight.

Within the United States, the outcome of the war with Spain vindicated proponents of an aggressive foreign policy based on naval force. U.S. industrial prowess provided the U.S. navy with boats and guns of significantly greater range and power than those of a more experienced but less technologically developed enemy. The leaders of Great Britain took note as well. Given growing competition from Germany in Africa and Asia, an alliance with the United States could strengthen the international

system Britain had constructed (Lake 1988: 77–79). With the occupation of Manila, the United States was positioned to become an Asian power that British officials thought would share many of their interests. British diplomats urged McKinley to annex the Philippines as an American colony. Filipinos had other ideas, and the war with Spain, brief and victorious with modest casualties, was followed in 1899 by a war with Filipino nationalists lasting into the next decade. The U.S. press initially did not report the brutal details of the Philippines war, preferring to celebrate the accomplishments of American teachers in developing a new educational system reaching into every community (Kramer 2006).

Teachers, however, wrote home to their families that massacres and brutal torture were everyday occurrences in the U.S. occupied Philippines. One teacher, who left the University of Michigan to open an elementary school in a town close to the war zone, wrote her mother, "If Filipinos were to judge the American people as a race from the soldiers, they must surely think we are their inferiors." Another teacher complained, "You think I must be mistaken concerning the orders for killing everything in Samar. It is true that I am mistaken if you take reports that reach the US, but nobody in the US knows what is going on here" (Alidio, 2001). As newspapers and magazines picked up the story, calls for the court-martial of General Jacob Smith, the commander of U.S. forces, grew into a public storm about the war and the U.S. place in the world. In 1902, the Senate held hearings about military tactics used in the Philippines. Soldiers who had practiced torture testified, often in tears. Smith survived a court martial but was forced into early retirement. The U.S. government declared hostilities over, and Congress, eager to reduce taxes, voted to shrink the army. The United States emerged from the Philippines war with the smallest military force of any industrial power. A new approach to empire developed: forget the bad experiences of colonial wars; shift focus onto the technological marvel of the Panama Canal, where U.S. engineers were reshaping the terrain of an entire country and U.S. doctors were vanquishing yellow fever, all to make it easier for ships to connect the East Coast and the West Coast. The Rough Riders' charge up San Juan Hill remained a staple of popular entertainment as an example of American manly virtue in the face of battle, but the United States was not yet politically ready to establish a large standing army and become a global military power. At the same time, the U.S. economy was growing so quickly that increasingly resources and attention were overwhelmingly dedicated to the nation's internal development.

Corporate business gained and preserved its dominance in part because it was effective in transforming how people lived. The inconvenience and expense of travel had impeded integrating regional markets into a single national economy until the 1870s when George Westinghouse developed the first working air brakes, one of several innovations that allowed railroads to increase their speeds significantly beyond thirty miles per hour (Klein 2007: 93–99). As fast train traffic became safer, travel times between communities shrank and the cost of transportation declined steeply. Railroads reached into every part of the country, including locations that were barely inhabited but would be once it became possible to get people, farm products, farm machinery, and consumer goods in and out easily (White 2012). As a result in 1892, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that the sections of the country with less than 2 persons per square mile had shrunk to isolated pockets mostly west of the Mississippi River. Several "pockets" extended hundreds of miles in every

Figure 12.3 "Lagoon at Night, Luna Park, Coney Island," 1905 © New York Public
Library, USA/The Bridgeman Art Library

direction, but the census finding formed the basis for historian Frederick Jackson
Turner's declaration in 1893 that the "frontier" had closed.

Many cities across the country grew rapidly almost solely because of rail
expansion. Los Angeles turned from a small village into a major city after it became
an easily reachable vacation spot for easterners escaping winter weather (Fogelson
1993). On the Great Plains, once ranchers began driving their cattle to Kansas City
for shipping to consumers of meat and leather around the world, the city population
jumped from 30,000 to over 180,000 between 1875 and 1890 (Shortridge 2012:
29–60). Chicago was the hub for train traffic linking the eastern and western sections
of the country, and the city also connected northern markets to ports on the Gulf of
Mexico. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, no other city in the
United States benefitted as much from the new railroad-centered economy. Its
commodity exchanges determined the market prices of most agricultural products
the country produced. The city attracted factories producing farm machinery,
railroad cars, and processed food. Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward, the
world's two largest mail-order catalog companies, located their headquarters and
warehouses in Chicago, while more factories opened to satisfy the demand for
consumer goods the mail-order business stimulated (Cronon 1992).

Thomas Alva Edison's company developed by building the telegraph lines rail-
roads needed to manage their trains. Edison's firm, exploring the commercial pos-
sibilities of electric power, developed the first working electric light bulb in 1879,
followed by an electrical generating system. In 1882, Edison opened the world's first
electric power plant in lower Manhattan, offering service to property owners in the
nearby banking and stock market district. Edison banked on direct current as the

safest, most economical method for introducing electrical energy into everyday life. Direct current involved limited amounts of energy, making it a reasonably safe system that was less susceptible to power variations or outages. Edison's generating plants, however, could supply sites only up to a distance of a mile or so. He believed that electrification would not become part of everyday domestic life but offered excellent value added to office buildings, department stores, and amusement parks. The technical limitations of the system as well as the high cost of Edison light bulbs limited the market, at least the market as Edison conceived it. Taking advantage of these limitations, George Westinghouse developed a competing system based on alternating current. Large-scale turbine generators could produce vast amounts of energy concentrated into high-tension currents that could be transmitted for hundreds of miles and then distributed to homes and businesses from local transformer stations. Westinghouse's system addressed the seemingly endless energy demands of the emerging industrial sector, but the infrastructure required was expensive.

Through the 1880s, Westinghouse and Edison engaged in a high-visibility battle to sell their competing systems. Edison could afford to wire one building at a time, while Westinghouse required full electrification of communities, including the introduction of electrical wiring into virtually every residence and business, for his system to be economically viable. The contest revealed with clarity that the freedom individual customers had to electrify their property or not might well be an obstacle to the development of a modern power system. For the modern industrial system to continue expanding, government decision-making might well have to guide rather than simply respond to consumer choice.

Westinghouse gained a major victory in 1888, when he convinced the municipal government of Kansas City to install an AC system to electrify its street lighting and local streetcar systems. Westinghouse offered incentives to property owners to connect their homes and businesses to adjacent power lines that their tax dollars had funded. City boosters declared that Kansas City, as a "city of light," had become "the Paris of the Great Plains." Edison's publicists responded by publicizing the dangers of the AC system. His laboratory developed the electric chair to dramatize that alternating current electricity was lethal. If high-tension wires were to fall on city streets during a storm, hundreds could die and fires might devastate a city. In a country inured to high levels of industrial accidents, consumers could not assume that electric companies would install or maintain wiring responsibly. The so-called "war of currents" remained in stalemate until the World's Columbian Exposition opened in Chicago in 1893. Edison's bid for providing the fair with electricity was more than twice what Westinghouse proposed. When fair organizers awarded the contract to Westinghouse's firm, Edison's General Electric Company refused to allow its competitor to use Edison light bulbs. The Westinghouse Corporation came up with an alternative light bulb that lasted much longer yet was cheaper to manufacture.

The Chicago world's fair resolved the war of currents in favor of alternating current. The same year, Westinghouse built the world's first hydroelectric power-generating plant along the Niagara Falls to provide electricity to nearby Buffalo. Over the next decade, electricity became commonplace in industry and in the nation's cities, transforming how people lived and worked, while dramatically increasing the ability of manufacturers to expand their productive capacity, as well as introduce new products such as refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, and washing machines that no

one had previously imagined could exist (Klein 2008). Electric lighting applied to advertising offered another way to remind the nation's busy workers of a fairy-tale world they could enter by spending their hard-earned money. In 1905 and 1906, the first electric light signs appeared on Broadway in New York City, advertising wine, clothing, soap, and other items for personal consumption. *Printers' Ink* wrote of the new phenomenon changing the New York skyline after dark:

> Flowers in natural colors stand out against the night sky. Garlands and drapery are traced in many-tinted fires. Delicate jewels of ruby, gold, and turquoise, are suspended over dingy buildings in the sight of thousands of the hurrying ants called men.
>
> (Quoted in Lears 1995: 196)

Note the distinction made between the beauty of the imagery and the "dingy buildings" and the "hurrying ants" condemned to bland everyday lives if deprived of the magic that consumer culture offered. The desire to escape into a world of consumer-driven spectacle fulfilled sociologist E. A. Ross's observation that modern society needed plenty of "social illusion" to contain the tensions of a society with intense divisions and social differentiation (Ross 1901: 314).

The rapid spread of automobiles in the first two decades of the twentieth century followed the model of railroads and electricity in revolutionizing everyday life, while simultaneously demanding that Americans accept more regulation as a condition of material progress. A short motion picture shot in San Francisco in 1905 reveals how profoundly the introduction of automobiles changed everyday habits of perception and interaction (*Trip Down Market Street*, 1905). The filmmaker rigged a camera on the front of a streetcar as it rode down the city's main commercial street. On first viewing, the film suggests that traffic in 1905 followed few rules. While most vehicles drove on the right, enough were on the left going against the majority of traffic to indicate that keeping to the right was not obligatory and the degree to which drivers did so sprang from common habits rather than enforceable legal codes. Traffic involved a mixture of automobiles, horse-drawn buggies, horse-drawn wagons and trucks, bicycles, cable cars, horse-drawn streetcars, and electric streetcars. Streetcars fixed on tracks provided a practical core structure to traffic flow that other vehicles had to respect. Otherwise, drivers switched lanes and pulled in front of each other without prior indication. Both right and left turns could be initiated from any place in the street. Drivers went where they wanted, and they assumed that others would keep out of their way. There were no observable cross walks at intersections requiring drivers to stop for pedestrians, no lanes dividing the street into orderly columns, no traffic signals halting movement on one street so drivers on crossing streets could proceed without hazard, no police directing traffic at any point. Pedestrians dart across the street whenever they spot an opening in the traffic. No one on foot moves slowly, no one seems to assume that drivers will stop.

Of course, the street was not actually a chaotic free-for-all. The rules and practices relied on common sense, self-restraint, and tacit understandings that can be arrived at through the exchange of glances, practical, if not foolproof, guides in an age when 10 miles per hour was very fast. The catalyst of what was coming is seen in the automobiles that weave freely through the traffic, often making dramatically

abrupt turns that cut across several lanes. The automobiles add a distinctively cinematic element to the production. They are the fastest and most erratic vehicles on the street, shifting lanes and cutting in front of the slower horse-drawn vehicles with dashing bravado. Newsboys running after the cars in the middle of the street add humor to the scene as well, and at one point three adolescent boys jump onto the rear bumper of a car and hang on while the automobile speeds ahead.

The boys wave at the camera, possibly indicating that they were asked to perform for the film. If the filmmakers staged one element of their production, possibly other elements of the film involved directed performance rather than pure cinema verité. Could a well-dressed woman standing to the side a block ahead who suddenly dashes into the street, quivers in the middle as traffic passes her in both directions, and then runs with long strides to get to the other side also have been an exaggerated dramatization of the perils confronting pedestrians? Even if that were the case, the resources available to filmmakers to create total environments were limited in 1905. This is not a Harold Lloyd production like *Get Out and Get Under* (1920) or *Girl Shy* (1924) where Hollywood crews took over entire blocks of Los Angeles to orchestrate elaborate moving-vehicle stunts on location. An assumption of traffic laws waiting to be broken is fundamental to the comedy in Lloyd's films, as is the prominent role of traffic police in overseeing public behavior, underscoring how quickly new rules of the road requiring frequent government surveillance of public behavior emerged and took hold. In the film of a cable car trip down Market Street in 1905, on the other hand, automobile stunts were low-key but they do indicate that producers were already thinking about how breaking the conventions of the street could enhance a film's entertainment value.

In the 1920s, Hollywood was the flamboyant symbol of the new mass culture already well underway in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, but Hollywood's heyday did not come until World War I closed down most European motion picture productions. Films were only one and a somewhat late component of a new communications system that developed between 1880 and 1920 as manufacturers sought to expand the consumer pool for their products. Advertising agencies were key players in the development of every aspect of modern mass culture, including Hollywood. The first modern advertising agencies emerged in the 1870s as faster, more frequent railroad service made shipping consumer goods across the country cheaper and more efficient (Chandler 1977; Lears 1995). In the 1880s, advertising agencies invested in middle-class journals in order to find better ways for their clients to reach potential customers. The *Saturday Evening Post* and *Ladies' Home Journal* were the first journals to reach over 100,000 subscribers and develop truly national distribution, establishing a pattern for what became the dominant reading matter in the United States. These new journals were called "slicks" because they were published on expensive treated paper ideal for quality graphic design. Advertising filled over half of each issue in the most popular magazines. As advertising agencies discovered the advantages of interspersing ads with editorial content, advertising had to become more spectacular and emotional if it were to compete with a magazine's editorial content for reader attention. The slicks could never repay their production costs through sales or subscriptions, but advertising revenues earned publishers larger, more stable income, provided the magazines could attract hundreds of thousands of readers per issue, who bought a magazine for a fraction of what it cost to

produce (Lears 1995). Advertising agencies promoted the construction of national newspaper chains. With detailed information on local markets that the research departments of advertising agencies accumulated, media magnates like William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer bought up local periodicals in every part of the country. Chain newspapers continued their local coverage, but shared national and international stories, as well as editorial content and opinion pieces. Most importantly from the business point of view, chains could tap into national advertisers willing to pay top dollar to reach into many local markets simultaneously.

Advertising agency staff were typically university-educated middle-class Americans from native Protestant families. Their core customers were middle-class Americans largely though not exclusively from Protestant backgrounds. But the development of national markets encouraged all Americans regardless of class, race, religion, or region, to become consumers. The corporate economy involved many people shifting their personal aspirations away from the search for independence and autonomy, an ideal long personified in the figure of the yeoman American farmer. An economy was emerging in which the interconnection of people was more clearly visible as the foundation of wealth than self-sufficiency. To be a success meant to work toward satisfying the needs of others through effective management of resources and skills. The middle-class professional stepped forward as the ideal figure for American progress, competing with the American farmer as the symbol of personal success and national strength. The corporate revolution was the foundation of the middle-class revolution, which encouraged millions of Americans to seek higher education, develop their skills, and enter into business or the professions—and increasingly after 1900 to enter reform movements working to limit corporate power, racial discrimination, or government violations of basic civil rights. Farm population declined rapidly after 1900, when a third of the nation still lived in farming counties. By 1930, only a tenth of the nation worked the land, though they produced more food with greater efficiency at lower costs. Racial barriers blocked access to most professions to people of color, but all communities in all parts of the country shared these new ideals, and education levels rose everywhere, while every community saw an increase in professionals and businessmen.

The world of the corporate revolution was based on the premise that abundance was the natural condition of human life, but required discipline and efficiency to achieve. Advertising did more than simply stimulate demand for goods that one may or may not "truly" need. The multiplication of wants led to most Americans, even the poor, developing new expectations for what they deserved from life and what they expected from themselves. As the Jewish garment worker told Hamilton Holt, "A girl must have clothes if she is to go into good society . . . a girl who does not dress well is stuck in a corner, even if she is pretty. Aunt Fanny says that I do just right to put on plenty of style" (Holt 1906: 46).

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CANADA

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D. M. R. Bentley

Early in 1880, the Canadian poet, novelist, and short-story writer Charles G. D. Roberts published *Orion, and Other Poems*, a collection that immediately met with high praise in Canada and arguably initiated the *fin-de-siècle* stage of the country's literary and cultural history. "I sat up all night reading 'Orion," Canada's finest nineteenth-century poet, Archibald Lampman, would later recall of his initial encounter with Roberts's collection while a student at Trinity College, Toronto; "[i]t seemed to me a wonderful thing that such work could be done by a Canadian, by a young man, one of ourselves. It was like a voice from some new paradise of art calling to us to be up and doing [. . .] [E]verything was [. . .] bathed in an old world radiance of beauty [. . .] [by] those divine verses [. . .] with their Tennyson-like richness and strange, earth-loving Greekish flavour" (1996: 94–95). The combination of new and old, Canadian and English, in Lampman's account of what has become the best-known eureka moment in Canadian literature captures very well the confluence of British and North American that is manifest in the Canadian *fin de siècle* and, indeed, in the very title of the act that had brought the Dominion of Canada formally into existence as a confederation on 1 July 1867: the British North America Act.

When Lampman recalled his Archimedean encounter with *Orion, and Other Poems* in a lecture to the Ottawa Literary and Scientific Society in February 1891, Canada was not yet twenty-five years old and many of its growing pains lay in the past. By 1891, the four founding provinces (Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick) had been joined by Manitoba (1870), British Columbia (1871), and Prince Edward Island (1871), the Northwest Mounted Police (later the Royal Canadian Mounted Police) had been formed (1873), the first of many treaties with the Native peoples had been signed (1876), and the Transcontinental Railway had been completed (1885). But there had also been two rebellions in the northwest led by Louis Riel (1869–70, 1885), a scandal had precipitated the resignation of the first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald (1873), and there had been a murderous spate of sectarian violence among Irish immigrants to Ontario. In the future lay the creation of Yukon as a territory (1898) and Alberta and Saskatchewan as provinces (1905), as well as Canada's involvement in the Boer War (1899–1902) and the First

World War (1914–18), both of which – and especially the latter – were crucial stages in Canada's gradual emergence as a nation on the international stage. "O Child of Nations, giant-limbed,/Who stand'st among the nations now," Roberts had written in "Canada" (1885) to encourage his countrymen to grow out of their dependence on the Mother country, "How long the ignoble sloth, how long/The trust in greatness not thine own? [. . .] How long the indolence, ere thou dare/Achieve thy destiny, seize thy fame [. . .]?" (1985: 85).

To Roberts's mind Canada in the 1880s was also bereft of literature of sufficient quality to bear comparison with the literary achievements of other nations, a lack that in the wake of the publication of *Orion, and Other Poems* he set about remedying through the creation of the loose school of poets that came to be known as the Confederation group: himself, Lampman, Bliss Carman, William Wilfred Campbell, Duncan Campbell Scott, and Frederick George Scott. All six men were born in Canada in the early 1860s and had therefore grown to adulthood in the new country. All six combined a love of their native land with enough literary talent to promise a poetry that would be, in the slogan of the Young Ireland movement whose Romantic nationalism undergirded Roberts's project, "racy of the soil" – imbued with the spirit of the Canadian people, the Canadian environment, and the Canadian nation. "I suppose [. . .] that you are [. . .] a Canadian Republican!" enthused Roberts to Lampman in September 1882 as he unveiled his plan to "get together literary and independent Young Canada, and to spread our doctrine with untiring hands [. . .] I am anxious [. . .] to get to Toronto [. . .] to put in execution many schemes" (1989: 29). Roberts did indeed get from his native New Brunswick to Toronto in 1883–84 as editor of *The Week* (1883–96), an "Independent Journal of Literature, Politics, and Criticism" owned by Goldwin Smith, who, far from being a "Canadian Republican," was an advocate of the annexation of Canada to the United States, a policy that would result not only in Roberts's speedy resignation from *The Week*, but also his acceptance of the view that Canada could best fulfill its "destiny" by maintaining, if not strengthening, its ties with Britain.

Since well before Confederation and for long after it, Canada was understood as a vessel buffeted in three different directions by the very options faced by Roberts: complete independence from Britain, annexation to the United States, or continued membership of the British *imperium*. During the decades surrounding the turn of the century, these alternatives took on a new urgency as Macdonald's National Policy (1879) for the furtherance of Canada's economic independence gave way to the openness of successive Liberal governments from the 1880s onward to negotiating unrestricted reciprocity with the United States, a goal eventually achieved by Sir Wilfrid Laurier in 1911 and summarily rewarded by defeat in the election of the same year. In *Canada and the Canadian Question* (1891), Smith had bolstered the case for annexation by countering the nationalists' Aesopian vision of the Canadian Confederation as "a bundle of sticks [. . .] [made] stronger by union" with an image more congenial to his Manchesterian and continentalist perspective, "a number of fly-rods" – the provinces – "tied together by the ends" and ripe for union or "rather [. . .] reunion" with the United States (1891: 192, 267). But by 1891 another option, one that combined the other two alternatives, had for some time presented itself in the form of Canadian imperialism, which is to say, the idea that Canada could best fulfil its destiny as a nation by assuming a central role in the British Empire. On

Christmas Day 1898, to commemorate the inauguration of penny postage through-out the Empire, a two-cent stamp was issued that depicts a map with Canada at the center linking Britain to the east with her overseas holdings in the west that gave pictorial expression to the imperialist dream, and in 1904 it was given fictional expression in the protagonist of one of the most accomplished Canadian novels of the period: *The Imperialist*, by another member of Roberts's generation, Sara Jeannette Duncan.

Set in a small Ontario town based on Duncan's native Brantford, an agricultural center with a burgeoning light-industrial economy west of Toronto, the novel is an astute social-cum-political analysis that characterizes Canada as a nation in the mak-ing within the overlapping spheres of Britain and the United States, a convergence neatly captured by the "twenty-five cents, [. . .] English sixpence, [. . .] [and] Yankee nickel" in the possession of one of its minor characters (1988: 11). Each of the members of the Murchison family on which the novel focuses as well as several other major and minor characters are easily recognizable *fin-de-siècle* Canadian types: the father is a hard-nosed and successful businessman of Scotch ancestry; his wife is a savvy housekeeper in the mold of pioneer women such as Catharine Parr Traill; and their oldest daughter Advena belongs to a new generation of idealistic dreamers. Other characters in the novel typify the Loyalist tradition, the condescending Englishman, and the New Woman; and, most important of all, the Murchison's elder son Lorne, the imperialist of the title, who is named after Lord Lorne (the governor general of Canada from 1878 to 1883), embodies the embrace of empire that imperialists believed was the key to simultaneously avoiding annexation to the United States and realizing Canadian nationhood. On the basis of this guiding Bagehotian "Idea," Lorne fights and loses an election, and finds himself at the end of the novel on the horns of an allegorical dilemma: whether to join "[a] college friend [. . .] in Milwaukee" ("[g]o over to the United States") or to accept the offer of a "partnership" by Henry Cruikshank, an elderly lawyer whose proposal provides an "individual parallel of certain propositions of a great govern-ment [. . .] growing old" (Britain) to a young and vital country (Canada) (231, 275, 277). Lorne accepts Cruikshank's offer, but even as *The Imperialist* was being serialized in Britain and Canada in 1903–04 and then published in book form in the United States and Britain in 1904, the life was draining from imperialism on both sides of the Atlantic and, with the defeat of the Conservatives by the Liberals in the British election of December 1905, it was effectively dead, not to revive again (and then in a very different form) until the First World War.

Although extinct in the political arena by the end of 1905, imperialism retained its appeal for many Canadians as a bulwark against annexation and a source of national identity. Among its most dogged adherents was Campbell, whose *Collected Poems* (1905), *Sagas of the Vaster Britain* (1914), and other publications contain fervent and sometimes fervid expressions of the belief in the British Empire and the British race that he had succinctly expressed in an address to the Empire Club of Toronto in November 1904: "I claim to be an Imperialist not only from the heart, but also from the head, and one of my strongest claims for Imperialism is that I believe it the only means by which there will ever be a real Canadian nation" (1987: 173). "Our responsibility renders it our duty to be more and more like Britain," he would tell the Canadian Club of Hamilton, Ontario in February 1915 between

reading poems such as "The Summons" and labeling George Bernard Shaw "a blatant traitor": "[w]e will never truly be a people, a nation in the best sense of the word, until we discover and undertake that responsibility [. . .] keep true to the whole principle of the Monarchy [. . .] [. . .] shoulder [. . .] our rifles of duty and self-denial and strive [. . .] to follow that historic road trodden by the steadfast, martial and heroic feet of our great ancestors" (200). To those less inclined to imperialism than Campbell, there was the *commencement-de-siècle* optimism of Laurier, who in January 1904 made the first of several speeches reiterating in different ways his much quoted conviction that "[t]he twentieth century belongs to Canada."

Whether they were Conservative or Liberal, few Canadians of the *fin de siècle* doubted that a major source of whatever distinctiveness Canada and its culture might have would to some degree be a reflection of their northernness. In the years immediately following Confederation, R. G. Haliburton's *The Men of the North and Their Place in History* (1869), William A Foster's *Canada First; or Our New Nationality* (1871), and works like them had given a local habitation and a name to post-Herderean notions of the special qualities such as hardiness and bravery that were supposedly instilled in northern peoples and northern cultures by the grandeur of northern scenery and the extremeness of northern climates. "If environment is anything, our work can hardly prove tame," wrote Roberts in "The Outlook for Literature" (1886); "[o]ur climate with its swift extremes is eager and waking, and we should expect a sort of dry sparkle in our page, with a transparent and tonic quality in our thought" (1974: 261). Since "our imagination nourishes itself" "upon the impressions which senses gather in during childhood," he added in Lockean mode in *The Savour of the Soil* (1892), "individuality is much the product of the soil upon which it took shape" and "wheresoever the [. . .] imagination [of writers] wander, they carry with them the savour of the soil" (252). Before recalling his momentous encounter with *Orion, and Other Poems* in his lecture to the Ottawa Literary and Scientific Society, Lampman gives his own version of the environment > mentality > art thesis:

> We know that climatic and scenic conditions have much to do with the moulding of national character. In the climate of this country we have the pitiless severity of the climate of Sweden with the sunshine and the sky of the north of Italy, a combination not found in the same degree anywhere [. . .] At the same time we have the utmost diversity of scenery, a country exhibiting every variety of beauty and grandeur. A Canadian race, we imagine, might combine the energy, the seriousness, the perseverance of the Scandinavians with something of the gaiety, the elasticity, the quickness of spirit of the south. If these qualities could be united in a literature, the result would indeed be something novel and wonderful.
> (Lampman 1996: 93)

While Europeans were increasingly fretting about racial and cultural decay and decadence, the Canadian environment promised not only distinctiveness but also newness: a distance from the grand "sights and sounds" of the natural would have an "insensible, but very real and powerful, effect in dulling the poetic fancy," opined the anonymous author of "The Decay of Imagination" in the Toronto *Globe* in May

1889; "the Rockies and the Selkirks, with their towering peaks, frowning precipices and awful gorges, must, at no distant day, call into existence a distinct race of Western poets" (1889: 4).

Partly because of the sense of newness and promise that is all but ubiquitous in *fin-de-siècle* Canada, but primarily because of its transitional position between the extremes of winter and summer, April holds special symbolic significance in Canadian writing of the period. "Betwixt wild March's humoured petulence/And the warm wooing of green-kirtled May," April for Lampman is "the year's first altar" on which he lays "Gifts of meek song" and makes his "spirit free/With the blind working of unanxious spring" (1900: 4, 6). For Roberts it is the season when "Earth" "Put[s] off her dumb dismay of snow," bids "all her unseen children grow," and sings an "adoration song" of "prayer" and "praise" to "God" (1985: 188–89). In both of these quotations and in countless others like them, the application of religious terminology to the natural world reflects the strong strain of pantheism that existed beside and often mingled with Christianity in Canada as elsewhere during the *fin de siècle* as a result of the decades of turbulence and ebbing in Mathew Arnold's "Sea of Faith" (1965: 242) that had spawned the word "agnosticism" and fueled the quests for spiritual alternatives of which Theosophy is the most prominent and, for Canadian literature and, later, art, most influential example. To a great extent, it was because of that very influence, but also because he was steeped in American Transcendentalism and knew of the Eleusinian mysteries from Walter Pater's *Greek Studies* (1895), that Carman came to see the Aprilian rebirth of the natural world as an intimation of the rebirth of the human spirit after death, the Easter in the calendar of a natural religion. Before moving permanently from New Brunswick to the northeastern United States in February 1890, Carman wrote of April in an elegy on Arnold as the "Bringer of seed time" and "Exalter of dumb hearts" (1889: 461); in April 1908, he would write in "Resurgam" "Lo, now comes the April pageant/And the Easter of the year./Now the tulip lifts her chalice,/And the hyacinth his spear [. . .] Child of the immortal vision/What hast thou to do with fear?" (1931: 220–21).

Canada's natural environment also served another not entirely unrelated purpose during the *fin-de-siècle* period. In the region of the United States to which Carman moved and in the area to its northwest lay New York, Chicago, and other cities that had grown exponentially since the American Civil War into the urban-industrial excrescences that Lampman depicts in "The City of the End of Things," a nightmarish vision of dehumanization and environmental degradation first published in the *Atlantic Monthly* (Boston) in March 1894. Perhaps inspired in part by "Why Socialism Matters," an essay by a fellow socialist, Walter Crane, in the January 1892 number of the same magazine, Lampman's poem recalls numerous other depictions of infernal cities from Milton's Pandemonium to James Thomson's "City of Dreadful Night" as it conjures up a realm of "lurid [lofty] and vast" "iron towers" and cacophonous factories where "figures [. . .] with clanking hands/Obey a hideous routine" that one contemporary American writer immediately identified with Chicago (1900: 179–80). "[W]hoso of our mortal race/Should find that city unaware,/Lean Death would smite him face to face," continues the poem's dystopian vision of a city ruled by the "idols" of materialism, "Or caught by [its] terrific spell,/Each thread of memory snapt and cut,/His soul would shrivel and its shell/Go

rattling like an empty nut" (180–81). From the mind- and soul-destroying effects of urban modernity to which George Miller Beard had given medical credibility in 1880 in *A Practical Treatise on Nervous Exhaustion (Neurasthenia)*, the unspoiled landscapes and unpolluted atmosphere of Canada could be at least as curative and revitalizing as a rest cure, regular forays into an urban park, or any other panaceas of the therapeutic culture that developed to cure the psychosomatic illnesses caused by life in a modern industrial city. Nova Scotia is "the healthiest spot on the footstool," proclaimed an advertisement for the Dominion Atlantic Railway in *The Land of Evangeline, and the Gateways Thither* (1895), a guide book aimed at upper-echelon urbanites in the American northeast for which Roberts, who was by then teaching at a college in the province, was commissioned to write an Introduction. "[T]ourist[s] [. . .] escaping to the cool atmosphere [of Nova Scotia] from the tropic fervours of Washington Street or Broadway," will find themselves in a place that is not only bathed in the "transfiguring glow" of Longfellow's *Evangeline*, but also good for their "health": "austere grandeur alternates with softest loveliness, [. . .] the wilding piquancy of untrained Nature with the rich peacefulness of well-tilled farms," and air that is "tonic and temperate [. . .] touches to content the o'er-wrought nerves, and fills with healing breath the troubled lungs" (1895: 1–2). Fifteen years later, Campbell would make similar claims for south and western Ontario in *The Beauty, History, Romance and Mystery of the Canadian Lake Region* (1910), with an anti-Americanism born of his imperialism: "our men of action and [the] practicalities of Life" should "spend a week or a month every summer somewhere on the shores of the [. . .] great lakes, away from the jar and jangle, the vulgar jostle of crowded money-marts" and the "stifling purlieus of half-civilized American cities, where [their] humanity is stunted and degenerated to the inhuman demands of a modern and money-hungered helotism" (1910: 29).

Nor was the Canadian environment the only cure offered by Canadian writers for nerves "o'er-wrought" by the "jar and jangle" of modernity. Poems and short stories could also have therapeutic properties. Some of Lampman's most accomplished lyrics, including "Heat" (1888) and "Among the Timothy" (1888), allow the reader to experience vicariously the curative effect of time spent in the natural world; indeed, the "design" of the latter, he told the American writer Hamlin Garland, "was not in the first place to describe a landscape, but to describe the effect of a few hours spent among the summer fields on a mind in a troubled and despondent condition" (quoted in Doyle 1985: 40). Lampman's "Comfort of the Fields" apparently gave Carman "tender, enduring, and most intimate solace; taking on itself the office of hands that are no longer near to soothe in calm" (quoted in Bentley 1990: 198). The *Vagabondia* volumes (1894, 1896, 1900), that Carman coauthored with the American poet and dramatist Richard Hovey, have a large therapeutic component, as do Carman's subsequent collections of essays (1903, 1904, 1905, 1908). Even the animal stories that Roberts began to gather together into volumes after he too had moved permanently to the United States in 1897 came to be viewed by him as a source of "refreshment and renewal" and a "potent emancipator [. . .] [that] frees us for a little from the world of shop-worn utilities, and from the mean tenement of self of which we do well to grow weary" (1935: 29).

Of course, the characteristics of modernity – "[t]all office buildings, pounding factories, complex road, water and sewage systems," "electrically-lit cit[ies] and

electrically-powered street transport" (Careless 1978: 25) – were also increasingly evident in Canada around the turn of the century, especially in Ontario and Quebec and, more specifically, in and around Toronto and Montreal. Scott's *In the Village of Viger* (1896), a collection of short stories set in Quebec but published in Boston, contains an epigraph describing the French-Canadian village on which it is centered as a haven from "toil [. . .] stress [. . .] fume [. . .] strife" and "The complex joys and ills of life" and then proceeds to portray Viger as an imminent and not entirely reluctant victim of encroaching modernity: "the city [probably Montreal] was growing rapidly. As yet its arms were not long enough to embrace the little village [. . .], but before long they would be [. . .] The change was coming [. . .] rapidly enough. Even now, on still nights, above the noise of the frogs in the pools, you could hear the rumble of the street-cars [. . .], and when the air was moist the whole southern sky was luminous with the reflection of thousands of gas-lamps" (1996: vi, 3). When the protagonist of Lampman's long poem *The Story of an Affinity* (1900) arrives by train in a city whose location indicates that it is Toronto, he leaves behind him the "quiet fields [. . .] sleeping marsh [. . .] [and] dim woods" of the Niagara Peninsula and enters a realm of "ranks/Of sooty walls, [. . .] the reeking depths/Of ringing foundries," and streets in which a "dense multitude/Like a checked river edd[ies] and flow[s] [. . .]/In channels of vast fronts and glittering panes" (1986: 2: 1–56) – a realm whose "foundries" recall "The City of the End of Things" and whose river-like "multitude" anticipates the "crowd flow[ing] over London Bridge" in *The Waste Land* (Eliot 1963: 62).

As Lampman well knew, even Ottawa was increasingly displaying the characteristics of modernity, but in a column in the Toronto *Globe* in February 1893, his patriotism combined with the therapeutic culture and climatic theories of the day to produce a rose-tinted portrait of Canada's capital:

> I venture to say that Ottawa will become in the course of ages the Florence of Canada, if not America [. . .] Old Vasari said that there was a certain 'air' in Florence which possessed a magical potency in exciting intellectual and imaginative energy [. . .] I have noticed the same thing in Ottawa. Perched upon its crown of rock, a certain atmosphere flows about its walls, borne on the breath of the prevailing northwest wind, an intellectual elixir, an oxygenic essence thrown off by immeasurable tracts of pine-clad mountain and crystal lake. In the air the mind becomes conscious of a vital energy and buoyant swiftness of movement rarely experienced in a like degree elsewhere.
>
> (*At the Mermaid Inn* 255)

Here Canada's northern environment is not only associated with physical vigor, but also described in terms ("magical," "elixir," "essence," "vital energy") that are redolent of the occult and in that respect reflect the growing association of the north with spirituality among Canadians who were touched by Theosophy and other heterodoxies of the *fin de siècle*. On the watershed between Hudson Bay to the north and Lake Superior to the south, "Something comes by flashes/Deeper than peace, – a spell/Golden and inappellable," writes Duncan Campbell Scott in "The Height of Land" (1916), a philosophical meditation that ends with speculations about the present and future states of human spiritual development: "do I stand

[. . .] At the zenith of our wisdom [. . .]?" Or will today's beliefs seem as "uncouth" in the future as "the pictograph/Scratched on the cave side by the cave-dweller/To us of the Christ-time?" (1926: 47, 50–51). Whatever the answer, many believed that, as a northern country, Canada was especially well situated for those inclined to seek spiritual enlightenment, a notion that later receives full expression in the writings of W. W. E. Ross and the paintings of Lawren Harris and Emily Carr.

While the therapeutic and mystical strains of *fin-de-siècle* thought and expression in Canada were to a great extent offshoots of developments south of the border, they also drew nourishment from deep roots in the soil of British Romanticism and Victorianism. Like Scott's "Something," the "Spirit of life or subtler thing" that teaches Carman and his companion "The secret of some wonder-thing" in his "Low Tide on Grand Pré" (1893) comes trailing clouds of glory from the "sense sublime/Of something [. . .] deeply interfused" throughout the animate and inanimate world in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" (Carman 1931: 4; Wordsworth 1963: 95–96). In 1893, both Carman and Roberts wrote commemorative poems for the centenary of the death of P. B. Shelley, as in 1921 did Scott for the centenary of the death of Keats, a poet whose "very name" was for Roberts "like a breath from the garden of spice" (1989: 42) and whose work, Lampman told his friend and fellow Canadian writer Edward William Thomson in April 1894, "so permeated my whole mental outfit that I have an idea that he found a sort of faint reincarnation in me" (1980: 119). Yet when Lampman wrote of Ottawa in "Winter Hues Recalled" (1888), it was in a Wordsworthian "spot of time" when "Sudden, mysterious, every moment deepen[s]/To some majesty of rose or flame" and in a near-mystical terminology derived in part from Tennyson's description of Camelot in *Idylls of the King* (1900: 30). Roberts's most powerful treatment of his native maritime landscape, "Tantramar Revisited" (1886), is a Romantic return poem whose roots lie in "Tintern Abbey," but it is also a Victorian sea meditation in the manner of Swinburne's "Evening on the Broads." In "The Modern School of Poetry in England" (c.1885), Lampman writes scathingly of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris as well as Swinburne – all palpable presences in the work of Roberts, Carman, and Duncan Campbell Scott – but in "The Land of Pallas" (1900), the utopian counterpart of "The City of the End of Things," he nevertheless draws heavily on the aesthetic socialism of Morris's *News from Nowhere*. All could agree, however, on the signal stature of Arnold, whom Roberts regarded as "second to no living writer in prose or verse" (1989: 30). "In his genius is that rare combination of philosophy and the poetic impulse in the highest degree," wrote Lampman some ten years later in 1892; "[w]ith a mind blown clear as by the fierce wind of heaven he surveys the extent of life [. . .] [O]nly the noblest emotions, life, beauty, and thought possess him" (*Mermaid Inn* 97–98). Campbell thought more highly of Arnold as a "thinker" than as a poet (*Mermaid Inn* 332) and Duncan Campbell Scott thought highly enough of his essay on "Heine" to give a lecture on the same poet. It is likely that, like Lampman, Scott was in attendance when the great man delivered his "Numbers" lecture in Ottawa in February 1884 on the Canadian leg of the North American tour that also took him to Toronto, Montreal, and Quebec.

Aligned though they were with the high Victorian tradition, Canadian writers of the *fin de siècle* were by no means untouched by the contemporary aesthetic-decadent and *symboliste* movements. When Oscar Wilde visited Fredericton, New

Brunswick in October 1882 on the Canadian leg of the North American tour that took him to several cities and towns in eastern and central Canada, he and Roberts apparently spent "a night" – or "nights" – together "drinking gin and reading their poems to each other," after which, according to Roberts, Wilde sent him "a long letter [. . .], announcing that with the beginning I had made he didn't believe there could be any heights in song beyond my reach" (1989: 33, 49). On the basis of this contact, Roberts came to regard Wilde as "a good friend," but had a mixed response to his poetry, declaring "Ave Imperatrix" "splendid," his "general output of lyrics [. . .] not of a high quality," and "[t]he very rankness" of his 1881 *Poems* "a fertile soil, which [. . .] his artistic perceptions will lead him to cultivate properly" (33). During the 1880s, Roberts shared with his British and American contemporaries an infatuation with fixed French forms and enjoined his fellow Canadian poets to attend more assiduously to their craftsmanship, a crusade that helped to produce more well-made poems and to alienate Campbell, who by the early 1890s had come to conceive of the poet as a prophet (*vates*) rather than a maker (*poiein*). Not content merely to rail at contemporary "magazine verse" and "word-painting," Campbell launched a bellicose public attack on Carman and other members of the Confederation group and their supporters that quickly became known as the "War among the Poets" and effectively led to the group's demise. It was partly this and partly his desire for the freedom of the metropolis that occasioned Roberts's 1897 move to New York, where he, Carman, Hovey, Richard Le Gallienne, and other would-be bohemians wore their hair long enough to be dubbed "The Angora School of Poets." The two volumes of poetry that Roberts published shortly after settling in Manhattan, *New York Nocturnes and Other Poems* (1898) and *The Book of the Rose* (1903) hearken back to Dante Gabriel Rossetti in their use of religious and mystical terminology to describe sexual experience, a theme present but less overtly so in his earlier work. During the same period, Carman, who had met Yeats in 1896 (and regarded him as "the William Blake of this smaller generation") wrote similarly syncretic work, but had less time than Roberts for writers of the English aesthetic-decadent movement: "All those *Yellow* and *Chapbooks* and *Savoys* and *Philistines* are capable of egregious bad taste and offensiveness," he told Louise Guiney in the same year, "[b]ut I tolerate that because they are willing to dare" (1981: 109–10, 111–12).

Neither Campbell nor Lampman was receptive to influences from continental Europe, but Carman, Roberts, and Duncan Campbell Scott all came under the influence of the French and German *symbolistes*. *Songs from Vagabondia* (1894) contains a translation of Mallarmé's "L'Après-midi d'un faun" by Hovey, whose two volume translation of Maeterlinck's *Plays* was published in 1894 and 1896 with an Introduction identifying the animals of Roberts's short stories and "The Stone" (1892) by the contemporary Canadian short-story writer and novelist Horatio Gilbert Parker as examples of the modern "symbolic principle" (1894: 8). Much the same could have been said of several of the short stories in *In the Village of Viger*, where the influence of Maeterlinck is also evident, and of Scott's "The Piper of Arll" (1898), the initial publication of which in *Truth* (New York) in December 1895 had a catalytic effect on the English poet John Masefield that led to a life-long friendship between the two men. Although by June 1904 Scott thought Yeats had become "cryptic and unreadable" in his use of "symbols and allusions,"

he had high praise for Maeterlinck as an exponent of "the mystical side of life" who was "endeavouring to awaken the wonder-element in a modern way, constantly expressing the almost unknowable things that we all feel" (1960: 24–25). The likelihood is strong that Maeterlinck's plays, together with the Plotinian and extraordinarily influential essays of his *Le Trésor des humbles* (1896; translated 1897) played a major role in shaping the mystical element of "The Height of Land" and other works by Scott.

In publishing collections of fiction in the mid-1890s, Roberts, Scott, and Lampman's friend Thomson (whose *Old Man Savarin, and Other Poems* was published to considerable acclaim in 1895) were reflecting a shift away from poetry that was evident in Canada as well as the United States. "The taste for poetry is becoming a lost accomplishment," observed one American periodical in 1898, and another: "the preponderance of fiction [. . .] is the most salient feature in the literary history of our times" (quoted in Mott 1966: 4: 120, 111). Among the other Canadian writers of the period who were contributing to that "preponderance" – a list that includes Lily A. Douglas, Charles William Gordon, Ralph Connor, Margaret Marshall Saunders, and Roberts's co-inventor of the post-Darwinian animal story Ernest Thomson Seton – none remains as popular or has become as much studied as L. M. Montgomery, whose *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) was an instant hit and the first of a series of five Anne books that appeared over the next three decades. "In these days of unhealthy literature it is [. . .] a real pleasure to come across a story so pure and sweet as 'Anne of Green Gables,'" wrote the reviewer in the *Globe* in August 1908: "[t]here are no pretensions to a great plot in the story, but from the first line to the last the reader is captivated by the sayings and doings of the girl child taken from a Nova Scotia home [and] adopted by the old Scotch maid and bachelor [. . .] who own [. . .] Green Gables, a Prince Edward Island farm" (quoted in Montgomery 2007: 336).

Part of the appeal to the Edwardian sensibility evident in this review resides in the warm nostalgic glow that emanates from Montgomery's novel. As remote from the "rankness of Wilde" as from the naturalism of Zola and the realism of Ibsen, *Anne of Green Gables* is a regional idyll rich in local rural color and a *Bildungsroman* with roots also in the dependent-orphan-to-self-sacrificing-adult mode of Dickens's *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield*. Yet Anne Shirley's development also replicates in small the movement from Romanticism to Victorianism that was succinctly captured in Carlyle's famous command in *Sartor Resartus* to discard Byron in favor of Goethe, whom Arnold would later describe as "the Physician of the iron age" (227), a phrase that resonates not only with much *fin-de-siècle* Canadian poetry, but also with much of Montgomery's fiction. At the outset of the novel, its heroine is a Romantic child who delights in the natural world and indulges in flights of imagination that in the eyes of her adoptive mother indicate that she is unable to "distinguish between what is real and what isn't," but as time goes on she learns to "control [. . .] [her] imagination"(2007: 44) in a series of dramatic episodes designed to display the dangers and follies of Gothicism, Arthurianism, and other forms of Romantic-Victorian fantasy. "I don't want ever to hear the word romantic again," she says after one especially dangerous episode contributes to the education in keeping her "imagination [. . .] within reasonable limits" that leaves her a "serious-eyed girl [. . .] with thoughtful brows" who will soon depart Green Gables for

teachers' college and cope with the death of her adoptive father (183, 199, 204). That along the way Anne has also served as a corrective to several pinched characters in the community and brought about a "mellow[ing]" (243) of her adoptive mother is as satisfyingly predictable as the final words that Montgomery gives to Anne – "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world" (245) from Robert Browning's *Pippa Passes* – are appropriate to its deeply Victorian depiction of the mutually beneficial reconciliation and interaction of imagination and reason, individual and community.

Efforts to achieve that alignment in Victorian and Edwardian Canada were not always so happy or benign, especially for Canada's Native peoples. Well before the beginning of the nineteenth century, prevailing geographical and climatological theories had resulted in the perception of Canada's Indians and Inuit as degenerate, inferior, and doomed to extinction. Deemed to be vanishing as well as hindering settlement, they would eventually disappear through extinction or assimilation, but in the meantime were allotted reserves, encouraged to convert to Christianity, and in some areas offered the opportunity to attend schools. Beginning in the mid-1890s in poems such as "The Onondaga Madonna" (1898), Duncan Campbell Scott, who in 1896 became Secretary to the Department of Indian Affairs and a force in shaping government policies regarding Native peoples, created a body of poems and short stories in which he depicts Indian women and, more often, women of mixed Indian and European blood through a lens colored not only by the vanishing or "waning race" theory (1926: 230), but also by the enduring stereotypes of the Noble and Ignoble savage, a post-Darwinian fascination with the possibility of racial inheritance and revision, and a unique combination of pathos, admiration, apprehension, and knowledge born of personal experience and study. Some of the same qualities color the work of E. Pauline Johnson, subordinated, however, to the fact that she was of mixed British and Native ancestry, which allowed her to thrill audiences in Canada, England, and the United States by reciting such poems as "The Song My Paddle Sings" (1895) and "A Cry from an Indian Wife" (1895) in Indian costume and then appear in fashionable European dress. In 1895, her first volume of poems, *The White Wampum*, was published in London by Bodley Head alongside books by Edmund Gosse and Aubrey Beardsley.

Johnson was spectacularly successful in giving center stage to Native themes, but in the bulk of Canadian writing of the *fin de siècle* Native peoples and concerns were at most peripheral. During an episode that gently satirizes Canadian nationhood in an enduring comic masterpiece of early twentieth-century Canada, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912) by Stephen Leacock (1869–1944), "Indian's Island" is the site of a picnic by the townspeople and when, in another sketch, an amateur historian brings "Indian relics" to show to the town's Anglican minister "the latter [. . .] would reach for his Theocritus" (2006: 48, 57). Despite the indifference, condescension, and sentimentality to which they were subjected, Canada's Native peoples "demonstrated their loyalty in the most convincing manner" in the bloody conflict that began two years after the publication of Leacock's book: "[d]uring the war [. . .] approximately thirty-five percent of the Indian male population of military age resident in [. . .] the Dominion enlisted for service with the Canadian Expeditionary Force" (Scott 2000: 1: 246–47). "The end of the war should mark the beginning of a new era for them" (1: 273) opined Duncan Campbell

Scott in a statement that resonates loudly with the view of contemporary writers such as J. G. Sime (*Sister Woman*, 1919) that the war had also ushered in a new era for Canadian women. "Liberty [. . .] – freedom," says one female character in a sketch in Sime's collection that is set in a munitions factory, and another: "What a change! What a sense of broadening out! What . . . !" (2004: 30, 32).

Of course, the beginning of an era is also the end of an era, and such was the case with the literature and culture of Canada's *fin de siècle*. The most famous and influential poem of the war by a Canadian, John McCrae's "In Flanders Fields" (1915), is a rondeau; on the western front, Roberts and Frederick George Scott wrote similarly traditional poems, as did Campbell and Duncan Campbell Scott on the home front and Carman in his efforts to get the United States to declare war in Germany. In January 1913, Duncan Campbell Scott had written: "[i]t is near the anniversary of Lampman's death – fourteen years ago [. . .] He must have realized if he had lived how greatly things have changed. If he had gone on producing in his old style no one would have cared for it and he would have been discouraged" (Letter). "Perhaps when the war is over [. . .] we shall have some fine poetry again," wrote Carman in April 1917, "[b]ut I feel that when the time arrives, only new men, young men, or those who have taken part in the struggle will be entitled to take part in the parliament of art. The Victorian days belong to history. I believe the new days will be better, but I doubt if any of the men who came to maturity before the great war will be able to find the new key, the new mode, the new tune" (1981: 244). An era had indeed ended.

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LATIN AMERICA

———·◆·———

Adela Pineda Franco

I call two countries home: Cuba and the night.
Or are they both one? No sooner does the sun
Draw back its majesty, than silent Cuba,
In long veils, a carnation in her hand,
Appears to me like a grieving widow.
How well I know that bloody carnation
Trembling in her hand! My breast
Is empty, crushed, and empty
Where once my heart used to be. Now the time has come
To begin to die. The night is a good time
To say good-bye. Light gets in the way,
And so too human speech. The universe
Speaks better than man
Like a flag
That is call to war, the red flame
Of the candle flutters. I open
Windows, now closed off within myself. In silence,
Tearing up the carnation petals, the widow Cuba
Passes, like a cloud that leaves the heavens dark . . .

(José Martí, "Two countries")

Octavio Paz considered this well-known poem by Cuban writer José Martí (1853–95) an emblem of Latin America's poetic modernity, which he associated with the *fin-de-siècle* literary movement known as *modernismo*. As "the answer of imagination and sensibility to the positivist drought" (Paz 1974: 88), Spanish American *modernismo* was, according to Paz, a belated version of European romanticism: a literary movement bearing the wound of spiritual banishment. Paz read this poem along these lines, pointing to its formal features (a poem-monologue in verse and prose) and thematic intent (death, eroticism, revolution), but most of all to its affinity with the romantic notion of correspondences, by means of which the universe offers itself as a forest of symbols to the poet's psyche (101). Indeed,

"Two countries" is a powerful expression of modernity, not only because of its connection to Western romanticism, but mostly because it captures the historical juncture at which the writer found himself in the face of an emerging neocolonial order in Latin America at the turn of the century.

The Spanish American War (1898) brought Spanish colonial rule to a complete end after the loss of the Empire's last bastions in Latin America (Cuba and Puerto Rico), leading to new geopolitical alignments. Beginning with Cuba and the rest of the Caribbean, Latin America began to gravitate away from European influence toward that of the United States (Halperin Donghi 1993). As the U.S. began to rise as an international power, veiling its strategic interests in Latin America under the ideology of Pan Americanism,[1] Europe experienced "the unedifying spectacle of too much Western capital chasing too few colonial territories" (Eagleton 1995: 13). Anxieties about decay, collapse, and the weakening of imperial might were fashioned into "fictions of loss" (Arata 1996), so characteristic of *fin-de-siècle* Victorian societies.

Martí died in May 1895 at the age of forty-two during the Cuban War of Independence against Spain, and came down to posterity as a foundational Latin American hero of epic stature. Nevertheless, according to his contemporary, the Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío, Martí's legacy must be understood differently. In his eulogy to the fallen emancipator, Darío wrote: "Cuba . . . the blood of Martí did not belong to you—it belonged to . . . a spirited generation of youth that lost in him perhaps the foremost of its teachers. He belonged to the future!" (Darío 2005: 447). Darío's claim that Martí was the precursor of modern Latin American literature has often been interpreted as evidence of two antagonistic viewpoints concerning the relationship between literature and politics at the turn of the century: Darío's purely aesthetic pursuit versus the politically engaged stance advocated by Martí.

A few decades later, well into the twentieth century, the relationship between literature and politics brought out two major concerns somehow related to these two viewpoints: the aestheticization of politics and the politicization of art. The former was at the center of Walter Benjamin's meditation on fascism, which he considered a form of capitalist totalitarianism based on the mystification of aesthetics. According to Benjamin, fascism reinstated the cult value of art (its aura) into political life, a process that inevitably led to authoritarian rule ("The Work of Art in the Era of Mechanical Reproduction" in Benjamin 1988: 241–42). Clearly, Benjamin's concern implied the perversion of the creed of art for art's sake, since the theologizing of art could develop, in the process of its institutionalization, into a powerful ideological State apparatus. This concern was a topic of debate already during the turn of the century in Latin America. In his novel *After-Dinner Conversation* (1896), the Colombian writer José Asunción Silva staged the flirtations of an aesthete with Latin America's authoritarianism, highlighting this character's mystification of ideals and casual approach to Latin American Caesarism:

> If the situation does not allow for those Platonic ideals . . . I will have to resort to supreme measures to spur the country to war, to the means that the government with its false liberalism gives us in order to provoke a conservative reaction . . . and after a war in which a few thousand wretched Indians succumb, one must . . . establish a tyranny.
>
> (Silva 2005: 92)

By the 1930s, in Europe, Benjamin called for unified action against the spread of fascism on an international scale through the politicization of art, which Communism seemed to offer at the time (1988: 242). History shattered Benjamin's hopes and thinkers of later date have highlighted the danger of both sides of the coin. Based on Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe's ideas on the vexed relationship between poetry, technology, and politics, Bruno Bosteels comments on the inadequacy of dialectical inversion regarding the aestheticization of politics or the politicization of art. In order to avoid the temptation of messianic totalitarianism one needs to undo both the logic underpinning the myth of the cult of art and the entanglement of politics, technology, and art (Bosteels 2000: 84).

A number of widespread changes help make *fin-de-siècle* Latin America a key period to explore the loose ends of these entanglements: the progressive erosion of positivism as a criterion of truth; the emergence of multifarious political and social movements; and the rise of capitalism, establishing consumerism as the principle that articulates social and cultural relations. This was also the time when colonial rule began to disintegrate on a global scale and to reveal its darker side, vis-à-vis renewed neocolonial configurations. The period proves so fertile a ground for discussions related to the aetheticization of politics and the politicization of art because, as José Martí cleverly remarked at the time, those were: "contemptible times . . . when the priests no longer deserve the praise or reverence of the poets, but the poets have not yet begun to be priests!" ("Prologue to Juan Antonio Pérez Bonalde's *Poem of Niágara*" in Martí 2002: 44). Not only in Latin America, but also in Europe, as Eagleton remarks, formulas, creeds, and conventions were ever more transient and subject to debate. European literary works such as those of Joseph Conrad threatened to unmask the fictional nature of imperialist ideology and envisaged the inexorable political and artistic dynamic of the period (Eagleton 1995: 15). Evidently Martí diagnosed the condition of literature as devalued and liminal: "There are no permanent works, because works produced during times of realignment and restructuring are shifting and unsettled in their very essence: there are no established paths" (44). At the turn of the century, literature was traversed by contradiction and governed by a critical impulse against dogmatic truths, therein lies its strong yet peculiar connection to politics. This connection went well beyond the conventional opposition usually exemplified with Darío's aesthetic pursuit and Martí's political stance.

At the level of representation "Two Countries" is a good example of the limits of this opposition. After all, Martí's political stance (the anxiety of Cuba's delayed emancipation) is articulated from a definite literary, introspective gaze. By depicting Cuba as the evanescent image of a mourning widow tearing up a red carnation, Martí evokes the shadow of mother Spain.[2] The same image conjures up the icon of the eternal feminine, which haunted the psyche of so many writers during the turn of the century,[3] and evokes the poet's experience of love in modern times: transient love, "love at last sight" as Walter Benjamin would call it in his study of Baudelaire's poetry (1988: 168–70).[4] But it acquires a particular meaning in Martí because it refers to Cuba's history of colonial subjugation. In the poem, this history takes the form of a vision that momentarily lights up the dangers of the present. The poet-warrior attempts to grasp the fleeting illumination in its actuality to face the material world. Martí resorted to poetic language to make history a meaningful dimension of

the present, offering a non-linear interpretation of Latin America's predicament vis-à-vis the emerging neocolonial order. In this regard, his poetics of history evokes Benjamin's particular kind of historical materialism. In his "Thesis on the Philosophy of History" the Jewish-German philosopher wrote: "To articulate the past historically means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger" (Benjamin 1988: 255). By inserting the figure of the mourning poet into an image of particular historical significance, Martí transformed the literary topos of European *fin-de-siècle* melancholia in regard to the vicissitudes of Latin American reality. He placed historical understanding within a literary mode of representation but, at the same time, avoided the idea of history as an exclusively literary trope. His poetry operated at the juncture of two regimes of meaning, the historical and the literary, pointing toward a peculiar way of addressing the perceptible world.

This mode of intervention is closely linked to the rapport between politics and literature at the turn of the century, which, in Latin America, has also been discussed in sociological terms. Following upon Pedro Henríquez Ureña's ideas of *modernismo* as "pure literature" (1945: 161–84; 1966: 97–112), critics have explored the division of labor brought about by the rationalizing will of the secular order, and Latin America's role as producer of primary products for European countries and as a market for Europe's manufactures (Halperin Donghi 1993: 118). The turn of the century witnessed the increasing professionalization of literature (its incorporation to an incipient bourgeois market of cultural goods), its growing independence from the discursive domain of the State, and its development as an autonomous institution with its own means of authorization: the tendency toward art for art's sake (Rama 1970, José Emilio Pacheco 1970, Gutiérrez Girardot 1983). However, the total autonomy of literature (its apolitical stance as a self-referential discourse alien to any form of extrinsic social significance) was never fully accomplished in Latin America. For some critics, this is a sign of Latin America's uneven modernization.

According to Uruguayan critic Ángel Rama, modernization in Latin America was indisputably connected to a political order, instituted since colonial times, to advance the project of European civilization over a physical reality either considered an ideal urban layout or stigmatized as barbaric (Rama 1996). Writing was the kernel of this order. During the colonial period and throughout most of the nineteenth century, lettered culture, according to Rama, remained associated with power relations and helped shape "an airy republic" (in the words of Bolívar) which prolonged the disconnectedness between social life and the legal apparatus. Modernization thus depended on the degree of order administered by means of writing in a world still thought of as being run by barbarism and lacking modern scientific knowledge. There was a close relationship between political power, the law, and the authority of writing. Within the Republic of Letters, literature was a rationalizing endeavor, authorized in State consolidation and in accordance with the advancement of Western civilization (Rama 1996: 41). It thus played an important role in the crafting of nationhood after the 1820s, as the repository of dying rural and oral cultural practices which, paradoxically, were being uprooted by the very race of progress which justified literature's existence as a modern intellectual endeavor (62). Nowhere is this function of literature better explained than in *Facundo* (1845) by Argentinean intellectual and politician Domingo Faustino Sarmiento:

Although the conditions of pastoral life, as constituted by colonization and negligence, give rise to grave difficulties for any sort of political organization and many more for the triumph of European civilization, its institutions, and the wealth and liberty that come from it, it cannot be denied that this situation also has a poetic side, and aspects worthy of the novelist's pen. If the glimmer of a national literature momentarily shines in new American societies, it will come from descriptions of grand scenes of nature, and above all, from the struggle between European civilization and indigenous barbarism, between intelligence and matter.

(Sarmiento 2003: 59)

For intellectuals like Sarmiento, writing was a space where they could weigh the downside of modernization against the dangers of what Sarmiento considered Latin America's inherent barbarism. Such intellectuals also turned to writing to address the risk of becoming fully dependent on the Western metropolises, which held the monopoly of civilization in terms of material and intellectual resources. Seen in this way, literature was, during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century, a means of reflection not so much about aesthetics as about identity and nationhood. Also, as critic Julio Ramos remarks, literary language shared the transparency of social communicability that characterized the undifferentiated domain of public writing (2001: 262).

Fin-de-siècle literature continued to be a reflective discourse on similar concerns, sustaining an ideological stance. A prime example is Martí's classic essay "Our America" (1891) (in Martí 2002: 288–96), a critical deliberation on Latin America's identity and the importance of regional and local cultural practices within a scenario already characterized by neocolonial interests, the internationalization of capital, and a concomitant intellectual trade. "Our America" is permeated by a tone of uncertainty in the face of imperial and colonial legacies, particularly the fragility of sovereignty in the presence of struggles for economic and political control on both sides of the Atlantic. There is a certain continuity between Martí's thought and the thought of liberator Simón Bolívar who feared disintegration and anarchy after the first wars for independence in the 1820s. In "A Panoramic View of Spanish America" (1829), Bolívar criticized "the rampant appetite of people who have broken their chains and . . . who cannot cease being slaves except to become tyrants" (in Adelman 2006: 5). Martí echoed this idea in "Our America", when he referred to "those who have no faith in their land" and "are like men born prematurely" (Martí 2002: 289).

However, by the time Martí was writing, a structural transformation in the relationship between literature and politics had already taken place and this transformation had surpassed ideology. Drawing on Nicos Poulantzas' distinction between "the political" (the bureaucratic and legal structures guaranteeing the centralization of power in the State) and "politics" (the processes of social struggles), Ramos explores the edgy situation of literature at the turn of the century, after being deprived of its previous organic communicative function with respect to civil writing; that is, after its social function and meaning were no longer guaranteed by "the political" (Ramos 2001: 75). Literature, he argues, strove to gain a new kind of authority based on the specificity of "style" (the purified territory of art for art's sake), yet without fully accomplishing its total institutionalization as "pure

literature" (Ramos 2001: 61). According to Ramos, in Latin America, literature lacked the material bases to achieve complete autonomy from other practices, like journalism, hence the impossibility of asserting a new ontology of the literary as the purified territory of art for art's sake. For this very reason literature became a decentered practice, and adopted a critical stance toward "the political" (64). On the other hand, it was precisely the separation of literature from the domain of civil writing that enabled Martí's politicization as a critical and poetic voice against the downsides of both social and literary modernization, that is, against the fragmentation of collective life and the exclusiveness of literary interiority. Ramos describes Martí's style as "a mélange of discourses and modes of writing that are sometimes archaic" (67). According to this critic, the Cuban writer crafted his critique of modernization by assembling fragments of traditional codes, but these variegated fragments could no longer be articulated as the organic whole of civil writing.

The formal hybridity in Martí's style proves then the paradox of a literary project that rejects the condition of possibility of its own coming into existence: the tendency toward total literary autonomy. This paradox reaches its maximum expression in Martí's *Diarios de campaña* (*War Diaries*), where he documented his short return to Cuba (February–May 1895) before dying in combat. In this piece of writing, Martí presents his last attempt to negate the separation between literature and political life, if only in the silence of his death (Ramos 2001: 69). Martí's last words written in this diary, two days before he fell in combat, convey the texture of a small-scale lived experience; they refer to his last supper, in company with a few men in Dos Ríos: a simple Cuban dinner composed of "roast plantains and pound jerked beef" (Martí 2002: 413). Martí's' "flight to the real",[5] or his passing without mediation from the concrete experience of a revolutionary adventure to broader literary concerns, is clearly an act of resistance toward the binary rationality separating life from literature. With his sudden death interrupting the unassuming tempo of the everyday, this diary reveals that the epic history of Latin America at the turn of the century did not come to a definite ending. In Martí's literary writings, his "poetry in deeds", that is his relentless vital drive toward both literary and political emancipation, also remained unresolved and unsettled, and, in this sense, closer to "politics" than to "the political".

Jacques Rancière's perspective on the politics of European literature during the same historical period may shed more light on the interface between politics and literature in Latin America, particularly in the case of Martí. In *The Politics of Literature*, Rancière questions the often-quoted Sartrean view of *fin-de-siècle* literary purity (or "literary petrification" in Sartre's words[6]) as an aristocratic reaction against democratization. Contrary to this view, Rancière associates literary purity with several regimes of equality, and contends that it implied a definite break between expression and content, freeing words from a specific "master or purpose", and from any desire for settled meaning. In this sense Rancière associates literary petrification with democracy (and not aristocracy), since readers were set free to appropriate the meaning of texts in many different ways (Rancière 2011: 12, 20). The French philosopher differentiates this type of literary writing from classical representation, where signification was based on a will to signify, and on a relationship of address. Whereas revolutionary oratory borrowed the power of speech-in-action from classical rhetoric in order to incite a will to act, literature developed a

different regime of meaning, based on a mute language that reveals its secrets the same way fossils and ruins bear evidence of a defunct era (14–19).

In Martí's writings, particularly in his chronicles, this explanation becomes somehow problematic because, here, the regime of signification is still traversed by the manner of living speech and by concomitant persuasive oratorical techniques. In Martí's prose writings, an implicit orator exercises a gamut of vocal tones, provokes emotion, and incites "a will to act" on the part of his audience. A good example is the beginning of one of his well-known literary manifestos, the "Prologue to Juan Antonio Pérez Bonalde's *Poem of Niágara*", that bears the marks of oratory with its theatrical flair, sententious turns, and the breath of *kairos*,[7] capturing the audience's attention in the volatility of the moment, with a direct and categorical address:

> Halt, oh traveler!
>   He whose hand I hold is no mere tinker of rhymes, nor one who echoes the teachings of old masters . . . And if you ask me more about him, curious traveler, I will tell you that he defied a giant, and was not wounded, but emerged with his lyre well placed upon his shoulder . . . And ask no more, for daring to defy giants is proof enough of greatness and merit lies not in the success of the attack (even if he emerged successful from the battle), but in the courage of attempting such an attack.[8]

Yet, unlike the orators of antiquity, Martí's figurative speaker is already a Whitmanian man of the crowd affected by the fluid energy of the city, which sweeps away the certainties of classical speech. Certainly, this feature marked his writings and those of his entire generation. Even critics who emphasize the indissoluble bond between power and lettered writing, like Ángel Rama, admit that the syncretic condition of Latin America's *fin-de-siècle* literature was the result of processes of social mobilization which affected Latin American societies and pushed literature out of the walls of the fortified "lettered city" into the desacralized domain of street culture. *Fin-de-siècle* poets were mostly provincial émigrés to big capitals. In this sense, they became part of the urban lower and middle classes that, according to historian Tulio Halperin Donghi, acquired the new habit of consumption and owed their very existence to the new system (1993: 118–19).

Modernista writers were indeed part of migratory waves that came to transform the traditional outlook of Latin American capitals, like Buenos Aires and Mexico City. José Luis Romero observes that at the time more than one Latin American city was considered a "Modern Babel" due to the high degree of geographical and social mobilization (1984: 270). According to Rama, poets began to explore "the ragged margins of reality that lay outside the city of letters" and crafted a literary language which put another regime of meaning to work, a language characterized by "an ambiguous hesitation between sense and sound" (Rama 1996: 73). Rama privileged the aural dimension of *modernista* literary language over the content-based aspects of signification following the theoretical perspective of "orality", understood as a hybrid system of signification lacking the transcendentalist drive of lettered culture. For Rama this feature was not exclusively connected to the search of purely literary perfection and innovation,[9] but to the fissures in the cohesive entity of public writing, and to an increasingly fragmented lettered culture (Rama 1985: 44). Literature came

to be exposed to the heterogeneity of dissimilar modes of cultural production brought about by democratization, and its undisputed scenario was the city.

Around the turn of the century, Latin American cities underwent the sort of transformation that occurred in Paris under Napoleon III with the initiative of Baron Haussmann. Demolition, new construction, urban mobility, and the experience of crowds inaugurated feelings of astonishment and anxiety. Cities "no longer lived for a yesterday fondly remembered and rich in signs of shared experience" but " . . . for an unpredictable but fervently imagined tomorrow" (Rama 1996: 70). In this scenario, the politics of literature are bound to the ways literature intervened in the public space in order to create a new sense out of the collective urban experience. In some instances literature became the sheltering sky that insulated human beings from estrangement and dislodgment. Literature helped create a mythology of city life: it aroused memories of old times; it fictionalized the urban space as a great village (*gran aldea*[10]) with familiar landmarks and devoid of the vestiges of underdevelopment, but it also gave account of the libidinal energy of consumerism. In his Havana chronicles, the Cuban poet Julián del Casal makes use of a decadent style in order to give an account of the blazing consumerism that characterized an otherwise sweltering and stagnant bourgeoisie. In Mexico, Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera forged an urban literary mythology for the middle class during the Porfiriato (1876–1911). Despite his subtle ironies about the system of "order and progress", his vistas of Mexico City mapped a familiar territory ("from the doors of the Sorpresa, to the corner of the Jockey Club"[11]), where a sense of belonging was still possible. Gutiérrez Nájera's writings reveal a shared yet hidden feeling of skepticism toward the one-dimensional happiness produced by the consumerist, autocratic society of "Don Porfirio"; however, they lacked any hint of the regime's darker sides (massacres, forced labor, extreme censorship, rural devastation), which finally led to the first major revolution of the twentieth century. Furthermore, according to critics like Graciela Montaldo, literature also responded with fear to the threat of mass culture, technology, and consumerism. Alarmist accounts on the sociology and psychology of crowds, of the sort Gustave Le Bon came to popularize in Europe with *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1895), also permeated the Latin American literary imagination of the period.

Beyond these circumscribed functions of cultural insulation and lettered paranoia, a deeper sense of the politics of literature in this period lies in its ability to blend into the inebriating intensity of the modern experience. In Darío's *Prosas profanas* (1896) desire is the impulse behind the poet's invitation to participate in an erotic masquerade where classical referents (Greek antiquity, Byzantium, the Middle Ages, Comedia dell'arte) glide into, and across one another, announcing Darío's very personal, ludic, heterodox, and up-to-date (therein Frenchified) way of reading the master narratives of Western tradition: "More than the Greece of the Greeks I love/ the Greece of France, because in France Venus serves her sweetest beverage, the echo of laughter and jollity" (from the poem "Disgression" in Darío: 2002: 95). Casal's poetic voice also reveals a self-conscious drive towards the "unhealthy" pleasures of the urban experience, as in the poem "In the Country": "I have the impure love of cities/. . ./More than a torrent that flows down from the heights,/I wish to hear the human throng/moaning in their lifelong servitude" (in Washbourne 2007: 79–81). Infused with these intensities, literature provided a visible and audible critical

account of the buzz of modernity from within. Once again, Martí's words are exemplary: "All is expansion, communication, florescence, contagion, diffusion . . . There is not enough time to give form to thought. Ideas are lost in each other in the sea of our minds . . . And hence the shimmering works of our time, and the absence of those great culminating works . . ." (Martí 2002: 46). The blending of literature into the frenzy of the modern city is another way to address the collapse of the social and cultural hierarchies that impacted the art of writing. As previously stated, the cohesive entity of lettered culture broke apart at the turn of the century, leading to unsuspected rapports between literature and the perceptible world. Undoubtedly, a novel genre, the so-called *modernista* chronicle, became the most appropriate discursive scenario of such rapports.

The *modernista* chronicle was a form of writing connected to journalism and cultivated by emerging poets in major cities and capitals at the turn of the century. The complex connections between literature and the domain of perception inaugurated by modern life mark the genre's distinctiveness: what critics of *modernismo* (Rama, Ramos, González Pérez, Rotker) call its heterogeneous condition. The chronicle was a fertile ground for the development of a new syntax and vocabulary to address Latin America's uneven modernization under capitalism. It emerged from forms of daily life that were becoming unrepresentable within established canonical genres and forms (Ramos 2001: 112). This is the reason why some critics consider the chronicle a "workshop" for literary redefinition (Rama, Rotker). It is also why it meets the presuppositions of certain theories postulating Latin America's cultural heterogeneity.[12] The *modernista* chronicle goes beyond the realm of journalistic information and articulates several regimes of expression in tension with each other. It brings these discourses together (particularly literature and journalism), but it also gives account of the limits (and rifts) of their interplay (Ramos 2001: 85, 112). In this sense, the chronicle's formal hybridity conveys not only the voluptuous energy of modern life but also the disquieting experience of social fragmentation that came to define *fin-de-siècle* writers' relationships not only with Latin America, but also with the world at large.

Parallel to Latin America's integration into the initial phases of time-space compression (Harvey 1989) inaugurated by the capitalist world-system, literature set in motion an expansive imaginative network of geographically distant lands. Sometimes these cosmopolitan "landscapes of culture"[13] came from the pen of writers who hardly ever traveled, like Julián del Casal, but whose ecumenical imaginations, in the style of the times, sought relief from frustrating, stagnant socioeconomic conditions. However, even their most ethereal and rarified vistas of European culture were enmeshed in the uneasy "worldliness" (Said 1983) of the *fin de siècle*. And part of that "worldliness" involved the realization that Latin America was thought to be the "elsewhere" of Western culture. Autobiographical writing reveals that Latin American writers began to conceptualize their role as marginal participants of a common world culture. In large hegemonic metropolitan centers like Paris and New York, *fin-de-siècle* Latin American writers became aware of their subaltern condition. Darío's disappointment with Parisian indifference toward his literary work triggered his skepticism toward the marvels of the capital of modernity: "I returned to the terrible enemy, center of neurosis, focal point of madness . . . where I duly act out my role as a 'savage' shut up in my cell on the rue Marivaux" ("Epistle to

Mrs. Lugones" in Darío 2002: 211). Darío clearly addresses the relationship between the Latin American subject and Western modernity as one of fragmentation and disbelief; his poetry became his most outspoken response—those were the politics of his literary project. A similar case can be argued with regard to Martí's prolonged residence in New York City (1880–95), an episode that, according to Ramos (2001: 63–64), not only explains his political stance as a revolutionary but also his literary critique of modernity from within. In a letter addressed to his friend Manuel A. Mercado, Martí recalls the autobiographical figure of the writer in a context of complexity and contradiction: ". . . every day as dusk arrives, I feel like food churning in a stomach that forces me to go on, that transforms my soul into volcanoes, and urges me to escape from myself. All that I am shatters and falls apart . . ." (in Ramos 2001: 62). From this peculiar vantage point, Martí, like many of his fellow writers, disarticulated the false integrationist culture of the capitalist world system. In his North American scenes, he interiorized the global dynamics of the period, bore witness to an emerging neocolonial order, and became conscious of his "minor" condition in the face of this order which was "devouring the sleeping worlds" ("Our America" in Martí 2002: 288). In New York, he crafted a literary project with the empowering potential of this minor condition. His case and others'—the complex legacy of decolonization—take us beyond the conventional divide between a political stance and purely aesthetic pursuits.

NOTES

1 The first Pan American Conference in which Martí participated as consul of Uruguay was held in Washington in 1889.

2 During the same time period Darío described the red carnation in connection with the lurid luxury of Spanish Catholicism: "It [Spain] works from its own impulses. Its gaiety is a native product among so much tragedy; it is the red carnation, the red flower of Black Spain" (Darío 2005: 554).

3 The gesture of destroying flowers was often associated with the ambivalent nature of Woman; an example is Darío's poem "It was a Gentle Air": "Divine Eulalia, radiant in her lace,/destroys a flower with her dainty fingers" (Darío 1965: 50–51).

4 In "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" Benjamin analyzes Baudelaire's sonnet "À une Passante", and interprets Baudelaire's imagery of erotic love as "love at last sight": a mixed feeling of enchantment and disillusionment (the "farewell forever"), experienced by the city dweller as he gets struck by the glance of a female passerby dressed in black whom Benjamin refers to as a widow (Benjamin 1988: 168–70).

5 Eagleton coins this expression to address the cultural legacy of the *fin de siècle*: the capacity to pass from the concrete to the cosmic by means of the power of intuition (1995: 17).

6 Sartre, *What is Literature?* (quoted in Rancière, 7).

7 In antiquity *kairos* stood for spontaneous and opportune inventiveness in confronting social situations (Haskins 2004: 67). In the *Iliad* it denotes a lethal or vital region of the body (Sipiora and Baumlin 2002: 2).

8 Translated by Susana Plotts from the Spanish in Martí 1964: 223. Excerpts in English in Martí 2002: 43–51.

9 The lexical and rhythmical transformation of Spanish poetry carried out by Latin American writers at the turn of the century through French mediation has been praised by critics of later date (Paz, Pacheco, and even Rama) as a compensatory cultural practice destined to offset Latin America's uneven modernization.

10 *La gran aldea* is also a novel published in 1884 by Argentinean writer Lucio Vicente López.

11 From the poem "La Duquesa Job" (1884) translated as "My Little Duchess" in Johns (1997: 20).

12 I refer to Cornejo Polar's usage of the term with respect to the dissonant coexistence of multiple temporalities, logics of social development, and systems of literary production in the Andean region (Cornejo Polar 2013).

13 "Paisajes de cultura" according to Spanish writer Pedro Salinas (1975: 114).

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DID CHINA HAVE A *FIN DE SIÈCLE*?

——— ·◆· ———

Maura Dykstra and Jeffrey Wasserstrom

It is a principle of things that the new is strong, but the old weak . . .
<div align="right">(Kang Youwei 1898)</div>

The words "Old" and "New" should be strictly prohibited altogether.
<div align="right">(Dowager Empress Cixi 1901)</div>

Our task today [involves] intense combat between the old and the modern . . .
<div align="right">(Chen Duxiu 1916)</div>

"One of the tasks of women's history," Joan Kelly claimed at the start of an influential essay, "is to call into question accepted schemes of periodization" (Kelly 1986). The same is true for world history. Too often, the names of periods are used as though they have universal relevance and resonance, yet turn out on closer inspection to apply, or at least only apply fully, to the experience of historical actors located in one or two regions. Hence the title of this piece: an homage to that of Kelly's oft-reprinted 1977 essay that asked: "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" When invited to contribute to this volume, we thought it important to start out with an agnostic attitude, rather than assume that China had a *fin-de-siècle* experience circa 1900 that was similar in meaningful ways to that which unfolded in Europe and North America. Taking this approach was to risk looking a gift horse – in this case, an invitation to contribute to a fascinating volume – in the mouth. For had we concluded that the answer was "no," we would have had to pull out of the publication. Fortunately for us, this was not the case. China did, we believe, have a *fin de siècle*.

This is in some ways a surprising conclusion, given how far removed China was from Europe and North America in the late 1800s and early 1900s. It was not just distant geographically and culturally but also chronologically. For reasons we explain in detail below, most people living in the domain governed by the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) simply did not think, as their counterparts in the West did, that a major temporal shift would occur with the dawn or end of the year 1900. Even more precisely, the year 1900 did not exist in the mind of the average Chinese individual.

Very few subjects of the Qing Empire were concerned with hundred-year periods; cycles of sixty, rather than one hundred, years loomed larger in the classical Chinese

calendar. Moreover, while the movement from one century to the next in the West has tended to imply a progression of accumulated years based on a common starting point, the Chinese sixty-year *jiazi* cycles, by contrast, were not numbered successively. At the end of each cycle, a new one began again in a never-ending repetition. Rather than relying on the numerical tallying of years in infinite progress starting from a "zero" point, the passage of historical time in China was marked by numbering the years within each reigning period of the imperial house. The two cycles that combined to produce notions of time in Qing China were thus capable of marking the shift from one year to the next, and of pinpointing time in a progression of emperors spanning thousands of years of recorded history. It was not capable of communicating the idea of a *fin de siècle* linked to the year 1900.

We stress this contrast in approaches to chronology for a reason: the difference between centuries and Chinese time cycles makes it all the more unusual that some of the events of the final years of the Qing and first years of the Republican period (1912–49) did in fact have Western parallels. Before going further, though, we want to make clear that, while we see good reason to highlight this temporal disjuncture, we do not subscribe to the once popular notion of a changeless China completely disconnected from the West. Nor do we think that the absence of a strictly numerical and linear notion of time in China precluded thought about progress or promoted a backward-looking obsession with recapturing past golden ages. These are misleading notions, which have had very long half-lives in part due to how they were embraced by major social theorists, including Hegel, Marx, and Weber. China has always been changing and has never been completely stagnant; it was often more linked to global trends than the European nations that would later claim to represent the global good; and as important as veneration for ancient ways often was, there were active traditions as well of reform, including ones that used allusion to the past as a cloak for arguing for novel ways to do things, much as leading figures in the French Revolution used appeals to Greece and Rome to legitimate and explain their creation of new political forms.

This being said, in the late 1800s, Chinese intellectual and artistic trends were often out of step with European and North American ones, and so, too, were Chinese senses of time. Even when Western styles flowed to China, they often did so along a syncopated timeline, with European and North American figures and works making their mark on Chinese writers and artists only after they had ceased to be fashionable and novel in their home milieu. (To cite just one of many possible examples, Jules Verne made his greatest impact in China not in the 1870s and 1880s, when his biggest bestsellers were in vogue in the West, but in the early 1900s.) Just as the writings and thoughts of European intellectuals became popular in China long after they were no longer in vogue in other parts of the world, so too was China only developing the merest sense of what a *fin de siècle* could possibly mean at the turn of the twentieth century, when few people living in the Qing Empire had begun to reckon years according to the calendar popular in Europe and the United States.

In spite of all this, after considering the question in our title from different angles, we have grown convinced that China, although distant from the West in both geographical and chronological terms at the close of the nineteenth century, *can* be brought into a volume such as this one in more than an artificial way, and perhaps even *should* be brought into it, for doing so has the potential to show how

widely distributed some phenomena were in and around 1900. In doing so, however, it is important to begin by settling on two analytical conditions to frame the exercise, both of which have been foreshadowed in the trio of quotes used to open this piece.

The first condition involves treating the *fin-de-siècle* period as lasting through the 1910s (as others have also proposed). This allows us to connect the Chinese experience in the late 1890s to the period that closed with the abdication of the last Qing emperor in 1912 and the experience of the first years of China's first Republic. In this formulation, China's *fin de siècle* concludes with the opening developments of the New Culture Movement (1915–23) in which Chen Duxiu, the last person we quote above, was a major figure.

The second condition involves narrowing down the field of inquiry associated with the wider realm of *fin-de-siècle* studies. Rather than try to compare China's late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century experiences across a wide spectrum of historical happenings across the globe at the time, we have chosen to focus instead on how changing notions of time and novelty emerged over this span. This focus has allowed us to eschew a pro-forma approach to defining the *fin-de-siècle* moment in China, and instead seize upon an essential component of the zeitgeist of the Western *fin de siècle*: the growing sense of an imminent temporal rift. In the following pages, we consider how China in particular grappled with an increasing sensitivity to tension between ideas of the old and the new, the traditional and the experimental.

If one follows this approach in exploring China's late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a *fin-de-siècle* experience well worthy of the name and fit for comparative discussion emerges. We are not the first to assert this; in doing so we follow in the footsteps of, among others, David Der-Wei Wang, a leading scholar of Chinese literature. His influential study *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1849–1911* (Wang 1997) is the most important single effort to date to probe the issues of interest to us here, and we encourage readers who want to learn more about what we say below to consult Wang's book.

In the pages that follow, we zero in on the push and pull between old and new before and after 1900. We will also note, though, how chronological understanding and other things set the Chinese experience apart from contemporaneous Western ones. We begin by grounding our efforts with a section surveying Chinese ideas regarding chronology. We then move on to one that explores the challenges that the Qing political and intellectual worlds faced between 1800 and 1895. After that, we focus on the emergence of changing visions of the new and the old from the mid-1890s to early 1900s before concluding with a series of meditations on the New Culture Movement that closed China's *fin-de-siècle* moment, as we define it, and its implications for later periods.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHINESE TIME

Forward, forward, let us range;
Let the people spin forever down the ringing grooves of change;
Through the shadows of the world we sweep into the younger day;
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

(Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "Locksley Hall," 1869)

> On 1 October 1949, Mao Zedong stood atop Tiananmen Rostrum in Beijing and proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The PRC turned 60 in 2009 . . . The 60th anniversary is the most auspicious day and a significant point in a person's life and a nation's history.
>
> (Zhu Zhiqun 2010, 1)

It is only recently, namely since the 1911 Revolution, that hundred-year periods have mattered in China. Before that upheaval, which like many revolutions was accompanied by a shift in the way time was measured and described, periods were most often marked out in terms of the lives or reign phases of emperors (that could vary in length) or via sixty-year cycles based on a combination of the twelve zoological (and mythological) zodiacal signs and five geomantic elements (wood, fire, earth, metal, water). The symbols used to label each of these systems of twelve and of five are found among the earliest pieces of Chinese writing, dating back to the Shang Dynasty (1600 BCE to 1046 BCE). The same cycles that marked one year from the next were also used to denote months and days. These cycles of time rotated together in an unbroken pattern from the earliest period of Chinese history down to the end of the last dynasty, the Qing.

The use of an unending cycle of sixty years was anchored in human time by linking it up to imperial reigns. In the Qing, the cyclical temporal scheme was used in conjunction with a count of the number of years since the beginning of the reign of each emperor, who adopted an auspicious era title to mark the period of his rule. These two types of time, one cosmological and the other political, operated independent of one another, but confluences in the two were causes for special celebration. The longest-lived of Qing rulers, the Qianlong Emperor, voluntarily stepped down from the throne after successfully completing a sixty-year cycle in power.

This tradition of never-ending sixty-year temporal cycles combined with the rubric of dynastic time to anchor the human experience within both a cosmological and a historical framework. These two ways of telling time had no connection at all to the Roman Gregorian tradition, which only gradually spread to various parts of the world over the course of five long centuries. Where the Europeans who visited China marked the beginning of a new era from the birth of Christ, Chinese time had no comparable shared notion of a starting point for historical time (though the start of new dynasties did provide medium-range temporal referents). While people in the West were ticking off the years in a steady, forward progression and the nineteenth century followed closely on the heels of the eighteenth, the Chinese cycle remembered nothing beyond a sixty-year period and did not add these cycles together in an accumulative pattern. Time was only measured in a linear progression within each cycle and each reign period.

Seasonal festivals, imperial rituals, and everyday events were scheduled according to the traditional calendars. Today, a full century since the end of the last imperial dynasty, almanacs featuring information about the astrological and agricultural cycles linked to the ancient Chinese calendar can be found in Chinatowns all over the world. In China itself, although the sixty-year cycle has been supplanted by "Common Years" (*gongyuan*) in official and popular writing, the appeal of older ways of telling time has endured. And, as one of the quotations used to open this section reminds us, sixtieth birthdays, of individuals and of larger entities, are still taken very seriously. In

the 1890s, when the Empress Dowager, the most powerful member of the Qing ruling family for much of her life, was about to turn sixty, big plans were made to mark the occasion with the opening of a spectacular new palace – plans that were scuttled when war broke out with Japan. Similarly, as the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the PRC neared, the Communist Party put enormous energy into making it a memorable occasion. Not only were a slew of "tribute films" released, including one that featured many of Hong Kong and the mainland's most famous actors and actresses, but a glittering pageant was also staged in Beijing. This gala, orchestrated by Zhang Yimou, the same one-time independent filmmaker turned state choreographer responsible for the Opening Ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics, was the biggest National Day ceremony in recent history. There are many other signs of the continuing valence of sixty-year cycles, even though they sometimes now compete with hundred-year ones. There were major rituals held in 1993 to mark the *centenary* of Mao Zedong's birth, for example, but there was also a great deal done late in 2013 to mark the passage of 120 years, or two 60-year cycles, since he was born (Miles 2013).

The sixty-year cycle is, even today, an important way of anchoring the individual to the Chinese past. In addition to the astrological time that is linked to these cycles, and the festivals that are marked in its time, this calendar is linked to Chinese history. Not only was time itself measured in politically bounded units, but also many of the most pivotal events of the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century – the Hundred Days Reform of 1898, the Boxer Rising of 1900, and so on – are referred to still at times by the characters associated with the dates on which they took place according to the traditional calendar. The 1898 calls for change are known as the reform efforts of the *wuxu* year, for example, while the Boxer Rising is described as the traumas of the *gengzi* year. Even as so many other things about China move in sync with the rest of the world, its past remains to some degree in another time zone.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the notion of the Gregorian calendar had still only circulated in small circles in China. It had been introduced to the empire by Jesuit scholars in the sixteenth century, but remained an exotic, esoteric, and unusual way of reckoning time throughout the empire. Missionaries and merchants visiting China purchased calendrical guides with concordance tables to negotiate the temporal shift between the two worlds. For China, as in many other places where time had been counted in distinctive ways, the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries coincided with the history of encountering the temporal sphere of Western and more specifically Christian time.

CHINA'S CHALLENGING NINETEENTH CENTURY

> What could be better than to take Chinese ethical principles of human relations and Confucian teachings as the foundation and supplement them with the techniques of wealth and power of the various nations?
>
> (Feng Guifen 1860)

> If China does not make any change at this time, how can she be on par with the great nations of Europe, and compare with them in power and strength?
>
> (Wang Tao 1870)

To prepare for discussion of the clash between old and new in the late 1800s and early 1900s, we now offer a second context, which explores not methods of keeping time but the events that came immediately before the clash between old and new of what we are calling China's *fin-de-siècle* era. China's traumatic experiences from 1800 until 1895, when our *fin-de-siècle* period starts, matter in part because of the ways these developments began to undermine traditional reckonings of time. A constellation of unsettling events – some international, some purely domestic, some a mixture of both – unfolded in a succession so rapid and unprecedented that, by the close of the nineteenth century, the Qing Empire had been profoundly shaken. In the course of this century of misfortune, more and more influential people, including prominent thinkers and writers like the two quoted above, began to wonder if China might be lagging behind other countries. By the middle of the nineteenth century, a widening circle of discussion among Qing politicians and intellectuals began to conjecture that the empire needed to catch up with a new pack of nations leading the development of world politics. The crisis underlying these urgent calls for "Western Learning" was the product of an entire century of difficult trials for the Qing, which must be understood to appreciate the pitch of China's *fin-de-siècle* intellectual ferment.

China's nineteenth century had begun with the Qing Empire facing myriad challenges, including piracy off the empire's southeastern coast and various rebellions. By the 1830s, domestic instability was aggravated by diplomatic and military conflicts, as first British and then French, American, and eventually also Japanese forces pressed the Qing to grant them commercial access, missionary freedoms, and political concessions. The first Opium War and its grim conclusion with the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing marked the beginning of a series of "unequal treaties" forced on Beijing. Imperial forces clashed with foreign militaries on Chinese soil again in the second Opium War from 1856–60, which climaxed when British and French troops razed the imperial Summer Palace in retaliation for Qing kidnapping and killing of Western envoys.

These Qing defeats inaugurated an era of weakness and what officials and intellectuals have referred to as a century of "national humiliation" that lasted until the 1940s, when the country regained its territorial sovereignty with the end of the last extraterritorial claims of other nations on Chinese soil. In the midst of this staggering progression of political, military, and diplomatic debacles involving foreign powers, domestic strife broke out once more with the Taiping Uprising (1850–64), a destructive civil conflict that was centered on the followers of a prophet who claimed to be Christ's younger brother, and who had a millenarian vision of an age of "Great Peace" (Taiping) beginning as soon as the Qing Manchu "devils" were driven out of China. It was finally quelled but at a great cost: to suppress it, the dynasty drained state coffers, gave local military commanders increased autonomy, and even appealed to and made use of Western troops, as foreign powers decided they preferred to see a weakened Qing stay afloat than deal with insurgents who embraced such a wildly eccentric version of Christianity. When peace returned, the Qing launched a wholesale reassessment of military, economic, and fiscal policies. The result was a set of initiatives – known to historians as the Self-Strengthening (*ziqiang*) movement – that laid the foundation for increased, albeit still limited, interaction with and adoption of Western technologies and philosophies.

From 1861 to 1895, the Qing and leading officials carried out a two-prong pursuit of development, whose watchword was *fuqiang* (wealth and power) and whose goal was raising China back up to par with other great empires (Schell and Delury 2013). During this period, most projects were military in character. New army drills and training for troops were adapted from models offered by advisors from Western nations. There was also a tentative embrace of modern industry; some emphasis put on learning about Western science; and, for the first time, government support for students going abroad. A Translation Bureau that focused on rendering foreign scientific and political treatises into Chinese was established, and grand plans for industrialization and exploiting natural resources were formulated if not always implemented.

One reform of which the Qing were particularly proud was the creation of crack troops, called the "New Army," who were assigned to the supervision of General Yuan Shikai, managed in accordance with the German and Japanese military methods, and supervised by German officers. But despite all that had been done to strengthen China militarily and in other ways, a war with Japan over control over Korea that began in 1894 ended in disaster the following year. When even China's New Army units were soundly thrashed on the battlefield, the progress of the last decades was deemed insufficient. More dramatic action was clearly needed.

A symbolic turning point came in 1897 with the famous scholar Yan Fu's translation of Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*. The Fujian Arsenal Academy where Yan Fu studied language was founded as a direct result of Self-Strengthening initiatives, and the interest in foreign language and thought that compelled him to translate this treatise were both patently the products of that movement. This first translation of a European philosophical treatise by a Chinese scholar foreshadowed a new way of thinking about time among intellectuals of the Qing, for the introduction of Social Darwinist thought of Huxley and his ilk became a widely popular explanation for China's recent failures. The focus shifted from not just worrying about catching up with the West through advanced learning, but avoiding the extinction of the entire nation. The impact of Yan Fu's translation reflected a growing anxiety over China's place in an emerging global order. It ushered in a period defined by concern with and fascination about the question of how China measured up to Western timelines that were based on ideas of evolution and forward motion.

VISIONS OF REFORM IN *FIN-DE-SIÈCLE* CHINA

From newness comes greatness and magnanimity, while cruelty and smallness are the children of the old.

(Kang Youwei 1898)

In the Classic of Changes it says: "What is lacking must transform. Once transformed, a thing begins to function again. Fulfilling its function, it may last through the ages."

(Liang Qichao 1896)

> There were those, previously, who used distinctions between "old" and "new" to exercise illicit authority and invite disaster ... who doesn't know that when the villain Kang Youwei spoke of a "New Way," what he really meant was the way of rebellion?
>
> (Dowager Empress Cixi 1901)

The final years of the nineteenth century saw a sense of crisis take hold among many people, increasing a sense that something had to give. Clashes between new and old began to reach a crescendo that fit in with broader *fin-de-siècle* trends. Even if few people in China knew that a century was ending, many worried that an age was at an end. Some began to voice the opinion that dramatic moves were needed to keep China from being undone by the challenges of the time. Compelled by a growing sense of urgency, authors even wondered whether or not China might even become a colony of the West, following the painful path of neighboring India. Much discussion in this period was haunted by the notion that China could become a *wangguo* (literally "lost country").

At the same time that different voices focused on a range of concerns about the future, a range of opinions existed about how disaster might be averted. Could doubling down on tradition save the realm? Did the Qing imperial family need to adopt new ideas and methods formerly considered too foreign and unfamiliar for implementation in China? And if it did this, how exactly should novel ways be assessed, adopted, and indigenized? Or, most radically of all, could the country only be saved if the dynasty was replaced? If so, was hope of salvation best invested in a new ruling house (as had happened periodically throughout history) or in an entirely novel scheme of governance in imitation of other, stronger nations? This section surveys some of the basic features of the arguments for reform that emerged in *fin-de-siècle* China; we then move on to consider the proponents of revolution in the following segment.

In the immediate aftermath of Japan's defeat of the Qing in 1895, differences of opinion within the elite became more acute. By 1898, demand for reform was finally heard within the imperial court itself, which embarked on a bold period of experimental legislation, modeled in large part on the Meiji Restoration in Japan. The two reformers most commonly associated with the 1898 reforms, Kang Youwei and his main protégé Liang Qichao, were both proponents of borrowing heavily from the West and modeling Chinese reform on the experiences of Japan. Japan's appeal to many reformers lay in the fact that it was a nearby country, presumed to share some basic traits with China, which had managed to become stronger than China in the process of adapting new ideas and technologies from the West. The precedent of Japan's Meiji Restoration was particularly palatable to members of the imperial court because the Land of the Rising Sun had kept its emperor in place throughout the nation's radical restructuring.

The twin objects of advancement and centralization made an alluring prospect. Juxtaposed against the increasingly fashionable interest in technological and intellectual transplants from other nations, the program of imperial reforms outlined by Kang and Liang carried powerful rhetorical force. Their proposals were oriented around visions of a clear contrast between past failures and future possibilities. As Liang Qichao put it in 1896:

Why must governments change? In all that is between heaven and earth, there is nothing that does not change. The darkness of night turns to light, and the cold of winter gives way to the heat of the summer as the years shift ... Now all over the globe the myriad nations are linked with another, locked in ever-mounting contention and competition that cannot be escaped.

(Liang 1896)

By the summer of 1898, Kang and Liang had won the endorsement of the Guangxu Emperor, who invited reformers to suggest the most urgent steps for reform. Kang's response argued that full-scale reinvention of the Chinese order was needed:

From newness comes accord, while perversity emerges from the old. From newness comes life, while rigidity is the result of the old. From newness comes flow and exchange, while stagnation alone emerges from the old ... when all things are old [in a realm], then only doom lies in the future ...

Recently Russia, Japan, and Siam have introduced government reforms, and so have grown strong under the leadership of the monarchy. India, Turkey, and Egypt cleave to the old and do not change, and so have been cut apart and extinguished!

(Kang 1898)

Compelled by these and similar arguments, the emperor poured his energy into reforms. More than 40 imperial decrees were issued in the 103 days of 1898 when Kang and Liang had his ear. This brief period became known as the Hundred Days Reform.

During this celebration of new approaches to governance, the military reforms of the Self-Strengthening era were continued through commands to purchase new materiel and train further troops in the new style. A newly mandated Bureau of Commerce made earlier vague plans for economic development more concrete; railways were planned, agricultural modernization discussed. The educational system was also targeted: the evaluation of traditional exams for imperial officials was revised, and new schools designed to teach "western learning" were slated for opening. Not even the administrative structure of the empire was safe, as initiatives to simplify the legal codes of the dynasty, and to abolish redundant and sinecure posts, were adopted. An exuberant atmosphere of reform prevailed.

However, before the end of 1898 – or the *wuxu* year, as it was known by Chinese reckoning – it was clear that it would be remembered for abortive rather than thoroughgoing reforms. After several months' backing by the emperor, a conservative backlash came, spearheaded by members of the imperial family more skeptical of the new and the foreign, such as the Empress Dowager Cixi, that left the progressive youthful monarch under house arrest. The emperor was silenced, his small cadre of reformers killed or frightened into exile. The recent reform edicts became a dead letter, and talk of the "new" was banned at court.

The next central court pronouncement on things foreign and new took place years later, in the year 1900, under very different circumstances, during a chaotic summer in which angry North China peasants, whom Westerners dubbed "Boxers"

(due to their use of martial arts practices), laid siege to the foreign legations of Beijing. The Boxers blamed a terrible drought that had recently devastated the country on the anger of local gods who had been affronted by the activities of practitioners of the foreign creed of Christianity. The first targets of the Boxers were Chinese Christians and Western missionaries. Boxer rhetoric provided a conclusion about the influence of things new and foreign that was quite the inverse of the Hundred Days reformers: Western religion, Western interests, and the Christian god were *responsible* for China's problems, not the answer to it. Novelty did not contain hope for the future, but doom in the present.

There was division within the Qing and among the officials who served it about how to respond to this total inversion of the temporal rhetoric of the *fin-de-siècle* moment. Some dismissed the Boxers as representing backwardness and banditry. Others argued that, given the government's inability to hold its own against foreign powers via other means, the insurgents, who sometimes spoke of protecting the Qing, represented a new kind of hope for the dynasty.

In a fateful move, the Qing threw their support behind the Boxers. The timing could hardly have been worse; soon after, a consortium of foreign armies stormed into North China, crushed the movement, freed the foreigners held captive, and forced the imperial family briefly into exile.

From her place in the exiled court at Xi'an, the Dowager Empress Cixi now offered a new pronouncement on how to renew the Qing government and its subjects. In an important memorial that later became famous as the opening sally of revived reforms, she opened with scathing comments about Kang's version of a "New Way," which she saw as an effort to undermine the Qing, before reflecting on the possibility that reform ought to be considered once more.

The edict began: "In every age there are those principles which are immutable regardless of the passage of time. But if a system of governance does not change it is impossible to adapt and survive" (Dowager Empress Cixi 1901). Later in the edict, Cixi concluded that previous reforms had not gone deep enough to address the systemic causes of China's difference from the West. She solicited the advice of court ministers and imperial officials on the subject of how to move China forward:

> Of late those who have studied the ways of the West have covered language and mechanics alone. But these are merely the external visage, and not the true root, of Western governance . . . China cannot study the path of Western nations to strength and wealth one word or one technique at a time . . . [All officials should] consider the current situation, and discuss the basic tenets of governance in China and the West. Raise for discussion any and all flaws of the empire. The bureaucracy, the people's living, the educational system, the civil exams, the military, and state finance: which should be continued and which reformed? . . . How can the national affairs be made to prosper?
>
> (Dowager Empress Cixi 1901)

The responses to this memorial initiated a decade-long project of imperial reforms and social initiatives to reclaim the former glory of the Qing. And, in spite of Cixi's prohibition against the terms "New" and "Old" in policy discussions, the reforms became collectively known as the "New Policy" movement.

Many of the reforms that emerged during this era dated back directly to the trials of the nineteenth century, but the reform was unprecedented in its scope and depth. Several of the earliest initiatives adopted during the New Policy era targeted the country's educational system. In 1901 the beginnings of a public school infrastructure were mandated, with universities planned in the capital city, middle schools in each prefectural seat, and elementary schools in every county seat of government. From 1904, initiatives to form specialized institutions for the study of professions and for teachers appeared. In 1905, a Bureau of Education was created to oversee these projects, and the examination system – which had garnered so much praise and condemnation over the ages – was officially dismantled.

Legal education and reform was another cornerstone of the New Policy. In 1901, China's first Bureau of Foreign Affairs was established to regularize relations with other nations. Legal experts Shen Jiaben and Wu Tingfang were charged with the task of developing a new Criminal and Civil Code for the Qing, and a new court system was proposed at the local level. Ambitious commercial policies were proposed in this era as well, ranging from fiscal reform to large-scale projects for mineral exploitation. The Bureau of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture, first mentioned during the Hundred Days Reform, was finally created in 1903. Its first command was to formulate a Commercial Code. Plans to build railroad lines connecting the commercial centers of the empire were supported by both the central state and thousands of local merchants and gentry, who purchased stock for partial ownership in the planned railroad lines. New laws and policies designed to protect and reward commerce reflected a strong commitment to the development of China's economy. Rewards were promised to innovative industrialists and entrepreneurs, and national expositions and fairs were organized to foster and celebrate Chinese businesses.

In an effort to generate support, enthusiasm, and guidance for these reforms, the Qing also allowed the creation of Provincial Assemblies to represent regional interests and municipal bodies to manage local projects. In the face of increasing pressure to establish a monarchy more in keeping with those seen in other nations, the Qing court even declared its intention in September of 1906 to formulate a constitution to frame the relationship between the imperial house, the institutions of self-government, and the empire's subjects.

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the New Policy reforms had altered many basic structures and routines of life. Social changes in response to, in sympathy with, and in anticipation of new reforms transformed the empire. Cities housed academies of scientific learning, international trade firms, new police bureaus, and a host of voluntary associations. Societies for the suppression of opium thrived alongside new religious organizations espousing Buddhism, Daoism, and Christianity; newspapers proliferated; the publishing industry boomed.

The New Policy reforms shored up support for the Qing in some quarters, but the central court was not presenting the only compelling vision of China's new role in the twentieth century. Beyond Beijing and the most enfranchised supporters of the New Policy initiatives, proponents of radical change and revolution grew increasingly vocal. Many of the men and women who argued that the Qing were incapable of the

type of change needed to avert disaster looked to Western struggles of 1776 and 1789 (and after 1917, to that year as well) for inspiration. Those who favored revolution were ready to jettison completely the dynastic system. We turn now to revolutionary thinking in *fin-de-siècle* China.

VISIONS OF A NEW ORDER BEYOND THE QING

> Revolution is a universal rule of evolution ... Revolution eliminates what is corrupt and holds on to what is good. Revolution is to advance from savagery to civilization.
>
> (Zou Rong 1903)

Throughout the nineteenth century, there were some, from White Lotus rebels to Taiping insurgents, who claimed that the only way that China could be renewed and revived was by overturning the Qing Dynasty and starting a completely new era. But it was only toward the end of the century that such calls for renewal posited that China needed to form a Republic. This idea found its expression in polemical tracts, such as the one authored by the young firebrand Zou Rong, who was arrested for his writings and soon died a martyr in prison. The dream of a Republic also animated the actions of underground revolutionary groups founded by figures like Sun Yat-sen, who had started out calling for reform than gravitated toward more radical positions.

In the early 1900s, revolutionary fervor took hold in urban centers within the empire and among Chinese ex-patriots abroad. The revolutionary groups formed out of these crucibles of idealism and discontent combined several disparate elements: sworn brotherhoods inspired by anti-Manchu rhetoric, whose members dreamed of restoring the Ming; revolutionary societies that found things to admire in the words and deeds of 1789 and more recently Russian anarchists; student organizations; and so on. Even the New Army personnel whose ranks were first created by the Self-Strengthening movement and then bolstered by New Policy reforms began to form networks of resistance to Qing authority. Each potential revolutionary had a different story, and a background that separated him or her from the others. The only thing that they agreed upon was that to survive China had to create something truly new, that the time for merely tinkering with the status quo had passed.

Revolutionary plots sprouted up across the empire. One – in the city of Wuchang – ended up, through a series of planned and unplanned developments, laying the groundwork for what was later described as the 1911 Revolution, although the term makes it seem like a more coherent event than it actually was. The Wuchang Uprising began ahead of schedule on 9 October 1911, after an accidental explosion occurred in a munitions workshop belonging to a revolutionary party. The accident threatened to bring official scrutiny to the organization, so members of Wuchang's New Army, recognizing that their involvement with anti-Qing groups was about to be exposed, went on the offensive. The city's Qing officials were forced into flight and the army proclaimed itself to be China's legitimate rulers. On 11 October, Li Yuanhong, the commander of the newly established military government declared:

> The people of our nation have no need to fear the Righteous Military forces. We have risen up to save the people, and not for any selfish or greedy purpose . . . You all have suffered gravely. You have been sinking in a sea of bitterness. It is all because of the tyranny of another race . . . The righteous outrage at this abuse inflames the land and reaches all the way to the heavens . . . Today . . . the flag of righteousness has been raised!
>
> (Zhu 1986, 649)

From 10 October through to the end of 1911, city after city declared independence. In most cities, officers of the very New Army that had been formed to protect the Qing took up positions of authority in new revolutionary governments, which were widely supported by students of the new schools. On 7 November 1911, Li Yuanhong began discussions with the leaders of other independent provinces about how to form a single provisional government.

Representatives of every province traveled to Nanjing, which was chosen as the future capital of the country being born, and they chose Sun Yat-sen to be Provisional President of what would be called the Republic of China. On 31 December, these delegates – now formally constituted as a National Assembly – formally declared the decision to employ the solar calendar. Huang Xing reported: "Today the National Assembly has decided to switch to using the solar calendar, and the convention of counting each year from the founding of the Republic of China. Tomorrow will be the first day of the first month of the first year of the Republic of China" (Zhu 1986, 1164).

On 1 January 1912, a new temporal order began with Sun taking his inaugural pledge as Provisional President of the just-created Republic. The event was reported in the *Eastern Miscellany*, which transcribed Sun's speech beginning as follows:

> The collapse of the tyrannical government of the Manchus is consolidated with the establishment of the Republic of China. Its purpose is to secure the prosperity of the people, and to realize the ambitions of the people with loyalty to the nation and service to the masses. The collapse of the tyrannical political system of the past has happened almost seamlessly and without disorder. The Republic now stands tall among the nations of the world . . .
>
> (*Dongfang zazhi* Vol. 8, No. 11, 9)

Sun then called for a "switch to using the solar calendar, thereby declaring this day the first day of the first year of the first month of the Republic of China." The declaration of the dawn of a new age and a new way of marking time was thus the first official order promulgated by the new Republic of China. From then on, the movement of time in China would officially be in sync with the other nations of the world, and years would be reckoned from the day the Republic was born.

It was not just the end of an era: it was the conclusion of dynastic time, and the beginning of a new temporal regime tied to the Chinese nation. The beginning of a new temporal cycle was not, however, the end of China's *fin de siècle*. Many Chinese intellectuals quickly came to feel that the old ways had just changed their name, not been overthrown. More than a change of calendar and of titles was needed for a New China worthy of the name to be created.

A NEW AGE: CHINA'S TWENTIETH CENTURY

> China's literature has been withering and decaying for a long time. It has been a hundred years since anyone vigorous has arisen. There's a new tide that cannot be stopped. It is time for a literary revolution.
>
> (Hu Shi 1915)

> We have to give up the useless and irrelevant elements of traditional literature and ethics, because we want to create those needed for the progress of a new era and new society.
>
> (Chen Duxiu 1919)

Revolutionary exultation and the celebration of China's first Republic soon gave way to confusion and dissatisfaction, as China's politicians, military leaders, students, workers, entrepreneurs, artists, and rural households realized that there was little agreement about how to realize the Republican dream. In February of 1912, just a month after Sun Yat-sen's installment in the office of President, the internationally recognized revolutionary figurehead was forced to concede his position to Yuan, a commander whose troops in the north of China had been responsible for negotiating the surrender of the young Last Emperor. An uneasy tension came into being, as those still eager to bring a brand-new age into being had to deal with the mundane nature of political realities, in which might seemed at times all that mattered.

Soon, the tension between the ambitious dreams of active political Chinese and the cautious Yuan regime, which shared power with other military commanders with armies personally loyal to them, grew into full-fledged resentment, and China's political world was divided into competing visions of what the Republic should be. The National Assembly, which had first convened in 1910 to draft a constitution and had supported the provisional presidencies of first Sun and then Yuan, was one of the first victims of the turmoil. The 1913 nation-wide election of delegates, which had placed Sun's newly formed Nationalist Party as the clear majority in the new nation's Parliament, degenerated into fighting and chaos as political rivals were assassinated, and pressure from Provisional President Yuan resulted in a series of forced referendums declaring the leader the elected head of state. That year, Sun was forced back into exile and fighting began to break out all over China between members of the parties now vying for political control. Yuan outlawed the popular Nationalist Party, removed its members from Parliament, and, in January 1914, finally dissolved the entire body.

Conflict over the fate of China's new Republic mounted slowly over the course of the first years of its existence. New voices – concluding that the founding of a new government was clearly not enough – began to propose more drastic measures for carving out a path for the future. What ensued was known as the New Culture Movement. The central claim of the members of this intellectual enterprise – many of them students and faculty at China's prestigious universities, such as Peking University – was that simply altering China's system of governance was not enough. Something deeper needed to happen. The people of the nation needed a new culture. Change could not be imposed from without, but must be cultivated from within.

Young voices clamoring for change came together to forge a rallying cry for resistance against the current regime in 1919, under the banner of what was known as the May Fourth movement. This movement formed in reaction to the 1919 verdict of the Versailles Peace Conference to cede Germany's possessions in China – now surrendered in defeat after World War I – to Japan, in spite of the fact that China had fought on the side of the allies, and lobbied enthusiastically for a return of its territories. This diplomatic, political, and territorial loss was the breaking point for the generation of students and intellectuals who had witnessed the first decade of the Republic with grim cynicism. Dissatisfaction with the new government was now expressed as outright resistance, as protests against the establishment spilled into the streets of China's urban centers.

The tensions leading up to this intellectual crisis extended at least as far back as the beginning of what we have labeled here China's *fin-de-siècle* moment. The westward-facing desire to learn the technology and statecraft of a new age, inherited from the Self-Strengthening movement of the nineteenth century, had first inspired much of the intellectual foundation of inquiry and cosmopolitan expectations of this new generation. Concerns from the late nineteenth century about China falling behind in a Darwinian struggle for existence among the world's nations were triggered by this failure in the early twentieth century. The outward-looking intellectual development of the nineteenth century had been realized in the twentieth century in a way that it could never have been before, by students educated in the styles of "western learning" that had been introduced over previous decades. Exposed to world affairs, and comparing the domestic situation to the situations in other nations abroad, they concluded that the existing regime was floundering under the death grip of feudal thought.

And the hope of a new China, which was powerful enough to have motivated decades of reform and innovation, still burned in the hearts of the young men and women who began, increasingly, to conclude that the fatal flaw of China's revolution was that it had not gone far enough. Students and young activists became convinced that the intellectual ferment of the first decade of the Republic could no longer be confined to dissent, but must be translated into action, and this led to both a rejuvenation of the Nationalist Party and the founding of the group that would alternately be its ally and its great rival, the Chinese Communist Party.

A cynicism and disgust with the *status quo* imbued the May Fourth movement and the political discourse of the early twentieth century with a sense of urgency. No author did more to articulate this disgust with the failure of China's new regime than a writer who used the pen name Lu Xun (alternative romanization Lu Hsun, birth name Zhou Shuren). In his preface to a compilation of stories bound together by meditations on China's failure to shake free of its past, he described the nation as painfully trapped. In what became a famous analogy, he compared the nation to an iron house:

> Imagine an iron house without windows, absolutely indestructible, with many people fast asleep inside who will soon die of suffocation. But you know since they will die in their sleep, they will not feel the pain of death. Now if you cry aloud to wake a few of the lighter sleepers, making those unfortunate few suffer the agony of irrevocable death, do you think you are doing them a good turn?
>
> (Lu 1922)

The *fin-de-siècle* anxiety, eagerness, and exuberance that we have surveyed briefly here had, as this eloquent wording suggests, climaxed in a renewed sense of crisis. This would drive political development for the remainder of the twentieth century. Students, communist leaders, urban political activists, government leaders, writers, and the whole body of men and women who experienced the revolutionary tumult of the decades stretching from the New Culture Movement through the 1980s and beyond were, in many ways, still living with the repercussions of the struggle between old and new that defined China's distinctive *fin-de-siècle* experience.

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JAPAN

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Selçuk Esenbel

This chapter looks at Meiji Japan's *fin-de-siècle* story from two sides of the same coin – as a Janus-faced revelation of modernity that entails progress and decadence. At the turn of the century, Asian societies shared the temper of the times with Europe, but Meiji Japan alone forged its modernity from an adaptation of the very same matrix as that of the modern West in terms of constructing a new state, economy, and society that dramatizes the contrast between progress versus decadence as themes in the making of modern Japan. Contemporary public opinion in Europe and Asia viewed the Meiji accomplishment as an extraordinary success story, a reputation that continues to this day. By 1895, Meiji Japan was Asia's first modern polity that emancipated itself from European hegemony by abolishing the "unequal treaties." The accomplishment of the Meiji Restoration of 1868 inspired the Asian *fin-de-siècle* quest for the same. (As Maura Dykstra and Jeffrey Wasserstrom note in their essay on China in Chapter 15 of this volume, the Chinese intellectual and reformist K'ang Yu Wei's proposal to the Qing Emperor for reforms looked at the Meiji model during the 100 days of reform in China.)

But the Meiji *fin de siècle* also displayed the other side of the Janus-faced coin, including the "dark" narrative of the modern Japanese society of misfits and decadence, the milieu of the avant-garde, the setting of revolutionary radicalism, anarchism, and rebel women that harbored the beginnings of the new century. Meiji Japan, though a success story of constructing a modern Western-style state and society accompanied by economic transformation under the newly imported industrial production technology of the West, also witnessed the misery of the urban poor and the plight of the peasants and workers. They were cogs in the wheel of a rapidly industrializing society which also engendered intellectual anguish concerning the loneliness of the modern individual. The *fin-de-siècle* narrative in this world is what Mikiso Hane (1982) preferred to call the Underside of Modern Japan.

Foremost in this narrative is the fact that the Japanese of the *fin de siècle* had tried to distinguish themselves from the rest of Asia in civilizational terms and turn themselves into a Western-like state and society by adopting fully the norms of Western civilization. The liberal intellectual Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901) had strongly promoted the project in his essay in 1885 known popularly as "Datsu-A"

or literally "Getting out of Asia." Translated as "Goodbye Asia" in David Lu's translation, Fukuzawa had insisted that "Japan is located in the eastern extremities of Asia, but the spirit of her people has already moved away from the old conventions of Asia to the Western Civilization," and that "We simply erase from our minds our bad friends in Asia," referring to the unenlightened autocratic form of governments in China and Korea. The typical urban Japanese intellectual of the Meiji era already viewed the modern West as the center of the modern world that Japan needed to emulate. For the modern Japanese of the Meiji era, Japanese culture, if defined as a national identity, was acceptable – but the universal claims of the heritage of classical Asian civilizations such as China or India, which had once been respected by their forefathers, were seen as outdated. As seen in Fukuzawa's article, the Meiji Japanese attitudes treated with condescension the traditional polities and cultures of the East that were not yet invested in the adoption of modern Western civilization like Meiji Japan.

Another point concerns Meiji Japanese ambition for progress at the *fin de siècle*. In his analysis of Meiji culture, the eminent historian of modern Japan Marius Jansen concludes that "Meiji men lived in the Victorian age, and were in fact Victorians themselves" (Jansen 2000: 494–95). The statement is significant, for it contains the implicit understanding that the Japanese of the Meiji era of reforms (1868–1912), which encompass the *fin-de-siècle* period, stood apart from the generally shared experience of the *fin de siècle* in Asia. To be sure, all Asian societies in the nineteenth century had to confront and share in the new age. But Britain, France, Holland, and Russia dominated most of Asia through their colonial imperialist project. Japan alone had escaped the colonial yoke and took the lead in the construction of a highly urban industrial society with a new military industrial technology.

Seen from this perspective, the Japanese *fin de siècle* is better understood as a *longue durée* process that covers the Meiji era. The period between 1868–1912 witnessed the young Emperor Meiji's reign over the new leadership of former samurai from the victorious rebel domains that overthrew and abolished the 250-year-old centralized feudal polity of the Tokugawa Shogunate. It serves very conveniently as the time and spatial setting for a *fin-de-siècle* history of modern Japan.

France originated the term "*fin de siècle*," *signifying* an aura of social and cultural urbanity and modernity that inspired many contemporaries globally. According to Eugen Weber, the *fin de siècle* comprised an enthusiasm about progress, industry, and technology, as well as the expression of modern decadence and ennui. The *fin de siècle* was a time of global optimism, a fascination with the new fairs and expositions that displayed modern culture, high technology, and industrial goods. It was also a time of global pessimism, in which individuals were dislocated from their traditional environments and values during the transition from rural to urban lifestyles. The Parisian *fin de siècle* gave birth to the beginnings of the avant-garde in art that defied the very Victorian norms of propriety. To summarize, the *fin de siècle* represented the end of the ancient regime that had once enjoyed ostentatious display of pomp and glitter in its heyday of enjoying wealth and empire (Weber 1986: 1–26).

The Japanese *fin de siècle* also witnessed the end of an ancient regime and enthusiastic immersion into the pace of global modernity. After Commodore Matthew C. Perry's sudden arrival in 1853 in Uraga Bay near Edo with four battle

ships, the political balance between great lords and the national government of the Tokugawa Shoguns was suddenly so dislocated that the rest of the decade resembled a roller-coaster ride of disintegration and upheaval of all of the traditional institutions and practices of the Tokugawa regime, a centralized feudal polity. Since the victory of Tokugawa Ieyasu – the founder and the first Shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate – in 1600 over the rival great lords, the Tokugawa Shoguns, a politico-military office of samurai governance had managed to maintain political stability for over two centuries. The Shoguns ruled over close to 200 locally autonomous military clan domains that had set the stage for "early modern" Japan that was the ancient regime legacy of modern Japan. One may argue here that in Japanese history the *fin de siècle*, if seen in a longer historical period from the latter half of the nineteenth century, began as a sudden rush that resulted from the pressure of the Western hegemonic forces in the 1850s that dismantled the Tokugawa order. One can also argue that once the West became the model of changes in Japanese society toward modernity after 1868, the Tokugawa legacy left social, economic, and cultural components that partially integrated with the global processes of the nineteenth century. For example, Edo, the capital city of the Shoguns, was to become Tokyo of *fin-de-siècle* modern Japan. Edo of the Tokugawa period was already a large city of about a million inhabitants, bustling with an urban culture of samurai military rulers and townsmen, workers, artisans, and peasants. The Japanese urban intellectuals and cultured individuals, who were frequently from the lower ranks of the ruling samurai class, may not have been equal to the contemporary wealthy British or American entrepreneurs who were busy building capitalism around the globe, but they were groomed in a sophisticated urbane culture of nascent cosmopolitanism, which suggests that many such individuals could also swiftly adapt themselves to the cosmopolitan *fin-de-siècle* urban culture of the West once that window was open.

The Tokugawa authorities had also heard the shocking news that the great Chinese empire of the Qing dynasty had been defeated in the Opium War of 1838–42 by Britain, who had already established a colonial entity in India, an unprecedented crisis that showed the recent rise of the "red-haired barbarians." Even more ominous for the Tokugawa and the higher samurai elite echelons of traditional society was the news that the Great Qing had been compelled to sign the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, which was an "unequal treaty" that provided legal and economic privileges to the Western powers (Jansen 2000: 270–71).

While Britain had taken the lead in forcing the entry of the Great Qing into the international system of the West, in 1853 the United States had taken charge of opening up Japan. At the time, the British forces were engaged in the western front against the Romanov empire during the Crimean War. Perry's demands were met, forcing the Japanese to end their traditional foreign policy of isolation when the Tokugawa government signed the treaty "without the explicit approval of the Emperor in the imperial capital Kyoto." The conclusion of the first treaties of inter-national relations between the Western powers and Japan in 1858 caused the erup-tion of a strong anti-foreign activism among the samurai, who vehemently accused the Shogunate of disloyalty to the sacral authority of the Kyoto Emperors by buck-ling under Western pressure to sign humiliating treaties with the "red-haired barbar-ians." The Meiji Restoration, which took place in 1868 – only a decade after the forced signature of the treaties – entailed the dramatic confrontation between the

Tokugawa polity and the rebel samurai forces. This led quickly to the disintegration of the ancient regime, which forms the background to the story of Japan as a *fin-de-siècle* historical experience (Totman 1980).

The Meiji Restoration of 1868 thus marks the radical dismantling of the old order and the conscious effort to construct a new legal, social, economic, and political frame for modern Japan; it explains the content of the difference from the rest of Asia. Meiji Japanese took great efforts to immerse themselves in the European cultural temper of *fin de siècle*, as many Japanese with exposure to Western culture participated in the cosmopolitan fashions of France and Britain or adopted the same through the new national politics that stressed progress and civilization.

The modernity of the Japanese empire is best represented by the 1870s Meiji slogan of *bunmei kaika*, civilization and enlightenment, which justified the sweeping away of the old and the inception of the new inspired by ideas from the West. Meiji Japan, by the turn of the century, was a success story of progress and development that accomplished the difficult challenge of abolishing the "unequal treaties" by 1895 and forged a precious alliance with Great Britain in 1902. Hence Meiji Japan by the *fin de siècle* had swept aside any possible threat of being subjects of Western imperialism. The Meiji Japanese, by the end of the century, were admitted into the coveted club of the civilized Western world despite the racism and orientalist prejudices of the *fin-de-siècle* Euro-American social environment (Jansen 2000: 460–61).

By the turn of the century, therefore, Meiji Japan became "Europeanized" in its swift construction of a Western-style state and a modern industrial economy. This development was marked by the establishment of the Yawata Iron and Steel Works in 1901 on the coast of Kyushu Island, which fed the new and growing industrial sector. The process of government-led reforms bolstered high technology production in new export-oriented private companies, such as the elite conglomerates Mitsubishi, Mitsui, and others that dominated the burgeoning industrial sector and had global outreach. All of these reform changes marked the transformation of this traditional agrarian society, in a somewhat historically marginal corner of East Asia, into an urbanized environment of big cities, such as Osaka and Tokyo.

Edward Seidensticker, who has written the history of the making of Tokyo from the ancient capital of the Shoguns, discusses the high city of new upper-class elites and the low city of inner-city Edo culture. *Fin-de-siècle* Tokyo witnessed the replacement of the decadent Tokugawa leisure culture of geisha teahouses and the exciting stage of popular Kabuki theater with new popular forms of leisure and pleasure quarters for the multitudes. The city inhabitants lived the double life of civilization between the so-called enlightenment of modern Western government buildings, department stores, and public parks, and the decadence of the inner city. The *fin-de-siècle* Tokyoite learned how to move back and forth between these contrasting worlds (Seidensticker 1985).

Unlike France, whose public lamented their terrible defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1871, *fin-de-siècle* Japan was also a military "success story" of two major victories, the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, which impressed the world opinion of Japan's rise to power. Britain even accepted the Japanese empire as an ally in the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Global Asian public opinion was mostly enthusiastic about the Japanese ability to counter European

imperialist hegemony by using their methods. The intellectuals of the Ottoman and Qing empires thought they should try to accomplish the same as that of the Meiji Japanese but felt that their polities either failed or were not as successful (Worringer 2007).

But there was a dark underside to this Meiji Japanese success story. This was Japan as victim of Western modernity: families of high status in olden times reduced to poverty, dislocated peasants compelled to become urban workers, or poorly paid indentured servants struggling in the increasingly polluted industrial setting of big cities such as Tokyo and Osaka. Late Meiji Japan between 1880 and 1910 witnessed intellectual ennui, political anarchists, assassins, and "rebellious" women who defied the conservative norms of traditional womanhood. Meiji Japan, though a success story of economic transformation under the newly imported industrial technology of the West, experienced the misery of the urban poor and the plight of the peasants and workers in this new industrial society. Mikiso Hane strongly criticized the rosy picture of Meiji modernity through his account of Yanagida Kunio, the prominent Japanese anthropologist who was working in a governmental legal department. Kunio came across the records of a man who had been convicted of murdering his children in the late 1880s. Kunio also found that starvation, infanticide, abortion, and the practice of selling daughters into prostitution did not cease in Japan even after the Tokugawa era ended and Japan became "modern." There were more than 3000 cases of peasant uprisings that continued the tradition of rural protests into the Meiji era; in 1885 alone bankruptcy of 108,050 farm households meant at least 400,000 people were left with no means of livelihood (Hane 1982: 23). Japanese men and women cast from the traditional bonds of traditional society and compelled to adjust to this new world of the Meiji, which rewarded the ambitious and the cosmopolitan following the Anglo-Saxon ideal of "self help," felt *fin-de-siècle* pessimism deeply.

The Japanese "Victorian" success story initially represented the new values of competition, self-reliance, moral fortitude, and individualism, all dedicated to the patriotic service of the empire. Meiji leaders consciously looked to Britain as a model for their own empire (Nish 1966). The liberal intellectual and journalist Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Bumeiron no gairyaku* (Outline of Civilization) was a popular essay of 1875 that designated Western civilization as modern and desirable for Meiji men and women in the early reformist enthusiasm of the *fin de siècle*. His essay was taught as the new ethics for Meiji children up until the end of the century. The educator and Confucian scholar Nakamura Masanao's translation of Samuel Smiles' *Self-Help* and John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* also promoted individualism and self-reliance that inspired Meiji entrepreneurs. These young men were meant to go out in the world and succeed in ventures that strengthened the empire. Both works were very popular and influenced the thinking of the new *fin-de-siècle* generation (de Bary 2005: 698–706). However, conservative traditionalist values accompanied the authoritarian measures of the Meiji imperial regime from the 1890s onward.

Basil Hall Chamberlain, a professor of Japanese at the Tokyo Imperial University and long-time resident of Tokyo, was an admirer of all things Japanese, and applauded the more progressive sentiments of turn-of-the-century Japan. He argued that Meiji Japan was a Europeanized country in terms of its basic state institutions, modernization projects, and new legal codes adapted from Western models. Chamberlain had

a sympathetic view of the swift Japanese adoption of modern European civilization, seeing it as profound and not superficial as some foreign observers criticized. He explained that the Europeanization of Japan had a long, dramatic history of 300 years, dating back to the arrival of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. For Chamberlain, the recent acceleration of Europeanization after the arrival of Perry in 1853 and the Meiji Restoration of 1868 was really a culmination of a long-term historical process. His brief in favor of the Meiji reforms was unambiguous: "The superficiality attributed to her assimilation of imported civilisations exists only in the superficial knowledge of the would-be critics" (Chamberlain 1985: 155).

According to contemporary opinions such as that of Chamberlain, Japan was in step with the European reformist mode of the *fin de siècle* and could no longer be relegated to the semi-civilized oriental polities of Asia. By the end of the century the Japanese government had discarded most of the ancient local codes and borrowed French and German laws wholesale, including state administration laws based on the Napoleonic code. They enacted the Constitution of 1889, a landmark in Asia that was derived from German Constitutional law (Kazuhiro 2007: ix–xix). The Japanese Civil Code of 1898 was based on the most recent German code of 1896. The legal Europeanization of Japan was definitely the most radical in Asia and among the most complete in Euro-Asia. (After all, the Russian Romanov empire did not adopt a constitution until 1906 when, in the aftermath of the revolutionary upheaval in Russia that followed the humiliating defeat of the Russo-Japanese War, Tsar Nicholas II was compelled to give up authoritarian rule and promulgate a Constitutional monarchy.) In this context, one can extend Basil Chamberlain's argument and claim that – given the radical degree of industrialization and the comprehensive adoption of European modern practices – Japan was, relatively speaking, the most "European-like" participant in the context of *fin-de-siècle* Asia.

The troubling psychological problems of this new world were expressed in the writings of *fin-de-siècle* intellectuals and literary figures. Turn-of-the-century Japanese intellectuals were quite troubled by the destabilizing experiences and were highly conscious of the difficulties involved in developing a new culture that was modern and yet Japanese. They also addressed the destructive impact of an increasingly industrial environment that ejected individuals from their traditional communities.

Nowhere does this come out more vividly than the world-view of Natsume Soseki – the novelist of the late Meiji era who has succeeded in touching the hearts of Japanese readers to this day with the lonely pathos of individuals struggling to negotiate this new world. Soseki, himself a product of the Meiji *fin de siècle*, was acutely aware of the plight of the modern individual, which he limned with cynical pessimism. According to one commentator, Soseki perceived the Meiji era of progress as *"a confused awakening"* (Jansen 2000: 457). During his study of English literature at the University of London as a government scholarship student between 1901 and 1903, Soseki was impoverished and lonely, which informed his critical view of modern life and exacerbated his critique of its unfolding in Japan.

Soseki's novels *Botchan* (Master Darling) and *Kokoro* (Heart), illustrated the conflicts between duty and desire or group loyalty and individuality, as well as the isolation of the individual during Meiji Japan's rapid modernization. He also captured the social malaise of many who questioned Japan's emulation of Western culture. *Botchan* traces the difficult life of a young math teacher from a former

samurai family. We see his struggle to survive as a member of Tokyo's new urban middle class, and his eventual relocation to a faraway provincial school in Shikoku Island; the local personalities in the novel represent the cultural and social clashes arising within this new Japan. Soseki cynically describes the protagonists with appropriate titles such as Akashatsu (Red Shirt), who is a superficial intellectual with continental European socialist ideas; Yamaarashi (Porcupine), who upholds old-fashioned samurai ideals of duty; and Uranari (Green Pumpkin), a refined melancholic gentleman (Soseki 1919). The novel *Kokoro* focuses on the friendship between an elderly teacher – "Sensei," meaning master – and a young man. The Sensei's tragedy unravels through a letter to his student, which is actually the elder teacher's suicide note. The novel describes the psychological breakdown of the older man, who commits suicide because he believes he provoked the suicide of a dear friend, with whom he competed for the love of a woman. Though the story is about this ménage à trois, the main point of the suicides is to illustrate the loneliness of the individual in the competitive and individualistic modern world.

The novel is a poignant, pessimistic reflection on the end of an era, signified by the death of Emperor Meiji in 1912 and the joint suicides of the hero of the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, General Nogi, and his wife, their deaths a *junshi* – "following one's lord to the grave" in the traditional style. For the older teacher Sensei, those who had been brought up in this era were destined to be left behind as anachronisms. He decides to commit suicide in *junshi* form as well. The novel is a succinct statement of Soseki's belief that the only way to escape modern loneliness is either through faith, madness, or death. One can conclude that the underside of modern Japan appealed to misfits such as Soseki (Soseki 1955: 245).

Challenges to Meiji establishment pride came from the second generation of the Meiji era, who shocked the earlier generation by attacking the Meiji establishment from both the right- and left-wing political platforms. The inequality of Japanese women, who were consigned to a secondary legal status in the conservative 1889 Constitution and 1898 Civil Code, gave birth to the feminist movement for equal rights. Hiratsuka Raicho, the radical feminist of the era, was the founder of the *Seito*-blue stocking-journal in 1911 that led the fight for women's rights in a self-governing society of women. Hiratsuka was also inspired by Buddhist traditions, especially the new religion of Omoto Sect, and argued for a return to nature. But she also challenged the traditionalist norms of society by living openly with her lover, with whom she had two children. Her acts were viewed as sexual scandals by many imbued with the prudish morals of the Meiji Victorians. While some of her views were criticized as supportive of the nationalism of the Emperor ideology in later decades, she was a pioneer in promoting the rights of mothers and female workers. Her opening manifesto in the first issue of *Seito* in 1911, which declared that *In the Beginning Woman was the Sun*, became famous for its association of women with nature; it also suggested a reference to the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, the supreme deity of the Japanese native faith of Shinto (Tomida and Daniels 2005: 19–39).

In that same year, Japan witnessed the attempted assassination of the hallowed person of Emperor Meiji, who represented the success of Meiji progress. The Meiji government used the event to round up opposition figures, leading to the High Treason Trial of 1911 that resulted in twelve executions, including that of the socialist-anarchist Kotoku Shusui, based on circumstantial evidence; the court

records are still closed to public scrutiny to this day. Kotoku, who translated works by European and Russian anarchists, founded the anarchist movement in Japan and advocated direct action for future revolution. The trial served as a kind of Dreyfus Case in Japanese history, exposing the authoritarian character of the modern state machinery in Meiji Japan. Unlike the Dreyfus Case, however, it resulted in furthering the Meiji government's repression of free thought and politics through draconian measures that resulted in the widespread curtailment of the press, political organizations, and even religious orders. Mention of the event was taboo until the end of World War II (Notehelfer 1971).

While Meiji self-reliance was the mode of the early 1870s, by the 1880s and 1890s the new conservative mode in the upper echelons of the imperial government and the rise of Japanese nationalism led to an amalgamation of the early Victorian values with a convenient reinterpretation of "traditional" Confucian norms. This fusion resulted in the formulation of *Kokutai* – the nationalist ideology of imperial Japan that prescribed patriotic service and loyalty to the unbroken succession of the divine imperial line. The Meiji Japanese of the 1880s and 1890s constructed historical roots for modern society, just as the English often drew on constructions of the medieval period for their modern cultural forms, including the monarchy.

The *fin de siècle* of Meiji Japan therefore witnessed the rise of late nineteenth-century Meiji nationalism based on the *invented tradition* of an ideology, one that defined Japanese national identity as stemming from being a loyal subject of the modern Japanese empire in service of Emperor and country. The new nationalist turn in the educational system and a series of imperial rescripts to soldiers, students, and the public inculcated a return to Japanese Confucian and Shinto traditions. The government's authoritarian measures derived their legitimacy from the newly created cult of the imperial family as divine and the central focus of loyalty and duty (Gluck 1985; Esenbel 2011). At the turn of the century, Japanese leaders, confident of the modernity of their empire, constructed a new ideology of divine imperial rule, giving it the patina of antiquity through constructing ancient shrines and rituals (Gluck 1985: 73–101).

The Meiji *fin-de-siècle* generation of Japanese men and women had to learn to shift between the pro-Western stance of the early Meiji and the turn to an authoritarian, nationalist Japan depending on class and gender differences. The majority of Meiji men and women lived in a quasi-traditional agrarian economy and social environment. Some migrated to cities to work in the new factories in urban areas. Photographs of Japanese farmers around the turn of the century show them living very traditional existences, not so different to their Tokugawa parents. At the same time, the photographs of the working-class neighborhoods in Tokyo exposed the squalor of the unpaved, muddy streets and run-down, overcrowded living quarters (Esenbel 2011: 154–62).

It was largely the educated urban middle classes, and especially the new Meiji elite, who were in direct contact with the Western world: they faced the challenge of formulating modern life through negotiating the eclectic categories of the modern Meiji formula of *Wa* and *Yo*, representing Japanese tradition and Western styles. The modern Japanese individual's experience of the *fin de siècle* was determined by his or her success at shifting between the "pure Japanese *Wa*" and the "pure Western *Yo*" in dress, etiquette, home, and public domains – these were the dual categories

constructed by the process of the Meiji transformation and Japan's opening up to the global world (Esenbel 2011: 154–62). In fact, this dual formula of Japanese and Western components merging in the everyday lives of the modern Japanese survives today, a product of the *fin-de-siècle* Meiji desire to recapture the past that was destroyed by revolution and the long nineteenth century.

Thus the urban, *fin-de-siècle* Japanese populace aspired to master a hybrid cultural mix of modernity that made use of Japanese traditions (such as the newly designed kimono, Japanese rooms, or etiquette) together with the civilized forms of contemporary Europe in their everyday lives. The Japanese and the Western in one's modern self were also supposed to remain both separate and complementary: separate when it came to pure Japanese dress or pure Western dress, but complementary when united in the persona of the individual. The successful ability of an educated and cultured Japanese individual to make the smooth shift from one to the other category according to situational need assured Meiji elite men and women of *fin-de-siècle* cosmopolitanism (Esenbel 2011). As the anthropologist Takie Sugiyama Lebra notes, the men and women of the Meiji nobility were very much aware of the psychological challenges of this mandatory shift from "pure Japan" to "pure Western" modes of behavior. Members of the nobility confessed to feeling the psychological strains resulting from intellectual and emotional Westernization that came from their proximity to a Western style of cosmopolitanism in service of the empire (Lebra 1993, cited in Esenbel 1994: 161).

As a result, the typical *fin-de-siècle* Meiji young man hoped to combine a successful business career in a cosmopolitan setting, which meant the appropriate dose of Japanese national culture in a formally Westernized public identity. The life of young merchant Yamada Torajiro serves as an instructive example. An affable young man from Gumma prefecture close to Tokyo, he played an important role in beginning the informal diplomacy between the Japanese empire and the Ottoman empire. Yamada was a typical cosmopolitan Meiji individual whose writings, like that of contemporary Europeans, expressed a romantic fascination with the "exotic" Ottoman world of the Turks. He interpreted this through Japanese sensibilities.

Gumma prefecture was formerly the site of the small but prestigious Numata domain whose Daimyo (domain lord) was the close advisor to the Tokugawa Shoguns. Yamada was the son of an old, upper-class samurai family of the Numata domain that had lost status during the Meiji era. Though trained as the traditional master of an ancient school of tea ceremony, Yamada succeeded in the business world through venturing into commercial relations with the Ottomans. Although the Ottoman world was on the periphery of the West, the imperial capital Istanbul was a major stop for Japanese dignitaries participating in the "grand tour" culture of the era. Yamada arrived in Istanbul in 1892 and stayed there for close to twenty years. He became part of the cosmopolitan culture of the city that was the gateway between Europe and Asia and helped pioneer the international trade between the Ottoman empire and Japan. Young Yamada successfully served as the intermediary between the Tokyo and Istanbul authorities in lieu of formal diplomatic relations between the two nations (Esenbel 2011: 239–50).

Typical of his generation, Yamada combined the old and the new in his background. He was educated in the new schools that taught French and English after some classical schooling in Japan. In his photographs, Yamada carried himself

with the refinement that perhaps reflected the pathos of having once belonged to a samurai aristocratic family of the ancient regime. Ever the resourceful helper of Japanese visitors to the Ottoman empire, Yamada's ventures in Istanbul are typical of the *fin-de-siècle* global economy. Doing business over areas that included Russia, Europe, and Indo China as well as Japan, Yamada communicated with the local Turks and the European business community in French and Turkish. While a pragmatic businessman, in his writings about Istanbul and Turkey Yamada also expressed the romantic vision of the nineteenth century that was fascinated with the "East" – but in this case from a modern Japanese perspective that claimed to have a special affinity and sympathy with the exotic Turks. Like many other Meiji Japanese globe-trotters, in Istanbul Yamada and his business partner Nakamura Kenjiro benefited from the new technological web of transportation that greatly reduced the travel time around the globe. Yamada often traveled with the Lloyd Company steam ship of London, Nippon Yusen Shipping of Japan, and the Trans-Siberian Railway trains to go back and forth to Japan. During the Russo-Japanese War, Yamada used the telegraph service of European post offices from Istanbul to send intelligence information to Minister Makino Nobuaki in the Japanese Legation of Vienna on the Russian Volunteer Black Sea Fleet (Esenbel 2011: 130–47).

Yamada's collection of hundreds of photographs form a remarkably rich collection that portrays his international career, especially the long years spent in the Ottoman empire. The photographs and the postcard designs show the aesthetic views of a *fin-de-siècle* Meiji Japan that reflect the naturalistic, romantic, and abstract designs of global *fin-de-siècle* tastes. His collection of postcards reminds us of how they served as the transnational means of communication in modern tourism. During the Russo-Japanese War, postcards from friends informed Yamada about the war front no less than more personal matters.

At the turn of the century, new semi-governmental associations promoted Japanese Pan-Asianist currents, which served the geo-strategic interests of the Japanese Imperial General Staff of the Army. These associations engaged in sharp criticism of Victorian Japan. The *fin de siècle* witnessed a new Japanese nationalism in politics, which was often expressed by militant circles in opposition parties. It was also expressed by many within the second generation of the Meiji Japanese, who not only opposed the unequal treaties of 1858 that had compromised the sovereignty of Japan, but were also strongly critical of the fascination with Westernization, a trend that was notable among the urban elite inner circles of the government who had upheld the enlightenment policies of the early Meiji aura of reforms. For the nationalists, the cosmopolitan airs of *fin-de-siècle* life represented social and cultural decadence, "aping western fashions" and the loss of the true spirituality of Japanese traditions. Emboldened by successful reforms and military might, the Japanese public increasingly demanded that the Meiji government oppose the Western powers – especially Russia, which was widely seen as the primary foe of the empire. The Japanese public and media became increasingly nationalistic, fueled in part by the sudden successes of the new Army and Navy in the 1895 victory over Qing China as well as the dramatic victory against Romanov Russia (a "whiteman's empire"). The performance of the Japanese military against that of Russia sealed Japan's status as a great power. The Kokuryukai Black Dragon Society, established in 1901, demanded that Japan lead an Asian nationalist revolution against the Western empires, particularly Russia.

Britain also bore the brunt of Asianist opposition, which would also strengthen the future of imperial Japan's drive to be the new leader of Asia. The Meiji reforms that had constructed the Western-style regime of the Restoration had now come full circle, with a new generation of Asianists such as Uchida Ryohei, the Chairman of the Black Dragons, and idealist members such as Miyazaki Toten, who fought in the Chinese Nationalist Revolution of 1911 against the Qing dynasty.

The Black Dragons and their Asianist activists moved into the twentieth century, confident that Japan's imperial destiny would emancipate Asia from the yoke of European colonial empires. These nationalist activists hoped to replace the pro-Western, liberal vision of the early Meiji reforms, citing Oswald Spengler's ominous prediction of the Decline of the West in 1918 (Saaler and Szpilman 2011). The enthusiasm of the Meiji *fin de siècle* ended with the defiance of the Pan-Asianist expansionist vision against the West. The early twentieth-century history of Japan followed that tragic course.

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THE MIDDLE EAST

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Jens Hanssen

The *fin-de-siècle* framework and Middle East history seems – at first glance – an incompatible pair. Muslims', Christians' and Jews' daily lives are structured by a multiplicity of calendars in which the lunar year of Islam competed with a number of alternative calculations of time: the year 1900 in the Gregorian calendar corresponded to 1317 *hijri* and to 1315 in the *maliyye* year of the Ottoman fiscal calculation; it was the year 5660 in the Jewish and 6649 in the Assyrian calendars. Moreover, the religious festivities that were celebrated on different days within Muslim and Christian communities also articulated competing temporalities in the towns and cities of the Middle East around 1900 (Hanssen 2010). Despite this communal heterogeneity, forces of temporal homogenization and spatial differentiation were at work in the nineteenth century that generated an epochal consciousness above and beyond the mosaic of communal chronological frames.

This chapter is animated by the question of what a metropolitan paradigm of high modernity can offer towards understanding a semi-colonized region of the world that has endured much more than enjoyed the cultural products of the *fin de siècle* enumerated in this volume. One invidious, systematic and lasting Orientalist representation occurred in the "thriving *fin-de-siècle* marketplace of popular fiction" which produced Sherlock Holmes and other imperial Gothic novels like Rider Haggard's *She* and Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of the Seven Stars* (Selim 2012). They bestowed Egypt with the enduring stereotypes of recidivist priests, lascivious queens and vengeful pharaohs inflicting apocalyptic punishment upon Western civilization that have been perpetuated *ad nauseam* by Hollywood (Shaheen 2001). Cultural imperialism thrived in the *fin-de-siècle* milieu (Said 1993). But the story would be incomplete if we stopped our investigations there. For example, an ingenious Arabic adaptation of one Egyptophobic novel was serialized in Cairo's *fin-de-siècle* press and converted the story of imperial anxiety into a nationalist tale of the Egyptian avenger. (Selim 2012, 21–39)

If, as Timothy Mitchell has cogently argued, modernity was a synchronic phenomenon that crystallized at the intersection between the West and the non-West (Mitchell 1999), then the *fin de siècle* ushered in a global shattering of epistemological certainties. Perhaps no single European intellectual personified this

fundamental reorientation of the moral and aesthetic compass more disturbingly than Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche sought inspiration outside the Western philosophical canon in a vain attempt to transcend the good and evil dichotomy in European civilizational thought. In his most iconic work, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883) he identified this pre-Islamic Persian prophet as the source and epitome of the life-affirming eternal recurrence, the contingency of supposedly universal values and the auto-emancipatory will to power. In his subsequent work, most notably *The Anti-Christ*, he launched his assault on Christian "docility" and European "decadence" by a strategic valorization of Islam as master-morality (Almond 2011, ch. 8). Nietzsche's Islamophilia drew on a few Wahhabi texts and a misreading of Islam as a medieval and manly religion void of any spirituality whose approach merely inverted the negative stereotypes of the Orientalism into positive ones (Orsucci 1996, 199–204). Nietzsche mobilized his twisted understanding of the virtue of Islam as a "barometer of difference" to measure German boorishness, self-righteous European fads of progress and equality, and "life-denying" Christianity (Nietzsche 2005, 63).

Nietzsche's maverick musings on Islam did not stick in Europe although, as we shall see, the idea of an authentic alterity was not far from the *salafi* reformist discourse in the *fin-de-siècle* Middle East. But what is perhaps his most apt concept for the political culture and intellectual history of the global *fin de siècle* is the notion of "transvaluation of all values." Nietzschean transvaluation attempted to convert meek acquiescence to suffering, stigma and anxiety – western(ized) decadence, social alienation, or cultural backwardness – into power-seeking, discriminatory intellectual dispositions and ideological movements. Social Darwinism, New Imperialism, pan-Hellenism, pan-Islamism, pan-Asianism and Zionism all shared these dispositions. It is in this sense that I adopt Hannah Arendt's periodization of the three decades before World War I as a distinct historical unit which "began with the scramble for Africa and ended with the birth of the [German and Slavic] pan-movements" and which she viewed as "continental imperialism." At the same time, overseas empire's like Great Britain "drew a sharp line between colonial methods and normal domestic policies, thereby avoiding with considerable success the feared boomerang effect of imperialism in the homecountry." (Arendt 1976, 123, 155)

FROM THE PEARL OF PALESTINE TO THE PARIS OF THE CARIBBEAN

In 1317h (1900/01), the municipality of Jaffa – picturesque port-city and Palestinian intellectual hub – celebrated the opening of a new clock tower. Built in new Ottoman style and local material, it was an impressive structure. The carefully choreographed opening ceremonies in Jaffa and other towns and cities where similar clock towers popped up simultaneously marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of Sultan Abdülhamid II's reign. The burgeoning Arabic newspapers of the day treated these Ottoman clock towers, some of which displayed both Islamic and Western time, as beacons of modernity that infused the people with pride of place and a sense of progress (Hanssen 2005).

Port-cities like Beirut and Jaffa represented the hybrid modernity of the Levant that elicited – as I will argue – much anxiety in the West and the East. One *fin-de-siècle* east-west nomad who has made both cities her home was the Zanzibari

princess Emily Ruete, née Sayyida Salme bint Sa'id (1844–1924). The French press hailed her as an "author of the World" for her autobiography of 1886. *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess* – probably the first by an Arab woman – was a tale of elopement with a Hamburg merchant, conversion to Christianity, pan-Islamic sentiments, assimilation to German culture but also of alienation, racism in Europe and stigmatization in East Africa. She found solace in the Levant, the place that resolved the many contradictions she had accumulated over the course of her life. Here she was "offered the opportunity to live *within* the two worlds that she knew so well, not simply *between* them as she had for decades." (Prestholt 2014)

The Ottoman government had other reasons to celebrate the *fin de siècle*. The Tanzimat reforms at mid-century had stopped provincial governors' habits of marching onto their rivals' capitals and the last pockets of outlaw rebellion had been quelled in the Eastern Mediterranean to inaugurate what Engin Akarli dubbed "the long peace." (Akarli 1993) Moreover, the Ottoman empire witnessed a remarkable state-led, defensive modernization drive since state bankruptcy in 1875 had effectively put the state into receivership, and the Congress of Berlin of the same year took away most of the empire's European possessions (Blumi 2011). By the 1890s, agricultural and sericultural production recovered from the crippling fiscal controls of the Public Debt Administration imposed by the concert of Europe (Quataert 2000). Ottoman bureaucracy extended deeper than ever before into subjects' everyday lives. Cities and towns absorbed more and more people and nomads were forced to settle (Kasaba 2009). Public security improved and state education began to challenge the European and American missionary schools (Fortna 2001). Railways and telegraph lines connected Istanbul to Paris, Baghdad and Mekka, leading to what one scholar aptly called "instant communications" across the Middle East (Rogan 1998). Port enlargement projects invited international shipping to the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean. The new harbour fronts in Alexandria, Izmir and Beirut, in particular, became relay station for the incorporation of the capitalist world-economy into the Ottoman empire where imported commodities and exported materiel crossed over and where banks and insurance companies settled, and the leisured classes perambulated (Hanssen 2010).

Many Ottomans, especially the well-situated notable families, identified with Sultan Abdülhamid II's modernization drive. The walls and ceilings of the court-yard mansions in Damascus, for example, were adorned with paintings of the Ottoman technological icons of the age: steamships passing the gardens along the Bosphorus, locomotives speeding across bridges and bi-planes floating over the Damascus skyline (Weber 2002). Many walls also depicted Parisian scenes, including the house of the French president who had crushed the Paris Commune in 1871, Adolphe Thiers. Most enigmatically of all, a ceiling in the guest quarters of one mansion depicted the volcanic eruption of Mt. Pelée in Martinique in 1902. This catastrophe which buried alive over 30,000 inhabitants of St. Pierre, cultural capital of the island – dubbed "the Paris of the Caribbean" – became an instant news sensation and a harbinger of apocalypticism around the globe (Gordon and Witts 1969). Arabic newspapers reported on it only a few weeks after the eruption. For our Damascene family who commissioned the painting, perhaps this natural disaster was a reminder of the fleetingness of material progress and human happiness. The Red Crescent steamship in

Figure 17.1   Wall-painting of Mt. Pelée earthquake, Martinique, 1902, in Ulabi House, Old City, Damascus. Photographer: Stefan Weber, Collection Stefan Weber. Courtesy of Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

the bottom right of the painting suggests that it was also an expression of the Ottoman humanitarian spirit and of solidarity with distant victims.

A LIBERAL AGE

In a collection of poetic portraits of contemporary Ottoman, Arab and European public figures – reminiscent of William Hazlitt's *The Spirit of the Age* of 1825 – Khalil al-Khuri, the editor of Beirut's first privately funded newspaper *Hadiqat al-Akhbar*, hailed the general awareness of the coming of "the new age" (Khuri 1863). This sense of being part of a distinct epoch and modern times that Khuri's *al-'Asr al-jadid* and the Damascene wall- and ceiling paintings invoked, acquired the Arabic sobriquet "*al-nahda al-'arabiyya.*" Translated literally as "rising-up," the Nahda came to be scripted as cultural trope of "cultural renaissance" in 1892, by the time Jurji Zaydan wrote paradigmatically of "the latest Egyptian Awakening" in his journal *al-Hilal* (Zaydan 1892).

Wide-ranging social and linguistic reform efforts raised expectations among the enlightened and well-educated that the Nahda would live up to and revive the classical Arabic literary heritage. This epoch has become characterized as the liberal age since Albert Hourani published his magisterial *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798 – 1939* (1962) in large measure due to the emergence of printing presses, translation projects, literary associations and schools, as well as the proliferation of newspapers and magazines throughout the Middle East.

In the 1890s, a women's press emerged out of the first female social gatherings and literary associations. The career of Esther Azari, who was born into one of Beirut's moderate-income Sephardi families in 1873, was both exceptional and representative of the sense of "women's awakening" or *Nahdat al-Nisa'* as she called the association she founded in 1896. Educated like many of the brightest Arab boys and girls at the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut, she soon contributed articles to Zaydan's *al-Hilal* and Sarruf's *al-Muqtataf* in Cairo, and translated French novels for Hind Nawfal's *al-Fatat* magazine for "young ladies." She moved to Istanbul where her husband and fellow Syrian Protestant College graduate, Shim'on Moyal, obtained his Ottoman medical license. There they befriended the Egyptian satirist 'Abdallah Nadim who was visiting Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, who was, as we shall see, one of the key *fin-de-siècle* figures in the Middle East. When they moved to Egypt in time to participate in newspaper discussions of the Dreyfus Affair and the controversy generated by Qasim Amin's *The Liberation of Women*, she dedicated herself to editing her own journal and her translations and biography of her intellectual hero, Émile Zola (Behar and Benite 2013, 30–47). After the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, the Moyals moved to Jaffa where they were preoccupied with promulgating an Arabic Haskala under the umbrella of Ottomanism whose crowning expression of Sephardi identity was the Moyals' Arabic translation project of the Talmud (Gribetz 2010).

Two Arabic publications were particularly hotly debated in the press in 1900 and had a lasting impact. The first, *Lughat al-jara'id* was a scathing assault on "newspaper speak" and penned by Ibrahim al-Yaziji, journalist, grammarian and son of one of the formative figures of the Nahda's mid-century literary revival. The Nahda's print revolution had transformed Arabic from a sublime language of infinite associations and allusions that gave erudite listeners and readers heightened sensual experience to a mechanical medium of conveying and embodying reform messages. And worst of all, this reformed Arabic was full of grammatical errors and orthographical mistakes. (Sheehi 2004, 109) His fellow Syrian émigré in Cairo, Jurji Zaydan, likely realized that Yaziji's was an attack on his project of reaching a mass audience with his journal and popular novels of Arab and Islamic history. But Zaydan was not just interested in expanding the market for his literary oeuvre by simplifying Arabic. He cultivated the modern Arabic language for ideological reasons. He was concerned that the vernacularization of Arabic – advocated in some colonial corners – would lead to a political and cultural fragmentation of the Arabo-Ottoman world and inhibit national aspirations (Hanssen 2014).

The second publication at the time was Qasim Amin's controversial *The Liberation of Women* (1899). The seclusion of women and polygamy, Amin (1863–1908) argued, may have made sense during times of war and tribal raids; "we are now in an age, however, when people trust one another and social order has been established." (Amin 2000, 152) A French-trained, Egyptian lawyer, Amin – like many Arab and Muslim modernists before and after him – was caught in an intellectual bind: as a proud Egyptian he rejected racist claims of cultural inferiority by enumerating Islam's past achievements. But in the process, he adopted the very family values Western detractors deemed lacking in Egypt and the wider Muslim world. Much of the controversy centred on his chapter on "Women and the Veil" in which he invoked shari'a law to prove that unveiled women were not imitating the

West but rather embodied a long-lost Islamic tradition. The book was hardly radical by *fin-de-siècle* standards. Any emancipation of women was in the service of the family, the children, the nation and the spirit of the age. The new Muslim woman was free "to progress [through] independence of thought, will, and action, as long as this does not exceed legal limits *and maintains the moral standards of society.*" (Amin 2000, 130, my italics).

The individual woman's rights to choose her own husband, her right to divorce, her right to education, to property and ultimately to vote, came with social responsibilities, evidence of maturity and obligations to themselves, to fellow women, to their families and their nation (Baron 2005). The way Amin framed evolution and freedom would have been familiar to British liberals like Charles Darwin and John Stuart Mill, whom he admired. But outside the anxious elite discourses about civilizational deficits, lower-class women had long defended their rights in the shari'a courts or participated in local protests and peasant rebellions. The growth of the Egyptian state in the nineteenth century reduced this room to manoeuvre and the British occupation in 1882 ushered in a nationalist cult of domesticity. Under colonial liberalism, women grew increasingly dependent on family support and "completely alienated – by language, culture, and experience, as well as gender – from the state apparatus." (Tucker 1985, 196)

AN AGE OF REVOLUTIONS

Widening economic disparities between urban and rural populations and within cities brought about subversive, transnational movements towards the end of the nineteenth century. While Young Turk intellectuals plotted revolution in Paris and Geneva, European anarchists escaped state persecution in Alexandria where they mingled with Syrian radicals avoiding Sultan Abdülhamid II's secret police (Khuri-Makdisi 2010). The large Ottoman public works and infrastructural projects produced a Middle Eastern proletariat of sorts which by the 1890s engaged in industrial action for better working conditions and mobilized against European investment companies, especially in port-cities (Quataert 2000; Beinin and Lockman 1988).

However, the first in a series of *fin-de-siècle* revolutions in the Middle East broke out in Iran in 1906 following a series of foreign concession scandals, the most notorious of which granted the British the right to exploit prospective oil reserves over most of Iran in 1901. Iran became a coveted site for European capitalists in the mid 19th century, as the Qajjar court sold state lands to associated urban businessmen while it auctioned off key sectors of agriculture, industry and infrastructure to British, Belgian and Russian companies. Wide-spread domestic opposition led, *inter alia*, by one Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–97) forced the government to rescind the sweeping Reuter Concession of 1872, in which the shah had granted the London-based entrepreneur Julius de Reuter the monopoly on Iran's infrastructural and industrial development capacities in a short-sighted attempt to stem his court's cash flow problems.

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani was to become a pivotal *fin-de-siècle* figure in Middle East and wider Asian politics. An Iranian Shia with unorthodox views, Masonic proclivities and insurrectionary tendencies, he acquired his anti-imperialism during his stay in India at the time of the Mutiny of 1857. Travels to Afghanistan, Russia

and Istanbul followed before he emerged in Cairo to agitate – with his British friend Wilfred Blunt – against British control in the prelude to the Urabi Revolt of 1881. That year, he refashioned himself as a pan-Islamist thinker with the publication of his widely read *Refutation of the Materialists*. In it, he dismissed the gamut of naturalist and materialist philosophy, from Epicurus to Rousseau, Voltaire and Darwin, as corroding humanity and as "sectarian" threats to social harmony and order. Communism and socialism claimed to speak in the name of the poor and downtrodden, but in fact they merely advocated shamelessness, trustworthiness and free reign of passions (Keddie 1968, 21–23, 73–84).

The unity and self-rule of the Muslim community became al-Afghani's over-arching political project. He espoused a vitalist and romantic understanding of Islam rather than the conventional theological or legal concepts (al-Azmeh 1993, ch. 2). During his exile in Paris in the 1880s, he mentored and politicized the foremost Egyptian reformer of Islam, Muhammad 'Abduh, in the art of anti-imperialist pamphleteering. In a famous response in the *Journal des Débats*, he challenged Ernest Renan on his Arabophobe lecture "L'islamisme et la science," in 1883. Significantly, he did so by accepting the false premise that science and reason marked Europe's current superiority over Muslims before reminding Renan of the debt medieval Europe owed to the Arab renaissance. Oblivious to the Europeans' debt to plantation slavery and capitalism, al-Afghani concluded that it did not logically follow that, even though unenlightened Muslim rulers and scholars had stifled free scientific inquiry in the recent past, a universal Islamic regeneration would be possible (Keddie 1968, 181–87, Massad 2007, 13–14).

Japan's victory against the Czar's army and the Russian revolution of 1905 inspired uprisings across Asia and radicalized the reformist oppositions in the Ottoman empire and in Iran (Kurzman 2008). In Tehran and Tabriz, in particular, societies of learning and grassroot councils (*anjuman*s) paved the way for a nation-wide constitutionalist movement that included the breadth of the Iranian demographic and ideological spectrum: Azeri, Georgian, Armenian, Azali Babis, freemasons, social democrats, pan-Islamists, liberals and guild leaders (Afary 1996, 33–50). In the month of Muharram of 1905, the Tehran shopkeepers went on strike following senior clerics' calls for an end to Belgian domination over Iranian customs and tariffs. More and more protesters sought sanctuary in mosques and the holy city of Qom before 14,000 subalterns famously camped in hundreds of tents in the gardens of the British legation in Tehran in the summer of 1906 (Afary 1996, 55).

The ailing Shah Muzaffer grudgingly acceded to the creation of a constitution and the elections produced a national consultative assembly in August 1906. It curbed the powers of the shah, introduced government accountability, and reined in the foreign loans and concessions business (Afary 1996, 63). The constitutional era gave Iran a tumultuous parliament, a vibrant satirical press and women's councils. Even though the Iranian democratic experiment was ultimately defeated by British and Russian interventions in 1911, the revolution itself was riddled with contradictions that were already visible in al-Afghani's *Refutation*. Political interests diverged between the "revolutionary north" and the "messianic south," clerics and secularists, merchants and socialists (Bayat 1982). Socialists, especially in Tabriz, pushed for direct councils akin to Lenin's idea of soviets, while the Shia clergy appealed for moderation and insisted on consultative precepts of Islamic political theory.

By comparison, the seeds for the Young Turk Revolution were planted in networks of clandestine cells which eventually merged into the more tightly organized party structure of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in 1906. Young Turks passionately debated the first constitution of 1876; closely studied the pitfalls of the French revolution; and analysed the Iranian constitutional movement. They saw in Japan's victory over the Czar's army a vindication of "eastern civilization" as a whole. It was proof that a parliamentary system, such as the Meiji restoration of 1868 had granted the Japanese, required a strong military in order to catch up with Europe. The broad popular base of the Russian revolution of 1905, in turn, appealed to Ottoman intellectuals who were as weary of military coups and constitutionalism from above as they were of European intervention and the disintegration of the empire along ethnic lines (Sohrabi 2002).

The Young Turk Revolution was planned by officers of the Third Army who were stationed in Manastir, Kosovo and Salonica. What started as a military mutiny in Macedonia triggered a popular rebellion. Their demands that the Ottoman parliament of 1876–78 be reconvened brought euphoric crowds into Istanbul's Grande Rue de Pera and other streets and squares. Sultan Abdülhamid II conceded to the popular demands and sacked his reviled entourage. He avoided deposition himself until after a botched counter-coup a year later. The empire-wide parliamentary elections energized Ottoman citizens of all stripes. But the second constitutional period was undermined by a coup d'état in 1913 that swept to power a triumvirate within the ruling Committee of Union and Progress following the loss of Libya to Italy and the secession of Albania and Macedonia in the Balkan War (Yavuz and Blumi 2013).

THE COLONIAL "BOOMERANG": FROM COMMON HUMANITY TO RACIST ANXIETY

In the earliest study to employ the *fin-de-siècle* paradigm to the Middle East, Edmund Burke III identified the period between 1890 and 1914 as the first crisis of the humanities in France and the birth of modern Orientalism. These developments were caused in large measure by the political assertiveness of the peoples on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean (Burke 1984, 213–26). Neither docile nor decadent, fatalistic nor fanatical, Arabs, Turks and Iranians seemed to be escaping in large numbers the categories that European culture and science had assigned to them. A few British liberals, like Wilfrid Blunt in Egypt, recognized Muslim aspirations and supported the Middle Eastern revolutionary movements of the *fin de siècle*. Some French Orientalists saw them as a great victory for France, where many Middle Eastern activists hatched their insurrectionary plans in exile. The "springtime of the Muslim peoples" was seen as a vindication of French spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity at a time when this revolutionary legacy was threatened by conservatism and antisemitism at home (Burke 1984).

European solidarity with emancipation movements abroad was limited. Rural anticolonial uprisings and attempts at independent state-building in the Middle East were brutally crushed and led to colonial occupations that lasted until the 1950s. The messianic Mahdiyya movement, which defeated the British army in 1885, maintained an independent Sudan for years before the slaughter of Omdurman in 1898, where British proto-type machine guns mowed down as many as 10,000 Sudanese armed

with spears and shields. Winston Churchill, a young officer who participated in the massacre, conjured up divine intervention: this "battle" had been "the most signal triumph ever gained by the arms of science over barbarians," while Kipling was moved to compose an ode to "the white man's burden" (Lindqvist 1996, 67–68).

For their part, many Egyptian nationalists embraced the British civilizing mission in the Anglo-Egyptian condominium of Sudan (Troutt Powell 2003). In Libya, the tribal Sanussiyya movement fought the Europeans for a decade before the Italians' aerial bombardment – another first in military history – paved the way for occupation in 1911 (Ahmida 2009, 73–102). In rural Morocco, the Hafziyya insurrection of 1907–08 gave Moroccans a brief respite from French assimilationist policies (Miller 2013, 76–87). But in 1912, Marshal Lyautey established a French protectorate whose colonial rule revolutionized urban design in the metropole and the colonies alike (Rabinow 1989, ch. 9). Lyautey's paternalistic approach also godfathered the League of Nations Mandate system after World War I (Khoury 1987, ch. 3).

Europe's encounter with the Middle East contributed to the growing levels of cultural pessimism and produced the promiscuous exoticism of André Gide, the disenchantment of Max Weber and Oswald Spengler's despair at the decline of the West. Pseudo-sciences, like phrenology and eugenics, emerged as an attempt to master the "dangerously 'restless' and 'advancing' peoples" of the East. Contact with the East was deemed as a demographic threat to Europe and talk of the "colonization" of France by large numbers of Mediterraneans led to apocalyptical visions (Bayly 2002, 286). Within this atmosphere, European liberals sought out moderate Muslims and Arabs to prove that "they" are just like "us" and to parade them in their struggle against metropolitan racism.

As a response to the stirrings and awakenings in the Middle East, Orientalist institutions like the *Revue du Monde Musulman* (1906) in France, the *Moslem World* (1911) in the United States and *Die Welt des Islams* (1913) in Germany produced generally sympathetic scholarship on contemporary Muslim culture. These were exceptions in the growing sea of Islamophobia. Much as the Entente powers talked up conspiracy theories of a secret pan-Islamic, Asiatic fraternity poised to defeat the West (most notoriously in John Buchan's best-selling *Greenmantle* of 1916) and much as the Germans tried to incite the Ottomans to wage *jihad* for them, no anti-Western uprising materialized during the Great War (Lüdke 2005).

TRANSVALUATION OF ISLAM: FROM INTERNAL CRITICISM TO CULTURE WAR

The critical interventions of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani had bequeathed two *fin-de-siècle* movements of regeneration that confidently sought remedies for the apparent decline of Islam: pan-Islamism and Islamic modernism – or Muslim reformism. They overlapped in the works of some particularly influential *fin-de-siècle* public intellectuals, most notably Rashid Rida (1865–1935), but their diagnostic emphasis differed. For Pan-Islamists the problem was a question of numbers: European imperialism was able to impose its will on Muslims because the modern *umma* was fragmented. The priority was, therefore, to unify Muslims under strong leadership (Aydin 2007). Muslim scholars and journalists, like the charismatic Egyptian nationalist Mustafa Kamil (1874–1908), began to invoke *The Rising East* (1905,

Hourani 1962, 205); some travelled across the Indian Ocean to establish pan-Islamic and pan-Asian networks, like the Azhar-trained, Georgian polyglot Hajji Muhammad Ali (Bayly 2002, 307); others joined the armed resistance against the Dutch occupation of Java or the Italian invasion of Libya in 1911.

But pan-Islamists were more regularly mobilizing against Westernization in their own countries. In the Ottoman empire, European intervention and support for Christian subjects fuelled discontent against the Tanzimat reforms which were perceived as breaking the bonds of Islamic solidarity by appeasing the West and favouring non-Muslims. Sultan Abdülhamid II re-established national sovereignty, and his inner circle of pan-Islamic Sufis and well-connected Levantine career bureaucrats became the headquarters of the Ottoman version of the *fin-de-siècle's* New Imperialism at home and abroad (Hanssen, 2011).

In contrast, al-Afghani's project of cultural autopsy shaped Islamic modernism. It also addressed the *umma* as a whole but was more concerned with the quality than the quantity of believers, more with theological *tawhid* – the unity of god and the sin of saint-worship – than with political *wahda* – the administration of the community of Muslims in one state or by one government. Modernists around Muhammad 'Abduh (1849–1905, Haj 2009) in Cairo, Tahir al-Jaza'iri (1851–1920, Escovitz 1986) in Damascus and Shukri al-Alusi (1856–1924, Fattah 2003) in Baghdad were engaged in a reform programme of internal criticism. The over-arching question was how to improve contemporary Islam without sacrificing its sublime qualities. What started out as a theological debate soon encompassed law, morality, the entire bio-political spectrum of social analysis and the very basis of religious and political authority.

The tumultuous career of Rashid Rida illuminates the gradual convergence of reformism, Salafism and pan-Islamism. Born into a family with a reputation of piety and noble birth in Tripoli, Syria, Rida was schooled and licensed by the renowned Darwinist Sufi scholar Husayn al-Jisr (Elshakry 2014). He became an avid reader of al-Afghani's and 'Abduh's Parisian pamphlets *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa* and sought their patronage. In 1897, he followed 'Abduh to Cairo where he quickly established *al-Manar*, the journalistic voice of the Islamic reform movement. 'Abduh himself came to distrust political passions and withdrew into his position of Mufti of British Egypt where he set about redefining the Islamic canon through *qiyyas* – a method of rational analogy – with a view to accommodate the exigencies of the modern state. That the state in question was a colonial entity mattered less to 'Abduh than to the pan-Islamists.

Rida was neither politically as unconventional as al-Afghani nor theologically as sound as 'Abduh. Yet, after 'Abduh's death in 1905, he fashioned himself as their intellectual heir even as he undertook a systematic transvaluation of the Islamic legal canon (Dallal 2000). Rida unplugged al-Afghani's romantic, vitalistic syncreticism and 'Abduh's syncretic reasoning to pursue an Islamic politics of cultural purity (al-Azmeh 1993, ch. 2). Rida pursued the reform discourse of his mentors which he pegged to an inflated and simplistic notion of *al-maslaha al-'amma* – "the public interest" or "common good." Even though this Islamic legal concept predated the emergence of the centralizing states of the nineteenth century (Opwis 2005), in the journalistic pen of Rida it became the "first and foremost mechanism [of deliberation] by which the modern 'Salafi turn' was effected . . . and allow him to expand Islam's jurisprudence into 'all aspects of life.'" (Hamzah 2012, 106)

Rida embraced many shifting political causes. Having co-founded the Ottoman Society for Constitutional Government before the Young Turk Revolution, he quickly grew disenchanted by the CUP's "Turkification" policies and joined Arab federalists. During the Great War, he supported Sharif Husayn's Arab Revolt against the Ottomans before railing against the Hashemites for their collusion with the British. After Atatürk's abolition of the caliphate in 1924 and the Wahhabi conquest of Mecca in 1926, he became a dedicated pan-Islamist, a spokesperson for Ibn Sa'ud and a sectarian polemicist against Shias, Copts and Jews.

Neither the Muslim *islahi*s nor the *salafi*s were traditionalists or conservatives, both of whom they vehemently attacked as brainless imitators responsible for the *umma*'s apparent decline. But the so-called "imitators" began to mobilize against the "modernizers" in the 1900s. Their most prolific representative was Yusuf al-Nabhani. Al-Nabhani (1849–1932) was the chief judge at the Court of Justice in Beirut during Abdülhamid II's reign and a passionate polemicist against the modern age in general and European cultural encroachment in particular. In his *Shawahid al-Haqq fi al-Istighatha bi Sayyid al-Khalq* (1905), he expressed his aversion to the *salafi* creed, in both its Wahhabi and reformist varieties. Their internal criticism would not only weaken Muslim unity and play into the hands of European imperialists, it also stigmatized the time-honoured Sufi practice of saint-worship, dream interpretation and spiritual performance. (Ghazal forthcoming) Rida used his *al-Manar* to delegitimize al-Nabhani's credentials while Shukri al-Alusi responded from Baghdad to brand al-Nabhani as a lowly Sufi heretic (Fattah 2003).

Conservatives and Sufis were by no means "luddites." Like the liberal reformers and the salafists, the *mutadayyinun* – or self-proclaimed upholders of the pious tradition – realized the power of the printing press. In post-revolutionary Damascus, for example, a group of avowed traditionalists founded *al-Haqa'iq*, a pugnacious newspaper which sought to challenge *al-Manar*'s campaign of denunciation, represent their worldview and expose the *islahi*s' and *salafi*s' moral and cultural corruption (Gelvin 2012). What started out as a wave of internal criticism at the beginning of the *fin de siècle* expanded into a full-out culture war towards the end. Two particular phenomena characterize this development. First, the purveyors of unadulterated Islam did not reason outside the *fin-de-siècle* dialectic of civilization and barbarism, degeneration and regeneration. Second, the "culture war" was internal to the orthodox tradition and did not pit Sunnis against Shias or other non-Sunnis as seems to become the hallmark of the start of this millennium. On the contrary, Iranian *marja'iyya*, Indian *deobandis* and 'Ibadi scholars from Zanzibar invested time and money in the various reform projects of the age (Zaman 2012, Ghazal 2010, 62–64).

DISCOURSES OF DEGENERATION AND REGENERATION

At the root of all these ostensibly religious debates was a general anxiety about the pace and direction of change in the Middle East at the *fin de siècle*, rocked as it was by rapid urbanization, revolutions, nationalist ferment, rural uprisings and industrial action. This anxiety was not limited to the Muslim culture war but permeated the second generation of the Arab Nahda. As early as 1880, Nahda intellectuals warned against the social dangers of laziness in an epoch of ever tougher world-wide

competition. Jurji Zaydan made public morality one of *al-Hilal*'s mantras. In the medical vocabulary of the age, he spoke of social vices like excessive consumption of coffee and tobacco, hogging in coffeehouses, gambling and prostitution. Places of leisure were dens of social and cultural degeneration. The popular Karagöz, or shadow play, evenings were a contagious social disease while nights at the Cairo Opera were a morally uplifting cultural panacea (Hanssen 2002).

Public morality came to be a defining feature of how *fin-de-siècle* intellectuals in the Middle East imagined class distinctions. The Egyptian working class, in particular, came to be both formed and contained (Lockman 1994). In 1911, Zaydan penned a brief history of working classes from ancient Greece to contemporary Egypt in *al-Hilal*. He extolled the national virtues of the Egyptian worker from the perspective of the benevolent entrepreneur who believed hard work would be a sign of national vitality and defeat European stereotypes. Workers' rights were best represented by the magnanimous state and not the budding unions. Unlike Egyptian nationalists who had come to make common cause with striking workers after the Cairo Stock Exchange crash in 1907, Zaydan still deemed industrial action as "extremist" and a counter-productive luxury to the national goal of regeneration and catch-up with Europe (Zaydan 1911).

The anxiety about stagnation and degeneracy was at work in the Nahda's construction of a historical canon. Zaydan was paranoid about the effect of the Abbasids' love-and-debauchery poetry on the youth of his day, and he censored Abu Nawwas and other poets who celebrated homosexuality and insinuated sex with minors. Public moralists like Zaydan exhibited a sort of double consciousness. The social and sexual deviance in the Arabic classics did not fit the image of Arabs that the Nahda wanted to project and only confirmed the Western stereotypes produced by European sex tourists like Gustave Flaubert and Victorian voyeurists like the translator of *The Arabian Nights*, Richard Burton. Arab civilization became as much a source of inspiration to be revived as a subversive cultural reservoir to be censored (Massad 2007, 9–11, 57–60).

The fear of degeneration was also a major impetus behind the Islamic reform project in the *fin de siècle*. Muhammad 'Abduh constructed modern Islam as a cultural bulwark against the tide of what he considered looming degeneracy caused by extreme traditionalism and hyper-Westernization among his contemporaries. Only the hybrid thought space between *taqlid* ("imitation") and *taghrib* ("estrangement" as well as "Westernization") would emancipate modern Muslims from the totality of both (Haj 2009). Anxious though they were, 'Abduh's and Zaydan's quest for balance contrasted sharply with European fear of degeneration.

ANTISEMITISM IN EUROPE; SETTLER COLONIALISM IN PALESTINE

Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1892) was emblematic of racist responses to cultural pessimism in Europe. An "assimilated" Austro-German Jew who moved with ease in the upper echelons of European capitals, Nordau (1849–1923) was the second most influential Zionist whose fame as a popular Social Darwinist, prolific journalist, polemical social critic and amateur psychologist gave the first World Zionist Organization's congress in 1897, which he helped his friend Herzl organize, its

cultural cache. In his lecture at Basel, he spoke of his desire for a "normal existence" for "healthy" Jews. More than any other Zionist of the *fin de siècle*, Nordau embodied the Nietzschean transvaluation that drove Zionists to pursue auto-emancipation out of Europe. Nordau envisaged Zionism to produce a Jewry of muscle which would transform both the "assimilated" and the ghettoized Jews of Europe from a "parasitic" diaspora into a "virile" and "disciplined nation" capable of colonizing and cultivating their own land. The only way and place for Jews to escape European degeneration, with its antisemitic spasms, was Palestine. A Jewish state in Palestine would regenerate "old Europe," overcome the ghetto and "*galut* mentality" of Jews, as well as the general "malaise of the fin de siècle" (Stanislawski 2001, 90–91, 241–43).

Some humanist intellectuals around Ahad Ha'am (1856–1927) and Martin Buber (1878–1965) promoted ideas of Jewish-Arab fraternity (Campos 2010). But they were soon side-lined as naïve and defeatist by labour Zionists and Zionist militants around Israel's "founding father" David Ben Gurion (1886–1973) and Vladimir Jabotinski (1880–1940), Nordau's erstwhile disciple and inspiration for Israel's right-wing Likud party. A cosmopolitan thinker, gifted translator and bon-vivant playwright from Odessa, Jabotinski's approach to Herzl's and Nordau's Zionism was the polar opposite of Ahad Ha'am's. Jabotinski was a will-to-power nationalist, less interested in Jewish Haskala – European or Arabic – or the spiritual dimension of Judaism. He took Nordau's new muscular Jew to its unapologetically bellicose conclusion. The goal of Zionism was to expand the boundaries of Europe "to the Euphrates," in his fanciful recollections (Stanislawski 2001). He acknowledged that "every indigenous people will resist alien settlers as long as they see any hope of ridding themselves of the danger of foreign settlement" but insisted that only after Arabs had accepted defeat would a dialogue be possible and desirable (Shlaim 2000, 11–16).

Arab intellectuals responded to this settler colonial threat with growing alarm. Leading Nahda figures like Esther Moyal, Jurji Zaydan and Rashid Rida understood the Jewish plight in Europe, had defended Dreyfus, admired Émile Zola, and abhorred the antisemitism of some European missionaries in the Levant (Haim 1955). The influential Cairo-based scientific journal *al-Muqtataf* warned its readers in 1898 that Zionists were no new missionaries but a nationalist movement claiming the land of Palestine. One of its editors, Shahin Makaryus, channelled Zionist race-thinking but – in a secular and Darwinian "transvaluation" – argued that as "Caucasian semites [they] were primordially and civilizationally linked to Arabs" (Gribetz 2010). The Aleppan author 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (d. 1902) imagined a pan-Islamic assembly modelled on the World Zionist congresses (al-Kawakibi 1931). And the Maronite Negib Azoury, Ottoman official in the province of Jerusalem and early Arab nationalist, considered Zionism an imperialist conspiracy in his *Le réveil de la nation arabe* of 1905. But it took the emergence of a Palestinian press after the Young Turk Revolution to launch a systematic analysis of the colonial nature of Zionist settlement and intermittent calls to resist it. The two journals *al-Karmel* (1909) and *Filastin* (1911) pressured Palestinian parliamentarians in Istanbul to mobilize the Ottoman public. It was in these public exchanges that a specifically Palestinian form of Arab nationalism began to challenge not only Zionism but also existing urban, parochial or pro-imperial identities (Khalidi 1997).

CONCLUSION

The *fin de siècle* was a time of mixing, effervescence, experimentation, violent uprisings and bloodless coups in the Middle East. The realization that people around the Mediterranean and in the wider Muslim world aspired to similar ideas of freedom, equality and democracy threatened to break down the barriers that colonial privilege, Orientalist stereotypes and Hamidian censorship had erected in the course of the nineteenth century. This chapter has been arranged around social and textual "vignettes." They have illuminated what I consider three foundational dimensions of the Middle East at the *fin de siècle*: a resistant object of Western Orientalism, European capitalism and colonial expansion; a disowned key to understanding the formations of modernity in the European metropole itself; and communities of discourse with their own self-reflective consciousness.

At the risk of stating the obvious, the Middle East at the *fin de siècle* was brimming with democratic movements, modern moments and radical visions, all of which were crushed by the New European Imperialism at one point or another between the Ottoman-Russian War of 1878 and World War I. Recording the dynamic developments in this period is not to dabble in the "could-have-beens" of nostalgic or counter-factual history; nor was the point of this chapter to excavate political or intellectual essences that existed all through the twentieth century that we were too distracted from noticing. Too much has changed in the Middle East since World War I, not all for the worse. From its early optimistic articulations of a new age in the 1860s to the pessimistic heralds of the end of an era in the 1910s, the Middle East was populated by men and women of letters who articulated a sense of contemporaneity, of belonging to a modern and global age.

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INDIA

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Ruth Vanita

The idea that civilizations decline and decay, which developed in the nineteenth century in Europe, reaching its apotheosis in Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1895), has generally been traced to Benedict Augustin Morel's 1857 treatise *Traité des Dégénérescences* (Taylor 2007: 15). In this essay I suggest that one of many antecedents of this idea may be found in somewhat earlier writings by British administrators in India. I examine as an example the 1848 to 1854 writings of W. H. Sleeman, British Resident in Lucknow, capital of the north Indian kingdom of Awadh. Sleeman argued that the King of Awadh's degenerate traits, inherited from his forebears and passed on to his son, demonstrated the decline of his dynasty and the ripeness of their kingdom for British control. Sleeman constructed the king's involvement with poetry and music as emblematic of his degeneracy, and by the end of the nineteenth century, most educated Indians had internalized his views. Indeed, this perception of Lucknow's late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century culture as decadent continued to dominate both academic and popular discourse until the late twentieth century.

All translations from Urdu and Hindi in this essay are by me, unless otherwise indicated.

AN EARLIER *FIN DE SIÈCLE*?

The end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century did not appear especially significant to most Indians. Even highly educated Indians who were fluent in English were still multilingual at this time, and often tended to count and reckon in their own languages (Vanita 2002). Most people ordered their lives as much if not more by the various Hindu calendars or by the Islamic *hijri* calendar as by the Christian calendar.

For the few Indian thinkers who took note of the turn of the Christian century, the *fin de siècle* did not presage a *fin du globe*; rather than ennui or the sense of an ending (Laqueur 1997: 7–10), it tended to inspire visions of new collaborations between East and West (Nandy 1983; Gandhi 2006). Thus, Sri Aurobindo, in his sweeping survey of literary history (1917–20), devotes a chapter titled "New Birth

or Decadence?" to considering and dismissing the idea that turn-of-the-century English literature is decadent, arguing instead that poets like Whitman, Carpenter, Yeats and Tagore contest the dominance of reason with a "new way of seeing" (212), a way that binds together the inner and outer life and "all the worlds" (214). Tagore may be said to have demonstrated such a way of seeing when he characterized English Romantic poetry as "a voice from across the sea" that came to him as a boy at the end of the nineteenth century (1918: 858), Jesus as "the man from the East" who once united East and West "in truth" (1922: 111), and Mahatma Gandhi as the "great personality" who will unite them again (1918: 861).

Oddly enough, though, the European notion that declining civilizations produce perverted and exhausted types of art significantly altered educated Indians' view not of Indian cultures at the end of the nineteenth century but of pre-colonial Indian cultures, particularly those that flourished at the end of the eighteenth century. This is because, both before and after the great rebellion, which swept north India in 1857 and was followed by the Crown's take-over of the Indian empire, British administrators used the language of decline to justify first, their usurpation of power from Indian rulers, and second, their violent reprisals against rebellious cities, particularly Delhi and Lucknow.

Thus, before the British applied the language of decadence to their own late nineteenth-century society and literature, they had already honed it in the denunciation of Indian polities, societies and literatures of an earlier *fin de siècle*. Educated Indians in the post-1857 period, most of whom felt compelled to remake themselves in the image of their conquerors, internalized these views of their social, political, literary and artistic heritages as worn-out, vicious, effete and decadent. Smarting from defeat and buying into the myth of the inevitability of history, they came to view Indian cultures as doomed to extinction by their own inevitable decline.

VIGOROUS OR DECADENT? LUCKNOW POETRY

The process can be seen in the case of the Urdu poetry produced in Lucknow, capital city of the kingdom of Awadh in north India. After the British annexed Awadh in 1856 on the grounds of its king's supposed inefficacy, Lucknow became an epicenter of the 1857 revolt. Following a long drawn out struggle, the British subdued the rebels and wreaked terrible vengeance on Lucknow's inhabitants, razing much of the city to the ground (Oldenburg 1990) and smashing its vibrant culture. See Figure 18.1. Although much of Lucknow's poetry was lost, what remains, some published and some in manuscript, provides a window into that culture. My recent book, *Gender, Sex, and the City: Urdu Rekhti Poetry in India, 1780–1870*, examines a particular type of poetry produced in Lucknow as emblematic of the city's cosmopolitanism, hybridity and openness to play of all kinds, particularly play around gender.

Economic historians have demonstrated that north India in the early nineteenth century had a stable banking system and a prosperous economy bolstered by production of and trade in cotton, metals, textiles, grains and luxury goods. Fisher (1987: 21) remarks that from 1775, "Lucknow emerged as the richest and perhaps most culturally significant center of its day." It has been estimated that by the mid nineteenth century, two-thirds of its population were artisans (Oldenburg 1990: 12), many of whom were women. The rulers and noblemen of Lucknow patronized

Figure 18.1   Painting by William Simpson showing soldiers and sailors looting the Kaiser Bagh Palace in Lucknow in northern India during the so-called "Indian Mutiny" of 1857 (known in India as the First War of Indian Independence). © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

artists and artisans from far-flung regions, including a number of European painters. Combating the British and later Indian nationalist view that Lucknow's production of luxury goods was decadent, Bayly states: "luxury production and consumption were the life blood of the pre-colonial order and . . . had a social and ritual value which cannot be easily conveyed by the glib term 'luxury'" (1983: 266).

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of Lucknow's urban culture was the way the rulers, in the course of a century (1754–1856), fostered an atmosphere singularly open to women's interventions (Vanita 2012: 14–18). These women ranged from the Nawabs' powerful mothers and wives to servants who rose to prominence through relationships with Nawabs and their female relatives, to dancers, singers and other performers at court. One Urdu commentator uses the apt term *'auratparastī* (women-adoring) for the tendencies of the Nawabs as well as the urban style that flourished around those tendencies (Siddiqi 1974: 77, 104). As Kidwai (2008: 118) argues, the political and cultural prominence of women in Awadh, which came to be viewed as symptomatic of its effeminacy, can be read as indicative of the "culture's strength rather than weakness."

The kings' sharing of economic resources and cultural power with women in this short period is probably related to British usurpation of political power. After winning the 1764 Battle of Buxar, the British aggressively manipulated both the Delhi and Awadh courts. They drained huge amounts of money from the rulers as the price for allowing them to retain their thrones. Facing "insecurity of tenure, humiliation and progressive isolation at the hands of the Company, and transference of massive amounts of capital and authority to it" (Fisher 1987: 162), it seemed preferable to the rulers to enjoy rather than accumulate, and to give to their subjects rather than to the British.

The Lucknow court provided employment to women in a variety of capacities. Women employees were classified by occupation, ranging from performers to betel makers, servers to cleaners, several of whom were elevated through marriage to the position of queens. Nawab Shuja-ud Daula (reigned 1754–75) had more than 2700 women in his palace, of whom 700 were queens, and 1700 performers (Akhtar 2000: 187). Nawab Nasir-ud-Din (reigned 1827–37) employed over a thousand women performers, each of whom got a salary of Rs 200–300 a month (Siddiqi 1974: 36). The value of these amounts can be estimated from the fact that Rs 300 a

Figure 18.2   Nawab Wajid Ali Shah
(1822–77), last King of Awadh

Figure 18.3 Group of courtesans, 1800–25 © San Diego Museum of Art, USA/Edwin Binney 3rd Collection/The Bridgeman Art Library

month was the budget for food and fuel for 300 patients at the state hospital in the 1830s (Llewellyn-Jones 1985: 81).

Women's presence and agency is reflected in the literary culture of the day. Courtesans, many of whom were themselves poets, functioned as the intellectual peers of male literati. These highly educated, accomplished and often wealthy women not only sang and danced to poems composed by major poets but also figured as characters in poetry. Several male poets composed lyrics, odes, elegies and narrative romances in which courtesan characters play major roles; some poems even name and praise real-life courtesans (Vanita 2012: 189–212).

Women's social and religious practices acquired cultural cachet through visibility at court. Some Nawabs and their female relatives engaged in female-oriented and gender-bending practices that gave a court stamp of approval to women's rituals (Kidwai 2008; Cole 2002).

Distinctive features of Urdu poetry composed in Lucknow at this time include the large proportion of non-mystical verses written by poets who also wrote conventional mystical verse; a hedonistic emphasis on everyday pleasures, including sexual pleasure; the romance of material things; a delight in urban hybridities of all kinds, from hybrid language to hybrid religious practice; and celebration of glamorous women and gender-bending men. This heady cocktail resulted in the production of Lucknow *rekhti* poetry, which had women speakers and focused on women's lives and loves.

Indian languages have long traditions of poetry written by men with women speakers. However, Lucknow *rekhti* is unique in its shift of focus from domesticity or devotion to the pleasures of everyday life, including the pleasures of love and sex, especially female-female love and sex. The woman speaker in Lucknow *rekhti* poetry of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries rarely appears as a wife and almost never as a mother. Like the male speaker in Urdu poetry, she is primarily a lover, and usually a lover of other women. The male speaker in mainstream Urdu poetry is a lover of both males and females; Lucknow *rekhti* invents his female counterpart.

The *rekhti* that has survived was written by male poets who also wrote about male-male and male-female amours. They wrote about all three kinds of erotic love in the same registers, ranging from humor to pathos, playful wit to high romance. I argue that, in the course of this writing, they produce a new kind of female speaker. Indicative of a pre-colonial modernity, she defies social convention and asserts her right to her own predilections, as in this *ghazal* by renowned poet Insha Allah Khan, pen-name "Insha" [Elegant Style] (1756–1817), where one woman addresses another:

> Young lady, if I'm bad, what is it to you?
> If I wear clothes with gold trimming – what is it to you?
> You won't be entangled in my vices
> If I'm full of vices, what is it to you?
> Sister, look after your own lightning-like beauty
> If I'm hot like gold trimming, what is it to you?
> I haven't robbed anyone's garden:
> If my lap is full of flowers, what is it to you?
> My style is like fields with new crops, "Inshā,"
> If I'm green and brightly colored, what is it to you?
>
> (Insha, Manuscript 935)

In keeping with this world-view that endorses pleasure, the typical female speaker in Lucknow *rekhti* enjoys all the activities city life offers, such as shopping, excursions, eating delicacies, conversation, flirtation, romance and sex outside marriage. The poetry and attached glossaries provide many terms for female lovers, for their sexual relations (some of these terms were still in use in the late twentieth century), and for the rituals they performed to form female couples or even to marry one another (Vanita 2012: 115–34).

In this poetry, a glamorous person, male or female, whether admired or loved by a man or a woman, becomes an emblem of the city – his or her androgynous glamour is mapped on to the city, many of whose spaces, such as the rooftop and the garden, become feminized (Vanita 2012: 41–56). With a great deal of word-play that is impossible to translate, the female speaker in this poem by popular poet Sa'adat Yar Khan, pen-name "Rangin" [Colorful] (1755–1835), eulogizes her female lover's beauty in terms that simultaneously celebrate the city's arts of adornment and of self-fashioning:

> My girlfriend has a youthful complexion, like yellow gold
> From head to foot, she looks like a picture of gold
> Her scarf's border frames and adorns her face
> Her words are shaped like artist's writing on a picture of gold

I've become the necklace round your neck, dear one,
So, my life, you don't need a chain of gold.

<div align="right">(Rangin, Manuscript 936)</div>

Where Swinburne depicts lesbian desire as violent and unfulfilling, Lucknow poets' depiction of female–female amours is closer to that of Michael Field, insofar as it depicts these romances as happy, fulfilling, going through all the ups and downs of any lasting love, and indeed as "a romantic, domestic ideal superior to the common heterosexual model" (Denisoff 2007: 35).

THIS-WORLDLY PLEASURE: "DECADENCE"

Lucknow at this time was a meeting place for worlds – people and goods from distant places were found in its markets. *Rekhti* poetry catalogues at length the intricate details of women's attire – long lists of fabrics, ornaments, cosmetics, precious stones, perfumes, embroidery and decorative accessories appear. The geography not just of the city but of the sub-continent is mapped in items from different places (Vanita 2012: 57–69). In Rangin's *Masnavi Dilpazir*, a verse romance about a transnational wedding, the groom's costume comes from Murshidabad in Bengal, one of her bodices from Dhaka, also in Bengal, while another is of European gauze, and the wedding bed sheets are from Chanderi in central India. A similar penchant for detailed cataloguing of beautiful objects is later found in the writings of such Aestheticists as Huysmans and Wilde.

Poets of the time who were renowned for their non-mystical poetry forthrightly defend their breaking or modifying literary conventions, their tendency to dwell on this-worldly rather than otherworldly joys, and their predilection for polyamorous enjoyments. Rangin declares his preference for the pleasures of this world to the joys of the next:

O God, instead of nymphs in paradise
Give me a sweetheart in this world
When have I ever desired paradise?
Whatever you wish to give me, give right here.

<div align="right">(Shaiftah 1973: 231)</div>

Insha prided himself on being free (*azad*) in his views; he playfully equates his freedom from sectarianism with his ability to mix with all sections of society:

I greet everyone, everyone is gracious to me
Shia, Sunni and Sufi, rogues, drunks and druggies too.

<div align="right">(1969: 368)</div>

Insha challenges and breaks several literary conventions, such as that of the lover who faithfully worships an indifferent beloved:

If love is true, why should the beloved not be a lover?
Look, the one I adore is also in love with me.

<div align="right">(1969: 203)</div>

Likewise, he justifies his explicit references to kissing and other sexual acts:

> To love and desire someone is not a bad act
> People here have given me a bad name for nothing.
>
> (1969: 130)

Perhaps most daringly, his persona refuses to be eternally faithful and put up with mistreatment by the beloved, as the conventions of the mainstream *ghazal* demand:

> Insha was very annoyed with you last night.
> Had you not cajoled him he would have left immediately.
>
> (1969: 6)

> There are hundreds all around, ready to take my heart–
> Setting aside politeness, may I ask, what's your special excellence?
>
> (1969: 488)

Another poet in the same circle, Shaikh Qalandar Bakhsh, pen-name "Jur'at" [Audacity] (1748–1810), similarly protests:

> Be happy with those whose presence you enjoy
> You've made me very unhappy
> This time, when I leave your alley
> I won't come back, do you hear me?
>
> (Hasan 1970: I, 450)

Insha's persona takes the ultimate step, celebrating polyamory:

> Laughing, talking, busily engaged in whatever way desired
> Embraced here, slept there, clung here, had relations there.
>
> (1969: 421)

Polyamory may also be read as a trope for the poets' quicksilver delight in hybridity, that hallmark of urban life. These poets specially prided themselves on the hybridity of their language. They credited women with being the makers of language, because they argued that women absorbed words from many different regions and incorporated them into speech. Their language is replete with colloquialisms, exclamations and idioms that came directly from the mixed languages of the street and market-place, including even some English words.

    They were particularly fond of puns, drawing on the kind of word-play (*iham*) engaged in by the generation of poets immediately preceding them. This word-play frequently concealed a sexual double entendre beneath the overt meaning. Wilde's 1890 description of Dorian's "poisonous book" works as an apt description of the elegant style signified by Insha's pen-name: "vivid and obscure at once, full of *argot* and of archaisms, of technical expressions and of elaborate paraphrases" (Wilde 1989: 101). It is no surprise that post-1857 critics trenchantly criticized these qualities.

The poets' innovations were not immune to criticism in their own time; some of their rivals termed them trivial and vulgar. However, this was par for the course in the literary wars of the period, with each side giving as good as it got. All the *rekhti* poets were both popular and acclaimed in their own times. They presented their poetry to kings and noblemen, but it was also widely known and recited (Vanita 2012: 5–9).

"PROFLIGATE" WOMEN, "EMASCULATED" MEN

The East India Company's principal strategy for usurping Indian kingdoms was to declare the heirs illegitimate, and this was often linked to the claim that the monarch in question was impotent or homosexually inclined – therefore he could not have fathered his putative son – or that adoption (a time-honored Hindu institution) was invalid. They did this more than once in Awadh; their invalidation of the heir's adoption in Jhansi was the direct cause of the Queen of Jhansi's joining the 1857 revolt.

Before 1857, the association of decadence with poetry and with effeminacy appeared as an almost obsessive theme in the writings of W. H. Sleeman, British Resident of Lucknow from 1849 to 1856. Residents were British officers placed in Indian kingdoms to spy on, control and extract money from Indian rulers, at the expense of those rulers. The Residency system was devised after the East India Company armies, consisting of hired Indian soldiers, defeated the combined armies of several Indian rulers at the Battle of Plassey, 1757. Sleeman's report to the Governor General, "A Journey through the Kingdom of Oude in 1849–50," and his copious correspondence with various British administrators played a crucial role in the British decision to dethrone and exile the King of Awadh in 1856, the year that Sleeman died. British usurpation of the kingdom was in turn a catalyst for the 1857 rebellion.

Sleeman repeatedly characterizes the King (Wajid Ali Shah; see Figure 18.2) as having an "emasculated" understanding (Sleeman 1858: II, 353, Letter to Governor General Dalhousie, 24 November 1851). He then proceeds to equate emasculation with imbecility, stating that the King is "an utter imbecile from over-indulgences of all kinds" (Sleeman 1858: II, 413, Letter to Mr Colvin, 28 December 1853). He applies the same term to the King's eldest son: "his understanding has become quite emasculated by over-indulgencies of all kinds" (Sleeman 1858: II, 380, Letter to Sir James Hogg, 28 October 1852). Although Sleeman abstracts the notion of emasculation to the King's and his heir's intellect, it remains fraught with the burden of physical impotence, of which the British had accused two of Wajid Ali Shah's forebears, declaring their sons illegitimate.

In accordance with the then-dominant understanding of effeminacy as caused by womanizing rather than homosexuality, Sleeman traces the King's and his noblemen's supposed emasculation to their being overly influenced by women. He therefore perceives the powerful women at court as interfering harridans. For instance, he denounces Badshah Begum (who had led the violent resistance to British interference with the succession), for having "a haughty and violent temper, and inveterate disposition to meddle in public affairs" (Sleeman 1858: II, 172). Taj Mahal, one of Wajid Ali Shah's queens, he repeatedly labels "profligate and insolent"

(Sleeman 1858: II, 334). Since he died before the rebellion, he was not able to comment on another queen, Begum Hazrat Mahal, who was an ex-courtesan, and who led the rebels at Lucknow.

At least a dozen times, Sleeman attributes the King's supposed imbecility to his spending "the whole of his time with women, eunuchs, fiddlers, and other parasites," and therefore being "altogether incapable of devoting any of his time or attention to business of any kind" (Sleeman 1858: II, 392, Letter to Sir James Hogg, 12 January 1853. See also I: lxxi and lxxv, Letters to the Marquis of Dalhousie, 6 September 1849 and undated.). Sleeman's lists of the kinds of people surrounding the King vary slightly, but all of them place poets and musicians in the same category as eunuchs and women. What all of these presumably have in common is unmanliness. In one instance, Sleeman declares the poets are worse than eunuchs: "the King is a crazy imbecile," "surrounded exclusively by eunuchs, fiddlers and poetasters worse than either" (Sleeman 1858: II, 369, Letter to Governor General Dalhousie, September 1852). Such statements, with minor variations, become a virtual refrain in Sleeman's writings. Sleeman's contempt is fueled by his perception of the class and caste of some of the King's companions: "He spends all his time with the singers and the females they provide to amuse him, and is for seven and eight hours together living in the house of the chief singer, Rajee-od Dowla – a fellow who was only lately beating a drum to a party of dancing-girls, on some four rupees a month. . . . These singers are all Domes, the lowest of the low castes of India, and they and the eunuchs are now the virtual sovereigns of the country. . . . " (Sleeman 1858: I, lxi, Letter to the Marquis of Dalhousie, August 1849).

Sleeman's claim that the King did nothing but engage in the performing arts is inaccurate, because we know from other sources that the King spent time in state business, such as inspecting his troops and dealing with petitions from his subjects. More importantly, Sleeman ignores the fact that Wajid Ali Shah had "inherited a kingship that was virtually bereft of political power" (Markel 2010: 20), and that patronage of the arts was consequently the only public arena where he could leave his stamp, which he succeeded admirably in doing.

Sleeman's contempt for Indian poetry, music, dance and theater renders him incapable of appreciating Wajid Ali Shah's significant contributions to these fields and the importance of his and his predecessors' patronage of arts and crafts, which had helped Lucknow develop into north India's most important cultural center. The King was a gifted poet, and has left behind a large oeuvre of works; several of his queens were poets too. He was also a dancer and a theoretician of dance. Sleeman reads normal poetic practices of the time as excessive, for example, he records that all the poets in Lucknow gathered in August 1849 for a poetry session that lasted from nine at night to three in the morning, and that the King there presented a long historical poem he was working on. Sleeman sarcastically remarks that these are the only men apart from the minister, the eunuchs and the singers who have had the honor of conversing with the King since January.

Sleeman's ignorance of how Indian courts functioned and his insistence on judging the polity by British standards are evident in his choice of words. He assumes that readers will share his distaste for "eunuchs," thus dismissing the long history of important noblemen and administrators who were known as *khwajasarai*, and whom the British termed eunuchs. Similarly, he considers the King's beating a drum in a

religious procession on the streets evidence of his "becoming more and more imbecile and crazy" (Sleeman 1858: II, 387, Letter to Sir James Hogg, 2 January 1853). He appears unaware that there was a long civic tradition of Indian kings publicly engaging in festivities, such as Holi, which might have been considered undignified by British monarchs. One of Wajid Ali Shah's predecessors, under his mother's influence, had even introduced religious innovations, which involved his performing in public, over several days, the role of a pregnant woman. Sleeman's second refrain, repeated in almost exactly the same words in several different writings, is that the King is "utterly unfit to reign" (Sleeman 1858: II, 386, Letter to Governor General Dalhousie, 20 November, 1852. See also II, 386, Letter to Sir James Hogg, 2 January 1853). Putting himself forward as the savior of the oppressed people and even the royal family, he proposes replacing the King with a Board of puppets hand-picked by the British.

Sleeman is well known for the horrific picture he paints of the Awadh countryside as rife with atrocities, constant warfare and superstition. He is not, however, immune from superstitions of his own; thus, while protesting against villagers' fear of killing wolves, he transfers to India European prejudice against wolves, asserting that wolves carry off many children but also adopt and raise some (Sleeman 1858: 1, 206–22). His writings had a great deal to do with the hunting to virtual extinction of the Indian wolf in the colonial period; about 100,000 were killed between 1871 and 1916 (Knight 2004: 280).

Sleeman's view of Wajid Ali Shah and Lucknow remained dominant from 1858, when his report was published with an unsigned introduction that eulogized Sleeman and parroted his opinions: "the King . . . gave himself up to the effeminate indulgence of his harem, and the society of eunuchs and fiddlers" (Sleeman 1858: 1, xx), to the nationalist period when the major Hindi writer Munshi Premchand (1880–1936) wrote a short story "*Shatranj ke Khiladi.*" This story begins: "It was Wajid Ali Shah's era. Lucknow was immersed in the colors of luxuriance. . . . Enjoyment and pleasure dominated every sphere of life. . . . Officials indulged in material pleasures, poets in descriptions of love and separation, artisans in making *chikan* embroidery and gold silken thread, traders in selling collyrium, perfume, emollients and cosmetics." (Premchand 2004: 180.) The story concludes with a description of a ruined monument, figurative of Lucknow. This view of Lucknow's decadence leading to its decline and fall was reinforced and canonized in Satyajit Ray's English film *The Chess Players* (1977) that was based on Premchand's story.

DUBBING LUCKNOW POETRY DECADENT

In the post-1857 period critics writing in English and in Urdu denounced Lucknow poetry of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as the most egregious example of everything that was wrong with Urdu poetry in general (see Pritchett 1994), while homoerotic poetry in particular, and especially *rekhti*, was constructed as the epitome of Lucknow's decadence.

This began with Altaf Hussain, pen-name Hali (1837–1914), a commentator and poet still revered today, who pronounced Urdu poetry "more foul than a cesspool" (Hali 1879: 193), and condemned Insha's generation of poets in particular: "Courtesans have their complete works by heart, and singers are under boundless obligation to them" (Hali 1879: 195).

Mohammad Husain, pen-name Azad (1830–1910), who wrote the most influential history of Urdu literature (*Ab-e Hayat*, 1880), tried unsuccessfully to reorient the *ghazal* toward nature and social issues. Although he had a nostalgic and deeply ambivalent love-hate relationship with Urdu poetry of the past, his view of *rekhti* and of Lucknow culture's effect on men was unambiguous: "Obviously, luxury, pleasure, and the company of singers and dancers influence impurity the way manure does vegetation. . . . Therefore this invention [*rekhti*] must be understood as one stimulant for the growth of effeminacy (*zanana mizaji*), cowardice and passivity among common people" (Azad 1883: 259).

Azad constructed an opposition between the poetic styles of Lucknow and Delhi, which later critics hardened into the idea of two nineteenth-century schools of Urdu poetry – the elevated Delhi school and the degenerate Lucknow one. Here is a typical description of the latter by a literary critic writing in Urdu: "Obscenity, worship of lust and of sexual pleasure, of which obscene verse and love of male youths are manifestations . . . is characteristic of all the poetry of Lucknow" (Hussaini 1968: 128). Both Hali and Azad insist that plain, simple language which directly conveys its meaning to the reader is preferable to ornate language that conceals meaning. While all Urdu poetry engages in word-play, critics singled out Lucknow poetry of Rangin's and Insha's generations as excessively complex and flowery, and thus evidence of a decline in poetic vigor.

It is no surprise, therefore, that from the second half of the nineteenth century up to the present most commentators in Urdu, whether discussing institutions like polygamy or courtesan households, or Lucknow poetry that celebrated polymorphous pleasure and play, or Lucknow kings and noblemen who engaged in cross-dressing, theater, dance and music, use eerily similar language. Urdu litterateurs label Lucknow poets like Insha obscene (*fohsh*), dirty (*gandi*) and shameless (*behaya*), and condemn the Nawabs as lovers of pleasure ('*aishpasand*), lazy (*aram talab*) and given to effeminacy (*zananapan*) (see, for example, Hashimi 1965: 280). In English commentary by Indian critics, right up to the twenty-first century, terms like "decadence," "perversion" and "lustful" crop up repeatedly. Thus, in 1988 an encyclopedia entry blames the supposed obscenity of *rekhti* on the decadence of Lucknow: "*Rekhti* poetry is replete with references to sex which are obscene and some times [sic] very scandalous. It had to be what it was to be able to cater to the rich of a decadent society, given to the pleasures of the flesh (Datta 1988: 2, 1797). Two decades later, the language of such encyclopedias has not changed: "As a literary form *Rekhti* had a dubious reputation. It was the product of a decadent culture and was obsessed with sensual and sexual pleasures and wallowed in obscenity and lustfulness." (Samiuddin 2007: 1: 517).

Critics condemned the *ghazal*, the most popular genre of Urdu poetry, for its central themes – love and wine. The chief reason for nationalist and social reformist discomfort with love in the *ghazal* is that it is almost never marital or procreative. When reformers' attempts to change the *ghazal*'s theme from love to nature and social reform failed, their next strategy was to reinterpret the *ghazal*.

Twentieth-century Urdu litterateurs pursued twin strategies – heterosexualizing the *ghazal* (past and present) and de-eroticizing it by insisting that the seemingly erotic, especially the homoerotic, is either a convention with no relation to real life or is a purely mystical trope pointing to the love of God. Translators pursue a

parallel strategy, usually turning the conventionally as well as specifically male gendered beloved into a female (see Vanita 2012: 23, 37–38).

Central to rewriting the past was the exclusion from the canon of poets who mingled non-mystical verse with mystical verse and whose poetry was sexually, especially homosexually, explicit. Late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century Lucknow poets suffered the most, because their writings are most replete with clearly erotic verse that cannot be heterosexualized or explained away as mystical.

Shah Mubarak Abru (1683–1734), a pioneering Urdu poet, who was known for his amours with other men and who wrote explicit poems on this theme, is mentioned in histories but his work is out of print and is not taught. Abru stands in relation to Insha and Rangin's generation as Pater does to Wilde's generation. Insha, Rangin's and Jur'at's collected works are out of print in India. In anthologies and in translations, the non-mystical verses, especially the male-male erotic verses, of major poets like Mir and Ghalib tend to be excluded.

ART, SEX AND DEATH

One reason Lucknow culture is viewed as decadent is modern critics' unexamined tendency to connect death with non-procreative sex. Although Gibbon attributed the fall of the Roman Empire to Christianity rather than to homosexuality, his use of the word "decline" along with his condemnation of the prevalence among Romans of the unspeakable vice has often been interpreted to suggest that non-procreative sex was one cause of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. Likewise, the unspoken suspicion as well as the open secret regarding Victorian Aestheticism was that art for art's sake pointed toward sex for sex's sake, and possibly aimed at legitimizing non-procreative sexual acts, such as same-sex acts, performed for pleasure alone. Walter Pater famously declared, "To burn always with this hard gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life" (Pater 1873: 210), and exhorted his readers to "be sure it is passion, that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness" (Pater 1873: 212–13).

This emphasis on living in and for the moment is one of several significant similarities between the poetics and world-view of the poets who wrote non-mystical poetry in Lucknow at the earlier *fin de siècle* and the Victorian Aestheticists. Another common feature is the simultaneity in this poetry of hedonism with a mystical resonance, for example, the way accumulation and cataloguing of material objects becomes symbolic of exploring both inner and outer worlds. Closely related is a deliberate hybridity of language, and a decorative complexity of style, both posited by critics as symptomatic of decline and decay (Dowling 1986). Nordau insisted that healthy language must be clear and not stylized (Arata 1996: 29–30); Azad had earlier made the same argument.

Equally important is the foregrounding of female presence and of same-sex desire in both sets of writings. For example, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, although desire is mainly triangulated between Lord Henry, Dorian and Basil Hallward, the philosophy of pleasure is elaborated through conversations not only among them but also with several witty women friends. Likewise, in non-mystical Urdu *ghazals* as well as narrative romances at the turn of the eighteenth century in Lucknow, desire of all kinds flourishes in a world mediated and inhabited by women characters.

In poet Jur'at's lengthy narrative poem based on the real-life romance between his friend, mystical poet Hazrat Khwaja Hasan, and a courtesan named Bakhshi, the hero finds his beloved when he goes in search of the city's beautiful people:

> He loved the company of beautiful people
> Whether women or male youth (*amrad*).
> It's true that one acquainted with God's truth
> Always desires those with beautiful faces
> He was much given to worship of beautiful witnesses
> Hazrat had a great taste for outings
>
> (21: 86–88)

The heroine is eulogized as having the beauty of a woman and the courage of a man; one may compare Wilde's pretty Duchess of Monmouth in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* remarking to Lord Henry, "Courage has passed from men to women" (Wilde 1989: 150).

And finally, the most important common element in the poetics of these two sets of writers, around which everything else coheres, is playfulness. Johan Huizinga has argued that "civilization arises and unfolds in and as play" (ix), and that play, being outside truth and falsehood, expresses itself in excess, and "is freedom itself" (Huizinga 1950: ix). All art, Huizinga suggests, especially poetry and music, partakes of play, but some times and places are more fertile in this regard. Having no purpose outside itself, play steps into an intense and sacred reality of its own. Although undertaken spontaneously, it creates order and has rules and limits. The opposite of play, Huizinga argues, is not seriousness (because play is not non-serious), but rather earnestness (1950: 44).

It is not for nothing that Oscar Wilde's greatest comedy unpacks the quest to be "earnest," exposing it as futile, or that a character in *Lady Windermere's Fan* remarks that life is too important to be talked about seriously (Wilde 1989: 390). Insha and his circle treat profound ideas playfully while often investing the apparently trivial with profundity. For example, in one of his most melancholy poems that dwells on loss and partings as life's end approaches, he inserts flirtatious verses about kisses and intimacy. In his book that purports to collect the jokes spontaneously uttered by Nawab Sa'adat Ali Khan, Insha ascribes wit (*latafat*) and word-play (*iham*) to God the creator, suggesting that the universe itself is a pleasurable riddle. He praises God as a stager of spectacles, who instilled a special pleasure in the temperament of those who tell jokes. Insha thus constructs a cosmic perspective on playing, jesting and performance.

Insha frequently describes his poetry as naughty:

> Insha's speech is so smoking hot that today
> Spring came and wrapped herself around his neck
>
> (1969: 359)

The works of these poets contain a lexicon of words describing the nuances of pleasure, such as *masti*, *lazzat*, *lahw*, *lutf*, *hansi-khushi*, *'aish*, *mauj*, *shokhiyan*, *ras*, *rang*, *garmi*, and they place friendship and love at the acme of heat. Although they

foreground love, friendship (especially friendship between poets) is the matrix of their creativity. They rarely comment directly on it; it emerges indirectly through dialogue of various kinds.

Strangeness is a central component of the way they construct beauty, a component that has also been identified as typical of Victorian Aestheticism. For instance, Insha paid a many-layered and almost untranslatable tribute to his and Rangin's relationship:

> *Ajab ranginiyan baton mein kuchh hoti hai a'e Insha*
> *Baham ho baithate jab Sa'adat Yar Khan aur ham*
> Wonderful colors arise in our talk, O Insha,
> When Sa'adat Yar Khan and I sit together by ourselves

<div align="right">(Insha 1969: 229)</div>

The adjective *ajab* is so placed as to heighten the noun "colors," suggesting indescribable pleasures but a second level of meaning indicates also the strangeness of these colors. The word *ranginiyan* (literally, colorfulnesses) describing the joys of conversation is a compliment to Rangin, based on his pen-name. This is also a rare example of a poet's full given name appearing in an Urdu verse; Insha here indicates personal affection as well as poetic colloquy.

The process I have demonstrated was by no means unique to Urdu poetry or to the poetry of Lucknow. A very similar process is evident in the way Hindi litterateurs dubbed eighteenth-century *riti* poetry licentious and fleshly, thus relegating it to a lower place in the canon than earlier devotional poetry and later nationalist poetry. This labeling has only recently begun to be re-evaluated.

In England the language of decadence was appropriated and redefined by writers and artists, who, in Wilde's phrase, picked up a brickbat and wore it as a buttonhole. In India, this was not the case. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Insha and his contemporaries presented their unconventionality not as decadent but as a vigorous and bold new approach. But by the end of the nineteenth century, no Indian writer was willing to claim the fleshly, the effeminate and the decadent as his or her own. The trend that began in the later *fin de siècle* to dub as decadent the poetry of an earlier *fin de siècle* began to tentatively be revised in the first decade of this new century. It is to be hoped that the reputations of Insha and his circle will undergo as complete a metamorphosis as that of Wilde and his circle has. Yeats's remark that "what seems to us decadence" may have been "in reality . . . civilisation perfectly achieved" (1937: 273) seems apposite.

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AFRICA

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Rebecca Saunders

The story of *fin-de-siècle* Africa is a tale of numerous and shifting cultures, political formations, religious beliefs and social practices. Islamic revival movements were disseminating a globalized ideology and sense of identity across the northern part of the continent, which put Africans in touch with Turks, Persians and Indians; the Egyptian Khedive was bankrupting his country building modernized cities and paying off the Suez Canal; Emperor Yohannes of Ethiopia was extending his realm; the Sultan of Zanzibar was building modern infrastructure and architectural wonders in Stone Town; the Swahili coast was carrying on a robust Indian Ocean trade; in the west, the Sokoto Caliphate was a thriving hub of scholarship, commerce and the arts; while to the south, King Cethswayo was training redoubtable Zulu warriors and the Matabele King Lobengula was building a new capital at Bulawayo.

But amid this vibrant collage of experiences, nearly all African societies had one thing in common: increasing infiltration by European missionaries, explorers, traders, soldiers and settlers. While coastal areas had centuries of experience with European contact, explorers had progressively penetrated the interior, and France and Britain already claimed certain informal empires or "spheres of influence," it was from about 1880 that the continent became subject to what would be called the "Scramble for Africa"—an appropriately undignified designation for the hodgepodge of European strategies that ranged from the prudent and benevolent to the ruthless, rapacious and farcical and, by the century's end, gripped all of Africa, save Ethiopia and Liberia, in the clasp of colonial rule (see Map 21.1). Under the banner of commerce, Christianity and civilization, the partition of Africa was carried out by numerous loosely connected agents—sovereigns, parliaments, explorers, businessmen, missionaries, militaries and administrators—who deployed widely divergent strategies including negotiation, economic "influence," treaties, concessions and outright conquest and occupation (Pakenham 1991). Regulating these practices was the primary aim of the Berlin conference convened by German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in 1884 in which signatories agreed to freedom of trade on the Congo and Niger rivers; to inform other signatories before laying claim to African territories; to accept treaties signed with African rulers as titles to sovereignty; and to follow territorial claims with "effective occupation" (Boahen 1990). The latter principle—"effective occupation"—was

particularly consequential because it encouraged European powers to populate African territories with settlers and establish colonial governance.

The sundry acts of negotiation, acquisition, conquest and occupation that comprised the colonization of Africa were subtended by factors in Europe and the U.S. that bear witness to the *fin de siècle* as an era of emergent globalization, in which African societies were ideologically and materially shaped by distal developments in engineering, biology and the social sciences. The inventions of dynamite and the steamboat facilitated European incursions into Africa, and the Maxim gun, the recoil-operated machine gun invented in 1884, assured its conquest. In addition to new technologies that Africans directly witnessed transforming their lands, lives and bodies, other, less evident, inventions were equally powerful tools of imperialism. The telegraph enabled communication between colonizers and the metropole; the linotype machine revolutionized printing and newspaper production, engaging large segments of Europe in debates and knowledge construction about Africa. Portable cameras allowed explorers and missionaries to document African societies for European consumption while zincography made it possible to reprint those photographs in widely distributed newspapers and journals.

Figure 19.1 La collection anthropologique du prince Bonaparte (Prince Bonaparte's anthropological collection), Exposition Universelle de Paris (anthropological gallery), 1889 © BnF, Département des Cartes et Plans, Société de géographie, Sg W 63 (5)

Advances in bacteriology, medicine and the life sciences—discovery of the cholera and tuberculosis bacteria, confirmation of the germ theory of disease, the development of a rabies vaccine and the use of quinine for preventing malaria—all contributed to making travel and residence in Africa less hazardous for Europeans. These discoveries also provided missionaries, politicians and social reformers with a virulent language of infection that governed much of the era's discourse on social conditions, deviance, criminality and race. Indeed it is no coincidence that the partition of Africa coincided with the rise of "scientific" studies of race, the intensification of European nationalisms, the development of social Darwinism and eugenics, and the institution of racial segregation in the Southern U.S.—all of which drew on the findings and language of the life sciences (Miller 1986; Appiah 1992; Dubow 1995).

Multiple disciplines contributed to the development of the new discourse of scientific racism, infusing beliefs and attitudes of missionaries and colonial administrators and profoundly influencing colonial policy. Comparative anatomy constructed taxonomies of humanity on the basis of craniometry and measurements of "facial angles" that were accepted as objective scientific knowledge about racial difference (Dubow 1995). Supported by tables and graphs that correlated race, physical attributes, nationality, character and mental ability, the resultant hierarchy of races, clothed in the distinguished robes of empirical science, functioned to naturalize fixed distinctions between peoples, warrant existing prejudices and endorse discriminatory social policies (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Appiah 1992; Dubow 1995; see Figure 19.1). In 1883, Francis Galton stepped into this swirl of ideas with the new science of eugenics, based on his experience as an explorer in Namibia. Galton's theories were conceived as a scientific solution to the ills of *fin-de-siècle* industrial societies—produced, in his view, by the "feeble-minded," criminal, morally degenerate and racially inferior. Drawing on evolutionary biology and social Darwinism, eugenics promoted social programs designed to enhance racial purity and reinforced the association of Africans with moral degeneracy and criminality.

While debates about race, degeneracy and moral corruption were regular features of mainstream science, they were also widely disseminated by learned societies comprised of non-professionals, by amateur geographers and ethnographers, and by the popular press. The narratives of African explorers and missionaries were popular reading material, as were journalistic renditions of scientific discoveries, and the two were often stirred into a heady concoction that created the illusion of sound and truthful knowledge about Africa, but in which most Africans would be hard put to recognize themselves. Such representations were further entrenched by the fashionable "ethnographic exhibits" of Africans, who were placed on display in European capitals in their "native habitats," accompanied by authoritative descriptions and situated in a hierarchized taxonomy of difference (Vergès 2011; Blanchard *et al*. 2012). The World's Fairs and Colonial Expositions of the period also drew huge crowds and featured exhibits such as the *village nègre* of the Exposition Universelle in Paris (1889) that made direct links between exhibited peoples and colonial endeavors. These exhibits, where individuals were expected to represent a homogenous "tribe" and authentic tradition, were highly influential in constructing conceptions of "natural" human differences, and had a significant impact on the perceptions and actions of missionaries, administrators and settlers arriving in Africa (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Mamdani 2012).
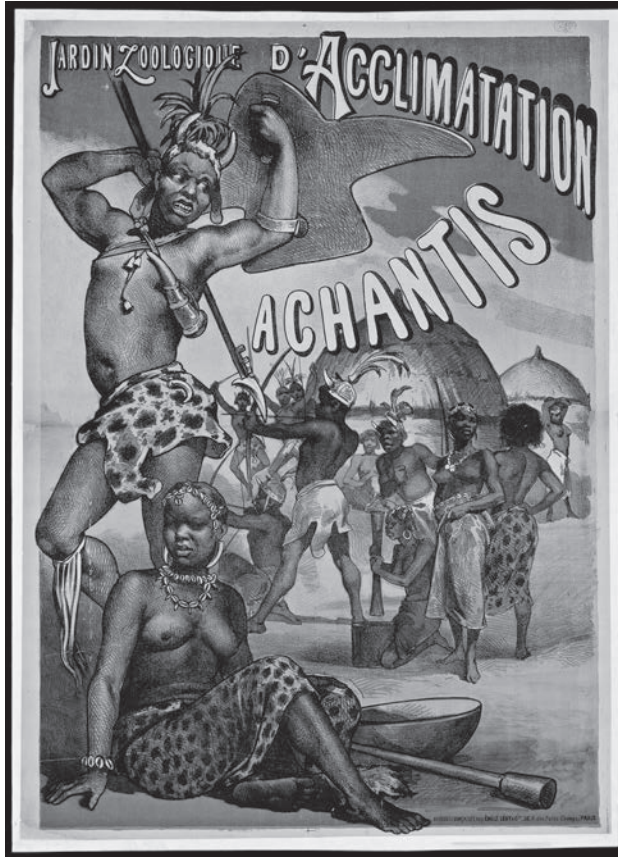
Figure 19.2   Poster for the Asante Exhibit at the Jardin zoologique d'acclimatation, Paris, 1887 © Bibliothèque nationale de France

The conceptual conquest of Africa—assuming the right to represent Africans both rhetorically and politically—was a project at once continued and contested in the realm of art and literature. Rudyard Kipling wrote in heroic terms of African explorers and the colonial enterprise in poems that, employing demotic language and easy rhyme schemes, lent themselves to recitation at schools and dinner tables. In perhaps his most famous poem, "The White Man's Burden," Kipling recasts the colonial enterprise as "seeking another's profit and working another's gain"—that is, as philanthropic sacrifice rather than predatory plunder—and bids the able-bodied men of Europe to commit themselves to its noble goals:

> Take up the White Man's Burden—
> Send forth the best ye breed—
> Go bind your sons to exile
> To serve your captives' needs;
> To wait in heavy harness
> On fluttered folk and wild—

Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.

<div align="right">

(Kipling 1999: 334)

</div>

Novels and serialized narratives about Africa reached an even wider audience, a prime example of which was Rider Haggard's bestseller, *King Solomon's Mines*. Inspired by the author's experiences in South Africa and by ongoing excavations of the Great Zimbabwe—the medieval Mashona civilization reputed to rest on the capital of the Queen of Sheba—the novel follows the melodramatic adventures of Allan Quatermain, an explorer and big game hunter who, with a friend and a dubious map, sets out to find the fabled mines of King Solomon. Arriving in the territory of a ruthless African king, the Englishmen pass themselves off as demi-gods and display a rich repertoire of European deceit before killing the king. The king's chief advisor—an evil witch—is captured and coerced into taking the white men to the mines, where she promptly imprisons them and leaves them to die. But the men miraculously escape, stuff their pockets with diamonds and head gleefully back to Europe. The depiction of Africa as a land of virile adventures, unexploited riches and treacherous natives—who, fortunately, are superstitious and easily duped—was an influential fantasy that fired the imaginations of many young Englishmen.

But not all European depictions of Africans were so simple. In contrast to Kipling's self-confident vision of degenerate and infantile natives, French poet Arthur Rimbaud's complex poetry interrogated the identity categories on which colonial discourse relied and provocatively questioned oppositions between Europeans and Africans, Christianity and paganism, civilization and savagery (Miller 1986). And Joseph Conrad, marked by his experiences as a steamship captain on the Congo, tells a decidedly less heroic tale than does Haggard. In *Heart of Darkness*, he invokes stereotypes of an inscrutable continent, in which "going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world" and relates a harrowing encounter with primal savagery and madness that has led some critics to read the novel as endorsing derogatory images, while others read it as a penetrating critique. But for many readers at the *fin de siècle*, Conrad's novel was a first, jarring glimpse into the brutal regime of King Leopold of the Belgians in the Congo, the atrocities of which would be further exposed in 1903 by Conrad's close friend, Roger Casement. If Africa was fictionally rendered uncivilized, infantile and savage, it could also be depicted as the site of an exhilarating exoticism, uninhibited sexuality, spiritual wisdom or aesthetic novelty, as an image of all that industrial modernity had lost or repressed. The French navy captain writing under the pseudonym Pierre Loti deftly purveyed this fantasy in *Le Roman d'un Spahi*, a desultory novelistic blend of travel diary, autobiography, amateur ethnography and romantic daydream, narrated by a lovelorn and lachrymose soldier in Senegal.

Meanwhile, the African art that was making its way into European exhibition halls was further sculpting European images of Africa. While the beauty of these objects was no doubt appreciated by many European viewers, equally significant was the manner in which they were recontextualized in museums, commented upon by experts, inscribed with meanings and situated within *fin-de-siècle* ideological discourses (Coombes 1994; Price 2002). Exhibited under the rubric of "primitive" or "savage" art, African art objects were positioned within an evolutionary schema

that instructed Europeans to perceive in them an uncivilized wildness and immaturity, primordial fears and animal instincts, crude sexuality and superstitious beliefs. Influenced by the new discipline of psychoanalysis—and its correlation of the psychosocial development of individuals with the evolution of societies—critics described African artwork as the product of undisciplined instincts, of peoples who had not yet mastered the repression necessary to civilization, but who, on the other hand, were attuned to an elemental spirituality and visceral intuition stifled by Western technocratic modernity (Price 2002). While such ideas cast African art as offering a kind of liberation from the constraints of modernity, they also depicted African societies as developmentally stunted, and African artists as mere conduits of a tradition or societal *id*, rather than as thoughtful creators endowed with technical skill. This art nonetheless had a profound impact on a number of European artists such as Vlaminck, Matisse, Picasso, Gauguin, Derain and Klee, who were intrigued by the geometric patterns and figural suggestiveness of African artworks. Picasso described having a "revelation" at the 1907 African art exhibit at the Trocadéro, which directly influenced his work over the next decade and inspired the fundamental techniques of cubism.

One collection of West African art had a particularly significant impact on the *fin-de-siècle* European imaginary. From the moment of its arrival in London in 1897, the immense trove of bronze sculptures and reliefs plundered from the Kingdom of Benin created an extraordinary sensation. Europeans were stunned by the refinement of the works and the artistic skill evident in their construction (see Figure 19.3). Felix von Luschan, an anthropologist who acquired a number of the bronzes for the Berlin Museum, averred that "These works from Benin are equal to the very finest examples of European casting technique. Benvenuto Cellini could not have cast them better" (quoted Ezra 1992: 25). Characterized by intricate detail, a striking combination of smooth and elaborately patterned surfaces, astounding technical precision and a richly layered symbolism, the Benin bronzes were quickly recognized as artistic treasures. But behind their magnificence lay a deplorable tale of devastation and plunder. In 1896, when Vice-Consul James Phillips embarked on an unauthorized trip to Benin City—purportedly to talk with the Oba [King] about British dissatisfaction with trade arrangements but surreptitiously plotting conquest—his party was ambushed and massacred. The event provided the British with an expedient pretext for attacking Benin, which had retained a sufficient degree of sovereignty to compromise the principle of effective occupation and to frustrate trade. Within six weeks, the "Benin Punitive Expedition" had been mustered, destroyed a half dozen Edo villages, captured Benin City, and, in the Oba's palace, discovered—and swiftly seized—thousands of works of art. Wasting no time, the British Museum mounted an exhibit of over 300 bronze plaques later that year. But the admiration elicited by the works was complicated by the tenacious conception of Benin as a depraved and savage society—which had, after all, justified the Benin expedition in the first place (Coombes 1994; Price 2002).

At the *fin de siècle*, there thus arguably existed two Africas: the Africa of the European imaginary and the Africa lived in and by Africans. These two Africas were neither entirely separate nor distinct—and at times overlapped. Neither of these conceptions of Africa was homogenous, moreover: not only did Africans of different regions, cultures, language groups, religions and classes live very different lives, but

Figure 19.3   Commemorative head of an Oba, Benin, late 18th to early 19th century
© African School/Musée Quai Branly, Paris, France/Giraudon/
The Bridgeman Art Library

European discourses about Africa were regularly contested and revised. Nonetheless, while the European bourgeoisie was largely encountering an "Africa" mediated by artistic and literary representations, scientific discourses and entertainments, the peoples of Africa were increasingly experiencing direct contact with Europeans—as missionaries deploring their beliefs and cultural practices, businessmen usurping their trade, soldiers destroying their land, and administrators restructuring their polities.

The peoples of the coast of West Africa had had contact with European merchants, slave traders and missionaries for centuries. But at the *fin de siècle*, the European presence became perceptibly more aggressive and acquisitive as Africans living in the Asante federation and the Tukolor and Sokoto empires began to experience the direct effects of European competition over trade routes, of the new imperative of "effective occupation," and of attitudes shaped by scientific racism (see Map 19.1). The powerful Asante federation had exasperated the British for half a century but, in 1874, fell to the forces of Britain's most renowned officer, Garnet Wolseley. Determined to dismantle the empire and assure that the federation would never be revived, he deposed the Asantehene (Emperor) and urged member states to rebel (Pakenham

1991; Reid 2012). He had not, however, counted on Yaa Akyaa, the powerful Asantehemaa (Queen Mother) who took control of the disintegrating realm in the 1880s, initiated a campaign of military, political and economic resistance, and seated her minor-aged son, Prempeh I, on the throne (Berger and White 1999). Under his mother's guidance, Prempeh reunited the member states of the federation, refused British offers of "protection" and dispatched a mission of ambassadors to England. The British government, for its part, refused to meet with the Asante delegation, and responded with an ultimatum: either accept a British governor and pay a steep war indemnity or face a full-scale military assault (Pakenham 1991). Realizing he could not defeat the British, Prempeh agreed to British "protection"—which for the royal family meant arrest and deportation. But the story was not quite over. For when the newly appointed British governor, Frederick Hodgson, demanded to be seated on the Asante royal throne—the Golden Stool believed to house the spirit of the Asante people—another powerful woman stepped onto the scene. Yaa Asantewa, of the Ejisu dominion, swiftly organized a military force and led a punishing insurrection against the British. While not equipped to save the kingdom, which was annexed into the Gold Coast Colony in 1902, she succeeded in protecting the throne (Berger and White 1999; Schwarz-Bart 2003).

A number of other West African societies were confronting British aggression and falling before the dreadful power of the Maxim gun. Primed by a longstanding missionary presence, a number of rulers in Yorubaland had, throughout the 1880s, concluded treaties with British businesses. But still unsatiated, British forces launched an unprovoked assault against the Kingdom of Ijebu in 1890, hoping to set an example for states which had not yet acquiesced to "protection" (Pakenham 1991). However unscrupulous, the strategy worked: between 1893 and 1899 Yoruba rulers readily accepted British governance. In the Niger Delta, the eccentric Englishman George Goldie, who dreamt of a commercial empire from the Niger to the Nile and of a monopoly in palm oil (in high demand by European factories), canvassed the region with blank treaty forms that few Africans signed and fewer were given the chance to understand, but which were crucial in warding off French and German competition and staking claims to the colony of Nigeria (Pakenham 1991).

Meanwhile, the two great Islamic empires of the Niger Valley—the Tukolor and Sokoto—faced encroachment by the French who, under Gustave Borgnis-Desbordes, aspired to connect the upper Senegal and Niger rivers by a chain of forts and railroads, and exploit the legendary wealth of Timbuktu. Sultan Ahmadu of the Tukolor was a skilled diplomat and had consistently refused the French a lease for forts or trading posts. But governing an increasingly fractious federation and hoping to evade military confrontation, he accepted a treaty in 1880 that granted France exclusive trading rights on the Niger in exchange for a supply of weapons, recognition of his sovereignty, and assurance that France would not invade the empire (Boahen 1987). In spite of this agreement, however, he found himself promptly confronted with French troops. When he consented to put his territory under French "protection," he learned, as would many other African rulers, that the referred-to "protection" was not for him, his kingdom or his people, but for France—which wanted to protect its colonial claims from other European powers.

The older and more stable empire, the Sokoto Caliphate, renowned as a center of Islamic scholarship, religious tolerance and artistic production, was governed
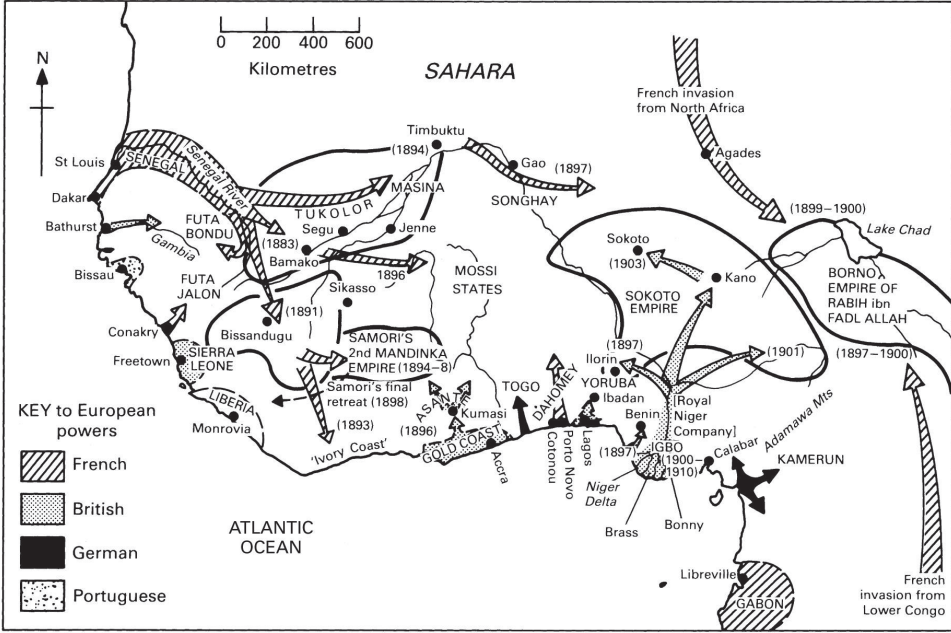
Map 19.1 West Africa in the era of the "Scramble." © *History of Africa,* third edition, by Kevin Shillington (Palgrave Macmillan)

Figure 19.4 Veteran Amazonian warriors of Dahomey photographed by François-Edmond Fortier

through a blended system of Hausa tradition and shariʻa law and by the region's most formidable ruler, Samori Ture, who, like Ahmadu, had consistently refused French demands to open up trade routes but, unlike Ahmadu, had a well-equipped army to back him up. After delivering a devastating defeat to the French in 1883, he concentrated on guerilla warfare, and when he concluded a treaty with them in 1886, it was on highly favorable terms. Exasperated by being nonetheless treated as a conquered subject, Samori turned to the British to buy arms, adroitly exploiting European rivalries (Boahen 1987; Pakenham 1991). In 1892, the French launched a major assault on the realm and, acknowledging defeat, Samori moved his people to the east; but the avaricious European grasp was widening and, in 1898, Samori was captured and deported to Gabon, and the Sokoto empire was at an end.

Further south, the Kingdom of Dahomey, with its strong centralized state and distinctive religion (Vodun), had been a significant regional power since the seventeenth century. Its dominant ethnic group, the Fon, had developed a sophisticated legal system and unique artistic tradition, but had also been a key player in the trans-atlantic slave trade—a fact that helped to coat French aggression with a veneer of abolitionist virtue. In 1878, the French had contracted with the king's representative for exclusive access to the port at Cotonou, but when the more audacious and astute King Béhanzin assumed the throne in 1889, he began raiding French protectorates, renounced the Cotonou agreement, and set about regaining the kingdom's territory, aided by those fierce and dreaded women warriors, the Amazons, who comprised a third of his army (see Figure 19.4). Declaring war against Dahomey, the French initiated a conflict that seesawed back and forth for four years. Béhanzin burned and evacuated his capital at Abomey, destroying the palm trees the French desired for oil, and fiercely resisted as his forces were slowly pushed upriver, but he was ultimately captured in 1894 and forced to surrender (Boahen 1987; Pakenham 1991). Exultant over defeating Dahomey, the French had significantly expanded their territory and returned to Paris with another cache of extraordinary African art, comprised of immense zoomorphic figures, remarkable wood and metal sculptures, jewelry and battle gear stripped from the Amazons, carved wooden doors and brilliant cloth appliqués.

Across the continent in the Eastern Sudan, an extraordinary drama was unfolding which would culminate in the Siege of Khartoum in 1885 but not see its denouement until the Battle of Omdurman thirteen years later. It is the story of a Muslim holy man, a quirky British general, and a thickly layered palimpsest of imperialisms intertwined with the Sudan's northern neighbor, Egypt, which, under Muhamad Ali, had conquered much of Sudan earlier in the century. To complicate matters, at the *fin de siècle* Egypt remained nominally part of the Ottoman empire, at the same time that the Khedive's enormous debts had resulted in dual Anglo-French control of the economy and installation of a British administrator in the person of Evelyn Baring, making Egypt a *de facto* British protectorate. In 1879, the new Khedive Tewfiq was confronted with a revolt spurred by resentment against foreign infiltration and the grievances of Egyptian military officers. When riots spread to Alexandria and Europeans were killed, the British bombarded the city and called in General Wolseley who, in 1882, presided over the massacre of 2,000 Egyptians at Tel el-Kebir and inaugurated a British occupation of Egypt that would last until 1954 (Strachey 1918; Pakenham 1991).

To the south, a charismatic holy man named Muhammad Ahmad had proclaimed himself the Mahdi—the "Expected One"—and advocated a return to fundamental

Figure 19.5 Portrait of Muhammad Ahmad (1844–85), known as the Mahdi © De Agostini Picture Library/G. Dagli Orti/The Bridgeman Art Library

Sufi virtues of purity, austerity and worldly renunciation (see Figure 19.5). Exploiting widespread resentment of the Ottoman-Egyptian rulers in Sudanese territory—who were preoccupied with the British—he drew large numbers of devotees from the Baqqara and Fur peoples and, after Tel el-Kebir, from the Hadendoa, who gave the Mahdi his finest general, Osman Digna. The decisive moment for the Mahddiya came in 1883 when the remnants of the Khedive's army, under the command of retired British colonel Hicks Pasha, mounted an attack on the Mahdist forces at El Obeid. In what seemed a sign and a miracle, the Mahdist forces, with their traditional weaponry of spears and swords, and with astonishingly few losses, devastated a technologically well-equipped army of over 8,000 men, of which only 300 survived. The Mahdi seized the army's weaponry, took control first of the city and then the whole of Sudan (Strachey 1918; Pakenham 1991; Reid 2012). Kipling seized the opportunity to commemorate the event with a characteristically bigoted poem on the Hadendoa (referred to as "Fuzzy-Wuzzys") and a grudging admission that they had broken the purportedly invincible "British square":

> So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
> You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;

> An' 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead of 'air –
> You big black boundin' beggar – for you broke a British square!
>
> <div align="right">(Kipling 1999: 412)</div>

In a far less jovial mood, the British cabinet sensed impending danger to European troops in Khartoum. Prime Minister Gladstone decided that the man to sort this out was the "inspired and mad" General Charles Gordon (quoted Strachey 1918). As deeply mystical as the Mahdi who would become his nemesis, Gordon had been appointed governor of the equatorial provinces of Sudan in 1874 and charged with abolishing the slave trade controlled by Darfur chieftain Zobeir Pasha. Gordon's success left the regional economy in shambles and inadvertently paved the way for the rise of the Mahdi, although by that time, Gordon had returned to England. Now, a decade later, summoned to organize the evacuation of Europeans from Khartoum, he made a triumphal return, releasing prisoners, decreasing taxes, abolishing torture and, with supreme irony, legalizing slavery—which simultaneously stabilized the economy and exasperated the British. In Cairo, Baring was increasingly alarmed by Gordon's continued talk of "smashing the Mahdi" (for which he had no mandate), his self-appointment as Governor-General, and his announcement that, based on a "mystic feeling," he wished to turn over the governorship, after the evacuation, to none other than Zobeir Pasha. Inundated with delirious and enigmatic telegrams from Gordon, Baring began to wonder about his sanity (Strachey 1918).

By this point, the Mahdi commanded a territory equivalent to the combined area of Spain, France and Germany, and before Gordon had gotten around to any evacuation or "smashing," the Mahdi's forces had surrounded Khartoum, cutting communication lines and supply routes. The single boat that evaded the blockade, carrying 2,500 Europeans, was captured upriver at Dongola; all were slaughtered, the news delivered to Gordon in a personal letter from the Mahdi (Pakenham 1991). Khartoum remained under siege for eleven months, and famine and disease were widespread. In the version of events that became legendary, Gordon remained a resolute leader, refused to fortify his palace, and committed himself to sharing the fate of the people (Strachey 1918). For his part, the Mahdi waited patiently for the lowering of the Nile, and on the night of 25 January 1885, 50,000 of his soldiers sloshed across the muddy riverbed, attacked the garrison shortly before dawn, and massacred 10,000 inhabitants of Khartoum. Despite the Mahdi's orders, Gordon was killed; his severed head delivered on a pike to the Mahdi. The relief expedition sluggishly dispatched by Gladstone arrived two days later. When news of the "fall of Khartoum" reached London, public outrage was intense; Gordon was seen as a martyred hero, his image commemorated on everything from tea towels to toddlers' toys.

The Mahdi proceeded to establish a centralized religious state, but died six months later of typhoid. The faithful swore loyalty to his successor, Khalifa Abdallahi, who skillfully ruled the state for a decade. But in Britain, desire to avenge Gordon's death continued to simmer and, as Belgians and Frenchmen appeared in Sudan, the idea became more appealing to colonially-minded politicians. Horatio Kitchener, British commander in Egypt, had been dreaming of the "reconquest" of Sudan and captured Dongola in 1895. Three years later, his Anglo-Egyptian forces, inspired to savagery by a sense of righteous vengence, met the increasingly divided Mahdist army at Omdurman. They proceeded to massacre over 10,000 Mahdist

troops, while sustaining fewer than 50 casualties themselves (Pakenham 1991). Kitchener destroyed the tomb of the Mahdi, had his bones throne into the Nile, and retained his skull for use as an inkwell. The British promptly dismantled the Mahdist state and parceled it out into a series of tribal homelands (Mamdani 2012).

To the southeast, in Ethiopia, Emperor Yohannes had been unifying and expanding his Christian empire since 1872 and had signed a treaty with the British, agreeing to assist them in combating the Mahdi with the understanding that he would receive in return the port of Massawa, captured by the Ottomans in the sixteenth century. But in 1889, Yohannes was killed by Mahdist forces and he left to his successor, Menelik II, an empire threatened by three invaders: the British, the Mahddiya and the Italians who had occupied Massawa. Setting up his new capital at Addis Ababa, Menelik signed a treaty with Italy, but its terms were distinctly different in the Italian text than in the Amharic. On the basis of this swindle, Italy recklessly claimed the whole of the Ethiopian empire and General Oreste Baratieri boasted he would bring Menelik back to Italy in a cage (Pakenham 1991). But Baratieri was prepared neither for Menelik's well-disciplined army nor for the redoubtable figure of the Empress Taitu who commanded an infantry force, organized thousands of women to care for wounded soldiers, and played a considerable role in the humiliating defeat visited on Italy at the Battle of Adowa in 1896 (Pakenham 1991; Berger and White 1999). This victory put Menelik in a position not only to dispense with the fraudulent Italian treaty, but to demand—and receive—recognition of Ethiopia's unqualified independence, to drive shrewd bargains with both the British and French for portions of Somaliland, and to double the size of his empire.

On the lush northeast shore of Lake Victoria, in the Kingdom of Buganda, Protestant and Catholic missionaries were vying for the soul of the young King Mwanga, while British and Germans contended for his territory. Mwanga's father had adroitly managed the Christian, Islamic and traditional Kiganda factions within his well-organized state. But his death in 1884 left an immature and petulant successor on the throne. When faced with escalating religious conflicts, an influx of foreigners and the threat of civil war, he only exacerbated matters by stripping elder chiefs of power, replacing them with reckless young men, and embarking on a politics of terror that included raiding villages, murdering the Anglican bishop, slaughtering Christian converts and alienating powerful Muslims. It was not long before Mwanga had a revolt on his hands, was deposed and forced to flee. The king installed in his stead, however, was largely controlled by Islamic traders which led the Catholics to support Mwanga's restoration. Shortly after Mwanga's return to power, the Englishman Frederick Lugard arrived on the scene, charged with staving off the Germans and establishing a British protectorate. Exploiting the animosity between Protestant and Catholic missionaries, Mwanga turned to the French Catholics and provoked Lugard into battle. The Battle of Mengo was a Pyrrhic victory for Lugard; it elicited outrage in France and Germany—where it was claimed Lugard orchestrated the demise of a Catholic king and destroyed the French mission. Nevertheless, Buganda was declared a British protectorate in 1894.

Perhaps the most hideous and tragic episode of the "Scramble for Africa" was unfolding further inland in the Great Lakes region, in the territory of the ancient Luba and Kongo empires. Both were centuries-old multiethnic federations with sophisticated political structures, economies and artistic traditions (see Figure 19.6).

Figure 19.6   Prestige drinking vessel in the form of a head from the Central African Kuba culture © Werner Forman Archive/The Bridgeman Art Library

But for Europeans, this was the darkest reach of the "dark continent," the very *heart* of darkness, and at the *fin de siècle*, its peoples found themselves caught in the vortex of a marriage made in hell between Europe's most celebrated explorer, Henry Morton Stanley, and its most rabidly avaricious monarch, King Leopold II of the Belgians. Stanley was a self-made adventurer of fortune, who shot to fame in the 1870s by recovering the Scottish missionary David Livingstone and making a stupendous journey across Africa: from Zanzibar in the east, he circumnavigated Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika, mapped the vast river system of central Africa, followed the Congo up cataracts and rapids and, having traversed 7,000 miles, emerged 1,001 days later on the Atlantic coast (Stanley 1878; Jeal 2007). He left behind a swath of death, but his memoir, *Through Darkest Africa* (1879), was a blockbuster, and the moniker he had acquired—"Bula Mutari" [Breaker of Rocks]—became synonymous in the region with the British colonial state, emblematizing its apparent ability to smash any obstacle in its path.

Obsessed with acquiring "a slice of this magnificent African cake" (quoted Hochschild 1998: 58), Leopold had been avidly following Stanley's exploits, but was shrewd enough to recognize that his colonial ambitions needed a humanitarian and scientific disguise. To that end, he convened a lavish conference of explorers and

geographers in 1876 where he established, to unanimous acclaim, an International African Association (IAA) dedicated to scientific advancement, humanitarian uplift and abolition of the slave trade. When Stanley reappeared out of "darkest Africa" a year later, he too was promptly invited to Brussels, duly enchanted by the royal treatment and speedily engaged on behalf of Leopold's murky enterprise in the Congo. But in a shell game of names, Leopold surreptitiously replaced the IAA with a "Committee for Studies of the Upper Congo" and, later, an "International Association of the Congo" calculated to be confused with the philanthropic organization he had established in 1876, but in actuality a front for his own commercial designs (Hochschild 1998). This legerdemain, abetted by pliable business cronies and well-compensated journalists, ultimately enabled Leopold to acquire as his own personal property a section of Africa seventy times the size of Belgium and a monopoly over the lucrative ivory and rubber trades.

Meanwhile, the Frenchman Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza was exploring the western Congo and European newspapers were having a field day dramatizing his "race" with Stanley for control of Lake Nkunda (known to Europeans as "Stanley Pool"). Prized as a strategic gateway to the waterways of central Africa, Lake Nkunda was under the control of an aging Teke chief, Makoko, who befriended Brazza and placed his territory under French protection—perhaps because his kingdom was in decline, because he believed collaboration would offer trade opportunities or because he feared the arrival of "Bula Mutari." Whatever his motivations, Makoko facilitated the establishment of the French settlement that became Brazzaville, administering a bitter blow to Stanley, who was forced to retreat to the other shore.

Stanley had returned to the Congo in 1879 with instructions from Leopold to obtain treaties that would "grant us everything," including trade rights, political control, resources and labor (quoted Hochschild 1998). Over the next five years, Stanley claimed treaties with 450 regional chiefs; most were led to believe they were signing traditional treaties of friendship or envisioned Europeans as trading partners or allies against Arab slavers (Boahen 1987; Reid 2012). By 1888, Leopold had established concession companies to exploit the resources and labor of his new territory and the paramilitary *Force Publique* to administer it. From the outset, his primary interest was in ivory, but that abruptly changed in 1890 when the Scottish inventor John Dunlop fashioned a rubber tire for his son's tricycle and inadvertently instigated a worldwide rubber boom. Leopold had within his grasp the prized red rubber of Kasai and he wanted lots of it collected fast. But gathering rubber was slow and grueling work. Belgian forces were without sufficient personnel to regulate Leopold's vast territory, under duress to produce exorbitant profits, and held accountable to no law; their solution was brutality. They impressed able-bodied men into uncompensated labor, imposed steep quotas, instilled obedience by way of the *chicotte*—a sadistic whip made of hardened hippopotamus hide—and seized women, children and the elderly as hostages who could be redeemed only by a quota of rubber (Hochschild 1998). Soon every village in the Kuba kingdom was caught in the pitiless mechanism of the Congo Free State, their resistance met with ever more ruthless forms of cruelty (Boahen 1987; Hochschild 1998; Vansina 2010).

As Joseph Conrad was piloting a steamer up the Congo in 1890, Leopold decided it was high time to seize Katanga province, reputed to have significant mineral wealth. Nominally in Leopold's territory, the region was controlled by a warlord

named Msiri and eyed by an Englishman named Cecil Rhodes. Msiri had ruled a kingdom in southeast Katanga since mid-century and established prosperous trade routes throughout the Great Lakes region, from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic. He had cannily traded copper and ivory for guns, formed a militia, and established regional alliances through marriage. Thus, when emissaries from the Congo Free State and Rhodes's British South Africa Company (BSAC) descended on his territory, he was disinclined to give it away (Boahen 1990; Pakenham 1991). Not dislodged by "diplomacy," Msiri found himself faced with Belgian troops, an ultimatum (refused) and a bullet (which killed him).

If dispensing with Msiri was a victory for Leopold, he was feeling heat from Sefu, the son of Tippu Tip, the legendary ivory and slave merchant who had retired to Zanzibar. Enraged by Leopold's encroachment on his trade, by ivory stolen from Arab traders, and Leopold's refusal of compensation, Sefu began organizing insurrections by Zanzibari traders, targeting personnel of the Congo Free State (Pakenham 1991; Hochschild 1998). By 1892, war had broken out between the Arab-Swahili traders of the eastern Congo and Leopold's Free State, with the Kuba and Bakongo caught in between. While Leopold claimed victory over Sefu in 1893, tens of thousands of Kuba fled, seeking refuge in central Kasai (Vansina 2010). Insurrections spread, gaining momentum from labor revolts and sowing anarchy across the region for the next fifteen years.

Arriving in the Congo in 1889, a young African American Baptist missionary named George Washington Williams was shocked by what he found. His "Open Letter" to King Leopold, distributed widely across Europe and the U.S., charged the regime with fraudulent treaties, theft of land and property, systematic brutality, abduction and abuse of women, the imposition of forced labor, wholesale engagement with the slave trade and numerous instances of murder (Hochschild 1998). Another remarkable African American missionary, William Sheppard, arrived in the Congo in 1890, settled near the homeland of the Kuba, began making extensive ethnographic notes, learned the Bakuba language, recorded ancestral narratives, collected Kuba art and textiles and, in 1892, was the first foreigner admitted to the court of the Kuba king, where he remained for four months. But in 1899, Sheppard was called to a more troubled part of the country where, in place of the vibrant life of the Kuba court, he found horror upon horror: decimated villages, rotting bodies and human hands being smoked over a fire, which, he learned, were required by the *Force Publique*: every bullet used to kill an underproductive worker had to be accounted for by a severed hand (Hochschild 1998; Kennedy 2002; see Figure 21.2).

While mounting criticism caused Leopold to appoint a deliberately ineffectual investigative commission on the Congo, his immense profits continued to roll in unabated. When he hosted the 1897 World's Fair in Brussels, the most visited exhibit was of 267 Congolese men, women and children guarded by the *Force Publique*. But in nearby Antwerp, an astute shipping clerk named Edmund Morel was scrutinizing his company's records, inspecting ships from the Congo, and concluding (correctly) that Leopold had instituted a regime of slave labor (Hochschild 1998). His deduction was corroborated by the testimonies of missionaries who were documenting the terror they witnessed and Morel soon joined forces with British diplomat Roger Casement, who had been commissioned by the British government to investigate conditions in the Congo Free State. The two founded the Congo Reform

Association that worked tirelessly to publicize the atrocities being carried out under Leopold's humanitarian disguise. Three publications—*The Casement Report* (1904), Mark Twain's *King Leopold's Soliloquy* (1905) and Morel's *Red Rubber* (1906)— were widely read across Europe and the U.S. and brought significant public opinion to bear on Leopold's governance of the Congo. Leopold fought back with his own well-oiled propaganda machine and sent another commission of inquiry to the Congo. But this time, the testimonies of horror gathered by the commission were too overwhelming to silence, despite Leopold's quashing of the record. Among the most wrenching was that of Chief Lontulu of Bolima, who silently laid 110 twigs on the commissioners' table, one for each of his people who had been murdered for rubber. Then, twig by twig, he named them (Hochschild 1998).

At the southernmost reach of the continent, the *fin de siècle* was ushered in by the discovery of diamonds, the fall of the great Zulu kingdom and the first Anglo-Boer War. As the British became more rapacious following mineral discoveries in the region, the Afrikaner Boers (descendants of Dutch settlers at the Cape who had trekked inland to establish independent republics) became more nationalist and fiercely independent. African communities—Xhosa, Swazi, Tswana, Venda—were forcibly removed from their lands or dismantled through a migrant labor system that sent men off to treacherous mines on longterm contracts where families were prohibited and mineworkers subject to newly elaborated discriminatory pass laws. The once-powerful Zulu nation had been weakened by the Boers and, subsequently, by the British, who were intent on annexing territory claimed by the Boers and dreamed of a "Cape-to-Cairo" empire (see Figure 21.1). But King Cetshwayo had rebuilt a formidable army, and when the British invaded Zululand in 1879 his forces massacred six companies of British soldiers using assegais and the traditional "Horns of the Buffalo" military formation. Nonetheless, the superiority of European weaponry soon prevailed and British forces defeated Zulu warriors at the Battle of Ulundi, burned the royal kraal, and initiated a furious manhunt for Cetshwayo (Pakenham 1991; Reid 2012). When captured, Cetshwayo was exiled to London, held captive for three years, and then returned to a dismembered territory carved into thirteen administrative districts (Pakenham 1991; see Figure 19.7). The Boers, by contrast, were able to repel the British; though they had no standing army and only loosely organized states, they were skilled at war on the veld and won a decisive victory at the Battle of Majuba Hill, bringing the first Anglo-Boer War to a swift end (Meredith 2007).

But British lust for Boer territory was reignited by the 1886 discovery of gold on the rand. Cecil Rhodes, who had already made a fortune in diamonds as director of De Beers, aspired to establish himself in the gold industry and acquire more land. The obstacle to that land and gold—the lands of the Mashona and the legendary mines of King Solomon—was King Lobengula of the Matabele, who maintained a redoubtable army and, mindful of the defeat of the Zulus, remained vigilant against European encroachment (Boahen 1987). Thus when Rhodes dispatched his partner, Charles Rudd, to secure a mining concession from Lobengula, the king was duly circumspect. However, after months of pressure, Lobengula, cognizant of his inability to repel a European army, reluctantly affixed his elephant seal to an agreement that granted Rhodes' company exclusive mining rights in his territory in exchange for weapons and tribute. But the agreement that Lobengula was given to sign was not

Figure 19.7 Portrait of King Cetshwayo of Zululand, photographed in London circa 1881

the same as the one translated for him, which had stipulated that no more than ten Europeans would be allowed to mine at a time and that they would abide by Matabele law (Pakenham 1991; Meredith 2007). When he learned of this treachery, Lobengula sent advisors to London, who were received by Queen Victoria and garnered considerable public support. Yet when Rhodes was summoned to Britain for explanation, he bribed and cajoled his way around the fraudulent concession, procuring a charter that empowered the BSAC to build infrastructure, award land grants, negotiate treaties, promulgate laws and establish a police force—in short, to colonize. Once back in Africa, Rhodes promptly skirted the Boer republics and barreled into Matabeleland in 1893, with a ragtag band of pioneers who had each been promised 3,000 acres of land and 15 gold claims in exchange for their service. Their Maxim guns decimated the Matabele with tragic ease and the Matabele were relocated to "native reserves," their land distributed to Rhodes' "pioneers." The British government recognized the BSAC's jurisdiction over Matabeleland in 1894 and left Rhodes to rule as he saw fit. He named his new territory, modestly, Rhodesia.

At the same time, Rhodes and a band of co-conspirators were cooking up a coup in the Transvaal, a quick defeat of the Boers that would put the lucrative mining wealth of Johannesburg in their hands. It was to be based on the grievances of "*uitlanders*" (European mineworkers), who were counted upon to join the uprising.

Boer President Paul Kruger, however, had gotten advance warning of the raid led by Leander Starr Jameson, and *uitlander* support did not materialize as expected: about 30 of Jameson's 600 or so men were killed and another 400 arrested (Pakenham 1991; Meredith 2007). The "Jameson Raid" was not only an abject failure on its own terms, but also enabled the first Matabele *Chimurenga* (uprising) and incited the second Anglo-Boer War. Coercing his police force into joining the raid, Rhodes had left his newly conquered territory undefended. The Matabele and Mashona, aggrieved by the loss of their land and cattle and the imposition of taxes and forced labor, seized the opportunity to attack white farms and settlers, spreading terror among Rhodes' settlers for two years and leaving hundreds of them dead (Pakenham 1991; Meredith 2007).

The Jameson Raid had also confirmed the Boers' worst fears: the British wanted their land and gold. Mounting pre-emptive strikes in 1899, the Boers gravely weakened British forces, taking garrisons under siege at Ladysmith, Mafeking and Kimberley and, despite the British capture of Pretoria in 1900, pursuing a protracted guerilla war. The British, under Lord Kitchener, responded with a scorched earth policy, destroying Boer farms and crops, slaughtering livestock and herding civilians into concentration camps where 26,000 Boer women and children died (Pakenham 1991; Meredith 2007). By the time the Boers surrendered in 1902, it had been the bloodiest war Britain had ever fought. It also resulted in large numbers of dispossessed Boers relocating to urban centers where they had to compete for jobs with displaced Africans, which fuelled Afrikaner nationalism with further righteous fury. Over the next decade, that nationalism was increasingly racialized and institutionalized as white South Africans convened the Native Affairs Commission of 1903–5, established segregation policies based on *fin-de-siècle* racial "sciences" and laid the foundations of *apartheid*. Black South Africans were also organizing and in 1912 inaugurated the South African Native National Congress (see Figure 21.3). Renamed the African National Congress (ANC) in 1923, the organization played a central role in combating *apartheid* throughout the twentieth century.

Just as Africans in different societies experienced distinct forms of conquest and responded with varied modes of opposition, so too they came under diverse technologies of colonial governance. The British, for example, favored a system of "indirect rule" that functioned through existing traditional leaders, while the French preferred a structure of "direct rule" and a policy of assimilation in which *évolués* who learned French, converted to Christianity and acquired property might become French citizens. Yet despite these variances, African societies were nearly all radically transformed by the institution of monetary systems, taxation and wage-labor; a shift away from diversified farming and local trade toward monocrop export economies; the resultant production of food insecurity and poverty; ignorantly drawn geo-political boundaries that created incoherent and fractious political entities; and the imposition of European systems of morality, patriarchy and gender bias, racial prejudices and a capitalist value system.

Hence many of the concepts and concerns that dominated the European *fin de siècle* had very different meanings for Africans: the cultural *malaise* over which Europeans fretted was, for Africans, a wholesale (albeit not uncontested) destruction of cultures, political systems and social structures; the infectious moral "degeneration" that Europeans feared came regularly to be associated with Africans

themselves; the scientific and technological progress in which Europeans exulted was for Africans the sign of their "backwardness" and underdevelopment; and the delirious dynamism that for Europeans constituted modernity was secured by the image of Africans as intransigently "traditional" and primitive. And if Africa and Africans functioned as ideological raw materials out of which Europeans confected their conceptions of self and world at the *fin de siècle*, they also played a decisive, if largely unacknowledged, material and economic role—through their raw materials and labor—in the construction of Euro-American modernity and the substructure of globalization.

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PART III
POLITICS IN A NEW KEY

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THE NEW NATIONALISM

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Timothy Baycroft

The study of nationalism presents several complex problems from the outset, not least that of simple definition. As a concept, nationalism is both particular and completely adaptable: on the one hand everyone knows what it means, but on the other no consensus has ever been found around a precise definition which can cover the full gamut of situations in which it is clearly at work. Nationalism can be primarily about xenophobia and racism; it can be the spreading of high and literate culture to the masses; it can be about states and borders, and the quest to make the political and the national units 'congruent' (through unification or separatism) to create a world of straightforwardly recognisable nation-states; it can be about identity, the mutual recognition of those who belong, and do not belong, to a particular national community; or it can be as simple as the quest to give greater glory and pride to a particular and universally recognised nation (on theories, see Lawrence 2005). A range of theories have been developed to explain the diversity, the most widespread of which is a grand scheme of classification into 'civic' and 'ethnic' types of nations and nationalism, although more recent work has shown the limitations of this theory, particularly for the nineteenth century (Baycroft and Hewitson 2006; see also *The ASEN Bulletin*, 1996/7). Likewise, no consensus can be found regarding the period and places in which nationalism can be said to have had an impact. The perennialist school of thought sees nationalism as a force to be found for many centuries in Europe (Smith 1998), including some looking as far back as Old Testament Israel (Hastings 1997), while modernists argue that nationalism is a force which arrived in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century or thereabouts, gradually spreading across Europe and the globe over the next few centuries (see, for example, Breuilly 1982). To understand nationalism as a force during the *fin de siècle* will require a more general sense of what the term could mean then, as well as an examination of what distinguishes nationalism at that time from the period which preceded it, that is to say, what was new, different and particular about nationalism during the *fin de siècle*. After exploring several dimensions of what nationalism meant at the *fin de siècle*, this chapter will then turn to an examination of several examples.

To cover all possibilities, a nation can be defined as a group of people sharing any number of real or perceived characteristics, at least some of the members of which

are conscious of the extent and the limits of the group and identify themselves with it. These characteristics may include any number of cultural traits, such as language, religion, dress or cuisine, a sense of the history of the nation (as heroes or martyrs), some kind of political or institutional structure (from a fully fledged State to an underground independence movement), and almost all include an identifiable territory or homeland. The combination of characteristics will be different for each nation, and can grow and become enhanced over time. The potential to conceive of the whole membership of the national community, and for individuals to draw some elements of their identity from the nation, is an important element in nationhood, making a nation, in the phrase of Benedict Anderson, an imagined community (1991). Nationalism is the word which is given to political movements which create, enhance and then draw upon sentiments of national identity and love of the nation in order to put a particular group into power or to mobilise support for their political agenda, most effective and obvious in times of crisis (Hewitson 2006, 312–55). Nationalism has also at one time or another been successfully combined with just about any other political agenda, be it liberal or conservative, authoritarian or democratic, progressive or reactionary. It is this very flexibility of possible definitions and potential compatibility with a wide range of political circumstances which make nations so adaptable, and nationalism potentially so powerful as a motivating political force.

One of the most widespread notions of nationalism has been that it is about bringing power to 'the people', but the ways in which the people were thought of changed dramatically in the century preceding the *fin de siècle*. From the time of the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century through the early nineteenth century, 'the people' were primarily defined against the aristocracy, and nationalist movements centred most commonly around overthrowing absolutism, breaking the power of entrenched aristocratic elites, and bringing about some kind of democracy. Different nations at this time were the allies of one another, seeking to bring about the triumph of not only their own people against the elite oppressors, but that of all nations against all forms of absolutist tyranny. The drive to establish democracy was a part of a universalist project aiming to see all nations triumph and the use of reason and Enlightenment spread throughout the world, paralleling the decline and fall of absolutism and the empowered aristocratic elites (see Hobsbawm 1994).

By the middle of the nineteenth century, much nationalist discourse was more closely influenced by romanticism, and the quest for the 'authentic' voice of each particular nation and its people. Understanding folk customs, tales and music were all a part of building a fully developed understanding of the cultural characteristics which defined each nation, made it special and valued, and upon which a national identity could be built and promoted (Baycroft and Hopkin 2012). Absolutism had not been completely vanquished, nor democracy fully ensconced, but the attention and objectives of nationalists had already begun to shift. At this stage, differentiation between each nation and the precise elaboration of the cultural specificity and uniqueness of each gradually superseded the universalist objectives of the nationalism of the Enlightenment and Revolution which had been more about the principles of sovereignty of the people than about each nation's individuality and uniqueness.

The *fin de siècle* saw new dimensions to nationalism and the various political discourses about nations emerge as the general political and diplomatic context became transformed. The map of Europe had already been influenced by nationalist

movements, having seen the unification of Germany and Italy, as well as the development of nascent nationalist or regionalist movements within the Austro-Hungarian Empire and elsewhere. The extension of the franchise had brought about an era of mass politics, where the electorate was there to be wooed and influenced by the various factions competing for political power. Nationalism had already proved a powerful motivating factor among urban elites and then masses earlier in the century, and by the *fin de siècle*, rival political elites sought to mobilise further support throughout the entire population with their nationalist discourses. Those already in power developed systems of mass education which would extend elite nationalist cultures and languages, as well as increase awareness of 'national' history and encourage and develop national identity among their populations (Gellner 1983). As the ability of states to regulate, monitor and control affairs within their own territories increased, each nation-state needed to mobilise more resources to compete with its neighbours, as well as use a greater proportion of its resources to influence its own population. Much of the development of national sentiment and identity was based upon the creation or even invention of the 'characteristics' which define a nation (see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, and Weber 1921).

Internationally, the major nation-states of Europe were also increasingly engaged in competition with one another. Economically, each sought to industrialise as quickly as possible, competing for markets, raw materials, and to develop techniques which would give their industries an advantage over others. At the same time they competed with one another for colonies, and as the remaining available territories diminished, so the competition between rival nations was heightened, leading to more than one crisis during the period (see for example Merriman 2010, 742–82). One part of this competition between nations involved cultivating and developing an ever-greater sense of nationalism among the populations, such that they would approve and support further mobilisation of resources in the name of competition between states, and to build up the fear of other nations and keep the nationalists themselves in power domestically.

In this context of increasing competition and rivalry between nation-states, the nature of nationalism began also to shift, incurring the label 'new nationalism'. In some ways such a label is simply a sign of the awakening consciousness of self which characterised the *fin de siècle*, coupled with the belief that whatever was happening was a part of definitive (as opposed to simply cyclical) change which was a part of the 'end' to which they were driving towards the turn of the century. The label 'new' was, after all, applied to other things in the period (including the 'new woman', the 'new imperialism' and the 'new journalism'). This suggests that those analysing nationalism were conscious that the developments which had occurred in the area of political nationalism were a part of the wider trend during the *fin de siècle* to adapt old forms into something new and different.

The new nationalism of the *fin de siècle* was not only more self-conscious but also relied more explicitly on defining 'the other'. 'The other' was in the first instance a simple means to refine a sense of the national self through greater awareness of national characteristics and cultures via those that were different. By the *fin de siècle*, however, 'the other' became much more prevalent among nationalist discourses, encompassing both the external enemy and also the enemy within. The latter could include immigrants (especially those of other races), the colonised, those

of other religions (Jews in particular, but also Catholics or Protestants, depending upon which religion could be easily exploited as potential national enemies), as well as the potential 'traitor', the member of the 'fifth column', or anyone not fully 'national'. Anything which could be presented as threatening the sanctity of the nation as it was perceived by the educated middle classes who dominated each nation's political elite was fair game.

The nationalists of the *fin de siècle* were particularly concerned with contemporary theories of racial superiority, whether scientifically or culturally based, as well as the predominance of xenophobia. The scientific and racial theories lent credence to the nationalist idea that their particular nation was the greatest, and that those from other nations were genuinely inferior. Even within Europe, the differences between the 'latin' and 'germanic' races could be used as a basis both to define self and to explain how others were 'naturally' different and therefore justifiably scorned as inferior or as enemies.

The fear of the other, whether of the immigrant or the rival nation, which leads to a corresponding need to increase the importance of one's own nation at the expense (at least rhetorically) of other nations, is also one of the key elements characterising the *fin de siècle*. One of the great fears was of course tied to the term itself, that the 'fin' towards which all were heading was uncertain, and possibly worse than the present. Belief in the 'end' meant that the place of a particular nation (and culture) had therefore to be secured, and while history might be mined for examples of national greatness, it was the present threats and future security and prosperity (if not survival) which were presented as being at stake and the most important. In such an atmosphere, nationalists were able to exploit the general sense of fear (or uncertainty) by stating that their nation was under threat of disappearance (or diminishing importance and power) and thereby promote their own agendas when they made the claim that they were best suited to protect the nation from the uncertainties which the new century would bring. It was also a fear of the disappearance of traditional culture (the familiar) faced with a modernity that would threaten traditional national culture, or at least those parts which came from rural and folk traditions. Thus nostalgia for an idyllic past of national traditions could be mobilised by nationalists, particularly if these traditions could be presented as under threat of disappearing.

Many of the descriptions of nations at the time began to take on a particularly *fin-de-siècle* character as well. The language of the psychology of individual nations began to intermingle with that of the simple cultural or ethnic descriptive characteristics that had come before. In a well-publicised speech called 'What is a Nation?' at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1882, Ernest Renan claimed that a nation was 'a soul, a spiritual principle' and that to understand a nation implied more than a comprehension of the simple culture, but required an understanding of the national character, of the national personality and mentality (Renan 1882). Nations were personified and came to 'understand' and to 'feel' – usually what the political elites seeking to mobilise support in their favour thought and felt, it is true, but expressed very much in the language of psychology associated with the *fin de siècle*.

The final general characteristic of the *fin de siècle* that can be seen in the nationalism of the time consists of a 'dark underside' to the more general discourse about nations. It can be seen that on the one hand nations were still upheld as that

which brought about, indeed stood for, the transmission of power to the people, representing not only democracy, progress and modernity, but openness and universal values derived from reason and the Enlightenment. On the other hand, nationalists also began to use their very discourses of national identity to turn inwards and to make war on other nations, to exclude even those who a generation before had been a part of the nation, and to prevent those they colonised from achieving equal status within their nations. This is the 'dark underside' of *fin-de-siècle* nationalism. Where previously nationalism had been a kind of pure celebration of 'the people', which included all peoples opposed to tyranny, even when trying to discover the essences of each national type through an examination of 'authentic' folklore or culture, by the *fin de siècle* nationalism was about identifying national enemies, internal and external, and finding ways to keep them out or down.

Thus the 'new nationalism' of the *fin de siècle* was still a political force seeking to mobilise support for nationalist politicians, but with a greater emphasis on the fear of the other, on threats and rivalries, based on language that was more psychological and that revealed a dark underside to the positive connotations of the mere promotion of patriotic loyalty and promotion of high culture. We will now turn to several examples of nationalism during the *fin de siècle*, beginning first of all with France and Germany, as examples of the traditional state-centred nation, before turning to the more diverse example of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the phenomenon of regionalism that was a related and increasingly significant factor at the time.

FRANCE

Most studies of nationalism include France, which has been held up as the archetype of state-sponsored and successful centralising nation-building, and which was able to mobilise and assimilate its diverse population into a coherent nation with a strong identity and clearly defined history and culture. It has also become the model of a 'civic' nation, based on notions of individual citizenship, and a social contract that allows those outside to join, as opposed to an 'ethnic' nation founded upon a discourse of ethnic or racial descent (Brubaker 1992). Such a view among much of the historiography of nationalism notwithstanding, the development of French nationalism is nowhere near as free from ethnic, racial or cultural discourses as has been commonly believed, and the *fin de siècle* is a moment in time when these other elements can most easily be seen (see Baycroft 2006).

The French Third Republic prided itself on its universalist, republican principles, inherited from the revolutionary tradition that had begun in 1789. As a nation, not only was France the beacon and example of these values to the world, but was also characterised by the greatness of its culture, language, history, and its ability to assimilate all comers into the home of liberty, equality and fraternity. Paris was the leading artistic and cultural centre of the world, and the centre stage of global attention during the whole of the *fin de siècle*. Twice during the period it played host to the World's Fairs, for the centenary of the revolution in 1889 and again in 1900, using them as a platform to showcase the greatness of the French nation to its own people and to the globe (Weber 1986).

Behind the glamour and the glory, however, the French nation also showed the signs described so far in this chapter of the changing form of nationalism found

during the *fin de siècle*. Having been defeated and humiliated by Prussia in the Franco-Prussian war, which saw them lose Alsace-Lorraine to the newly united Germany in 1871, the French tried ever so much harder to seek glory. Although theoretically incompatible with the republican discourse of liberty to peoples, the French conquered many new colonies and tried to influence if not dominate the international scene, along with a renewed discourse of national greatness and rivalry with Germany. Along with their more obvious rivals across the Rhine, other groups were also targeted as enemies of the nation – enemies from within – Catholics, Jews and the far left. Contributing to this atmosphere of fear, the 1880s and 1890s saw crisis after crisis, where nationalism was prominent among the arguments of all political groups seeking to build a stronger nation based on the fear and hatred of the supposed enemies of the French nation (see Baycroft 2008).

The first internal enemy was the Catholic Church, accused of having supported the counter-revolution and monarchy in opposition to the republic and all of its values from the first revolution onwards. The fact that in 1890 the Church officially changed its politics and proclaimed an acceptance of the republic to all of the clergy and the faithful not only did not lessen the charges against it, but on the contrary led to greater charges of trickery and backroom plotting to overthrow the republic in secret. The 1890s and the first few years after the turn of the century saw the highest levels of anticlericalism and anti-Catholic rhetoric in a century. The Church was accused of being anti-national, fundamentally opposed to the defining principles of the French nation (that is to say republicanism), and the increased pressure of the *fin-de-siècle* years led through the proscription of monastic orders to the final official separation of the Church and state in 1905 (Larkin 1995).

While anticlericalism was a phenomenon essentially of the nationalist republican left, both the right and the mainstream left agreed that international socialism also represented a threat to the nation. Although much socialist rhetoric within France sought to keep the far left within the nationalist revolutionary tradition, the personal and later institutional links to the Second Workers International were hard to pretend as being other than dedicated to the destruction and removal of all nations in the name of the working class of all countries. Some real electoral success by socialists in France in the 1890s encouraged nationalists to continue to keep the threat of socialism as alive as possible, and their oppositional rhetoric played strongly upon how the far left were traitors to the nation. The journalist and poet Charles Péguy warned that if ever France entered into another war, the first thing they would need to do is execute the socialist leader Jean Jaurès, so as to prevent 'the traitor from stabbing us in the back' (1913).

Finally, antisemitism was also increasing in France during the *fin de siècle*. Édouard Drumont wrote his book *La France Juive* [*Jewish France*] in 1885; in its wake numerous antisemitic newspapers and other writings multiplied through the next couple of decades. The Jews, it was argued, were not inherently a part of the French nation, but perpetually other, and incapable of proper patriotism since they could only prey upon France for their own benefit. Much of the rhetoric was contemporary, of course, but they could draw upon the traditional language of antisemitism and the image of the foreign Jew (see Wilson 2007).

The Dreyfus Affair was the event which draws all of the elements of *fin-de-siècle* nationalism together. Captain Alfred Dreyfus was charged and convicted by the

French army of treason (betraying secrets to Germany) in the early 1890s, and sentenced to prison in far-off Devil's Island. Even as the evidence mounted that he was in fact innocent, the army went to great lengths (including forging documents) to see that its initial conviction was upheld and its honour not questioned. The antisemitic press supported the army and mounted a large campaign against Dreyfus the Jew, arguing that his 'nationality' indicated his traitorous disposition. By 1898 a political scandal erupted of huge proportions, bringing down the government. The result was a great strengthening of French nationalism, very much in the style of the *fin de siècle*, as fear of the foreigner and antisemitism combined to create new flights of nationalist rhetoric (Cahm 1996).

GERMANY

Although in many respects the historical context was strikingly different, nationalism in Germany during the *fin de siècle* bore many resemblances to that of France. Having only been unified in 1871, the first two decades of the united Germany had been dominated politically by the Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. The new era at the *fin de siècle* was marked by the coming to the throne of a new Kaiser, Wilhelm II, in 1888 and Bismarck's fall shortly thereafter in 1890. The post-Bismarckian years would see a 'new nationalism' arise in Germany, encouraged from the top (Green 2001, 298–337). The young Wilhelm II picked as his first new chancellor General Leo von Caprivi, who sought a policy of internal reconciliation through his 'new course' (see Kitchen 2006, 180–85; Feuchtwanger 2001, 119–29 and Segara 2001, 209–13). The quest to calm domestic unrest was combined with an aggressive foreign policy, known as *Weltpolitik* or world policy, in which Germany would take its place as a leader in global affairs. German nationalism assumed a new character as well, very much in the style of the *fin de siècle*, characterised by the hunt for domestic traitors alongside of the fear of the other outside of the nation.

Internally, three groups were targeted in their different ways as enemies of the German nation (not dissimilarly to France): socialists, Jews and Catholics (see Berger 2004, 84–92). Changes in the laws and a rise in unrest in certain quarters saw electoral successes of the socialists during the 1890s, which ironically contributed directly to an alliance of former rivals (conservatives and liberals) against the further rise of the far left. Socialists, while operating within a national framework, and perfectly willing to encourage love of the fatherland alongside of the class solidarity of the workers, did oppose certain overt forms and symbols of bourgeois, militaristic nationalism (such as commemoration of the victory of Sedan), which made them an easy target for the nationalists wanting to label them as anti-national.

Criticising the Church was in many ways easier, for official criticism of the Catholic Church was already well established in Imperial Germany by the start of the *fin de siècle*. Beginning in the early 1870s, Bismarck had waged a battle against the Catholic Church, known as the *Kulturkampf*: the Church had been labelled not only as reactionary, opposed to progress, but as fundamentally anti-national. Like the socialists, Catholics in Germany were not fundamentally opposed to the nation as such, but they did disapprove of the ways in which much of the German national imagery included Protestantism as one element of Germanness. Integrating German Catholics in support of the regime was important during the *fin de siècle*, but the

discourse concerning the Church itself as at least a potential enemy lasted beyond the end of the *Kulturkampf* in the early 1880s (Smith 1995).

As with the criticism of the Catholic Church, a tradition of antisemitism also pre-dated the *fin de siècle*. Traditional religious antisemitism combined with criticism of the capitalism and wealth of the German Jews, fear of increased numbers of poor non-German Jews from further east, and an association of Jews with the rise of socialism, internationalism, feminism and pacifism, all of which made the group as a whole subject to being seen as anti-national at just about every level. The potential lack of coherence of the different levels of antisemitism did not reduce its potency, nor make the Jews less of a target for the nationalists seeking an internal enemy to blacken (see Hagen 2012 and Smith 2008).

Unity among the nationalists forged out of opposition to the internal enemies (Catholics, Jews and socialists) was fragile, and required regular effort to build and re-build. In 1897, the government introduced an overt policy of solidarity, called the *Sammlungspolitik*, to unite the productive classes (agriculture and industry) and to bring about a deliberate 'mobilisation of national consciousness' and identity (Smith 1995, 118–19). The aim was simply to garner support for the government. They also used a renewed foreign policy and a targeting of external enemies of the German nation as a complement to the domestic policy: this was the *Weltpolitik*.

Under this policy, Germany aimed to surmount other world nations and to develop a colonial empire rivalling those of the other great European powers. The chief external enemies targeted by the nationalists were France and Great Britain, both of whom were rivals to the rise and greatness of Germany. Their neighbours to the east, the various Slavic nations, were derided as backward and racially inferior (Berger 2004, 92–93). Colonial expansion and the development of a large-scale naval programme would eventually lead Germany into conflict with the other powers, but such an aggressive foreign policy was intended in large part as a means to enhance unity, stability and solidarity on the domestic front. Chancellor Bülow overtly stated that his foreign policy of grand gestures was a political device, for 'only a successful foreign policy can help to reconcile, pacify, rally, unite'. (Quoted in Mommsen 1995, 151.) Overall, Germany fits the pattern of the big states in their changing nationalism at the *fin de siècle*. It turned increasingly towards the rhetoric of internal and external enemies, as well as cultivating fear of these enemies and pride in German superiority as ways of enhancing internal political support for the nationalists in the closing years of the century.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

The Austro-Hungarian Empire provides a different sort of example to the state-centred nationalism seen in both long-standing France and recently united Germany. In addition to 'Austrian' (German-language) and 'Hungarian' nationalisms, the Empire was home to quite a few other national groups in different states of political advancement and popular self-consciousness. During the *fin de siècle*, the sheer diversity of the different groups makes generalisation quite difficult. The division of the territory also leaves two different contexts, where Hungary appears more like the standard model of centralised nation-building based upon the education and assimilation of the population into a single national cultural community, and the

remaining territories under Austria more tolerant of diversity in a (relatively) more pluralistic society bound together by loyalty to the crown. Ironically, it was the more pluralistic, tolerant and culturally diverse Austrian system which provided an environment more conducive to the development of fragmented national communities than the assimilationist Hungarian one (Haslinger 2012, 111–28). Furthermore, a disagreement persists in the historiography as to whether or not it was nationalism which was the primary cause of the eventual break-up of the Empire, or alternatively whether it even posed a threat to the Empire at all, which was only brought down by external defeat rather than internal nationalism (for a summary, see Bideleux and Jeffries 2007, 268–77). Either way, the nationalists would capitalise on the defeat in 1918 as the basis for the division of the Empire into smaller nation-states, and the *fin de siècle* was a key moment for the development of the nationalist discourses and movements in the first place.

The key developments in the rise of nationalism in Austria-Hungary were the spread of education and the development of written versions of what would become the national languages; a longer term development which led to the formation of educated elites in these languages that could rival the centre; and more importantly, at this particular moment, the successful association of nationalism with the discourses of progress and modernity. Since the reactionary, conservative and traditional elites stood for Empire, those supporting 'progressive' liberalism economically and constitutionalism politically increasingly allied themselves with the new elites from outside the traditional German-speaking circles. It was this association of the liberal, progressive and constitutional discourses with an emotive sense of historic roots in a language community that contributed to the rise of nationalism, and made it so powerful. The 'new nationalism' of the *fin de siècle* was recognisably different from earlier nationalisms elsewhere. As Robin Okey observed, progress was increasingly identified 'with the aspiration for a dynamic nationhood rather than a more abstract concept of advancing humanity' (2001, 284), which, as we have seen, is what the nationalists at the time of the French Revolution and in the early nineteenth century had promoted.

Because of the slightly different political position of the nationalists in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the 'enemy' other who was to be feared was slightly different than what we have seen for France and Germany, particularly in the sense of who was internal and who was external. Since the groups were in practice mixed on the ground, everyone was internal, at least to the Empire, and the proximity lent force to the tension between them. As with other nationalist thinking during the *fin de siècle*, national divisions were also expressed increasingly in terms of racial differences. Internal 'traitors' occupied a slightly less central position, partly because other religious groups, for example, simply formed or were conceived of as rival nations. Socialism was still there to be feared as internal and anti-national, but in some ways, ironically, helped to promote the growth of nationalism. Socialist thinkers, writers and activists throughout the Empire at this time, though genuinely internationalist in their objectives, made a point of providing material in the various languages, inadvertently supporting the creation of a wider political sphere in each language, and ultimately playing into the nationalists' hands, rather than the socialists' ones. Thus, although differing in many respects from France and Germany, nationalism in *fin-de-siècle* Austria-Hungary still bore the characteristics of attempting to generate national consciousness among the population and mobilise the masses using fear of the other

and the threats they represented to the national community, which itself was presented as representing progress and modernity.

REGIONALISM

Just as nationalism in France, Germany and the different minority nations within the Austro-Hungarian Empire developed differently, so each of the other nations of Europe not specifically covered here had its own story, determined by the specific political context of the states in which they developed. Thus in Great Britain, questions of Empire and imperialism, as well as the rivalry between 'Britain' on the one hand, and England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales on the other, gave a particular character to the development of identities, and the ways in which national sentiment was mobilised by different political groups. Meanwhile, nationalism developed in Italy against a background of recent unification, in Belgium coloured by two rival linguistic groups in a non-historic state, and in Spain in the context of rival large regional centres and a perception of general decline. In each case, the specific political context determined the potential for the political mobilisation of national sentiment. But they all witnessed some form of nationalism, as a result of the unsettling and rapid changes – political, economic, social and cultural – of the *fin de siècle*, which various political groups capitalised on for their own purposes. Similarly, the *fin de siècle* also saw the widespread development of regionalism.

If nationalism is difficult to define, regionalism is perhaps even more so. A region can be sub-national, or group together several nations (such as Scandinavia or the Balkans). On the one hand, it may refer to the kind of culturally or ethnically defined group that is simply not yet politically developed enough to be called a nation, or that others want to consign to non-national status, but which does constitute the basis of an identity for its inhabitants or members. On the other hand, it may imply political objectives as diverse as formal separatism and the desire for a greater place for regional languages or traditions in local education. Within the scope of regionalism, Joost Augusteijn and Eric Storm include 'particularism, decentralisation, *Landespatriotismus*, nation-building, cultural regionalism, political regionalism and separatism'. (Augusteijn and Storm 2012, 3) Across Europe during the *fin de siècle*, regions and regionalism were becoming widespread and gaining in significance, though they were not always as widely known or visible as nationalism. Visible in the forms of regional societies interested in folklore, festivals or the philology of the local dialect, the development of identities linked to regions at the same time as nations was truly a transnational phenomenon, and one which grew significantly in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Facilitated by the rise in the levels of education, one way to think about this trend in terms of the *fin de siècle* was that it was partly fuelled by the fear that modernity would eliminate traditional ways of life (such as local dialects or traditions), and that efforts were needed to ensure their preservation and survival into the twentieth century. The local character of particular regionalisms was then determined by the particular political context of each state, the presence of large regional cities outside the capital, the historical legacies of wars and boundary changes, as well as religious and linguistic factors, which all varied from place to place. Thus the rise of nationalism in the *fin de siècle* took place against a background of increased development of regional cultural

identities alongside of the national ones, some of which would grow into nationalist movements in their own right, which also helps to explain the prevalence and power of the national political discourses.

CONCLUSION

Although more often associated with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a whole, the *fin de siècle* was a distinctive turning point in the history of European nationalism. Its roots were still in attempts made by political groups to mobilise support for themselves using emotive national language and persuasive arguments to foster and enhance national consciousness among the population, and to associate their particular political point of view with the supposed interests of the nation and its people. In the rapidly changing social, economic and political climate resulting from the development of mass politics, increased urbanisation and industrialisation, coupled with the widespread fear that was a characteristic feature of the *fin de siècle* as a whole, nationalist arguments proved particularly potent in these years. Nationalism became not only a part of the political platform of the liberal left and centre, but also of the conservative right, mobilising nationalism in the interests of more traditional elites, military growth, colonial expansion and economic protectionism. Nationalism also became a factor among numerically smaller groups, particularly in eastern Europe, not just of the elites in larger states. Nationalism also began to change somewhat in nature during the *fin de siècle*. Still about 'the people', *fin-de-siècle* 'new nationalism' built much more upon the fear of the other (including the internal traitor) than earlier nationalisms had done. Rivalries with enemy nations were presented as a crisis in which nationalism was the solution, one that continued to operate through the end of the century and into the next. Nationalism would also spread throughout the world, as other continents sought to escape the direct control of European empires through the creation of modern nation-states after the European image, with strong identities, popular support, nationally defined cultures, institutions and economies and identifiable 'others'.

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THE NEW IMPERIALISM

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Sascha Auerbach

"We cannot bury him, only strangers can" (Achebe 1958). It seems appropriate to begin an essay on the New Imperialism with the words of one of its most prominent chroniclers and critics, Chinua Achebe. Achebe's passage, uttered by an Igbo villager following the death, by suicide, of the protagonist in *Things Fall Apart* (1958), evokes the violence of imperial conquest and the loss of power and culture (to say nothing of life) experienced by those in colonized territories. There was much that was new about the New Imperialism, that rapid spasm of expansion that extended European control over almost all of Africa and significant portions of the eastern Mediterranean, Southeast Asia, and Pacific territories in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. It encompassed new forms of control, new ideologies, new technologies, new state structures, new cultural elements, and new players in the game of empire. But in the end, what was most new about the New Imperialism was that it involved newly unified European states, that its practitioners justified their actions through explicit references to racial ideology, that it occurred far more rapidly and over a broader area than previous phases of imperialism had, and that it witnessed the widespread imposition of political, economic, and cultural domination over that territory. Characterized thus, the New Imperialism began with the Berlin Conference of 1884–85, which formalized and legitimized the rapid European conquest and occupation of Africa. It ended in 1914 with the outbreak of the First World War, a war that was fought partially in (though not necessarily over) newly occupied territories, and concluded with a radical reshuffling of colonial possessions and Germany's complete divestment of all extra-European territory.

A major distinguishing element of the New Imperialism was its violence. While urbane Londoners, Parisians, and Viennese were basking in the wealth and cultural flowering of "La Belle Époque," the peoples of Africa and Asia were enduring undreamt-of misery and bloodshed. This systematic brutalization, the political forces that prompted it, and the cultural energies that justified it presaged the cataclysm of the First World War. They have remained among the most persistent global legacies of the *fin de siècle*. The violent character of this expansion has also shaped the most crucial scholarly interpretations of New Imperialism, which have focused on the destruction wrought on populations and cultures, on the racist ideologies

that underpinned European practices, and on recovering the voices and experiences of colonized peoples. Such scholarship has challenged fundamental categories of historical analysis, asking us to question the designations of "Europe," Asia," and "Africa" (Chakrabarty 2000); to re-examine the relationship between them (Said 1978; Cooper and Stoler 1997); and to re-assess the dynamics of politics, economics, and culture in this period and in the decades that followed (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1989; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; A. Thompson 2005). Within this violent expansion was also born the germ of another major cultural and social shift that has persisted to this day. The experience of New Imperialism, among both the colonizers and the colonized, encouraged the development of philosophies and identities that transcended both nationalism and the dominant cultures where they originated (Gilroy 1993; Hochschild 1998; Kale 1998; Grant 2004; Sinha 2007; Lake and Reynolds 2008). Just as the redrawn lines of nation and empire continue to haunt modern society, these ideas continue to shape policy, practice, and thought in the modern era.

New Imperialism was made feasible for European powers by technological and organizational innovations, attractive by political change, and justifiable by cultural developments. The dramatic conquest of Africa by relatively small numbers of European troops and government agents, and their ability to hold that territory once gained, would have been impossible without the rapid-firing Maxim machine gun and repeating rifles, the advance of steamboat technology (which guaranteed supply routes into the interior), and the telegraph. These developments preceded the rapid expansion of empire after 1880, but the pattern of capitalization, investment, and modest (but uneven) growth of infrastructure exemplified by the Suez Canal and transoceanic telegraph systems was another central characteristic of the New Imperialism. To the established plantation agriculture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—often worked in the later nineteenth century by a dispossessed peasantry and imported indentured laborers from India and China—and the railroad networks of the early nineteenth century, both of which were expanded considerably, were added dams, mines, military ports, and commercial harbors. Fuelled by trade and resource development, the migration of rural populations to the new imperial boomtowns, while providing modest new educational and economic opportunities for some (the incorporation of educated Indians into the Indian Civil Service is one example), hastened the dismantling of communal agriculture and village governance, and added new social problems for most. One prominent example of the conurbations created by the New Imperialism was Jakarta, the capital of the Dutch East Indies (later Indonesia), which more than quadrupled in size, growing from 67,000 in 1870 to over a quarter million residents by 1920. Rapid growth brought many of the attendant urban ills, though the philanthropic reform and civil engineering that would ameliorate them in European cities were almost entirely absent.

It is tempting to exaggerate the importance of capitalism and the demands of industrialized European economies as direct catalysts for the New Imperialism. But Marxist interpretations, which have a genealogy dating back to V. I. Lenin and J. A. Hobson, have largely failed to provide adequate explanations for its causes, development, and character (Cain and Hopkins 1993). British financiers, merchants, and industrialists looking beyond Europe and the Americas preferred the safer bets of enterprises in "white-settler colonies" such as Australia and Canada to riskier ventures in newly

acquired lands. Rather than arguing for an overarching explanation of private enterprise or state-driven expansion, or for the primacy of economic versus political and ideological dynamics, the tendency of historians in recent years has been to view the New Imperialism as deriving its impetus from many different factors, their relative importance depending upon the specific region and circumstances.

The need to profit and recoup investment certainly drove some of the more brutal labor regimes, and a small group of European companies wielded vast power over colonial populations and seized control of staggering colonial resources. The De Beers Company, founded by British-born South African Cecil Rhodes, was able to establish a near-monopoly over the region's diamond-mining industry (Figure 21.1). A pattern of joint European and white-settler ownership with African or Asian labor was characteristic in South African and Australian gold-mining as well. When the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) disrupted mining, transportation, and the African labor supply in the gold-rich Transvaal region, mine-owners secured the collusion of the British imperial authorities in importing 65,000 Chinese indentured laborers to make up the shortfall. In the 1890s, however, Rhodes had viewed interference from the government in London as more hindrance than help. In Australia, similarly, mine-owners found themselves at odds with a politically mobilized white laboring population that resented the former's use of "yellow slaves" to dig Australian gold. In order to achieve working-class support for the federation, Australian politicians were forced to conciliate on the issue and pass strict anti-Chinese immigration laws (Lake and Reynolds 2008). In the period of New Imperialism, while government and private enterprise shared economic goals, prominent representatives, cultural presumptions, and racial ideology, it was often far from an easy marriage. When the interests of the state and those of private stakeholders came into conflict, it was almost inevitably the former that won out. In the wake of the Indian Mutiny of 1857, even the vaunted East India Company, that juggernaut of imperial commercial enterprise, was forced to cede control of its Indian possessions, administrative powers, and military personnel to the British Crown.

Technology certainly played its part in facilitating rapid imperial expansion, as did the vast reserves of capital for investment in both private and state enterprises, military and civil. Another great advantage of the Europeans over African and Asian rulers was their expanded and consolidated state apparatus. Indeed, the centralization of state power—which emerged from varying degrees of nationalism, dynastic ambition, and the wealth of industrialization and international trade, depending upon the state in question—facilitated the conquest and subjugation of Africans far more than any specific technology did. Colonial agents often acted on their own initiative, and control from Europe's capitals was anything but complete or uncontested. But, ultimately, it was the collaboration between state entities, both military and bureaucratic, and the financial interests they protected and which underwrote their efforts, which made the New Imperialism possible. The power of European governments and investors enabled them to deploy resources of men and material effectively and to engineer the passage of laws that governed the seizure and control of resources (trade commodities and productive land most especially), the dispossession and disfranchisement of native peoples, and their subsequent incorporation into oppressive labor schemes. The economic usurpation and social and demographic transformations that accompanied it comprised the lion's share of imperial violence,

Figure 21.1   "The Rhodes Colossus," *Punch*, 10 December 1892. Cecil Rhodes
is depicted holding aloft a telegraph line linking the Cape Colony to Egypt
© Mary Evans Picture Library

and claimed exponentially more lives than even the bloodiest military conflicts. The
conquest and economic restructuring of the Congo by King Leopold of Belgium
through the auspices of the *Association internationale du Congo*, the Congo Free
State, and his private colonial army, the *Force Publique*, yielded casualties that made
the Battle of Omdurman pale in comparison. Historian Adam Hochschild has esti-
mated that the combination of direct violence and indirect deprivation and exploita-
tion cost the lives of some 10 million Congolese civilians between 1885–1905 alone
(Hochschild 1998). Other estimates have put the toll taken by disease, starvation,
overwork, exposure, mutilation, and outright murder far higher (see Figure 21.2).

   As with the disparity between the growing prosperity of European nations and
the dispossession of rural populations in Africa and Asia, the political rights and
social conditions of colonized peoples often diminished in contrast to those of most
colonizing nations and the white residents of their extra-European territories. In
the second decade of the twentieth century, black South Africans were stripped of
their voting rights even as working-class men in Britain were granted their own
(L. Thompson 1992). This was a necessary precursor to the seizure of land in South
Africa, since those disfranchised by the new South African constitution could mount

IKABO   LOKOTA   EPONDO

CHILDREN MUTILATED BY CONGO SOLDIERY

(For particulars of Ikabo and Lokota, refer to Appendix; for particulars of Eponido, see concluding chapter)
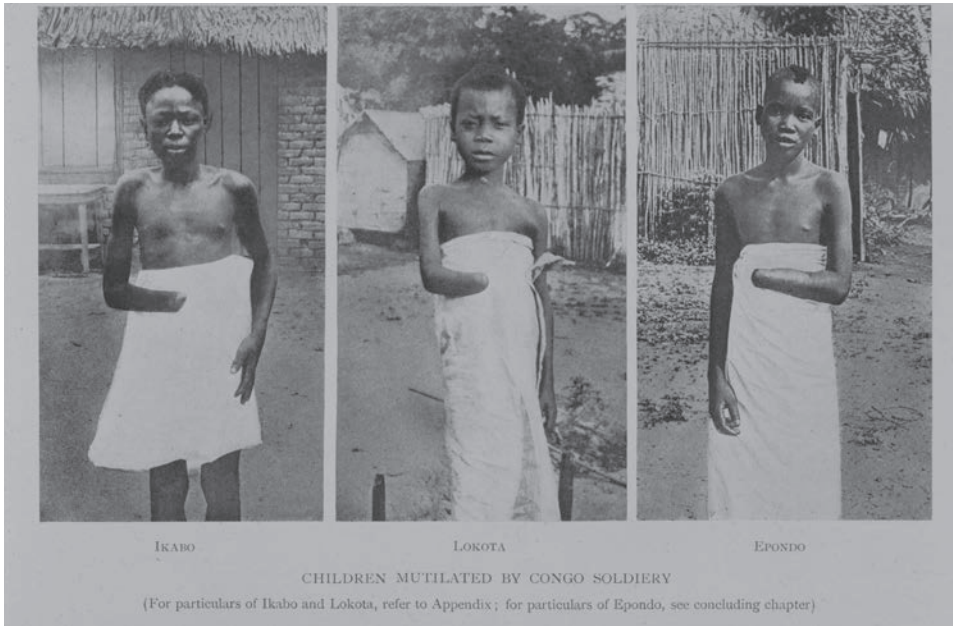
Figure 21.2   One of the most infamous of the Belgian policies implemented in the Congo was the punishment of death or serious mutilation for failure to meet rubber-farming quotas © Morel, E. D. (Edmund Dene), 1873–1924/New York Public Library

no direct political resistance to dispossession. In Australia, similarly, the rise of organized labor was accompanied by increasing legal oppression of Chinese immigrants, whose presence was itself facilitated by Britain's expanded political control over Chinese territory and trade.

The apparatus of state power, rather than the balance of authority between local or metropolitan interests, was a key factor in the marginalization of colonized peoples under new economic and political systems. In the Congo and the Sudan, it was the expansion of centralized European state power that fostered conquest and oppression, but in Australia and South Africa, it was the retreat of British imperial stewardship that opened the door to expansion and exploitation by semi-independent colonial governments. Where metropolitan authority withdrew, local authority took its place, assuming the reins of a well-established bureaucracy of courts, offices, and agents, and without the limitations on race-based legislation mandated by the British constitution. This was hardly new in and of itself. But the explicit linkage of laws that dispossessed, disfranchised, or excluded non-whites to race-based ideologies grounded in alleged biological and evolutionary necessity signalled how far removed the period of New Imperialism was, culturally and intellectually, from the humanitarian impulse that had brought an end to slavery in the British Empire at the beginning of the century. Just as new technologies made possible the concrete aspects of the New Imperialism, Social Darwinism, scientific racism, and eugenics provided its cultural and intellectual underpinnings, paving the way for equally dire visions of racial conquest and social engineering in the decades that followed.

Those who did criticize New Imperialism were far more likely to do so on the basis of its alleged harm to the interests of the working classes or its potential to trigger international conflict than they were out of recognition for the rights of colonized peoples (Grant 2004). It would be left to subsequent generations of Indian, African, Caribbean, and transatlantic black intelligentsia to articulate philosophies that challenged the basic assumptions of Liberalism, free labor, and imperial paternalism (Gilroy 1993; Zachernuk 2000). And those fundamental critiques could be slow in coming. The majority opinion among the founding members of the South African Native National Congress was that a more racially just society could be achieved not by radical transformation, but by the fair application of Liberal principles. Solomon T. Plaatje, for example, sought intervention by British authorities to prevent the disfranchisement and dispossession of Africans by the Boer *Het Volk* government in the years during and immediately preceding the First World War, as will be discussed below. Yet such an appeal, with its underlying assumption that metropolitan authority was preferable to independent colonial authority and that British Liberal ideology could not countenance such gross injustice and inequality, as far as race was concerned, was based on a mixture of Christian idealism and a pragmatic recognition of what reforms British policymakers and voters might support. The history of later nineteenth-century British imperialism would have given him little realistic hope for amelioration. The same personnel and framework of government had overseen the economic, social, and cultural domination of Africans and Asians for generations (in established colonies) and decades (in new ones) already. In hindsight, it should come as no surprise how *little* the patterns of race-based labor and ownership changed in the transition from slavery to indentured labor in British Guiana, from French to British control in Mauritius, or from Ottoman to European control in the Middle East. Nevertheless, in some areas of older colonization, former indentured laborers and the descendants of emancipated slaves did make economic headway. One of the patterns that accelerated in areas of the sugar economy (e.g. Mauritius) during the final quarter of the nineteenth century, for example, was the shift from plantation agriculture to peasant farming as sugar prices declined to the point at which the former became unprofitable (Allen 1999).

New Imperialism, in addition to serving the European leaders' desires for prestige and investors' demands for profits, had a populist element. A new and powerful addition to domestic political discourse was "popular imperialism," the intertwining of empire building with mass politics and party platforms. It became instrumental by the last decade of the nineteenth century. From the perspective of a European political leadership seeking to woo the politicized working classes from Socialism with appeals to nationalism, racial destiny, and the promise of imperial glory, the acquisition of new lands in Africa or Asia, though not without its hazards, did not pose the political complications that attempts to expand within Europe itself did. The Moroccan Crisis of 1905–06 aside, seizing territory in Africa and Asia brought leaders acclaim without the same threat of escalating conflict that accompanied saber-rattling over the Balkans or Alsace-Lorraine.

In African imperial ventures, racial ideology, financial gain, and political aspirations worked together, since the alleged moral and intellectual inferiority of African peoples to Europeans justified direct administration by government officials

and resource seizure by private interests. Such power grabs were driven largely by international rivalries, though there was a certain level of collusion between states as well. Leopold of Belgium's exploration and subsequent seizure of the Congo had revealed the rich resource potential of the central African interior. This region, prior to the expeditions by Henry Morton Stanley in the 1870s and 1880s (the latter financed by Belgium), had been of little interest to European powers subsequent to the decline of the trade in enslaved Africans at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Motivation for the "Scramble for Africa" that followed, in which nearly the entire continent was carved up among both the older colonial powers (Britain, France, Spain, Portugal) and the newer ones (Germany, Italy, Belgium) was political, strategic, and economic. In the final two decades of the century, Germany became a particularly avid acquirer of new territory. For reasons still not entirely clear, Otto von Bismarck, the German Chancellor, who was originally an opponent of imperial expansion, changed his tune in the mid-1880s. Bismarck's desire to support the "informal empire" of German merchants played a part, as did his need for balancing the forces of domestic politics. France had already established itself in Africa with its 1830 conquest of Algeria, and Britain had been expanding its hegemony over Egypt and southern Africa since the Napoleonic period. What Germany had lost in time they made up for in the speed of their colonial acquisitions, which included German New Guinea, German East Africa, and German Southwest Africa.

This combination of new imperial actors, a new focus on Africa, and the rapid expansion of formal territorial control in the 1880s is why most historians see this period as the beginning of the New Imperialism. At the Berlin Conference in 1884, convened at Bismarck's urging, the major European powers agreed on the ground-rules for future African colonization, in hopes of avoiding a war over their colonial possessions. In the years that followed, France further expanded its territory to encompass most of west and northwest Africa. Britain pushed south from its base in Egypt (where formal occupation began in 1882) and north from southern Africa in an attempt to link the two regions, Cecil Rhodes being particularly keen to realize this dream of a British African empire that stretched from Cairo to the Cape. Germany, Italy, and Portugal, meanwhile, seized smaller, but strategically valuable, regions (e.g. Italian Somaliland and Eritrea, flanking British and French territory at the southern entrance to the Red Sea on the Horn of Africa). By the end of the nineteenth century, a continent that had once been all but unknown to Europeans with the exception of Egypt, southern Africa, and the north African coast had been almost completely carved up into European-controlled territory (Map 21.1).

The period of New Imperialism in Asia saw Burma and French Indochina brought under European control. South and Southeast Asia, with its valuable trade goods, had been a target of concerted European efforts for hundreds of years prior, beginning in earnest with the Portuguese establishment of a permanent trading base at the south Indian port of Calicut in the early sixteenth century. The territorial gains (or losses, depending upon one's perspective) of the nineteenth century, however, were not inconsiderable. The French seized control of Da Nang and Saigon in the late 1850s, and from there stretched control over what is today southern Vietnam. Their victories over China from 1883–85 cemented their domination of northern Vietnam, as well as the regions of Laos and Cambodia. The British, in addition to securing their dominion over India and sparring with Russia over control of Afghanistan,
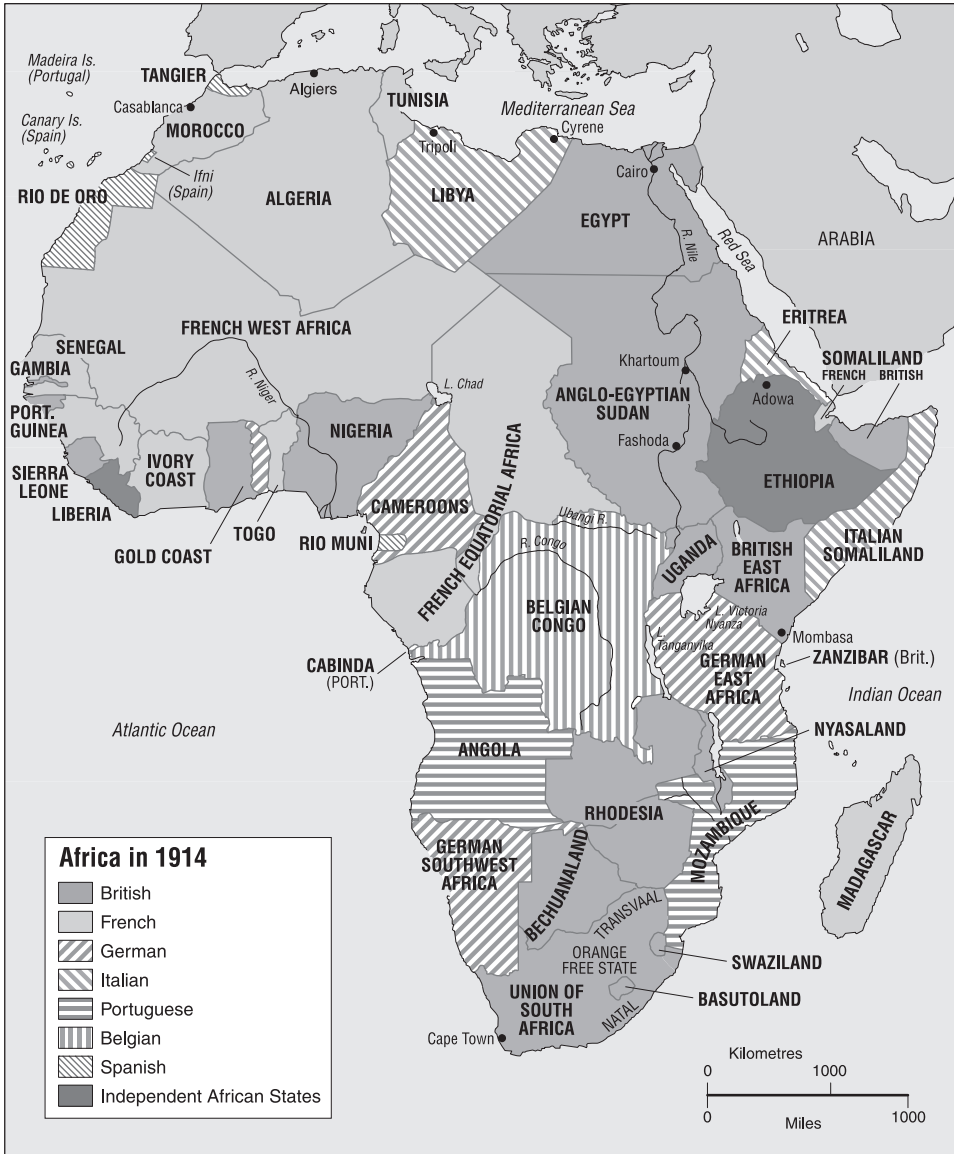
Map 21.1 Map of the European zones of control in Africa, 1914

slowly extended their rule to encompass the lands of a Burmese empire that had, in the early nineteenth century, been one of the largest in Asia.

China was the most prominent exception to the general pattern of European imperialism in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Although victories in the "Opium Wars" (1839–42, 1856–60) of the mid-century had allowed Britain to dominate Chinese trade and control its most valuable ports, there was never any serious impetus to subdue the Chinese mainland. The decisive defeat of the Boxer

Rebellion (1899–1901) by the combined forces of Russia, Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Japan, which occurred in tandem with the rapid rise of the latter as an imperial power in its own right, seemed to seal the ignominious end of China's long reign as the dominant empire in the region. To some, it may have appeared that the parcelling out of Chinese territory to European, American, and Japanese control was on the horizon. Had it not been for the outbreak of war in 1914, this outcome would certainly have been conceivable. The repeated military humiliations at the hands of European, American, and Japanese forces, along with declining economic fortunes, periodic internal rebellions, and widespread civil disorder did weaken the Qing Dynasty to the point of collapse in 1911. A period of modernization followed, only to be cut short by the outbreak of civil war in the 1920s.

In the midst of China's ongoing crisis, however, and across the breadth of Europe's imperial holdings, the final decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth heralded the arrival of new cultural forces that would, in time, profoundly reshape the political landscape and redraw the maps, both concrete and conceptual, composed during the era of New Imperialism. The spread of English-language education across the British Empire, which brought with it inculcation in the principles of economic and political Liberalism, was an important precursor here. Although much of the effort to "Europeanize" indigenous elites had been abandoned by the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the evangelizing project continued to grow and thrive, and an interest in humanitarianism accompanied it. With the former's expansion, particularly in southern Africa, came the foundation of missionary schools, which produced many of the region's first prominent activists for "native" rights and representation within the context of Liberal constitutionalism. In India, as well, the reaction against imperialism would blossom rapidly, though the precursor for its articulation in language and ideologies already acknowledged as valid in Europe arrived much earlier.[1]

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, the best students from around the empire (and from India in particular), had they the wherewithal, could hope to travel to England and matriculate from a university there, Oxbridge being the most coveted destination (Deslandes 1998). Further education at the Inns of Court, for some, provided both higher status in colonial society and also the legal knowledge to articulate claims of rights and representation. The language of law and rights was well suited to mount an internal assault on the legalistic and bureaucratic structure of imperialism, as well as upon its moral foundations of "justice" and "order." Along with the rapid expansion of territory, the final quarter of the nineteenth century also witnessed the legal, moral, and intellectual tools of imperialism being turned upon the imperialists themselves. But the most trenchant attack was one that took the bold step of defying the entire system of Western politics, bureaucratic organization, and centralized state culture. Gandhi's *Satyagraha* campaign followed this model. When his philosophy was combined with colonial nationalism and mass civil disobedience, the results were profoundly disruptive to the authority of colonial rulers in India and to the public justification of imperial stewardship mounted by British leaders at home and abroad.

For most colonial peoples who attended European-founded secondary schools and universities, however, education meant indoctrination as well. The majority of

those from colonized regions who passed through this educational program emerged as strong believers in British cultural and political superiority. Only a small (but vocal) minority employed their skills to challenge the ideas of race, nation, and authority that underpinned the European imperial structure. And all but a tiny minority of those saw no benefit, at least initially, in abandoning the principles of European Liberalism. As Gandhi and his supporters were burning their government documents in protest over the extension of race-based "pass laws" to South African Indians, his contemporary, Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje, was formulating his own forceful critique of the imperial system and its racist foundations, and doing so based on the principles of fair representation and legal equity. In 1909, Plaatje traveled to London in the company of W. P. Schreiner, Walter Msimang, Alfred Mangena (both he and Msimang had studied Law in London), Abdullah Abdurahman (an acquaintance of Gandhi's who received his medical degree from the University of Glasgow), and several other South African political activists, both black and white, to protest the disfranchisement of South Africans in the new nation's constitution. The pleas of Abdurahman and his compatriots fell on deaf ears, and it was left to Plaatje, writing seven years later from London, to describe the desolation that dispossession and disfranchisement had wrought. "Awakening on Friday morning, June 20, 1913," he wrote in *Native Life in South Africa*, "the South African native found himself not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth," (Plaatje 1916). Although Plaatje still espoused his faith in Liberalism and in the inherent sense of justice among British voters, his vision and writing ranged well beyond the former's conceptual borders and the latter's national and imperial horizon. He referenced circumstances in Russia, the writings of W. E. B. Du Bois, British popular culture, and, finally, the category of race itself. In sum, while his writing may have been conventional and Liberal in its political purview, it was radical and transnational in its cultural scope. Plaatje and Abdurahman were especially preoccupied with the relationship between law and justice, a concern they shared with Gandhi, the other members of the South African Native National Congress (later the ANC) delegations to Britain, and a host of writers and activists across the length and breadth of regions under European dominion (Figure 21.3).

The concern was an apt one. The British government had recently concluded a bloody, protracted war against the Boers, a war that had been fought partly in the name of the rights of British workers in the Transvaal goldfields. And it was to the principles espoused by British leaders (Liberalism, primarily, along with Christian morality) that Plaatje and his colleagues were appealing for redress. Incorporated into these appeals was a fundamental articulation of a universal justice that should be applied equally to all peoples. In India, the precedent for such appeals was a deep one, as the engagement of Indian intellectuals with the Liberal ideology stretched back to the beginning of the nineteenth century (Bayly 2012). But, for Plaatje and his South African colleagues, their faith in the British constitution was tempered by a profound recognition that the racial divide was real and must be recognized as central to both the past and the future of relations between Europeans and Africans. The law, Plaatje wrote, must protect black South Africans *as* Africans (Plaatje 1916). History, he asserted, and the history of imperialism since the imposition of slavery in particular, validated this perspective and provided the context for understanding the current relations between Europeans and Africans.

Figure 21.3   South African Native National Congress delegation sent to London in 1914 to protest the 1913 Natives Land Act. Back row: Walter Rubusana, Saul Nsane; front row: Thomas Mapikela, John L. Dube, Solomon T. Plaatje © akg-images/Africa Media Online

Indeed, these four elements—a focus on the violence of imperialism; a demand for justice under the law; a recognition of the implacability of racial difference based on culture and the long history of imperialism; and an awareness of the global scope of these issues—were common in the responses to the New Imperialism among African, Asian, and European writers and activists. Like Plaatje, Lao She, one of the most prominent Chinese novelists of his era, wrote in the 1920s that it was China's history of domination by Britain and its weakness as a nation that prompted the ordinary British child to mock Chinese men on the streets of London, and left the latter both shamed and powerless to respond (Lao She [1929], 1987).

This blend of universalism and particularism (all deserve equal justice, but injustice itself sprung from historical inequality), of the national and the transnational (Britain in China and South Africa, white Europeans in Africa and Asia), and of the concrete and the abstract (laws are central, but laws must manifest deeper ideals) in understandings of race and demands for redress against racism was the most distinct characteristic of both the New Imperialism and the responses to it at the *fin de siècle*. The same practices, structures, and technologies—the state, communication and transportation networks, philosophies of nationalism and racial identity—that facilitated imperialism also shaped the typical patterns of responses to it. When William Des Voeux, the peripatetic colonial administrator, and Joseph Beaumont, the former Chief Justice of British Guiana, described the problems plaguing that colony, they did so in the language of an objective "justice" that all subjects of the

Crown deserved. They also couched their objections in the historical context of slavery and its aftermath, even though it was a half-century distant and had never been imposed on the Indian immigrants now present (Des Voeux 1903; Beaumont 1871). But despite their authority, experience, and insight, the efforts of Des Voeux and Beaumont to foster a more just and humane administration for indentured laborers in British Guiana came to naught. Gandhi's initial legal campaigns against race-based legislation in South Africa were likewise failures, and Lao She's pioneering, interwar novel was not even translated into English until 1987 (Auerbach 2013). Neither Plaatje nor Gandhi could have foreseen that their campaigns would, slowly but inexorably, have a profound impact on the political and economic mobilization of black South Africans and the achievement of Indian independence.

In contrast, the groundswell of transnational "white" solidarity achieved rapid gains in political representation, in law and policy, and in promulgating the image of a world divided indelibly along racial lines (Lake and Reynolds 2008). In 1893, *National Life and Character: a Forecast*, the work of King's College London lecturer turned Australian MP Charles Henry Pearson, became the intellectual blueprint for race-based immigration policy around the British Empire.[2] Lauded by William Gladstone in 10 Downing Street, praised by Theodore Roosevelt, and held aloft at the first meeting of the Australian Commonwealth Parliament, Pearson's work championed the legal protection of the precious temperate zones where white men thrived against incursion from "black" and "yellow" races.[3] Pearson also argued that the economic infrastructure introduced during the New Imperialism would serve only to facilitate expansion by the racial competitors to Anglo-Saxons. That a book warning of the expansionist impulse of Africans and Asians, at the apex of European imperialism into these regions, could gain such traction in the highest halls of government is surely a measure of the degree to which racialized thought and paranoid fantasies of the "Yellow Peril" had permeated British political and cultural discourse.

The popular counter-reaction against "Chinese labour" across the British Empire was another sign of how the casual racial superiority of the early nineteenth century had merged with Social Darwinism and a widespread resentment of economic encroachment to foster virulent racial hostility among the middle and working classes. Anti-Chinese sentiment was not only instrumental in the federation of Australia and in bringing the *Het Volk* government to power in South Africa, but also played a crucial role in the British General Election of 1906 and even in London municipal elections in the same period (Figure 21.4). The latter was not attributable to any measurable presence of Chinese workers in British industry. There were less than a thousand permanent Chinese residents in the entire country at the time (Seed 2006). It was, rather, a combination of political calculation by Liberal politicians (then in opposition), and concerted efforts by labor leaders in Britain, Australia, and South Africa that had brought the Chinese issue to the attention of British voters.

New Imperialism was thus a global phenomenon that was experienced and expressed in intensely local and personal ways. The frequent expression of universal concepts such as the divide between "white," "black," and "yellow," through the specific language of law, local policy, and even municipal politics also explains much of the scholarly disagreement over the domestic impact of imperialism and the

Figure 21.4 *The Morning Chronicle*, 8 March 1904. The image depicts the London County Council, represented as the Angel of Progressivism, slaying the hydra of Conservatism, corrupt privilege, moral turpitude, and cheap Chinese labor

significance of race in British popular culture. Even beyond contrasting ideological or theoretical stances (the two are often intertwined in the study of imperialism), in dealing with sources that move easily between broad racial classifications and the minutiae of wage penalties for lost plantation work-hours, it is as easy to miss the trees for the forest as it is to miss the forest for the trees. This can result in three historians examining similar topics, and two arguing that race and gender are fundamental to imperialism, while a third, analyzing decolonization, ignores gender completely and dismisses the entire postcolonial perspective with a single sardonic footnote (McClintock 1995; Levine 2003; Hyam 2007).

The situation becomes even more complex when scholars turn, as many have in the last three decades, to viewing the European metropole as a site of colonial contact (Burton 1994), to decentering the notion of imperialism, and to challenging the concepts of history and modernity that have emerged from a fundamentally Eurocentric viewpoint (Chakabarty 2000). Overarching much of this discussion is a

wide recognition among those who study the history, politics, and literature of this period that the New Imperialism influenced the generation, recording, and dissemination of knowledge itself (Said 1978; Guha and Spivak 1988; Thomas 1994; Cooper 2005; Hevia 2012). This apparently endless progression through a labyrinth of interpretations, with each new insight further undercutting the epistemological grounds that fostered it, is intrinsic to the study of New Imperialism. The tendency of the period and its consequences to resist any straightforward analysis is both a result of the theories employed and one of the greatest ironies of the *fin de siècle* itself, when so much seemed so sure, and yet would soon vanish to leave only a phantom echo behind.[4]

Of all the ideas and practices that prevailed during the *fin de siècle*, however, the violent transformations of the New Imperialism and the discourses of rights, race, and nationalism that emerged from them are surely among the most enduring. To this day, we wrestle with their aftermath even as we seek, in scholarship, to understand their history. The common parlance dividing the world into "developed," "developing," and "underdeveloped" regions; the pervasive anxiety over China's "rise"; the environmental, medical, and political crises that plague Sub-Saharan Africa; and even the Arab Spring are all, in part, inheritances of the New Imperialism.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOTES

1 Thomas Babington Macaulay's implementation of an English-model educational system in 1835 was one crucial milestone.
2 The "Natal test," which, by employing language proficiency as the criterion for exclusion, avoided the ban on racial legislation incorporated into the British constitution, was already well established as the legal mechanism of choice.
3 A fear which Japan's decisive victory over Russia in 1905 fed considerably.
4 My thanks to Madhavi Kale for this particularly apt phrase to describe the legacy of New Imperialism.

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THE NEW POLITICS OF
'HIGHER INDIVIDUALISM'

—◦•◦—

Chris Nottingham

INTRODUCTION

Politics might initially seem an unproductive point from which to view the *fin de siècle*. The copious secondary literature suggests that literary modernism, artistic innovation, cultural decadence, metropolitan mores or socio-biology would offer a sharper perspective. Even where apparently political categories were used, for example socialism and anarchism, they took on a form that owed more to the particular moment than any tradition. The core difficulty is the millennialism that united the celebrants of *fin-de-siècle* culture; a certainty that something was happening that was so novel as to defy conventional categories. Even those who detested the new movements, such as Max Nordau, were no less convinced that some unprecedented transformation was underway (Nordau 1968). Nordau damned it as 'Degeneration', Havelock Ellis welcomed it as the 'New Spirit', but they were dealing with the same phenomenon.

A distinction has to be drawn between the *fin de siècle* as a chronological period, and *fin de siècle* as a unique attitude or response to this period. For example, T. H. Escott, editor of the *New Century Review*, was enthusiastic about the developments of the age but set them in a general context of continuing improvement, avoiding the intellectual intoxication that characterized both the true imbibers of the *fin-de-siecle* 'New Spirit' and their most passionate opponents (Escott 1897). My focus here will be on the intoxicated, in particular Grant Allen and Havelock Ellis, who were both convinced that the waning of the nineteenth century, their formative years, had seen intellectual changes that amounted to a new Renaissance. Neither have been usually considered as political figures but I shall argue that the outlook they, and others, applied across a range of issues amounted to a 'New Politics' of 'Higher Individualism', and to deal with it as political discourse offers the clearest view of its beliefs and purposes.

How, though, is it possible to identify the political dimension of a movement that believed all was in flux and everything connected with everything else? As I have no single definition of politics to work from I can offer no simple solution. I shall explore three well-worn understandings of the term, none of them totally

satisfactory, and try to maintain a disciplined fluidity in applying them to *fin-de-siècle* agendas.

In the first place politics can be considered simply as public things; classically, the affairs of the *polis*; the issues that constitute public debate. The difficulty here is that the question of the public and the private is subject to change and can itself become the substance of political debate. Nonetheless in terms of *fin-de-siècle* politics, this definition is illuminating as it touched many of the core topics: whether, for example, the relationships of employers and employees were matters of private contract, whether the raising of children could be left to parents, whether women were entitled to full citizenship, whether knowledge of sexuality and contraception should be publicly available, whether homosexual relationships should be subject to legal regulation or left to the choice of the principals. The broad trend of *fin-de-siècle* debate led towards a broader conception of the public zone but as that last example suggests, what was involved was sometimes a more complex readjustment of the private/public boundary (Harris 1994).

Another conception of politics, as 'the art of the possible', also raises questions, but is helpful in this context. This proposes that political logic does not always coincide with moral logic; that in politics one seeks out solutions that satisfy a range of interests and opinions rather than insisting on a line that one believes to be right in a purely logical or ethical sense. Politics here becomes associated with the brokerage of deals; ideas are not irrelevant but subservient to the competition for power. Broadly speaking, *fin-de-siècle* intellectuals held such considerations in contempt; the transformations which they anticipated were on a scale that transcended sordid bartering.

Finally I shall bear in mind the idea of politics as governance; the means by which conflicts are reduced to order. The response of most *fin-de-siècle* intellectuals was that while existing societies did exhibit such conflicts, these arose from defective perceptions. If a society were set on the right basis, it would have no need for such processes. As Saint-Simon had put it much earlier, 'the government of men would be replaced by the administration of things' (Draper 1970). For one contemporary opponent of *fin-de-siècle* ideas this gentle 'administration' would actually produce a 'Terror': the pursuit of 'Moral Sanitation' would introduce 'espionage in all the affairs of Life, public and private' (Buchanan 1891, pp. 35–36). This seems overstated, but there was certainly more to this projected 'administration' than might appear at first glance.

As most of my illustrations will be drawn from the United Kingdom I should emphasize that *fin-de-siècle* culture cannot be understood as the product of any single country. When Havelock Ellis produced his celebrations of the intellectual progenitors, *The New Spirit* in 1890 and *Affirmations* of 1897, none of those he identified – Diderot, Heine, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Whitman, Nietzsche, Zola, Huysmans, Casanova, and St. Francis – were British. Give or take an eccentricity or two, these were widely accepted as essential authors for anyone who aspired to engage with the spirit of the age. Ellis was a passionate internationalist and could function professionally in French, Spanish, German and Italian. Moreover, many of the rapidly expanding metropolitan centres across Europe witnessed the development of groups of artists and intellectuals who acknowledged the same mentors and felt themselves members of a movement that knew no national boundaries. Ibsen's social dramas set off a wave of translation and imitation: Jane Addams' contributions to the 'Social

Question' made the 'Atlantic Crossing'. *Fin-de-siècle* culture was seen by both celebrants and detractors as an opening chapter of a universal history. The influence of Darwin was important: if one was dealing with human beings as mammals, national distinctions did not amount to much. The socio-biological outlook suggested variations were stages of development rather than distinctions of kind. Nordau was in full agreement: the infection of 'moral insanity' had no more respect for national boundaries than the cholera (Nordau 1968, p. 231).

GRANT ALLEN – 'FRESH FORCES IN POLITICAL LIFE'

When Holbrook Jackson was attempting to capture the mood of 1890s London he quoted Grant Allen's eulogy:

> The return wave of Celtic influence (. . .) has brought with it Home Rule, Land Nationalisation, Socialism, Radicalism, the Reverend Hugh Price Hughes, the Tithes War, the Crofter Question, the Plan of Campaign. It has brought fresh forces into political life – the eloquent young Irishman, the perfervid Highland Scot, the enthusiastic Welshman, the hard-headed Cornish miner: Methodism, Catholicism, the Eisteddfod, the parish priest; New Tipperary, the Hebrides, the Scotland Division of Liverpool; Conybeare, Cunninghame Graham, Michael Davitt, Holyoake; Co-operation, the Dockers, The Star, the Fabians. Powers hitherto undreamt of surge up in our parliamentary world in the Sextons, the Healys, the Atherley Joneses, the McDonalds, the O'Briens, the Dillons, the Morgans, the Abrahams; in our wider public life in the William Morrises, the Annie Besants, the Father Humphreys, the Archbishop Crokes, the General Booths, the Alfred Russel Wallaces, the John Stuart Blackies, the Joseph Arches, the Bernard Shaws, the John Burnses; the People's Palace, the Celtic Society of Scotland, the Democratic Federation, the Socialist League. Anybody who looks over any great list of names in any of the leading modern movements in England – from the London County Council to the lectures at South Place – will see in a moment that the New Radicalism is essentially a Celtic product.
>
> (Jackson 1988, pp. 178–79)

Where Allen was overwhelmed by harmony others struggled with the apparent disparities. Was it an age of decadence, a time for aesthetes rejoicing in their superiority over the ordinary, all *Yellow Books* and green carnations; or was it the age of the 'socialist revival', a time when earnest young men and women took to the slums in pursuit of the 'Social Question' and intellectuals became enchanted with municipal affairs? Allen's novels were last republished in a collection called 'The Decadent Consciousness' although he was at home in earnest socialist company (Fletcher and Stokes 1977). Did the proclamations of the new – new unionism, new women, new literature, new drama, art nouveau, new theology – amount to anything? Could Nietzsche's work be reconciled with the earnest struggle for female emancipation? Could Oscar Wilde's profession of socialism be taken seriously? Was it an age of blossoming individualism or of budding collectivism? Might it be both? (Harris 1994)

Now largely forgotten, Allen was an adept practitioner of the 'New Journalism' and embraced by astute publishers with an eye on the progressive market (Jackson 2001). When, in 1898, the Labour Press sought out leading luminaries to speculate on 'prospects for the coming century' they turned to Allen along with George Bernard Shaw, Alfred Russel Wallace, Tom Mann, William Morris, Henry Salt, Margaret McMillan and Edward Carpenter (Carpenter 1897). However, Allen's importance owes less to his originality than to his ability to synthesize the thoughts of others.

Allen's identification of the Celtic as the defining undercurrent was not as eccentric as it now might seem. 'The Celts', for Allen, represented the 'unconquered' parts of Britain: the source of 'all radicalism, socialism and love of political freedom'. The Celtic spirit evoked 'the tender and mystical side of our natural temperament', and provided an alternative set of values in a society that rewarded 'men who have successfully adulterated their coffee, or (. . .) gambled to the ruin of others on the stock exchange' (Allen 1894). Allen was not alone; William Butler Yeats, an active presence in London progressive circles, was busily, brilliantly, inventing a usable Celtic past (Edelstein 1992, p. 127). Douglas Hyde, later President of Ireland, advocated politics by the cultural route: 'by linking past with present by employing traditional Irish music and games; by preserving traditional Irish customs and habits of dress; by reading Irish and Anglo-Irish books' (Dunleavy and Dunleavy 1991, p. 184). Allen underlined the point: 'You have but to look down a list of members of the Arts and Crafts Society to see at a glance that the greater number (. . .) are well known as advanced political thinkers' (Allen 1894, p. 273). When Havelock Ellis married Edith Lees she rapidly set about decorating his cottage in the Art Nouveau style so as to shock 'stodgy suburbians' (Ellis 1939, pp. 328–29). Arcadia provided a signpost to Utopia, and Liberty & Co. was doing well by it.

In a series of essays for the *Westminster Gazette*, Allen demonstrated his grasp of the new agenda. He heralded the new internationalism: nation states had had their day; patriotism '*never* means any good' (Allen 1894, p. 81). In education, he favoured the experiential over the formal: 'six months in the fields with a platyscopic lens would teach them strange things about the world about them than all the long terms at Harrow and Winchester' (Allen 1894, p. 129). This was the spirit in which Olive Schreiner had performed post mortems on animals: 'With a startled feeling near akin to ecstasy we open the lump of flesh called a heart' (Schreiner 1989, p. 135). George Moore, the aesthete's aesthete, elevated 'The natural man, who allows his mind to ripen under the sun and wind of modern life in contradistinction to the University man, who is fed upon the dust of ages' (Moore 1939, p. 26).

Wells later recalled Allen as 'full of the new wine of aggressive Darwinism': 'He had an earlier infection of that same ferment of biology and socialism that was working in my blood. He wanted not merely to enjoy life but to do something to it. Social injustice and sexual limitation bothered his mind and he was critical of current ideas and accepted opinions.' (Wells 1934, p. 202) Darwinism was the keystone of the new outlook. Even Leonard Hobhouse, sober proponent of the 'New Liberalism', believed Darwin had shown that 'a harmonious development of human life' was 'a reality to which the whole story of evolution, physical, biological, mental and social leads up' (Hobhouse 1909, p. 165). Ellis wrote of the 'scientific spirit' – 'this devotion to truth, this instinctive search after the causes of things' – as

'what may be called a new faith'. Its fruits were 'sincerity, patience, humility, the love of nature and the love of man' (Ellis 1890, p. 6).

Darwinism, Allen argued, had provoked a 'mental upheaval', a 'final manifestation of innumerable energies which have long been silently agitating the souls of nations in their profoundest depths' (Allen 1885, p. 2). Shaw recalled being caught up 'by the great wave of scientific enthusiasm' and rejoicing in 'the blow it dealt to the vulgar Bible-worship' (Pierson 1979, p. 46). Wells acknowledged Darwin and Huxley as 'mighty intellectual liberators' (Wells 1934, p. 202). Science undermined previous authorities and confirmed its followers were on the right path.

Allen's favourite subject was the 'New Woman'. In his preface to *The British Barbarians*, he wrote: 'it is women whom one mainly desires to arouse to interest in profound problems' (Allen 1895, p. xv). Victorian society revealed its diseased nature in its treatment of women. Prostitution and marriage were equal parts of the ruling hypocrisy; 'the corrupting mass of filth underneath' maintained 'the vile system of false celibacy' (Allen 1895, p. 114). Allen had no time for celibacy, false or otherwise; hedonism was 'sane and pure and wholesome and beneficial', and the purification of sex only required 'untrammelled liberty' for women to follow 'the divine instinct of love' which would tell them with whom they 'should spontaneously unite' (Allen 1895, p. 176).

In *The Woman Who Did* (1895), Allen's *succès de scandale*, his heroine abandons corsetry in favour of flowing robes and sandals. Victorian clutter is banished from her house and an Arts and Crafts aesthetic rules. She chooses to have a child with her lover but will not live with him and surrender to the 'man-made patriarchate' (Allen 2004, p. 87). Yet 'untrammelled liberty' had its limits. Although motherhood was to be made 'as little burdensome as possible', it remained an inescapable destiny (Allen 1894, p. 181). The 'modern mother' would have no more than four children, be free from the 'hateful drudgery of "earning a livelihood"', and 'rest content with being free and beautiful, cultivated and artistic'. She would be protected from the tyranny of father and husband by the new state, in 'perfect liberty'. 'Your Socialist', Allen concluded, 'is the true and only individualist' (Allen 1894, p. 195).

For Millicent Fawcett, prominent suffragist, *The Woman Who Did* was the 'incoherent cry' of the 'unregenerate man' giving voice to 'the ape and the tiger' in his nature (Fawcett 1895, p. 625). Present readers might find even more to question, but neither Allen's views nor the confidence with which he prescribed for others were unusual. It was an article of faith in the New Politics that conventional marriage and prostitution were on a par. Shaw made the point in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*: 'middle class morality' rested on money alone (Shaw 1949, p. 114.). Olive Schreiner dismissed marriage without love as 'the uncleanest traffic that defiles the world' (Schreiner 1989, p. 133). However, it was not, as Fawcett insisted, necessary to repress one's sexual instincts. Quite the contrary, for instinct freed from financial considerations would produce not only mutual happiness but the perfect environment for producing children. For the Swedish feminist Ellen Key, liberated motherhood was the highest destiny and the 'new mother' the basis of the new order: 'new life must be born in love and purity, in health and beauty, in full mutual harmony, in a complete common will, in a complete common happiness' (Key 1909, p. 51). Margaret Sanger also believed new mothers could purify society, and supported Wells' condemnation of 'spare time motherhood' (Sanger 1926, p. 248).

On the agency question Allen offered a biological simile. Society was passing 'through something like the chrysalis stage in its evolution (. . .) chaos precedes the re-establishment of a fresh form of order (. . .) a new heaven and new earth' (Allen 1894, pp. 130–32). His readers could be 'conscious partakers in one of the great ages of humanity'. The 'conscious partakers' however would not be drawn from 'the ill-used classes themselves, but the sensitive and thinking souls who hate and loathe the injustice with which others are treated'. The 'Social Question' was not a conflict between rich and poor but between 'the selfish Haves on one side, and the unselfish Haves, who wish to do something for the Have-nots, on the other' (Allen 1894, p. 135). This coincides with Hubert Bland's dismissal of popular agitation: 'The revolt of the empty stomach ends at the baker's shop (MacKenzie and MacKenzie 1979, p. 79).

Allen, I suggest, captured the *fin-de-siècle* state of mind. Where more original minds might be opaque, Allen was simple. At the root of the iniquities of the age was a diseased culture of 'getting and spending', at odds with all natural instincts. The return to simplicity and harmony was in some way preordained, yet still required the attention of his self-selecting elite.

HAVELOCK ELLIS – THE NEW SPIRIT

When Havelock Ellis produced his eulogy to the 'New Spirit' in 1890, he also expressed a sense of unity:

> It is strange: men seek to be, or seem, atheists, agnostics, cynics, pessimists; at the core of these things lies religion. We may find it in Diderot's mighty enthusiasm, in Heine's passionate cries, in Ibsen's gigantic faith in the future, and in Whitman's not less gigantic faith in the present. We see the same in the music dramas of Wagner, in Zola's pathetic belief in a formula, in Morris's worship of an ideal past, in the aspiration of every Socialist who looks for a return to those barbarous times when every man was equally fed and clothed and housed. How can I make it clear to myself this vast and many-shaped religious element of life?
>
> (Ellis 1890, p. 228)

Ellis has never slipped into total obscurity but has not in the past few decades been afforded the attention he merits. The revival of radical sexology in the 1970s brought the damnation of faint praise (Weekes and Rowbotham 1977, p. 148); Queer Studies scholars have been impatient with his caution (Crozier 2009); second wave feminist writers have been suspicious (Brandon 1990). Misunderstandings have often arisen because critics have ignored the vision that, as Ellis insisted, ran through his work and life. Little consideration has been given to Ellis as any sort of political figure. One biographer commented, 'He always described himself as a socialist, but there is no evidence of his practical advocacy of any single measure.' (Grosskurth 1980, p. 61).

Ellis, like many who aspired to an intellectual career, had to begin with teaching, though in his case it was in the Australian Outback. Here, after a brief surrender to the desolation of a godless world, he discovered a mission to dispel the miseries of the human race. Evolutionary insights began to suggest harmony in nature, and that sexuality need not be soured by prohibition. On returning to London he

obtained a mediocre medical degree; professional ambition did not engage him. As a student he began to circulate in progressive circles and contribute to journals. In 1883, aged 24, he published a striking article praising Thomas Hardy's radical portrayal of women, which drew a letter of appreciation from the author (Ellis 1883). In 1890 he produced that eulogy to the prophets of the 'New Spirit' discussed above. Ellis's list coincided with those of enthusiasts and critics. An anonymous writer in the American journal *Art Critic*, though defining the *fin-de-siècle* milieu as 'a confusion of suppressed ideas, impulses, sardonic smiles, narcotic dreams, chronic mental catarrhs, ascetic efforts, godlike ideas, and the most absurd eccentricities and mannerisms' was in near perfect agreement as to those responsible (Anon 1893).

Ellis lived the life of the *fin-de-siècle* intellectual. He shared a flat with Arthur Symons, the missionary of symbolism to the English. Together they visited the Parisian salons of the masters, being particularly drawn to de Gourmont and Gautier (Beckson and Munro 1989, pp. 20–21). With Symons, Ellis enjoyed the frisson of alternating high art with low life at the music hall. With another friend he experimented with the hallucinogenic properties of nitrous oxide. He established an intense relationship with Olive Schreiner whose novel, *The Story of an African Farm*, was the success of the season. He actively participated in 'little societies' such as the Men's and Women's Club and the Fellowship of the New Life. He published in the *Savoy*. All the while he was pursuing his sexual studies and beginning his collaboration with A. J. Symonds on the study of homosexuality, which was to be the first published volume of the monumental *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (Nottingham 1999).

Yet he also published two substantial studies which seem out of place: the *Nationalisation of Health* (1892), in which he made the case for a preventive approach to health questions, a state run medical profession and an occupational health service, and *The Criminal* (1890b), based on the theories of Lombroso and advocating socio-psychological treatment rather than punishment. It would, however, be wrong to see this as flitting between subjects as the fancy took him. His interest in such topics was lifelong and, in his mind, entirely compatible with the rest of his work. In Isaiah Berlin's categorization of intellectuals as foxes and hedgehogs (Berlin 1988), Ellis was emphatically the latter. It appeared that he knew lots of things, but, in reality, he was driven by one big idea:

> In the moral world we are ourselves the light-bearers, and the cosmic process is in us made flesh. For a brief space it is granted to us, if we will, to enlighten the darkness that surrounds our path.
>
> (Ellis 1890, p. vii)

Ellis was eternally fascinated by utopias. He carefully followed the many experiments in living according to ideals. His friend and confidant Edward Carpenter was, throughout their long, mutually congratulatory correspondence, exploring the virtues of the 'simple life' at his small holding in Derbyshire. Ellis took delight in his wife's service as the general factotum of 'The Fellowship of the New Life', in its manifestation as an experiment in communal living. Edith summed it up in one of her novels:

> Why should not the new truth date from the little group you have gathered together? Why should not modern life take on a cleaner, saner, and more brilliant

colour from the torch lighted by you handful of earnest workers bent on ridding life of its shams and ugliness?

(E. Ellis 1909)

Utopia was no philosophical abstraction.

In 1900, Ellis published *The Nineteenth Century. A Dialogue in Utopia*, a reflection on where the 'New Spirit' was leading. The form is a dialogue between an omniscient protagonist and an interlocutor asking naive questions. The subject matter is the nineteenth century as it might be viewed from a serene, far distant future. Ellis's utopia is a post-industrial place. Its inhabitants are engaged in unspecified higher pursuits. A 'Lancashire Enclosure' is preserved, but as a black museum. The proletariat has disappeared; 'As all work became skilled, it became necessary for all workers to possess a fine training, and to acquire those virtues of self-discipline and self-control which can never belong to an unskilled populace' (Ellis 1900, p. 9). These skills are not spelt out, but a simple life is available to all. The disappearance of 'the lower orders' is no cause for regret: 'For as at Rome the rabble clamoured for bloodshed in their circuses, so they yelled two thousand years later in their newspapers for another nation to be slaughtered and its liberties extinguished' (Ellis 1909, p. 9). Ellis's vehemence was probably exacerbated by the riotous celebrations of Victoria's Jubilees (1887, 1897) and Mafeking Night (1900) – events which all progressives detested. In his utopia, nation states have disappeared: 'An enormous advance was made when the settlement of the whole world quietly but effectively suppressed nations as nations' (Ellis 1900, p. 32).

Ellis always strived to present his arguments as calm observations, scarcely arguments at all, yet 'Victorians' clearly tested his serenity. In *Affirmations* he conceded they had 'performed many dirty and laborious tasks' but this was merely 'to cleanse its Augean stables of the filth it has itself deposited, to pull down buildings it has itself erected'. Though prepared to recognize their blundering efforts he could countenance no celebration:

> when these yet unwashed toilers rise up around us in half intoxicated jubilation over the triumphs of their own little epoch, well assured that there never was such an age or such a race since the world began. Then we may well pause.
>
> (Ellis 1897, p. vi)

The Victorians, though suffering delusions of progress, were in reality in the grip of a toxic concoction of militarism, Christianity and commercialism. Ellis took particular exception to that Victorian hero, the 'Moral force Reformer': instead of 'illustrating the truth of his opinions (. . .) by the beauty and excellence of his own life, he would fight society at large in order to force the other people to do what he thought was good'. Ellis added that in domestic life the moral force reformer would 'be most inhumane, brutally ill treating his wife and driving his son mad'. Moral force was 'the main cause of the hypocrisy which seems to us so hateful a feature of that time'. (Ellis 1900, p. 71).

Ellis here captures the generational animus that united proponents of the New Politics. The things in which Victorians took greatest satisfaction – their moral tone, their art, their Christianity, the products of their industries – actually represented

their greatest failings: 'All their things were ugly.' The only exception to the catalogue of criticism was women. 'The sweetness of their women alone redeemed the evil influence of England in the world.' (Ellis 1900, p. 163)

Adversarial politics had perpetuated the disease: 'It was never the custom for any country to seek out diligently its wisest men.' The 'best men' were pushed aside and 'the most pugnacious, the most thick-skinned, the most hypocritical' held sway, in league with 'a foolish public opinion led by the prejudices (. . .) of journalists'. (Ellis 1900, pp. 28–29). In the law courts: 'Instead of quietly investigating the circumstances of the case in a judicial manner, and submitting the criminal as speedily as possible to the most appropriate treatment, they took sides and fought a battle over him with a judge as umpire.' This provokes the naive one to exclaim, 'But surely there were experts even in the nineteenth century?' The omniscient being replies, 'Yes, but they were forced to take sides too!':

> it was always possible to play one expert off against the other, and instead of being regarded as final, their decisions were quite commonly treated with contempt.
>
> (Ellis 1900, pp. 28–29)

The Victorians had missed the point about science:

> Science being to them a novelty, a matter to dispute about, consisted largely of talk (. . .) To us it means both a universally recognised instrument of research into the unknown and the organisation of the whole material part of life. In the first capacity we accept it simply without dispute; in the second we do not think about it any more than we think about the air we breathe.
>
> (Ellis 1900, p. 40)

The Victorians were also blind to 'the scientific study of themselves, their really average and typical selves'. Ellis was as convinced as the driest Fabian that the abolition of adversarial politics and competitive commercialism would involve no diminution of liberty. 'No one needs individualism in his water supply, no one needs Socialism in his religion' (Ellis 1912, p. 392). He simply wished to focus on the true individualism that would be released when 'the material side of life is automatically supplied'. (Ellis 1900, p. 41)

Ellis stood in the tradition of Rousseau. Disorder was the product of the authorities that claimed to maintain it. Underneath was a dormant natural order; only remove the artificial conflicts and individuals would recognize deeper truths:

> The most elementary rules of social organisation, when once their recognition is worldwide, effect a change that is enormous and out of all proportion to their simplicity. A tradition of civilisation once firmly established, artificial barriers fall, and men are free to develop their own impulses in infinite diversity.
>
> (Ellis 1900, p. 131)

Ellis wrote that his target readership was the teacher in the schoolroom, the doctor in the surgery; professionals who could quietly establish the foundations of the new

order. The new collectivism would not resemble the Victorian state that 'had a power of intervention into all sorts of matters that we deal with more quietly and more effectively' (Ellis 1900, p. 27).

The new clerisy of experts would rule by example and scientific reasoning, rather than threat or sanction. Individuals would realize the suppression of atavistic instincts was a small price for a higher civilization. Expertly schooled parents, especially mothers, would undertake the business of replacing quantity with quality. Reproduction would no longer involve a fatalistic submission to biology. Putative parents would voluntarily consider their 'Galtonian rank' and dispassionately evaluate their fitness to reproduce. Children would be few, closely watched and nurtured, regarded by parents as their 'work of art'. Child rearing would become a serious and, no doubt, anxious business. For the class who could never enter the circle of enlightenment, the 'rabble', Ellis could only offer oblivion. 'They are', he wrote, 'not adequately capable of resisting their own impulses'. Such 'feeble folk' could never be entrusted with 'the task of social hygiene' (Ellis 1911, p. 7).

The works of Allen and Ellis suggest the familiar assumption that collectivism was the main theme of *fin-de-siècle* political thinking needs to be refined. Georg Simmel, writing in the same period, noted that individualism was assuming two distinct meanings: first, 'the sense of freedom and responsibility for oneself that comes from a broad and fluid social environment', a view he associated with the Enlightenment, and second, the way 'the individual distinguishes himself from all others; that his being and conduct – in form and content, or both – suit him alone', which came out of nineteenth-century Romanticism (Levine 1971, p. 271). It was the second sense that animated the prophets of the New Politics. In Ellis's words:

> At bottom every man well knows that he can only live one single life in the world, and that never again will so strange a chance shake together into unity such singularly varied elements as he holds: he knows that, but he hides it like a bad conscience.

> (Ellis 1897, p. 21)

The alternative view of individualism, involving competition, was dismissed out of hand. Markets of any sort bred disorder. All vexations over material questions would dissolve under 'scientific' order. Experts would deliver solutions and allow men and women to get on with the business of self-exploration. The entry requirement for the new order was a capacity to assume the responsibilities of the higher individualism.

CONCLUSION

One of the ways to evaluate the substance of the New Politics is to ask whether it was transferable. The small town of Eastwood on the Nottinghamshire coalfield might seem an unlikely location, yet in the first decade of the twentieth century, a small group, defined by intellectual ambition, came together. Numbers were small and resources limited, yet, 'Out of the shabby, often grimy houses (. . .) emerged dedication, courage, ideas, fights for freedom, self-education, music and drama.' (Hilton 1993, p. 24).

One evening in 1908 a young man, still known as Bert Lawrence, read his paper on 'Art and the Individual' in a friend's front room. David Herbert Lawrence, like several others, was then an elementary school teacher, a rapidly expanding avenue of advancement for intelligent men and women from poor families. They were socialists, committed to the cause of humanity, but conscious of being above the common herd. One member did not allow her children to play with 'miners' children' (Hilton 1993, p.17). Lawrence's mother was an active co-operator, paid her husband's union dues religiously but, like the rest, recoiled from the working people of the town. Although most would never get there, London was their spiritual home; the place where the new identity could take on substance and escape the critical gaze of the local community. They maintained contact through journals (in particular A. R. Orage's *New Age*), occasional visits from the great figures and, of course, books. Lawrence, while still in Eastwood, read almost all of the authors Ellis had identified as sources of the 'New Spirit' twenty years before (Burwell 1982, pp. 59–125). He borrowed Carpenter's works from Alice Dax. Dax, a combative feminist, a socialist and founder of a district nursing scheme, also demonstrated her embrace of the new by abandoning corsets and wearing sandals. She incurred local disapproval by clearing her house of Victorian clutter and replacing her net curtains with drapes. Lawrence lyrically embraced eugenics and devoted much energy to planning his 'Rananim', a community of like minded souls, where life could be lived simply and according to principle. Some critics have attributed Lawrence's enthusiasms to personal eccentricity but it seems likely that they owed as much to the New Politics.

In Glasgow, at the same time, Edwin Muir was undertaking a rigorous process of self-education. The city was on the progressive lecturing circuit. Muir listened to Christian socialists, militant atheists, anarchists, historical materialists and advocates of free love: Edward Carpenter 'took us into his personal confidence, describing how he had his clothes made in a special way'. He too subscribed to the *New Age*; he recalled that it gave him a 'feeling of superiority' (Muir 1980, p. 112). In Leeds slightly earlier, Holbrook Jackson and Orage had founded an arts club to bring the news of the 'anti-Victorian reaction' to the city. Activities stretched from vegetarian lunches to lectures on Nietzsche. On 'Gala Nights' the Club welcomed the metropolitan stars of the New Politics. Buoyed by success, the founders departed for 'Mecca' and became joint editors of the *New Age* (Mairet 1936, p.31).

The New Politics, then, was clearly political in the first sense outlined above. It was passionately concerned with, and highly successful in expanding, the contemporary political agenda. It offered a new way of being 'interested in politics' that encompassed sexuality, child rearing, gender issues, art, drama and literature. It promoted big issues and high ideals. At the same time, it elevated domestic questions: the personal became political as the political became personal. This proved particularly congenial to those who could never see themselves as simply voters or the raw material of the historical process. Political activity need no longer be confined to formal channels. Purposeful research, voluntary social work, group discussion and even the individual conscience or the way one conceived one's occupation might all serve as locations (Nottingham 2007). Politics became, unmistakably, a means by which one expressed one's identity, one's intellect, even one's moral worth.

In terms of the second definition, 'politics as the art of the possible', the marshalling of political resources to achieve finite ends, the New Politics was clearly,

intentionally, defective. The evangelical style, the promise of transformation, the exclusion of doubt, suggests a greater debt to Christian faith than to any political outlook. Many leaders had only recently relinquished their religious attachments. Carpenter had been ordained; Ellis retained dreams of the pulpit well beyond the time when his beliefs might justify it. Some felt religion and New Politics were compatible. The Reverend R. J. Campbell's 'New Theology' encouraged Christians to discard inconvenient tenets of faith and work for a socialist kingdom of heaven on earth (Campbell 1907). This was not a good moment for those who could not face the vulgarities of popular politics, for the growing electorate, whatever else it was, was becoming an inescapable fact of life. Yet franchise campaigns, even votes for women, attracted little enthusiasm. Adherents of the New Politics were inclined to think of popular politics in terms of the theories of Gustave Le Bon rather than entertaining Mill's cautious hope that the result might be educative. They saw no point in making any accommodation. They claimed to be democratic but by this they meant only that they knew what was best for everyone.

In terms of the third definition of politics, as governance, the New Politics was theoretically indifferent; once disruptive ideas had been pushed aside and men and women open to the simple truths of existence, order would look after itself. In practice, however, its dream of order rested on the agency of experts as bearers of enlightenment. They would support 'new mothers' in choosing suitable mates, restricting their fertility, and producing healthy and enlightened future citizens. Public health professionals would be active in removing causes of ill health. Teachers would, in perfect unison with enlightened parents, embed the new civility in their pupils. Criminals would be scientifically manipulated until they posed no threat, while eugenic experts would gradually eliminate those not fitted for this new world.

One of the more remarkable features of *fin-de-siècle* culture as a whole is persistence: its artefacts retain a capacity to provoke conflict. This applies to its New Politics. Its extensions of the political agenda, its contempt for the hypocrisies of popular politics, its dream of an order rooted in civility, remain potent sources of disagreement. The debate about the respective roles of parents and professionals in the raising of children frequently flares up in bitter public controversy. Public health issues still drive people into opposing camps. The social implications of motherhood and the significance of biological differences between the sexes continue to escape authoritative resolution. The search for a balance between moral self-esteem and the pursuit of pleasure in personal conduct continues. Social professionals continue to puzzle why their clients remain suspicious of their good intentions. The works of its prophets exercise a fascination that is more than antiquarian: Ibsen's dramatic exposures of tyrannical fathers, repressive husbands and corruption hidden under the shell of respectability, and Nietzsche's 'transvaluation of values', retain a power to excite. On the other side it would not be fanciful to detect in Christopher Lasch's 1970s lament for the descent of the American liberal tradition into 'narcissism' and 'therapeutic control' an echo of the condemnation of soft tyranny and romantic individualism in the New Politics as expressed by Nordau and Buchanan (Lasch 1985, pp. 229–30).

Some might detect in the New Politics, shorn, perhaps, of its millennialism and some unpleasant features, an attempt to come to terms with the regulation of the complex interdependencies of advanced societies; others will certainly detect a

sinister extension of 'the gaze' and the empowerment of 'judges of normality'. However, whatever one feels about its proposed solutions, the persistence of these arguments suggests that the proponents of New Politics should be credited with a capacity to ask interesting questions.

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PART IV
MASS CULTURE

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CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

PUBLISHING

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Christopher Hilliard

The history of publishing is usually an ancillary subject, supplying context for histories of literature or the diffusion of scientific knowledge. But publishing ripples out into many other domains, and, at certain points, events in publishing turn on far-reaching historical transformations. The closing years of the nineteenth century were such a moment. At stake in the history of publishing in the *fin-de-siècle* world were the implications of mass literacy and the nature of the international movement of cultural goods. The most important development in publishing during these years was the establishment of something approaching international copyright. The invention of meaningful and reasonably secure forms of 'literary property,' as its advocates liked to call it, recast the infrastructure of the international traffic in aesthetics, knowledge, and entertainment.

While books regularly cross borders in unanticipated ways, historical studies of publishing do not always travel so well. At the close of the nineteenth century, most publishers worked within national markets, or markets bounded by a language area. Making sense of their operations depends on quite local particulars. This survey of publishing in the *fin de siècle* is an attempt to complement an examination of the transnational dimensions of the subject with a case study of one of the most significant national publishing industries. The significance of the British case stems from its scale, the huge worldwide readership for books in English, and—related to that global reach—the many points of international connection and comparison that a focus on Britain makes possible. The 1890s were a critical episode in the history of British publishing. The publishing landscape had become increasingly complex and populated by different types of actors and interests; the book trade attempted to protect itself from capitalism's forces of creative destruction; and an expansion in novel-production forced a reorganization of the way the genre was written and disseminated.

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By the late nineteenth century, most European nations and a fair number of states in the Americas had some kind of copyright system. Many continental European states' provisions for authors' and artists' rights could be traced back to the time of the

French Revolution, when systems of 'privileges' gave way to legal regimes that treated writing as a form of alienable property. Britain's system was established over a long period through a series of incremental Copyright Acts. These acts also formed the basis for the United States' copyright framework. Copyright regimes varied widely (with regard to the extent of an author's or publisher's rights concerning translations, for instance), and copyright holders also ran up against the fact that the trade in books was not easily limited to a given jurisdiction.

Works written in other countries could often be republished with impunity. For obvious reasons, the threat posed by piracy was especially acute for authors and publishers whose language was shared by citizens of other countries. Multilingual European states, especially Belgium, were notorious centres of piracy. Massive immigration from continental Europe made the United States a profitably multilingual market for pirates towards the end of the nineteenth century (Briggs 1906: 40). Before the unification of Italy and the establishment of the German Empire, publishers in the various Italian- and German-speaking states enthusiastically pirated books issued in neighbouring states (Darras 1887: 144–45; Ricketson 1987: 18). French's status as the second language of privileged Europeans meant that the works of French writers were vulnerable to unauthorized copying in many countries. It was France that 'suffered the most' from piracy, the jurist Alcide Darras declared (1887: 145).

A lack of formal copyright protection did not always lead to 'pillage' across national borders, to use Darras's word (1887: 145). Speaking on international copyright 'in some of its relations to ethics and political economy' to members of the New York Free-Trade Club in 1878, George Haven Putnam sanguinely asserted that the gentlemanly conduct of his fellow American publishers ensured that foreign publishers did receive their due. 'While the authorization of the English author can convey no title or means of defence against the interference of rival editions, the leading publishers have, with very inconsiderable exceptions, respected each others' [*sic*] arrangements with foreign authors, and the editions announced as published "by arrangement with the author," and on which payments in lieu of copyright have been duly made, have been as a rule not interfered with. This understanding among publishers goes by the name of "the courtesy of the trade"' (Putnam 1879: 45). So-called *ex gratia* payments to foreign publishers were common, and not just by publishers operating within the Anglo-American legal tradition. The Leipzig firm of Tauchnitz, which published editions of contemporary British and American novels primarily for English-speaking travellers in continental Europe, chose to pay authors for European rights rather than simply appropriate their work, as other Leipzig publishers did—and as Tauchnitz reminded British authors when approaching them (Waller 2006: 616 n; Tauchnitz 1887: 17–18).

Not everyone shared the view that disregarding foreigners' intellectual property rights constituted 'pillage'. Not paying the original publisher was a convenient way of turning a profit, but it also made ideas, information, and aesthetic experiences more freely available. American politicians and officials persistently held that the civic and educational needs of an ever-expanding democracy took priority over the property rights of foreign authors and publishers. The most influential and far-reaching elaboration of this principle was the work of Henry C. Carey, protectionist political economist and Philadelphia publisher's son. Carey pointed out that when Ireland was

brought into the Union in 1801, Britain destroyed a piratical Irish book trade that had been vital to the 'development of the intellectual faculties': so, he argued, a regime of 'international copyright' that would extend the centralizing power of London would dissipate the cultural energies of the United States. International copyright was the enemy of local civilization and progress (Johns 2009: chap. 11, esp. 322).

Despite Putnam's claims about the honour code of 'leading publishers', piracy in the United States was systemic, not simply the practice of disreputable and short-lived operators (Johns 2009: 302–03). The prominent publisher Fletcher Harper brought out a pirated version of one of Anthony Trollope's works to sabotage the American edition about to be published by Lippincott's (Waller 2006: 617–18). American publishers applied ingenuity and industry to acquiring foreign works for free. In 1884, reported one authority, an American company despatched agents to Britain to acquire a new book published by Queen Victoria as soon as it went on sale so that it could then be 'cabled across the Atlantic ocean in twenty-four hours, and . . . printed and put on sale within twelve hours of the receipt of the last words' (Briggs 1906: 40). Compositors working for American publishing houses were known to 'set up the type of English works on the steamers from Liverpool to New York, so that the new books have been issued to the American public within a week after their appearance in England' (Briggs 1906: 40–41).

Unsurprisingly, the United States was not a signatory to the documents produced at a succession of summits in the latter decades of the nineteenth century tasked with establishing an instrument for international copyright—principally for the purpose of inhibiting piracy (Ricketson 1987: 19–20). These conferences sought to build on the bilateral agreements already negotiated between European states, whereby nationals of one country would have their ownership of books, art works, and musical compositions recognized in the other and vice versa. By the mid-1880s, 'there was an intricate network of conventions, declarations and arrangements in place between the majority of European states, as well as between several Latin American states' (Ricketson 1987: 29). The strongest push for a multilateral agreement came from France, but at different summits over the course of the 1870s and 1880s German and British delegates had also advanced proposals that shaped the accord that was ultimately endorsed at Berne in 1886 (Ricketson 1987: 46, 71, 72, 77).

The Berne Convention came into force at the end of the following year and applied to much of continental Europe, Britain, and much of Britain's empire: India, the Cape Colony and Natal, Canada and Nova Scotia, the as-yet-unfederated Australian colonies, and New Zealand. Japan sent a delegation indicating its interest in signing on later, which it did in 1899 (Ricketson 1987: 79–80). Haiti was the only state in the Americas to join. Repeated efforts to establish a pan-American copyright union were not very successful. Nevertheless, bilateral agreements and, in the case of Mexico and Chile, 'territoriality' legislation granting limited protection to foreign works if the publishers complied with local registration requirements were evidently sufficient to permit companies based in Spain to command a large share of Latin American publishing markets (Ricketson 1987: 23, 837–40; Moya 2010: 456).

Boyd Winchester, the diplomat who served as the American observer at Berne, wrote in his report to the Secretary of State that 'the Government of the United States cannot afford to stand before the world as the only important and deeply concerned power persistently refusing to do common justice to foreign authors'

(quoted in Solberg 1926: 96). Winchester argued along the lines that previous American critics of Careyite ideas had: 'Literary property is the only kind of personal property not protected by our law when the owner is not a citizen of the United States. . . . The sophistical plea that the culture and education of the American people is to be imperilled or books to be placed beyond the reach of the masses by international copyright should be disregarded' (quoted in Solberg 1926: 96). President Cleveland's administration expressed guarded support for the principle, but held that because the US constitution charged Congress with 'securing . . . to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries', national legislation would be more appropriate than adherence to an international treaty (Solberg 1926: 94–95, 97). The Chace Act of 1891 was as close as the United States came to endorsing international copyright: authors from certain countries would have their intellectual property recognized provided that they were published simultaneously (or first) with an American publisher and the American copies printed and bound within the United States. The Chace Act did not end unauthorized copying of foreign nationals' books, but, as Adrian Johns observes, 'it did bring to an end the period in which America made piracy a system. From then on, it was merely a crime' (Johns 2009: 325).

The Chace Act and the Berne Convention brought a measure of security to the international operations of publishing. This is not to say that they 'flattened' the publishing world into a smoothly globalized system. The common principle of copyright protection did not make for a single market. Thomas Hardy's correspondence from the late 1890s and the earliest years of the twentieth century shows that it was complicated even for an author of his eminence to negotiate favourable and dependable contracts with publishers and translators in continental Europe (Waller 2006: 617). Moreover, the biggest beneficiaries of international copyright were probably not the writers and publishers whose books had been pirated, but locals whose work had been passed over in favour of imports. Seeing the international political economy of literature rather differently from Henry Carey, the British lawyer William Briggs remarked: 'American authors were placed at a disadvantage in their own country, their works suffered an unfair competition with English works, which publishers could reprint without giving any remuneration to their authors' (Briggs 1906: 637). In 1908 the bestselling British novelist Hall Caine pronounced that American copyright had not simply 'secure[d] justice for the English author' but had shored up authorship as a profession in the United States: 'it is no matter of surprise to me that in the few years that have intervened, America's books have ousted English books in the favour of the American people' (quoted in Waller 2006: 621).

If the British publishing industry smothered some of the local competition in the United States, it did not profit in the process. In the empire, metropolitan publishers often did both. London-based publishers had so much heft in Australia that 'it was simpler and more economical for the local trade to organise itself to be importers and retailers rather than publishers with an eye for local literary talent and new forms of literary expression' (Nile and Walker 2001: 8). Colonial booksellers willingly sold the cheap 'colonial editions' supplied by the big London publishers (Lyons 2001: 24). One series of colonial editions packaged books for Australia with a kangaroo on the spine, volumes for Canada with a beaver, those for India with an elephant, but before long the publisher stopped differentiating: 'after all, the whole

economy of colonial editions rested on producing identical books for worldwide consumption' (Lyons 2001: 23). It was a lucrative trade: a publishing house's profit on a colonial edition could be as much as 60 per cent (Lyons 2001: 24). Poets and novelists in the Australian colonies and to a lesser extent New Zealand complained bitterly about the dearth of local publishing opportunities in the 1890s and 1900s, a time of colonial-nationalist self-assertion in literature. The few New Zealand novels that were published at this time were put out by London firms; the characteristically 'New Zealand' products of the exiguous local publishing industry were retellings of Maori legends and tribal histories.

These cases of metropolitan dominance were premised on the pre-eminence of the English language in the colonies involved. In territories where English was not the primary language, publishing was less dominated by British companies, even though the relations of imperial rule were more restrictive than they were in largely self-governing settler colonies. While the spread of print (and, overlapping with the printing of type, the lithographic reproduction of calligraphic script) in India was part of the colonial process, the multilingualism of many publishing centres on the subcontinent meant that 'the indigenisation of print' was strongly influenced by the dynamics of relations between different communities and different traditions of knowledge with their own preferred languages (Orsini 2004: 106, 114–15, 126–27). Publishing in northern cities such as Benares was highly multilingual because of the variety of language communities to which different social groupings belonged. When an ebullient Hindi commercial publishing industry began to take shape in the city in the 1880s, it did so in dialogue with literature in another language. The Bengali novels translated into Hindi by Benares publishers—and the recognition that a Hindi publishing sector had emerged—prompted local aspirants to attempt the novel form. The Benares novel boom of the 1890s was accompanied by a growth in publishing outlets, as many novelists launched their own monthly magazines carrying serialized fiction (Orsini 2004: 116, 122–23, 125). The contents were often detective stories, a genre that flourished globally at the end of the nineteenth century.

* * *

Free trade was central to the folklore of Victorian capitalism, but successful businesses had obvious incentives to try to immure themselves from competition. In the late 1880s, the discounts publishers offered booksellers, together with competitive undercutting among booksellers, drove many businesses into trouble. Frederick Macmillan's idea for settling 'the "underselling" question' was what he called 'net' pricing (Macmillan 1924: 6). He would publish a book at a slightly lower nominal price than was usual and stipulate a fixed discount for the trade; and he would refuse to sell to any bookseller who would not agree to abide by the set price. Macmillan began trying this approach in 1890. Once he had proved it profitable, other publishers started adopting the practice, and in 1899 the Publishers' Association and the Associated Booksellers finalized the Net Book Agreement (see Waller 2006: 36–37). The booksellers accepted that while some of their number profited from discounting warfare, others were destroyed by it. If the Net Book Agreement cut back opportunities for making a killing, it also bought publishers and booksellers some security.

There were other limits to the competitiveness and, indeed, the commercialism, of British publishers in this period. The organization of the trade was such that

issuing audacious or eccentric books did not necessarily spell disaster for a *fin-de-siècle* publisher. Well into the twentieth century British publishers (and bookshop owners) ran their businesses in ways that recognized, and sometimes gave priority to, values other than profit. As leader of the Society of Authors—which agitated for international copyright, pursued miscreant publishers, and worked in other ways to 'defend literary property'—Walter Besant laboured to neutralize perceptions that it was unworthy to take account of the commercial side of writing, and to this end took pains to articulate distinctions between literary and commercial value (Besant 1893: 14–19).

The Society of Authors, which was founded in 1884, was one of a number of intermediary bodies that helped authors navigate the world of late nineteenth-century publishing. Literary agents emerged as a recognizable profession in the 1870s, but became truly established players in the game of authorship and publishing only in the mid-1890s. Even then, individuals could begin their careers as agents by 'pure fluke', as Curtis Brown put it (1935: 1–2). Brown was an American who was working as the London correspondent of a New York newspaper when authors of his acquaintance asked him, informally or on the spur of the moment, to act on their behalf. Grumbling about the advent of literary agents in 1893, the publisher William Heinemann declared that this was 'the age of the middleman' (Hepburn 1968: 1–2). The need or niche for such intermediaries is an indication of the scale and complexity of the literary marketplace in the late nineteenth century, a marketplace characterized by 'rapid expansion and diversification' (Keating 1989: 30–31). The expansion can be measured, as we shall see, by the increase in the number of books published in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, and by the host of new publishing houses founded, including such enduring and significant firms as Chatto and Windus, Heinemann, Edward Arnold, Hodder and Stoughton, Duckworth, and The Bodley Head (Keating 1989: 60). And, of course, a growing domestic market was complemented by the overseas markets opened up by the advance of international copyright.

Although the literary market was increasingly international, the routes in and out passed through the terminus of London. Edinburgh was still home to a number of book publishers and the headquarters of several of the great generalist periodicals that had been the hubs of high-Victorian intellectual life, but it was dwarfed by London. Publishing in Britain was more centralized than it was in most countries. Elsewhere, cities other than capitals—or other than capitals of culture—remained important publishing centres: Leipzig, Boston, and Philadelphia, for instance. In contrast with the German book trade, where books were produced in multiple cities and then distributed and marketed from Leipzig's literary stock-exchange, the *Börsen-Gebäude*, in Britain the publishers, printers, commission houses—and a great many authors—were concentrated in the metropolis. London formed, in John Sutherland's nice phrase, 'a kind of literary-commercial ganglion' (Sutherland 1976: 68–69).

Centralization and concentration can be thought of as part of the logic of modern capitalist culture. So can specialization and professionalization. These processes certainly shaped *fin-de-siècle* British publishing, but they did so unevenly. As universities expanded and multiplied, and as the ideal of the academic researcher (as distinct from the teacher and the moral shepherd) gained currency, learned societies established non-profit journals where research could be presented and debated in

technical detail and according to standards established by a scientific or scholarly discipline rather than by the market within which other publishers worked. A succession of these journals was founded in the last two decades of the nineteenth century: *Law Quarterly Review*, the *English Historical Review*, the *Classical Review*, the *Economic Journal*. In practice, none closed its pages to 'amateur' historians, economists, and so on (Collini 1991: 212–20). But the advent of these journals does indicate a change in British intellectual life and its publishing apparatus. Each of these scholarly journals dealt with subjects that could also be, and had been, treated in generalist periodicals such as the *Fortnightly Review*, the *Contemporary Review*, the *Nineteenth Century*, and many others. The great Victorian reviews presupposed a high level of general education and cultivation, including familiarity with languages other than English, and it was quite feasible to discuss law reform or classical literature in their pages without extreme simplification (which reflects the limits of academic specialization at the time as well as the sophistication of bourgeois 'general readers'). With the incipient professionalization of what we would now call the humanities and social sciences, there was now a cleavage between generalist and specialist discussions of issues in philosophy or economics that had not existed at mid-century (Collini 1991: 212).

Scholars' *books*, however, continued to appear under the imprint of commercial publishers: university presses did not come to dominate the publishing of scholarly non-fiction until well into the twentieth century. The volume with which Frederick Macmillan launched his net-book experiment was *Principles of Economics* by Alfred Marshall, a professor at Bristol and then Cambridge, and the most important figure in the establishment of economics as a professional field and a university subject in its own right in Britain. Macmillan also published the Cambridge philosopher and university reformer Henry Sidgwick. Indeed, the publishing house founded by Macmillan's father and uncle, who first set up shop opposite the King's College chapel, had a long history of competing successfully for academics' titles with the university's official publisher. Cambridge University Press failed to provide any real competition for Oxford's publishing arm in India because Macmillan published the work of so many Cambridge graduates and fellows writing on Indian subjects or writing for Indian readers (Chatterjee 2006: 9). Of the two heroic scholarly contributions by publishing to the national culture that date from the late nineteenth century, one—what became the *Oxford English Dictionary*—was launched under the auspices of a university, and the other, the *Dictionary of National Biography*, was a private undertaking published by a commercial publisher, George Smith. The contrast between this triumph of British private enterprise and state-sponsored monuments of print in continental Europe was rather a matter of pride (Collini 2008: 301–02).

In another respect, too, *fin-de-siècle* book publishing was not firmly specialized or stratified. Terms such as 'mainstream' and 'avant-garde' might, despite the dangers of anachronism, serve as labels for types of author or text, but they do not work at all well as ways of differentiating publishers in the 1890s. Much of the writing that we think of as 'decadent' was published by firms that were, in their constitution and business model, quite conventional. Take the case of a cult figure of 'nineties' literature, Frederick Rolfe, sometimes known as Baron Corvo. Rolfe's most famous book, *Hadrian the Seventh*, is an ornate novel in which an ostracized

English Catholic finally has his vocation recognized, becomes a priest, and, amid the simultaneous ritualism and unpredictability of Vatican politics, is elevated to the papacy, whereupon he embarks on a campaign of spiritual and political reform while dogged by enemies old and new. The prose is rococo and the novel practically begs to be read as an acutely forceful articulation of its author's fantasies, which were, of course, not everyone's fantasies. *Hadrian the Seventh* was published in 1904 by a major London publisher, Chatto and Windus. One of Rolfe's other books, an eccentric revisionist history of the Borgias, was published in 1901 by another London publisher, Grant Richards, whose better claims to publishing fame are James Joyce's *Dubliners*, Robert Tressell's *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists*, and that classic of racist children's literature, the *Story of Little Black Sambo*. Richards met with Rolfe a number of times in 1899 and eventually surprised the author with a suggestion of a commission for a book on the Borgias. Margins in the late 1890s were not so tight as to inhibit risk-taking publishers who wanted to play the part of the 'literary sportsman', as Richards styled himself in his memoirs (Richards 1934), or the role of the disinterested servant of literature.

Rolfe's *Chronicles of the House of Borgia* was, to use an expression contemporaries often applied to writers like him, caviar, not everyone's taste. Richards remaindered the book within two years, but it was warmly received by other literary figures whose names had a frisson of 'decadence', such as Henry Harland (Scoble 2012: 91). Harland had published Rolfe's short stories while editor of *The Yellow Book*. With Aubrey Beardsley's distinctive drawings and design, *The Yellow Book* became a byword for aesthetic and sexual heterodoxy. When Oscar Wilde was arrested in 1895 for homosexual offences he arrived at court carrying a yellow book that hostile observers took to be a volume of *The Yellow Book*, whose headquarters they went off to vandalize. *The Yellow Book* was issued by The Bodley Head, which had been founded in 1889 and which published the work of a number of poets who were subsequently regarded as defining 'the nineties'. Many of The Bodley Head's books were published in extravagant limited editions, adorned with art nouveau script and printed on sumptuous paper.

The idea of the book as *objet d'art* was taken up outside Britain, too. In Germany at the turn of the century boutique small presses modelled on British examples flourished, and periodicals such as *Pan* and *Jugend* drew on the ideas and design practices of William Morris, who founded the Kelmscott Press in 1891, in striving to match new artistic styles with sympathetic craft and printing materials. For Morris and the German artists and publishers inspired by him, craft and beauty were aesthetic and ideological spaces where commodification could be resisted or evaded; for The Bodley Head and its customers, fine book production and deliberately scarce limited editions created a new market for collectable books, one that thrived on both sides of the Atlantic.

Publishing in lavish limited editions also had another use: it could shield from legal trouble a book that might be deemed immoral. Expensive and rare books were likely to be handled discreetly, and, in any case, in Britain the police and the courts often tolerated expensive editions of questionable books that they would have confiscated and destroyed had they been cheaply produced for a supposedly vulnerable working-class readership. The cost of the edition served as a proxy for the social class of the reader (Hilliard 2013). Henry Vizetelly was prosecuted for

obscenity offences on two occasions, in 1888 and 1889, for publishing cheap translations of Émile Zola's novels. As one of the prosecutors put it, Vizetelly had made immoral French novels available to 'the common market' rather than 'the select literary class' (Cummins 2009: 124). A few years after Vizetelly's second conviction, another firm published Zola translations in expensive editions with high production values (buyers had a choice between handmade paper and Japanese vellum). The expensive translations were sold by subscription and the publishers stated explicitly that they were not on offer to 'the ordinary English public' (Cummins 2009: 128–29). These publishers were not charged with an obscenity offence.

Translations of contemporary French novels and classics such as *The Decameron* and works from antiquity were mainstays of the non-clandestine trade in books that could count as erotica (sometimes English translators inserted explicit passages into the originals). However, the translation of classics was an industry that catered to a much larger market than the one for licit pornography. The German firms Reclam and Teubner built thriving businesses out of translations of classics; so did Aleksei Sergeevich Suvorin in Russia. In Britain the great age of accessible, low-priced editions of 'the world's classics', in the Oxford University Press series of that name and, on a larger scale, Everyman's Library, belonged to the early twentieth century, but already in the late nineteenth century popularizers such as George Newnes and W. T. Stead were churning out classic novels, often abridged, priced at a penny each (Altick 1957: 314; Waller 2006: 45). Reprints of nineteenth-century novels that did not always have canonical status flooded the market too, as they came out of copyright (Waller 2006: 45–46). And books published more recently were reissued in lower-priced editions by the more experimental 'go-ahead publishers of fiction': 'the works of current, popular novelists' would pass through 'various stages of reincarnation as 6s, 3s6d and 2s books', and ultimately as paperbound reprints priced at 6d., the 'sixpenny novels' talked about so excitedly and apprehensively in the book trade in the 1890s (Eliot 1994: 73–74; see also 3).

The proliferation of cheap reprints maps onto the increase in the proportion of fiction in publishers' total output. Simon Eliot's calculations, based on the lists of new titles reported by the *Publishers' Circular*, indicate that 31 per cent of all new titles published in 1890–99 were fiction (including juvenile literature, but not educational books for children), compared with 12 per cent for biography, history, travel, and geography, and 10 per cent for religious books. The previous decade, fiction had accounted for 26 per cent of new titles, religion 15 per cent, and biography, history, travel, and geography 13 per cent. For the 1870s, the figure for fiction had been 23 per cent. The long-term loser was religion, books about which comprised the largest category in a different data set for the period 1814–46 (Eliot 1994: 44–51). The absolute number of novels was growing as well as their proportion of the total output of new books. The average number of novels for adults published in Britain from 1875 to 1885 was 429. The following year, the number jumped to 755. In 1894, 1315 new novels were published in Britain (Keating 1989: 32). (It was at this time that publishers' readers became a fixture in most companies.) The growth in fiction was one of the most salient developments in publishing in the last few decades of the nineteenth century; and the radical restructuring of novel-publication in the mid-1890s was extraordinarily important in the history of the novel.

The change in question was the abolition of the three-volume novel, the so-called three-decker. The three-volume format had been the norm for new novels since the 1820s. Their nominal price, 31s. 6d. (in other words, one and a half guineas) remained more or less constant over the form's seventy-three-year life, though routine discounting and the fact that most readers encountered these books as library stock meant that few customers actually paid the full price. The three-decker was probably, as Sutherland remarks, 'the most stably priced and sized commodity in the whole nineteenth-century market place' (1976: 12). (The general trend in the second half of the nineteenth century was for prices to fall.) The high prices were matched by low print runs, and usually a large proportion of an edition had been sold (or 'subscribed') before the date of publication, so the three-volume novel provided publishers and authors with larger and more predictable returns per unit than is often the case in the book trade (Sutherland 1976: 13–16; Griest 1970: 158–59, 163). The life of the form was prolonged by the commercial circulating libraries that served a middle-class clientele, the most famous of which was Mudie's. The circulating libraries had a vested interest in the three-decker because they charged by volume rather than by title—or, more precisely, each grade of annual subscription fee corresponded with a certain number of volumes rather than titles (see Waller 2006: 33). The libraries propped up a particular form for the novel; and their directors' concern for the moral sensitivities of their subscribers pushed authors towards self-censorship and sometimes direct bowdlerization. The major circulating libraries were, in effect, co-publishers.

The three-volume format had many critics—not just of its economics, but also of its literary consequences. Obviously, if a novel had to fill three volumes the author was under pressure to pad it out—or to think of a particular narrative scale as the only appropriate one for a novel. This was one reason Victorian novels were so long and unwieldy, though it was not the only reason—the 'large, loose, baggy monsters' Henry James had in mind when he criticized novels of the mid-nineteenth-century were those of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, neither of them products of British publishing conventions. Thomas Hardy chafed at the constraints of the three-decker. Robert Louis Stevenson and several other purveyors of adventure, such as H. Rider Haggard and Arthur Conan Doyle, managed to have their novels published in single-volume editions in the 1880s and early 1890s, but they were very much the exception (Waller 2006: 32–33; Griest 1970: 190–91). Some authors were attached to the three-volume form and its rhythms, rhythms that they could make correspond to those of serial publication. Mary Elizabeth Braddon was one of these enthusiasts for the three-decker. Although she is rightly thought of as a key player in the 'sensation novel' craze of the 1860s, Braddon was an enduringly popular and prolific author through the 1890s (Griest 1970: 204–06; Law 2000). Established authors with more modest earnings than Braddon feared that disrupting the settled arrangement with the circulating libraries, with its unspectacular but dependable returns, would make life more precarious for new and middling authors. This was one of the novelist George Gissing's many gloomy prognostications (Cross 1985). One reason for this concern was that many authors received a lump sum from their publishers for their works, rather than a percentage per copy sold. The Society of Authors now urged its members to demand royalty agreements as a matter of course (Weedon 2003: 143).

As the circulating libraries had sustained the three-decker, so did they end it, in the mid-1890s. The ever-increasing volume of fiction published in Britain was one reason the commercial libraries wanted to abandon the cumbersome three-volume format, but even more pressing was the trend towards quick reprinting. Mudie's profits depended not just on subscription revenue, but also on re-selling copies of novels after their season of popularity had finished (Griest 1970: 170). Once publishers started reprinting three-volume novels in cheaper one-volume editions while the titles were still getting borrowed from the libraries, demand for second-hand three-deckers slumped. In 1894, Mudie's and the other powerful chain of circulating libraries, W. H. Smith, sent circulars to publishing houses telling them that the 'constantly increasing number of novels' and the profusion of affordable reprints issued shortly after the three-volume edition had put them under intolerable pressure. The libraries did not explicitly ask the publishers to drop the three-decker, but that was the necessary implication, and the publishers generally recognized the libraries' 'suggestions' as an ultimatum. Most complied, and within several years the standard format for a British novel was a single volume priced at six shillings (see Griest 1970: chaps 7–8). By the end of the decade, 'the six-shilling novel was being bought in huge quantities; first editions of works by popular novelists were scores of times larger now than they had been when they were destined principally for a handful of libraries' (Altick 1957: 313). While literary agents made the 1890s the age of one kind of 'middleman', the collapse of the three-decker put an end to a different kind of negotiation and divided power, that of the de facto co-publishing arrangement with the libraries.

The obvious explanation for the swelling *fin-de-siècle* market for new fiction is the growth of literacy. But this cannot be, for two reasons. First, the decisive phase in the achievement of mass literacy occurred *before* the elementary education legislation of 1870 (Vincent 1989: chap. 3; Altick 1957: 171–72). The graph of book production in the second half of the nineteenth century does not correlate closely with the curves of literacy levels and population growth (Eliot 1994: 3 n, 24–25). Secondly, working-class readers were seldom in a position to buy new books in the late nineteenth century—a state of affairs that would persist at least until the 1930s. This does not mean that they did not read contemporary novels, since there was a street trade in used books, and end-of-the-line sixpenny or threepenny paperbound reprints were within reach of a good many working-class people. But this does mean that working-class readers were incidental to a publisher's decision about what to do with a manuscript: a working-class readership would figure in a novel-publisher's calculations only after the book had proved itself with better-off customers. The social change relevant here is probably not increasing working-class literacy but the dramatic expansion of the clerical lower middle class in the late nineteenth century. The fall of the three-decker and the rise of the six-shilling novel attest to changes in the book-buying public rather than the reading public more generally.

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Books and bulky periodicals loom large in historians' accounts of publishing and *fin-de-siècle* culture, but much of print culture of the late nineteenth century was embodied in other kinds of publication that are now largely forgotten or lost

altogether. The most common media of working-class Britons' reading matter at this time were weekly fiction papers and the short paperbound 'novels' or 'novelettes' spun off from them. This was a common pattern. In Spain, where literacy levels were far lower than they were in Britain, a growing number of new readers drove an expansion in periodicals and 'short, cheap novels characterized by poor typography and showy covers which were issued at regular intervals as part of collections'. They could be found in newsstands and bookstalls in cities, and as such were referred to as 'kiosk literature' (Frago 1990: 595). Like their British and French counterparts in newsagents', grocers', and haberdashers' shops, they were part of the quotidian run of popular commerce (Lyons 2008: 49). Literary figures who investigated the reading habits of workers—the 'unknown public'—usually found that the publishers who catered to these readers were equally unknown. Penny weeklies were 'put forth from Heaven knows what printing-houses in courts and alleys', wrote the popular English novelist James Payn (1881: 146). These printing-houses stood outside what Payn regarded as the established publishing world, and their ephemeral quality meant that scholars often still found their products elusive. If melodramatic novelettes and other kiosk literature sit uneasily with notions of the '*fin de siècle*' in its traditional, resonant sense, they were very much of a piece with the media cultures and mass politics of another version of the late nineteenth century.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

TRANSPORTS OF SPEED

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Andrew Denning

Scholars often invoke the pithy, paradoxical formulations of Indian-born Briton Rudyard Kipling – "the White Man's Burden," "the savage wars of peace" – to give voice to the tensions and contradictions of the global *fin de siècle*. Lesser known but equally significant in its encapsulation of the era is a succinct statement buried in a piece of Kipling's science fiction first published in 1905. In *With the Night Mail: A Story of 2,000 A.D.*, Kipling imagines a world in which enormous airships deliver the mail quickly and efficiently across the globe to destinations such as Quebec, the Cape, and Bombay. As new technologies allow humans to conquer the air, these airships knit together a global market for diverse products including West African gold, Argentine beef, and Siberian timber. Further, air transport minimizes petty divisions among the world's peoples, a form of progress reflected in a universal language and a technocratic world government. By the time Kipling composed *With the Night Mail* at age thirty-nine, he had experienced firsthand how new transportation technologies – the bicycle, the automobile, and the airplane – altered daily life and revolutionized established practices and ideologies. The motto of the technocratic Aërial Board of Control encapsulates the transformative power of these new technologies across the globe; to understand the *fin-de-siècle* world is to recognize, in the words of Kipling, that "Transportation is Civilization" (Kipling 1909: 47).

But what kind of civilization did the new transports of speed create and reflect? When examined through the lens of transport and speed, as in so many other realms of human experience, the *fin de siècle* witnessed the collision of old and new technologies, the expectations of tradition and reveries of the future. Although the expansion of railroad and steamship transport in the nineteenth century carried connotations of progress, many contemporaries lamented their adverse effects. The infrastructure, equipment, and personnel required to operate a locomotive or a steamship demanded tremendous investments, placing these transports under the control of states and corporations, rather than individuals. In response, many commentators described the experience of railroad and steamboat travel as deeply alienating. Previous modes of transport, such as horse carriages, conferred nobility through mobility, allowing men of means to chart their own path and to roam widely, whereas those without access to transportation led a circumscribed existence

in which their horizons were limited by how far their feet could take them. In contrast to such "driver-oriented," independent modes of transport, German author Otto Julius Bierbaum argued in 1902 that "whoever goes traveling in a railway coach forgoes, for a time, his freedom. Every trip made by railway is also a transport of prisoners" (quoted in Sachs 1992: 7).

The railroad and the steamship proved problematic to social elites because they were at once "passenger-oriented" transportation technologies, attuned to the embryonic, vulgar mass culture of the nineteenth century, and commodity-based forms of transport, in which the efficient transport of people and goods took precedence over the aesthetic experience of travel itself. Trains and steamships were rational, reliable, and safe, but ultimately anonymous, dull, and alienating in the eyes of many (Schnapp 1999: 3, 8). A wide array of contemporaries described mass transport in pathological terms, tracing the alienation of rail and steamship transport to speed itself. Among *fin-de-siècle* medical authorities, "neurasthenia" became a shorthand for a sort of "speed sickness," while commentators like English cultural critic John Ruskin argued that "all traveling becomes dull in exact proportion to its rapidity" (quoted in Schivelbusch 1986: 58). In short, although railroads and steamships were engines of progress that expanded human powers beyond natural limits, they remained beyond the control of individual citizens and thus signaled the continued march of turbulent, world-historical forces – industrialization, bureaucratization, and the expansion of global capitalism – at the expense of the individual.

It is in the context of rail and steamship travel that the *fin-de-siècle* transports of speed must be understood. In this era, technological advances and cultural preferences intersected in a particularly dynamic way as bicycles, automobiles, and airplanes combined the independence and privacy of horse travel with the power of modern machinery, allowing moderns to harness speed and conquer natural limits through human ingenuity. On the one hand, new *fin-de-siècle* technologies allowed moderns to utilize speed as active subjects, and speed became pleasurable and thrilling, embodying power, independence, and progress. If speed had once been a means to an end – profits, political control, military domination – new transports offered speed for speed's sake, a modernist celebration of form over function through which the individual control of speed promised to allow individuals to transcend modern ennui through their mastery of velocity (Duffy 2009: 4–5). Whereas today the utilitarian applications of the bicycle, the automobile, and the airplane drive transport use and design, they were often seen as escapist tools of leisure and adventure for the vast majority of their enthusiasts during the *fin de siècle*. On the other hand, many detractors interpreted transports of speed as the pinnacle of *fin-de-siècle* decadence and degeneration. Technophobes and Luddites lamented the continued tyranny of motors and machines in everyday life, and many others recognized that because transports of speed conquered natural limits of time and space, they possessed immense destructive capacities.

Transports of speed evoked passionate responses from both supporters and critics, amplifying the ambivalence and dynamism of this schizophrenic epoch. For better or worse, new, driver-oriented transports of speed symbolized change and modernity, and contemporaries recognized such transports as both a medium and symbol of *fin-de-siècle* civilization. By transforming the way people moved and their motivations for doing so, transports of speed played an important role in

globalization, revolutionized cultural perceptions and practices, and became a tool of political and social power that both reinforced and subverted existing social relationships.

GLOBALIZING SPEED

When trying to determine a precise starting date of the amorphous *fin de siècle*, one could do much worse than to settle on 1867, the year the first bicycle appeared on the streets of Paris. These early bicycles, known as the "Ordinary," employed an enlarged front wheel up to five feet in diameter and remained a plaything for elites and adventurers thanks to their prohibitive price and the danger of taking a "header" from the high seat of the poorly balanced contraption at high speeds. Nevertheless, these early bicycles were a cultural phenomenon throughout the Western world; within three years they had spread to Asia, the Pacific, Africa, and South America (Herlihy 2004: 75, 132, 144, 159–63). Bicycle producers continued to tinker in the following decades until two innovations of the mid-1880s revolutionized its form and function. English inventor J. K. Starley developed the "Safety" bicycle in 1885, which placed a low frame on equal-sized wheels driven by a chain. This design benefitted immensely from the invention of the pneumatic tire by Scotsman John Boyd Dunlop in 1888, which created a smoother ride and allowed cyclists to reach great speeds while maintaining control during turns. These two inventions set off a global bicycle "fever" in the 1890s, as falling prices democratized the bicycle and made it an object of mass consumption, although many among the working classes were forced to scour the secondhand market (Mom 2004: 33–34). No longer were bicycles the exclusive province of the well-to-do, and as we shall see, the independent mobility provided by the bicycle revolutionized both class and gender relations in the *fin de siècle*. As the bicycle began to deliver on its promise as a democratic means of individual transport, it shifted in the first decades of the twentieth century from a leisure tool to a utilitarian means of transport. Indeed, by 1910 the American vice consul in Yokohama, Japan could report that "bicycles are in general use throughout the Empire" (quoted in Herlihy 2004: 316). Although the bicycle set off a cultural craze during the *fin de siècle*, it quickly began to recede as an object of popular rapture both because it was no longer socially exclusive and because it demanded immense effort and exertion, placing bicycles in conflict with contemporary ideas of idle leisure (Sachs 1992: 104).

Meanwhile, scientists and engineers working in a variety of fields invented the automobile, as innovations in bicycle and automobile technology reinforced one another. The development and technical refinement of the internal combustion engine across Europe from the late 1850s forward culminated in the creation of the first automobile by German engineers Gottlieb Daimler and Wilhelm Maybach in 1886, while another engineer, Karl Benz, produced a working automobile independently in the same year (Volti 2004: 3–4). Many early automobile producers were bicycle mechanics, and the techniques employed in the mass production of bicycles in the 1880s and 1890s laid the basis for the expansion of the automobile industry in the first decade of the twentieth century. The mechanical fascination with the automobile gave rise to modern technoculture, as a major appeal of the automobile was that it allowed amateur mechanics and tinkerers to interact with modern technology

(Mom 2004: 40). Whereas locomotives and steamships were enormous, complex machines beyond the comprehension and control of the layman, moderns could master technology and possess it as a commodity in the form of the automobile.

The airplane similarly benefitted from preceding advances in transport technology. Americans Orville and Wilbur Wright, who flew the first airplane in 1903, began their career as bicycle mechanics in Ohio and propelled their airplane by connecting a twelve-horsepower engine to propellers with bicycle chains; the first airplane was literally a hybrid bicycle/automobile/flying apparatus. As technologies advanced in all fields during the Second Industrial Revolution of the late nineteenth century, a heightened pace of innovation paralleled the accelerating speeds of new transports. The Wright Brothers' first flight in 1903 measured 120 feet and less than 7 miles-per-hour; by 1908 Wilbur Wright stayed aloft for 140 minutes and traveled some 125 kilometers; in 1909 Frenchman Louis Blériot safely crossed the English Channel in 37 minutes (Wohl 1994: 13–14, 33, 55). Transports of speed did not merely move individuals at greater speeds, but they also accelerated cultural expectations for change, marking the *fin de siècle* as a dynamic era defined by synergistic technological and cultural transformations.

Although citizens of Western nations developed the technological innovations that drove transport innovations, transports of speed depended on global supply chains and the labor of imperial subjects, making the bicycle, the automobile, and the airplane products of empire. The latter two in particular revolutionized history by instituting a new energy regime, marking the *fin de siècle* as a transitional period from a century of coal and steam to a century of petroleum. By the end of the nineteenth century the internal combustion engine ran on gasoline, a formerly useless byproduct of the petroleum refining process that would either be sold for pennies per gallon or surreptitiously dumped into rivers. The automobile's thirst for gasoline ignited a petroleum boom at the turn of the century with global repercussions. Gasoline sales at John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil tripled from 1900 to 1911, and the rapid increase in demand led to the creation of global oil conglomerates to meet Western demand. Royal Dutch Petroleum Company uncovered massive oil reserves in Indonesia in the last days of 1899, while the British Shell Transport and Trading Company secured resources in the Black Sea and the Caucasus, provoking socialist strikes organized by a young Joseph Stalin and becoming a major irritant in the "Great Game" struggle between Russia and Great Britain for hegemony in Central Asia; the two companies merged in 1907 to compete with Standard Oil (Yergin 1991: 14, 95, 118, 129–30).

Dunlop's invention of the pneumatic tire in 1888 and rubber's importance for all three transports of speed initiated an immense rubber boom that led Western states and businesses to scramble for access to the tropics of the Southern Hemisphere. Propelled first by the bicycle craze of the 1890s and later by the rising popularity of the automobile in the 1900s, rubber became a vital resource. King Leopold II of Belgium ran the Congo Free State as his own personal rubber company, an immensely profitable enterprise because harvesting rubber from wild vines required neither cultivation nor investment, only labor. Between 1890 and 1904, rubber profits in the Congo increased ninety-six-fold, as Belgian officials rounded up cheap labor through compulsion, hostage-taking, and genocidal terror (Hochschild 1998: 160–62). Similar conditions prevailed in the Amazon Basin, where local rubber

barons enslaved indigenous tribes to tap wild rubber trees, feeding the growth of the American rubber industry in particular. Meanwhile, Western businessmen cleared huge swathes of rainforest in tropical Africa and Asia to make way for more lucrative rubber plantations, which multiplied before World War I in Dutch Sumatra, German East Africa, Belgian Congo, and British Malaya (Tully 2011: 65–73, 189; Tucker 2007: 121). Although the vast majority of users of these transports of speed lived in the West, their impact touched every corner of the globe, and the resource requirements of each transport medium created an impetus for the expansion of Western influence throughout the world.

In the process of translating transports of speed from inventions to marketable commodities, businessmen altered production techniques in order to compete in the marketplace. The most influential of these innovations appeared at the end of the *fin de siècle* and would prove revolutionary. Seeing a chance to improve efficiency in his factories, Henry Ford combined a strict division of labor with mass production along the assembly line to accelerate production and decrease costs; in the years before World War I Ford's plants could assemble a car fully in 98 minutes. But this was only half of the socioeconomic revolution that has come to be known as Fordism. Alongside these innovations in mass production, Ford encouraged mass consumption by creating and marketing a cheap, reliable car and by paying his workers unprecedentedly high wages for unskilled labor. Ford made it a priority to make customers out of his workers, believing that higher wages and cheaper cars would increase corporate profits while minimizing worker unrest. Ford also expanded aggressively, establishing a production plant in Manchester, England in 1911 and opening Japanese, Latin American, and Indian markets before World War I (Volti 2004: 25–29; Ward 2003: 13). Although Fordism emerged only in the waning years of the *fin de siècle*, it signaled a fundamental transformation in social and economic relationships that proved significant in the twentieth century. It was the complexity of the automobile and its desirability as a commodity that set this shift in motion.

SPEED CULTURES

The individual experience of transports of speed had deep cultural ramifications and reshaped perceptions of the world. For some, these inanimate machines became objects of rapturous devotion, not only because they moved their drivers and passengers at great speeds, but because their revolutionary speed promised to alter human experience itself. As the Italian devotee of speed F. T. Marinetti exclaimed, the people of the *fin de siècle* stood "on the last promontory of the centuries," and everyday life would be forever changed by new ways of moving, seeing, and experiencing provoked by transports of speed (Marinetti 2009: 51). These transports created new perceptions of time and space and played a formative role in the development of a mass culture, at once reflecting and transforming *fin-de-siècle* culture.

The most striking cultural interpretation of new transportation technologies came in the form of Futurism (Marinetti was a progenitor), a transnational cultural movement based in Italy in the last years of the *fin de siècle*. Futurists argued that the experience of speed, consumed for individual pleasure, would eliminate the decadence and torpor of the modern world. Futurism was a techno-romantic cult of speed, and the transports that allowed individuals to attain superhuman velocities

served as the medium of transcendence. To ride, drive, or fly gave humans immense power and was an act of self-deification through which man became one with the machine: Frenchman Louis Baudry de Saunier described the cyclist as "a man made half of flesh and half of steel" (quoted in Thompson 2008: 27), while Marinetti described the driver/automobile as a Centaur and the pilot/airplane as an Angel (Schnapp 1999: 2). Transports of speed multiplied human capabilities far beyond natural limits; writing in 1904, Belgian author Maurice Maeterlinck believed that they allowed moderns to experience "in one day, as many sights, as much landscape and sky, as would formerly have been granted to us in a whole lifetime" (quoted in Danius 2002: 124).

This multiplication of powers and stimuli provoked new ways of seeing and representing the world. As a result, transports of speed became an object of interest and deep reflection for the artistic avant-garde of the *fin de siècle*, ranging from James Joyce and Marcel Proust to Edith Wharton and Gertrude Stein. The Futurists both articulated and responded to this challenge most vociferously. Italian Futurist Gabriele D'Annunzio pronounced the revolutionary effects of the airplane in 1910, exclaiming, "a new civilization, a new life, new skies! Where is the poet who will be capable of singing this new epic?" (Quoted in Wohl 1994: 116) Marinetti elucidated a technophilic aesthetics of speed, arguing that "A roaring automobile that seems to ride on grapeshot – that is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*" (Marinetti 2009: 51). Transports of speed offered a truly synesthetic experience that engaged all senses to rapturous effect, and Futurist artists endeavored to represent the rush of stimuli in word and image.

We should not mistake the techno-enthusiasm of the Futurists as universal, however. Many shared the appreciation of the Futurists for the possibilities opened up by new transports, but did not perceive these vehicles euphorically as a means of transcendence. What was ubiquitous in the *fin de siècle*, however, was a revolutionary new perception of space instigated by traveling at great speeds. In an era in which Western commentators perceived the closing of frontiers and the mapping of the world through New Imperialism, transports of speed offered new horizons by transforming ways of seeing and experiencing space, even more than had been the case with the advent of the railroad and steamships earlier in the century. The ability of individuals to move at great speed across wide distances and established frontiers inspired many to think in global terms: the *fin de siècle* produced the Olympic Games, The Hague Conventions, Zionism, Esperanto, and global empires, and ultimately culminated in a global war. The airplane in particular inspired flights of fancy, as "the continent of the air was seen by all as humankind's final frontier: a last remaining source of mystery, miracles, novelty, and the unknown" (Schnapp 1994: 170). Little wonder, then, that many iconic examples of *fin-de-siècle* science fiction imagined a world made by air travel, projecting either global peace, as Rudyard Kipling did, or global war, as in H. G. Wells' prophetic *The War in the Air* (1907).

Transports of speed altered not only perceptions of space, but spatial relationships on the ground. In both material and metaphorical terms, these new transports were a study in contrast with nineteenth-century forms of transport. Whereas riverbanks and shorelines limited the range of steamships and locomotives were bound to a network of rails, the new transports of speed liberated moderns from such constraints. Bicycles and automobiles allowed men and women to take part in the

fin-de-siècle celebration of nature and romanticization of the rural. Sunday rides and drives in the country became so commonplace that many priests demonized new transportation technologies as profane distractions. Middle-class urbanites seized upon their new spatial freedom to engage in outdoor leisure pursuits that had once been available only to men of leisure, such as hunting, fishing, and golf. The vogue for rural leisure made possible by transports of speed injected new life into the countryside by encouraging the creation of businesses to serve urban tourists, providing an economic lifeline to long-suffering rural areas (O'Connell 1998: 150–58).

The effect of transports of speed was not always so mutually beneficial, however, and they often produced new antagonisms. The original road rage did not pit driver against driver, but rather cyclist and driver against pedestrians. Transports of speed initiated a contest for the use of public space, challenging centuries of practice in which roads and streets were a public amenity meant for common use. No traffic rules governed bicycles and automobiles in the early years of their usage, and pedestrian fatalities skyrocketed in the years before World War I, just when automobiles became more affordable and thus more widely accessible. Automobile organizations endeavored to redefine streets as exclusive automobile routes, while demonizing pedestrians as disorderly "jaywalkers" and streetcars as problematic traffic obstructions (Norton 2008: 3–16). In turn, motorists were often the target of public ire and many drivers carried whips or pistols to defend themselves against mobs of angry pedestrians. In one particularly macabre episode, residents of rural Hennersdorf, Germany stretched a wire between two trees, decapitating a wealthy couple out for a Sunday drive (Möser 2003: 248). Thus, while all would agree that the transports of speed irrevocably altered spatial relationships and perceptions, not all were as sanguine as the Futurists.

The ubiquity of transports of speed in *fin-de-siècle* culture and their effects on everyday life demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between these transports and mass culture in this era. Transports of speed evoked similar cultural responses across the globe, knitting together a cosmopolitan mass culture. The adventure and danger of the new transportation technologies made them ideally suited to an increasingly spectacle-obsessed mass culture. Transports of speed inspired breathless media coverage of the great feats achieved by cyclists, drivers, and pilots. An American journalist declared the successful airplane crossing of the Alps in 1910 by Franco-Peruvian Jorge Chavez, which resulted in his death from a crash landing, "the most daring feat in all aviation . . . Foolhardy as this flight was, there was a certain magnificence in the boldness of its conception that staggers the imagination. At least, it was splendid folly" (Warth 1911: 16).

Although expense posed a barrier to driving and flying in particular, the general public consumed speed culture through the media and as direct spectators. France counted nearly 300 velodromes to host bicycle races at the turn of the century, and races, fairs, and carnivals devoted to the new transports became serialized fodder for daily newspapers (Thompson 2008: 13). In 1908, Paris' *Le Matin* and *The New York Times* cosponsored an around-the-world, New York-to-Paris auto race and reported daily on the competitors' progress. The "fevers" and "crazes" associated with transports of speed positioned them squarely in the realm of modern mass culture, a creation of the *fin de siècle*, and demonstrate the mutually dependent relationship between transports and the mass media. *The New York Times* wrote of

the "Ordinary" in 1869, "Never before in the history of manufactures in this country has there arisen such a demand for an article" (quoted in Herlihy 2004: 3). Similarly, the appearance of bicycles in the department store in the last years of the nineteenth century confirmed both the mass appeal of the bicycle and its decline as a marker of elite status. As this example suggests, the cultural meanings of the transports of speed, communicated through proliferating media outlets to an expanding mass culture, had significant social consequences.

MOBILITY AND POWER

In 1886, Jules Verne reflected on the future of flight, writing that the conquest of the air would mean "the transformation of the domestic and political manners of the old world" (Verne 1887: 31). Verne recognized that new ways of moving about the globe had the potential to revolutionize social relations in unforeseen ways. However, his invocation of the "old world" implies that the power to move at speed would remain the province of Western peoples. Cycling, driving, and flying were public, visible displays of status, particularly in an era when access to transports of speed remained circumscribed. As a result, the operators of these transports were dandies engaged in "kinetic self-display" (Schnapp 1999: 13–14). Because transports of speed were expensive commodities and contemporaries interpreted the experience of speed itself as an ennobling exercise of power, their everyday use could either buttress or subvert existing hierarchies of class, gender, and race.

Each of these transports conveyed elite status in different stages of the *fin de siècle*. The early "Ordinary" bicycle was an expensive product for adventurous young men in the 1860s and 1870s, whereas early automobiles were "adventure machines" that, as expensive and desirable commodities, served as a marker of truly elite status following the democratization of the bicycle in the 1890s (Mom 2001: 161, 167). Indeed, future President of the United States Woodrow Wilson declared in 1906 that automobiles "are a picture of arrogance and wealth, with all its independence and carelessness . . . nothing has spread Socialistic feeling in this country more than the automobile" (quoted in Volti 2004: 18). Aviators occupied a different social milieu entirely. Many came from aristocratic or bourgeois backgrounds, and all gained entry into rarified social circles by virtue of their courage and adventurous spirit (Rieger 2005: 119–22). The media celebrated pilots as Renaissance men of mind, body, and spirit – part inventor, part athlete, part hero – and transformed the most daring and media-savvy aviators into overnight celebrities.

Operating transports of speed was also a highly gendered act. The power and nobility conferred by mastering time and space with transports of speed coded cyclists, motorists, and aviators as male. Many described the (male) interaction with the machine as an act of mastery, or even sexual conquest. A popular French song of 1909 developed a sexually suggestive metaphor of flying to describe a courtship:

> Come up in my airplane
> It's just like a bird
> It stays up in the air as it should.
> Oh! come, oh! come,
> Come on, little old Suzanne

> You'll go crazy honey
> When you've seen my little bird.

> (Quoted in Wohl 1994: 104)

To travel at speed was to woo, conquer, and possess the machine, just as a man courted a woman.

In light of such assumptions, women of means who wanted to enjoy the visceral thrill of speed and to exhibit their status in motion posed a challenge to dominant gender ideologies. The first women's bicycle race took place in France in 1868, and the transgressive potential of the bicycle was clear even at this early stage: in order to mount the high-seated bike and pedal safely, women wore much shorter skirts than usual. Women took to the "safety" bicycle in great numbers during the bicycle craze of the 1890s, comprising over one third of the total market. Many wore bloomers, both to allow them to pedal more easily and to make a political statement. Indeed, the bicycle itself became a symbol of women's emancipation and the suffrage movement in the 1890s (Herlihy 2004: 100, 266). Traditionalists fulminated against the bicycle as an instrument that would instigate a sexual awakening, whether personal, as many expressed hushed trepidation about women straddling a bicycle seat and experiencing the shocks and vibrations of the road, or socially, as bicycles gave women the freedom to escape the watchful eye of parents and chaperones.

Women at the wheel proved equally disruptive. American novelist Edith Wharton was an avid motorist who described driving a vehicle as "an immense enlargement of life," but opponents argued that women should not drive for the same reason that they should not vote: they were emotional, physically weak, and intellectually deficient (Scharff 1991: 24–26). *Fin-de-siècle* women recognized both the joy of movement and the rhetorical power of transports of speed and deployed the cultural associations of power, control, and independence to argue for women's suffrage in this era. Indeed, suffragettes often toured in automobiles both to spread their message and to highlight their broader challenge to accepted gender norms.

The links between transports of speed and discourses of power and civilization also had significant effects on racial and imperial relations during the *fin de siècle*. Although bicycles began to catch on in the non-Western world after the democratization of access in the 1890s, only the elite could afford to import and maintain automobiles, and airplanes were nearly nonexistent. In the non-Western world, the uses and cultural meanings of transports of speed echoed those of the West, with mobility and speed connoting power and status. King Norodom of Cambodia was an avid cyclist who frequently toured the streets of Phnom Penh trailed by a retinue of cyclists, while the Europhile elites of Brazilian metropolises flaunted their wealth by cruising up and down city boulevards (Tully 2011: 50; Wolfe 2010: 14–15). The global connotations of luxury and power were quickly adapted to local customs as well. Cars had a prominent place in Rio de Janeiro's famous Carnaval parades as early as 1907, while British King George V was surprised in 1911 when, during his visit to India, local dignitaries taking part in the royal procession paraded in thirty-three Ford Model Ts, rather than elephants and horses as tradition dictated (Wolfe 2010: 17; Ward 2003: 7). Many in the non-Western world believed that transports of speed were not merely symbols of progress, but could indeed serve as tools of development. Russians viewed aviation as a way to modernize the nation and

definitively leave behind its historical underdevelopment, while Brazilian officials, with much counsel from American bureaucrats and business interests, imagined the automobile as a way to knit the enormous country together and to improve access to the untapped resources that lay inland, far from the country's coastal population centers (Palmer 2006: 6–7; Wolfe 2010: 9).

For Westerners, the use of transports of speed beyond Europe and North America both reflected and facilitated *fin-de-siècle* global imperialism. The automobile in particular became a vital tool of economic imperialism. Non-Western nations imported all of their vehicles from Europe and the United States. In the last years before World War I, Ford and General Motors focused on Latin American markets, believing that Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay possessed enough wealthy citizens to support a large automobile market (Wolfe 2010: 25). Ford had dealerships spread across the world as far as Bombay, and American travelers to Asia in 1911 estimated some 400 automobiles in Shanghai and 1000 in Bombay (Ward 2003: 130, 154–55).

Inspired by real and fictional tales of imperial adventure across the globe, many used automobiles to conquer and possess the globe through an early form of adventure tourism. From 1907 to 1909, Paul Graetz, a former German army officer, traversed Africa from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean, journeying from modern-day Tanzania to Namibia through the dense tropical forests of central Africa in 630 days (Gewald 2009: 38). Similarly, three American men undertook a remarkable marketing tour that saw them circumnavigate the globe in an automobile while tracing a path of *fin-de-siècle* American imperialism through Hawaii, the Philippines, and East Asia before returning to Detroit via India, Egypt, and Europe (Ward 2003: 1–6). Transports of speed became tools of global travel and imperial adventure, demonstrating Western domination of natural limits and global space in equal measure.

Transports of speed were not always so playful, however. While Westerners could interpret them as instruments of individual liberation, they also played a vital role in imperial projects to dominate the lands and peoples of the non-Western world. Bicycles and automobiles were tools of control that allowed imperial officials to supervise large areas of land and groups of people. The British Governor of the Gold Coast colony (Ghana) imported the first motor vehicle to the colony in 1902, contending that cars would "not only greatly reduce the cost of transport but also, by facilitating traveling, will increase our knowledge of the colony and therefore our power of administering it" (quoted in Heap 1990: 21). In the closing years of the *fin de siècle*, the Italian military demonstrated that the airplane was more than a mere Icarian pleasure machine, but a tool of deadly utility. In 1911, during a war with the declining Ottoman Empire for control of Libya, Italy deployed nine aircraft to undertake reconnaissance flights to scout the movements of the enemy and to communicate them to military commanders on the ground and at sea, allowing the Italians to coordinate bombardments and infantry movements. They also dropped grenades on their enemies, which contemporary Italian military reports noted "had wonderful moral effect upon the Arabs." The Italians were so impressed with the military utility of the airplane that they based planes in Eritrea, Italian Somaliland, and Libya to police the colonies and protect them from invasion (Paris 1992: 106–09).

Thus, the power of the transports of speed to collapse time and space was not always individually emancipating, but extended state power and possessed the

potential for great destruction. Upon viewing an early flight in Paris in 1906, British newspaper magnate Lord Northcliffe cabled home, "England is no longer an island. There will be no sleeping safely behind the wooden walls of old England with the Channel our safety moat. It means the aerial chariots of a foe descending on British soil if war comes" (quoted in Wohl 1994: 41–42). Many recognized that further advances in flying technology would erase the distinction between combatants and civilians, giving birth to an age of total war. Further, while the meanings of these transports were at times cosmopolitan and unifying, at others they were intensely national. In the years before World War I, air cultures became increasingly nationalistic and belligerent, and pilots' prowess represented a Social Darwinist measure of national supremacy (Fritzsche 1992: 1–5). The revolutionary power of transports of speed was not merely theoretical or philosophical, but had a tremendous impact on social, political, and military relationships across the globe during the *fin de siècle*.

CONCLUSION

The revolutionary global upheaval of World War I brought the *fin de siècle* to a definitive close, and this conflict looms large over historical narratives of the era. But when viewed from the perspective of those who lived through the era without foreknowledge of the war, the *fin de siècle* takes on a different character. As German author Theo Wolff wrote in 1909, "When at some later time cultural historians try to label the epoch extending from the beginning of the nineteenth to after the turn of the twentieth century, they will best designate it the epoch of great advances in transportation, of great progress in vehicular technology" (quoted in Sachs 1992: 2). From the first appearance of the bicycle in 1867 to the devastating military deployment of airplanes in the last years before World War I, transports of speed affected every aspect of everyday life during the *fin de siècle*, transforming established political, social, economic, and cultural practices. Materially and symbolically, modern societies place a great value on mobility and in concise terms, mobility *is* modernity; transportation *is* modern civilization. Thanks to the driver-oriented transports of speed, it was during the *fin de siècle* that mobility entered the global cultural vernacular.

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CONSUMER CULTURE AND ADVERTISING

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H. Hazel Hahn

This essay examines consumption patterns in various regions in the world during the *fin de siècle*, with an organization by region. Although this organization can potentially exaggerate national or regional distinctions, it is appropriate for two reasons. Scholarly research has been overwhelmingly framed along national boundaries, reflecting disciplinary divisions. Second, national identity was frequently an important context of consumer culture in the 1870–1914 period.[1] Consumer culture is defined broadly here, as patterns of buying, selling, and using goods that take into account associated meanings such as status, sociability, enjoyment, taste, fashion, aesthetics, consumer choice, agency, and ethics, as well as anxiety and manipulation. Attention is given to modern patterns of consumption consisting of new methods of retail, spectacle, and advertising, but also linked phenomena such as urban culture, the modern press, leisure, global connections, and tourism.

The view of industrialization and its consequences as leading to the emergence of "consumer societies," first in Europe and the United States in the nineteenth century, has been significantly modified through studies on longstanding phenomena of trade in earlier periods. For example Mongol Empires of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries facilitated great mobilities of people, goods, and ideas throughout Eurasia, through policies of religious tolerance and fostering of trade (Burbank and Cooper 2010). Chinese porcelain and cotton textiles were two of the commodities that circulated globally in the early modern period, and in the case of cotton, from much earlier, and produced for niche markets. In the 1500–1700 period a consumer culture rose in China, stimulated by a flow of silver (Pomeranz 2000). Until the mid-nineteenth century the Indian subcontinent was the center of the manufacturing of cotton textiles (Riello and Parthasarathi 2009). Indian patterns were adapted by French cotton manufacturers. Clearly, then, the use and enjoyment of goods, including exotic, imported goods and goods emulating exotic styles, had long been associated with status, taste, and fashion, as well as with convenience and practicality. Another aspect of consumer culture that predated industrialization has to do with retail practices and consumers' behavior. Browsing, fixed prices, and attractive displays were practiced in Britain and France in the eighteenth century (Goggin and Tobin 2009; Coquery 2011). In Japan there was also much continuity in

consumption patterns from the seventeenth through to the late nineteenth century (Francks 2009).

It is nonetheless important to establish that the long nineteenth century saw transformative changes in much of the world. New forms of transportation such as trains, trams, steamships, and automobiles, new transport routes such as the Suez Canal which opened in 1869, new forms of communication such as the telegraph and telephone, as well as printing technologies, photography, electric lighting, and cinematography, profoundly changed the experience of space and time. The 1870–1914 period was not an era of unchecked acceleration of the flow of people, goods, and ideas, but rather saw regulation and bureaucratization of these movements that were part of the eventual creation of a global market (Huber 2013). Universal Expositions and World Fairs were grand sites of consumption, entertainment, the celebration of science and technology, economic networking, cultural interaction, architectural experimentation, education, and display of imperial prowess and nationalism. Between 1880 and 1914 about 140 large-scale exhibitions were held around the world; display of colonized subjects, as well as replicas of monuments in colonies, was common at the exhibitions.

Present-day scholars' attempts to locate modern patterns of consumption as integral parts of expanding capitalist networks (based on their observation that this was the case in Western Europe and the U.S.) have run into problems. While capitalist networks were globalizing in the 1870–1914 period, specific local situations varied enormously, and much of the world was not industrialized. We see powerful connections and shared themes, but also great diversity in consumers' experiences. "Mass" consumer culture—consumption of manufactured goods through modern retail settings by large sectors of societies—took shape only in Western European and American cities. Modifications or transformations of longstanding patterns of trade, Western imperial expansion, formations of national identities, changes in societal relations including class and gender dynamics, aspirations for modernity, and ambivalent or mixed responses to and selective adaptations of "modern" or "Western" practices were all significant facets of consumption.

FRANCE

Already during the 1840s Paris was renowned for pleasure, spectacle, and modernity (Hahn 2009). Under the Second Empire (1852–70) Paris became what would be regarded as a model of a modern, elegant city, with numerous new boulevards and luxurious architecture. Monuments like the Arc de Triomphe were highlighted. The 1870–1914 period saw further continuation of urban planning and the emergence of a mass consumer society. Large-scale advertising campaigns mobilized varied media such as posters, purchased articles, other textual advertisements, sandwich men, and giveaways like chromolithographic cards to publicize a huge variety of products (Hahn 2009). Illustrated posters proliferated. Commodities like chocolate and biscuits became mass products, and wine and champagne became an integral part of national identity and social rituals (Guy 2003). Perfume products, in spite of the great reduction in manufacturing costs due to the introduction of synthetic ingredients after 1880, were turned into luxury products with symbolic values (Briot 2011). Department stores, which provided spaces for female sociability, articulation

of aesthetics, and testing of different meanings of the public (Tiersten 2001), did not replace smaller stores in the long run in Paris or anywhere else; even in 1939 they only represented 4.5–5.5 percent of retail sales in Britain (Haupt 2012: 272). The center of urban spectacle was the set of the older Grands Boulevards that formed a semi-circle on the right bank, which in the 1880–1914 period was the site of mobile, spectacular forms of advertising (Hahn 2009: 127–42). While the French increasingly envied powerful American forms of advertising seen as rational and effective, they were confident on the global dominance of French fashion. A fashion house (Figure 25.1) declared in an advertisement: "This group of pretty [French] women will wear the new fashion created for the winter season of 1911–12 in the whole world" (*L'Illustration* 1911: 8). Aristocrats created social distinction through interior furnishing and decoration, exercising what was viewed as naturally superior taste that the wealthy bourgeoisie could only emulate (Macknight 2009: 77).

This sort of consumer culture was concentrated in Paris and to a lesser extent in other cities, many of which also went through Haussmann-style urban changes. Profound pockets of differences existed in France regarding access to consumer culture (Robb 2007). However, expanding travel industries interconnected the city and the country, and the seaside in France and England became a desirable destination, a far cry from the bleak and deserted place as imagined before 1750 (Corbin 1994). By 1900 800,000 people were visiting spas in France, taking advantage of all-inclusive spa packages (Mackaman 1998: 66). Brittany, once the destination of elite travelers, developed popular tourism by 1900. Packaging Breton cultural

Figure 25.1 "Maison Ström," *L'Illustration*, 1911

Figure 25.2 Georges Meunier, poster for French State Railway, 1893

difference, including refashioning the Breton costume, was an example of heritage tourism (Young 2012). Railroad companies commissioned posters, postcards, and purchased articles in the press. In Georges Meunier's poster (1896) for a railroad company advertising "excursions in Normandy and Brittany," an elegant woman and her children make a colorful contrast to a local man in brown from head to toe. The poster conveys messages of safety for a woman traveling with children, her family commitments, the quaint picturesqueness and warmth of locals, and the attractions of the area. Another poster (Figure 25.2) (1893) by Meunier depicts a woman in a bathing costume. Travel destinations were publicized also through attractions at Universal Expositions, such as a moving Mareorama depicting the "Mediterranean Sea with its various ports, havens and resorts" at the 1900 Universal Exposition of Paris.

RUSSIA

Russia was viewed by the French, until the 1870s, predominantly through the civilizational, even colonialist, perspective; this changed as, nearing the Franco-Russian

alliance (1894), France increasingly saw Russia as an ally against Germany (Brookes 2004). The alliance and the tsar's visit to France were marked by a large output of souvenirs and other merchandise in France. In an 1896 poster by Gaston Noury, two young women, representing France and Russia as well as the optimism and hope of the new alliance, ride a sled—a wintry symbol of Russia (Hahn 2009: 193–95). In Moscow the enchanting aspects of Russian tradition, as well as popular forms of the Russian Orthodoxy, were also mobilized into poster campaigns by the 1880s, formulating modernity through tradition, countering the intelligentsia's objection to material orientation by appropriating the "Russian soul" into commercial discourse (West 2011). The tsarist state also employed mass-market publicity methods to represent itself (Hilton 2012).

GREAT BRITAIN

London, the capital of a vast empire, was the city in the 1880s with the greatest volume of mechanized transportation in the world, followed by Paris (*Journal des voyages* 1882: 376). Its population having grown from 1 million in 1800 to 6 million in 1900, it was one of the largest cities in the world and displayed sharp contrasts between the wealthy West End and the working-class East End. Consumer culture could indirectly encourage a more openly political movement for women's rights, but was also criticized for distracting women from family commitments and enabling women to indulge in drinking, theft, and prostitution (Rappaport 2000). In London, men's fashion in the 1880–1914 period was a significant aspect of male identity, retail industries, and new leisure activities; the wealthy urban milieu followed highly sophisticated codings of taste, and many men of the East End wore cheap but fashionable suits (Breward 1999). Consumption was also a central aspect of children's social identity, and clothing manufacturers heavily invested in advertising for children's clothes (Rose 2010). Many Victorians resolved the potential conflict between the desire and enjoyment of goods and renewed evangelical Christian morality by associating spiritual faculties with goods, intertwining the values for home, goods, artistic taste, and faith (Cohen 2006). Victorians were fascinated with celebrities like nowhere else, whether writers, military heroes, explorers, scientists, artists, members of the high society, actors, or spiritual mediums. The houses and lifestyles of avant-garde artists like Rossetti and Morris, objects of public fascination, influenced architecture and interior decoration, while Oscar Wilde's notion of the "House Beautiful" made him famous (Calloway and Orr 2012). The British Empire was very much present in metropolitan retail settings. Merchandise from India, Japan, and the Middle East was widely available (Mathur 2007; Checkland 2003: 187). Department stores of the 1890s sold Chinese merchandise that fulfilled specific criteria of the luxurious exotic evoking nostalgia for "Old China," in a period when imperial conflicts in China renewed interest in such objects (Cheang 2007). An efficient postal system facilitated mail order business. By the 1890s more than 40 million parcels were delivered annually in England. Whiteleys Department Store sent out 2.5 million catalogues and circulars in 1913 (Coopey, O'Connell, and Porter 2005: 14–16).

Over a hundred seaside resorts dotted the English and Welsh coastlines by 1911, and the beach holiday became an important part of Edwardian life (Walton

2000: 28). Marketing of resorts included emphasis on the health benefits of "bracing" sea air—and ozone! (Beckerson and Walton 2005). Some of the resorts along England's southeastern coastline were favored by Germans, as part of numerous ties between the British and the German empires that existed before World War I (Sebald 1998: 225).

The travel press promoted new forms of recreation and reported on the lifestyles of the celebrities of British high society in foreign resorts (Steward 2005). A large number of grand hotels continued to be built in the 1880–1914 period in Europe and in the colonies. The Sarkie brothers built a number of grand hotels across imperial boundaries, in Penang, Singapore, Rangoon, and Surabaya (Denby 1998: 206). Degrading stereotypes were visible in European advertisements featuring Orientalized or degenerate-seeming "natives" and foreign "Others." Through British advertising, Ceylon was foremost associated with tea, in a period when the vastness of the empire made it hard for the public to be well acquainted with any one part of it.

GERMANY

Although Germany was a newly unified nation in 1871, Germans had a long history of fantasizing about colonial domination (Zantop 1997). German advertisers in the 1880–1914 period frequently used striking motifs of African tropics and Africans, placing viewers in the position of powerful colonizers, notwithstanding the economic insolvency of German colonies (Ciarlo 2011).

At the same time Germans widely emulated modern and systematic American marketing and packaging (Ciarlo 2011: 206–07). The German public was the target of American corporations' marketing from the 1890s. American corporations like Babbit Soap Company, with newly formed corporate identities and a strong mission based on a sense of economic superiority, used languages of "Civilization" and "Enlightenment" to emphasize cleanliness as a measure of civilization (Schug 2005: 307–42).

UNITED STATES

The U.S. became a mass consumer society by the late nineteenth century, involving numerous new professional groups such as retailers, journalists, marketing experts, advertising agents, home decorators, fashion specialists, store designers, and consumer advocates. Giant corporations dominated the American economy, and cities developed dramatically. There were more than 3,500 magazines in 1900 (Norris 1990: 40). By 1914 a billion dollars were spent on advertising annually (Baldasty 1992: 59). While some campaigns failed, tobacco advertising resulted in a dramatic increase in tobacco consumption (Norris 1990: 127). By the 1890s most American men's clothing was ready-made, while much of women's clothing was still custom-made (Schorman 2003: 5, 47). Advertisers promoted consumption as a distinctly American social practice, using "American" symbols, icons, landscapes, traditions, and vocabulary (McGovern 2006). Clothing was associated with value, versatility, individual presentation of the self, and citizenship (Schorman 2003: 154–57). A large number of symbols and brands depicting American Indian warriors, chiefs, and maidens appeared between 1870 and 1910, when native American cultures were

displaced to the margins of society through warfare and legislation (Steele 2000: 109). This was one of the ways in which corporate culture integrated national narratives.

Throughout the nineteenth century European companies, practices, and styles significantly shaped American consumption. Pears Soap brought a century of experience in advertising in England to bear on advertising campaigns in the U.S. from 1883, running full-page ads, rare in the U.S., and also much better illustrated (Norris 1990: 56). British-American Tobacco Company (BAT) dominated the tobacco industry in the U.S. from 1902 (Cochran 1999: 38). Large sectors of the American public consumed foreign goods. French fashion held sway throughout the nineteenth century (Hoganson 2007: 83–113). Upper middle-class white women, particularly fascinated by foreign goods, decorated interiors using foreign themes including "Oriental" design—which included Moorish, Turkish, Chinese, or Japanese (Hoganson 2007: 3–8). American consumer culture was truly global in scale, in that foreign workers had made much of what Americans consumed, and also because cosmopolitanism and imperial sensibilities, associated with status and distinction, were significantly present (Hoganson 2007: 251–55). Imperialism was visible also at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, where 1,200 Filipinos were exhibited in a Filipino village.

CHINA

The consumer culture that emerged in China in the second half of the nineteenth century was a direct result of the establishment of treaty ports from the 1840s to open China to foreign trade following "unequal treaties" with Europeans, the United States, and Japan. From around 1870 to the Republican Revolution of 1911, a vast variety of goods, including quotidian ones like yarn, toothpaste, oil, and soap, modern conveniences like lamps and new building materials, as well as items of clothing, cosmetics, and decorative goods, were imported and used by the majority of the Chinese urban *and* rural population (Dikötter 2006). Thus China's everyday material culture was connected to the transnational flow of goods by 1900. Many of the goods were quickly imitated and manufactured in China (Dikötter 2006).

It was in the treaty ports that urban, modern consumer culture arose. In the second half of the nineteenth century a new group of merchants emerged and made great wealth working in the treaty ports as brokers and middlemen between Chinese and foreigners (Yeh 2007: 13–14). They wore both Chinese silk robes and "Western" clothes, built houses and mansions in a variety of architecture, and invested, along with other merchants, in foreign manufacturing and packaging industries as well as public utilities (Yeh 2007: 13, 53; Carroll 2005: 84–85). Many Chinese frequented drug stores, dance halls, and other establishments initially built for foreigners. The volume of both imported goods and Chinese manufacturing of these goods increased. Until the 1890s, opium carried by the British accounted for the largest share of Chinese imports (Gerth 2004: 30–37). From the 1880s illustrated advertising in periodicals was common, and the number of newspapers, periodicals, and other publications, as well as advertisements, increased dramatically between 1900 and 1910 (Gerth 2004).

Shanghai, where a British and American settlement and a smaller French concession area were located, became a major industrial center following the Sino-Japanese War

and the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895), which allowed foreigners to build factories in the treaty ports. In Shanghai the majority of factory workers were women (MacPherson 1998: 9–10). Foreign advertising campaigns were initially met with mixed results. BAT's first advertising campaigns began in 1902 and failed, as Chinese consumers found posters depicting scantily clad American women, American landscapes and historical figures jarring. BAT then switched to advertising more suited to Chinese taste (Cochran 1999: 38). Following the 1911 Revolution Shanghai underwent dramatic capitalist expansion. It became a great international port; a unique, Shanghai-style modernity was driven by the dynamic between the Chinese and foreigners (Bergère 2010).

Hong Kong, a British colony since 1842, was the center of major Chinese capitalist businesses and industries that expanded into China and Southeast Asia by 1900 and also began to dominate Hong Kong's real estate and industrial sectors. The Chinese business and community elite established their own exclusive network of clubs and associations, to counter exclusion from the elite European community while cultivating their own social distinction (Carroll 2005: 84–85). In department stores, established by overseas Chinese from Australia, the Chinese could shop without having to face discrimination (Carroll 2005: 106). Sun Yatsen, a leader of the 1911 Revolution, promoted the department store as part of the modernization program for China (MacPherson 1998: 12).

By 1905 the new consumer culture and the popularity of foreign goods came to be a target of emerging nationalism. Chinese manufacturers led campaigns urging the public, especially women, to boycott "foreign," imported goods and buy "national products"—goods made in China (Gerth 2004: 50–55). Growing national trade deficit, and perceived foreign dominance of Chinese economy—which did not occur in reality—came to be symbolic of the loss of sovereignty (Gerth 2004: 46). The ending of the Confucian examination system in 1905 meant the end of sumptuary laws regulating officials' clothes as much as the architectural style of their houses, which had profound consequences in consumption; men's adaptation of wool suits over traditional silk robes threatened the powerful silk industry (Gerth 2004: 49–50, 80–81). The "anti-imperialist" boycott movement, an urban phenomenon, would be largely unheeded by the public that generally regarded "Western" products, architecture, and institutions as superior. In addition, a weak national identity, and the ambiguity in defining "Chinese" products, stymied the boycott movement (Gerth 2004: 355). In this regard the unevenness of modernity in China needs further investigation, as vast areas in China were cut off from news of major events as well as social trends. Many people never even knew there was an Opium War, and their experience of modernity was wholly negative.

JAPAN, KOREA, AND SIAM

Following the forced opening of Japan in the 1850s to trade and diplomatic relations with Western powers, the influx of Western goods, ideas, and practices led to intensive industrialization and modernization projects under the Meiji government (1868–1912) (Francks 2009). By the 1880s imported cotton, textiles, raw material, and certain luxury goods became popular in Japan (Seidensticker 1983). Modernization led to intense debates about Japanese cultural and national identity.

Whereas Chinese influence on Japanese clothes had been ingrained for a long time, the new encounter with the West led to the traditionalization of the "Japanese dress" by the 1890s and also feminized it, following the new, idealized identity of women as purveyors of tradition (Dalby 2001: 64–67). Japanese men wore Western-style suits for work, influenced by government campaigns and magazines to adhere to the new ideal of Japanese men, active outside the home and politically enlightened (O'Brien 2008). Most women continued to wear Japanese clothes while using Western-style accessories (Slade 2009: 103). Luxury hotels were built in Japan from the 1870s in European and Japanese styles (Denby 1998: 213). By 1910 some specialty shops became department stores, integrating new sales techniques such as open displays, and Mitsukoshi opened a branch department store in Seoul in 1908 (Moeran 1998: 142–47; McNamara 1990: 63). The experience of time dramatically changed between 1870 and 1900, as Japan synchronized with the Western, abstract, modern notions of time (Tanaka 2004). Such standardized experience of time was integral to the development of the railway network and of a tourism industry with seasonal publications.

In Korea, Western goods and practices were selectively adopted under the threat of the loss of state sovereignty, and then under the Japanese colonial regime (1910–45). New meanings of "traditional" and "modern" clothing emerged in Korea after the forced opening of Korean ports in 1876. Missionaries and diplomats brought new associations of civilization, status, and power, and King Kojong allowed the public to wear Western clothes, seen as a sign of progress (Lynn 2004: 78). The introduction of soccer, baseball, and tennis by missionary schools between 1895 and 1910 led to further changes (Lynn 2004: 78–79). However, many members of the gentry, commoners and peasantry associated Western clothing with traitorous practices and imperialism. A "Righteous Army Movement" of 1895–96 opposed such changes, yet members of the second Righteous Army Movement, which began in 1905, wore Western-style military uniforms and had short hair (Lynn 2004: 78–79). Although the public continued to ignore the government's campaign, Western clothing, for men in particular, was adopted by a sector of society before 1910 (Lynn 2004: 79).

In Siam (Thailand) in the second half of the nineteenth century, the monarchy refashioned its public image through the consumption of Western luxury products and the adoption of Western practices, following the conceptual shift in civilizational order and power toward the West, away from China and India (Peleggi 2002: 3–7). The monarchy also actually became more absolutist (Peleggi 2002: 164–65). To symbolize royal power King Chulalongkorn ordered extensive building, between 1872 and 1889, at the summer palace at Bang Pa-in of edifices and bridges in a variety of styles, including a neo-classical throne hall, a building and a bridge in a Russian baroque style, Swiss chalets, a Siamese-style pavilion, a Chinese-style mansion, and Wat Niwet with a neo-gothic ordination hall, that collectively presented the aesthetics of Universal Expositions (Peleggi 2002: 24, 33).

INDIA

In British India clothing came to be associated with competing values. In the late eighteenth century English clothing and textiles first entered the market in the Indian

subcontinent, when nobles began to prefer European-style furniture, paintings, and tapestries (Bayly 1986: 306). European goods continued to spread, as India provided a large market for English manufacturing. Between 1905 and 1910, the destruction of Indian handicraft and weaving production, caused by the import of British-made cloth, resulted in the nationalist *swadeshi* (one's own country) movement for boycotting foreign goods, led by Bengali leaders and later Mahatma Gandhi (Bayly 1986: 285). In India people continued to believe that clothing transmitted the "spirit" of the gift, including evil or pollution; thus *swadeshi* resonated in a spiritual way while being associated with the ideals of community, purity, and sacrifice, creating a compellingly unified ideology (Bayly 1986: 285–311).

Such ideology was integrated with the emergence of the powerful concept of "Mother India," an image of a mother/goddess drawn from millennial Hindu iconography that originated in the late nineteenth century, following the emergence of "India" as a unified territorial entity in the course of the nineteenth century and the strengthening of anti-British nationalism in various parts of the subcontinent from the 1890s (Ramaswamy 2010). Women were called to the forefront of *swadeshi* to increase production, but were also confined to traditional roles and asked to abstain from using machine-made goods (Bayly 1986: 313). During the years of *swadeshi*, the iconography of "Mother India" reflected this concept of the "new" Indian woman: chaste, virtuous, and supportive of her sons' outward activities (Ramaswamy 2010: 114). While *swadeshi* shared similarities to Chinese boycott movements, the former was much more widespread and compelling, led by politicians rather than manufacturers, and far more radical in its call to forego machine-made goods altogether.

Courtly women residing in *zenanas* designed interiors using foreign material, and patronized exclusive shops in Europe. Such practices were a means of social differentiation and association with European upper classes (Jhala 2009) that complemented the spectacular staging of colonial authority by British aristocratic colonial women (Thomas 2007). An Indian noblewoman in the film *The Home and the World* (1984), directed by Satyajit Ray, in an adaptation of Tagore's novel set around 1908, is told by her husband that most of the items in their mansion were imported, whether furniture, decorations, perfume, or even the thread used in her saris. However, she turns out to be much better informed about worldly matters than he had imagined, in spite of her secluded existence.

FRENCH INDOCHINA (COLONIAL VIETNAM, CAMBODIA, AND LAOS)

In French Indochina, boulevards and edifices housing theaters, shops, cafés, restaurants, and hotels were built in Hanoi, Saigon, and Phnom Penh, initially patronized exclusively by Europeans. As in most of Asia the rickshaw was the most popular, albeit controversial, form of transportation by 1910 and was part of the emerging modern consumer culture. Vietnamese bourgeoisie saw consuming French food as a means to underline their social standing and sophistication (Peters 2011: 187). From the 1880s major newspapers carried ads, initially mostly in French; the French aimed to introduce French lifestyles, although many of the French in Indochina disliked the idea of Vietnamese people acting "French." (Peters 2011: 187–88) Yet the colonial government imposed seemingly pre-modern monopolies of alcohol,

opium—banned in France—and salt. As in much of Southeast Asia the Chinese played major roles in the economy (Sasges 2012).

CAIRO, ISTANBUL, AND BEIRUT

In many cities in the Middle East, as in Eastern Europe and Latin America, the principles of urban planning and architecture of the French Second Empire were applied in varying degrees. In Cairo, whose diverse neighborhoods and architectural styles evolved over many centuries, Khedive Ismail's decision to build a modern city led to the construction, in the 1870–1914 period, of a large number of Parisian-style buildings along new wide boulevards and squares (Myntti 2003). Following the military occupation of Cairo by the British in 1882, some parts of the city underwent further Europeanization (Stanley 2007: 111). Only a small segment of Egyptian population was literate, but middle-class urban people read much more. Many Muslim, Christian, and Jewish women preferred gender-and-class-segregated means of purchasing, and also desired stores or branches where they would not be seen by men or lower-class women (Russell 2010: 27). Images of women's bodies were very rare in advertisements in Egypt—or Istanbul—before 1914 (Russell 2010: 19, 24).

In Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, the Haussmannian model was also adapted, leading to large-scale design projects seen as part of modernization. In the late nineteenth century, along with new factories and new official architecture, neighborhoods were built along the lines of Parisian boulevards or Vienna's Ringstrasse, contributing to a cosmopolitan appearance of a city also marked by evolving Islamic neotraditionalism (Frierson 2004: 109). Under the government of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876–1909), a complex modern consumer culture evolved, as part of rapid expansion in commerce and manufacturing. Consumer culture was marked by state interventions, intensive debates between columnists and readers over the meanings of clothes, and consumption patterns intertwined with nationalism defined along religious and ethnic lines—cast in the context of long-running extraterritoriality and other privileges of Europeans as well as of Christian minorities. State protectionist policies were coupled with the formation of anti-Western consumer practices, and eventually against the Christian minorities favored by European powers (Greeks and Armenians) that were reinforced by advertisers and shoppers (Frierson 2004: 243–59). The conservative revolutionary Young Turk ideology incorporated a boycott of Armenian goods before the regime of the Young Turks (r. 1908–23) began, and also a boycott of Austrian goods after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908 by the Habsburgs (Frierson 2004: 111–18). Consumption practices in Istanbul in the 1870–1914 period had multivalent meanings; appreciation for good value, new products and aesthetics was modulated by the role of patriotism.

Léon and Philippe Orosdi and Joseph Back, French businessmen of Hungarian origin, founded a Franco-Egyptian chain of department stores in 1855 in Istanbul (Kupferschmidt 2007: 177). In the 1880s they opened branches in Bucharest, Plovdiv, Salonica, Izmir, Aleppo, and Tunis, and purchased offices in cities across Western and Central Europe as well as in Japan (Kupferschmidt 2007: 178). In 1900 they opened the first department store in Beirut, an Ottoman provincial capital. Part of the gentrification of the port, the store was centrally located on the

quays near a new train station, to serve both Beirut's residents and visitors, including Muslim pilgrims stopping on their way to Mecca (Hanssen 2005: 252).

The new consumer culture ushered in by department stores, part of urban changes that associated Western fashion with modernity, presented a dilemma for Muslim women for negotiating changing meanings of dress: the ancient sumptuary law of "modest dress" was challenged by the allure of new display windows and marketing practices. The increasing presence of working women in Istanbul's streets led to an intensive contestation over women's changing dress patterns, in particular headgear (Frierson 2004: 106–12). Magazines campaigned for Muslim women to avoid Parisian fashions, seen as expensive and frivolous, and to buy Ottoman, more specifically Muslim, goods. Thus, earlier than in China, women's consumption was associated with potential threat to national security (Frierson 2004: 111–18).

LATIN AMERICA

In the second half of the nineteenth century, in Latin-American societies, the wealthy elite enthusiastically embraced French and British culture, urban planning, fashion, and consumption patterns. Through the consumption of European goods, elite groups distinguished themselves from the culture and institutions of erstwhile colonial masters Spain and Portugal—seen as impeding modernity—and from the mass population, seen as distinct in race and culture but nonetheless as sharing language and religion (Bauer 2001: 152, 164). After 1870 worldwide demand for items like fibers, minerals, fertilizers, and food, including sugar, Chilean copper and nitrates, Colombian coffee, Venezuelan petroleum, and Argentine beef and wheat, generated great wealth for the elite, which increased the import of luxury goods (Orlove and Bauer 1997: 113).

Maximilian, installed as the Emperor of Mexico in 1864, began to create, in the center of Mexico City, parks and the boulevard Paseo de la Emperatriz (Bauer 2001: 160). Until 1914 the French and Western Europeans remained the major foreign influence in regard to consumption patterns, taste, and urban design; new exclusive districts of Júarez were modeled after Paris and London (Bunker 2012: 61; Bauer 2001: 160). From around 1870 diagonal layouts began to alter the Habsburg checkerboard plan, and gas lighting in sections of cities brought more modernity (Bauer 2001: 160). The great avenue Paseo 9 de Diciembre in Lima, begun in 1898, along which were elegant residential buildings and marble statues, was Italian and French in spirit (Ramón 2002: 172).

During the *fin de siècle*, centers of sociability moved from private houses and churches to new cafés, European-style restaurants, balls, theaters, operas, and clubs (Bauer 2001: 154–56). French trends dominated women's fashion, while men's clothes were imported from England. Upper-class men wore wool suits under the tropical heat of Rio de Janeiro (Needell 1987: 167–69). Social echelons of Chile ranged from the wealthy urban aristocracy, who lived in French-style mansions completely furnished with imported goods, to the new urban preindustrial elite of merchants, bankers, agriculturalists, and bureaucrats, all the way to the rural poor with few possessions (Orlove and Bauer 1997: 143).

Consumer culture was not just an elite phenomenon. Wide segments of Mexican society were involved in the expansion of consumer culture. During the presidency

of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911), domestic forces were marshaled for greater consumption, and Mexico City's cityscape and consumer culture witnessed great changes (Bunker 2012). Between 1891 and 1900 five department stores were established, democratizing consumption by welcoming wide sectors of society in order to create a broad consumer base. This coincided with the expansion of domestic textile industry (Bunker 2012: 99–130).

CONCLUSION

The 1870–1914 period of the *fin de siècle*, marked by national identity formations, Western imperial expansion, and anti-colonial resistance, displays interconnections in consumer culture in many parts of the world. These include the establishment of department stores, Haussmann-style urban planning in cities of Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East, and an expansion of print culture. However, the access to modern stores (never mind department stores) and print culture was restricted to small, urban segments of the population in much of the world. The emergence of "mass" consumer culture was a rare phenomenon, largely restricted to certain Western European and North American cities. The strength or weakness of consumer advocacy movements, such as the numerous consumers' leagues that were active from 1900 to 1914 in Europe and the U.S., seem connected to this phenomenon (Trentmann 2006). However, the consumption of staple manufactured goods such as soap *was* a widespread phenomenon in places like rural China and Egypt, although such items were not advertised.

Some department stores, as well as grand hotels that also began to dot the globe (though predominantly in Europe), were created as international chains. The modernity that such establishments symbolized, whether through architectural styles, size, or capitalist networks, often did not extend beyond their façades, especially in colonial settings. In Western nations as well, the modern and the "traditional"—such as spiritual or animistic attributions to goods—coexisted (Saler 1999).

Since the mid to late nineteenth century, Britain, France, the United States, and Germany became the "Western" powers, centers of civilizational gravity. While Istanbul had a long history of appropriating European ideas and technologies, in Japan and Korea more limited patterns of cultural exchange within Eurasia changed in much more abrupt ways. This created new definitions of "modern" and "traditional" as well as the internalization—albeit with much creative and nuanced debate—of the notions of "Occident" and "Orient." During the *fin de siècle*, the world contended with the reach of Western powers and the allure of Western products and cultures, but Western societies also showed great fascination with everything foreign. Consumer cultures were characterized by great complexity and diversity including complicated semiotics of dress, dynamics of gender, class, ethnicity, and religion, and multivalent positions of consumers in specific local settings. More research is needed to fully comprehend the changes and continuities seen across the globe. Often overshadowed by the tremendous changes brought by World War I, the characteristics of the decades immediately prior to the war need to be more fully drawn.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOTE

1   Africa and Oceania are some of the regions not treated in this essay. For comprehensive overviews of historiography and methods see, among others, Trentmann 2012, Tobin 2009, and Rappaport 2012.

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PART V
DISCIPLINES

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THE UNIVERSITIES AND THE HUMAN SCIENCES

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Peter Mandler

In November 1917 the German sociologist Max Weber, among the founders of his discipline, gave in Munich a famous speech on 'Science as a Vocation' – using the German word for 'science', *Wissenschaft*, which includes systematic knowledge of all aspects of the world, human and natural. In it he proposed himself and his fellow scientists both as a source of the ills of modernity and as one of their antidotes. In the course of his own academic career, which had begun in the 1890s, science had become rationalized and bureaucratized. It had been a crucial vector of the 'disenchantment of the world', by which Western society had lost its faith in higher, mysterious powers; it had substituted for those powers the bars of what he would later call the 'iron cage' of modernity, rationalization and bureaucracy, by which modern life had come under control but at the cost of autonomy, imagination and craft. At the same time, he argued, the sciences dearest to his heart – what we today call the social or human sciences – offered tools for people to think themselves out of the iron cage: how to understand the forces bearing on the individual, how to clarify one's own stance with regard to them, and thus how to account for the ultimate meaning of one's own conduct (Gerth and Mills 1948: 129–56).

Almost all subsequent thinking about the human sciences has taken its inspiration from one of these two characterizations. During these sciences' heyday in the mid-twentieth century, Weber's celebration of them as the highest intellectual callings was much relied upon. Then, in the 1960s, as a radical, humanistic turn gripped Western culture, the converse view of the human sciences as the grim instrument of uncontrollable corporate and bureaucratic forces came to the fore, with the considerable assistance of Weber's disciple C. Wright Mills, whose influential book *The Sociological Imagination* (1959) in fact dutifully reflected both Weber's optimism and his pessimism, though it was the latter that readers of the 1960s read it for. In this chapter, we explore the emergence of the modern research university at the *fin de siècle* and the central place held in it from its origins by the human sciences – especially sociology, anthropology and history, but with ancillary places for geography, political economy and psychology. As Weber's 1917 lecture indicated, from these very origins the human sciences were always at the same time

building-blocks for the new social order of modernity and the instruments of their critique and dismantling – agencies of modernity and postmodernity simultaneously.

THE MODERN RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

The modern research university is commonly held to date from 1810 when the Prussian educational reformer Wilhelm von Humboldt founded the University of Berlin. Working in the wake of defeats at the hands of Napoleon and seeking to mobilize resources for a national renaissance, Humboldt's principal concerns were for *freedom* – to free the German university from the direct control of church and state, and to liberate knowledge both for students (who he felt should be freer to choose their own paths than traditional prescribed curricula allowed – *Lernfreiheit*) and for teachers (who should be enabled to seek out truth wherever they could find it, unencumbered by patrons and orthodoxies – *Lehrfreiheit*). In the actual unfolding of the 'Humboldtian model' over the nineteenth century, what came to the fore was the centrality of *research* to the role of the university. The emphasis of the academic mission shifted from the inculcation of knowledge and character in the young to the generation of new knowledge for humanity. The role of the academic became less that of the teacher and more that of the researcher. The lecture theatre gave way to the laboratory. The textbook gave way to the academic journal and the professional association. Undergraduates gave way to postgraduates – that is, budding academics – and the Bachelor's to the Master's and doctoral degrees. The educational theatre of the Humboldtian university became the seminar, the place where the professor enunciated and organized his specialism in the presence of and for the benefit of his graduate students.

Especially after mid-century, the Humboldtian model became increasingly attractive to elites and states outside Germany. Specialist science and technology in particular were seen as crucial instruments in the kind of competitive state-building that gripped Europe, vital for the construction of infrastructure such as mines, railways, steamships and telegraphy, and for the equipment of the 'Second Industrial Revolution', but also for the cultivation of human capital that modern states needed to administer mobilized populations by means of mass-education systems, mass-communication systems, bureaucracies and armies. The number of university students in Europe trebled between 1840 and 1900 to nearly 1 in 1000 of the population (Gerbod 2004: 114). Most strikingly, the Humboldtian model became a global model. National universities on this model had already been constructed in Chile and Uruguay by the 1840s. After the Iwakura mission, sent by the Meiji Emperor in 1871–72 to gather information from the West that might be useful for Japan's modernization, a spate of new universities was founded on Humboldtian lines, including specialist technological universities, with German faculty (Shils and Roberts 2004: 224–26). Elites in those parts of the world unable to support their own universities began to export their young to Europe; thus there was a substantial body of university students of Eastern European origin in Paris by the 1880s, from the Ottoman Empire by the 1890s, and over 100 students of South Asian origin at Oxford and Cambridge by 1907 (Moulinier 2006: 132–34; Deslandes 2005: 281n92).

Most dramatic was the way in which the Humboldtian university was adopted and adapted in the United States. After the national trauma of the Civil War – in

some ways analogous to the Napoleonic crisis in the German states – educational reformers in the U.S. campaigned for a new academic spirit that would unleash higher education from the didactic denominationalism of the old colleges and harness it to democratic uplift and economic growth. The 1862 Morrill Act had already authorized huge land grants to support 'agricultural and mechanical' colleges to help develop the West, and the state universities that resulted in places like California, Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin were soon gripped by the Humboldtian spirit, which lifted them beyond narrowly technical purposes to follow the higher callings of 'pure' research. A unique combination of land-grant and private philanthropic funding brought the Humboldtian model to the heartland of the old colleges, New York, with the founding in 1868 of Cornell University, combining the democratic spirit (offering to take on all applicants from any background) with academic ambition (claiming to teach any subject across the full range of human knowledge). And then in 1876 came what the sociologist Ed Shils has described as 'the single most decisive event in the history of learning in the Western hemisphere', the founding of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, the Humboldtian model in full flower, with the production of original research and the training of graduate students as the avowed mission of the university (quoted by Geiger 1986: 7).

The financial and intellectual success of this experiment led to the endowment of a series of world-class research universities that laid the foundation for the United States' twentieth-century domination of global higher education, notably Stanford in 1891 and Chicago in 1892. Rather than relying on German imports, American universities sent their best and brightest to study in Germany – 9000 did so in the nineteenth century, most after 1870, their numbers peaking in 1895 – and then brought them back to spread the gospel at home (Veysey 1965: 130). In this way many of the old colleges also ensured that by retooling they would join the ranks of leading research universities; for example, Harvard, led from 1869 by a chemist, Charles W. Eliot, who had previously travelled for two years in Europe picking up the connections being forged there between specialist research and business enterprise. By 1900, most of the titans of American higher education familiar to us today were already recognizably in place (Veysey 1965: 264).

There was, however, another model competing with Humboldt's that has had less attention but that was in many ways equally significant for the globalization of higher education in this period: a British model. Typically British higher education has been seen to be backward, only catching up with the Humboldtian model in the twentieth century. The collegiate teaching of Oxford and Cambridge, based on close pastoral relations between elite undergraduates and their tutors, aiming as much at the inculcation of character as at the transmission (still less the generation) of knowledge, and burdened by lingering denominational ties, was precisely the kind of old-world elite training that the new American universities were leaving behind. Yet the teaching-centred model proved flexible and useful in spreading higher education to parts of the world that could not yet afford or justify the expensive Humboldtian model. Founded in 1836 as a non-denominational alternative to Oxbridge, the University of London served as an umbrella and certifying institution for constituent colleges, at first in London, but after 1858 anywhere in the world. This facility extended a network of teaching colleges across England, forming the basis of the modern British university system, but even more quickly across the

British Empire, especially in the 1880s, a decade of 'recolonization' when ties between metropole and empire were strengthened. London's federal model, with a central certificating body and sometimes quite far-flung teaching colleges, was expatriated; new federal universities were established in South Africa (1873), New Zealand (1874), Manchester (1880), Toronto (1887), Wales (1893) and Ireland (1908) (Pietsch 2013: 28, 30–31).

This global network of teaching institutions proved a source of innovation that rebounded back on the metropole. The intake of students was naturally more socially varied than at Oxbridge, and it included women as early as 1874 (in New Zealand, followed by London in 1878). Furthermore, the creation of an imperial network of BA students put pressure on British institutions to fill the role of the Humboldtian university which colonial institutions could not yet afford, and so partly for this reason there was a convergence between the Humboldtian and Oxbridge models. Colonial BAs at the turn of the century began regularly to present themselves at Oxford and Cambridge for further, that is, postgraduate education. The institution of a British PhD degree in 1918, though delayed in comparison to Germany and the U.S., was thus in part a result of the global extension of the British university network (Pietsch 2013: 29, 54, 93).

Nevertheless, convergence had already begun before this. Oxbridge wriggled free of its more constraining denominational ties not long after its 'Ivy League' counterparts in the U.S. Major reforms of its undergraduate curricula were diversifying its subject range from traditional strengths in the classics (and, at Cambridge, mathematics) from mid-century. Cambridge offered a natural sciences course as early as 1851, which by 1910 was being taken by 18 per cent of its students (Brooke 1993: 157). Conversely, the Oxbridge model of tutorial education for undergraduates was catching on in the U.S. Institutions such as Johns Hopkins which had begun practically as graduate-only rebalanced their portfolio to offer two layers of education, the 'liberal arts' for undergraduates, specialist research-based education for postgraduates, though it would not be until after the First World War that Harvard, Yale and Princeton founded their undergraduate colleges explicitly on Oxbridge models.

THE PLACE OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES

What did contemporaries mean by 'science'? As we noted at the outset, in Weber's usage, the German word *Wissenschaft* always encompassed both the natural and the human sciences. The Kantian philosophical tradition dominant in the nineteenth-century university insisted both that humans were part of the natural world and at the same time that everything known about the natural world was necessarily perceived through human faculties. Nevertheless, there was a strong tendency across the nineteenth century for the natural sciences to take the lead in the modern university, both as of more practical use in spearheading economic development and as requiring the lion's share of funding. We see in this period the origins of the twentieth century's 'big science', whether it be in the Cavendish experimental physics laboratory founded in Cambridge in 1874 (where the electron was discovered in 1897) or the medical hospital and laboratories for which Johns Hopkins was famed from 1889.

Strikingly, however, the natural sciences did not dominate the new universities, and in fact they shared with a set of new disciplines, largely carved out in the late

nineteenth century and known alternatively as the social or human sciences, the task of pushing back the traditional dominance of classical and religious studies. By 1896, together the natural and human sciences had come to account for half of all students in the leading American research universities, but their numbers were equally shared, a quarter of the total each for the natural and the human sciences (Veysey 1965: 173). How can we account for this rapid emergence of the human sciences? Three factors might be emphasized.

One was Darwinism, making its sudden impact in the 1860s. Darwin's vision not only confirmed the Kantian view of humans as part of the natural world, but it also offered a more clearly recognizable alternative to the theistic world-view than did the natural sciences, and this was a particularly attractive quality for a generation of academics seeking to free their institutions from denominational control and to found their intellectual authority on new bases. It was not that Darwinism was *against* religion – in a still largely religious age that would have been a liability – but rather that it addressed in a non-religious, 'scientific' form the questions about humans' place in the world that religion had already put at the centre of intellectual enquiry for centuries past. Thus Darwinism – or, more loosely, evolutionary perspectives, which had an older pedigree but were brought to the fore by Darwin – could be applied to study more systematically a range of traditional fields of learning (for example, philology, which Max Müller, a German scholar at Oxford, recast as an evolutionary discipline) and to open up new ways of understanding humans as individuals or in groups (for example, the 'comparative method' by which archaeologists and anthropologists arrayed all known human societies, past and present, along a single evolutionary path) (Burrow 1966: 79–81; Manias 2013).

Second, relatedly, was the ambition of late nineteenth-century academics to form a new clerisy, displacing the absolute authority of religion over the secular world and constructing a new intellectual elite with its bases in the university but with tentacles reaching out into all aspects of society, into government, business, welfare and work. To do this they both adopted the respectable intellectual trappings of natural science – independence from church and state, professionalization and specialization, the pursuit of truth in research and submission to evidence before all else – and adapted to their own purposes the priestly functions of providing moral and ethical guidance to society. It was this *combination* of 'pure' knowledge and higher spiritual aspirations that particularly dignified the human sciences. This combination came naturally to a generation that very often consisted of the children of pastors, and whose information about the wider world often came directly from the investigations of missionaries (whose ranks were themselves growing rapidly at the *fin de siècle*) (Harries and Maxwell 2012: 5–7; Cox 2008: 267).

Third, and most controversially, the human sciences were being turned to for practical solutions to waves of social and geopolitical problems that crashed into public consciousness in the 1880s and 1890s, triggered by global economic trends that unleashed millions of peasants to move into cities or to migrate to new lands, and by international competition that caused Western political elites to think increasingly of their populations as machines for growth and expansion, which needed to be tuned for maximum productivity and efficiency. These drivers of international competition at the same time extended Western states' penetration into the non-Western world and put a premium on knowledge about the human and natural

resources of Asia and Africa especially. From this impetus came the view, widely prevalent today, of the human sciences as tools of 'social control' and 'social engineering' (both terms introduced by American social scientists around 1900). Certainly sociology, the newest of the human sciences at least in name (psychology and anthropology had been so-called in English since the seventeenth century, but the word sociology was popularized by Herbert Spencer around 1850), was seen by contemporaries as supplying practical techniques of social diagnosis and treatment that the unique challenges of modernity seemed now to require. William Graham Sumner, a German-educated lecturer in political economy at Yale, and an Episcopal minister turned disciple of Spencer, began to teach a course on 'sociology' in 1876 in order to transfer from Europe some lessons of social organization that its earlier industrialization and urbanization had already taught (Ross 1991: 56–57, 86–88). A few years later, in 1887, Émile Durkheim, also German-educated and trained in political economy, began to teach what he called sociology at Bordeaux, encouraged by republican politicians to develop formulae that would balance the rights of the individual with the needs of society. And that is exactly what Durkheim promised sociology would do in his inaugural lecture: 'It will make the individual understand what society is, how it completes him and that he is unimportant when reduced to his own powers.' (Weisz 1983: 91) Other disciplines – notably geography and anthropology – benefited more from the globalizing impetus. There were only 16 geographical societies in the world in 1870, 12 in Europe; by 1890 there were 115, 99 in Europe (Tilley 2011: 37).

In ways that now seem odd to us, the nascent human sciences took on in this period the language, methods and institutional behaviour of the natural sciences, the better to draw on their austere reputation for independence and authority. It was not only in the formal organization of the disciplines that this applied – though that development was notable enough – but also involved the formation of disciplinary bodies on the national level to organize and police research (and the proliferation of more specialist societies to serve sub-disciplines), the founding of journals again often on national level to publish and disseminate research, the earnest discussions of where exactly to draw boundaries (e.g. between psychology and sociology) and how to secure permanent posts and career paths. A higher value seemed to be placed on academics speaking to other academics than to wider publics, and particularly to academics in their own part of their own field. There was also a considerable degree of 'science envy' in human scientists' approach to questions of epistemology and methodology. Human scientists jockeyed to prove that their enquiries were just as 'value neutral' as natural scientists'; they embraced 'empiricism', the reduction of their research goals to the ascertainment of universally acknowledged and verifiable facts, and 'positivism', the philosophy of science that restricted its remit to the organization of those empirically ascertained facts that obeyed general laws (Ross 2003: 208–15).

They also sought to base their research in institutions as much like the scientific laboratory as possible. This impulse was particularly strong in psychology, which from the foundation of the first psychological laboratory in an academic settting by Wilhelm Wundt in Leipzig in 1879 increasingly saw itself as an 'experimental' science (Mandler 2007: 40–42, 54–59). This tradition of 'brass instrument' psychology, unlike 'depth' psychology, focused in a positivist way on universal phenomena that

could be observed and measured in any human subject and presented quantitatively (Ash 2003: 255–57). Sociologists proceeded somewhat differently. They had their empirical data already – gathered from social surveys conducted by charity-workers and public servants, or from statistics accumulated in government offices – and the early stages of professionalization dictated that they distance themselves from these amateur or non-academic associations; it was only later that sociological laboratories, working with small groups or entire communities, emerged. In this period, instead, sociologists worked on the positivist generalizing of theories from their data – Durkheim drawing comparative conclusions about suicide from different nations' data, for example, or his student Paul Lapie's use of occupational data to assess the contribution of education to social mobility (Karady 1983: 82–83). Even anthropologists, testing evolutionary theories about the progression of human societies through fixed stages of development, constructed a laboratory in the 'field' by sending teams of scientists to assess individuals and groups in their natural environments. At their most ambitious, anthropologists from Cambridge organized a multidisciplinary expedition to the Torres Strait Islands north of Australia in 1898 in an attempt to capture all aspects of an isolated community in a single study – an expedition sometimes seen as the origins of modern anthropological fieldwork (Stocking 1995: ch. 3; Herle and Rouse 1998).

Perhaps most surprisingly, even historians came to portray themselves as scientists in this period. History had traditionally been a humanistic discipline – dubbed 'philosophy teaching by example' in one influential formulation – associated with elite training in knowledge and character rather than with specialized research. But German historians had staked their place in the Humboldtian university from the beginning. The founding of the Monumenta Germaniae Historica in 1819 by the Prussian educational reformer Stein was an early attempt to delineate a fixed and comprehensive body of original ('primary') sources for specialist research; by 1875 the MGH had become a nearly official national institution, based in Berlin. Similarly the Camden series of texts in early English history was founded in 1838 and taken over by the Royal Historical Society in London by 1897. Most European states founded official national archives over these same decades. The German model of seminar-teaching, whereby the professor surrounded himself with his research students and a comprehensive library of primary sources on surrounding shelves, was widely adopted and became the historical equivalent of the laboratory. Historians were as eager as any other human scientists to found specialist associations and research journals. And they were equally prone to 'science envy' in defining the ground-rules of their discipline: empiricism, value-neutrality, even positivism, not so much in the generation of laws as in the conviction that 'definitive' conclusions were attainable. The founder of the history department at Johns Hopkins University, Herbert Baxter Adams, proclaimed the liberation of his discipline from 'dogma' and its apotheosis as 'a laboratory of scientific truth' (Novick 1998: ch. 1, quote at 33; Hesketh 2011). In his inaugural lecture as Regius Professor of History at Cambridge in 1895, Lord Acton paid even more lavish tribute to the natural scientist as the historian's true role-model:

> For they can show how to test proof, how to secure fulness and soundness in induction, how to restrain and to employ with safety hypothesis and analogy. It

is they who hold the secret of the mysterious property of the mind by which error ministers to truth, and truth slowly but irrevocably prevails. Theirs is the logic of discovery, the demonstration of the advance of knowledge and the development of ideas, which as the earthly wants and passions of men remain almost unchanged, are the charter of progress, and the vital spark in history.

(Acton 1895: 14)

WHAT KIND OF A SCIENCE?

Yet 'science envy' only tells half of the story of the human sciences, if that. The Kantian tradition had always made room for categorical distinctions between *Geisteswissenschaft* and *Naturwissenschaft* – between human and natural science – and even provided an option for human scientists to see themselves as prior to and essential to the natural sciences, as masters of the human apparatus through which all data about the world was channelled. This distinction was re-enunciated in the *fin de siècle* by the philosophically minded historians Wilhelm Dilthey and Benedetto Croce, who abjured the 'nomothetic' (law-making) claims of the human sciences and emphasized instead understanding and interpretation (Hughes 1977; Burrow 2000: 88–89; Revel 2003: 392–95; Ross 2003: 215–16). It was therefore open to human scientists to inherit and build upon the moral and ethical mission of the traditional humanistic disciplines, even while ordering them on newly specialized and professional lines. Even Darwinism, especially during this early period when the mechanisms of biological inheritance were still unclear, was susceptible to a variety of interpretations: it might seem to dictate the course of human development along the *laissez-faire* lines that the likes of Spencer and Sumner had detected in the allegedly impartial record of human history; or its basis in random variation and susceptibility to environmental influence might provide powerful new instruments of ethical guidance and leadership; or the struggle between populations might warrant social-engineering policies through eugenics that might change the course of human history altogether (Jones 1980: 55–62; Pick 1989).

Human scientists tended to see themselves as a special kind of scientist: ones who despite (or even because of) their specialization had a new entitlement to speak to wider publics. One prevalent definition of the 'intellectual' is a person who speaks on the basis of highly specialized or technical knowledge to wider human concerns, a definition that one can trace back to 'le manifeste des intellectuels' on behalf of the human rights of Captain Dreyfus in 1898, a statement signed by 1200 scholars credentialized by their university degrees. While they hailed from a mixed bag of disciplines, it was the literary, historical and social-scientific sort who naturally gravitated to such exercises, drawing here not on the 'value neutrality' of the human sciences but rather on their claim to ethical superiority (Collini 2006: 20–22, 255–56). By the same token, while natural scientists were more likely to prioritize the cloisteredness of the laboratory over the publicity of their findings, human scientists – here historians were very much in the van – took advantage of their rhetorical skills and moral authority to link higher learning and popularization closely together. When the mass market for fiction took off in the late nineteenth century, the mass market for history took off as well. The Regius Professor of History at Oxford, E. A. Freeman, was at the same time one of the pioneers of 'scientific' history and also a

prolific journalist and author of history books for children (Mandler 2002: 36–45, 63–65; Readman 2005; Howsam 2009: 6–9, 28–33).

While once we tended, therefore, to see the human sciences in this period as 'scientistic', in the service of social control and social engineering, there is now a greater awareness of the divided consciousness of the human sciences – torn between 'science envy' and ethical convictions, between the new authority of the Humboldtian university and the older authority of public service, civic virtue and 'speaking truth to power'. In part this shift of focus stems from our own shift from a post-Vietnam scepticism about the role of the university in society to an early twenty-first-century attempt to refound and rehabilitate that role (cf. Ross 1991; Jewett 2013). But the divided consciousness was there all along – in Kant, in the Humboldtian model, in the ethical as well as the technical goals of the new American universities, in the new disciplines (for every alleged 'positivist' like Durkheim there was an anti-positivist like Gabriel Tarde, for every advocate of science for social control there was an advocate of science for democracy) (Latour 2005, 14–16; Jewett 2013). In certain cases the divided consciousness lay within a single scientist. William Sumner began as a Spencerian evolutionist, with a firm view of the 'fittest' path for human development, and ended his life writing a book, *Folkways* (1907), that became one of the building-blocks of cultural relativism. Wilhelm Wundt was the founder of both experimental psychology, which sought universal phenomena through 'brass instrument' experimentation, and *Völkerpsychologie*, which differentiated these human universals along social and historical lines.

Both Sumner and Wundt were influenced in their later careers by a new sensitivity to human diversity that marked the *fin de siècle*. This sensitivity was already embedded in Kantian metaphysics – in the German intellectual tradition, it can be best traced back to Herder, who layered a distinctive *Volksgeist* for every people on top of human universals, and to Wilhelm von Humboldt himself, whose radical empiricism valued the particular over the universal (Smith 1991: 20–29) – but it was further potentiated by epochal transformations at the end of the century. European expansion into Asia and Africa fuelled an ethnocentric self-confidence about a unitary human nature and a unilinear civilizing process, but it also sowed the seeds of its own critique. Resistance to European expansion among Asians and Africans was intellectual as well as social and political. Indian writers of the period portrayed 'India as a dominant, evolving civilisation' following its own path, suited (in a way that both Herder and Darwin might recognize) to its own ecosystem (Bayly 2012: 105, 246). Japanese modernization seemed to have adopted European methods without abandoning its distinctive culture. When the Japanese shocked Europeans by defeating a Great Power – Russia – in a war fought by modern methods in 1904, it was, as Sumner observed, 'a cause of amazement'; the persistence and modern success of this alternative ethos was one of the sources of his turning to multiple 'folkways' (Sumner 1907: 71). London was the setting for a number of international congresses where for the first time not only the European nations but all the nations of the world (real or imagined) were represented – the Pan-African Congress of 1900, the Universal Races Congress of 1911 (Schneer 1999: ch. 9). For themselves, in the run-up to the First World War, the European nations came increasingly to view each other as distinctive and rivalrous, rather than as part of a unitary master-civilization (Sluga 2006: ch. 3; Manias 2013). Thus the loss of confidence in Western

civilization, which is often attributed to the effects of the horrors of the First World War, can be alternatively located in the preceding decades.

Human scientists put themselves in the vanguard of this movement. Their principal tool for understanding it was 'culture'. *Kultur* had been one of Herder's synonyms for *Volksgeist*; now gradually it began to supersede *Volksgeist*, *Völkerpsychologie*, 'folkways', 'ethos' and *Zeitgeist* as the favoured term for the distinctive lens through which different groups of people viewed the world. Culture began to infiltrate every aspect of human behaviour, right down to the very basis of knowledge, the making of meaning, rendering 'science' once again a matter of interpretation. The historians got there early. The Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt has some claim to having discovered that culture had its own history in his trailblazing book *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), pointing towards Dilthey's understanding of history as a *Geisteswissenschaft*. The English literary critic Matthew Arnold, another Germanophile, wrote a different kind of cultural history in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). Later, as we have seen, psychologists and sociologists like Wundt and Sumner came to similar conclusions about the multiplicity of ways of knowing.

But it was the anthropologists who took the idea of culture most to heart; for many of them 'culture' came to define the very scope and remit of their burgeoning discipline. For much of the nineteenth century anthropology had been more a biological than a social science. 'Culture' offered the new discipline a chance to break away from anatomy and to refound itself on a discrete basis. With their Herderian background, German anthropologists such as Rudolf Virchow and Adolf Bastian, who founded the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte in 1870, had a natural advantage in making this departure. They also made early contributions to the emergence of fieldwork by following Humboldt's commitment to assembling material-culture collections in research-oriented museums. British anthropologists, with their initial greater attachment to unilinear ideas of civilizational development, were however not far behind. Edward Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (1871) promoted the unilinear understanding of 'the general improvement of mankind by higher organization of the individual and of society' but at the same time set afoot the study of culture as a discrete subject unrelated to biology. In 1884 he was appointed to the first British university post in anthropology, at Oxford (Smith 1991: 100–110; Stocking 1987: ch. 7).

But what truly shocked anthropology out of its evolutionary perspective, and endowed it permanently with its discrete disciplinary method and epistemology, was fieldwork, the emerging anthropological laboratory. Unlike orthodox experimental setups, the field was more likely to surprise and upset the experimenter, and early fieldworkers from Britain and Germany were duly surprised and upset by it. It was on his first field-trips to the Arctic and British Columbia in the 1880s that Franz Boas, a German-Jewish scientist working initially as a geographer, discovered almost at the same time the discipline of anthropology and the flaws in its evolutionary dogmas. Building on Bastian's view of culture as a reflection of *Weltanschauung*, or world-view, Boas came to see the various indigenous cultures not as steps in an evolutionary progression but as unique, conjuncturally constructed ways of thinking; it was Boas who first used the word cultures in the plural. Emigrating to the U.S. in 1887, Boas eventually founded a school of anthropology at Columbia University in New York that moved the discipline further away from biological

science, even away from social science, towards the standing it more or less has today as the science of culture. As George Stocking has argued, it was not fieldwork alone that converted Boas to cultural pluralism (or relativism) – though his immersion in the lives of his subjects undoubtedly persuaded him of their greater complexity and idiosyncrasy than the evolutionary perspective allowed. It was, rather, the synergy between the fieldwork method, the post-Kantian tradition in which he had been trained, and the *fin-de-siècle* moment when anthropology, above all the other natural sciences, was attracting to it a fresh generation of young scholars calling into question the liberal verities of positivist science (Stocking 1968: 203–4).

All of the human sciences, therefore – not only history and anthropology, but also psychology and sociology – were to some extent captivated (though not fully captured) by the culture concept before the First World War. Psychology and sociology would remain more fixed in the positivist mode, as a result of which refugees from both migrated to the more congenial atmosphere of anthropology; this undermined the nascent discipline of social psychology, and accelerated the development of social anthropology, especially in Britain. However, these migrations between the disciplines of the human sciences had themselves been enabled by the rise of the Humboldtian university, which, while it attempted to rope off discrete disciplines and thus tended to break up more holistic studies of human behaviour, at the same time created homologies between the disciplines (e.g. in departmental structures and career paths) that also facilitated the movement of researchers between them (Karady 1983: 83–85). This is but another way in which the rise of the Humboldtian university both facilitated modernization and turned a critical mirror upon it.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

PHILOSOPHY

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Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen

Where in the world at the turn of the last century is philosophy? To answer the question, we may aspire for something like a satellite view of the planet, though we will do better to start somewhere closer to earth. With seven continents to choose from and a desire for impartiality, we decide to leave our selection to chance. So let's imagine that we close our eyes and spin a globe from the turn of the last century, listen for the whirl of a few rotations, and then stop it with a touch of our hand. We open our eyes to see our finger resting on the Libyan Desert. If we take the conventional, though not uncontested, view that philosophizing is a human activity, then a location that is home only to the hardiest of insects, spiders, and reptiles is also a poor place to start. So we close our eyes, spin the globe, and stop it on . . . the Aleutian Islands. It is hard, though not impossible, to consider the Aleutian inflection of the Russian Orthodoxy brought by missionaries in the eighteenth century as an example of *fin-de-siècle* philosophy. But with the hope of an easier place to start, we spin one last time. Stop. We get lucky. Our finger has landed right on one of the intellectual centers of the British Empire, right on the university town of Oxford. Where in the world can we find turn-of-the-last-century philosophy? Most certainly in Oxford, England.

Though instances of philosophical inquiry, professional philosophers, and texts demarcated as "philosophy" abound, let us zero in on one particular figure with impeccable philosophical credentials, who should thus serve as an obvious expression of the phenomenon we are looking for. It is the 21-year-old Alain Locke, busy with his graduate training in philosophy at Oxford's Hertford College. Locke came to Oxford from 1907–10 as the first African-American Rhodes scholar after earning his B.A. *magna cum laude* from Harvard under Hugo Münsterberg, Josiah Royce, and George Herbert Palmer during the philosophy department's famed "Golden Age." He spent three and a half years at Oxford before moving on to the University of Berlin. In Germany, he gained exposure to Franz Brentano's phenomenology, Alexius Meinong's ontology, and Christian Freiherr von Ehrenfels's psychology of value, before traveling to Paris to attend the celebrated lecture courses by Henri Bergson. Locke returned to Harvard from 1916–18, where he wrote his doctoral dissertation under Ralph Barton Perry on "Problems of Classification in Theory of

Value," which would signal his continued contributions to axiology, aesthetics, race theory, and cultural pluralism. Best known as the "Father of the Harlem Renaissance" for his edited collection *The New Negro* of 1925, Locke was a professor of philosophy at Howard University, who continually, up until his death in 1954, tested and reformulated his integration of value theory to his critical pragmatism (Harris 2008).

Despite Locke's considerable contributions to twentieth-century Pan-African thought and American pragmatism, if we turn to the major histories of modern philosophy, not only is Alain Locke missing, but also the crucial *fin-de-siècle* transnational institutional and intellectual exchanges that his case illuminates. Understandably, the major surveys of modern philosophy—from George Boas's *The Adventures of Human Thought* (1929) to Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy* (1945), to Frederick Copleston's *A History of Philosophy* (1946–74)—cover British philosopher John Locke, noting his towering influence on subsequent epistemology and moral and political theory. But none take notice of Alain.

No doubt, historical surveys of philosophy cannot possibly account for every philosophical text or every person who either bears the title "Professor of Philosophy" or self-identifies as a philosopher. But it is not an exercise in impertinence to survey surveys for their narrative arc, dramatis personae, and omissions to consider what counts as instances of "philosophy" in a global perspective? In the case of Alain Locke, given that African and African-descended thinkers are consistently out of view of histories of "Western" philosophy, it is tempting to think that his race has something to do with it. But Boas's casual remark that "American philosophy . . . is not an indigenous product," perhaps because Americans "are not a critical people" (echoing a conventional trope since Tocqueville that Americans have no philosophy and show no interest in it) suggests that Locke's nationality, more than his race, may be the disqualifier (Boas 1929: 418). But Locke's absence may also have something to do with his explicit interest in values, literature, and the arts. Despite philosophy's purported "love of wisdom," academic philosophers in turn-of-the-last-century Europe and America became increasingly specialized, and their mode of analysis more technical and refined, and thus stopped regarding something so seemingly sentimental as wisdom-loving as part of their job description (Kuklick 2001; Campbell 2006). Surely, if we take "philosophy" to mean the "love of wisdom," this history would include Locke. But so too would it direct us right past most of the thinkers we typically consider the towering figures in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century transatlantic philosophy.

The problems about what counts as "philosophy" mount. Even if we drop "wisdom" and Alain Locke, we are bereft of clear selection criteria that can yield anything like a global consensus about the nature and value of philosophy. Limiting ourselves to "Western" thought doesn't quite solve the problem, as the history of "philosophy" has been a history of contestations over its nature and commitments. Add to that the fact that "philosophy," as Ninian Smart reminds us, is "a Western word," and "there is no guarantee that it has a clear equivalent outside of the West" (Smart 1999).

And yet there is a history to the problems that vex an inquiry into turn-of-the-last-century philosophy, and it is one that is rooted in the very period under consideration. It was at this time that a variety of thinkers around the world sought

to de-provincialize "Western" conceptions of philosophy and not allow them to serve as measures of all-things-philosophical. An increasing range of thinkers came to discover that they could no longer achieve a God's eye view, an objective view, a view of everywhere but from nowhere in particular, without any *a priori* commitments to this tradition or that criterion. "Henceforth, my dear philosophers, let us be on guard against the dangerous old conceptual fiction that posited a 'pure', will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject," warned Friedrich Nietzsche in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887). "There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective 'knowing'" (Nietzsche 1967[1887]: 119). Though Nietzsche's claims for the radical perspectival and subjective nature of knowledge were extreme in his time, they signal dramatic cognitive changes underway at the turn of the last century. And they are taken to be axiomatic by many historians and sociologists of philosophy today. As Randall Collins put it in his *The Sociology of Philosophy* (1998), the very notion of a true universal perspective has developed within human societies, and "it is no more than a historical fact to say that we have never stepped outside of the human thought community" (Collins 1998: 8).

This does not mean that intellectual historians, sociologists of knowledge, or philosophers have given up the aspiration to understand global phenomena. The cognitive challenges exemplified by Nietzsche and passed along by a number of his contemporaries simply demand that we not mistake any one *fin-de-siècle* thinker's philosophical cosmos as the cosmos of *fin-de-siècle* philosophy. Instead of seeking a static, universal view of "the world," they fostered a habit of mind attentive to the dynamic, pluralist *worlds* of philosophy.

THE DARWINIAN BACKSTORY

If we take John Dewey as our guide, the turn-of-the-last-century distrust of an absolute philosophical picture of the world has its origins in 1835 amid giant tortoises, tiny finches, and blue-footed boobies on a volcanic archipelago 500 miles west of Ecuador. It was there, on the Galápagos Islands, during a five-week expedition of a five-year global voyage, that Charles Darwin, then a 22-year-old aspiring Anglican minister and unpaid naturalist with the British survey ship *H.M.S. Beagle*, encountered curious variations among its fauna that would spur him to fundamentally transform philosophical inquiry with his evolutionary ideas and his theory of "natural selection." Over two decades later, Darwin published his findings in *On the Origin of Species* (1859), which he characterized as "one long argument" against the then-dominant theory of special creation (Mayr 1991). From John Dewey's vantage point a half century later (on the occasion of the 50 year anniversary of *Origins*'s publication), Darwin's ideas not only disturbed theologians and natural scientists with his picture of a world in flux, they also challenged all philosophical essentialisms.

In "The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy" (1910), Dewey noted that the philosophical ideas of absolutes that dominated philosophy for millennia

> rested on the assumption of the superiority of the fixed and final; they rested upon treating change and origin as signs of defect and unreality. In laying hands upon the sacred ark of absolute permanency, in treating the forms that had been

regarded as types of fixity and perfection as originating and passing away, the 'Origin of Species' introduced a mode of thinking that in the end was bound to transform the logic of knowledge, and hence the treatment of morals, politics, and religion.

According to Dewey, this new "mode of thinking" took "transition" as its First Principle. It recognized the futility of inquiries into absolutes and in their place focused on contingencies. It likewise foreswore universal truth claims and studied instead the conditions that generate particular moral and epistemological commitments. No longer would philosophy be blurry-eyed with idealism or perseverate in rationalism; it would now be brought in line with concrete facts of immediate experience. For Dewey, Darwinism was not deterministic, but rather had a liberating effect on the intellect. Whereas once man projected all notions of nature and necessity "that it could not carry over to the more competent shoulders of the transcendent cause," now Darwinism welcomed "responsibility into the intellectual life." For Dewey, Darwin helped usher in dramatic changes to the form and content of philosophical inquiry, and helped bring philosophy down to earth (Dewey 1910: 1–2, 18, 17).

MODERNIZATION AND ITS PHILOSOPHICAL DISCONTENTS

To many turn-of-the-last-century observers, Darwin's picture of a world in constant, feverish transition seemed to speak to their experience of modernization (Glick 1974; Glick, Puig-Samper, and Ruiz 2001; Hodge and Radick 2009; Numbers 1998). To varying degrees in different regions of the globe, the late nineteenth century was a period of dramatic transformation: increased industrialization of production; new technologies of communication and transportation; massive demographic transfers, dislocating millions of the world's inhabitants into unfamiliar environments, linguistic contexts, and patterns of culture; consolidation and imperial expansion of nation states, and with them new forms of political consolidation and subjugation; and an ever-widening reach of a volatile global capitalism. These technological, political, and economic developments set the terms for what Marshall Berman described as the "experience of modernity" in global perspective (Berman 1982). In addition to posing new problems for philosophers to address, they fostered—albeit often invisibly— new cognitive habits for thinking through those problems. Though the intellectual responses to modernization were as varied as the pace and features of it were uneven, the social and psychic problems it presented underscored its imperative to bring inquiry in line with concrete problems provided by that experience.

One important way that universities in the late nineteenth-century transatlantic world sought to bring academic inquiry to bear on modern experience was to sharpen the division of intellectual labor in the human sciences, with each area claiming specialized expertise, practices of inquiry, and explanatory schemes. While post-Darwinian evolutionary thought encouraged a view of human beings and their societies as responsive to their environments, so too did the disciplinary specialization it fostered equip the new disciplines with a variety of empirical methods to closely examine these modes of adaptation and evolution (Ross 1994; Porter and Ross 2003).

This late nineteenth-century disciplinary division of labor was a mixed blessing for philosophy. While it enabled academic philosophy to slowly, if steadily, break from academic theology as well as rival its moral authority, it also meant that the purview of academic philosophy was held in check by the emergent disciplines of psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science (Kuklick 2001). In the opening years of the twentieth century, what would come to be known as "analytic" philosophy out of Cambridge and Vienna (and would emerge as the dominant strain in Anglo-American academic philosophy by the interwar period) welcomed this narrowing as a way to reduce the fuzzy logic and syntactical imprecision of modern truth claims still beholden to metaphysics or too enamored with subjectivity. Bertrand Russell (integrating the insights of Gottlob Frege's quantificational logic), Alfred North Whitehead, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Otto Neurath were the most influential turn-of-the-last-century philosophers, who employed the terms and methods of modern logic, mathematics, and modern physics, for limiting (while making more rigorous) what would come to be called "philosophical analysis." But in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, academic philosophy throughout the transatlantic world was increasingly unsure of its reputation as the "queen of the sciences," recognizing that the growing authority of the human sciences threatened that it might be downgraded to its handmaiden (Campbell 2006).

While within the European and American academies the range of philosophy's intellectual domain narrowed, globally its discourse and practices spread along the paths of late nineteenth-century empire. Because the turn-of-the-last-century university was tied to the nation-state, the philosophy it taught must be mapped within what Walter Mignolo has referred to as the "geopolitics of knowledge" (Mignolo 2000: 91). In one sense, this requires attention to the ways in which imperial administrators, educators, and colonial schools dispersed European philosophy throughout its colonial holdings as well as drew colonial subjects into the orbit of their ideas (Steinmetz 2013). Attention to philosophy in its imperial contexts alerts us to the ways in which the philosophy taught in the British Academy travelled extensively across the globe—being interpreted and reformulated anew at every point of contact—between the British Isles, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Indeed the networks connecting the "British Academic World" stretched so far and wide at the *fin de siècle* that British philosophers could boast—though not without controversy—that the sun never set on British philosophy (Pietsch 2013). Because Germany was a latecomer to French- and British-style imperialism, if we seek to integrate German philosophy into this imperial narrative, we do best to examine how the Humboldtian German research university, with its premium on its *Philosophische Fakultät*, not only drew in and credentialed thousands of turn-of-the-last-century doctoral students from around the world, but also became a global model of higher education in the United States, East Asia, and in Latin America (Du 2012; Johnson 2009; Shils and Roberts 2004).

In an equally important sense, though, Mignolo's "geopolitics of knowledge" draws attention to ways in which turn-of-the-last-century philosophical ideas themselves both instantiated—and became tools of—political aggression, dominance, and exclusion. Though Darwin's naturalism challenged philosophical appeals to unobservable causes, positivists who invoked his authority to justify racism and ethnic chauvinism either ignored or failed to notice this inconvenient fact. Thus "Darwinism"

became a popular misnomer for Spencer's positivistic evolutionary theories, and an ideology authorizing discourses of racial essences and hierarchies, and eugenics. From Ernst Haeckel in Germany to Francis Galton in England to Madison Grant in the United States, and through the provincial capitals of colonized Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Africa, philosophical inquiry reliant on a language of racial "classification" and "stages of civilization" circumnavigated the *fin-de-siècle* globe (Graham 1990; Kramer 2006; Love 2004). In Latin America, for example, the importance of positivist philosophies to state-building are on full display. What philosopher Eduard Mendieta says of the centrality of positivism to late nineteenth-century Mexico can be extended to Argentina, Brazil, and Chile: "Positivism was to the Porfiriato what Leninism was to the Russian Revolution" (Mendieta 2013:1).

The intellectual habit of using positivism as a brake on a world in motion, to seek absolutes and essences as anchors in an otherwise dizzying evolutionary cosmology, characterizes varieties of late nineteenth-century orientalism, as well (Le Guellec 2010; Marchand 2009; Schimmelpenninck van der Oye 2010). Because both positivist and orientalist essentializing held perceived inferior races or cultures static, fixed in time and place, as stable referents against which to imagine their own cultural progress, they were often complementary tendencies. We can see this in French naturalist George Pouchet's *Plurality of the Human Race* (1864), in which he folded orientalism into his theories of polygenesis:

> If science has shone with a bright light in the East, this was due solely to the introduction of a more human philosophy, born among another race, and conveyed there by the works of Aristotle and the neo-Platonists. The East was . . . inspired [by] these foreign doctrines, which it would have been incapable of originating itself.

Pouchet argued that different human species, marked by distinctions in race, must also have different values, different truths. He thus exemplifies the ways in which advances in late nineteenth-century "anthropology" were welcomed for their service to "philosophy itself" (Pouchet 1864: 2, 23). Rather than exhibit, as Dewey put it, the empirical demands Darwinism put on modern philosophy, late nineteenth-century positivism and orientalism enlisted science to reformulate, though not abandon, philosophical idealism, absolutism, and essentialism.

VARIETIES OF PHILOSOPHY DOWN TO EARTH

While varieties of turn-of-the-century positivism enlisted evolutionary theories to bring order to a disordered universe, other transnational philosophical trends accommodated themselves to indeterminacy, welcoming the epistemological and moral challenges it posed. Rather than take up Kant's challenge "*Sapere aude!*" ["Dare to know!"], philosophers throughout the late nineteenth-century transatlantic world "dared to admit they could not know," as James T. Kloppenberg has put it. "They could only dare to think." The shared sensibility that intellectual certainty was as hubristic as moral absolutes were false, and a concomitant willingness to take on the "challenge of doubt," drew philosophers of varying educational traditions and intellectual temperaments into transnational discourse about the new

burdens imposed upon the intellect that has no recourse to certainty (Kloppenberg 1986: vii, 26). Justo Sierra, Mexico's leading intellectual of the late nineteenth century, effectively articulated the new-found skepticism about the confidence of the last century: "We doubt: in the first place, because if science is nothing more than the systematic understanding of the relative," then it is folly to take refuge in "fundamental truths" (Candelaria 2012: 91).

Historians of philosophy of the period have shuffled through a variety of phrases to characterize these cognitive transformations. For J. W. Burrow they bespoke a "crisis of reason," while Michael Candelaria refers to them as a "crisis of unreason" (Burrow 2000; Candelaria 2012). For H. Stuart Hughes, philosophy of the period reflects a fundamental "reorientation" of humanistic inquiry, while Morton White argues it signals a full-scale "revolt against formalism" (Hughes 1977; White 1949). Edward Purcell characterizes these philosophical changes as the ascendance of "scientific naturalism" (Purcell 1973). Surely, certain designations are more apt for describing some philosophers than others. And none adequately account for the transformation in methods and aims so central to Russell and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica* (1910–13) and Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922), arguably two of the most influential philosophical works of the entire twentieth century. But together they effectively signpost the radical reformulation of knowledge we see in a variety of transatlantic philosophical developments, from Wilhelm Dilthey's hermeneutics and John Dewey's instrumentalism, to Miguel de Unamuno's existentialism, Hans Vaihinger's "as if," and George Herbert Mead's notions of the social self and perspectivalism. Together, they reveal the widespread *fin-de-siècle* effort to end habits of mind reliant on breaking subject from object, noumena from phenomena, existence from experience, past from present, and a willingness to set them all loose in a world of flux. They exhibit a broad effort to bring theories of knowledge and ideas of good and evil down to earth and in line with modern experience.

THE UNITED STATES AND THE EXAMPLES OF PEIRCE AND JAMES

This impulse to bring philosophy down to earth is on full display in late nineteenth-century Cambridge, Massachusetts among members of the Metaphysical Club. Organized in 1872 by Harvard lecturer Charles Sanders Peirce, and including other Harvard instructors Chauncey Wright and William James, the group—despite its name—opposed grounding truth in metaphysical "essences" and instead accepted the Darwinian account of the universe as one marked by change, contingencies, and uncertainty. They came to work out a pragmatic conception of truth that challenged notions of mind and morals based on timeless foundations. They held that truth was not something that resided outside human experience, but rather was a term human beings give to beliefs that help them make their way in the world. Given that the world is one based on change, not stasis, the inquiry into truth must look at consequences, not origins, and practical results, not theory. The line of thinking to come out of these Cambridge-based philosophers was that no religious or scientific explanatory schemes should get a free pass because of their credentials; regardless where an idea came from, it had to prove itself useful in order to be

classified as "true." They came to refer to their new theory of truth and method for attaining it as "pragmatism" (Menand 2001).

Generally regarded as the first formulation of pragmatism, Peirce's "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" (1878) upended assumptions of modern logic. In it, he characterized beliefs as established habits, and introduced the notion that logic can make our ideas clear without making them "true." Peirce rejected British empiricism, arguing that while sense data were not prior to experience, they had no meaning apart from the mental conceptualization and interpretation of them. He thought it fruitless both to seek the thing-in-itself as well as to imagine that thought is what creates the thing. For Peirce what mattered—and could be subject to analysis—is that the mind making sense of data is what constitutes experience. A trained scientist, Peirce turned to scientific inquiry believing it offered the best model for settling philosophical disputes, and limited the scope of meaning to that which had testable consequences. An innovator in symbolic logic and semiotics, he argued that all thinking and meaning drew on prior truths contingently agreed upon by a community of inquirers. Thus, his version of pragmatism (or, as he preferred to call it, "pragmaticism") wholly embraced a Darwinian dissolution of absolutes, welcomed the doubt it engendered as a necessary part of the struggle for beliefs, and understood truth as process, not an endpoint, in the life of human communities (Peirce 1878).

References to William James as an "American" philosopher (though technically true as he was an American citizen), tend to be confessions of chauvinism by American commentators proud of his philosophical achievements or criticisms by those who take their cues from Tocqueville and want to belittle him. Educated in America, Switzerland, and France, and well connected to considerable intellectual networks throughout the United States, England, and Continental Europe, James worked out his pragmatism in response to the pressures on philosophy to come more in line with the natural sciences, but not to mistake its insights as absolutes. James came to philosophy by way of his training in medicine at Harvard in 1864, and later his exposure to advances in physiology and psychology in Germany. His *Principles of Psychology* (1890) helped establish him as an early founder of psychology in America, and set some of the early terms for his approach to philosophy by way of psychology. He argued, for example, that differences in thinkers' temperaments can explain their competing philosophical commitments. Thus the late nineteenth-century warfare between idealism and empiricism was best understood as the tensions between competing intellectual predispositions. James referred to this in his famous essay "The Will to Believe" (1896) as a human being's "passional nature"—one's intellectual temperament that steps in to make decisions when the individual is faced with a dilemma for which there is insufficient evidence to resolve it (James 2000: 205).

Radically pluralist in his ethics and his epistemology, James argued that there was no single "true" account of the universe, only truth claims that proved useful to the believer. In *Pragmatism* (1907) James poked fun at any and all efforts to hand over philosophy to what he referred to as "magic words": "God, the One, Reason, Law, Spirit, Matter, Nature, Polarity, the Dialectic Process, the Idea, the Self, the Oversoul" (James 2000 [1907]: 28, 105).

For James, the notion of "*The* Truth" was nothing more than an "idol of the rationalistic mind" (James 2000 [1907]: 105). He thus developed his pragmatism as a theory of truth as well as a radically empirical method for identifying what is classed

as "true." Whether writing on religion, morality, consciousness, or knowledge, James insisted that philosophy was good only insofar as it made a practical difference in human lives. James thus sought to banish the otherworldliness of philosophy and recognize it as a human practice with human applications.

FRANCE AND THE EXAMPLE OF BERGSON

The exchanges and expressions of warm appreciation between William James and Henri Bergson exemplify the vibrant transnational interest in a philosophy at once more subjective and empirical. References to James's conception of thought as a stream of consciousness crop up in Bergson's work as early as 1889, and the French philosopher continued to enlist Jamesian psychology for decades to come. James, in turn, took delight in looking across the Atlantic to the Collège de France, where he could find a fellow philosophical empiricist, committed to preserving as much of the scientific method that could jibe with their move toward subjectivity. Bergson, like James, sought to reformulate philosophy to both reflect a world of flux and meet the human needs of those making their way in it. James esteemed Bergson as a fellow philosophical scientist who looked to experience, not "intellectualism," as the source and arbiter of truth claims (James 1907: 14).

Born the same year as the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Bergson welcomed an evolutionary perspective but not the mechanical and teleological explanations of it so dominant in his day. For Bergson, both were equally devoid of novelty, and for him, evolution was nothing but a creative process. Thus in *Creative Evolution* (1907) Bergson sought to reconcile the continuity of an evolutionary force with the vibrant multiplicity such a force creates. He found this in his *élan vital* (vital impulse), the creative force pulsating through all life forms. Bergson described this force as if "from an immense reservoir of life, jets must be gushing out unceasingly," but then was careful to clarify that this image of a jet should not be seen as deterministic: for "the creation of a world is a free act, and the life within the material world participates in this liberty" (Bergson 1911: 261).

Bergson's *élan vital* reflected his longstanding effort to conceptualize a fundamental reality as yet dimly understood by modern philosophy. He argued that Kant bequeathed a fundamental error to philosophy with his insistence that the mind can know only the phenomenal, not the noumenal, world. Bergson maintained that there were two forms of knowing: intelligence and intuition. Intelligence is what we typically associate with knowledge, though he was careful to insist this form is always relative to the perceiver. The more perspectives it can take in the better. But in all of its perspective gathering, the best intelligence can do with all that data is to break the phenomenal world into categories, chopping up knowledge in terms comprehensible to human reason. While Bergson maintained that the intellectual means of accessing the world were crucial, he also insisted that intuition was another form of knowing the world, indeed the only way to access reality. In "An Introduction to Metaphysics" (1903), Bergson insisted that intuition was no "intellectualism" but rather it was "*true* empiricism": "There is one reality, at least, which we all seize from within, by intuition and not simple analysis. It is our own personality in its flowing through time—our self which endures. We may sympathize intellectually with nothing else, but we certainly sympathize with our own selves. . . ." This

"intellectual sympathy," this "intuition" open to "mobile reality," has no use for ready-made philosophical concepts (Bergson 1912: 9, 69). It comes to knowing the world by being immersed in, and open to, the vital impulse. It yields a direct form of knowledge, indeed an "absolute" one, though it is an absoluteness of ever-flowing vibrancy and multiplicity.

Bergson's emphasis on flux and subjective experience was both a register of, and an influence on, the intellectual and cultural transformations at the turn of the last century. While he upped the skepticism about the capacity of the rational mind to understand and bring order to the modern world, he complemented it with the creative mind able to access, and take pleasure in, an open-ended universe. His diagnosis of and response to the ruptures of modern experience were widely influential not only on a new generation of philosophers, but also avant-garde artists and modernist writers, who wrestled with the moral and aesthetic implications of the mismatch between external reality and subjective experience. Bergson's fame was indeed so widespread that transatlantic commentators marveled over the "Bergson cults," while throngs of visitors from around the world (including one Alain Locke from America) packed his lectures at the Collège de France.

GERMANY AND THE EXAMPLE OF NIETZSCHE

While Bergson was an international intellectual celebrity at the *fin de siècle,* his superstardom was dwarfed by that of Friedrich Nietzsche. Given the Nietzsche "vogues" rippling through Continental Europe and increasingly making their way to the United States over the course of the 1890s, the observation in the philosophical journal *Monist* was quite an understatement: "he who will know the Zeitgeist must know Nietzsche" (Ratner-Rosenhagen 2012: 47). Though not remembered for his intellectual humility, Nietzsche arguably more than any other philosopher of his day devoted his career to bringing philosophy down to earth. "Gradually it has become clear to me," observed Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), "that every great philosophy so far has been: namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir." The longstanding "prejudice of philosophers" was to assume their subjective experience would or should be normative, and to mistake their particular angle of vision for a view of the whole. Nietzsche experimented with radical subjectivism and perspectivalism to show how philosophy has managed to offer only "frog perspective[s]" despite its aspiration to offer a God's eye view of the world (Nietzsche 1966: 12, 10).

Nietzsche's philosophy is best understood as both a sensitive register of, and a powerful influence on, the dramatic late nineteenth-century cognitive changes in philosophy. From his earliest essays on aesthetics, history, and genius in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) to his experiments in philosophical aphorism in *Human, All Too Human* (1878), to his later works assaulting Christian morality *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887) and *The Antichrist* (1895), this "philosopher with a hammer" (as he came to identify himself) spent his career tapping that hammer against Western ideals turned hollow idols. Nietzsche dedicated his entire philosophical project to toppling the notion of eternal truth. A radical historicist, Nietzsche maintained that no values, no beliefs, no truth claims transcended time and history.

Nietzsche recognized that burrowing into the foundations of Western morality required uprooting the biggest foundation of them all: an omniscient, all-powerful God. He shocked readers with the declaration that "God is dead," and disturbed them with his insistence that God had not created man in his image; it was *man* who had created an image of God in order to meet his psychic needs for purpose and order and meaning. He thus presented a genealogical account of Christian cosmology in an effort to persuade his readers that all of its absolutes—a sanctified world, the divinity of Jesus, otherworldly redemption, the promise of resurrection— were creations of "human, all-too-human" inventions which had calcified over the millennia into cultural conventions.

Nietzsche's philosophical project was not simply to demolish settled truths but to try and imagine a world beyond them. Even he wondered what would happen once every article of faith had been shed and every claim to universal knowledge and morality exposed as a human construct. It would require a special kind of individual capable of surviving even thriving in a world of indeterminacy—a figure he called the "Übermensch," which he introduced in *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (1883–85). The Übermensch traveled far and wide, drawing readers in Continental Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, East Asia, and the United States into a global debate about the meaning and political and social implications of Nietzschean free will, radical individualism, and voluntarism for modern life (Aschheim 1994; Grillaert 2008; Kelly 1996; Parkes 1996; Ratner-Rosenhagen 2012). Nietzsche recognized how momentous both the destructive and regenerative aspects of his thinking were, describing his philosophy as "an event without equal" (Nietzsche 1992 [1908]: 103).

JAPAN AND THE EXAMPLE OF NISHIDA

The revolt against positivism, and with it the impulse to view philosophy not as a corrective to human experience but as something deeply bound within it, extended far beyond James's America, Bergson's France, and Nietzsche's Germany. Indeed a powerful example of this turn-of-the-last-century move to break philosophy of its otherworldliness and naturalize it as a human practice can be found in writings and teachings of the Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitaro. Nishida, the founder of the "Kyoto School," together with Tanabe Hajime and Nishitani Keiji, both helped establish Western philosophy as an object of serious study in twentieth-century Japan and also used it comparatively to identify the particularities of East Asian thought. Finding harmonies and generative frictions between Continental European discourses and Zen and Pure Land Buddhism, Nishida sought to repudiate distinctions between self and world, and between the knowing subject and object known, by locating the "oneness of subject and object" in the primacy of "pure experience" (Odin 1996: 81). His pathbreaking *An Inquiry into the Good* (1911) worked out a philosophy centered on "the logic of the East" as instantiated in Zen Buddhism, which identified all particularities and disjunctures (as well as the philosophical categories so common in Western thought) as expressions of reality interrupted, not apprehended. According to Nishida, the self-understanding so central to and yet elusive in contemporary European thought could be achieved only by self-abnegation. This meant placing personality in pure experience, enabling false distinctions between self and other to fade into "absolute Nothingness" (Heisig 2001).

Nishida's efforts to bring European philosophy to the Japanese university and contemporary Western terms to ancient East Asian religious texts should in no way indicate that the turn-of-the-last-century transnational traffic of philosophy was unidirectional. As scholars have shown, we misunderstand the Kyoto School when we see it as taking its agenda from European philosophers. Randall Collins has demonstrated that the case is much more complicated, especially when we consider the longstanding "cosmopolitan networks" linking Meiji Japan to other intellectual centers across the globe. In addition, the modernizing intellectual forces putting pressure on *fin-de-siècle* philosophical thought—religion's loss of dominance over the means of intellectual production, and with it the rise of literacy and the expansion of a secular educational marketplace in Japan—were "indigenous" inflections of global phenomena. In addition, the notion of East Asian intellectual borrowing is simply not pared out by the crisscrossing of scholarly connections:

> Nishida's teacher Nanjo Bunyu was a monk who had been sent by the Pure Land sect to Oxford to study Sanskrit with [German-born] Max Müller; returning in 1885, Nanjo began teaching Indian philosophy at Tokyo. In turn, Nanjo's pupil D. T. Suzuki came to Chicago for the World's Parliament of [R]eligions in 1893, organized by [the German-American philosopher] Paul Carus. Suzuki stayed as Carus' assistant during 1897–1908, meeting William James (just then in his phase of exploring religious experience), and translating Sanskrit and Japanese Buddhist texts.
>
> (Collins 1998: 374)

And the story just gets going from there, as Suzuki goes on to be the prime popularizer of Zen Buddhism in twentieth-century America and Europe. Collins speaks for many scholars of these exchanges when he suggests that Nishida's philosophy was considerably more sophisticated and richer than his European counterparts (Deussen, Müller, and Carus), and that the only meaningful second-handness here may be in the Japanese philosophers' critique of the West, as the "repudiation of West was itself an important theme in contemporary Western philosophy" (Collins 1998: 377).

THE UNITED STATES REVISITED
AND THE EXAMPLE OF ADDAMS

For one last view of the *fin-de-siècle* efforts to accept the intellectual burdens of a world and self ever unstable, ever in transition, and ever becoming, let us make one more crossing, this time over the Pacific Ocean and back to North America. For it was there, among those historically excluded by philosophy's institutional practice, that the pressure to bring philosophy down to earth was felt most acutely. Women intellectuals and social activists were especially unwilling to let philosophy either fly into the heights of abstraction or burrow deeply into speculative foundations. What they sought was a philosophy they could bring to bear on concrete problems of modern life: persistent sexism, racism, and national and ethnic chauvinism.

It was this imperative to make philosophy the handmaiden of social melioration that animated Jane Addams's moral thought. Together with her friend, Ellen Gates Starr, Addams founded the social settlement Hull House in Chicago in 1889, not to bring the "good life" to the harsh reality of industrial society but to radically reformulate the way turn-of-the-century moderns understood it. A close friend of and influence on John Dewey—she lectured in his philosophy courses at the University of Chicago and, in turn, regularly hosted him at Hull House—Addams believed that philosophy must address concrete human problems. Rather than adopt James's "hands off" approach to other people's truths, Addams advocated for a *hands on* model that meant regular exposure to and testing of different beliefs and practices (James 2000 [1899]: 285). For Addams this epistemological and moral cosmopolitanism was imperative in a pluralist world.

Readers may be surprised to find an American social philosopher like Jane Addams placed together in an analysis of transnational discourse with a German anti-social philosopher like Friedrich Nietzsche. Though she emphasized the "subjective necessity of social settlements," Addams was no Nietzschean antifoundationalist. She was, in fact, very clear about her subjectivity's aspirational "foundation": "the solidarity of the human race" (Addams 2002 [1910]: 26). Nietzsche bitterly opposed the move among modern Christians who reformulated their theology into a form of secular democratic social ethics, and this is precisely the move that the Quaker-raised Addams exemplifies in her effort to use social settlements as laboratories for social democracy and Christian humanism. But we lose sight of the dramatic cognitive transformations of the period when we let nationality, or the logic of continental divides, or even ideological commitments distinguish thinkers, who otherwise are working within, and struggling against, a shared set of intellectual problems. For both Addams and Nietzsche, this was the problem of bringing epistemology in line with experience, striving for order without essences, and seeking meaning without monism. For them, this meant imagining that no view of the world can be a view from nowhere.

CONCLUSION

As if reflecting on the intellectual commitments and preoccupations that stayed with him from the *fin de siècle*, George Santayana in 1951 argued that dogmatism can neither be the starting- nor end-point of philosophy. He surveyed his own cosmopolitan life of crossings: between his birth-place Spain, his academic home in New England, his post-academic life in England, and the exposure that these travels gave him to different languages, cultures, ways of wisdom, and ways of wonder. At the advanced age of 88, he only wished that he had been able to cross more. "It is a hindrance to the free movement of spirit to be lodged in one point of space rather than another, or in one point of time: that is a physical necessity which intelligence endeavors to discount, since it cannot be eluded" (Dilworth 1989: 138–39). Though very different in temperament from his colleagues James and Münsterberg and Perry at Harvard, he shared their struggles at the turn of the last century to recognize that there were no God's eye views of the world, that every worldview viewed the world from *somewhere*. And he shared with them a student who shared this belief that the unified world beheld by philosophical idealism, rationalism, and

positivism bore little relationship to the diverse epistemological and moral worlds in the world. Santayana shared with them the young philosophy student Alain Locke.

Where in the world at the turn of the last century is philosophy? To answer the question, we can check back in with Locke the Rhodes Scholar in Oxford, England in 1907, working on his credentials to be a professional philosopher. Or Locke the advanced graduate student in Paris, France, listening with great enthusiasm to Bergson's lectures, and imagining the implications of his "intellectual sympathy" for a future philosophy of inter-racial understanding. Or even Locke the philosophical visionary behind the 1920s New Negro movement, who applied the turn-of-the-century experimentation with philosophical pluralism to find terms for racial pride, while simultaneously working to de-essentialize notions of race. Or we can simply follow the concerns animating Locke's entire philosophical oeuvre, as he worked with—and contributed to—the pragmatism he first learned back at Harvard. Locke came to express powerfully the implications of philosophy after its late nineteenth-century revolts for African-Americans (and, by extension, "Pan-" or "diasporic-" Africans").

Alain Locke's philosophical thought demonstrates the promise and the burdens of the turn-of-the-century rejection of absolutes. For Locke, this meant understanding that there was nothing inherent about "blackness" any more than there was something inherent in any other concept moderns use to bring order and meaning to their worlds. With his "critical relativism," he argued that views of race, like values, are *human* tools, always and invariably experimental, always and invariably provisional efforts to enable human beings to purposefully negotiate a dynamic universe. Like so many philosophers of his time, Locke had no use for an otherworldly philosophy, and instead maintained that philosophy is deeply culture-bound. He was careful, though, to challenge any essentialist view of culture, arguing that in a dynamic world of fluidity, movement, and hybridization there is no such thing as "pure culture." For him, philosophy at its best was a human practice of—not outside—culture, and one that should aim at addressing very human problems within it. For Locke, bringing philosophy down to earth meant upping its potential for healing the world.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

THE "NEW PHYSICS"

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Helge Kragh

Physics at the turn of the nineteenth century was not uninfluenced by the general intellectual climate of *fin-de-siècle* culture, but neither did it reflect it to any considerable degree. In so far that this mentality or Zeitgeist was associated with negative sentiments or stereotypes such as bourgeois decadence, degeneration, despair, and escapism, it did not include the world of physics or most other natural sciences (Hiebert 1990; Staley 2008). Physicists considered their science to be healthy and progressive, not stagnating or degenerating, and they looked with excitement and optimism toward the new century and its many opportunities. On the other hand, the *fin-de-siècle* mentality was complex and ambivalent, and another strand of it was characterized by hope and optimism. From this point of view there was no disharmony between the view of the physicists and the *fin-de-siècle* mentality.

Physics at the time was a highly developed and professional science. Experimental and applied aspects dominated the field, yet the last decades of the century witnessed the emergence and growth of theoretical physics as distinct from the earlier tradition of mathematical physics (Jungnickel and McCormmach 1986). In terms of manpower and institutes it was a small science, comprising between 1,200 and 1,500 academic physicists worldwide, almost all of them from Europe, North America, or Commonwealth nations such as Australia and New Zealand (Kragh 1999: 13–22). Although international, physics was no more global than the other sciences.

The period from about 1890 to 1905 saw several attempts at establishing a new, modern foundation of physics, but what today is known as modern physics – essentially relativity and quantum physics – had other roots. The notion of a "classical" physics and the classical-modern dichotomy first appears in 1899, referring to mechanics (Staley 2005). Only a decade later did physicists begin to talk about the modern versus the classical physics in the sense used today, and quantum theory did not become a dominant theme in so-called modern physics until after 1914. When used in the *fin-de-siècle* period, the term "modern" physics mostly referred to either programs of the future or to alternatives to the mechanical foundation of physics such as the electron theories of the early twentieth century.

THE MECHANICAL WORLD VIEW

It is often assumed that the revolution in the physical sciences that occurred in the early twentieth century was preceded by a period in which the Victorian generation of physicists complacently accepted the supremacy of mechanics in all of science. Physics, so they are to have believed, was and would remain solidly based on Newton's mechanical laws and the forces acting between bodies, either long-range forces as in astronomy and electricity or short-range forces as in atomic and molecular physics. According to the philosopher and mathematician Alfred North Whitehead, the last quarter of the nineteenth century was a period of what Thomas Kuhn many years later would call normal science bound by a paradigm. It was "an age of successful scientific orthodoxy, undisturbed by much thought beyond the conventions," even "one of the dullest stages of thought since the time of the First Crusade" (Whitehead 1925: 148). However, Whitehead's characterization is a caricature of *fin-de-siècle* physics, a chapter in the history of science that was anything but dull.

Newtonian mechanics was undoubtedly held in great esteem in the late nineteenth century. It was widely accepted that the goal of physics – or sometimes even its definition – was the reduction of all physical phenomena to the principles of mechanics. There were physicists who believed that their science was essentially complete and that future physics would remain mechanical in its foundation, but this was hardly the generally held view (Badash 1972). Nor was the orthodoxy complete, for the basis in mechanics was not accepted dogmatically or always thought to be universally valid. On the contrary, there was in the 1890s a lively and many-faceted discussion of what the mechanical clockwork universe was, more precisely, and how valid – and desirable – it was. The two new sciences of thermo-dynamics and electrodynamics, both going back to the mid-century, differed in many ways from classical mechanics, and yet it was widely believed that they could be understood on a mechanical basis, indeed that such an understanding had already been achieved.

On the other hand, even physicists of a conservative inclination recognized that there were a few dark clouds on the mechanical heaven. On 27 April 1900 Lord Kelvin (William Thomson) gave a famous address to the Royal Institution in London on "Nineteenth-Century Clouds over the Dynamical Theory of Heat and Light" in which he singled out two problems. One of them was the problem of the stationary ether and the lack of any physical effect of the earth's motion through it. The other and even darker cloud related to the successful kinetic theory of gases as founded on a mechanical basis by James Clerk Maxwell and the Austrian physicist Ludwig Boltzmann. Briefly, this theory seemed to be consistent only if it were assumed that the molecules or atoms of a gas were rigid bodies with no internal parts. This assumption contradicted the evidence from spectroscopy, which strongly indicated that the atom had an internal structure, and a most complex structure at that (Brush 1986: 353–63).

There were other problems, some of them relating to the second law of thermo-dynamics according to which the entropy of a physical system, a measure of its degree of molecular disorder, increases spontaneously and irreversibly in time. The fundamental entropy law thus expresses a direction of time, from the past to the future, but how can this law possibly be explained on the basis of the time-symmetric

laws of mechanics? Although the problem received a solution of sorts with Boltzmann's probabilistic theory of entropy of 1877, it continued to be controversial. Some physicists considered the second law an insurmountable obstacle for the mechanization of nature.

Even Newton's law of gravitation, the central element in celestial dynamics and a paragon for the mechanical world view, was not beyond criticism. It had been known since the late 1850s that it could not account with sufficient precision for the motion of Mercury, an anomaly that could only be removed by the addition of arbitrary hypotheses of an ad hoc nature. There were in the period around 1900 several attempts to improve Newton's law or to provide it with a non-mechanical foundation in terms of either hydrodynamics or electrodynamics. Although these theories were unsuccessful, they indicate a characteristic willingness of *fin-de-siècle* physicists to challenge even the most sacred parts of the mechanical research program. More was soon to follow.

Although the supremacy of mechanics was increasingly questioned, in the 1890s only a minority of physicists saw the situation as a serious crisis in the mechanical world view. They typically responded to the problems and critiques by reformulating mechanics and not presenting it as an overarching world view. Rather than *explaining* nature mechanically, they retreated to the more modest position of *describing* it mechanically (Heilbron 1982; Seth 2007). Such an attitude was consonant with the popular "descriptionist" idea that science was not concerned with truths, and certainly not with absolute truths. Scientific theories were considered to be just condensed and economic descriptions of natural phenomena. Similarly, there was nothing more to understanding than equations and models.

A GOSPEL OF ENERGY

According to some physicists and chemists energy was more fundamental than matter, and thermodynamics more fundamental than mechanics. The physicist Georg Helm and the physical chemist Wilhelm Ostwald, a future Nobel laureate, arrived at this conclusion at about 1890, coining the name *energetics* for their new research program of a unified and generalized thermodynamics (Hiebert 1971; Görs, Psarros, and Ziche 2005). They and their allies promoted energetics as more than just a new scientific theory: it was meant to be an alternative to the existing understanding of nature, which they claimed was a "scientific materialism" based on mechanics and the hypothesis of matter as composed by atoms and molecules. As they saw it, mechanics was to be subsumed under the more general laws of energetics in the sense that Newton's mechanical laws were held to be reducible to energy principles.

Moreover, according to Ostwald and a few other energeticists, the generalized concept of energy was not restricted to physical phenomena but included also mental phenomena such as willpower and happiness (Hakfoort 1992). Generally, elements of *Lebensphilosophie* were part of Ostwald's version of energetics. While some critics saw this as a problematic sign of materialism, Ostwald insisted that energetics was thoroughly anti-materialistic, a much needed revolt against the dominance of matter in science. He further thought that an energy-based science would eventually result in a better world, both materially and spiritually. This element of utopianism

was not restricted to the energetics movement, but can be found also in other sciences at the turn of the century (Kemperink and Vermeer 2010).

For a decade or so the energetics movement occupied an important position in German scientific and cultural life. Although primarily German, its influence extended to other countries, including France, Sweden, Italy, and the United States, in many cases as part of the more general positivistic philosophy known as monism. The French physicist and philosopher Pierre Duhem arrived, largely independently, at a vision of a generalized thermodynamics as a non-mechanical, phenomenological theory of everything. His ideas had much in common with those of Ostwald and Helm, yet there were also differences. For example, whereas the energetics movement was anti-religious or at least anti-clerical, Duhem presented his version of energetics as in harmony with orthodox Catholicism, maintaining that science could not dispense with the notion of matter. He had no taste for Ostwald's extension of thermodynamics beyond the limit of traditional science.

Ostwald and Duhem had in common that they wanted to rid science of visualizable hypotheses and analogies with mechanics, in particular the seductive illusion of atoms and molecules as real material entities. Thermodynamics, they argued, had the great advantage that it was neutral as to the constitution of matter, indeed neutral as to the existence of matter. In this respect energetics agreed with the ideas of the Austrian physicist-philosopher Ernst Mach, who from a positivist perspective held that atoms were nothing but convenient fictions. On the other hand, many scientists considered the controversial anti-atomism of the energetics alternative as reason enough to dismiss or ignore it. While Ostwald eventually conceded that atoms existed, Duhem and Mach went into their graves (both in 1916) without accepting the reality of atoms.

At the annual meeting of the German Association of Natural Scientists and Physicians in Lübeck in 1895, Ostwald gave a programmatic address in which he argued that energetics was destined to be the scientific world view of the future and that it was already on its way to overcome the inherent limitations of scientific materialism. In the debate that followed the views of Ostwald and Helm were attacked by Boltzmann, in particular, who denied that he was a scientific materialist in Ostwald's sense of the term. He concluded that the energetics program was without scientific merit and that it was closer to ideology than science. Max Planck, who a few years later would initiate quantum theory, came to agree with Boltzmann. He considered energetics an unsound and unproductive version of natural philosophy, what he called a dilettantish speculation. Although other German physicists expressed some sympathy with the ideas of energetics, its impact on physics was limited and short-lived. While it made sense to deny the reality of atoms in 1895, ten years later it was a position that was much harder to defend.

THE HEAT DEATH

Thermodynamics entered *fin-de-siècle* physics also in a cosmological context, primarily in the form of the so-called heat death and its consequences for the past and future of the universe. Shortly after the formulation of the second law of thermodynamics several physicists pointed out that on the assumption that the law was of unrestricted validity it would lead to an irreversible "degradation" of energy

throughout the cosmos. The amount of energy would remain constant, but in the far future it would be unable to generate further physical activity of any kind. In 1867 the German physicist Rudolf Clausius formulated the pessimistic scenario of a *Wärmetod* in terms of the global entropy tending toward a maximum: the closer the entropy approached this maximum, characterized by a complete disorganization of material structures, the closer would the universe approach an equilibrium state of unchanging death.

Disseminating quickly from the world of theoretical physics to the general cultural arena, the heat death scenario was hotly debated from about 1870 to 1910. Not only was the scientifically based prediction of an end to the world highly controversial, it also seemed to follow from it that the world must have had a beginning in time. The "entropic creation" argument first stated about 1870 relies on the simple observation that we live in a low-entropy world. Had the world existed in an eternity of time, entropy would by now have increased to its maximum value, and consequently the age of the world must be finite. There must have been a beginning. To the mind of most people, whether scientists or non-scientists, a cosmic beginning implied creation, and creation implied a creator. In other words, the law of entropy increase could be used apologetically, as a scientific proof of God.

The heat death and the associated notion of cosmic creation were highly controversial and endlessly debated in the last quarter of the nineteenth century (Kragh 2008). The subject was an integral part of the more general cultural and social struggle between, on the one hand, materialists, positivists, and socialists, and, on the other, protagonists of the established world order and its belief in religious and spiritual values. As many saw it, reversibility and the mechanical world view were associated with materialism and implicitly atheism, while these views were contradicted by the irreversibility expressed by the second law of thermodynamics. In Germany the issue became part of the *Kulturkampf* that raged in the 1870s and 1880s, with many Catholic thinkers arguing for the inevitability of the heat death and, in some cases, using the authority of thermodynamics as an argument for divine creation. Those opposed to such reasoning could easily avoid the conclusions, for example by inventing counter-entropic processes or by claiming that the second law was inapplicable to an infinitely large universe.

It should be pointed out that the entropic controversy in the late nineteenth century mostly involved philosophers, social critics, theologians, and amateur scientists. Although a few physicists and astronomers contributed to the discussion, most stayed silent, convinced that it was of a metaphysical rather than scientific nature. The consensus view among astronomers was that the universe was probably infinite in size, but they realized that there was no way to prove it observationally and preferred to limit their science to what could be observed by their telescopes. The universe at large did not belong to astronomy, its state of entropy even less so. Generally, the large majority of professional physicists denied that their science was relevant to the larger themes of *fin-de-siècle* ideology such as degeneration and decadence. Occasionally inorganic decay or energy degradation as expressed in the law of entropy increase was associated with the general feeling of degeneration, but such ideas were rare. Entropy played but a limited symbolic role in the degeneration ideology, at least among most physicists.

THE MANY FACES OF THE ETHER

According to most physicists in the second half of the nineteenth century, the world consisted not only of matter in motion but also, and no less importantly, of an all-pervading ethereal medium. The "luminiferous" ether was considered necessary to explain the propagation of light, and this was only one of the numerous purposes it served. In short, and in spite of a few dissenting voices, the ether was generally regarded indispensable in physics. The basic problem was not whether the ether existed or not, but the nature of the ether and its interaction with matter. Was the ether the fundamental substratum out of which matter was built? Or was matter a more fundamental ontological category of which the ether was just a special instance? The first view, where primacy was given to structures in the ether, came to be the one commonly held at the turn of the century and the years thereafter.

From a technical point of view the ethereal world picture popular among Victorian physicists was not incompatible with the mechanical world picture, but it nonetheless differed from it by its emphasis on continuity rather than discreteness and the corresponding primacy given to ether over matter. According to the vortex atomic theory originally proposed by William Thomson in 1867, atoms were nothing but vortical structures in the continuous ether. In this sense the atoms were quasi-material rather than material bodies. As the ultimate and irreducible quality of nature, the ether could exist without matter, but matter could not exist without the ether. Based on Thomson's idea, in the 1870s and 1880s the ambitious vortex theory evolved into a major research program. The theory was developed by several British physicists who examined it mathematically and applied it to a wide range of physical phenomena, including gravitation, the behavior of gases, optical spectra, and chemical combination (Kragh 2002). However, in the end this grand Victorian theory of everything proved unsuccessful.

A contributing reason for the decline of the vortex theory was its foundation in the laws of mechanics, a feature that appeared unappealing in an environment increasingly hostile to the mechanical world view. Although the British vortex theorists presented their ether in a dematerialized form, they did not see it as entirely different from ordinary matter. It was mechanical in the sense that it possessed inertia as an irreducible property, and non-material only in the sense that it was continuous and not derivable from matter. From the perspective of many *fin-de-siècle* scientists, the emancipation from the thralldom of matter that the vortex theory offered did not go far enough. At any rate, the demise of the vortex atom did in no way signal the demise of the ether. At the beginning of the new century the ether was much alive, believed to be as necessary as ever.

Although a physical concept and the basis of physical theory, the ether also served other purposes, in particular of an ideological and a spiritual kind (Noakes 2005). To some physicists, most notably Oliver Lodge, the ether became of deep spiritual significance, a psychic realm scarcely distinguishable from the mind. Not only was all nature emergent from the ether, he also came to see it as "the primary instrument of Mind, the vehicle of Soul, the habitation of Spirit . . . [and] the living garment of God" (Kragh 2002: 32). Lodge's extreme view was not shared by his fellow physicists, but it helped making the ether a popular concept among non-scientists

and an ingredient of many *fin-de-siècle* speculations well beyond the limits of conventional science.

ELECTRODYNAMICS AS WORLD PICTURE AND WORLD VIEW

The demise of the mechanical ether models was followed by the emergence of a vigorous research program in which the ether was described by Maxwell's field theory of electromagnetism. Although Maxwell's theory dates from the 1860s, it was only in the last decade of the nineteenth century that physicists fully realized the theory's amazing power. Among avant-garde physicists electromagnetism came to be seen as more fundamental than mechanics, a unifying principle of all science. The new electrodynamic approach proved more successful and progressive than the one of energetics, in part because it fitted naturally within the ethereal world picture that it reinterpreted and breathed new life into. The replacement of the mechanical by the electromagnetic ether was arguably the most important change in fundamental physics in the years around 1900. While forgotten today, in the *fin-de-siècle* period it was regarded as a revolutionary advance in the understanding of nature (Jungnickel and McCormmach 1986: 227–44; Kragh 1999: 105–19).

Matter possesses mass, a fundamental quality that the vortex atom theory had been unable to explain in terms of the ether. Electrodynamics did better, for on the basis of Maxwell's theory a sphere of electricity could be assigned an "electromagnetic mass" with properties corresponding to those of the mass of ordinary matter. The question then arose of whether the mass of electrical particles could be completely accounted for in terms of electromagnetism, meaning that material or ponderable mass could be entirely disregarded. The question was considered in the 1890s by physicists such as Joseph Larmor and Hendrik A. Lorentz, who suggested the existence of "electrons" pictured as discrete structures in, or excitations of, the electromagnetic ether. These theoretical entities, localized ether in disguise, turned into real particles in 1897, when J. J. Thomson in Cambridge discovered negative electrons in a celebrated series of experiments with cathode rays. By the closing years of the century, electrodynamics had given birth to electron physics, the conception of discrete subatomic particles wholly or partly of electromagnetic origin.

In a paper of 1900, significantly titled "On the Possibility of an Electromagnetic Foundation of Mechanics," the German physicist Wilhelm Wien outlined the basic features of a new research program the aim of which was to reduce all physical phenomena to electrodynamics. Five years later his compatriot Max Abraham referred to the program as the *electromagnetic world picture*, a name that indicates the theory's scope and ambitions. What, then, was the essence of this world picture or, in some versions, world view?

First of all, it was based on the belief that electrodynamics was more fundamental than mechanics, in the sense that the laws of mechanics could be fully understood electromagnetically. On the ontological level, it was claimed that there is nothing more to physical reality than what the science of electromagnetism tells us. All matter is made up of ethereal structures in the form of electrons, negative as well as positive. According to Augusto Righi, a prominent Italian physicist, electron theory was not so much an electromagnetic theory of matter as it was a replacement of

matter by electromagnetism. On the methodological level, the electromagnetic research program was markedly reductionistic, a theory of everything similar to the earlier vortex theory. The vision of the new and enthusiastic generation of electron physicists was, in a sense, that they were approaching the end of fundamental physics.

Although the ether was no less indispensable than in earlier theories, with the advent of electron physics its nature changed and became even more abstract and devoid of material attributes. Many physicists spoke of the ether as equivalent to the vacuum, or sometimes to absolute space. According to a German electron theorist, August Föppl, the conception of space without ether was analogous to the contradictory conception of a forest without trees. However, this abstract and thoroughly dematerialized ether was more popular among German physicists than among their British colleagues. J. J. Thomson, Lodge, and Larmor tended to conceive the ether as a physical medium that played both a physical and metaphysical role. Lodge's ether was far from the abstract nothingness that some German physicists ascribed to the ethereal medium: in 1907 he calculated its energy density to no less than 10^{30} joule per cubic meter. The same year J. J. Thomson characterized the ether as an invisible universe that functioned as the workshop of the material universe. "The natural phenomena that we observe are pictures woven on the looms of this invisible universe," he said (Thomson 1908: 550).

By the early years of the twentieth century the electromagnetic view of the world had taken off and emerged as a highly attractive substitute for what many considered the outdated materialistic-mechanical view. Electron enthusiasts believed that physics was at a crossroads and that electrodynamics was on its way to establishing a new and possibly final paradigm of understanding nature.

DISCOVERIES, EXPECTED AND UNEXPECTED

Physics at the turn of the century caused excitement not only because of the ambitious attempts to establish a new theoretical foundation, but also because of new discoveries that caught the physicists by surprise and contributed to the sense of crisis in parts of the physics community. While some of the discoveries could be interpreted within the framework of ether and electron physics, others stubbornly resisted explanation. The experimental study of cathode rays from evacuated discharge tubes resulted in Thomson's electron, and it also led to Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen's X-rays announced in early 1896. Thomson's electron of 1897 was subatomic, with a mass about 1,000 times smaller than the hydrogen atom, and he originally thought of it as a *protyle*, the long-sought constituent of all matter. And this was not all, for he also believed that the electrons making up the cathode rays were produced by the dissociation of atoms. The cathode-rays tube worked as an alchemical laboratory! Atoms, he speculated, were not the immutable building blocks of matter, as traditionally believed, but could be transformed into the atoms of another element. On a cosmic time-scale, this was what had happened in nature.

While the electron had been anticipated theoretically, the phenomenon of radioactivity discovered by Henri Becquerel in 1896 was completely unexpected (Malley 2011). It was only two years later, with Marie and Pierre Curie's discovery of the highly active elements polonium and radium, that radioactivity became an

exciting field of physical and chemical research, and also one that attracted great interest among physicians and the general public. Remarkably, radioactivity proved to be a spontaneous phenomenon that, contrary to chemical reactions, was independent of external conditions such as pressure, temperature, and catalysts. Moreover, the property had been detected only for a few heavy elements. Might it still be a general property of matter? In the first decade of the twentieth century it was widely believed that all elements were radioactive, only most of them of such a low activity that it escaped experimental detection.

Although radioactivity cannot be speeded up or slowed down, by 1902 it was established that the activity spontaneously decreases over time at a characteristic rate or half-life given by the substance. According to the decay law found by Ernest Rutherford and Frederick Soddy, atoms of a particular substance decay randomly and in such a way that the probability is independent of the atom's age. The decay or disintegration hypothesis was controversial because it challenged the age-old dogma of the immutability of the elements, but within a year or two growing evidence forced most physicists and chemists to accept it. Combined with the belief that radioactivity is a common property of matter, it allowed for speculations about the ephemeral nature of all matter. Was matter gradually melting away? If so, into what? Soon after Rutherford and Soddy had shocked the world of science with their transmutation hypothesis, experiments proved that radioactive change is accompanied by large amounts of energy. From where did the energy come? What was the cause of radioactivity?

There was no shortage of answers, but they were all speculative, short-lived and unconvincing. In desperation a few physicists toyed with the idea that energy conservation might not be valid in radioactive processes. However, the most accepted hypothesis was that the released energy was stored in the interior of the atom in the form of unstable configurations of electrons. In 1905 an unknown Swiss physicist by the name of Albert Einstein suggested that the source of energy was to be found in a loss of mass of the radioactive atoms. Few listened to him. In the decade following the discovery of radioactivity in 1896, the phenomenon remained deeply enigmatic and the source of countless speculations.

Not all scientists accepted the Rutherford-Soddy interpretation of radioactivity based on the transmutation of elements. As an instructive case, consider the eminent Russian chemist Dmitrii Mendeleev, the father of the periodic system (Gordin 2004: 207–38). A conservative and a realist in matters of chemistry and physics, he was disturbed by the new developments of *fin-de-siècle* physics such as the nonmaterial ether, the electron, the composite atom, and the evolution of elements based on a primordial form of matter. In works of 1903–4 he warned that these developments might lead to all kinds of mystical and spiritual pseudoscience, leaving the material foundation of natural science behind. Mendeleev realized that the modern views of radioactivity and the composite atom made element transmutation a possibility, which to him was a sure sign of unscientific alchemy.

His worries were not unfounded. Alchemy, mixed up with elements of cabalism and spiritualism, experienced a revival at the turn of the century, often justifying its excessive claims by the results of the new physics (Morrisson 2007). In France, *outré theories* flourished under the aegis of the Société Alchemique de la France and in England the spiritual and transcendental aspects of alchemy were cultivated within

the Theosophical Society and later the Alchemical Society. Soddy and William Ramsay, two of Britain's foremost radiochemists and both of them Nobel laureates (of 1921 and 1904, respectively), described radioactivity in alchemical terminology. If the transmutation theory of radium proved correct, said Ramsay in 1904, then "The philosopher's stone will have been discovered, and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that it may lead to that other goal of the philosophers of the dark ages – the *elixir vitae*" (Morrisson 2007: 118). As Mendeleev saw it, there were good reasons to reject the modern transmutation theory of radioactivity.

MORE MYSTERIOUS RAYS

Cathode rays, X-rays, and radioactivity were not the only kinds of rays that attracted attention in the years around 1900. In the wake of these discoveries followed several claims of new rays, most of which turned out to be spurious. The N-rays that the French physicist René Blondlot claimed to have discovered in 1903 attracted much interest and were for a couple of years investigated by dozens of physicists, most of them French. The new rays were emitted not only by discharge tubes but also by a variety of other sources such as the sun and gas burners. Sensationally, they seemed to be emitted also by the human nervous system, promising a connection between physics, physiology, and psychology. Although "seen" and examined by many physicists, by 1905 the consensus view emerged that N-rays do not exist. The effects on which the claim of the rays was based had no physical reality, but were of a psycho-sociological origin. To simplify, scientists saw them because they wanted to see them.

In 1896 another Frenchman, the author, sociologist, and amateur physicist Gustave Le Bon, announced the discovery of what he called "black light," a new kind of invisible radiation that he believed was distinct from, but possibly related to, X-rays (Nye 1974). Although black light turned out to be no more real than N-rays, for a while the discovery claim was taken seriously. In 1903 Le Bon was even nominated for a Nobel Prize in physics. Connected with the black light hypothesis, he developed a speculative, qualitative, and time-typical theory of cosmic evolution and devolution, which he presented in the best-selling *The Evolution of Matter* of 1906. The chief message of Le Bon was that all matter is unstable and degenerating, constantly emitting rays in the form of X-rays, radioactivity, and black light. Material qualities were held to be epiphenomena exhibited by matter in the process of transforming into the imponderable and shapeless ether from which it had once originated. The ether represented "the final nirvana to which all things return after a more or less ephemeral existence" (Le Bon 1907: 315). If all chemical elements emitted radioactive and similar ether-like rays, they would slowly melt away, thereby proving that matter could not be explained in materialistic terms. Energy and matter were two sides of the same reality, he declared, different stages in a grand evolutionary process that in the far future would lead to a kind of heat death, a pure ethereal state.

Although clearly speculative and amateurish, many scientists found Le Bon's ideas attractive or came independently to somewhat similar cosmic scenarios. The views of Lodge in England were in many ways congruent with those of Le Bon. In both cases, the views appealed to the anti-materialist, evolutionary, and holistic sentiments that were broadly popular in the *fin-de-siècle* period. It was part of the

Zeitgeist, both in France and elsewhere, that many scientists were willing to challenge established knowledge, including doctrines such as the permanence of the chemical elements and the law of energy conservation. The very qualities of permanence and conservation were considered suspicious within an intellectual climate emphasizing transformation, evolution, and becoming.

Part of the intellectual climate at the time tended toward anti-science, or at least anti-scientism, in so far that it contrasted the scientific world view with an idealistic understanding of the world that included irrational, emotional, and spiritual perspectives. Le Bon's quasi-scientific speculations had considerable appeal among those who were dissatisfied with positivistic ideals and longed for an undogmatic, more youthful science that would better satisfy what they associated with the human spirit. His ideas struck a chord in a period that has been described as a "revolt against positivism" (Hughes 1958) and in which science was charged with being morally bankrupt (MacLeod 1982). Although far from anti-science, Le Bon joined the trend and flirted with its values. According to a French newspaper of 1903, "Poincaré and Le Bon fearlessly undermine the old scientific dogmas [and] do not fear saying that these cannot fulfill and satisfy the human spirit. We recognize along with these teachers . . . the bankruptcy of science" (Nye 1974: 185).

In *The Value of Science*, a collection of articles from 1905, Poincaré argued that physics was in a state of crisis, not only because of the uncertainty with respect to mass and energy conservation, the problems with the second law of thermo-dynamics, and the new electron theory, but also because of the mysterious radium – "that grand revolutionist of the present time," as he called it. Lenin, in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, approvingly quoted Poincaré, and he was not the only one to consider radioactivity revolutionary in more than the scientific sense. The disintegration hypothesis, and radioactivity generally, was sometimes seen as subversive not only to the established scientific world view but also to the political order. According to the Spanish physicist and intellectual José Echegaray, radium appeared as "a revolutionary metal, like an anarchist that comes to disturb the established order and to destroy all or most of the laws of the classical science" (Herran 2008: 180).

SPIRITUALISM AND HYPERSPACE

As mentioned, there was in some parts of the *fin-de-siècle* scientific community a tendency to extend results of the new physical world picture to areas of a non-scientific nature, such as alchemy, occultism, spiritualism, and related paranormal beliefs. In England, the Society for Psychical Research had been founded in 1882 and among its members were luminaries such as Lord Rayleigh, J. J. Thomson, William Crookes, and Lodge. Membership of the society indicated an interest in the psychic or spiritual realm, but not necessarily a belief in the reality of psychic phenomena (Oppenheim 1985). In spite of different attitudes, the scientific members of the society agreed that spirit should not automatically be banished from the world revealed by modern science.

Although the standard view then as now was to consider spiritualism antithetical to science, many believers argued that séances with psychic media provided *scientific* evidence for the survival of the spirit after bodily death. Neither did the majority of

scientists perceive science as inherently inimical to spiritualist belief. They thought that the reality of psychic phenomena could be examined by the ordinary critical and experimental methods of science. But there were also those who reached the conclusion that science and spiritualism, although not in conflict, could not be reconciled either: the study of spiritualism was legitimate in its own right, as based on religious and psychological considerations, but there was no such thing as spiritualist science.

With few exceptions, physical scientists in the Society for Psychical Research avoided explaining spiritual phenomena by invoking the ether, electromagnetic forces, radioactive transmutation, or other parts of modern physics. Yet some did, such as the chemist and physicist Crookes who had become convinced of the reality of telepathy. In an address of 1897 he vaguely suggested that telepathic powers might be explained by X-rays or something like them acting on nervous centers in the brain. From a different perspective, in 1902 a Spanish socialist magazine explained to its readers that radioactivity was likely to do away with supernatural causes of telepathy and similar paranormal phenomena, which instead could be explained on a sound physical basis (Herran 2008).

Contrary to some of his colleagues in England, the Leipzig astrophysicist Johann Karl Friedrich Zöllner was convinced that spiritualism belonged to the realm of science. In the years around 1880 he investigated in great detail the spiritual world in séances with participation of leading German scientists and philosophers (Treitel 2004). A believer in the reality of spiritualist manifestations, Zöllner published in 1879 his *Transcendental Physics*, a book that appeared in several editions in both German and English. To his mind, the project of a transcendental physics including both material and spiritual phenomena was but a natural extension of the astro-physical project of accommodating terrestrial and celestial phenomena within the same theoretical framework. The distinguishing feature in Zöllner's transcendental physics was the crucial role played by a hypothetical fourth dimension of space as the site of paranormal phenomena. He was convinced that the reality of four-dimensional space could be established experimentally, indeed that there was already incontrovertible scientific evidence for it. This extended space was transcendental but nonetheless subject to physical analysis, and it was destined to revolutionize physics.

Ideas of a four-dimensional "hyperspace" were common at the end of the nineteenth century, if rarely entertained by leading scientists and in most cases without the direct association to spiritualism that Zöllner advocated. The English-American mathematician and author Charles Howard Hinton wrote a series of articles and books, including *The Fourth Dimension* of 1904, in which he claimed that the extra space dimension might explain physical phenomena such as the nature of ether and electricity. Among the few scientists of distinction who entertained similar ideas was the American astronomer Simon Newcomb, who in 1896 cautiously speculated that "Perhaps the phenomena of radiation and electricity may yet be explained by vibration in a fourth dimension" (Beichler 1988: 212).

Although hyperspace models of the ether and similar speculations of a fourth dimension were well known in the *fin-de-siècle* period, they were peripheral to mainstream developments in physics, such as the turn from mechanics to electro-dynamics. The fourth dimension caught the public imagination, was eagerly adopted

by occultists and idealist philosophers, and became an important utopian theme in literature and art in the early twentieth century (Henderson 2009). Most physicists considered it a harmless speculation of no scientific use.

TOWARD MODERN PHYSICS

The spirit of physics in the *fin-de-siècle* period was both conservative and revolutionary. According to Erwin Hiebert (1990: 240), the transition in physics – in retrospect a revolution – "took place in a relatively unbroken and tranquil but reformist and spirited manner."

At the same time as the majority of physicists worked within the framework of Newtonian mechanics, there was a growing dissatisfaction with this framework, in part for scientific reasons and in part for reasons that may best be described as ideological. The dissatisfaction resulted in what has been called a "neoromantic" trend (Brush 1978), attempts to establish the physical sciences on a new foundation that did not share the elements of materialism with which the older paradigm was often associated. As a result, classical physics was partially overthrown, but without a new "modern" physics taking its place. The great unifying concepts of the new physics were energy and ether, the latter described by the equations of electromagnetism rather than mechanics. Whether in the form of energetics or the electrodynamic world picture, the great expectations of the neoromantic physicists were not fulfilled. The revolution failed or rather, it was overtaken by another and at the time hardly visible revolution that was antagonistic to both the classical world view and the one envisioned by *fin-de-siècle* physicists of a more radical outlook.

The two pillars of this revolution – what today is recognized as the beginning of modern physics – were Planck's quantum theory of 1900 and Einstein's theory of special relativity dating from 1905. Both theories stood apart from the fashionable theories of the time based on ether, energy, and electrodynamics. With the recognition of the theories of quanta and relativity the ethereal world view so characteristic of *fin-de-siècle* physics became obsolete. Einstein summarily dismissed the ether as an unnecessary construct, and the new theory of quanta proved incompatible with the electrodynamic ether embraced by avant-garde physicists. As seen in retrospect, the enduring and really important contributions of the *fin-de-siècle* period to modern physics were not the ambitious attempts to create a new unified foundation of physics. They are rather to be found in the period's experimental discoveries of, for example, X-rays, the electron, and radioactivity. These discoveries were initially interpreted within the framework of *fin-de-siècle* physics, but, with the possible exception of the electron, they were not products of it.

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BIOLOGY AND EUGENICS

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Marius Turda

During the *fin de siècle*, eugenics promised a much-desired racial enrichment and physical regeneration. This was simultaneously a biological and political project. In the name of science, eugenicists fused hereditarian and cultural determinism with modern visions of a 'new society' and a 'new man'. They insisted that both pursued the same goal: to heal the societal wounds torn open by modernity. Ratified by the authority of the biological sciences of the late nineteenth century, eugenics thus perfectly embodied the *fin-de-siècle* vision of a new society able to withstand a perceived process of cultural decay and biological degeneration. (For various national contexts see: Schorske 1980; Weber 1988; Pick 1989; Steinberg 2011.)

By the end of the nineteenth century, nations were increasingly being portrayed as living organisms, functioning according to biological laws, and embodying great genetic qualities symbolising innate racial virtues transmitted from generation to generation. After 1900, especially, this shifting relationship between the individual and the racial community to which he or she belonged contributed significantly to the emergence of a eugenic ontology of the nation. As a result, the individual body became a synecdoche for the collective national body depicted as an organism susceptible to the biological debilities that attend birth, growth, aging and dying. Responding to modernity's ruinous effects on the national body – such as over-population, poverty, social transgression and so on – eugenics located the individual and national body within a specifically scientific discourse, one whose legitimacy stemmed from its preoccupation with improving the racial quality of the population and protecting its health.

The idea of man's improvement was not some paean to the human spirit only but – equally important – a precise evaluation of the human body's place in nature. More than any other scientific movement during the *fin de siècle*, eugenics changed the conceptual, genealogical and biological understanding of the human body. This transformation was certainly not as extreme as some suggested it to be, but there is no doubt about the renewed importance *fin-de-siècle* modernity bestowed upon the body in the establishment of a new biological vision of humanity (Turda 2013).

Considering the nineteenth-century discoveries in the natural sciences and biology, it is no surprise that eugenicists bravely posed as creators of new scientific

knowledge, one now founded on the progressive refashioning of biological identity. This was not necessarily a straightforward process. As Angelique Richardson has pointed out: 'Biology is not overtly concerned with social transformation but it has the potential to change human self-perception, and to affect social relations' (Richardson 2003: 9). To be sure, biologists often rejected the social, cultural, political and racial pretentions professed by eugenics (Bowler 2003), but – as will be discussed in this chapter – eugenics was nevertheless the scion of the scientific climate of the *fin de siècle* and its accompanying biological ontology.

GALTON'S *FIN-DE-SIÈCLE* EUGENICS

'The growth of science is the growth of the ideas of scientists. Each new or modified idea was born in the brain of an individual scientist' (Mayr 1982: 830). This is an apt description of how Francis Galton's theory of selective breeding – one which he termed eugenics – emerged at the end of the nineteenth century (Galton 1883). In *fin-de-siècle* Britain, Galton phrased the aspirations of eugenics as the dream of a society populated by healthy, well-educated individuals aware of their human value.

Much has been written on Francis Galton's contribution to the emergence of eugenics (Forrest 1974; MacKenzie 1981; Kevles 1985; Mazumdar 1991; Gillham 2001; Bulmer 2003). Following a series of publications during the 1870s and 1880s, Galton had embarked on the formulation of a new scientific philosophy based on the theory of natural selection and inheritance, which he termed eugenics, following an entrenched Victorian penchant for ancient Greek culture. He had hoped that the old order, sanctified by religion and outdated scientific dogmas, would ultimately be replaced by secularisation and the growing acceptance of theories on evolution and heredity. This is clearly expressed in his 1901 Huxley Lecture at the Anthropological Institute in London, suggestively entitled 'The Possible Improvement of the Human Breed'. Referring to the Parable of Talents in the New Testament, Galton praised the 'good and faithful servant' of the parable, who knew how to turn his five talents into ten through wise planning. 'We each receive at our birth a definite endowment', Galton noted, 'some receiving many talents, others few, but each person responsible for the profitable use of that which has been entrusted to him' (Galton 1909: 3).

Galton's eugenic ideas were hardly original. The main tenets of eugenics derived equally from Classical and Christian philosophies of history, and from nineteenth-century theories of evolution and progress, especially the work of Charles Darwin, Thomas Malthus and Herbert Spencer. Believing in the growing acceptance of Darwinism, and thus of a new scientific doctrine about the origins of man, Galton envisaged a leading role for biological and statistical sciences in deciding the future of humanity. Like other *fin-de-siècle* biologists, Galton was convinced that there was a human subject in history and that there was the need for its social and biological improvement.

Galton recommended that the improvement of human beings should become a systematic, ritualised practice, with the result that eugenic harmony would be achieved after a few generations. Biology was crucial to this eugenic narrative of human improvement. A person's composite genetic history was referred to habitually whenever the corporeality of the eugenic subject was discussed. The body, for eugenicists, was thus a heterogeneous synthesis of biology and history, and Galton's

eugenics emphasised both aspects in his celebrated definition of eugenics: 'the science which deals with those social agencies that influence, mentally or physically, the racial qualities of future generations' (Galton 1905: 11). The time had come, Galton further argued, to establish the groundwork for the general reception of eugenics. First, he contended, eugenics 'must be made familiar as an academic question' (Galton 1909: 42). Eugenicists regularly complained that the general public, and even numerous scientists, were yet to be persuaded of the scientific importance of hereditarian theories of human improvement. One strategy towards this goal, Galton continued, was to have eugenics 'be recognized as a subject whose practical development deserves serious consideration', namely the convergence of the biological with the political into a practical programme of social engineering. Building on these achievements, then, one could hope to introduce eugenics 'into the national conscience, like a new religion' (ibid.). Eugenics, consequently, had 'indeed strong claims to become an orthodox religious tenet of the future, for eugenics co-operate with the workings of nature by securing that humanity shall be represented by the fittest races. What nature does blindly, slowly, and ruthlessly, man may do providently, quickly, and kindly' (ibid.). In appropriating the authority of religion for eugenics, Galton pondered what religion might be without divine design while, at the same time, demanding that eugenics be seen to challenge the premises underlying other scientific disciplines dealing with the body of the individual, such as biology and anthropology.

What emerges out of this eugenic reading of the biological subject is a new epistemology of the human. Galton reiterated his commitment to a modern theory of racial improvement, viewing it within a new biological ontology predicated upon a view of individual and collective regeneration. Eugenics, from this perspective, was not about encouraging the individual's public involvement as it had been in the individualist liberal tradition, but a means of encouraging precisely the opposite: the fulfilment of individual aspirations within the collective realm. If, as Peter Gay suggests, 'the nineteenth century was a golden age for incubating new dogma' (Gay 2007: 28), eugenics was certainly one of them, resting on the scientific authority of the natural sciences but aiming to forge a biological theology for the future. The eugenic vocabulary of the *fin de siècle* embodied this distinctive utopian vision. As Edgar Schuster – the first Francis Galton Research Fellow in National Eugenics at the University of London – put it in 1912:

> the most important task before the apostle of Eugenics is the dissemination of the Eugenic ideal. By this is meant the co-ordinated group of sentiments, aspirations, and desires, based on a right appreciation of moral and social values, which will lead those in whom they are implanted to enter gladly, but wisely, and with a sense of responsibility, on the duties and privileges of marriage and parenthood.
>
> (Schuster 1912)

What made eugenics a characteristic document of *fin-de-siècle* modernity was its blend of the pathos of biology with the restraint of morality. The eugenicists were the priests of a new scientific religion, champions of a biological utopia. Thus portrayed, eugenics aimed to re-create society, both in terms of its *quantity* and its

quality, according to a set of principles based on the laws of heredity as well as knowledge of the social and biological environment. It is at the intersection of these coordinates that Science and the idea of Progress came to serve the eugenic discourse of human perfectibility. Thus, while eugenics was indeed designed to remodel the individual and the society, it also illustrated something else, namely the implication of transcendence, accompanying the knowledge of how the improvement of man's *nature* could in fact be achieved.

Yet for Galton, persuasion rather than coercion was eugenics' primary purpose. Moreover, he pictured an underlying unity to the human race. He, like other scientists of the *fin de siècle*, was aware of human imperfection but he assumed that science – together with training and education – could help with individual and collective improvement. There is no better illustration of this belief than the eugenic obsession with degeneration.

THE SPECTRE OF BIOLOGICAL DEGENERATION

Degeneration infused eugenic epistemologies of human improvement with a sense of urgency. Max Nordau recognised this situation perfectly when he depicted Western civilisation as condemned to extinction. 'In our days', he wrote, 'there have arisen in more highly-developed minds vague qualms of a Dusk of the Nations, in which all suns and all stars are gradually waning, and mankind with all its institutions and creations is perishing in the midst of a dying world' (Nordau 1993: 2). Nordau's apocalyptic vision echoed the concerns of many eugenicists disturbed by the alleged racial deterioration of the European nations. Just a couple of years earlier, in his acclaimed *Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism*, Edwin Ray Lankester presented his evolutionary theory of degeneration, insisting on the parasitic nature of his contemporary society, which he believed – in Darwinist fashion – 'may be defined as a gradual change of the structure in which the organism becomes adapted to *less* varied and *less* complex conditions of life' (Lankester 1880: 32). The exaltation of genetic heritage and hereditary patrimony became a favourite topic for eugenic propaganda. Some authors outlined degeneration in a variety of historical contexts, universalising it. The Italian anthropologist and eugenicist Giuseppe Sergi, for instance, visualised degeneration as the prevalent human condition, as increasingly more individuals 'survived in the struggle for existence', living in 'inferior conditions' and parading the physical marks of their biological inferiority (Sergi 1889: 25). Sergi's emphasis on degeneration as a characteristic modern condition was echoed by eugenicists across Europe. In 1891, the German physician Wilhelm Schallmayer, one of the founders of German racial hygiene movement, published *Über die drohende körperliche Entartung der Kulturmenschheit und die Verstaatlichung des ärztlichen Standes* (*Concerning the Imminent Physical Degeneration of Civilized Humanity and the Nationalization of the Medical Profession*). Schallmayer spelled out the negative effects that modern civilisation had on the organic nature of humanity. Modern science, through medical expertise, scientific knowledge, penal and corrective institutions – in other words, the calculative rationality of the state – only contributed to the pathologisation of society. By conceiving degeneration in medical and epistemic terms, and situated within the interstices of power and knowledge, Schallmayer found its modern articulation in the discourse and practice

of heredity and eugenics. What this biologised treatment of degeneration margi- nalised and penalised was the 'unfit' and racially 'unworthy' individuals seen as impediments to the collective improvement (Schallmayer 1891).

Following a similar line of reasoning, Karl Pearson's *The Problems of Practical Eugenics* argued that 'the attempt to improve the racial fitness of the nation by purely *environmental* reforms, the removal of child and mother from unhealthy surroundings and the provision for the weak and the suffering' has failed 'in promoting racial efficiency' (Pearson 1912: 34). His diagnosis was indeed pessimistic: 'we find ourselves as a race confronted with race suicide; we watch with concern the loss of our former racial stability and national stamina' (ibid).

But eugenics could provide the antidote to biological degeneration. 'Artificial selection', Sergi noted, 'was regeneration' (Sergi 1889: 228). The eugenic tropes of rejuvenation and improvement were used as a counterweight to racial and social degeneration, indicating the overlap between the protection of the individual body and that of the national community. In Spain, the eugenicist Enrique Madrazo had proposed the creation of a *Centro para la Promoción de la Raza* (Centre for the Promotion of the Race) in 1904, expounding his conviction that 'it is in our scope to be able to purify the body and the soul of the human species, so that the black marks which today sadden its existence are removed'. Madrazo also highlighted the secular dimension of his eugenic programme. 'The religious ideal', he argued, 'must be substituted by that of science; in other words, the sentimental ideal must be substituted by that of reason, which has already replaced the former in those societies which are in the forefront of culture' (Madrazo 1904: 137). For Madrazo, eugenics and the biological rejuvenation it entailed would ultimately transform and modernise Spain (Cleminson 2000).

As a cluster of ideas of social and biological improvement, eugenics centred on redefining the individual and its national community according to the scientific laws of natural selection and heredity. In the majority of cases, the eugenicists relied on the state's intervention to assure the success of its programme of biological rejuvena- tion. It was believed that the regulatory functions of the modern state ought to ensure not only social control and discipline, but to also provide mechanisms enabling racially 'valuable' individuals to flourish and reproduce in greater numbers. Confronted with such difficult circumstances, Pearson believed the eugenicists' responsibility to be twofold: they could either 'follow the easy course of appeal to popular feeling and untutored human emotion, in which case they will create, like philanthropic effort, immediate interest, have their day and their fashion, and leave no progressive impress on racial evolution'. Conversely, they could 'take the harder road of first ascertaining the laws which regulate the human herd, of creating a science which shall dictate an ultimate eugenic art' (Pearson 1891: 37).

These anxieties about racial prowess were compounded by the spectre of bio- logical degeneration. The Boer War of 1899–1902 brought these fears to the general public's consciousness, adding to a general impression that the British population had began to decline physically. In fact, social commentators were not far from the truth as the birthrate more than halved between 1871 and 1914. Authors like the Fabian socialist Sidney Webb, in his 1907 *The Decline in the Birth-Rate* (Webb 1907), and the eugenicist Ethel Elderton, in her 1914 *Report on the English Birth Rate*, confirmed these sombre predictions of biological decline (Elderton 1914).

No surprise, then, that an Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration was established in 1903, reflecting growing public and official concerns with national degeneration. Such biological predicaments were, however, not reserved for Britain alone.

New discourses on degeneration had emerged in France in the wake of the publication of such classics as the 1857 *Traité des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l'espèce humaine* (*Treatise on the Moral, Intellectual and Physical Degeneration of the Human Species*), by the psychiatrist Bénédict August Morel, and the 1873 *L'Hérédité: Étude psychologique sur ses phénomènes, ses lois, ses causes, ses conséquences* (*Heredity: A Psychological Study of Its Phenomena, Laws, Causes and Consequences*) by the psychologist Théodule Ribot. If French psychiatry provided one source for this anxiety about degeneration (Faber 1997), Italian criminal anthropology provided another. In a number of books including *The Criminal Man* (1875) and *The Delinquent Man* (1976), the criminologist Cesare Lombroso transformed the criminal body into an example of deviancy and degeneration (Horn 2003).

At the confluence of these intellectual endeavours was the need to identify the individual body as an appropriate object of scientific knowledge and regulation. Eugenicists across Europe adopted many of these arguments in their crusade for racial improvement. Increasingly, the race's alleged degeneration became central to medical and anthropological research. Some authors, like the Austrian military psychiatrist Emil Mattauschek examined Europe's internal 'Others' – the Bosnians (Mattauschek 1908) – while others, like the Italian statistician Corrado Gini, transferred the locus of degeneration to a cluster of idiosyncratic historical and cultural entities which he grouped into a new racial entity, the 'Latin nation' (Gini 1936).

Eugenic efforts to counter biological degeneration were often accompanied by the formulation of rhetorical, institutional and disciplinary strategies of social and racial protectionism. To this end, eugenics was consciously politicised. If in Germany it was the conservative Right that emerged as the racial guardians of the nation, in France, some of the most vocal defenders of the race came from the revolutionary Left and the anarchists (Sonn 2010). The birth control campaigner and anarchist Paul Robin, for instance, placed the issue of fertility among the lower classes at the centre of his neo-Malthusian programme of racial rejuvenation. If authors like Georges Sorel and Charles Péguy predicated the regeneration of France on patriotism and the Christian tradition, Robin preferred a rational planning approach to motherhood. In 1896 Robin established the League for Human Regeneration together with the journal *Régénération* (*Regeneration*), based on a programme of racial improvement he had already outlined in his 1895 *Dégénérescence de l'espèce humaine* (*The Degeneration of the Human Race*). Opposing other eugenicists who sought to encourage the poor to limit their reproduction in order to counteract the negative effects of modernity, Robin argued for birth control as a technique through which the poor could, in fact, control the internal dynamic of change in society. As his Spanish disciple Luis Bulffi pointed out while launching the neo-Malthusian journal *Salud y Fuerza* (*Health and Strength*) in 1904, the purpose of eugenics was:

> to make available biological and social scientific data so that future generations
> are not like our own and so that the ones about to be born are not the result of

hurried passions, of a chance sexual encounter. Instead, they should be the result of the conscious decision of healthy parents, who have vigorous bodies and minds, and who are perfectly aware of the task they are undertaking.

(Bulffi 1904: 1–2)

Eugenics and the control of reproduction held the key to social and biological regeneration. That this was clearly the case can be seen in the developments of psychiatric discourses on degeneracy in Eastern Europe. In 1874, the founder of Romanian psychiatry Alexandru Sutzu established a direct relationship between heredity and the degeneration of nations (Sutzu 1874), while in his 1876 *Filosofia medicală: Despre amelioraţiunea rasei umane* (*Medical Philosophy: On the Improvement of Human Race*) the dermatologist Mihail Petrini-Galatzi went even further in advocating that members of communities suffering from hereditary diseases should be discouraged from reproduction (Petrini-Galatzi 1876). The Czech sociologist Břetislav Foustka, on the other hand, integrated the issue of national degeneration within the larger ideal of humanity, providing a sense of a biologically guaranteed physical order and moral purpose. In his 1907 *Die Abstinenz als Kulturproblem mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der österreichischen Völkerstämme* (*Abstinence as a Cultural Problem with Particular Consideration to Austrian Nationalities*), Foustka provided a further reading of the idea of resisting decay and degeneration through an extensive programme of rebirth: 'Everywhere one calls for regeneration; and not only political, ethical, and religious but also biological regeneration' (Foustka 1908: 6).

Within the emerging hygienic culture of the twentieth century, the 'lower classes' and 'inferior individuals' found themselves at once rejected and celebrated, decisively transforming not only representations of societies and nations in terms of their racial quality but also the eugenic discourse itself. As Saleeby warned in his 1911 *The Methods of Race-Regeneration*, '[i]t must be remembered that we shall not raise or regenerate the race merely by purging it of diseased elements, however necessary and desirable that process may be' (Saleeby 1911: 45). Yet 'purging' was what some eugenicists deemed essential to biological improvement. The British physician Robert Rentoul argued in his 1903 *Proposed Sterilization of Certain Mental and Physical Degenerates*, and again in his 1906 *Race Culture; or, Race Suicide?*, that the 'white race' was in peril due to the low birthrate exhibited by the better classes (as opposed to the high birthrate of the lower classes), coupled with racial intermarriage and the increasing number of feeble-minded individuals and asocial elements (Rentoul 1903 and 1906). Of the social vocabularies available to eugenicists to articulate their concern with the increased number of 'unfit individuals' within society, one consistently used was the questioning of government welfare programmes or protective legislation on the grounds that such social reforms enabled the hereditarily unfit to survive, thereby weakening society as a whole.

Practical eugenics was thus considered to be the best alternative to social and racial degeneracy. But with few notable exceptions, eugenicists were not interested in redeeming those deemed 'unfit', preferring to idealise the healthy body of the nation and the race instead. The internal trajectory eugenics followed may have differed among countries like Britain, France, Germany, Romania and Spain, as scholars of eugenics have repeatedly insisted, but the biological regeneration of the national body proposed by eugenicists was essentially the same across Europe

(Bashford and Levine 2010). In this manner, negative eugenic practices like segregation and sterilisation, synonymous with complete submission of individual liberties, could be conjoined with the ideal of a healthy national community.

POLITICAL BIOLOGY

To use Stephen Jay Gould's expression, eugenics was in many ways a form of 'biological determinism' presupposing that 'shared behavioural norms, and the social and economic differences between human groups – primarily races, classes, and sexes – arise from inherited, inborn distinctions and that society, in this sense, is an accurate reflection of biology' (Gould 1981: 20). Just as Darwinism may be seen as challenging the hegemonic role of religion and the biological fixity of the human species, eugenics may be seen as supporting the very notion of humanity as defined in terms of a hierarchy of distinct social bodies, some better biologically equipped than others. As discussed above, eugenics was an intrinsic part of a scientific ethos and aspired to offer a doxology of racial development that embraced humanity as a whole, and reconciled theories of particular, national evolution with a commitment to a new future. Intellectual commitment, in addition to the new scientific ethos, was equally necessary for the transformation of eugenics from a specialised scientific discourse into a topic of public interest.

In many ways, the birth of eugenics expressed Galton's concerns with the evolution of British society. In others, eugenics was a template for something that was much more universal. Across the world, groups of physicians, biologists, sociologists and health reformers helped establish eugenics as the ideology of the future, and groups of activists helped define eugenics not only as a body of ideas but also as a scientific community. On the one hand, this political biology articulated new social and racial genealogies of identity indicating how eugenic discourses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were transformed into a totalising national narrative about biologically re-designed societies. On the other hand, this narrative legitimised the projects of national regeneration to be implemented on behalf of a new racial community.

Thus, in his seminal 1895 text on racial hygiene the German eugenicist Alfred Ploetz argued against pursuing those methods of social selection that encouraged the 'weak' to survive and reproduce. 'Individual hygiene', Ploetz claimed, was to be subordinated to the 'principle of racial hygiene' (Ploetz 1895: 13). In 1908 another prominent figure of European eugenics, the Norwegian Jon Alfred Mjøen, divided racial hygiene into three thematic clusters. The first dealt with negative 'measures for diminishing undesirable racial elements', namely 'permanent segregation of recidivists in working colonies and the sterilization of the unfit'; the second cluster referred to positive 'measures aimed at the increase of valuable racial elements', including 'selective internal colonization with schemes for diminishing the movement from country to town'; 'introduction of human biology in school and university curricula' and 'centrally controlled propaganda in knowledge of the renewal, health and nutrition of the population, with bureaux for giving information on questions of racial hygiene'. Finally, the third cluster, which Mjøen termed 'prophylactic race hygiene (protection of the unborn child)', consisted of campaigns 'against racial poisons, venereal diseases, narcotics, etc.; certificates of health before marriage,

including the discouragement of marriage with widely unrelated races; biological assessment of the whole population; immigration control based on biological standards, with powers to prevent admission' (quoted in Hodson 1935: 42).

These definitional endeavours emerged in a context of creative institutionalisation of eugenics during the *fin de siècle*. Encouraged by the reception of Galton's ideas in Britain, the Eugenics Education Society was established in 1907 in London. Other countries followed this example; in Scandinavia, for instance, a Swedish Society for Race Hygiene was formed in Stockholm in 1909. American eugenicists had established the Station for Experimental Evolution at Cold Spring Harbor as early as 1904, followed by the Eugenics Record Office in 1910. These initial efforts to popularise eugenics in Europe and the US did produce the outcome Galton had anticipated, namely the recognition of eugenics as 'a subject whose practical development deserves serious consideration'. The French Eugenics Society was established in 1912; in Central Europe, the Austrians founded eugenic societies in 1913, followed shortly thereafter by the Hungarians in 1914. Also in 1914, an Italian Eugenics Committee convened at the Roman Society of Anthropology. By then, the German Society for Racial Hygiene and the German League for National Regeneration and Heredity, both established in 1905, were intensely involved in disseminating eugenics to the general public, both at home and abroad, as illustrated by the Hygiene Exhibition organised in Dresden in 1911. More than 400 participants from countries as diverse as India and Greece attended the First International Eugenics Congress in London in 1912.

The exponents of British, German, Scandinavian and American eugenics – Galton, Saleeby, Ploetz, Mjøen and Davenport – agreed on the biological foundations of eugenics, which often translated into an over-emphasis on heredity seen as a catalyst as much for improvement as for degeneration. In his 1911 *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* Davenport fused Mendelian genetics with quantitative approaches to biology to promote his eugenic programme. 'Eugenics', Davenport believed, was 'the science of the improvement of the human race by better breeding' (Davenport 1911: 1). According to Davenport, eugenics could ultimately offer 'the salvation of the race through heredity' (ibid: 260).

There was, however, another intellectual trajectory, one that – while appreciative of biology and heredity – was equally interested in the cultural and social foundations of eugenics. In the Mediterranean and Latin American countries, eugenics was largely characterised by the improvement of environmental influences on mothers and infants, puériculture, pronatalism and rural hygiene (Schneider 1990; Nash 1992; Bucur 2002; Richards 2004; Cleminson 2006; Cassata 2011; Turda 2012; Eraso 2013). Other eugenicists in Central Europe shared similar concerns. For instance, describing the aims of the Czech Eugenics Society (established in 1915), Ladislav Haškovec classified them into:

(1) the special study of biology; (2) the dissemination of knowledge of the conditions of physical and psychic health among all classes of the population, together with the conviction of responsibility toward future generations; (3) the fight against hereditary diseases and those of early infancy; (4) the encouragement of care for women in confinement, of the new-born, and of nursing women;

(5) the battle against alcoholism and tuberculosis, against venereal diseases and against all the other factors which destroy the roots of the nation.

(Haškovec 1923: 440)

Indeed, the eugenic values of war that were proposed at the beginning of the Great War included the removal of existing vicissitudes and the systematisation of the biological power of the state. To this end, eugenicists offered a vision of the state as the laboratory for the nation's rehabilitation, assuming that only the state could mobilise and manage the vast biological and social engineering needed during and, especially, after the war.

It was largely due to the demographic changes brought about by the war that political elites turned to eugenics as a means of promoting social and biological revivalism amid a disillusioned political environment. Social reformers and eugenicists, in turn, alerted the government to the need for a rigorous health policy integrating eugenic principles. What ensued was an intense debate not only about national health but, ultimately, about national survival. For these measures to be adopted eugenics had to be institutionalised and eugenic ideas put into practice. The architects of the eugenic transformation of the state emphasised that society's purification with a view to its biological continuity depended upon the transmission of new health codes and hygienic values to the general public.

Connected to the theme of eugenic morality is the control of sexuality and fertility (Franks 2005). 'A eugenic girl is a healthy girl, and a healthy girl is an attractive girl' – so claimed *The Eugenics Review* in 1913 (quoted in Richardson 2003: 81). Moreover, eugenicists repeatedly depicted women as sources of racial rejuvenation (Bland 1995). In 1915 the prominent Hungarian gynaecologist János Bársony contributed a study to the *Archiv für Frauenkunde und Eugenetik* (*Journal of Women Studies and Eugenics*), in which he maintained that the war had destroyed the 'healthy and strong men of the nation'. Racial fears were thus seemingly justified by statistical evidence about the numerical increase of the 'inferior individuals in the population'; eugenics, Bársony argued, needed to respond efficiently to wartime challenges and traumas.

Two techniques were drafted to ensure the 'recovery of the race'. The first course of action was to increase the birth rate. 'In Hungary, for example, the family with six children is regarded as a rarity in contrast to the past, and there are entire regions in which the "one-child system" dominates' (Bársony 1915: 268). Additionally, some of the factors contributing to 'the stagnation of the Magyar race', such as 'birth-prevention, abortion and abortionists', were to be neutralised by preventive eugenic measures. The second approach underlined precisely this point: 'The new generation should be not only large, numerically speaking, but also primarily healthy. The health of the parents is the first condition for [the recovery of the race] to happen' (ibid: 272). More generally, the reappraisal of the mother's eugenic role resulted in a nuanced evaluation of the relationship between eugenics and maternity. There was thus a convergence of interest between the nation's future and the protection of the mother. In order to raise the racial quality of future generations, Bársony advised the Hungarian government to 'begin by protecting women' (ibid: 275).

In Italy, the project of protecting women, as with all other eugenic schemes, involved mobilising the medical profession and state resources. This is particularly well illustrated by Luigi Maria Bossi's editorial in the Italian journal *La ginecologia*

moderna (*Modern Gynaecology*), highlighting the protection of women in terms of its social and legal consequences:

> *The defense*, therefore, *of women and race*, in relation with neo-Malthusianism, criminal abortion and the right to abortion of women systematically violated by the Germans constitutes a great, complex problem that must be resolved through three indivisible relationships: social, juridical and medical. And it is above all pertinent to gynecologists, because they are responsible, as is obvious, for the basal concept of conservation of the species, of the present life and health of the mother, and subordinately, of the life and health that is the product of conception. The social and juridical sides must naturally be subordinate to the gynaecological side.
>
> (Bossi 1917: 128)

Unborn children not only served as the ubiquitous emblem for the nation's biological regeneration, but provided eugenicists with a mobilising medical agenda. The birth of healthy children was increasingly viewed less as an exclusively private matter, and more as a matter of major concern to the state. 'Perhaps nothing betrayed the Victorian bourgeois origins of the eugenics movement', Richard Soloway remarked, 'more than its idealization of the genetically precocious large family reared under the watchful guidance of the devoted "race mother"' (Soloway 1995: 110). The devotion of motherhood to the patriotic cause contributed not only to the strengthening of nationalism but also enabled states to control sexual reproduction and proposed a normative ideal of femininity. As the German eugenicist Wilhelm Schallmayer insisted, the existing political elite's priority should be to use eugenic propaganda to create a sense of social responsibility towards future generations (Schallmayer 1915).

The state was essential to eugenic work. In Hungary, the Society for Racial Hygiene and Population Policy received most of the institutional support it needed to spread eugenic propaganda from the Ministry of War. For instance, in response to the serious problems affecting Hungarian civilians during the war such as contagious diseases and mortality, the Ministry created special commissions to promote the well-being of the family, including marriage counselling and medical assistance for venereal infections (Turda 2014). These objectives were pursued, to different degrees, by most European nations, indicating how rapidly eugenic ideas had spread towards the end of the war. New organisations joined established ones, such as the Polish Society for the Struggle against Race Degeneration founded in 1917, expressing not only the struggle to build a nation, politically and institutionally, but also morally and spiritually (Gawin 2003). Eugenic redemption was gradually explained in terms that overcame the contrast between decadence and modernity to propose a regenerative political biology, one centred on selective breeding and ideas of national purification. As the *fin de siècle* expired in the war trenches, eugenics embraced racial protectionism with a tenacious vitality and rationality, becoming as much a political as a biological movement of national regeneration.

CONCLUSION

During the *fin de siècle*, the relationship between biology and eugenics articulated new social and racial genealogies of identity indicating, on the one hand, how discourses about human improvement were transformed into a totalising national narrative about biologically re-designed societies and, on the other, how this narrative legitimised the projects of national regeneration to be implemented on behalf of a new racial community (Turda 2013).

In the history of eugenics, the *fin de siècle* occupies a central place. The modernist drive for societal transformation and biological renewal that characterised eugenic discourses on degeneration was formulated at the time. Although coupled with the increased biologisation of national belonging, eugenics transcended the field of biology; it began to operate within a new conceptual register, one that was culturally eclectic and scientifically contentious (Turda 2010). Not surprisingly, many eugenicists saw the Great War as a redemptive process, allowing for their society and nation to start anew from its own biological ruins. Indeed, after 1918 eugenics gradually turned into a persuasive strategy of how to protect the nation from a disappointing present and guide it into a rewarding future. In addition to offering scientific remedies to the alleged decline in the general population's health, eugenics further provided a defensive biological strategy for particular social, sexual and ethnic groups. Prompted by the need to generate a powerful sense of cohesion and shared identity, in the wake of profound socio-political changes eugenicists often employed discriminatory arguments in order to justify their visions of national improvement. A nation's identity was to be determined by biological, social and cultural boundaries, separating those who belonged to the community from foreigners and outsiders, who were viewed as aliens or potential enemies. In addition, eugenics created a complementary system of 'internal cleansing', according to which those members of society deemed 'unhealthy', 'diseased' and 'anti-social' were separated from the 'healthy' majority. Such eugenic thinking and practices would become the norm during the interwar period.

From its birth at the end of the nineteenth century, and wedded to the emergent knowledge about human heredity being uncovered by biology, anthropology and medicine, eugenics blended opposing visions of human improvement into a new form of scientific knowledge, one based on theories of evolution and heredity as well as population control. Reflecting this wide variety of social and cultural experiences, eugenics often had shifting and fluid, rather than fixed, meanings in different national and international contexts. Any attempt, therefore, to recapture how twentieth-century eugenics developed must begin by understanding how ideas of modern science emerged during the *fin de siècle*.

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CHAPTER THIRTY

PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHIATRY

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Eric Shiraev

The global *fin de siècle* was a crucial turning point for psychology and psychiatry. No longer were priests, ministers, shamans, or fortunetellers expected to explain and address a person's inner experiences and pains. These roles were now replaced by a professional scientist—trained and licensed—who used science to listen, understand, and heal. Although psychology and psychiatry shared many common roots, their developments were markedly different.

At the end of the nineteenth century, psychology was becoming a mainstream academic discipline and a new profession in North America and Europe. This was less evident in other parts of the world. Japan may be an exception due to its rapid economic development at that period and the interest paid by this country's elites to scientific and educational innovations taking place in other countries (Norman 1940, 10). Several reasons explain this difference. The first was economic. Western governments and private businesses invested in science and education. Although psychology was not among the biggest recipients compared to chemistry, engineering, and medicine, the access to funding became increasingly available for this young discipline. The second reason was structural. Psychology grew out of a vast educational and research base of universities. The United States took the leadership in advancing higher education. America soon surpassed most European universities in funding and number of students enrolled (Rudolph 1990). More European psychologists began to study and work in the United States, not the other way around. The third reason was educational. The reforms of elementary education and the advancement of compulsory schooling of children in economically developed countries created a range of logistical challenges ranging from proper placement of students to teacher's training and counseling. Psychology professionals found employment in national educational systems. The fourth reason was professional. Private businesses and government institutions sought competitive workers and civil servants. Psychologists found their skill useful in management, advertisement, skill assessment and placement, litigation, and criminal investigation. Mental testing began in education, business, and government service. Psychology was becoming a legitimate academic and applied discipline.

Medical doctors working with the mentally ill now identified themselves with a medical field called *psychiatry*. It was already a profession supported by social

institutions and interest groups. Psychiatrists, who were medical school graduates, turned to brain anatomy and neurophysiology to explain mental illness. They utilized medical methods of diagnoses and treatment.

With the advancement of education in the industrialized Western world, mental illness was emerging in people's eyes as a medical problem, not a mysterious behavioral manifestation or a moral transgression.

PSYCHOLOGY: THE LAYMAN'S UNDERSTANDING

Most educated English-speaking individuals used the adjectives "psychic" or "mental" to refer to inner experiences. A popular university textbook published in the United States in 1895 described four clusters of such experiences: *sensation, emotion, intellect, and volition.* Sensation involved vision, hearing, touch, taste, and smell in addition to temperature, organic (associated with internal organs), and muscular sensation (Baldwin 1895). Emotion referred to fear, anger, surprise, curiosity, aesthetic feelings, love, sympathy, and jealousy. Intellect had something to do with perception, memory, association, imagination, the discursive process (today we call it thinking), and the self. Volition—a rare word in today's psychology textbooks—stood for reflexes and impulsive, instinctive, and ideational actions (Wright 2002).

The educated also knew that specific parts of the brain were responsible for particular aspects of psychic activities and behavior. German physiologists Johannes Müller (1801–58), Ludwig F. von Helmholtz (1821–94), and their followers earlier in the nineteenth century explained sensation in terms of physics and biology. The idea dominant early in the century, that emotions were largely localized in the liver, was abandoned. Most educated people were aware of conscious and unconscious, voluntary and non-voluntary processes. Experimental research by Hermann Ebbinghaus (1850–1909) explained in mathematical terms how people memorize and forget. Psychologists also learned how to measure the reaction time. It was generally assumed that certain behavioral features, such as intellectual skills or musical taste, were passed on from parents to children. The mother, not the father, was believed to be largely responsible for the transmission of such features.

Hypnosis attracted interest, thanks to new research on physiology of sleep and the studies by the French doctor Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–93). For the most part, however, people perceived fellow human beings as reasonable and pursuing rational objectives. Educated people no longer believed in witches and demons, the evil eye, and the supernatural. Yet women were generally thought to be inferior to men because of their lower intellectual capacities, difficulties working under pressure, and problems in controlling emotions. People believed in significant differences in mental abilities among ethnic groups. Most people condemned homosexuality and masturbation as immoral and perilous practices. Psychologists tended to support these views (Laqueur 2004).

In Europe and North America, academic psychologists as a rule remained religious. Although some prominent psychologists, such as G. Stanley Hall (1844–1924), hoped that psychology would never rid itself of faith, he witnessed a different trend: religion was being driven out of the university campus. Science-based psychology was the antagonist. In the early 1900s references to the divine power of God almost disappeared from publications by university psychologists (Maier 2004).

PSYCHOLOGY AS A DISCIPLINE

Psychology had several interconnected sources. One was biology and medicine. The writings of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer helped researchers see psychological processes as adaptive mechanisms allowing individuals to adjust to changing conditions. Francis Galton offered statistical methods of measurement and sparked the *nature and nurture* discussion. Cultural anthropologists traveled to faraway places to provide detailed records of behavior and beliefs of indigenous groups.

Those who called themselves "psychologists" represented two distinct fields. The first, more traditional one, was *mental philosophy*. Mental philosophers used logic and observation, rejected quantitative methods, and saw experimentation as a vulgar way to understand the soul. Psychologists of the other field accepted the idea that physical forces were responsible for everything mental, spiritual, or ideal. They believed that physics, biology, and math could explain the mind. In their research, theoretical speculations gave way to experimentation, data recording, and statistical analysis (Green, Shore, and Teo 2001).

Several areas of scientific research emerged. The first was experimental measurement of sensation, perception, attention, and memory. Another involved the measurement of individual development and psychological abilities. In the third area, psychologists studied abnormal psychological symptoms and their treatment.

PSYCHOLOGY MOVES INTO THE LABORATORY

"What has psychology to do in a laboratory?" German experimental psychologist Hugo Münsterberg was asked this question most frequently while visiting New England. He received many questions about the weather in Europe and why people in Germany didn't play American football (Münsterberg 1893). Discussing psychology, his colleagues often called experimental methods nonsense. Soon, however, most American psychologists would not imagine the development of their discipline outside the experimental laboratory.

The first such a lab was created in Leipzig, Germany in 1879. Similar experimental facilities appeared in the universities in the United States (1883), Russia (1886), France (1889), Canada (1891), England (1897), Japan (1903), and in several other countries. The first psychological laboratory in Argentina was founded in 1898 at the National College in Buenos Aires (Ardila 1968: 567). In Japan, Tokyo University opened its first psychology research lab in 1903 followed by Kyoto University in 1907 (Sato and Graham 1954: 443). In China, in 1889, Yan Yongjing translated a Japanese version of an American textbook written by Joseph Haven called *Mental Philosophy* (1875). However, research psychology in China emerged much later in the twentieth century.

French psychology took a different path and focused mainly on mental pathology, which was focusing on systematic observations of abnormal psychological symptoms, mostly in hospitals (Moser and Rouquette 2002). At the end of the nineteenth century, a highly centralized system of higher education in France (unlike that of North America) had little money and interest in funding psychology laboratories or hiring full-time psychology professors. Individuals with a doctoral degree in psychology had a very difficult time finding a job unless they had clinical training

(Nicolas and Ferrand 2002). Further, an advanced degree obtained in Germany, where experimental psychology was thriving, was not accepted as an equivalent to a French doctoral degree (Brooks 1993). Similarly, university authorities in Great Britain did not believe in psychology as an experimental science. As a result, almost no research funds were allocated to support psychological laboratories until much later in the twentieth century.

Overall, in several countries, psychologists were moving into the laboratory. It was an important step toward legitimizing psychology as a scientific discipline.

WHAT PSYCHOLOGISTS STUDIED

Germans Gustav Fechner (1801–87) and Ebbinghaus were among the first to start experimental studies of sensation and memory in the nineteenth century. Wilhelm Wundt, who is commonly regarded as a founder of experimental psychology, introduced *experimental introspection*, according to which researchers had to carefully observe the quality, intensity, and duration of their own inner responses to physical stimuli. Wundt trained hundreds of aspiring scholars from many countries. Edward B. Titchener (1867–1927), a British emigrant who worked at Cornell University, shared Wundt's basic theoretical ideas and saw psychological phenomena as mental "elements," from which more complex mental structures appear. Titchener's approach is often called *structuralism* and its followers are called structuralists.

William James (1842–1910), an older brother of the writer Henry James, turned to the dynamic purposes of psychological experience rather than its structure. His views are associated with the *functionalist* approach in psychology, according to which psychologists should study experiences only in relation to other experiences and the situational contexts in which they occur (Calkins 1906). A structuralist studying speech, for instance, is likely to examine the alphabet and the ways different letters are combined into sounds, words, and then sentences. Conversely, a functionalist is likely to examine the person's use of language in various situations. A shift to practical, real-life applications of psychology was gaining momentum.

Meanwhile, another influential tradition was taking shape: *behaviorism*. Early behaviorism developed in the works of comparative psychologists. Most of them used the evolutionary ideas of Darwin and Spencer and believed in the adaptive nature of behavior. They studied animal behavior and sought to apply their findings to understand humans. Comparative psychologists first used primarily noninvasive techniques such as observation. Edward Thorndike (1874–1949) at Columbia University introduced a new experimental method. He placed his research animals inside a "puzzle box," a specially designed cage or enclosure. An animal could only escape by tripping a latch mechanism that opened a door or lifted a small barrier. Using this method, Thorndike measured the reactions of experimental animals.

Other psychologists worked on methods of measurement and statistical analysis of individual traits. These studies found important applications in educational and professional assessment. American James McKeen Cattell (1860–1944) studied in Leipzig under Wundt's supervision and taught at Columbia University for 26 years. Cattell coined the term *mental test* in 1890 and compared an individual's performance and the performance of large populations on the same test. Cattell believed that his tests would help in making speedy assessments of students' educational potentials.

Charles E. Spearman (1863–1945) tried to find correlations among hearing, vision, touch, and other psychological processes and advanced statistical methods in studying psychology.

Frenchman Alfred Binet (1857–1911) and his assistant Theodore Simon (1872–1961) developed psychological tests to measure a child's performance on certain intellectual tasks such as comparing shapes, doing multiplications, or explaining an ambiguous situation. This was the beginning of studies and measurement of a child's intelligence. Psychologists also began to study childhood as a special developmental period. For decades, most teachers believed that rigorous discipline, drill, and repetition should be the key factors in influencing academic success of a child. Psychological research at the *fin de siècle* often challenged such assumptions. They argued that children should be given more opportunity and freedom, and be allowed creativity in the classroom. New research was necessary. Among pioneers of these studies was John Dewey (1859–1952) who in 1896 established a University Elementary School at the University of Chicago. This school served as a research facility for classroom observation and testing and soon attracted national attention.

New methods of professional assessment grew increasingly popular across the West (although in China an evaluation system had existed for centuries). Psychologists insisted that they were particularly qualified to design and administer such tests. Several names stood out. For instance, German psychologist Hugo Münsterberg (1863–1916) came to Harvard in the 1890s as a specialist in work effectiveness. He designed tests to study business management, productivity, and work satisfaction. He evaluated ship and trolley car operators, among other professions. Walter D. Scott (1869–1955) pioneered psychological studies of advertising at Northwestern University. He assessed the effectiveness of advertisement strategies and designed tests measuring vocational aptitudes of people working in sales.

One of the true pioneers of psychological studies of gender was Helen Bradford Thompson (1874–1947). She was a relentless supporter of gender equality and received a doctoral degree from the University of Chicago in 1900; her dissertation was titled *Psychological Norms in Men and Women*. Using undergraduates as subjects, she experimentally examined their motor ability, skin and muscle senses, taste and smell, hearing, vision, intellectual faculties, and affective processes (Thompson 1903). Contrary to popular expectations, her research revealed no significant gender differences.

WHO TAUGHT PSYCHOLOGY

In the 1860s, a typical university professor teaching psychology was likely to be an ordained minister. His lectures on "mental philosophy" would focus on reason, causes of mental acts, creation, and the vitality of the soul and willpower. He would ignore experimentation and discuss Immanuel Kant and the possibility of formal knowledge prior to experience (Farr 1988; Fuchs 2000). Most taught psychology using association theory, focusing on the mind as a complex stream of interconnected sensations and ideas.

By the end of the century, a noticeable change had taken place. By the early 1900s, the ranks of psychology professors were primarily comprised of biologists, physiologists, and doctors. The founder of the first Russian psychology lab,

physician Vladimir Bekhterev learned about experimental methods from Wilhelm Wundt, also a doctor and founder of the first psychological lab in Germany. Some professors came from philosophy: James Baldwin, who established the first experimental psychology laboratory in Canada, received a philosophy degree from Princeton (Green 2004). Universities began offering advanced degrees in psychology. A new generation of "original" psychologists was growing.

Psychology majors attended classes in or near a psychology lab on campus. Professors used illustrative models or handmade replicas with detachable parts of the brain, eye, and ear showing the students how the brain, nerves, and sensory organs worked. Posters with anatomical diagrams and histological samples appeared on the walls. Labs purchased experimental equipment custom made by skilled mechanics, carpenters, and electricians.

Hugo Münsterberg, as an illustration, listed the instruments needed for his psychology laboratory at Harvard. The list included a pipe organ, a collection of tuning forks, pipes, and resonators—all to be used for psychological acoustics. Color-mixers, prisms, apparatuses for after-images and color blindness were used to study psychological optics. Complex gadgets to measure touch and temperature sensations and instruments to study movement and pressure were also on the list (Münsterberg 1893). Certainly, not every university could afford a sophisticated psychology laboratory. Some schools could not even draw enough students to take psychology classes. Critics regarded psychology as lacking useful applications.

HOW PSYCHOLOGISTS APPLIED THEIR RESEARCH

Looking for application for their research, psychologists pursued at least three goals. The first one was to increase the public visibility of psychological research. The best opportunity for this was the newspaper and the illustrated journal, which were increasingly available for the general public. Next, psychologists needed to earn standing among private businesses and financial corporations. Psychologists wanted to show that their work had useful applications and secure funding for future research. Third, because of government's increasing involvement in education, business regulations, military training, health and childcare, psychologists saw government as a likely sponsor of new psychological studies.

Psychologists began to contribute to the legal system. They testified about the mental competence of adults and children and conducted court-ordered psychological evaluations of the suspects or their victims. In Europe and North America psychologists consulted or designed selective programs related to schooling, immigration, and employment. However, despite their reliance on progressive attitudes, psychologists were frequently silent about social, racial, or gender discrimination. Many continued their condemnation of homosexuality, willingly equating it with perversion or even criminal behavior.

By the early twentieth century, psychologists in a range of countries had already formed their national organizations. In 1892, the first annual meeting of the American Psychological Association took place at the University of Pennsylvania, representing 31 original members including psychiatrists, philosophers, experimental psychologists, and experts in education (called *pedagogists*). They were all men whose average age was 35; the eldest was 54 years old. Membership reached 127 by

the year 1900, and its budget rose to $2,770 by 1901. The annual fees ranged from $1 to $3. (For comparison, a psychology professor at the time earned from $1,000 to $7,000 a year.)

During its first formative years, the American Psychological Association served several important functions. It became an important symbol of psychologists' group identity. Psychology had acquired a formal institution representing the profession and its members. The Association improved psychologists' interactions and co-operation. Its members maintained regular correspondence by mail and participated in joint projects. Circular letters (such as an announcement mailed to multiple recipients) were a new trend. The members of the Association could now present themselves to the larger community of American and international scientists.

Psychiatry, as noted previously, was already a distinguishable medical field in many countries. Like psychology, it had already turned to science to understand mental illness, develop diagnostic methods, and suggest treatment. Like psychology, it struggled to establish its identity.

MENTAL ILLNESS AND PSYCHIATRY: THE LAYMAN'S UNDERSTANDING

Across cultures and times, people thought of mental illness as something grossly atypical and undesirable. This "something" was supposedly within a person's mind and caused persistent behavioral problems or odd manifestations. Mental illness was different from identifiable bodily abnormalities such as a skin lesion or a broken arm. It was also significantly less understandable than physical maladies. Throughout history people had broad expectations that some forms of mental illness were curable. Plants, roots, leaves, and other natural substances frequently served as remedies to treat abnormal psychological symptoms. Ritualistic acts, meditation, and prayer were also common methods of treatment along with social and physical isolation of the mentally ill. These methods are not abandoned in many parts of the world today.

Psychiatry as a medical discipline began to take shape by the end of the 1800s. Although textbooks on medicine in the early nineteenth century contained chapters on psychiatry, *mental illness* appeared as a special category only by the mid-1800s. By the end of the century approximately 50 academic journals dedicated to mental illness emerged in Europe and the United States. Several common and loose types of mental illness were recognized among specialists.

Madness (also called *insanity* or *lunacy*) referred to two ostensibly contrasting clusters of symptoms in an individual: either aggressive, violent behavior coupled with dramatic emotional outbursts or withdrawn behavior together with decreased motivation, peculiar postures (labeled *catatonia*), and profound lack of will, desire, or emotion.

Neurosis was a catchall word indicating persistent, overwhelming anxiety and avoidant behavior. Unlike people with madness, most neurotic patients seemed to be aware of their problems and usually acknowledged the oddness of their emotional state. A special type of neurosis called *neurasthenia* was characterized by persistent feelings of weakness and low mental tone. G. M. Beard, who coined this term in *American Nervousness* (1881), suggested that the nervous system has a varying

tonus, which is either *sthenic* (strong) or *asthenic* (weak). Neurasthenia soon became a fashionable diagnosis. Clinicians also drew attention to *phobias*, or excessive and inappropriate fears. *Hysteria* stood for various complaints—including muscle spasms, involuntary movements, panic attacks, refusal to eat, stomach disturbances, and so on—without an identifiable physiological malady.

Affective disorders included profound and painful mood disturbances such as *melancholy* (long-lasting sadness) and *cyclothymia* (alternating mood swings). English physician William Gull (1816–90) described *anorexia nervosa* in adolescent girls with deliberate weight loss through self-starvation (Habermas 1989). Several forms of substance-related illnesses were also recognized including alcoholism and morphine addiction.

These labels were utterly imprecise. Similar names routinely referred to different symptoms. Likewise, different doctors would give different labels to similar symptoms. For example, the term *idiocy* stood for a wide range of a child's developmental problems. These problems could also be labeled as *madness* or *dementia* (a profound loss of cognitive abilities). *Insanity* was freely applied to severe forms of alcoholism or behavioral problems such as fire setting or compulsive theft.

A few classifications of mental disorders emerged by the end of the century but only one, put forward by German doctor Emil Kraepelin (1856–1926), received wide recognition later in the twentieth century. Kraepelin kept observations of hundreds of his patients and carefully recorded their symptoms, how they occurred, developed, and whether or not these symptoms were curable. This knowledge led him to evaluate the likely outcome of a patient's illness. His classification became an early foundation for the contemporary classifications of mental illness.

WHAT CAUSES MENTAL ILLNESS?

At least two general views emerged. One was associated with studies of the brain and nervous system, their structure, functioning, and pathology. The other emphasized the importance of social and psychological factors.

Supporters of the clinical-pathological view (often called *anatomists*) believed that neuroscience was near a major breakthrough in explaining mental illness. By the late 1800s, scientists saw the brain as a complex machine with interconnected parts. Specific brain centers seemed to be responsible for certain mental functions. Likewise, specific brain dysfunctions were presumed to be related to identifiable psychological abnormalities. Cases involving patients with identifiable brain traumas or other anomalies seemed to provide indisputable evidence to support the anatomists' position. A considerable increase in the number of patients with neurosyphilis, a venereal disease associated with slowly progressive and destructive infection of the brain and spinal cord, revealed new facts about the deterioration of mental functions, including progressive personality changes, memory loss, and decreasing ability to make judgments. The rampant substance abuse spreading in the West and some countries in East Asia (the most abused substances were alcohol, cocaine, opium, and morphine) provided new clinical cases. Many clinicians also turned to the entire nervous system (of which the brain is only a part). They believed that an important key to mental illness resided in the way the nervous system functioned.

In fact, a handful of neurophysiologists at that time believed that, like the body in general, the nervous system functions within a set of parameters. Any serious deviation away from such parameters should generate abnormal symptoms. The idea that the nervous system could be "out of balance" was popular (Sutton 1998). (Today several key ideas of Chinese and Japanese holistic treatment approaches—emphasizing the balanced interaction of the body, the mind, and the environment—are popular among researchers and practitioners, as well as millions of ordinary people.) The idea that "exhaustion" or "fatigue" of the nervous system caused abnormal psychological symptoms became widely acceptable. An individual experiencing persistent stress is at risk of developing a *nervous illness*. This term later became a part of the vocabulary in many languages.

Others turned to hereditary factors as an explanation for psychological abnormalities. The French physician Bénédict-Augustin Morel (1809–73) posited a generational regress in physical and psychological traits and symptoms in certain people, and this notion of "degeneration" became a common concept in popular as well as professional discourse. *Degenerates* were believed to be essentially incurable. They could not control their impulses and therefore were prone to self-exposure, masturbation, and homosexuality (Krafft-Ebbing 1886).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, an alternative school of thought came to the fore. Researchers and medical practitioners studied social and psychological factors contributing to mental illness. Papers were written about difficult events in an individual's life triggering distressful psychological symptoms. Such events could include financial losses, debilitating handicaps, failed romances, sexual infidelity, dishonorable behavior, and so forth.

Some linked an individual's inner conflicts with serious psychological problems. Others considered symptoms of mental illness as underdeveloped individual traits, such as an inability to control one's emotions. Yet others saw mental illness as a disharmony between the natural forces on the one hand and a person's behavior on the other. When a natural force is blocked, it was believed, an illness ensued. Physical and psychological symptoms influence each other. Anxiety can cause high blood pressure, which may elevate an individual's worrying thoughts (Shiraev 2011).

Austrian physician Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) approached mental illness from a distinct perspective. Initially with Joseph Breuer (1842–1925), and then independently, Freud attempted to show that the early traumatic experiences of a person, primarily of a disturbing sexual nature, might become causes of mental illness. Sexual conflicts within individuals accumulate unreleased energy, which then manifests in a variety of pathological symptoms. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), Freud articulated the initial assumptions of his theories and treatment methods that would dominate Western psychiatry for half a century.

WHO SHOULD TREAT MENTAL ILLNESS?

Psychiatry and psychiatrists identified with medical schools. To train physicians, Germany, Great Britain, France, the United States, Austria, and Russia, among others, have moved away from the system of apprenticeship. This traditional system required future physicians to spend several years learning skills directly from their

mentors. Now it was done in medical schools attached to universities. The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore had a four-year graduate program, which quickly became a model for medical schools around the world. In Russia, the government sponsored several medical academies to train physicians for military and civil service. Medical schools for women appeared in several countries long before the century's end, including the United States, Russia, and Great Britain. The Female Medical College of Pennsylvania was founded in 1850; the London School of Medicine for Women was established in 1874. In 1887 the Women's Medical Institute opened its doors in Russia.

What was the role of psychologists in these developments? A growing number of university-based psychologists also wanted to study, diagnose, and treat psychological abnormalities. They also wanted to share responsibilities with doctors. The latter objected. They claimed that only medically trained doctors, not psychologists, should have such responsibilities. Psychiatrists naturally wanted to limit competition in their professional field by excluding nonmedical specialists. In the ensuing turf battles, physicians eventually prevailed. Psychiatrists were better organized through medical associations. For example, the Association of Medical Superintendents of the American Institutions for the Insane was created in 1844 (in 1892, this organization changed its name to the American Medico-Psychological Association and to the American Psychiatric Association in 1921) and the American Medical Association was founded in 1847, several decades prior to the establishment of the American Psychological Association. Similar medical-psychological associations emerged in several countries. They imposed comparable standards on medical education and training of physicians, and provided general guidelines for the work of medical professionals such as licensing. In industrial nations doctors were supposed to be *licensed*, or given the legal right to practice medicine. Graduating from medical school was one of the prerequisites for licensing, which kept most psychologists (who had non-medical degrees) away.

Psychologists objected but had little unity in their ranks. First, some argued that psychologists were not fully qualified to study mental illness. Second, clinical psychologists were often perceived as "defectors" from traditional research psychology. Despite these difficulties, *clinical psychology* as an independent field within the psychology discipline was established. Clinical psychologists gradually accepted the assisting role, helping physicians in gathering information about the symptoms of psychological dysfunctions, their dynamics, and outcomes. Psychologists were allowed to conduct tests and make limited assessments of psychological abnormalities, but the power to interpret the tests and make recommendations to patients belonged to licensed medical professionals. Medical doctors trained in the fields of neurology began to assume a major role in diagnosis and treatment of mental illness.

WHERE MENTAL ILLNESS WAS TREATED

For centuries, a mentally ill person has been an outcast: ostracized, avoided, or openly discriminated against. An important sociocultural shift in attitudes about mental illness emerged at the end of the twentieth century. A person having mental illness was increasingly viewed as a patient in need of professional treatment. Medically trained professionals claimed they could provide such a treatment. By

1910 Germany already had 16 psychiatry clinics in universities, nearly 1,500 psychiatrically trained physicians, and more than 400 private and public mental asylums (Shorter 1997). Mental health care was also increasingly regarded as a necessary social institution like many others, including schooling, law enforcement, and sanitation services.

Nevertheless, the scope of state-sponsored medical services in industrialized nations was very limited. The few private facilities were expensive and out of reach for most people. Individual *psychotherapy*, involving a structured interaction between the psychotherapist and the client, was only emerging. Clinical studies of mental illness depended mostly on small medical school salaries, insufficient hospital budgets, and the relentless enthusiasm of dedicated specialists. As was the case a century before, most mental patients with severe, dangerous, or debilitating symptoms were confined in so-called mental asylums.

MENTAL ASYLUMS

A typical asylum around 1900 was a detached building or a gated compound with several dwellings inside. Patients in most cases could not leave the facility without permission. Surveillance and head counting was part of the staff's many responsibilities. Strict regulations controlled patents' activities: eating, sleeping, working, and recreation. Special logs contained information about each patient's habits, conversations, requests, and interactions with patients and staff. Discipline and orderliness appeared essential for the successful operation of an asylum. Most early facilities were large enough to accommodate many hundreds of patients. There were also smaller facilities.

Facilities providing care of the afflicted or orphans existed for centuries in countries such as China (Mungello 2008: 47). Asylums exclusively for the mentally ill began to appear about 200 years ago. Britain began to build asylums in the late 1700s. Russia had asylums in the first half of the nineteenth century. In the United States, the first asylums opened in Philadelphia, Williamsburg (Virginia), and New York City. Other countries, including Canada and South Africa, also began to build asylums later in the nineteenth century (Louw and Swartz 2001). The United States and Great Britain maintained a largely decentralized system of asylums. In Europe, however, central governments played a crucial role in the creation, financing, regulation, and maintenance of mental institutions.

Asylums served several important functions. First, they incapacitated violent individuals, thus providing relief for many families and communities. Second, asylums were supposed to provide treatment. A common assumption was that by isolating some troubling individuals, society would be able to cure them and thus address the problem of the mentally ill. In some cases, temporary social isolation, regular physical exercise, scheduled day activities, and a modest diet provided relief to certain patients. In other cases, patients showed little or no signs of improvement. Third, asylums gave medical professionals a unique opportunity to collect empirical data about a wide range of symptoms of mental illness and test various methods of treatment.

Overall, asylums promised shelter, food, and basic security for their inhabitants. Most patients were diagnosed with insanity or serious disability associated with alcohol addiction, neurosyphilis, or severe developmental problems. Many mental

asylums soon became virtual stockpiles for people who, unwanted and abandoned by their families, could not leave. In addition, asylums typically attracted scores of swindlers, petty criminals, or other social misfits.

The rapidly increasing numbers of patients in each facility made an individualized approach to care nearly impossible. Overcrowded conditions and lack of effective therapeutic methods worsened many patients' symptoms. Segregation by race and social class—like in the United States or India—was also widespread (Grob 1994). The main problem was how to treat the mentally ill.

HOW MENTAL ILLNESS WAS TREATED

Although psychiatrists made significant progress in diagnosing mental illness, they could not offer effective methods to treat it.

In 1763, French physician Piere Pomme (1735–1812) recommended chicken soup and cold baths against fatigue and emotional emptiness. Although chicken soup was later rejected as a remedy, cold baths were not. In fact, in the early 1900s (and later), patients with violent or manic symptoms were frequently put, against their will, into such baths to "cool down." Hot baths were also used because physicians were relatively free to choose any treatment they wanted. Many tried laxatives and bloodletting to cleanse the patient's body of harmful "elements" causing mental illness—whatever they appeared to be. Some physicians routinely conducted dangerous experiments on their patients, prescribing chemical substances including opium or morphine. Only a few experiments achieved notable results. Danish psychiatrist Carl Lange (1834–1900) used lithium to treat affective disorders. He and his colleagues incorrectly theorized that lithium salts could correct abnormal uric acid levels and thus treat the symptoms of mania and melancholia (Schioldann 2001). Lithium was later recognized as an effective drug to treat symptoms of bipolar disorder, which was caused by a different physiological mechanism.

Some physicians, in search for remedies, turned to "orderliness," believing that rigorous discipline could improve the patient's mental state. Other clinicians turned to the "nervous fatigue" hypothesis, assuming that any procedures that soothe the body should change the psychological symptoms as well. It was expected that the combination of mineral water, proper diet, and moderate physical exercise could provide remarkable healing for their emotional problems. In Europe, recreational centers near mineral water resorts became famous. So-called nerve doctors and spa doctors gained recognition. They started placing ads promoting their methods in magazines and newspapers. Since more people in economically developed countries began to have regular vacations from work, more of them could afford short or even extended stays at such resorts. Many felt comfortable discussing their "nervous exhaustion" rather than their "mental illness." Water resorts, however, despite their relative effectiveness in reducing stress and anxiety, could not cure serious forms of psychological dysfunction, such as severe anxiety problems, bipolar symptoms, chronic delusions, or depression.

Psychiatrists' individual and structured interaction with their patients was becoming common. It was assumed that if the therapist showed compassion and trust, then the patient could restore the lost qualities of normal behavior, including the ability to reason. This kind of treatment was called *moral therapy*. In most cases,

the method had little to do with moral issues. However, because it was an alternative to physical restraint and isolation, the term remained in use for some time.

In asylums, some supporters of moral therapy offered classes about good habits, personal hygiene, and religion. Others introduced painting and music. Yet others offered gardening or carpentry as a kind of occupational therapy. In the United States, human rights advocate Dorothea L. Dix (1802–87) led a campaign to create civilized conditions for individuals in mental asylums. She traveled across the country to report the inhumane conditions in which the afflicted spent their lives abandoned by their families. In part because of her advocacy, the federal government in 1855 funded the Government Hospital for the Insane in Washington, D.C. The asylum was the first large mental facility of this kind in the United States. It had grown significantly by the early twentieth century (Wilson 1975).

Many forms of mental illness remained incurable. In this light, some psychiatrists supported government actions to isolate the mentally ill or even sterilize them, including the "feeble-minded" (Pick 1989). The supporters of this method believed that if the mentally retarded were isolated from the rest of society, this would eventually improve the biological makeup of the general population. Books would be written later in defense of this view (Goddard 1916).

Other professionals rejected this approach. They developed treatments based on education, discussion, or persuasion. They believed that if mental illness occurred as a result of past misfortunes or serious personal disruptions, then the patients should be able to recover from their maladies with the help of a caring specialist. These forms of treatment were called *mental therapeutics*.

Acceptance of a structured, interpersonal discussion as a form of therapy grew. The expectation was that through the psychiatrist–patient interactions, the patients should undergo re-education, develop new social and communication skills, and form an insight into their mental illness. Psychiatrists now turned to the patients' past for therapeutic strategies. Moreover, clinical histories showed that many individuals had enough inner resources to understand their problems and improve.

Other clinicians turned to more audacious forms of persuasion. Mesmerism and hypnotism re-emerged as methods of treatment. Anton Mesmer (1734–1815) claimed that many ailments, including mental illness, arose from the disruption of the normal flow of an invisible fluid called *animal magnetism*. A trained physician, according to Mesmer, could by touch find and remove the blocks causing the disruption of the flow of the fluid (Schmit 2005). Mesmerism regained its popularity in Europe and the United States. Physicians and amateur enthusiasts made public demonstrations, delivered lectures, and promised treatment for a variety of symptoms. People who conducted such sessions often called themselves "psychologists" or "mental healers." Many of their clients reported improvements in their chronic pain symptoms, sleep patterns, or disappearance of headaches.

A somewhat similar phenomenon, hypnotism, also gained popularity in Europe and America. Described by English physician James Braid (1795–1860), the phenomenon was called first *nervous sleep*. Braid coined the concept *neuro-hypnology*, or, in a shorter version, *hypnology*: the study of causes and effects of nervous sleep. Charcot in France observed that people susceptible to hypnosis were likely to have symptoms of hysteria, thus suggesting the common cause of these two phenomena.

Several therapists, including Freud, proposed further that hypnotherapy could be used to treat symptoms of hysteria.

The early use of the term *psychotherapy* often meant hypnology. Two Dutch therapists, Frederik W. van Eden (1860–1932) and Albert W. van Renterghem (1840–1919), used hypnosis as a method of treatment in their Clinic for Psycho-therapeutic Suggestion in Amsterdam. In the United States, Boris Sidis (1867–1923) published *The Psychology of Suggestion*, giving a detailed account of hypnosis as a medical method (Sidis 1907). In France, Hippolyte Bernheim (1840–1919), whose work had an impact on Freud, was among the early specialists to use *talk therapy*, which was gaining popularity in many countries including Japan (Hendstrom 1994). Russian doctor Vladimir Bekhterev (1857–1927) used hypnosis to effectively treat some behavioral problems such as smoking.

Freud was formulating his therapeutic method at the turn of the century. In the beginning of his independent work, he tried hypnosis but was soon disappointed by its ineffectiveness. Then he tried the method based on the patient's supervised "confession": Freud's role was to try to persuade his patients to reveal their intimate secrets. This technique didn't work well either. Next he focused on catharsis, or the release of tension and anxiety by re-thinking some events of the past. The patients had to overcome resistance to understand the sources of their own psychological problems. This method was only marginally successful. Eventually Freud began to use dream interpretation and free association. Later he included in his system the analysis of *transferences*, the process by which patients shift emotions applicable to other people (like parents), onto the psychoanalyst. Freud's therapeutic approaches gained him only a handful of supporters at that time. Little did he know that a decade later his popularity would skyrocket and more than 100 years later almost every psychology and psychiatry textbook would mention his name, his views, and his methods.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Several important developments in psychology and psychiatry were taking place at the *fin de siècle*. First, science produced reliable knowledge about a wide range of psychological phenomena, both normal and abnormal. More educated people began to discuss mental experience in scientific terms free of superstitions and prejudice. Psychology as an academic discipline and profession had emerged. Psychology was abandoning philosophy and embracing research traditions of natural and social sciences. It became a discipline within universities and students could major in psychology. University-trained psychologists began offering their expertise to schools, businesses, clinics, and courtrooms.

Psychiatrists, trained in medical schools and licensed, strengthened their position in industrially developed nations. Although mental asylums largely remained key institutions to isolate the mentally ill, individual therapy became more widespread. Increasingly, the educated and the well-to-do were seeking help from a medical professional working in a private office and offering treatment based on persuasion and reasoning. Psychiatrists now could offer privacy and respect to millions of sufferers.

For psychologists and psychiatrists, the end of the century represented the beginning of their professional journey.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

MEDICINE

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Andrew Smith

Medical advancements at the *fin de siècle* enabled the eradication of a number of diseases. New understandings of how disease was spread through bacterial infections led to the development of programmes of immunisation which saw, at least in the West, the end of once fatal diseases such as scarlet fever, yellow fever, diphtheria, tuberculosis and syphilis. The period was also notable for its surgical developments, which included successful appendectomies (first carried out in 1880) and the surgical removal of ulcers (1881). New understandings in medical knowledge were in part driven by increasing levels of specialisation, with medical practitioners electing to work in distinctive areas of enquiry (surgery, physiology, bacteriology), which were in turn supported by the establishment of specialist institutions (children's hospitals, geriatric care, sanatoriums and other disease specific places of treatment). Such developments were underpinned by nationally inflected forms of state support. From the mid-nineteenth century in parts of Europe (notably in France and Germany), medical training took place in universities, which established a link between research and medical care. Elsewhere (as in the USA) less state regulated cultures led to the creation of private medical training colleges that in the main specialised in teaching rather than research (the exceptions being elite universities such as Harvard and Johns Hopkins). While the major medical advancements of the day took place in Europe and North America, there was also a strong interest in the claims of alternative medicine that had links to Asian cultures (see Porter 1997: 389–96).

In addition, it is important to note that medical developments were shaped by very significant non-medical factors, such as the population growth in cities and the expansion of colonial trade routes which led to immunisation programmes against tropical diseases – even while the presence of traders, officials and missionaries often led to the spread of Western diseases to indigenous peoples, frequently with devastating consequences. Arguably the spread of capitalism led to the creation of new social experiences (such as living in cities) that helped to expedite the contamination of the urban populace (as in the spread of typhoid fever and cholera), while colonial developments introduced new diseases to those Westerners working in such climes. The historian Roy Porter has neatly summarised these changes:

Before the twentieth century, the health problems of the industrial world were largely distinct and independent from those of the colonized: in many respects the 'West' and the 'Rest' were still making contact. During the twentieth century all grew interlocked, through the transformation of empires, gigantic population migrations, the changes brought by multinational capitalism, communications revolutions, world war and global politics.

(Porter 1997: 483)

The period was thus a complex time for medicine both in terms of disciplinary developments and medical discoveries.

This chapter will focus on the following areas: the development in bacteriology and immunisation, the growth in public health care (which was principally built upon a strategy of engaging with the problems created by urban poverty), an assessment of how medicine was regarded in relation to other sciences (the history of the British Association for the Advancement of Science provides an instructive example), an outline of theories of degeneration (which transferred notions of disease to 'culture'), and finally a brief exploration of how these issues were manifested within cultural debates at the time – which indicates a widespread scepticism about medicine in general and doctors in particular (with reference to Gothic texts such as *Jekyll and Hyde* [1886] and *Dracula* [1897]). There was also a tension between medical advancements and how medical discourse was used in theories of degeneration to support a model of cultural decline. This paradox will also be addressed.

Roy Porter, in his compendious *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity from Antiquity to the Present* (1997), provides an authoritative account of the various shared practices, individual conflicts, and national rivalries which conditioned many of the medical advancements at the *fin de siècle* – especially in relation to bacteriology and the development of vaccines. The key figure in bacteriology was Louis Pasteur (1822–95) whose work in the 1850s on fermentation (of alcohol, milk and vinegar) helped move discussion of the causes of corruption of certain fluids from chemistry to biology by identifying the microbes responsible. By boiling fluids to certain temperatures Pasteur discovered that the microbes could be killed, which would preserve the molecular integrity of the fluid. However, this also initiated a debate about the life of micro-organisms, which could also be discovered in the air. Pasteur's research was to provide the basis for what became known as germ theory – which demonstrated that germs could be spread through the air, challenging the earlier thesis that disease was spread by miasmic emanations that were generated by, for example, stagnant water.

Pasteur was subsequently able to identify the microbe responsible for the spread of cholera in chickens and discovered that, if he injected them with a weakened version of the bacteria, it made the chickens immune to stronger doses of the bacteria. This work was developed in Germany by Robert Koch (1843–1910), who produced a vaccine which helped to protect against anthrax in the 1880s, and who subsequently identified the bacillus that caused tuberculosis and helped to develop a vaccine which alleviated some of the symptoms but not the disease (meanwhile Pasteur was working on a vaccine for rabies). These pioneering developments in the areas of streptococcal infections helped produce vaccines which would protect

against the micro-organisms responsible for the spread of typhoid, diphtheria, leprosy, plague, pneumonia, cerebrospinal meningitis and gonorrhoea (among other infections) (see Porter 1997: 437).

The development of various vaccines also led to research that explored how the body could combat infections. This required identifying the way that white blood cells helped in the fight against disease, with the initial work in this area being led by the Russian Élie Metchnikoff (1845–1916) in the 1880s and 1890s. How the body normally functioned and how its natural defences could be boosted by vaccines represented significant advancements in the understanding of how the body functions. These became particularly helpful when examining the seemingly new (or non-Western) diseases that were encountered in India and Africa. The chief agent identified for the spread of tropical diseases was the mosquito and this led in the 1890s to the development of an advanced parasitology that helped to identify the role of amoebas, worms and trematodes in spreading disease. One of the main tropical diseases was malaria; along with yellow fever, malaria was largely transmitted through mosquito bites (see Porter 1997: 462–92). If the expansion of colonial trade created the need to develop an understanding of tropical diseases, at home (or 'home' as it was in the 'West') the attention turned to public health care as a means of curtailing the spread of disease within urban spaces.

The industrial socio-economic changes of the nineteenth century generated a rapid growth in the urban population. (At the start of the nineteenth century, for example, London had a population of 800,000; at its end the population had increased to 7 million [see Porter 1997: 398].) It is important to note one key similarity in public health care between Britain and the USA at the time: the importance of self-regulation. Public health care initiatives combined the dispensing of practical knowledge (about hygiene, or healthy ways to prepare food, for example) with some form of moral guidance to support self-monitoring city dwellers. In Britain such policies largely revolved around the temperance movement, while in the USA there was an additional focus on sexual health. The discussion here will compare public health care across the two nations to give a sense of how these initiatives were developed.

Edinburgh in 1791 had a population of 80,000, which by 1891 had risen to 270,000. It was a city in which there were especially acute problems associated with population density. The Edinburgh Health Society was established in 1881 'To promote, *by all means in its power*, attention to personal and domestic Cleanliness, to Comfort, Self-denial, Temperance, and the Laws of Health generally' (*Health Lectures for the People*, 1895 vol 2, iv, italics in original). The first set of public lectures delivered in 1881 to the poorer inhabitants of Edinburgh included lectures on 'Care of the Body,' 'Food and Drink,' 'A Few Words on Lungs and Air,' 'The Blood and Its Circulation,' 'Accidents, Emergencies, Wounds, and Operations,' 'Hints to Women Regarding Their Health, Habits and Occupations,' 'On the Rearing and Training of the Infant and Child,' 'The Use and Abuse of Water in Houses,' 'The Use and Abuses of Alcoholic Stimulants and Tobacco' and 'Preventable Diseases and Their Causes.' The lectures attracted average crowds of around 2,000 people. The opening lecture was delivered by Fleeming Jenkin (1833–85), who was actually a professor of Engineering at Edinburgh, famous as the inventor of the technology used to transport cable cars. His scene-setting lecture is clear about the parts of the

audience that he wants to address when he notes that 'it is to the poorer among you that I am to address myself tonight' (Jenkin 1895 vol 1: 1). The moral, rather than strictly medical, focus of his lecture is stated at the beginning: 'the Care of our Body is a Duty' (Jenkin 1895 vol 1: 1). For Jenkin the moral purity found in religion supports a cleansing of the body because 'Our complete duty' is 'to love God' (Jenkin 1895 vol 1: 2). This also enables self-restraint so that we do not overindulge in alcohol or behave impulsively, as this too will lead to ruin.

In trying to reach out to his ideal auditor he provides analogies which infantilise his audience and provide interesting examples of how the medical becomes merged with the literature of the nursery. He states at one point, 'The child of a Princess was suffering from diphtheria. The Princess took no precaution and with a certain heroism, kissed the child, caught the disease and died. Now did the Princess do her duty? I venture to think not' (Jenkin 1895 vol 1: 3). Such self-sacrifice would be pointless, claims Jenkin, because it would leave her other children without a mother to care for them. Jenkin's notion of duty encompasses the medical, the social and the political, arguing that adults and children must be vaccinated against disease and that there is a duty to make 'complaints regarding any nuisances that may exist in your district' (by which he means reporting unsanitary conditions) and that finally 'you should support by your votes those who take an active interest in sanitary matters' (Jenkin 1895 vol 1: 4). Jenkin's agenda-setting lecture also identifies two particular concerns that he wishes to combat: 'indifference and idleness,' which are 'two presumptuous sins' (Jenkin 1895 vol 1: 10) because they arrogantly assume invulnerability to disease.

The Edinburgh lectures are typical of their time; the emphasis on a healthy mind and a healthy body runs throughout many of them. The main issue that underpins them concerns the city and its population density. A lecture on overcrowding quotes from a report by the Medical Officer of Glasgow, Dr Russell, which noted that 'for grassy fields we have stony streets, and in place of trees we have lamp-posts, and altogether we are [. . .] far shut out from the ministry of nature' (Smart 1895 vol 1: 219). This lecture, by a Dr Smart, elaborates this view of urban living in which:

> The mutual dependence of class upon class, and their unavoidable concourse, the relationships of life, as well as its vicissitudes and necessities, all tend to bring people together – in short, the entire machinery of society such as we find it, is peculiarly adapted to spread infectious diseases.
>
> (Smart 1895 vol 1: 220)

This view takes public health care away from the city dweller and situates it within a discussion of social and environmental policy. The Management of the Edinburgh Health Society were conscious of this political move, and its possible ramifications are indicated in the anonymously authored prefatory material to the second volume of collected lectures. The tone is decidedly reconciliatory as the Committee were clearly conscious of their lack of political power and sought to foster a spirit of collaboration:

> The Committee wish it to be understood, that the object of the Health Society is not to come into collision with the authorities, but rather to co-operate with

them. It does not wish to embarrass or force legislation; neither do its members wish to make themselves disagreeable in any way.

<div align="right">(Health Lectures for the People, 1895 vol 2: vi)</div>

The apolitical tone adopted in the preface is at odds with some of the more strident opinions within the lectures. J. A. Russell's lecture on 'Some Lessons from Modern Medicine' provides an overview of the recent advancements in medicine including discoveries in chemistry and developments in medical instruments (thermometers and microscopes), the use of statistics in supporting scientific evaluations, improvements in preventative medicine (which is reflected in declining mortality rates) and perhaps more controversially, given the strength of anti-vivisectionist feeling at the time, animal experimentation. However, the mood shifts when he outlines the different building policies in London and Edinburgh. In London strict building regulations meant that the height of a house could not exceed the width of the road that it was situated on and that no road could be less than 40 feet in width. In Edinburgh roads only needed to be 20 feet wide and houses were permitted to be up to one and a half times higher than the width of the road. This meant closely packed, tall housing with more occupants, often in the poorer parts of Edinburgh. Russell was clear that it was up to the inhabitants to bring political pressure to exert change to building policies and to support relevant medical officers and health committees in lobbying for improvements against 'persons whose self-interest is opposed to healthy surroundings for others' (Russell 1895 vol 2: 9). Russell was aware that such a view might be regarded as controversial: 'I shall be told that if I attack density I touch upon the rights of property' (Russell 1895 vol 2: 8). He responded, 'There is no property to which a man has a better right than to his own health' (Russell 1895 vol 2: 8–9). This leads him into a discussion of how all of society is affected by the consequences of disease, even those who rent out such properties who will inhabit a world associated with 'weakness and decay' (Russell 1895 vol 2: 9). This view was given an apocalyptic turn by Charles W. Cathcart who, in his lecture on 'Physical Exercise: Its Function,' argued that urban population density generated early and protracted mental strain which led him to the question of 'How are we to prevent the race from degenerating?' (Cathcart 1895 vol 3: 36). As we shall see in the following discussion on degeneration, such a question had a key cultural function at the time as theories of degeneration moved medical discussion into the realm of social and political critiques of the body politic.

The *Health Lectures for the People* series were important because they brought together a number of often eminent men of science and medicine who attempted to communicate the medical advancements of the day to a large working-class audience as part of a non-governmental policy of public health care. The emphasis was on self-policing and moral regulation, with the association occasionally entering into more overt political discussions about the promotion of health care in cities. The example of the USA in matters of public health provides an interesting comparison.

In *Making Sense of Self: Medical Advice in Late Nineteenth-Century America* (1981) Anita Clair Fellman and Michael Fellman note that a spirit of public scepticism about medical discoveries characterised the period 1870–90, before a renewed confidence in medical practice was asserted at the end of the century due to the breakthroughs in immunisation programmes. As noted above, many of the key

medical advancements in immunology were initially made in the 1880s, and the time lag between these and a general change of attitude in the USA can in part be attributed to the ways in which medicine was taught in the period. Roy Porter has noted that a laissez-faire and anti-elitist attitude to medical training in the USA meant that purveyors of alternative medicine flourished in the nineteenth century, where they were regarded as providing viable alternative treatments to those taught in the more orthodox, if largely deregulated, medical schools. However, the medical advancements could not be ignored and these tended to shift public opinion towards a wider acceptance of the benefits of conventional medicine. This also coincided with a period when charitable organisations helped to support medical research and to create links between research and medical training (with the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, established in 1901, proving key in this respect) (see Porter 1997: 531).

Fellman and Fellman note an emphasis given to moral and physical health that generated an enthusiasm for public health initiatives not dissimilar to those found in Britain. A shared concern was the danger seemingly posed by the modern world, which potentially leaves the subject alienated from nature. Felix L. Oswald, writing in *Physical Education; or The Health Laws of Nature* (1882), captures this concern:

> Every disease is a protest of Nature against an active or passive violation of her laws. But that protest rarely follows upon a first transgression, never upon trifles; and life-long sufferings – the effects of an incurable injury excepted – generally imply that the sufferer's mode of life is habitually unnatural in more than one respect.
>
> (Oswald 1882: 103, quoted in Fellman and Fellman 1981: 28)

If the modern world stimulates unnatural tendencies then it becomes necessary to establish safeguards against them. That this could take on an emphatically religious turn is clear from the ten health commandments set out in J. R. Black's *The Ten Laws of Health or How Disease is Produced and can be Prevented* (1885). The frontispiece sets out these laws and many of them are familiar from the public health campaigns in Britain, as they address issues concerning the importance of cleanliness, exercise, food and mental tranquillity. However, two of the 'Laws' are unfamiliar. One is an explicit injunction against recreational sex: 'The exercise of the sexual function only for, and no interferences with, the natural course of reproduction' (Law V). The other specifically warns against incest: 'No intermarriage of blood relations' (Law X) (quoted in Fellman and Fellman 1981: 39). This explicit injunction against certain types of sexual behaviour marks out a difference between the US and British contexts. In reality this is all a matter of emphasis. The British context of public health reform *was* concerned with sexual health but in the main chose to focus on the health care of children and family life, rather than make explicit condemnation of sexual practices (which would likely have proved unpopular in the public lecture format).

If germ theory provided a model in which the subject was the innocent victim of disease, the US context attempted to return agency by asserting that bacteria could only infect the physically and morally weak. As Fellman and Fellman note, this led a Christian Scientist like Charles M. Barrows to declare in 1887 that 'The bacteria

revealed by the microscope have no power to infect the body unless the mind consents' (Barrows 1887: 163, quoted in Fellman and Fellman 1981: 51). A strength of moral purpose combined with a confidence in inheritable physiological strength were the two antidotes to the dangers posed by the modern world. Part of the *fin-de-siècle* antipathy towards modernity rested on a concern that civilisation might itself contain the potential for a degenerative decline.

To discuss degeneration at this point is to acknowledge that the relationship between medicine and society was ideologically porous. Theories of degeneration were not rooted within medicine per se, but incorporated within them a view of a potentially diseased (and so 'ill') society. Such a view informed public health care initiatives, although it is important to acknowledge the different social classes that were addressed. The Edinburgh Health Society directed its lectures towards a working-class congregation, whereas US public health care initiatives, as they appeared in pamphlets and books, largely reached out to a middle-class readership. It has been noted, for example, that an emphasis on sport and physical exercise in the US context was directed towards the middle classes as a promotion of physical activity that was otherwise lacking from their lives, but not from working-class culture (Fellman and Fellman 1981: 125). The concern was that while ostensibly it seemed that working-class life could create the degenerate (certainly within the context of urban overcrowding, which was the subject of much political discussion in Britain), there was a wider concern that it was the middle classes who might degenerate due to the lack of physical exercise in their lives. Models of 'civilisation,' in this context, become suspect.

The roots of degeneration are to be found earlier in the century in the work of Bénédict Augustin Morel (1809–73) in France in the 1850s. Morel attempted to account for social ills such as gambling, alcoholism and prostitution in medical terms by suggesting that they were the result of inheritable traits. This transfer of social problems to biological disposition was part of a wider national soul-searching in France, which identified the forces of degeneration as ills that were blighting the nation (See Pick 1996: 47–59). For Morel and others, the medicalisation of social problems was reassuring because it meant that such problems were subject to biological laws in which the 'weak' degenerate would effectively breed themselves into non-existence.

This medicalisation of social problems was later transposed to criminological discourse in the work of the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909) in the 1870s and beyond. Lombroso's measuring of the skulls of dead criminals, combined with his extensive photographing of the faces of criminals, represented an attempt to physiognomically locate the signs of degeneration. Criminality again represented weakness because, according to Lombroso, it could be bred out through successive generations. The work of Morel and Lombroso might seem to be distant to models of troubled middle-class civilisation as they manifestly implicate a working-class form of degeneracy. However, by the *fin de siècle* these issues became more complex as they were moved from the realm of crime into ideas about Empire and Art. Such a move attempted to medicalise cultural practices, but it also illustrated an elision between conceptions of the biological body and models of the body politic.

An early example of this transposition from the body to the nation can be found in Edwin Ray Lankester's *Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism* (1880). Lankester

(1847–1929) was an evolutionary biologist and professor of Zoology at University College London (he later held a professorship at Oxford University and the directorship of the Natural History Museum), and his book on degeneration was an introductory guide addressed to a non-academic audience. He argued that in certain circumstances it would be possible for otherwise complex cellular life forms to devolve into less complex organisms (his prime example is the Ascidians). Such an idea implicitly developed ideas from Morel and Lombroso that under certain conditions it would be possible to regress. This provoked concerns that within the body there lurked the potential for regression and that, crucially, it was an overly civilised life that produced the conditions under which degeneration could occur. For Lankester:

> Any new set of conditions occurring to an animal which render its food and safety very easily attained, seem to lead as a rule to Degeneration: just as an active healthy man sometimes degenerates when he suddenly becomes possessed of a fortune; or as Rome degenerated when possessed of the riches of the ancient world.
>
> (Lankester 1880: 33)

The lack of a Darwinian struggle for existence meant that there were no natural enemies to fight (the battle against which could reinvigorate the subject, or indeed the nation). As in the US context, individuals become estranged from their natural 'instincts' as a life of ease removes their necessity. Lankester's analogy between the 'healthy man' and ancient 'Rome' is revealing. Individuals and societies are prone to degeneration when they become overly refined and this concept marks out the chief medical ambivalence of the period.

We have seen how the very considerable medical advancements of the day eradicated a number of otherwise fatal diseases and that this also coincided with significant developments in surgical procedures (there was also a growth in the importance of the laboratory, which now became the place where experiments could be conducted with some safety, rather than directly on patients on the often unhygienic hospital ward [see Porter 1997: 320–23]). The view of the medical profession had correspondingly shifted as the positive signs of progress were noted, including a model of professional medical training that educated new generations of properly equipped health care professionals. And yet even as these advancements were made, images of disease refused to go away. Instead, they paradoxically reappeared in discussions about progress, ones in which civilisation now became suspect. As the body became increasingly 'healthy,' so it seemed it became the site of potential disease. This contradiction is crucial for any understanding of medical discourse in the period. It came about because conventional medicine, despite all of its advancements, lacked a model of the unified subject. As we have seen, conventional medicine was characterised by developments in areas of specialisation. While this had a positive effect on the health of the body, it also meant that that body was fragmented across these disciplines, which subjected it to their own quite specific forms of scientific scrutiny. Theories of degeneration, however, rested on a model of a unified, if potentially diseased, subject. Orthodox medicine had no rival subject to assert because of an epistemological inability to locate the 'person' within coherent

scientific taxonomies. Medical specialisation effectively fragmented the subject and this had its roots within wider scientific discussion in the nineteenth century that addressed the diverse places in which 'life' was to be found. This complex problem will be clarified below in a discussion of the published *Proceedings* of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (established in 1831), but first it is necessary to conclude this discussion of degeneration with a brief account of the work of Max Nordau (1849–1923).

Nordau's *Degeneration* (1892) attempted to construct a coherent theory of the new social changes that were associated with the *fin de siècle*. While the book focused on new artistic developments in the novel and the theatre, it also provided a reactionary account of the New Woman movement (caricatured as 'travailing women,' Nordau 1968: 7) and more generally represented hostility towards many of the progressive political changes emerging in the period. The book was dedicated to Lombroso and reapplied the language of symptomatology from earlier models of degeneration to modern European culture. For Nordau the decadent writings of Oscar Wilde, the social realism of Zola, and the new theatrical developments of Ibsen variously represented the presence of cultural disease because their work lacked the didactic moral purpose that characterised allegedly 'healthy' art. While his thesis rests upon a link between art and moral utility, it nevertheless reworks earlier notions of degeneration (such as Lankester's, among others) that had indicated that Western civilisation – now represented by its allegedly amoral artefacts – cannot be trusted. Indeed Nordau goes so far as to suggest that:

> the physician, especially if he has devoted himself to the special study of nervous and mental maladies, recognises at a glance in the *fin-de-siècle* disposition [. . .] two well-defined conditions of disease, with which he is quite familiar, viz. degeneration (degeneracy) and hysteria.
>
> (Nordau 1968: 15)

Thus it is not specific individuals that manifest illness, it is potentially entire nations.

Central to Nordau's critique of modern society is the implication that an overly refined civilisation manifests the 'disease' of effeminacy, as that is the inevitable consequence of an estrangement from instinctive masculine vigour. Art is the key agent in this. Nordau notes that with the 'degenerate':

> a commonplace line of poetry or of prose sends a shudder down his back; he falls into raptures before indifferent pictures or statues; and music, especially, even the most insipid and least commendable, arouses in him the most vehement emotions.
>
> (Nordau 1968: 19)

Nordau can pathologise the new art forms of the *fin de siècle* because a medical notion of disease has become culturally transportable. The paradox is that it is progress and 'civilisation' that appear to point the way back to degeneration and decline. As we will see below, this is a central contradiction that becomes addressed elsewhere in the culture, particularly in the late-Gothic novel. However, it is also important to acknowledge that the idea of an atavistic decline, while not accepted by all

(indeed Nordau was much critiqued by commentators such as William James and George Bernard Shaw, among others; see William James 1895: 289–90, George Bernard Shaw 1908) is also built on ideas about the relationship between the human and the nonhuman. Despite medical advancements, this relationship dogged scientific taxonomies in the period. The *Proceedings* of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (or BAAS) helpfully illustrate this problem.

The history of the BAAS demonstrates how many of the tensions between competing scientific disciplines in the early part of the nineteenth century reflected wider social and economic concerns – as illustrated, for example, by attempts made by the agricultural lobby to press for representation within the BAAS at a time when agriculture was threatened due to the advancements of industrial urban economies. The changing status of 'medicine' within the BAAS throughout the nineteenth century underpins how the discipline came to be perceived within the BAAS at the end of the century. Medicine had uneasy points of contact with other disciplines in the nineteenth century and while originally 'medicine' was accorded a category of its own in the BAAS's *Proceedings*, this was only between 1836–44, after which its findings became largely subsumed under 'Physiology.'

This ambiguity can be traced back to the origins of the BAAS, which had been conscious of the difficulty in isolating medicine from its wider social context. In their history of the BAAS, Jack Morrell and Arnold Thackray note that 'Problems of definition were especially acute in the case of medicine, and there was argument over whether the BAAS should limit itself to physiology and anatomy, or whether it should include matters of practice and social concern' (Morrell and Thackray 1981: 276). The BAAS was aware that its explorations could drift towards the metaphysical, assuming a model of the humanities that was beyond the dictates of proper scientific scrutiny. However, it is clear from the structure of the BAAS's published *Proceedings* that they are complicated due to the lack of a clear concept of a 'person' although there is a somewhat muddled concept of 'life' which at various times created links between botany, zoology, and human physiology. By the 1890s, definitions of the 'person' were subject to some instability in disciplinary location because at various points in the *Proceedings* the boundaries among 'Physiology,' 'Anatomy,' 'Zoology' and 'Botany' were so highly porous. For example, the definition of 'Physiology' during the 1890s also includes a subcategory on 'Experimental Psychology': but where to place the person is still unclear, in part because of the recent consolidation of 'Anthropology' as a scientific category in its own right (one which rested on an older category of 'Ethnology' from the 1840s). Also, while the medical discussions in 'Physiology' reflected a growing interest in bacterial infections and inoculations there were slippages with other categories, most notably with animals. In 1894, a report on how animals respond to changes in temperature was included under 'Physiology,' while under 'Anthropology' there were reports on 'the Mental and Physical Condition of Children,' 'The Heredity of Acquired Characters,' and one that brought medicine and the anthropological nicely together titled 'On the Anthropological Significance of Ticklishness.' Many of these were authored by MDs rather than MAs.

What it meant to be a person at the end of the nineteenth century was in part shaped by what was meant by life (animal, vegetable, human). The specialisation in medical investigations that we noted at the beginning undoubtedly had a very positive effect in health care. Laboratory work on bacteria could be beneficial for

patients, as could the more technological developments in surgical procedures. These initiatives alongside advanced understandings in parasitology helped to create the sense that, by the end of the century, the world's dangers could be met. However, the 'person' became fragmented in this process and was transferred to the alternative medicalised context of theories of degeneration where a unified concept of the self (as 'ill,' criminal,' 'amoral') became established. In truth the claims of theories of degeneration are not notably medical, or indeed scientific, but the fact that they could be presented as such indicates how a discourse of medicine was used to underpin a social and political model of reactionary pessimism, while medicine per se had seemed to make the world a safer (better) place. There were thus quite specific tensions between these versions of medical discourse, and the place in which they were subject to cultural analysis was in the Gothic fiction of the day.

One feature of the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic is its engagement with images of medicine. R. L. Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* centres on how Dr Jekyll's discovery of a chemical agent enables him to generate a seemingly degenerate throwback in the guise of Mr Hyde. Oscar Wilde noted the medical ambience of the novella when he claimed that the 'transformation of Dr Jekyll reads dangerously like an experiment out of the *Lancet*' (Oscar Wilde 2001: 167). The novella repeatedly dwells on the idea of a degenerate proclivity that inhabits the world of middle-class respectability, here represented by doctors and lawyers (the quintessentially middle-class professions). Jekyll notes the 'ape-like tricks' (Stevenson 1979: 96) of Hyde that imply an engagement with Darwin. However, in keeping with other *fin-de-siècle* Gothic texts, the context of degeneration is challenged as the focus shifts to emphasising that civilisation is the problem. Civilisation in *Jekyll and Hyde* is not represented as overly refined, and so serves as the prelude to a degenerate decline (as it is in Lankester and Nordau). Rather, civilisation is represented as fundamentally empty and so calls Hyde into being. Jekyll and the other principal characters, such as Mr Utterson and Dr Lanyon, are described as living hollow, alienated lives due to their strict adherence to notions of middle-class decency. Stevenson, radically, suggests that this makes them similar to the living dead. Hyde at least has energy as he evolves into being – he gets physically bigger throughout the novella – whereas they metaphorically die out. Stevenson turns degeneration back on to the middle classes who have created Hyde and so destroyed themselves (which is why the novella ends with a suicide). Stevenson's novella can thus be read as a critique of class and its self-generated ills.

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* also engages with theories of degeneration. Stoker was aware of the medical advancements of the day, as three of his brothers were doctors. His brother Sir William Thornley Stoker (1845–1912) was President of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and Bram corresponded with him about the effects of head contusions, which he wished to symptomatically map on to the assaulted Renfield in *Dracula* (see Eighteen-Bisang and Miller 2008: 180). The novel addressed ideas of a fatigued sense of middle-class civilisation in the figure of Jonathan Harker, whose opening journal account of his trip to Castle Dracula furnishes many clues about the Count's vampiric identity that the vampire hunters will later decode. Harker provides a description of the Count's face:

> His face was a strong – a very strong – aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair

growing scantily around the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiar sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was of extraordinary pallor.

<div align="right">(Stoker 1996: 17–18)</div>

Leonard Wolf has noted that this is a paraphrase of the features of the archetypical criminal as outlined by Lombroso in *Criminal Man* (1876) (Wolf 1975: 6). Also, while Harker does not identify this from the description his fiancée Mina does, claiming that 'The Count is a criminal and of criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him' (Stoker 1996: 342).

While this marks out the Count as irredeemably criminal, it also creates a paradox because he is associated with a heroism that is lost in a world dominated by middle-class professionals. He tells Harker of his heroic pedigree in which 'We Szekelys have a right to be proud, for in our veins flows the blood of many brave races who fought as the lion fights, for lordship.' However, 'The war-like days are over. Blood is too precious a thing in these days of dishonourable peace; and the glories of the great races are as a tale that is told' (Stoker 1996: 29, 30). The irony is that Harker (who is initially prone to fainting fits) needs to emulate the Count in order to be transformed into a man of action who can help kill the Count at the end of the novel. Such a transformation engages with Nordau's idea that a lack of manliness characterises the *fin de siècle* and Harker is in pursuit of some seemingly instinctive masculine impulse that can affect this transformation. The central paradox of the novel is that in order to defeat the degenerate Count it becomes necessary to become more like him, as this is the only way to cast off an apparent middle-class degeneracy that is linked to a model of the civilised middle-class professional (see Smith 2004: 34–37).

Dracula also includes references to medicine with Dr Seward's private Asylum providing a space in which debates take place about the significance of his patient, Renfield. Seward has categorised the animal eating Renfield as 'zoophagus' (or life-eating), but it is Professor Van Helsing who indicates that it is necessary to understand Renfield rather than simply scientifically categorise him, as he has links to the Count (as a would-be vampire) that it is necessary for them to understand. Ultimately, the medical diagnosis of vampirism can only go so far, but the novel's references to how hypnotism could be used in a quasi-medical context to elicit covert information does play an important role in the novel. H. G. Wells's *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896) can be seen within the context of popular anti-vivisection debates, even while he lampoons particular types of medical experimentation, whereas Arthur Machen in *The Great God Pan* (1894) brings together the medical with the pagan. These late-Gothic texts engage with contemporary ideas of progress that are undermined by the presence of seemingly older forces. Or as Harker puts it in *Dracula*, there are forces in the world 'which mere "modernity" cannot kill' (Stoker 1996: 36).

The *fin-de-siècle* Gothic provided a cultural context in which ideas of medical progress and degenerate regression were discussed. As we have seen, the period was

characterised by considerable advancements in all branches of medicine. However, medicine, via Nordau, was then applied to society in order to account for the presence of social 'ills.' Medicine and a language using the medical thus need to be disentangled in any understanding of the period – and the Gothic of the time went some way to provide the cultural space in which that occurred. Medicine also had a public mission. As we saw in the British and US public health care contexts, the desire was to both educate and create the conditions under which self-regulation (by instilling 'healthy' habits), could take place. As a result of medical specialisation, medicine did not produce a holistic model of the subject. This fragmented medical being left a space in the medical discourse that theories of degeneration could readily fill as they placed the potentially unified, if diseased, subject at the centre of their cultural and social (rather than strictly medical) enquiries. This ultimately marks out the central ambivalence of *fin-de-siècle* medical discourse – it looked forwards and backwards at the same time, although with different agendas and with varying levels of scientific credibility.

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PART VI
SELFHOOD

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GENDER AND SEXUALITY

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Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn

'Women love us for our defects. If we have enough of them they will forgive us everything, even our intellects . . .'

'[T]rue . . . If we women did not love you for your defects, where would you all be? . . . You would be a set of unfortunate bachelors. Not, however, that that would alter you much. Nowadays all the married men live like bachelors, and all the bachelors like married men.'

'*Fin de siècle*,' murmured Lord Henry.

'*Fin du globe*,' answered [Lady Narborough].

'I wish it were *fin du globe*,' said Dorian . . . 'Life is a great disappointment.'

(Wilde 2007: 149)

Dorian Gray's comment is often viewed as encapsulating the world-weariness of decadent life in the late nineteenth century. What has received less attention is the sense implied of the global nature of such experience. Lady Narborough's introduction of '*du globe*' into the discussion is pertinent for an interrogation of gender and sexuality at the *fin de siècle*. Studies of the 1880s and 1890s have tended to focus on debates about women, and more recently masculinity, sexual identities and the political and personal battles for expression figured through bodies, behaviours and beliefs within largely European and Anglo-American contexts. With greater exposure to a plurality of exoticised or eroticised countries in the decadent imagination, however, the universal applicability of Western ideas of gender and sexuality came to be questioned. While this was a time of expanded travel, the period also saw increased instances of conflict for empires in tension. The literary 'fantasies of reverse invasion' (Ledger and Luckhurst 2000: xvi) that emerged reflected a sense of the dangers as trading routes and systems were tested in the East and the dividing lines drawn up at the Berlin Conference in 1885 between the competing imperial powers. These contexts channelled a new energy into preserving imperial ideology even in the face of its own decline, and often with masculinity at stake in the project of protecting empires near and far (see the imperial Gothic of H. Rider Haggard's *She* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*).

This anxiety of ideological decline had a profound impact on understandings of cultural movements, with gender and sexuality becoming the battleground for the moral and mental constitution of Western civilisation. The Austrian-born Max Nordau claimed a degree of universality not only for his diagnosis of cultural decay but also more broadly for a world in self-destruction. Nordau's opening declaration in *Degeneration* (1892, first English translation 1993) signals the worldwide dimension of his verdict on the *fin de siècle* as an epoch heralding the 'Dusk of the Nations, in which all suns and all stars are gradually waning, and mankind with all its institutions and creations is perishing in the midst of a dying world' (1993: 3). This is decay at a cosmological level. Yet Nordau's examples of global weariness reaching its conclusion in apocalyptic, eschatological meanings (Bradley 2010) are Western and predominantly European. European introspection appears often to have trumped more globalist as well as regionally diverse understandings of the contexts of the period.

This is not altogether surprising. For progressives and decadents alike in the 1890s one might perceive such inward and domestic rather than outward and foreign self-examinations as part of a rebellion against the previous generations and their expansionist colonial impulses. Identifying when the world experienced the *fin de siècle* is therefore a complex task. Whereas the *fin de siècle* and the 1880s and 1890s have become synonymous in a European context, and often incorporate the broader periodicity of the century, spanning the French *belle époque* as well (McAuliffe 2011), charting when the *fin de siècle* is *experienced* in terms of cultural replication and similarities of style, concern and anxieties is harder to determine in its international dimension. To use the twin figures of Anglo-American *fin-de-siècle* sexual anarchy, the New Woman and the dandy (Showalter 1991), for example, raises questions about the temporal framing of the period across different national and ethnic settings. The New Woman appeared in non-Western cultures like Japan and even in a European framework at divergent periods after the century's turn, in the 1910s or 1920s (Heilmann and Beetham 2004). In making international comparisons, therefore, we need to be mindful of the risk of global reductionism, seeing continuity in circumstance and influence in happenstance. Thus, while David Der-wei Wang's *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1849–1911* shares a terminology and a periodic framework resonant with the Western *fin de siècle*, his study draws pointed attention to the divergent and often contradictory pressures at work in the Chinese context of the time.

As a result, the global *fin de siècle* proves an arresting area of research: intriguing, but also problematic as we seek to explore the international dimensions of such localised paradigms and cultural specificities as gender and sexuality. The partial way to handle this is to accept the limitations of the global as a unifying point of critique and embrace the dominant mode. Christopher Bayly sets out the dilemma and its solution in his stated objective 'to chart the interdependence of world events, while allowing for the brute fact of Western domination [even though] . . . over large parts of the world, this European domination was only partial and temporary' (2004: 3). Similarly, Bryan Turner suggests that while 'we can have some view on the global nature of the *fin de siècle* . . . we also need some understanding of the local circumstances and in particular on the indigenous circumstances . . . within national cultures' (1994: 153).

An important insight that has emerged from Regenia Gagnier's 'Global Circulation' project for *Literature Compass* is that linear approaches to the transnational circulation of literature seeking to identify repetition and assimilation can be misleading, given that the complexity of cultural models is more diverse than influence or spread of ideas, residing instead in cultural resonances across time periods and geographic range. Gagnier (2010) places new emphasis on reconsidering the diversity of global understandings and cultural cross-currents of the late nineteenth century. Underlining the significance of the nomadic nature of ideas as they have permeated, non-synchronically, across borders, Gagnier's investigation of how concepts travel transculturally resonates with critical perceptions of decadence as a Western phenomenon. It may be considered somewhat ironic that decadence, imagined as it was through decay and non-reproduction, should provide a model of cultural transmission. It is, after all, a concept framed by sterility and dissolution.

Other key markers of decadence – excess, affectation and ornamentation – point to the gendered contexts of the movement which, as Roger Luckhurst comments, 'was associated with ostentatious and pointless display. The Decadent . . . became absorbed in an obscure, private, and perverse world. The Decadent style is encrusted with ornament, weighed down with abstruse learning and Latinate constructions. It revels in artifice; it despises the natural and virile.' (2005: xvii) The revulsion from the 'virile' and the desire to embrace the 'unnatural' are key to the ways in which decadence and its self-assertion through self-denying sexuality underpin the first strand we wish to explore: sex and celibacy.

SEX AND THE SINGLE LIFE

Lady Narborough's comment about 'unfortunate bachelors' in Wilde's novella conjures up the contrast between respectable irregularity and its dangerous opposite of disrespectable singularity, between the cover of marriage and the exposure of celibacy (or worse). In the pivotal year of 1895 the Anglo-Irish novelist George Moore published *Celibates*, a collection of three novellas exploring questions of non-reproductive sexuality, the complexities of gender and sexual desire, and the yearning for a life aesthetic and ascetic. Featuring as his three protagonists a half-hearted New Woman, a repressed homosexual and a convent-educated daughter from a broken middle-class home, Moore's tales challenge the notion of decadent sexuality as explicit or overtly expressive. When thinking of *fin-de-siècle* gender and sexuality, celibacy does not immediately come to mind. Yet Moore's stories and his revisions of them into the late 1920s are more of the period than we may assume. Indeed, one of the core concerns of social commentators at the time was the lack of sexual activity taking place rather than the excess of it. Thus a debate about 'The Degradation of Woman' conducted in the *Humanitarian* in 1896 between the Catholic biologist St George Mivart and the science writer and novelist Grant Allen articulated male anxiety about 'that indifference towards, or positive aversion to, intimate conjugal relations which so many wives . . . seem now to experience' as a result of a rapidly spreading 'fixed idea' that 'to submit themselves to those conjugal relations, when not prompted to do so by their own feelings, is for them a DEGRADATION!' (9: 251, in Heilmann 1998: II). Allen, who had caused a sensation with his free (extramarital) love novels *The Woman Who Did* and *The British*

Barbarians (both 1895), shared Mivart's panic about female sexual abstinence, if from the opposite spectrum, warning that because of outdated virginity and chastity norms 'England to-day is full . . . of celibate women to whom their condition is, rightly and naturally, a wrong and a grievance' (9: 341–42, in Heilmann 1998: II).

His eugenically inflected claim that women's inherent sexual imperative was for motherhood retraced earlier-Victorian medical-establishment views that female sexuality was exclusively focused around reproductive desire. Allen's conviction that 'Our girls are crying, not for freedom to be nuns, but for freedom to be mothers' (342) was hotly contested by feminists. In her reply, 'Nature's Nuns', Coralie Glyn pointed out, in the same *Humanitarian* issue, that modern women were keen to disengage from both marriage and motherhood because of the ingrained gender inequality of moral and legal codes and that their primary objective lay in their personal and professional development as human beings (420–26, in Heilmann 1998: II). This point was reinforced by Ella Hepworth Dixon, author of *The Story of A Modern Woman* (1894), in her 1899 contribution to the *Humanitarian*, 'Why Women are Ceasing to Marry' (14: 391–96, in Heilmann 1998: II). The radical New Woman author Mona Caird may have shocked fewer of her female contemporaries than might be expected with her explosive journalistic and novelistic attacks on a system which deprived women of the right of control over their bodies at a time when marital rape remained a sharply disputed concept, given that, in law, wives granted permanent sexual consent on contracting marriage (Shanley 1989: 184–85). In her collection of essays, *The Morality of Marriage* (1897, in Heilmann 1998: I), and novels like *The Daughters of Danaus* (1894) Caird dissected late-Victorian women's bodily dispossession and their consequent withdrawal from sexual relationships.

Other writers like George Gissing, with his punningly named protagonist of *The Odd Women* (1893), Rhoda Nunn, dealt with the question of the (statistically) 'superfluous' woman, and short stories by men and women in periodicals like *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy* carried tales that referenced the reduced availability of marriage partners, while simultaneously embracing the possibilities for different forms of desire that this opened up. Often, such short texts challenged prevailing social mores about female 'innocence', male 'experience' and silence on issues of sexuality. George Egerton's tales 'A Cross Line' (*Keynotes*, 1893) and 'Virgin Soil' (*Discords*, 1894) tackled maternal responsibility in preparing daughters for conjugal sex as much as married women's adulterous impulses. Sexual desires were also wrapped up with questions of the East and the exotic, as in Kate Chopin's 'An Egyptian Cigarette' (1897). That sex was depicted as both erotic and imposed, and that narratives played with gender boundaries for stylistic innovation rather than to project political solutions, illustrates the complexities of a period that simultaneously embraced 'perverse' and sterile moods.

Moore's explorations of the sexual self-denial of psychological 'celibates' are therefore in tune with decadent or over-aestheticised gender performance. The inability of one of Moore's three protagonists, John Norton, to erect an overtly phallic tower at his family seat or the failure of his flawed New Woman to paint to a high standard are reflective of the tension between aesthetic representation and gendered constraints. Moore's point may have been at odds with many of his artistic contemporaries: that sexual denial of either men or women ran against creativity and aesthetic success. But in identifying singledom or the pursuit of non-reproductive

sexuality as a virtue, he was in step with his time. Indeed, Moore's central *Celibates* character Norton, a figure he would reconceptualise repeatedly (see Heilmann and Llewellyn 2007: I and V), ties in with Luckhurst's perception of the prevailing 'positive embrace of the image of the exhausted aristocratic line by the Decadent Movement' as a 'sign of a doomed attempt to mark themselves off from the banalities of bourgeois and mass culture' (2005: xvii). Such identification is implicitly a critique of a particular mode of advanced, civilised culture in tension with its own choices within a market of relationships that are themselves commodities.

Even where decadent writers of the period do feature sexual activity, this is frequently represented as post-coital pessimism, an odd conjunction of desire and listlessness. In 'The Decadent Movement in Literature' (1893) Arthur Symons advanced ideas that played with the complexities of sexual longing expressed in and through aesthetic languor. Decadent literature, to the decadent Symons as much as to the anti-degenerationist Nordau, appeared inherently dis-eased and in the process of decay: 'this literature is certainly typical of a civilization grown over-luxurious, over-inquiring, too languid for the relief of action, too uncertain for any emphasis in opinion or conduct . . . its very artificiality is a way of being true to nature' (1983: 236–37). Nordau's focus on the European is not dissimilar to Symons's conceptualisation here of the *fin de siècle* as almost quintessentially constitutive of the remnants of an advanced civilisation. The juxtaposition of the natural and the unnatural, the authentic and the artificial, is a common discursive strategy, from the plays of Wilde to the artistic works of Aubrey Beardsley. The perversity but also the self-replicating sexuality of Beardsley's art, in particular his 1894 illustrations of Wilde's *Salomé* (French original 1891, English translation 1894), which depict Salome gleefully dancing with the decapitated saint's head, are simultaneously masturbatory and celibate. The decadent mode and the expression of sexual and gendered performances are thus often inseparable. This intermixture of artificiality and the natural, the blurring lines between the lived and the imagined, and the disgust following sexual performance are neatly exhibited in Symons's poem 'White Heliotrope' (1895) with its 'feverish room and . . . white bed,/The tumbled skirts upon a chair' in which the mistress is defeated by her own image and artifice ('The mirror that has sucked your face/Into its secret deep of deeps'). The speaker's self-hypnotism is deadening:

> And I, who watch you drowsily,
> With eyes that, having slept not, ache;
> This (need one dread? nay, dare one hope?)
> Will rise, a ghost of memory, if
> Ever again my handkerchief
> Is scented with White Heliotrope.
>
> (2003: 47)

The anaestheticising effect of the white heliotrope (itself a piece of imagery in tension since the actual colour of the plant is pink-purple) reflects on a past sexual experience. Moderated by a distinct air of disease and death, the text acts as a warning of not only the melancholy of the post-sexual moment but also the implicit anxiety of lost consciousness ('drowsily'), the slippage between life and death ('a ghost of memory') and the connection of both with contagious disease. In an age in which sexual

activity carried the threat of disability and death through syphilis, Symons's poem and its age are as coloured by the belief in individuals' right to make choices about sexual desire as by the recognition of the unforgiving after-effects of decisions not their own. Henrik Ibsen's play *Ghosts* (written in Norwegian in 1881), which premiered in London in 1891, is of this moment too, conjuring up the sexual sins of the fathers as they wreak havoc on the lives of their children: a morality of desire that threatens the purity of desire. Following the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts (1864–86), legislation that had incriminated working-class women for the spread of venereal disease, the stark message of the syphilis plots in Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1893), Emma Frances Brooke's *A Superfluous Woman* (1894) and, across the Atlantic, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Crux* (1910) was that social (read: sexual) purity was the only guarantor of the moral and physical health ('hygiene') of the nation; women had every right to demand clean sexual records of prospective husbands and reject suitors tainted with prior experience and thus potentially infectious bodies. For many New Woman writers and feminists, the most pressing issue at the *fin de siècle* was not to attain greater sexual freedom for women, but to establish the health hazards and thus unacceptability of sexual licence in men (see Bland 1995).

Yet abstinence or celibacy, while not resolving issues of sexual identity, did bring conflicted impressions of gender performance. Without displaying virility, men appeared effeminate and figures like John Norton, although repulsed by the fleshly, raised questions about gender identity. The body as a public possession and its compliance with accepted codes of conduct thus brought into tension issues of choice, free will and the very individualism that epitomised social interaction in the period.

WHOSE BODY IS IT ANYWAY?

In 'White Heliotrope' the female lover's body is irrelevant: she is the sex not there, possessed before the poem begins. Her physical form is vacated from the text in favour of the accoutrements of her profession (clothes and 'paints'). Her eyes, visible in the poem, stir only anxiety in the male poet, and a weary ache. But although Symons's poem does, by its very decadent engagement with gender and sexuality, neglect the physicality of the body for the transience of a perfumed scent, the *fin-de-siècle* period itself more broadly exhibited a strong fascination with the tangibilities of the corporeal. This is signalled by an increase in the availability of pornography and the distinct role it played in late-Victorian imperial science (see Sigel 2002: 50–80, 84–85, 88, 163; Marcus 2009). While celibacy prefigured certain choices about sexuality and personal identity, the expression of desire and a new fluidity in gender performance were also quintessentially of the *fin de siècle*. Like the esoteric mysticism evinced in Norton's Latinist denial of sexuality and the spiritualised celibacy of Madame Blavatsky's Theosophical Society (Kaye 2007: 66), sexual expression also often drew inspiration from a global sphere.

Recent work by Heike Bauer and others has indicated the international aspects of sexology (the science of sexuality). Influential figures like the German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing, the British social reformer Havelock Ellis and the Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud made use of international comparisons to posit an antithesis between the savage without and the savage within. Krafft-Ebing's

discussion of African polygamy and 1890s anti-Islamic views reproduced normalising debates by juxtaposing 'savage' societies and 'civilised' practices in the West. Sexology (as well as psychoanalysis) served as a legitimating discipline established in opposition to an aestheticising cultural discourse: while texts explored individual desires in multifarious form, sexology categorised (and globalised) them. Such aestheticisation often located itself around the body in ways that engendered polymorphous approaches to desire and its control and regulation. Popular fiction like Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) employed Gothic tropes to explore such frameworks, but in presenting distortions of the male professional, it illuminated the impossibility of categorising the other as elsewhere and external. Indeed, as Andrew Smith notes, the anxiety of the period was 'staged within the dominant masculinist culture, rather than . . . [in] external threats to it' (2004: 1).

Attempts to classify sexuality continued not only through the new discourses of sexology but also through the ways in which such narratives frequently reinforced more conventional ways of seeing. Thus Elizabeth Stephens argues that the tradition of the anatomical museum served 'professional and popular' purposes, with exhibitions playing 'an important role in the identification and classification of . . . "perverse" sexualities and bodies' (2008: 26). The classificatory impulse of the nineteenth century permeated discourses of sexuality as much as it shaped evolutionary science. Indeed, there was a degree of greater licence at the *fin de siècle* for investigations into human categories, with specific attention paid to the degeneracy of individuals and nations. Following Nordau, scientific theories, Smith notes, 'attempted to account [for] popular anxieties about national decline by exploring its alleged causes within particular nations' (2004: 14).

Projecting this outwardly through expansionism and engagements with other cultures, European and American travellers saw mirrored and refracted models. Tradition and notions of ownership of the physical body are a further connection with the international dimensions of cultural encounter around women's roles in particular. Individual women very often found themselves involved in non-Western questions of gender and identity while in occidental locations. One such traveller was Alicia Bewicke, a successful novelist and social commentator who moved to China following her marriage to the businessman Archibald Little. Publishing as Mrs Archibald Little, Bewicke began to campaign against the practice of foot binding and led a movement that engaged with political figures as first president of the Anti-Footbinding Society of China (Tien Tsu Hui). The New Woman writer Sarah Grand similarly experienced at first hand the politics of gender and sexuality in China, and some of her texts reflect on this experience in ways that draw parallels with a more globalised version of womanhood. While these transnational engagements stimulate recognition and distance at one and the same time, the mutually informative nature of self and other frequently did not carry over into life practice or modes of transferable behaviour. The exotic, when it did return to the home country, remained an exhibit of difference.

These differences remain part of the problem in seeking out a comparative approach, which resides not only in cultural dissonance but in the concealed nature of areas related to gender and sex. One alternative is to look for explicit comparisons that lack nuance while establishing strong parallels, such as Dennis Altman's *Global*

Sex (2001), which begins by drawing a connection between the Bangkok of 2000 and the Vienna of 1900. Laura Engelstein's work on Russian sexual discourses at the *fin de siècle* presents a different approach, for as she points out, '[t]he Russian secular elites drew their cultural vocabulary from the Western repertoire and tested their values against a Western standard' (1992: 2). While this makes Engelstein's angle on the 'quest' for liberalism as a mode of happiness (6) more enriching as a context for the Western connection, it limits an authentic representation of Russia in its sexual or gendered attitudes. The externalisation of discourses around gender and sexuality thus simultaneously elucidates and hides the problems of nation states in articulating coherent models of behaviour.

This connects to the body politic alongside the physical body in the modes of exploration encountered in nineteenth-century pornography. As Lisa Sigel has argued, pornography, poised between 'mass market' production and 'elite consumption', illuminates the way in which discourses of sexuality could reflect on 'political instability [and] imperialism' (2002: 11). The commodification of the body, gender roles and sexual performance (performative on the page and in the act of reading) thus codifies prevalent social and cultural assumptions across the borders of national experience. The 1890s are marked by awkward tension between the explication of sexual perversity and its restraint. Even when sex explicitly entered the representational modes of aesthetic cultures, as in the works of Aubrey Beardsley, the very absurdity of hyper-phallic portrayal renders such depictions comic rather than threatening. In Beardsley's strutting *The Lacedaemonian Ambassadors* from *Lysistrata* (1896) the over-visualised male members make sexual desire farcical and grotesque, just as the intoxicating figure of the *femme fatale* turns into satire in *The Peacock Skirt* (1894). The hyper-stylised performance of gender identity and sexual explicitness embodies the friction in public and aesthetic discourses around both female and male bodies.

PEACOCKS PREENING: MALE MODELS

The female body received intense attention in the period from medical practitioners and social commentators, and became a site of debate that cut across contemporary arguments about women's roles, responsibilities and rights. The figures of the mother and wife and – often placed in diametrical opposition – the modern (New) woman and the *femme fatale* were encapsulated in literary, cultural and political discourses. In feminist writing, the body of a woman became the nucleus of contestation between the 'old' sexual politics of moral degeneration and a 'new' agenda for the maternalist renovation of society (Richardson 2003). That this reformist programme was frequently compromised by eugenicist and imperialist principles (Jusová 2005) points to the 'odd mixture of reactionary and advanced thinking' that Richard Kaye has identified as symptomatic of *fin-de-siècle* approaches to gender and sexuality (2007: 55).

It was not only New Woman writing which singled out the body of the male as the locus of sexual corruption and contagion. This was also the case in the periodical press reporting on male brothels (like the Dublin Castle and Cleveland Street scandals of 1884 and 1889; see White 1999:64) and sensational exposure of international girl-trafficking and child sexual abuse rings (W. T. Stead's 1885 undercover

Pall Mall Gazette investigation into 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon', Walkowitz 1992: 81–134). Ironically, measures introduced under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 to make provision for the greater protection of girls (which raised the age of consent from 13 to 16) were accompanied by the criminalisation of homosexual acts under the Labouchere Amendment (White 1999: 22): the legislation under which Wilde was prosecuted in 1895.

A risky undertaking in light of increasing moral panic about homosexuality, the self-conscious demonstration of alternative masculinities was often defused into a playful parade of the narcissistic peacock dazzled by his own feathery reflection in the mirror. Developing from Regency figures like Beau Brummell, the dandy took on a new form through the influence of Charles Baudelaire (Moers, Garelick). In contradistinction to the preening peacock of fashionable clothing and colourful display, the *fin-de-siècle* dandy was much more sculptural and structured in his performance. To Baudelaire, 'the specific beauty of the dandy consists particularly in that cold exterior resulting from the unshakable determination to remain unmoved; one is reminded of a latent fire, whose existence is merely suspected, and which, if it wanted to, but it does not, could burst forth in all its brightness' (1981: 422). Baudelaire noted the strictness of this performance, referring to dandyism as an 'institution outside the law' with 'a rigorous code of laws' (419). Such *mise-en-scène* of the coldness of the Baudelairean figure, though aligned with the late-century *flâneur*, is separate from the flamboyancy deployed by Wilde. Wilde's stage instruction in *An Ideal Husband* (1895) for Lord Goring, his dandy figure, engages the more strutting side of male performance:

> Enter Lord Goring. Thirty-four, but always says he is younger. A well-bred, expressionless face. He is clever, but would not like to be thought so. A flawless dandy, he would be annoyed if he were considered romantic. He plays with life, and is on perfectly good terms with the world. He is fond of being misunderstood. It gives him a post of vantage.
>
> (2003: I, 247)

The overt determination to veil emotion, to be perceived as one thing while inwardly identifying as something else, reflects the ability of the gay man to get away with it through self-satirising performance. The very attractions of such peacocking behaviour ensured an audience that was prepared to tolerate and even be amused by its excess. The paradoxical nature of Wilde's work and the duality of male- and female-gendered play in his writings were permissible, and entertaining, as long as the veneer of his own respectability was maintained: a strategy of staged rebellion in plain sight. However, as Elaine Showalter argues, 'Wilde's trial created a moral panic that inaugurated a period of censorship affecting both advanced women and homosexuals' (1991: 171). Such restraint included self-censorship, and necessitated new modes of expression as a result.

The dandy-esque performance of strutting peacocks in London and Paris was in stark contrast to the delayed Victorian-inflected national masculinities of other countries. In Korea, for example, we encounter the problems inherent in a global perspective on social and cultural norms. Vladimir Tikhonov's work on Korean masculinity in the 1890s places its functionality in service to a nation-building

modernism at the forefront of its mission. Tikhonov indicates the ways in which a global discourse of masculinity developed at different times beyond its European middle-class routes. The 'masculine' virtues of discipline, self-control and a sublimated sexual desire were taken forward through models of noble manhood and a militarised notion of gentlemanly conduct. This resonance of but also dissonance from established Western modes of masculine identity during the long nineteenth century reflects on how established behavioural codes at the *fin de siècle* were in a dual process of reification and decay. While the aestheticisation of decadent discourses of Western Europe undermined the public perception of the well-fostered and cultivated male structures and strictures of a (largely) Victorian ideal of manliness that had been successfully exported throughout the empire and beyond, emerging cultures of malehood in Korea were subtly channelling support to those older models of male patterns of work, strength and performance even as they were being eroded or at least challenged elsewhere. The Korean model of men in the 1890s thus owed more to Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help* (1859) than Wilde's *Dorian Gray*.

The complexities of universalising a global gender of the 1890s or a supranational sexual liberation are thus demonstrated to be vast. Even as the decadent men of Europe were reconfiguring identity politics in satirical ways, so other national masculinist movements were revitalising an older ideal of patriarchal reserve and reconstructing male behavioural codes.

VAMPING IT UP: WOMEN ON TOP?

If the dandy's performances were ambiguous, so was the more politicised enactment of New Womanhood. Here, too, there were tensions. Sarah Grand, for instance, was determined to display a model of femininity in her public appearance that was often at odds with the direct nature of her social commentary within her fiction (Heilmann 2004: 13–26). A similar friction in the *mise-en-scène* of a hyperfemininity that served to defuse while at the same time heightening the potential of female authority is discernible in the figure of the *femme fatale* (Dijkstra 1986). The international dimension of the threat of power-wielding women is dramatised in H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1887). While the text aims for an exhibition of male scholarly authenticity through a paraphernalia of textual devices – physical records of evidence, the display of 'original' artefacts and notations, translations of ancient documents, the use of the learned footnote – all is geared towards containing the power of the archetypal woman at the narrative's heart. As we learn early on, one of the most prominent traits of the male protagonist Holly is that 'he was popularly supposed to be as much afraid of a woman as most people are of a mad dog' (1991: 2). It thus comes as no surprise to read the descriptions of the landscape the adventurers must navigate. Ayesha, the quintessential dominatrix, resides in a geo-gendered space portrayed as a figuration of the abject female body. The imagery of a secreting vaginal topography is underpinned by references to the 'almost endless swamp' (73) as the home of '*She-who-must-be-obeyed*' (74). Masculine petrification at the sight of 'uncanny female interiors' is a common motif in literature of the period (Hurley 1996: 124–63). That this feminised natural environment must be mastered in order for the men to reach Ayesha is symbolic of the desire to overcome the female body. In their second trial, the confrontation with the Amahaggar, Holly

and his adoptive son Leo discover another horrifying parallel to the engulfing nature setting in the cannibalistic women's enthusiasm for subjecting male intruders to the inverted birth ritual of hotpotting. This culminates in Ayesha's terrifying display of power that draws irresistible strength from the regime of dread and desire produced by acts of veiling and unveiling. The representation of the *femme fatale* serves as a warning about women and their ability to emasculate virile manhood: this is why the text must enact a phallic revenge on Ayesha's body by vanquishing it with a momentous 'pillar of fire' (287) and the restorative (for the men) and yet destructive (for the woman) 'effluvium of the flame' (288). The punishment the text imposes on Ayesha reflects the need to highlight the atavistic nature of her sensuality and her savagery, cast as a return to the baser instincts of mankind in her transmogrification into a monkey (293). *Fin-de-siècle* degeneration fears are here visualised in the horrific spectacle of a regressive backward step of human development, the inverse of Darwinian evolution: 'Smaller she grew, and smaller yet, till she was no larger than a baboon' (294). The demise of the *femme fatale* reaffirms the male-to-male bonding disturbed by Ayesha while also releasing Britain and the Western world from the threat of invasion: for the Arabic-born Ayesha had previously expressed her intention of usurping the British throne and launching a new imperial regime.

Although of a very different order to Haggard's adventure narrative, Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) provides a useful context for considering that twin of the *femme fatale*, the New Woman, beyond her metropolitan location in London or New York. Schreiner's novel is a complex text, partly in terms of its split narrative, with the first part's passionate call for gender equality stalled in the ruthless destruction of its feminist spokeswoman Lyndall in the second. *African Farm* appears to suggest that there is no possible resolution to the woman question, and yet this was the time when the first-wave women's movement, in Britain and elsewhere, was achieving important victories. Like Haggard's *She*, albeit from the opposite ideological position, the text effects a consummate annihilation of the transgressive heroine, revealing the possibility of change only then to renounce it. The same is true of the treatment of the New Man figure Gregory Rose, whose development of an authentic human voice, paradoxically by cross-dressing in women's clothing, proves equally self-defeating.

Chapter 17, entitled 'Lyndall', articulates the feminism of Schreiner's time. *African Farm* started a trend, and in the fifteen years that succeeded its publication many female novelists followed Schreiner's model in using fiction as a platform for political ideas. On returning from school, Lyndall proclaims that

> It is not what is done to us, but what is made of us . . . that wrongs us . . . We all enter the world little plastic beings, with so much natural force, perhaps, but for the rest – blank; and the world tells us what we are to be, and shapes up by the ends it sets before us. To you it says – *Work*! and to us it says – *Seem*! To you it says – As you approximate to man's highest ideal of God, as your arm is strong and your knowledge great, and the power to labour is with you, so you shall gain all that human heart desires. To us it says – Strength shall not help you, nor knowledge, nor labour. You shall gain what men gain, but by other means. And so the world makes men and women.
>
> (1989: 171)

Lyndall's speech pinpoints Victorian feminist demands for gender equality, women's right to education and access to the professions, highlighting the importance of female independence and cautioning women against marriage: as long as marriage was premised on the sexual subjection and material dependence of women, an egalitarian partnership remained impossible. The present system of marriage amounted to prostitution because the woman 'sold' herself for a living. Instead of marriage, the text proposes free love: a dangerous option for women at the time, given Lyndall's rapid decline from the moment she elopes with her lover and her death by self-starvation after she gives birth to an illegitimate child. Sue Bridehead's experience in Thomas Hardy's anti-marriage novel *Jude the Obscure* (1895) is equally devastating. Real-life free unions too entailed distinct hazards for women: even members of the Legitimation League, an organisation in support of free love and illegitimate children, admitted that women had a much harder deal of it (Bland 1995: 157–58). A decade after *African Farm*, in 1895, the year of the Wilde trials, the socialist Edith Lanchester was committed to a lunatic asylum at the behest of her father, on the medical grounds that her relationship with a man whom she refused to marry was manifest evidence of madness, probably caused by '[o]ver-education' (Bland 1995: 159–61).

In addition to invoking the New Woman's dilemma between rejecting the old paradigms of patriarchal marriage and exploring new models for the expression of female desire which did not inflict similar vulnerabilities in a different configuration, Schreiner's novel also indicates the significance of women's activism beyond the Anglo-American paradigm. South Africa, India and Russia all had a role to play from the *fin de siècle* onwards in the debates about women's role in society; a tradition that both utilised and also deviated from Western feminist models is in evidence in each case (De Haan *et al*. 2012). Here, countries at the periphery of global leadership nevertheless had a significant place in interpreting and providing counter-narratives for the gender discourses taking place within the context of more dominant geo-political spheres.

Schreiner's concept of a feminism dislocated from Europe in a localised African space was complemented by other models of femininity in rebellion. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) proves useful here in reflecting on divergent versions of 'good' and 'bad' women, desire and its expression or repression, and the geo-gendered sexuality of its vampiric central protagonist. With its dual heroines Mina and Lucy, the text presents oppositional models of femininity. Both are under threat from the same externalised and eroticised male source, the Count himself. Just as he prompts a strong sense of gender discomfort among the male and female characters alike, so he unsettles through his imposition of a sexuality that is without restraint and a gender identity that is as fluid as the blood he sucks. This Eastern European threat to Western domesticity and virtue is powerfully invoked from the outset in the tortuous journey from West to East undertaken by the professional lawyer's clerk Jonathan Harker. Analogous to Holly's arrival in the lair of Ayesha, the novel suggests that danger is external to Western civilisation. That in his encounter with the female vampires Harker succumbs to the temptation of alternative adventures, signalled by his desire of being penetrated, is problematised as a quest for the perverse and the *unheimlich* (the Freudian notion of the uncanny conjoining the familiar and the strange). When Dracula is cast as the repressed vampiric body that must be

annihilated in order to stop the threat of a plague of unrestrained desire being unleashed on England's shores, what we can detect in the Crew of Light's project is a desperate resistance to self-knowledge (of shared homoerotic identity) as much as the repulsion of an outside force. Just as Van Helsing articulates the collective yearning – 'it is a man we want' (1997: 113) – so the novel's conclusion, with the Count's demise succeeded by the birth of a collective child called after its multiple fathers, reaffirms the disrupted social and sexual order while simultaneously under-cutting the imposition of 'straight' normality.

CONCLUSION

In ending with the figure of the vampire, we return to the non-reproductive sexuality of our beginning. The vampire has a bite that replicates but does not reproduce, that is sexualised but not sexual. From increased pornographic circulation models to sexological ratification of the (de)limitations of desire and gender identity via the New Woman and the dandified man, the complex and shifting modes and mores of 1890s sexuality are enhanced by thinking about the global dimension. The *fin de siècle* did not happen for all nations, or even all those within individual nations, at the same time, although the permeation and circulation of the ideas generated in the period did carry influence internationally. The ambiguous figure of the vampire, representative of a decadent and decaying lineage, epitomises the complexities of being and living, gendering and sexing, at the global *fin de siècle*.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

RACE AND ETHNICITY

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Laura Tabili

The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line.

(Du Bois 1999 [1903]: 209, quoted in Schneer 1999: 203)

Conveyed in this famous statement from the proclamation of the 1900 London Pan African Conference, 'To the Nations of the World . . . in the name of the darker races', the *fin-de-siècle* world saw intensified struggles in which fictions of race and ethnicity became central rationalizations for scarcities, inequality, domination and exclusion. In response, activists came together from across the globe, mounting collective resistance organized around the same racial categories and practices (Schneer 1999: 8, 224). The struggle for justice thus became partly a contest over race itself. This essay will focus briefly on the construction of racial difference through dialectical processes of political economy and ideology (Lorimer 2003: 188). It will then consider how people victimized by racism appropriated racial identities, using the oppressor's linguistic tools as a means of resistance and turning them into vehicles for liberation. As Frantz Fanon (1925–61), a prominent theorist of racism, put it, 'It is the white man who creates the Negro. But it is the negro who creates *negritude*' (Fanon 1959: 47).

RACE IS A RELATIONSHIP, AND NOT A THING

Like 'ethnicity', an even less precise category, race has no basis in biology but has taken shape historically through racist practices (Lewontin, Rose and Kamin 1984; Lorimer 1978: 14–15). Since race is fictive, writing its history appears at first blush impossible. Racial ideas are contextual, thus ever-changing. A global history of race and ethnicity thus assumes the aspect of an impossibly complex and never-ending project. The *fin de siècle* does, however, offer evidence of global-scale economic and political struggles that produced intensified racial practices, and of commensurate activism predicated on racialized categories. Briefly, revived empire building at the *fin de siècle* deepened discursive and ideological distinctions between colonizers and colonized, often expressed as 'race', as well as resistance organized around these categories. These will form the subject of this essay.

RACE THINKING AND THE *FIN-DE-SIÈCLE* CRISIS

Hardly new in the late nineteenth century, racial ideas gained purchase due to renewed imperial expansion after a hiatus of 'free trade imperialism' at mid-century (Gallagher and Robinson 1953). A toxic combination of racist practices, justified and lent scientific credibility by modernist hubris, gave 'scientific' racism momentum, excusing European colonial domination. These included simplistic biological explanations for colonization and resistance to it as well as for class conflict (Lorimer 1988: 408). Empire building, paradoxically, by transgressing geographical barriers, simultaneously encouraged and enabled increasing numbers of newly colonized people to settle in Britain and Europe. Wherever they lived, colonized and racialized people challenged colonizers in multiple ways. In the United States and European imperial metropoles, these challengers often used the 'master's' tools of science and reason to debunk racist arguments and rationales, and the practices they supported.

Assuming race as an ahistorical constant once went hand in hand with the view that Enlightenment and progress would eradicate it eventually. Scholars repudiating this version of events pointed out that in the United States, racial distinctions were reified to justify withholding universal rights at the moment these rights were allegedly extended to 'all men' through the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Racial ideas embodied an attempt to evade the implications of Enlightenment humanism, which conflicted with the simultaneous persistence and extension of chattel slavery. This evidence fundamentally problematized the association of capitalism with human progress (Fields 1990).

Paradoxically, the abolition of Atlantic slavery in the course of the nineteenth century, starting with British and other European colonies and finishing in the United States and Brazil, coincided with deepening racial stratification. In the United States, racial thinking persisted and even strengthened: to justify and perpetuate African Americans' continuing political exclusion and, indeed, their virtual re-enslavement, an exclusively racial hierarchy supplanted the ancient dichotomy between enslaved and free that excused economic and labour exploitation (Hodes 1997: 147, 152, 166, 168–69, 205–06, 210). Intensified racial distinction and subordination did not follow an autonomous or *sui generis* trajectory, however: it coincided with and accompanied worsening class and other stratifications in the late nineteenth century. This in turn stemmed from scarcity and instability produced by the global, industrial capitalist crisis known as the Great Depression of 1873–96. In response, states and the elite mobilized various categories of difference to justify excluding people from entitlement to social resources (Lorimer 1978: 104–07, 200–21 and *passim*).

European powers sought to remedy the systemic crisis through a drive for formal colonies known as the New Imperialism, as competition for territory and markets from other aspiring imperial powers rendered free trade imperialism unfeasible (Gallagher and Robinson 1953). Africa remained the last substantial uncolonized part of the globe by the 1880s, but experienced rapid colonization thereafter, known as the Scramble for Africa (1885–1902), as European powers competed for markets, resources, and exploitable labour to supply their industrial systems and prestige to quell popular discontent. Revived *fin-de-siècle* racism has thus been attributed to the New Imperialism with its particular focus on Africa. European and non-European

powers justified renewed imperial expansion, attended by subordination of indigenous people, with rhetorics of racial and cultural superiority (Lorimer 1978: 13, 23).

Most nakedly opportunistic in the colonial setting, racism nonetheless proved far from absent from *fin-de-siècle* Europe. The later nineteenth century thus saw intensified racial thinking, in dialectic with racial discrimination, in Europe and the United States. Race also proved indivisible from related nationalism, and the process of nation building created minorities and internal others (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Consequences included deepening anti-Semitism and the racialization of subject people and national identities (Schorske 1981).

Although Enlightenment ideals provided unreliable protection for enslaved people, *fin-de-siècle* currents repudiating humanism, rationality, reason and progress legitimated antirational, antimodern and illiberal recourse to particularity and fabricated national identities, even 'instinct' (Schorske 1981: xvii–xviii, 142, 145, 153–73; Lorimer 2003: 194). Mid-Victorian antiracists understood the 'civilizing mission' justifying colonial rule to imply equality before the law for colonized people. By century's end, however, vocal advocates of inequality competed with these earlier activists, promoting imperial conquest and abandonment of the rule of law (Lorimer 2003: 189). When imputed racial antithesis between Saxon and Celt distinguished even among natives of Britain, this held profound repercussions for the colonized world and beyond (Mosse 1975: 27, 28; Lorimer 1978: 205; Samuel 1998: 58). Racial ideologies thus deepened and were elaborated to justify extending colonized people's exploitation and subordination (Lorimer 2003: 189).

RACIALIZED CONFLICTS IN THE *FIN DE SIÈCLE*

Changes in geopolitics, many of them emanating from the colonized empire or ex-colonies such as the United States, stimulated the ascendancy of racial discrimination in the *fin de siècle*. Colonial governments and settlers fought, subordinated and discriminated against indigenous people and sought to exclude in-migrants from other colonies such as India. The 'Native Question' and 'Colour Question' reflected ongoing conflicts between settlers and indigenes in South Africa and elsewhere. Chattel slavery was succeeded by forced, coerced and exploitative labour systems such as contract labour and indentures that preyed on colonized people, justified by languages of racial inferiority. The Boer War (1899–1902), among other imperial adventures, stimulated jingoism. In South Africa, racial categories were codified and thereby reified, rendering racial distinction structural (Lorimer 2003: 194, 198–99; Schneer 1999: 220; Schneer 2003: 183). In the United States, experimentation with Black equality during Reconstruction yielded in 1877 to revived segregation and subordination, known as Jim Crow, culminating in the Supreme Court's Plessy v Ferguson decision, legitimating 'separate but equal' and, implicitly, the 'one-drop rule' (Hodes 1997: 173, 200). By century's end, Europeanized African Creoles' expectations of self-government receded with an influx of European settlers invoking virulent racism to excuse land grabs and forced labour (McCaskie 2004; Bickford-Smith 2004). This frustrated Western-educated urban petty-bourgeoisie of clerks, teachers, clergy and other professionals went on to form the vanguard of anti-colonial movements (Parsons 2004; Rodney 1981: 274). Simultaneously, Black Victorians became isolated as their white allies in antislavery movements became less influential and visible (Lorimer 2003: 194).

RACE SCIENCE IN THE *FIN DE SIÈCLE*

The period after 1870 witnessed commensurately embittered racial thought which attributed such conflicts not to 'colour prejudice', which could be unlearned, but to the inevitable effects of involuntary 'race instinct' or 'physical repulsion' (Lorimer 2003: 190, 195, 197, 199). Languages and ideologies of race used to excuse continuing inequalities and subordination in nominal democracies as well as settler colonies manifestly owed their changing character to socioeconomic and geopolitical events (Lorimer 2003: 190, 194–97). After 1880, discredited pseudo sciences such as craniology, Aryanism and even polygenesis were revived, colouring scientific thinking into the mid-twentieth century. Classification, the hallmark of Victorian science, was employed to hierarchize physical traits such as skin tone, head shape and size, depicting them in turn as markers of 'temper and intellect' (Lorimer 1988: 408, 419–25).

Apologists for racism argued conflict stemmed from inherent inequalities of 'intelligence and will' as well as 'dissimilarity of character' between 'advanced' and 'backward' races. Solidarities and antipathies, in this view, while not rooted in crude biology as mid-century scientific racists thought, were now attributed to involuntary 'physical repulsion', psychology or 'human nature', rather than history, politics or rational conflict (Lorimer 2003: 196–97).

Scientists lent these views credibility, naturalizing racism as visceral, thus beyond human control or remedy. After its foundation in 1871, the British Anthropological Institute (BAI) shaped British scientific racist thought. Late nineteenth century figures, such as imperial Proconsul Lord Cromer (1841–1917, Evelyn Baring until 1892) and Colonial Office Undersecretary Charles Lucas, attributed racism to a deeply rooted association of colour with servile status, a legacy of Atlantic Basin slavery, as well as to instinct, ignoring more immediate reasons for racist resurgence as well as failing to account for anti-Semitism. Scientific racists denied colonized people the possibility of agency as they ignored colonial power dynamics (Lorimer 2003: 188, 195). This interpretation justified colonialism and racial subordination in the US and South Africa as well as other colonies, now challenged by colonized people as well as other racially subordinated groups such as African Americans. Such circular explanations failed to persuade many, such as Irish Home Rulers, who rejected views of Celtic racial inferiority used to withhold self-rule. Some extended such logic to Africans and Asians (Lorimer 2003: 197–98).

Across Europe, anti-Semitism too intensified, acquiring pseudo-scientific justification through a racial reinterpretation (Lorimer 1978: 205). It also owed much to the twin processes of nation building and empire building that created outsiders and national minorities as well as conquered people. In France, the Dreyfus Affair belied Republican rhetoric in the anti-Semitic persecution and conviction of an innocent military officer, Alfred Dreyfus (Schorske 1981; Gilman 1991: 6; Weber 1986: 121–25).

RACE AS RESISTANCE

Examining racism in action as opposed to theory renders visible pervasive and persistent antiracist activism by racially stigmatized people and their allies. These included colonized people's demands for political rights and the rule of law, equality, representation and self-rule in Africa, Asia and elsewhere (Lorimer 2003: 196).

While resistance must always be assumed, this essay will focus on self-consciously antiracist movements in the *fin de siècle*.

A pioneering scholar has cautioned against 'colonizing the Victorians' by projecting them as the 'racist Other' in contrast to our more enlightened times: 'if we . . . omit the forces of resistance . . . then our language is also a source of oppression rather than liberation' (Lorimer 2003: 203). Excessive reliance on texts, including those of obscure learned societies such as the BAI, neglects variations in racial practices. In particular, it risks ignoring resistance to racism, most obviously that organized by 'colonial subjects of Asian and African descent' as well as their white allies (Lorimer 2003: 187, 199–203). Intensifying racism linked to *fin-de-siècle* economic instability and related imperial competition did prompt an activist response from an array of racially subordinated people and their allies.

Like racism itself, antiracism was a global movement, forged by networks of personal relations linking Europe to Africa, South Asia and the United States. This internally diverse movement coalesced from remnants of the Abolitionist movement, temperance and thrift societies, people of faith, white British Radicals, socialists and Liberals, and people of African and Asian origin and descent (Schneer 2003: 175–77, 181). A web of activists and organizations with overlapping membership, it included the diasporic Africana intelligentsia who moved between London and various African and Caribbean colonies, forming a consistent and ongoing antiracist opposition throughout the *fin de siècle* (James 2004; Gilroy 1993: 29). Antiracism also enjoyed an attenuated constituency of middle class provincial Nonconformists and upper artisanal working class supporters who had been active in Abolition earlier in the century (Lorimer 2003:199–200). Just as eighteenth century fugitive slaves such as James Somerset had catalysed British antiracism, in the *fin de siècle*, activism by people of colour and their allies challenged the racist ascendancy (Lorimer 2003: 190, 193). Antiracists realized they had to broaden their scope from slavery to colonialism and imperialism.

Activism and protest by antiracist organizations proved more influential over government policy than racist anthropologists. An example was the white-dominated Aborigines' Protection Society (APS), the 'principal lobby group for persons of colour subjected to colonial rule'. Founded in 1837, the APS actively campaigned against the racial depredations of the age of empire, championing indigenous people's land and treaty rights against settlers and apprising the Colonial Office of offences against indigenous rights, especially in south and west Africa. Even after its 1909 merger with the more conservative British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS), the organization continued to receive appeals from Africans and other colonized people abused, in trouble, abandoned or destitute in England (Lorimer 2003: 202–03).

It would be a mistake, however, to assume all anti-imperialists automatically opposed or repudiated racism. Antiracists made up a minority of anti-imperialist activists, most of whom accepted the scientific validity of racial distinctions, to the special detriment of Africans. Within the broader anti-imperialist movement, antiracist figures included Irish Nationalist MP and Quaker Alfred Webb, sometime president of the Indian National Congress; John Scurr, of the otherwise racist Social Democratic Federation; and Scottish MP William Wedderburn (Schneer 2003: 175–77, 181).

These individuals and groups undertook the unglamorous but necessary work of debunking scientific racism and exposing the abuse and exploitation of people of

colour this racism rationalized and excused. They argued that inhumane practices and conditions throughout the British Empire and the colonized world stemmed from 'opposition' between 'capital and labour' rather than the instinctive racial antipathies scientists promoted (Lorimer 2003: 199; Schneer 2003: 176–78). A series of major figures and landmark events punctuated the history of *fin-de-siècle* racial resistance.

DADABHAI NAOROJI (1825–1917)

Academic, activist, Liberal MP (1892–95) and sometime president of the Indian National Congress (1886, 1893 and 1906), Dadabhai Naoroji came from outside Abolitionist circles but remained a consistent supporter of British antiracism (Figure 33.1). A professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in India, Naoroji also became a prominent reformer and critic of British colonialism. Moving to Britain for business in 1855, he rapidly joined anti-imperialist circles, authoring critiques of discrimination against Indians and of the undemocratic nature of the British Raj.

THE GRAND OLD MAN OF INDIA: MR. DADABHOY NAOROJ

Figure 33.1   Dadabhai Naoroji, The Grand Old Man of India, 1914
© Private Collection/The Bridgeman Art Library

In *Poverty and Un-British Rule* (1901) Naoroji's influential 'drain theory' exposed colonial exploitation of India, both by a parasitical British military and civil service, and by the export of wealth from India to Europe's elite, resulting in the destitution of India's peasantry. He also took on race itself, repudiating views of Asians as racially inferior. To defend India in Britain, Naoroji co-founded the British Committee of the Indian National Congress (BCINC) in 1889, among several organizations, and was elected to Parliament for Finsbury Central in 1892. As the first Indian Member of Parliament (1892–95), Naoroji used his position not only on behalf of his Finsbury constituents, but also as a spokesman for India. Ubiquitous in antiracist circles, Naoroji influenced prominent Britons including John Bright, Charles Bradlaugh, H. M. Hyndman, Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald (Visram 1986: 78–92 *passim*).

CATHERINE IMPEY AND *ANTI-CASTE*

A central figure in British antiracist networks, Catherine Impey (1847–1923) founded and edited *Anti-Caste*, Britain's first antiracist newspaper, and co-founded in 1893, with Scotswoman Isabella Fyvie Mayo (1843–1914), the Society of the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man (SRBM) (Schneer 2003: 178; Bressey 2010: 279). A Quaker schooled in political activism and networked through the BFASS and the temperance movement, through which she gained first-hand experience of American racism, Impey grew impatient with their compromises (Bressey 2012: 403, 411). Unlike the paternalistic Aborigines Protection Society and BFASS, Impey advocated racial equality (Schneer 1999: 204), deploring 'distinctions between people' as un-Christian, especially those 'based purely upon physical characteristics, – sex, race, complexion, nationality', labelling discrimination 'evil' (Ware 1992: 186). Impey instead articulated a counter-vision of human unity and solidarity explicitly global in scope, a vision drawn from her spiritual conviction. She began publishing her slim monthly newsletter in March 1888, aiming to give voice to people of colour themselves. According to its masthead, *Anti-Caste* 'claim[ed] for the Dark Races of Mankind their equal rights to Protection, Person Liberty, Equality of Opportunity and Human Fellowship' (Schneer 1999: 204). *Anti-Caste* republished articles produced in the United States, the Caribbean, India and Africa (for example, in the South African publication *Imvo Zabantsundu*). With its ambitious successor publication *Fraternity*, *Anti-Caste* sought to provide a forum in which to speak 'with the Negro' rather than 'about the Negro', unlike the BFASS and APS. The letters column became a forum for diverse voices from among a global readership that spanned Australia, Africa, the United States and Europe.

Impey herself struggled with the language of race, whose credibility she sought to problematize, removing the phrase 'coloured races' from the journal's masthead, and experimenting, like African American activists, with terms such as 'caste' (Bressey 2012: 406). *Anti-Caste* aimed to expose the violence and 'lust for blood, power and plunder' that drove racial subordination and the 'colour line' globally, but particularly in the 'English-speaking world', e.g., the British Empire and its ex-colony, the United States (Bressey 2012: 402). In publicizing abuses, Impey sought to raise her readers' consciousness, stimulating them to take responsibility for and action against racism perpetrated in the colonies, but in Britons' name (Bressey 2012: 402, 406; Bressey 2010: 279; Ware 1992: 186; Schneer 2003: 178).

Self-conscious heirs of the Abolitionist movement, Impey and her allies sought to forge a global 'anti-caste' or 'emancipation' movement composed of Indian, African, European and African American activists (Bressey 2012: 406). Transatlantic in scope, the movement could not be contained by national borders. Impey's network alone included Frederick Douglass and John Bright, while Naoroji and Webb sat on the board of the SRBM (Schneer 2003: 178). *Anti-Caste* carried announcements for other antiracist groups such as the Indian Association, the BFASS and the APS. Its subscribers included prominent Quaker activists such as Joseph Rowntree (Bressey 2012: 404). Its global reach extended to Jean Finot, a French journalist popularized in England by W. T. Stead, Gustav Spiller, organizer of the Universal Races Congress of 1911, and Fabian colonial administrator Sydney Olivier (Schneer 2003: 178)

CELESTINE EDWARDS AND *FRATERNITY*

The Dominican Celestine Edwards (1857?–1894) was another major figure in this first phase of *fin-de-siècle* antiracism (1888–95). As secretary of the SRBM, he edited its journal *Fraternity*. *Fraternity*, like *Anti-Caste*, had a global readership: it extended from Britain to West Africa and the West Indies, even to Norway (Schneer 1999: 211; Schneer 2003: 178; Bressey 2012: 404–05). A charismatic and erudite speaker, Edwards embodied the Wesleyan and temperance roots of British antiracism. Shunned by British trade unionists on his arrival in the 1880s, he found an outlet for his formidable oratorical gifts in temperance lecturing on behalf of the Edinburgh Good Templars, and later the Primitive Methodists. His missionary work continued with the Christian Evidence Society, for whom he founded a weekly paper, *Lux*. Through this medium he debunked scientific racism as a pretext for imperialism by mobilizing countervailing scientific evidence, from Darwin among others. Edwards challenged Christian missionaries who participated in imperialism (Schneer 1999: 209–10; Schneer 2003: 178–80).

During his brief editorship, Edwards expanded the journal substantially, allowing for consideration of racism against nominally 'white' people such as Jews, Kurds and Armenians. Edwards also took part in an 1893 delegation to the Colonial Secretary regarding the expropriation of the Mashona (Bressey 2012: 409). The journal published articles exposing Jim Crow and lynching in the United States; the expropriation of Africans from their land; and Australia's exclusion of Chinese migrants. They also linked colonial abuse and labour exploitation to British consumption of colonial products such as tea, in articles such as 'The Cost of Cheap Tea' (Bressey 2012: 408, 409). With 250 British subscribers and others in Africa, Bermuda, Canada, the United States and the Bahamas, and a circulation extending to Australia and Africa as well as the United States and Europe, *Anti-Caste* and *Fraternity* each enjoyed a readership ranging between 3000 and 7000, thus reaching more readers than the racist Victorian anthropology that had featured in so much scholarship (Lorimer 2003: 200; Bressey 2010: 279, 282; Bressey 2012: 404–05).

Most spectacularly, the journal sponsored Ida B. Wells's lecture tour of Britain in 1893, in which Wells exposed the evils of lynching and recruited for Impey's new activist organization, the Society for the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man (Bressey 2012: 283–84). Supporting himself by lecturing while editing both journals *gratis* destroyed Edwards's health. He died prematurely in 1894 at his brother's

home in Barbados (Schneer 1999: 209–12; Schneer 2003: 178–80). After Edwards's untimely death in July 1894, control of *Fraternity* passed from Impey to Scottish activists, and its explicitly antiracist focus faded (Bressey 2010: 288). *Anti-Caste* failed shortly thereafter.

IDA B. WELLS AND THE ANTI-LYNCHING COMMITTEE, 1894–95

The ultimate expression of racism was violence against racialized people, and its relative impunity in the colonies as well as the United States. In the latter the *cause célèbre* galvanizing the *fin-de-siècle* antiracist movement was lynching, the random but ritualized murder of men and sometimes women by white mobs – often accompanied by grisly torture. Lynching intensified from the 1880s, in the context of economic recession and the broader effort to terrorize and intimidate African Americans while retrenching the rights they had enjoyed, briefly, during Reconstruction, which ended in 1877. The bulk of victims, over 4000 between 1882 and 1930, were African American men, with incidence peaking in 1892 (Ware 1992: 171–72; Hodes 1997: 176–79, 187–96, 210).

IDA B. WELLS.

Figure 33.2   Illustration of Ida B. Wells from *The Afro-American press and its editors*, by I. Garland Penn, 1891. Courtesy of The Library of Congress

Internationally, women took the lead in organizing against this evil, particularly in repudiating the stereotype of the victimized white woman routinely used to justify lynchings. Impey publicized lynchings in her journal *Anti-Caste*, and invited African American journalist and campaigner Ida B. Wells (1862–1931) to lecture in Britain in 1893 as part of a campaign against the practice (Figure 33.2). Wells toured a second time at the invitation of Celestine Edwards, speaking before thousands of people across Britain, and helping to found the British Anti-Lynching Committee. Composed of familiar figures including Dadabhai Naoroji, Keir Hardie, Samuel Gompers, the editors of the *Manchester Guardian* and other newspapers, and clergy including the Bishop of York, the committee's activities included writing to the Governor of Alabama demanding accountability for reported lynchings there. Wells's success in Britain spurred anti-lynching activity in the United States, evidence of the effectiveness of global dialogue and solidarity in the *fin-de-siècle* world (Ware 1992: 174–75, 194, 205, 219; Bressey 2010: 283–84).

HENRY SYLVESTER WILLIAMS AND THE 1900 PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE

Tension between more generalized anti-imperialism that might not be antiracist and the almost unique disadvantage of people of African descent has historically driven an impulse for separatist organizations. This manifested in the *fin-de-siècle* Pan African movement led in Britain by H. Sylvester Williams (1869–1911), who founded the African Association in 1897 (Schneer 2003: 180–83).Williams, a Trinidadian schoolteacher, moved first to the United States in 1890 and then to Canada, where he took a law degree at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia (Sherwood 2003: 190–94). Arriving in London in 1896, he studied law in the evening at King's College, London. Like Edwards before him, Williams supported himself by lecturing for thrift societies and the Temperance Society, and eventually the APS (Sherwood 2003: 194; Schneer 2003: 181). A vocal critic of racial subordination in South Africa, he promoted orator Mrs A. V. Kinloch, South African wife of a Scottish engineer, which brought him to the attention of Radical and Liberal activist Richard Cobden's daughter Jane Cobden Unwin (Schneer 1999: 212–14).

On 14 September 1897, Williams, with Reverend Henry Mason Joseph and Sierra Leonean law student T. J. Thompson, founded the African Association. The organization aimed to bring London's 'African Britons' together and 'serve as a pressure group' for African-descended people to intervene and oppose British and European empire building and imperialism. In riposte to discouragement from the paternalistic Aborigines Protection Society, full membership was limited to African-origin or -descended people, although the organization welcomed associate members. The African Association nonetheless expressed the political and philosophical legacy of Naoroji, Edwards, Cobden, Bright and H. R. Fox Bourne of the APS, and the foundation built by the SRBM and BCINC. It benefited from cash support from Naoroji and the BFASS (Schneer 2003: 181–82; Schneer 1999: 213–14).

A cosmopolitan group including West Africans, Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans, the organization boasted 47 members by late 1898, including such prominent individuals as composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Dr. John Alcindor, law student D. E. Tobias, John Archer (later mayor of Battersea), Celestine Edwards's

Antiguan mentor, the Reverend Henry Mason Joseph, and of course Celestine Edwards himself (Schneer 2003: n36).

Through its newspaper, *Pan African*, as well as public agitation taking the form of lecture tours, public meetings challenging British policies, lobbying, pamphlets and books, the Association sought to educate the public about Africa, dispelling and repudiating myths of African incapacity that justified colonial subordination. Edwards used lecture tours to debunk racist arguments, and corresponded with editors of newspapers in West Africa, the United States, the West Indies and with church leaders from across the globe. The organization embraced a global remit, lobbying, however fruitlessly, Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain and Liberal MPs regarding 'Distress in the West Indies', colonial educational and agricultural policy, the Rhodesian Constitution and other issues in 1898–99 (Schneer 1999: 216–19; Sherwood 2003: 191).

Frustrated by the lack of response to these efforts, the African Association mounted an ambitious Pan African Conference (PAC) in July 1900, assisted by Joseph Royeppen, BCINC, of South Asian and possibly African heritage. Supporters included an array of African-descended luminaries from three continents, including Booker T. Washington, president of the Tuskegee Institute; Professor W. S. Scarborough, president of Wilberforce University in Ohio; the Reverend Majola Agbebi, founder of the first independent church in West Africa; nationalist Bishop James Johnson of Nigeria; Bishop James Holly of Haiti; and Dadabhai Naoroji. Naoroji also contributed financially (Schneer 2003: 177, 180–83; Sherwood 2003: 191).

The aims of the conference were 'to bring into closer touch with each other the Peoples of African descent throughout the world; to inaugurate plans to bring about more friendly relations between Caucasian and African races; to start a movement to secure to all African races living in civilized countries their full rights and to promote their business interests' (Sherwood 2003: 191). The conference attracted 32 official delegates from Africa, the West Indies, Britain and North America, including William Edward Burghardt (W. E. B.) Du Bois (see Figure 33.3), African American scholar and journalist, who chaired the committee that authored the proclamation 'To the Nations of the World'. Many more non-delegates attended as well (Schneer 2003: 182–83; Sherwood 2003: 192).

Questions discussed included the lack of rights in the United States and British colonies, especially the franchise and labour rights; lack of educational opportunities in the colonies; lack of access to the top ranks of the civil service; commercial exploitation of native Africans; and the role British capital was playing in racial subordination in South Africa. The conference generated a memorial to Queen Victoria regarding southern Africa, receiving a tepid response. Discussion included repudiation of Social Darwinism and eugenics, as well as the furore over miscegenation. The conference demanded an end to racial discrimination; responsible government in British colonies; and an end to African Americans' subordination in the United States (Sherwood 2003: 192).

The conference culminated in establishing the Pan African Association, a global organization with the following goals: to secure civil and political rights for Africans and their descendants throughout the world; to encourage friendly relations between Caucasians and Africans; to encourage education and business enterprise among Africans; to influence legislation of concern to Black people; and to relieve

Figure 33.3   William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868–1963), African American scholar, writer and civil rights activist © Private Collection/The Bridgeman Art Library

oppressed Negroes in Africa, America and the British Empire and elsewhere (Sherwood 2003: 192).

   This new organization boasted an array of African-descended dignitaries: the president was Bishop Alexander Walters of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion church; Sylvester Williams was the General Secretary, and the General Treasurer was Dr R. J. Colenso, son of Bishop Colenso of Natal. The Executive Committee included John Archer and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, as well as Africans and African Americans. W. E. B. Du Bois was delegated to serve as the vice-chair of the United States branch of the PAC (Sherwood 2003: 48). Williams became editor of its journal, *Pan African*, intended as the 'mouthpiece of millions of Africans and their descendants', to replace supplication and philanthropy with collective influence. The organization corresponded with the British government regarding its concerns; reprinted speeches; and published news on the South African (Boer) war, then in progress. While Williams travelled to the West Indies, establishing branches in Jamaica and Trinidad, the London organization languished. The *Pan African* published only six issues, and by the time campaigning Ghanaian lawyer Joseph Ephraim (J. E.) Casely Hayford (1866–1930) joined in 1903, the organization was essentially defunct. After a brief stint in South Africa between 1902 and 1905, Williams became a Fabian and a councillor for Marylebone. As an attorney, he represented African clients in contention with the British state over land rights; taxation; lack of democracy; compensation; loans; and trade and boundary disputes. He returned to Trinidad with his English wife and children in 1908, remaining politically active until his untimely death in March 1911 (Sherwood 2003: 194).

Apparently modest, the PAC's goals, to achieve both equality and autonomy within the British Empire rather than dismantling it, proved radical in practice, incompatible with the perpetuation of imperial processes (Schneer 1999: 219–20; Schneer 2003: 183). Although the PAA did not much outlast the Conference, London continued to be a crossroads of empire and a focus of antiracist ferment.

THE UNIVERSAL RACES CONGRESS, 1911

The Universal Races Congress met at the University of London in July 1911, with the goal of advancing 'interracial and international understanding and reconciliation [and] world peace'. Its conveners, Germans Gustav Spiller and Professor Felix Adler, chose London precisely due to its position at the heart of the world's largest empire, and, not coincidentally, the crossroads of anti-imperialist and antiracist activism. Spiller and Adler sought, further, to promote 'cross-racial, cross-religious, cross-cultural and cross-national dialogue' (Bonakdarian 2005: 118, n3 127). They saw Japan's victory over Russia in 1905 as a manifestation of a broader Asian anti-imperialist 'awakening' (Bonakdarian 2005: n2 126–27). A larger and more eclectic group than the Pan African Conference, comprising some 2000 people, the Congress included a large contingent of paternalist delegates such as the Bishop of London and numerous colonial administrators, but also the likes of Franz Boas, Olive Schreiner, Max Weber and numerous Fabians. Some attendees, including Schreiner and John Hobson, already concerned themselves with racial subordination (Pennybacker 2005: 104).

The conference was devoted to examining and challenging theories of race and racial superiority as well as Eurocentric models of civilization. Delegates conversant with vocabularies of science, like Celestine Edwards before them, used this knowledge to repudiate scientific racism. Not all participants promoted racial tolerance or contested racial hierarchy, however. Of the thousands present, W. E. B. Du Bois counted only 25 'Negroes'. Even participants of colour hardly presented a unified front: John Archer was conspicuously absent, while Mancherjee Bhownagree, Conservative MP, took part. Some delegates, such as Sydney Olivier, espoused openly racist views. Yet more radical and antiracist 'troublemakers' such as Du Bois, suffragist and pacifist Charlotte Despard, communist trade unionist Tom Mann and Duse Mohamed Ali took part (Pennybacker 2005: 105, 109, 111, 113). Within the conference, therefore, commitment to universality existed in tension with anti-colonial nationalisms often founded on ethnic particularism and chauvinism (Bonakdarian 2005: 119, 121, n32 130–31).

Although the conference contested polygenist theories of racial origin, it also failed to challenge the legitimacy of empires or the notion of 'backward races'. The agenda confined discussion to 'civilized cultures', excluding sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Instead, it strove to 'educate' colonial and diplomatic civil servants who wielded power over colonized, racialized people (Pennybacker 2005: 104, 111). Not surprisingly given its size and diversity, the conference ultimately fell short of producing unified conclusions or positions in the manner of the PAC of 1900. The Congress as a whole confined itself to specific policy measures demanding 'protection' rather than equality for racialized people, and the reform of imperial 'abuses' rather than challenging the legitimacy of empires

themselves (Pennybacker 2005: 114 and *passim*). Although such goals, in common with most *fin-de-siècle* anti-imperialism, appear modest – to 'humanize' the British empire – its unfulfillability betrayed a more radical agenda (Schneer 1999: 183). Further, it continued dialogue among a globally diverse constituency that continued to engage with European racism (Pennybacker 2005: 114–15).

DUSE MOHAMED ALI AND THE
AFRICAN TIMES AND ORIENT REVIEW

A participant in the Universal Races Congress, journalist and activist Duse Mohamed Ali (1886/7–1945) framed his anti-imperialism in explicitly racial terms, forging networks of antiracist anti-imperialists in the early twentieth century (Dabydeen and Sivagurunathan 2007: 25). Of apparent Egyptian origin, Ali was sent to Britain for education in the late nineteenth century, initially becoming an actor and play-wright (see Figure 33.4). Increasingly involved in politics, Ali began writing for the liberal journal *New Age* in 1909. After attending the Universal Races Congress in 1911, Ali and Sierra Leonean journalist and businessman John Eldred Taylor (d. 1924) founded and edited the *African Times and Orient Review*, which published intermittently from July 1912 until 1920. Supported financially by West African professionals and businessmen including J. E. Casely Hayford, the journal professed to convey the voices of colonial subjects, uniting the 'Black, Brown and Yellow races'. It reported African and Asian news, exposing colonial abuses which were taken up in Parliament by sympathetic MPs. Widely read in Britain and abroad, the journal's effectiveness was perhaps betrayed by charges of sedition levelled by the British Colonial Office and surveillance by MI5 (Duffield 1992: 124–49; Sherwood 2003: 1–6).

The journal promoted solidarity between Africans and Asians against Western imperialism, especially in defence of those African and Asian territories not yet under imperial domination. It drew on ideas from Pan-Africanism, Pan-Islamism and Pan-Asianism, among others. A wide array of activists from Asia, Africa, Europe, the United States and elsewhere contributed articles. These included Irish anti-imperialist Frank Hugh O'Donnell, Zaffar Ali Khan, editor of the Lahore journal *Zamindar*, activists connected to the Woking Mosque, Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey (with whom Ali had a stormy relationship). Ali also networked with the African Association and the Anti-Slavery Society. The principle of Afro-Asian anti-imperialist solidarity extended logically to defending the integrity of Libya against Italy, and of the Ottoman Empire, the latter at odds with British policy, particularly during the First World War. Ali organized meetings in Ottoman defence and founded the Ottoman Committee in 1913. He also founded the League of Justice of the Afro-Asian Nations in 1914. In 1916, the imperial government banned his journal in Africa and Asia (Duffield 1992: 124–49; Sherwood 2003: 1–6).

Ali recognized imperialism and racism as global problems demanding global analysis and global remedies. He wished colonized people to retain control over the capitalist development of their countries. In pragmatic terms, Ali aspired to free the colonized from European sway through organizing autonomous economic networks, whereby colonies and ex-colonies would provide markets for one another's goods,

Figure 33.4 Photograph of Duse Mohamed Ali. © New York Public Library, USA/The Bridgeman Art Library

pool capital and share expertise, bypassing the imperial powers. He also recruited African American banks to open branches in Africa. Although the *African Times and Orient Review* failed finally in 1920, and Duse Mohamed Ali left shortly afterwards, scholars acknowledge that the journal and Ali's political activities articulated the desideratum of explicitly multiracial and antiracist, anti-imperialist solidarity among colonized people (Duffield 1992: 124–49; Sherwood 2003: 1–6).

Events such as the Pan African Conference and the Universal Races Congress punctuated a period of ongoing antiracist and anti-imperialist activity that spanned the globe in the *fin de siècle*. Although individual organizations and organs proved ephemeral, like many oppositional movements formed in the face of intense hegemonic pressure, the antiracist movement remained a consistent presence throughout the period, contesting and repudiating racial rationales for empire and subordination. Activist networks and coalitions ranged from India to the Caribbean, West Africa to Britain, Europe and the United States. In light of intensifying racism in multiple sites, including the peak of Jim Crow in the US, the Scramble for Africa among the Great Powers, and the jingoism manifest in the Boer War specifically,

antiracists exhibited courage in 'an era of racism, intimidation and slaughter' (Schneer 2003: 183). Fully a century after the *fin de siècle*, antiracism remains an unfinished project.

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RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

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CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

SECULARISM/ATHEISM/ AGNOSTICISM

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Vincent P. Pecora

Secularism, atheism, and agnosticism belong to what Ludwig Wittgenstein called a "family" of ideas, yet are etymologically distinct. Two of the terms—agnosticism and secularism—are coinages of later nineteenth-century Britain, though their linguistic roots are much older. At least in Western Europe and Russia, the *fin de siècle* produced a questioning of theism unlike anything that had come before. The dominant religious attitude among late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century intellectuals had been *deism*, the assumption that God existed but was absent from human affairs. Some deists could have been called atheists or agnostics, had the latter term been available. But deism covered, as it were, a multitude of sins between theism and atheism, and provided a useful way of avoiding deeper theological controversy. It was a perspective inspired by Galileo's astronomy, Isaac Newton's mechanics, the Reformation's rejection of miracles and the papacy, and the acknowledgment after the voyages of discovery of a larger and less savage array of religious practices than anyone had previously imagined. Deism was the shared theology of the Enlightenment, from the Scottish sentimental moralists and French *encyclopédistes* to the American founders and the German Romantic philosophers.

By contrast, the European nineteenth century unfolded in the idealistic but threatening shadow of the French Revolution, which was nothing if not virulently anti-clerical. Whether one celebrated its humanist, republican ideals with nationalist revolutionaries, or feared its anarchic violence, as did supporters of the old regimes, the French Revolution and Napoleon's attempt at a new European order presaged a liberated and Promethean but also unregulated and disorderly future. Percy Bysshe Shelley updated Aeschylus in his *Prometheus Unbound: A Lyrical Drama in Four Acts* (1818–19), in which the phantasm of Jupiter invoked by the chained Prometheus rehearses Prometheus's curse against his God.

> But thou who art the God and Lord—O thou
> Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,
> To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow
> In fear and worship—all-prevailing foe!
> I curse thee! Let a sufferer's curse

Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse,
Till thine Infinity shall be
A robe of envenomed agony
And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain
To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

(*Prometheus Unbound*, Act 1, ll. 282–91)

Under the guise of pagan verse-theater, Shelley did not mince words. But the promise of Promethean revolution was its ability to overcome the limitations of fine art, social class, and political power in the pursuit of a world unfettered by Gods and monarchs alike. It is this Napoleonic/Promethean vision of a heroically anti-theistic and anti-authoritarian humanity that the nineteenth century inherited, and that gave its debates about divine authority the *frisson* of a struggle over social authority as well.

ATHEISM

Atheism today seems straightforward: evolution, atoms, DNA, but no God or supernatural realm. But this is too simplistic. The word in English dates back at least to the late sixteenth century, where it tended to mean "godless" or Epicurean. Mere fragments of the writings of Epicurus (341–270 BCE) survive, but his name has long been associated with atomistic materialism. Yet his religious beliefs seem closer to that of eighteenth-century deists: Epicurus held that freedom from fear and pain was life's goal, and that the gods did not interfere in mortal existence. In *Paradise Lost* (1667), John Milton refers to "the atheist crew" following Satan into battle against God's angelic legions (Book VI, line 370), but Milton means something closer to impious or rebellious here. Satan obviously does not deny the existence of God; he wants to dethrone him. Atheism throughout the centuries actually pointed to a number of different epistemological and moral positions—neither Epicurus nor Milton's Satan aligns neatly with, say, the seventeenth-century materialism of Thomas Hobbes or the libertinism of John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester, though all four have been labeled atheists, and Rochester was quite vocal about his disbelief (despite his deathbed conversion). Like later nineteenth-century agnosticism, atheism implied both an epistemological position—there is neither evidence for a divinity nor any reason to assume one—and a moral position, summed up by several characters in Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880): without God and immortality, Miusov observes, "everything would be permitted, even anthropophagy" (Dostoevsky 69). The nineteenth-century arguments about secularism, atheism, and agnosticism are often about the relation between belief and morality. Does the epistemological position necessarily entail the moral one (as Rochester's death at 33, probably from venereal and kidney disease, implied to many) and as Dostoevsky assumed, or can one ignore the deity and still lead a virtuous, even admirable, life, a view held by Hobbes, most of the deists, and the majority of nineteenth-century atheists and agnostics?

Three significant versions of later nineteenth-century atheism deserve attention. Throughout the flurry of debate and discussion over religion, two figures—one solidly on the political left, and one roughly on the political right—stand out as

exemplary atheists: Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche. Marx's claim that religion was nothing more than the "opium of the people" resounds to this day, but his more far-reaching critique of religion appears in "On the Jewish Question" (1843) (see Marx, *Critique* 131). The latter essay responds to Bruno Bauer's argument that neither Prussia nor any other Christian state could politically emancipate the Jews and survive. Bauer demanded the abolition of religion as a prerequisite to true political freedom. What is remarkable today is that neither Bauer nor Marx demonstrated any confidence in what modern democracies call religious pluralism. Religion for Marx and Bauer was so identified with a single national identity that neither believed a nation harboring competing religions could cohere.

Bauer insisted that only the renunciation of religious belief could produce equality of political rights—an extension of French republicanism and of the Young Hegelian argument, elaborated by Ludwig Feuerbach, that religion was nothing more than human love mistakenly displaced into a non-human realm. Once the mistake was recognized, Feuerbach argued, religion as such would disappear and true human emancipation would occur. Against Bauer, Marx argued that religion would wither away of its own accord. Economic oppression and inequity drove individuals into the arms of religion searching for cosmic solace—the justice denied on earth was to be guaranteed in heaven—so that ending injustice would destroy the need for religion.

Marx and Engels devoted a large part of *The German Ideology* (completed in 1846, though not published until 1932) toward illustrating how Feuerbach had put the cart before the horse. By making emancipation depend on the abandonment of religious belief, Feuerbach granted religion a causality it did not possess. "Feuerbach, consequently, does not see that the 'religious sentiment' is itself a social product" rather than an element of some "human essence" ("Theses on Feuerbach," nos. VII and VI; see Marx and Engels, *German* 122). With capitalism's collapse, a new egalitarian society would no longer have any need for religious explanations or expectations. Marx did not assume that atheism itself had any social or epistemological effects; theism was simply an illusion that would evaporate when material inequality disappeared.

Whatever one thinks of Marx's economic program, it is certain that his arguments against religion have had a larger effect on the way intellectuals have approached belief after him than those of any other nineteenth-century thinker. Many liberals after Max Weber, and especially after the Great Depression, embraced Marx's central point that religious belief and economic wellbeing were inversely proportional, no matter how skeptical they remained about communism. Christ's "blessed are the meek" became sociological axiom, though not in the way Christ intended. For the sociologists, the meek had more need of faith. The mid-1960s brought the flourishing of the "secularization thesis": the rise of economic, political, and social modernity, including nationalism and rationally administered capitalism, guaranteed the fall of religion, a conclusion borne out by empirical data at the time. Only in recent decades has the long association between the rise of economic modernity and the fall of religion come to be seriously questioned.

Nietzsche's critique of religion was more aggressive, if more ambitious and ambiguous, than Marx's. But Nietzsche may be more representative of the decadence-cum-regeneration spirit of *fin-de-siècle* culture. Nietzsche mounted a wholesale

attack not only on European Christianity and the Judaism from which it arose, but also on non-Western religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, all of which exemplified "ascetic ideals"—that is, selflessness, a hatred of the body and its desires, and a longing for release from the physical world (see Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Third Essay). Priestly Christianity promoted this ascetic ideal to the wretched of the earth, convincing them of what was in their interest: the meek would one day inherit the earth and be avenged by divine triumph over their tormentors. Nietzsche claimed that this ascetic ideal led to Europe's nineteenth-century nihilism and the catastrophe of egalitarian democracy and socialism. But the demise of European civilization was for him also a harbinger of cultural rebirth, with other forms of enchantment arising out of Europe's destruction. Where Marx understood the birth and death of religion as necessary consequences of economic development, Nietzsche saw the emergence of Judaism and Christianity in antiquity as a grand historical detour, the growing implications of which had become intolerable in *fin-de-siècle* Europe.

For Nietzsche, decadence resulted from moral hypocrisy and disavowed nihilism. Christianity had tamed Europeans. Morally, they now possessed, like obedient sheep, nothing more than a "herd mentality." But they had also lost any interest in Christian doctrine. They blindly obeyed moral codes the reasons for which they no longer accepted, or even understood, because of the social security it provided. Against this disavowed, passive nihilism, Nietzsche proposed an active nihilism: the recognition that moral truth is always merely a fiction generated by historical circumstances, and that now, "God is dead" (Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, "Zarathustra's Prologue," sec. 2). Nietzsche's perspective was more elaborate than that of the Orthodox Dostoevsky, who saw only violent anarchy following the death of God. For Nietzsche, the dissolution of Christianity might introduce chaos, but it would also foster a liberation of human potential—the flowering of alternative mythologies and moralities imagined by an *Übermensch* (an over- or superior-man) no longer repressed by the herd's morality.

As Nietzsche articulated the problem, Christianity had inadvertently become its own executioner.

> After Christian truthfulness had drawn one inference after another, it must end by drawing its *most striking inference*, its inference *against* itself; this will happen, however, when it poses the question, *"what is the meaning of all will to truth?"*
>
> . . . As the will to truth thus gains self-consciousness—there can be no doubt of that—morality will gradually *perish* now: this is the great spectacle in a hundred acts reserved for the next two centuries in Europe—the most terrible, most questionable, and perhaps also the most hopeful of all spectacles.
> (Nietzsche, *Genealogy,* Third Essay, sec. 27; Nietzsche's emphasis)

Yet Christianity had served a crucial historical purpose, for through it humankind learned how to give meaning to suffering—a process that Leibniz had earlier called "theodicy." The human will had thus preserved itself, since "man would rather will *nothingness* [as in the ascetic ideal], than *not* will" (Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Third Essay, sec. 28; Nietzsche's emphasis). Nietzsche even saw the air of "unconditional honest atheism" inhaled by "we more spiritual men of this age" as less the antithesis

of the ascetic ideal than the "latest phase of its evolution" brought about by "two thousand years of training that finally forbids itself the *lie involved in belief in God*" (Nietzsche, *Genealogy,* Third Essay, sec. 27; Nietzsche's emphasis). Questioning the belief in God demanded also that we question our desire for the truth. Nietzsche and Dostoevsky were not so far apart in their understanding of the moral consequences of atheism. Both believed that if God is dead, anything is permitted. But only Nietzsche imagined that, once anything is permitted, new mythic affirmations of humanity would arise.

Nietzsche's claim about Christianity forbidding itself the lie of theism also inspired those who promulgated the "secularization thesis." As Peter Berger noted in 1967, "historically speaking, Christianity has been its own gravedigger" (Berger 127). Nietzsche's importance to figures as diverse as Weber, Martin Heidegger, the French existentialists, and Sigmund Freud (though Freud himself always denied he had learned anything from Nietzsche) is clear. Nietzsche's views are nevertheless steeped in even greater controversy than Marx's. While he denounced the rise of anti-Semitism in the increasingly nationalist German state, Nietzsche attributed the original "slave revolt in morality," the collapse of which promised renewal, to the Jews.

> It was the Jews who, with awe-inspiring consistency, dared to invert the aristocratic value-equation (good = noble = powerful = beautiful = happy = beloved of God) and to hang on to this inversion with their teeth, the teeth of the most abysmal hatred (the hatred of [induced by] impotence), saying "the wretched alone are the good; the poor, impotent, lowly alone are the good; the suffering, deprived, sick, ugly alone are pious, alone are blessed by God. . . . "
>
> (Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, First Essay, sec. 7)

Nietzsche's critique of the "slave revolt in morality" became a fertile if not always fully understood source for the re-embrace of the mythmaking impulse, whether on the anarchistic left, as in figures such as Georges Bataille, or on the totalitarian right, as in the case of Adolf Hitler. Nietzsche likely would have repudiated Hitler's megalomania and Bataille's libertine anarchism alike. But his philosophy still represents the most important nineteenth-century statement of an atheism that would not lead toward (or arise from) a greater degree of economic and social equality, but would become the agent of emancipation from the oppression of "the truth" itself—especially the sober truth of nineteenth-century enlightenment, utility, and progress.

The third significant figure in nineteenth-century atheism is Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. The co-founder (with Mikhail Bakunin) of anarchism, Proudhon was both celebrated and denounced by the radical anti-capitalism of mid-nineteenth-century Europe. Marx and Engels's rejection (in their *Communist Manifesto*, published in both German and French in 1848) of Proudhon's "utopian socialism" as nothing more than "bourgeois" reform of tariffs and prisons promoted a split between Proudhonist mutualists and collectivist communists in the First International (or International Working Men's Association) at the Basel Congress of 1869. In return, the anarchists feared that Marx's plan to appropriate rather than dissolve the state would only lead to dictatorship.

Proudhon was not an economic theorist, though his passionate denunciations of private property were popular across Europe. But he did develop an interesting form

of atheism. Refusing the labels of vulgar atheist and materialist humanist, Proudhon insisted on being called an anti-theist or a methodical atheist. He maintained that there was a necessary dialectical opposition between man and the idea of God (God as a heuristic useful to human reason rather than as dogma supported by revelation), though it is an opposition that could not find a Hegelian resolution.

> Man, as man, is never able to find himself in contradiction with himself; he only feels confusion and anguish through the resistance of the God who is within him. In man is reassembled all the spontaneity of nature, all the instigations of mortal Being, all the gods and demons of the universe. In order to subdue these powers, to discipline this anarchy, man has only reason, his progressive thought: and here is what constitutes the sublime drama, the vicissitudes of which form, through their admixture, the ultimate justification for all existence. The destiny of nature and of man is the transformation of God: but God is inexhaustible, and our struggle eternal.
>
> (Proudhon 2: 255; my translation)

The intractable opposition between the human "transformation" (*metamorphose*) of theology and the inexhaustible nature of the God within produces a struggle that Proudhon preferred to reductive materialism. Methodical atheism borrowed and diverged from Feuerbach's anthropology of religion. Proudhon emphasized that the conflict between the merely human and the God within is an ineradicable stimulus to all ideals of justice and true (or mutualist) community, even as his unflinching anti-Semitism fatally compromised those ideals. But Proudhon's atheism had an afterlife. It became central, wittingly or not, to subsequent anarchist projects, from the anarcho-syndicalism of Georges Sorel, who learned much from Proudhon, to various versions of "New Left" counter-culture utopianism in the 1960s.

AGNOSTICISM

Agnosticism was coined in later nineteenth-century Britain to mean a suspension of belief either in favor of or against the existence of God, based on a thorough rejection of the divine origins of scripture and all supernatural existence, expressed as spirits, demons, and the miraculous. This is not to say that there were no equivalents elsewhere or earlier.

In Germany, what went by the name "agnosticism" in Britain would have been understood as Kantianism, which derived from Immanuel Kant's elaboration in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) of an *a posteriori* world of sensual experience that we order according to an *a priori* realm of innate concepts (the propositions of mathematics and the idea of causality are examples). The *a priori* realm of mind was what Kant termed "pure reason," and while he demonstrated that belief in God was an "antinomy" of pure reason—one could mount equally good arguments for and against belief, which made it unfit for modern, critical philosophy—Kant nevertheless admitted that the three "*inevitable problems of pure reason itself are* God, Freedom, *and* Immortality" (Kant 5; Kant's emphasis). He would rather risk error, Kant noted, than completely abandon investigation of knowledge that "transcends the world of the senses," called "Metaphysic" (Kant 5). Kant argued instead that it was only by

critically examining "what reason can and cannot do" (Kant 5) that the "inevitable problems of pure reason"—which included questions of morality, a *sensus communis* or social agreement formed without conceptual clarity, and the supersensible—could be properly engaged.

A more direct and significant source for British intellectuals was the skepticism of eighteenth-century Scottish philosopher David Hume. Kant's philosophy was constructed in large part as a riposte to Hume's radical empiricism. Hume argued that we have no reason to assume the reality of any substance to which we routinely refer, substances that were for Kant mental unities carved out of sensual experience by innate concepts. Rather, "we know nothing but particular qualities and perceptions" (Hume, "Abstract" 194). For Hume, our idea of any body, including the mind itself, is composed only of individual sensations: our idea of a "peach," for example, "is only that of a particular taste, color, figure, size, consistency, etc." (Hume, "Abstract" 194). Even our idea of causality is simply a habit formed by experience, on the assumption that the course of nature we have observed in the past will remain constant in the future. We expect billiard balls to react in certain ways when hit, but that expectation is based only on prior observation. Hence, "we are determined by *custom* alone to suppose the future conformable to the past" (Hume, "Abstract" 189).

Hume's views on theism, while more obscure, follow from his skepticism. His impressionist empiricism ruled out any direct knowledge of supernatural beings, just as it denied we had any direct knowledge of the substance of minds or peaches. And the only argument for God Hume would credit is the deist one based on design—that is, the argument that so complexly designed a universe required an original designer, even if that designer remained hidden once the mechanism was in place. Popular theism he understood to be derived anthropologically from the superstitions of polytheism, and apt to give way to absurd polytheistic tendencies under trying circumstances (drought, plague, unexplained death). Only sustained, Aristotelian reflection on "the beauty of final causes" brings humanity back to "the firmer and more durable foundation" of belief in God (Hume, *Natural History*, secs. 6.1 and 6.2).

Hume's target was not abstract theism itself. Like other deists of his time, Hume argued that "the universal propensity to believe in invisible, intelligent power, if not an original instinct, being at least a general attendant of human nature, may be considered as a kind of mark or stamp, which the divine workman has set upon his work" (Hume, *Natural History*, sec. 15.5). But Hume also outlined two fundamental objections to the way the generality of humanity thought about God. First, he saw no possible connection between the bare argument from design and the more common understanding of providence. Just as we had no reason, other than custom, to assume constancy in the course of nature, so we had no reason to assume God's providential hand in human history. When things went badly, we were apt to deny God altogether, thus proving Hume's underlying assumption that passions ruled reason, rather than the reverse. Second, he also argued that the image of the creator borne by humanity had been horribly "disfigured" in the "popular religions of the world," since however much we revered our likeness to God, we constantly dishonored it. Human hypocrisy—the manifest discrepancy between the certainty of our religious beliefs and the utter impiety of our actual lives—was for Hume the best

argument against theism. Such hypocrisy only fueled Hume's skepticism: "the whole is a riddle, an aenigma, an inexplicable mystery" due to the "frailty of human reason" (Hume, *Natural History*, secs. 15.5 and 15.13).

Hume's "inexplicable mystery" of theism reappeared most obviously in the nineteenth-century work of Herbert Spencer, perhaps the most widely read essayist of the era, who referred to the place held by God in theology and metaphysics as "the Unknowable." Spencer titled Part One of his *First Principles of a New System of Philosophy* (1862), one of many attempts to present his work systematically, with the phrase "The Unknowable." The goal was to demonstrate that both "Ultimate Religious Ideas" and "Ultimate Scientific Ideas" invoked final hypotheses that were at best vague and illusory, even incomprehensible. Nevertheless, Spencer suggested, the indefiniteness of our understanding of ultimate religious ideas was itself not fatal to religious speculation, which remained "an indestructible element" of human thought (Spencer, *First Principles* 91).

Spencer borrowed from Hume and Kant, though he was perhaps less skeptical than the former and less idealistic than the latter. But he also borrowed from two men who are less well known today, Sir William Hamilton and Henry Longueville Mansel. (Mansel edited Hamilton's posthumously published *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic* [1859–60].) Hamilton, who belonged to the second generation of the Scottish Enlightenment, wrote his essay "Philosophy of the Unconditioned" (1829) after several visits to Germany, where he embraced Kant's critical philosophy. But Hamilton's reception of Kant was typical of Scottish thought, and was aligned with the common-sense (or natural) realism of Thomas Reid, a contemporary of Hume. Hamilton largely ignored Kant's troublesome bracketing of the thing-in-itself—the conceptual substance to which, as Hume had noted, we have only sensual (or for Kant, phenomenal) access—so that like Reid, Hamilton found common-sense objectivity less difficult to grasp than had Kant. Where Kant treated the unfathomable postulates of time and space as innate categories of mind, about which we had no insight, Hamilton saw our dependence on such unfathomable categories as support for religious faith and proof of the inherent weakness of human intellect. Our minds, conditioned by material reality, required something Unconditioned if our confidence in a natural order we could not fully understand was to be maintained. Spencer's Unknowable clearly echoes Hamilton's Unconditioned.

In the Bampton Lectures he delivered at St. Mary's in 1858 (published the same year), titled *The Limits of Religious Thought*, Henry Mansel, an Oxford philosopher, churchman, and finally Dean of St. Paul's, made explicit the intimate connection between the necessary limits of human reason, outlined with such vigor by Hume and Kant, and theology proper, at least the theology implied by Reid's common-sense philosophy and Hamilton's Unconditioned. But Mansel was well aware that he was also reviving an older tradition of Christian apologetics (derived from Augustine, Clement of Alexandria, Aquinas, and Richard Hooker) in which direct knowledge of God was considered impossible due to the weakness of fallen intellect. Mansel took some of the most skeptical arguments of his day and turned them back into useful tools for theology. If reason is truly undependable and limited, he argued, we must revert to revelation—divinely inspired scripture—for guidance, despite the previous two centuries' attacks on it. Those attacks had questioned scriptural coherence; highlighted the gap between its composition and the earlier events it

purported to recount; and stressed the abundant evidence of its fallible human authorship, as revealed in commentary from Baruch Spinoza to the later German higher criticism. Mansel transforms this entire tradition of Biblical criticism into confirmation of man's fallen intellect: we are incapable of understanding how the divine word actually got transmitted via scripture, whose absolute authority we must therefore accept.

A fine-grained intellectual history of the period has argued that Mansel's Bampton Lectures are the authentic, if paradoxical, source of nineteenth-century agnosticism, since Spencer clearly borrows arguments from Mansel in his *First Principles* a few years later (see Lightman). But while it is obvious that the unknown nature of God is fundamental to Spencer's claims, as it is to Hume, Kant, and the rest of eighteenth-century deism, the "Unknowable" remains a generalization that could be taken in completely opposed directions, as Mansel and Spencer demonstrate. Whereas Mansel returned to scripture to resolve his doubts, Hume, Kant, and Spencer most assuredly did not. Whatever skepticism the latter three demonstrated toward theism, they had no doubts about revelation: scripture was a human creation, without miraculous or divine inspiration, and must be interpreted as such.

The theologian Richard Holt Hutton first uses "agnosticism" in print when he attributes the term to Thomas Huxley in an article for the *Spectator* in 1869 (Hutton 642), and the word slowly came to be the source of controversy, especially between ecclesiastics and defenders of religious tradition on one side, and more empirically inclined figures such as Spencer and Huxley on the other. The main source of *how* the term was invented is Huxley, some twenty years after the event. In "Agnosticism," a sharply worded reply to remarks made by Dr. Henry Wace, the Principal of King's College, Cambridge, at a Church of England Congress held in Manchester in 1888, Huxley notes that, after having read the work of Hume and Kant, François Guizot and Hamilton, and embarking on a career in Natural Science, he was unable to call himself an atheist, a theist, a pantheist, a materialist, an idealist, a Christian, or a freethinker (though he leaned most toward the last label).

> So I took thought, and invented what I conceived to be the appropriate title of "agnostic." It came into my head as suggestively antithetic to the "gnostic" of Church history, who professed to know so much about the very things of which I was ignorant; and I took the earliest opportunity of parading it at our Society [the Metaphysical Society], to show that I, too, had a tail, like the other foxes. To my great satisfaction, the term took; and when the *Spectator* had stood godfather to it [that is, in Hutton's essay of 1869], any suspicion in the minds of respectable people, that a knowledge of its parentage might have awakened was, of course, completely lulled.
>
> (Huxley, *Science* 239)

Though Hutton attributed Huxley's term (as if it were a version of Spencer's thinking) to a reading of St. Paul, who refers critically at one point to a pagan Greek altar dedicated "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD" (*Acts* 17:23), Huxley wants to set the record straight, and for good reason. Huxley's decades-long response to his critics—including Wace, who had asserted in his Manchester speech that "agnostic" was nothing more than a euphemism for "infidel"—constituted an ongoing attempt

to defend himself against the charge that he was fundamentally *anti*-religious, or *anti*-Christian, as would be implied if he had adopted the pagan Greek perspective that Paul rebuked. Instead, Huxley tried to inhabit a space between belief and non-belief.

In "Agnosticism and Christianity" (1889), he insisted that while agnosticism rejected "faith" as itself "immoral" (Huxley, *Science* 310), since faith dispensed with evidence (no *sola fide* for Huxley), agnosticism was neither immoral nor atheistic. The principle of agnosticism, which for Huxley was neither "negative" nor a "creed," declared "that it is wrong for a man to say that he is certain of the objective truth of any proposition unless he can produce evidence which logically justifies the certainty" (Huxley, *Science* 310). Huxley's larger perspective might be understood as an extension of Protestant attitudes dating to the Reformation. Like Luther and Calvin, Huxley emphasized the non-miraculous nature of human existence—he repudiated the demonology of Roman Catholicism. For many Protestants of Huxley's day, especially progressive evangelicals such as anti-slave trade crusader William Wilberforce, following the practical moral example of Christ (as in the traditional *imitatio Christi*) was more important than dogma. But for Huxley, Protestantism's critique of the Roman Church was confused, if not hypocritical, since it remained largely wedded to a spurious supernaturalism. Instead, Huxley excluded not only all that Mansel saw in scriptural revelation (no *sola scriptura* for Huxley), but also insisted that human beings could neither intuit God's presence, as figures from Aquinas to Cardinal Newman had claimed, nor be affected by the dispensation of his grace (finally, no *sola gratia* for Huxley either). Huxley also rejected all attempts to connect him to his two most prominent skeptical competitors. Spencer's Unknowable seemed too mystical and gnostic, as were Spencer's later attempts to reconcile faith and science. In France, Auguste Comte's notion of positivism seemed altogether wrongheaded, since in the name of a purely empirical philosophy Comte had wound up creating a Religion of Humanity, complete with feast days dedicated to great men of science and letters, which Huxley derided as "Catholicism minus Christianity" (Huxley, *Method* 158). For much of his life, Huxley found it necessary to repeat, time and again, that an agnostic was not just an atheist lacking the courage to say so openly.

As Huxley makes clear at the end of his Prologue to *Science and Christian Tradition*, his rejection of the infallibility of scripture was never intended to be a rejection of the Bible's utility for moral instruction, a perspective that he believed distinguished his view from that of the "heterodox Philistine" who ignorantly ridiculed both the Bible and its cultural traditions (Huxley, *Science* 55). In the 1870s, Huxley relied on the relatively thin idea that the Bible somehow humanized its readers. It made them aware of scripture's cultural and aesthetic importance to England and the English language—he calls it the "Epic of Britain," though it can only be the King James version he invokes (Huxley, *Science* 56)—and it made them more cosmopolitan, since even the simple-minded would learn of foreign countries and antiquity. The Bible further imparts the unsparing lessons of history, in that only those who strive to "do good" and "hate evil" will earn the approval of later generations (Huxley, *Science* 56). It is an odd and confused argument, because of both its curious nationalism and its rather cavalier approach to good and evil, as if the meaning of the terms was perfectly compatible with scripture, and as if *how*

(let alone *whether*) the historical annals recording their time on earth would have any effect on the obscure, untutored masses Huxley hoped to improve.

When he revisits this theme in 1892, his reasoning is different and more politically engaged. After a half-century of democratic and socialist revolution in Europe and South America, and the end of slavery in the Americas, Huxley sees something else in the scriptural message. "Throughout the history of the western world, the Scriptures, Jewish and Christian, have been the great instigators of revolt against the worst forms of clerical and political despotism. The Bible has been the *Magna Carta* of the poor and of the oppressed. . . . Assuredly, the Bible talks no trash about the rights of man; but it insists on the equality of duties, on the liberty to bring about that righteousness which is somewhat different from struggling for 'rights'; on the fraternity of taking thought for one's neighbor as for one's self" (Huxley, *Science* 57). Huxley calls the Bible "the most democratic book in the world" (Huxley, *Science* 58), and asserts that Protestantism promoted political freedom in the same proportion that it recognized no authority other than the Bible. While Huxley insists that none of this has anything to do with the "cosmogonies, demonologies, and miraculous interferences" of traditional belief, his argument in 1892 for the pedagogical importance of scripture is nevertheless remarkable and definitively separates him from almost all of the radical atheists of his era (Huxley, *Science* 58).

Much of the controversy surrounding agnosticism died out by the end of the nineteenth century, perhaps because the increasing popular acceptance of the authority of the physical sciences, which technological development made palpable in Huxley's lifetime, also meant increasing acceptance of a sort of *détente* between religion and science. Each would be allowed its separate sphere, as Kant had desired, so that one set of principles would not interfere with the other. The change was perhaps clearest within English universities. At the start of the nineteenth century, only Anglicans could be found at Oxford and Cambridge. Leslie Stephen became a tutor at Cambridge in 1856, and was ordained in 1859. But after openly questioning the historical evidence of scripture, he was asked to resign his university position in 1862. (In 1875, he renounced the Anglican ministry altogether.) By the latter half of the century, the growing protests of Catholics, Methodists, Quakers, and Jews finally led to change. After several failed attempts, Parliament passed the Universities Tests Act of 1871, which allowed members of all religions (or none) to attend and teach at Oxford and Cambridge.

It is often observed that the rise of agnosticism in Britain, especially in major figures such as Spencer, Huxley, Stephen, and John Tyndall, coincides with the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. Darwin is presented as the culmination of a half-century of geology and archaeology that completely overturned the Biblical account of creation, from which the age of the earth was still being calculated at 6000 years by Archbishop Ussher as late as 1833. At the beginning of the nineteenth century in France, Georges Cuvier's paleontology and comparative anatomy continued to assume that changes in nature, including the appearance and disappearance of species, occurred suddenly—so-called *catastrophism*—and that this sudden emergence of new forms could be reconciled with the received Biblical story. Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830–33), a favorite of Huxley's, popularized and provided empirical evidence for James Hutton's contrary theory of *uniformitarianism*—the idea that changes in nature

occurred slowly over many millennia and in uniformity with the way nature changed in the modern world, so that one species could indeed evolve over time into another. (Jean-Baptiste Lamarck's prior version of evolution, positing that physical characteristics acquired in life by one member of a species could be transmitted to progeny, would be superseded by the idea of natural selection arrived at simultaneously, yet independently, by Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace. But even Lamarck recognized that the earth was much older than scripture implied.)

That Huxley, who called himself and came to be called "Darwin's Bulldog," coined the word "agnostic" ten years after the appearance of *On the Origin of Species* provides good evidence for the claim of Darwin's role. Huxley engaged in a famous debate over Darwinism with Bishop Samuel Wilberforce (egged on by the anti-Darwinian naturalist Richard Owen) in 1860 at Oxford and became the most prominent champion of Darwinian evolution in the following decades, though he tended to remain scientifically agnostic, to Darwin's unceasing consternation, about the mechanism of natural selection. It is unlikely that the arguments surrounding Huxley over religion and science, faith and agnosticism, would have produced the same emotional heat had Darwin's radical challenge to the received scriptural wisdom of human origins and development not loomed large. Unlike previous debates, which took place largely in the philosophical literature, the public controversies over theism in Huxley's time occurred when the established Church of England was fighting to maintain its long-established social authority, and it was slowly, inexorably, losing the battle.

Civilized morality for Huxley was finally not a product of the humanizing education to be provided by lay instruction in the Bible. Like Spencer, Huxley believed that morality was due primarily to the evolutionary requirements of order and survival among complex social organisms. "The more complex the social organisation the greater the number of acts from which each man must abstain, if he desires to do that which is best for all. Thus the progressive evolution of society means increasing restriction of individual freedom in certain directions" (Huxley, *Science* 53). It is a sentiment akin to those later found in Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that agnosticism as an idea arose primarily out of philosophical currents that long pre-dated Darwin, even if Darwin's work gave those currents a new forcefulness. By 1892, Huxley was denying that he ever embraced any "philosophy of evolution," and continued to assert that while "natural selection" depended on evolution, he could well imagine evolutionary processes that did not include natural selection (Huxley, *Science* 41). While Darwin's ideas clearly abetted the agnostic cause, they were not crucial to its origins.

SECULARISM

The last person to be imprisoned in England for promulgating atheism was George Holyoake, in 1842. He makes his appearance only at this point in the discussion because he is better known today as the inventor and proponent of a new doctrine he called "secularism." Holyoake's trial and six-month imprisonment, about which he provided an excruciatingly detailed account, speaks directly to the question of atheism and agnosticism in the period. Holyoake began as a follower of Comte's Religion of Humanity, but abandoned French theory as he became involved with Chartist labor reforms in Britain. He remained an adherent of Benthamite

utilitarianism, though he applied it in the direction of philanthropist Robert Owen's utopian socialism, which included the cooperative organization of labor and the communal living arrangements supported by Owen's investment in and organization of the mill town of New Lanark. Owen was opposed to organized religion and argued that each person was primarily the consequence of his material social environment—a view that Holyoake shared. But Owen later embraced spiritualism, and was in no sense, as Holyoake observed at his trial, an atheist.

Holyoake traveled the cities and towns of England, with family in tow, as a Social Missionary, teaching elementary mathematics for a pittance and speaking to assemblies of workers, as he did in May of 1842 at the Cheltenham Mechanics' Institute, one of hundreds of such establishments dedicated to what we would today call "adult education" for the working class. Shortly before, his fellow-missionary Charles Southwell had been sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for publishing an atheist periodical called *Oracle of Reason* in Bristol. Though Holyoake's stated topic in Cheltenham was "Home Colonisation as a means of superseding Poor Laws and Emigration" (a title that signified "socialism" to local authorities and clerics), he was asked from the audience after his speech why he had spoken only of the duty of man to man, and not of the duty of man to God. Holyoake's response was the tipping point. Given that the national debt is a "millstone round the poor man's neck," he replied, and that religious institutions cost the nation "about twenty millions annually," the workers of England were simply "too poor to have a God." For added piquancy, he mused that, like workers in a recession, perhaps God should be put "upon half-pay," and concluded: "Morality I regard, but I do not believe there is such a thing as a God" (Holyoake, *Last Trial* 5). Some months later, after his excoriation in the conservative local press (the reformist newspaper defended him) for everything from "devilry" to being a "monster," Holyoake returned to Cheltenham to defend himself in a second lecture, after which he was arrested, tried by jury, convicted, and imprisoned.

Several elements of Holyoake's trial deserve attention. First, Holyoake was charged under common law by local magistrates, at the urging of local clerical authorities. Under common law, the charge was blasphemy—more particularly, libel against God. For their part, the clerics of Cheltenham focused on Holyoake's witticism about "half-pay" for God (and, by implication, his ecclesiastic servants). But there had never been any statute forbidding the promotion of atheism in England, and one of the results of Holyoake's subsequent notoriety and his numerous letters to friends in Parliament was an investigation of his arrest and imprisonment, which produced pointed attacks on the absurdities of common law prosecutions in the modern era. Second, while Holyoake's atheism may have been of some concern to the churchmen involved, it is obvious that neither the clerics nor the magistrates would have taken any notice of Holyoake had his comments been made in private, to elite listeners, or as scholarship. Rather, it was Holyoake's venue that became central at the trial: he spoke as an Owenite socialist before a mass of untutored workers regarded as easily turned against authority. His trial would be, as he hoped, the last attempt of the old order to suppress atheists in the English courts, though the social disability the label carried persisted.

After his imprisonment, Holyoake more carefully calibrated his theological perspective to prevailing political winds. While he accepted the label atheist in the

early 1840s, he knew it was a problematic rallying cry. The weekly magazine Holyoake founded in 1846, *The Reasoner* (it ran until 1861), reflects the more accommodating language he adopted. The first appearance of the word "secularism" in print may be Holyoake's response in 1851 to a reader's letter, which recommended Holyoake adopt the existing term "secularist" rather than "atheist" if he wanted to avoid needless theological dispute. Holyoake replied that he had already embraced the term in a lecture on "The Martineau and Atkinson Letters" and claimed that "*Secularism* is peculiarly the work we have always had in hand, and how it is larger than Atheism, and includes it" (Holyoake, *The Reasoner* XI: 6, 88; Holyoake's emphasis). In a later essay on "Religion, Atheism, and Art," under the pseudonym "Christopher," Holyoake makes a point that would be crucial for Huxley as well: "that morality *is* independent of religion," and that the inspiration for art may easily come from the former rather than the latter (as in the case of pagan antiquity); "morality is an inspiration, and that in the kingdom of secularism all the riches of nature are opened to the student therein" (Holyoake, *The Reasoner* XI: 8, 118). Once Huxley's term "agnosticism" was popularized in the 1860s, Holyoake apparently embraced that term as well (see Berman 213; McCabe 2: 266).

In 1870, Holyoake debated Charles Bradlaugh on the theme "Secularism, skepticism and atheism," arguing on pragmatic grounds that the taint of immorality in atheism (which both Dostoevsky and Nietzsche would declare a necessary consequence of disbelief) was politically fatal to the term. People will not "stand still to listen to secular propositions," observed Holyoake, "if you have to settle the Atheistic first" (Berman 213). But by then, Bradlaugh was one of the few remaining public figures arguing not only for doctrinaire atheism—there is no God, and Bradlaugh believed he could prove it—but also for the duty of atheists to disprove the charge of immorality leveled against them.

Something quite similar happened to religious skeptics within the *fin-de-siècle* women's movement. Harriet Martineau, mentioned by Holyoake, was a British Unitarian who recognized only an "unknowable" divinity similar to Spencer's. George Eliot (Mary Anne Evans), raised as a dissenter, became immersed in Strauss's higher criticism of scripture and Feuerbach's anthropology of religion. But from the time of Lucretia Mott (a Quaker minister and abolitionist) and her *Discourse on Women* (1849), American suffragists tended to argue along two lines simultaneously where religion was concerned. On the one hand, they said, all religions bore an awful responsibility for women's oppression, beginning with the story of Eve's putative betrayal of Adam. On the other hand, as Mott and other feminists claimed, scripture properly interpreted actually supported women's rights. Perhaps the most powerful statement along the latter lines was *The Women's Bible* (Part 1, 1895; Part 2, 1898), composed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and a committee of twenty-six other women. As much Biblical commentary as newly edited scripture, the book reflected Stanton's desire to link women's suffrage to religious reform, and it caused a split within the movement (though at least one of Stanton's editors, Matilda Jocelyn Gage, took the more radical view that not even a re-edited Bible could be used to support women's rights). Not unlike Holyoake in response to Bradlaugh two decades earlier, Stanton's colleague Susan B. Anthony and others argued instead that the women's movement should keep its eyes focused on the main prize—securing the vote—and remain open to all varieties of religious sentiment. It was Anthony's position that largely carried

the day after the 1896 meeting of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. While Stanton did indeed at times approach atheism, her position was perhaps closest to Huxley's agnosticism, in that she wanted to preserve what she saw as politically useful in scripture while discarding the rest. But by 1896, even this degree of skepticism had become for many women an unwanted distraction.

Holyoake's mixture of socialist politics and religious skepticism may not be what most people today mean by secularism, though echoes of the term's political significance can still be heard in the anti-secularism of certain orthodox religious groups, both Christian and Muslim (and even if much Muslim anti-secularism is anti-capitalist as well). But it is important to note that Holyoake was in no sense the originator of the root term "secular," which has its beginnings in pre-Christian Latin (where it meant a historical epoch) and in later Church Latin (where it meant both the time of the fallen world—the *saeculum*—between Adam's sin and Christ's second coming, and the space of the laity, where a priest may serve in a congregation apart from a cloister or monastery). To "secularize" was given added meaning under Henry VIII: it meant transferring the ownership of property from church to state, which is what Henry did after establishing the Church of England with himself as head. Even "secularist" has early eighteenth-century origins, referring to those (as the letter to *The Reasoner* stated) who felt more commitment to worldly matters, especially in education, than religious ones. Still, Holyoake can be called the originator of a social movement called secular*ism*, even if this movement did not outlive Holyoake.

Holyoake's pragmatism in leaving atheism out of political discussion was something most of the secular societies arising in England in the later nineteenth century agreed with, and both Huxley's agnosticism and Holyoake's secularism outstripped Bradlaugh's atheism in terms of popular appeal. Yet the appeal of secularism was perhaps more intimately related to its progressive and socialist politics than to any sort of ameliorative theological position. Secularism represented a mode of intellectual uplift for a largely uneducated working class and a big tent of sorts for a range of reformist politics, functioning as a euphemism for both socialism and atheism.

No other nation of the era offers a direct parallel. Anti-clerical republicanism re-emerged in France with the founding of the Third Republic in 1870 and the permanent establishment of universal male suffrage in 1875. Following a series of reforms excluding priests and nuns from the administration of schools, charities, and hospitals, and the embarrassment of religious royalists in the Dreyfus Affair, the statutory separation of church and state—commonly called *laïcité*—occurred in 1905. The political edge of Holyoake's secularism was absent in the Third Republic to the same extent that many of his religious and social reforms were being integrated into the newly centralized French state. The unification of Germany as a monarchical federation led by Prussia unfolded under the Lutheran, pietist, and royalist Otto von Bismarck in 1871. But Bismarck found less success in suppressing atheistic socialism by law (he repeatedly tried) than by paternalistically coopting it through the first modern welfare state, which avoided interference in the workplace but offered workers social insurance for health, accident, and disability, and a pension upon retirement. Socialism in Germany did not disappear and would explode after World War I. But by allowing universal male suffrage and providing a corporate version of reforms that Holyoake would have supported, Bismarck also undermined much that drove Holyoake's version of secularism.

In the United States, Jefferson's now famous "wall of separation" between church and state (borrowed from puritan Roger Williams, founder of Rhode Island), has often been invoked as the basis of American secularism. But Jefferson's phrase was his interpretation of the Constitution's First Amendment, and that amendment applied only to the federal government until the Fourteenth Amendment after the Civil War. State governments could, and often did, maintain religious preferences well into the nineteenth century, and organized prayer in state-sponsored schools survived until 1963. Jefferson's phrase did not become part of Supreme Court jurisprudence until a polygamy case in 1878, and even in 1947, when Hugo Black invoked Jefferson's wall in a dissenting opinion, the majority decision still upheld the right of a state to fund the transportation of students to Catholic schools. The origin of the "wall of separation" in the writings of Roger Williams—who left both the already separatist Congregationalists and Calvinist Baptists for a form of theology that we would today call non-denominational—may tell us more about the meaning of secularism in America than Jefferson's usage, precisely because Williams, echoing Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, imagined the wall as a way of protecting and preserving religion from the corruption of the state, and not vice versa, as did later French republicans. In 1644, Williams wrote of a "hedge or wall of Separation between the Garden of the Church and the Wilderness of the world" (Williams 1: 108). This is the antithesis of Holyoake's sentiments, but Williams's words may exemplify American secularism in the nineteenth century and beyond far better than Jefferson's. Only in Britain, where the Church of England remained intimately linked with monarchy, government, and social institutions long after the Universities Tests Act of 1871 (prayer is still allowed in Britain's state-sponsored schools), where the welfare state was embraced only fitfully by Liberal and Labour governments before and after World War I, and where universal male suffrage was not achieved until 1918, would the term secularism bear the political weight of reformist, even revolutionary, fervor.

Most of this fervor did not survive the turn of the century. Atheism per se was embraced in academic philosophy, especially at Cambridge: G. E. Moore, J. E. McTaggart, and subsequently Bertrand Russell published complexly reasoned arguments for atheism. More importantly, and largely because of the spread of secular attitudes among Britain's middle class (rather than among its workers and intelligentsia), the close relationship between secularism as a non (or anti-)theological position and socialist reform disintegrated. This is not to say that most British socialists abandoned atheism, but rather that by the second decade of the twentieth century the struggle for the rights of laborers and women, and even the future of Britain as an empire, entered a new and more confrontational phase in which euphemisms such as secularism no longer served any purpose. Secularism in Britain became a much more capacious if blander term, signaling an insistence on worldly as opposed to other-worldly affairs in politics, education, and social policy, but often not much more.

The history of religion has long been understood to be a house of many mansions. But this is also true of the history of non-belief, in which we confront a plurality of secular impulses inexorably defined by what they reject. The skepticism of the *fin de siècle* is best understood when we acknowledge both its familiarity and its distinctness.

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THE JEWISH *FIN DE SIÈCLE*

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Olga Litvak

Since the twilight of the last century, scholarly consensus has upheld two formative, but potentially conflicting, accounts of the Jewish *fin de siècle*. As if on cue, both of them – Jonathan Frankel's *Prophecy and Politics* and Carl Schorske's *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* – initially appeared in 1981, to provide twenty-first-century scholars with contrary etiologies of this first turning point within and against modern Jewish history. The prospects remain, to say the least, uncertain. Revisiting roughly two generations of scholarship, it is still hard to tell whether or not there even was a Jewish *fin de siècle*. Although Frankel registered the significance of the final decades of the nineteenth century as a post-liberal "crisis" that ignited an explosion of new "radical and collectivist ideologies" (Frankel 1981: 2), he ultimately traced the roots of the Jewish revolution back to mid-century "dilemmas of [Jewish] messianic conscience" (Frankel 1981: 6–48) rather than to the apparent exhaustion of nineteenth-century liberalism that virtually defined the experience of the *fin de siècle*. According to Frankel, contemporary "prophets" of Jewish mass politics were responding to changes in "*objective* conditions" (Frankel 1981: 48, my emphasis) – anti-semitic violence, "savage exclusion," a population explosion that contributed to endemic impoverishment and "chronic underemployment" (Frankel 1981: 1) – but the "ideological turnabout" that he chronicled in such exhaustive detail was, as he put it, "not the dominant note" of the period. Indeed, Frankel confidently asserted that most *fin-de-siècle* Jewish intellectuals "felt that they had remained true to values which others had renounced" (Frankel 1981: 87); by "others," he presumably meant those non-Jews who forsook their liberal "values" for conservative myths of autarky, of which anti-semitism was the prime example. Anti-semitism, Frankel insisted, forced Jewish liberalism to give way to Jewish radicalism only when the "receiving society" had conclusively "rejected" emancipation in favor of racialist vitriol and legal persecution. In this story, the conspicuous illiberalism that characterized the European *fin de siècle* found no quarter among either the Jewish masses or the "literary intelligentsia" that proposed to lead the new Jewish exodus out of an increasingly insane Europe, choking (as the Russians would say) on its own fat. Echoing Frankel, Yaacov Shavit concluded that turn-of-the-century Jewish intellectuals

saw anti-semitism both as a major pathological symptom of the European essence and as a result of *fin-de-siècle* decadence. The different varieties of Jewish radicalism, including radical nationalism, were one of the sharp responses to this general *Kulturpessimismus* and a manifestation of the conclusion which the Jewish intelligentsia drew from it.

(Shavit 1991: 555)

Pressed to reassure the reader that the *telos* of twentieth-century Jewish politics is traceable to the hopeful vision of the Enlightenment rather than to the "general pessimism" of the *fin de siècle*, Shavit insisted that Jewish intellectuals "rejected romanticism and anti-Westernism and cleaved to the idea of Zionism as the only way to achieve 'acculturation without 'assimilation'" (Shavit 1991: 570), the "premature" utopian dream of unfulfilled nineteenth-century Jewish universalists like Moses Hess and Aron Liberman (Frankel 1981: 47).

But the strain of an embittered and ungenerous "moodiness" that Shavit and other readers of Frankel have taken pains to relegate to the sidelines of the "underlying cultural reality" of a Jewish *fin de siècle* (Shavit 1991: 570 and Bar-Yosef 1996: 73) cannot be so confidently dismissed from Jewish history. In fact, the most significant challenge to the normative view that quarantined Jewish political judgment from the unhealthy effects of gentile decadence placed no less a person than Theodor Herzl, the founder of Jewish nationalism, among the anti-semites (Schorske 1981). In sharp contrast to Frankel's progressive genealogy of Russian-Jewish radicalism, Carl Schorske's analysis of Austrian "politics in a new key" implicated the birth of Zionism in the European "secession" from the values of cosmopolitanism, individualism and laissez-faire. Instead of attributing Herzl's fortuitous discovery of his Jewish commitments to the *effects* of anti-semitic reaction, Schorske compared his search for a personal vocation to the careers of two other Viennese figures who likewise abandoned the "dry, rational politics of liberalism" for a "mode of political behavior at once more abrasive, more creative and more satisfying to the life of feeling than the deliberative style of the liberals" (Schorske 1981: 119). The analogy is highly provocative, even shocking, since the two figures in question were, in fact, professing anti-semites, not merely typical but leading figures of Vienna's *fin de siècle*, the general subject of Schorske's book.

Among the founders of Austrian conservatism, Georg Schönerer (1842–1921) espoused a Prussian-style pan-German nationalism in which "legal restrictions on the Jewish exploiters of the people" were instrumental in the "moral rebirth of the fatherland" (Schorske 1981: 131). The leader of the Austrian Christian Socialist party, Carl Lüger (1844–1910) had an impressive career in Habsburg municipal politics that culminated in a long stint as the mayor of Vienna. Like Schönerer, Lüger completed the "evolution from political liberalism through democracy and social reform to anti-semitism" (Schorske 1981: 139). His popular success depended on the support of radical Catholics in Vienna, a new "democratic" constituency that alarmed both the old Catholic hierarchy and the liberals but found a hero and a spokesman in Lüger. Addressed to the frustrations of Vienna's small-time traders and artisans who saw themselves as victims of laissez-faire capitalism and to the authors of the Catholic revival engaged in a struggle against secular culture, anti-semitism provided Lüger's electoral platform with ideological focus.

Tracing Herzl's life-long obsession with the Eastern European Jewish masses to his psychological and political alienation from the liberal values of his parents' generation, Schorske points to a "deep kinship" between Herzl and his contemporaries, Schönerer and Lüger: "his rejection of rational politics, and his commitment to a noble, aristocratic leadership style with a strong taste for the grand gesture." Most disturbingly, "another tie linking [Herzl] to his enemies" was his own marked "distaste for Jews" (Schorske 1981: 160). Like the Russian "prophets" of the Jewish revolution, Herzl saw the vast majority of "ghetto Jews" as the "shock troops of exodus" (Schorske 1981: 166) from modern Europe and the raw material from which a new nation, a sovereign "Kingdom of Israel," would be born. His redemptive vision dispensed with realistic plans for reform and embraced the imaginative "totalizing" possibilities of Viennese aestheticism: "Herzl would shape a new race of men in defiance of reality and out of his power as an artistic creator" (Schorske 1981: 164 and Steinberg 1988: 22). Like Schönerer and Lüger, Herzl thus conjured up an "archaic communitarian tradition" as an alternative to an "unsatisfying present" (Schorske 1981: 167), responsibility for which rested with the bankrupt liberal order.

For all of the persuasive power of Schorske's description of Herzl as an exemplary *fin-de-siècle* figure (Stanislawski 2001) neither his emphasis on the importance of a shared cultural milieu nor Frankel's normalizing insistence on the "objective" reality of anti-semitism can fully explain why it was that late nineteenth-century "prophets" of a Jewish revolution often evinced a greater sense of psychological and intellectual kinship with anti-semites than with most of their Jewish contemporaries. In 1901, when the poet Paul Loewengard, a staunch Dreyfusard and a committed republican, became a Zionist, he credited his return to his own "Oriental" origins to Maurice Barrès' cult of soil and ancestry. Writing to Barrès himself, Loewengard confessed that it was Barrès, the public voice of the anti-Dreyfusards and a committed anti-semite, who had "delivered" Loewengard from loneliness and dread by "opening the doors of his [own] interior City" (Harris 2010: 379).

Loewengard's longing for a private Jewish "City" of the soul stands out sharply against contemporary unease with the idea of the "public" city as promiscuous, dangerous and very scary. His exultant vision of withdrawal into the comforts of a ghetto of the mind tells of *fin-de-siècle* ambivalence about the openness of the modern metropolis, the new frontier of a future civilization, where real Jews multiplied. Places of "dreadful delight" (Walkowitz 1992), late nineteenth-century cities became the preeminent sites of a new kind of emancipation anxiety, to which Jewish and non-Jewish "prophets" proved equally susceptible. Aggravated by the unprecedented and unchecked westward migration of Eastern European "ghetto Jews," late nineteenth-century fears of urban chaos, physical decay and political anarchy inspired the ideal of integral national selfhood that Loewengard, for one, had found so congenial in the example of Barrès. Reading Schorske and Loewengard, one might come to the conclusion, *pace* Frankel, that the historical impetus for the palpable sense of *fin-de-siècle* crisis in Jewish culture was not too little emancipation but the feeling, in certain quarters, that there was altogether too much.

Each to his own, Jewish nationalists and anti-semites were engaged in the attempt to impose some form of ideological control on the very same social phenomenon: the dramatic and rapid "rise of the Jews" during the long liberal century between

the French Revolution and the First World War (Lindemann 1997). The effects of Jewish emancipation on Christian Europe were not confined to the West, where a combination of naturalization and political fiat had practically wiped out the legal distinctions between Christians and non-Christians that had governed European society since the fourth century, propelling a disproportionate number of German, French and British Jews into the ranks of the new European bourgeoisie. In Eastern Europe, the process was more tentative; still, by the end of the nineteenth century, even the Russian Empire had a Jewish middle class that sent its children to gymnasia, attended the theater and took the Russian papers. But the effects of emancipation were neither limited to legislation nor confined to a shift in status for professionalized and wealthy urban Jews. Everywhere, even in the tiniest, most remote Eastern European Jewish hamlet, the awareness of emancipation as a possibility made an important difference in the "cultural reality" of people's lives – even when those people were not liberal but manifestly pious and socially conservative. To be sure, economic exigency ultimately moved great numbers of Jews across the European continent and across the Atlantic. But for masses of Eastern European Jews, migration was emancipation by another name. The necessary psychological stimulus that encouraged individual initiative rather than long-suffering resignation to the will of God came from the rapid and unprecedented escalation in social expectations, manifested in the prodigious "excesses" of *fin-de-siècle* consumerism (Weber 1988). Along with political emancipation came the emancipation of desire, a process whose impact was limited only by the reach of information and other forms of moveable social capital. It was not simply that Paris offered more than Pinsk (this was, probably, always the case); it was also that Jews from Pinsk were now prepared to go to Paris because they learned, from a variety of sources, to expect more than Pinsk could ever offer.

The great westward surge of Eastern European Jewry represented the first *mass-scale* return of the Jews to Western Europe since their collective expulsion between 1290 and 1492 from every European state and city west of the Elbe. In the *longue dureé* of European Jewry, this resettlement might well be described as a demographic "correction"; but, of course, its more proximate history lies in the Western European colonization of Eastern Europe. Between 1772 and 1795, Prussia, Russia and Habsburg Austria presided over the diplomatic dismemberment of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, home to the largest concentration of Jews to be found anywhere. At the end of the eighteenth century, Polish Jewry, numbering some 750,000 people, accounted for about a third of the world's Jewish population. The next largest European community, in the combined Habsburg territories of Bohemia, Moravia and Hungary, had only 150,000; other Habsburg communities were much smaller. Pre-revolutionary France had about 40,000 Jews, Georgian England, half that number. In the German lands, Jewish settlement remained highly restricted until after the Napoleonic Wars; some 35,000 to 40,000 Jews were widely dispersed among the small towns and villages of the former domains of the Holy Roman Empire. The largest urban concentration of German Jews, settled in Frankfurt am Main, numbered only 2,200 people. This picture would change substantially, once Polish Jews became Russian, Prussian and Austrian subjects.

The division of Poland-Lithuania consigned Polish Jewry to the east of Europe. Partition effectively pushed an illustrious and once-proud center of Jewish learning to

the cultural and geographic periphery of modern European civilization. Poland was reduced to the ambiguous status of a colonial frontier; its Jews immediately became backward, associated with medieval Polish "chaos" that the imposition of enlightened absolutist rule would set right (Wolff 1994). But even as the language of colonization relegated Polish Jews to the eastern margins of Europe, the imperatives of economic exploitation and the process of political integration opened up new opportunities and encouraged mobility from the periphery of the market town (Yid. *shtetl*) to the urban centers of imperial administration. Enterprising Jewish colonials began to shift from small towns toward imperial capitals and developing emporia of commerce, manufacture and government. In nineteenth-century Germany, Austria and Russia, Jewish *embourgeoisement* was linked to the scale and direction of internal migration from the East. By the 1870s, Eastern European Jews, now numbering more than 5 million, were moving still further west, and even across the Atlantic.

The palpable demographic effects of migration set off the emancipation anxiety of the Jewish *fin de siècle*. To begin with, the capitals of the three partitioning powers – Berlin, Vienna and St. Petersburg – where a Jewish presence had scarcely registered in the previous century, were now magnets for their own Jewish provincials. In 1815, Berlin had roughly 10,000 Jews; in 1900, there were 110,000, constituting 5 percent of the population. Most of these Jews came from east Prussia and from Posen, the Polish territories acquired during the partitions. Jewish residence was officially proscribed in St. Petersburg. Even here, the process of "selective integration" – Russia's half-cooked version of emancipation – bore striking demographic results. In 1910, Russia's window to the West boasted a legal Jewish population of 35,000; contemporaries estimated that nearly an equal number of Jews also lived in St. Petersburg illegally. But of the three imperial capitals, it was Herzl's Vienna that experienced the most dramatic and continuous growth of its Jewish population, fed predominantly by unceasing movement from colonial Galicia but also from the crown lands. As late as 1857, Vienna's Jewish community was still small, numbering roughly 2,500 and comprising about 1 percent of the total. In 1890, that figure stood at 800,000. At 12 percent of the capital's general population, Viennese Jewry was the largest, most visible and most highly diverse of all the new metropolitan Jewries of Europe. But similar changes were taking place elsewhere. On the eve of the Dreyfus Affair, Paris had 40,000 Jews; in 1850, there had only been about 8,600. Some of the migrants came from the Alsace, France's own eastern Jewish frontier and the demographic pool that sustained the growth of French Jewry throughout the nineteenth century; however, the residents of the Pletzl – Paris's new Jewish neighborhood – were primarily Yiddish-speaking Jews from Eastern Europe. By the time Dreyfus was finally exonerated and the Third Republic installed, only about half of all Parisian Jews had been born in France. In 1850, London had about 20,000 Jews; in 1905, there were 144,000. Roughly 85 percent were Eastern European Jewish immigrants, living in the East End. Thanks to the migration from the former Polish territories, not only from the Pale of Settlement, but also from Prussian Posen and Austrian Galicia, New York's Jewish population grew by a factor of 100 in the course of the nineteenth century, from 16,000 in 1850 to 1,600,000 in 1920.

As striking as these numbers are, the results of internal migration in Eastern Europe itself were still more so. According to the results of the 1897 census, nearly

20 percent of all Russian Jews living in the Pale of Settlement (some 800,000 people) were concentrated in only 12 of its largest cities, where they constituted at least one third of the entire urban population (Dinur 1957). Three spectacular examples of the effects of internal migration on the demographic distribution of Eastern European Jews at the turn of the century will suffice: Warsaw's Jewish population grew from 9,000 in 1800 to 219,000 in 1897, Odessa's from 200 to 138,900, and Lodz' from 300 to 98,700. Replicated all over the Pale of Settlement, the most highly urbanized and the most economically dynamic region of the Russian Empire, these numbers were not the result of a stable and gradual natural increase. They are evidence of the most momentous population shift in Jewish history.

Dense pockets of Eastern European Jewish resettlement did not melt easily into the background of Europe's urban landscape. They impinged significantly on their immediate environment and on the lives of their neighbors. Jewish migration changed local residential patterns, carved out new neighborhoods and introduced new business practices, sometimes in defiance of existing traditions and well-worn codes of commercial conduct. Out of necessity, Eastern European Jewish entrepreneurship frequently ventured into areas where natives feared to trade. Under the circumstances, the widespread charge that Jews were responsible for the worst abuses of capitalism could acquire social traction. The contrary association between Jews and an upsurge in revolutionary activity was likewise related to the dynamics of migration. Having extricated themselves from confessional discipline, many Jewish immigrants sought a sense of moral purpose and a new feeling of community in political organization. Those who ended up working in factories found themselves on the front lines of socialist agitation. None of this meant that Jews were any more prone to acts of disloyalty and subversion than non-Jews, but the uncertain social position of the migrant made such accusations easier to stick.

Indeed, the widespread appeal of radicalism to Jewish immigrants, particularly in London and New York, pointed to a crucial connection between emancipation and migration that became a source of concern for observers, both Jewish and gentile. Unlike every previous wave of migration, this latest one did not result in the transplantation of established communal institutions. Arriving alone or with their immediate families only, Eastern European Jewish migrants showed no inclination to reconstitute themselves into a confession or to take up the structures of authority that had governed their lives back in the *shtetl*. Old forms of communal self-government, which had sustained Jewish collective discipline for more than 1,000 years, gave way to a patchwork of informal, voluntary organizations and to new styles of self-assertion, grounded in class consciousness or feelings of ethnic pride (Lederhendler 2009). Confessional Judaism had in fact *persisted* in the consistorial regimes of Germany and France, where established communities grew more conservative and more prosperous as the century wore on. In a strangely disconcerting contrast, confessional discipline seemed to have no real relevance to the daily lives of Eastern European immigrants who were ostensibly *more* traditional than their native Western European counterparts. Without passports or papers to declare precisely where and to whom they belonged, Eastern European Jews appeared to be bound by fewer social and cultural restraints than were formally emancipated, native-born Jews. Their Jewishness seemed improvised, their civil status fluid, their communal ties uncertain and unreliable. Wherever Eastern European Jews landed,

religious authority and the respect due to rank and wealth suffered the ignominious fate of being cheerfully ignored rather than bitterly contested. The intellectual progress of emancipation encouraged utopian visions of social justice but it also fed extravagant day-dreams of financial independence and personal success. Both were disturbing signs of emancipation run amok.

The new state of infinite possibility found both detractors and admirers; often they were the same people, in equal measure impressed and appalled by the visible prospects of emancipation from below. Under his colloquial alias "Howdy-do" (Yid. *Sholem-aleichem*), the Russian-Jewish writer S. N. Rabinovich became the master of this shifting Eastern European Jewish universe, moved by nothing except the proliferation of desire. The infectiously garrulous "Sholem-aleichem" served as both the voice and the ministering conscience of the mobile Jewish id; Rabinovich, intensely ambitious, was himself the personification of *fin-de-siècle* Jewish restlessness. But none of his characters can suffer to sit still either. They seem to have lost the proverbial Jewish ability to bear their troubles with stoic patience. Rabinovich's irrepressible provincial dreamers live in the shadow of the same unsettling possibility, that of becoming a "Rothschild." Formally posed by a small-town schoolteacher in one of Sholem-aleichem's most famous monologues, the question "What If I Were Rothschild?" (1902) yielded a rich ruminative thread that indicted the self-serving and ultimately false identification of "lust" with the Victorian anodyne of "common welfare" (Howe and Wisse 1979: 162–66).

Tevye, Sholem-aleichem's Eastern European Jewish everyman, inherited the logic of emancipation from his smug liberal predecessors; he is a *fin-de-siècle* tribute to the discreet charms of the Jewish bourgeoisie. Indeed, the entire gallery of small-time Jewish hustlers, shape-shifters, hapless entrepreneurs and relentless comers, that were so familiar to Sholem-aleichem's readers, effectively exposed the collapse of the difference between pleasure and virtue as a pious historicist fraud. The lure of mobility, both geographic and economic, beset Menahem-mendl, one of Sholem-aleichem's inexhaustibly buoyant travelers; but the real story of this *shtetl* escape artist, recounted between the lines of the letters Menahem-mendl writes home to his wife, involves a studied evasion of responsibility and the reckless abandonment of his family. Even Sholem-aleichem's most popular imaginary immigrant, Motl, the cantor's son who never ages, envisions America as a place where the ordinary people could finally avenge themselves on their betters. An eternal Jewish child, Motl is both an artless narcissist and the perfect embodiment of Eastern European regression as the return of the Western European repressed. Seen through his eyes, the spectacle of mass migration looks like emancipation – freedom – stripped of its moral nicety.

Meticulously etched by Sholem-aleichem's unsparing pen, the topsy-turvy world in which children and "primitives" exposed the hypocrisy of sophisticated modern adults has a darker side as well. Representing Europe's own dark sub-continent, the Asiatic East of Europe, Eastern European Jews were the first of many colonial "Orientals" to invade Western Europe. Densely populated, noisy and poor, Jewish neighborhoods were classified as an indecipherable frontier, an urban jungle that was both inside and outside the modern European city (McLaughlin 2000). The object of disgust as well as of intense ethnographic curiosity, the Jewish East stood for the prostration of the West in consequence of "reverse colonization" by more robust, but less culturally developed races (Arata 1990). Dracula's fateful arrival in

London (1897) evoked expectations of Europe's imminent, apocalyptic collapse before the Eastern hordes; in fact, Bram Stoker's deathless Slavic aristocrat (his lineage was suggestively mixed) shared many features with the eternal Jew of Christian nightmares. Dracula was not just an Eastern European Jewish monster. His sexual, genetic, inter-species hybridity defined the *fin-de-siècle* meaning of monstrosity. The "mixture of bad blood, unstable gender identity, sexual and economic parasitism and degeneracy" in *Dracula* projected the risks of modernity onto the colonial "threat embodied by the Jew" (Halberstam 1995: 252).

In Stoker's novel, troops of the "undead," led by Dracula, perform the social irruption of the colonial hinterland into the centers of European civilization. For the emancipated Jewries of Western Europe, the invasion of Jewish Eastern Europe was similarly uncanny (Ger. *unheimlich*) not because the Eastern European Jew was entirely alien but because he was just a shade too familiar. To the metropolitan Jewish *arriviste*, the indigestible presence of the side-locked Galician Jew, clad in his black gabardine and speaking in a language that was like a parody of his own laboriously acquired high German, on his own recently conquered turf, was a source of shame and discomfort. These long-lost cousins descended on middle-class native Jews with all the force of their own repressed origins. Indeed, if the so-called "ghetto Jew" or *Ostjude* was the genie of degeneration, surely he had been released from his hold by the same promise of emancipation associated with the contemporary success of Jewish *embourgeoisement*. The potential for confusion between native and foreign, good Jews and bad, new money and old thus proved increasingly vexing. All the more so, since the age of capital provided no clear line of moral demarcation between legitimate returns on honest investments and making money out of doing nothing. In the age of laissez-faire and of the joint stock company, the lines separating a big score from utter bankruptcy – with catastrophic consequences for large numbers of people – were razor-thin. As a result, the danger of slipping from middle-class Western European comforts back into the primal soup of Eastern Europe, the place where all but a tiny minority of Europe's nineteenth-century Jewish population could trace their roots, was just a little too close for comfort. Skeletons who refused to stay behind the pale and safely in the closet, Eastern European Jews, out of place and out of time, could neither be entirely absorbed nor conveniently forgotten.

The idea of a Jewish renaissance developed against the social background of mass migration and within a discursive framework in which emancipation had come to signify not the end-point of human progress, envisioned in liberal political theory, but the underlying cause of popular unrest, superficiality, hedonism and biological decline. From its inception in the 1870s, when anti-semitism was still in its infancy, the discourse of national regeneration was already wedded to a Jewish auto-critique of emancipation; the common trace of emancipation anxiety made anti-semitic charges ring more – not less – true in Jewish ears and thereby provided Jewish nationalism with "prophetic" credibility. By the time Dr. Herzl convened the First Zionist Congress in 1897, inaugurating the twentieth century in Jewish history, Jewish intellectuals were already forearmed with a diagnosis of the modern Jewish condition that made his prescription look like a virtual miracle cure.

It must be said that nineteenth-century Jewish culture was never entirely at ease with the idea of emancipation. Most Jewish intellectuals were prone to expressions of ambivalence, if not hostility, to the prospect of social and economic mobility

without the prior benefit of moral discipline and cultural improvement (Feiner 1996). Moreover, to the extent that nineteenth-century Jewish thought resisted the ultimate dissolution of communal authority and insisted on the necessity and eternity of Jewish social bonds, it was never fully committed to the political necessity of emancipation, even in theory (Litvak 2012: 128–29). Against the background of mass displacement, the Jewish critique of emancipation that originated in the literature of Jewish Romanticism (Heb. *Haskalah*) became more explicit and more strident and, finally, gave way to nationalist aims. Articulated in its sharpest form by Ahad ha'am (Asher Ginsberg) in a piece called "Slavery within Freedom" (1891), nationalist faith shifted *arguments* against the temptations of personal choice into a normative ideological key. Absorbing the moralizing tone but dispensing with the moral idealism of Jewish Romantics, Ahad ha'am now presented the reader with the certainty that the hollow promise of freedom incurred the far greater danger of cultural superfluity and imminent collective disappearance (Ahad ha'am 1962: 187). In place of an evolutionary narrative of the eventual education of humanity, a liberal "hope" that Ahad ha'am elsewhere dismissed as naïve and delusional (Ahad ha'am 1962: 105–06), nationalism had installed an apocalyptic mythology of regeneration.

The internal shift in Jewish thought from the evolutionary temporality (Gr. *chronos*) of the nineteenth century to the "crisis" temporality (Gr. *kairos*) of the *fin de siècle* (Nathans 2006) can be dated very precisely. Between 1872 and 1877, Peretz Smolenskin published two long rambling essays called "The Eternal People" (Heb. '*Am olam*) and "A Time to Plant" (Heb. '*Et la'taat*), in which he set out to dismantle the foundational premises of nineteenth-century historicism. Eventually integrated into the Zionist canon, Smolenskin's essays directly assailed three of the most important articles of what Y. H. Yerushalmi famously termed the "faith of fallen Jews" (Yerushalmi 1982: 86). First, that Jewish law was the expression of divine reason in history and therefore the source of moral freedom for the Jewish individual. Second, that biblical Hebrew was the preeminent language of mediation between transcendent ethical content and authentic Jewish self-expression. And, finally, that the historic synthesis between Judaism and universal reason was embodied in the figure of Moses Mendelssohn, the philosophical conscience of modern Judaism.

To begin with, Smolenskin now argued that the commandments were not profound ethical norms but vestiges of ancient civic rituals that carried no intrinsic meaning for the modern individual apart from his belonging to the Jewish people. Conceived as dead "legacies" of a common past, the contemporary vessels of Jewish religiosity were mere "bodies," and "corpses," subject to the corrosive passage of time (Smolenskin 1925: vol. 2, 26–27). Jewish collective consciousness was that which constituted "the living substance" of the commandments which, like the public laws of other nations, served only to police the boundaries between Israel and its neighbors (Smolenskin 1925: vol. 2, 22). The fetishization of identity also extended to language. Smolenskin denied the transcendence of biblical Hebrew. Modern Jewish Biblicism, which elevated the eternal ethical content of biblical poetry above the historical contingencies of collective self-expression, "enslaved" the Jewish language to the languages of other nations (Smolenskin 1925: vol. 2, 72). In attempting to refine the crudities of the original and to bring the vagaries of traditional interpretation into accord with modern sensibilities, the romantic translation project, initiated by Mendelssohn, constituted an act of "sacrilege" against the

memory of Jewish martyrs and the "dignity" of the ancestors. The "modernization" of the Bible was an offense against national genius.

Finally, there was Mendelssohn. Smolenskin's quarrel was not actually with Mendelssohn; what disturbed him was the nineteenth-century idealization of Mendelssohn in the work of the popular German-Jewish historian, Heinrich Graetz, whose volume on the modern period in Jewish history, issued shortly before Smolenskin wrote "A Time to Plant," probably spurred the writing of the essay. It was Graetz who was responsible for the iconic representation of Mendelssohn as the original modern Jew, the signifier of progressive change and of the gradual "education of humanity," an idea about which Mendelssohn had, in his own time, expressed grave reservations (Litvak 2012: 105–06). In contrast to Graetz, Smolenskin depicted Mendelssohn as a conservative whose legacy was the "dead letter" of philosophical speculation rather than the "living monument" of a loyal following (Smolenskin 1925: vol. 2, 13). Mendelssohn's heroic individualism, so highly prized by Graetz, was for Smolenskin a sign of political lassitude; his "miraculous" singularity only served to alienate him from the people and prevented him from exercising a leadership role appropriate to his high status (Smolenskin 1925: vol. 2, 68–71). Furthermore, the distinction between knowledge and faith that Mendelssohn's arrival had introduced into modern Judaism was not a sign of intellectual progress, but the cause of conflict and fragmentation. The confinement of the "living body" of the nation to the status of a religion sowed the seeds of "discord" between religious reformers and their fanatical opponents, a process that led to moral "degeneration," social attrition, and, ultimately, collective dissolution (Smolenskin 1925: vol. 2, 85).

Abandoning the evolutionary framework of nineteenth-century thought, Smolenskin embraced something closer to Nietzsche's myth of eternal return. Subverting both in style and in substance Graetz' smooth narrative teleology which culminated in the appearance of Mendelssohn, Smolenskin proposed that the history of the Jewish nation was cyclical, punctuated by the periodic recurrence of regeneration and decline. The perilous "days of ben-Menahem" (Smolenskin 1925: vol. 2, 144) had come in the footsteps of the early modern period of national awakening, signified for Smolenskin by the seventeenth-century figure of Menashe b. Israel, a rabbi and a statesman who had petitioned Oliver Cromwell for the readmission of the Jews to England. For Smolenskin, Menashe b. Israel was a paradigmatic Jewish nation-builder, the Judah Maccabee of his own time, who transmuted popular messianic longing for the end of exile into a political program (Smolenskin 1925: vol. 2, 67).

To convey the significance of the overarching pattern that he had identified with the development of Jewish national consciousness, Smolenskin reached back to the medieval period, casting R. Saadya Gaon and Maimonides in the respective roles that he had assigned to Menashe b. Israel and Moses Mendelssohn (Smolenskin 1925: vol. 2, 85). Identifying his own time with a new post-Mendelssohnian era, Smolenskin wrote in the expectation of another period of national renewal, a "time to plant," in which the spirit of Saadya and Menashe b. Israel would be revived. Dispensing with the larger nineteenth-century vision of universal historical improvement, Smolenskin introduced into the Jewish *fin de siècle* the idea that there was no single, unmarked history, only different times that governed exclusively the inner lives of nations. Every nation lived by the revolutions of its own internal clock and by its own past, in an eternal cycle of endings and beginnings. Every age was entitled to its own messiah.

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, the drama of collective death and rebirth became an abiding preoccupation of Jewish literature, as well as the primary controlling fiction of the Jewish national movement (Litvak 2006: 140–55). The literary flowering of the Jewish *fin de siècle* seemed to thrive on the possibility of pregnant kairotic moments. The threat of destruction and the promise of rebirth is a persistent theme in the work of nearly every major Jewish writer of the time, including Sh. J. Abramovich, M. L. Lilienblum, Ben-Ami, H. N. Bialik, M. J. Berdyczewski, M. Z. Feierberg, and I. L. Peretz. It is not impossible that the very idea of *kairos* encouraged the overproduction of literature for a tiny educated readership. Literary culture instantiated the new mythology of Jewish nationalism, continually reproducing the nation as Smolenskin's "living monument" (an image haunted by Bram Stoker's "living dead"). The best-known instance of literature as both the burial ground and the cradle – the end and the beginning – of the nation is David Frishman's provocative evocation of the death of the historical *shtetl* and its rebirth as a potent and durable myth. The writer Sh. J. Abramovich, wrote Frishman, in his introduction to the anniversary edition of Abramovich's collected Hebrew works

> encompassed the full spectrum of Jewish life in the alleys of the small towns of Russia in the first half of the preceding century, developing it into an enormous, fully detailed picture [. . .] If, let us suppose, a deluge came, washing from the face of the earth the Jewish ghetto and the Jewish life it contains, not leaving behind so much as a sign, a vestige except by sheer chance, Mendele's four major works, *Fishke the Lame*, *The Travels of Benjamin the Third*, *The Magic Ring* and *Shloyme, the Son of Hayyim*, as well as two or three shorter works – I do not doubt that with these spared, some future scholar would then be able to reconstruct the entirety of Jewish *shtetl* life in Russia of the first half of the nineteenth century in such a way that not even a single detail would be missing.
> (Frishman 1911: vii)

The quotation provides a touchstone for the imaginative resistance *unto death* to the emancipation of the *shtetl*. Like Loewengard, Frishman fantasizes about replacing a real Jewish city with an eternal Jewish city of the mind. Abramovich's indestructible Jewish fiction serves as a fortress against the chaos of actual cities where Jews lived their disordered lives, Jewish cities like the modern metropole of late imperial Odessa, where so many *shtetl* Jews – including Frishman himself – so often seemed to end up.

From the literature of the Jewish renaissance, anticipations of degeneration and rebirth entered into the political vocabulary of the Zionist movement. Nationalist ideology did not emerge spontaneously in response to the "crisis" of anti-semitism; rather, anti-semitism endowed the articulate discontent of precocious *fin-de-siècle* "pessimists" like Smolenskin with immediate social purchase. The language of Jewish renewal demanded, as a pre-requisite, a clean break with the *shtetl* and its rapidly multiplying, highly mobile residents. As the impetus for Jewish exclusion and a form of insurance against the disconcerting future of an expanding Eastern European Jewish diaspora, anti-semitic reaction was thus immediately drafted into the anti-historicist language of the Jewish *fin de siècle*. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Jewish intellectuals saw in the oncoming "deluge" of anti-semitism both a

hysterical symptom of modern decline and a self-fulfilling Zionist prophecy, which made the cure of national regeneration seem like an urgent historical necessity. This, at least, was how an Odessa physician named Leon Pinsker first presented the case in *Auto-emancipation* (1882), a manifesto in which the founding generation of the new national movement found an answer to the question of time.

Conceived as a direct response to the wave of urban riots against Jewish property, subsequently known as *pogroms*, which swept through the southwestern frontier of the Russian Empire in the spring of 1881–82, *Auto-emancipation* presented itself as a singularly timely text. The epigraph, misquoted from the rabbinical classic *Ethics of the Fathers* (Avot 1:14) immediately identified the effective construction of self-hood with opportunity: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if not now, when?" (Pinsker 1979: 181). Pinsker tellingly omits the second question of the three: "And if I am only for myself, who am I?" which considerably complicates the claims of Jewish subjectivity that *Auto-emancipation* asserts as a fact, needing only to be stated, rather than a possibility needing to be argued or (as the dialectic in the original does) *positioned*. Set deliberately at odds with the dialectical self-conscious-ness of the original, Pinsker's normative language of identity derives from an open-ended, cyclical concept of time that he obviously shared with Smolenskin. The assumption of eternity – which is to say, pure duration rather than constant, some-times imperceptible and sometimes drastic, evolutionary change – is the only guar-antee of recurring opportunity, the only assurance that what goes around, eventually comes around. Pinsker's foreknowledge of a coming Jewish national revival was underwritten by the ahistorical premise that anti-semitism is forever.

Indeed, Pinsker shied away from the word "anti-semitism" because it was still too suggestive of historical specificity. The good doctor resuscitated the older, more medical-sounding "Judeophobia," because what he wanted to name was, to him, "a psychic aberration [which makes it] hereditary" and a "disease transmitted for two thousand years [which makes it] incurable" (Pinsker 1979: 185). In defiance of the political novelty of anti-semitism and of its highly provisional character, Pinsker dispensed with all ideological matter; anti-semitism is *not* anti-semitism – which would make it merely political, merely a matter of belief, of economic circumstances, or even of an error in judgment – but Jew-hatred, an old disease with a new name. "Judeophobia" is a permanent fixture of the human species (a strange argument for a doctor, surely aware of Darwin's work) that, insofar as it identifies him as the "other-in-perpetuity", also secures the eternal half-life of the Jew.

The naturalization of anti-semitism involved the denaturalization of the Jew. Pinsker referred to Jews as "ghosts," a "frightening form of the dead walking among the living" (Pinsker 1979: 184). The living want the dead to stay dead, and, so, insist on trying to kill them. Like Dracula, *these* "walking dead" cannot be harmed by conventional means; the only effective form of attack is total extermination, the delivery of a "*coup de grâce* to all the Jews scattered over the face of the earth," but Pinsker sighs, half in jest, "such destruction is neither possible nor desirable" (Pinsker 1979: 191). Actually, not quite *all the Jews*: Pinsker's repeated invocations of "surplus" Jews clearly referenced the Eastern European Jewish masses, who were so intent on crowding and discomfiting the rapidly professionalizing Jewish middle class. These "surplus" Jews, the "ghosts" of the original Jewish crowd that followed Moses out of the first exile in Egypt, could never regain their humanity – until, that

is, they were "reborn" as another people, living somewhere other than Europe, if not in the first Promised Land. The time to act was now, when these same masses were reduced to an abject post-traumatic "crisis" state, and thus prepared to flee from physical danger anywhere that Jewish leadership was prepared to secure. It is to this leadership that Pinsker directed his well-timed gospel:

> In the life of peoples, as in the life of individuals, there are important moments which do not often recur, and which, depending on whether they are utilized or not utilized, exercise a decisive influence upon the future of the people as upon that of the individual, whether for weal or for woe. We are now passing through such a moment. The consciousness of the people is awake.
>
> (Pinsker 1979: 195)

Something in the nature of a *pharmakon*, anti-semitism emerged in Zionist discourse as both the death of modern Jews and the ultimate source of Jewish emancipation anxiety as in, "if we don't do something about these *Ostjuden* the anti-semites will kill us all." But, taken in a timely fashion, anti-semitism is also the toxin that stirred the Jewish nation back into life.

Pinsker's adroit rhetorical construction of 1881–82 as a "decisive" moment which would determine the destiny of modern Jewry provided the immediate stimulus for national awakening. Consisting largely of Russian-Jewish intellectuals at home and abroad, Pinsker's readership began to mobilize in expectation of revolution. This meant, frequently, a life of richer emotional and intellectual pursuits than the uncertain middle-class rewards of family, status and money, not to mention a looming prospect of a long middle age. Prone to bouts of depression about their own displacement from Jewish society and a lack of either a satisfying faith in God or a clear sense of moral purpose, *fin de siècle* Jewish radicals in-the-making were themselves examples of Pinsker's Eastern European Jewish "surplus" – unattached, "rootless" (Heb. *telushim*) and "superfluous" men, who, like Marx' specter of communism (and much like Marx himself), haunted the dreams of nineteenth-century Europe. Victims of a distinctly personal kind of emancipation anxiety, culturally mobile but socially vulnerable, their future uncertain but their sense of individual entitlement prodigious, the new Jewish populists fully expected not only to be able to regenerate the Jewish masses, but also to be regenerated by them. For them, anti-semitism was an enabling violation, the trauma of which represented the moral price of a high-minded political vocation and a larger, ennobling life. By the flickering light of the *fin de siècle*, the authors of the Jewish renaissance transfigured violence against the *shtetl* into an *event* that signified the death of time and the make-believe of a beginning. Frankel's radical prophets of the Jewish Revolution staged their mutiny against history in moonlit "cities of slaughter."

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CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

CHRISTIANITY

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Vincent Lloyd

If the *fin-de-siècle* milieu was characterized by "contempt for traditional views of custom and morality," as Max Nordau (1895: 5) asserted in his defining polemic against the spirit of the age, one might expect *fin-de-siècle* Christianity to be moribund. Nietzsche, after all, had declared God, and particularly the Christian God, dead. Christians, Christian institutions, and Christian thinkers did, indeed, struggle with the challenges posed by the developments of the late nineteenth century: advances in natural and social science, radical political movements, and a sense of moral drift among the upper classes, among others. Orthodox and modernizing impulses made *fin-de-siècle* Christianity turbulent, characterized by fierce struggles and efforts to quell those struggles. This turbulence cannot simply be read as a sign of Christian decay (or secularization). Indeed, several of the quintessential artistic figures of the *fin de siècle* – among them Wilde, Huysmans, Gray, Beardsley, and Verlaine – turned to Christianity after exhausting secular decadence, escaping material reality now through spirituality rather than through aesthetics.

As a secular Jew, soon to become a leading Zionist, Nordau does not include secularism among his complaints against his degenerate contemporaries. Rather, he complains that they are bad Christians, picking and choosing aspects of the Christian tradition. This sometimes leads them to mysticism, a flight from reality bitterly condemned by the rationalist Nordau. Sometimes, as in Wagner's appropriation of redemption, Christian concepts are misused, and the work of art itself becomes an object of worship. Nordau (1895: 183) diagnoses in *fin-de-siècle* art "the persistence, in the midst of later doubts and denials, of early-acquired Christian views, operating as an ever-active leaven, singularly altering the whole mind, and at the same time themselves suffering manifold decomposition and deformation." This complex cultural landscape where "custom and morality" no longer align with Christianity, where opposition to those values sometimes takes an apparently Christian form, and where Christian ideas continue to pervade European culture, is captured by Holbrook Jackson, writing *The Eighteen Nineties* in 1913: "It was the old battle between heterodoxy and orthodoxy, materialist and mystic, Christian and Pagan, but fought from a great variety of positions" (13).

The struggle between materialist and mystic, as it were, was nothing new within Christianity. But the late nineteenth century saw particularly dramatic confrontations for both Roman Catholics and Protestants, both in the colony and in the metropole. A seeker like William James could mine spiritual autobiographies to limn religious experience and assess its value (his lectures on "The Varieties of Religious Experience" were delivered in 1901–2), but Christian theologians were required to work within the constraints of accepted church doctrine and shifting denominational stances. Yet theological method itself was put in question by secular developments of the period, among them James's observations. While theological battles may have only indirectly affected ordinary Christians, a spirit of piety touched many more, prompting devotion, social concern, or – as in the case of Conselheiro discussed below – faith unto death.

Earlier years had seen the evolving relationship between Christianity and modernity take place on the center stage of European high culture. By the end of the nineteenth century this evolution often took place less publicly, among Christian theologians. European high culture had secularized – it was there that God had died – and took an interest in Christianity as an antimodernist modernism, the result of the avant-garde pushing so far forward that it returned to the past.

CATHOLICISM

The final three decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twenti-eth century saw the consolidation of a theological outlook in the Catholic Church typically characterized as conservative, an outlook that was, in an important sense, literally medieval. Given the challenges of the modern world, Catholic leaders turned to scholastic philosophy, and particularly the thought of Thomas Aquinas (McCool 1989). It would become the only resource permitted by Rome. Dissent from this revival of scholasticism persisted, dissent that attempted to synthesize rather than separate modernity and Catholic orthodoxy. The errors of these dissent-ers, the "modernists," were condemned by Pope Pius X in 1907, and some were excommunicated (Reardon 1970). On the surface, then, the story of *fin-de-siècle* Catholicism is one of a backward-looking establishment suppressing progressives attuned to the spirit of the age. In reality, the story is more complicated, with the seemingly regressive Thomists laying the groundwork for the most innovative twen-tieth century theology.

The First Vatican Council, from 1869–70, affirmed the primacy of the pope and declared his infallibility; it also condemned pantheism, rationalism, and materialism. Among its conclusions: through human reason we can come to know that God exists and some of his characteristics. Revelation, i.e., the content of Scripture and tradition, offers humans the opportunity to receive additional knowledge of the divine; God is the author of Scripture. Faith is not a blind leap but can be approached through reason. Reason alone tends to fall into error, which faith corrects. The Council was brought to an abrupt halt as secular affairs intruded on the bishops' proceedings. War between France and Prussia resulted in the withdrawal of the French troops that had been protecting Rome and, quickly thereafter, Italian troops occupied Rome. Rome would become the capital of the new Italian nation, but the papacy would refuse to recognize Italian control. For nearly sixty years, no pope

would leave his compound in a show of resistance. Some have argued that the papacy's embattled political position resulted in a defensive stance toward modern culture and philosophy, a stance first made explicit at the First Vatican Council.

The relationship between reason and faith sketched at the Council paved the way for resurgent interest in the thought of Thomas Aquinas. The Council was careful to avoid intervening in ongoing philosophical and theological debates. For instance, it did not endorse any specific arguments for concluding that God exists, just the principle that such arguments do exist. However, a group of Catholic intellectuals, many of them Jesuit, were pushing Aquinas as offering the best account of the relationship between faith and knowledge – and the best answer to many other theological questions as well. The Jesuit-run journal *Civiltà Cattolica* championed Aquinas, and pockets of Thomist theologians had developed at universities and seminaries in Italy, Belgium, and Germany.

One of the centers of this Thomistic revival was Perugia, where Gioacchino Pecci was archbishop and his brother, Giuseppe, a former Jesuit and a theology professor, was a key collaborator. In 1878 Gioacchino Pecci would become Pope Leo XIII, and he would elevate his brother to the cardinalate. Leo appointed the leading Thomist Joseph Kleutgen to be a top administrator at Rome's Gregorian University. Kleutgen and the other leading Thomist of the era, Matteo Liberatore, an editor of *Civiltà Cattolica*, collaborated in drafting *Aeterni Patris*, an encyclical that Leo would issue declaring philosophy crucial for the Church, and declaring Aquinas the supreme philosopher. *Aeterni Patris* was framed as a continuity of the First Vatican Council's statements on faith and reason. Philosophy could not question revelation (Scripture or tradition), but rather served as the handmaiden to theology. Moreover, Christian philosophy was superior to secular philosophy because the faith of the Christian philosopher gave him intellectual virtues that aided in his philosophical endeavors. Aquinas was the superior philosopher, for "clearly distinguishing, as is fitting, reason from faith, while happily associating the one with the other, he both preserved the rights and had regard for the dignity of each; so much so, indeed, that reason borne on the wings of Thomas to its human height can scarcely rise higher, while faith could scarcely expect more or stronger aids from reason than those which she has already obtained through Thomas" (Vatican 1879). Before Aquinas, human learning had been scattered and fragmentary. Aquinas brought it together into a coherent system, attacking errors and exalting truth. *Aeterni Patris* noted the "plague of perverse opinions" in the contemporary world and pointed to increased dissemination of Aquinas's ideas as the best antidote.

The Aquinas who was commended by Leo XIII was Aquinas as interpreted by Joseph Kleutgen more than anyone else. A German Jesuit, Kleutgen's *Die Theologie der Vorzeit* (1853–60) and *Die Philosophie der Vorzeit* (1860–63) recovered the old times, *Vorzeit*, in implicit contrast with the defective new times of modernity, *Neuzeit* (in philosophical terms, the shift in eras was marked by Descartes). The Aquinas of the late nineteenth century constructed a universal, objective system on Aristotelian foundations, eschewing the subjectivism of Descartes and, more generally, modernity. Oddly, a revived interest in Aquinas was thought to be the same as a revived interest in medieval scholasticism in general. Distinctions were often blurred between, for example, the dramatically different views of Bonaventure and Aquinas, nor were distinctions made between Aquinas and later Thomists, such as

the influential but now much maligned sixteenth century Aquinas interpreter Cardinal Cajetan. In short, Thomism, the dominant strand of late nineteenth century Catholicism, paid little attention to the historical development of Christian doctrine, instead concerning itself with a timeless system of metaphysical truths.

Following *Aeterni Patris*, numerous schools and institutes were set up to advance the study of scholasticism, or Thomism, in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, France, and elsewhere. Existing philosophy faculties at Catholic universities were purged of holdouts, who were replaced with loyal Thomists. However, the new Thomists who joined these faculties, unlike Kleutgen and Liberatore, were often narrow and rigid thinkers, and often they were entirely unfamiliar with the modern philosophy they implicitly opposed. The focus was on exposition of the Thomistic system for students rather than on advancing that system through philosophical inquiry and argument. Relatively little attention was paid to Scripture and tradition, as the Thomistic system was supposed to have synthesized their essential philosophical elements.

Because of these limitations of the Thomistic revival, and because of the eagerness with which the Vatican promoted it as the only appropriate method for Catholic thought, opposition naturally arose. It grew in places where Thomism had never been particularly strong: England, the United States, and especially France. During the final two decades of the nineteenth century in France a series of anti-religious laws were enacted secularizing schools, limiting the roles of priests and nuns in hospitals, dissolving the Jesuit order, and otherwise interfering with Catholic Church functioning. These laws, enacted in part against the monarchist tendencies of right wing Catholics, together with the Dreyfus Affair, in which conservative Catholics took a very active part, polarized Catholics in France and motivated Catholic reflection on how Church teachings could be reconciled with modernity.

Catholic modernists were never a coherent group – some say the only coherence was provided in their condemnation – but they tended to share certain philosophical and theological views. They accepted the insights of Kant and post-Kantian philosophy: specifically, that concepts change over time and develop in the dynamic relation between subject and object. Further, concepts serve practical needs. For Thomists, concepts were timeless, forming a map in the mind of static reality. Modernists thus posed a sweeping challenge to Catholic orthodoxy. If concepts are always revisable, dogma could not reflect eternal truth. Natural theology – the ability to conclude that God exists based purely on human reason – was similarly threatened by the modernists' embrace of post-Kantian philosophy. For the modernists, religious truth was an inner experience not capable of being perfectly translated into concepts. Additionally, modernists were open to historical criticism of the Bible. In its condemnation of the modernists, the Church would prohibit such Biblical analysis. In a way, the modernists' interest in history reflected their philosophical convictions, which might be summarized as an emphasis on *becoming*, implicitly opposed to the scholastic emphasis on *being*.

The most famous of the modernists were Alfred Loisy (1857–1940) and George Tyrrell (1861–1909). Loisy was a talented Biblical scholar and a priest, until he was excommunicated in 1908. In his studies Loisy became skeptical that Scripture was entirely inspired by God (a belief that had been affirmed in the First Vatican Council), and he concluded that Scripture should be studied using secular historical methods before it is used in theology. Moreover, those parts of the Christian tradition that

contradicted the conclusions of modern science had to be abandoned. Despite a growing suspicion of nearly all Church teachings, Loisy recognized the historical importance and continuing relevance of the Church, particularly its moral vision, to which he remained devoted. He thus set about to reform it, urging that obsolete dogma be shed. Church dogmas were symbols representing theological realities, Loisy charged, but Catholics had forgotten this, attaching themselves so strongly to dogmas that the dogmas themselves were treated as theological realities. Loisy differed from Protestants, who would also discard much dogma, in that his vision of Christianity was fundamentally not individual but social. In the early Church, according to Loisy, relating to God happened collectively, as a community, and this had been forgotten by modern liberal Protestants. Loisy's Protestant targets included August Sabatier, whose famed *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion* was published in 1897, and the German Adolf von Harnack. Ironically, the towering text of Catholic modernism, Loisy's *The Gospel and the Church* (1902), was a refutation of Harnack, defending ritual and tradition against the latter's reduction of Christianity to the message of Jesus Christ. Loisy rejected Harnack's conclusions but not his historical method, which he applied even more zealously, with the result that he concluded there was no "essence" of Christianity at all, with the legitimacy of faith judged by the degree to which it served the needs of a particular community at a particular time.

The Irish George Tyrrell was a convert to Catholicism, and he began his theological career with vigorous enthusiasm for the Church. Received into the Jesuits after being trained in scholastic philosophy, Tyrrell grew frustrated by the rigid Thomism that was prevalent, a Thomism he judged to differ sharply from the thought of Aquinas himself. Tyrrell's modernist views were first formulated in an 1899 article, "The Relation of Theology to Devotion," that would become the core of his book, *Through Scylla and Charybdis* (1907). Tyrrell took as essential and normative the spiritual lives of ordinary Christians; it was to the experience of these lives that doctrine had to be held accountable. Rationalism was one tool of faith, but it was not one needed in the current cultural context. Reasoning about such mysteries as hell could be counter-productive, Tyrrell argued, and Catholics should be content with a "temperate agnosticism" on such matters. There was a pragmatic streak in Tyrrell's thought, echoing his contemporaries William James and C. S. Peirce. Statements of faith were to be judged according to their "religious value" – how they benefited the spiritual lives of believers (Tyrrell added that their historical facts were to be judged by historians). Tyrrell understood himself to be navigating between the "rock of tradition" and the "whirlpool of progress," extolling both the value of spiritual experience and the need to reflect on the history of doctrine imperfectly attempting to codify that experience – and so Tyrrell, too, carefully distinguished himself from liberal Protestants.

Tyrrell, Loisy, and others were connected with a wider network of Catholic modernists in France, England, and beyond that flourished at the *fin de siècle*, catalyzed by the expert networking of the wealthy amateur Austrian theologian Baron Friedrich von Hügel (1852–1925). Catholic modernism came to a decisive end in 1907 when it could no longer be called Catholic. In *Lamentabili sane exitu* and *Pascendi dominici gregis*, Pope Pius X described the doctrines of the modernists as though they were a coherent system, and he dramatically condemned them. Modernism entailed agnosticism and immanentism, it substituted personal experience for the authority of

Scripture and tradition, it supported the separation of church and state (opposed by the First Vatican Council), and it subjected faith to the authority of science, the pope accused. Pius X colorfully elaborated in *Pascendi*: "Blind that they are, and leaders of the blind, inflated with a boastful science, they have reached that pitch of folly where they pervert the eternal concept of truth and the true nature of the religious sentiment; with that new system of theirs they are seen to be under the sway of a blind and unchecked passion for novelty, thinking not at all of finding some solid foundation of truth, but despising the holy and apostolic traditions" (Vatican 1907). Modernists were to be removed from teaching positions, their books banned, and local committees established to search out and report lurking modernists. In 1910 Pius X further required priests and theologians to take an antimodernist oath.

Standing apart from the other modernists was the philosopher Maurice Blondel (1861–1949). Blondel studied under Léon Ollé-Laprune (1839–98), a Catholic philosopher at École Normale Supérieure who opposed Cartesian and Kantian thought but did so by developing an account of the human will as irreducible to conceptual schemes. Embrace of religious truth, for Ollé-Laprune, involved something deeper than intellectual agreement; it involved assent shown through living in a certain way. In his 1893 book *Action*, Blondel developed these insights. Our inner lives are always incomplete, and we strive for external objects in an attempt to make them complete. These objects are never fulfilling, and from this we can conclude that our inner longing is really for the transcendent. The specific form of this transcendent is accessible only through revelation; humans are open to revelation because of their built-in desire for the transcendent. On questions of theology Blondel was not a radical. Although his 1896 *Letter on Apologetics* raised serious questions about the philosophical soundness of the Thomist revival, his 1903 *History and Dogma* struck a more moderate note. Blondel rejected both the privileging of historical science over Christian teachings and the privileging of Christian teachings over historical science. The middle path Blondel labelled tradition, a mixture of a community's reasoning, collective life, and shared history – all, in the case of Catholicism, under the authority of the Bishop of Rome. Perhaps this stance explains why Blondel avoided condemnation with the other modernists in *Pascendi*. Blondel's account of tradition would later be picked up in the revival of Catholic thought in France in the mid-twentieth century. Through such figures as Yves Congar and Henri de Lubac, Blondel would have an important impact on the Second Vatican Council and the shaping of contemporary Catholicism.

PROTESTANTISM

Protestants, like Catholics, struggled to hold together the changes brought with modernity and their faith. Unlike Catholics, for Protestants this faith was focused on the Bible, not on tradition. Acknowledging the historical development of Christianity came more naturally to Protestants: it was, after all, one of the essential points motivating the Reformation. Moreover, the centrality of the individual's relationship to God, also definitive of Protestantism from its earliest days, aligns with the late nineteenth century interest in individual experience, particularly mystical experience. Yet these two points of alignment between Protestantism and *fin-de-siècle* culture, historicism, and subjectivism also threaten the very essence of Protestant Christianity.

Subjective religious experience leaves little room for specifically Christian content, and historicizing Christian tradition quickly leads to historicizing the Bible, too (Livingston 2006; Welch 1985).

The great Protestant theologian of the late nineteenth century was Albrecht Ritschl (1822–89). By the century's final decade, his thought dominated the German theological academy. The preeminence of this academy attracted many foreign students, and Ritschl's thought would frame discussions of theological liberalism in the United States well into the twentieth century. Indeed, Ritschl and his successors were so successful at determining the theological mainstream that the specifics of their claims can seem anodyne. They battled three groups of opponents. First, there were those who, like Hegel, would subordinate theology to philosophy, analyzing God as a subfield of metaphysics. In contrast, the Ritschlians, influenced by neo-Kantianism, emphasized that Christianity was concerned with the realm of value. These values were relevant for daily life, a relevance not appreciated by metaphysicians. Further, as addressing questions of value, Christianity did not necessarily conflict with science, which was concerned with the realm of fact. The Ritschlians' second group of opponents were followers of Friedrich Schleiermacher, the towering figure of theology a century earlier. For Schleiermacher, there was continuity between the human being and the natural world; for Ritschl, the human person uniquely had access to the realm of value, and was of value, insulating the human person from scientific reductionism. Moreover, Schleiermacher took religious feeling as the core of Christianity; Ritschl viewed feeling as aestheticizing, amoral, and not specifically Christian. (Ritschl diagnosed a similar problem in mysticism.) Instead, Ritschl put the New Testament account of Christ at the core of his theology. The third opponents battled by Ritschlians were those dogmatic theologians, particularly Lutherans, who used legal concepts as models to understand forgiveness, atonement, and divine justice. Ritschl preferred understanding these crucial theological notions in terms of ethical inwardness, commending actions motivated by love and aimed at building the Kingdom of God.

For Ritschl, then, God was not to be known in Himself, but through history and through faith. These modes of knowing God were linked: Biblical history could only be approached from the perspective of the faith it produced in Christians, and the faith of Christians had to be held in light of historical evidence. Ritschl thus provided a way of integrating the Biblical criticism that was flourishing in the late nineteenth century into systematic theology. German research into Biblical composition flourished in the wake of the uproar caused by David Friedrich Strauss's *The Life of Jesus* (1835), becoming professionalized and "scientific." Julius Wellhausen published his *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* in 1878 (translated into English in 1885), synthesizing scholarship about the composition of the Hebrew Bible out of four independent sources well after the time of Moses; Heinrich Holtzmann's *Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament* (1889–91) exemplifies similar New Testament criticism. The distance was growing between such scholarship and the abstract propositions about God affirmed by metaphysically oriented theologians. The historical Jesus was separating from the theological Christ. Ritschl, and particularly his follower Wilhelm Herrmann, attempted to hold them together, shifting attention from abstract questions about the nature of God and Christ to questions about their effects in the world, from Biblical times to the present. Christianity

should be approached from the realm of value, and it was the value of Biblical events for communities, and for the believer, that mattered, and that had to inform the conclusions drawn from Biblical scholarship. Christianity should not be dismissed as merely mythical, they argued, because it had continuing normative significance. Value-laden history was necessary but not sufficient for faith. Faith was the personal experience of the believer for whom the historical facts of Christianity became a necessary and essential part of life – faith was self-authenticating.

For Adolf von Harnack, the most prominent Protestant theologian at the turn of the century and a follower of Ritschl, Christianity was fundamentally about the teaching and person of Jesus Christ. Church structures and doctrines were secondary. Controversially, Harnack deemphasized the metaphysical questions raised by the status of Christ as God, and he refused to insist on Christ's uniqueness. For Christians, as Harnack described in his influential set of lectures published as *What is Christianity?* (1900), it was also essential to understand the Gospel as it unfolded in history and was lived in the present. *What is Christianity?* considered the history and implications of the Christian message, positioning its conclusions as emphatically moderate. Jesus "was no political revolutionary" and had "no political program." He commended love and the promotion of justice, but not unreasonably. In short, Harnack offered a liberal Protestantism that perfectly matched the sensibilities of the German bourgeoisie. The book was so popular that, on its release, the Leipzig train station was clogged by freight cars shipping it. Harnack would go on to positions of political influence; he penned his friend Kaiser Wilhelm's speech announcing the start of the First World War.

A strand of liberal Protestantism committed to social reform, and politicizing the Gospel, also emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. What would come to be known as the Social Gospel movement in the United States echoed Harnack's stress on devotion focused on the person of Jesus Christ (Dorrien 2001). Unlike Harnack, Christian social reformers saw Jesus and his followers anticipating that the Kingdom of God would come soon, and this prompted action. This strand of Christianity focused on Christ but reconciled Christian teachings with the contemporary world, so developments in the natural and social sciences could be utilized for religious ends without apprehension. In 1897 the American Baptist Shailer Mathews published *The Social Teachings of Jesus*, aligning the era's faith in progress with early Christians' faith in the coming of the Kingdom. The most influential proponent of the Social Gospel in the United States was Walter Rauschenbusch, another Baptist, who had experienced the dark side of modernization as a minister in New York City from 1886–92. This fueled his commitment to Christian social reform and Christian socialism, and he asserted that individual salvation and social salvation were inextricable. Ritschl had distinguished eternal life and the Kingdom of God as the goals of the individual and of humanity, respectively. Rauschenbusch would put creating the Kingdom of God, a new and just community on earth, at the center of Christianity, as the goal for both the individual and the collective. During the 1890s he wrote a number of articles on related topics, and he labored on a book while travelling in Germany. When it was finally published in 1907, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* would attract wide attention and catalyze a social movement.

More generally, Christianity in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century was embroiled in conflict between conservatives and liberals. The once

dominant Princeton school of theology, led by Charles Hodge of the Presbyterian Princeton Theological Seminary and carried on after his death by his son Archibald Alexander Hodge and Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, was committed to Biblical inerrancy, systematic explication of doctrine, and combatting subjectivism. The elder Hodge remarked proudly that Princeton was home to no new ideas during his fifty-year tenure there. The younger Hodge and Warfield published "Inspiration" in 1881, an influential article that defended the Bible's internal consistency, its conformity with philosophy, science, and history, and its status as the word of God, explicitly addressing and rebutting recent advances in Biblical criticism. Warfield went on to publish numerous essays and reviews attacking the Ritschlians, charging that they compromised Christian teachings to make them fit a modern mindset when in fact it was the assumptions of modernity that should be challenged by Christianity.

These American conservatives faced a challenge not only from German liberal theologians but also from homegrown liberals, notably the group of Andover-based theologians who would collect their writings in *Progressive Orthodoxy*, published in 1892. These advocates of what was sometimes called the New Theology adamantly affirmed their commitment to Christian tradition but equally adamantly argued that faith and progress went together. They reinterpreted central Christian doctrines – including the Incarnation, Atonement, Trinity, and Scripture – in a spirit of moderation, steering clear of dogmatism but also respectful of tradition. Among their more novel suggestions was that eternal salvation might be decided during a period of "future probation" after death. This was all too much for the leaders of Andover Seminary, which attempted to dismiss faculty members involved in the movement (the dismissals were ultimately overturned by the Massachusetts Supreme Court). The final two decades of the century saw the rapid spread of liberal theology in the US, prompting even more resistance from conservatives. The most notorious public conflict was the heresy trial of Charles Briggs, a professor of Biblical Theology at Union Theological Seminary, which had rapidly become a liberal bastion. Briggs had embraced the new methods of Biblical criticism, refusing to subordinate the study of history to the study of theology and refusing to affirm Biblical inerrancy. The Presbyterian Church appointed a Prosecuting Committee that juxtaposed passages from Briggs' writings with passages from the Bible and the Westminster Confession to prove heresy – precisely the method against which Briggs had devoted his career. The trial, lasting from 1891 to 1893, attracted broad public interest and ultimately resulted in the theologian's excommunication.

These theological and institutional contests in American Protestantism stand in contrast to the revivalism that swept the country a few years before. The 1870s saw Dwight Moody drawing crowds in the thousands, sometimes tens of thousands, as he travelled the United States, England, and Scotland. Moody and other revivalists were light on theology, heavy on sentiment and anecdote. The Bible and Christian values were defended while social action was marginalized, but the specifics of doctrine were sidestepped as revivalists attempted to attract an audience that crossed denominational lines. By the final two decades of the century, also the final two decades of his life, Moody was immersed in educational pursuits, founding the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago as well as two secondary schools near his family home in Northfield, Massachusetts.

Among those whose lives were affected by Moody was the Scotsman Henry Drummond (1851–97). As a young man, Drummond travelled with Moody in England and Scotland, assisting with revival follow-up work. Drummond would go on to a career as a scientist and amateur theologian. His first book, the hugely popular *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* (1884), argued that the natural and spiritual worlds followed the same laws, to which humans had access. As a consequence, science and religion were not in competition; they were in a sense about the same thing. Drummond sought to bring more certainty to questions of faith. For example, Drummond begins his chapter on eternal life by juxtaposing quotations from Herbert Spencer and Jesus Christ, then asserting, "One of the most startling achievements of recent science is a definition of Eternal Life" and developing an account of "the scientific aspects of communion with God" (203; 244). In a later work, *The Ascent of Man* (1894), Drummond argued that the struggle for the life of others – in scientific terms, reproduction – advanced over the struggle for life of self – in scientific terms, nutrition – and, in doing so, entailed the advancement of the Kingdom of God. While Drummond represents evangelical accommodation of science and religion, the American Lyman Abbott represents liberal accommodation. Abbott similarly identified scientific and spiritual laws, but in doing so rejected some aspects of Christian doctrine, such as the Fall, which he found incompatible with an evolutionary view of progress. Even the conservatives of Princeton were open to integrating scientific discoveries into their theology, confident as they were that everything in the Bible was a scientific truth, even if it was not all expressed in modern scientific terms.

Outside of the United States and Europe, the confrontation between modernity and Christian orthodoxy at the end of the nineteenth century was complicated by the struggle between missionary and indigenous forms of Christianity. The latter were taking new configurations, theologically and institutionally, throughout Asia, Latin America, and Africa (Koschorke *et al.*, 2007). Indeed, this was the definitive feature of global Christianities at the *fin de siècle*. In India, efforts to establish an indigenous-led ecclesiastical body that crossed (Protestant) denominational boundaries resulted in the establishment, in 1886, of the Indian National Church. The founders worried that "Christianity has in India been molded too much after European pattern, and Missionaries have been a little over-anxious to perpetuate their own Church peculiarities." The Church explicitly linked itself with the growing Indian nationalist movement, and it saw itself as doing important ideological work to prepare for independence. Under the umbrella of "Ethiopianism," a variety of indigenous churches developed in south and west Africa. Intellectually fueled by the pan-African religious prodding of Edward Blyden, particularly his *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* (1887), Africans who had been affiliated with missionary churches increasingly set out on their own. For example, the Nigerian Mojola Agbebi (born David Brown Vincent) worked for Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists, and Baptists before founding a series of indigenous-led churches, starting in 1888. In an 1889 sermon delivered in Lagos, Agbebi proclaimed that "to render Christianity indigenous to Africa it must be watered by native hands, pruned with the native hatchet, and tended with native earth." This spirit was reflected, too, in the post-Reconstruction US South: the first major African American Baptist denomination structure, the American National Baptist Convention, was formed in 1886, and the

most significant African American Pentecostal denomination, the Church of God in Christ, was founded in 1897.

The most dramatic, and bloody, of these confrontations between colonial and indigenous Christianity occurred in Brazil in 1893. Antônio Vicente Mendes Maciel (1830–97), a lay Catholic, travelled and preached in rural areas of the country where he was soon treated as a prophet, and where he began to be called Conselheiro (Counselor). Against the modernizing Republic established in 1889, Conselheiro preached allegiance to an older, more Catholic Brazil, and he dismissed modernization as Satanic, and the Republican government as the anti-Christ. Conselheiro's followers were attracted by his piety and apparent Catholic orthodoxy (in fact mixed with native and African beliefs) that complemented his commitment to the Brazilian nation. Followers gathered around him in northeastern Brazil, where they established the messianic community of Canudos. By 1897 a variety of disenfranchised Brazilians, including many recently emancipated former slaves, would populate Canudos, totaling some 30,000. In that year, the Republican government of Brazil would attack, destroying the community and killing its inhabitants. The events surrounding Canudos form the basis of the most revered work of Brazilian literature, Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões* (1902).

DECADENT CHRISTIANITY

It might seem as though the debates among Catholic modernists or Ritschlians are at a great distance from mainstream *fin-de-siècle* culture, epitomized by decadent literature. Indeed, neo-Kantian-influenced theology, unlike earlier Hegelian-influenced theology, more easily disentangled theology from the rest of the intellectual landscape; in the Catholic world, the embattled Vatican's claims to cultural supremacy were so great that they were naturally often ignored. In an era when the ideology of progress was reaching its limits, its ideologues searching for something more new than novelty, the image of a Christian past, particularly Catholic and particularly medieval, offered a powerful temptation (Hanson 1997). More than just a nostalgic fantasy, the pursuit of Beauty above all else expressed in and through *fin-de-siècle* literature deeply resonated with the pursuit of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful at the core of Christianity. Moreover, the notion that a human being was able to participate in the Good, the True, and the Beautiful perfectly and so be both human and divine, and that imitation of this person, Jesus Christ, was the primary ethical message of Christianity, was richly suggestive of the lifestyle of the aesthete. A troubled attitude toward human sexual desire, mixing obsession and abstention, was found both in the lives and works of the period's authors and in the Christian tradition. As a result of both these parallels and the fantasy image of the medieval Catholic, a significant number of decadent writers, from varied backgrounds, flirted with conversion to Catholicism or actually converted.

Of the decadent converts to Catholicism, Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848–1907) was among the most enthusiastic and devout. He had penned the acclaimed decadent novel, *À Rebours*, in 1884; by 1910 he was one of the only modern writers granted an entry in the Catholic Encyclopedia. There, his decadent writings are acknowledged in passing: "His first books, which must be mentioned here, belonged to the most realistic school of literature and professed to show all that is most base and

vile in humanity" – and are mentioned again in the article's dramatic final sentence concerning the blindness of his final years: "In his piety he believed that these eyes, with which he had seen so many beautiful things and through which he had received so much pleasure, were taken from him by way of enforcing penitence" (Delamarre 1910). Huysmans began his career as a government bureaucrat, and it was in this quintessentially modern vocation that he wrote prose exploring aestheticism unmoored by reason. His writing is an exact record of beautiful things, and of the incapacity of the world to contain them. Most famously, *À Rebours* depicts a turtle whose shell is so ornamented with jewels that it cannot move, and dies. The protagonist, who owns the turtle, has retreated from worldly life to a country home filled with exquisite tastes, colors, smells, and sights.

In 1895 Huysmans was accepted into the Roman Catholic Church. He not only converted, he joined the Benedictine order as a lay member, living near a monastery. After his conversion, Huysmans put his literary talents in service to the Church. He fictionalized his conversion in four novels, *Là-Bas* (1891), *En Route* (1895), *La Cathédrale* (1898), and *L'Oblat* (1903). The first of these books is an extended meditation on Satanism, perhaps marking Huysmans' conclusion that the pleasures of the material world are mere idols. Durtal, the narrator and Huysmans' alter ego, announces that now he will seek "to attain the beyond and the hereafter, to create, in a word, a spiritualistic naturalism." The third of these books, *La Cathédrale*, sold the best despite its inaccessible style – lengthy passages of introspection mixed with detailed discussions of the medieval cathedral at Chartres. Against the background of the French government's dissolution of the Benedictine order, *L'Oblat* presents a moving portrait of the Benedictines as offering the best worldly way to reconcile an aesthetic sensibility with a spiritual calling.

Perhaps the most surprising of the decadent Catholic converts was Oscar Wilde. But, in a sense, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) is a tale of transcendence sought in a duplicitous world. The pure form of beauty that the young Dorian represents, and the desire it provokes, contrasts sharply with the worldly, hollow beauty of Sibyl Vane, who provokes this-worldly desire that is ultimately fleeting, and disastrous. When he meets Sibyl Dorian has not as yet fully learned the lessons of Lord Henry Wotton, the devotee of world-transcending beauty. The sharp wit of Lord Henry, later channeled by Dorian, can be read as a refusal of the wisdom of the world, a persistent critique of worldly truths. No higher truths are posited in their place – the witticisms simply call conventional wisdom about what is right and good into question – except truth as performed, as lived in life devoted to beauty. In this is the promise of eternal life, the life of the eternally young Dorian. But eternal life is only obtainable if worldly moralizing can be overcome, and for Dorian it cannot be. His guilt leads him to destroy the other-worldly beauty of his picture, and so to lose the possibility of immortality. Lord Henry, despite his desire for the beautiful and despite his ideology-critical badinage, never has the opportunity to achieve eternal life for in practice he lives a quite conventional life. As Basil Hallward remarks of him near the start of the novel, "You never say a moral thing, and you never do a wrong thing. Your cynicism is simply a pose" (Wilde 1904: 6). In the novel, Wilde dramatizes fragments of secularized Christianity, the desire for beauty in tension with the hold of morality. It is a tension he saw in the lives of his contemporaries: the poet John Gray, Wilde's sometime lover and perhaps the

inspiration for Dorian Gray, would convert to Catholicism in 1890 and join the priesthood in 1901.

In prison, Wilde reflected more deeply on the relationship of his literary work, and his life, to Christianity. These reflections form the center of *De Profundis*, his long letter to the fickle lover who Wilde perceives used and betrayed him. Wilde portrays himself as loving his lover with *agape*, committed and caring regardless of how outrageous his lover's behavior was. After detailing their trying relationship, Wilde abruptly shifts to a reflection on Christ, describing the "intimate and immediate connection between the true life of Christ and the true life of the artist" (Wilde 1999: 69). What these lives share is a commitment to development of the personality toward perfection. This commitment transcends morality and metaphysics; it requires more than anything imagination. Christ made of his life a poem, according to Wilde, both fulfilling and transforming the expectations for a messiah. Christ's personality was contagious, eliciting beauty in those he encountered, as recorded in the New Testament parables. For Wilde, the Kingdom of God is the human soul. Despite his Catholic leanings, and eventual conversion, he had little interest in the social message of Christianity. Even Christ's imperative to forgive and love one's enemies is translated, by Wilde, into a teaching on how to improve oneself. Neither did Wilde have any patience for the history of Christianity, with the exception of St. Francis of Assisi. At the end of the day, it was the resonance, across history, between the contemporary human being and the person of Jesus Christ that mattered to Wilde. He had spent his whole adult life, from his days as a student of the philo-Catholic Walter Pater at Oxford, contemplating conversion to the Roman Catholic Church (although born in Dublin, Wilde's family was Anglican). In 1900, on his deathbed, he finally converted.

One of the monuments of Christian history for which Oscar Wilde did have words of praise was Chartres cathedral. It was this cathedral, too, that would also inspire a long book, *Mont Saint-Michel and Chartres* (1904), by the American Henry Adams (1838–1918). While Adams is not often classed with the decadents, he was part of a strand of antimodernism that flourished in the United States at the *fin de siècle* (Lears 1981). Like the French and English decadents, these antimodernists were fascinated by Roman Catholicism, and particularly by medieval Catholicism. With the decline of revivalism and lessened talk about Satan and sin, cultural commentators worried that the United States had lost its moral compass, and they longed for its restoration. While relatively few converted to Catholicism, a greater number joined Anglo-Catholic churches with elaborate rituals, or collected medieval art and objects. Colleges and boarding schools commissioned Gothic buildings, there was a rapid growth of interest in genealogy, and magazines glamorized all things medieval. This was the atmosphere in which Henry Adams, grandson of John Quincy Adams and great-grandson of John Adams, historian, memoirist, novelist, and socialite, would write his most significant books. Like Wilde, Adams was fascinated by Catholicism but also deeply ambivalent.

Three years before *Mont Saint-Michel and Chartres*, Adams penned a poem entitled "Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres." The first person voice petitions Mary for help in seeing, knowing, and feeling rightly – and, finally, for "The strength, the knowledge and the thought of God, –/The futile folly of the Infinite!" (Adams 1920: 134). Adams opposes the rationalism and scientism of the era to a faith that is at once intuitive and linked to the Christian, and specifically Catholic, tradition. "I feel

the energy of faith," he writes to the Virgin, "Not in the future science, but in you!" (131) Although ostensibly written as a travelogue for his nieces, *Mont Saint-Michel and Chartres* offers Adams' ambivalently nostalgic description of Christian aesthetics as an antidote for the antinomies of modernity. In Chartres he found a powerful sense of unity, both of the structure and of the structure's aesthetics together with the values of its culture. The medieval Christianity that Adams found at Chartres did not involve debates about the best arguments for God's existence. Rather, he asserts, "if [God] is to be known at all, He must be known by contact of spirit with spirit, essence with essence; directly; by emotion; by absorption of our existence in His; by substitution of His spirit for ours" (cited Lears 1981: 283). While this focus on spiritual life as normative seemed to resonate with Catholic modernists, Adams speaks from outside the Church, and his views can be quite idiosyncratic. For example, Adams' devotion to the Virgin Mary is so strong that at times he seems to locate her as theologically superior to God. This perhaps hints at a deeper tension between aestheticism and the Christianity aesthetes so admired, for contemporary Christian theologians were struggling over the norms of Christian faith just as aesthetes were embracing a Christianity of beauty without norms.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

ISLAM

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Marwa Elshakry

We often think of the *fin de siècle* as an era of lush decadence and modernist angst – a gilded world of plush excess, interiority, and the thwarted illusions of a retreat into aestheticism. Yet we should not forget that for some it was also a time of intense optimism, and that the sub-theme of decadence and degeneration itself was one that also facilitated novel discourses of rise or revival. In fact, one could even argue that the two – the anticipated future and the feared apocalypse – were necessarily linked. One can catch sight of this, for instance, in the optimism generated by some of the new technologies of the era, from the telephone, telegraph and cinematograph to the automobile and steamship, where the fantastic futurism they inspired offered a prominent counterpoint to the looming sense of a dystopic technological modernity.

This polarity, vacillating between an inevitable decline and a promised future, reverberated across the globe in the wake of the new imperialism. After all, the *fin de siècle* was also the era in which European empires were expanding rapidly, particularly through the so-called "scramble for Africa," and carving up the world in its wake. These events contributed to the formulation of a new sense of European civilizational and racial superiority, and just as critically to the identification of so many fallen "civilizations" elsewhere. In particular, the language of decline and fall was crucial for what one historian has recently characterized as the "invention of world religions" (Masuzawa 2005).

Take the late nineteenth-century depiction of Islam. The vastly transformed European empires that emerged at this time were, more than ever, empires ruling over Muslims. Indeed Europeans now found themselves collectively governing the majority of the world's Muslims: at its height, the British Empire ruled over the largest number, followed by the Dutch, French and Russian. The Ottoman Empire came in at a distant fifth. Unsurprisingly, contemporary Muslim discourses spoke at once to the anxiety of an encroaching Europe, and to the hubris of its newly acquired historicist, civilizational and racial claims, even as they resuscitated and transformed older discourses of reform and revival. It was no accident that this was the era in which a new generation of Muslim "reformers" was born. Helped along by the press, the classroom and the courthouse, these thinkers emerged in an utterly changed institutional landscape.

This chapter attempts to sketch out, via the example of some key thinkers of the age, the main features of what was in fact a highly variegated *fin-de-siècle* discourse on Islam. The subject is of course vast and no single scholar can easily hope to encompass the full extent of thinking on this topic by Muslims even within this relatively short time frame. Although this article makes reference to other works in the literature, it will focus on a number of key figures who wrote in both major European languages and Arabic in the late nineteenth century. Exploring the intellectual interconnectivities between colonizers and colonized, and the multiple refractions these created, it looks to both contemporary European and imperial ideas, on the one hand, and various Muslim or vernacular regional conceptions and practices, on the other. It also explores the *fin-de-siècle* discourse on Islam alongside the rise of professional disciplines, particularly Orientalism and religious studies, and then shows in some detail how these commentators on Islam deployed and responded to Western efforts to define a putative "Islamic civilization," embracing (and at times reversing) the concept for their own reasons and purposes. European imperialism and professional Orientalism were rapidly expanding at this time, often in tandem, as territorial conquest brought with it the demand for new knowledge and expertise. The idea in particular that there was – or had been – an identifiable "Islamic civilization" played a critical role in shaping Europe's changing sense of itself on a world scale. But it also transformed how Arabs and other Muslims conceived of themselves and their past. Through a process of historicization the notion of a Muslim ecumene was reconceptualized in the four decades between 1880 and the end of the First World War that saw Western imperialism at its zenith.

Islam was critically reimagined in western Europe during the *fin de siècle* through both European imperialism and professional Orientalism. In particular, it played a critical role in shaping Europe's changing sense of itself on a world scale. Hence it was folded both into the search for the origins of the true "universal religion" and into the new fascination with the historical progress (or retrogression) of "civilizations."

The term "civilization" had become more and more widely diffused since the end of the eighteenth century, but it was not until the first third of the nineteenth century that it gained real force with the flowering of European liberal thought (Benveniste 1971; Bowden 2009; Febvre 1973; Starobinski 1993). Among the first to bring these various threads together was the French statesman and historian François Guizot. His 1828 *A History of Civilization in Europe* was essentially an elaboration on the theme of Europe's place at the summit of world history, a history that was told as a story of material and moral progress over other "savage" and "barbarous" peoples. Guizot's text was popular outside as well as within Europe, and it was frequently cited in the Arabic, Turkish and Farsi press (e.g. Kohn 2009). His ideas – together with those of J. S. Mill and others – were circulating in the Arabic press just as the notion of an "Islamic civilization" was gaining ground among Muslim thinkers. Sometime between the 1830s and 1880s, we can begin to chart the rise of a new fascination with *al-hadara al-islamiya* or *medeniyet-i Islamiye*, or "Islamic civilization" (e.g. Tahtawi 2004; Aydin 2007).

That is not to say that the notion of civilization (as either *hadara* or *madaniya*) had not existed before. Indeed, Ibn Khaldun's fourteenth-century *Muqaddima* (or

Introduction) to his three-volume historico-geography of the Arabs and the *barabra* (which we can render as Berbers or barbarians) repeatedly makes reference to this idea. Yet, in Ibn Khaldun's work, it meant something quite different: there were references to the rise and fall of specific "civilizations," meaning *civitas* or urban polities in particular; but there was no single, ecumenical Muslim "civilization." In the fourteenth century, the notion of a Muslim ecumene was already covered by the term *umma*, the community or commonwealth of people, in this case tied together over time and place by the bonds of a common religious faith. Of course, the notion of a Muslim *umma* would itself be reformulated in the course of the long nineteenth century, and under pressure from European imperial and socio-institutional encroachment, it would get refashioned at the century's end under the rubric later scholars would signal through talk of "pan-Islamism."

The late nineteenth-century view of Islam as a civilization – whether treated in European or Muslim hands – was drawn from an eclectic set of sources and discursive traditions, which we can neither reduce to an insular genealogical purity nor to mere mimicry. They included early historical geographies like Ibn Khaldun's, whose fashionable revival among European audiences at precisely this time – note the appearance of abridged versions of his works in English and French through the nineteenth century – reinforced his growing popularity among Muslim readers. But others too spoke to these ideas, many of whom were less known such as Abu al-Hasan al-Mas'udi (d. 956) or Muhammad Ibn Iyas (d. 1524). With the rise of professional Orientalism, and the "recovery" of Muslim texts in that context, as well as with the rapid and widespread print publication of older texts, the tracing of a Muslim discursive tradition in the nineteenth century is no simple matter. The revival of interest in Ibn Rushd, for instance – which was as bound up with the works of Ernest Renan on Averroës as it was with the long-standing corpus of writings inspired by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali – forms a good example of how classical texts were both reappropriated and reformulated in this era (Kugekgen 1996). Guizot himself was not the only influential nineteenth-century liberal thinker to be discussed outside Europe – others included J. S. Mill, Herbert Spencer and, for Arabic readers perhaps above all, Gustave Le Bon, whose 1884 *La Civilisation des Arabes* in translation provided a popular source.

As ideas moved to and fro between Arabic and European languages, the works that contained or generated them were critically transformed. Partly this was a question of translation. Le Bon's own highly racialist terminology and conception of history, for instance, was often elided in Arabic discussions where the older term "*umma*" was typically used in place of the original "race" when speaking of the "Arab" or "Semitic" peoples. The general reference to a peoples or community would have been understood, even as it overrode its common religious valence; operating this way in translation, it lacked the hierarchical connotations of the original (Selim 2009).

But these critical conceptual tensions at the intersection of talk of civilization, race and religion also reflected disciplinary ambivalences. Ernest Renan (one of the key originators of the idea of Semitism itself) put it this way in 1883 while speaking of the confusing interrelation of these categories in reference to France: "We French, for instance, are Roman by language, Greek by civilization and Jewish by religion" (Renan 1896, 84). Ideas of civilization were critically bound up with

those of "religion": philology, history and anthropology competed to clarify the connections. Indeed we can scarcely understand the *fin-de-siècle* reconceptualization of Islam without thinking of the emerging human sciences of the time, from the new racial and "religious sciences" to the growing institutionalization of Oriental and philological studies. Just as the *fin de siècle* gave birth to the notion of an "Aryan Buddhism" among Orientalists – seen as a universal and philosophically deist religion born of the genius of the Aryan race, and hence far removed from the corrupt ethnic "nationalism" of Brahmanism – so too Christianity was similarly reconceptualized against its confrère monotheistic faiths, Judaism and Islam.

Renan himself was the first to redefine this relation. For Renan, as for many others of the time, prophecy was the true universal root of Christianity, one which had been abdicated in the narrative of Babylonian captivity after the kingdom of David. Islam, long seen as the nemesis of European Christendom, was in contrast regarded by him as a mere ragbag of Jewish and Christian influences, collected and fashioned by Muhammad for his fellow Arabs – themselves the quintessential expression of Semitic tribalism and fanaticism. This was a common theme in European discussions of Islam. From this perspective, Islam remained among the more uneasily classed "world religions," its universality challenged or mitigated by this negation of the (largely self-conceived) European claim to universalism through references to dogmatic tribalism and irrational particularism (Masuzawa 2005, 179–206). Precisely how, or even whether, Islam contributed to this universal march of progress was not clear.

Such was the background to the exchange that took place in 1883 between Renan and perhaps his best-known Muslim interlocutor, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani. Suffused with civilizational terminology, Renan's Sorbonne lecture of that year on "Islamism and Science" begins by painting a picture of the quintessential "Mussulman" as full of "stupid pride in the possession of what he believes to be the absolute truth." This above all renders him completely disdainful of "everything that constitutes the European spirit." For evidence of this, Renan pointed to the current "decadence" of Muslim nations. In response to arguments that this was nothing but a "transitory phase" of decline, he noted how, "to reassure themselves for the future, they make appeal to the past. This Mohammedan civilization, now so debased, was once very brilliant. It had men of science and philosophers. It was for centuries the mistress of the Christian West. Why should that which has been, not be once more?" To all this, Renan had a grim reply: the medieval Islamic renaissance of science and philosophy had little to do with Islam, rather it was part of the historic and fortuitous union of both a Persian and Greek inheritance from the eighth to thirteenth centuries. He argued that in fact science and philosophy had been crushed under the first century of Islam, through the early brutality of its religious wars and conquests, and then under the heavy yoke of the Umayyads. Yet he also admitted that a new spirit of rationalism had nevertheless been revived under the 'Abbasids. To explain this he claimed the latter dynasty was the heir of "the most brilliant civilizations that the East has ever known, that of the Persian Sassanidae." Through their Persian, and therefore Aryan, inheritance, and through their Christian and Parsi translators in particular, the 'Abbasids' "brilliant caliphs" – men like Mansur, Harun al-Rashid and Ma'mun, who "can scarcely be called Mussulmans" – helped revive Greek rationalism and free thought. Renan thus classed this era of "Muslim" philosophy

and speculative theology as "Graeco-Sassanian" in fact (and at one point he even classes Mu'atazalism as Protestantism). Once this "golden age" was destroyed by the "stupid barbarity" of the Turks and Berbers, the seeds of Islam's own advance and its brief commitment to liberty of thought withered. In the thirteenth century, the torch of progress was then carried forward by the Latin West (Renan 1896, 85–94).

Of the many responses this lecture provoked perhaps most important was one of the first, that of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, a highly influential Muslim intellectual who travelled in the course of his life from Tehran, Hyderabad, Cairo and Beirut to Paris and Istanbul. Renan himself later claimed that he had originally been inspired to write the lecture after meeting with Afghani during the latter's brief stay in Paris. Renan referred to him as "an Afghan, entirely emancipated from the prejudices of Islam; he belongs to those energetic races of the Upper Iran bordering upon India, in which the Aryan spirit still flourishes so strongly" (Renan 1896, 104).

Yet Afghani, in his response, questioned Renan's racialism and attached greater importance than Renan did to the issue of language and politics. On the question of Persian influence, he argued there was a great deal of overlap with the Arabs, even well before the conquests of Sassanid lands by Arab warriors, and primarily through the Persian appropriation of Arabic. Making a racial distinction between Persians and Arabs, Afghani thought, was meaningless, since race and language were in fact synonymous: the Arab race was as much defined, over the centuries of conquest and civilization, as a community of Arabic speakers as anything else.

Afghani also utilized the language of civilizational progress against Renan. "Since all nations have advanced from barbarism . . . toward a more advanced civilization," Renan's claim that there was something peculiar about Islam's disdain for "free thought" was misleading. The Arabs had in fact propelled themselves from a nomadic tribal to an advanced civil state through conquest and unprecedented expansion. Similarly, they "acquired and assimilated" the Greek and Persian sciences, which they also "developed, extended, clarified, completed and coordinated with a perfect taste and a rare precision and exactitude". To say that religious dogma and free rational inquiry were at odds, he thought moreover, was true but no explanation of anything: one could obviously create a similar historical narrative for European Christendom. What had led to the downfall of the sciences in Islam, he thought, was precisely what contributed to its general decline into the present: namely, political despotism (Afghani in Keddie 1968, 180–87).

Contributing by his embrace of civilizational discourse to what amounted to a novel reconceptualization of Islam and its *umma*, Afghani provides a telling example of the new intellectual horizons of the epoch. Living the *fin-de-siècle* intersection of empire and ideas, he had spent part of the 1870s and early 1880s in India and Egypt, where he experienced first-hand the expansion of British imperialism and its sweeping impact on Muslim life and thought. Conversant with European texts through his reading of popularized versions of them, and perhaps too from his time in missionary libraries and in Paris itself, his tendency was always to bring them into conversation with the works any well-educated *'alim* would have been expected to know. Thus, on the one hand, he made use of arguments that were familiar to Renan and to other French readers of the time, like Guizot, whom he almost certainly read.

He argued that, left unchecked, religious dogmatism (e.g. "the Church") would always stifle free inquiry. Yet on the other hand, Guizot was but one influence and the problem of dogma – or *taqlid* – had long been discussed in classical Arabic texts of theology and philosophy that Afghani knew well.

In short, the debate with Renan was something of an outlier in Afghani's oeuvre. These were used by him not merely to engage with Western thinkers, but through this engagement to demonstrate the possibilities for a renewal of Muslim theology itself. In India, for instance, he had become deeply concerned with what he would come to call European "materialism," a concern that is evident in one of his best-known texts, his 1877 *Refutation of the Materialists* (originally written in Farsi and then published in Urdu and later in Arabic and Turkish). Deploying a long-standing tradition of Muslim writings against materialism, Afghani's main target was basically another strand of Islamic reformism, a rival in the struggle to modernize conceptions of the faith itself: that of Sayyid Ahmad Khan.

Writing within the British Raj, Khan was a Muslim intellectual and educational reformer who influenced generations of Urdu writers. Like many other self-defined Muslim reformers, Khan emphasized the need to highlight reason and natural law in theological and philosophic thought, and in particular to expand the scientific curricula of Muslim higher education. Under the British, he founded a scientific society and later a college at Aligarh (in 1864 and 1875 respectively), and together with other well-known Aligarh colleagues like Altaf Hussain Hali and Shibli Nu'mani led the movement that symbolized for many the possibilities (or pitfalls) of a new strain of self-consciously reformist Muslim thought. Indeed, we might class the emphasis on rationalism as another key feature of *fin-de-siècle* discussions of Islam. Unlike later Muslim theological movements, such as those inspired by an interest in the phenomenology of religious life, many nineteenth-century theologians were almost exclusively concerned with questions of textual historicity and veracity, as well as of hermeneutics and epistemology (whereas later twentieth-century thinkers, by contrast, often turned to a renewed emphasis on the inner experience or ontology of belief itself) (Elshakry 2008). Their emphasis on rationalism led Khan and others at the Aligarh college to promote new methods of *tafsir* or exegesis, and it was toward this end that they advocated a thorough overhaul of the sources of Muslim law and its hermeneutic strategies.

Afghani found Khan's approach troubling, despite the fact that he had sometimes proposed a similar stress on rationalism in his own writings. Warning Muslim youth against the movement (which he variously dubbed naturalist, materialist and atomist), he claimed it was infused with a particularly toxic strand of contemporary European materialism. In his attack, Afghani linked Khan by association to Darwin, although what he really meant was the new strain of evolutionary materialism that Darwin of course did not subscribe to. In fact only a handful of Muslim intellectuals promoted this brand of evolutionary materialism – and it is not likely that Khan did himself. Afghani's critique of Khan's naturalism may have been unfair to his ideas but that was beside the point: Afghani's real criticism had as much to do with politics as it did with the philosophy of nature. His attack was motivated by Khan's political liberalism and his ready association with colonial officials and European missionaries in the Indian subcontinent, as well as the particular brand of acculturated thought and theology that he thought this "naturalism" represented.

Moving through a world whose borders were quickly being redrawn by emerging European empires, Afghani's search for an alternative to British and European rule led him to the Ottoman Empire and its Arabic provinces. His treatise against materialism was translated into Arabic by one of his Egyptian disciples, another well-known reformer, Muhammad 'Abduh. 'Abduh had met Afghani in Egypt shortly before the 1882 British occupation of the country and after his participation in the 'Urabi revolt led to his temporary exile, he travelled to Paris with Afghani, where they started a new journal together known as *al-Urwah al-Wuthqa* (*The Indissoluble Bond*). This journal acquired a reputation among French, British and Ottoman officials as dangerously radical because it advocated an ecumenical Muslim *umma* stretching from the Atlantic coastline of North Africa to the Indian subcontinent and beyond. But 'Abduh would later appear less revolutionary: he eventually returned to Egypt and rose through the ranks of the *Azhari* bureaucracy, thanks in part to his close collaboration with a number of key British officials there.

However, his one time mentor, Afghani, took a very different route, gambling instead on the Ottomans and the court of Sultan Abdülhamid II. It was a fateful decision. The sultan – carving out his own early version of imperial pan-Islamism – might initially have thought Afghani would help strengthen his own position as the spiritual and political leader of the *umma*. But he feared Afghani as much as he admired him. Although Afghani spent some four years at the court in Istanbul, he published very little during this time. As a result of the sultan's desire to have him withdraw from public affairs, by the end of his stay in Istanbul, Afghani was a virtual prisoner of the court, dying there in 1897 (Keddie 1972).

Afghani's career, glossed here, sheds some light on the intellectual and geopolitical features of what we have come to call "pan-Islamism." Like many other pan-regional movements of the time, from pan-Slavism to pan-Arabism, it was essentially an anti-colonial response to the rise of European power and the decline of older, dynastic land empires. But empires could draw on anti-colonialism too, and this was where Ottoman policy – as the expression of the last great surviving Muslim empire – also became important. Mounting the throne in 1876, Sultan Abdülhamid's reign coincided with European encroachment into the Balkans, North Africa and the Arab provinces. From the outset, the sultan was keen not only to emphasize his role publicly as the spiritual and political leader, or Caliph, of the Muslim world, or to engage in prestige projects like the railways that crossed the Balkans and later drove down to the Hijaz, but also to establish cultural and intellectual links with Muslim theologians and Sufi networks.

As we saw briefly in the case of British India and the Aligarh group, the cause of educational reform in particular emerged as a key site of contention among Muslim intellectuals and certain *'ulama* in particular. The extent of this emphasis on culture and schooling is striking – we find it everywhere from the British and Russian empires through Istanbul to the Ottoman provinces in Europe itself, such as Bosnia and Albania (see, e.g., Khalid 1999 and Fortna 2002). Many mobilized the language of renewal – "jadidism" – and reform – *islah*. But the political valenus behind these movements were often complex and ambiguous. For some, educational reform offered a way to assert a new regional or national sensibility, which promised a fresh alternative to late Ottoman imperial rule; for others, strengthening the *umma* involved demonstrating one's loyalty to the empire by contrast.

This contrast is evident in the works of two Arab theologians and self-proclaimed reformers who crossed paths briefly in Beirut, a city with a history of recent European intervention and a growing missionary educational presence. It was the missionaries and their activities that led to the founding in the early 1880s of a new "Sultan's school" (*al-Madrasa al-Sultaniya*) under the auspices of the *Jami'at al-Maqasid al-Khayriya* (Charitable Aims Society). The school's first director, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani, was an Ottoman loyalist who had also been instrumental in founding a cultural organization and a journal, the *Thamrat al-Funun* (*Fruits of Knowledge*). In 1882, the year the school opened its doors, he invited Husayn Al-Jisr, an important Sufi intellectual and educator, to begin teaching there. Alongside Al-Jisr, Muhammad 'Abduh – Afghani's translator – was also involved with this school, where he delivered various lectures on the "Theology of Unity."

'Abduh and Al-Jisr were thus acquainted with one another, and there was a great deal of overlap in their ideas on educational reform. Both men were also clearly acquainted with other educationalists in Beirut, including those at the Syrian Protestant College there, and we know too that both men frequented its library and were avid readers of a "Journal of Science and Industry" that had been founded by two of the Protestant College's "native tutors," Ya'qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr (Elshakry 2013). Science and civilization turned out to interest both of them, albeit in tellingly different ways.

Al-Jisr was the first to address these matters, in a popular 1887 treatise. *Al-Risala al-Hamidiya fi-Haqiqat al-Diyana al-Islamiya wa Haqiqat al-Shari'a al-Muhammadiya*, "A Hamidian Treatise on the Truthfulness of Islam and the Shari'a," like the school itself, made its loyalties to Abdülhamid clear in the very title. This work, which was rewarded with an award by the sultan, was an extensive engagement with the same problem of "materialism" that had bothered Afghani some years earlier. But it was also very much involved with the question of Islam and civilization, and in particular with whether or not Islam could be said to possess a distinctive civilizing mission of its own.

The treatise begins with the ideas of a British Anglican priest, Isaac Taylor, who gained considerable attention in the press by arguing that Islam was better equipped to "civilize" the Africans than Christianity was. The problem of "civilizing Africa" was one that had intensified since the onset of the so-called "Scramble" of 1882–83 and the challenge of "uplifting" the Africans was one that concerned colonial officials as well as Christian missionaries. But what precisely was the role of Christianity in this process became an ever more fraught subject. Colonial intervention intersected with, and complicated, longstanding abolitionist impulses. Taylor's view was that it was not the job of Christian missionaries to civilize their heathen charges: indeed, Christianity was unsuited to this task, given the complexity of its theological doctrines and rituals. Islam, he thought by contrast, with its simple theological precepts and dogmas, with its emphasis on absolute abstinence and with its clearly outlined ceremonial rites and practices was, as he saw it, the perfect "civilizing" religion for primitive heathens and for Africans in particular.

Many Christian missionaries were enraged and it appears to have been some of their comments on Islam that prompted Al-Jisr's treatise. Well informed on the debate, Al-Jisr referred to Taylor primarily to point to the growing interest in Islam

in Europe, and claimed that he wrote it in order to educate Westerners and particularly to correct "certain misapprehensions" about Islam. The treatise goes out of its way to present what he regarded as an orthodox view of such things as polygamy, slavery and miraculism, as well as to outline in general terms Sunni methods in legal and scriptural interpretation (both *ta'wil* and *tafsir*) and of the conditions by which one can measure rational or human knowledge against divine revelation in particular (Al-Jisr 1888).

But was Al-Jisr's treatise really designed to provide the theology for a new conception of an Islamic civilizing mission, or simply to engage in a project of clarification made all the more necessary by seemingly endless missionary, colonial and Orientalist interventions and critiques? The latter, surely. Reviving Islam within Ottoman lands in the face of an epistemic invasion from the West was key, and the author emphasized those strands of theology that might help equip Muslim educators to deal with the rash of new "sciences" or "subjects" (*'ulum*) that were infiltrating pedagogical institutions throughout the Muslim world at that time. Prompted by a debate in England, the "Hamidian Treatise" is thus best thought of as part of the movement toward a new "speculative theology" or *yeni ilm al-kalam* that preoccupied such well-known Ottoman theologians as Izmirli Isma'il Hakki (1868–1946) (Özervarli 1999). At the same time, for both Al-Jisr and Hakki, this emphasis on *'ilm al-kalam* involved a self-conscious process of historical recovery and a revival of older discursive traditions. Indeed, in general terms, we might also class the late nineteenth century as a period of intense retrospectivism.

Like Al-Jisr, Muhammad 'Abduh also responded to European intervention by calling for reform, but his efforts pointed in a very different direction, both politically and institutionally. It was when he was teaching at the *Madrasa al-Sultaniya* that he began sending Ottoman and British officials proposals for the reform of the educational system in Egypt. After his return he quickly rose through the ranks of the bureaucracy. He served on a reform committee at *al-Azhar*, reforming its pedagogical system and bureaucratic structure. And as with many colonial intellectuals and Muslim theologians, he also took part in the ambitious project of *shari'a* codification. The late nineteenth century was a period in which both colonial rulers and established imperial bureaucracies (like those of the Ottoman and Russian) institutionalized oversight over Muslim civil and state codes and religious practices (Asad 2003, chapter 7).

Intellectually, 'Abduh participated in several key debates. Shortly after his appointment as Grand Mufti of Egypt, he published a response to the French statesman and historian Gabriel Hanotaux. Hanotaux had followed Renan in presenting the Arabs as locked in a kind of "Semitic mentality." 'Abduh countered in a fashion not unlike Afghani's response to Renan. 'Abduh also criticized Hanotaux's knowledge of Muslim theology, exploding his view, among others, that Islam was wed to an absolute view of predestination.

Then there was the question of civilization. 'Abduh had argued for Islam's early "civilizational" grandeur in his rebuttal of Hanotaux. But he would take up the theme in much greater detail some years later, first in a series of debates he had with the early socialist thinker Farah Antun, over the role of rationalism in Islam, and later in a series of essays comparing Christianity and Islam's attitudes toward science. (His collaborator Rashid Rida would later help publish these as *Al-Islam*

wa-al-Nasraniya ma'a al-'ilm wa al-madaniya.) In much the same way that he countered Hanotaux's claim about predestination in Islam, 'Abduh critiqued Antun's assertion (citing Renan) that Islam misunderstood the nature of causation. 'Abduh argued that Antun had misunderstood Ibn Rushd's understanding of causality, but his main argument was a historical one. Far from Islam being antithetical to "science" and to "scientific causality," he argued that Islam had done much more to promote scientific progress than Christianity had. Drawing upon such figures as Le Bon and John William Draper (notably Draper's 1874 *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* which was widely discussed in the popular Arabic press), 'Abduh argued that it was Christianity, and particularly the Catholic Church, that had proved the most seriously antithetical to scientific inquiry in the past. According to 'Abduh, only with the Protestant Reformation – which he applauded as allowing "a return of Christianity to its true state" through its limitation of the power of the clergy and through the abolition of confessions and of icons – had "science [i.e. rational thought] appeared in the West." It was thanks to the Arabs, he argued, that freedom of thought and religious principles were first shown to be compatible. This he argued was Islam's real contribution to civilization.

Yet 'Abduh also saw the current state of Islam as one in which *taqlid* or imitation of past legal decrees and schools of thought had taken precedence over true theological reasoning and a resurgent faith. Arguing for the need to revivify Muslim theological principles and pedagogic practices through a simultaneously rational and ethically sound vision of nature, 'Abduh was in the forefront of moves to reform the curriculum at *al-Azhar*. Like many other *'ulama*, 'Abduh worried about the inroads made by foreign schools in Muslim lands, and he wanted to bridge these two worlds by "modernizing" *al-Azhar* itself (Hanotaux and 'Abduh 1905 and 'Abduh 1905). Moving away from his earlier and brief commitment to revolutionary and anti-imperial politics, 'Abduh spent much of his later career dedicated to the cause of educational reform. Yet he often attacked what he saw as the utter stagnation (*jumud*) of his *Azhari* colleagues, and the *'ulama* were the subject of many of his critiques. Naturally, this won him few friends at the *madrasa*-mosque, and 'Abduh himself was subject to much criticism in the press (Gesink 2010). Lord Cromer, the governor-general of Egypt was a key supporter of 'Abduh's pedagogical reform efforts and even helped appoint him to the post of Grand Mufti. For this reason, 'Abduh was sometimes viewed as a British stooge – an impression reinforced by his reference to European works and authors, particularly Spencer and Darwin. Worse perhaps, his praise of Protestantism and his desire to return to the "true principles of Islam" also meant he was sometimes denounced as a "Wahhabi." This was in reference to the Saudi theologian Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab, considered heterodox by many Ottoman and Egyptian theologians for his trenchant anti-Sufism and his pietist interpretation of the sources of law. (Incidentally, this was also a line that Khedival spies helped to promote.) (Elshakry 2013).

Abduh would also later be regarded as something of a national hero, and his reform efforts were hailed variously as a response to colonial intervention in Egypt or as the founding of a new "Islamic modernism," or even as the pinnacle of the "liberal age" of Arabic thought. Viewing him against the background of his "traditionalist" critics,

however, complicates all these versions. He himself was conscious of the need to move beyond a simplistic dialectic between *taghrib* and *taqlid*, between an alienated Europeanization and an adherence to the tradition. To this end, he called for a revival of such Muslim discursive traditions as *fiqh* and *kalam*, or jurisprudence and theology. Even as he drew on multiple sources, from an extant to a recalled discursive tradition that stretched from Ibn Taymiyya to Ibn Khaldun, as well as to current Orientalist and other fashionable texts of his time, his reform efforts can be categorized neither as pure mimicry nor mere apology (Haj 2009). Yet this should not lead us to instate our own rigid dichotomies. The point may seem trite, but it may nevertheless be useful to remember that even as discursive traditions operate according to their own inner dynamics and according to the logic of their own particular chains of transmission, they are also enmeshed within a wider network of readings, interpretations and appropriations, demonstrated by the many Sunni and Shi'a reform movements of the time (see Çetinsaya 2005). Reform and revivalism, renovation and the appeal to tradition – indeed the recuperation through history – thus went hand in hand.

Reformist theologians from 'Abduh and Rida to Nu'mani and Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi newly emphasized a focus on the intent of the *shari'a* or *maqasid al-shari'a* as the basis for new legal interpretations and thereby linked *islah* (reform) with *maslaha* (the common good). Whereas this had been recognized previously as one of the sources of *fiqh* or jurisprudence (from al-Ghazali and al-Razi to al-Tufi and al-Shatibi), by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it became a newly important source of legal rulings and furnished further support for legal arguments made in the name of the public interest or common good (Opwis 2005 and Ibrahim 2006). Hence, we might best understand the dyad of *islah/maslaha* as a genealogical restructuring of a discursive juridical tradition, and an enmeshing of colonial and liberal readings of "interest" and the "common good."

From Afghani to Al-Jisr to 'Abduh, there were multiple languages, and projects, of reform and new vehicles for them too. 'Abduh and Rida, particularly through their journal, *al-Manar*, offered one highly visible and increasingly popular avenue for this. But their version of reform differed from others', including that of Abdülhamid himself, who, as we saw, actively pursued his own brand of Muslim revivalism. A key point of dispute was over Sufism (Sirriyeh 1999). Whereas Abdülhamid clearly supported a number of Sufi *turuq*, Rida in particular was fairly opposed to Sufi practices. The history of Sufi movements in this period – and their imbrication within mainstream Sunni society throughout the Ottoman Empire and beyond – is a subject that has only recently been investigated, and one that is, once again, beyond the scope of this essay (Van Bruinessen and Day Howell 2007). But its presence in modernist discourses of reform, particularly in Arabic, was salient for many of the authors covered here. Rida wrote repeatedly against shrine worship in particular (a theme that 'Abduh had also taken up). Yet Sufism also held an enduring social power. Indeed the *fin de siècle* was also a period of intense Sufi revivalism, particularly throughout North Africa: the number of Sufi organizations, festivities and popular practices increased rather than decreased, and its influence was felt everywhere from the Maghreb to the Dutch East Indies. (See e.g. Van Bruinessen and Day Howell 2007, and for an interesting study of Orientalist discourses and Sufism in Indonesia, see Laffan 2011).

The question of the caliphate was another complicated point of divergence among reformers especially after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Whereas 'Abduh's amanuensis Rashid Rida had remained something of an Ottoman loyalist until 1918, after that he began to promote the need for an Arab caliphate with considerable energy. Rida's aspirations were never realized, of course, and even Sultan Abdülhamid's emphasis on his post as *khalif al-umma* had proven ineffective in the face of rising nationalisms: from the new brand of Ottomanism promoted by the Young Ottomans to the Turkism of the Young Turks, and the varieties of Arabism that would later underpin the post-colonial nation states of the region. Neither pan-Islam nor the idea of a *khalif* ruling in the name of the *umma* in fact proved anything like resilient enough to seriously challenge equally new conceptions of national belonging.

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The concept of civilization, at least as it developed in the late nineteenth century, was inseparable from the power of an entirely new social institution – the press. Printing replaced the intellectual norms and circus of late nineteenth-century Muslim discourses. One might even claim that 'Abduh and Rida's careers would not have been possible without their use of it. 'Abduh's reputation was, in large part, created thanks to Rida's dissemination of *al-Manar*, which travelled far and wide throughout the Muslim world, from Zanzibar and Morocco to India and Indonesia. We might then consider the press to be another critical instrument for reformers. Of course, long before print capitalism appealed to Muslim audiences, there were numerous literary and social networks: one could even argue (as has been done for the case of India) that these "information economies" were critical for how colonial agents themselves would later mobilize and institutionalize their own information networks. Yet the print capitalism of the nineteenth century was obviously transformative, and it played its part in altering the literary tastes and sensibilities of both authors and readers. If nothing else, it also introduced a new sense of temporal change, or the sense that there was in fact something very new going on. This was what the spokesman of Mehmet 'Ali's *nizam-i jadid* had claimed when they founded the first state-sponsored Arabic press, the *Bulaq* press, and it was what missionaries and those who prospered under their tutelage repeatedly argued when translating and publicizing new brands of literature through their own mission presses.

Thanks to the press, the notion of an Arab "renaissance" or *Nahda* first made its way into the discourse of the era. In fact, it seems that many nineteenth-century writers originally used the term *nahda* – usually when referring to the nineteenth-century literati movement in Arabic arts and letters – to refer more specifically to the expansion of the press itself: this was how 'Abduh used the term in his 1902 response to a poll proposed by *al-Jami'a* on the current state of the Arabic press, which he referred to as "*al-Nahda al-adabiya fi al-sharq*." ('Abduh 1993, 3, 127–32). But the role of the press was itself transformed by mass literacy and expanding education especially after the First World War. It was not long before a variety of oppositional voices – or "counter-publics" – would chip away at the reformers themselves. Even by the end of the First World War, many Muslim theologians and other Arab intellectuals had begun to lose faith in the prospect of an imminent renaissance.

The historian and novelist Jurji Zaidan should be discussed in this context for he was one of the key originators of the idea of an Arab *Nahda* itself, and through his

popular journal, *al-Hilal*, contributed critically to the ongoing historicization of Muslim thought. Zaidan proposed what amounted to a series of novel periodizations for both Arab and universal history in his numerous works on history. Based in part, at least initially, on Victorian models familiar to him ever since his schooling at the Syrian Protestant College, his early writings on world history stressed a classic tripartite division between antiquity, the middle and the modern ages. In later works, particularly both his *Tarikh al-tamaddun al-Islam* (*History of Islamic Civilization)* and his *al-Arab qabl al-Islam* (*The Arabs before Islam*) he presented the universal middle ages as nothing other than the story of Islamic civilization itself, by contrast. His lectures on history (including those he composed but did not deliver for the newly founded Cairo University in 1910) argued something similar. Yet, while he constructed a novel periodization for universal history, his basic commitment remained the same: it was through a Muslim efflorescence that the real power and strength of the Arab peoples has contributed to the progress of history. For Zaidan, the novelty of this particular construction of a Muslim "golden age" was that it was nestled between the fall of the greatest ancient empires of the world and the rise of a Europe whose glorious present matched its own decline (Zaidan 1902–06 and 1908).

From the start, Zaidan had been keen to popularize for Arabic readers the lives and contributions of key figures from the Arab Golden Age now familiar to us: biographies of Avicenna, Averroës, Avempace and Ibn Khaldun, featured prominently in *al-Hilal* and in other of Zaidan's writings. This offered a new historical timeline for popular audiences. Yet Zaidan's cast of characters was more eclectic than this suggests – and alongside these medieval thinkers one finds him writing on Hammurabi and Cyrus, as well as on Muhammad 'Ali and his descendants. Zaidan also traced the origins of Arabic, and hence the sacral language of the Qur'an itself, and of its very spiritual-legal codes, as far back as the Babylonians. Indeed, features on the ancient Phoenicians, Assyrians, Persians, Babylonians and others formed a critical theme for his historical journalism. Stretching the Arab ecumene in this way implied attaching Islam to a critically refashioned sense of its own *jahiliya*, or era of ignorance. Set against the background of classical Arabic histories, this was an unusual and distinctive chronology. Yet it was an influential one and we should bear in mind that Zaidan was a pioneer for many later writers – Taha Husayn comes to mind in particular – who redefined the history of Islam by recasting the meaning and scope of the *jahiliya*.

Zaidan's reconstruction of an Arabo-Islamic chronology and history was thus cast against his reading of the categories of Western historical time: East and West formed a critical suture for Zaidan and allowed him to rethink the history of the Arabs as a series of transitions along a dual timeline. In doing so he borrowed from contemporary ongoing periodizations of Arab and Islamic histories. For instance, his four-volume work on *Tarikh al-adab al-'arabiya* followed a chronology strikingly similar to that of the Orientalist Carl Brockelmann's eight-book *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*. But there was at least one major difference: unlike Brockelmann, who covered the modern period in a matter of mere pages, Zaidan devoted the entire final volume, volume 4, to the contemporary *Nahda*, a narrative which helped shape Arab renaissance discourses for generations to come. Zaidan's general chronology followed that of Brockelmann's: it understood the rise, decline and fall of distinct phases of Arabo-Islamic history. Indeed, Zaidan was himself an

avid reader of nineteenth-century Orientalist works. His notebooks, which offer a fascinating glimpse of how he sketched out many of his articles in his literary and historical journal, *al-Hilal*, show him making copious notes from various Orientalist journals of the day, from the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* to the *Journal asiatique*. He also followed the proceedings and was a member of several European Orientalist societies. Like many pioneering Arab historians of this era, he was familiar with both professional and popular works on Oriental history. He frequently cites Alfred Von Kremer's *The Orient under the Caliphs* and Le Bon's *History of the Arabs*, particularly as they both sketch an appealing narrative for Arab nationalists (of all stripes) about Arabic contributions to universal history and contemporary civilization. (For more on Zaidan and the Orientalists, see Dupont 2012). Zaidan's vision of Islamic history proved popular, and his historical novels imaginatively recast early Muslim history for numerous generations after.

Writing at a time when Egypt's first modern university was established, Zaidan was himself heavily involved in educational debates over the methods and aims of histories of Islam. The lectures he prepared for Cairo University were never delivered after a number of objections were raised against his scholarly credentials. Much of the controversy surrounding Zaidan set professionals against popularizers, historicists against traditional linguists, and claimants to the authenticity of autochthonous against Orientalist histories of Islam. For Ahmad al-Iskandarani, for instance, the real issue was that Zaidan had "no knowledge of the religious sciences." For Rafiq al-'Azm, reading Zaidan's works, it was clear that "his perception and knowledge are alien to ours." In effect, he had "trusted the historians versus the hadith." As Anne-Laure Dupont has recently pointed out, many saw Zaidan as an *adib* not an *'alim*, and his depiction of the various stages in the development of Islam seemed alien to those who were trained in or mostly familiar with the classical religious sciences. In particular, many objected to Zaidan's depiction of the early history of Islam, his ideas on its origins and connection to the Arabs and Arabic in particular, and, above all, to his depiction of the 'Umayyads, as a semi-barbarous dynasty, whose Arab chauvinism led to the decline of its civilizational accomplishments in the arts and sciences. His depiction of the 'Abbasids and Buyids also raised eyebrows. One critic claimed that it was almost as though for Zaidan the 'Abbasids and Buyids were great because they were *ajami* (foreign). These disputes brought up familiar problems: as we saw before, the Persianate background to the 'Abbasid reign was something that had attracted a great deal of commentary ever since Renan. In an era of ever growing Arab nationalism, these historical questions became even more problematic (Dupont 2012).

Indeed, it was this and other similarities between Zaidan and the Orientalists – in his methodology, his narrative of decline and fall and in his general periodization – that attracted the most criticism. Shibli Nu'mai, in *Intiqad Tarikh al-Tamaddun al-Islami* (a series of collected essays published by Rashid Rida in response to Zaidan's *Tarikh*) accused him of basing his narrative too much on Western Orientalist scholarship; Lewis Cheikho, a Catholic writer who often took on *al-Muqtataf* and *al-Hilal*, had already said much the same. He accused Zaidan of relying on – if not outright plagiarizing from – Brockelmann's *Geshichte der arabischen Litteratur* in particular, a work, as we saw, that did indeed offer a strikingly similar historical periodization.

After his death, popular theologians and anti-rationalists turned Zaidan's historical interpretations into an intellectual battleground, particularly as a variety of new nationalist ideologies gained ground. Yet his ideas also proved surprisingly long-lived and powerful: one has only to consider the works of Taha Husayn, as mentioned before, or the late twentieth-century corpus of the highly influential Moroccan intellectual Muhammad 'Abid al-Jabiri to appreciate this.

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While many of these diverse *fin-de-siècle* narratives of Islam shared some common themes, they nevertheless also met with a common fate. What declined, in general terms, in discourses about Islam after the First World War was a certain ideology of reformism, as well as an emphasis on rationalism. What remained was the notion of Islam as a critical actor in the world of civilizations that could be set within and beyond a universal historical timeline. We might even argue that Zaidan's vision of Islamic history (like his conception of the *Nahda*) proved the most durable for later histories of Islam. Yet he was not alone in this reconstruction of Muslim historical thought, as I hope this chapter has shown. Regardless, the language of civilizational rise and decline that so many of the authors covered here helped to construct was clearly one of the more enduring legacies of the *fin-de-siècle* discourse on Islam.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

2444 AN
Buddhism

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Donald S. Lopez, Jr.

By 1900, Buddhists in Asia, or at least some Buddhists in Asia, had decided to formalize a traditional way of measuring time. Events were often described in Buddhist texts as having occurred a certain number of years after the death of the Buddha or, in Buddhist terms, after his passage into nirvana. In English-language publications beginning in the late nineteenth century, Buddhist writers would often provide the year of publication in Buddhist terms: A.N., that is "After Nirvana" (or sometimes, B.E., "Buddhist Era"). According to this reckoning of time, one that was not universally accepted across Asia, the Buddha had passed into nirvana in 544 BCE. 1900 AD = 2444 AN.

Despite this declaration of chronological independence, in 2444 AN much of the Buddhist world was under European colonial control, or the threat of such control. Buddhism was in crisis across Asia, reeling from or plunging toward events that would shape Buddhism throughout the twentieth century and to the present day. It is important to note, however, that in 2444 AN, or 2558 AN, there was no single Buddhism in Asia. Each of the Asian nations (or colonies) had its own form of Buddhism and each faced its own challenges.

It would require a monograph to document everything that was happening in the Buddhist world in 1900. This essay can therefore only provide a brief and superficial sample, looking at just three moments in three different countries. However, in order to understand what was occurring in 2444 AN, it is important to understand something about what had occurred in the previous 2,443 years.

THE BUDDHA AND AFTER

According to his traditional biographies, the Buddha had been born as a prince in what is now southern Nepal. At the age of twenty-nine, he renounced his future throne to go out in search of a state beyond birth and death. After six years of ascetic practice, he achieved enlightenment, becoming at that point the "Buddha," a Sanskrit term that means the "awakened one." He soon attracted a group of disciples, which eventually evolved into a monastic community (*saṃgha*). He also established (as the story goes, grudgingly) an order of nuns. And he also attracted a

number of wealthy and powerful patrons, including rulers of some of the kingdoms of northern India. After teaching his doctrine (*dharma*) for some forty-five years, he passed into nirvana at the age of eighty. Modern scholarship generally rejects 544 BCE as the year of his death, although there is no consensus about the precise date; some scholars place his death as late as 400 BCE plus or minus twenty years.

The Buddha had exhorted his monks to go forth and teach "for the benefit of gods and humans," and Buddhism spread throughout most of the Indian subcontinent in the centuries after his death, an expansion supported by the patronage of the Emperor Aśoka of the Mauryan dynasty, who ruled India (and much of what is today Pakistan and Afghanistan) from 269 to 232 BCE. Buddhism also spread to Sri Lanka during this period. Buddhism would eventually spread to China in the first century CE, to Korea in the fourth, to Japan in the sixth, and Tibet in the seventh century. It also spread to Southeast Asia, becoming the state religion of what are today Myanmar (Burma) and Vietnam in the eleventh century, and the state religion of what is today Thailand in the thirteenth (although there is evidence of Buddhism throughout Southeast Asia, including modern Indonesia, centuries earlier).

In order to understand the state of Buddhism in 1900, it is important to specify not only where Buddhism was in Asia, but also where it was not: India. Although the Buddha had lived his long life in India, although Buddhism had spread from India across Asia, although the four most important places of pilgrimage in the Buddhist world—the place where the Buddha was born, the place where he was enlightened, the place where he gave his first sermon, the place where he died—were all in India (his birthplace is now in Nepal), Buddhism as an active religious institution had died out in India by the late thirteenth century. When the Europeans arrived in India (Vasco da Gama landed on its western coast in 1498) Buddhism was largely an archaeological artifact, with the four great pilgrimage sites in ruins. Thus, Buddhism existed all around India but Buddhism no longer existed in India, although all the Buddhist lands of Asia venerated India as the source of their religion. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, European scholars—first, officers of the British East India Company, and later French and German scholars—would enter this empty space and repopulate it with a Buddhism of their own imagining.

For much of the period of European contact with the Buddhist world, extending back to Marco Polo in the thirteenth century and before, Buddhists were classified—along with all other non-Christians, non-Jews, and non-Muslims—simply as idolaters. Because the Buddha has a different name in each Buddhist land and because each region has its own conventions for representing him in painting and sculpture, various European missionaries and travelers assumed that the pagans of Asia worshipped a variety of idols, with names like Fo, Xaca, and Sommona Codom (all, in fact, simply local names for the Buddha in China, Japan, and Thailand). It was only at the end of the seventeenth century that it was discovered that the various names and images represented the same figure, and even then, whether he was a god or a historical personage, and if a historical personage, where and when he lived, remained in question. It was only at the beginning of the nineteenth century that European scholars—now able to read with some degree of accuracy Buddhist scriptures written in Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan, Pali, and Sanskrit—knew with certainty that the Buddha had been a historical figure and that he had lived and died in India.

Based on their readings of Buddhist texts, and their own enlightenment sensibilities, they painted a portrait of the Buddha whose image would be reproduced around the world and up to the present day. For them, the Buddha was a philosopher who declared that there was no God and who set forth a path to freedom that he opened to all. He condemned the meaningless rituals and the haughty avarice of the Hindu Brahmins (who seemed uncannily like Roman Catholic priests) and he rejected their caste system that restricted sacred knowledge to those of high birth. He described an ethical universe, where each was a master of his fate, with no need to fear a capricious God. He discovered these truths through his own efforts, without the need for divine revelation, and he never declared himself to be divine. This was the view of the Buddha put forth by the first, and most influential, European monograph on Buddhism of the nineteenth century, *Introduction à l'histoire du Buddhisme indien* (1844), by Eugène Burnouf, holder of the first chair of Sanskrit in Europe, at the Collège de France. Burnouf and others created the idea of a classical Buddhism, one that had died out in, or been driven from, India. It was now dead, and all the various forms of Buddhism existing in Asia in the nineteenth century were pale reflections of it, tainted by the admixture of all manner of local superstitions.

It was at the end of the century that the idea began to take shape, first in Europe and later in Asia, of a single world religion called "Buddhism." Its classical age, long past, had been forgotten in Asia but had been recovered by European scholars. The various national Buddhisms of Asia were all offshoots of the ancient Buddhism, the Buddhism of the Buddha. Although all were forms of Buddhism, in the eyes of European scholars, some were better than others. In 1900, the Buddhism that remained closest to the source was that found in the British colony of Ceylon. In 1900, the Buddhism that was farthest from the source was that found in Tibet. It was so deviant that it did not warrant the name "Buddhism;" it was called "Lamaism." Tibet was not a British colony.

TIBET

In Tibet, 1900 was the Iron Mouse year of the fifteenth cycle. The thirteenth Dalai Lama, Thupten Gyatso (Thub bstan rgya mtsho, which means "Ocean of the Buddha's Teachings") was twenty-four years old. Tibet was unique in the Buddhist world for its institution of the incarnate lama (*sprul sku*, pronounced "tulku"), in which a great Buddhist teacher would be identified from one generation to the next. This was not the standard Buddhist doctrine of rebirth, according to which all beings wander from lifetime to lifetime among the six realms of *saṃsāra*, as gods, demigods, humans, animals, ghosts, or denizens of hell. Incarnate lamas are considered enlightened beings who choose their place of rebirth, returning to the world as human teachers in lifetime after lifetime to compassionately dispense the dharma. The practice of identifying children as the incarnations of deceased masters may date from as early as the twelfth century. By the fourteenth century, all sects of Tibetan Buddhism had adopted the practice of identifying the successive rebirths of a great teacher; the Dalai Lamas were only the most famous. There were some 3,000 lines of incarnation in Tibet (only several of whom were female).

The incarnations of the Dalai Lama began (at least in historical time) in the fifteenth century. It was the third Dalai Lama, Sonam Gyatso (Bsod nams rgya mtsho,

which means "Ocean of Merit") who received the name *dalai* from a Mongol khan; *dalai* means "ocean" in Mongolian. The first four Dalai Lamas had been important figures only within their own sect of Tibetan Buddhism, the Geluk (*dge lugs*, "System of Virtue") until 1642, when the fifth Dalai Lama, with the backing of a Mongol warlord, became the ruler of Tibet. He was the most famous of the Dalai Lamas, the builder of the Potala Palace in Lhasa. But his successor had little interest in the monastic life. He was deposed and assassinated at the age of twenty-three.

The institution of the Dalai Lama presented a unique model of political succession. From one perspective, it provided a kind of supernatural continuity, as the same enlightened being returned to the throne from generation to generation over the centuries, invested with a level of charisma exceeding that of more ordinary kings. At the same time, it lacked political efficiency. After the death of the previous Dalai Lama, a regent was appointed to find the new child. This entailed sending out search parties throughout the land, collecting reports of births attended by auspicious portents, and toddlers who, after they learned to talk, spoke of their past lives. Once the boy was identified (usually three to five years after the death of his predecessor), he had to be educated in the vast corpus of Buddhist doctrine as well as the affairs of state. It was only around the age of twenty that the new Dalai Lama would become ruler of the nation. During the decades between one Dalai Lama and the next, Tibet was ruled by the regent.

If the Dalai Lama were to die for some reason, the regent would continue in his role, searching for the next incarnation and overseeing his education, while serving as de facto ruler of Tibet, his reign extended. And as it happened, in the nineteenth century, four Dalai Lamas in a row died young: the ninth at age nine, the tenth at age twenty-one, the eleventh at age eighteen, the twelfth at age nineteen. Scholars suspect that more than one of these deaths were assassinations, probably by poisoning. A similar fate awaited the thirteenth Dalai Lama as the end of the nineteenth century approached.

In 1895, at the age of nineteen, the thirteenth Dalai Lama became head of state. Soon thereafter, his regent offered him (or a member of his circle, according to some accounts) a beautiful pair of boots. Hidden in the heel of one of the boots was a talisman intended to bring about the death of the Dalai Lama. The plot was said to have been revealed by the state oracle, a monk periodically possessed by the spirit of a wrathful deity who was a protector of the Dalai Lama. When the plot was discovered, the regent, himself an important incarnate, was arrested and executed by drowning. To insure that he did not return in the next lifetime, his line of incarnations was declared ended. Surviving an attempt on his life by black magic, the thirteenth Dalai Lama became the first Dalai Lama in a century to survive into his majority. However, he faced more quotidian threats.

The Manchu rulers of China had held firm control over Tibetan foreign relations during much of the eighteenth century. During the nineteenth century, as the Qing Dynasty moved toward its demise, the Chinese presence in Tibet was weak, and weakening. The British, long established in India, regarded Tibet as a buffer state between their Raj and Russia. By the end of the century, they were concerned about possible Russian influence in Tibet. One of the tutors of the thirteenth Dalai Lama was Agvan Dorzhiev (1854–1938), a monk from the ethnically Mongol region of Buryatia near Lake Baikal. In 1898, Czar Nicholas II had presented him with a

watch in recognition of the intelligence he had gathered during his time in Tibet. After returning to Tibet, at the behest of the Dalai Lama, in 1900 he led a delegation to the czar, meeting with him at his summer palace in Yalta in 1901. They returned with a shipment of Russian arms.

Alarmed that Tibet might fall under Russian influence, the British demanded greater trade relations with Tibet. When these were refused, British troops under the command of Colonel Francis Younghusband crossed into Tibet in December 1903. Over the next six months they made their way toward Lhasa, encountering along the way Tibetan forces armed with matchlock rifles, swords, and spears. In a series of skirmishes and battles, some 3,000 Tibetans were killed. By the time they reached Lhasa, the Dalai Lama had fled to Mongolia. Negotiating with the senior monk of the Geluk sect, they extracted a trade agreement that allowed the British to establish trade stations in two Tibetan towns (but not in Lhasa).

From Mongolia, the Dalai Lama traveled to China, where relations between the Tibetan leader and the Qing court continued to deteriorate, beginning with his refusal to kowtow at the feet of the Empress Dowager. Eventually, he began the long journey by horse and palanquin back to Tibet; the Chinese sent troops in pursuit. When he reached Lhasa, they were close behind and so he continued south toward India, with his entourage fighting a rearguard action against the Chinese to prevent his capture. Thus, in 1910, just seven years after he fled to Mongolia and then to China to escape the British, he fled to British India to escape the Chinese. He would spend two years there, for the most part in Darjeeling and Kalimpong, but was also the first Dalai Lama to visit the holy sites of Buddhism, including Bodh Gaya, where the Buddha achieved enlightenment.

During his time in British India, he established a close friendship with Sir Charles Bell (1870–1945) and from their conversations and what he observed of British administration, he devised a series of reforms that he hoped would both modernize Tibet and lead to its international recognition as an independent state. Upon his return in 1912, the Dalai Lama began to institute these reforms, including building a modern army. In 1913, after the fall of the Qing Dynasty, Tibet and Mongolia signed a treaty, thus signaling their status as independent states. However, the Dalai Lama's attempts at modernization met with strong resistance from the monastic establishment of his own Geluk sect. He died in 1930, leaving behind a chillingly prescient prophecy of the fate that awaited Tibet.

The end of the century marked the beginning of the end of what is now referred to as "old Tibet," although, as always, this is only clear in retrospect. Surviving the black magic that Victorian scholars saw as central to the "Lamaism" they described, in the first years of the new century the thirteenth Dalai Lama faced a more formidable foe in the form of the colonial powers: the contemporary colonial power of Britain and the future colonial power of China, whose troops would invade Tibet in 1950, when the next Dalai Lama, the fourteenth, was fifteen years old. Without a modern army to defend its borders and without allies to come to its aid (Tibet had remained neutral during the Second World War), the traditional Tibet that the thirteenth Dalai Lama had sought to maintain through modernization, the Tibet that was the proud preserve of rich traditions of Buddhist philosophy, Buddhist practice, and Buddhist art, would fall. Of the 7,000 Buddhist temples and monasteries in Tibet in 1950, only a handful remained standing by the end of the Cultural

Revolution in 1976. Like the thirteenth Dalai Lama, his previous incarnation, the fourteenth Dalai Lama fled south, pursued by Chinese troops, crossing the border into India on 30 March 1959. Unlike his previous incarnation, he has never returned to Tibet.

BURMA

According to Buddhist cosmology, we live in an age of degeneration, moving inexorably toward a period of constant strife and warfare. Predictions of the decline appear often in Buddhist literature. The most famous of these is attributed to the Buddha himself. When he grudgingly admitted women to his community, establishing the order of nuns, he predicted that had he not done so, his teaching would have remained in the world for 1,000 years. Because he admitted women, it would only last for 500. According to Buddhist doctrine, there have been buddhas in the past, and there will be buddhas in the future. The reason that there are no records of previous buddhas or their teachings is because a new buddha does not appear in the world until the teachings of the previous buddha have completely disappeared from the world. It is only when the path to enlightenment has been forgotten that a new buddha appears to find the path again and teach it to others. The death of a buddha, or, in the language of the tradition, his passage into nirvana, marks the beginning of a period of slow decline, a period of increasing amnesia. It is said in some Buddhist traditions in Southeast Asia that the condition is sufficiently serious that for centuries it has been impossible for anyone to achieve enlightenment.

If this were not bad enough, the human lifespan is declining. It is said that when the Buddha appeared in the world the human lifespan was 100 years. It is steadily declining and will do so until it reaches ten years; Buddhist texts present an apocalyptic vision of a world ruled by fourth-graders. It is only when the lifespan begins to increase again—according to some accounts until it rises to 80,000 years—that the next Buddha, named Maitreya, will come. This doctrine has led not only to expressions of despair but also to millennial aspirations, various forms of waiting for Maitreya. In Burma, the *weikza* or wizards engage in forms of meditation, incantation, and alchemy in order to extend their lifespans to the advent of Maitreya, when they will become his disciples. In the intervening centuries, they act as healers and exorcists.

Britain went to war with Burma three times in the nineteenth century, conquering more and more of the country each time. In the First Anglo-Burmese War of 1824–26, Burma lost some of its own previously conquered territories in the west. In the Second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852, all of Lower Burma fell to the British. In the Third Anglo-Burmese War, lasting only three weeks in November 1885, the rest of Burma fell and the entire country became an extension of the British colony of India. The king was deposed and sent into exile. In 1895, the *saṅgharāja*, the "king of the community," the supreme patriarch of the Buddhist monks of Burma, died, and there was no king to appoint his successor. The exile of the king was an event of major significance for Buddhism in Burma. Traditionally, one of the most important duties of the Burmese king was the protection of the *sāsana*, the Buddhist institution. This was done by royal patronage but also by royal decree. It was the king who had the authority to convene a council to settle disputes and to enforce the *vinaya*, the

code of conduct that is the foundation of Buddhist monasticism. When Lower Burma fell in the Second Anglo-Burmese War, many monks migrated to the north in order to come under the protection of King Mindon (1808–78), leaving behind their temples and parishioners.

When Mindon's son and successor, Thibaw Min, was deposed in 1885, the monastic community of Burma had no protector. If Burma had been conquered by a Buddhist power, the *saṅgha* would come under the protection of the conquering monarch. However, the British viceroy, Lord Curzon, did not provide such protection. In 1895, the second most powerful person for Burmese Buddhists, the *saṅgharāja*, died. His successor was elected but was not recognized by the British until 1903 and even then, they conceded his authority only over Upper Burma. This disruption in the Buddhist order of things would have far-reaching consequences.

There had long been a tension in Buddhism between study and practice, that is, between the memorization and exegesis of the scriptures and the practice of meditation. There were longstanding debates about which was more important, with preference generally given to study. If the teachings were not maintained, how would one know what to meditate upon? Prestige in the monastic community also derived from scholastic achievement. Meditation also received less emphasis because of the belief that the achievement of nirvana was no longer possible. In Burma, it was believed that no one had achieved nirvana since 1337. At the turn of the century in a Burma without a king and without a *saṅgharāja*, this would change.

One of the most important monks of this period was Ledi Sayadaw (1846–1923). Already a renowned scholar of the Buddhist canon at the time of the Third Anglo-Burmese War, he viewed the fall of Burma to the British, and the profound threat that it posed to the survival of Buddhism, from the perspective of Buddhist cosmology: the coming of the British was a sign that the world was entering the next stage of the degenerate age, when the teachings of the Buddha would be completely forgotten and lost to the world. Without a pious and powerful monarch to protect Buddhism, that protection had to be found elsewhere. Traditionally, over the long history of Buddhism and across the Buddhist world, the study of the scriptures and the practice of meditation had been the exclusive purview of the monastic community. The role of the laity, always the vast majority of Buddhists in a given country, was to support the monastic community with their offerings. In a symbiotic relationship that stood at the heart of Buddhism across Asia, the role of monks and nuns was to maintain their vows (especially the vow of celibacy) and thus remain suitable recipients of the offerings of the laity. In this exchange, monks and nuns received material support and lay people received merit, that is, good karma, which would lead to a happy rebirth in the next lifetime. With these two roles long established, study and meditation did not have a natural place in lay Buddhist life.

But with the dharma without royal protection and under threat of extinction, Ledi Sayadaw sought to preserve it by dispersing it as widely as possible, extending it even to the laity, and in both of its forms, the study of scripture and the practice of meditation. Lacking the support of the king, he looked to the commoners, attempting to democratize the dharma in order to save it. Making use of the newly introduced printing press, he began writing pamphlets that set forth the complicated categories of Buddhist philosophy, called the *abhidhamma*. He also "revived" a simple form of meditation practice called *vipassana*, or "insight" meditation.

Through his efforts and those of other important monks, centers were established where lay people could study and meditate. It is this movement at the beginning of the twentieth century—motivated by fear of the British—that spawned the practice of "mindfulness" that swept through the self-help community in Europe and America at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In certain circles, this form of meditation is known simply as "the Burmese method."

SRI LANKA

The history of Buddhism is often told in terms of its councils. The first council, according to tradition, was held shortly after the Buddha's death, with 500 enlightened monks convening to remember and memorize everything that the Buddha had taught during the forty-five years of his ministry. The second council is said to have taken place 100 years after the death of the Buddha. Here the issue was the monastic code of conduct, with the community of monks dividing into two groups over such apparently minor matters as whether a monk is allowed to carry salt in an animal horn, eat when the shadow of the sundial is two fingerbreadths past noon (monks are not supposed to eat anything after noon), drink milk whey after mealtime, and use mats with fringe. The group that opposed those practices was known as the Sthaviranikāya or the "section of the elders" and the group that condoned them was known as the Mahāsāṃghika, the "great assembly." The Theravāda tradition of Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia traces its origins to the former group (although recent scholarship has shown the connection to be more tenuous than previously thought). In oblique ways, the Mahāyāna Buddhism of China, Japan, Korea, and Tibet is connected to the latter group. If the second council took place 100 years after the Buddha, it would have occurred some time in the fourth century BCE. More than two millennia later, at the end of the nineteenth century, an American set out to heal the schism. His name was Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907).

He was raised in a Presbyterian family in New Jersey and served in the Union Army during the Civil War, appointed to the commission that investigated the assassination of Lincoln. Working as a journalist in New York City, he occasionally reported on "spiritualism," the beliefs and practices connected with communicating with the spirits of the dead, something very much in vogue in the last half of the nineteenth century. In 1874 he made a trip to Chittenden, Vermont to investigate paranormal events occurring in a farmhouse belonging to the Eddy brothers, who were said to be able to summon spirits. There he met the Russian émigré and medium, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–91). Their shared interest in spiritualism, psychic phenomena, and esoteric wisdom led them to found the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875, an organization that would bring the teachings of the Buddha, at least as interpreted by the Society, to a large audience in Europe and America over the subsequent decades. For Blavatsky and Olcott, Theosophy was an ancient wisdom that was the root and foundation of the mystical traditions of the world. This wisdom had been dispensed over the millennia by a group of Atlantean masters called mahatmas, or "great souls." In the modern period, these masters had congregated in a secret location in Tibet. Madame Blavatsky claimed to have studied under their tutelage there over the course of seven years and to have remained in psychic communication with them.

By 1878 Blavatsky and Olcott had shifted their emphasis away from "spiritualism" and the investigation of psychic phenomena toward a broader promotion of a universal brotherhood of humanity, claiming affinities between Theosophy and the wisdom of the Orient, specifically Hinduism and Buddhism. In 1873, a debate had taken place in Sri Lanka between a Buddhist monk and a Methodist minister. Five years after the debate, an account was published in Boston, entitled *Buddhism and Christianity Face to Face*. Olcott read it and determined to join the Buddhists of Ceylon in their battle against Christian missionaries. In 1879 Blavatsky and Olcott sailed to India, proceeding to Sri Lanka (at the time, the British colony of Ceylon) the next year, where they took the vows of a lay Buddhist; Olcott was presumably the first American to do so. Olcott would enthusiastically embrace his new faith.

Olcott took it as his task to restore true Buddhism to Ceylon and to counter the efforts of the Christian missionaries on the island. In order to accomplish this aim, he adopted many of their techniques, founding the Buddhist Theosophical Society to disseminate Buddhist knowledge (and later assisted in the founding of the YMBA or Young Men's Buddhist Association) and publishing in 1881 *A Buddhist Catechism*, modeled on works used by the Christian missionaries. Olcott shared the view of many enthusiasts in Victorian Europe and America, who saw the Buddha as the greatest philosopher of India's Aryan past. The Buddha's teachings were regarded as a complete philosophical and psychological system, based on reason and restraint, opposed to ritual, superstition, and sacerdotalism, demonstrating how the individual could live a moral life without the trappings of institutional religion. This Buddhism was to be found in texts, rather than in the lives of the modern-day Buddhists of Sri Lanka, who, in Olcott's view, had deviated from the original teachings.

Olcott's close confederate in his mission was Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1933). Although his family was Buddhist, he was educated in Christian schools run by Anglican missionaries. He met Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott during their first visit to Ceylon. In 1884 he was initiated into the Theosophical Society by Olcott, and later accompanied Madame Blavatsky to the headquarters of the Society in Adyar, India. In 1889, he traveled with Colonel Olcott on his lecture tour of Japan. On a trip to India in 1891, he was shocked to see the state of decay of the great pilgrimage sites of India, all under Hindu control, and most especially Bodh Gaya, the site of the Buddha's enlightenment. He became a founding member of the Mahabodhi Society (named after the temple at Bodh Gaya), which called on Buddhists from around the world to work for the return of the great sites to Buddhist control, a goal that would only be achieved after his death. In 1892, the Society launched its journal, calling it *The Maha-Bodhi and the United Buddhist World*. In 1893 Dharmapala attended the World's Parliament of Religions, held in conjunction with the Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. Although only one of several Buddhist representatives, his excellent English and Anglican education made him an effective spokesperson for the dharma, demonstrating both its affinities with and superiority to Christianity. The *St. Louis Observer* of 21 September 1893 reported, "With his black, curly locks thrown from his broad brow, his keen clear eyes fixed upon the audience, his long brown fingers emphasizing the utterances of his vibrant voice, he looked the very image of a propagandist, and one

trembled to know that such a figure stood at the head of the movement to consolidate all the disciples of Buddha and to spread the 'Light of Asia' throughout the civilized world."

In 1885, Olcott had set out on the mission of healing the schism he perceived between "the Northern and Southern Churches," that is, between the Buddhists of Ceylon and Burma (Southern) and those of China and Japan (Northern). He believed that a great rift had occurred in Buddhism 2,300 years earlier and that if he could simply have representatives of the Buddhist nations agree to a list of shared doctrines, it might be possible to create a "United Buddhist World".

By the end of the century, the old division of the peoples of the world into four nations—Christians, Jews, Mahometans, and Idolaters—had been displaced by the new idea of "world religions." According to this formulation, there were two kinds of religions, world religions (*Weltreligionen* in German) and local religions (*Landesreligionen*). Although there was, and continues to be, debate about which religions merit the "world" category, there was consensus from the outset that Buddhism was a world religion. The Buddhists of Asia, however, seemed largely unaware of, or at least uninterested in, this fact. For Colonel Olcott, there could not be a single Buddhism until the great North-South wound had been healed.

He was unsuccessful in his first attempt, but set out again in 1891, armed with a list of "fourteen items of belief" (he also referred to them as "Fundamental Buddhistic Beliefs"). Item #14 was: "Buddhism discourages superstitious credulity. Gauṭama Buddha taught it to be the duty of a parent to have his child educated in science and literature. He also taught that no one should believe what is spoken by any sage, written in any book, or affirmed by a tradition, unless it accord with reason" (Olcott 1915: 95).

Olcott traveled to Burma, Sri Lanka, and Japan, where he negotiated with Buddhist leaders until he could find language to which they could assent. But these were only three Buddhist countries, and only one, Japan, represented the Northern branch. Shortly thereafter, a rift occurred in Sri Lanka. At the turn of the century, the Buddhist leaders of Sri Lanka, including his former disciple Dharmapala, turned on the man known as "the white Buddhist."

In 1905, the leading Buddhist monk in Sri Lanka withdrew his imprimatur from the fortieth edition of Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism*, declaring that seventeen of the answers were "opposed to the orthodox views of the Southern Church of Buddhism." Dharmapala was particularly emphatic in his repudiation of Theosophy. In 1906, he published an essay entitled, "Can a Buddhist Be a Member of the Theosophical Society?" The short answer was "no." In his obituary of Olcott in 1907, he said that Olcott never understood the fundamentals of Buddhism, perverting it by mixing in various Hindu and occult doctrines. Elsewhere, in an essay entitled "Theosophical Degenerates," he writes, "Theosophy is a Eurasian pantheism, it is neither purely Eastern nor Western. It is an 'occult' mixture given to the credulous world by a band of impostors, who deceive the world by plagiarising Buddhistic Pali phrases and Vedantic metaphysics." This essay ran in the July 1906 issue of *The Maha-Bodhi and the United Buddhist World* (Vol. XIV, No. 7: 106); the title page said, "Buddha Year 2450." By the turn of the century, at least in Sri Lanka, the Buddhists no longer welcomed the white man who sought to speak on their behalf. They could speak for themselves, in English.

CONCLUSION

These vignettes from Tibet, Burma, and Sri Lanka are not meant to be exhaustive. A different, and equally consequential story could be told for almost every country in Asia. In China at the turn of the century, a growing community of intellectuals saw Buddhism as a form of primitive superstition impeding China's entry into the modern world. In 1898, the emperor had issued an edict ordering many Buddhist temples (and their often substantial land holdings) to be converted into public schools. Although the order was rescinded in 1905, a number of Buddhist schools and academies for the training of monks were founded on monastery property in an effort to prevent their seizure and the establishment of secular schools. The monastic schools set out to train monks in the Buddhist classics, with those monks then sent out to teach to the laity (as Christian missionaries did).

In 1868 in Japan, the shogun was deposed and the emperor restored to power. One of the first acts of his new Meiji government was to establish Shinto as the state religion, with the emperor as its head priest. New policies included a suppression of Buddhism in a movement that was called "abolish Buddhism and destroy Śākyamuni [Buddha]" (*haibutsu kishaka*). Buddhism was attacked as a foreign and anachronistic institution, riddled with corruption, a parasite on society, and the purveyor of superstition, blocking Japan's entry into the modern world. Thousands of Buddhist temples were eliminated and thousands of monks were returned to lay life. The assault on Buddhism continued in 1872, when the Meiji government removed any special status from monkhood. Henceforth, monks had to register in the household registry system and were subject to secular education, taxation, and military conscription. The government also declared that monks could eat meat and marry.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Buddhist intellectuals, reeling from these changes, strove to demonstrate the relevance of Buddhism to the interests of the Japanese nation by promoting a New Buddhism (*shin bukkyō*) that was consistent with Japan's attempts to modernize and expand its realm. This New Buddhism was represented as both purely Japanese and purely Buddhist. It was also committed to social welfare and public education and supported the expansion of the Japanese empire. Beginning with the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95 and continuing until the defeat of Japan in 1945, Buddhist leaders consistently called for the restoration of true Buddhism (which existed only in Japan) to the rest of Asia. It was yet another failed attempt, this time from a different colonial power, to create a United Buddhist World.

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NEW AGE *FIN DE SIÈCLE*

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Gary Lachman

In this essay I'd like to address two points. First, that the *fin de siècle* had an optimistic, forward-looking, positive character, generally overshadowed by its more well-known "dark side". And second, that the roots of much, if not all, of contemporary "alternative" thought and, for the sake of a better word, "New Age" philosophy can be found in this less well-known "positive" *fin de siècle*. Establishing the second point will, I believe, do much to help establish the first.

That the *fin de siècle* is generally characterized by "decadence" needs little arguing. Although the seeds of decline were planted earlier, 1884 can be seen as the official starting date of the "decadent movement". In that year, J.-K. Huysmans' "breviary of decadence", *À Rebours*, was published (Symons p. 76). Translated as "Against Nature" and "Against the Grain", neither attempt quite captures the essence of the French, for which "up the asshole" would be a fair equivalent. This was the notorious "yellow-backed book" that sent Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray, as well as many others, on their exquisite roads to perdition. If we need more proof that decadence was in the air, eight years later Max Nordau's bestselling *Degeneration* (1892) achieved world-fame by arguing that the spirit of the age was rife with exhaustion, hysteria, and enervation, expressed in the work of obvious "degenerates" like Nietzsche, Ibsen, Wagner, and Baudelaire; that Baudelaire and Nietzsche died of syphilis, and that Ibsen wrote a play, *Ghosts*, about it, may suggest that Nordau had a point. In "Dregs", the ennui-ridden poet Ernest Dowson (d. 1900) wrote of "the end of every song man sings", and Arthur Machen's hideously entertaining novella *The Great God Pan* (1890) depicted the rise of blasphemous atavistic forces, dragging modern man down into erotic madness and disintegration. That "decadence" tapped into a deep, ever-present well of *Weltschmerz* is evidenced by the popularity it maintained well beyond the *fin de siècle*. For example, Machen's grotesque story, as well as his many others, enjoyed a revival in the United States in the 1920s, and at the same time, decadent pastiches like Ben Hecht's *Fantazius Mallare: A Mysterious Oath* (1922) were still shocking enough to attract the attention of the authorities.

Yet a decade before Huysmans' dangerous book appeared, not to mention its train of epigones, a different kind of *fin de siècle* had started brewing in, of all

places, New York's East Side. In Irving Place on 13 September 1875, three people came together to found an occult movement that would exert a profound influence, not only on modern spirituality and esotericism, but on practically the whole of modern culture itself. Two of the three were men: William Quan Judge and Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, both with distinguished careers behind them. But the third, female member of this triumvirate was the real centre of attraction. Before she put her considerable stamp on practically all aspects of modern spirituality, the eccentric Russian Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (born Helena von Hahn, 1831–91) had had an incredible roller-coaster ride of a life. There are varying reports of her activities prior to 1874, when it becomes possible to independently corroborate accounts of her exploits, and much controversy surrounds them, but as far as the story goes, H. P. B., as she was called, must rank as one of the most remarkable women of the nineteenth or practically any other century. She claimed to have travelled widely across Europe, the Near East, North and South America, India, Tibet, North Africa, and other points, at a time when such travel, especially by a solitary woman, was exceptional or, in the case of Tibet, unheard of. She claimed to have met "Red Indians" and journeyed across the Midwest in a covered wagon in the 1850s. In 1867 she fought with Garibaldi on the barricades against the Papal army and the French at the battle of Mentana, and became friends with Mazzini. In 1871 she survived the wreck of the *Eumonia*, a sea disaster that in its day was as famous as the *Titanic*. She worked as a medium in Cairo, ran an artificial flower factory, taught piano, and in her spare time wrote articles, essays, and short stories for several newspapers and magazines. And these are just some of the stories. Again, much controversy surrounds these claims – especially the journeys to Tibet – but even if only half of what Blavatsky claimed was true, she still deserves respectful recognition (Washington pp. 32–33).

It was in her capacity as a medium that Blavatsky met Colonel Olcott, at the farm of the Eddy brothers in Chittenden, Vermont in 1874. Olcott, who was interested in spiritualism, was covering a series of spiritualist phenomena occurring at the Eddys' farm for the New York *Daily Graphic*, and H. P. B. went there with the intention of meeting him. Although today it seems, at best, a marginal pursuit on the fringes of the mainstream in the mid-nineteenth century, spiritualism was immensely popular, both in the United States and Europe. Its official starting point was 1848. In March of that year, two girls, Margaretta and Kate Fox, of Hydesville, New York, discovered they could communicate with the spirit of a dead man. Soon others discovered they could do the same, and the age of spiritualism had begun. The belief in and practice of communicating with the dead became so widespread that one writer speaks of an "invasion of the spirit people" (Wilson pp. 73–108). In 1872, two years before Helena met Henry, spiritualism had even got into American politics, when the medium and psychic healer Victoria Woodhull ran for President – the first woman to do so – as a candidate for the Equal Rights Party, on a spiritualist, free love, feminist, and socialist platform. Needless to say she didn't win.

Blavatsky and Olcott's meeting led to a lasting, if often stormy, friendship and collaboration, the central result of which was the founding, mentioned above, with William Quan Judge, of the Theosophical Society in September 1875. Arising out of the spiritualist movement and responding to the sense of meaninglessness created by the increasing dominance of materialist science – especially in the form of Darwinian

evolution, and the belief in the inevitable "heat death" of the universe predicted by the second law of thermodynamics – Theosophy ("the wisdom of the gods") provided a kind of secular religion that in its heyday attracted some of the most influential people of the time. It was generally devoted to reviving the "lost" knowledge and wisdom of the ancients that, its members believed, exceeded both contemporary science and religion in insight and profundity, and exploring the hidden, occult character of human life and the cosmos. Some of its early converts included Thomas Edison and Abner Doubleday, the Civil War hero and purported inventor of baseball. Later Theosophists included the painters Wassily Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian; the composer Scriabin; the poet W. B. Yeats; the novelist Jack London; the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru; and the Zen Buddhist scholar D. T. Suzuki, to name a few.

Although attracting much initial attention, bolstered by the publication in 1877 of Blavatsky's enormous *Isis Unveiled*, which we can see as the first major work in the "ancient wisdom" genre still popular today, by 1879, Blavatsky and Olcott had moved their base from New York to India. For its first five years on the sub-continent, Theosophy enjoyed unqualified success, attracting many influential recruits and publishing its highly popular magazine, *The Theosophist*. This success was in no small part due to the founders' very vocal embrace of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy and culture – in 1880 both Blavatsky and Olcott formally became Buddhists by taking *pansil* in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) – and their equally vocal criticism of the British Raj and the Christian missionary effort. Then, in 1884 – that year again – a twofold disaster struck. Some disgruntled employees accused Blavatsky of faking the paranormal phenomena she produced in order to secure belief in the hidden adepts or "Mahatmas" whose agent she claimed to be; these phenomena consisted chiefly of "letters" from the Mahatmas that materialized out of thin air. And on the heels of these revelations, made public through a Christian missionary magazine, a report for the Society of Psychical Research by their investigator Richard Hodgson corroborated the charges of fraud, and concluded that H. P. B. was possibly a Russian spy – but was certainly "one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting impostors of history" (Cranston p. xvii).

Although both the initial charges of fraud and Hodgson's report were highly contested – indeed, in 1986 the SPR itself withdrew Hodgson's report as unreliable – Blavatsky's reputation and health suffered as a result of the claims (Cranston p. xvii; Hastings). The Theosophical Society itself, however, minimized its connection with her and was relatively unshaken by the scandal. Leaving India in 1885, Blavatsky wandered in Europe until 1887, when she settled in London. Here she spent her last years completing another enormous work, *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), purporting to be a vast commentary on seven stanzas from the mysterious and, to most scholarship, unknown *Book of Dzyan*, a work depicting the hidden history of mankind and the cosmos, written in the forgotten language of Senzar. Blavatsky attracted a new group of followers, among them the Fabian and Socialist Annie Besant, who abandoned her political activities to become H. P. B.'s closest champion. With the death of Colonel Olcott in 1907, Besant would become the head of the Theosophical Society, a position she maintained until her own death in 1933. Blavatsky herself died of Bright's disease and general exhaustion in 1891, leaving behind a vast body of work, an international

organization, and enough controversy to keep her devotees and critics busy for more than a century.

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Soon into its running the Theosophical Society established a "mission statement" that continues to inspire its members and fellow travellers today:

1   To form the nucleus of a universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour.
2   The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study.
3   The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man (Cranston p. xviii).

Without making the "strong" argument that H. P. B. and Theosophy were the *sole* source of what I'm calling the "New Age *fin de siècle*," a look at what followed in her considerable wake – Blavatsky was a large woman and at one point tipped the scales at 232 pounds – makes clear that very little escaped her seminal influence. That influence continues today, and anyone who meditates, is interested in Eastern wisdom and religion, thinks about their past lives, contemplates their chakras or astral body, or considers themselves a member of the "counter culture" has, in a very real sense, Madame Blavatsky to thank for this.

Blavatsky herself is an excellent meeting place for the various pursuits and interests that made up the New Age *fin de siècle*; she had, as it were, several fingers in an assortment of "alternative" pies. The following is a brief account of some of the central themes of the more positive, optimistic *fin de siècle* that, in one way or another, had their roots in Blavatsky and Theosophy and which continue in various forms today.

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH AND ALTERED STATES

When Blavatsky was investigated by the Society for Psychical Research, that organization itself was in its infancy. Founded in 1882 in England by the classical scholar F. W. H. Myers, the philosopher Henry Sidgwick, and the psychologist Edmund Gurney, it arose out of the fascination with spiritualism and the decline of the Church that characterized the mid-nineteenth century. Focusing on what we would call "paranormal" phenomena, the initial motive for forming the society was the belief that "objective and intelligent investigation" into these matters "could provide answers to the troubling metaphysical questions of the time" (Blum p. 41). Those "troubling metaphysical questions" were born out of the rise of rationalist thought and the inroads it was making into traditionally religious concerns. For men like Myers, Sidgwick, and Gurney, and many others, the increasingly polarized debates between science and religion – emblemized most emphatically by the famous battle between Thomas Huxley and Bishop Wilberforce in 1860 – left little middle ground between blind faith and aggressive agnosticism. While traditional religion seemed increasingly unable to provide a believable account of human existence, the ever-triumphant rationalist view was heading towards a "non-moral

universe," and declared that the existential questions of human existence – the mysteries of life and death and of good and evil – were either nonsense or unanswerable. With religion outgrown and science dismissive, Myers and his fellows wondered if the evidence for ghosts, spirits, precognition, telepathy (a term Myers coined), clairvoyance, and other "psychical" phenomena might help throw light on "the actual truth as to the destiny of man" (Blum p. 43).

The central question regarding the "destiny of man" was that of life after death. As science secured more and more of the territory of "truth" from religion, the idea that there was some existence beyond the grave seemed increasingly doubtful, and this undermined the rest of religion's edifice, including its moral and ethical commands. Myers and others believed that the alleged messages from the spirit world conveyed in séances, automatic writing, apparitions, dreams, and other ways might, if objectively studied, provide some evidence in support of, if not immortality, then at least some suggestion of a consciousness independent of the body. This could show that the strict materialist view was inadequate.

Today most scientists and intellectuals shy away from any public admission to anything other than the strict materialist view, and many of them go out of their way to deny any spiritual or metaphysical character to reality. But in the *fin de siècle* this was not the case. Soon after its inception, the SPR drew into its ranks many of the most influential minds of the time, such as Alfred Russel Wallace, co-"discoverer" of the theory of evolution; the physicists William Barrett and Lord Rayleigh; the philosopher and British Prime Minister Arthur Balfour; the physiologist Charles Richet; the philosopher Henri Bergson; and the psychologist and philosopher William James.

James straddled the twin, related concerns of psychical research and investigations into the phenomenology of mysticism and "altered states of consciousness", a pursuit that Myers himself followed in his posthumously published *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* (1903). In this gargantuan, two-volume work, Myers developed his own theory of the "unconscious" or "subliminal" mind, in advance of Freud, and his ideas influenced fellow psychologists such as James, Pierre Janet, Théodore Flournoy, and C. G. Jung.

James agreed with Myers that any account of human life must include evidence from "abnormal" psychological states, such as mediumship and mystical experience. In his classic work *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), James argued that personal experience was a more valid "proof" of God or religion than any theology, dogma, or abstract system, and a good deal of the book is devoted to examining the evidence of various "mystical" experiences. James himself had more than one mystical experience. Perhaps his most famous one was that occasioned by his use of nitrous oxide that, among other things, helped him to understand the philosopher Hegel (Melechi pp. 20–24). Under the effect of the gas, James saw "depth beyond depth of truth" and recognized that "our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different". "No account of the universe in its totality can be final", James said, "which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded." (James p. 305)

James, like Myers and others at the time, argued that the increasingly dominant rationalist view, based on only one form of consciousness, was indeed disregarding these other forms wilfully. It isn't surprising that, in the 1960s, when many of the

concerns of Theosophy and the "New Age *fin de siècle*" were being rediscovered, James was conscripted by the LSD advocate Timothy Leary as an early pioneer of what Leary and others at the time called the "psychedelic revolution". And the current exploration of altered states through the use of a variety of substances, such as the powerful South American hallucinogen *ayahuasca*, owes much to James' own self-experiments in the *fin de siècle*.

James acknowledged the difficulty in retaining much of the "truth" he perceived in his mystical states, but one insight did remain. The essence of it, James said, was "reconciliation". "It is as if the opposites of the world", he wrote, "whose contra-dictoriness and conflict make all of our difficulties and troubles, were melted into unity." (James p. 306) One philosopher of mysticism that James drew on in his reflections was the Canadian R. M. Bucke, whose book *Cosmic Consciousness* (1901) is a kind of mystical riposte to the bleak concerns of Nordau's *Degeneration*. Bucke argued that, rather than sinking into the slime of degeneracy as Nordau believed was imminent – in a kind of racial entropy – mankind was on the contrary giving birth to a new type of human being, one who possessed what Bucke called "cosmic consciousness", a permanent awareness of the kind of "unity" James and others glimpsed only briefly. Cosmic consciousness, for Bucke, is "a higher form of consciousness than that possessed by the ordinary man" (Bucke p. 1). It is a "consciousness of the cosmos, that is, of the life and order of the universe" (Bucke p. 3.).

Among other insights brought to Bucke by his own experience of cosmic consciousness was the fact that "the Cosmos is not dead matter but a living Presence" and "that the soul of man is immortal", realizations that would have eased the anxieties of Myers and many others at the time (Bucke p.10). These revelations led Bucke to a wholly optimistic vision of the future. "The immediate future of our race", Bucke believed, was "indescribably hopeful" (Bucke p. 4). Bucke based some of his optimism on the kind of technological vision that H. G. Wells was just beginning to make popular, but its main drive was evolutionary. Bucke believed that the growth of cosmic consciousness was a natural outcome of evolution, and his book is made up for the most part of accounts of earlier "sports", individuals such as Buddha, Jesus, Plotinus, and more recent figures like William Blake, Walt Whitman, and Bucke's contemporary Edward Carpenter, who embodied the new faculty. Yet while Bucke's account of cosmic consciousness falls more or less within Darwinian lines, its implication of a "new race" fit in with Theosophy's speculation on a similar development, and with some of Blavatsky's spawn it was wedded to Nietzsche's idea of a coming *Übermensch* or "superman". Blavatsky believed that a "new race" was coming into existence – an idea she borrowed from Edward Bulwer-Lytton's early science fiction novel *The Coming Race* (1871) – and that it would appear in America (Blavatsky p. 445).

OCCULTISM

Two of the most influential adherents to the idea of an "evolution of consciousness" came, not from the psychological or biological camps, but out of the Theosophical fold: the Russian writer and philosopher P. D. Ouspensky and the English editor and essayist A. R. Orage. Both united the idea to the tradition of occultism that Blavatsky herself, more than anyone else, revivified in the late nineteenth century.

By the end of the century, occult "undergrounds" were thriving in practically all the major cities of Europe, with London, Paris, and St Petersburg setting the fashion for the rest. When W. B. Yeats visited Blavatsky in her home in Holland Park, London in 1888–89, he had already helped to found the Dublin Hermetic Order and the Dublin Theosophical Lodge, and had attended more than one séance. Yeats' pragmatic approach to occult studies soon led to his being asked to leave the Theosophical Society – which was heavy on theory but thin on practice – but he soon after joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, probably the most well-known magical group of the *fin de siècle*, whose members included the notorious dark magician Aleister Crowley. Crowley's explorations in consciousness can be seen as an expression of the positive side of the *fin de siècle*, but his famously extravagant and excessive life style, rife with sex, drugs, and assorted perversions, not to mention his Swinburnesque poetry, put him also in the company of the decadents. Another *fin-de-siècle* figure who spanned the decadent and optimist divide was the writer M. P. Shiel, whose lapidary style and flamboyant ideas make him a peculiarly unique voice. His early work *Prince Zaleski* (1895) tapped the growing taste for eccentric detectives inaugurated by Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories – and Conan Doyle himself was familiar with Theosophy and became a spiritualist. Shiel's eponymous character, however, solves his cases through hashish intoxication and never leaves his "vast palace of the older world" filled with "barbaric gorgeousness". He is a kind of Des Esseintes, the anti-hero of Huysmans' *À Rebours*. Yet Shiel's work is filled with speculations about the "superman", and in his last novel, *The Young Men Are Coming* (1937), in which extraterrestrials trigger a "youth movement" dedicated to eradicating the "tired and irrational society of the Old Men", Shiel's evolutionary vision is expressed in a troubling, semi-fascist form.

Paris seemed relatively immune to Theosophy's call, but the French already had a long tradition of a Catholic occultism (Godwin). Eliphas Levi, whose colourful books on Kabbalah and magic were a major influence on Blavatsky, had been a defrocked priest, and a distinctly Parisian occult milieu developed along its own lines. One portal to these mysteries was Edmond Bailly's bookshop in the rue de la Chausée d'Antin, which numbered among its clientele Huysmans, the playwright Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, the poet and drug addict Stanislas de Guaita, the Freemason Gérard Encausse, the composer Erik Satie, the poet Stéphane Mallarmé, the artist Odilon Redon, and the occultist "Sar" Merodack Péladan. Péladan was the founder of the famous Salon de la Rose-Croix, and at its first gathering in 1892, Satie's *Trois Sonneries de la Rose + Croix* were first performed. Another composer associated with the salon was Claude Debussy. Alchemy formed a large part of the Parisian occult *fin de siècle*, and a remarkable document of "alchemical Paris" at the time is August Strindberg's fascinating *Inferno* (1898), based on the posthumously published *From An Occult Diary* (1963). The alchemical milieu Strindberg occupied carried on well past the *fin de siècle*, and was centred again on another bookshop, this time the Librairie du Merveilleux run by Pierre Dujols and Alexandre Thomas (Dubois).

Much of what was de rigueur in Paris made its way, as was usual, to Russia, and of all the occult capitals of the *fin de siècle*, St Petersburg was perhaps the most frenetic. In Russia's "Silver Age" (1890–1914), occultism was the height of fashion, and a variety of outré activities turned St Petersburg and also Moscow into hotbeds

of mysticism, magic, and erotic extravagance, in which the dark concerns of the decadent *fin de siècle* mixed with the forward looking optimism of the early "New Age" movement. This, we remember, was the age that produced Rasputin. On the dark side, an efflorescence of satanic imagery and themes flooded the cultural streams, and practically everyone engaged in creative work of some kind at the time was touched by the Devil's hooked claw, a development most clearly seen in the career of the novelist and poet Valery Briusov. The more positive occult presence was felt in the influence of Rudolf Steiner, the Austrian Goethe scholar turned spiritual teacher. Before founding his own esoteric movement, Anthroposophy, in 1912, Steiner was the most impressive Theosophical lecturer in Europe. Steiner, who is best known today as the founder of Waldorf Education, made a profound impact on the "God Seekers", Russia's religiously driven intelligentsia, including figures like the writer Dimitri Merzhkovksy and the poet Zinaida Hippius. So great was Steiner's appeal that, when the 1905 revolution forced him to cancel a series of lectures in Russia, they were rescheduled for the next year in Paris, the exile capital of Europe.

One Russian thinker bitten by the Theosophical bug, yet critical of his compatriots' devilish pursuits, was the journalist and novelist P. D. Ouspensky. Although an important thinker in his own right, Ouspensky is today best known as the chief interpreter of another spiritual teacher to emerge from the Russian *fin de siècle*, G. I. Gurdjieff. Ouspensky cut his esoteric teeth in the Theosophical Society, and in 1912 he published a work that remains an exhilarating, inspiring, and optimistic *tour de force* of metaphysics. In *Tertium Organum*, Ouspensky brought together a dazzling array of anti-materialist, anti-reductionist thought that still packs an impressive philosophical punch. Ranging from reflections on Theosophical themes like the astral body to the "fourth dimension" of Charles Hinton – whose "hypercubes", a visualization aid meant to trigger perception of "higher dimensions", were highly popular in the *fin de siècle* – Ouspensky's central insight is the need to develop a more intense form of consciousness, precisely the kind of cosmic consciousness that R. M. Bucke had envisioned. But where Bucke believed that cosmic consciousness was a natural development of evolution, and would eventually become the norm for the entire race, Ouspensky's Nietzschean sensibilities rejected this democratic notion (Ouspensky 1981 pp. 274–78). Instead, Ouspensky believed that the new form of consciousness would appear only in individuals who subjected themselves to the culture and discipline necessary to produce it. Cosmic consciousness for him wasn't something that would appear automatically, but had to be achieved through effort.

Another Theosophist who saw a new form of consciousness on the rise was A. R. Orage. Like Ouspensky, Orage would become a spokesman for Gurdjieff. (Although it is unclear if Gurdjieff ever officially joined the society – as both Ouspensky and Orage did – it is safe to say that his own "Fourth Way" school grew out of Theosophical soil.) In 1904, before he came into contact with either Ouspensky (whom he met in 1914) or Gurdjieff (whom he met in 1921), Orage gave a series of lectures to the Leeds and Manchester branches of the Theosophical Society on "Consciousness: Animal, Human, Superman", later published as a book. For Orage, our everyday human consciousness is "inferior to superman consciousness, just as an embryo in an egg is inferior to the bird flying in the air". Orage agreed with Ouspensky that the superman is a product of effort, an imaginative one: "evolution

is altogether an imaginative process. You become what you have been led to imagine yourselves to be" (Orage p. 68). Like Ouspensky, Orage's Nietzschean sensibility soon distanced him from rank and file Theosophists. His *Nietzsche and the Dionysian Spirit of the Age* (1906) was the first systematic introduction to Nietzsche in English and was praised by H. G. Wells (Mairet p. 33).

Orage's periodical *New Age*, which he edited from 1907 to 1924, was the premier clearing house and sounding board for a dizzying array of "progressive" ideas: vegetarianism, arts and craft, back-to-nature, anti-vivisection, Rational Dress, socialism, Fabianism, feminism, Eastern religion, and a motley assortment of other "new" notions, including Theosophy; before editing the *New Age*, Orage's main literary outlet was the *Theosophical Review*. Orage had an enviable ability to synthesize the medley of ideas that populated his eclectic mind into a point of view that not only sidestepped the contradiction between, say, Blavatsky and Bernard Shaw, or H. G. Wells and Plato, but made their unlikely union eminently reasonable. Orage published Shaw, Wells, and G. K. Chesterton, among others, and is most remembered today – outside of Gurdjieffean circles – as the discoverer of the New Zealander short story writer Katharine Mansfield. It was the *New Age* under his editorship that most clearly typified the immensely stimulating blend of progressive ideas, evolutionary vision, mystical doctrines, and radical lifestyles that, not surprisingly, characterized the *fin-de-siècle* New Age.

COUNTER CULTURE

One progressive figure who spanned the spheres of consciousness and the "new life" was Edward Carpenter, earlier referred to as one of Bucke's examples of a contemporary carrier of cosmic consciousness. Carpenter was a poet, social philosopher, and what we would call an early gay activist, as well as a member of the Fellowship of the New Life (founded in 1883), whose other members included the sexologist Havelock Ellis, the feminist Edith Lees, and the animal-rights activist Henry Stephens Salt. Dedicated to the cultivation of a "perfect character", the fellowship aimed to transform society by setting an example of "the simple life" as expressed in the social ideas of Leo Tolstoy. With their aim of working towards the common good, they shared in Theosophy's goal of achieving "a universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour". The Fabian Society was a later offshoot of the fellowship.

Carpenter was one of the most important and influential figures of the turn of the century, and he shared in at least three central themes of the New Age *fin de siècle*: the idea of an "evolution of consciousness"; progressive social reform; and "the journey to the East", which we will look at in the next section. In *From Adam's Peak to Elephanta* (1892), about his journey to Ceylon and India, Carpenter has a chapter entitled "Consciousness Without Thought", in which he describes his experience of a "new" form of consciousness which he believed humankind was evolving into; hence his inclusion in Bucke's book. Carpenter's biggest impact at the time, however, was through his work *Civilization: Its Cause and Cure* (1889), which updated Rousseau's notion of the "noble savage" and expressed an early form of the 1960s philosophy of "dropping out". For Carpenter – as for the hippies – civilization was a "disease" that human society passed through; its "cure" was "getting back to

nature", "the simple life", a closer connection to the land, and a closer acquaintance with our own inner world. Carpenter presaged much contemporary progressive thought, writing at length on environmental concerns, animal rights, gay rights, organic farming, vegetarianism, feminism, anti-capitalism, and dress reform, and advocating what he called "mystical socialism". Anyone who enjoys wearing sandals in the summertime has Carpenter to thank for it, as he was the first to popularize their use in Europe. Another dress reform advocate, the Theosophist Anna Kingsford, was also a vehement anti-vivisectionist. Her antipathy to the practice was so great that Kingsford claimed to have killed several vivisectionists by sheer will power. How she squared this with the Christian mystical beliefs that led to her leaving Theosophy to form her own Hermetic Society is unclear (Washington p. 73).

A more straightforward Theosophical expression of progressive social ideas began around the same time in Switzerland. In 1889, Alfred Pioda, a member of the Swiss Parliament and a devoted Theosophist, planned a "Theosophical cloister" in the sleepy village of Ascona, on the shores of the beautiful Lake Maggiore. Ascona by this time already had a radical background: in 1873 one of its residents was the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin (ironic, as today it is an upmarket holiday resort). The cloister was to be set on a hill named Monescia, overlooking the lake, and Pioda's collaborators in the plan were the Swedish countess Constance Wachmeister, Madame Blavatsky's companion; Franz Hartmann, a Theosophist, German occultist, and translator of the *Bhagavad Gita*; and the Dutch novelist, psychiatrist, spiritualist, and dream researcher Frederik van Eeden, who, in 1913, coined the term "lucid dream".

Although Pioda's plan did not materialize, another "alternative community" did soon take root on Monescia. In 1900 Ida Hoffman, a Montenegran piano teacher, and Henri Oedenkoven, the son of a wealthy Belgian industrialist, rechristened the hill Monte Verità, the "Mountain of Truth", and on it founded a "co-operative vegetarian colony". The site soon attracted scores of esoteric and cultural notables, eager to escape the stress-ridden life of the big city and relax in the beautiful near-Mediterranean micro-climate of Italian Switzerland's Ticino. Well in advance of the "love generation", anarchists, vegetarians, nature enthusiasts, free-love advocates, Theosophists, psychoanalysts, poets, painters, occultists, and philosophers who rejected an increasingly materialist mainstream society were drawn to the curiously spiritual atmosphere surrounding Ascona. The novelist Hermann Hesse, the dancer Isadora Duncan, the choreographer Rudolf Laban, the radical Freudian Otto Gross, the philosopher Ludwig Klages, the occultist and spy Theodor Reuss, the "spiritual scientist" Rudolf Steiner, the sociologist Max Weber, the novelist D. H. Lawrence, and the anarchist Erich Mühsam (later murdered by the Nazis) were among the many who came to participate in the "new life", forming an at times chaotic attempt at actualizing Theosophy's call for "a universal brotherhood of humanity".

Perhaps the most characteristic figure associated with Monte Verità was the *Naturmensch* Gustav Gräser, known simply as "Gusto". A poet and painter determined to cure himself of "civilization", Gusto made his own clothes and plucked food from the trees, lived in a cave with his wife and several children, made his own furniture from tree limbs and branches, and did his best to, as we would say, "stay off the grid". During a visit to Monte Verità to take the cure for his nerves, Hermann Hesse was so impressed by Gusto that he submitted to his regimen. This meant exposing his

naked body to the elements, and Hesse later wrote of being burned by the sun, drenched by rain, and having his skin torn by thorns (Freedman pp. 136–37).

The original Monte Verità experiment ended in 1920, when Hoffman and Oekendoven moved to South America, but in the 1930s it received a new lease on esoteric life when the English-Dutch socialite Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn opened her nearby Casa Gabriella as the location for the famous Eranos Conferences, presided over by the psychologist C. G. Jung. Fröbe-Kapteyn had originally planned for the auditorium she built to be used by the Theosophist Alice Bailey. Bailey, however, declined, saying that the area was associated with black magic and witchcraft (Green).

THE JOURNEY TO THE EAST

Perhaps the greatest debt that the New Age *fin de siècle* and our own New Age owe to Madame Blavatsky and Theosophy is the dissemination and popularization of the "wisdom of the East". Although interest in Indian religion and philosophy had been present since William Jones' groundbreaking Sanskrit studies in the late eighteenth century, Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott were the first highly publicized Westerners to proclaim a deep appreciation of the Hindu and Buddhist cultural heritage and to argue its superiority over that of the West. By the time of their move from New York to first Bombay (Mumbai) and then Adyar, many other Europeans and Americans were making their own "journeys to the East" – the title of a novel by Hermann Hesse, first published in 1932, but popular in the 1960s and early 70s. Hesse himself went to Ceylon in 1911. We've seen that Edward Carpenter had made the trek. So did Ouspensky, in 1913, on his "search for the miraculous". Gurdjieff, the esoteric teacher Ouspensky met at the end of his search – in a Moscow café, not in the mystic East – had made his own journey to Central Asia. Many others did as well, and the idea that *lux ex orient* soon became a part of mainstream culture. In the early twentieth century it informed pulp fiction in, to give two examples, the Theosophist Talbot Mundy's gripping tales of mystical adventure, such as *King of the Khyber Rifles* (1916), and Walter B. Gibson's character the Shadow, who learned his ability to "cloud men's minds" in Tibet, where Madame Blavatsky herself perfected her occult powers. Less politically correct, by contemporary standards, were the ripping thrillers featuring the fiendish Fu Manchu by Sax Rohmer that first appeared in 1913, in which the East is seen as the source of the ominous "Yellow Peril" advancing on the West. More middlebrow mystical Eastern fare was later provided by James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* (1933), which introduced the world to Shangri-La, the hidden monastery in Tibet (fashioned after Blavatsky's claims to living in one) and W. Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* (1944), whose title is taken from a verse in the *Katha-Upanishad*. Both books were made into highly successful films.

To chart the spread of Eastern ideas and practices in the West begun by Madame Blavatsky would require a book in itself. Suffice it to say that the many yoga centres, meditation classes, Oriental and Indian medicines, books on Tantra – not to mention the widespread adoption of Tibetan Buddhism in the West – popular today owe their existence to Madame Blavatsky, Colonel Olcott, and the other early Theosophists. One clear sign of the global impact of Eastern and Theosophical ideas occurred at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions, an early multi-faith event that

grew out of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, an early form of the World's Fair. This was the first formal assembly of representatives of Eastern and Western religions, and among the participants numbered many Theosophists, including Anagarika Dharmapala, the representative of Theravada Buddhism, who had been Blavatsky's student; W. Q. Judge, head of the American branch of the Theosophical Society and one of the society's founders; and Annie Besant (Cranston pp. 425–29). The opening speech by Swami Vivekananda is seen by some to mark the beginning of the West's, and certainly America's, interest in Indian religion as a vital, living tradition, and not merely an exotic eccentricity. That Buddhists, Jains, Bahá'ís, Muslims, Hindus, and Theosophists could share the platform with Catholics, Protestants, and Jews was, for the time (and still today), a remarkable achievement, and it was precisely the kind of coming together of different faiths that Blavatsky saw as the essence of Theosophy. If she was still hovering around in her astral form and witnessed the gathering, she no doubt felt that her efforts had been worthwhile.

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PART VIII

AESTHETICS

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MUSIC AND THE
GESAMTKUNSTWERK

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Mark Berry

When does a *fin de siècle* start? The French term seems to have been used first in the mid-1880s, at least in the singular sense employed today. It would be fascinating to devote an entire essay, even a book, to that matter, yet to do so would hardly fulfil my brief of considering the *fin-de-siècle* musical world. To begin slightly before the time in which the term began to be used makes sense not only in avoiding anachronism – such avoidance often proves merely a pedantic alternative to engagement with actual historical problems – but because it coincides with the death and thus also the *fin-de-siècle* after-life of the composer who, above all others, may justly be considered emblematic and symptomatic of the nineteenth century. Friedrich Nietzsche certainly thought so; so would Thomas Mann. And no musician, nor indeed anyone remotely interested in music or culture in general, was able to avoid the heavy shadow cast by Richard Wagner.

WAGNER AND AFTER

Wagner died at Venice's Palazzo Vendramin in 1883. Voice of the 'German spirit' or its most ardent 'universalist' foe? As in the case of many such constructed oppositions, the answer may well be both; why otherwise pose the question? For to understand Wagner's legacy to his *fin-de-siècle* followers, willing and unwilling, we must step a little further back, to briefly consider the man who, for Nietzsche, not only summed up the modern world, but was '*une névrose*' (Nietzsche 1888: 22), that neurosis of *décadence* always bringing out the French language in Nietzsche, as indeed it does in our 'end-of-the-century' term.

'Wagner's body belongs to me. Nothing must be done without my orders as regards the transport from Venice.' (Quoted in Newman 1976: iv, 713) The Bavarian king, Ludwig II, may have claimed Wagner's body, just as he had bankrolled Bayreuth, yet Ludwig's Wagner, a purveyor of pseudo-mediæval romances enshrined in the Schloss Neuschwanstein, was certainly not that of the *fin de siècle*, nor of modernity and modernism more generally. Indeed, that cod-Romantic confection of knights and swans had little to do with Wagner himself either. (Would that those who angrily denounce 'non-traditional' stagings of his dramas might understand

that too.) The bizarre world of the 'Bayreuth Circle', centred around Wagner's posthumous son-in-law, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and his noxious racialist ideologies, put forward one especially strident claim to inheritance. Were it not, however, for Chamberlain's anointing of Hitler and the subsequent calamitous history of the Third Reich, we should at best consider such Bayreuth antics a footnote. In any case, Wagner's musical legacy should be sought elsewhere, a fine irony given Bayreuth's insistence, ultimately unsuccessful, that German copyright law be modified so that Wagner's final drama, *Parsifal*, might be restricted to the theatre for which it was written.

That was the Bayreuth Festspielhaus, constructed for the first performances of the *Ring* cycle in 1876, and the last in a series of theatres, mostly merely projected, in which Wagner had hoped to transform operatic life, to make art, revolutionary in æsthetic and political terms, rather than commerce or high society the focus of attention. Through Bayreuth, the world would properly come to know of the 'complete work of art', the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, in which individual arts, long artificially divided, would regain the unity they had possessed in Attic tragedy, and thus fulfil their individual and collective potential. Bayreuth, as Wagner's theatrical plans had always been, was as much a political and religious as an æsthetic idea. However, by now there was a contradictory understanding, stronger than during his Dresden revolutionary heyday, of a 'temple of art', hinting at the Secession Movements of Berlin, Munich, and Vienna, as well as the struggles between musicians and the public of the twentieth century. And so, on 22 May 1872, his fifty-ninth birthday, Wagner laid the foundation stone of his festival theatre in Bayreuth, a small town with no other distractions: perfect, that is, for surrender to art, which was already coming to be considered, at least in part, for its own sake, rather than primarily as a tool of social transformation. He informed his gathered supporters that, the next time they assembled, they would find on this very spot a building (see Figure 40.1) whose intellectual history they would be able to read upon and within it:

> You will find, constructed with the cheapest of materials, an outer shell which will at best remind you of those sketchily built festival halls erected on odd occasions in German towns for singing and similar social occasions, to be immediately dismantled when the festival is over. On the other hand, you will, upon entering the building, soon begin to see which of its aspects have been designed for permanence. Here too you will find very cheap materials, a complete lack of decoration; you will perhaps be surprised by the lack of ornament with which those traditional festival halls were pleasantly hung. But, in the proportions of the interior and in its seating arrangements, you will find the expression of an idea, which, once grasped, will transform your expectations into something quite different from anything you will previously have experienced in a theatre. If this effect should be fully achieved, the mysterious entry of the music will now begin to prepare you for the unveiling and display of scenic pictures, which, by appearing to emanate from an idealistic dream world, would demonstrate to you the complete reality of the simulating powers of a noble art. Here, nothing must be permitted to speak in mere provisional, sketchy forms; in scenery and acting, you will be offered the very best that the artistic skill of our time can achieve.
>
> (Quoted in Skelton 1979: 406)

Gone are his youthful – or relatively youthful – plans for a theatre that would, over four days, present the *Ring* and then be pulled down, having done its job. Or rather, such plans are transformed, so that the building remains in relative terms, inexpensive and undecorated. Crucially, all is at the service of the work; this is no Royal Opera House, Covent Garden or Milan's La Scala, let alone the nineteenth-century Palais Garnier, to which one might go to be seen, and perhaps to pick up one of the dancing girls from one of those dramatically unmotivated ballets upon which Parisian opera insisted. Once the performance was underway, one would see nothing but the stage, being plunged into darkness, even the orchestra invisible throughout. *Parsifal* was to be confined to Bayreuth, and given the unwieldy, opera-house-defying description of *Bühnenweihfestspiel* (stage-festival-consecration-play). Its premiere was given in 1882, less than a year before Wagner's death.

Parsifal has often been understood as a 'late' work, even an almost incongruously modern work (Barone 1995). For Theodor Adorno, *Parsifal* exhibited both the Wagnerian *Altersstil* and the 'still disconcertingly new' (Adorno 1956: 52). Wagner had long seen the Athenian *polis* and its attendant tragic artworks as the archetypal embodiment of harmony between the individual and society, private and public, not to be restored, but to be renewed, with all the means of modernity at his and, more broadly, society's disposal. Moreover, art and its performance were not merely a part of this political project, but the most important part. A tension arose in his later years, a tension that would be one of his most important legacies to the *fin de siècle* and beyond, namely that between the positive vision of art as socially transformative and celebratory of social transformation, and the disillusioned or at least elitist idea

Figure 40.1   Wagner and Kaiser Wilhelm I open the Bayreuth Theatre in 1876.
Liszt stands on Wagner's right. © Private Collection/Look and Learn/Rosenberg Collection/
The Bridgeman Art Library

of a refuge from the ills of modern society. The latter's cultism became ensconced far more firmly in Bayreuth than had ever been Wagner's intention or fear, yet *Parsifal* had itself offered on stage a religious community, a gathered congregation in an almost Lutheran sense. What the cultists failed to recognise was the need for rejuvenation; after all, Monsalvat would have perished had it not been for the new, charismatic leadership of Parsifal. Many successors, however, tended not to grasp, or not wish to grasp, the ambiguities in Wagner's legacy.

Claude Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, its symbolist drama a more or less straightforward setting rather than adaptation of Maurice Maeterlinck's play, tended towards æstheticism in its response, so much so that the composer adored the score of *Parsifal* whilst finding its dramatic content merely ludicrous. Secrets rather lay at the heart of the inheritance and content of Debussy's sole completed opera. Indeed, he expressed in 1893, the year on which he embarked work on the opera, a hope to found a Society for Musical Esotericism. Yet, whatever Debussy's 'intentions', it remains one of the most obviously post-Wagnerian great operas. Debussy derived, consciously or otherwise, from *Tristan und Isolde* deferral, predicated upon tonal expectation, of resolution, both musical and dramatic. Its lyric arabesques are unmistakably in a French tradition, indeed one many post-Wagnerians would consider dubious: the pastel-hued – for some, merely insipid – *décadence* of Jules Massenet. Nevertheless they seem, almost against Debussy's will, to be transmuted by a Wagnerian imperative towards an operatic symphonism, that being the true secret of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which otherwise remains a mere feat of agglomeration, an imperative extending beyond the celebrated 'musical drama' of the orchestral interludes. (These were actually not part of the composer's initial conception, written to cover scene changes that Paris's Opéra-Comique could not otherwise manage.)

However, ultimately, and here we consider Debussy and the *fin de siècle* at their most modernistic, it is, in dramatic terms, Samuel Beckett who beckons (though even in that respect, Wagner is not irrelevant, no more than he would be for James Joyce or T. S. Eliot). Realism both summons and is incorporated into its half-lit opposite. Consider Arkel's 'Perhaps no events that are pointless occur.' The answer, if answer there must be, is clearly 'perhaps', as the ambiguities – Debussy's trade-mark, indeterminate 'vagueness', so powerful an inheritance for twentieth-century composers such as Pierre Boulez – of the score make clear, or vague. In the midst of such purposeful, if not purposive, aimlessness, one may readily overlook the naturalism in the work, perhaps more of a rebellion. As the biographer of Dame Maggie Teyte, an early Mélisande, observed: 'Various forms of naturalism flourished at the time, from an extreme Zola-esque crudity to the delicate performances of Antoine's *Théâtre Libre*, and the enchanting performances of Chekhov, and it was these daring innovatory practices in the straight theatre on which Debussy drew heavily for *Pelléas*.' (O'Connor 1979: 70) (See Figure 40.2.) It also owed a substantial debt to the practice of Modest Mussorgsky, especially in his historical epic *Boris Godunov*. And yet, following such practices was not really an anti-Wagner rebellion at all, for the mythologies of both composers embodied and, in Wagner's case, anticipated, such naturalism, without being confined thereto. Even Debussy's employment of the orchestra to express inescapable Fate has its roots, compositional and æsthetic, in Wagner's conception of the orchestra as Greek chorus.

Figure 40.2   The Death of Pelléas, Act IV, Scene 4 of *Pelléas et Mélisande* by Debussy, from a photograph of the first production in April 1902 of the opera at the Opéra-Comique in Paris © Bibliothèque des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France/Archives Charmet/The Bridgeman Art Library

For a great deal of the orchestral writing and even the rare – in every sense – vocal passion from the final scene of the fourth act, Pelléas's 'last night' with Mélisande might almost have been taken from *Tristan und Isolde*. Likewise, of course, their separation in death, in this case thanks to Golaud's jealousy, a *more* traditionally 'operatic' device than that of King Marke's incomprehension and subsequent forgiveness. If musico-dramatic self-definition against the alleged excesses of operatic 'tradition' continued to yield to that which it disdained even in *Pelléas*, generally considered the subtlest of heirs to Wagner, how much more so did it in the work of many other composers, Richard Strauss included? Moreover, it was not always the case that composers, still less audiences, wished so to struggle. With respect to Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca*, references to which in the critical literature are now almost universally followed by Joseph Kerman's notorious jibe 'shabby little shocker' (Kerman 2005: 205), contemporaries remarked upon and in many cases protested against its Wagnerisms. Puccini stood accused of abandoning his native lyrical tradition, of prostrating himself to the conceptual, and still more to the orchestral, quasi-symphonic apparatus of Wagnerian music drama. What strikes many listeners today as utterly Italianate was noted at the time at least as much for its departures from the soil that had nurtured the operas of Giuseppe Verdi (and late Verdi works such as *Otello*, premiered in 1887, had themselves met with such criticisms).

Wagner's influence in France ran far deeper than the single example of Debussy; indeed, since Baudelaire it had been estimable. Despite the understandable hostility voiced towards Wagner following his attitude during the Franco-Prussian War – the play, *Eine Kapitulation*, mocking Parisian suffering was a particular low point,

though Wagner might not unreasonably have pointed to the shabby treatment he himself had suffered in Paris – Wagner's stock rose rapidly after his death. By 1890, it was noted that works by Wagner were appearing in almost every Sunday concert programme (Weber 1986: 415). The city whose Jockey Club had in 1861 notoriously derailed his *Tannhäuser* now sat respectfully and honoured him alongside Beethoven and Johannes Brahms – part and parcel, it should be noted, of an increasing tendency towards respect for the artwork and performance, even their sacralisation, which offered a marked contrast with, indeed opposition towards, conceptions of art as 'mere' entertainment. The cultic tendencies of *Parsifal* may have been extreme, but they were not idiosyncratic.

In German-speaking countries, whilst Wagner loomed very large, there was in some respects more of a contest. Strauss, who, in compositional terms, owed more to Wagner than to anyone else, displayed æsthetic ambivalence in rejecting Wagner's later Schopenhauerian metaphysics of music – music, uniquely amongst the arts, as a representation of Schopenhauer's 'Will' – for a materialism founded upon Wagner's greatest accuser, Nietzsche. Indeed, during the *fin-de-siècle* years, Strauss composed but a single, though admittedly highly Wagnerian, opera, *Guntram*, making his name instead as the anti-Romantic – though not necessarily un-Romantic – *enfant terrible* of the post-Lisztian symphonic poem or 'tone poem'. That phenomenon was not limited to Strauss, though it is perhaps brought into greater relief, given his evident discipleship (and immersion in the æsthetics of Arthur Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, *et al.*) For instance, in the music of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, that magic in the 'Magic Fire Music' concluding Wagner's *Die Walküre* lost all of its metaphysical richness, becoming something closer to naturalistic pyrotechnics: 'exotic' to some Western, perhaps Orientalist, observers, ultimately in need of primitivist or some other reinvigoration to the following generation, including Igor Stravinsky and Sergei Prokofiev, Rimsky's pupils. *Tales of Tsar Saltan* (1899–1900), Rimsky's contribution to the Pushkin centenary, and still more so the later *Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh* (1903–04) both sound somewhat impoverished, as much in 'substantial' or 'metaphysical' as musical terms, to Wagnerian ears and yet also look forward in colouristic 'imagination' to Stravinsky's ballets for Sergei Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*, not least *Petrushka*.

Let us, however, return briefly to Strauss. In *Also sprach Zarathustra*, its very title announcing homage to Nietzsche, he makes clear his lack of interest, unlike his contemporary Gustav Mahler, in Wagnerian matters of redemption; eternity is of no interest, but rather the almost Voltaire-like imperative in the here and now to escape the bonds of religious superstition. Strauss originally subtitled the work 'symphonic optimism in *fin-de-siècle* form, dedicated to the twentieth century', for which he would later substitute, 'freely after Nietzsche'. That said, Strauss was, if not exceptional, then unusual in his partial escape. In his first book, *Wagner-Probleme und andere Studien*, published in 1900, the Austrian music critic Max Graf painted a picture that might sound exaggerated, yet barely is (quoted in Glauert 1999: 9): 'With deep emotion and awe, we, the avant-garde of a new generation, turned away from Wagner's picture and after moments of fear and trembling stepped out together and with head held high towards our own world, our own sun.' The only candidate for exaggeration is the degree of progress made towards a different world and sun; resistance varied enormously, yet by 1900 was more often than not halting.

BRAHMS AND AFTER

More common than successful escape was the outright hostility of the 'Brahmsians'. Brahms himself died in 1897, offering another death we might consider. But hostility raged during his lifetime too, even if less his than that of his followers, most notoriously that of the critic and æsthetician, Eduard Hanslick, parodied by Wagner as the uncreative nitpicking town clerk, Beckmesser, in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Attempts have been made to rehabilitate Hanslick, who after all held a chair in æsthetics in Vienna. His music criticism, however, was vehemently partisan and showed little understanding of Wagner, Anton Bruckner (who died in 1896), or indeed any composers of a more 'progressive' outlook. Music for Hanslick was, to a certain degree in anticipation of the modernist æsthetics of Stravinsky, expressive of nothing other than itself; it was certainly not its role to express emotions or extra-musical ideas. Wagner's conception of the 'emotionalisation of the intellect' (Wagner 1851: 215), for at least partly extra-musical ends, was thus anathema. Brahms's solidly instrumental, allegedly 'absolute' example, vocal works notwithstanding, thus offered another path. It might, on that wonderfully rich, mahagony surface, seem almost to offer the soundtrack for the Buddenbrook family of Mann's novel – solid, decent German *Bürger* – but there lies far more beneath the surface in Brahms, just of course as there does in the decline of Mann's chosen family.

For, despite its undoubted appeal to the educated middle classes, brought up on the 'classics', often wary of political and musical 'revolutionaries' such as Wagner, Brahms's music would itself prove highly 'progressive', to use Arnold Schoenberg's own term, not so much in precipitating the crisis of tonality as in providing the materials of motivic integration from which to construct a new, serialist order in the 1920s. Its 'universalism' could be understood in a different way from that in which decent, well-ordered households would have done, more progenitor of the Bauhaus-like æsthetics of 1920s *Neue Sachlichkeit* ('New Objectivity') than comfortable reminder of 'timeless', universal values. In that respect, it is well worth noting an interesting point made by Peter Franklin in his biography of Mahler, concerning the claims to universality and singularity of musical culture in Austria-Hungary, a point that might readily be extended to the wider musical world, at least as viewed from a still-Germanocentric standpoint:

> All the races that made up the ethnically diverse, 'multinational' Habsburg Empire were represented by Mahler's contemporaries at the Conservatory. The aim of their teachers was to make them all executants and officials of a traditional musical culture whose special value was defined by its universality and its transcendence of the popular, the ephemeral, the ethnic, the worldly. The 'mastery' of the greatest works was taken to be synonymous with their structural articulation as models of a theoretical 'organic unity'.
>
> (Franklin 1997: 32)

And indeed, even in the apparent archaism of one of his final works, the neo-Bachian organ Chorale Preludes, op. 122, written in 1896 and published posthumously, the music is Janus-faced – much, of course, as is Bach's own music, not least for most of the composers (if not really for Debussy) hitherto mentioned. Foundations of the

most determined 'organic unity' seem already to entail its dissolution. Take away the tonal underpinnings of a metrically complex Brahms melody – in, for instance, his decidedly 'late' piano pieces of the 1890s – and you will find yourself but a stone's throw from a Schoenbergian twelve-note row. (There are many passages in Mozart of which one might say much the same.) Schoenberg may actually be considered, from at least *Verklärte Nacht* (1899) onwards, to be the reconciler of Brahms and Wagner (see Goehr and Goehr 1957), the string sextet of that transfigured night offering a Brahmsian framework for the post-*Tristan* harmonies and the eroticism of the Richard Dehmel poem that furnishes the work's none-too-secret 'programme'. Schoenberg, in a late note to a recording of the work, would attempt to play down its programmatic associations, in his presentation of the sextet as a piece of apparently absolute music handing a posthumous victory to Brahms (Schoenberg 1950). However, the cunning of history would render his position somewhat old hat: Wagner rather than Brahms would soon prove the greater inspiration for Schoenberg's later-twentieth-century successors.

LISZT AND AFTER

Who else died? In 1886, the still grossly misunderstood figure of Franz Liszt. Wagner's friend and eventual father-in-law, though under two years older than Wagner, Liszt has suffered at posterity's hands by being remembered chiefly as the greatest of piano virtuosi, which he undoubtedly was, rather than as one of the century's most striking and, crucially, avant-gardist composers. He represents a gateway to the twentieth century, his experimentalism in many respects setting him 'beyond' – from a modernist perspective – Wagner himself, anticipating, as it were, Debussy, Schoenberg, Béla Bartók, *et al.*, before they had penned a note. The possibility of a musical language beyond tonality had long preoccupied Liszt; he had attended as early as 1832 lectures in Paris by the Belgian François-Joseph Fétis, in which the idea of a final, 'omnitonic' harmony was propounded (Walker 1997: 440). Yet whereas Fétis had seen decay – 'decadence', to use the currency of fifty years hence – Liszt caught a prophetic glimpse of something new. Late piano works, such as *Nuages gris* (1881), greatly admired by Debussy and Stravinsky, may have been dark, embittered even; yet, unlike Wagner, for whom *Tristan und Isolde* seems to have marked an ultimate extreme, Liszt imagined, even stole from, a future that lay beyond even those harmonic shores, offering a parallel to Nietzsche's vision in *The Gay Science*:

> Indeed, we philosophers and 'free spirits' feel, when we hear the news that 'the old god is dead,' as if a new dawn shone upon us; our heart overflows with gratitude, amazement, premonitions, expectation. At long last the horizon appears free to us again, even if it should not be bright; at long last our ships may venture out again, venture out to face any danger; all the daring of the lover of knowledge is permitted again; the sea, *our* sea, lies open again; perhaps there has never yet been such an 'open sea.'
>
> (Nietzsche 1882: 280)

One of Liszt's many piano pupils, Arthur Friedheim, told of encountering his teacher at work on a treatise on modern harmony, in which what we might call, anticipating

another, brasher twentieth-century movement, the composer's futurism would have been more fully discussed. Liszt appears to have been at work on the treatise as late as 1885. (Unfortunately, the sketches appear to have been lost.)

> In his later years, the Master had formed the habit of rising at five o'clock in the morning, and I paid him many a solitary visit at that hour, even playing to him occasionally. . . . On the last of these matutinal visits, I found him poring over books and old manuscripts. With his permission I joined him in this very interesting occupation. Catching sight of one manuscript which particularly drew my attention I picked it up saying: 'This will make you responsible for a lot of nonsense which is bound to be written someday.' I expected a rebuke for my remark, but he answered, very seriously: 'That may be. I have not published it because the time for it is not yet ripe.' The title of this little book was *Sketches for a Harmony of the Future*.
>
> (Friedheim 1961: 165–66)

This crepuscular world with its whispering intimations of mortality and elegies (both being composed for Wagner), flickeringly lit by Mephisto waltzes and stations of the Cross (the stark *Via Crucis*, 1878, unperformed until 1929), was Liszt's gateway to a music of the future, as radical in its way as the 'artwork of the future' from Wagner's post-1849 Zurich exile. Interestingly, Liszt discouraged his pupils from performing his late music, fearing that it would damage their careers; just as Beethoven in his late quartets was in part consciously writing for posterity, so was Liszt now entirely, albeit more pessimistically. That classically modernist opposition between composer as seer and his uncomprehending bourgeois audience, soon so glaringly illustrated by Viennese audiences jangling their keys at Schoenberg's latest works, had already opened up here; with Liszt, it is arguably greater, for he actually wished to discourage contact rather than risk *Skandalkonzert*-style confrontation. Liszt's music of the future would nevertheless be taken up, consciously or otherwise, by many, not least by successor pianist-composer-theorist, Ferruccio Busoni, whose *Sketch of a New Aesthetic of Music* remains a founding document of twentieth-century experimentalism (Busoni 1907).

The idea of the 'growth' of harmony, whether as guiding principle of understanding musical history, or hovering in the background as a tacit assumption, was open to all manner of objections. Liszt both rejoiced in it and proved one of its most prescient critics – at least from a standpoint other than the reactionary. Yet, on a more practical level, many 'new' chords arose more from mixing existing chords in a particular musical situation and made little 'grammatical' sense out of context. Liszt's use of chords built upon fourths was a relatively rare constructive exception – echoed many years later by Bartók and Schoenberg – but his 'Madonna' chord in *Via Crucis* exemplifies the 'contextual' variety. That is partly why Debussy's delight in the sonorities of particular harmonies, chords viewed almost as *objets d'art*, though never of course ultimately without context, proved so revolutionary, offering an example that would appeal to many of the more radical composers of the twentieth century from Stravinsky to Boulez and beyond.

Nevertheless, however problematical, the idea of 'growth' proved highly influential, both at the time and in retrospect: pedagogically, hermeneutically, and creatively.

Like its economic counterpart, it was always bound to prove unsustainable, especially when pursued at dizzying pace. A crash, an explosion, a liberation: some form of cataclysm was always on the musical horizon. Schoenberg would achieve his 'emancipation of the dissonance' in the 1908 Second String Quartet, tonal moorings cast away forever to the strains of Stefan Georg's words, 'I feel the air of another planet.' Relief and outrage, excitement and foreboding, were felt in equal measure. Schoenberg's reluctance to be a revolutionary – no one else applied for the job, he once remarked – was part and parcel of the historical moment, of a neo-Hegelian view of historical necessity that brooked no dissent. It might encounter less nostalgia, as in the case of Anton Webern, or more, as in the case of Alban Berg, but the very concept of a musical *Zeitgeist* would inspire the mainstream of twentieth-century composition just as it had that of the Wagnerian nineteenth century. Post-modernism would attempt to posit an alternative, yet the burning conviction of a Schoenberg, or of successor theorists and composers such as Adorno and Karlheinz Stockhausen, would prove more enduring.

The Romantic artist as priest, then, not only survived through the *fin-de-siècle* years; he – and it was almost, though not quite always, *he* – emerged reinvigorated by the experience. Writing of Liszt upon his 1911 centenary, Schoenberg would argue for Liszt's greatness in terms almost of Old Testament prophecy: 'Liszt's importance lies in the one place where great men's importance can lie: in faith. Fanatical faith, of the kind that creates a radical distinction between normal men and those it impels. Normal men *possess* a conviction; the great man is *possessed* by a faith.' (Schoenberg 1911: 442) Atonality's John the Baptist was duly honoured by its incarnation. That musical language would never be the same again tended to confirm that honour. Those angry, fearful, conservative Viennese concert-goers confirmed that just as much as those avant-gardists who never looked back.

'TIMELY' OR 'UNTIMELY'?

The 'untimeliness' of music, to borrow a term of Nietzsche's, both a reality and a highly ideological claim, is a complex, fascinating phenomenon. It has often been argued that more general æsthetic developments displayed themselves and came to fruition, whatever that might be, later in music than in many of the other arts. Romanticism, for instance, tends to be placed later than in, say, literature, though that ignores what Romantic writers such as E. T. A. Hoffmann, himself a composer, had to say about music, considering 'Romantic music' to be that of Mozart and Haydn as well as Beethoven. Romanticism, according to many standard music histories, then endured throughout the nineteenth century, in sharp contradiction to the worlds of, for instance, literature and painting. However, that tends more to reflect a difficulty in knowing what to call the music of the second half of the nineteenth century, rather than a lack of change. 'Neo-romanticism' has something to recommend it, but it has never really caught on; post-Romanticism might also work, but does not really seem to have been tried. Other intellectual movements, for instance positivism, are for obvious reasons rather difficult to relate to music, save in very particular instances. (The post-Second World War avant-garde's 'scientism' lays as good a claim to musical positivism, at least in compositional terms, as anything else, but that is another story.) Nationalism plays an important role too,

but it is too reductive to take on the umbrella role of something akin to 'Romanticism' or 'modernism'.

Perhaps neo-Romanticism ought to take upon itself the burden; it certainly aids understanding of our period. In the words of Carl Dahlhaus:

> Throughout the age of scientific positivism between 1850 and 1890, coinciding with the rise and establishment of the new German empire, music was at once 'untimely', inasmuch as it was still a romantic art, and a spiritual force of incalculable influence, inasmuch as it was the expression of an alternative culture. The special position of music was what enabled Wagner – whose authority as a writer on the philosophy of culture derived from his authority as a musician – to mediate between the romanticism of the early part of the century and the *Kulturkritik* of the end of the century, which he inspired. It was from that critical evaluation of an entire culture that a literary and philosophical neo-romanticism was born around 1900, reflecting musical neo-romanticism.
>
> (Dahlhaus 1980: 10; see also Troeltsch 1913)

It is certainly true that, at some point in the later nineteenth century, with Wagner not simply standing as symptom but to a certain degree as cause, musical history, practice, and developments had such an effect (though again, one can point to precedents in music-obsessed German Romantic poets and writers too, not least Friedrich Schlegel.) Thomas Mann would be an obvious example; *Doctor Faustus* may have marked his *summa* in that respect, but *Tristan*, his 1903 novella, also has Wagner exert his ambiguous spell.

EVERYDAY MUSICAL LIFE: LEIPZIG AND BEYOND

Even in this heyday of the strong, Romantic or post-Romantic, concept of the 'musical work' (see Goehr 1992), composition was certainly not the whole of musical life, even when restricted as here to the world of Western 'high culture', 'art music', call it what we will. Let us turn to Lezipig, the city in which Wagner was born in 1813. Its nineteenth-century musical life was nevertheless dominated by the music of Wagner's æsthetic opponents, composers such as Robert Schumann and Felix Mendelssohn. Despite the continued importance of opera – the Neues Theater opened in 1868, having been designed by Carl Ferdinand Langhans, also the architect of Wilhelm I's Berlin Altes Palais – the concert life of the Gewandhaus, more 'respectable' than the world of the stage, held firmer sway. Mendelssohn having built the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra into one of the most celebrated in Europe, there grew a need for a new hall, which, under the name of the Neues Gewandhaus, opened in 1884, with a programme of Bach, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. (The latter had a longstanding relationship with the orchestra, having conducted it in his Violin Concerto's 1879 premiere.) Yet even in relatively 'conservative' Leipzig, Bruckner's Seventh Symphony would receive its premiere in the same month as that opening concert, and the music of Wagner would gradually insinuate itself, especially under the leadership of Arthur Nikisch, from 1895.

Musical life extended beyond the opera and the Gewandhaus. Choral societies proved in many senses a backbone of popular participation – and, to a certain

extent, musical politics – not only in Germany, not only in Europe, but in the United States too, the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, founded in 1874, providing but one of many interesting connections between Old musical World and New. In Leipzig itself, the Singakademie, founded in 1802, continued to flourish, but was joined by a host of other groups, often several hundred strong in terms of membership, such as the Leipziger Männerchor, founded by Gustav Wohlgemuth in 1891, as a participating member in the unashamedly nationalist Deutscher Sängerbund. According to its statutes, 'Through the unifying power immanent to German song, the German Choral Union aims for its part to strengthen the sense of national cohesion among the German peoples and to collaborate towards the unity and power of the fatherland.' (Quoted in Eichner 2012: 188) The importance of the Leipzig Conservatory, founded by Mendelssohn, persisted, whether in terms of composition, performance, or musicology. And Leipzig's historic role as a site for music publishing (and indeed, other publishing) was if anything stronger than anything by the *fin de siècle*, at which point the city could claim more than sixty firms involved in that business. Breitkopf und Härtel, long first amongst equals in this world, published the sixty-one volumes of a complete Bach edition between 1851 and 1899, in collaboration with the city's Bach-Gesellschaft, which, its job done, dissolved itself in 1900, only to be immediately replaced by a Neue Bach-Gesellschaft. Wagner's home city, then, suggests a number of ways in which we should be wary of assuming a particular character for *fin-de-siècle* musical life. Notwithstanding the almost mandatory death of operatic protagonists in works as different as Puccini's *La bohème* (1894–95) and Ernest Chausson's *Le Roi Arthus* (1886–95), all was not post-*Tristan* doom and gloom, or even post-*Tristan* experimentation and (proto) modernism. Much of the above sketch suggests a musical world that just happened to find itself at the end of a century rather than being defined by it.

That said, our understanding of this *fin-de-siècle* world has not unreasonably concentrated upon that culture of both death and the seeds, in some cases rather more than that, of modernity. Wagner's or at least a Wagnerian reach could readily extend into more domestic circumstances than the fevered imaginations of the Parisian *Revue wagnérienne*, founded in 1885 by Eduoard Dujardin and strong meat indeed for those of less hallucinatory persuasions (Huebner 2009). And those circumstances were far from always 'purely' musical; indeed, the *Revue* was more literary than musicological, that emphasis itself a notable feature of much Wagner reception. Consider also the Darmstadt artists' colony on the Mathildenhöhe, a hill close to the city, near the Odenwald. An exhibition of its work, *A Document of German Art*, was held in 1901. The architect Peter Behrens built his house with that exhibition in mind; its catalogue describes the house's music room as 'the most solemn festive room'; there, the atmosphere is 'kept solemn and serious', everything is ornamented, including the grand piano (Hoeber 1913: 16). To quote Reinhold Brinkmann:

> In these precious surroundings, withdrawn from everyday life, is the place of music. The *aura* which the room provides for music is important for us. I mean the establishment of a sacred sphere. . . . The inwardly and outwardly rounded marble pillars under the roof clearly define this [marble] recess as an apsidal place. The painting seems like an altar picture. The candelabra, placed into the

sides of the apse, however, is the musical instrument, the grand piano, in the holy place. And the large music stand gives the impression of a lectern. This environment, worked out to the very last detail, makes the playing of music into a cultlike action.

(Brinkmann 1984: 31)

OLD WORLDS AND NEW

If Bayreuth, consciously or otherwise, could be reproduced or at least honoured, elsewhere, then so could the composer's avant-gardism, and not just in Europe. Most of Charles Ives's œuvre, especially his more experimental works, was to come later than the period with which we are concerned. Nevertheless, he was already in the 1890s beginning to burst the bounds of his compositional models, be they Protestant American hymn tunes or Brahmsian instrumental writing. Moreover, his early choral works already relished note-clusters, whole-tone scales, and other compositional devices that would have been considered at the height of European radicalism, if not beyond it. Pioneering American composers such as Henry Cowell and Ruth Crawford Seeger would find a great deal of inspiration in Ives's restless, often highly uncompromising, seeking after originality, which yet found many of its moral roots in the nineteenth-century Transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman. A Nietzschean, anti-Wagnerian, or at least anti-*décadent* morality of strenuousness would have many worse exemplars than this young New England composer following his father's celebrated advice always to stretch his ears.

Much of America's musical life, however, remained far more closely wedded to European models. Boston Symphony Hall, modelled on the Leipzig Neues Gewandhaus, opened in 1900, the earliest documented public concert in America having taken place in Boston in 1731, 'on sundry instruments at Mr Pelham's great Room' (Matthews 2008: 42). The Boston Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1881, and continues to offer a beacon for European and American art music in the United States. Yet there was innovation and exceptionalism in New England and, more generally, American musical life too; although to a certain extent almost all sought inspiration from across the Atlantic, that was not the whole story. John Knowles Paine, first occupant of Harvard's chair in music, the first in the United States, was a symphonist of local renown, though his models lay, unsurprisingly, in early nineteenth-century Europe.

George Whitefield Chadwick, trained in Leipzig and subsequently director of the New England Conservatory, which he re-organised on European lines, for instance instituting an opera workshop, pre-empted Antonín Dvořák's celebrated 'New World' Symphony use of 'negro' pentatonic melodies in the scherzo of the second (1883–85) of three symphonies. Chadwick's *Ode for the Opening of the World's Fair held at Chicago, 1892* did what its title said in gargantuan style: though only twenty minutes long, its forces included (perhaps echoing Hector Berlioz's *Grande messe des morts*) no fewer than three brass bands, as well as a chorus of 5000 and an orchestra of 500 (Faucett 2012: 129–35). Such at least was a typical assertion of pride in home-grown concert music, fit to show the world, albeit with compositional roots firmly entrenched in Old World soil. Interestingly, however, Boston audiences

reacted far less favourably than New York to Dvořák's Ninth Symphony, 'From the New World', the critic William Apthorp notoriously decrying its use of 'barbaric' plantation songs and native American melodies, resulting in a 'mere apotheosis of ugliness, distorted forms, and barbarous expressions' (quoted in Levine 2009: 144). He might have been a typical Viennese critic ten years later, fulminating against Schoenberg – and racialism was common to both attacks too.

Not that musical 'high culture' was confined to the East Coast: San Francisco had staged Vincenzo Bellini's *La somnambula* as early as 1851; between that time and the 1906 earthquake, the city seems to have staged as many as 5000 operatic performances, and the San Francisco Philharmonic Society had been giving concerts since 1852, German immigrants again very much to the fore of the city's musical life.

A fascinating case is provided by the Mexican composer Julián Carrillo, who studied in Europe between 1899 and 1905, though he had been composing for some years before that. He split his European studies between Ghent and the Leipzig Conservatory; he also led the Gewandhaus Orchestra, under Nikisch. Though, like that of Ives, Carrillo's avant-gardist heyday came later – he would, in 1950, be nominated for a Nobel Prize in Physics – the composer discovered as early as 1895, whilst experimenting upon his violin, a microtonal 'thirteenth sound' (*el sonido trece*), between G and A on the fourth string of his violin, from which his theory would take its name. Carrillo would construct therefrom a plethora of systems, based upon melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, and other parameters of musical theory. Schoenberg might almost seem conservative by Carrillo's side – and in many ways, the tradition-loving reconciler of Brahms and Wagner was, clinging ever more tightly, as the twentieth century progressed, to the hallowed twelve notes of the chromatic scale.

Schoenberg's 'air of another planet' may ultimately, then, have proved by far the more powerful and more æsthetically enduring path; yet, perhaps especially in a world in which we concentrate so heavily upon Europe in general and the German-speaking lands more particularly, it is worth recalling that extra-European pioneers such as Ives and Carrillo, influenced by the Old World yet looking very much to the New, had much to say too. Nor were the boundaries of 'Western' art music now confined to the 'West'. Debussy tried, however ambiguously, to rid himself of Wagner's influence; by contrast, Debussy was quite happy to remain under the profound spell cast by the gamelan from the Javanese village on show at Paris's 1899 *Exposition universelle*. Moreover, a gamelan was left behind from that Chicago World's Fair at which Chadwick's *Ode* was performed; it now stands on show in the city's Field Museum. Who, in cultural terms, colonised whom?

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THE VISUAL ARTS

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Michelle Facos

The world of art was never more heterogeneous and international than it was in 1900. Artists, depending on their ideological stance and aesthetic preferences, could choose from a widening array of media, since photography and print making were rapidly gaining the respectability previously accorded only painting and sculpture. With escalating boldness artists adopted experimental approaches to style, subject, and technique, in order to develop visual languages singularly suited to their purposes. In some contexts style was ideologically freighted – in Poland, for instance, Impressionism, Symbolism, and Expressionism were considered equally progressive and modern in contrast to the academic realism that constituted the status quo, while in Germany, Impressionism was considered quintessentially French and signaled the undesirable qualities of frivolity, impatience, and superficiality. Artists and the general public were exposed to art more than ever before through the proliferation of art journals and the increasing frequency of exhibitions – from state-sponsored world's fairs to private initiatives in galleries and newspaper offices. Artists also reflected increasingly on their identity and status, sometimes marketing themselves as misunderstood geniuses or working-class artisans, and opportunities for women to study and to pursue art professionally expanded. The century's rapid urbanization and industrialization continued to inform much of the subject matter depicted by artists, whether to condone, to condemn, or to ponder. Attitudes toward nature shifted in the decades around 1900, a situation reflected by the frequent replacement of nude women by nude men in outdoor scenes. This shift in subject matter evidenced the growing conviction that nature constituted an invigorating environment that strengthened men (and weakened women) mentally and physically and was not simply an uncontrolled feminized space defined by fertility and sensuality. In keeping with the increasingly egalitarian and participatory character of western societies, many artists also sought ways to actively involve viewers – challenging them to decode obscure meanings, to interpret works based on their own experiences and values, or removing sculptures from their traditional pedestals to promote interaction.

The old system of state-sponsored art academies and exhibitions continued to exert significant influence, and modernist pioneers like Pablo Picasso, Paul Cézanne,

Henri Matisse, and Edvard Munch painted works that conformed to its standard categories of portraiture, landscape, genre, and still life. At the same time, secessionist organizations offered alternatives to the status quo. While state-sponsored institutions sought to preserve tradition, they also instructed artists in the technical aspects of their craft and legitimized their status as artists. For instance, while the percentage of French artists exhibiting at the annual, state-sponsored Paris Salon dwindled during the final decades of the nineteenth century, the percentage of foreigners increased because participation validated one's status as a successful international artist to audiences at home at the same time as it showcased one's work to potential clients and dealers in Paris.

EXHIBITIONS

Beginning with the 1855 *Exposition universelle* in Paris, world's fairs provided the first significant venues for international displays of art viewed by visitors from around the globe. The pace of world's fairs escalated until the early twentieth century, with Paris taking the lead, mounting fairs in 1855, 1867, 1878, 1889, and 1900 (which clocked a record 50 million visitors); in 1898, there were international exhibitions in Bergen, Dunedin, Jerusalem, Munich, and Vienna, and in 1902 in Cork, Hanoi, and Turin. Improved transportation, particularly the rapid expansion of railway networks and of steamship travel, facilitated the mounting of and attendance at these exhibitions. For those unable to attend, illustrated exhibition catalogs enabled artists and connoisseurs to keep abreast of the latest artistic developments, as did the media explosion, with increased and illustrated coverage of the arts in newspapers and specialized journals. In fact, the 1890s witnessed the establishment of a number of influential, internationally circulating periodicals that tracked the latest international trends in art and design: *Jugend* ('Youth'; Munich, 1896–1940), *Pan* (Berlin, 1895–1900), *The Studio: An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art* (London, 1893–), and *Ver Sacrum* ('Sacred Spring'; Vienna, 1898–1903).

In 1900, Paris was the world's art capital. Not only could artists foreign and domestic study at either the state-sponsored academy (École des Beaux-Arts) or any of a number of private art schools such as the Académie Colarossi or Académie Julian, but they could also hope to have works accepted for display at the prestigious Salon, where more than 5,000 works of art were exhibited annually. In addition, a variety of alternative exhibition societies had emerged by 1900 due to artists' frustration regarding limited exhibition opportunities. Most of these groups were inspired by (and more financially successful than) the French Impressionists' *Société Anonyme Coopérative des Artistes Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs* ('Anonymous Cooperative Society of Painters, Sculptors, Engravers'; eight exhibitions, 1874–86), whose bylaws were based on those of the Pontoise Bakers' Union, a situation signaling the group's solidarity with the labor movement, a political stance held by many secessionist groups. In France, the politically conservative, Roman Catholic and mystically oriented Order of the Rose + Cross (under the leadership of Joséphin Péladan) held six international exhibitions between 1892 and 1897, while the more ecumenical *Société National des Beaux-Arts*, founded in 1862 by Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) and Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (1824–98), among others, held annual exhibitions – *Salon du Champ-de-Mars* – beginning in 1890. Anti-establishment,

secessionist groups proliferated, motivated by common aesthetic goals (*Nabis* in Paris), ideological purposes (*Les XX* in Brussels, *Mánes* in Prague, *Młoda Polska* in Krakow, *Secession* in Munich and Vienna), or simply the desire to provide greater exhibition opportunities for members (*Den Frie Udstilling* – 'the Free Exhibition' – in Denmark, *Konstnärsförbund* – 'Artists' Union' – in Sweden).

STYLE

Since 1886, when art critic Jean Moréas published his 'Symbolist Manifesto' in the Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro*, Symbolism reigned as the foremost avant-garde movement. Its goal – to express the inexpressible, to suggest ideas through visual imagery, to give form to dreams and imaginings – fostered a broad range of subjects and visual imagery. Still, in 1900, it was less a matter of one dominant artistic style than of newly emerging styles increasing the range of choices available to artists: Romanticism accentuated dynamism, emotion, and exoticism; Realism placed a premium on exacting detail; Naturalism emphasized fidelity to normative visual experience; Impressionism sought to convey the rapid pulse of urban life and the mutable effects of light and atmosphere; Neoimpressionism (Divisionism, Pointillism) offered a scientific prescription for capturing Impressionism's nuances. Boundaries between these styles were fluid and many artists pursued hybrid strategies, with thinking 'outside the box' increasingly acceptable.

OBJECTIVES

Throughout the nineteenth century progressive artists were motivated by the twin concerns of picturing truth (however that was interpreted) and formulating visual languages that would effectively communicate their ideas, shared objectives that led to increasing heterogeneity, as each artist sought a personally satisfying strategy. Symbolism's expansion of viable subject matter to beyond the visible world increased exponentially the possibilities open to artists and encouraged experimentation. This complemented the desire to formulate a recognizable individual style, since success in the marketplace was closely aligned with 'brand recognition'. This situation marked a significant transformation of conditions existing a century earlier. In 1800, government and religious patronage, along with portrait commissions, constituted the mainstays of artists' incomes. However during the course of the nineteenth century 'free' market mechanisms combined with new categories of collectors – from educated middle class individuals with disposable incomes to nouveau riche eager to demonstrate their wealth and taste – to generate new demands for art. Now displayed in homes rather than palaces, paintings diminished in size as did the demand for historical, religious, and mythological subjects – landscapes, cityscapes, and scenes of everyday life became more prevalent and photography replaced painting as the preferred means of portrait making.

PAINTING

A career as an artist was complicated in 1900. On the one hand, artists felt pressured to develop signature styles, on the other, many felt misunderstood by their public

and persecuted by critics. As a result, some identified with Jesus and portrayed themselves as the suffering Christ. In *Golgotha* (1900, Munch-Museet, Oslo), Edvard Munch (Norwegian, 1863–1944) represented himself crucified alone on a hill overlooking a crowd of sorrowful women and mask-like male faces along the painting's lower edge. Munch worked with such thin paint that it almost appears as watercolor, and the figures merge into one another, dissolving into wavy lines and blue circles, ciphers for heads. This uneven treatment evidenced a growing embrace of the artist's prerogative to compose and paint images exactly how (s)he liked – thinly painted or heavily textured, normative or peculiar spatial arrangements, clearly defined or incoherent shapes, conventional or aberrant color. 1900 was an exhilarating moment when artists were becoming increasingly aware of their absolute authority to determine the appearance of their art works.

Earlier, Paul Gauguin (French, 1848–1903) had painted himself as Christ in the garden at Gethsemane (*Agony in the Garden*, 1889, Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach) and James Ensor (Belgian, 1860–1949) imagined himself as Christ in *The Entry of Christ into Brussels in 1889* (1888, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles), a parody of Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Here, Ensor expressed skepticism about the public's ability to recognize Jesus were he to appear in modern times, as well as exasperation in the face of animosity toward his art. In addition, Ensor decried King Leopold II's inhumane and avaricious policies in Congo Free State, which he owned privately, and the lack of freedom and equality for citizens in Belgium (Berman 2002).

PEASANT IMAGERY

While the depiction of peasant life is associated with the rise of Realism and Naturalism in the mid-nineteenth century, such imagery continued well into the twentieth. Although artists such as Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo (Italian, 1868–1907) in *The Fourth Estate* (1901, Pinocoteca di Brera, Milan) and Eero Järnefelt (Finnish, 1863–1937) in *Swidden Farming* (1893, Ateneum Art Gallery, Helsinki) sympathetically portrayed the hardships and poverty of peasant life with the goal of social reform, for many, rural life represented a salubrious and idealized existence lived in harmony with nature, and they wanted to purchase paintings affirming that outlook. *The Ploughboy* (c. 1900, Aberdeen Art Gallery) by Henry La Thangue (English, 1859–1929) provided such a bucolic view. Here a clean, well-fed, healthy, and tidily dressed boy concentrates on whittling, while leading a pair of workhorses down a lane in the early morning sunlight. The boy strides with right foot forward, a stance echoed by the brown horse directly behind him, suggesting accord between man and beast. La Thangue painted with the loose brushwork associated with Impressionism, making his painting appear modern, yet not disturbingly avant-garde.

The countryside represented for many an antidote to crowded, dangerous, expensive, filthy, and stressful urban life. An idealized vision of rural life attracted French artists such as Jean-François Millet to the village of Barbizon near the Fontainebleau Forest beginning in the 1820s. For similar reasons artists' colonies proliferated beginning in the 1880s: Newlyn and St. Ives (England); Pont Aven and Grez-sur-Loing (France); Ahrenshoop, Dachau, and Worpswede (Germany); Laren and Katwijk (The Netherlands); Skagen (Denmark); Abramsevo (Russia); Varberg

(Sweden); Provincetown, MA and Woodstock, NY (United States); and Gödöllö and Nagybanya (Hungary), to name just a few (Lübbren 2001).

Some artists sought escape from the camaraderie of artists' colonies. Emil Nolde (German, 1867–1956), for instance, withdrew to the village of Seebüll on Germany's North Sea coast. There, he depicted nature as a place of solitude and reflection in paintings like *Light Sea-Mood* (1901, Nolde-Stiftung, Seebüll), a canvas empty, save for broad, pale swathes of paint suggesting beach, sea, and sky on a hazy, overcast day. In the 1880s Winslow Homer (American, 1836–1910) settled on his family's estate in Prout's Neck, Maine, where he recorded the dynamic interaction of water and rocky shore. *West Point, Prout's Neck* (1900, Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, Williamstown, MA) shows the crashing waves and foam of the Atlantic Ocean at sunset. Homer found that concentrating on the incessant, turbulent, and elusive movement of water an absorbing, challenging, and relaxing respite from the aggravations of modern urban life, as did pioneer modernist Piet Mondrian (Dutch, 1872–1944), who celebrated a windy summer day in *Pollard Willows on the Gein* (1902–4, Gemeentemuseum, The Hague), where water ripples erase the reflections of poplars on the river.

NATURE AND HEALTH

The idea that outdoor physical activity was beneficial gained traction in the second half of the nineteenth century and by 1900, sea bathing, especially for men, was considered invigorating and salubrious. Edvard Munch, J. A. G. Acke (Swedish, 1859–1924), Peder Severin Krøyer (Danish, 1851–1909), and Max Liebermann (German, 1847–1935) were among those who painted images of boys and men bathing nude outdoors. In Liebermann's *Bathing Youths* (1898, Neue Pinakothek, Munich) boys dress, undress, and frolic in calm Baltic waters on a sunny summer day, toughening their young bodies through direct exposure to fresh air, sun, and sea. A singular painting of this subject is *Sad Inheritance* (1899, Colección de la Caja de Ahorros, Valencia). In it, Joaquín Sorolla (1863–1923) shows a crowd of physically handicapped, nude boys playing in the sea or struggling toward it on their crude wooden crutches under the supervision of a solicitous priest in the hopes that nature will make them healthier and stronger as it does for 'normal' boys. Syphilis and tuberculosis, rampant in the decades around 1900, raised concerns about the health of individuals and society and fed fears about degeneration.

Paintings of female outdoor bathers abounded as well, the continuation of a trend that began earlier in the century. This primarily reflected a desire to find legitimate excuses for depicting titillating female nudes for a seemingly insatiable male audience. Édouard Manet (1832–83) made an implicit link between nude female bathing and prostitution in *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863, Musée d'Orsay; original title: *The Bath*), while Pierre Renoir's *Bathers* (1887, Philadelphia Museum of Art) are so artificially posed that their purpose could hardly be anything other than visual delectation. Anders Zorn (Swedish, 1860–1920) distinguished himself by painting a series of naturally or un-posed nude women in Stockholm's archipelago. Paintings such as *Outdoors, Dalerö* (1887, Göteborg Art Museum) suggest a holistic, unselfconscious integration of woman and nature.

This vision of women as part of, rather than separate from and invigorated by, nature was a common trope in the years around 1900, but was generally treated in a more formal, conceptual manner. For instance in *The Large Bathers* (1898–1905, Philadelphia Museum of Art) by Paul Cézanne (French, 1839–1906), a dozen female nudes form the base of a triangle completed by arching tree trunks. Awkward, inexplicable poses, patchy brushwork, and an overall blue tonality reinforce the artificiality of his arrangement. Similarly, Henri Matisse (French, 1869–1954) created a bucolic, if fantastic, scene of naked women relaxing by the Mediterranean Sea in *Luxe, Calme Volupté* (1904, Centre Pompidou, Paris). Here, four women striking a variety of studio poses are accompanied by companions represented with the same dashes of unnuanced color as the sea, sky, mountains, trees, and beach. Matisse's technique was a kind of aerated and elongated version of George Seurat's Neoimpressionist dots with which he composed paintings in the late 1880s. Whereas Seurat sought chromatic accuracy by forcing the viewer's eye to mix, for instance, dots of blue and red that would then be perceived as violet, Matisse experimented with patches too large to optically coalesce, thereby emphasizing his image as a fabrication of the artist's imagination. Regardless of style or composition, all images of women bathing or relaxing in groups in the nude by the seaside were unrealistic at the time, since outdoor nude bathing was not a practice engaged in by women. It would be unusual today, and would have been even more unusual in 1900.

IDENTITY

A significant trend in art that developed in the final decades of the nineteenth century and continued until after World War I was Romantic Nationalism, whose goal of visualizing love of homeland was related to the Symbolist imperative to 'express the inexpressible'. Style and subject matter played a key role in these works, intended to evoke the densest range of associations among the artist's compatriots. The new nation of Germany (1871) encouraged a singularly German school of art stylistically influenced by the quasi-photographic, hard-edged, highly detailed realism of revered German Renaissance artists Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) and Hans Holbein (1497–1543). Anton von Werner (1843–1915) was the favored practitioner of officially sanctioned German Realism. Part of German Realism's appeal was its fundamental difference from the casual and personal subjects, loose brushwork, and apparent spontaneity and carelessness of French Impressionism. German cultural patriots further linked the Impressionism of artists like Claude Monet to the frivolous decadence of the elitist, aristocratic Rococo style that arose in eighteenth-century France, contrasting it with disciplined, detailed, accessible, and democratic German Realism. For this reason, xenophobic German art critics condemned as unpatriotic German artists who worked in an Impressionist style, such as Max Liebermann.

Beginning in the 1870s and culminating with Paris's *Exposition universelle* of 1900, critics praised artists such as the Norwegian Erik Werenskiøld (1855–1938) for representing a Norwegian subject under typically Norwegian climatic conditions and in a Norwegian style (*Peasant Funeral*, 1883–85, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo) and condemned artists such as Anders Zorn for a lack of authenticity due to their perceived imitation of French subjects and styles. Truth, honesty, and authenticity were, to the minds of many, best evidenced by

artists who sought to capture and convey the 'essence' of their nation. As a result, many artists, from Monet in France (Rouen Cathedral, poplars along the Epte River) to Vasily Surikov (1848–1916) in Russia, Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1865–1931) in Finland, and Paja Jovanović (1859–1957) in Serbia, strove to visualize singular national qualities for audiences both native (for whom associations were often denser and more subtle) and foreign. Jovanović's *Migration of the Serbs* (1896, Patriarchate of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Belgrade) and Surikov's *Boyarina Morozova* (1897, Tretyakov Museum, Moscow) depicted in legible, realistic styles important national-historical events. Jovanović recorded the tragic seventeenth-century event when Serbian patriarch Arsenije III decided to relocate Serbs from their ancestral homeland in present-day Kosovo to the location of present-day Serbia, a measure he hoped would be temporary. (See Figure 41.1.)What made the event tragic was the fact that the Serbs had honored Austrian Emperor Leopold VI's request to defend the Empire's southeastern border until Austrian troops arrived, but Leopold decided against sending reinforcements, thereby endangering Serbian lives and land. Just as this betrayal constituted a patriotic touchstone for Serbs, the failed leadership of Boyarina Morozova, who chose imprisonment and starvation rather than capitulation to the reforms in the Orthodox Church effected by Patriarch Nikon in 1753, also marked a seismic change in Russian life, resulting in a decisive and fraught split between Old Believers and 'new' Russian Orthodoxy.

Figure 41.1   Paja Jovanović, *Migration of the Serbs*, 1896. Courtesy of the Patriarchate of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Belgrade, Serbia

Artists also depicted culturally specific myths and legends directed at native audiences in order to evoke Romantic Nationalist sentiments. In Gallen-Kallela's *Kullervo's Curse* (1899, Ateneum Art Museum, Helsinki), an episode from the Finnish national epic, *Kalevala*, Kullervo was tortured and enslaved, but possessed magic powers and vowed revenge on his uncle Untamo. Kullervo's imprudent actions resulted in the murder of his family and Kullervo, despondent and repentant, committed suicide. On a happier note, Czech painter Karel Mašek (1865–1927) painted the legendary female founder of Prague and mother of the Czech nation in *Libuse* (c. 1893, Musée d'Orsay, Paris), two years after the Jubilee Exhibition in Prague displayed the cultural singularity and independence of the Czechs. Signifi-cantly, Finland and Czech were aspiring nations with intensifying urges for independence, from Russia in the case of Finland, and Austria in the case of Czech.

Other artists turned to typical and singularly evocative depictions of landscape in order to promote a sense of rootedness in the nation. In *Bird Song* (1893, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest), Károly Ferenczy (1862–1917) painted the Hungarian forest in national colors – red, white, and green. Here, a young girl gazes at a bird perched on an upper branch, absorbed by its song. Her hands clasp the birch tree, completing a circuit of interanimation that seems to nourish the girl's soul. Organic interdependence of cells in a body, of members on a team, or of individuals in society and in nature sanctioned belief in the interdependence of individuals and the environments that nurtured them. Isaak Levitan (Russian, 1860–1900), in paintings like *Twilight* (1899, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow), focused on the magnificent 'white nights' of Nordic summer in his depiction of a farmyard at night, with rustic timber buildings, rail fence, and field of grain stacks bathed in a cool, even light. Richard Bergh (Swedish, 1859–1919) portrayed a couple enjoying a similar moment in Stockholm's archipelago in *Nordic Summer Evening* (1900, Göteborg Art Museum); they stand on a balcony overlooking the water, physically separated, with souls united in silent contemplation. Such paintings reified sentiments of rootedness and belonging – feelings and ideas that ally Romantic Nationalism to Symbolism.

Identity constituted a crucial theme in 1900. While gender and nationality were perhaps the most prevalent categories, religion was also significant. During a period that witnessed pogroms in Russia that drove thousands of Jews westward, along with the growth of Zionism and escalating anti-Semitism (whose nadir was the Dreyfus Affair), Jewishness became an important identity marker. Samuel Hirszenberg (Polish, 1865–1908) expressed the insecurity of Jews in an increasingly hostile Christian world in *Wandering Jew* (1899, Jewish Museum, Jerusalem). Here in a dismally monochromatic landscape, a frightened elderly man flees a forest of crucifixes, whose floor is littered with corpses. Clad only in a loincloth, evoking representations of the crucified Christ and flanking thieves, the man looks beseechingly at and runs toward the viewer, placing the burden of rescue and rectification in the viewer's uncertain hands.

GENDER

Women constituted an increasing presence in the art world by 1900. The Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) offered the greatest freedom for women artists: governments awarded them scholarships and travel funds

and fellow artists included them in their groups. Many lived and worked in Paris during the 1870s and 1880s – Norwegians Harriet Backer (1845–1932) and Kitty Kielland (1843–1914), Swedes Eva Bonnier (1857–1909) and Hanna Hirsch Pauli (1864–1940), and Danes Anna Brøndum Ancher (1859–1935) and Maria Triepcke Krøyer (1867–1940), both of whom studied in the studio of Puvis de Chavannes. Among Finnish women painters, Helene Schjerfbeck (1862–1946) was a pioneering modernist because of her abandonment of Naturalism for simplified, more geometric, and thinly painted forms that seem to merge with their canvas support.

Women artists usually came from bourgeois backgrounds and adhered to the social constraints that imposed. In a world in which a woman's place was in the home, women artists focused on portraiture, still life, and domestic scenes. In France, where a declining birthrate was exacerbated by a declining marriage rate and a rise in the percentage of childless couples, images of motherhood were particularly fraught. Mary Cassatt (American, 1844–1926) lived in Paris and concentrated on healthy children and solicitous mothers in images such as *Mother and Child* (1898, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), painted in a loose, impressionistic style. A coarser, simplified style characterized the imagery of Paula Modersohn-Becker (German, 1876–1907), who died of complications following childbirth. Her *Nursing Mother* (1902, Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf) evidences the emphasis placed by the *goût de lait* ('taste of milk') movement on the scientifically demonstrated benefits of nursing one's own children. The result of a questionably 'separate but equal' attitude, the responsibility of mothers to insure the healthy upbringing of the nation's future citizens was taken seriously in 1900. *Nabis* artist Edouard Vuillard (French, 1868–1940) depicted the harmonious interrelationship of mother and child in a nurturing, sheltered domestic setting in *Mother and Child* (1899, Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow). Vuillard intended this heavily patterned, upholstered milieu to communicate safety and comfort, in stark contrast to the frozen wasteland portrayed by Giovanni Segantini (Italian-Swiss, 1858–99) in *The Evil Mothers* (Belvedere Museum, Vienna). There, negligent, self-indulgent mothers, backs arched in either hysteria or ecstasy and tethered by hair and clothing to leafless trees, ignore their babies. The mothers' ability to levitate combined with their state of semi-nudity emphasize their unnaturalness and unsuitability as mothers.

STYLE

While some painters worked in a resolutely traditional, realistic mode, others searched for visual languages suitable to express intangible feelings and ideas, a quest that would soon lead to abstraction. And while some artists continued to submit paintings to the juries of state-sponsored exhibitions such as the Paris Salon in hopes of legitimizing themselves according to time-honored standards, experimentally minded artists established alternative 'secessionist' exhibitions as venues for the presentation of subjects, styles, and techniques at variance with the status quo. The common ground of a century earlier, when most artists sought commissions from the church, state, and the nobility, dissipated in favor of a free-market situation with financially independent artists able to follow self-formulated goals while their colleagues struggled to produce works appealing to an increasingly affluent middle class. Especially in Germany, municipal art associations formed

beginning in the 1820s, with memberships comprised principally of middle class art enthusiasts. These associations held exhibitions and lotteries with paintings as prizes, and offered lithographic prints of contemporary paintings as part of membership benefits. A flourishing network of galleries and dealers arose to meet the growing demand for works of art, with some artists, such as the Hungarian painter Mihály Munkácsy (1844–1900), exchanging their artistic production for a steady income from an art dealer. World's fairs (Paris 1855, 1867, 1878, 1889, 1900; Vienna 1893; Philadelphia 1876; Chicago 1893) included art exhibitions both in independent displays and in conjunction with national pavilions, thereby providing artists and audiences with unprecedented public exposure (with attendance numbering in the tens of millions) and acquainting them with international trends.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 1900, Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973), newly arrived in Paris, painted his first Parisian picture *Le Moulin de la Galette* (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York). Moulin de la Galette was a popular, hilltop, working-class café-restaurant in Montmartre, whose outdoor dancing had been painted earlier by Impressionist Pierre Renoir in 1876 (*Dance at Moulin de la Galette*, Musée d'Orsay, Paris). In contrast to Renoir's cheery outdoor scene of happy, working class dancing couples, Picasso recorded an eerie indoor scene populated by lustful men in silk top hats and stylish ladies of the night. It is one of the few surviving paintings from that year, since the impoverished Picasso burned many paintings to heat his apartment/studio. Picasso's distortion of color, form, and physiognomies for expressive purposes suggests his absorption of Synthetist principles, evolved during 1888 by Paul Gauguin (French, 1848–1903) and Paul Bernard (French, 1868–1941), who synthesized their inspirations from Japanese woodcuts, medieval stained glass, and French folk art. However Picasso's approach appears modulated by the often melancholy mood of Realism, with its concern for representing the seedier side of urban life.

GRAPHIC ARTS

The 1890s witnessed an unprecedented degree of technical experimentation, as artists searched for appropriate visual languages to express their ideas; the graphic arts were among the most enthusiastically explored. The decision to produce prints evidenced an artist's anti-establishment, avant-garde stance, since print making was generally considered a commercial rather than a fine art medium. Some artists were attracted by the medium's reproducibility and attendant potential for financial profit, while others were more interested in the possibilities print making offered for attaining novel visual effects. Publishers encouraged the collecting of prints by offering signed and limited editions and some artists, particularly Max Klinger, Odilon Redon, Félicien Rops, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Félix Vallotton concentrated their creative efforts on print making.

Odilon Redon (French, 1840–1916) began exploring the expressive possibilities of prints in the 1860s as a pupil of the renowned Parisian etcher Rodolphe Bresdin (1822–85). Redon's graphic work came to public attention in 1884 with his

illustrations for the Decadent author Joris-Karl Huysmans's novel *Against the Grain* (*À Rebours*) because the best-selling novel's protagonist, Des Esseintes, decorated a room of his bizarre home with Redon prints. 'Sometimes even the subjects seemed to be borrowed from the dreams of science, to go back to prehistoric times . . . These drawings [actually lithographs] passed all bounds, transgressing in a thousand ways the established laws of pictorial art, utterly fantastic and revolutionary, the work of a mad and morbid genius' (Huysmans 1884 chapter 5). Between 1879 and 1899 Redon produced eight sets of lithographs issued in editions of 50 to 100, in addition to book illustrations. Although admired by fellow artists and writers including Paul Gauguin and Stéphane Mallarmé, these 'blacks' ('*noirs*') were financial disasters. Today, scholars recognize them as daring attempts to visualize creations of the imagination.

Redon worked primarily in lithography, a printing technique developed by Alois Senefelder in 1796 that involved drawing with oil crayon on a polished stone; the crayon drawing resisted ink applied to the stone with the result that crayon drawing appeared as white on the black ink surface. The titles Redon gave to his series acknowledge the sources of his inspiration: *In the Dream* (*Dans le Rêve*, 1879), *To Edgar Allan Poe* (1882), *Homage to Goya* (1885), *To Gustave Flaubert* (1889), *Dreams* (1891), *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (1899). For Redon, color best described the realm of nature and black and white, that of the imagination. His fascination with the real yet intangible creations of his imagination led Redon to focus on heads – in close-ups that exclude the body (*Parsifal*, 1891), in spaces where they float independently (*Germination* from *In the Dream*), or as hybrid plants (*The Marsh Flower* from *Homage to Goya*). Similarly, eyes – sometimes soulful, sometimes strange – engage the gaze of viewers, challenging them to perceive or speculate on what those eyes might see. *In The Eye, Like a Strange Balloon* (*To Edgar Allan Poe*), a hot air balloon that is also an upward-gazing eye transports a plate carrying a head with staring eyes above a calm sea. Redon explained his fantastic landscapes and hybrid creatures: 'I suffered the torments of imagination and the surprises which it presented to me under the pencil; but I guided and controlled these surprises according to the laws of artistic organization which I know, which I feel, with the sole purpose that they should exercise upon the spectator, through a process of attraction, all the evocative power, all the charm of the vague that lies at the extreme limits of thought' (Redon 1969, xii). Just as Romantic artist Goya was inspirational to Redon, so was Symbolist Redon inspirational to Surrealist artists decades later.

In 1894 Edvard Munch (Norwegian, 1863–1944) took up print making for two reasons: economic and aesthetic. On the one hand, he recognized the growing interest on the part of collectors in purchasing limited edition prints and print series, and considered it a possible solution to his pecuniary woes, on the other, he was deeply interested in possibilities for achieving new visual effects. While in Berlin during 1894–95, Munch began making aquatints, drypoints, etchings, and lithographs. He had already utilized unconventional techniques in his paintings: leaving paintings to weather outdoors, scratching lines into paint, scraping and repainting areas, diluting paint so that the color and texture of the canvas remained apparent. Munch worked on metal plates, stones, and wood and printed multiple versions of an image using different inks and papers. He often made changes to the image between printings, with the result that many Munch prints are unique. Art critic

Julius Meier-Graefe wrote the first essay about Munch as a graphic artist for a small portfolio of prints in 1894, and enticed Munch to move to Paris in spring 1896. There, Meier-Graefe arranged Munch's first one-man show at Siegfried Bing's gallery L'Art Nouveau, which included 42 prints and 12 paintings. Once in Paris, Munch was invited by one of France's premier art dealers and print publishers, Ambrose Vollard, to contribute a color lithograph to the print portfolio *Album des peintres-graveurs*, which included works by Maurice Denis, Redon, Auguste Renoir, and Félix Vallotton. For this, Munch created a print version of *Anxiety*, a painting in his Frieze of Life cycle, a Symbolist project whose purpose was to explore modern responses to universal emotions – anxiety, attraction, jealousy, lust, separation, shame.

Before engaging in print making himself, Paul Gauguin was an avid print collector, acquiring works by Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917) and lithographic reproductions of paintings by Eugène Delacroix (French, 1798–1863). Gauguin turned to print making for financial and publicity purposes, encouraged by etcher Félix Bracquemond, who established the original (as opposed to reproductive) print-making society *L'Estampe Originale* in 1888. Following a visit to the successful inaugural *Exposition de Peintres-Graveurs* (Exhibition of Painter-Engravers) held in Paris at Galerie Durand-Ruel in January 1889, Gauguin 'commenced a series of lithographs for publication in order to make myself known' (letter to Vincent van Gogh; Boyle-Turner 1986, 11). Known as the *Volpini Suite*, after the surname of the proprietor of the café on the grounds of the 1889 world's fair in which these zincographs were first exhibited, this edition of a dozen original works was printed on various types and colors of paper, thereby emphasizing their uniqueness. Although a financial failure, the *Volpini Suite* helped initiate the print revival of the 1890s; in 1890s Paris, eight publications were dedicated to the dissemination of original artist prints (Cate 2000, 19–20).

The group of young French artists established in spring 1889 and known as the *Nabis* – Emile Bernard, Maurice Denis, Pierre Bonnard, Paul Sérusier, *inter alia* – turned to print making (mainly lithography) for its expressive potential. *Nabi* artists usually produced prints themselves as experiments kept or given to artist-friends rather than sold and/or issued in marketable editions. During Gauguin's final Tahitian period (1895–1903), he continued to make prints, but turned to woodcut, the only available method, but one that corresponded to Gauguin's urge to create cruder, more naive, and simple images. Moving in the opposite direction, artist Jules Chéret (French, 1836–1932) demonstrated the compatibility of commerce and creativity; his posters advertising entertainment at Parisian night clubs and cafés inspired artists as diverse as Georges Seurat (French, 1859–91) and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (French, 1864–1901). One important outcome of the print making revival was a blurring of the boundaries between fine and commercial art, since Lautrec, Bernard, and others avidly undertook commissions for stage designs, book and sheet music illustrations, theater programs, and advertisements.

James Ensor had pragmatic reasons for print making: 'I fear the fragility of paintings exposed to the ravages of restorers, to incompetence, the calumny of reproductions . . . I want to survive, to speak for many years to the men of the future. I dream of solid copper, of indelible inks, of the easy reproduction of images and I therefore adopt etching as my chosen medium' (quoted in Gillis 2002, 7). Ensor began print making in 1886, and depicted a wide range of subjects – life of Christ, land- and cityscapes, portraits, Dutch history, *The Deadly Sins* (1904) – but

is best remembered for his fantastic, satirical, and socially critical images. For instance, *The Gendarmes* (1888) commemorated the murder of three protesting fishermen by government troops, while *Hop-Frog's Revenge* (1898) imagined the last scene of Edgar Allan Poe's 1849 eponymous story, a cautionary tale about retribution for the abuse of power.

In the years after 1900, German artists, above all, engaged in print making, partly because of their interest in exploring its expressive potential, but also because it was considered a quintessential German art, a significant factor in that era of rampant nationalism. In fact, print making on paper was invented in fifteenth-century Germany; first woodcuts, then engravings. In the nineteenth century, Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) represented the apex of German print making, and Max Klinger (German, 1857–1920) sought to reestablish Germany as the epicenter of print making. In fourteen series with subjects ranging from autobiography (*A Glove*, 1881) to social critique (*On Death I*, 1889) to music (*Brahms Fantasies*, 1894), Klinger influenced a generation of print makers, including Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945) and artists of the Berlin-Dresden Expressionist group *Die Brücke* (The Bridge, 1905–13). In 1898, inspired by Klinger's socially motivated series, Kollwitz produced and exhibited her best-known set, *The Weavers*, six prints inspired by the failed uprising of impoverished Silesian weavers in 1842. Her second series, *Peasant War* (1902–8), although inspired by a sixteenth-century peasant revolt, evidenced her solidarity with the working class and its struggle for labor reform and a political voice. *Die Brücke* artists (Erich Heckel, Ernst Kirchner, Otto Mueller, Karl Schmidt-Rotluff) also established an emphatic socially critical stance: 'one of the aspirations of *Die Brücke* ist to attract all revolutionary and fermenting elements' (letter from Schmidt-Rotluff to Nolde; Dube 1980, 92). For these reform-oriented artists, print making constituted a process that was simultaneously anchored in the national past and felt more direct, honest, and spontaneous than painting. For artists committed to a return to a simpler, more authentic lifestyle rooted in nature and egalitarian social relations, print making, especially woodcut, seemed an ideal mode of expression.

SCULPTURE

In 1900, Auguste Rodin (French, 1840–1917), the world's most renowned and influential sculptor, privately organized a retrospective exhibition coincident with the *Exposition universelle*, which attracted 50 million visitors to Paris. There he displayed 150 innovative works that, despite the inherently conservative nature of sculpture, paved the way for major twentieth-century developments.[1] Although Rodin worked in the traditional media of clay and plaster and his finished sculptures were subsequently produced in marble or bronze, the primary materials of sculpture since ancient times, Rodin was less interested in technical experimentation than in transgressing visual and conceptual boundaries. In an effort to express compellingly his subject's psycho-emotional state, his individuality, Rodin eliminated elements he considered extraneous – in the case of *Walking Man*, the arms and head (c. 1900, Art Institute of Chicago), thereby revealing the expressive potential of the partial figure, a discovery crucial for later sculptors such as Constantin Brancusi (Romanian, 1876–1957) and Alberto Giacometti (Swiss, 1901–66). Rodin discovered the creative potential of accident (an important artistic strategy, particularly for Dada

artists beginning in the 1910s) in 1863 while working on the classically inspired *Man with the Broken Nose* (Philadelphia Museum of Art), a sculpture that evoked the Roman portrait busts he studied in the Louvre. When Rodin returned home one evening to find the head he intended to present as his debut at the reputation-making, annual Paris Salon exhibition lying on the floor with the back of the head broken off, Rodin realized that the most important aspect of a portrait bust is the face, not the back of the head. He left it in that condition, and was surprised when the 1864 Salon jury refused it, considering how many partial works of ancient art crowded the galleries of the Louvre. Throughout the nineteenth century many artists were concerned with the presentation of truth, and in the final decades of the century that often meant incorporating the creative process into the viewer's visual experience. While Rodin's marble sculptures often have the high degree of finish typical at the time, a close examination of his bronze sculptures reveals thumb and hand prints, scratches of gouges and chisels, and gobs of clay or plaster whose presence was retained even when the sculpture was 'completed'.

Rodin also minimized the boundary between art work and viewer, both physically and psychologically, in his *Burghers of Calais* (1884–89), a sculpture commemorating the 1347 surrender of Calais city councilmen to English King Edward III, who was then besieging the city. (See Figure 41.2.) Rodin won the *Burghers of Calais*

Figure 41.2   Auguste Rodin, *The Burghers of Calais*, completed 1889. Bronze, life-size. Calais, France. Courtesy of Per Nordahl

commission because he promised to deliver life-size images of all six councilmen, rather than of just the leader, Eustache de St. Pierre, as did his competitors. Rodin intended to bury the sculptures' bases in the pavement of Calais city hall, so that passers-by could mingle with the bronze fourteenth-century councilmen, study their varying postures and expressions as they, one could imagine, trudged toward the encampment of Edward III, not knowing their fate and having said final good-byes to families and friends. (Although this radical solution was rejected by the town council, viewers still must circumambulate the closely integrated group, now gathered on a single base, in order to see all of the faces and gestures.) Rodin's attempt to integrate viewer and art work, life and art, modern life and the historical past, and to encourage viewers to examine and sympathize with the varying burghers' responses anticipated the operative principles of Alexander Calder's Stabiles, Duane Hanson's polyester resin people, and other forms of participatory modern sculpture.

Rodin was the sculptor to reckon with in 1900 Paris. In *The Serf* (1900–06, Museum of Modern Art, New York), Henri Matisse (French, 1869–1954) reinterpreted Rodin's famous *Walking Man*, following the common practice of copying or reinterpreting masterpieces. Typical for a young, studying artist, Matisse's effort was less audacious. Whereas Rodin's *Walking Man* consisted solely of a male torso and striding legs – all that's necessary to convey the idea 'walking' – Matisse included a downcast head and arms severed above the elbow, details emphasizing the serf's powerlessness. The surfaces of both figures are bumpy and agitated; for Matisse, this unnatural surface made palpable the idea that the serf's agitated psyche manifested itself outwardly at the same time as it drew viewers' attention to Matisse's creative process of hand-molding clay.

Sculptors such as Aristide Maillol (French, 1861–1944) were more concerned with reinterpreting the classical tradition than inventing new expressive possibilities for sculpture. Most sculptors in 1900, in fact, concentrated on portraiture and the human form. Maillol turned from painting and textile design to sculpture due to failing eyesight: his last model, Dina Vierny, explained to this author in 1983 that the sculptor worked more by touch than sight, which meant his sculptures were intended more as tactile experiences than visual ones. *The Mediterranean* (1902–5, Musée d'Orsay, Paris) is in many ways the opposite of Rodin's best-known sculptures; it is static, enclosed, smooth, and simplified, and evidenced a conceptual move in the direction of abstraction. *The Mediterranean* is a Symbolist sculpture insofar as it embodies the *idea* of the sea: classical in its white marble and pristine geometry, inviting, calm, and contemplative.

Romanian carpenter Constantin Brancusi arrived in Paris in 1904, bringing with him a peasant's appreciation of rough-hewn wood and direct carving as well as the geometric forms inspired by the carved architecture and grave stones found in his village in the Carpathian Mountains. For two years he worked as an assistant to Antonin Mercié (French, 1845–1921), a professor at the École des Beaux-Arts (the state-sponsored art academy), and briefly (two months) to Rodin, whose presence, Brancusi felt, inhibited his creative development. Three years later Brancusi arrived at the reductive, abstracted forms for which he is best known. *The Kiss* (1907–8, Art Museum, Craiova, Romania), a rethinking of Rodin's famous sculpture of the same title, evidences Brancusi's Symbolist conviction (shared by Rodin) that the essence of

a thing is real and permanent, not its appearance. Brancusi represented the idea 'kiss' by means of two conjoint figures, shown from the chest up and minimally carved in the traditional medium of marble. The male and female figures are subtly differentiated: the woman has longer hair and the barest indication of breasts, suggesting that male and female are not contraries, as they had been construed in the nineteenth century, but complementary forms of humanness, whose similarities are more important than their differences.

The same reformist impulse that made woodcuts appealing to artists – 'primitivism' – inspired many artists to reject traditional sculptural materials and techniques and embrace woodcarving. Woodcarving was a process associated with so-called 'primitive' cultures, whose members, many Westerners assumed, enjoyed simpler lives in harmony with nature and each other, in contrast to the aggressive, hostile, materialistic, and debilitating character of modern Western society. Paul Gauguin made his first wood sculptures in the 1880s, and in 1902 embellished the sequoia wood door frame of his house, the Maison de Jouir, in Atuana on the Marquesan island of Hiva-oa with low relief and painted carvings of female nudes, animals, and flowers (Musée d'Orsay). A Gauguin retrospective held in Paris in 1906 influenced some of the twentieth century's most important artists, including Matisse and Picasso.

Many artists sympathetic to the labor movement also considered themselves workers, but few tried to raise awareness of the plight and dignity of the working class more avidly than Constantin Meunier (Belgian, 1831–1905), a founding member of the Brussels exhibition association *Société Libre des Beaux-Arts*. Beginning in the mid-1880s Meunier began producing life-size, realistic male figures representing various traditional agricultural and modern industrial occupations, including *The Dockworker* (1885) and *The Sower* (1896). These were part of an envisioned multi-part *Monument to Labor*, finally assembled 25 years after the artist's death.

Although Rodin was unquestionably the most illustrious sculptor of his generation, the three decades since the founding of France's Third Republic (1871) were a boom time for French sculpture. More public monuments were commissioned then than during any comparable earlier period in European history, as modern day visitors to Paris cannot help noticing. Because of the messiness and physical involvement required for sculpture making, in 1900 it was still largely a man's game. For someone as talented and tenacious as Camille Claudel (French, 1864–1943), however, this was no impediment. Best known as the assistant, lover, and muse of Rodin, whose final three decades were spent tragically imprisoned by her mother and brother in a mental institution against the advice of doctors, Claudel was the most gifted female sculptor of the period. *The Gossips* (1897, Musée Rodin, Paris) exemplifies the eclecticism typical of the visual arts circa 1900. Executed in bronze and onyx, a semi-precious stone generally reserved for jewelry, the variegated, transluscent material emphasizes disparity between the smooth surface and the erratic facture beneath. Claudel balanced this attention to the sculpture's material properties with a mundane subject – three woman attentively listening to the story told by a fourth participant. While the situation is typical of pressionist-Naturalist-Realist subjects, particularly with the inclusion of intersecting walls, the fact that these women are nude divorces the scene from the everyday and links it to classical tradition.

Max Klinger (German, 1857–1920) created a similarly hybrid, if much larger, sculpture in his *Beethoven* (1897–1902). A labor of love conceived and paid for by the artist, *Beethoven* is a life-size, mixed-media seated portrait of the composer in heroic partial nudity. Revered as the ultimate German man of genius who triumphed over adversity (deafness) to produce some of the most sublime music ever written, Klinger portrayed the Romantic composer as a synthesis of Prometheus, the Greek god who suffered eternal torment for bringing humans the essential gift of fire, and Zeus, king of the gods. Klinger based his composition on descriptions of the famous fifth century BCE statue of Zeus at Olympia by Phidias, thereby linking his own sculpture to revered classical tradition, and created it from rare and expensive materials, including gold, amber, ivory, marble, and bronze. Klinger and Claudel's embrace of atypical sculptural materials signaled an experimental attitude that would come to characterize much twentieth-century sculpture. As the centerpiece of the Vienna Secession's 1902 exhibition, *Beethoven* comprised part of a multi-media experience that included a mural, the *Beethoven Frieze*, painted by Gustav Klimt (Austrian, 1862–1918), and the performance of the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony arranged and conducted by Gustav Mahler. This path-breaking event paved the way for multi-media installation art, now a staple of contemporary art.

In America, realism and commemoration were the order of the day. Irish American sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848–1907), founder of the Cornish (New Hampshire) Artists' Colony, received numerous orders for Civil War monuments, the most famous of which is his *William Sherman* memorial in the south west corner of New York's Central Park (1892–1903). Saint-Gaudens chose the traditional equestrian style monument, originally inspired by the ancient Roman statue of Marcus Aurelius on Rome's Capitoline Hill, and used over the centuries for generals (Donatello, *Gattamelata*, 1453, Piazza del Santo, Padua) and rulers (Étienne-Maurice Falconet, *Peter the Great*, 1766–82, Decemberists' Square, St. Petersburg).

PHOTOGRAPHY

Since its development in 1839, photography underwent rapid development due to advances in chemistry and optics. In 1900, the debate that had pestered photography since its advent – is it a documentary science or a fine art? – was still raging. Science advocates argued that the camera's ability to capture with meticulous precision the details of the visible world by means of a mechanical process disqualified it as art, while fine art advocates stressed the control exercised by the photographer over choice of motif, composition, exposure and development times, and the ability to combine in one image negatives made at various times and places. Pictorialism, an international movement that promoted photography as fine art, emerged in 1869 with the publication of *Pictorial Effect in Photography* by Henry Peach Robinson (English, 1830–1901). Pictorialists subordinated fact to beauty and encouraged experimentation.

The battle for photography's recognition as fine art intensified in the 1890s with the establishment of aesthetically oriented photographic organizations such as The Camera Club of New York (1884), The Italian Photographic Society (1889), The Club of Photographic Art Lovers in Lvov, Poland (1891), the Kamera Klub in

Vienna (1894), and the Photo-Secession, an invitation-only group established by Alfred Stieglitz (German American, 1864–1946) in 1902. Photographers frustrated by the hierarchical organization and resistance to experimentation of the Photographic Society of Great Britain, as well as its relative disinterest in providing members with exhibition opportunities, led a dissident group to establish the closed-membership international Linked Ring in 1892.

1893 was an important year for photography with The Linked Ring initiating the first annual photographic exhibition and museum director Alfred Lichtwark establishing the first International Exhibition of Amateur Photography at the Hamburg (Germany) Kunsthalle with an impressive display of over 7,000 photographs. In 1898, the Munich Secession was the first international art exhibition to include photography. The receptivity in Germany regarding photography as fine art is explicable partly by the open-mindedness of Germany's progressive art establishment and partly by the fact that Realism was the officially sanctioned art style of the recently created (1871) German nation-state. In Turin, Italy, the First Italian Congress on Photography held in 1898 marked an important benchmark in photographic history because it included separate sections for commercial/technical photography and art photography, thereby awarding equal attention to photography's twin aspects.

The international appeal of Pictorialism is evidenced by its embrace in Japan. The Japan Photographic Society was formed in 1889 with Takeaki Enomoto (1836–1908) as its first president, and it published *Monthly Photo Journal*, which offered tips regarding materials and techniques as well as information about individual photographers and exhibitions at home and abroad. In 1893, works by London Camera Club photographers were exhibited in Tokyo, spurring interest in photography in Japan. Photographic societies formed in many Japanese cities, often with a populist agenda. The manifesto of *Yutsuza-sha*, for instance, explained its goal as encouraging "each of its members to fully realize and attain his or her own artistic ideals" (Kaneko 2008, 82).

Europe took the lead in recognizing photography as fine art. The international exhibition held in 1901 to celebrate the opening of Glasgow's new Kelvingrove Art Gallery included photography alongside painting and sculpture – more than 500 photographs by 200 photographers from a dozen countries were exhibited. The organizer, pictorialist photographer James Craig Annan (Scottish, 1864–1946), was eager to demonstrate the creative flexibility of the photographic medium. He insured that a broad range of techniques was represented, including images made with pinhole cameras, composite images assembled from multiple negatives, images printed on platinum-coated paper (giving the most nuanced tonal range), and color images. Similarly, the National and International Exhibition of Photography held in Florence, Italy in 1899 included works by Alfred Stieglitz and Robert Demachy (French, 1859–1936) as well as works by members of the Vienna (Austria) Camera Club. A momentous advance in the visual arts was made at the Paris world's fair of 1900, when the mesmerizing medium of movies was introduced to millions of spellbound viewers, who watched the early cinematography of Louis Lumière (French, 1864–1948) projected onto a huge screen. In contrast to these European initiatives, the St. Louis world's fair held in 1904 banned photography from the art pavilion.

Alfred Stieglitz was among those American photographers frustrated by the conservatism of the American art establishment. Constant harassment from unprogressive

members of the Camera Club of New York in his role as editor of the organization's journal *Camera Note,* led Stieglitz to establish *Camera Work* in 1902, the same year he founded the Photosecession. The purpose of the Photosecession and *Camera Work*, according to Stieglitz, was to promote 'Only examples of such works as gives evidence of individuality and artistic worth, regardless of school, or contains some exceptional feature of technical merit, or such as exemplifies some treatment worthy of consideration . . . ' (Stieglitz 1903, 4). In the first issue of *Camera Work*, American photographer Edward Steichen (1879–1973) refuted the belief that a photograph is an impersonal and objective visual record: 'In the very beginning, when the operator controls and regulates his time exposure, when in the dark-room the developer is mixed for detail, breadth, flatness or contrast, faking [i.e. purposeful intervention] has been resorted to. In fact, every photograph is a fake from start to finish, a purely impersonal, unmanipulated photograph being practically impossible' (Steichen 1903, 48).

Stieglitz's dream of a permanent space for showcasing recent developments in art and photography was realized in 1905 when Steichen donated space in his studio at 291 Fifth Avenue for a gallery. There, American audiences were first introduced to the pioneering works of European artists Brancusi, Cézanne, Matisse, Picasso, and Rodin, as well as the pictorialist photography of Americans Gertrude Kasebier (1852–1934) and Clarence H. White (1871–1925) until the gallery's closure in 1917.

A vast array of exhibition possibilities in the years around 1900 combined with a more self-conscious striving for international recognition and open-minded experimentation to provide an exhilerating environment for the pioneers of twentieth-century art: Constantin Brancusi, Vassily Kandinsky (Russian, 1866–1944), František Kupka (Czech, 1871–1957), Kazimir Malevich (Ukrainian, 1879–1935), Pierre Matisse, Piet Mondrian (Dutch, 1872–1944), and Pablo Picasso. These artists, with their roots in the late nineteenth century, explored issues of identity and subjectivity, reflected on the meaning, purpose, and possibilities of art, scavenged from art of the past, present, and non-Western cultures in order to create visual languages that correlated with their diverse goals. The extreme heterogeneity that characterizes art today has its conceptual and methodological origins in the *fin de siècle*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

NOTE

1 Sculpture was inherently the most conservative artistic medium for four reasons: 1) the expense of raw materials, traditionally either bronze or marble, 2) the expense of assistance for both carving and bronze-casting, 3) the expense of transportation, and 4) its primary purpose was public commemoration. For these reasons the demand for traditional figural sculpture was high in the years around 1900 and experimentation occurred within relatively narrow parameters – the exhibition halls of the 1900 *Exposition universelle* in Paris were packed with portrait busts, female nudes, and other figural sculptures.

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THE CINEMA

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Tom Gunning

NINETEENTH-CENTURY CINEMA

Cinema appeared internationally in the 1890s, the result of exchanges between inventors and industrialists on several continents. By 1900 cinema had traveled around the world, appearing in major metropolises in the Americas, Europe and Asia as well as colonial Africa. Not only were films projected around the world, they were also shot in dozens of countries, introducing one of the dominant genres of early film: foreign views. *Fin-de-siècle* audiences in Chicago, Tokyo, Johannesburg or Moscow watched films shot in New York, Paris, Stockholm, Mexico City and Jerusalem. Several early film companies adopted the motto "the world within reach," and fulfilled this promise by projecting an image of a world beyond borders. Although production companies remained concentrated in the West, cinema reflected a new global consciousness and films gave this a visible form.

Cinema has been called "the art of the twentieth century" (Sontag 2001). Originally this phrase denoted an art of the modern, the product and the expression of the energies of a new age. Cinema appeared as a technological art, based in mass production, and the product of a democratic consumerist age. As an expression of modern experience, cinema offered new modes of representation, especially of space and time. Avant-garde movements claimed the cinema – a relation that might seem in tension with film's role as the dominant popular art form (Brantlinger 1990, pp. 106–08). Cinema's identification with the twentieth century signaled its newness, contrasted with traditional art forms whose origins were legendary, or could be traced back millennia.

Viewed, however, from our twenty-first century, this rubric places cinema in an already past historical period. Despite cinema's continued popularity and influence, any claim to be the art of our century, an exemplar of the contemporary, seems to have been usurped by electronic images in their varied forms: television, computer image or virtual reality. But did cinema truly belong to the twentieth century? The round number of centuries hardly serves to regulate history. Technological revolutions in media, urbanism and transportation, all of which affected the emergence of cinema, began somewhat before the mid-nineteenth century with the rise of the

railway, the telegraph and photography. The development of instantaneous photography, the phonograph, the telephone and the automobile mark a slightly later period of accelerated transformation at the end of the century often referred to as "The Second Industrial Revolution." (Chandler 1990, p. 28) Cinema emerged during this period, thus belonging exclusively to neither the twentieth nor the nineteenth century. Cinema belongs profoundly to this in-between era – the *fin de siècle*. The *fin de siècle* denotes more than the beginning of a new century on the calendar of history. Like the uncanny clock time of midnight, it captures the moment where something ends while something else begins, a shadow that falls between the old and the new, a period of transition. If the *fin de siècle* predominantly connotes the end of something, a broad sense of decadence, it is perhaps poetic justice that the new invention of the cinema bridges this sense of shadowy decline into a new era of technological innovation.

THE INVENTION OF THE *FIN DE SIÈCLE*

Research by film historians over the last decades has revised and complicated the chronology of cinema's invention (or even the concept of "invention" – Charles Musser's term "the emergence of cinema" describes the process better) (Musser 1990). But many cultural historians have not absorbed this revision.[1] I therefore offer a sketch of cinema's nineteenth-century pedigree. The controversies surrounding cinema's invention arose initially from rival patents and national (even local) pride, which need not engage us here. Thom Andersen's claim that at the turn of the century any reasonably skilled engineer could have invented cinema and several did, may underrate the skilled labor of cinema's pioneers, but it does stress that cinema emerged as a confluence of several technical innovations combined with a new desire to record time (Andersen 1975). But to trace these origins, we need to consider what we mean by "cinema."

Transforming images created by mirrors or projection have existed at least since the seventeenth century (Mannoni 2000, pp. 28–135). But devices that endow images with an appearance of continuous motion appeared only in the early nineteenth century with the Phenakistiscope (sometimes called the Stroboscope) and the Zoetrope. These devices revolved a series of images portraying successive stages of a simple motion (e.g. horses leaping, people dancing, a windmill turning) within a viewing aperture that functioned like a shutter. The human vision enables us to perceive such an intermittently appearing series of images as a continuous motion, provided that the images are properly designed and the revolutions reach a certain speed. These devices depended on images drawn on circular surfaces, such as the discs used in the Phenakistiscope or the circular paper strips of the Zoetrope. Such circumscribed surfaces could only hold short cycles of motion (therefore repetitive motions, such as dancing, jumping or sawing wood, were favored, since their repetition could seem to be continuous). These devices coincided with new research into human vision and optics and knowingly manipulate human perception in order to produce a moving image (Crary 1990). This melding of perception and technology constituted a dramatic innovation in the history of representation. However, they only provided a moment's sensation: movement was brief and repetitive. Yet they made *images move* and one could argue that later developments of cinema only elaborated this basic phenomenon.

Three major revisions supplemented these early moving image devices to yield what we usually consider cinema (although scholars could disagree on whether any one of them defines cinema). Extending the playing time of the moving image required redesigning devices so they no longer depended on a single revolving circular disc or strip. For some scholars, animating *photographic* images (as opposed to drawings) defines cinema (although one could claim, rather, that animation based on drawing formed the earliest form of cinema). Finally, projecting the moving image on a screen for some historians marked the true emergence of cinema (although the seminal invention of Thomas Edison, the Kinetoscope, like several other early devices, was actually a peepshow device like the original Phenakistiscope and Zoetrope, in which the viewer looked through an aperture to see animated photographs). These three developments transformed the toy-like devices of the early moving image and led to later developments of cinema. However, it can be debated which combination of them, if any, defines the medium.

Projection systems, such as the magic lantern, which threw images painted on glass onto a screen by means of light focused through lenses, had existed since the seventeenth century. By the nineteenth century projecting lanterns constituted a widely popular form of entertainment and instruction (Mannoni 2000, pp. 264–96). A number of showman/inventors managed to combine Phenakistiscopes or Zoetropes with projection, so that a moving image could be shown on a screen to an audience, instead of being limited to one viewer at a time. As Charles Musser has shown, a long tradition of screen culture existed before cinema; projecting still or transforming images and the moving image had worked its way into this culture by the 1860s (Musser 1990, pp. 15–54). These early motion projections continued to be limited to brief sequences on revolving discs. One might therefore claim the major innovation that led to the emergence of cinema as more than a parlor entertainment lay in placing successive images on a lengthy flexible strip or band rather than a disc, which could be wound up on a reel, rather than simply revolved. Eventually this led to the material base of cinema becoming a strip of translucent material. Ultimately this strip gave its name to the medium itself: film (Rossell 1998, pp. 57–78).

Film, like cinema, is a slippery term. It can denote both the medium based in moving images and the material that became the basis of that medium – at least during the twentieth century: a thin flexible translucent strip of material, originally made of celluloid but later using a variety of synthetic plastics. The flexibility of this material base allowed the succession of images printed on it to greatly exceed a revolving disc since they could be rolled onto a reel rather than being restricted to the circumference of a disc. However, flexible-roll film was not the first choice of a material surface for pioneers of the cinema, largely because it was not widely available from manufacturers until the late 1880s. Thomas Edison's research laboratory supported the best-funded and technically sophisticated investigation into moving pictures at the turn of the century. While hardly the exclusive inventors of the cinema, Edison and his assistants, especially William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, explored a variety of techniques for obtaining a motion picture technology that would surpass the brief moving images others offered (Spehr 2008 passim). Dickson's interaction with early manufacturers of sheet celluloid, George Eastman and the Carbutt Company, led eventually to the adoption of rolls of celluloid as the base of cinema, as Paul Spehr has detailed. However, celluloid strips had not been the first

choice. Edison's curious first choice reveals a great deal about the models for cinema and its engagement with time.

An arguably new idea underlies the material basis and mechanical devices of cinema: the recording of time – allowing a past moment to be "replayed." While various systems of notation and representation allowed a record of the past, the first technological direct recording of the flow of a temporal phenomenon came with the phonograph, which records sounds, especially the voice and music, and allows them to be replayed. Several inventors had attempted to record sound mechanically in the late nineteenth century, including the Decadent French poet Charles Cros (whose drink Arthur Rimbaud had once laced with sulfuric acid in a Parisian dive). Thomas Edison offered a successful sound recording device in 1879. This phonograph (originally intended as a mechanical replacement for an office secretary), inscribed sound as indentations on a spiral track that snaked around a shellac cylinder. This machine inspired Edison's research into motion pictures (Gunning 2001). His original announcement of his new project in October of 1888 to the U.S. Patents Office declared: "I am experimenting upon an instrument that does for the Eye what the phonograph does for the Ear" (Musser 1990, pp. 63–64). The Edison motion picture research team first imprinted spirals of microscopic successive photographs around the surface of a cylinder that would be viewed through a magnifier. Although not a total failure, this approach proved impractical and Edison and Dickson next pursued the celluloid path (Spehr 2008, pp. 82–93; Musser 1990, pp. 64–72). While for decades the cylinder seemed an amusing detour from cinema's main path, now, in the era of motion picture DVDs based on audio CDs, it may seem prescient, underscoring the shared temporal role of sound and video recording.

Celluloid had recently emerged as a new medium for photography, an alternative to fragile glass plates, especially the new roll film Eastman produced for the amateur hand-cameras, such as the Kodak Brownie (Rossell 1998, pp. 57–77). Many scholars consider Edison's Kinetoscope, which combined photographic moving images with the longer running time allowed by celluloid film as the defining moment for the emergence of cinema. But is photography necessary for cinema? The extraordinary figure of Émile Reynaud shows both how gradual the move from moving images to cinema was and how ambiguous determining the exact moment of cinema remains. (Auzel 1992; Cholodenko 2008; Mannoni 2000, pp. 364–86) Reynaud, a French artist and inventor, had created the Praxinoscope, an improved version of the Zoetrope, by adding prismatic mirrors to aid the viewing of the animation. (See Figure 42.1.) He introduced a projecting Praxinoscope in 1880, which allowed his invention to leave the parlor tabletop and present a public show of moving images. But the revolving circular format still limited the show to simple repetitive motions lasting a few seconds. A means of allowing a longer show was a necessity for performances before an audience. Reynaud first devised a series of flexible bands which carried hand-painted transparent images and projected them by means of a beam of light reflected from a mirror onto a screen, a system Reynaud named the *Théâtre Optique*. With this extensive band of images Reynaud could present a performance of close to ten minutes rather than a few seconds, which allowed him to present extended situations and stories. Reynaud further improved his devices by introducing a flexible transparent strip (apparently made of a gelatin product), moved by perforations engaging with a toothed wheel, on which he painted the
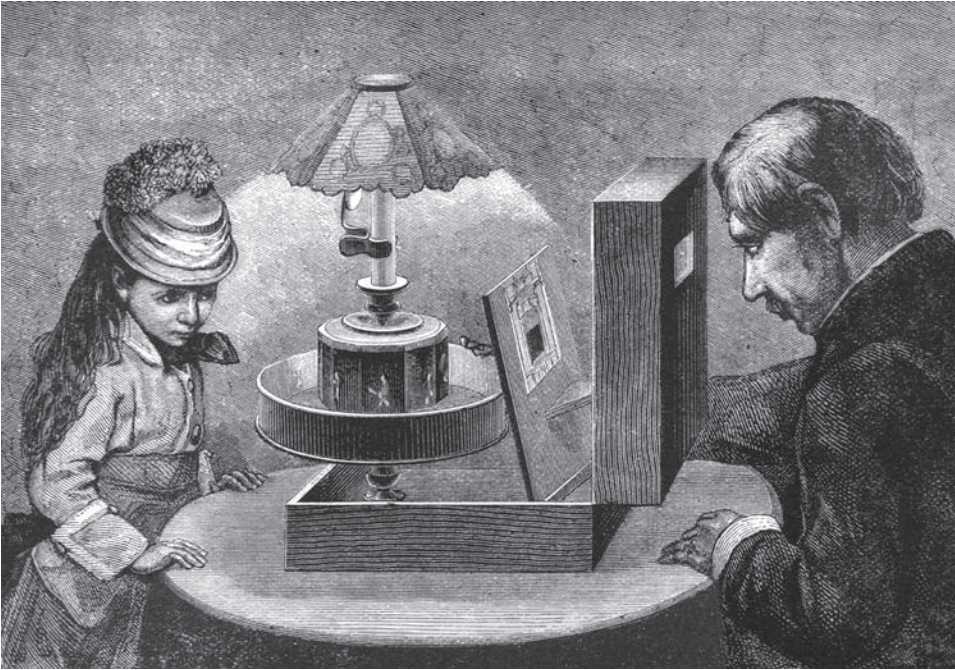
Figure 42.1 Historical artwork of a young girl watching a man using a Praxinoscope. Invented by Émile Reynaud in 1879, it was a nineteenth-century novelty item that was a precursor to modern cinematography © Sheila Terry/Science Photo Library

successive images of comic incidents. These programs can be considered the first animated films and, arguably, the first presentations of cinema. Entitled *Pantomimes Lumineuses*, these shows were publicly presented in late 1892 before a paying audience at the Parisian showplace of popular entertainments, the Musée Grévin, where it ran as an attraction for several years. But even if the importance of these shows must be acknowledged, their lack of photographic processes separates them from a major aspect of cinema's development, the use of photography as both a source for the series of successive images and a means of reproduction. Later animated films used motion photography as a means of making multiple prints. Reynaud's strips remained unique hand-painted objects, which greatly limited their distribution. Yet the moving image began with drawn images – an important and often neglected aspect of cinema's origins in the nineteenth century. Indeed photography had to undergo a prolonged development throughout the nineteenth century in order to be useful for the development of motion pictures.

When photography first emerged toward the middle of the nineteenth century, an extended exposure time was required in order to imprint a photographic image on a sensitive surface. Even in the 1860s photographic exposures took scores of seconds and photographing moving objects led to blurred images. The goal of producing a photographic process sensitive enough to capture the world in motion through a brief exposure remained elusive until the 1870s when Eadweard Muybridge managed to snap the image of a galloping horse (Prodger 2003, pp. 112–52). The relation

between the images of still instantaneous photographs, which became increasingly possible toward the end of the century, and the moving images of the cinema may not be immediately obvious, since the freezing of motion in photography appears radically opposed to the reproduction of motion by the cinema. But instantaneous still photography allowed cameramen to register precisely the rapid successive exposures needed for both the analysis and the synthesis of motion.

At the *fin de siècle* two separate traditions converged to form cinema: Reynaud's projection of successive drawings animated through the mechanics of a projected flexible strip of images, and instantaneous still photographs likewise arranged in series, but initially intended primarily as tools for scientific analysis of motion. This photographic practice was termed chronophotography – the photographing of time. Eadweard Muybridge in the United States (who came from a photographic tradition) and Étienne-Jules Marey in France (who was trained as a physiologist) pioneered the use of instantaneous successive photographs to capture the stages of motion (Braun 1995). As a tool of analysis, chronophotography employed brief exposure times to still the course of time and motion. However, the need to demonstrate that these punctual moments truly formed instants of motion (since many found these unusual still images – such as horses with all four hooves off the ground – unlikely and suspected them of trickery) also led Marey and Muybridge to experiment with putting their images into motion. Muybridge used a projecting Phenakistiscope (which he called a Zoopraxiscope), still limited to the brief sequences of motion that could be endlessly repeated, to project his animal locomotion to audiences (Prodger 2003, pp. 112–222). Marey introduced a variety of flexible strips of photographic paper and eventually celluloid, as well as a revolving glass disc system, which his assistant Demenÿ initially devised as a tool for teaching the deaf to speak (Braun 1995, pp. 150–98). Thus a number of optical devices designed for both entertainment and scientific research combined to create cinema at the end of the nineteenth century. First and most essential was the creation, earlier in the century, of devices that could manipulate the interface between human vision and images in motion to create an animated image that moved continuously. Reynaud's construction of an extensive flexible band as the support for these series of images extended their length. Around the same time the development of instantaneous photography allowed the camera to master time and break the course of motion into individual photographs. These mechanically and chemically produced images could therefore replace the individually drawn images that had previously formed the basis of the moving image.

Several inventors in different countries put together these elements to achieve cinema. Paul Spehr has offered a chronology of the period between October 1894 and December 1995 in which he lists the succession of motion picture inventions by such figures as the Latham family (US), Robert Paul (UK), Herman Casler (US), Birt Acres (UK), Georges Demenÿ (France), in addition to those I discuss below (Spehr 2008, pp. 379–82). A number had at least limited success, although their technical achievements were rarely matched by commercial exploitation. Thus the Anglo-French inventor Louis Leprince (whose mysterious disappearance after boarding a train has generated a variety of conspiracy theories) was able to produce a motion picture camera as early as 1888 whose successive images have recently been digitally animated, although during his lifetime he was never able to stage a successful public

projection, let alone turn his invention into a commercial enterprise (Spehr 2008, pp. 111–17). The German Skladanowsky brothers did manage a public showing of their brief motion pictures as part of a variety show at the Wintergarten Theater in Berlin in November of 1895, using a somewhat gerrymandered system of double strips of film (Mannoni, pp. 457–58).

Two early cinema devices made the biggest impact on film history, due as much to strong financial and technical foundations of the companies that introduced them as their technical mastery. The Kinetoscope Thomas Edison developed from 1889 to 1894 earned him the frequently made claim to be the inventor of cinema, even if his device depended on a long tradition. Reynaud's flexible celluloid band moved by perforations and Marey's and Muybridge's experiments in photography and projection were essential to Edison. Equally important was the long process (detailed carefully in Paul Spehr's recent magisterial account of Dickson's career) that his assistant Dickson undertook of perfecting a celluloid strip that would serve both in the camera taking the views and in the Kinetoscope that displayed them (Spehr 2008). The flexible band allowed a more complete action than the disc viewers of chronophotography that had been designed by Marey's assistant Demenÿ or the German chronophotographer Ottomar Anschütz (Rossell 1998, pp. 42–47). The Kinetoscope's band of celluloid with its successive images ran continuously past a magnifying lens impelled by perforations and a toothed wheel, held tautly by a bank of spools. However, the Kinetoscope remained a peepshow device. Edison experimented with projection, but the Kinetoscope was conceived as a commercial machine, based on the phonograph, which had had success as a coin-operated machine. Edison assumed individual viewers peering in the viewer after dropping in their nickels would be his most profitable mode of exhibition.

After Edison, the Lumière brothers are most often associated with the "invention" of the cinema. Like Edison their device was supported by a large enterprise, *Lumière et fils*, based in Lyon, France, which manufactured photographic supplies targeted mainly at the burgeoning amateur market. Pioneers in innovative aspects of photography (instantaneous and color photography especially), Louis and Auguste, sons of the company patriarch Antoine, turned their attention to motion photography, drawing important lessons from compatriots Marey and Reynaud as well as a careful examination of Edison's Kinetoscope. Their product, the *Cinématographe*, gave us the term cinema. Its lightweight, compact design allowed the operator to use it as a camera, and, with the addition of a magic lantern, as a projector, and even as a printer for making positive prints from negatives (Sadoul 1946, pp. 184–96; Chardère 1995).

Cinema's most lasting impact has arguably been as a projection system. One could debate whether projection is a defining element of the new medium – in which case Edison's Kinetoscope is relegated to the pre-cinematic (a term I find intolerably teleological). Perhaps based on the unexpected success of their early experimental showings before invited audiences, the Lumières were convinced that projection in the tradition of the magic lantern was the best commercial path for their new invention. In pursuing this path the Lumières were neither unique nor very original; a number of other motion picture pioneers included projection as an essential aspect of their apparatuses. Muybridge and Reynaud among others had offered motion picture projections and Leprince and the Skladanowsky brothers' early spectacles were also conceived as projection before an audience. Indeed, as Charles Musser has

demonstrated, at least one public paying performance predates both the Skladanowsky Berlin showing and the Lumières' more successful commercial premiere of the *Cinématographe* at the Grand Café in Paris on 28 Dec 1895: Thomas Armat and Francis Jenkins showed their Phantoscope at the Cotton States Exposition in Atlanta (Musser 1990, pp. 100–105). However, as opposed to the rather brief and often technically flawed exhibitions of Jenkins and Armat or Skladanowsky, the Lumière exhibition gained audiences in Paris and led not only to touring shows for exhibition throughout France but internationally. Because of the dual nature of the *Cinématographe* these exhibition-tours also became location shoots, as the company sent teams of operators around the world, charged both with exhibiting the *Cinématographe* and with shooting new films. These films became the center of future Lumière exhibitions, and one of the first genres of cinema emerged: the travel film.

This chronology of the emergence of cinema roots the medium within the nineteenth century, specifically its last decades, the *fin de siècle*. The technology of cinema developed from a variety of material and technical innovations responding to modern concepts of space and time as well as new industrial processes and materials. Precision machinery regulating the movement of flexible materials such as celluloid and the light-sensitive chemicals of the emulsion that coated it allowed motion photography to break action into minute instants during filming and then replay these successive images rapidly enough to create the perception of motion. Thus at the end of the nineteenth century reliable mechanical devices could create moving images and project them for sizeable audiences. The possibility of replaying the unrolling of time revolutionized not only the possibilities of representation but modern consciousness of time itself. Cinema served not only as a means of recording time, but provided new ways to think about its malleability. As an industrial product capable of mass production (a single film negative could generate many prints) and relatively easy transportation (films could be shipped across borders and oceans) cinema quickly became a global commodity. If its centers of production remained limited to European and American manufacturers, its export and exhibition became truly international by 1896, less than a year after its first commercial success. Few cultural and technical innovations could claim to so powerfully embody the transition from the old century to the new.

THE FILMS OF THE *FIN DE SIÈCLE*

Cinema was amazingly stable for nearly a century. Although technical transformations occurred, such as synchronized sound, color photography, and third-dimensional effects, they were simply perfected or became dominant – all three were experimented with before WWI (admittedly, with often short-lived results). But the format most of us think of as a film, a feature-length (e.g. about an hour or more) entertainment, usually of a fictional/dramatic nature, has dominated the international film industry only since around 1914. A different sort of film marked the medium's emergence and characterized the *fin de siècle*. In later cinema the moving image primarily served as a medium for a story or information. But in *fin de siècle* cinema movement formed the main attraction. Cinema emerged to show the movement of the world; the spectacle of the world in motion constituted the motive for the medium. Rather than a fictional world, early films displayed both the intricacies

and surprises of motion and the workings of the motion picture apparatus. Georges Méliès recounted his first viewing of the *Cinématographe* at a private preview (Quèvain and Chaconnet-Méliès 1984, p. 235). With consummate showmanship the Lumières had not revealed the nature of their new photographic novelty. The invited audience waited in expectation and Méliès described his disappointment when a projected photograph of the streets of Paris appeared on a screen, a spectacle presented for decades. But astonishment followed, as, after an instant, the still image was put in motion by turning the crank of the *Cinématographe* and the street was filled with the life of motion. Méliès, the premier Parisian impresario of stage magic, recognized the new invention's relevance to his profession and soon began to project films at his Théâtre Robert-Houdin between elaborate magical acts.

We could differentiate between cinema, the means of displaying moving images and films, and the films it shows. The main attraction of the first cinema exhibitions was the apparatus itself and the first exhibitions of cinema in the 1890s advertised the names of machines (and there were a number of them: the *Cinématographe*, the Vitascope, the Biograph and many others) rather than individual films. Films shown tended to be brief, rarely more than a minute, and not infrequently were shown repeatedly, as loops, as audiences marveled at the effect of the moving image. They were often accompanied by music or spoken commentary and usually formed one attraction on a variety bill that included other acts: singers, acrobats, comedians and dancers. The moving image was considered a scientific and technical novelty and was covered as such in the press. Most viewers came to the earliest moving picture shows to see this novelty demonstrated.

The earliest films belong to what I call "motion" genres (Gunning 2009). Whatever their subjects, their attraction lay in the motion they displayed. Take, for instance, a Lumière film from 1895 entitled *L'Arroseur arrosé* (literally translated: "The hoser hosed" but more descriptively titled in English as "The Bad Boy's Joke on the Gardener"), which has been claimed as the first fiction film. In a sense it does stage a story (unlike the Lumières' "everyday scenes," such as *The Arrival of the Train*, *Workers Leaving a Factory* or *Demolishing a Wall*). A mischievous boy steps on a garden hose, stopping the flow of water; when the gardener examines the nozzle, the boy steps off, releasing the spray into the man's face. This slapstick gag predated the film and had been the subject of a comic strip (Sadoul 1946, p. 251). But early film catalogs that hawked the film to exhibitors stressed its "water effect," the movement no comic strip could capture. Thus, although early films fell into a number of genres (visual gags; scenes of everyday life; travel films; parades; dances and vaudeville acts), nearly all of them foregrounded the attraction of motion.

Motion-based films dominated the first decade of cinema. But the moving image of early cinema stands in opposition to philosopher Giles Deleuze's concept of the "Movement-Image" in cinema. Deleuze's concept primarily refers to the creation of a trajectory of motion, usually across several shots. The Movement-Image is best exemplified by what Deleuze calls an Action-Image, a succession of shots that follow or construct an action (Deleuze 1986, pp. 12–28, 64–70). This structure became vital for film as it developed as a narrative medium, a carrier of story. This was not the primary mode of films during the *fin de siècle*, most of which consisted of a single shot. Editing only developed gradually, and the action-image first developed around 1903–06 with the appearance of the chase films, which were

popular internationally. In the United States, Biograph's 1904 *Personal* followed a horde of women chasing a French nobleman who had advertised for a bride; the British 1905 kidnapping drama *Rescued by Rover* showed a faithful dog tracing and rescuing an abducted child; and perhaps most famously, Edison's 1903 *The Great Train Robbery* presented bandits who held up a train and then were killed by a pursuing posse. In early chase films the action of pursuit joins shots, constructing a continuous geography of contiguous spaces. Such editing patterns created an armature of cause and effect that would form the basis of later narrative cinema.

These action-based films introduced the second decade of cinema, but the films from the literal turn of the century had a different form and focus. Rather than storytelling, the cinema's first decade privileged display, a tendency André Gaudreault and myself call the "cinema of attractions" (Gunning 1989; Gaudreault 2011; Strauven 2007). This cinema addressed the spectator directly, grabbing the viewer's attention with the visual equivalent of "look at this!" Rather than creating a diegetic (that is a fictional) world, viewed through a transparent "fourth wall," the cinema of attractions invited viewers to marvel. This cinema of attractions displayed a variety of novelties, including the new technology's ability to capture the motions of everyday life or views of distant lands, or feats of performance (acrobatics, dances, even pornography).

Careful examination of the prints of early films (made especially by André Gaudreault and his teams of researchers) has found that these films increasingly used some form of splicing (cutting and then joining the filmstrip). (Gaudreault 2000, pp. 8–15) In contrast to narrative editing, which joined different spaces through action, these splices served to augment display, for instance, by cutting out "dead time" when recording long events (such as a procession or a soccer match). Such splices were also used to make magical disappearances smoother. The ability to shorten cinematic time by splicing film led eventually to planning and shooting films in shots designed to be edited together, as in the chase films. Although the display of attractions and construction of a story through editing differ, they can shade into each other or even combine. Both modes of spectator engagement, attractions and narrative integration, persist throughout film history, but one or the other tends to dominate. Contemporary horror films teeter between the suspenseful narratives and direct displays of gore; porno films use some narrative elements as a fig leaf to hold episodes together, but sex scenes dominate. Literary adaptations may depend primarily on the narrative, but moments of spectacle occur in the display of costumes or dance sequences. During cinema's first decade, attractions and display dominated films.

Perhaps the most complex genre of the cinema of attractions is the trick or magic film, a genre often associated with Georges Méliès. Deriving from the theater of illusions of the nineteenth century (of which Méliès was a major entrepreneur in Paris), the trick film presented a variety of visual illusions and transformations (Abel 1994, pp. 61–86). Méliès understood the *Cinématographe* as a marvelous visual illusion, recognizing the affinity the Lumières' new invention had with his own theater of illusions. The first films he shot and showed in his magical Théâtre Robert-Houdin followed the Lumière model presenting moving images of everyday life. But Méliès soon figured out that cinema could also create magical tricks.

Méliès later claimed his discovery of cinema's possibility of transformation occurred by accident when a camera jammed briefly while he was shooting a Parisian
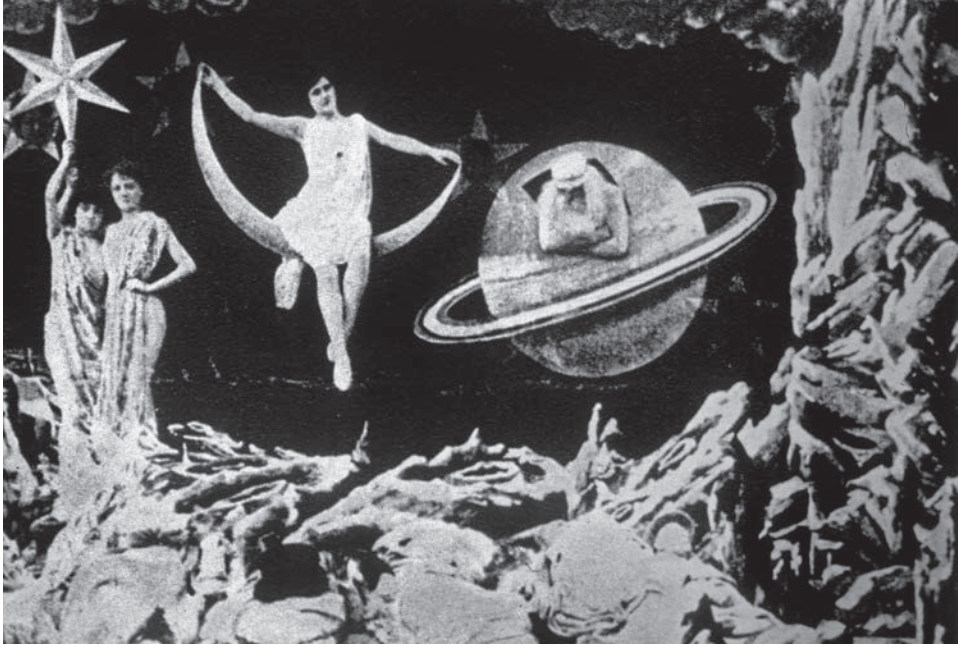
Figures 42.2 and 42.3   Two stills from *A Trip to the Moon/Voyage dans la Lune*, a 1902 film directed by Georges Méliès, French illusionist and filmmaker
© RA/Lebrecht Music & Arts

street; on the resulting film it seemed that a passing lorry magically transformed into a hearse. True or not, the anecdote illustrates the way the trick film redefined the cinematic apparatus. Cinema's continuous capture of time and motion can be interrupted – either by stopping the camera, cutting the film, or combining these processes. Méliès realized these interruptions could pass unnoticed if masked by apparently continuous action. Thus, a person could seem to disappear or change into another figure, if the camera were stopped and the scene rearranged before continuing to shoot. Time could jump and thus transform reality instantaneously, magically. Méliès could make a lady vanish, without a trap door, simply by cutting her exit out of the film. Stopping and starting filming, splicing the film strip so as to render gaps smooth, filmmakers turned ladies into dogs, made apparitions fade in and out, while double exposures (running the film through the camera twice) could superimpose tiny dancing figures on a piece of cheese, or make star-crowned girls seem to float through the sky. These tricks could be absorbed into longer stories. Méliès' early story films *A Trip to the Moon* (1902) (see Figures 42.2 and 42.3) and *The Kingdom of Fairies* (1903) attracted large audiences to the new medium, especially in the traveling cinemas that graced the fairs of England and Europe. A realm of cinematic fantasy opened that went beyond the reproduction of motion, partly by redefining cinema's mechanism. Using the devices of cinema, adopting fanciful costumes and sets from the *féerique* and pantomime theater, and applying vivid colors directly to the film prints filmmakers like Méliès created through cinema another world than the one we dwell in (Solomon 2010, pp. 40–79).

Méliès and other filmmakers mastered a variety of cinematic tricks: transformation, disappearance, superimposition, overlap dissolves, fast motion, reverse motion and filming from unusual angles (and slightly later – around 1906 – techniques of animation). Although some trick films were inspired by well-known fairy tales, others simply presented a series of transformations performed by a magician. The longer trick films spun stories, but often relied on the viewer's foreknowledge of the tale rather than developing storytelling cinematic techniques. This was not a narrative cinema based in psychology or character motivation, and, as Méliès confessed, the tricks remained the main attraction, while the story allowed them to string together a succession of spectacular effects (Sadoul 1961, p. 118).

Film historians have sometimes claimed the Lumières and Méliès represented opposed aspects of cinema: realism versus stylization; documentary opposed to fiction; reality or fantasy. However, although early film viewers certainly recognized the visual difference between magic films and views of everyday life, the films of the Lumières and Méliès (and the films of other early filmmakers, such as Edison or Robert W. Paul) primarily exhibited the new possibilities of motion pictures. Although cinema can be viewed as an eminently realistic mode of presentation, early cinema appeared as a device of wonder, presenting even the familiar world in the mode of the astonishing.

FIN DE SIÈCLE AND THE CINEMA OF SHADOWS

At its origins, cinema provided a novel mode of display for current events, vaudeville acts, brief gags, erotic images or views of foreign lands. Cinema in 1896 represented a triumph of science and technology, and was often associated with the name of inventor Thomas Edison, the avatar of a new era of electricity and possibility. The

cinema became an emblem of modernity, an entirely new way of making and seeing images: based on a mechanical and industrial system, which shaped light rather than pigment on canvas, carved marble or cast bronze. Electric light projected onto a screen, moving with the speed of modern daily life, the film image seduced viewers into a new realm of the virtual and immaterial, via the technological and mechanical. Cinema not only emerged during the *fin de siècle*, it embodied its contradictory energies.

This new world of science also appeared as a fulfillment of ancient magic; Edison himself was named a "wizard." The *fin de siècle* witnessed attempts to give magical beliefs a rational scientific basis (as in the international Society for Psychical Research) or to blend scientific discoveries with new occult beliefs (Theosophy, Spiritualism). Although ultimately this synthesis proved elusive, the trick film, which created apparent miracles of virtual transformation through scientific mechanisms, responded to such impulses. Lighthearted and mirthful in a way that contradicted most occult movements, trick filmmakers such as Méliès, Segundo de Chomón, Gaston Velle and Albert Smith brought the modern magic of the turn of the century to a technological culmination (Solomon 2010, pp. 60–79). Their films provided an image of a new world whose visions were neither traditionally material nor spiritual, but the product of light and technology.

The generation that saw cinema for the first time experienced a transformation in the nature of visual media that produced a sense of wonder, simultaneously rational and astounding. Perhaps no record of a first-time viewing of cinema so perfectly embodies the cinema's affinity with *fin-de-siècle* culture as the pseudonymous newspaper report written by Russian writer Maxim Gorky reporting his viewing of the *Cinématographe* at a major fair in Nizhy Novgorod in 1896. I will give lengthy excerpts from the account that appeared in the newspaper *Nizhegorodskii listok* in July of 1896. (Gorky 1896)

Last night I was in the Kingdom of Shadows.

If you only knew how strange it is to be there. It is a world without sound, without color. Every thing there—the earth, the trees, the people, the water and the air—is dipped in monotonous grey. Grey rays of the sun across the grey sky, grey eyes in grey faces, and the leaves of the trees are ashen grey. It is not life but its shadow, it is not motion but its soundless specter.

Here I shall try to explain myself, lest I be suspected of madness or indulgence in symbolism. I was at Aumont's and saw Lumière's cinematograph—moving photography. The extraordinary impression it creates is so unique and complex that I doubt my ability to describe it with all its nuances. However, I shall try to convey its fundamentals. When the lights go out in the room in which Lumière's invention is shown, there suddenly appears on the screen a large grey picture, "A Street in Paris"—shadows of a bad engraving. As you gaze at it, you see carriages, buildings and people in various poses, all frozen into immobility.

All this is in grey, and the sky above is also grey—you anticipate nothing new in this all too familiar scene, for you have seen pictures of Paris streets more than once. But suddenly a strange flicker passes through the screen and the picture stirs to life. Carriages coming from somewhere in the perspective of the picture are moving straight at you, into the darkness in which you sit; somewhere

from afar people appear and loom larger as they come closer to you; in the foreground children are playing with a dog, bicyclists tear along, and pedestrians cross the street picking their way among the carriages. All this moves, teems with life and, upon approaching the edge of the screen, vanishes somewhere beyond it.

And all this in strange silence where no rumble of the wheels is heard, no sound of footsteps or of speech. Nothing. Not a single note of the intricate symphony that always accompanies the movements of people. Noiselessly, the ashen-grey foliage of the trees sways in the wind, and the grey silhouettes of the people, as though condemned to eternal silence and cruelly punished by being deprived of all the colors of life, glide noiselessly along the grey ground.
Their smiles are lifeless, even though their movements are full of living energy and are so swift as to be almost imperceptible. Their laughter is soundless although you see the muscles contracting in their grey faces. Before you a life is surging, a life deprived of words and shorn of the living spectrum of colors—the grey, the soundless, the bleak and dismal life.

It is terrifying to see, but it is the movement of shadows, only of shadows . . . Suddenly something clicks, everything vanishes and a train appears on the screen. It speeds straight at you—watch out!

It seems as though it will plunge into the darkness in which you sit, turning you into a ripped sack full of lacerated flesh and splintered bones, and crushing into dust and into broken fragments this hall and this building, so full of women, wine, music and vice.

But this, too, is but a train of shadows.

Gorky's testimony shows that the cinema did not necessarily appear as a triumph of life and realism, but could seem to blend realist movement with an unrealistic monochrome and eerie silence, yielding an uncanny effect, not unlike the contemporary experience of "the uncanny valley," that uncomfortable zone between the familiar and the strange that realistic computer simulation provokes in some viewers today (Gunning 2012). For Gorky the cinema was a harbinger of a new world, bearing that sense of imminent apocalyptic transformation that haunts much of *fin-de-siècle* culture. He describes less an image of vitality and scientific progress than a ghostly realm, familiar from the symbolist and decadent writers of the era: the silence of Maeterlinck, the black magic of Huysmans, the pending apocalypse of Blok.

This mute, grey life finally begins to disturb and depress you. It seems as though it carries a warning, fraught with a vague but sinister meaning that makes your heart grow faint. You are forgetting where you are. Strange imaginings invade your mind and your consciousness begins to wane and grow dim . . .

Gorky's invocation of the shadow world of early cinema provides the perfect tone to close this survey of *fin-de-siècle* cinema. The cinema became increasingly familiar and common as the century aged. By 1905 it was no longer a novelty headlining in vaudeville and music hall programs and even the popularity of fairground cinema was beginning to fade. The pure novelty appeal of attractions gave way increasingly to simple narrative forms, as fairy tales, chase films and slapstick comedies began to

predominate over the actualities, trick films, foreign views and vaudeville turns that marked the first motion-based genres. Around 1906 converted storefronts and then specially built (or rebuilt) film theaters began to appear, such as the nickelodeons in urban America. While the Lumière Company ceased film production, major corporations with international networks for production began to emerge, such as Charles Pathé and Gaumont in France, while American pioneers Edison and Biograph began to make plans for a cartel of production companies that could turn out a regular schedule of films for the burgeoning nickelodeons. From 1906 on Pathé, Gaumont, Biograph and Vitagraph began to adapt cutting into a coherent mode of narrative expression, as characters began to emerge and eventually stars. On the eve of WWI cinema had transformed itself into a series of institutions, firmly based in modern business and industrial practices, as the films increasingly offered the feature-length narratives in established genres and promoted stars (and even auteurs such as D. W. Griffith, Mack Sennett or Max Mack), while the first film palaces were appearing in New York and Paris. But that is another (his)story.

NOTE

1 For instance, the essay on cinema included in a previous anthology of essays on the *fin de siècle*: *Fin de siècle and its Legacy* ed. Mikulas Teich and Roy Porter: "Photography, Cinematography and the Theater: A History of a Relationship" by Barbara Lesak, makes no use of recent film historians and repeats many inaccuracies, such as the unsubstantiated myth that audiences panicked during the projection of train films at the Lumière program at the Grand Café in 1895.

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CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

SCIENTIFIC ROMANCE, FANTASY AND THE SUPERNATURAL

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Roger Luckhurst

Recognisable modern popular fiction genres began to emerge in the latter half of the nineteenth century, with the extension of mass culture driven by a transformation in the economic and technological basis for print journals. This was the literature for what George Gissing dismissively called the 'quarter educated' in *New Grub Street* (Gissing 1998, p. 460). Conservative commentators dismissed the fiction filling the new journals as quick and formulaic, a crude stimulus for blunted nerves already over-stretched by urban modernity. This was not culture, but anarchy. *Fin-de-siècle* Decadence has often been critically regarded as a defensive formation against this mass culture. High art hoped to raise itself above the lowly market, and however hopeless and contradictory this aim, literary criticism has tended to follow. Henry James was understood to have won the aesthetic argument with H. G. Wells over the nature of fiction; it was Wells who quitted the field calling his own art 'abortion' (Wells in Edel and Ray 1959, p. 176).

Yet genre fiction has its own distinct cultural work to do; one aesthetic standard will not fit all. Genre may appear formulaic, but formulae, after all, are immensely generative symbolic expressions: concentrations of thought, not signs of its absence. There is something worth exploring about the flowering of non- or anti-Realist popular genres in the late Victorian period. The 'scientific romance,' coined in the 1880s, named an innovative fusion of ancient form with modern content (the awkward term 'scientifiction' appeared in the American pulp magazine market in 1926, coined by editor Hugo Gernsback, before 'science fiction' settled the generic name three years later). The scientific romance was intertwined with a significant Gothic revival that resituated the delirium of the eighteenth-century Gothic in the structures of the new print culture, producing a golden age of supernatural fiction. The eccentricities of Victorian fantasy were also channelled through new formal possibilities: Lord Dunsany's *The Gods of Pegâna* (1905), for instance, constructed a fantastical cosmogony through brief sketches and fables rather than epic poetry or immersive fiction.

Although often artificially separated by critics who want, typically, to try to maintain an opposition between the alleged scientific rationalism of science fiction and the irrationalism or mysticism of fantasy and the supernatural (see Suvin 1979),

these genres clearly exist on the same spectrum. They refract the same light, the same generative conditions, only at different wavelengths. All are fictions that might be defined by their response to the accelerations of technological modernity experienced in the nineteenth century. The genres communicate disorientations in spatial and temporal belonging. The scientific romance tilted these transformations into the future, for good or ill: utopia was an old form, but it took the extremes of the new century to coin the antonym 'dystopia.' The Gothic haunts the modern with stubborn past survivals, human agents weighed down with the nightmare of history in anxiety and fear, whilst fantasy is frequently suffused with a melancholia, the genre anchoring itself on a deep, mythical past that is nevertheless acknowledged as irretrievably lost in the relentless forward thrust of the modern.

These genres refuse the novelistic dominant of Realism, but this is never – even in the case of fantasy – an act of aesthetic evasion or escape. Rather, it is the formal registration of the fact that the logic of modernity continually uproots and redefines the very structure of the social world. As Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels evocatively described the revolutionary effects of capitalism: 'All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air' (Marx and Engels 1998, p. 6). As the industrial revolution set about remaking the world, so we might regard the various modes of fantastic fiction as a distinctive array of cultural forms that are highly responsive to the continual revolution typical of capitalist modernity. It is the 'painful mutation in historicity' at the end of the nineteenth century that suggests to Fredric Jameson the emergence of 'a fantasy narrative apparatus capable of registering systemic change' (Jameson 2003, p. 280).

Another stage in the argument is to contend that it is because of their uncoupling from mimesis that the genres of the fantastic register the globality of the nineteenth-century modernity far more explicitly than Realism. The Realist novel form was already buckling under pressure in the late Victorian period, producing the mannered over-determinism of Naturalism. The Realist or Naturalist novel may exhaustively particularise the local but can often only imply the larger forces of the global. It takes the brilliance of a critic like Edward Said to discern the trace of the colonial periphery in the great tradition of the nineteenth century English novel.

In contrast, the critic John Clute has suggested that the genres he collects under the more inclusive Russian term *fantastika* (fantasy, science fiction and horror) are defined by their intrinsic status as 'planetary' fictions. For Clute, these are modern genres because they emerge only after 1750 with the consciousness that we exist not in a world but on a *planet*. The planet is hugely extensive and yet ever more interconnected by trade, diplomacy and colonisation. Communication technologies continually shrink the space and time of the globe until its curvature, as it were, becomes humanly perceptible. The last link in the all-Red imperial telegraph route that linked New Zealand to Canada finally completed the 'British World' in 1903. Science charts the surface and ages the depths of the Earth and situates it within a solar system, whilst travel opens up a comparative anthropological knowledge that profoundly disturbs traditional structures of belief. These disjunctions positively require fantastical representations to capture the traumatic novelty of this new global consciousness. 'Fantastika is the planetary form of story' (Clute 2011, p. 24): it is a record of the *world storm* that constitutes modernity.

This essay explores the thesis that it is genre fiction in the *fin de siècle* that consistently works to register the full impact of late nineteenth century globalisation. I will begin in England, but the logic of the argument will rapidly push out centrifugally beyond national bounds to regard the genres in their emergent globality.

The revival of the literary romance form in England in the 1880s was hailed by its defenders as a return to older, virile, native forms of narrative against the etiolated, Decadent interiors of the analytic novel (usually a code for Henry James or the foreign filth of Émile Zola). The influential critic Andrew Lang praised Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883) and H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) in avowedly ethnographic terms – these forms reached back into the childhood of the northern races to reinvigorate contemporary fiction. 'Not for nothing did Nature leave us all savages under our white skins; she has wrought thus that we might have many delights, among others "the joy of adventurous living" and of reading about adventurous living' (Lang 1886, p. 102). The Stevenson and Haggard adventures were driven by their expansiveness, their breaching of limits: both stories centre on maps that point beyond the edge of the known world, the sort of white spaces that inspire Marlow to travel up the Congo River in Conrad's fractured romance *Heart of Darkness* (1899).

The 'scientific romance' was a hybrid development that created adventure from the possibilities opened up by the revolutions in science and technology that transformed everyday life with a host of electrical inventions and scientific breakthroughs in the 1870s and 1880s. The eccentric science populariser Charles Howard Hinton called his miscellaneous set of mathematical speculations and fictional sketches *Scientific Romances* in 1886. It was at this vanishing point between science and fiction that his occult speculations on the fourth dimension prospered, Hinton arguing that his awkward sketches had 'considerable value; for they enable us to express in intelligible terms things of which we can form no image' (Hinton 1886, p. 31). A more successful contemporary pioneer in the form was Grant Allen, a fervent social Darwinist who was unable to secure a post as a biologist after the failure of his debut *Physiological Aesthetics* (dedicated to his hero Herbert Spencer) and so shifted to science journalism, lurid Gothic fiction and proto-science fiction in the 1880s. His heavy-handed satire *The British Barbarians* (1895), in which a twenty-fifth-century anthropologist examines the primitive social and sexual taboos of *fin-de-siècle* England, was only the most explicit of his fictions premised on the temporal dislocation of perspective granted by evolutionary theory.

The young H. G. Wells followed Allen's trajectory away from science education, text-book hackwork and journalism towards fiction. Wells respectfully wrote to Allen after the publication of *The Time Machine* (1895): 'I believe that this field of scientific romance with a philosophical element which I am trying to cultivate, belongs properly to you' (Wells 1998, pp. 245–46). *The Time Machine*, nevertheless, is regularly declared as one of the inaugural texts of science fiction.

What is most relevant here about Wells' novella is that the melodrama is driven by the disadjustment opened by evolutionary time, a sublime terror that is generated by a strict adherence to social Darwinian logic. The future ruin of London, the powerhouse of Britain's global empire still not quite at its extensive peak in 1895, was a long established trope of satirical inversion, but the extrapolation of Victorian class conflict into the branching out of species into the Eloi and Morlocks was

embedded in theories of cultural decadence and biological degeneration circulating in the 1890s. It is an effective device to alter radically the axis of time, throwing the Time Traveller forward first to the year 802 701, then forward again millions of years to witness the entropic heat death of the sun, but not move in space. Wells again anchored his tactic of defamiliarisation in the topography of London with *The War of the Worlds* (1898), a comical marriage of the parochial suburbs of the city with interstellar threat from the evolutionarily superior Martians. Sleepy Woking is smashed to pieces by death rays. The famous opening of that novel is the quintessential instance of the planetary perspective the scientific romance engenders: 'No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinised and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinise the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water' (Wells 1993, p. 5).

After 1900, Wells lost much of his ambiguous and playful tone, convinced by the scientific accuracy of his extrapolated year 2000 in his set of lectures *Anticipations of the Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (1902) and the essential rightness of his eugenic socialism in a sequence of didactic utopias that alienated liberal humanists like Henry James and E. M. Forster. Forster's dystopia 'The Machine Stops' (1905) was an explicit riposte to Wellsian mechanised future, as was Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and C. S Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* (1945), the latter featuring a venomous portrait of Wells as a malevolent agent of modernity. But Wells' later advocacy of world government led by an elite of engineers which was envisioned in the wake of the catastrophe of the Great War was consistent with the planetary perspectives of his early scientific romances.

Of course, Wells was not the only source for the development of the scientific romance. In America, Edward Ellis' *The Steam Man of the Prairies* (1868) introduced the inventor Frank Reade and his unpredictable humanoid machine (the term 'robot' arrived in the English language in 1920 through Karel Čapek's Czech science fiction). This became the basis for a series of dime novel inventor tales in the 1870s, which were copied in the pulp serials of the *Frank Reade Library* or the Tom Swift tales of the 1890s. All of these stories were about improvising technical solutions and dodging dastardly syndicates, often with a trusty if comical black sidekick (see Landon 2002). They were fictions that celebrated the mythical model of the self-made inventor, like Thomas Alva Edison or Alexander Graham Bell, who became national heroes for their string of inventions. These electrical wizards promised, in the wake of gramophones, telephones and light bulbs, flying machines, a whole new array of devices like wireless telegraphy, photophones, and schematics for machines to transmit thought instantaneously or to communicate with the dead. Accelerated invention and discovery blurred science fact and fiction in a rapturous state of proleptic promise. Every electrical technology produced its own super-natural supplement, too, whether it was the spirits that tapped in Morse code down telegraph wires and the other end of telephones or the psychical phantasms zapped through the ether on newly detected Hertzian waves (see Sconce 2000). Rudyard Kipling's characters were soon seeing ghosts on cinematograph celluloid in 'Mrs Bathurst' (1904) or picking up spirit communications in the midst of Marconi's

early radio experiments in 'Wireless' (1902). The electrical revolution rewired the supernatural.

Unlike the pessimistic fears of degeneration that weighed on the Darwinian imagination of Allen or Wells in England, the American engineer paradigm was often confident and optimistic. Technology was the vehicle of progress, the promise for a nation brought up on Horatio Alger self-help stories. American expansionist policy in South America and the Pacific in the 1890s heralded the dawn of the American Century. In popular fiction, this is most strikingly demonstrated in Garrett Serviss's instant sequel to *War of the Worlds*, published in the *New York Evening Journal* in January 1898 immediately after the American serialisation of Wells' invasion narrative. Wells ends the novel with an ironic, accidental human victory: it is microbes that have stayed the Martians' implacable advance, not man. In a riposte to this dying fall, Serviss depicts a global technological drive, headed by Edison, to command the world's factory system to build spaceships and weapons to defeat the invader: the novel was called *Edison's Conquest of Mars*. This was the American engineer resituating the challenge of the frontier in cosmic terms, just a few years after Frederick Jackson Turner famously declared that the Western frontier was intrinsic to American identity and yet had now been fully mastered: 'the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history' (Turner 1962, p. 38). No wonder Wells himself was aghast when he wrote of his arrival in New York in 1906: 'The great thing is the mechanical thing, the unintentional thing which is speeding up all these people . . . making them stand clinging to straps, jerking them up elevator shafts, and pouring them on to ferry-boats.' Here was the epicentre of 'inhuman' modernity (Wells 1906, p. 54).

The technophilia of the scientific romance relied less on Wells and more on the fiction of French author Jules Verne, a major influence on American popular fiction (usually through very poor pirated translations). Verne's series of novels loosely gathered under the collective title *Voyages Extraordinaires* were marked by a ceaseless technological movement, plumbing the depths in *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* (1869), girdling the Earth in *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873), or exploring the disjunctive temporal pocket of the hollow planet in *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1872). Verne did write future fictions: his early *Paris in the Twentieth Century*, only recently rediscovered, was a striking projective portrait of Paris in 1960. In the main, however, Verne explored the hectic tilt of nineteenth century technological modernity, his enigmatic heroes Captain Nemo or Phileas Fogg roving the globe in innovative machines dedicated to ceaseless forward movement, a compulsion given scant motivation. These are fictions built from the experience of planetary space-time compression, the murky depths or the poles of the Earth brought into human grasp for the first time.

Verne's largest global influence, oddly enough, may have been through the World's Fairs movement that emerged after the Great Exhibition in 1851. The movement was championed by advocates of free global trade in Britain and by Saint-Simonian idealists of industrial progress in France. Driven by internationalist rhetoric, the grandiosity of world's fairs was in fact marked by intense national competition, but the events also became a key cultural driver to communicate the global extensiveness and interconnection of the capitalist economy. The exhibition sites became pockets of wondrous futurity for tens of millions of visitors (see Greenhalgh 1988; Luckhurst 2012).

The 1889 World Exposition in Paris was presided over by the spirit of Verne, not just in Gustave Eiffel's iron-lattice gateway or Edison's pavilion of electric light or the Hall of Machines, but rather more literally in the fairground rides that transported visitors around the world in eighty days or twenty thousand leagues beneath the sea. Other Expos in the 1890s added voyages to the moon, and spaces like Luna Park on Coney Island constituted what the architect Rem Koolhaas has termed 'urban science fiction' (Koolhaas 1994, p. 33), weird pocket universes in which futurity could be immersively experienced. This was then folded back into fiction: in Enrique Gaspar's Spanish novel *The Time Ship: A Chrononautical Journey* (1887), it makes perfect sense to launch a time machine in the grounds of the 1878 Paris World Exposition.

I have elsewhere defined science fiction as the literature of technologically saturated societies (Luckhurst 2005), with the implication that this limited the genre to advanced industrial societies of the West. In fact, the experience of modernity could be even sharper where uneven development meant less an immersive experience than a jagged confrontation of different speeds and temporalities that accompanied processes of globalisation. As genre historians have begun to show, the late nineteenth century was a crucial period for the development of science fiction around the globe, in Japan (where Verne was translated first in 1878), China (where Huang Jiang Diao Suo's *Tales of the Moon Colony* appeared the year after Verne's *From Earth to the Moon* was translated in 1903) and Latin America (see Tatsumi 2008; Wu 2013; Isaacson 2013 and Ferreira 2011). In Russia, *Nature and People* magazine announced in 1894 'Science and technology are defining modern reality by transforming not just everyday life, but the very ways in which we can think and imagine. A new kind of writing called *nauchnaia fantastika*, scientific fantasy, is playing a not inconsequential role in the process . . . Is it not in the imagination where bold theories and amazing fictions are first born?' (cited Banerjee 2012, p. 1). Given the strange mystical 'cosmist' theories that circled around both Russian scientific romances and the cadre of Russian Revolutionaries, the utopian projections of a Soviet Union can come to seem particularly science-fictional (see Young 2012).

One of the most spectacular jarrings of space-time experience at world's fairs was the deliberate disjunction between advanced industrial modernity and the display of native peoples, presented as anomalous survivals of prehistoric time. These 'human zoos' corralled peoples from Africa, Australia and the American wilderness into native villages as displays of savages being swept up and improved by the advance of Western modernity. In 1899 at the Greater Britain exhibition, it was possible to visit Savage South Africa, 'A Vivid Representation of Life in the Wilds of the Dark Continent', in which nearly 200 Africans daily staged their own defeat in Matabeleland in 1893. Paris put Dahomey tribes on display, widely depicted as the most savage African tribe recently rescued from their barbarous state, whilst the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 compressed a bewildering jumble of native villages from around the globe in a brutal disjuncture with 'the lightning city' around it. Chicago was widely regarded as an uneasy 'laboratory of the future' in the 1890s (Lewis 1997, p. 4; see also Blanchard et al 2008) and the native villages only exaggerated this bewilderingly uneven time of modernity.

Travelling in colonial space was framed chronotopically: as time travel. It is important to understand the emergence of scientific romance as thoroughly intertwined with the colonial romance. John Rieder's critical study (Rieder 2008) reinforces the

sense that the expansive imagination of science fiction takes its historical underpinnings from colonialism. Cecil Rhodes, the agent of many dubious land-grabs in southern Africa, who annexed the territory of Rhodesia in his own name, gave the game away in his famous lament: 'I would annexe the planets if I could; I often think of that. It makes me sad to see them so clear and yet so far' (Millin 1933, p. 138). In this way, the late Victorian romances of Rider Haggard can be seen as crucial switching points between genres, because his depictions of episodic travel through the unevenly distributed time of modernity around the globe generate moments of sublime wonder that tend to slide uneasily towards Gothic unease or outright horror.

Henry Rider Haggard was born into a wealthy Norfolk farming family, but his father considered him too stupid to educate and so arranged for him to work on the staff of Sir Henry Bulwer, who was taking up the post of Lieutenant-Governor of Natal in southern Africa. Not yet out of his teens, Haggard travelled far beyond the borders of British territory, negotiating with tribal chieftains, acting as a circuit judge, and was one of the handful of Englishmen present at the Raising of the Union Jack when the British annexed the Transvaal in 1876. He briefly attempted farming in Africa, but the Zulu War of 1879, in which the British punitively annihilated a complex and sophisticated culture, and rising tensions with Dutch Boer settlers, forced him back to England. He was failing at law and turgid Realism (his first novel *Dawn* appeared in 1884) when he scribbled *King Solomon's Mines* at delirious speed in 1885. It became a sensation, quickly followed by *She* in the following year. Haggard then regularly produced one or two romances per year until his death in 1925, always with the same smooth, unedited flow that – Freud and Jung, both avid readers, agreed – tapped something primal beneath this fastidious Tory squire.

Haggard's focus was both intensive – he once spent two years surveying the decline of farming in every county in England – and restlessly extensive, setting fictions in southern Africa, modern and ancient Egypt, Mexico, Iceland and beyond. His home in Ditchingham was stuffed with curiosities gathered from his global travels – Zulu spears, Incan relics, Egyptian artefacts, Dickens' desk – objects from which he used to conjure his fictions. *King Solomon's Mines* establishes the plot pattern: a rag-bag of unregarded English adventurers, ill-suited to the effete modernity of London, venture into unknown African landscapes, breaching fearsome spatial boundaries to uncover isolated pockets where impossibly sophisticated civilisations cling on, seemingly confounding the linear developmental time that drove both evolutionary anthropology and colonial ideology. The journeys are at once time travel back to a prehistoric past, but also disturb the self-regard of Victorian contemporaneity since the present is revealed less as a vanguard than an uncanny repetition. It is this disadjustment that feels science-fictional, yet Haggard's romances are suffused with the melancholy of fantasy (these are always *lost* civilisations, after all) and ultimately tilt towards the uncanny or Gothic.

Haggard's fictions contained a signature scene that returned like an obsession in book after book: the discovery that a culture is literally undergirded by the brute materiality of corpses. Many of his romances culminate in the discovery of underground caverns stuffed with perfectly preserved legions of the un/dead. In *King Solomon's Mines*, the adventurers discover the lineage of the kings of the Kukuanas in a mountain cavern, seated in eternal conference, preserved by being transformed over aeons into living stalactites. *She* has the same scene, the technique of mummification

even more uncanny, as Leo confronts his own double, the preserved ancestor he in effect reanimates. The Tombs of Kor are described as 'a honeycomb of sepulchres' and the horrified realisation that 'the whole mountain is full of dead' (Haggard 1991, p. 214 and p. 170). It was even there in his first novel, *Dawn*, written in ostensibly Realist mode, where Mildred Carr's respectable middle-class home on Madeira bizarrely conceals a cavern carved out of the rock beneath it to display her collection of Egyptian antiquities, including a fine haul of mummies, 'the corpses of the Egyptian dead, swathed in numberless wrappings' (Haggard 1884, II, pp. 186–87). The un/ dead is the quintessential Gothic trope for ambivalent liminality. On the one hand the lively dead things that litter Haggard's fictions represent a preservation of ancient forms that act as a bulwark against the depredations of modernity (Haggard died as the first Labour government took power, a sign he took of the imminent demise of England). On the other, they are the dead weight of history that the romances half-acknowledge suck the lifeblood from any chance of a future. The masses of dead bodies that push up through the cracks are a sign that there is a mournful yet dis-avowed glimpse of the deathly logic of colonial possession in these romances.

The Gothic romance, even in its first Enlightenment iteration, mapped its fictions onto an international geography of terror. These were the fever dreams of northern, modern Protestants pitching their worst fears of reversion onto the superstitious, decadent and sunken populations of southern Catholic Europe. Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) was set in a fantasy medieval Italy, *The Monk* (1796) in Catholic Spain, which still served as the backdrop for fears of biological degeneration as late as Robert Louis Stevenson's lurid Gothic tale *Olalla* (1885). In the nineteenth century, there was a certain centripetal tendency in the Gothic, as the horrors moved progressively from the remote past to the present day and from the European periphery to the metropolitan centre. This is the path of Bram Stoker's Count Dracula, moving from the very edge of Europe, where Transylvania has repeatedly switched between Christian and Ottoman empires over the centuries, into England, relentlessly burrowing towards the heart from Yorkshire, then the eastern limits of London, to finally be tracked down in Piccadilly in a house a mere stone's throw from Buckingham Palace, the centre of empire. Order returns as the Count is chased back along this inward trajectory to his proper place on the margin to be exterminated there.

The menacing irruption of the colonial periphery in the centre was a typical late Victorian Gothic trope. It is what Sherlock Holmes often defends the metropolis against, whether from savage pygmy assassins in *The Sign of Four* (1890) or the poisonous exotic snakes of India slithering through the home counties in *The Speckled Band* (1892). Sax Rohmer, who began writing in 1903, made a career from the mechanical reiteration of Eastern threats, Britain repeatedly saved from disaster at the hands of the dastardly Fu Manchu (a figure of aggressive Eastern modernisation) by the derring-do of Nyland Smith.

Yet the Gothic does not just register the underside of the centripetal effects of cosmopolitan urbanisation. The Gothic experiences a centrifugal dispersal as well – and again supplies ample evidence that genre fiction offers the means to grasp a kind of planetary, even cosmic, consciousness of late nineteenth century transformation.

Rudyard Kipling became the laureate of the British empire but he was a restless Anglo-Indian migrant whose brief years in London after the sensational success of

Plain Tales from the Hills (1889) were very unhappy – and he moved on to live in America, South Africa and elsewhere. His earliest tales from India, often first published in newspaper columns mixed in with local news, were received as communications from an utterly unknown territory, at and beyond the limits of the administered empire. 'If you go straight away from Levées and Government House Lists, past Trades' Balls – far beyond everything and everybody you ever knew in your respectable life – you cross, in time, the Borderline where the last drop of White blood ends and the full tide of Black sets in . . . One of these days, this people . . . will turn out a writer or a poet; and then we shall know how they live and what they feel. In the meantime, any stories about them cannot be absolutely correct in fact or inference' (Kipling 1987, p. 91). Intelligence of native and colonial life was scanty and sometimes tended towards the fantastical. In Kipling's tales, the supernatural becomes a way of articulating the oddness of encounters at the very limits of the colonial knowledge. They show how identity in Kipling is 'created by faith and superstition, by psychic and paranormal experience, by trauma' (Kemp 1988, p. 2). Kipling may have mocked the superstitious beliefs of Indian natives in stories like 'The House of Suddhoo' (1886), or demystified spectral hauntings by revealing the plain facts of murder as in 'The Return of Imray' (1891), but just as often these tales trade in a currency of supernatural understanding. 'The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin' (1887) details how a new arrival in India has to abandon his rigid scientific positivism and rationalism to grasp the inexplicable magic of the colonial encounter in India. Strickland, Kipling's British agent working undercover far beyond the palisades of white settlements and outposts, has to learn to flex with native beliefs, unmanning himself in the story of torture and supernatural regression 'The Mark of the Beast' (1890).

These whispered tales are typical of the colonial Gothic form, stories traded around the campfire in utterly alien territory. Rosa Campbell Praed's Australian tale 'The Bunyip' (1891), for instance, absorbs and reconfirms something of the Aboriginal belief in the chimeric creature that haunts lagoons with melancholy cries that perhaps echo the last gasps of the souls of captured settler children. A primal sense of dread at the vast wilderness and semi-mythic presences also typifies Algernon Blackwood's tales that derive from his failed experience as a farmer in Canada in the 1890s: 'The Wendigo' (1910) is his classic appropriation of a figure from Algonquian native culture. Blackwood was another global wanderer, somewhat uneasy in England, who generated metaphysical dread from the landscapes of the Black Forest, the deserts of Egypt or the Canadian wilderness. The outpourings of colonial Gothic continued from prolific authors like the Australian Guy Boothby or South African adventurer Bertram Mitford. Along with Conrad's African horrors and the degenerative collapse in the South Pacific explored in Stevenson's very late works like *The Ebb Tide* (1894), the Gothic shaded the map of the globe with cross-hatchings that darkly shadowed the bluff jingoistic talk of Greater Britain and the forward policy.

In Kipling's 'At the End of the Passage' (1890), the intolerable solitude of being alone in the last outposts of administered empire also turns resolutely metaphysical. At the very edge of the known world, stoical men crumble under the immense psychological pressure. They are haunted with thoughts of self-destruction: what they see at the end of the passage is a blankness that reflects back only their own

empty shells. These moments of revelation of a meaningless void that hides behind appearances is the quintessence of modern horror.

Where Kipling manifested it on the edge of empire, the American author H. P. Lovecraft raised the stakes to a cosmic level. His doomed narrators travel to the edges of the known world: lost Pacific islands, inaccessible zones of the Antarctic or the measureless caverns beneath New England. What they find opens up horrifying aeons of cosmic time. Lovecraft's fiction was written in accord with his philosophy of indifferentism. To Lovecraft, human meanings and values are worthless in terms of the 'vast cosmos-at-large.' As he said in a letter in 1927: 'When we cross the line to the boundless and hideous unknown – the shadow-haunted *Outside* – we must remember to leave our humanity – and terrestrialism at the threshold' (Lovecraft 1968, p. 150). Lovecraft begins his most famous short story, 'The Call of Cthulhu' (1926) in this vein: 'We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity . . . but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age' (Lovecraft 2013, p. 24). Modern horror delivers what John Clute calls the horror of *vastation* – a moment of unveiling in which one comes 'to experience the malice of the made or revealed cosmos' (Clute 2006, p. 148).

Lovecraft's materialism and atheism were a response to the philosophical crisis wrought by the extensiveness of biological time and astronomical space. His response was also a conservative political one, convinced of a racial catastrophe in America, where strong Nordic settler blood was being diluted by indiscriminate immigration. In his embrace of the thesis of Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* (1918), Lovecraft's ideas were directly tied back to the popular degeneration theories and his models for fiction were writers like Arthur Machen, whose degenerationist horror fictions of the 1890s (such as *The Great God Pan* from 1894) scandalised good taste. For Lovecraft, the Gothic was an explicitly Nordic racial register of the crisis of modernity.

Fantasy responded to the same conditions, but instead of the secular horrors of Lovecraft it often restated the tenuous possibility of Christian redemption. The chance of transcendence takes one out of the fallen temporal order of the modern. There is a line that leads directly from George MacDonald's Victorian fantasies via C. S. Lewis to J. R. R. Tolkien's epic of vanished shires, *The Lord of the Rings*. MacDonald was considered too unorthodox by his Scottish Presbyterian congregation and resigned, becoming the author of peculiar fantasies that, between *Phantastes* (1858) and *Lilith* (1895), never quite comfortably mapped plots onto Christian narratives, as if the machinery of allegory was broken. Perhaps this brokenness was what allowed Oscar Wilde to use the conventions of the fairy tale so subversively in *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (1888). Andrew Lang's project to resituate fairy tales in his famous anthologies of the 1890s within the frame of comparative religion and ethnography did not help. Yet Tolkien continued to regard fantasy on a Christian model of recovery, escape and consolation. Fantasy resisted the 'dyscatastrophe of sorrow and failure,' he said, to provide instead a Christian eucatastrophe, 'a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world' (Tolkien 1964, p. 68). Yet genres, particularly in the process of emergence, are never stable or reducible to a single reading. Lewis Carroll's Alice books (penned by another deeply unorthodox

Victorian priest) generate another tradition of fantasy interested less in the stability of waning cosmogonies than in the sly 'subversions of social norms' (Mendlesohn and James 2009, p. 20).

A focus on the globality of this cluster of genres offers a perspective that lifts into view figures previously rendered elusive or marginal. A writer like Lafcadio Hearn was perhaps sliding towards obscurity, but his perpetual roving across the world and across fantastical genres now makes him look like an exemplary figure on which to end.

Lafcadio Hearn was born to an Irish father and Greek mother on the Greek island of Lefkada in 1850 and educated in Ireland, England and France before travelling to Cincinnati and taking up journalism. He was at once a reporter of 'lowlife' poverty row and a translator of the French Decadents Théophile Gautier and Pierre Loti. He was fired from his first post for his marriage to a mixed race woman of Irish and African descent, a union not legally recognised in Ohio. It was part of a pattern of a horror of bourgeois convention and an embrace of the bohemian. In 1877, he moved to New Orleans and published carefully honed impressionistic sketches in the press – later collected under the title *Fantastics and Other Fancies*. To some, Hearn was the writer who invented the nostalgia for a passing French Creole exotic culture on which New Orleans has been sold to tourists ever since – Hearn even published a cookbook of Creole recipes (see Starr's introduction to Hearn 2001). His reports included an account of the life and death of Bayou John under the melancholy title 'The Last of the Voudous', a man who had been born in Senegal, kidnapped by Spanish slavers, freed in Cuba, and become an overseer of workers on plantations outside New Orleans owing to his 'peculiar occult influence' (Hearn 2009, p. 78), a talent later translated into voodoo medicine. Such a figure represented a culture, Hearn thought, that was passing away and needed documenting before it completely disappeared.

Hearn also became interested in collecting folklore and legends and retelling them in Gothic mode in ornate Decadent prose. His first commercial work, *Stray Leaves from Strange Literature* (1884) self-consciously sifted folkloric tales from Egyptian, Finnish, Arabic, Polynesian and Japanese traditions. In the preface to *Some Chinese Ghosts* (1885) he proclaimed he 'sought especially for weird beauty' in his loose adaptations (Hearn 2009, p. 9). His Eastern bug crested with the craze for 'Japonais' art and design, but it was properly kick-started, typically enough, by his 'encounter' with Japan at the New Orleans World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition in 1884. This was initially unashamed Eastern exoticism, an Orientalism little disturbed by actual knowledge, but with Hearn it would develop into a much deeper engagement.

Hearn had announced his literary manifesto in a letter to a friend in 1884: 'I have pledged me to the worship of the Odd, the Queer, the Strange, the Exotic, the Monstrous' (cited Rothman 2008, p. 265). This search consequently took Hearn into the tropics, another zone of projective Western fancy, on a journey through the Caribbean islands. Hearn composed the travel narrative *Two Years in the French West Indies* (1889), principally focused on the island of Martinique, where he positively embraced the complex mix of races (rejecting white and black 'purity' with equal disdain). The book is a mix of impressionistic writing marked by a strong erotic charge when describing native bodies, and the collation of local legends and

superstitions less for ethnographic accuracy than weird and uncanny effect. He also wrote the novel *Youma* (1890), in which the nostalgia for plantation culture before the uprising of slaves in 1848 was plainly preferred to the sunken state of the modern Caribbean. This collapse Hearn blamed on the emancipation of the blacks rather than white abandonment once the economics of expropriation through slavery ended. On return to New York, Hearn contemplated the abyss of conventional newspaper reporting in a city whose brash modernity horrified him, and he promptly took a commission from *Harper's Magazine* to report on Japan, where he stayed for the remaining fourteen years of his life, marrying the daughter of a samurai and changing his name to Koizumi Yakumo. His *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894) was a monumental 800 pages of travel, legends, speculations on the 'inner life' of the Japanese, and ghost stories. Weak health meant he was not able to maintain the pace of newspaper reportage at the *Kobe Chronicle* and he became a professor of English Literature at the Imperial University in 1896. He resigned his post when anti-foreigner restrictions began to bite in 1903. He published extensively on Japanese culture, including several collections of native ghost stories, delivered in a sparser, reflective prose reflecting Buddhist principles, including *In Ghostly Japan* (1899) and *Shadowings* (1899). He died in 1904.

This peripatetic bohemian existence was dedicated to seeking the exotic, surfing the vanishing cultures of the French Louisiana and the Caribbean as the reconfiguration of the global economy uprooted their social formations. He documented a similar effect in his record of Japan: as Yoshinobu Hakutani observes, one of his final books, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation* (1904) was a shocked account of a newly militaristic and modernising country that shattered Hearn's sense of a culture deferential to centuries of tradition. In many ways, his roving forms of writing matched this ungrounded trajectory around the southern and western rims of the American world. Although he was a defender of French Naturalism, that invented name for his 'fantastics' is a suggestive innovation for a dedicated Decadent who took the bejewelled prose of France beyond known frontiers to create a *métissage* of whimsy, wonder and weird: a kind of Gothic ethnography.

Lauren Goodlad has called for a mapping of a 'Victorian geopolitical aesthetic' which would aim to capture 'literature's globality through the interplay of aesthetic expression and geohistorical process' (Goodlad 2010, p. 404). It is easy to contend that an attention to the 'fantastics' of late Victorian genre fiction already lays bare the extensive networks and routes of this globality for those willing to read it.

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CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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Seth Lerer

CHILDHOOD, LITERATURE, AND THE *FIN DE SIÈCLE*

Though not a children's book, and though not written until the 1950s, few works of fiction capture the *fin-de-siècle* world of English childhood better than L. P. Hartley's *The Go-Between*. With its detailed descriptions of late-Victorian country house life, its attentions to the codes of class and conduct, and its play-by-play of sport and sorrow, Hartley's novel brilliantly achieves what he had set out to do: "to evoke the feeling of that summer [of 1900], the long stretch of fine weather, and also the confidence in life, the belief that all's well with the world, which everyone enjoyed or seemed to enjoy before the First World War" (Hartley 1953: 10). For Leo Colston, the novel's twelve-year-old hero, however, all is not well. A middle-class boy awkward among the rural aristocracy, torn between the commands of his betters and his emerging moral consciousness, he holds on to old decorum like a life raft. As he remarks before the epic cricket game that marks the center of the novel and the turning point in his own sense of self, "I did not believe you could succeed at a game unless you were dressed properly first" (Hartley 1953: 150).

Young Leo's words sum up the sensibilities of a boy at the turn of the last century: a boy schooled as much on the cricket pitch as in the classroom, reared as much on the adventures of G. A. Henty as on the epics of Homer, as fluent in Tom Brown as he was in Tacitus. Life was a game that needed to be played by custom and in costume. Samuel Hynes called it, in his field-defining study *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, an "Age of Propriety," and much as Leo Colston could be anxious about his cricketing attire, so too could Edward VII who, as Hynes reports, "chastised his grandson for wearing the uniform of one regiment of Foot Guards with the spurs of another" (Hynes 1968: 6).

Not just as king, but in his superannuated turn as Prince of Wales, Edward embodied the values and the forms of culture that would shape both the social and the fictional worlds of children from the 1880s through the 1910s. In fact, for all of his paternalistic strictures, he remained a boy at heart. Though nearly sixty when he came to the throne in 1901, he often seemed little more than a man-child in his appetites, his will, and his adventurism. His American contemporary, Theodore

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Roosevelt, only forty-five when he became the President in that same year, appeared to his contemporaries as equally childish: playing with his young son, often ill-dressed and ill at ease with Washington's elite. "You must remember," wrote one diplomat to another about Roosevelt, "that the President is really six years old" (Morris 1979: xii). His favorite book had come to be Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, and when he visited England in 1910 he sought out the writers of his fancy: Grahame, Kipling, and the fairy-tale collector Andrew Lang (Green 1982: 185–86).

The Anglo-American decades before the First World War still remain, for many, the long summer of children's literature. The era generated a sustaining canon of imaginative works for any child's bookshelf: *Peter Rabbit*, *Peter Pan*, *The Wind in the Willows*, *The Secret Garden*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *The Railway Children*, *The Coloured Fairy Books*, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*. Their authors preside over that golden age: Beatrix Potter, J. M. Barrie, Kenneth Grahame, Francis Hodgson Burnett, L. M. Montgomery, E. Nesbit, Andrew Lang, Kate Douglas Wiggin. And their books still inflect the look and feel of children's books today: the illustrated covers hearkening back to stories of survival or of sentiment; the illustrations, blending idioms of Arts and Crafts and Pre-Raphaelite into the arabesques of adventure; the printing and typography, benefiting from the advances of linotype and photolithography. If the *fin de siècle* was the age of Potter and Grahame, Rudyard Kipling and G. A. Henty, *The Boy's Own Paper* and the Girl Guides, it was also the great age of book design and illustration: Walter Crane, Kate Greenaway, and Randolph Caldecott – artists whose legacies can still be seen behind Robert McCloskey, Maurice Sendak, and Eric Carle (Freeman 1967; Hunt 1995; Hurliman 1968; Lacy 1986; Nodelman 1988).

Much recent scholarship in children's literature, however, has moved away from celebrating this golden age to exposing its social and ideological fissures (Clark 2003; Gubar 2009; Lerer 2008; Lurie 1990). For every Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm, there was an Anne Shirley living in Green Gables, torn between the delights of theatrical performance and the strictures of adult norms. For every Master Colin of *The Secret Garden*, who gains strength and confidence enough to leave his wheelchair and stand proud among his peers, there is the crazy Mr Toad, living for his perpetually manic adolescence and his motor-cars. For every boy-hero of G. A. Henty's many colonial exploits, there remain Edith Nesbit's Railway Children, sent far away from their politically disgraced father, and yet still able to see, in the all-too-modern rush of locomotive energy, a dragon with its "hot wings." What has been called "idea of the child as an innocent Other" (Gubar 2009: 9) in many children's stories of the age fades beside the images of exile and abandonment, collaboration and betrayal. The story behind Hartley's *The Go-Between*, the story of the child co-opted into adult lies, is the story of the age.

For this was an age of the child, a time when scholars, physicians, social reformers, and politicians saw in the play and game of childhood possibilities for understanding humankind itself. For sociology and psychology (two disciplines distinctively emerging in the 1880s and 1890s), childhood and humor were the centerpieces of analysis: Henri Bergson's *Laughter* appeared in France in 1900; Freud's *On Jokes* was published in Vienna in 1906; and the founder of the British Psychological Society, James Sully, devoted much of the 1890s to the study of the child's development in language, art, and play (his own *Essay on Laughter* appeared in 1902).

For Sully and his contemporaries, childhood was an age of the imagination, a time of "flitting . . . nursery visions" (Sully 1896: 3). Such visions found their adult refractions in the attempted encounters with otherworldly spirits. This was the great age of the séance (Noel Coward's brilliant drama of spiritualism, *Blithe Spirit*, though first performed in 1941, retains a *fin-de-siècle* country-house feel to it). After years of social realism in the novel and technological advancement in the factory, the last years of the nineteenth century (in the words of Samuel Hynes) sought to "restore metaphysics to the human world." A generation of writers – Wells, Chesterton, Conan Doyle, and the two Jameses, Montague Rhodes and Henry – turned their attentions to the ghost story, science fiction, and tales of the supernatural. In many of these stories, children are either in control or at risk (or, as in James's *Turn of the Screw*, possibly both). In other stories, spiritual shards reduce grown men to babies. In Perceval Landon's "Thurnley Abbey" (1908), the main character is so terrified of a bit of skull tossed at him that "he screamed and screamed" until his wife "held on to him and coaxed him like a child to be quiet" (Landon 1908: 477).

In many such tales, people of all ages find themselves mute infants before a nature now conceived as spiritually powerful, almost divine. Forests were full of fairies, and the old tales of the Grimm Brothers or Hans Christian Andersen found new life in collections that gave past imaginations present feel. The fairy tale of the *fin de siècle* was no homage to an earlier folk memory, but something of a lived dream. As A. S. Byatt put it, in her brilliant fictional resuscitation of the literary and social worlds of Fabian-era childhood: "In 1889 Andrew Lang's *Blue Fairy Book* appeared. Tales for children suddenly included real magic, myths, invented worlds and creatures." What Byatt calls "the coming – or return – of the fairytale" opens "some trapdoor" in the imagination of her fictional children's book author, Olive Wellwood (Byatt 2009: 46–47). But it opened the imaginations in many writers of the time.

Along with the new spirits were the old gods. Pagan deities crop up everywhere in the two decades before the War, from the erotic fauns of Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations to *The Yellow Book*, to the Piper at the Gates of Dawn in Grahame's *Wind in the Willows* (Hynes 1968: 134). How can we not hear an echo of Grahame's forest deity – with his "backward sweep of the curved horns gleaming in the growing daylight . . . the stern, hooked nose between the kindly eyes, . . . the long supple hand still holding the pan-pipes" (Grahame 1908: 156) – in the country boy, Dickon, who emerges out of the landscape in Burnett's *Secret Garden*, "playing on a rough wooden pipe. . . ., his nose turned up and his cheeks . . . as red as poppies" (Burnett 1911: 125).

Grahame's Pan and Burnett's Dickon straddle the forest and the fantasy. Each brings the creatures in their ambit into harmony, taming the animals into attention. They stand as figures of natural artistry, awing their beholders, but also inspiring their writers. For it is at moments such as these that Grahame's and Burnett's own writing rises to a level of rare evocation. The sentences run on, and their depictions of the natural world shade into descriptions of art itself – as if they were aspiring to evoke, in their own readers' minds, the sense of the sublime felt by their fictional characters.

For writers of this generation, the great tutor in the sublime would have been John Ruskin (Helsinger 1982). Works such as *Modern Painters*, *The Stones of Venice*, and his autobiographical reflections *Praeterita* scripted the late-nineteenth- and

early-twentieth-century visual sensibility. For Ruskin, natural phenomena were supposed to spur reflection not just on the beauty of the world but on the possibilities of human and artistic reproduction of that world. The experience of the beholder formed the center of an understanding of the work of art, and Ruskin's sense of art's own history developed an ideal of this beholder's sublime.

But the Ruskinian history of art was as much about childhood growth as it was about adult appreciation. In *Modern Painters*, he notes that, when "art was in its infancy," it simply offered the "outlines and pleasant colours" that were "nothing more than signs of the thing thought of, a sort of pictorial letter for it." Such art may have been pleasing, but "it asserted nothing, for it could realize nothing. . . . This act of the mind may still be seen in daily operation in children, as they look at brightly coloured pictures in their story-books" (Ruskin 1872: 48). But if art had its infancy – and Ruskin understood the early medieval styles of manuscript illumination to be childish in their execution – its forms could move a grown-up into fantasy. Writing about medieval books of hours, with their rich illustrations and their gilded letters, he noted, in *Praeterita*: "Truly a well-illuminated missal is a fairy cathedral, full of painted windows bound together to carry in one's pocket, with the music and the blessing of all its prayers beside." And, when Ruskin gets to own such a manuscript, "and could touch its leaves and turn, . . . no girl of seven years old with a new doll is prouder or happier" (Ruskin 1894: 398–99).

The fascinations with the child and spirit, with class and costume, with decorum and desire are all here in Ruskin, much as they are in *The Secret Garden* or *The Wind in the Willows*, or *The Railway Children*, or *Peter Pan*. Holding a medieval manuscript reduces Ruskin to a child, and as we hold the books of now more than a century ago, we too may feel ourselves transported back to an idealized childhood that we never had.

The *fin de siècle*, therefore, stands not just as a golden age of children's literature but as a golden age for children's literature. So many later, twentieth-century works of children's fiction set themselves in the late-Victorian and Edwardian age that we often expect to find the place of the imagination amid the hedgerows of the country house or the horse-carts of the city. *Mary Poppins*, first published in 1934, evokes a pre-World War I London. Lewis, Tolkien, and Milne all had Edwardian childhoods, and much of their fantasy retains the feel of the 1910s: the Professor's study in *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*; the Shire of Middle-earth; Owl's beech tree in *Winnie the Pooh*.

Little wonder that L. P. Hartley, seeking to recover that precise moment when a young boy loses his innocence, should find it in the summer of 1900. Like his fictional narrator, we come upon the *fin de siècle* as a box of toys and letters, put away for years and then recovered in late middle age, its fragments pulling memories out of us much as the little magnets in the box still pull the bits of metal in their midst. To understand the place of children's literature in the *fin de siècle*, then, is not just to appreciate or analyze the cultural momentum of the age and the particulars of publication. It is to recognize the hold that this age still has on the industries of fantasy and the imaginations of collective youth.

If there is, now, an industry to children's literature, the *fin de siècle* often saw children's literature in industry. Emerging technologies of transportation and communication were perceived as industries, explicitly, in their "infancy." The

airplane and the motor-car, playthings of the wealthy, were as glossy and as fragile as a children's toy. They were as tempting, too, and nowhere is the childishness of new invention as brilliantly (and, I think, subversively) displayed as in Grahame's *Wind in the Willows*.

MACHINES AND GARDENS

Early in the story, Rat and Mole find Mr Toad impatient in his country-house retreat. Boating no longer captivates him ("Silly boyish amusement"), and he has taken to the idea of caravanning through the country, walking beside his horse-drawn "gypsy caravan, shining with newness, painted a canary-yellow picked out with green, and red wheels." Dragging his friends behind him, Toad rambles "over grassy downs and along narrow by-lanes," camping in the quiet of a late Victorian summer. Sleeping late and barely managing to hold his own on the ramble, Toad leaves it to Rat and Mole to keep things going, "quietly and manfully," as if this trio were a kind of little, beasty version of the "three men in a boat" of Jerome K. Jerome's novel: a book that, since its appearance in 1888, had been embraced as a manifesto for the feckless ease of young men along riverbank and dale in the Queen's waning years (Jerome 1889).

No sooner have the animals brought their wagon to the high road, than they hear a "faint warning hum."

> Glancing back, they saw a small cloud of dust, with a dark centre of energy, advancing on them at incredible speed, while from out of the dust a faint 'Poop-poop' wailed like an uneasy animal in pain . . . with a blast of wind and whirl of sound that made them jump for the nearest ditch, it was on them! The 'Poop-poop' rang with a brazen shout in their ears, they had a moment's glimpse of an interior of glittering plate-glass and rich morocco, and the magnificent motor-car, immense, breath-snatching, passionate. . . .
>
> (Grahame 1908: 73)

This is the alternative world of the Edwardians: the world not of the quiet tea party but of the rush of technological advancement. As Richard Overy has put it, in his study of the rise of automobiles and airplanes in the English *fin de siècle*, "it is the motor car that overturns innocent stability, the golden age" (Overy 1990: 73). This may be a machine, but it is fitted out with all the glitter of a luxury commodity; it may run on petrol, but it has a passion all its own. It is an object of desire, and Toad's new obsession takes on an almost erotic power: the scenes of Toad behind the wheel are the most sexually charged moments in the whole book.

These episodes in *The Wind in the Willows* show the new technologies of twentieth-century life crashing in on the quiet pastorals of the Victorians. If, as Overy has put it, Grahame's book is a "fable of the *fin de siècle*," it is a fable keyed to paradox: the motor-car and the river-boat; the quiet domesticities of Badger's home and outsized awe of Pan; the easy life of smoking-jacket and well-stocked larder and the passions of the car, the train, and the telephone. Indeed, at that moment of sublime recognition, when Mole smells the smells of his old home and longs for his return, the "summons," Grahame puts it, "took him like an electric

shock." For this remarkably, pre-technological world, electricity seems everywhere: in the "filaments" that bring communication back and forth, almost telepathically, to the animals.

At the heart of many books of fantasy and the imagination in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is the transformative magic of technology. As early as 1889, Mark Twain could envision Hank Morgan travelling back in time to Arthur's Britain and electrifying it – in all senses of the word. Hank sets up telegraphic lines, brings telephones to Camelot, and dreams of his "hello-girl" back home, her operator's voice soothing him into solace. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* becomes a kind of Edisonian fable, where the new "wizard of Menlo Park" could compete with the old Merlin (Lerer 2003). And yet, this wizardry was to have worked a social magic, as Twain and his contemporaries foresaw a world made more democratic by inventions. As Hank reflects on his Camelot:

> Slavery was dead and gone; all men were equal before the law; taxation had been equalized. The telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the type-writer, the sewing-machine, and all the thousand willing and handy servants of steam and electricity were working their way into favor. . . . I was getting ready to send out an expedition to discover America.
>
> (Twain 1889: 397–98)

Of course, this is satire; but the fantasy persisted. The hero of the American adventure story was the engineer, and if Hank Morgan sets out to electrify King Arthur's British Isle, it is Cyrus Smith who brings order to Jules Verne's mysterious island. Set during the American Civil War, *The Mysterious Island* imagines an assembly of union prisoners who escape their Confederate jailers in a balloon and who, driven off course by the winds, wind up on some uncharted island where they must turn wilderness into civilization. Cyrus is the "Engineer" and sets his companions to mine ores and minerals, make gunpowder and pottery, smelt metals and, eventually, wire the island for communication.

Verne's novel first appeared in French in 1874, but it was immediately translated into English: first by W. H. G. Kingston in 1875 and then by Stephen W. White in 1876 (Lottman 1996; Martin 1990). Together with Verne's many other *Voyages extraordinaires*, it quickly entered the canon of boys' adventure tales: as if Robinson Crusoe had been crossed with the inventor of the Gatling gun, or as if Defoe had been given the Sears Catalogue (Compère 1999). Cyrus Smith is a leader of unquestioned control, and whether his companions hew their houses out of rock or synthesize sulfuric acid out of local minerals, they follow his instructions like school students in a lab. The real children in the book are the animals: Top, the dog who escaped with the men from America; and Joop, an orangutan who meets them on the island and amuses them with childish antics.

The power of Verne's book – and its appeal to generations of young boys – lies not so much in the drama of its plot but in the detail of its recipes. The reader trusts Verne as much as the islanders trust Cyrus the Engineer, and if any one of us had been marooned on an island with this book, we could most likely build our own boats, fire our own pottery, and smelt our way into civilization. But at the book's close, we realize that the escapees have had help. Captain Nemo has been there all

along. Returning from his earlier appearance in *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, Nemo is a master of machinery who turns his efforts not to social engineering but to solitary oversight. A sad, brooding figure from the Old World, he contrasts with Cyrus Smith, whose can-do American exuberance conquers not just the island but all history (his very name yokes together the American maker, Smith, with the exotic conqueror, Cyrus of Persia).

How do you make your way in the world? these kinds of stories ask. When cast adrift, do you create society and family? Do you seek solace in the countryside or wrest it into shape? Does the imagination take flight in the garden or does it blast an arch out of the rock?

Such questions permeate the books for young readers throughout the *fin de siècle*. For E. Nesbit's *Railway Children* of 1906, the questions come up at the most unexpected moments. The children's father in the story had been wrongly imprisoned, charged with selling secrets of state to Russia. The children see themselves as cast adrift, needing to make a new life among the welcoming staff of the local railway station. And yet their father, absent in accusation, recalls Alfred Dreyfus, sent off to Devil's Island in 1894. That other, all-too-real mysterious island haunts *The Railway Children*, terrified of revealing to their neighbors the truth of their lives. About a quarter of the way through the book, the young girl, Bobbie, gets a lift from the local doctor driving along the road in his dog cart. Bobbie confesses that her mother said "I wasn't to go telling everyone that we're poor," but the doctor listens thoughtfully, and as he tries to allay her anxieties, he notices a work of local engineering. "Look here, this is where the aqueduct begins." Bobbie is confused, "What's an aque – what's its name," and the doctor explains, "A water bridge. Look." And when she looks, she sees – as much as Toad might see in motor-cars or Cyrus's companions behold in their handiwork – the sublimity of its craft. "It is grand, isn't it?" she said. "It's like pictures in *The History of Rome*" (Nesbit 1906: 56–58). The doctor concurs, calling it a "splendid piece of engineering," and noting that "engineering" is about much more than "making engines." "Ah, there are different sorts of engineering – making roads and bridges and tunnels is one kind. And making fortifications is another."

There are, indeed, different sorts of engineering, and building bridges among people, bringing a refreshing take on life, is now one of them. The doctor now becomes, in his old-fashioned horse-drawn cart, an engineer of souls, and his pleasant conversation with the girl offers as much a "splendid piece of engineering" as the local canal or the Roman feats of masonry.

Along the road of local life, new forms of transport and communication rise to break the arc of old Victorian pastoralism or to reassure the castaways of broken families that things can be mortared back to life. For Mary Lennox, orphaned in colonial India, the rural Yorkshire manor of her exile glooms among the moorland. Only when she discovers the secret garden does she find solace and imagination. "It was the sweetest, most mysterious-looking place any one could imagine" (Burnett 1911: 46). This is her own mysterious island, her own place of what Grahame called "the song-dream," and she finds her local tutor in the young boy, Dickon, Pan-like in his habitat. But there is a machine in this garden – not hoe or hedger, but a wheelchair. One day, Mary finds Colin Craven, son of the manor's owner, locked away and weeping in his own room, bedridden and disfigured. She tells him all

about the garden, even brings some of the animals to visit him, until one day Dickon visits and reports on all the doings of the "otters' and badgers' and water-rats' houses" (Burnett 1911: 118) – as if he were inviting the young boy to live out Grahame's fantasy. And so Dickon and Mary plan to get Colin outside, to transport him in his "chair-carriage" (Burnett 1911: 119). Cushioned and contained in his instrument – "transported," as much as Toad is in his glittering motor-car – Colin experiences the sublimities of nature. "I shall get well!" he shouts, glorying in the beauty of the garden. Soon, Dickon will become his tutor as well: a tutor, however, not in the Pan-like subtleties of nature but in muscularities of manhood. Dickon had learned from one of the locals, Bob Haworth, a former champion wrestler, how to build his muscles, and he teaches Colin what he learned. It is as if Dickon has become an engineer of the human, a Cyrus Smith of arms and legs. "I'm not a cripple," Colin soon cry out (Burnett 1911: 129), and toward the novel's end a reinvigorated Colin announces, much like Pinocchio of Carlo Collodi's world-famous fable: "Now that I am a real boy, my legs and arms and all my body are so full of Magic that I can't keep them still" (Burnett 1911: 153). Finally, tutored in "magic" of exercise, as muscular a Christian as any boy of Baden-Powell's troop, he emerges "tall" and "handsome," striding across the grass "as strongly and steadily as any boy in Yorkshire" (Burnett 1911: 173).

The Secret Garden ends by showing us the engineering of social life. It takes the boy out of the wheelchair, replaces technologies of mediation with the arts of self-development. Like all these fables of the *fin de siècle*, it portrays a complex, challenging relationship between technology and nature. It offers moments of sublime awareness and exhilaration: moments of Ruskinian awe in little spaces.

But what it offers, too, is what so much of *fin-de-siècle* children's literature had offered: a sense of childhood not just as a stage of life but as a life led on the stage. There is, from the 1880s through the 1910s, a powerfully controlling sense of childhood as theatrical: of children set up to perform for peers and parents. And, in the rise of the children's theater itself, the *fin de siècle* puts adventure squarely in the mind's proscenium.

THEATERS OF CHILDHOOD

From Antiquity, children had been expected to perform (Lerer 2008: 17–35, 228–52). Greek and Roman ritual depended on public participations of the child, and classroom education had long centered on the student's formal recitation. Medieval, Renaissance, and early Modern European cultures sustained these traditions: in schoolroom oratory, church plays, royal and aristocratic display, and in secular theatrics, as well. By the mid eighteenth century, boys and girls were living more and more explicitly in the theater of family and social life. From Lord Chesterfield to Baden-Powell, boys were advised to dress well, care for their appearance, and act according to standards of behavior. Girls, too, were being made exquisitely conscious of their public impression, and there was, by the mid nineteenth century, an emerging "theater of girlhood" that embraced the social and the literary presentation of young women. Mary Cowden Clarke's immensely popular novellas *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines* (first published in 1851 and 1852 and frequently reprinted) imagined a pre-history for the leading female characters of the plays. In the course

of her stories, Clarke seeks these young women as inherently dramatic characters. Her heroines are often trapped between the demands of private life and the temptations of public acclaim. Victorian girlhood becomes here – as it was becoming throughout the last half of the nineteenth century – a place of performance and control. Books such as Isabel Reany's *Girls: Their Place and Power* (1879), Phillis Browne's *What Girls Can Do* (1880), and Arthur Talbot Vanderbilt's *What to Do With Our Girls* (1884) all testify to an emerging category of "girlhood" seen as scripted and performed.

Theatrical scenes crowd young people's stories in the decades before the First World War. The Edwardian garden party had become a stage set, and descriptions of nature all-too-often shade into dramatic design. When Mary and Dickon place the wheelchair-bound Colin in the garden for the first time, it is as if they have set him on the stage of some children's play: "It was like a king's canopy, a fairy king's." By the 1880s and 1890s, the fascination with the child *on* the stage was so great that social reformers had become quick to condemn it as exploitation (Gubar 2009). More and more plays were featuring child characters and child actors, and by 1909, a reviewer for the London *Times* could complain of the many plays "In which the chief characters are children, and are often played by children" (Gubar 2009: 164). Max Beerbohm lamented the spate of Christmas shows and pantomimes, calling attention (in 1898) to a "cult of children." Even plays for adults featured child characters, such as the adaptations of *Rip Van Winkle* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Gubar 2009: 184), and children were increasingly taken to the theater from an early age. Novels originally written for young readers, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, most prominently, found theatrical adaptations: the former, on stage by the mid 1880s; the latter, pirated for the theater, was rewritten by Burnett herself in 1888.

This growing sense of children as theatricalized creatures reaches its apotheosis in what may be the most famous work of "children's theater" before the First World War: J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. Based on the stories Barrie had developed for the children of the Davies family, *Peter Pan* was reckoned the most successful play of the year 1904, and while Barrie himself may have claimed to have written it "for children," the audience was full of adults. Rupert Brooke came down to London from his Cambridge undergraduate college and reported it the best thing he had ever seen (Hynes 1968: 146).

Much like *The Wind in the Willows*, *Peter Pan* offers an anxious Edwardian reflection on an earlier age of Victorian security. It opens in the nursery of quiet, nineteenth-century accoutrements: the clock and the toys all reminiscent of that comfortable clutter of the cared-for child of the time (as the stage directions put it) when "Mr Roget" was writing his *Thesaurus* (that is, the period from about 1848 until its first publication in 1852). The children in this nursery are, already in the fiction of the play, acting as others. Young John (whom the stage directions say to speak "histrionically") announces, "We are doing an act; we are playing at being you and father." "Stand you for my father," commanded Prince Hal to Falstaff in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I*, in one of the great moments of self-conscious play-acting in all of English theater. And Shakespeare is everywhere in *Peter Pan*: from Captain Hook's schoolmaster manqué orations, through Peter's own displays of verbal prowess, to visitations of the "Indians," a strange moment that recalls *The*

Tempest as much as *Treasure Island*. "How still the night is," Hook soliloquizes toward the play's end, "nothing sounds alive. Now is the hour when children in their homes are a-bed; their lips light-browned with the good-night chocolate, and their tongues drowsily searching for belated crumbs housed insecurely on their shining cheeks." How can we not hear Hamlet here, meditating on his actions:

> Now is the very witching time of night,
> When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
> Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,
> And do such bitter business as the day
> Would quake to look on.
>
> (*Hamlet*: III.2.280–84)

Hamlet's hot blood becomes the children's bedtime chocolate; the yawning churchyards find their answer in the drowsy mouths of children. Hook's Shakespearean afflatus may say much about his bloated character, his failed aspirations, and the pathos of his yearnings. But it says much, too, about the status of a newly emerging children's Shakespeare for the *fin de siècle*: a culture of adaptation for the stage and schoolroom, seeing Shakespeare's plays as both occasion for and instruction in childhood performance.

Children's Shakespeare was everywhere. The journal *Boys of England* ran serialized versions of *Othello* and *Hamlet*: the former, marked by juvenile racism (with Othello saying things like "turning off de gas-light ob her life"); the latter marked by equally jejune parody ("a little more than king, and less than kind," puns this Hamlet). Edith Nesbit published her *Shakespeare's Stories for Young Readers* in 1900, recasting great poetic speeches into simple prose and often uncoiling the temporally displaced plots and recitations of past actions into straightforward, linear narrative.

Nowhere is this straightening-out clearer than in Nesbit's *Tempest*, where she retells the story beginning with Prospero in Milan, subject to his brother's coup, and cast off in the boat with his books and his little daughter. No long, historical speeches here. This is a fairy tale for daughters, with Ariel's songs reproduced verbatim, and the lessons of forgiveness at the surface. There is a remarkable similarity between this simple, almost chapbook version of *The Tempest* and the 1908 silent film of the play: twelve minutes of narrative, with Prospero and his little girl, with Miranda grown, with Caliban threatening, with the ship first in and then out of danger, and with Ariel played by a young girl, probably no more than ten, her Pre-Raphaelite hair flowing behind her, as she prances and skips across a recognizably English country side. This Ariel is the true magician of the movie, and it gives its audience a sense that in the child lies real imagination. Recall James Sully's comments about "flitting . . . nursery visions." Recall *Peter Pan*, a character of such spirit that, almost from the start, he had been played by female actresses. The American Pauline Chase was famous for her portrayal from 1906 to 1914 (Hunt 1995: 190). Peter Hunt's *Illustrated History of Children's Literature* reproduces a drawing by Frank Haviland of Chase, sitting on a rock in the Mermaid's lagoon, staring dreamily at the viewer. How like an Ariel she is; indeed, as Stephen Orgel has pointed out, Ariel was played for two centuries as a female role until 1930 (Orgel 1987: 77).

These casting issues are profoundly central to the idea of the theater in the literature for children and of childhood in the *fin de siècle*. For it is this theatricalization of the child that challenges the roles of gender; indeed, it affirms that gender is a role, something you play rather than simply are. This is the great age of the boy hero: Jim Hawkins of Stevenson's *Treasure Island*; Harvey Cheyne, Jr., of Kipling's *Captains Courageous*; Gregory Hillard Hartley of Henty's *With Kitchener in the Soudan*. All of these boys, and nearly countless others, learn to play the man in the exotic spaces of colonial exploit or sea-borne voyage. This was, as well, the great age of the ingénue: the young girl of the stage who plays in the domestic theaters of small spaces, supporting families, fending off suitors, and living with emotions. Annie Russell (1864–1936), perhaps the most famous of those ingénues, made her stage debut at eight, and by the later 1880s she was regularly starring in the plays of Burnett and W. S. Gilbert. She was the model for Sandy, Hank Morgan's beloved in Twain's *Connecticut Yankee*, and in Dan Beard's illustrations for the novel she appears as much a child-star as a maiden in distress, a model for those later ingénues of the first years of silent film: Lillian Gish, Mary Pickford, and Pearl White.

The ingénue adventuress stands at the heart of one of the most popular of early-twentieth-century children's fictions and what would become the most iconic of its later filmed realizations: *The Wizard of Oz*. Inaugurated in 1900, L. Frank Baum's Oz books would take two decades to tell Dorothy's many stories. But, in all of them, there is not just adventure but theatricality. The Kansas farm seems like an empty stage, while Munchkinland is full of costumed players (vivified in the illustrations to the first editions). The Great Oz himself, whatever his wizardry, seems more a circus manager than magician, and by the time *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* appeared in 1913, the illustrations made him look (explicitly and intentionally) like P. T. Barnum. The stories had, from their beginning, such a rich theatricality that they were put on stage and on the screen almost immediately after their publication. There was a 1902 musical co-written by Baum himself, and silent films from 1910 and 1925, as well as a 1933 animated version (Swartz 2000). Long before Judy Garland, Dorothy was a familiar figure of performance, and by the time the now-famous 1939 movie appeared – with its own, self-conscious recognition that the phantasms of childhood are peopled by great performers – the *fin de siècle* was effectively enshrined as the site of the imagination and the place of children's literature. If, as James Sully averred in the 1890s, "the page of modern literature is, indeed, a monument of our child-love and our child-admiration" (Sully 1896: 2), the pages of our own, contemporary writings and the screens of our films and televisions remain monuments to the hold that the *fin de siècle* child still has on us.

AFTERLIVES

That child has survived throughout the twentieth century until today. The years before the First World War still offer the default mode of children's fiction. How else can we explain, for example, the immense success of the *Thomas the Tank Engine* stories, written by the Reverend W. Audry, first published in 1946, and ubiquitous on public television in the 1990s. With their animations of mechanical beings, their top-hatted railway executives and flat-capped workers, and their moral fables of community support and self-reliance, they return us to an age more benign than our

own: an age before trains carried soldiers off to war, an age before they carried children off to safety from the Blitz.

This is the train that opens Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, and the Pevensie children take refuge in the countryside, not just to escape London's bombing in the 1940s but to return to a golden age of the 1910s. The professor of the story lives in an Edwardian country house. And in the woods, they find owls, hawks, stags, badgers, foxes, and rabbits. It is as if the doorway opens to a fictional world, a *Wind in the Willows* landscape, and the wardrobe takes them not just to the land of Narnia but the time of older fictions. In *The Magician's Nephew* (the first written of the Narnia books, but published in 1955, five years after *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*), Lewis announces: "This is a story about something that happened long ago when your grandfather was a child. . . . In those days, Mr. Sherlock Holmes was still living in Baker Street and the Bastables [the children of Nesbit's *Treasure Seekers* and *Wouldbegoods*] were looking for treasure in the Lewisham Road." This is the post-war world refracted through the 1890s, a time when the young boy of the story, Digory, can imagine in the noises of the house a pirate in the attic, "like the man at the beginning of *Treasure Island*."

C. S. Lewis was born in 1898, J. R. R. Tolkien in 1892, P. L. Travers in 1899. The worlds of their fantasies are *fin-de-siècle* worlds, and if the professor of *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* lives in a kind of Edwardian time warp, so do the Hobbits, who for all their fairy-tale features reside in an idealized country village out of Kenneth Grahame. Like Rat and Mole on their wilderness journey, Bilbo on the road longs for his kettle, "for a wash and brush," for his tea and toast and bacon for breakfast. Tolkien's own philological researches into Early English, Norse, and Celtic languages were grounded in the Oxford of the 1910s – the age of Sir James A. H. Murray, the wizard-like editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary* – and his vision of social upheaval in *The Lord of the Rings* could only have been written by a man who had watched his college cohort die in the trenches (Brogan 1989).

P. L. Travers' *Mary Poppins* first appeared in 1934, but with her long skirt, umbrella, and carpet bag she seems a character more out of Oscar Wilde than the Depression. In fact, her famous carpet bag (a nineteenth-century accoutrement that Wilde himself loved to comment on) seems, to the children of her care, so odd and old that they fail to understand its meaning: is it a bag full of carpets, they ask? Of course not, and though it first seems empty, all kinds of marvelous things appear from its darkness.

Memory is a carpet bag, and the fantasists and fabulists born in the last years of the nineteenth century sustained the idioms of their youth. As L. P. Hartley wrote in his introduction to *The Go-Between*, "it is almost a rule that novelists, however wedded they may be to the present, write best when they are recalling – or can identify themselves with – episodes or atmospheres or states of mind belonging to their youth, because that is the time when the deepest impressions, or the impressions most fertile for literary creation, are made" (Hartley 1953: 8). And yet, for many children of our own time, the *fin de siècle* remains that most fertile moment of literary creation. When are the *Harry Potter* novels set? It is hard to determine, for while there are elements of modern life in Muggle world – the telephone, the city bus, mass media – there are no computers or advanced electronics. And the wizard's life seems set, as if in amber, in a world of old Etonian instruction, school scarves,

chilly rooms, and late-nineteenth-century shops and pubs. The fantasy of *Harry Potter* is that wizards live perpetually in the golden age of children's literature: the age of Andrew Lang's *Fairy Books*, of Rat and Mole, of Tom Brown, of Henty's adventures. Harry and Ron could be cut from the cloth of *The Boy's Own Paper*, and Hermione remains all Girl Guides and Girton College.

For that master of historical fiction, A. S. Byatt, the *fin de siècle* comes to life again in her magisterial novel *The Children's Book*. Taking its inspiration from the real-life E. Nesbit, and peopled with all the personae of the age – from Wilde, to Rupert Brooke, to Barrie – *The Children's Book* reveals (especially in its opening scenes of a rural, Midsummer Eve party of 1895) how fairy tale and theater, technology and pastoral, Shakespeare and sentiment, all come together to create not just a new literature for children but a new social moment for the child. The children of these smart, Fabian families, "at the end of the nineteenth century, were different from children before or after. . . . They roamed the woods and fields, built hiding-places, and climbed trees, hunted, fished, rode ponies and bicycles, with no other company than that of other children" (Byatt 2009: 39). Though Byatt's families fit comfortably in the wicker of social progressivism, they are, in the end, little different from the aristocracy of Hartley's *The Go-Between*. For, in both novels, childhood remains a privileged place, not simply of adventure, but of self-narration. Children were now expected to tell stories of their own: not just fairy tales of nursery, but the histories of themselves. What children's books of the *fin de siècle* taught, in the end, was the ability for any child to place him or herself in fiction – for children to realize that, at this privileged moment in their lives, they were themselves as much imagined creatures of the wood as anything that they might find in Grahame, Potter, Lang, or Nesbit. And for the child or parent reader of the early twenty-first century, the templates of the late nineteenth survive, as if we all have come to recognize that childhood is, itself, as much a fleeting moment, conscious of its own loss, as a summer party before wartime.

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CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

REALISM

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Petra Dierkes-Thrun

Realism at the *fin de siècle* became a topic of heated literary and cultural debate as a new generation of realist writers in England, France, Germany, Russia, Scandinavia, and the United States took on topics and ideas that had not previously been considered fit for public discussion, let alone mass publication. Distinguishing themselves from such mid-century predecessors as Dickens, Eliot, Anne Brontë, Trollope, Howells, Stifter, Storm, Droste-Hülshoff, Balzac, Flaubert, Maupassant, or Tolstoy, the 1890s realists were "characterised by their willingness to offend" (Arata 2007: 178), especially concerning their writing about sexuality and gender roles. Under the influence of French Naturalism, the rise of social and medical sciences including sexology, and the New Woman debates, along with increasing literacy rates and changes in the publication business, male writers such as Hardy, Moore, Gissing, Meredith, Morrison, Henry James, Fontane, Tourgenieff, and Dostoevsky, and in the theater Ibsen, Schnitzler, Shaw, and Chekhov, included shockingly frank depictions of such topics as sexual desire, marital infidelity, prostitution, odd (unmarried) women, sexual disease and rape, with an eye on social commentary and reform. In their emphasis on sexuality they were joined by female New Woman writers of the 1880s and 1890s, such as Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, George Egerton, Mona Caird, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Kate Chopin, who often employed realist writing techniques alongside other experimental stylistic means like allegory and writing about dreams, to criticize the constrictions of traditional gender roles for women. Together, the so-called New Realists and the New Woman writers (some of them, like Hardy and Gissing, were identified with both camps) laid bare the hypocrisy of the European and US middle-class culture that reserved many of its most important economic, legal, social, and sexual freedoms and privileges only for men. Along with writing about different topics and experiences, these writers experimented with new forms and styles that importantly contributed to the development of modernism.

Shocking plot points or characters were not new to literature, of course, but the difference of 1880s and 1890s realism lay in the directness and social reformist impulse with which taboo topics were treated. Earlier novels portrayed their protagonists as complex individuals within their own environments rather than

examples of an oppressed class or type of people, and they only suggested, rather than flagrantly displayed, matters of sexuality. Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (which prompted an obscenity trial in France in 1857) or Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1873–77) both ended with the suicide of their transgressive female protagonists, and Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871–72) or Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847–48) had strongly hinted at illicit sexual desire and marital infidelity, but none fundamentally attacked the institution of marriage or traditional gender roles themselves. (The closest *Madame Bovary* ever got to depicting Emma's marital infidelity was to state that she was driving around with Léon in a carriage with closed curtains.) Dickens and Balzac had portrayed the effects of industrialization and the plight of the working class, and Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) depicted alcoholism, violence, and a wife leaving her husband, but the realism of these authors ultimately affirmed rather than questioned the existing class system and social and moral order.

By contrast, in the 1880s and 1890s texts such as Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1866, but first translated into English in 1886), Zola's *Germinal* (1885), Ibsen's *Ghosts* (1881, English translation also in 1885), George Moore's *A Modern Lover* (1883), or the South African writer Olive Schreiner's landmark New Woman novel *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) were perceived as entirely different in nature and intention: they drew explicit attention to grim social facts and pressing injustices, attacking and questioning rather than reinforcing and furthering traditional middle-class values. They wrote about hitherto unspeakable topics like rape (Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, 1891), unwed motherhood (Allen's *The Woman Who Did*, 1895), sexual disease (Ibsen's *Ghosts*; Grand's *The Heavenly Twins*, 1893), or prostitution (Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, 1891). Thomas Hardy, in an influential 1890 essay in the *New Review*, termed this phenomenon the new "candour in fiction" and publicly argued for the necessity of realist novels' frank portrayal of "the sexual relationship as it is." Ann Ardis writes, "[t]his, then, will be the 'new' English realism's claim to superiority over the 'old' realism: it tells the truth about human sexuality" (Ardis 1990: 34). Decades before Georg Lukács's and Erich Auerbach's landmark works *Theory of the Novel* (written 1914–15) and *Mimesis* (written 1942–45), both of which analyzed the deeply social, historical, and philosophical impulses of realist literature's efforts to represent reality but more or less ignored sexuality as a realm of human experience, the New Realists insisted on its crucial importance.

There was considerable disagreement in the 1880s and 1890s about what realism meant as contemporaries drew connections between several literary and cultural movements that shared an interest in accurately representing and reforming current "reality." Realism and naturalism in particular were to some extent used interchangeably within late nineteenth-century culture, Sally Ledger notes; both movements wrote "about the ordinary and the close to hand" and echoed the ongoing nineteenth-century fascination with modern evolutionary, social, and medical sciences (Ledger 2010: 87). Max Nordau's vitriolic *Degeneration* (German 1892, English translation 1895) includes a chapter entitled "Realism" that actually discusses naturalist literature, mainly the "degenerate" Zola and his German "plagiarists", among them Hermann Bahr (who actually rejected naturalism as early as 1891).[1] The anti-realist Oscar Wilde also discussed Zola as a "realist" in his late-1880s writings. Proclaiming in "The Decay of Lying" that "as a method, realism is

a failure" (Ellmann 1982: 303), Wilde nevertheless made a qualitative distinction in another essay, "Balzac in English," between the "imaginative reality" of writers like Balzac, Dostoevsky, and Tourgenieff, whom he loved, and the "unimaginative realism" of Zola, whom he despised (Ellmann 1982: 30). In "The Poet's Corner," Wilde even mocked the latter as a stinking "Gorgon-Zola" (Ellmann 1982: 85).

Realist and naturalist dramas with a focus on sexual themes entered the European theater scene at the same time, most notably through the work of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, whose influential works stirred up an international controversy about "Ibsenism." Ibsen's dramas, too, were variously called realist or naturalist, also sometimes decadent and degenerate (e.g. by Nordau), but a common thread was Ibsen's reimagining of women's roles and a critique of bourgeois marriage.[2] The play that first established Ibsen's fame, *A Doll's House* (1879), shows a disillusioned wife leaving her husband and children; the shocking *Ghosts* deals with syphilis and the sins of hypocritical bourgeois fathers visited upon their families (it was consequently banned in most of Europe); and *Hedda Gabler* (1891), about a thwarted Decadent New Woman, ends with her suicide and the ironic survival of her naïve bourgeois husband. Other European plays associated with Ibsenism, for example Swedish playwright August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* (1888) or Shaw's *The Philanderer* (1893) and *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, openly critiqued male sexual licentiousness, rape, and prostitution. In Germany and Austria, naturalist writer Gerhart Hauptmann (*Bahnwärter Thiel* [1888], *The Weavers* [1893]) and Freudian-influenced playwright and novelist Arthur Schnitzler (*Anatol* [1893], *Flirtation* [1895], *La Ronde* [1897]) as well as Franz Wedekind (with *Earth Spirit* [1895], the first of his *Lulu* trilogy of plays) put forward similarly open critiques of bourgeois society's social and sexual hypocrisy. In Russia, Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull* (1896), *Uncle Vanya* (1897), *Three Sisters* (1900), and *The Cherry Orchard* (1904) also focused on the psychological and material reality of his characters in contemporary settings, emphasizing strong women.

New Woman fiction, too, coupled literary and social reformist concerns. Authors wrote about sexual desire, syphilis, the risks of marriage as well as the economic and social perils of being left out (or choosing to opt out) of marriage in a complex bourgeois patriarchal and class system whose realities were very different for men and women. Some reimagined maternity or showed its profound effects on women's lives (Egerton's "A Cross-Line" [1893], Mary Cholmondeley's *Red Pottage* [1899], Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" [1899] and *Herland* [1915], Gertrude Dix's *The Image-Breakers* [1900]). American women writers reacted against mainstream male realism by William Dean Howells and Henry James, who idealized the independent American Girl while downplaying her sexuality (Barrish 2011: 137). Kate Chopin's upper-class protagonist Edna Pontellier in her feminist realist classic *The Awakening* (1899) irrevocably wakes up to "the sensuality of nature, everyday bodily experiences, and previously buried emotions, including tabooed sexual desires" (Barrish 2011: 137f.).[3] Differing from Howells and James, Chopin "seeks to give her readers access to an upper-middle-class white woman's inner experiences and sensations—bodily, intellectual, and emotional [. . .] Those 'certain facts of life' to which Howells insisted the female portion of American fiction's audience should not be exposed [. . .] all related from Edna's female point of view and with a remarkable lack of moral judgment from the author" (Barrish 2011: 143).

Many of the most prominent New Woman authors wrote fiction as well as articles and books on social and economic issues, illustrating the strong connections between feminist realist aesthetics and social and political activism. In 1888, for instance, Mona Caird's article attacking marriage as outmoded provoked a flood of 27,000 letters and weeks of public debate. The South African-born Schreiner wrote not only fiction but also articles on South African politics and published *Women and Labor* (1911). Gilman's literary work merged with her social reformist stance and work as a sought-after lecturer and writer on women's economic and labor issues (*Women and Economics*, 1898). Grand's essays "The New Aspect of the Woman Question" (1894, generally credited with introducing the term "New Woman") and "Marriage Questions in Fiction" (1898) combine her literary realism and social activism. Stephen Arata notes, "[t]o wary critics, it was precisely the potential link between narrative realism and political radicalism that caused most concern" (Arata 2007: 179). The ultra-conservative National Vigilance Association put it succinctly:

> Realism [. . .] means nothing short of sheer beastliness; it means going out of the way to dig up foul expressions to embody filthy ideas; it means [. . .] the laying bare of social sores in their most loathsome forms; it means the alternation of the brutal directness of the drunken operative of today with the flabby sensuality of Corinth in the past. In a word, it is dirt and horror pure and simple.
>
> (Quoted in Ledger 2010: 86)

Much of the literary and cultural debate about the New Realism was situated in England, where the backlash against the New Realism and its perceived literary siblings derived from the fact that it was seen as "a foreign import" from France, Scandinavia, Russia, and the USA (Arata 2007: 172). The first instance of the term and concept of realism was indeed non-English: German *Realismus* (1781 in Kant's philosophy, 1798 with regard to literature), then French *réalisme* (first with reference to Kant in 1801, and 1826 with regard to literature and in 1853 to art).[4] After George Eliot's death in 1880, "the influence of French realism was beginning to be felt strongly in certain areas of English literature" (Arata 2007: 175), along with newly translated Russian novels by Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. In May 1888, the dangers of French and Russian realism were even discussed in the House of Commons after a motion was put forward "that this House deplores the rapid spread of demoralising literature in this country, and is of opinion that the law against obscene publications and indecent pictures and prints should be vigorously enforced, and, if necessary, strengthened" (quoted in Arata 2007: 170). Aimed at the publisher Henry Vizetelly, who was translating works by Flaubert, Zola, Daudet, de Maupassant, Bourget, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky, among others, the House of Commons motion passed unanimously; Vizetelly was then prosecuted and forced to pull his Zola translations.

George Moore, who had publicly declared his allegiance to Zola, experienced the backlash firsthand. His novel *A Modern Lover* was banned from Mudie's Circulating Library (the most lucrative and widespread source of literary success for novelists at the time) because it violated the so-called "Young Readers" standard that Mudie's followed. Moore fought back with an article attacking "A New Censorship of Literature" in the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1884) and a pamphlet provocatively entitled

"Literature at Nurse, or Circulating Morals" (1885), in which he lamented Mudie's undue restrictions on authors' creative freedom and business opportunities, leading to, as Ardis says, many 1880s novels' "avoidance of all controversial or risqué topics and its facile reproductions of 'Mrs. Grundy's' moral platitudes" (Ardis 1990: 32). Similarly, Henry James defended novelists' freedom to avoid pandering to flat tastes: "A novel is in its broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life: that [. . .] constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression. But there will be no intensity at all, and therefore no value, unless there is freedom to feel and say" (James 1894: 384).

Moore's "Literature at Nurse" not only stressed that Mudie's censorship infantilized the novel (hence the essay's title) but also attacked the feminine-coded tyranny of taste by the two "ladies of the country" whose complaint to Mudie's about his work prompted its removal. In the wake of an expanding fiction market, supported by cheaper industrial production of print and a rising mass readership, female readers had become a stronger economic force. In 1890, conservative journalist and author Eliza Linton, best-known for her anti-suffragist writings, wrote, "[t]he spread of education among the people demands literature cheap enough to at once suit their pockets and meet their wants" (quoted in Ardis 1990: 41). A few years earlier, Linton had openly called for a new virility of literature. Echoing Moore's metaphor, she denigrated Mudie's mild three-decker novel type as "a feeble, futile, milk-and-water literature" (quoted in Ardis 1990: 33), an affront to virile English culture. She favored the New Realism instead because it treated English readers like adults and fostered "a strong-headed and masculine nation" (quoted in Ardis 1990: 46). Moore's, Gissing's, James's and Linton's arguments illustrate the importance of gender within the realism debate. Lynn Pykett explains, "'[a]dvanced' critics and novelists saw the autonomous authority of the artist and the development of the novel as a bold, experimental 'masculine' art form as threatened by supposedly moralistic and aesthetically conservative women readers, and by the demands of a mass market which was coded 'feminine'" (Pykett 1995: 54f.).

The New Realists themselves also grappled with what realism meant. The English "master leader" of the new realist school (as H. G. Wells called him in his obituary), George Gissing, was ambivalent, Aaron Matz shows. In his satirical novel *New Grub Street* (1892), Gissing parodied literary scientific objectivism through a character, "The realist," who expounds extreme realist literary theories and eventually commits suicide, yet the novel as a whole still strives to be realist in style and content. Three years later, in his essay "The Place of Realism in Fiction," Gissing declared himself ready to give up the term altogether since he felt it had been "mauled" by people who did not understand it: "One could wish [. . .] that the words *realism* and *realist* might never again be used, save in their proper sense by writers of scholastic philosophy. In relation to the work of novelists they never had a satisfactory meaning, and are now become mere slang. [. . .] When a word has been so grievously mauled, it should be allowed to drop from the ranks" (quoted in Matz 2010: 74f.).

By 1893, there was already no going back. Novelist Edmund Gosse wrote, "The public has now eaten of the apple of knowledge and will not be satisfied with mere marionettes. Whatever comes next, we cannot return, in serious novels, to the inanities and impossibilities of the old well-made plot, to [. . .] the madonna-heroine, and the god-like hero, to the impossible virtues and melodramatic vices." Novelists

can and must now "contrive to enlarge their borders" even further and include human stories and facts previously only found in "the weeds of newspaper reports" (quoted in Ardis 1990: 35).

Male New Realists regularly appropriated New Woman topics and styles, co-opting them to their own ends. In *The Odd Women* (1893), for example, Gissing wrote about unmarried middle-class women's personal strife and social discrimination during the beginnings of the women's movement, giving women a voice through extensive spoken dialogue and a sympathetic narratorial perspective. Carefully laying out various alternatives to the marriage and romance plot through the perspective of three women's lives while stressing the complexity and difficulty of their personal decisions, Gissing's novel paints a complex picture of women's gender reality at the *fin de siècle*, prompting readers to see the topic from several different angles. George Meredith's *Diana of the Crossways* (1885) or Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895) also "explore[d] issues relevant to their literary aesthetics and used the relative embodiment of feminism, the New Woman, as a metaphor" (Kranidis 1995: 109). With Tess and Sue Bridehead, Hardy created intensely sympathetic female characters. When Tess is executed after murdering her potential rapist Alec and Sue loses her children as well as Jude—in each case because of a series of tragic personal circumstances in consequence of society's sexual hypocrisy and double standards—a critique of society's treatment of women is implied, but still subdued.

For many male writers, the new themes constituted great literary vehicles rather than attempts at direct political intervention. Ibsen, for example, publicly stressed in a speech to the Norwegian Women's Rights League on 26 May 1898 that, despite his reputation for sexual and gender-role themes, he was not a self-identified feminist: "I [. . .] must disclaim the honor of having consciously worked for the women's rights movement. I am not even quite clear as to just what this women's rights movement really is. To me it has seemed a problem of humanity in general" (quoted in Ledger 2002: 81). Henry James's *The Bostonians* (1886), even though it has the women's movement as its direct subject, actually "takes a largely satiric view" toward it, leaving only the ending slightly ambiguous and open (Barrish 2011: 146). The male realists' new focus on women's issues was both helpful and problematic to the cause, as many of the male New Realists featured "narratives in which the contested female subject figured only symptomatically" and mainly served "as the Realists' literary agenda [. . .] in the same stroke, reinforc[ing] some old oppressive stereotypes," such as that a male novelist can "know women more intimately than women can profess to know themselves" (Kranidis 1995: 127f.). Overall, "while in the 1890s both men and women became significantly repositioned in relation to their work and their readers, it was male writers such as Moore, Meredith, and Gissing who acquired cultural recognition for producing revolutionary representations of female subjectivity, while feminist novelists such as Mona Caird, Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, and Mary Cholmondeley were generally dismissed as sensational or overly subjective" (Kranidis 1995: xiii).

Still, Molly Youngkin explains, the relationship between male New Realists and some female New Woman novelists went both ways: just as "the New Realists incorporated the content of New Woman novels into their work," so women writers "appropriated the formal conventions of the New Realists" (Youngkin 2007: 15).

They were, in fact, much more fully intertwined than critics have acknowledged, and contributed in tandem to a larger "feminist realist aesthetic" that influenced "the debate over realism at the *fin de siècle* by advocating serious consideration of the representation of woman's agency" across the board (Youngkin 2007: 173). Victorian women's periodicals such as *Shafts* and *The Woman's Herald* often gave credit to indirect male supporters like Hardy even if their work was "not fully consistent with the feminist realist ideal" (Youngkin 2007: 37) and even if, for instance, Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* was inspired by Lucas Malet's [Mary St. Leger Kingsley Harrison] *The Wages of Sin* (1890), as Talia Schaffer has described (2000: 197–243).

Large parts of 1890s literary feminism relied on the employment of a realist aesthetic that focused equally on depictions of women's inner lives and real world experiences, showing them thinking, speaking, and acting for themselves, moving women's agency and consciousness to the foreground: "[t]o triumph over these [adverse] conditions, fictional women needed to assert agency in the same manner real-life women did: they needed to experience a transformation of *consciousness* to realize their condition, articulate their condition through *spoken word*, and use *concrete action* to change their condition" (Youngkin 2007: 7). New Woman novels and short stories not only portrayed reality for women but also sought to change it by reinventing domestic realism. "Like its modernist successors, much New Woman fiction broke with or modified the representational conventions of realism" by "offer[ing] a different view (that of the woman-as-outsider)" or "construct[ing] a new version of reality shaped to a woman's desires," and focusing on "decentered narrative[s]" and "polyphonic form[s] in which the multiplicity of voices and views on current issues are exposed" (Pykett 1995: 57).

Olive Schreiner's short fiction and her best-known work, the semi autobiographical novel *The Story of an African Farm* (published under the pseudonym Ralph Iron and set in Schreiner's childhood landscape) are significant examples of the new feminist realism's stylistic experimentation. Schreiner's story "The Buddhist Priest's Wife" (1891) features an allegorical frame narrative whose narrator urges the reader to "cover up" the body of a dead deer to preserve its dignity. This frame introduces and accompanies, but doesn't explain, the story's realistic main narrative, which shows a nameless New Woman-type female and a man in a leave-taking conversation about the woman's plans to live in India. The woman is in love with the man, but he doesn't know it. It soon becomes apparent that the woman knows that his conventional masculinity and stereotyping of women would prevent their happy union; instead of wooing him, she therefore bravely chooses to leave and live an independent life. The man is left in the dark about any of this. Stephanie Eggermont argues, "[b]y ending the story with a man's lack of knowledge and certainty, Schreiner rewrites traditional narrative conclusions that are enunciated by an all-knowing and mostly masculine voice" (Eggermont 2012: 46). Schreiner does not spell out the relation between her allegorical frame narrative and this realist storyline; readers must seek it themselves. We may surmise that the dead beautiful deer is the woman, many years later, who has overcome heartbreak and made a beautiful life for herself, for which she deserves honor and respect. Inventing "open-ended narrative structures" within feminist realism and "[i]magining new female identities outside patriarchal constrictions, Schreiner shows that there are more scenarios open to women than marriage" (Eggermont 2012: 52).

Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm* also combines a realist coming-of-age, feminist-themed narrative (revolving around the orphaned, strong-willed Lyndall, her similarly free-thinking friend Waldo, and Lyndall's struggles against the female social constrictions of her time and place) with allegory and dreamlike philosophical meditation. An example of the latter is the chapter "Times and Seasons," which features Waldo's inner wrestling with fundamental faith questions and shows his transition from believer to atheist. In another chapter, a stranger on horseback tells Waldo a mysterious allegory of a hunter and hands him an unnamed, life-changing book (probably Spencer's *First Principles*, one of Schreiner's own key influences). Without explanation of her stylistic shifts, Schreiner fuses them into otherwise recognizably realist style, making room for ambiguity and her characters' not always successful searches for truth and independence.

Schreiner apparently felt her new style allowed a deeper kind of truth and appealed more directly to readers' emotions, offering alternatives to rational prose and the language of evolutionary science. According to Ann Heilmann, "just as her political vision challenged the 'truth' of new and old authoritative discourses, contesting the division of humanity into neatly demarcated categories of gender, race and class, so her 'aesthetics of literary miscegenation' confounded textual and sexual boundaries" (Heilmann 2004: 120f.). Schreiner's strategic intermixing of realism with biblical-like allegoresis, "archetypal language," and dream writing appealed to a wide audience, including the suffragettes, and "lent universal significance to the personal and political aspirations of her readers. [. . .] white women in particular were able to conceptualise their claim to equality and citizenship as a spiritual quest for human redemption" (Heilmann 2004: 125). Schreiner's most influential allegory, "Three Dreams in a Desert" (1890), presents a white woman as a Christ-like figure who undergoes suffering and redemption, a motif that became standard in suffragette literature (Heilmann 2004: 130).

Australian-born and Irish-identified George Egerton (Mary Chavelita Dunne Bright) also experimented with form in her important short story collections *Keynotes* (1893) and *Discords* (1894). In the psychologically focused story "A Cross Line," Egerton explores a fantasy by an unnamed married woman to elope with a sensitive man who woos her and leave her boring husband behind, only to channel her sexual and intellectual desires somewhat ambiguously into motherhood at the end. Rather than following clear motivation or offering a moral teaching at the end, "A Cross Line" functions "in an elliptical and evasive way" and its "refusal to disclose motivation g[ives] the effect of disrupting the idea of a stable identity," illustrating that "the new feminine realism was conceived and articulated within a network of intersecting discourses in which the feminine was an extremely problematic and contested term" (Pykett 1995: 63, 76). Strongly influenced by Norwegian writer Knut Hamsun (with whom she had a relationship), Egerton's psychological realism also includes features "we now think of as distinctively modern: [her narratives] are impressionistic, compressed, concentrated, allusive, elliptical, episodic, and make much use of dream, reverie, and other forms of interiority. The recording of events and the description of outward circumstances are almost always a means of suggesting inner realities, especially the inner realities of women's experiences and desires" (Pykett 1995: 62).

Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" is another prominent example of women's modification of realism through form. It incorporates gothic and strongly symbolic

elements into its realist, first-person narrative to depict a young mother's postpartum, depression-induced fall into madness as she is subjected to S. Weir Mitchell's notorious "rest cure" (an experience that Gilman herself underwent and which she set out to criticize with this story). The husband John's brutally rational, pragmatic attitude, actions, and patriarchal insistence that he knows best paint a stark contrast between the female protagonist's inner and her physician-husband's outer "reality." His refutation of her inner reality exacerbates the cruel effects of her quasi-imprisonment in her sick-room without writing instruments, reading, or other diversions, leading to her psychotic breakdown at the end, in which she sees first one and then many creeping women behind the wallpaper trying to escape. Barrish observes that "the character John embodies an especially limited version of Howellsian realism's commitment to the rational over the romantic," whereas the narrator's reality "demand[s] an openness to emotions, including terror, despair, and painful self-doubt" (Barrish 2011: 139 f.).

Schreiner's dream and allegoresis, Egerton's play with inner monologue and fantasies from the largely unexplained perspective of a female protagonist, and Gilman's nightmarish juxtaposition of a depressed and hallucinating woman's inner reality with her husband's tyrannical insistence on *his* view of reality constitute critical perspectives on current social and cultural ideas of "truth" and agency. Therefore they actively participate in the New Realism debates about literature's mimetic and social functions. What is truth—for a woman? What purposes should the new focus on sexuality, gender relations, marriage, and motherhood serve—for both men and women?

Austrian and German realism of the 1890s addressed similar themes but presented the pressing social problems of the day with a greater focus on the bourgoisie's anxious psyche, economic struggles, and, especially in Austria, ongoing class conflicts with the aristocracy (Schorske 1981: 3f.). Like some of the New Woman writers, Arthur Schnitzler explored characters' interior lives and motives by combining realist techniques with symbolism highlighting dreams, sexuality, and gender roles, but mostly focused on his male protagonists. His novella *Leutnant Gustl* (1900), written as inner monologue in its entirety (a novelty at the time), focuses on the suicidal Gustl's neuroses and fears concerning others' views of him. In *Traumnovelle* (1926), Fridolin aimlessly strolls through Vienna's nightly streets driven by sexual jealousy, fantasies of marital infidelity and physical violence, and a sense of inner restlessness, illustrating the disturbingly fluid boundaries between inner and outer realities.

In Germany, Theodor Fontane's great masterpiece of Prussian realism *Effi Briest* (1895) narrated the adultery, expulsion, and heartbroken death of a naïve seventeen-year-old girl enthralled by a philanderer and bound by marriage and early motherhood to a boringly conventional nobleman. Fontane presented the narrative as a tragic result of the ambitions of her bourgeois parents and their misguided social values. His *fin-de-siècle* realism thus differed from the *poetischer Realismus* (poetic realism) of previous realists such as Droste-Hülshoff, Stifter, Storm, and Raabe, whose emphasis was on moral duty, humane feeling, and desire to conserve and protect the social status quo. Fontane's *Irrungen, Wirrungen* (1888) and *Effi Briest* were "studies of social and sexual power relations in the Bismarckian *Reich*, where outward modernization—symbolized in both novels by the rapid growth of

the imperial capital Berlin—takes place alongside a pseudo-aristocratic moral code that both licenses and compensates for the absence of political modernity and the continued exploitation of women" (Walker 2011: 5).

The New Woman fiction of the 1890s is often seen as marking a real shift in agency for female writers who saw themselves as authorities on questions of female gender and sexuality, ultimately leading to a separate tradition of female writing "correcting" and enhancing the New Realists' portrayal of women's inner and outer lives. In a 1896 letter, Grand acknowledged her and other women writers' established prominence by then: "thanks to our efforts [. . .] the 'novel with a purpose' and the 'sex novel' are more powerful at the present time, especially for good, than any other social influence" (quoted in Heilmann 2004: 1). The "runaway success" of female-authored books with frank discussions of sexuality, desire, and disease, such as Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*, Grand's *Heavenly Twins* (which immediately sold 20,000 copies), or Egerton's *Keynotes* and *Discords*, "meant that one of the direct results of a literary movement that had as one of its central aims the re-masculinization of literature was that late-nineteenth-century fiction actually became even more strongly associated with women than before. As the critic for the *Athenaeum* sneered, 'Now every literary lady is "realistic" and everybody says "How clever! How charming!"'" (Ledger 2010: 99).[5] In her article "Marriage Questions in Fiction" (1898), Grand stressed the importance of expressing women's reality and getting heard: "Our minds are forever reaching out after something, something elusive, something which hovers on the confines of thought, but is not to be coaxed into focus; that something which it would make such a difference to be able to say and to convey to others," but when the writer finally finds the right expression, it is "rapture" (quoted in Youngkin 2007: 41). Thomas Hardy commended Grand for her bold writing and fearlessness: "she can write boldly, and get listened to" (quoted in Youngkin 2007: 38).

While it is true "that women were writing with new authority about female experience after the downfall of the circulating libraries—and receiving widespread public attention for doing so (Ardis 1990: 45), there was also a critical reaction against women writers' supposedly diseased or impure contents. This in turn stimulated impassioned debates about women's proper or improper behavior and ideas. In 1895—following Sydney Grundy's satirical play *The New Woman* (1894) and the exchange between Sarah Grand and Ouida about the New Woman in the pages of the *North American Review*—the backlash against the alleged "sex mania," "erotomania," or "tommyrotics" of New Woman literature was at its strongest, fueled also by Oscar Wilde's notorious trials for "gross indecency" and the publication of Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did* and its follow-ups (Lucas Cleeve's [Adelina Kingscote's] *The Woman Who Wouldn't* and Victoria Cross's *The Woman Who Didn't*). Hugh Stutfield, B. A. Crackanthorpe, D. F. Hannigan, Janet Hogarth, and others expressed disgust and outrage at the dominance of sexuality in fiction in a wave of essays. One of them, James Noble's "The Fiction of Sexuality," argued:

> The new fiction of sexuality presents to us a series of pictures painted from reflections in convex mirrors, the colossal nose which dominates the face being represented by one colossal appetite which dominates life. Sometimes it is made as inoffensive as deformity can ever be made; sometimes it is unspeakably

revolting; [. . .] but everywhere it is a flagrant violation of the obvious proportion of life. Be the prominent people in this new fiction young or old, married or unmarried, voluptuaries or ascetics, the sexual passion provides the main-spring of their action, and within its range lies their whole gamut of emotion.

(Quoted in Ardis 1990: 49–50)

Another example of both the backlash and the tendency to connect realism, French naturalism, and New Woman fiction at the time is Arthur Waugh's essay "Reticence in Literature" (1894). Waugh attacks them together but reserves his strongest vitriol for female writers, whose alleged emphasis on pleasure, sensuality, and passion compare negatively with male "calmness of judgment" and "reticence" in literature.

The man lives by ideas; the woman by sensations; and while the man remains an artist so long as he holds true to his view of life, the woman becomes one as soon as she throws off the habit of her sex and learns to rely on her judgment, and not on her senses. It is unmanly, it is effeminate, it is inartistic to gloat over pleasure, to revel in immoderation, to become passion's slave; and literature demands as much calmness of judgment, as much reticence, as life itself.

(Waugh 1912: 13–14)

Like Linton, Waugh connects manly, virile literature and culture with a strong nation, echoing Matthew Arnold's moralistic association of realist-oriented writing ("to see an object as in itself it really is") with a healthy nation. New Realism's "frankness" speaks to "excess prompted by effeminacy" (Waugh 1912: 21). Most dangerous to literature are New Women writers with their emphasis on "sensual pleasures" presented in a "chirurgical" way, their topics dealing with "promiscuous intercourse," "diseases of names unmentionable," and pregnancy. Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, and other male realist works readily come to mind as possible examples, but Waugh only focuses on women writers: "We are told that this is a part of the revolt of woman, and certainly our women-writers are chiefly to blame [. . .]. How is art served by all this? What has she told us that we not all know, or could not learn from medical manuals? And what impression has she left us over and above the memory of her unpalatable details?" (Waugh 1912: 22–23)

The influence of both the New Woman writers availing themselves of feminist realism and their male counterparts, the New Realists of the 1880s and 1890s, was important and long lasting. By expanding the range of topics, styles, and intentions associated with mid-century forms of realist writing, authors such as Hardy, Grand, Gissing, Caird, Ibsen, Shaw, Schreiner, Moore, Chopin, Gilman, and others laid crucial foundations for modernism. In fiction, they "helped push the development of the novel from Victorian to modern, since this new aesthetic placed stronger emphasis on consciousness and subjective experience than previous realist aesthetics had" (Youngkin 2007: 8). In the theater, the realists and naturalists made serious social critique a hallmark of modern drama, leading from Ibsen, Strindberg, Shaw, and Chekhov to Eugene O'Neill, Bertolt Brecht, and beyond.

In particular, the experiments with psychological realism, ambiguity, and fragmented narratives in *fin-de-siècle* realist fiction such as that of Egerton, Chopin, and Schreiner, who worked within the mainstream realist tradition and simultaneously

transformed it, anticipate modernism. They emphasized interior rather than ulterior truths, representing these through new literary styles (fragmentation, shifting narrative point of view, streams of consciousness, etc.). In fact, many modernists honed their ideas and their craft by reading and writing about *fin-de-siècle* realism, which helped them define their own views on literary form and purpose. For instance, Virginia Woolf's landmark essays "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" and "Modern Fiction" polemically engage realist theories to develop her own modernist theory.

Realism as an international network of affiliated individuals and movements at the *fin de siècle* fit the ongoing process of democratization by "bringing into literary or painterly view common worlds of experience that had previously been aesthetically unseen, disregarded, or out of bounds" (Bowlby 2010: xvi). Insisting on society's reform as it simultaneously transformed literary style and technique, realism in the 1890s mirrors the fluid, complex nature of the *fin de siècle* itself, easily traversing back and forth between nineteenth-century literary and social traditions and the rise of modernism.

NOTES

1 Max Nordau in Germany and Cesare Lombroso in Italy included prominent realist and naturalist writers in their pseudo-medical genealogy of physical or mental deformity.
2 Zola publicly endorsed Ibsen, and his intervention made the Paris premiere of Ibsen's *Ghosts* in 1890 possible (Ledger 2010: 95).
3 Barrish points out the bilingual Kate Chopin's debt to French realism, in particular "writers such as Gustave Flaubert and, especially, Flaubert's protégé Guy de Maupassant, both of whom depicted sex and sexuality with far more openness than American writers" (Barrish 2011: 143).
4 See "realism, n." *OED Online*, June 2013, Oxford University Press, www.oed.com. ezproxy.stanford.edu/view/Entry/158931?redirectedFrom=realism (accessed July 03, 2013).
5 The Society of Authors (founded in 1884) mostly excluded female authors, except for well-known ones. But as Gavin and Oulton point out, many of them formed their own networks in the 1880s and 1890s. Grand read chapters of *The Heavenly Twins* (1893) to members of the all-female Pioneer Club; from 1884 on, the Women Writers' Dinners (which grew from 20 to 200 women in 1899) also helped "to enable an exchange between very different writers. [. . .] In this woman-only environment female writers and their critics need not be mutually hostile, and difference could be celebrated" (Gavin and Oulton 2012: 5).

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