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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

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CULTURAL TRANSMISSION IN THE AGE OF MODERNISM:

MENTORSHIP IN THE NOVEL, 1890—1960

by

Dalia Nechama Oppenheimer

A dissertation presented to the  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
of Washington University in  
partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2011  
Saint Louis, Missouri

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Dalia Nechama Oppenheimer

December 2011

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*“Culture is a forbidding word. I have to use it, knowing of none better, to describe the various beautiful and interesting objects which men have made in the past, and handed down to use, and which some of us are hoping to hand on.”*

E.M. Forster, “Does Culture Matter?”

## Introduction: Education and the Pursuit of Culture

“Culture,” according to Matthew Arnold, is the “pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world.”<sup>1</sup> Arnold claimed this pursuit involved his ubiquitous “sweetness and light,” the beauty and intellect that represent “the best” of human thought and behavior. He believed that careful study of classical traditions of learning, such as Greek philosophy, could influence contemporary behavior by imparting morality and a passion for doing good works.<sup>2</sup> The pursuit of sweetness and light was an inward process that would encourage people to act at their own personal best. Culture for Arnold was a process of learning aimed at influencing social conduct, which led him to claim in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) that culture offered “a long-term programme for the reform of Britain’s entire intellectual life.”<sup>3</sup> Arnold argued that if everyone pursued culture by living this “intellectual life,” they would be brought into social harmony through a shared understanding of the lessons from culture’s venerated past.

Since he believed in the possibility of the widespread adoption of culture, Arnold had to conceive of culture in transmissible terms. His version of culture, like the one in

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. Ian Gregor (Indianapolis & New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1971), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold found in the Greeks an intellectual flexibility he would call “Hellenism.” Hellenism in *Culture and Anarchy* refers to “*spontaneity of consciousness*”: “Hellenism, and human life in the hands of Hellenism, is invested with a kind of aerial ease, clearness, and radiancy; they are full of what we call sweetness and light” (112). Arnold contrasts Hellenism to Hebraism, the mechanical obedience of Christianity: “As Hellenism speaks of thinking clearly, seeing things in their essence and beauty, as a grand and precious feat for man to achieve, so Hebraism speaks of becoming conscious of sin, of awakening to a sense of sin, as a feat of this kind” (113).

<sup>3</sup> Chris Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism, 1848-1932* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 22.

this project's epigraph, inherently depended on being "handed down," on the preservation and propagation of the intellectual and artistic traditions of the past. The transmission of Arnoldian culture required institutional support, "an ideal centre of correct information, taste, and intelligence."<sup>4</sup> Arnold found such a centre in the ancient, exclusive institutions of Oxford and Cambridge: "Yet we in Oxford, brought up amidst the beauty and sweetness of that beautiful place, have not failed to seize one truth: the truth that beauty and sweetness are essential characters of a complete human perfection."<sup>5</sup> Culture was a way of thinking modeled at the Oxbridge of his day, where thought and philosophy formed the core of the curriculum. Oxbridge embodied culture's transmissibility, since it institutionalized and taught the classical tradition of learning so central to Arnold's idea of culture.

Arnold's formulation of the university as cultural epicenter endured at least into the middle of the twentieth century: F.R. Leavis claimed in his *Education and the University* (1948) that universities "are recognized symbols of cultural tradition," a position he maintained in *English Literature in our Time and the University* (1969).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 91.

<sup>5</sup> Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 49.

In "The Literary Influence of Academies" (1865), Arnold considered the possibility of an intellectual academy along the lines of the French Académie Française. Such an academy would provide a central authority for regulating matters of intellectual life. Arnold eventually decides against such an academy for the English in favor of the inner process of culture he outlines in *Culture and Anarchy*, and limits his intellectual centers of authority to the already established Oxford and Cambridge. Chris Baldick believes Arnold based that decision on a fear that this academy would eventually be overrun by the "philistines": "It was one thing to revere an already established academy sanctified by centuries of tradition, quite another to brave the stormy currents of contemporary English controversy and embark upon the messy practical work of constructing an academy anew" (Baldick 45).

<sup>6</sup> F.R. Leavis, *Education and the University: A Sketch for an "English School."* (New York: George W. Stewart, 1948), 16.



Leavis upheld a version of culture consistent with Arnold's: "the future must lie in the cultural realm," he insisted, and "in the performance of this function the universities have an essential part."<sup>7</sup> Both *Culture and Anarchy* and *Education and the University* reinforce the position of the university as protector and transmitter of culture because Arnold and Leavis feared culture faced a particular threat. To put it in its most general terms, this threat was utilitarianism. A social theory made popular in the nineteenth century, the utilitarian movement advocated Jeremy Bentham's dictum, "the greatest happiness for the greatest number."<sup>8</sup> "A good society," utilitarian John Stuart Mill suggested, "is one that maximizes everyone's pleasure, whatever its source."<sup>9</sup> With that premise, utilitarianism encouraged an association of education with economic advancement rather than with Arnold's cultural program. The pragmatic utilitarian wanted an education that had practical use or provided specific training, not Arnold's passionate morality.<sup>10</sup>

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The rapid expansion of universities that came about in the early twentieth century (on which I comment later in this introduction and in Chapter 4) encouraged Leavis to look for culture in universities beyond Oxford and Cambridge.

<sup>7</sup> Leavis, *Education and the University*, 11.

<sup>8</sup> For additional discussions of utilitarian influence on Victorian life, see Michalina Vaughan's and Margaret Scotford Archer's, *Social Conflict and Educational Change in England and France 1789-1848* (1971), Alan Rauch's *Useful Knowledge* (2001), R.E. Pritchard's *Dickens' England: Life in Victorian Times* (2003), and Catherine Gallagher's *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction* (1985).

<sup>9</sup> J.B. Schneewind, introduction to *The Basic Writings of John Stuart Mill: On Liberty, The Subjection of Women & Utilitarianism*, by John Stuart Mill (New York: Modern Library, 2002), xiii.

<sup>10</sup> For criticism of utilitarianism contemporary to Arnold, see Benjamin Disraeli's "Utilitarian Follies." In the essay, Disraeli takes exception to utility as the paramount value because he believes it interprets "the greatest happiness" in starkly material and formulaic terms. The real inadequacy of utilitarian thought, he claimed, is that it conceives of humankind as fundamentally tyrannical and violently selfish. A limiting construction, utilitarianism ignores a multitude of more positive possibilities for human motives.

For Leavis, utilitarian philosophy began a century-long assault on a moral or humane tradition; it ignited a shift toward scientific approaches to social thought that he maintained had led to the “social and cultural disintegration that has accompanied the development of the inhumanely complex machinery” characteristic of his version of modern society.<sup>11</sup> The university, in his view, could succeed against utilitarianism if it remained based in a “cultural tradition” similar to the one Arnold advocated. Culture according to Leavis “is a directing force, representing a wisdom older than modern civilization,” a wisdom with the “authority” to “check and control the blind drive onward of material and mechanical development, with its human consequences.”<sup>12</sup> The “blind drive onward” of utilitarian thought could only be counteracted if education ensured the continuation of culture’s vaulted tradition. Even if utility were to creep into the university in ways Leavis believed to be detrimental to society, he remained confident that, because of the strength of its humanist tradition, the university would prevail and successfully transmit culture for generations to come.

In this dissertation, however, I argue that writers across the era associated with modernism questioned the transmissibility of culture. In particular, they resisted the institutional forms of cultural transmission and preservation supported by Arnold and Leavis. Oxford and Cambridge, ancient institutions themselves, were vital to Arnold and Leavis because they protected important traditions from the past. Modernism’s characteristic break with literary and cultural tradition, however, stemmed from a belief

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<sup>11</sup> F.R. Leavis, *Education and the University*, 23.  
See also Leavis’s introduction to his *Mill on Bentham and Coleridge* (1950).

<sup>12</sup> Leavis, *Education and the University*, 16.

in the impossibility and undesirability of replicating that past. In “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1921), T.S. Eliot attends to the emergent tension in modernism’s approach to culture. If culture is based on a tradition of learning and art that spans centuries, he asks, then to what degree is modernist innovation actually completely new? Eliot considers especially the particular cultural tradition, or “handing down,” outlined by Arnold—a long-standing intellectual and artistic heritage. In order to, as Ezra Pound put it, “make it new,” Eliot “challenged tradition and attempted to reconstruct it out of the contributions of the individual talent.”<sup>13</sup> The high modernism that Eliot represents, in other words, needed a culture to set modernism against; modernist writers could not pull away altogether from the traditions of their intellectual past, since one must receive culture in order to know how to manipulate and change it. Modernist writers could, however, refigure these traditions in innovative and fragmented ways, which Eliot does in his landmark poem, *The Waste Land* (1922). The poem’s “heap of broken images” imaginatively pieces together the “cunning passages” and “contrived corridors” of history Eliot considered earlier in *Gerontion* (1920).<sup>14</sup>

History and tradition in *The Waste Land* are notoriously complicated matters. As Michael Levenson argues, Eliot’s engagement with history is not some “consistent or continuous” inheritance; rather, the poem constructs a history “whose unity can be no more assumed than the unity of personality. The poem expands its historical view and just when it seems to have established a coherent temporal standpoint, it expands

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<sup>13</sup> Malcolm Bradbury, *The Modern British Novel* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), xv.

<sup>14</sup> T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (New York & London: Penguin Books, 1998), 32; 55..

again.”<sup>15</sup> An unstable “temporal standpoint” indicates Eliot’s ground-breaking engagement with tradition and history more generally, but it also, I suggest, has implications for conceptions of culture as transmissible—as a tradition from the past being preserved as it is brought into the present and handed down to the future. To rethink one’s engagement with a cultural past is also to consider how this past can be passed on. In this project, I revise Eliot’s question from “Tradition and the Individual Talent” in terms of a tension between culture and specifically the institutions that had historically been tasked with transmitting it: what does the modernist drive for innovation mean for the university that preserved and propagated an old tradition of culture? Culture for the modernists relied upon the well-trained elite brought up in the halls of Oxford or Cambridge, but it simultaneously rejected the idea that culture could be transmitted as the particular knowledge or values that had been long associated with the university.<sup>16</sup> At stake in my argument is the possibility of institutional cultural transmission, as modernists begin to doubt whether the experience of education accurately reflects a transmissible culture at all.

I suggest that modernist-era writers articulate the difficulty in transmitting culture by turning to unforgiving depictions of the figure historically tasked with cultural preservation: the mentor. Encouraging personal achievement through the affirmation of particular cultural values and traditions, mentors effectively represent the culture they are

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<sup>15</sup> Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A study of English literary doctrine 1908-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 199; 204.

<sup>16</sup> For overviews of the complicated relationship between modernism and its longer literary tradition, see Harold Bloom’s *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) (a fairly direct refutation of Eliot), Malcolm Bradbury’s *The Modern British Novel* (1993), Michael Levenson’s *A Genealogy of Modernism* (1984), and Perry Meisel’s *The Myth of the Modern* (1987).

intended to pass on. The incremental failure of fictional mentorship across the period I describe thus indicates modernist-era writers' sense of a culture that can no longer be sustained or transmitted. In the novels I discuss in the following chapters—Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895), E.M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910), Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961)—mentorship is figured in a negative way, either as a stumbling block to the attainment of culture or as rendering culture inaccessible to those who seek it. In particular, these authors associate failed mentorship with the institutions of education charged with the task of cultural transmission. Through depictions of failed mentorship, they express a growing fear that culture and education have become progressively distinct. Despite so many of its Bloomsbury group constituents having come through the Cambridge corridors, English modernism had difficulty locating in those halls a usable model for the continued transmission of culture. Celebrations of Oxford and Cambridge in Hardy's and Forster's novels are celebrations of a memory, of a treasured past as Arnold may have had it, but they are not the future Leavis envisioned. Rather than use the university to pit culture against utilitarianism in the ways that Arnold and Leavis did, modernist-era writers question whether culture can remain an institutionally transmissible entity at all. Essentially, institutional education cannot offer a viable mentorship in which culture as those writers understood it remained the subject of meaningful and sustained transmission.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Because this project considers education reform that occurred on the outer edges of the period associated with modernism, I use the more expansive terms “age of modernism” and “modernist era.” Further, while Hardy and Forster are not canonical high modernists, I situate them in relation to the high modernist concern for cultural preservation—a concern I examine from the perspective of specifically culture's

My argument speaks to two particular trends in current modernist criticism. Firstly, I consider studies of how the propagation of culture became necessary for modernist writers wanting to project an image of cultivated taste. Lois Cucullu, Melba Cuddy-Keane, and Sean Latham, for example, conduct scholarly inquiries of “matters of production, dissemination, and reception” of both high art and popular forms of culture across the period.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, modernist studies in the past two decades has begun to read further into the institutional and cultural contexts of the period. These contexts have been particularly well explained by Lawrence Rainey, Michael Levenson, and Michael North, who have argued that the modernist involvement in the production of high art could not be completely separate from simultaneous developments in mass culture.<sup>19</sup> While these studies illustrate well how the modernist preoccupation with high culture was enmeshed in other concerns of the period, none consider at length the role of institutions of education. In finally considering the role of institutional higher education in modernism, I ask especially how these institutions offer a yet unstudied narrative of the problems modernist-era writers had with the dissemination of culture; the problems of cultural

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transmissibility. By looking more carefully into the politics of education reform taking place contemporary to modernism, Hardy and Foster help to illustrate the particular problem of cultural transmission Eliot alludes to in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” and addresses explicitly in *Notes towards a Definition of Culture*. Spark, although an early postmodernist, is an appropriate ending point for a project about modernism because she refigures the modernist question about cultural transmission in light of increased anxiety over cultural transmission after World War II.

<sup>18</sup> Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz “The New Modernist Studies,” *PMLA* 123.3 (2008): 738. For other work addressing the production and dissemination of culture, see Lois Cucullu’s *Expert Modernists, Matricide, and Modern Culture* (2004) and Melba Cuddy-Keane’s *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and The Public Sphere* (2003).

<sup>19</sup> See Michael Levenson’s *A Genealogy of Modernism: A study of English literary doctrine 1908-1922* (1984); Lawrence Rainey’s *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (1998); and Michael North’s *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern* (1999).

transmission were manifested in the educational advancements thought to be inimical to cultural preservation.

My particular concern is with how cultural transmission in the age of modernism came to be influenced by matters of educational policy. While Victorian studies has long considered the impact of education reform on the development of the Victorian novel, modernist studies lacks a comparable perspective.<sup>20</sup> By focusing on mentorship and institutions of education, I hope to add to the recent critical discussions of the cultural institutions involved in the production of literary modernism to include the important legislative changes made to education during the period. The policy changes and educational debates that took place in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth affected class accessibility to education, contributed to the credentializing function of schooling, and resulted in a significant increase in the amount and variety of universities. Education reform radically changed who attended schools and universities, and what they learned while there. For the modernists, this refigured the content of what these institutions of education were passing on as something separate from culture. The novelists I study here further conclude that if the university, at one point a cultural touchstone, can no longer transmit culture, it is because has ceased to be a transmissible entity. Mentorship is the appropriate framework for this type of study because mentors are part of a longer tradition of cultural preservation and propagation; where mentorship breaks down, so do the cultural values that the mentor had preserved.

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<sup>20</sup> See Richard Altick's *Victorian People and Ideas: A Companion for the Modern Reader of Victorian Literature* (1973) and *The Presence of the Present: Topics of the Day in the Victorian Novel* (1991), Herbert Tucker's *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture* (1999), Dinah Birch's *Our Victorian Education* (2008), and Alan Rauch's *Useful Knowledge: The Victorians, Morality, and the March of Intellect* (2001).

I argue that the modernist-era interest in culture reached beyond “culture” qua high art and extended into the vibrant social debates about education that were occurring in the period. Where Arnold and Leavis responded to utilitarianism’s dismissal of culture’s value by reaffirming the value and transmissibility of culture, however, modernist-era texts express a more deep-seated anxiety over culture’s fate. Their response is to remove culture from institutional forms of education altogether, calling into question whether culture could ever be properly handed down. The historical period I consider begins with the 1870 Forster Education Act, arguably the single most important piece of education legislation in Britain. The Act mandated education for all of Britain’s children of ages five through twelve within their home districts and under the oversight of Inspectors and School Boards. My study follows British educational reform through to the nationalization of education in the immediately postwar period, the early years of Britain’s modern welfare state. My intent is to move the narrative of education out of the confines of the nineteenth century and into current critical discussions of the cultural institutions that shaped modernism. In doing so, I hope to add another layer of definition to culture as the modernists may have considered it. When contextualized in its long-established affiliation with the university, culture refers to more than simply the artifacts of high art or intellectualism and includes a particular tradition that was conceived of in terms of transmissibility. Investigating the contemporary debates the changes to education elicited offers a new way of looking at the difficulty the writers of the period confronted in conceiving of culture as a valuable entity that, as my epigraph from Forster implies, can be “handed” on.



## I. Education Reform and the Victorian Novel

Before I demonstrate how these writers considered education reform in their identification of a breakdown in cultural transmission at the university, I offer by way of prologue an outline of the most significant efforts at education reform that took place in the nineteenth century. Education became an area of particular concern in the nineteenth century given the rapid social changes attendant on the industrial revolution.<sup>21</sup> Innovative forms of technology in the previous century made possible diverse types of labor, which opened up paths for economic advancement and social mobility. Newly available wealth helped establish a rising middle class, while increased scrutiny of industrial work also began to expose the vast injustices and abysmal conditions of an underprivileged working class. Although it would not be the subject of far-reaching legislation until 1870, education reform was precipitated by this social upheaval and consequential calls for reform. The Reform Act of 1832 responded to a newly industrialized Britain's early attempts to recognize the middle class and to provide more representation for the poor and working classes.<sup>22</sup> Even if education was not part of the language of the actual 1832 Reform Bill, the Act's passage reflected a growing insistence upon legislative change that would increase governmental representation of the middle and lower classes, an insistence on equality that would further develop into the eventual education mandates.

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<sup>21</sup> See R.E. Pritchard's *Dickens's England: Life in Victorian Times* (2003), Richard Altick's *Victorian People and Ideas* (1973) and *The English Common Reader* (1957), and Catherine Gallagher's *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction* (1985).

<sup>22</sup> Most notably, the Reform Act of 1832 changed the electoral system and more than doubled the number of individuals granted the right to vote. While the bill may not have been particularly effective in granting additional rights to the working class, it is considered a landmark event in terms of advancing democracy in Britain (Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 85-9).

Continuing the reforms put in place by the 1832 Reform Bill, the 1867 Representation of the People Act, which Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli famously called the “leap into the dark,” nearly “doubled the number of parliamentary voters, and in particular gave the vote to great numbers of working-class men in the large towns.”<sup>23</sup> The Act’s passage indicated a particularly striking shift—hence Disraeli’s dramatic phrase— in the power granted to the working class, and intensified conversations regarding the accessibility of education. H.C. Dent uses the example of Robert Lowe of the Conservative Party, who “had fought the Bill furiously from first to last,” to illustrate the bill’s implications for education reform:

In a memorable speech, which in quotation is usually telescoped into five words, ‘We must educate our masters’, he [Lowe] said: It appears to me that before we had intrusted the masses—the great bulk of whom are uneducated—with the whole power of this country we should have taught them a little more how to use it, and not having done so, this rash and abrupt measure having been forced upon them, *the only thing we can do is as far as possible to remedy the evil by the most universal measures of education that can be devised. I believe it will be absolutely necessary that you should prevail on our future masters to learn their letters... From the moment that you intrust the masses with power their education becomes an absolute necessity.*<sup>24</sup>

Lowe’s speech implies that with the enfranchisement of the middle and working classes came the obligation to educate them so that they might make informed choices.<sup>25</sup> All classes should have at least some access to education so that all citizens could learn to act

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<sup>23</sup> H.C. Dent *1870-1970: Century of Growth in English Education* (London: Longman, 1970), 3.

<sup>24</sup> Dent, *Century of Growth*, 3-4 (Dent’s emphasis).

<sup>25</sup> See Pritchard, *Dickens’s England* pages 77-114 and 144-179 and Altick’s *Victorian People and Ideas* pages 73-113. For a comprehensive view of the many different reforms undertaken in the Victorian period, see Asa Briggs’s *The Age of Improvement* (1960).

responsibly. If education fosters social responsibility, then educational reform must accompany any increase in rights for the working class.

What education for the lower classes might look like, however, was not clear. England lacked a nationalized system of education that would see to the widespread and standardized education of the country's youth: "The early part of the century," R.E. Pritchard suggests, "showed little of an educational system: a few 'public' schools, dame schools, a scattering of private, voluntary schools and governesses."<sup>26</sup> Up until the 1870 Forster Education Act, education had been largely haphazard and inconsistent; formal schooling was unregulated and not widely available. Lowe's claim in his 1867 speech that "future masters" needed "to learn their letters" was not wholly an oversimplification, as even basic literacy was scarcely attainable to the lower classes. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the working class had an appallingly low literacy rate of approximately 33%; even the general population had a literacy rate "scarcely higher than in the Elizabethan period."<sup>27</sup> In 1851 "fewer than half the school-age children attended school."<sup>28</sup> Lowe's call for universal education would require significant reform to the country's educational infrastructure, since access to education had been widely restricted for so long.

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<sup>26</sup>R.E. Pritchard (ed.), *Dickens's England: Life in Victorian Times* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), 77.

<sup>27</sup> David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture : 1750-1914* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 12.  
Richard Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas: a companion for the modern reader of Victorian literature* (New York: Norton, 1973), 30.

<sup>28</sup> Pritchard, *Dickens's England*, 77.

How to go about systemizing education was an exceptionally complicated matter given the varying needs of a diverse population. Considering the different career paths made possible by the industrial revolution, there was no single curriculum that could provide universally relevant training. Gregory Castle suggests that education reform was considered as part of the larger issue of social reform that came about after the industrial revolution: “The creation of new routes for social mobility necessitated a change in the function and nature of education, insofar as new job opportunities required new modes of training or former credentials.”<sup>29</sup> There came to be new forms of instruction, with state-sponsored education expanding to include “modes of modern apprenticeship, certification, and on-the-job training that accompanied many occupations, especially those involving skilled office work and general literacy.”<sup>30</sup> Expounding further on the development of new types of education accessible to the working class, David Vincent writes that “informal mechanisms of training and recruitment were gradually being challenged by more structured, meritocratic, and bureaucratically mediated routes into the labour market.”<sup>31</sup> These developments in education speak especially to the utilitarian movement, which asked for educational programs to include specifically technical and scientific curricula. Interpreting Lowe’s call for social responsibility in terms of economic success, utilitarian thinkers argued that such programs would teach practical skill and result in economic gain.

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<sup>29</sup> Gregory Castle, *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida: 2006), 54.

<sup>30</sup> Castle, *The Modernist Bildungsroman*, 54.

<sup>31</sup> Andrew Miles and David Vincent, “The Past and Future of Working Lives,” in *Building European Society: Occupational Change and Social Mobility in Europe, 1840-1940*, eds. Andrew Miles and David Vincent (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), 13.

The changing scope of education indicates a corresponding change in perceptions of the value of a more traditional “gentleman’s education”; utilitarian reforms uprooted preconceived notions of education previously tied to the upper class. The aristocracy and gentry had access to public schools, which provided “training in the classics and in gentlemanly manners and principles.”<sup>32</sup> From roughly the eighteen forties, more and more young men from the professional and business classes became potential candidates for such an education, seemingly on the principle that a gentleman’s education could turn them into gentlemen, or at least provide a gentleman’s income.<sup>33</sup> Rather than providing purely economic gain, this education was intended to, as John Ruskin maintained, create a refined, honorable, and ordered society: “There is only one cure for public distress—and that is public education, directed to make men thoughtful, merciful, and just.”<sup>34</sup> The gentleman’s education, anchored in a liberal, humane tradition, offered another way of promoting social responsibility. Ruskin believed that education should have lasting ethical, social, and political implications; it should provide a sensibility, a moral backbone that supports the interworking of all society’s limbs.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Pritchard, *Dickens’s England*, 77.

<sup>33</sup> Pritchard, *Dickens’s England*, 77.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, ed. Deborah Nord (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2002), 61.

<sup>35</sup> The Victorian debates over education are an extension of those begun in the century before. Among the most notable early contributors to the debate are Richard Edgeworth, most famous as an inventor, and his daughter, novelist and writer Maria Edgeworth, who, in *Practical Education* (1798), draws from social philosophers such as Locke and Rousseau, as well as more specialized writers of education such as Joseph Priestly and William Godwin. As we move closer to the mid-nineteenth century, the discussion is furthered by Lord Henry Brougham, a politician, who would advocate education reform based on his belief that scientific and difficult literature should be adapted for a rapidly expanding literate group, and social theorist Harriet Martineau, who in *Household Education* in 1848, applies to education her sociological insights about freedom and rationality.

Both utilitarian reformers and proponents of a traditional curriculum agreed that cross-class education was a burgeoning necessity. The debates leading up to and following from the Forster Education Act stemmed from disagreements over what the content of education should include and who should have access to certain types of education.<sup>36</sup> Those same debates play out in the Victorian novels of education, which clarify the stakes of Victorian educational reform, putting their characters in often untenable situations that highlight both the pressing need for reform and the potential complications of change. Access to education is a central issue for many of these novels; social inequality prompts further consideration of who should receive an education of culture. My argument that modernist-era writers found education to be illustrative of the of the impossibility of cultural transmission is an extension of the Victorian novelists' examinations of whether cultural transmission should occur across class lines. The modernist complication to the Victorian question of "who should have culture" is the additional question, "is culture something that can be given?"

George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) is an especially notable example of how the English novel critically examined different approaches to middle class education,

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<sup>36</sup>In addition to providing increased educational opportunities to the poor, reformers also often proposed that women should receive education, as well. A woman's education in the first half of the nineteenth century, to the extent that it existed, was superficial and disjointed, subject to the whim of private governesses and unregulated boarding schools. In *Sesame and Lilies* (1865) Ruskin outlines his plan for educating both boys and girls. He believes their education should be distinct from one another in order to reflect men and women's different social roles: a man's command of education should be "foundational and progressive," while a woman's should be "general and accomplished for daily and helpful use." While Ruskin did not advocate a traditional "gentleman's education" for young girls, he hoped to spread to them what he saw to be the essence of that tradition, asking educators to "appeal to the same grand instincts of virtue in them [girls]; teach *them*, also, that courage and truth are the pillars of their being" (Ruskin 61). For different perspectives on the education of boys and girls, see William Henry Hadow's report, "Differentiation of the Curriculum for Boys and Girls" (1923) and George Eliot's essays "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" and "How we Encourage Research."

particularly the contrast between utilitarian and traditional curricula. When Mr. Tulliver proclaims “What I want, you know... what I want, is to give Tom a good eddication: an eddication as’ll be a bread to him,” he means he wants to give his son the opportunities he himself had not been afforded in his youth.<sup>37</sup> Representative of the burgeoning middle class, Mr. Tulliver is situated in a moment that had no precedent, no clear educational path for training Tom for a life of business. Mr. Tulliver knows his son needs education in order to advance to a life of business, but he does not know what that education should entail: “Education was almost entirely a matter of luck—usually of ill-luck—in those distant days,” Eliot reminds her readers, “The state of mind in which you take a billiard-cue or a dice-box in your hand is one of sober certainty compared with that of old-fashioned fathers, like Mr Tulliver, when they selected a school or a tutor for their sons” (176). Mr. Tulliver’s confusion about what an appropriate education looks like is put into a more directly political context a few years later in Eliot’s *Felix Holt, the Radical* (1866), which, like *The Mill on the Floss*, takes place around the Reform Act of 1832. *Felix Holt* engages much more forcefully with overtly political themes, as Eliot asks for a kind of civic accountability in the wake of social reform. As workers are bribed for their votes and political rallies result in physical violence, she asks if there might be types of knowledge that are dangerous for the working class to have if they are not fully and properly—according to her definition—educated. Novels such as Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South* (1855) and Charles Kingsley’s *Alton Locke* (1850) also explore the social injustices suffered by the working classes, confronting the question of what forms of knowledge could bring them real benefit.

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<sup>37</sup>George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), 11. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

These novels illustrate Lowe's point that new access to education would invite increasing questions about how to use that education responsibly. Part of that responsibility included a consideration of which types of education would be best suited to the middle and lower classes. The most obvious conflict in *The Mill on the Floss* is between education as a humane pursuit and as a utilitarian program. Tom's existing knowledge is useful and sensible: "He knew all about worms and fish and those things; and what birds were mischievous and how padlocks opened, and which way the handles of the gates were to be lifted" (43). But the novel's young protagonist, the spirited and impetuous Maggie Tulliver, searches for a knowledge different in kind from that of her brother: she demonstrates a markedly different intellectual capacity that is founded on curiosity and creativity, "remembering what was in the books" and comparing the injustices of her own daily life to the rich, imaginative world offered in literature (43). This contrast in learning styles is echoed in Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*, which criticizes utility taken too seriously. Dickens highlights the pressures of a fully utilitarian lifestyle, as the harsh and overly pragmatic Thomas Gradgrind sees his daughter, Louisa, suffer as she learns the limits of such dry factuality. Sissy Jupe's free spirit, on the other hand, compensates for her lack of academic success. Culture in these novels is contrasted starkly to the terms of a utilitarian program. Eliot, Dickens, Kingsley, and Gaskell all continue to support culture, advocating an educational program that teaches the values that inspire their own literary craft.

When it appears in these novels, mentorship generally affirms the value of culture, often indicating the shortcomings of overly rigid approaches to utility. Sissy Jupe, for example, becomes a positive mentor to the Gradgrind children, while Mr.



McChoakumchild is a detrimental one, a caricature of utilitarianism at the cost of creativity. Eleanor in *Alton Locke* tutors the poor tailor in theology, eventually encouraging Locke to become a poet, so he can “help to infuse some new blood into the aged veins of English literature” and “bring home fresh conceptions of beauty, fresh spiritual and physical laws.”<sup>38</sup> In *The Mill on the Floss*, however, mentorship is an elusive and conflicted resource. Maggie feels stifled, held back from the opportunity to learn because she is unable to find a mentor, while Tom is forced into Mr. Stelling’s mentorship, which he does not want. Stelling’s Oxbridge degree may be useful, according to Eliot, but it may not be useful for everybody. Eliot’s portrayal of Maggie and Tom’s conflicting experiences of mentorship encourages the reader to consider that there may be different curricula appropriate for different students. Tom’s “worms and fish” calls for discussion about whether education should be overtly useful to someone like him, or more traditional, as in the liberal or humane practice of culture better suited to Maggie’s intellectualism and curiosity.

Through her depiction of conflicts in mentorship, Eliot questions whether the newly educated are being transmitted an education appropriate to their needs. She uses mentorship to depict the particular frustrations in acquiring a meaningful education, but she also finds no resolution to the problem of mentorship she outlines. Mr. Stelling’s attempts to mentor Tom prove futile and Philip Wakem’s mentorship of Maggie does not actually bring her any lasting benefit. Philip’s mentorship offers Maggie very little; the

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<sup>38</sup> Charles Kingsley, *Alton Locke* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 384. See Alan Rauch’s reading of the novel in *Useful Knowledge: The Victorians, Morality, and the March of Intellect* (2001).

natural conclusion to their relationship is his marriage proposal. Like Rachel Vinrace in Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out*, Maggie dies before her mentor could become her husband, indicating that marriage is not really a viable solution to a wider problem of access to education. While Woolf, I will argue, revisits mentorship in more complicated ways in her later novels, Eliot cuts off any sustained examination of mentorship as soon as Maggie drowns. Still, her treatment of mentorship in *The Mill on the Floss* grants an expansive view of culture that highlights its attempts as a program of social welfare. Mentorship in the novel is not aimed at validating the worth of Mr. Stelling's Oxford culture as much as it represents the enormous difficulty of making such culture benefit everyone. In my next section, I elaborate on a specific conception of Oxford and Cambridge culture as having precisely such value. In my examination of how mentorship fails in twentieth-century fiction, I argue that these later authors are able to denounce mentorship more radically than Eliot does because they resist more forcefully this particular notion of culture as a larger social curriculum.

## **II. Education as Culture: the Gentleman's Education and the University**

In a practical sense, education in the nineteenth-century English novel is clearly wrapped up with Victorian debates about class. Many of these novels ask how the state should systematize education so that more may receive it. As reformers called for increasing and systematized access to education among all classes, there remained those who wanted to preserve education's relationship to the cultivation of what might be called upper class sensibilities. According to these arguments, even though an education

based on culture had typically prepared a student only for a life of leisure or purely intellectual pursuit, this education could be made suitable for people of a wider range of class backgrounds. One of the most vocal proponents of such an education was Arnold, whose writings went on to inspire an entire century of critics committed to what Chris Baldick calls “the social mission of English criticism.” In tracing the foundation of English studies in its modern institutional aspect, Baldick drawn a line from Arnold to Leavis; he explores the development of literary criticism as “practical criticism” in that it “seeks a real practical effect upon society, directly or indirectly.”<sup>39</sup> Arnold was as much concerned with the creation of a healthy society as the reform and utilitarian movements had been. Just as such movements responded to class disparity, Arnold’s arguments in favor of culture were rooted in his own formulas regarding class. When he “recommend[ed] culture as the great help out of our present difficulties,” he intended culture to unite a society divided among the “Barbarians” (upper classes), “Philistines” (middle classes), and “Populace” (working classes).<sup>40</sup> The cultural program he proposed was centered on the humane learning associated with the academy—a learning that he did not feel needed to be made immediately accessible to all in order to bring benefit.

In his introduction to Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy*, Ian Gregor paraphrases Arnold’s point as “In Victorian England, we have a society in which the aristocracy is no

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<sup>39</sup> Chris Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism*, 4.

Baldick also notes that Arnold himself was opposed to the term “practical criticism,” associating it with the overly mechanical or short-sighted engagement with only economic concerns. “As part of his withdrawal from the sphere of practice, it is to be noted that the term ‘practical criticism’ appears in Arnold’s writing as a description of the worst kind of criticism, an interested criticism tied to one or another class or political faction in society” (23).

<sup>40</sup>Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 5.

longer in effective control of a nation destined to be ruled by the populace, a nation which has been checked in its true development by the selfishness and commercialism of a complacent middle class.”<sup>41</sup> So in *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold proposes a resurgence of upper class values even though the tradition the upper class enjoyed had lost its former dominance. The “aristocratic class,” as Arnold called it, had a “well-known politeness, a kind of image or shadow of sweetness.”<sup>42</sup> As part of its decline, the aristocratic class had been “lured off from following light by those mighty and eternal seducers of our race which weave for this class their most irresistible charms—by worldly splendour, security, power, and pleasure.”<sup>43</sup> Even if members of the aristocratic class use their wealth to procure items of luxury, Arnold maintains that at one time they were able to use their class position to further their interest in beauty and intellect. It is that lifestyle—one in which free time was devoted to learning and the appreciation of art—that Arnold wishes to revive.

He believes, however, that these aristocratic values, with proper training, can emerge from members of any class. These “aliens” will pass on to others only the best of what the aristocratic class has to offer.<sup>44</sup> Culture can potentially belong to anyone, and, in turn, support a society in which all classes exist in harmony. The aristocratic class (albeit of his own construction) offers a useful model for all society since the type of knowledge

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<sup>41</sup> Ian Gregor, introduction to *Culture and Anarchy*, by Matthew Arnold (Indianapolis & New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1971), (xvii).

<sup>42</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 84.

<sup>43</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 84.

<sup>44</sup> “Aliens” is Arnold’s term for the intellectuals who can be born from any class, who together will form the “cultured” state.

it has is oriented not toward—as Arnold would have it— the fleeting and short-sighted motives of utilitarian reform, but toward a long and rich English history that Arnold thinks can mediate present social unrest. Arnold locates in utilitarianism an economic motive that subverts a nobler social mission: “In his school reports and in the public debates about state funding of education [Arnold] deplored the Gradgrindery of crammed instruction and the Liberals’ short-sighted educational policy of ‘payment by results’.”<sup>45</sup> Even (or perhaps especially) in the absence of a ruling aristocracy, Arnold proposed a concerted effort to continue to disseminate the particular aristocratic values that could reassert virtue, or the “shadow of sweetness,” and work against what he saw as an alarming educational trend that he believed would result in the social unrest he termed “anarchy,” the danger of “doing as one likes.”

Arnold maintained that the kinds of knowledge to which the aristocratic class had previously received exclusive access could actually serve a social mission of universal benefit. His goal is social harmony and class transcendence, a “quest for a principle of authority in a democratic society” that “[brings] into one harmonious and truly humane life... the whole body of English society.”<sup>46</sup> Arnold’s ubiquitous “sweetness and light” may seem to be at first blush a “disengagement from practical politics,” but they are actually long-range planning tools: “He intends to have an effect upon the world, but an effect that is necessarily delayed by its detour through history.”<sup>47</sup> Arnold’s formula is a sustained theory of social reform meant to change the future for all classes by advocating

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<sup>45</sup> Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism*, 34.

<sup>46</sup> Gregor, introduction to *Culture and Anarchy*, xiv.

<sup>47</sup> Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism*, 23.

the sustained cultivation of a particular history of humane thought that had hitherto been characteristic of or accessible to only one class.

For Arnold, culture had two defining characteristics: first, even though it had the ability to reform future society for all, it uniquely and historically belonged to members of the aristocratic class who had access to generations of criticism and philosophy so as to inform their own understanding of the world; and, second, it was a dynamic process that relied on an active engagement with one's own present and past. Arnold maintained that the process of culture could bring people out of their class, making their distinguishing characteristic humanity. Culture could "make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere"; it removed the bounds of class by bringing "sweetness and light" to all.<sup>48</sup> Arnold's argument about culture culminated in his claim that education should be tasked with disseminating culture. For all his memorable poetry and criticism, Arnold focused much of his work on education as an institution: in 1851 he became part of an inspectorate that was part of a highly controversial government department that looked at the connections among Government, Church, and "Dissent over the minds of the rising generations."<sup>49</sup> In 1875, he told the Royal Academy, "My life is not that of a man of letters but of an Inspector of Schools."<sup>50</sup> Indeed, education as an institution offers Arnold a useful metaphor for society as a whole. Dr. Arnold of Rugby, Matthew Arnold's father, famously viewed schools as microcosms of society, and, according to Baldick, his son "often seems to envisage society as a large

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<sup>48</sup> Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 5.

<sup>49</sup> Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism*, 33.

<sup>50</sup> Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism*, 33.

school in which the exemplary conduct of teachers and monitors is decisive.”<sup>51</sup> Arnold’s version of education, like his version of culture, relied on the knowledge of the few to be spread to the many. Education and culture both work through a system of thought-modeling, and serve the same function as the antidote to anarchy.

Thus Arnold conceived of education “as a civilizing agent rather than just a transfer of information.”<sup>52</sup> To that end, he proposed a model for education that went beyond simply reproducing information and actually transmitted it through mentorship. He encouraged personal role models capable of training other individuals to become their own “best selves.” In order to ensure the transmission of culture—a transmission necessary for social preservation—Arnold offered an education premised on the idea of formative training. If people could be brought into contact with good literary models, then there might emerge a newly trained corps of teachers who could be brought “into intellectual sympathy with the educated of the upper classes.”<sup>53</sup> Arnold was looking “for an example to lead the multitude now that priesthoods and aristocracies were losing their power,” and makes culture and education, at one point the intellectual capital of the aristocracy, stand in for the aristocracy itself.<sup>54</sup> In his attempt to transmit these values to the middle class, Arnold appealed to “their duty as the ‘natural educators’ of the eager

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<sup>51</sup> Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism*, 33.

Baldick quotes Arnold’s father’s argument about the need for a “mentoring” aristocracy: “It seems as if few stocks could be trusted to grow up properly without having a priesthood and an aristocracy to act as their schoolmasters at some time or other of their national existence” (33).

<sup>52</sup> Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism*, 34.

<sup>53</sup> Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism*, 34.

<sup>54</sup> Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism*, 34.

and irrepressible working masses,” even though he feared that the middle classes would likely not succeed in this endeavor. “The middle classes,” Baldick continues, “ must embrace state education, not just to assimilate the masses, but to cure their own lack of exemplary governing qualities, otherwise ‘a great opportunity is missed of fusing all the upper and middle classes into one powerful whole’.”<sup>55</sup> The harmony of that “whole” was Arnold’s main imperative; it was the primary task of culture.

Culture for Arnold moved away from the ordinary or the mechanical and toward transcendence of one’s limited class or other experience. Arnold was comfortable prescribing this system of culture with limited admission as an antidote to “anarchy” among all the classes because he felt confident that his select group could adequately disseminate this culture by modeling the appropriate behavior for those unable to get more direct access:

Therefore the true business of the friends of culture now is...to spread the belief in right reason and in a firm intelligible law of things, and to get men to try, in preference to staunchly acting with imperfect knowledge, to obtain some sounder basis of knowledge on which to act.<sup>56</sup>

Culture was not only something that one has, but a subject that could be taught; culture lent itself to his mentorship model since it was intended to be passed on through a combination of dutiful study and personal reflection. Furthering his argument that culture could be spread through education, Arnold labeled his cultured elite the “sovereign educators,” whose task was to work “decisively and certainly for the immediate future.”

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<sup>55</sup> Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism*, 34.  
Baldick refers especially here to Arnold’s *The Popular Education of France* (1861).

<sup>56</sup> Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 176.



This work required the development of their “best selves,” through which “we are united, impersonal, at harmony.”<sup>57</sup> Culture was an inward operation involving personal behavior rather than state regulation, encouraging one to live in harmony with the state: “Everyone of us has the idea of the country, as a sentiment; hardly anyone of us has the idea of *the State*, as a working power. And why? Because we habitually live in our ordinary selves, which do not carry us beyond the ideas and wishes of the class to which we happen to belong.”<sup>58</sup> Here Arnold asks for social responsibility and encourages people to move outside of their class and consider how to enact actual social change; mentorship was his version of legitimate social reform. His sovereign educators, then, operate in line with the traditional obligations of mentorship, intended to pass on an agreed-upon standard of values. As they promote the “best self,” the sovereign educators reproduce shared social and national values in those around them, encouraging other individuals to become their own “best self,” continuing the cycle of acculturation.

Culture for Arnold cannot be separated from the institution that fosters it; the university is a kind of hallowed ground for the cultivation of the mind that he believes, with the help of mentorship, can eventually cultivate the nation. The university was, as it would become later for Leavis, Arnold’s last and only hope. Because of its well-recognized association with the upper classes, the only ones granted access to the expense and unpaid leisure of Oxbridge, the university had a longtime association with the allegedly upper-class sensibilities that Arnold hoped to disseminate among the entire

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<sup>57</sup> Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 176.

<sup>58</sup> Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 176 -7.

population. Castle identifies the university during Arnold's time as relatively immune from the pragmatism coming to dominate schooling at lower levels: "intellectual discourse remained committed to the goals of humanistic education. This was true especially in the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge, which continued to offer a curriculum grounded in [transmitting] the humanist ideal... to a middle- and upper-class clientele."<sup>59</sup> Mill, too, would claim that the university "is not a place of professional education."<sup>60</sup> As it was for Leavis, the university was for Arnold the bastion of the tradition of humane learning, and so the only institution appropriate for transmitting the culture that he believed this tradition could promote.<sup>61</sup>

Writing a century later, Leavis reiterated Arnold's argument that Oxbridge not only promoted culture, but constituted it. Though criticized for his often overzealous defense of the moral value of English literature, Leavis believed in a version of culture that has endured for centuries. Leavis argued in *Education and the University* that specialization at universities overshadowed liberal education; he offered a model for a

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<sup>59</sup> Castle, *The Modernist Bildungsroman*, 55.

<sup>60</sup> John Stuart Mill, qtd. in W. Kenneth Richmond, *Education in Britain Since 1944: A Personal Retrospect* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1978), 115.

<sup>61</sup> Arnold's contemporary Cardinal John Henry Newman likewise charged the university with the task of cultural preservation, arguing in his *The Idea of a University* (1852) that knowledge is its own end, a valuable pursuit even if it does not satisfy more overtly pragmatic goals. While Newman's ultimate vision would require Church assistance, the fundamentals of his argument coordinate nicely with Arnold's belief that education and culture share a particular relationship when brought together in the university. The university, Newman maintains, "is a place of *teaching universal knowledge*," not the scientific advancement advocated in a utilitarian curriculum (Newman 3). To the extent that it has a function, it is that liberal education "brings the mind into form" (Arnold 7). As for Arnold, there is a real benefit in an institution that is a "seat of universal learning" because it brings together bright minds and academic debate. It fosters, Newman claims, an environment of "pure and clear" thought, "which the student also breathes," and that in turn "A habit of mind is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are, freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom" (Arnold 77).

“University English School” based on a liberal studies curriculum designed to bring together various disciplines. Leavis believed a university education had the potential to offer experiences that could not be matched elsewhere:

I assume that the attempt to establish a real liberal education in this country—to restore in relation to the modern world the idea of liberal education—is worth making because, in spite of all our talk about disintegration and decay, and in spite of what we feel with so much excuse in our many despondent moments, we still have a positive cultural tradition. Its persistence is such that we can, in attempting at an ancient university an experiment in liberal education, count on a sufficient measure of agreement, overt and implicit, about the essential values to make it unnecessary to discuss ultimate sanctions, or provide a philosophy, before starting to work.<sup>62</sup>

Here, Leavis explains that the assumption behind his entire argument is that liberal education restores a “positive cultural tradition,” and this tradition is still seen as valuable even in his own day. If the universities focus on what he calls the “cultural realm,” they can work against modern society’s “decay.” It seems significant that Leavis felt the need to defend the relationship between “positive cultural tradition” and the university in ways that Arnold did not feel necessary—likely because Arnold could take that relationship as a given.<sup>63</sup> His halting prose, replete with qualifying clauses, reveals that Leavis wanted to remind the reader that this relationship still exists. While the first few lines of the passage could almost belong to Arnold himself, Leavis’s “we *still* have” implies that he may have perceived the relationship between culture and the university to be increasingly

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<sup>62</sup> Leavis, *Education and the University* 18.

English literature, however, was not specifically part of the centuries-long tradition of education that Leavis celebrated; it did not become a subject of study at Oxford and Cambridge until the end of the nineteenth century.

<sup>63</sup> Lord Alfred North Whitehead offers in “The Aims of Education” an interesting formula that combines Arnoldian and utilitarian thought. His calls for specialization ask for a knowledge base built by general versions of culture, which is then accompanied by an education focused on utilization, or a specific skill. It is worth noting that Whitehead’s version of culture and education had religious overtones, as well, although his version of religion is hardly equivalent to Newman’s. Whitehead does make it clear, however, that his definitions of culture and education are indebted to the nineteenth century.

precarious as the twentieth century progressed. He even defends culture itself by supplementing “cultural tradition” with the term “positive,” a qualifier Arnold would not have needed, having assumed that culture is inherently good. Leavis felt that the specializations of the modern day curriculum threatened to unseat the university as a keeper of positive cultural traditions. For Arnold, the university and the “sovereign educator” worked in tandem, but as the university moves away from liberal education and culture, mentorship, I will show, characterizes an increasingly pervasive concern for the loss of cultural transmission Leavis so vocally feared.

### **III. The Social Uses of Mentorship: *Bildung* and *Habitus***

Greek in origin, “Mentor” appears in *The Odyssey* as the man into whose care Odysseus places his son, Telemakhos. Encouraging Telemakhos to search for his father, Mentor initiates the boy’s quest for “identity and adulthood,” as Thomas Simmons puts it. Mentor “identifies and nurtures the traits that most distinguish Telemakhos: ...faith in self, trust in the gods. Mentor draws Telemakhos further into his own Ithakan tradition by giving him a chance to prove himself.”<sup>64</sup> According to this foundational model, a mentor promotes personal, individual achievement while also encouraging awareness and acceptance of a set of shared social values. A mentor in this classical sense is a guide rather than an imitable subject; the mentor makes possible a journey in which the mentee comes into his own while also becoming the embodiment of a tradition. This process, Simmons clarifies, depends on active, livable experience as a means of transmitting

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<sup>64</sup>Thomas Simmons, *Erotic Reckonings: Mastery and Apprenticeship in the Work of Poets and Lovers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 4.

culture: “Mentor does not teach abstract values, or lecture about the gods... [He] invokes a cultural tradition that cannot be passed along in abstract or philosophical speculations. It must be achieved through living.”<sup>65</sup> Mentorship, according to its original principles, facilitates the acquisition and transmission of culture by joining the process of individual human maturation and experience with the continuation of shared cultural traditions and values. Through mentoring the individual, the mentor preserves key social principles and ideals.

Mentorship in these terms is not far removed from a literary tradition especially popular in the nineteenth century: the *Bildungsroman*, loosely translated as a novel of development. The *Bildungsroman* illustrates fully mentorship’s task of cultural preservation and transmission from the perspective of the mentee. As *Bildungsroman* protagonists become more conflicted across the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, they anticipate the more dramatic failings of mentorship that I highlight in the novels of Hardy, Forster, Woolf, and Spark. While its roots are in eighteenth-century Germany (Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* is considered the archetype of European *Bildungsroman*), the *Bildungsroman* was popular among the Victorians because it offered a model of social order or harmony through the establishment of a shared set of cultural values. Typically, a mentor would facilitate this process for the protagonist through what Castle calls “a mystical apprenticeship and induction.”<sup>66</sup> Similar to the primary task of the classical mentor, the *Bildungsroman* traces the development of a self that matures in

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<sup>65</sup> Simmons, *Erotic Reckonings*, 4.

<sup>66</sup> Castle, *The Modernist Bildungsroman*, 48.

the context of prescribed social norms.<sup>67</sup> In its most traditional form, *Bildungsroman* sees no conflict between *Bildung* and culture: *Bildung* translates to “education” or “training,” and through such education or training the protagonist finds resolution with the cultural values of his society.

This resolution is complicated, however, as the nineteenth century progresses. Franco Moretti’s influential *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (1987) argues that by the eighteen thirties, the self began to be brought into conflict with society in increasingly irresolvable ways.<sup>68</sup> Todd Kontje elaborates, “Youth acquired new significance during this period as individuals could no longer expect to mature into the stable world of their parents...the evolving protagonists of the new *Bildungsroman* do more than reflect the uncertainties of the age; they also help to shape

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<sup>67</sup> Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Lehrjahre* (1795-6), gained popularity following Carlyle’s 1824 English translation (see Todd Kontje’s *The German Bildungsroman: History of a National Genre* for more information about Goethe’s contribution to the form in Germany and England, and Martin Swales’s *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse* for an additional overview of the traditional *Bildungsroman*).

Wilhelm Dilthey, who coined the term “*Bildungsroman*” in 1870, claims that a leading characteristic of the form is the way it portrays the individual internalizing society: *Bildungsroman* maintains “the emphasis on the uniqueness of the protagonist and the primacy of his private life and thoughts” while considering “whose age and culture these inner thoughts reflect” (Castle 8). Similarly, Mikhail Bakhtin identifies the two characteristic features of the genre as the depiction of a character “in the process of becoming,” and that it is possible to trace historical change by tracing the development of the *Bildungsheld* (protagonist) (Kontje 111).

<sup>68</sup> Moretti argues that the ascendancy of the *Bildungsroman* was a response to sweeping historical changes in eighteenth-century Europe, and that Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* is one of the best representations of English *Bildungsroman*. According to Moretti, the “miracle, or mirage perhaps” of *Bildungsroman* is the “beautiful balance” it portrays “between the constraints of modern socialization, and its benefits” (vi). “Modern socialization” in these novels “is a *process*,” Moretti contends. This process first encourages “dynamic, youthful,” and “subjective” individualism, then later emphasizes that such individualism is mere “irresolute wandering” (59). As he undergoes that process, the individual learns to subject his individual desires to the will of society.

an understanding of the events that produced them and to which they respond.”<sup>69</sup> In novels such as Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss*, Dickens’s *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*, and Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, protagonists undergo the process of socialization only with great difficulty; this leads Moretti to claim that these novels critique particular social norms and values as oppressive or interfering with one’s individuality.<sup>70</sup> Moretti identifies the Industrial Revolution and Chartism as the specific political revolutions that shaped these novels and brought about the tensions between personal satisfaction and social imperatives one finds there. In light of such social upheaval, he believes, *Bildungsroman* protagonists could not locate a stable or desirable system of social values.

In response to those same political movements, however, Arnold only tried to reaffirm his belief that the self and society could be brought into harmony. Fearing a breakdown into violence or “anarchy” after the Hyde Park demonstrations of the eighteen sixties, Arnold turns to culture as restorative *Bildung*.<sup>71</sup> As Baldick notes, Arnold considered “culture” to be a translation of *Bildung*; the “sweetness and light” of Arnold’s

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<sup>69</sup> Kontje, *The German Bildungsroman*, 83.

<sup>70</sup> The protagonist of English *Bildungsroman* “is certainly not expected to establish a moral universe that already exists, eternal and unchangeable, and even less to question that universe. His most typical function lies rather in making that world *recognizable* for any and all readers” (Moretti 189). In other words, the nineteenth-century English *Bildungsroman* does not seek to establish the tenets of a moral code, but to demonstrate the difficulty a protagonist might have in achieving morality given particular social unrest.

<sup>71</sup>In *Culture and Society*, Raymond Williams is quick to point out the fallacy of Arnold’s assumptions of violence: “But now the Hyde Park railings were down, and it was not Arnold’s best self which rose at the sight of them. Certainly he feared a general breakdown, into violence and anarchy, but the most remarkable facts about the British working-class movement, since its origin in the Industrial Revolution, are its conscious and deliberate abstention from general violence, and its firm faith in other methods of advance” (125).

culture come from a specific education or training rooted in classical texts.<sup>72</sup> Arnold's culture included, as I have outlined, a liberal education, and he believed it could accomplish what *Bildung* could accomplish in the classical *Bildungsroman*: encourage individuals to work toward a peaceful and harmonious social State. Arnold's sovereign educators are, like traditional mentors, charged with the perpetuation of cultural values, only they transmit a specific version of culture. While the protagonist of the mid-nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman* lacks a clear sense of how to reconcile himself with possibly evolving cultural values, Arnold maintained that his specific program of culture fostered at Oxbridge was the only truly restorative version of *Bildung*.

In my argument that mentorship fails in the novels of the twentieth century, I identify a developing belief in the ultimate inadequacy of culture, specifically in the form of *Bildung* Arnold had envisioned. Moretti also examines a crisis in *Bildung*, arguing that the *Bildungsroman* as a form collapsed in the modernist age. Seeing that the tension between self and society reached a climax in the years leading up to World War I, Moretti identifies modernism's particular failure to conform to the demands of the traditional *Bildungsroman*.<sup>73</sup> He looks to the modernist difficulty with the *Bildungsroman* in order "to discover how this failure signals a successful resistance to the

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<sup>72</sup> Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism*, 33.

<sup>73</sup> Moretti uses James Joyce as representative of the modernist *Bildungsroman*. The "decentered subjectivity" and "more developed form of bourgeois identity" of Leopold Bloom, for example, "sets the pattern for twentieth-century socialization" (244). In his reading of *Portrait of the Artist*, Moretti argues that the novel's merit "lies in its being an unmistakable failure"; Joyce intentionally follows the discovery of Stephen Dedalus's artist's "soul" with a "strikingly blank and pointless" final chapter to illustrate the irresolvable conflict between "meaningless everyday" and "meaningful revelations" (241-3).



institutionalization of self-cultivation (*Bildung*).”<sup>74</sup> The modernist *Bildungsroman*, Castle finds, ultimately cannot get around a contradiction between *Bildung* in its traditional sense and the tenets of modernism: the type of self-cultivation *Bildung* requires relies on an acceptance of social parameters that modernists would resist in favor of a more radically asserted and experimental selfhood. Developing these arguments about the irresolvable conflict of *Bildung*, I show in the following chapters that the ready association between *Bildung* and cultural transmission also comes to an end. Self-development and education may still be possible in the twentieth century, but they can no longer occur in tandem with the acquisition of a socially agreed upon culture. This, in turn, complicates the preservation and propagation of culture.

The self-development and education that had once been part of *Bildung* are part of a larger and more complex system of value dictated by one’s social class and experience. In place of *Bildung*, I contend the novels I study more accurately align culture with Pierre Bourdieu’s “*habitus*.” Bourdieu’s *habitus* refers to “dispositions,” or the social values that have been passed on in a particular group.<sup>75</sup> Related more to social performance than personal feeling or behavior, *habitus* is a disposition, an attitude or preference shaped by exposure to the everyday experiences typical of one’s social group. *Habitus* addresses

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<sup>74</sup>Castle, *The Modernist Bildungsroman*, 1.

<sup>75</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 6.

Bourdieu calls *habitus* a “generative and unifying principle which retranslates the intrinsic and relational characteristics of a position into a unitary lifestyle, that is, a unitary set of choices of persons, goods, practices” (*Practical Reason* 8). In *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, he qualifies this “generative principle” as being “durably installed” and tasked with “regulat[ing] improvisations” and “produc[ing] practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle” (78).

one of the questions Bourdieu asks in his *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*: “how can behavior be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules?”<sup>76</sup> *Habitus* does not rely on obedience, but emphasizes the reconciliation of individual agency with social structure in ways that consider the interworking of one’s class, background, family and other diverse elements of what Bourdieu calls “social field.” The question I ask is how might one aspire to *Bildung* if doing so goes against the expectations of one’s social field? If *habitus* formulates the social self as helping shape the “inner” self, what happens if these two selves are brought into conflict? In particular, I ask how studying cultural transmission from the perspective of *habitus* makes impossible the type of cultural transmission Arnold envisioned as part of *Bildung*. *Habitus* requires a more careful consideration of class and experience than Arnold may have been willing to account for, and it opens the possibility that matters of class and educational policy impact the viability of a *Bildung* spread among all classes. The authors I study consider culture in the context of the whole of their protagonists’ life experiences, and this exposes the vulnerabilities of cultural transmission in an age replete with social conflict.

Mentorship is particularly appropriate to such a study since, as I have shown, it unites cultural transmission with the harmonizing of self and society. How can the mentor transmit culture if he cannot bring an individual into harmony with social values? If, as Moretti implies, shared cultural values are increasingly more difficult to establish in the

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<sup>76</sup> Karl Maton, “Habitus,” in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, ed. Michael Grenfell (Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2008), 50.

*Habitus* is more formally defined in Bourdieu’s *Reproduction, Outline of a Theory of Practice*, and *The Logic of Practice*.

modernist period, and, as Bourdieu implies, cultural values are largely determined by an evolving *habitus* that reflects class-based expectations, then the modern mentor and the modern mentee may be placed in an impossible position. Like Moretti and Bourdieu, I believe the conflicts of *Bildung* and *habitus* are expressed most clearly in institutions of education. Moretti senses the beginnings of this conflict in his analysis of the representations of schools in the late *Bildungsroman*: “school...teaches this and that, stressing the objective side of socialization—functional integration of individuals *in* the social system. But in doing so it neglects the subjective side of the process: the legitimation *of* the social system inside the mind of individuals, which had been a great achievement of the *Bildungsroman*.”<sup>77</sup> Values are replaced by coercion; students must learn facts but need not believe their truth. Schools, Moretti claims, depict a stifled individuality; the institution encourages social order without regard for the individual—an untenable imbalance in *Bildungsroman*.

Similarly, Bourdieu’s observations of the French school system in the 1930s led him to believe education was a “mechanism for consolidating social separation...The pedagogy and the curriculum were of a piece with this controlling ethos.”<sup>78</sup> While education had been intended as a means of achieving an inclusive society, Bourdieu instead found that it “imbibed a cognitive culture which procured him ‘distinction’, potentially elevating him above the process of mass democratization.”<sup>79</sup> Bourdieu felt that the effects of formal education are reproductive in that those who benefit from it the

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<sup>77</sup> Moretti, *The Way of the World*, 230.

<sup>78</sup> Derek Robbins, “Theory of Practice” in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, ed. Michael Grenfell (Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2008), 29.

<sup>79</sup> Robbins, “Theory of Practice, 29-30.

most are already in possession of economic advantage and social standing. Rather than promote solidarity, education encourages division. Bourdieu's observation identifies the ultimate failure of Arnold's vision for education and mentorship: Arnold depended on the transmission of culture through *Bildung*, with the assumption that differences in *habitus* would become irrelevant. In practice, though, as education reforms met middle class demand for expanded economic opportunities, culture became increasingly defined in the context of one's *habitus*, as social performance fitting to one's economic status. In the novels I examine, *Bildung* can be encouraged through mentorship, but *habitus* cannot. That mentorship fails for these protagonists, I argue, points to modernist-era authors' sense that culture could not be transmitted across classes in the ways that Arnold had imagined.

#### **IV. The Incremental Failure of the Modernist Mentor**

Even as they famously identified failures of institutional education, Victorian novels could typically still find the successful transmission of culture for their protagonists, especially with the help of a mentor. But in the later novels I analyze in this dissertation, mentors seem to subvert rather than promote both social harmony and individual advancement. Mentorship acts as an impediment to cultural transmission, rather than a facilitator. I suggest that these novels contextualize mentorship's inability to transmit culture in a meaningful way within a greater framework of institutional education. These novels do not point to the specific failures of educational institutions themselves, but to the very assumption that culture could be transmitted by any

institution. Each of the following chapters is aligned with a particular landmark moment in the history of education reform as I trace the incremental failures of mentorship in these novels to the incremental nationalization of education that took place in the first half of the twentieth century, culminating in the arrival of the British welfare state. This does not imply a relationship of direct causation, but demonstrates that both the nationalization of education and the modernist-era concern over the transmission of culture are symptoms of a widening gap between education and culture that these writers attempted to address.

The tenets of education reform highlight the particular challenges to cultural transmission that Hardy, Forster, Woolf, and Spark identify; culture's foundations in education mean that problems of cultural transmission cannot be far removed from evolutions of education's parameters. As education reform considered especially class-based differences in educational experiences, modernist-era writers could locate similar challenges to transmitting Arnold's celebrated Oxbridge culture, while also arguing more radically that cultural transmission is an increasing impossibility. Therefore, when speaking of the institutional and cultural contexts surrounding literary modernism, one should also consider education—especially the university.<sup>80</sup> A consideration of the

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<sup>80</sup>The university is occasionally considered in arguments about the relationship between modernism and postmodernism. In their introduction to *Bad Modernisms* (2006), Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz relay an anecdote from Susan Stanford Friedman to demonstrate how the university has tended to portray modernism: Friedman's first "sketch" is "that of the graduate student she was in 1965, for whom modernism 'was rebellion' modernism was 'make it new.' Modernism was resistance, rupture... Modernism was the antidote to the poison of tradition.' The second is that of her own students thirty years later. Who found their own antidote to tradition in postmodernism and for whom 'Modernism was elitism. Modernism was the Establishment. 'High Culture' lifting it skirts against the taint of the 'low,' the masses, the popular'" (6).

Lawrence Rainey, too, identifies in *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* the perception of the university as a site of the transmission of modernist values—a perception he believes to be flawed because it relies too much on the high and low culture dichotomy he overturns: "The current

university as I present it also allows us to consider a more nuanced version of what “culture” meant to modernist-era writers. Not only a term encapsulating the artifacts of high art and intellectualism, “culture” for these writers also referred to a particular tradition that had been defined by its very transmissibility in historical institutions. Even as they insisted on the preservation of art, these writers would question the institutions of its production as they endeavored to “make it new.”

I begin my analysis with Thomas Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure*, a novel published in 1895, twenty five years after the Forster Education Act. At this point, it had become obvious that the Act had been only marginally successful in creating opportunities for educational advancement among the lower classes. J.F.C. Harrison calls the Forster Act “wretchedly inadequate,” in part because it was incomplete.<sup>81</sup> The 1870 Act had made education compulsory only at the primary level, which resulted in rates of illiteracy dropping sharply, but prompted very little reform at the secondary school level.<sup>82</sup> As a result, while the government finally extended grants to university colleges (including technical schools) in 1889, “even the small number of students fluctuated up and down in a disconcerting way.”<sup>83</sup> By the 1890s, in other words, it had become apparent that the

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narrative around structures of modernism and postmodernism is flawed, and leads to arguments like those of Charles Newman” (3). Newman argued in *The Postmodern Aura* that in “the twentieth century... universities and other cultural institutions appropriated modernism’s formal repertory, canonized its works and artists, and sapped its political energies” (Rainey 3).

<sup>81</sup>J.F.C. Harrison, *A History of the Working Men’s College 1854-1954* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954), 147.

<sup>82</sup>Pritchard, *Dickens’s England*, 77. See also H.C. Dent’s *Century of Growth in English Education*, 42. Pritchard specifies that as a result of the Act, the illiteracy rate dropped from 31 per cent of males and 45 per cent of females, to 19 per cent and 26 per cent.

<sup>83</sup>H.C. Dent., *Century of Growth in English Education*, 42.

educational opportunities given to the country's youth had not sustained them all the way to the university.

Jude Fawley of *Jude the Obscure* seems to have taken to heart Ruskin's dicta about the benefits of educating the masses, but he suffers as a result of reform's shortcomings. Published two decades after the Act's passage, he is a symbol of its inability to enact any real change, especially with respect to university-level education. He dreams of attending Christminster, Hardy's version of Oxford, despite his humble origins. While the sweeping changes to education made in the latter half of the nineteenth century seemed poised to allow students like Jude further educational access, these were ultimately only surface reforms: "Opportunities for ambitious 'poor students' like Jude Fawley were not uncommon in the nineteenth century, though resistance to the 'overeducation' of the working classes defined the nature of education available to those classes."<sup>84</sup> As a result, education reform only increased lower-class access to education at the secondary and vocational levels, while "access to the ancient universities remained foreclosed."<sup>85</sup> Educational reform may have, in theory, encouraged personal growth, but only to the extent that it did not lead a student too far outside his class, and left Oxbridge as the ultimate and exclusive educational triumph.

In the aftermath of the 1870 Education Act and the realization in the early 1890s that the poor were still unable to advance to the universities, *Jude the Obscure* diagnoses

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The quote comes from Sir James Mountford, who had at one time served as a Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool, and later wrote a book on British universities.

<sup>84</sup> Castle, *The Modernist Bildungsroman*, 79.

<sup>85</sup> Castle, *The Modernist Bildungsroman*, 79.

a disparity, I believe, between two accounts of culture. On the one hand, culture is the Arnoldian ideal achievement of a “best self,” a process of humane development. On the other hand, culture refers to the acquisition of a particular type of education, namely an Oxbridge degree. The downfall of Hardy’s protagonist is that mentorship grants him access only to the first kind of culture; his lower-class status shuts him out of a class-stratified institutional reality. My reading of the novel is premised on Raymond Williams’s definitions of “culture” in *Keywords* and *Culture and Society*. He identifies two separate definitions of culture, one that is related to a process, “the tending of natural growth,” while the other refers to a specific acquisition: “But this later use, which had usually been a culture *of* something, was changed, in the nineteenth century, to *culture* as such, a thing in itself.”<sup>86</sup> Williams places this shift in the nineteenth century, and I suggest that this modification in meaning is the first step toward identifying culture as, to use Bourdieu’s term, cultural capital.

Education in the novel is used to depict defining moments in Jude’s development as his needs come into conflict with social expectation; education as a formalized system of knowledge fails to account for an institution that is inherently rife with inequalities and that often cannot provide knowledge even to those who seek it. Mentorship fails Jude at every turn, especially in the shape of his teacher, Phillotson. While Phillotson and even Sue Bridehead can help arm Jude with specific forms of knowledge, they cannot grant him access to the institution that would provide him with cultural capital. Mentorship, in fact, becomes harmful as it leaves Jude in a kind of cultural no-man’s-land: he lacks the

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<sup>86</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 16.



ability to find social acceptance anywhere and is left both impoverished and alienated. Because *Jude the Obscure* is often read as a precursor to the modernist novel, the failures of mentorship in the novel effectively lay the groundwork for the eventual denunciation of mentorship that I explore in later chapters.<sup>87</sup>

My second chapter, a reading of E.M. Forster's *Howards End*, also explores the ways in which access to culture is class bound. Despite their best efforts at mentoring the working-class Leonard Bast, the intellectual Schlegel sisters succeed only in enabling his death. Bast, a clerk, has aspirations of cultural acquisition, reading Ruskin and attending the Queens Hall concerts. When the Schlegel sisters attempt to imbue him with their own version of upper-class culture, however, it becomes apparent that he will never be able to attain it. Mentorship in the novel is set against heritage, a lived experience. The mentorship the Schlegel sisters offer Bast is nothing but a false piety, since they cannot also give him heritage, which proves to be intransmissible.

In particular, the Schlegels' mentorship of Bast evokes the motivation behind the Working Men's College and other adult education programs. F.D. Maurice, one of the founders of the Working Men's College, attempted a "more spiritual analysis of education" than had been offered at more technical-type programs, such as the Mechanics' Institutes.<sup>88</sup> Alongside the rise of the University Extension Movement from Cambridge, the Working Men's College was part of a wider movement for adult

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<sup>87</sup> Both Malcolm Bradbury's *The Modern British Novel* (2001) and Perry Meisel's *The Myth of the Modern: A Study in British Literature and Criticism after 1850* (1987) position Hardy as a proto-modernist. Hardy also makes a pronounced appearance in Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975).

<sup>88</sup> Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College, 1854-1954*, xvii.

education that, as Ruskin had, often sought to extend some of the cultured lessons of Oxbridge to laboring men. Additionally, the Education Act of 1902 abolished the old School Boards and contained a provision for secondary schools. Rapid educational expansion at all levels soon followed, including higher education, as there appeared a marked increase in new universities that had offered a variety of different types of programs.<sup>89</sup> Forster's critical presentation of the Schlegels' mentorship calls to mind the Liberal landslide of 1906, where increased Liberal political successes was accompanied by greater scrutiny of liberal programs, as well as a loss of working class support. Universities extended the amount and variety of programming available to working men, but the education they offered remained distinct from the Cambridge experience Forster enjoyed. The question Forster asks in response to these developments is not whether the curriculum of working class students should overlap in places with those of Oxford and Cambridge. The question he asks, in fact, is whether what is transmitted to these students—even if the content is the same—is actually culture at all, or whether culture remains dependent on the particular heritage he associates with Oxbridge.

In the end, Bast is mentored by the Schlegels according to certain Cambridge principles, but without the benefit of institutional heritage— all Helen can reproduce through her mentorship comes in the form of Bast's illegitimate child. Culture, Forster argues, is increasingly wrapped up with a very specific kind of lived experience; it cannot be duplicated. This is not a condemnation of adult education or the Working Men's

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<sup>89</sup> Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College*, 142.

Dent also explains that in the first decade of the twentieth century, the number of English universities doubled from five to ten, thanks especially to the work of Joseph Chamberlain (74-79).

College; rather, Forster acknowledges that the state of higher education has changed in irreversible ways, and to go on with culture as before is disingenuous. Forster's ambivalent resignation in *Howards End* leads him to reflect much later in "The Challenge of Our Time" that while he experienced at Cambridge a wonderfully "humane and intellectually curious" education, it was blind to economic disparity. With the spread of parliamentary reforms, "[t]he poor have kicked...and more power to their boots."<sup>90</sup> He develops the argument he began in *Howards End*, where Bast was not yet poised to "kick" since he is merely a passive object of the Schlegels' own interest. Ignoring Bast's economic status is a mistake because it leads the Schlegels to think he should be grateful for any sort of crumbs of culture being tossed his way. So when Forster later reflects, "life has become less comfortable for the Victorian liberal," it "has lost the basis of golden sovereigns upon which it originally rose, and now hangs over the abyss," he is looking back at the liberal programs that the Schlegel sisters evoke.<sup>91</sup> The "abyss," a loaded term in *Howards End*, is where Bast ends up as a result of an education that was more of a charity. Ultimately, the Schlegel sisters represent a culture that Forster enjoyed but does not think can or should be reproduced exactly, a conclusion he comes to in part because of his own engagement with working-class education programs.

Virginia Woolf, the subject of my third chapter, changes Forster's sovereigns for guineas but draws a conclusion no less concerned with Oxbridge inaccessibility. Woolf's criticisms, though, are gender based, linking Oxbridge exclusivity to tyrannical

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<sup>90</sup> E.M. Forster, "The Challenge of Our Time," in *Two Cheers for Democracy*, by E.M. Forster (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1951), 56.

<sup>91</sup> Forster, "The Challenge of Our Time," 57.

patriarchy. My argument begins with her late pacifist manifesto *Three Guineas*, in which I argue she uses mentorship to characterize the relationship between higher education and war that she elucidates in the text. Woolf identifies male exclusivity as the cultural value transmitted to the sons of educated men, the transmitted material of an outmoded mentorship. She incriminates Oxbridge for a reproduced patriarchal and exclusionary male discourse that shuts out from education the “daughters of educated men” identified in *Three Guineas*. Oxbridge comes to symbolize for Woolf the absence of a viable, transmissible entity, a culture worth passing on.

For Woolf, the prime historic motivating factor was not a specific reform act or even institutionalized higher education for women (although she delivered addresses on these topics on several occasions).<sup>92</sup> Instead, she uses mentorship as a means of criticizing what she believes were the social values that led to the Great War and were liable to result in World War II. War informs her view on the tangible danger presented by the transmission of a gender-bound culture. To help explicate the links among mentorship, patriarchy, and war, I first examine male education in *Jacob’s Room*, where Jacob Flanders’s walk through the Cambridge corridors seems to lead him straight to Flanders Field. In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf reveals a more complete argument regarding education and the transmission of patriarchy and tyranny as she links Mr. Ramsay’s oppressiveness and Charles Tansley’s blind worship to the university that encourages such behavior among male mentors and mentees. In this novel Woolf further defines mentorship as a masculine tradition that is also overly concerned with materiality. She depicts mentorship in *To the Lighthouse* as both male-based and thing-based, as the

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<sup>92</sup> See especially Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1929).

educated men of the novel transmit only objects that will decay with time. There is not a lasting mentorship, but a self-eroding one; as such it is not a viable or lasting cultural tradition.

I think Woolf struggles, though, in defining this cultural tradition. Castle reads *Mrs. Dalloway* as a *Bildungsroman* and believes that the novel “embrace[s] the core value of *Bildung*” and “retrieves it from a recent history of institutionalization within state educational systems.”<sup>93</sup> I am not so convinced, however, that Woolf is able to reach back to a completely desirable version of culture or education. In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf berates the exclusivity that was fostered at institutions of higher education long before any “state” or truly standardized educational system came into play. So while her novel is a sharp critique of Oxbridge’s relationship to war, an implied militarism that she believes is the result of an inherently masculine type of transmission, she also poses the possibility of a mentorship that would belong exclusively to women and produce its own model of a transmissible culture predicated on feeling and lasting emotion. The relationship between Lily Briscoe and Mrs. Ramsay seems poised to offer a viable alternative of cultural transmission, only to be ambiguously cut short at the end as Lily asserts her own selfhood. Woolf concludes *To the Lighthouse* with the eventual condemnation of mentorship altogether, seeming finally to do away with any system of cultural transmission at all.

Notwithstanding Woolf’s pronouncement that mentorship is effectively dead, mentorship remains a topic of inquiry in later novels concerned with cultural

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<sup>93</sup> Castle, *The Modernist Bildungsroman*, 5.

transmission. I turn in my last chapter to Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, published in 1961, to see her look back at a century's worth of national and political reform that had completely re-imagined the role of education in the state. Spark's novel marks the end of the journey for the 1870 Forster Education Act, having been taken all the way to its possible conclusion. Spark, who is often viewed either in relation to France's late modernist "nouveau roman" or as an early postmodernist, demonstrates the early twentieth-century anxiety about cultural transmission that developed after World War II and the relative democratization of education in the United Kingdom. If Woolf saw in World War I the end of a culture that could be transmitted through institutions of education, then she may, had she lived, seen late in World War II an even more radical separation of the two than she even began to imagine in "The Leaning Tower," where she suggested that the war left the writers of the thirties with feelings of guilt over their own privilege, which they depict in critical self-reflections of their educational experiences.

Spark's novel is set in the early thirties, just a few years before the outbreak of World War II and the subsequent reform legislation. Spark reminisces over the vestiges of an unregulated education, the lingering rebellion Miss Brodie represents at the Marcia Blaine School. The novel is set in a primary school, the particular division brought under mandate back in 1870. The school's stern headmistress Miss Mackay, attempts to shape the students into a nationally approved version of the proper young lady, dictating their dress and lessons and helping them map their futures. But Miss Jean Brodie, whose culture is based in the perceived superiority of her own taste, offers her own approved version with her visions for her girls' futures. Education and culture divided, the Marcia

Blaine School and Miss Jean Brodie battle it out to see whose version of social value will prevail. The character who emerges in a pyrrhic victory is Sandy Stranger—Miss Brodie’s mentee who had betrayed her to Miss Mackay. Sandy, who had at one point sympathized with and admired Miss Brodie, becomes famous for writing *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, a title that seems to reflect decisive change. Through Sandy, Spark finally advocates a “transfiguration” of culture, where culture moves out of the institution altogether.

Such decisive change also characterizes the sweeping educational reform movements of the nineteen forties. One of the most significant pieces of education legislation since the 1870 Forster Education Act, the 1944 Education Act mandated a number of noteworthy reforms. Its fundamental changes included a mandate for secondary education, newly defined as beginning at age eleven and lasting until fifteen or sixteen. Additionally, free secondary education would be extended to all children in schools maintained by the public authorities.<sup>94</sup> The act was designed to overcome the noticeable lack of students enrolled in secondary education, a lingering problem of the Forster Education Act. As social historian Angus Calder notes in his post-war history *The People’s War*, even as late as in 1938 “the proportion of children eligible by age for secondary education who had actually obtained admission to secondary schools had been only fourteen per cent.”<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> H.C. Dent, *A Century of Growth*, 116.

<sup>95</sup> Angus Calder, *The People’s War: Britain 1939-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969), 541.

But one of the most significant parts of the bill was based on a recommendation of the 1926 Hadow report, which had, “[urged] the reorganization of the elementary schools into junior (or primary) and senior (or modern) schools, with a break at eleven.” In a response to the findings of the report, the 1944 Butler Education Act instituted the “eleven plus” examination. The results of a student’s eleven plus exam would dictate his or her track in the tripartite secondary school system, which divided students into either academic, technical, or functional programs.<sup>96</sup> The eleven plus system, Calder chides, “ensured that privilege was perpetuated behind a façade of democratic advance.”<sup>97</sup> Here, the Education Act of 1944 moves beyond earlier reforms which had focused on providing access to students of all classes and expanding higher education to the working class. The Act also solidified a progressive system of levels that would lead to increased scrutiny regarding what was taught at each level and also how it would be measured.

Miss Brodie approaches the primary school with the same task of cultural preservation that had once belonged to Arnold’s sovereign educator; only it is not clear why her version of culture is worth having. Miss Brodie teaches her six girls, the “Brodie Set,” that only her version of culture is education, and only she understands how to transmit and measure this culture. While Miss Brodie believes she is mentoring her girls in order to ensure the continuation of an appreciation for the high arts, her mentorship actually devolves into a culture too much removed from social welfare, as what Miss

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<sup>96</sup> Part II Section 7 of the bill reads: “The statutory system of public education shall be organized in three progressive stages to be known as primary education, secondary education, and further education; and it shall be the duty of the local education authority for every area, so far as their powers extend, to contribute towards the spiritual, mental, and physical development of the community by securing that efficient education throughout those stages shall be available to meet the needs of the population of their area.” (Qtd. in Richmond, *Education in Britain since 1944*, 169).

<sup>97</sup> Calder, *The People’s War*, 543.



Brodie passes on to her protégés is essentially fascism. I argue that Spark points to the educational policies of the mid-century as indicative of the final break between educational institutions and culture; these institutions transmit a version of a culture no longer worth preserving. If education had, at one point, signified individual cultural achievement, it now refers to an abstracted elitism that cannot be transmitted in any relevant way. Mentorship, a once viable demonstration of the link between education and culture, is finally rendered obsolete—even laughable.

## Chapter One

### Culture's Anarchy: Mentorship and Cultural Capital in *Jude the Obscure*

“‘Let me only get there,’ he had said with the fatuousness of Crusoe over his big boat, ‘and the rest is but a matter of time and energy.’”

-Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*

Thomas Hardy makes it clear on the first page of *Jude the Obscure* that Jude Fawley is meant to suffer. The novel opens with the loss of Jude's teacher, Mr. Phillotson: “The schoolmaster was leaving the village, and everybody seemed sorry.”<sup>1</sup> No student, however, is more unhappy than Jude. When Phillotson asks, “Sorry I am going, Jude,” the young boy responds only with tears (10). Phillotson, too, is sorry to leave his eager pupil and gives the boy a book as a parting gift. Jude, however, wants to know where his teacher is going. Despite his protestations that Jude “wouldn't understand my reasons,” Phillotson shares with his student his own plans to attend Christminster, the Wessex incarnation of Oxford: “Well—don't speak of this anywhere. You know what a university is, and a university degree? It is the necessary hall-mark of a man who wants to do anything in teaching. My scheme, or dream, is to be a university graduate” (10). In a final goodbye, Phillotson urges Jude to continue his studies and smilingly asks his pupil to come visit him should he ever come to Christminster.

In this simple exchange between a student and his teacher, Hardy sets in motion a string of heartbreaking events that are the unintended consequences of Jude's attempts to follow his teacher to Christminster. Jude's working-class origins prevent him from ever gaining admission to the university and he pays a steep price for having even tried. His

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, ed. Norman Page (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 9. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

failures at Christminster lead him to a life of wandering and poverty, unable to find happiness in love or career. Upon embarking for Christminster, Jude reconnects with Phillotson, but his former mentor—who never made it to the university—is now his romantic rival. At the end of the novel, Phillotson is married to Jude's love, Sue Bridehead, while Jude dies alone and impoverished, having already outlived all of his children. While the mentorship between Phillotson and Jude begins in the novel as a teacher's inspiring gesture toward an education evocative of Arnoldian culture, their relationship eventually becomes the source of Jude's social isolation and personal alienation.

As a result of mentorship, Jude is encouraged to seek a higher level of education, but he is given no real way to achieve it on account of his class. The educational aspirations of *Bildung* fail to bring Jude any socially recognized capital. In this chapter, I argue that this failure points to a contradiction inherent to cultural transmission: Hardy uses the problematized mentorship among Sue, Phillotson, and Jude to depict the tension that exists between culture as a process of self-cultivation and culture as Bourdieu's cultural capital, a set of definitive knowledge marked only by acquiring a socially recognized asset, in this case a Christminster degree. Phillotson initiates Jude's quest toward academic learning, but this learning cannot grant him access to Christminster, an institution outside his class. Reflective of this irresolvable conflict, mentorship in the novel is ultimately useless in the face of deep-seated class distinctions that consistently fail to grant the lower classes full educational admission. In a damning critique of the cost of culture's inaccessibility and the consequences of that inaccessibility, Little Father Time, Jude's supposed protégé, commits murder-suicide as a result of his father's

misfortunes; Little Father Time abolishes any likelihood of mentorship's espousing Arnold's "harmonious expansion of human nature" as he illustrates the unsustainability of this conflicted account of culture.<sup>2</sup> Hardy's protagonist fails as both apprentice and mentor, unable to develop either as an individual or as a member of a social group. When Jude dies sick and alone at the novel's end among the sounds of the Christminster Remembrance Day celebration, he warns of the impossibility of Arnold's celebrated institutional culture and the mentorship tasked with transmitting it.

## **I. An Evolving Definition of Culture**

Raymond Williams argues that we can find in the nineteenth century a moment at which the definition of culture was in flux. In one connotation stemming from eighteenth-century usage, culture in the nineteenth century referred to an Arnoldian-type process of humane development with its "intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic" associations. With an emphasis on culture as a progressive improvement, culture was "the tending of a natural growth, and then, by analogy, a process of human training."<sup>3</sup> Moving into the twentieth century, however, culture assumed a newly dominant definition as finite and product-oriented. Williams suggests that this second definition emphasized measurable or readily identifiable cultural artifacts, referring to "the works and practices of intellectual and

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<sup>2</sup>Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. Ian Gregor (Indianapolis & New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1971), 38.

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), xvi. Chris Vanden Bossche agrees with Williams that the nineteenth century saw "culture," in part, as "broadened to comprehend the general process of individual development...this development was a gradual, 'natural' process" ("Moving Out: Adolescence" 83). Vanden Bossche and Williams also explain that this definition of culture was, specifically, a continuation of the eighteenth-century reformers' depictions of education as the cultivation of a plant.

especially artistic activity.”<sup>4</sup> Mentorship in *Jude the Obscure*, I argue, brings these two models into conflict. Whereas the promises of mentorship early in the novel point to culture as a process, the novel’s subsequent failures of mentorship can be attributed to this additional late nineteenth-century model of culture, a model Hardy identifies as inimical to the first. As culture comes also to mean “the independent and abstract noun, which describes the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity,” Jude’s learning cannot constitute culture unless it leads to a tangible outcome.<sup>5</sup>

Associated with human maturation or classical *Bildung*, mentorship initiates Jude’s journey toward Christminster, but as the novel progresses, this mentorship model is no longer sustainable as Jude learns he would have needed to have been mentored his entire life to succeed at Christminster and struggles to find guidance in Christminster city. Ultimately, Christminster betrays both mentor and apprentice, drawing them near only to deny them entry and guard a culture which, despite its earlier apparent egalitarianism, shows itself as distinctly class-bound.

In the beginning of the novel, education is tied to mentorship in ways that evoke Arnold’s sovereign educator. Arnold advocated cultural transmission through the personal pursuit of study and the adoption of a best self that would later promote other best selves; Hardy positions Phillotson as such a potential mentor through his aspirations

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<sup>4</sup>Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford UP, 1976), 80. Williams does not imply—nor do I—a linear progression from one understanding of the word to another. Instead, he traces when different senses of the word came into play; the nineteenth century, in particular, experienced multiple perspectives on the definition of “culture,” largely due to a preoccupation with the topic.

<sup>5</sup>Williams, *Keywords*, 80.

Williams goes on to say that this sense of culture as product is now the most pervasive: “This seems often now the most widespread use: culture is music, literature, painting and sculpture, theatre and film... this use is in fact relatively late... The decisive development of [this last sense] into English was in 1C19 [the last third of the nineteenth century] and eC20 [the first part of the twentieth century].”

toward intellectual growth and his inspiring Jude to reach beyond his small Marygreen village. Jude and Phillotson have enjoyed a close relationship since Jude “was not among the regular day scholars, who came unromantically close to the schoolmaster’s life, but one who had attended the night school only during the present teacher’s term of office” (10). Jude remembers their closeness and his dreams of Christminster are tied directly to his desire to imitate Phillotson: “the city acquired a . . . hold on his life, mainly from the one nucleus of fact that the man for whose knowledge and purposes he had so much reverence was actually living there; not only so, but living among the more thoughtful and mentally shining ones there” (20). In Jude’s vision, Phillotson is a “best self,” a model worth duplicating. Phillotson and Christminster are inseparable in Jude’s mind; even the wind that blows from Christminster refreshes Jude because he believes that it is the same breeze that “touch[ed] Mr. Phillotson’s face, being breathed by him” (21). “And now,” Jude reflects, “you are here, breathed by me—you, the very same.” Associating the wind just as much with his teacher as with Christminster, Jude phrases his educational aspirations as an extension of his desire to be like Phillotson.

Illustrative of the type of culture that Arnold promoted, the education Phillotson encourages includes a code of behavior.<sup>6</sup> Phillotson’s departing words to Jude, “Be a good boy, remember; and be kind to animals and birds, and read all you can,” are geared towards fostering moral adult behavior (10). Jude tries to live by his teacher’s words, showing sympathy to the birds while acting as a scarecrow for Farmer Troutham since “Mr. Phillotson said I was to be kind to ‘em” (15). Even though he does not apply Phillotson’s teachings reflectively, this brief display of compassion effectively shows

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<sup>6</sup> This also references Mentor’s focus on developing Telemakhos’s personal characteristics. Having assumed Mentor’s form, Athena tells Telemakhos to “lack neither courage nor sense from this day on” (Book II, line 203).

Jude's early steps in the process of self-cultivation. It does not matter if he necessarily interprets all of Phillotson's teachings properly at the outset; Hardy calls to mind here the slow and careful process of a young *Bildungsroman* protagonist just beginning his journey. Phillotson, it appears, has set Jude on the right path toward possible cultural acquisition, emphasizing the importance of moral behavior ("be kind") and continued, self-motivated learning ("and read all you can").

The education Phillotson initiates is a "private study," paralleling the "inward operation" characteristic of Arnold's culture (28). Jude commits himself to his studies even and especially in the absence of his teacher and requests Phillotson send him Greek and Latin grammars. Jude receives the grammars and studies them carefully, imagining his mentor is beside him: he "covered up the marginal readings [in his Grammars], and used them merely on points of construction, as he would have used a comrade or tutor" (28). Jude's studies are marked by hard work and determination. His task is "a herculean performance... The mountain-weight of material under which the ideas lay in those dusty volumes called the classics piqued him into a dogged, mouselike subtlety of attempt to move it piecemeal" (27). Although immeasurably difficult, Jude's self-directed lessons are successful since he learns not only to translate Caesar, Virgil, and Horace, but also comes to a personal understanding of the material: "the boy...[would] plunge into the simpler passages...in his purblind stumbling way, and with an expenditure of labour that would have made a tender-hearted pedagogue shed tears; yet somehow getting at the meaning of what he read" (28). By emphasizing the tirelessness and difficulty of Jude's studies alongside his eventual success in learning the material, Hardy seems to celebrate a socially transformative mentorship. Mentorship is credited with having put Jude on the

proper path toward self-cultivation, and because of his hard work in meeting the tasks transmitted to him, Jude appears poised to enter his revered Christminster.

Phyllotson is a mentor because he fosters humane behavior and educational motivation by promoting a personal journey for Jude towards Christminster; that he encourages specifically the pursuit of an intellectual and moral best self—as illustrated by his aiding Jude in Greek and Latin and encouraging him to read and behave well—indicates that these criteria constitute, at this point in the novel, “culture,” the acquisition of which is a mentor’s goal for his apprentice. This mentored culture of *Bildung*, Arnold maintained, was best upheld at Oxbridge, institutions dedicated to the preservation and transmission of that culture. It follows that Jude believes his own cultural endeavors have sufficiently prepared him to enter an institution with a similar emphasis on a learned tradition. When Jude imagines himself at Christminster, he sees himself as “her beloved son,” as a natural extension of the tradition of learning in which he has engaged himself (33). “Would it be a spot,” he wonders, “in which, without fear of farmers, or hindrance, or ridicule, he could watch and wait, and set himself to some mighty undertaking like the men of old of whom he had heard?” (23). Believing he is finally free from the difficulties of life at Marygreen, Jude now associates himself with the “men of old.” When he arrives at Christminster, Jude wanders the streets alone while imagining conversations with various “sons of the university,” one of whom is Arnold himself. Although Hardy does not name the “spectre,” Jude “hears” bits from the preface to Arnold’s *Essays in Criticism: First Series* (1865): “Beautiful city! So venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene!...Her ineffable charm keeps calling us to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection” (66). Jude believes he can be part



of that “venerable” tradition; mentorship, he thinks, transmits to him culture at its fullest potential.

In a passing parenthetical phrase, however, Hardy reveals that the same “spectre” that called Christminster a “beautiful city” would later “mourn” Christminster as “the home of lost causes” (66). Hardy here makes ironic the tribute to Oxford that Arnold had intended in his preface to *Essays in Criticism*. Hardy borrowed a small part of Arnold’s reference to Oxford’s commitment to “the ideal, to perfection” even in the face of a rapidly changing society: in “an epoch of disillusion and transformation,” Oxford was the “home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties!”<sup>7</sup> Only Oxford could resist the Philistines, Arnold believed, even if to do so was unpopular. But if Oxford was a haven for “lost causes,” Christminster makes Jude a lost cause himself; Christminster becomes the home that Jude, named for the patron saint of lost causes, will never be able to claim as his own. Literalizing Arnold in a way Arnold would never have imagined, Hardy begins to undercut Jude’s notion of Christminster as accessible to those who desire and appreciate its vaulted tradition.

The depiction of Christminster itself, I maintain, puts Williams’s two definitions of culture in competition with each other, and illustrates the resulting limitations of Jude’s studies. When Phillotson explains Christminster to Jude, he frames the university as facilitating the acquisition of Williams’s second sense of culture: “You know what a university is, and a university degree? It is the necessary hall-mark of a man who wants to do anything in teaching. My scheme, or dream, is to be a university graduate, and then to be ordained. By going to live at Christminster, or near it, I shall be at headquarters. . . I consider that being on the spot will afford me a better chance of carrying it out than I

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism* (London and Cambridge: MacMillan & Company, 1865), xv- xix.

should have had elsewhere” (10). Here, Phillotson implies that culture is tied in to a specific place. Only a Christminster degree will make him able “to do anything in teaching.” Even to become a member of the clergy, he implies, requires a “hall-mark” degree. The division Phillotson makes between “a university” and a “university degree” is telling: a university experience may point to learning itself, but it is the attainment of the degree, specifically, that will allow him to move toward his goal of being ordained. He specifies his wish to be a “graduate” rather than simply a “student,” foreshadowing the insufficiency of his simplistic advice to Jude to behave properly and study hard.

Jude’s interpretation of Phillotson’s account of Christminster is a hybrid of the two forms of culture Williams identifies, although Jude continues to emphasize the importance of earnestness and self-development. He envisions Christminster education as the inward, humane process of Arnold’s culture and also as bringing him toward finite and tangible indicators of having received culture:

Hence I must next concentrate all my energies on settling in Christminster. Once there I shall so advance[...]that my present knowledge will appear to me but as childish ignorance[...]And then he continued to dream, and thought he might become even a bishop by leading a pure, energetic, wise, Christian life. And what an example he would set! If his income were £5000 a year, he would give away £4500 in one form or another [...] Well, on second thoughts, a bishop was absurd. He would draw the line at an archdeacon. Perhaps a man could be as good and as learned and as useful in the capacity of an archdeacon as in that of a bishop [...] ‘I can work hard. I have staying power in abundance, thank God! And it is that which tells... Yes, Christminster shall be my Alma Mater!’ (32-3)

Jude’s vision is one of Christian morality and economic success. He hopes to continue his process of self-development to the point that he can reflect back proudly on his journey, and he believes that simply living a “Christian life” will be enough to make him a Bishop. This endeavor, though, cannot be separated from economic gain, as Jude’s mind quickly goes to the specific titles he can receive and how much money he can earn as a

result of his education. To the young and eager Jude, the education of the “university” and the “university degree” are one and the same, so he sees no reason to think that anything other than hard work and thoughtful study will be necessary to get him to Christminster. Jude has “staying power in abundance” and he thinks this is enough to take him to Christminster; he believes that engaging in the process of culture, in other words, is enough to grant him the tangible indicators of culture described in Williams’s second sense of culture (32). His future seems deceptively bright: his mentor teaches him that culture is a process of growth, of intellectual development, and to be cultured is to use education to promote such growth among others. Working toward such culture can bring one to Christminster, where a degree will set him on the path toward monetary recognition of his cultural acquisition. Had Jude succeeded, he would have been the ultimate success story of the 1870 Forster Education Act, having worked earnestly to achieve social mobility.

Jude does not, of course, live out that dream in any capacity. As soon as he arrives at Christminster city, he “found himself actually on the spot of his enthusiasm,” only to perceive “how far away from the object of that enthusiasm he really was. Only a wall divided him from those happy young contemporaries of his with whom he shared a common mental life...Only a wall—but what a wall!” (70). Jude shares with the Christminster students a “common mental life,” but he does not know how to get to where they are. Jude’s self-development and independent study are the products of Phillotson’s mentorship and have brought him to Christminster, but having that shared “mental life” with the undergraduates is not enough to actually make him part of their cohort. As Part Second unfolds, Christminster education itself becomes the definitive best

self, the actual embodiment of intellectual and artistic activity—and Jude is shut out from it by virtue of his class.

## II. Christminster as Cultural Capital

If mentorship's inspiration brought Jude to Christminster in the first place, its disappointment foreshadows Jude's impending frustration. Shortly after arriving at Christminster, Jude learns that Phillotson never made it to the university. When Jude pays a visit to the man who inspired him to go to Christminster, he is saddened to see a sallow-looking Phillotson, who had grown "thin and careworn since Jude last set eyes on him" (83). In an instant, Jude's optimism is shattered, as "this homely complexion destroyed at one stroke the halo which had surrounded the schoolmaster's figure in Jude's imagination ever since they parted." In Jude's mind, his mentor's failure predicts his own: "Jude's countenance fell, for how could he succeed in an enterprise wherein the great Phillotson had failed? ...he had visions of how Phillotson's failure in the grand University scheme would depress him..." (82). Jude's binary language of success and failure, of wholesale acquisition or outright lack, indicates that culture here is not a process of development, but a specific accomplishment—the university degree Phillotson set out to achieve. Jude does not consider the possibility that Phillotson could be successful even without the degree, even though Phillotson has contentedly settled into a career as a schoolmaster.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> That Phillotson could be considered a "failure" despite his other notable accomplishments simply because he did not attend Christminster is supported in part by Hardy's own biography: in *The Country and the City*, Williams quotes a British Council member who refers to Hardy—as well as George Eliot and D.H. Lawrence—as "our three great autodidacts," despite their having achieved high levels of formal education. Williams concludes, "So the flat patronage of 'autodidact' can be related to only one fact: that none of the three was in the pattern of boarding school and Oxbridge which by the end of the century was being regarded not simply as a kind of education but as education itself: to have missed that circuit was to have missed being 'educated' at all," just as Jude sees Phillotson as an educational failure, despite his success as a schoolmaster (171).

Phyllotson's failure transforms Jude's dream into the "fatuousness of Crusoe over his big boat" as he recognizes that "to move among the churches and halls" of Christminster, to be "imbued with the *genius loci*," is but a symptom of "his dreaming youth" rather than an appreciable reality (94).

Ultimately, Jude concludes that the knowledge taught in these institutions does not constitute "education" and "culture"; rather, the institution itself is culture. If culture progresses, as Williams suggests, in the direction of absolute, identifiable markers, it is scarcely surprising that the institutions of education would come to be associated with the acquisition of culture, since they teach those texts that are readily identified as "culture." In this context, Christminster moves away from culture as *Bildung* and is more accurately Bourdieu's "cultural capital." Separate from economic capital, cultural capital refers to "the general cultural background, knowledge, disposition, and skills that are passed from one generation to the next."<sup>9</sup> Bourdieu describes cultural capital as a "trajectory," an inherited sensibility that "functions as a sort of advance (both a head-start and a credit)," by providing each new generation with "the example of culture incarnated in familiar models."<sup>10</sup>

Cultural capital represents the accumulated cultural knowledge indicative of a particular group's tastes and values; a Christminster or Oxbridge education would be one particular part of the cultural capital of the upper classes, who had enjoyed fairly

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<sup>9</sup> Jay MacLeod, *Ain't No Makin' It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 12.

<sup>10</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 16; 70. Value is socially assigned to specific institutions that represent the particular "disposition" of particular classes. Robert Moore explains cultural capital as "acquired in the systematic cultivation of a sensibility in which principles of selection through inculcation, into principles of consciousness that translate into physical and cognitive propensities expressed in dispositions to acts of particular kinds" (Moore 111).

exclusive access to the universities. Such students do not consider their degree the hallmark of having gained culture in the sense of *Bildung*, since a degree is the confirmation of their having received the cultural capital particular to their class. Given that cultural capital is transmitted by a system of values shared by a particular group or class, the mentorship Jude receives from Phillotson is not the same type of mentorship Christminster students receive. If Christminster is the cultural capital of the upper class, then Jude, as a member of the lower class, will have a particularly difficult time gaining access—just as Phillotson did. The mobility of cultural capital between classes, Bourdieu claims, is rarely present in educational institutions. Bourdieu argues in *The State Nobility* (1996) that an elite university education is necessary cultural capital for those seeking dominant positions in socially powerful fields such as the government, commerce, and the arts, but that class movement in education is typically restricted. That is, Bourdieu understands education as a particular strategy that upper-class families use to maintain or advance social position: “the educational system...tends to perpetuate the space of the differences that separate them [the students] before they enter the system.”<sup>11</sup> Educational institutions “pla[y] a critical role in the in the reproduction of the distribution of cultural capital.”<sup>12</sup> Because of this, “[t]hose highest in cultural capital in the form of possession of ‘legitimate culture’ are those highest in *educational capital*.”<sup>13</sup> Bourdieu describes this protected cultural capital in *Homo Academicus* (1988), where he outlines how a classical (i.e. public school) education, along with the support of an educated

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<sup>11</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, Trans. Lauretta C. Clough (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 228.

<sup>12</sup> Bourdieu, *The State Nobility*, 5.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Moore, “Capital,” in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, ed. Michael Grenfell (Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2008), 113 (original emphasis).

family, guarantees selective access to the universities. But the problem of educational, and thus social, exclusivity Bourdieu identified with education in 1930s France was also the problem of 1890s England.

Christminster education, crucially, comes to be defined as belonging to a specific class, an institution associated with capital: “Such places be not for such as you—only for them with plenty o’ money,” Aunt Drusilla admonishes Jude (92). Williams affirms Drusilla’s claim, stating that only one or two percent of the population—the upper class—were eligible for classification as educated, “all the rest were seen as ‘uneducated’ or as ‘autodidacts’.”<sup>14</sup> Lumping together the uneducated with the autodidact, the upper class mentality as Williams would have it has little use for lower class education of any sort. In agreement with Bourdieu’s claim that educational institutions are closely guarded by the upper class in order to maintain their own authority and power, Williams maintains that the upper class took a dismissive view of lower class attempts to become educated: motivated poor students were seen “as either comically ignorant or, when they pretended to be learning, as awkward, over earnest, fanatical.”<sup>15</sup> The tavern scene, in which Jude proves his Greek and Latin capabilities amid the sneers of the Christminster undergraduates, confirms the upper class refusal to allow lower class participation in education. Jude is mocked into reciting Latin to entertain the Christminster men; they do not take him seriously. Christminster for them had significance as an institution that signifies the acquisition of cultural capital, but not necessarily the acquisition of the actual learning necessary for Arnold’s type of culture. The Christminster students, in fact,

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<sup>14</sup>Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford UP, 1973), 171.

<sup>15</sup> Williams, *The Country and the City*, 171.

“had not the slightest conception of a single word” Jude spoke, but they are able to buy him repeated rounds of drink (99). These students did not gain admission to Christminster through the arduous process of self-education that Jude had undergone, but by virtue of their having the economic means to attend. As such, their class has granted them cultural capital, a Christminster degree—that, and not necessarily the education for which the degree was supposedly awarded.

Indeed, despite his abilities, Jude is cut off from Christminster completely because of his class: T. Tetuphany, a Master at Biblioll College, explains to him “that you will have a much better chance of success in life by remaining in your own sphere and sticking to your trade than by adopting any other course” (95). By virtue of its becoming a “hall-mark,” culture has become commodified, a means for the perpetuation of wealth, and so available only to a few, bringing to the forefront the class distinctions which Arnold had hoped to move beyond. By exploring the persistent class implications associated with the evolving definition of culture, Hardy eventually resists the synonymy of culture and mentorship laid out in the beginning, arguing against those attempts that—like Arnold’s—present culture and cultural transmission as a way finally out of class distinctions. Mentorship in the novel illustrates the shifting definition of culture across the period from an inward process available to all to a version of cultural capital that denotes a specific set of culturally referential indicators. However mentorship also reveals Hardy’s criticism that attempts around that distinction between culture and cultural capital, between the processes society privileges and the markers it sets to see if those processes have been completed, are not only unrealistic, but dangerous to the social order that they try to promote.



If culture had become wholly equivalent to cultural capital, mentorship would be a bit of a ruse—to learn Greek and Latin, to learn how to live, even, are irrelevant without an accompanying Oxbridge degree. Mentorship would be largely unnecessary when the English public school system already sends upper-class students, and only those, to Oxford. But mentorship’s cultural significance as a way of transmitting knowledge is still insisted upon in the novel, since Hardy maintains that mentorship still remains necessary for the achievement of that cultural capital: Jude learns that

to qualify himself for certain open scholarships and exhibitions was the only brilliant course. But to do this a good deal of coaching would be necessary... It was next to impossible that a man reading on his own system, however widely and thoroughly, even over the prolonged period of ten years, should be able to compete with those who had *passed their lives under the trained teachers and had worked to ordained lines*” (93-4; emphasis mine).<sup>16</sup>

Schooling here substantially entails mentorship. Hardy argues that the wealthy acquire cultural capital through mentorship, but this mentorship is distinct from the mentorship that would inspire a lower class mentee to achieve culture. The ambitious poor are then left with a conflict between a sense of culture that implies the ability to move beyond their class—culture as process—and the cultural capital from which they are cut off.

Jude, to his detriment, remains deluded by the earlier version of culture held out to him by his mentor, still believing that a mentorship-type relationship would make a difference: “He felt that he wanted a coach—a friend at his elbow to tell him in a moment what sometimes would occupy him a weary month in extracting from unanticipative, clumsy books” (92). But, as Tetuphany’s letter suggests, Jude cannot be expected to

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<sup>16</sup> The other possibility for his entrance, “that of buying himself in... seemed the only one really open to men like him, the difficulty being simply of a material kind... [He] ascertained, to his dismay, that, at the rate at which, with the best of fortune, he would be able to save money, fifteen years must elapse before he could be in a position to forward testimonials to the Head of a College and advance to a matriculation examination” (94). In either case, Christminster is marked as available only to those with material means, rather than those with forms of humanist knowledge and appetite.

attain an education given his “sphere.” What is worse, even when Jude gives up his Christminster aspirations and seeks instead the position of a lowly cleric, he is reminded once more that real capital ultimately determines cultural capital: as he seeks a relationship with a certain composer, he is again shut out again when the man realizes Jude’s lack of material wealth (156). Jude, in short, has been indoctrinated with the idea that to engage in culture is to strive towards a personal best, but is continually frustrated by his inability to gain any actual capital—either economic or cultural— as a result of that process. Mentorship not only provides a vocabulary for culture, but models the problems of cultural transmission in actual practice. Jude, keenly aware of the impact his lifelong “struggle with material things” has had on his educational aspirations, is led to a dangerous place, “the hell of conscious failure” (101). Rather than facilitate cultural transmission, mentorship only raises Jude’s awareness of its impossibility.

In Arnold’s text, Williams explains, the two nineteenth-century definitions or evolutions of culture as process and product are “indistinguishable” to the author; I maintain that Hardy, however, found the relationship between these models to be exceedingly problematic in practice, and the primary cause of his protagonist’s downfall. In invoking both mentorship and *Bildung*, Hardy, as I have suggested, recalls Arnold’s sovereign educator and his task of encouraging everyone toward culture. When actually put into practice in Hardy’s novel, however, the sovereign educator reveals the non-viability of the Arnoldian paradigm precisely because it refuses to acknowledge the contradictions inherent to its arguments. For all Arnold’s emphasis on culture as an inward pursuit and study, he assigns the academy the role of “recognized touchstone for

the intelligence of society.”<sup>17</sup> It is that “generally recognized touchstone” that makes the implementation of his model so difficult, as this education was unavailable to people of the lower classes, who were, as Castle puts it “effectively barred from higher education.”<sup>18</sup> Jude’s insistence that “I can do without what it [Christminster] confers” is made only grudgingly because he actually does require a degree to achieve the capital that would promote social mobility (121). His declaration that he does not “care for social success” is the only way out of this problem; he realizes that social success without a Christminster degree is unattainable, so he can only reject social success outright. Jude sets out, in all earnest, to achieve a best self, to learn exactly what Arnold would have him learn, but for all the language around educational reform—from Ruskin, Arnold, Mill, even Eliot—encouraging personal growth, in practice education stopped short of leading a student outside his class. Jude had been, as Sue puts it, “elbowed off the pavement by the millionaires’ sons” (121).

Baldick explains that Oxford was the object of Arnold’s “extremes of adulation... a particularly clear example of the lengths to which he went in creating an imaginary spiritual and intellectual ‘centre’ for English culture.”<sup>19</sup> But it is this very idea of a “centre” that frustrates Hardy because Arnold’s ambitions really required a stronger

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<sup>17</sup>Ian Gregor, introduction to *Culture and Anarchy*, by Matthew Arnold (Indianapolis & New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1971), xx.

<sup>18</sup>Gregory Castle, *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), 73.

<sup>19</sup> Chris Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848-1932* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 46. It is significant that some of Arnold’s enthusiasm for Oxford may have been performative. Chris Baldick explains: “In his private letters and in some of his lesser known educational reports Arnold admitted that Oxford was little more than a glorified finishing school for the Barbarians, with a stagnant intellectual life. Yet in his more public pronouncements, all his rhetorical gifts are brought into play to weave a myth of a completely different Oxford. This Oxford, despite the passionate theological controversies of Arnold’s own student days, is described as ‘so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene!’ This serenity, whether or not it corresponds to the real Oxford, is clearly important to his purpose” (46).

social mandate in order to be realized—and the State, as it had demonstrated in the educational reform movements of the 1870s and beyond, had stopped far short of granting access to this hallmark of educational cultural capital to all of its classes. And while Arnold, as an Inspector of Schools, was keenly aware of the politics surrounding education, he could not set up a tangible system for enacting the mentorship he advocated. Arnold relied on institutions already recognized for their cultural association—affirming the idea that to be cultured, one requires an Oxbridge education. Williams, sympathetic to Arnold in many ways, admits the “ambiguity” in Arnold’s position:

For it is not merely the influence of the best individuals that Arnold is recommending; it is the embodiment of this influence in the creation of a State... as a ‘centre of authority and light’... Yet the existing State, loaded with such an agency, is in fact, on Arnold’s showing, subject to the deadlock of the existing and inadequate social classes. The aristocracy uses the power and dignity of the State as a means to protect its own privileges. The middle class, reacting against this, seeks only to diminish State power, and to leave perfection to those ‘simple natural laws’ which somehow arise out of unregulated individual activity.<sup>20</sup>

Arnold’s mentorship model fails because it tries to have culture in both ways: mentorship encourages personal development but then holds individuals to a class-bound standard that recognizes such growth only selectively. Although Arnold would see culture as ideally bringing people out of their class (by paradoxically promoting cross-class privileging of upper class values), he infamously could not get around stock notions of class. His model collapses in on itself because it is bound to institutions while pretending to be beyond institutions. Abstract to the point that it cannot be reproduced, culture is not a model that a mentor realistically can transmit across class lines.

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<sup>20</sup> Williams, *Culture and Society*, 122-3.

### III. Mentorship and Anarchy

Williams links the failure of Arnold's vision to a State that was ill-suited to such a program of culture, lacking the structures and power to implement his vision. "It scarcely seems likely," Williams concludes, "if Arnold is right about these classes, that any actual State, expressing the power of one or other of them, or a deadlocked compromise, could undertake the all-important function which he proposes."<sup>21</sup> Arnold's culture depended on an inward process that still needed State regulation, which created real confusion for Arnold, Williams suggests, because he was unable to "find the material" of the process of culture "in the society of his own day, or, fully, in a recognition of an order that transcended human society."<sup>22</sup> Williams emphasizes here the ways in which the State undercuts cultural transmission. Hardy's response to this is to test a mentorship that reacts against the State.<sup>23</sup> If the mentorship between Phillotson and Jude shows the persistent disparity between culture and cultural capital, then the mentorship between Sue and Jude tries to offer an alternative cultural transmission that disregards the conventions of a State that has frustrated Jude. Culture in this context is not separate from anarchy, but a possible cause of it. As a result of his failures, Jude is led to a form of anarchy; he must do as he likes because he has no longer has a social group to reference. Anarchy becomes Jude's only viable option, since his indoctrination with a culture only available

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<sup>21</sup> Williams, *Culture and Society*, 123.

<sup>22</sup> Williams, *Culture and Society*, 127.

Having difficulty locating in the State the appropriate means to disseminate culture, Arnold's own definition of culture begins to contradict itself. Williams clarifies that culture for Arnold "is right knowing and is right doing; a process and not an absolute," but on the other, "his emphasis in detail is so much on the importance of knowing, and so little on the importance of doing" (125).

<sup>23</sup> Arnold defines the "State" as "the nation in its collective and corporate character. The State is the representative acting-power of the nation; the action of the State is the representative action of the nation" (*Passages from the Prose Writings of Matthew Arnold* 161). Jude and Sue react against particular conventions and structures that are characteristic of the State.

to the upper classes has left him with a conflicted *habitus* that renders him unable to identify with the members of any class.

Mentorship in this incarnation is antagonistic, a reaction against society rather than a means of harmonizing with it. As a response to his unavoidable failure at Christminster, Sue tries to transmit culture to Jude in a form that lacks the constraints of cultural capital, yet the result, I argue, is an anarchy that leads Jude only to further conflict and alienation and illustrates Hardy's ultimate denunciation of cultural transmission. Sue mentors Jude with values distinct from those transmitted by Phillotson. After running away from her training school at Melchester, she cries to Jude, "I *wish* I had a friend here to support me; but nobody is ever on my side" (122). Jude, Sue believes, is against her because he retains his religious beliefs and refuses to share her ill opinion of Christminster. While she does not want to "disturb" Jude's "convictions," she "did want and long to ennoble some man to high aims," and she believed that person was Jude: "when I saw you, and knew you wanted to be my comrade, I—shall I confess it? —thought that man might be you. But you take so much tradition on trust that I don't know what to say" (122-3). Sue wants to mentor Jude *away* from Christminster, "an ignorant place," on the grounds that it no longer promotes intellectualism, but only "new wine in old bottles" (120). She opposes the "traditions of the old faith" and wants "the medievalism of Christminster...[to] be sloughed off" (120). For Sue, mentorship offers the possibility of a break from tradition, rather than its continuation. Christminster, according to her argument, should not be seen as the "hall-mark" of culture precisely because it shuts out men like Jude: "You are one of the very men Christminster was intended for when the colleges were founded: a man with a passion for learning, but no

money, or opportunities” (120-1). Sue recognizes that Christminster has become a privileged cultural capital, so she rejects institutions outright, calling herself an “Ishmaelite” who prefers to live “outside all laws except gravitation and germination” (111).

Sue hopes to pass on to Jude a version of culture that supports his commitment to learning but removes it from the rigid and medieval confines of Christminster. Sue herself had been mentored in this way by a Christminster graduate, “the most irreligious man I knew, and the most moral” (120). Like Maggie Tulliver and Rachel Vinrace, Sue is intended to receive an educated man’s mentorship alongside a romantic commitment, as the graduate “wanted me to be his mistress” (118). Whereas Maggie and Rachel die in lieu of reconciling mentorship and marriage, however, Sue simply rejects the latter. The graduate dies instead, left brokenhearted. Sue and the graduate offer a refigured mentorship: he uses his traditional Christminster knowledge to mentor Sue, but at the moment his mentorship would only reinforce a social institution (here, marriage), Sue resists and turns down his proposal.<sup>24</sup> Thoroughly “unconventional,” Sue manipulates the terms of mentorship to reflect how cultural transmission could occur in a society that she believes has lost touch with culture’s fundamentally humane purposes. The graduate taught her a great deal of Greek and Latin classics (though through translation), among others: “Lemprière, Catallus, Martial, Juvenal, Lucian, Beaumont and Fletcher, Boccaccio, Scarron, De Brantôme, Sterne, De Foe, Smollett, Fielding, Shakespeare, the Bible, and other such” (118). While this bizarre mix of texts casts Sue as forward-

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<sup>24</sup>Cut off from the type of mentorship that would bring her the cultural or economic capital associated with a Christminster education, Sue still gets capital from mentorship: her boyfriend bequeaths to her a small amount of money that she invests. She invests it unsuccessfully, however: “I invested his money, poor fellow, in a bubble scheme, and lost it” (119).

thinking (Oxford was not, at the time, considering seriously English novelists), it reflects a mentorship that is entirely premised on personal taste, an eclectic mix that hardly reflects any agreed upon notion of cultural value. Christminster here still has value, but only as one possible means of transmitting culture; Sue thinks herself just as qualified to teach Jude as her boyfriend was to teach her. Culture here is separate from the State, and so is finally exempt from the conflict between culture and cultural capital.

Under Sue's guidance, Jude ultimately rejects the narrative of cultured self-improvement that had guided him for so long precisely because it has led him away from society itself: "It had been his standing desire to become a prophet, however humble, to his struggling fellow-creatures, without any thought of personal gain. Yet with a wife living away from him with another husband, and himself in love erratically... he had sunk to be barely respectable according to regulation views" (173). Upon denouncing such "regulation views," Jude throws into the fire the books that had marked his ministerial pursuits: "leaves, covers, and binding of Jeremy Taylor, Butler, Doddridge, Paley, Pusey, Newman and the rest had gone to ashes." And here he finds comfort, "as he turned and turned the paper to shreds with the fork, the sense of being no longer a hypocrite to himself afforded his mind a relief which gave him calm. He might go on believing as before, but he professed nothing, and no longer owned and exhibited engines of faith" (173). When Sue and Jude live together unmarried and finally reject the conventions of the social order the State was to preserve, she believes she has finally reclaimed the Hellenism so central to Arnold's philosophy: "I feel that we have returned to Greek joyousness, and have blinded ourselves to sickness and sorrow, and have forgotten what twenty-five centuries have taught the race since their time, as one of your



Christminster luminaries says” (235). Culture, Sue teaches, can only be transmitted when social order is disregarded.

The problem, however, is that Sue’s version of culture is intertwined with the force Arnold places in opposition to culture: anarchy. And while Sue may disregard the problem of “doing as one likes” initially, even she cannot get past the eventual isolation she suffers. Whereas Arnold’s culture and mentorship had been intended to bring together people from all classes and also unite members of an individual class, Jude’s attempts at culture have led him to become a social pariah who struggles to find work and even basic lodgings. The novel’s pessimism is obvious given the amount of corpses that collect by the end, so it is unlikely that Hardy found Sue’s mentorship any more viable than Phillotson’s. Instead, Hardy illustrates a moment of paralysis, unable to find a way to reconcile the individual who is, Dale Kramer explains, “struggling in the context of both universal and temporal forces that work in tandem to restrict happiness and freedom.”<sup>25</sup> Jude, Kramer maintains, suffers “unfocused despair” that “could have been avoided had someone come along to give comfort and sound advice at the time Jude realizes there is no system of transmutation between languages.”<sup>26</sup> Mentorship has failed Jude at every turn. When the narrator reflects, “But nobody did come, because nobody does,” Hardy resigns his protagonist to isolation and suffering. Mentorship and culture have put individual achievement and social harmony at odds—an unintended consequence that leaves the pursuit of culture uncomfortably similar to the effects of anarchy that Arnold feared.

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<sup>25</sup>Dale Kramer, “Hardy and Readers: *Jude the Obscure*,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. Dale Kramer (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 150.

<sup>26</sup> Kramer, “Hardy and Readers: *Jude the Obscure*,” 150.

Sue's attempts at a cultural transmission that exists outside the realm of social propriety lead her only deeper into anarchy. The joy of her Hellenism is false; after the fleeting happiness brought about by "doing as one likes," she falls into what Arnold called Hebraism, meaning an overly strict view of moral conduct, and returns to Phillotson, her husband, out of a sense of religious guilt. Once described as his "*protégée* and betrothed," Sue— like Maggie Tulliver and Rachel Vinrace— must now face the possibility of marriage to her mentor (121). Trying to circumvent the clash between society and cultural transmission, Sue is led back to the same impossibility Jude faced in his attempt toward Christminster; her attempts to break free from social expectation have brought her only intense pain. When she finally submits herself to Phillotson physically, she does so out of a sense that she "ought to do this," and swears her fidelity to her husband on the New Testament. Reverting to convention and religion, Sue "must drink to the dregs" and immerse herself in the lifestyle she had fought so desperately to escape (314). Mentorship, it seems, lacks the power to transmit a meaningful culture in the face of a repressive social system.

To return to Williams's critique of Arnold, "sweetness and light" had been for Arnold an attempt at ordering society other than the divine:

Human thought 'makes' and 'saps' *all* institutions, yet must rest, finally, in something 'absolute and eternal': that is to say, by his own argument, in something above and beyond 'institutions'. In Newman, this position might make sense; he could at least have said clearly what the 'absolute and eternal' was. Arnold, however, was caught between two worlds. He had admitted reason— 'human thought'—as the maker of institutions, and thus could not see the progress of civil society as the working of a divine intervention.<sup>27</sup>

Although a critique of Arnold, Williams's insightful reading into the ordering principle behind "all institutions" provides a clue as to why Jude finally rejects religion—and why

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<sup>27</sup> Williams, *Culture and Society*, 128.

Sue later embraces it. For Jude to believe in a divine system of ordering society is to believe that his society actually is ordered, that even if he cannot understand its principles or prejudices, that they do serve some higher purpose. But, Hardy claims, they do not. It is a particularly harsh blow to mentorship, as it removes it from the type of ameliorative and harmonious work accomplished by Mentor and in the *Bildungsroman*. Instead, mentorship only offers Jude indoctrination into values that lack absolute significance or even moral aims—mentorship only perpetuates the “artificial system of things.” Jude turns to religion when his Christminster hopes were originally dashed, because mentorship had failed him. Sue turns to religion when her belief in Hellenist liberty is crushed, because mentorship had failed her. In the absence of an “absolute and eternal” value that culture can reasonably transmit, Hardy’s characters cannot move beyond the conflicts created by their attempts to gain culture.

But the kind of isolation that Jude experiences at the hand of Phillotson’s and Sue’s mentorships is of a particular kind—the result of a *habitus* that cannot find a means of reconciling opposing social and personal forces. Although he does not use Bourdieu’s terms, Williams does share with Bourdieu the belief that “We see and learn from the ways our families live and get their living; a world of work and of place, and of beliefs so deeply dissolved into everyday actions that we don’t at first even know they are beliefs, subject to change and challenge. Our education, quite often, gives us a way of looking at that life which can see other values beyond it: as Jude saw them when he looked across the land to the towers of Christminster.”<sup>28</sup> This is the constitution of *habitus*, of learning tastes and values from one’s own class. “But...again and again,” Williams continues,

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<sup>28</sup> Williams, *The Country and the City*, 197.

“comes another idea: that the world of everyday work and of ordinary families is inferior, distant; that now we know this world of the mind we can have no respect—and of course no affection—for that other and still familiar world. If we retain an affection, Christminster has a name for it: nostalgia. If we retain respect, Christminster has another name: politics or the even more dreaded ‘sociology.’”<sup>29</sup> Williams here alludes to the conflict between culture and cultural capital I have outlined—Jude has been taught to pursue an education that will either reject him for his class, or, if it allows him in, will require him to change to the point that he no longer shares tastes or values with his earlier life. Because of the conflict between culture and cultural capital, Jude’s *habitus* cannot reconcile his personal values with his social field. Cultural capital and *habitus* are both related to a transmitted background, and together present a system for understanding the long and constant process in which an individual may come to acquire and develop his or her own personal taste in the context of his or her own class. If, as I have argued, culture and cultural capital are at odds in the novel, then Jude, who develops tastes outside of his own class, is put into an interminable position.

Mentorship has put Jude in an untenable situation, since the “sovereign educator” who could unite individual study and the advancement of social harmony among classes now puts those very missions at odds instead. Since mentorship is predicated on harmony and social acceptance, the conflict caused by attempts to integrate culture into a *habitus* shaped by working-class experience is particularly problematic because it greatly limits

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<sup>29</sup> Williams, *The Country and the City*, 197.

the possibilities for cultural transmission.<sup>30</sup> In light of the conflict between culture and cultural capital—and the conflicts I describe in later chapters among culture, educational experience, and gender—mentorship certainly espouses feelings such as the “general crisis of relations between education and class” that Williams identifies, but also connects this crisis to cultural transmission.<sup>31</sup> Jude, with a *habitus* so oddly constructed and self-conflicted, has no idea how to go about transmitting the values of that *habitus* to the next generation, to his son Little Father Time.

#### **IV. Little Father Time and the Crisis of Mentorship**

At its core, mentorship involves transmission, the “invocation of the father” as Simmons puts it, and this invocation, as articulated earlier, “cannot be passed along in abstract or philosophical speculations.”<sup>32</sup> But mentorship as the invocation of the father does not bode well for Little Father Time, the enigmatic “Age masquerading as Juvenility” (218). Upon the boy’s arrival, Jude immediately projects onto him his own aspirations: “We’ll educate and train him with a view to the University. What I couldn’t accomplish in my own person perhaps I can carry out through him?” (220). Hardy establishes here a kind of cyclicity, setting up a system in which culture—or dreams of it—are passed down. It is, Bourdieu would say, the propagation of suffering or “symbolic violence,” as “contemporary social hierarchies and social inequality, as well as the suffering that they cause, are produced and maintained less by physical force than by

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<sup>30</sup> *Habitus*, according to Bourdieu, should be “generative and unifying”: “One of the functions of the notion of habitus is to account for the unity of style, which unites the practices and goods of a single agent or class of agent” (*Social Space and Symbolic Space* 8). Jude, of course, cannot achieve such unity.

<sup>31</sup> Williams, *The Country and the City*, 206.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Simmons, *Erotic Reckonings: Mastery and Apprenticeship in the Work of Poets and Lovers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 4.

forms of symbolic domination.”<sup>33</sup> This “symbolic domination” is formed by “specific organizational structures and mechanisms, and in the mental structures adapted to them.”<sup>34</sup> Bourdieu’s symbolic violence is especially important in his work on education, since he sees education, as I explained above, as a particularly notable site for the preservation of class dominance. So when Jude attempts to mentor Little Father Time with his own ideals of education, he will also transmit that same conflict between “organizational” and “mental” structures, between those same conflicting cultural models that caused him so much pain. The result in the novel is literal violence. In a perversion of Arnold’s call for a “stock-taking of our assumptions,” Little Father Time notoriously reflects too well on society’s assumptions and their ramifications when he decides to hang his siblings and then himself.<sup>35</sup> After taking stock of his family’s poverty, Little Father Time writes a suicide note that reads simply, “Done because we are too menny” (266).

Jude’s “They are making it easier for poor students now, you know” is vague at best and naïve at worst, because education had not actually gotten substantially easier for poor students (220). Taking his family to see the graduates’ procession on Christminster Remembrance Day, Jude gathers a small crowd and tells them his only fault was “It takes two or three generations to do what I tried to do in one” (257). Jude’s optimism becomes frightfully naïve in light of Little Father Time extreme action at the end of the novel. Jude mentors Little Father Time in a world of unachievable aims, just as

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<sup>33</sup> Daniel Schubert, “Suffering/ Symbolic Violence,” in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, ed. Michael Grenfell (Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2008), 183.

<sup>34</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 40.

<sup>35</sup> Gregor, introduction to *Culture and Anarchy*, xvii.

Jude himself had been mentored by Phillotson. Jude accepts that he has suffered “mental and social restlessness” and “a chaos of principles,” but he fails to see that he transmits these signs of a conflicted *habitus* down to his child in ways that make it impossible for Little Father Time to even imagine a life in which he can be free of such complaints. As Jude and Sue reproduce, they only propagate their awkward social position, no longer fitting the mold of the lower class because of their extensive academic knowledge and dedication to the personal growth Arnold associates with *Bildung*.<sup>36</sup> Little Father Time, eventually christened “Jude,” looks onto their situation with the dire urgency at which Arnold looks at his own. But since the enigmatic boy is “Age masquerading as Juvenility,” he might also be seen as the grim consequence of forcing opposites together. While embracing a life of learning and intellectual discussion, Jude and Sue are forced to live in anarchy; they bring their children up in a conflicted environment that is somehow both culture and anarchy, and there is no clear way to transmit culture out of that conflict.

Just as culture in Arnold’s paradigm is not a religious or social “body of belief,” but a way of looking at anarchy, “a way of responding to the world in which we live,” Little Father Time is the embodiment of the conflicted culture that fills the previous pages; he is the response to anarchy, and the response is deeply troubling.<sup>37</sup> Little Father Time’s corpse reflects “the whole tale of their situation”:

On that little shape had converged all the inauspiciousness and shadow which had darkened the first union of Jude, and all the accidents, mistakes, fears, errors of the last. He was their nodal point, their focus, their expression in a single term.

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<sup>36</sup> In a postscript to *Jude the Obscure* written sixteen years after the novel’s original publication, Hardy alludes to the profound consequences of not fitting into social molds: “Artistic effort always pays heavily for finding its tragedies in the forced adaptation of human instincts to rusty and irksome moulds that do not fit them” (7). Arnold was responding to a hostile review of the novel, which he paraphrases as “Your picture may not show the untrue, or the uncommon, or even be contrary to the canons of art; but it is not the view of life that we who thrive on conventions can permit to be painted” (7).

<sup>37</sup> Gregor, introduction *Culture and Anarchy*, xxvi.

For the rashness of those parents he had groaned, for their ill-assortment he had quaked, and for the misfortunes of these he had died. (266)

Little Father Time's death is the result of Jude's entire journey. Hardy here exposes the risk of smoothing over class ruptures with acts of parliament that do not ultimately change class attitudes, as he takes that prejudice to its furthest possible conclusion. Arnold dismisses anarchy too quickly, preventing the necessary consideration of the impact of disparities in access to education. The conflicted *habitus* that arises from the tension between culture and cultural capital invites a more sympathetic response to anarchy than Arnold is willing to give. Arnold sees anarchy only in opposition to culture, failing to see the ways that it also points to the tensions that emerge from within culture itself. The actual offspring of a couple who lives in anarchy, Little Father Time represents the unsustainability of a society that fails to recognize the ways in which anarchy and culture can be brought together to reflect fundamental tensions in *habitus*. If kept confined to institutions of privilege and the cultural capital of the wealthy, culture will continue to create irresolvable conflict.

When he kills his siblings and then himself, Little Father Time dramatically cuts off any possibility of mentorship and reveals a kind of paralysis: attempts at culture breed only more anarchy, but the resulting culture sees no way out of present difficulties other than personal annihilation. Indeed, Hardy's response to anarchy is unsatisfying as he has no solution, nor any seeming optimism, as illustrated by Sue's unsure response to Little Father Time: "I couldn't bear deceiving him as to the facts of life. And yet I wasn't truthful, for with a false delicacy I told him too obscurely... Why didn't I tell him pleasant untruths, instead of half realities?" (267-8). Inherent in Sue's lament is not that Little Father Time's suicide was unwarranted or that he misconstrued reality, only that she was



not able to lie better. Mentorship in this last act has taken to misrepresenting society in order to ensure its survival. Sue has no viable alternative to offer Little Father Time; the ultimate tragedy of *Jude the Obscure* is its inability to locate any kind of knowledge which a mentor might pass down.

Hardy's strange compounding of orphaning is in many ways even more sad than the figure of the orphan would typically suggest, as he creates an "orphaned parent" in Jude who, in addition to having no parents, sees visions of his own familial continuance literally dangling lifelessly before his eyes. Because he articulates the cultural circumstances that made the advent of a new kind of literary protagonist a necessity, Hardy's text resists an overly pessimistic or optimistic reading and instead evokes the "the ache of modernism" so beautifully articulated in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Hardy asks his audience to consider the "human consequences of living out the modernist premises" and "harbored a certain concept for, and distrust of, the optimistic ideal of a modern secular and rational culture."<sup>38</sup> That is to say, Hardy focuses on the implantation of ideals, and so his model of mentorship senses the impending need for a more fully heightened awareness of what culture has come to mean. What is culture's power? What else might culture symbolize? Looking to the chapters ahead, Hardy's preoccupation with what the present generation can transmit to the next lays the foundation for continued analyses of how culture becomes increasingly difficult to pass on.

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<sup>38</sup> David DeLaura, "The Ache of Modernism," *ELH* 34, no.3 (1967): 399.

Hardy's "ache of modernism" in his latter novels ushers out what David De Laura, in his analysis of Tess's famous phrase, calls "the collapse of Victorian secular idealism" and their "outdated and destructive moral scruples" (397; 394). De Laura, like Perry Meisel and Randall Stevenson, positions Hardy on the cusp of modernism, noting in particular the isolation Jude feels and his inability to mesh his more modern ideas with his less-progressive society. "To commit oneself to life on the premises of a freer and more personal morality was also to accept the ache of modern dislocation, without the sustaining optimism of the older rationalists" (399).

## Chapter Two

### “An Instinct Which May be Wrong”: Cross-Class Education in *Howards End*

*O Cambridge! Cambridge! small the need  
Of plighted faith to honour thee;  
Thine is the hand that sowed the seed,  
The gathered fruit thy guerdon be;  
'Twere wasted breath to bid thee take  
The creature though thyself didst make.*

-Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, 1887

Written three years after his 1884 graduation from Cambridge, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson's exalted ode to his college days credits his alma mater with molding him into the person he had become. The poem is certainly true at the literal level: funded by a scholarship, Dickinson's years at Cambridge eventually turned into a career, as he returned there as a lecturer in 1886 and served for over thirty years. Figuratively, though, the sentiment behind the short poem is that to matriculate at Cambridge is, as Jude Fawley always dreamed, to be afforded unique intellectual opportunities that have tangible rewards—"gathered fruit." The poem's traditional, agricultural motif is well-suited to a celebration of education: the "cultivation" of young, promising minds that are eager to be shaped under the guidance of esteemed scholars so they can one day thrive on their own. While the poem may seem overdramatic or sentimental in its praise of Cambridge, the feelings behind it were shared by Dickinson's longtime friend and biographer, E.M. Forster. In his 1934 biography of Dickinson, Forster muses that Cambridge "seems too good to be real."<sup>1</sup> While Forster wrote Dickinson's biography as a farewell salute to an old friend, his sympathy for Dickinson, an unremarkable character

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<sup>1</sup> E.M. Forster, *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), 22.

with a conservative academic past, reveals Forster's own nostalgia for the Cambridge of his youth, "the magic years," and his cherished memory of his time there.<sup>2</sup> For Forster, the Cambridge experience is education *par excellence*; the strongest, most admirable qualities in his dear friend had been cultivated at the institution they both revered.

One mark of the Cambridge man's cultivation, Forster muses later in Dickinson's biography, is his happily made claim on some kind of emotional and intellectual birthright bequeathed to him through the Cambridge corridors: "He was often to be exquisitely happy. He was always to have a choice before him which alleviated his miseries. To be a man was, in itself, a satisfaction to him, and he set himself to occupy, so far as he could, our *heritage*."<sup>3</sup> While speaking about Dickinson, specifically, Forster implies more generally that Cambridge education frees up young men's minds, opening conduits to this idea of "heritage," some continuously and generationally communicable kind of cultural knowledge. Indeed, this heritage seems to be a transmissible entity that can affect even those outside the grand halls of the Cambridge tradition: Goldie, Forster continues, "seems not only to epitomize Cambridge but to amplify it, and to make it the heritage of many who will never go there in the flesh."<sup>4</sup> Forster construes heritage as a type or subset of culture to which Cambridge grants both direct and indirect access.

Heritage is, on the one hand, a state which can be "occupied," a present-tense

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<sup>2</sup> E.M. Forster, *The Longest Journey* (Connecticut: Alfred A. Knopf, 1922), 195. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>3</sup> Forster, *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson*, 22 (emphasis mine). Since the task of carrying on this heritage falls upon Cambridge men, it isn't surprising that carrying on such tradition is the mark of success among those dedicated to the intellectual life. In his essay on T.S. Eliot, Forster celebrates one of the greatest artists of the century by crediting him with the preservation of heritage: "But he who could turn aside to complain of ladies and drawing-rooms preserved a tiny drop of our self-respect, he carried on the human heritage" (*Abinger Harvest* 88).

<sup>4</sup> Forster, *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson*, 29-30.

involvement with certain cultural pursuits; on the other, it is future possibility, a prospect that can be passed down. Despite the term's vagueness here, it is clear from his description of Dickinson's "occupation" that Forster figures heritage as intertwined with the Cambridge experience, part of its inherent value, and a necessary precursor to obtaining "gathered fruit."

Given how closely the Dickinson biography links heritage to higher education, it seems odd that in his novels Forster typically separates heritage from Cambridge or institutional education of any sort: while his plots make frequent references to culture, inheritance, and tradition—all conceivably linked to the notion of heritage briefly sketched in Dickinson's biography—he takes on few university men as serious characters. The notable exception to this is Rickie Elliot, the ill-fated Cambridge graduate in *The Longest Journey* (1907). Certainly not one of Forster's most popular or critically admired, the novel pits the traditional Cambridge education against a rapidly reforming English landscape where the traditions to which Rickie clings no longer seem relevant or sufficient. The novel was met with harsh reviews by Forster's contemporaries, who saw it as a "dreary fandango" rife with "terrible faults" (although Desmond MacCarthy gives Forster credit for being able to "hit off those miserable muffs the Cambridge Apostles pretty well").<sup>5</sup> Part of the difficulty of *The Longest Journey* is that Rickie Elliot is simply a judgmental snob. For all his embracing Cambridge and its associated heritage, and for all his growth throughout the novel when he comes to realize the limits of that heritage, Rickie remains an unsympathetic character whose unexpected death is tragic, yet

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<sup>5</sup>Qtd in P.N. Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life. Volume One: The Growth of the Novelist (1879-1914)* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1977), 150. Lytton Strachey is to be credited with the "dreary fandango" comment. The faults are further illumined in Furbank's biography (150).

uncomfortably melodramatic. His legs are crushed beneath a moving train, but he manages to eke out a dying whisper to the wealthy Mrs. Failing that confirms her suspicion that he “has failed in all he undertook” (319). Despite his time at Cambridge, he is “one of the thousands whose dust returns to the dust, accomplishing nothing in the interval.” While the beginning of the novel manifestly argues that heritage and Cambridge are both worth having, by the end it is not obvious why, or what one must do to realize the potential of this heritage.

Part of this ambiguity may originate in Forster’s own complicated relationship to that very heritage he valued at Cambridge. Rickie’s snobbishness—the root of his disdain for Stewart Ansell, a Cambridge colleague of humble birth—is of the kind that Forster also detected in his friend Goldie Dickinson. While a well-received teacher at Cambridge, Dickinson struggled in his lectures for the University Extension program, an outreach series designed to spread some of the “cultural heritage” of Cambridge to the lower classes. “His idea,” Forster says critically of Dickinson, “was that he should reveal their beauties to enthusiastic working men, who would be grateful for any crumbs from the academic banquet.”<sup>6</sup> Like Rickie Elliot and his brother-in-law, Herbert Pembroke, Dickinson’s love for heritage and tradition is short-sighted, too wrapped up in its own preservation to be of any real use outside of the institution itself. Having himself lectured for the Working Men’s College for twenty years, Forster may have felt conflicted: how can one pass on the knowledge of Cambridge to those not actually there if the “gathered fruit” of the Cambridge experience is so entwined with the institution itself?

This question is met head-on in one of Forster’s most celebrated novels, *Howards End* (1910). Whereas Stewart Ansell is used to probe the implications of working class

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<sup>6</sup> Forster, *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson*, 46.

men physically present at Cambridge, the characterization of Leonard Bast asks the reader to consider more carefully what exactly it is that a Cambridge-type education can bring to those less privileged. How is it that someone like Dickinson could make Cambridge “the heritage of many who will never go there in the flesh”? Forster creates a cast of characters outside of Cambridge who seem, as the Schlegels do, to somehow reside in its heritage, and he sets them against one family that has no use for such cultural knowledge, and one man who is desperate to learn, but gets no easy path. As the business-like Wilcox and culture-minded Schlegel families battle to see whose way of life is more viable or more worthy, poor Leonard Bast, an autodidactic clerk, gets caught in the crossfire, becoming more destitute as a result of the efforts of both families. While the universities are notably almost completely absent from the novel (save for the vapid Tibby Schlegel’s matriculation at Oxford), the culture it protects—seemingly a tradition of high art and intellectualism—is studied by both the Schlegel sisters and Bast. As in *The Longest Journey*, questions of cultural value and preservation remain paramount to the plot as the Schlegel sisters unsuccessfully attempt to take Bast under their wing. Due to their interference (as well as a misguided career move made at the advice of Henry Wilcox), Bast loses the meager job that he has and, after a tryst with Helen Schlegel that results in her pregnancy, dies at the hand of Charles Wilcox, Henry’s son.

Bast is a complete anomaly in Forster’s corpus. Not only is he the sole working-class character Forster ever undertakes with seriousness in any of his novels, but even his rudimentary familiarity with art and literature (he attends the Queen’s Hall concerts and is an avid reader of Ruskin) make him a most unusual case study for the working-class student. Poised to gain access to some type of heritage with the help of the Schlegels, the

underprivileged Bast complicates Forster's own observation in "Liberty in England": "The hungry and the homeless don't care about liberty any more than they care about cultural heritage. To pretend that they do is cant."<sup>7</sup> While Bast might not be so destitute as to be hungry or homeless in the beginning of the novel, it seems Forster is positing an inverse relation between cultural heritage and economic means. Given his obviously paltry income, Bast seems an unlikely candidate for a sustained study of cultural heritage. What, then, if anything, prevents *Howards End* from becoming "cant"? Is Bast's meager existence somehow just comfortable enough to facilitate the acquisition of cultural heritage?

The answer, I contend, comes from an important distinction: the relationship explored in the novel between culture and class is not rooted in the amount of wealth Bast does or does not have, but in a more sustained analysis of heritage. Bast pursues that same heritage problematized in *The Longest Journey* far more actively than he pursues material gain, and that heritage eludes him while simultaneously making him both tragic in his death and ultimately unrealistic in his depiction. Even though heritage in *Howards End* is associated with cultural preservation—a relationship that has already been well-argued by critics ranging from Malcolm Bradbury to, more recently, Lois Cucullu—heritage in the novel is distinctly *not* mentorship. I argue that Forster pits the cultural transmission of heritage against the failed type of transmission offered by mentorship. The reason that mentorship becomes a kind of false piety in the novel is precisely because it is not equivalent to the transmission of a heritage, nor can it ever be so. The mentorship that the Schlegel sisters attempt to offer must fail because part of Cambridge's value comes from a heritage that is, ultimately, not transmissible in the form

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<sup>7</sup>E.M. Forster, *Abinger Harvest* (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1936), 62-63.

of mentorship. Not a negation of Forster's claim that Goldie makes Cambridge "the heritage of many who will never go there in the flesh," *Howards End* is actually a resigned confirmation: heritage must necessarily be transmitted by Goldie and men like him *because* he experienced heritage in the flesh. Forster's veneration of the kind of educational experience afforded by Cambridge confounds him as he tries to confer this type of education to Leonard Bast, who is mentored by the Schlegels according to Cambridge principles, but without the benefit of heritage. As a privilege of their class, the Schlegels received a first-hand acculturation from their father (a university professor), who brought up his daughters in the tradition of passionate intellectualism that he thought the university, at its best, had also promoted. Heritage here becomes an integral part of one's *habitus*; it relates to a particular lived experience that shapes one's disposition. The Schlegels can encourage Bast's self-cultivation, but they ultimately cannot reshape the life experience afforded to him by his class. The lack of heritage, not simply the lack of wealth or access to learning, is what perpetually complicates Bast's attainment of the cultural tradition he studies.

This chapter argues that *Howards End* offers the conflict between heritage and mentorship as a criticism of a long history of educational reform that sought to mentor the working classes according to upper class principles, but then denied them the rights of that privileged heritage. For Hardy, as I argued, mentorship is an ideal, a rite of passage or key to Oxbridge. For Forster, I argue that mentorship is a kind of mediocre and ineffectual replacement for the heritage offered by Oxbridge. Whereas Hardy characterizes mentorship as the education of the upper classes, Forster characterizes it as the education of the lower classes. Yet for both it symbolizes something fundamental that



is denied to those for whose benefit the reform measures were enacted. Margaret Schlegel mirrors the efforts of the Mechanics' Institutes and University Extension programs that eventually led to the Working Men's College in which Forster was involved, as her conversations with Helen and Henry re-enact decades' worth of debates regarding what and how to teach a motivated and growing segment of the population. While Margaret clings to the humanist traditions of the universities, she seeks to align this culture with more profound forms of human sympathy of the liberal spirit, and to mentor Bast with the former, and Henry Wilcox with the latter. That she fails miserably in both regards—Bast ends up dead, crushed beneath a bookcase, while Henry becomes a weakened invalid incapable of much independent activity or thought—speaks to the problems of transmitting heritage via surrogacy, since heritage cannot be separated from lived experience. Like Jude, Bast is taught to appreciate a culture that will forever deny him any kind of meaningful access. But where Forster advances the debate is in his questioning of the very motivations behind these reform movements as he ushers out the Victorian and Edwardian liberalism that had shaped his own writing and experience, and ushers in a period of political and intellectual uncertainty that would remove his own beloved Cambridge heritage to a place that is decidedly more past than passed down.

### **I. The Case for Heritage**

Malcolm Bradbury's 1966 collection of essays in celebration of Forster includes his own reading of *Howards End*. In an argument that has now become critically axiomatic, Bradbury claims that the novel grasps toward unity and harmony while navigating morality in a complicated society: "*Howards End* is...about the circumstances

in which the moral life, which is also the full life of the imagination, can be led in society, about the compromises which it must effect with itself if it is to do so, and about the moral imaginative value of making such compromises.”<sup>8</sup> In a corresponding claim, Bradbury continues, “[t]he Wilcoxes are associated with a practical English heritage, the Schlegels with an intellectual, *deraciné* one.”<sup>9</sup> Bradbury’s latter statement, on the surface, is a simple illustration of the type of compromise he locates in the novel: the “practical English heritage” of society is a concession for which the “intellectual, *deraciné*” heritage of the imagination must allow. This reading assumes a ready connection between “heritage” and the novel’s overt engagement with culture more generally, as heritage here is only part of the novel’s more general self-proclaimed staging of the battle between “Intellectualism” and “Materialism.”<sup>10</sup>

Andrea Zengulys, however, proposes in *Modernism and the Locations of Literary Heritage* a different possibility for heritage. Her argument rightly emphasizes heritage as a particular relationship that characterizes a fraught relationship between the present and past. “Heritage,” she argues, “is the creation of a past that is patently ideological and (thus) nostalgic, defining of collective and individuated subjects and rationalizing of unsettling social change. It is a past entirely fitted to the present.”<sup>11</sup> With its orientation towards nostalgia and pastness, this heritage seems distinctly anti-modernist; Zengulys

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<sup>8</sup> Malcolm Bradbury, “Howards End,” in *Forster: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), 130.

<sup>9</sup> Malcolm Bradbury, “Howards End,” in *Forster: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), 132-133.

<sup>10</sup> See especially *Howards End*, page 25.

<sup>11</sup> Andrea Zengulys, *Modernism and the Locations of Literary Heritage*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1.

associates it with the uniquely Victorian and Edwardian fascination with history and memoriam.<sup>12</sup> With an emphasis on landscape and architecture, she argues that modernists must write against this “visibly and even ostentatiously mediated past,” and that this process is proof of modernism’s necessary and continual engagement with its Victorian predecessor even as it seeks to turn away from it.<sup>13</sup> Modernism, as it breaks from the past, must simultaneously “retell” the past “in ways transformative of the present,” forming an account of the past that resists the traditional Victorian heritage narrative of nostalgia and rationalization and instead can actually alter how one understands the present.<sup>14</sup> According to Zemgulys’s framework, heritage is useful to the modernist even as he or she rejects it, as it frames new ways to examine how the present reshapes the past, and how the past has shaped the present.

Zemgulys’s reading of *Howards End*, an Edwardian novel only on the cusp of modernism, identifies Forster’s farewell to heritage. She believes that for him “it represented a memorialized past best superseded,” a gesture away from what she considers Victorian nostalgia. “*Howards End*,” she argues, “strains to represent life in new and better ways, to be *modernist*, in short.”<sup>15</sup> Like Bradbury, Zemgulys reads with an eye toward unity and argues that the novel positions art and the appropriate appreciation of it by an acculturated public as ameliorative forces finally able to supersede heritage. In her extended reading of the Chelsea Embankment, Zemgulys identifies Forster “with liberal, even utopian modernist ambitions: the scene projects an author who, like nearly

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<sup>12</sup> Zemgulys, *Modernism and the Locations of Literary Heritage*, 5.

<sup>13</sup> Zemgulys, *Modernism and the Locations of Literary Heritage*, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Zemgulys, *Modernism and the Locations of Literary Heritage*, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Zemgulys, *Modernism and the Locations of Literary Heritage*, 118.

every major modernist of the early twentieth century, imagines that art can make a better world (democratically ‘open’) *if* that art has a public which can meet it (who use it ‘rightly’).”<sup>16</sup> The elite space of the Chelsea Embankment is, in her argument, an oasis away from the noisy and crowded Queen’s Hall, a space depicted as fraught with reminders of disparities in class and culture.

While Zemgulys is correct to argue that *Howards End* is about moving past a heritage that is passé or outdated, she puts heritage and culture too much at odds. In her emphasis on art and art appreciation, Zemgulys dismisses the means through which such appreciation is cultivated and transmitted. Although she mentions public works projects, she pays little notice to education reform movements, those efforts that addressed the divided society that she claims spurned the Victorian and Edwardian reliance on heritage narratives, and also to spread the kind of cultivation that she argues is necessary to Forster’s enduring vision of art. Zemgulys addresses a heritage that is based on the need for stability in the wake of reform and she sees the novel as envisioning an open and liberal space that emerges on the other side of such movements, but she misses that it is Forster’s nostalgic Cambridge—his own heritage—that reflects his first model of such an open and liberal space.

This particular heritage, I maintain, is the subject of its own sustained inquiry in the novel, and the preservation of such a space would depend on more than just the enduring vision of art that satisfies Bradbury and Zemgulys. Just as Forster sought a “past best superseded,” he also mourns in *Howards End* the loss of a specific heritage associated with lived experience. He questions in the novel how to transmit a specific

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<sup>16</sup> Zemgulys, *Modernism and the Locations of Literary Heritage*, 118.

heritage of one's past, one that for him marked the "gathered fruit" so necessary to a cultivated and humane life. Finding this heritage impossible to transmit, he wonders if it is ultimately best superseded, as well.

## **II. Constructing Heritage at Cambridge**

If this heritage is mourned in *Howards End*, it is created in his earlier novel *The Longest Journey*, where Forster sentimentalizes Cambridge and, ultimately, turns it into a nostalgic heritage of the type Zemgulys identifies. *The Longest Journey* is the only novel in which Forster takes on outright the value of the education that Cambridge offers, outlining his contemporary vision of what his "magic years" had brought him. As such, it is the best place to locate what exactly it is about the Cambridge education and experience that Forster thought worth having and that he would want future generations to have as well. In the novel, Forster articulates a version of Cambridge that combines his nostalgic memories of a venerated past with questions of how that same memory can be refigured in the present and, in a crucial addition to Zemgulys's framework for thinking about heritage, passed on into the future.

*The Longest Journey* famously opens with a group of young Cambridge undergraduates in a dormitory, engaged in a polarizing and intense discussion about cows. Despite the mundane subject matter, their conversation is important: "It was philosophy. They were discussing the existence of objects" (11). Given that the topic is presented as inane, the value of the discussion must stem from the very nature of debate itself. In pondering whether or not cows have "a real existence of their own," Ansell and Tilliard are involved in a process that Forster positions as unique to university life, for "at

Oxford, just at the same time, one was asking, ‘What do our rooms look like in the vac.?’ Forster makes the subject matter seem obviously irrelevant; what matters is that the young men have the luxury to “honestly think the matter out,” to test the limits of their philosophical abilities and ponder the abstract, fundamental questions of existence (12).<sup>17</sup> Whether Tiliard or Ansell prevails is irrelevant—indeed, neither is claimed the victor—yet both feel triumphant by virtue of having gone through the steps of the mental exercise: “I have proved it to myself,” claims Ansell, to which Tiliard retorts that he has proved to himself the exact opposite conclusion (11). From the outset, Cambridge is revealed as a kind of gymnasium for the mind, a forum for open thought and self-understanding. As he does later with Dickinson, Forster casts these men as “exquisitely happy” because they have the freedom to choose a perspective and work with it until they reach whatever conclusions they deem satisfactory.

During this debate, Rickie Elliot, the novel’s protagonist, remains silent. A passive receiver, he absorbs information, taking in the conversation as part of his physical environment. On the one hand, this reflects his perceived limited abilities—“It was too difficult for him... If he spoke, he should simply make himself a fool” (12). On the other, though, it is a confirmation of Cambridge’s value as a space hospitable to heritage. Even as a quiet observer, Rickie is taking part in a rich tradition of open discourse simply by virtue of his presence. It is his room in which the debate takes place, and in his later reflections on the discussion that had unfolded, he has the chance to begin to draw his

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<sup>17</sup> This is not to say that these kinds of discussion do not also have intrinsic educational worth: “subject, object, and the nature of reality” are indeed the stuff of Mr. Ramsay’s research in Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*. Here, however, the intellectualism of the debate is seconded to the fellowship it fosters—but it is, crucially, still an academic discourse that unites the young men. The topic may be inane, but it is not irrelevant.

own conclusions about the cow, to test both hypotheses. His very lack of conclusion is itself an accomplishment: he, too, shares Dickinson's freedom to "have a choice before him which alleviated his miseries." Rickie here does not need a mentor; he only needs to live at Cambridge.

Indeed, Rickie—like Dickinson—finds Cambridge a welcome academic oasis. His picture of university life is in sharp contrast to that of, as Forster would have it, public school humiliation and drudgery.<sup>18</sup> Forster's distinction between public schooling and higher education centers on a distinction between isolation and companionship:

A year ago he had known none of these joys. He had crept cold and friendless and ignorant out of a great public school, preparing for a silent and solitary journey, and praying as a highest favour that he might be left alone. Cambridge had not answered his prayer. She had taken and soothed him and warmed him, and had laughed at him a little, saying that he must not be so tragic yet awhile, for his boyhood had been but a dusty corridor that led to the spacious halls of youth. In one year he had made many friends and learnt much, and he might learn even more if he could but concentrate his attention on that cow. (14)

Sociality and warmth personified, Cambridge wraps together young men in the embrace of her spacious, commodious halls.<sup>19</sup> Public schooling is dull and lifeless by virtue of its emphasis on the individual, solitary journey, whereas Cambridge is vivacious and comforting because it both provides social activity and allows one to engage in self-reflective activity (i.e. debates and philosophical discussions) in the company of others.

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<sup>18</sup> See John Colmer's *E.M. Forster: The Personal Voice* (1975) for a fuller accounting of Forster's disdain for the British public schools. "Forster's experience of his public school," Colmer explains, "provided him with two vital elements of his vision of life: first, a hatred of the conventional values that were taught there; second, a recognition that the public school system was responsible for the characteristic weakness of the English middle classes—their inability to give to the emotional life its proper importance" (5). As Sarah Cole notes, this sentiment was shared by several of Forster's contemporaries: "...the idea of the university as an attractive alternative to the brutal public schools became something of a commonplace among many of Forster's contemporaries. When Forster describes this movement into collegiate harmony in *The Longest Journey*, his attitude is more representative than idiosyncratic" (51).

<sup>19</sup> Forster makes later reference of his disdain for public schooling in *A Passage to India*: "Ronny's religion was of the sterilized public-school brand, which never goes bad, even in the tropics" (286).

Inherent to Forster's claim here is that to gain knowledge about oneself, one must interact with friends. As had been true of the debate between Ansell and Tilliard, the lively and social manner in which that subject matter is discussed is more important than the subject matter itself.<sup>20</sup> Forster, as would the writers of the 1930's campus and varsity novels, ignores the transfer of book-knowledge from professor to student in the Cambridge classrooms, celebrating instead the exchange of meaningful reflections among gathered friends in the dormitory. The essence of the Cambridge experience is, as the Schlegel sisters will later offer Leonard Bast through mentorship, intelligent conversation.

The centrality of these relationships to the Cambridge experience is further demonstrated in Sarah Cole's *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, where she analyzes "normative ideas of masculinity" in late-Victorian cultural politics as espoused by public schools and universities.<sup>21</sup> Cole's study of male friendship leads her to conclude that public schools and universities are "crucial sites of male community and identity."<sup>22</sup> The fellowship that Cambridge allows for is, in her argument, an ideal relationship, one that Rickie will try unsuccessfully to recreate: Rickie "and his peers will pursue the idea of creating new social forms for men, with their own symbolic repertoire, into post-Cambridge life. If the university offers a humane and compassionate alternative to the public school, what looms after the men go down is a kind of aporia: the dreariness

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<sup>20</sup> Lois Cucullu acknowledges the "social space of the university," although her focus is on "the aesthetic pairing of the sexual and affective from the Classical Studies that socialized him at Cambridge" and his application of that Hellenized model to the domestic novel in *Howards End*: "He effectively traduces the romanticized social contract of institutionalized monogamy and the domestic woman's power over it with a same-sex amative and affective alliance" (28).

<sup>21</sup> Sarah Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 31.

<sup>22</sup> Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 23.



of marriage, the meaninglessness of many forms of middle-class labor, the slow dissolution of the friendships that alone had been accorded value in the novel.”<sup>23</sup> The starting point of Cole’s argument is the end of one’s time at Cambridge; Cambridge is a kind of preparation for adulthood, where the fellowship Forster enjoyed would be also an ideal model for post-Cambridge life. The tension central to *The Longest Journey*, Cole argues, stems from the fact that Cambridge friendship is incompatible with other social norms. Cambridge is an idealistic or utopian model unsustainable outside of its own context.

Cole’s argument is, in many ways, a refutation of Herbert Pembroke’s claim that “school is the world in miniature” (182). As Rickie claims, Cambridge “is wonderful, but—but it’s so tiny,” and so he fears that once he and his peers go out into the world, they will forget one another (76). Rickie’s fears come true, as Cole reads each subsequent relationship in the novel as a failed attempt to recreate the ones forged at Cambridge. The rest of the world simply does not measure up: Rickie continues to grasp for a society that is not capable of or suited to Cambridge’s youthful idealism, nor does it allow for the luxury of fraternal philosophical musings. As Rickie’s marriage fails, his career sputters, and he avoids his lone living relative, he consistently fails to regain the pleasure of his time at Cambridge. Cole’s point is that educational institutions operate under a social code that is distinct from middle-class values, so their values are not applicable to society at large. Her argument is very present and future tense: she is concerned with men who attend Cambridge and how their lives after graduation are unable to reclaim the fellowship they formerly enjoyed.

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<sup>23</sup> Cole, *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*, 58.

What, then, is the long term value of attending Cambridge? To answer this question, Forster does not look forward in the way Cole imagines, but backward. Forster has only ambivalence about the future in *The Longest Journey*, yet there he greatly venerates the past, and I argue that we can look at the ways in which Forster does so in order to see how Cambridge fellowship is both a literal experience and part of a greater tradition that extends far back into the past. In the novel, he associates the university with a long tradition. The heritage Cambridge provides is structured from the careful selection of choice parts from that tradition; Cambridge's lasting value cannot come from the duplicability of the experience, but from a nostalgically formed memory. Cambridge is celebrated distinctly as a place that must always evoke versions of the past in meaningful ways that will help one make sense of—or find solace in—the present. Forster begins to make the case in *The Longest Journey* that even the memory of Cambridge is worthwhile.

With a nod to its long-held position as a revered institution of higher learning, the ancient Cambridge is, from the start of the novel, steeped in images of pastness. Even the trees “had for generations fooled the college statutes by their residence in the haunts of youth” (12). In one day, Rickie can have conversations with intellectual masters both past and present: a typical morning consists of reading “Theocritus, whom he believed to be the greatest of Greek poets” and “[lunch] with a merry don...” (14). The philosophical bovine has grown old, the subject of discussion for many years: “As for the cow, she was still going strong, though turning a little academic as the years passed over her” (76). At Cambridge, as Forster's biographer Nicola Beauman observes, “the past, the classical past, revived and the resurrected authors—Sophocles, Virgil, Theocritus—stayed with

him for life.”<sup>24</sup> The present is never far removed from the very past that helped create and shape the curriculum and camaraderie Rickie and his friends enjoy. In their lively debates and philosophical discussions, the Cambridge youth not only engage in meaningful fellowship, but participate in a centuries-old tradition that in turn keeps alive the voices of even the earliest great thinkers and grants them contemporary relevance.

Rickie, a “classical enthusiast,” learned at Cambridge to make the past live, which is precisely why he is never fully comfortable at Sawston, Pembroke’s secondary school. Pembroke is ashamed of Sawston’s past as a school for the underprivileged and works to project an image that directly refutes the school’s own history. Under Pembroke’s direction, Sawston educates only rich boys, imbuing them with the values more traditionally ascribed to the education and culture of the ancient Greek thinkers: “patriotism, athletics, learning, and religion.”<sup>25</sup> Sawston has no vaulted past of its own; to increase its standing (and surely funding) it must engage with classical values of the past so that it may become in the present a revered institution. Through schoolmaster Herbert Pembroke’s lamentation that the school never can quite achieve the glorious traditions that an older school with a tradition of greatness could, the novel makes the case for why heritage matters—why it is important to have a longstanding tradition that remains at the forefront of one’s memory. “Tradition,” Pembroke claims, “is of incalculable value” (183). The tradition of which Pembroke speaks is connected deeply to institutions of learning—“I envy,” Pembroke bemoans, “those schools that have a natural connection with the past” (183). Sawston, as a secondary school rather than a university, will

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<sup>24</sup>Nicola Beauman, *E.M. Forster* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 78.

<sup>25</sup>S.P. Rosenbaum, “*The Longest Journey*: E.M. Forster’s Refutation of Idealism,” in *E.M. Forster: A Human Exploration*, eds. G.K. Das and John Beer, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1979), 43.

necessarily lack the “esprit de corps,” as Pembroke calls it, of Cambridge, but Forster emphasizes equally that it suffers from a lack of tradition, a history that grants it contemporary worth.<sup>26</sup>

With its deeply rooted historical ties, Cambridge has value simply because of its connection to a rich past. Pembroke believes that regardless of present day activities, Cambridge will always have an edge over other educational institutions because it emerged from a glorified intellectual tradition—this past will stay with it and exalt it, just as, contrastingly, Sawston’s lower class origins will always impede its being seen as a vaulted institution of learning. The value of heritage, though, is not limited to just this tradition of grand intellectual narratives of civilization; it applies also to an individual’s own learning. So, in his analysis of what Cambridge offers to its students, Forster asks his readers to consider that the value of Cambridge learning also stems from its becoming part of a student’s personal past. A young man’s mere association with such a tradition is enough to somehow elevate him later. Rickie shares with his wife, Agnes—who had been engaged to Rickie’s university peer, Gerald Crich, until his untimely death—that fellowship is what he took away from his university years:

You see, the notion of good-fellowship develops late: you can just see its beginning here among the prefects: up at Cambridge it flourishes amazingly. That’s why I pity people who don’t go up to Cambridge: not because a University is smart, but because those are the magic years and—with luck—you see up there what you couldn’t see before and mayn’t ever see again. (195)

Most obviously, Rickie’s observation supports Cole’s claim that the Cambridge years are an irreproducible ideal. If we consider, however, that this revelation does not come until

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<sup>26</sup> Pembroke’s frustration stems in particular from the presence of the day boys, those who attend classes and then go home. He believes that boarding students take class more seriously—in a nod to Cambridge, the fraternity breeds productive discussion.

the halfway point of the novel, just past the end of the “Cambridge” section, then it becomes clear that Rickie’s memory of the experience is idealized. He is unable to fully appreciate fellowship in the moment; instead it “develops late” and is satisfying to him in memory. As such, it shows that fellowship becomes the essence of Cambridge in nostalgia—it is the strongest memory of one’s time there, what one must cling to while embarking into an adult life that may be rife with uncertainty.

So when Forster speaks of heritage in Dickinson’s biography, or emphasizes his “personal relations” credo in the later essay “What I Believe,” he refers to that lasting memory of fellowship he emphasizes in *The Longest Journey*; it is the root of the “magic years” that offers the privileged perspective Rickie attempts to articulate to Agnes. The memory of Cambridge, the strength of the heritage of fellowship—these do for Rickie what Phillotson’s mentorship had done for Jude early on. Heritage is supposed to be enough to guide one through the future, even if the actual experiences cannot be duplicated; it is a solace for the kind of loss Cole studies. Yet part of the novel’s tragic and problematic ending is that heritage is not enough; memory is too fleeting. Rickie, anxious about leaving Cambridge, knows that the bonds he has forged will not last, because even the mere memory of them will fade: “‘We know and like each other; we shan’t forget.’ But they did forget, for man is so made that he cannot remember long without a symbol; he wished there was a society, a kind of friendship office, where the marriage of true minds could be registered” (78). Not only does Rickie fear the end of his “magic years,” but he also fears that he will lose the mere memory of them, and that such a loss is somehow even more poignant.

My point is that Forster knew attempts to recreate Cambridge were destined to be futile, and so he posits the value of a mediated memory. Because applying Cambridge ideals to the real world is so difficult, living in the memory or heritage that he acquired at Cambridge becomes all that Rickie can do; he tries to apply his past to his present, and to use Cambridge to guide him. At the end of the novel, when Rickie is finally willing to embrace a character from his past—his half-brother, Stephen Wonham—he tells Mrs. Failing he is finally happy, “Because, as we used to say at Cambridge, the cow is there. The world is real again. This is a room, that is a window, outside is the night... The day is straight below, shining through other windows into other rooms” (313). Only back in the comfort of the memory of Cambridge does Rickie feel confident, and it is by channeling his memories that he is able to look beyond his own troubles. Cambridge has soothed Rickie once again, even if it is unable to protect him once he has left; the memory itself has a unique power in that it can bring the comfort of friendship even if it cannot duplicate the actual relationships forged at Cambridge. For Rickie, however, even that is insufficient: like Dickinson, Rickie has benefitted greatly from heritage, yet in his case heritage, made up of private memory and personal experience, only reminds him of what he has not got, and will never be able to achieve again.

If memory is where heritage’s lasting value could conceivably come from, then the problem Rickie ultimately faces is that the memory is not transferable—or at least Rickie has not been able to figure out how to do so until his death, at which point these memories seem to have little benefit. And here is where *The Longest Journey* becomes so unsettling: while raising the possible shortcomings of heritage, Forster continues to grant importance to the memories of Cambridge. Unable to turn away from his heritage, yet

simultaneously unable to use it helpfully, Rickie is practically cut in half at the novel's end, a fitting image in a novel dominated by unsatisfying ambivalence. *The Longest Journey* lacks the harmony that would come to characterize Forster's later *Howards End*, as it fails to come to any clear position regarding heritage's place and value. Forster does, however, successfully raise a new question: can the heritage that he associates with Cambridge in *The Longest Journey* exist outside of it? Can the experiences typical of Cambridge—the pleasure of fellowship and discourse—in some way be enough on their own? If the heritage offered by attending Cambridge is persistently insufficient in modern society, can a similar set of values instead be reconfigured and transmitted outside of the university, perhaps to greater success?

### **III. De-Institutionalizing Culture**

In *The Longest Journey*, Cambridge is celebrated on two fronts: as a forum for friendship and discussion and as a site of memory. Inherent to that juxtaposition is a concern for the future, the propagation of those values that grow out of such camaraderie. When Rickie worries that “[t]here isn't any future,” he confirms his own early fear that his personal past would inhibit him from transplanting the Cambridge experience into his later life. Rickie is himself obviously connected to a more painful past apparent in his very biology—he suffers from a congenital deformity, a visible limp that disgusts Agnes at first: “This hereditary business is too awful” (18). Rickie fears that all he can pass on is his physical lameness and the bitterness that comes from having been bullied because of it. When his daughter is born lame, that fear is realized. When she dies (from an illness unrelated to her lameness), it verifies for him that he has not got anything worth passing

on: “But the lesson he had learnt so glibly at Cambridge should be heeded now; no child should ever be born to him again” (212). His daughter represents to Rickie the transmission of his own values, which are ultimately only cynicism and pain. And here is where the future of Cambridge begins to break down: where Forster celebrates the treasured past captured by heritage, he struggles to find a vision of the future where any of it really matters.

Instead, the future in *The Longest Journey* belongs to Rickie’s half-brother, Stephen Wonham, who marries Rickie’s widow and has a child with her. Unable to find a meaningful manifestation of Cambridge fellowship in a post-Cambridge world, Forster unsatisfyingly and abruptly turns to a clichéd version of England’s future as a whole: “he believed that he guided the future of our race, and that, century after century, his thoughts and his passions would triumph in England” (326). As Carola Kaplan points out, Forster does not make clear exactly what Wonham brings to England’s future—he becomes an honest farmer who also arranges for the posthumous publication of Rickie’s stories. Kaplan concludes that “the narrative suggests that England’s salvation lies in the hands of honest and right-minded businessmen such as Mr. Ansell, whose money supports his son, and Stephen... Forster seems to place his greatest hopes in men who use their business acumen to support and protect art and intellect.”<sup>27</sup> But the protection of art and intellect seems now separate from the institution that produced such talents in the first place. The ending is unsuccessful, Kaplan continues, because the novel is caught between criticizing “modern and industrial development” while simultaneously “applaud[ing] the business acumen that has produced it and the worthier products of that money-making

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<sup>27</sup> Carola Kaplan, “Absent Father, Passive Son: The Dilemma of Rickie Elliot in *The Longest Journey*,” *Twentieth Century Literature* 33. 2 (1987): 207.



talent: the breakdown of class barriers, social amelioration, and the patronage of art and intellect.”<sup>28</sup> In the end, she believes, the novel “collapses upon itself,” unable to piece together a coherent vision for the future.<sup>29</sup> Eminently unsatisfying, the ending never resolves why Forster went to such pains to recall a worthwhile Cambridge heritage, since it seems so irrelevant to the future England offered by Wonham.

But biographically, Cambridge remained close to Forster for virtually his entire life, since he spent most of his final years living at King’s College. Cambridge, John Colmer explains, “liberated Forster from a world he despised and provided him with a symbol of the good life.”<sup>30</sup> In parallel, while Rickie was ultimately never “liberated,” he remains, to the last, dedicated to thoughts of “[b]ooks and friends,” desperate for that “good life” (318-9). Where *To the Longest Journey* fails is in bringing together the “good life” of Cambridge with the “good life” that Wonham comes to experience. The world that Forster “despised” was one in which he felt increasingly unsure, one where the role of art seemed in flux, particularly in relation to modern industrial practices and economic concerns, which is why his endorsement of Wonham is only half-hearted at best. *The Longest Journey* leaves off with Forster wanting to harmonize the Cambridge “good life” with the honest, simple Wonham, but that harmony never quite takes place within the confines of that early novel.

Even though Forster never grants Rickie such liberation into the “good life,” he does turn again to questions of the value of fellowship and discourse in one of his most

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<sup>28</sup> Kaplan, “Absent Father, Passive Son,” 207.

<sup>29</sup> Kaplan, “Absent Father, Passive Son,” 196.

<sup>30</sup> John Colmer, *E.M. Forster: The Personal Voice* (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 6.

famous novels, *Howards End*. In the novel, the values he associated with the university are given another chance, as the unproductively resolved conflict at the end of *The Longest Journey* between economics and cultural awareness becomes its starting point. Kaplan's "business acumen" belongs to the Wilcox family, and "the patronage of art and intellect" belongs to the Schlegels. The novel's harmony comes from the joining together of these two families as matriarch Ruth Wilcox and intellectual Margaret Schlegel reach out to one another. When Margaret marries Ruth's widower, she begins a kind of uneasy unification, some preliminary steps toward the cultivation of appreciation for both ways of life in ways that evoke Stephen Wonham's provisions for the sustenance of art and intellect. This, as I mentioned above, has been the focus of the majority of critical readings of the novel. But in an important distinction that has not yet been critically addressed, *Howards End* lacks an institutionalized educational system but echoes some of the same Cambridge ideals articulated in *The Longest Journey*. I believe that more sustained attention to this point can illuminate a different side of the novel's famous "only connect" theme, revealing a heritage in which such connection becomes impossible.

The university itself in *Howards End* takes on quite a different hue from the earlier novel, being hardly venerated at all. At the start of the novel, sixteen-year-old Tibby Schlegel should have all the promise that Rickie did, however instead he is "an intelligent man... but dyspeptic and difficile."<sup>31</sup> Tibby is variously described as a

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<sup>31</sup>E.M. Forster, *Howards End*, (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1993), 26. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

While Margaret and Helen get considerable introduction, Tibby receives a mere line and a half, "Little need be premised about Tibby."

tiresome hypochondriac, a poor host, and an egotist (3; 36; 56).<sup>32</sup> As the sole son of an intellectual father, he should presumably embrace the fellowship and learning of Oxford, where he matriculates soon after the novel's start. Tibby's father, Ernst Schlegel, had left Germany when, in a nod to the utilitarian threat Arnold faced, he began to feel that the universities there "have learned men, who collect more facts than do the learned men of England. They collect facts, and facts, and empires of facts. But which of them will rekindle the light within?" Tibby is hardly one for kindling, as he is positioned in direct opposition not only to his father, but also to the values associated with Cambridge in *The Longest Journey*. He does not socialize with others, nor does he exhibit any of the passion shown by Tilliard and Ansell in their excited debate. In fact, he does not say much in the novel at all, and does even less.<sup>33</sup>

While Rickie admires the lush trees of Cambridge as he reflects on the many generations who had similarly lounged in their shade, Tibby's appreciation of the Oxford landscape is far less reflective. Rickie's romanticized enjoyment of nature is replaced by a colder, overly intellectualized aesthetic appreciation:

Tibby was sensitive to beauty, the experience was new, and he gave a description of his visit that was almost glowing. The august and mellow University, soaked with the richness of the western counties that it has served for a thousand years, appealed at once to the boy's taste: it was the kind of thing he could understand, and he understood it all the better because it was empty. Oxford is— Oxford: not a mere receptacle for youth, like Cambridge. Perhaps it wants its inmates to love it rather than to love one another: such at all events was to be its effect on

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<sup>32</sup> Tibby's portrayal as an egotist is especially interesting given Virginia Woolf's claim in "The Leaning Tower" that the writers of the thirties became great egotists. These writers, as I explain in my last chapter, feel a lack of certainty over their own place in a tumultuous society, which leads them to write about the only subject they have a secure knowledge of: themselves. While Tibby obviously did not live through the war to which Woolf refers, it is interesting to see how Forster anticipates the egotism of a young man unsure of what to do with his education.

<sup>33</sup> The notable exception is that he betrays Bast's whereabouts, leading to Charles' accidentally killing the clerk. Even this, however, is done in a moment of apathy, a careless gesture without much motivation or thought.

Tibby... He made no friends. His Oxford remained Oxford empty, and he took into life with him, not the memory of a radiance, but the memory of a colour scheme. (89)

Oxford here is the antithesis of Cambridge in *The Longest Journey* as fellowship and lively discourse are replaced by stone silence, reduced to an unemotional, dry aesthetic. As a “mere receptacle for youth,” Cambridge seems hardly immune from the extinguished “light within” that encouraged Ernst to abandon the German universities. Tibby wants “civilization without activity”; he wants the exact opposite of what Cambridge promised Rickie, which was civilization and activity in perfect harmony (94). Forster glosses over Tibby’s time at Oxford in a mere few lines, characterizing it as completely unremarkable.

Tibby’s lack of motivation and enthusiasm may stem from the way that institutionalized university education in the novel is, in contrast to *The Longest Journey*, removed entirely from the realm of classical philosophy and its associated discourse. Instead, it is aligned with what Rickie struggles against in the entire second half of *The Longest Journey*: an industrialized and unfeeling society.<sup>34</sup> In *Howards End*, the universities no longer produce Rickie Elliot-types at all. The fellowship that could not be duplicated in *The Longest Journey* is here never generated within the university itself in the first place. Oxford does not equip Tibby to move forward out into the world and attempt to duplicate his experience; instead he turns to the university as a way of turning away from meaningful engagement with the rest of society. When Helen and Margaret agree that “money is the warp of the world,” they further concede that, for Tibby, Oxford

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<sup>34</sup> Rickie struggles to accept his half-brother, who he believes to be the illegitimate son of his hated father (Stephen, in fact, is the illegitimate child of Rickie’s mother, whom he loved). The moral conundrum he faces because of Wonham manifests itself in Rickie’s anger towards his students, an anger only compounded by his frustration over not being able to live as a writer. His Cambridge friend Ansell ignores Rickie’s letters, only further separating Rickie from the happiness and camaraderie he had at university.

is the woof (108). This is actually a fairly damning statement, confirming that Tibby's desire for "civilization without activity" leads him to a worldview that lacks the optimism and vigor that Rickie Elliot had once had and that had motivated Ernst Schlegel to leave Germany. The woof, Margaret explains, is "Very much what one chooses... it's something that isn't money—one can't say more." For Helen, the woof is walking at night; for Mrs. Wilcox, it is Howards End—for both, the woof of life is a means of drawing closer to the world around, a meaningful and rejuvenating interaction with nature. For Tibby, Oxford is just an interaction with himself, an exercise for the mind that can be played alone and that only further encourages him to retract himself from society.

Together, Tibby and Oxford present an image of education that is in stark contrast to the carefully laid out veneration of Cambridge in *The Longest Journey*. Whereas Rickie's Cambridge puts great emphasis on the ways in which the institution revitalizes classic civilization through activity, Tibby's Oxford is dryly aesthetic, as dead as the authors it teaches. In *Howards End*, the ancient university—once a symbol of learning, free discourse, and a great tradition carried out over many generations—is a hollow shell, completely devoid of character. It produces no lasting and meaningful memories; Tibby is unlikely to recollect it with great nostalgia. For Tibby, Oxford is simply a gift he receives from his father's money, an institution he gained rights to as a benefit of his class.

Despite the paucity of meaningful institutionalized education, the spirit of Cambridge still lives in the novel. Instead of young men in dormitories, we are presented with Helen and Margaret Schlegel, sisters who seem to embody the lively discourse exemplified in *The Longest Journey*. Often engaged in serious discussion both with one

another and with anyone who will listen—“both were tremendous talkers”—the sisters seem to live in a state of perpetual fellowship (26). “Discussion keeps a house alive,” Margaret exclaims to Mrs. Wilcox, and the sisters prove intelligent, articulate, and lively (65). They engage frequently in debates of the same type as Ansell and Tilliard, questioning matters such as outer versus inner life and the mind of God. The intellectual light that eluded their father, Ernst, in Germany seems to shine in them as they revel in the varied aspects of a joyful intellectualism. Their father, a man dedicated to what he saw as an enduring vision of the university’s potential, wanted to pass that heritage along to his children, and he seems to have at least provided his daughters with an intellectualized, argumentative spirit.

Even though Helen and Margaret are able to live a comfortable life in which they can engage in friendship and discussion every day, they still seem to lack a heartfelt connection to tradition or memory; these died along with their father. As with Tibby and Oxford, they have little value for nostalgic memory. They rarely speak of the past and feel only a passing grief over losing the house in which they were raised. “There is nothing distinctive about it,” Margaret tells Mrs. Wilcox (70). Instead, heritage in the form of nostalgia comes from Mrs. Wilcox, the Wilcox family matriarch, who “worshipped” the past and has “the instinctive wisdom the past can alone bestow” (19). Introduced as “a voice from the garden,” Mrs. Wilcox is part of her surroundings, an institution that has taken root. So in tune with nature, with the actual property comprising Howards End, she seems almost old-fashioned in the company of the modern and socially conscientious Schlegel sisters who believe their ideas can flourish regardless of place. Mrs. Wilcox’s attachment to the ancestral home echoes Rickie’s attachment to

Cambridge—for both, the place itself bears significance, creating heritage within its very walls so that future generations may reside there. In her contradicting Margaret’s point that discussion could keep a house alive, it becomes readily apparent that heritage in this novel, if it is to appear at all, is going to be rather different from Forster’s earlier novel: this difference is marked early on by an immediate dismissal of the possibility for the present to interact meaningfully with the past: an old cathedral, for example, “had been ruined, absolutely ruined, by restoration; not an inch left of the original structure” (7). As with Oxford, the cathedral is a mere shell of its former self, unable to exist in the present as it once had in the past. With Mrs. Wilcox’s death and the subsequent shuttering of Howards End, which she considered her ancestral home, the possibility of a past that can speak to the present and future seems remote. The novel may open with pieces of Cambridge heritage such as intellect, sociality, and tradition, but in separating them from one another, heritage seems as dead as Mrs. Wilcox. Without the institution to carry it on, there seems to be little hope of sustained relevance.

As a counterpoint to heritage, the novel proposes inheritance, an indication that such heritage has been dismantled and is no longer passed whole in its traditional form. Heritage uses a sentimentalized memory to shape desires for the future, while inheritance, a different form of transmission, seeks something more straightforward, a direct bequest. In 1943, Lionel Trilling famously claimed that *Howards End* asks “Who shall inherit England?”<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the term “inherit” has become practically a cliché in critical studies of the novel. The subject of this inheritance, as has been well-argued, is English culture itself: since both the Wilcoxes and Schlegels have contributed to English society, each

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<sup>35</sup> Lionel Trilling, *E.M. Forster* (New York: New Directions, 1964), 118.

has the possibility of earning the status of rightful heir.<sup>36</sup> While heritage seems difficult for the characters to find, inheritance fuels them all: the Schlegel siblings live off an inheritance from their father and Charles Wilcox looks to Henry for financial support. In the narrative of inheritance, Forster acknowledges the intertwined nature of the two families, seeing that an economic concern cannot be overlooked in attempts to preserve art and intellectualism. Yet, in supplanting the language of heritage from *The Longest Journey* with that of inheritance, Forster also makes room for an examination of, I argue, deinstitutionalized heritage. By removing Oxbridge as an assumed site of transmission, relegating it to the stuff of inheritance only, he revives the question of his earlier novel: how can the actual, treasured, educational heritage be taken out of Cambridge and into the world itself?

Any study of inheritance in the novel must account for Forster's general concern with the balance between economy and culture, or the way in which money underwrites humanistic inquiry; indeed, that is the general assumption made behind the most seminal readings of the novel, including Trilling's and Bradbury's. But a myopic view of inheritance leaves something out, failing to see the ways that the inheritance narrative is part of Forster's lingering concern over heritage in the novel, a concern which disappears in the critical emphasis on the battle between the Schlegels and Wilcoxes over inheritance. In taking heritage apart, dividing its pieces among Mrs. Wilcox and the

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<sup>36</sup> The Schlegels, however, are not completely English; their father was German. Aunt Juley may claim they are "English to the backbone," but the narrator makes it clear that they are neither wholly English nor "Germans of the dreadful sort" (24). Margaret resists the privileging of either an English or German nationalism: "To me one two things is very clear; either God does not know his own mind about England and Germany, or else these do not know the mind of God" (26). If the Schlegels are to "inherit England," it will be with an expansive culture that is premised on the intellectualism and imagination that Ernst thought superseded any imperialist boundaries—he was an "idealist... whose imperialism was the imperialism of the air" (25).



Schlegel sisters while dismissing Tibby's institutional affiliation as class-bound rather than intellectually motivated, Forster lays plain that what I am here indentifying as his Cambridge heritage needs to be reconfigured as time moves on. Significantly, the character in the novel with the most heartfelt connection to the art and intellectualism that Ernst Schlegel wanted his children to appreciate is the one who stands to inherit nothing: Leonard Bast. Shut out by his class from questions of inheritance, Bast still keeps the heritage narrative alive, since he appears poised to gain access to at least the part of heritage maintained by the Schlegels, and his son will eventually occupy Howards End. If, as Tibby illustrates, the material gain of inheritance had begun to replace heritage, then perhaps heritage, which cannot be transmitted through inheritance alone, can instead be transmitted through the mentorship the Schlegel sisters so enthusiastically offer Bast. Whereas humane pursuits prove to be the prerogative of wealth in *Jude the Obscure*, Forster here tries to use mentorship to separate culture from cultural capital, or to bring it to all classes. To preserve heritage, Forster turns to mentorship to supplement the inheritance narrative.

Under the tutelage of the Schlegel sisters, I will show, Bast is seemingly afforded a unique educational opportunity. But unlike Goldie Dickinson or the fictional Stewart Ansell who were granted access to Cambridge despite their being from less economically privileged families, Bast is only mentored with the values Forster earlier associated with Cambridge; he has neither class privilege nor institutional access. As a result, he fails in some ways as miserably as Jude Fawley, denied full access to what the heritage once associated with Oxbridge and class privilege could offer. Characters such as Bast and Tibby, Forster argues, are the differently failed consequences of unsustainable cultural

transmission, as Tibby is made blind to an intellectual heritage left to him by his father and provided by inheritance, and Bast receives visions of a heritage he simply cannot fully access because instead of inheritance, he has only mentorship as a paltry substitute. Just as all the training and self-cultivation Jude undertakes are ultimately worthless in the reality of his class, Bast is unable to apply his learning and acquire heritage, a kind of capital from which his class is shut out. The Schlegels can share with Bast their *Bildung*, but cannot change his *habitus*; he can benefit from being mentored through their knowledge and conversation, but he cannot gain access to their heritage.

#### **IV. Mentoring Bast: The Limits of Culture**

Tibby's overwrought intellectualism represents an institutional failure that indicts Oxbridge for transmitting culture in a vacuum; Tibby is unable to use his experiences and knowledge from his studies to understand the world around him. As John Colmer argues, Tibby's experience at Oxford is a commentary on the various experiences one can have with culture: Tibby "illustrates that it is possible to be intelligent, cultured and well bred and yet be incapable of personal warmth... he exhibits the limits of culture when not infused with human passion."<sup>37</sup> "Culture" in the novel maintains its relationship to the arts and revered intellectual tradition, but it does have "limits." It cannot achieve its highest potential without, Forster believes, some element of passion and connection, such as the fellowship that fueled Goldie Dickinson and Rickie Elliot. The empty and august outlook that Tibby has on Oxford prevents him from seeing viable ways to pass on his university experience. Tibby shall not, to use Trilling's phrase, "inherit England" because

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<sup>37</sup> Colmer, *E.M. Forster: The Personal Voice*, 95.

he inherits too limited a culture, one that lacks, as his sisters illustrate, liveliness and relevance.

This is made apparent at the very beginning of the novel, when the sisters' aunt, Juley Munt, uses the appreciation of "Literature and Art" as a litmus test of personal worth. Aunt Juley parrots the values she knows her nieces have, responding to Helen's sudden (and brief) involvement with Paul Wilcox by voicing her concern over his family in a way that she thinks will encourage Margaret to intervene: "Are they our sort? Are they likely people? Could they appreciate Helen, who is to my mind a very special sort of person? Do they care about Literature and Art? That is most important when you come to think of it. Literature and Art. Most important" (8). But against her narrow-minded view enters Margaret, who responds, "I have it in Helen's writing that she and a man are in love...All the rest isn't worth a straw...If Helen had written the same to me about a shop-assistant or a penniless clerk...or if she wanted to marry the man who calls for Carter Patterson, I should have said the same" (9). This is not a rejection of "Literature and Art" as the stuff of culture, but Margaret's refusal to keep culture confined to such a trite and restricted definition. In this gesture, Forster makes it clear that Margaret and Helen enjoy a special version of culture because it inspires them to extend their knowledge of literature and art into a positive and liberal outlook on their world; they use culture to lead them to a perspective that is equitable and free of prejudice. Margaret's assertion that she would accept any lover of Helen's, regardless of class, reveals her assumption that whatever it is that constitutes Aunt Juley's separatist "our sort" is actually something sharable, not bound by profession or background. In short, Margaret's version of culture attempts to bring groups together, rather than divide them from one another.

Tibby's and Aunt Juley's stunted versions of culture have disallowed them the opportunity to forge the personal connections that come to characterize the sisters, and so neither is charged with the task of cultural transmission. Instead, that task in the novel belongs to the two women for whom culture is still an intellectual tradition, but one that is buttressed by empathy and eagerness. As Malcolm Bradbury summarizes, the Schlegel sisters are "emancipated, modern, humane, thoughtful, concerned with the arts for more or less their own sake, responsive to the plight of those less fortunate."<sup>38</sup> It is an expansive view of culture, to be sure, for in Margaret and Helen, what Forster associated with Cambridge heritage's spirited fellowship has taken on a new social consciousness. Their distinction from Tibby is twofold: not only do they have a genuine love of art and learning that evokes Rickie Elliot, they are also keen to assimilate this knowledge into the world around them, to make it relevant in ways Rickie could not. In this sense, they are the ones poised to transmit culture in the way that most closely evokes the heritage of *The Longest Journey*: they seem to want to make culture a kind of touchstone to which they can continuously return and use to shape their daily lives.

What the Schlegel sisters make clear is that culture is more than simply an inert body of knowledge; Aunt Juley's "Literature and Art" is just as inadequate as Tibby's appreciation of Oxford for its color scheme. For the Schlegel sisters, culture is most closely connected to what they call "personal relations." After her brief affair with Paul Wilcox, Helen sheepishly regrets her ever having sympathized with his stance that art and intellectualism are mere frivolities and renews her prior allegiance, exclaiming "I know that personal relations are the real life, forever and ever" (24). Margaret's hardy "Amen!"

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<sup>38</sup> Bradbury, "Howards End," 133.

affirms their alliance against what Margaret calls “the outer life,” “a life in which telegrams and anger count. Personal relations, that we think supreme, are not supreme. There love means marriage settlements, death, death duties” (24). The outer life, the world of practicality to which the Wilcox family subscribes, is by no means unnecessary, but Margaret believes in the superiority of her perspective. She acknowledges openly that she prefers to dwell in the realm of a firm commitment to the arts and culture. Their social consciousness, then, is the end result of a culture that bears actual significance to the world around them:

They talked to each other and to other people, they filled the tall thin house at Wickham Place with those whom they liked or could befriend. They even attended public meetings. In their own fashion they cared deeply about politics, though not as politicians would have us care; they desired that public life should mirror whatever is good in the life within. Temperance, tolerance, and sexual equality were intelligible cries to them; whereas they did not follow our Forward Policy in Thibet with the keen attention that it merits, and would at times dismiss the whole British Empire with a puzzled, if reverent, sigh... But the world being what it is, perhaps they shine out in it like stars. (24)

Forster offers here a glimpse into the expansive view of culture that the Schlegels would transmit, the kind that Tibby could not quite get his head around. They understand culture as also involving human passion and interaction, and so they themselves are compelled to act passionately and interact with varied perspectives. Their view of culture, at least on the surface, actively seeks to bring ancient principles alive through intelligent and lively debate. They apply intellect, literature, and art—the products of a cultivated education provided by Ernst Schlegel—to a social context.

So, when Margaret Schlegel first meets Leonard Bast at a Beethoven concert at the Queen’s Hall, it is readily apparent that her interest in him is in accordance with her view of culture. She and Helen will be motivated to help him based on their belief that

one can find in the mundane outer life manifestations of the good inner life, and they will encourage Bast to engage in a similar process in his own life. After a brief exchange regarding the umbrella Helen inadvertently stole from Bast, Margaret is instantly taken with Bast: “But she found him interesting on the whole—every one interested the Schlegels on the whole at that time—and while her lips talked culture, her heart was planning to invite him to tea” (31). The juxtaposition of culture and tea foreshadows the relationship the Schlegels will attempt to cultivate with Bast: the three already share an appreciation for music, art, and literature, but the sisters will help cultivate these tastes through mentorship, advising and guiding the young clerk in an effort to build a personal relationship with him. Indeed, Bast appears at first only to lack the refinement and discerning taste that belongs to the sisters. While Helen is a bit snobbish about the Queen’s Hall’s shoddiness, Bast actually attempts to recreate the Hall in his flat, playing Grieg and decorating his mantle with cupids, those same figures Helen scoffs at for “inclining each to each with vapid gesture, and clad in sallow pantaloons” (28). It is Bast’s earnest desire to capture culture for his own personal life that makes him such a ready mentee, even if he cannot quite grasp which indicators of culture are genuine according to the standards of an upper class.

Because Bast is poor, his early gestures toward culture have been self-initiated, without knowing which specific texts would grant him access to culture. As Douglas Mao maintains, “The cruel truth that Forster illuminates is that knowing which books are the right ones is almost impossible unless one is part of a social set that credibly decides which books fit the bill. As Londoners in the vanguard or near-vanguard of intellectual

life, the Schlegels would have found Leonard's reading a thoroughly mixed bag."<sup>39</sup> Similar to Sue Bridehead's uniquely constructed reading list, Bast's readings are a questionable mix of "Literature and Art," as he is unsure whether his selections constitute "culture" or "common." As with his misguided attempts at decorating his flat in a "cultured" way, Bast only marginally and uncomfortably exists in cultured society; he cannot piece together a coherent vision of culture, one that would fully adapt culture into his daily life. Reading Ruskin fervently, he asks, "Was there anything to be learned from this fine sentence? Could he adapt it to the needs of daily life? Could he introduce it, with modifications, when he next wrote a letter to his brother, the lay-reader? ... Something told him the modifications would not do" (42). He recognizes the absurd disparity between high-style—"the spirit of English prose"—and his shabby flat and wishes for a "sudden conversion," where "he would one day push his head out of the grey waters and see the universe" (42).

Like Jude, Bast is motivated by a desire for the self-improvement characteristic of the *Bildungsroman*: "I care a good deal about improving myself by means of Literature and Art, and so getting a wider outlook" (45). Unknowingly echoing Aunt Juley's earlier dogma (which had been an attempt to sound like the Schlegel sisters), Bast seems to be well on his way to the limited view of culture. But where Jude intended his self-improvement and "Literature and Art" to gain him institutional access, Bast wants something different—he wants only the opportunity to speak the language of culture, to embrace it with a familiarity that will, he thinks, help him find the "good life" in his own mundane "outer life." His spotty knowledge of the classics, his misguided attempts at

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<sup>39</sup> Douglas Mao, "Afterword," in *Howards End* by E.M. Forster (New York: Pearson Education, Inc, 2010), 300.

recreating cultured venues—these indicate Bast’s background, but they do not address Bast’s true cultural lack, which is the ease with which the Schlegel sisters communicate their knowledge, their comfort with culture, and their ability to apply culture to their daily life. Margaret’s spiel on Wagner “fluttered away from the young man like birds.” “If only he could talk like this,” Bast thinks, “he would have caught the world! Oh to acquire culture! Oh, to pronounce foreign names correctly! Oh to be informed, discoursing at ease on every subject that a lady started! But it would take one year!” (33). It is the ease of discussion that Bast lacks, the casual camaraderie of school-aged boys in a dormitory discussing cows. Unlike the spirited debates there, “There had always been something to worry him ever since he could remember, always something that distracted him in the pursuit of beauty. For he did pursue beauty, and therefore, Margaret’s speeches did flutter away from him like birds” (33). Bast’s discomfort here is palpable as he realizes that Margaret is not his peer. He feels inferior, as the worries of his class prevent him from devoting the full attention he would want to the kinds of discussion Margaret offers.

Bast’s uncertainty over how to discuss and apply his readings, in other words, illustrates an unfamiliarity or inexperience of a more profound type: he demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of how one acquires culture. He thinks his failure to focus on beauty is a result of distraction; if only he had more focus, less worry, he would be able to understand beauty completely. Recognizing what he lacks, he thinks he can come to it suddenly: “Leonard...did believe in effort and in a steady preparation for the change that he desired. But of a heritage that may expand gradually, he had no conception: he hoped to come to Culture suddenly, much as the Revivalist hopes to come to Jesus” (42-3). And, once again, Forster places great weight on the idea of heritage: it is a process, an



understanding, almost a sensibility. And that is precisely what Bast cannot understand; it is what he cannot have, even though it is hardly his fault. He fails to recognize that there is an undercurrent to culture, a long history, a collection of memories that inform culture—“Those Miss Schlegels had come to it; they had done the trick; their hands were upon the ropes, once and for all. And meanwhile his flat was dark and stuffy” (43). Bast has some version of the “Literature and Art” kind of culture; he can envision the process through which he might apply culture to his daily interactions, but, thinking there is a singular “trick,” he cannot envision a way to come to heritage because there is none. Like Jude, Bast cannot reach outside of his class to access culture. Reflecting on his time at the Schlegel home, Bast realizes that “[t]hey had all passed up that narrow, rich staircase at Wickham Place, to some ample room, whither he could never follow them, not if he read for ten hours a day. Oh it was not good, this continued aspiration. Some are born cultured; the rest had better go in for whatever comes easy” (46). Aware of the great divide between them, Bast is at a complete loss as to how to come upon the particular culture of his mentors.

I will explain below what is at stake in the class implications in play here, but I think it important to first make it clear that Bast is not denied culture simply because he is poor and so lacks time for culture because he must have gainful employment, even if that is part of it. His class status prevents him from acquiring culture because he is shut out specifically from a key part of the process that simply cannot be mentored: heritage. Heritage is precisely what Jude Fawley was not able to ever gain since all the learning and personal motivation could not grant him access to the halls of the Oxford, the locus of heritage. So when Leonard Bast begins to follow Jude’s autodidactic footsteps,

immersing himself in Ruskin, we can see Forster outlining a similar fate, even if Cambridge and Oxford are removed as the sole site of cultural capital. Where Hardy sees mentorship as a key indicator of heritage, however, Forster positions mentorship as a kind of poor substitute. Heritage is the slow process through which Ernst Schlegel acquired culture, and while pieces of it live on in his daughters in a deinstitutionalized form, they cannot pass heritage on to Bast. So, instead, they attempt to offer him their own packaged view of culture as cross-class sympathy, a mentorship that never quite gets around its own self-righteousness. When Helen and Margaret meet Bast again, they guide him away from conversations about his own reading and instead encourage him to talk about his walk. They do not want to hear about E.V. Lucas's "Open Road," which they think unimportant, or the Pole Star, since Helen already "know[s] its little ways"; they want Bast to feel as inspired by walking through nature as they do, so they push him to discuss it in the terms that they see fit, asking him questions that they deem important. Even Tibby is made uncomfortable—"He knew that this fellow would never attain to poetry, and did not want to hear him trying"—and he slips out while the sisters enthusiastically continue their cultural inquest (99).

The result is the one moment in which Bast speaks with confidence to the Schlegel sisters. Unable to speak from the place of heritage that is unfamiliar to him, he turns to his own experience of being poor. Describing his walk, Bast surprises Helen, answering her romanticized question, "But was the dawn wonderful?" with "an unforgettable sincerity," replying simply, "No" (100). The effect is profound: "Down toppled all that had seemed ignoble or literary in his talk, down toppled the tiresome R.L.S. and the 'love of the earth' and his silk top-hat. In the presence of these women

Leonard had arrived, and he spoke with a flow, an exultation, that he had seldom known” (100). Here, describing how miserable he felt while walking hungry, the wretchedness of living in a single room, he finally masters the self-assured tongue of his mentors. Just as the Schlegel sisters’ intellectual heritage informs and shapes their confident speech, Bast’s poverty shapes his and he cannot obtain fluency.

Indeed, to illustrate the remaining chasm between the sisters and Bast, Forster immediately follows this with Bast’s return to his literature-speak, as he tries to continue his course of confidence by initiating a conversation about Jeffries, Borrow, and Thoreau. He quickly falls victim to “his cramped little mind,” and the sisters quickly dismiss this turn (100-1). Trying to mentor him, they end up reducing him to “the naïve and sweet-tempered boy for whom Nature had intended him,” tritely encouraging him for having “pushed back the boundaries; I think it splendid of you” (101). The effect is rather patronizing, as they pat Bast on the back for talking about what comes easily to him, but discourage him from discussing the literature that he has not mastered. That literature, it turns out, is but a murky “swamp of books” that Bast has little hope of ever navigating: “No disrespect to these great names. The fault is ours, not theirs. They mean us to use them for sign-posts, and are not to blame if, in our weakness, we mistake the sign-post for the destination. And Leonard had reached the destination” (101). For Rickie Elliot, his journey away from Cambridge may be long, but he can turn to his heritage for guidance and hope; for Leonard Bast, he has no similar journey on which he can look back.

Without heritage, Bast cannot fit what he reads into his own experience because his experiences, his *habitus*, do not allow for it. He has nowhere to go with his self-improvement other than to Wickham Place for tea. He is passingly, almost laughingly,

referred to repeatedly as Helen's "protégé," but more because she is his advocate than because she is able to offer him any kind of meaningful advancement.<sup>40</sup> And this is why the Schlegels' mentorship is utterly futile: they are enthused by his efforts, vaguely encouraging and interested, but they cannot offer him a life in which literature and art are more than "sign posts." He can speak to the Schlegels, he can speak to a Cambridge undergraduate on a train—"perhaps the keenest happiness he had ever known"—but their destinations are not the same. The Schlegels become mentors to Bast for reasons that are ultimately selfish: "To the Schlegels, as to the undergraduate, he was an interesting creature, of whom they wanted to see more." Bast feels their mentorship is pointless because he can never advance to their place: "But they to him were the denizens of Romance, who must keep to the corner he had assigned them, pictures that must not walk out of their frames" (101-2). Forster is resigned to the fact that heritage and by extension the culture it promotes are not transportable; they cannot be reached by train, fueled by even the friendliest conversations between students and motivated clerks. Even if culture is parceled out in different ways, separated from institutions of heritage, it cannot ever really be fully transmissible.

While Margaret and Helen have the noblest of intentions, they cannot deliver because heritage simply must be lived. Forster characterizes heritage as a combination of education, inheritance, and culture. Therefore, as class-bound as the institutions that house it, heritage will always elude Bast and others like him because there is no way to come to culture suddenly. The voice of Ruskin, the impetus behind the free concerts at the Queen's Hall—the liberal encouragement toward "Effort and Self Sacrifice"—is, as

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<sup>40</sup> See *Howards End*, pages 190-3.

Bast sadly realizes, “the voice of one who has never been dirty or hungry, and had not guessed successfully what dirt and hunger are” (42). In considering class, Forster moves away from the ambivalence over heritage and class that plays out in *The Longest Journey*, and his commentary on the non-transmissibility of culture becomes much sharper. *Howards End* more forcefully criticizes those who turn a blind eye to the classist nature of heritage altogether. Hardly a reprimand of culture itself, Forster pointedly implicates those who fail to recognize the deep-seated and exclusionary nature of the production and preservation of cultural heritage. Indeed, the Schlegel sisters’ efforts ultimately prove meddling, the direct cause of Bast’s further plunge into poverty and subsequent death; their efforts at transmitting culture are not simply misguided, but dangerous. Mentorship, hardly the equalizing impulse of the sovereign educator, is a kind of inconsequential noblesse oblige, an indulgence of the mentor’s feelings.

## **V. Class-Bound Heritage and Forster’s Critique of Education Reform**

What *Howards End* works out is that heritage really is class based, ultimately coming from a place of privilege. Part of what keeps heritage class-bound is that, as Herbert Pembroke realizes, it is gained a priori, rather than post priori; heritage is not what you work toward, but where you come from. Bast, in my argument, is not cut off from access to the items of culture—“Literature and Art”—but finds that his class limits him from internalizing what he reads, or from assimilating it in ways that could allow him to shape the present and future.

This general gesture toward class disparity is critically unsatisfying, though, because it does not account for why Bast’s character never quite comes across as

completely sympathetic, or even realistic. Even though he demonstrates well the non-transmissibility of culture, Bast remains an odd choice for illustrating the chasm between classes in terms of culture given his discomfort among members of every class, including even his common-law wife. Barbara Rosencrance finds “Forster’s relation to Leonard Bast is at best uneasy, a mixture of compassion and condescension.”<sup>41</sup> She accuses Forster of the same compassion and condescension exhibited by the Schlegels. Rosencrance’s accusation seems to me particularly misplaced given Forster’s own criticism of Goldie for not understanding how to teach students from the lower classes. Further, by the narrator’s own admission, Bast certainly is not even a wholly representative member of the lower classes, many of whom are explicitly excluded from the novel. The sixth chapter famously opens with, “We are not concerned with the very poor... They are unthinkable, and only to be approached by the statistician or the poet.” However Bast, while perhaps not “very poor,” is after all in bad enough circumstances to feel the disconnect between himself and a writer such as Ruskin. But the narrator continues, “This story deals with gentlefolk, or with those who are obliged to pretend that they are gentlefolk” (39). And here Forster reveals that Bast’s particular brand of poverty puts him in a position “at the extreme verge of gentility... He was not in the abyss, but he could see it, and at times people whom he knew had dropped in, and counted no more” (39). His vaguely lower-middle class affiliation is not defined in any monetary sense, but from its position on the fringe of other classes. Bast does not represent a class in and of itself, but others’ perceptions of his class; he represents what others think he can become,

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<sup>41</sup> Barbara Rosencrance, *Forster's Narrative Vision* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1982), 135.

whether or not he will ultimately “count” and join the ranks of the genteel. He may not be studied by the “statisticians and poets,” but he is certainly an object of scrutiny.

For Rosencrance, Bast becomes the object of specifically political scrutiny: “[t]he significance of Leonard Bast is in his origin, in his pivotal position as cause celebre for the liberal intellectuals and victim of the capitalists, and in his sentimental apotheosis into England’s future.”<sup>42</sup> Bast, according to such readings, is a commentary on an entire movement geared toward pushing members of the lower and working classes closer toward the “verge of gentility,” efforts that mirror both Helen and Margaret’s mentorship, and especially Margaret’s endeavors at helping her husband, Henry Wilcox, turn toward the poor with greater empathy. “This liberal attitude is at the centre of the book,” claims Malcolm Bradbury, and his observation holds true as one of the novel’s most overt engagements with the liberal agenda occurs early on, as soon as Bast meets the Schlegels at the Queen’s Hall.<sup>43</sup> It is an apt location, Zemgulys explains, “known for inexpensive musical performances aimed at ‘improving’ a broad public.”<sup>44</sup> Zemgulys argues that because the incident at the Queen’s Hall sets into motion the plot that ultimately leads to Bast’s death, “it’s plausible that such broadly appealing institutions of cultural uplift are subtly disapproved.” For Zemgulys, this disapproval speaks to Forster’s perceived “futility of cross-class exercises in cultural exchange,” citing Margaret’s claim that such

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<sup>42</sup> Rosencrance, *Forster’s Narrative Vision*, 135.

<sup>43</sup> Bradbury, “Howards End,” 136.

<sup>44</sup> Zemgulys, *Modernism and the Locations of Literary Heritage*, 119.

“In the late nineteenth century,” Zemgulys continues, “the Queen’s Hall hosted the first of the ‘London Proms,’ and in the first decade of the twentieth century, hosted affordable concerts for working people on Saturday afternoons and Sunday evenings” (119).

exchange is termed ‘social intercourse’ or ‘mutual endeavor, when it’s mutual priggishness if it’s anything.’<sup>45</sup>

Similarly, David Medalie argues in *E.M. Forster’s Modernism* that these cultural exchanges demonstrate the breakdown of late-Victorian progressivism into a display of pseudo-egalitarianism, as the novel “deal[s] with the failure to be inclusive and to carry out the Arnoldian injunction, with its Victorian ancestry and its liberal-humanistic cargo.”<sup>46</sup> That “Arnoldian injunction,” which Medalie identifies as Arnold’s hope “that the cultured would see to ‘humanise [culture], to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned’, thereby extending ‘sweetness and light’ to ‘the raw and unkindled masses of humanity,’” is the task of the sovereign educator, the task that the Schlegels sisters undertake to Bast’s detriment. For Medalie, Arnold and Ruskin are poignant figures, “for they both, in their different ways, represent a late-Victorian tendency to see culture in socially progressivist terms.” This progressivism was designed to bring culture to a newly literate middle class: when Bast reads *The Stones of Venice*, Medalie continues, he “deliberat[es] upon the viability of Ruskin’s project and upon the notion of cultural consumption—in particular, the extent to which the Victorian cultural legacy may be digested by the increasingly literate masses.”<sup>47</sup> So, when Bast fails, Medalie concludes that culture itself must be “profoundly inefficient,” as well as having “the effect of entrenching ‘the cultivated and learned’ in the seclusion of their Bloomsbury-like coterie.”<sup>48</sup> As does Zemgulys, Medalie reads progressivism in the novel

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<sup>45</sup> Zemgulys, *Modernism and the Locations of Literary Heritage*, 119-120.

<sup>46</sup> David Medalie, *E.M. Forster’s Modernism*, (New Hampshire; Palgrave, 2002), 46.

<sup>47</sup>David Medalie, *E.M. Forster’s Modernism*, 46.

<sup>48</sup>David Medalie, *E.M. Forster’s Modernism*, 45.



as a failing project, one that only superficially accounts for the incompatibility of culture across classes, only he goes one step further and equates this progressivism with culture itself.

I think, though, that Forster's optimism about culture might be salvaged if this progressivism is understood more in context. These efforts at reading Bast as a more generalized symbol of an unproductive liberalism leave something out, namely the educational heritage Rickie Elliot and the Schlegel sisters enjoy. If, as I have claimed, Forster searches in *Howards End* for a means of transmitting culture without class-based heritage, then surely he has a stake in the institutions that were being created specifically to bring culture to the lower classes, such as the University Extension Programs and the Working Men's College. Bast, I argue, certainly is a caricature of the supposed beneficiary to liberalism, but he is also more specifically a caricature of exactly the imagined beneficiary of certain specific liberal education programs. Only citing Forster's ambivalence to cross-class cultural interaction overlooks his ever-present concern over what would happen to the Cambridge of his youth as he grapples with an educational system that increasingly ignores heritage as it re-packages culture in different ways and parcels it out among new and varied types of educational programs.

In my previous chapter, I argued that Jude Fawley was destined for failure because of an educational system that brought into conflict culture and cultural capital. And like Jude, because Bast suffers as a result of mentorship gone awry, he acts as a harbinger of the disappointment of educational reform. But where Jude is an explicit commentary on the accessibility of Oxbridge itself, through Bast Forster casts a critical eye on those institutions designed to distribute individual elements of Oxbridge to the

lower and middle classes. These institutions, of course, grew out of the Arnold-Ruskin type conversations of the nineteenth century: “Even in the nineteenth century, after all, the mechanics’ institutes and adult schools, and the public libraries, had increased the working man’s access to knowledge and culture; such landmarks as the 1896 Act of Parliament providing for the Sunday opening of museums, and the founding in 1899 of Ruskin College, Oxford, specifically for working men, were signs of the times.”<sup>49</sup>

Norman Page finds that the time between *Jude the Obscure* and *Howards End* saw an increase in individual students finding success in such programs, and he concludes in turn that “[i]t may be objected then, that Forster, speaking from the limitations of his own experience and class, had an inadequate sense of the social and human realities and that he exaggerates the extent to which a truly civilised life is dependent upon an unearned income.”<sup>50</sup> Page’s slightly patronizing reading cannot account for Bast’s failures other than to discredit Forster for failing to see the widespread benefits of such programs.

While Page, of course, is right to credit the Working Men’s College and University Extension Programs for improving the lot of many, a closer look at the motivation behind the creation of these institutions may undercut his optimism and explain why Forster wanted to temper their successes, or at least analyze them in a more critical way. Importantly, I am not arguing in any way that Forster did not believe these programs were worthwhile—his longstanding involvement in both shows otherwise— or that he was exhibiting a snobbishness just as damning as Goldie Dickinson’s. Instead, I think that Forster only wanted to record the process of the loss of his version of heritage

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<sup>49</sup> Norman Page, *E.M. Forster* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988), 85.

<sup>50</sup> Page, *E.M. Forster*, 85.

even as he helped usher in its successor, and while these institutions were certainly not responsible for such loss, they do illustrate the particularities of the complications that arise around cultural transmission for all classes at the beginning of the period associated with modernism. As I conclude this chapter, I turn specifically to the Working Men's College, the founder of which, F.D. Maurice, had hoped to instill in his students those same values of fellowship and intellectual discussion that Forster attributes to Cambridge.

Established almost sixty years before Forster published *Howards End*, the Working Men's College undertook with great seriousness the idea of an inclusive adult education. In an invaluable overview of the College's origins published in honor of its centennial (1954), J.F.C. Harrison focuses on the college's founder F.D. Maurice and his commitment to creating an institution that responded to gaping holes in education for the lower classes while also creating an environment that duplicated the fellowship of Oxbridge. The principal of the college at the time, Sir Wilfrid Eady, summarizes the College: "Above all it is not just a place for evening classes; it is a College, with all the ordered corporate life and free companionship that is in the word."<sup>51</sup> Indeed, for Maurice, Harrison recalls, "The word symbolized...the spirit of a corporate life, of fellowship, of brotherhood in the deepest, Christian, sense."<sup>52</sup> This fellowship, according to his model, would come not only from the students interacting with one another, but with learned men—their teachers. The college was designed to bring classes together in "lessons rather than lectures," with ample time for discussion in which all questions or opinions

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<sup>51</sup> J.F.C. Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College, 1854-1954* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954), vii.

<sup>52</sup> Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College*, 21.

would be welcomed.<sup>53</sup> Maurice's vision here seems like an ideal combination of Ansell and Tilliard's cow discussion and the Schlegels' tea with Bast: the college would facilitate free-flowing discussion in which members of all classes were valued participants. The workingman "was conceived to be 'a person, not a thing, a citizen and not a slave or even a wage-earning animal.'" <sup>54</sup>As a result, literature was taught as part of a greater framework of history and ethics. Maurice "seems to have felt that the primary function of literature in the classroom was to illustrate other subjects, rather than to whet an appetite for reading for its own sake."<sup>55</sup>

At its time, the College was a revolutionary idea, miles apart from the Mechanics' Institutes, "with their science for artisans, and Lord Brougham's appeals to them to get knowledge that they might get on."<sup>56</sup> The Mechanics' Institutes offered what Maurice found to be only superficial knowledge, with banal exhortations to "improve your mind that you may rise in the world."<sup>57</sup> The Working Men's College offered an openly spiritual analysis of education, with a focus on brotherhood, fellowship, and mutual benefit. And arguably its most revolutionary tenet was that rather than continue the dully watered-

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<sup>53</sup> W.E. Styler, "Introduction," in *Learning and Working* by Frederick Denison Maurice (London: University of Hull Publications, 1968), 6.

<sup>54</sup> Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 209.

<sup>55</sup> Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 210.

<sup>56</sup> Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College*, 21.

In his "Address to the Members of the Manchester Mechanics' Institution" in 1838, Brougham would argue that a knowledge of science would not only "strengthen [the mechanic's] religious belief, it would make him a better and a happier, as well as a wiser man, if he soared a little into those regions of purer science where happily neither doubt can cloud, nor passion ruffle our serene path." The institute would also be tasked with preserving social order: "A taste for rational enjoyments, lectures and books rather than gin parlors and bear pits, would be cultivated among the common run of men; 'habits of order, punctuality, and politeness, would be engendered'" (qtd. in Altick 189).

<sup>57</sup> Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College*, vii.

down scientific lessons of the Mechanics' Institutes, it would take up the humanist tradition of Oxford and Cambridge, a hitherto unheard of prospect in the field of education for working men.<sup>58</sup>

Maurice wanted his college to evoke the Oxbridge tradition not only in spirit, but in practical execution. Under the leadership of George Tansley, the Working Men's College modeled its hierarchy of examinations and honors on the Oxbridge system, and annual visits to these older universities were begun. Further, Tansley proposed a "resident tutor" at both Oxford and Cambridge who would act as a correspondent and serve as an "*ex-officio* member of the Council."<sup>59</sup> "When the Founders had talked of a college and of a liberal education for working men," Harrison explains, "they had always had thoughts of Oxford and Cambridge in the back of their minds; but it was the general collegiate spirit rather than the specific scheme of studies that they had desired to emulate."<sup>60</sup> That spirit, spelled out by Maurice in his 1854 pamphlet, *Scheme of a College for Working Men*, would insist on establishing commonality between his university and Oxford and Cambridge in the service of elevating that most respected fellowship: "I do not mean that we shall ever have a Gothic chapel or hall, or endowments, or that we should wish for them. But I mean that, starting from a common maxim and a common object, there ought to be an understanding between us, even when the subjects which we teach are most

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<sup>58</sup> The Working Men's College was also instrumental in the development of an English literature curriculum, which Oxford and Cambridge had dismissed until nearly the end of the nineteenth century. See the chapter "A Civilizing Subject" in Chris Baldick's *The Social Mission of English Criticism*.

<sup>59</sup> Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College*, 26.

<sup>60</sup> Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College*, 26.

different... that is not found, so far as I know, among professors or tutors elsewhere.”<sup>61</sup>

Maurice’s vision was an educational and cultural utopia, an institution in which “only connect” would have been realized in its fullest capacity nearly sixty years before Forster wrote *Howards End*. This vision linked together adult education for the working classes with Oxbridge tradition, a relationship later evoked by Bast and the Schlegels.

The College, however, was not especially successful in its early years. In 1883 the total number of students for the year was 425; in 1889 it had risen to 875; until 1896 it remained steady at around 790; at its peak in the late 1800s it reached over 1000, but those numbers steadily declined soon after.<sup>62</sup> In 1873, it considered changing into a center for the newly popular University Extension Movement that came out of Cambridge, which had gathered so much momentum that it saw the establishment of the Workers’ Educational Association in 1903, and, in the year before the publication of *Howards End*, the College offered its first University Tutorial Class. Richard Altick specifies one of the biggest obstacles to workingmen’s education: “The fact remained, however, that the working class was so completely unprepared for higher education that all but the most indomitable spirits soon lost hope.”<sup>63</sup> Here Altick introduces a point that helps explain why Bast, who is a clerk and not a mechanic or workingman, is such an apt symbol of the adult education movement: these programs, while geared toward mechanics and workingmen in name, ultimately were better suited to skilled artisans rather than common laborers. “Business and professional families” took the mechanics’

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<sup>61</sup> Qtd. in Harrison, *A History of the Working Men’s College*, 20.

<sup>62</sup> Harrison, *A History of the Working Men’s College*, 20.

<sup>63</sup> Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 210.

place and the Mechanics' Institutes ultimately attracted students who were from the "higher branches of handicraft trades, or are clerks in offices, and, in many instances, young men connected with liberal professions."<sup>64</sup> The same happened at the Working Men's College, as white-collar workers soon outnumbered actual workingmen by a large margin. Even the university extension program found this to be the case, eventually becoming mostly populated by women and business and professional men.<sup>65</sup> Bast's clerkship, his autodidacticism, his position on the cusp of gentility make him the consummate beneficiary of any number of emergent adult education programs at the beginning of the twentieth century. Those institutions had, however, only limited success in the latter half of the nineteenth century, illustrating that Bast comes up against a tradition still in the process of inventing itself.

The final push for such reinvention came in the years immediately preceding Forster's writing *Howards End*, as the Education Act of 1902 abolished the old school boards and resulted in rapid educational expansion that took place at all levels, ushering in an era of significant growth in the sheer amount and diversity of universities, a phenomenon on which I comment in my final chapter.<sup>66</sup> The moment, then, was ripe for Forster to reflect on where the university education of his own experience might go or how it might compare to those of the newer institutions. Forster picks up these main ideas from the recent history of adult education—fellowship and free discussion, how to educate working and middle classes, and the evolution of cross-class education from

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<sup>64</sup> Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 188 FN 2; 191.

<sup>65</sup> Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 210.

<sup>66</sup> For additional information about the expansion of elementary, secondary, and technical levels, see Harrison's *A History of the Working Men's College*, page 142.

vague platitudes of self-improvement to in-depth discussions of literature—and examines their relationship to his own version of culture and its associated heritage. Bast and his conversations with the Schlegels emphasize fellowship and meaningful understanding of art because that was the common thread Maurice wanted to share with Oxbridge; the relationship between the Schlegels and Bast mimics the kind of environment Maurice wanted on a national scale. And if the endeavor fails, with Bast never achieving any real benefit, it is less a commentary on the failure of the Working Men’s College mission as much as it is the realization that Maurice’s tie to the heritage at Oxford is, at last, out of date.

With that in mind, we can look anew at the old questions of creating a national policy for culture, a seemingly tired debate that Helen and Margaret enter into when they attempt to mentor Bast. The clerk unwittingly becomes the subject of vigorous discussion in response to the hypothetical question posed at a dinner party: “How ought I to dispose of my money?” (105). Should the financial gains of one generation be used to provide for the poor of the next? Matters of financial necessity overlap with questions of cultural gain as discussion ensues over “what right had ‘Mr. Bast’ to profit” from others’ hard-earned income, as well as what kinds of culture should be sufficient for him—must he have a free library? Free tennis courts? Should he be assigned a “Twin Star,” “some member of the leisured classes who would watch over him ceaselessly”? Should he be given “food but no clothes, clothes but no food” (105)? Margaret, assigned for the purposes of the debate the position of the “Society for the Preservation of Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty” argues that “Mr. Bast”—always in quotes now, who has come by this point to in the discussion to represent his entire class— should simply



receive cash: “Money’s educational. It’s far more educational than the things it buys...isn’t the most civilized thing going, the man who has learnt to wear his income properly? ...give Mr. Bast money, and don’t bother about his ideals. He’ll pick up those for himself” (106). It is a valid enough position, and argued for and against well by the other guests. Interestingly, though, another woman’s suggestion that “Mr. Bast” receive “personal supervision and mutual help,” in which “the effect...was to alter poor people until they became exactly like people who were not so poor,” is quickly dismissed by the Schlegel sisters (107). The mentorship the women offer Bast, it seems, is recognizably unviable, even though “personal supervision and mutual help” is exactly what Helen attempts with Bast on her own in the latter half of the novel. In her argument against mentorship, Margaret only affirms the import of class privilege, but she ignores that Bast cannot simply “pick up” the heritage she herself had been granted.

The negative reaction to the idea of mentorship sticks out to me because it marks this debate as unique among conversations regarding education for the lower and middle classes; the inclusion of mentorship makes the debate not as typical of the kinds of social progressivism that critics such as Bradbury, Zemgulys, and Medalie read as being criticized in the novel. This dig at mentorship alludes to my earlier point regarding Forster’s recognition that mentorship is an ineffectual replacement for heritage, and asks the reader to consider specifically how the institutions in charge of such adult education respond to a more pervasive loss of heritage. As the sisters grapple with engaging both Leonard Bast, the individual to whom they try to share their heritage (even if they fail), as well as “Mr. Bast,” the nonspecific person who is at the heart of a debate over matters of educational policy, they get at a key issue at stake in the rise of universities and adult

education at the beginning of the twentieth century, which is the loss of the sovereign educator's instinct that heritage could ever be taken across classes. To use Mrs. Wilcox's phrase, Forster finds it is "an instinct which may be wrong" (55).

Maurice's instinct that a line could be traced directly from Oxford and Cambridge to his own College may not be a feasible one; the University Extension lectures may not be actual extensions of the Cambridge that creates them. The break does not come from the inability of the lower classes to access culture more generally—that kind of reading leads to the snobbishness Page and Rosencrance detect—but from this uncomfortable idea that culture can be mentored or passed down. There was a heritage that came with an Oxbridge education, one to which Forster felt greatly connected, and it seems his failed experiment with mentorship and Bast constitutes his acknowledgment that this particular experience cannot ever be duplicated or shared. Mrs. Wilcox directs the "an instinct which may be wrong" phrase at Helen and Paul's incompatibility, but Margaret takes it to mean "they belong to types that can fall in love, but couldn't live together. That's dreadfully probable. I'm afraid that in nine cases out of ten Nature pulls one way and human nature another" (55). It seems apt, though, in Bast's case as well. The instinct behind a place like the Working Men's College or the University Extension Centers that opened all over England is, I think Forster would find, admirable in every way. But it is incompatible with the instinct of another sort, the heritage that he had come to enjoy at Cambridge. Educating Bast is hardly a worthless endeavor, but it will not take the place of heritage. Even the oldest institutions of education must now face a newly expansive view of defining and acquiring culture.

## VI. Forster and Liberal Decline

If any mentorship succeeds in *Howards End*, it is the mentorship of Margaret Schlegel by Ruth Wilcox, whose deeply personal ties to Howards End mark the novel's most poignant connection to a heritage connected to history and tradition. For Mrs. Wilcox, the transmission of material goods, a topic I will explore in my next chapter, matters not a whit, even as her leaving the home to Margaret creates complications for her estate: "Mrs. Wilcox has left few clear indications behind her," and only hastily scribbles her testament to leave to Margaret Howards End (55). She sought for Howards End "a spiritual heir," and her own spirit "stayed in and out, ever a welcome ghost" (83, 138). The two women form, over time, a close bond, and Margaret assumes Mrs. Wilcox's position as Henry's wife after her death. But while Margaret may have taken over Mrs. Wilcox's physical place, Mrs. Wilcox seems to last even in death. Margaret says to Helen near the novel's end:

I feel that you and I and Henry are only fragments of that woman's mind. She knows everything. She is everything. She is the house, and the tree that leans over it. People have their own deaths as well as their own lives, and even if there is nothing beyond death, we shall differ in our nothingness. I cannot believe that knowledge such as hers will perish with knowledge such as mine. (282)

Through Mrs. Wilcox, Forster seems nostalgic for meaningful spiritual ties, even as he acknowledges those ties, as his old Cambridge ones, may no longer carry the same relevance or value. The value of such spiritual mentorship, or the tie to one's heritage, has been usurped by inheritance, the importance of material goods or economic capital. While Margaret herself is the subject of Mrs. Wilcox's spiritual bequest, Howards End will eventually go to Bast and Helen's child, the object of material inheritance. While the

spirit of Mrs. Wilcox will always live in Margaret, even Margaret realizes that it does so incompletely, since with Mrs. Wilcox died her devotion to her ancestors.

Forster's wistfulness for Mrs. Wilcox is in line with what so many of the foundational arguments about the novel, from critics such as Rose Macaulay, Lionel Trilling, and F.R. Leavis, claim of Forster's politics, in particular his struggle with being "on the fag-end of Victorian liberalism."<sup>67</sup> In such readings Mrs. Wilcox represents an earlier time: Forster's nostalgia for Victorian liberalism in the face of modern disquiet. The compromises between the dichotomous Schlegels and the Wilcoxes, between culture and business, are demonstrative of Forster's own political compromises. Indeed, Forster is often considered a not-quite-modernist, an author too-firmly rooted in both the literary tradition and political liberalism of an ageing Victorianism to be a convincing modernist. Malcolm Bradbury, in particular, has argued that while Forster is hardly an "old-fashioned" writer, he is merely at the periphery of Bloomsbury, and hence of modernism, the era of liberal decline.<sup>68</sup>

It follows, then, that in mourning Mrs. Wilcox, Forster is mourning the Cambridge of his youth, the heritage that helped shape him, and feels a bit of nostalgia as he sees slipping away the age in which he could so happily and unwarily engage in its culture. In his 1946 essay, "The Challenge of Our Time," Forster reflects on that "admirable age":

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<sup>67</sup>Forster, "The Challenge of our Time," 56.

<sup>68</sup> Malcolm Bradbury, "Introduction," in *Forster: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), 1. Frederic Jameson goes so far as to call Forster "at best a closet modernist" in his *The Modernist Papers* (158). More complete accounts of Forster's position on the cusp of modernism can be found in Malcolm Bradbury's "Introduction" to *Forster: A Collection of Critical Essays*, and David Medalie's *E.M. Forster's Modernism*.

[it]...practised benevolence and philanthropy, was humane and intellectually curious, upheld free speech, had little colour-prejudice, believed that individuals are and should be different, and entertained a sincere faith in the progress of society. The world was to become better and better, chiefly through the spread of parliamentary institutions. The education I received in those far-off and fantastic days made me soft and I am very glad it did, for I have seen plenty of hardness since, and I know it does not even pay. But though the education was humane it was imperfect, inasmuch as we none of us realised our economic position...we did not realise that all the time we were exploiting the poor of our own country and the backward races abroad, and getting bigger profits from our investments than we should... All that has changed in the present century.<sup>69</sup>

Grateful for his education and the outlook it gave him, Forster nonetheless realizes it has lost relevance in modern society, and thankfully so, in some ways. He turns, though, back to that “old morality...the doctrine of *laissez-faire*,” and asks that it be combined with the “new economy.” This is a confirmation of Forster’s dedication to liberty and the preservation of freedom of one’s mind. Though it is a commentary on much bigger political currents, Forster’s recollection of the education of his youth is his own reminder that heritage helped create his own art, and even if such heritage cannot be duplicated exactly, it still bears lasting relevance for anyone concerned with the freedom of the mind and the cultivation of the spirit. The Schlegel’s “personal relations” must live on, as surely as Mrs. Wilcox’s spirit would forever preside over Howards End.

During an interview granted to a young man at Cambridge after his novelistic career had ended, Forster was asked if the undergraduate’s generation “bewildered Forster.” He responded “no, he was fortunate to have always been around young people from having lived so much in Cambridge. He thought he understood them; it was their relation to the world they live in that he did not understand.”<sup>70</sup> Forster felt he could no

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<sup>69</sup>Forster, “The Challenge of Our Time,” 56.

<sup>70</sup>Recollection of Sandy Campbell, “Mr. Forster of King’s,” in *E.M. Forster: Interviews and Recollections*, ed. J.H. Stape (New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc. 1993), 116.

longer write about “the old-fashioned world with its homes and its family life and its comparative peace,” the war having ruined the vestiges of his political liberalism and leaving him with fear over the country’s and democracy’s future.<sup>71</sup> Looking to my next chapter on Virginia Woolf and how she sees mentorship and the university factoring into the Great War, it is important to note that the university always remained for Forster a place that should be separate from the ugliness of war. I turn once more to Forster’s biography of his friend, Goldie, to illuminate Forster’s own feelings on his beloved Cambridge. After the Great War, Forster writes, “Cambridge only increased his sadness. All that he had cared for and worked for had vanished, and a grim obscene power took its place.” Forster recalls an incident in which a group of soldiers burst out laughing at the site of an undergraduate in cap and gown, laughing at “the tradition I had been educated in, and that it should be laughed at in its own home appalled me... No one defended it or even seemed to regret it, it had become a wraith which the next puff of gas would drive away.”<sup>72</sup> Woolf, of course, will challenge Forster’s vision of a perfect pre-war Cambridge, but for him it remained, till the last, the symbol of the very best kind of life, where students would learn to always be “the light of truth burning in a storm.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> “E.M. Forster on his Life and Books” (interview with David Jones, January 1959) in *E.M. Forster: Interviews and Recollections*, ed. J.H. Stape (New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc. 1993), 39.

<sup>72</sup>Forster, *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson*, 134.

<sup>73</sup>Forster, *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson*, 135.

### Chapter 3

#### “The Procession of the Sons”: Gendered Mentorship in *To the Lighthouse*

*Almost the same daughters ask almost the same brothers for almost the same privileges. Almost the same gentlemen intone almost the same refusals for almost the same reasons. It seems as if there were no progress in the human race, but only repetition. We can almost hear them if we listen singing the same old song, 'Here we go round the mulberry tree, the mulberry tree, the mulberry tree' and if we add, 'of property, of property, of property,' we shall fill in the rhyme without doing violence to the facts.*

-Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*

In 1916, Virginia Woolf wrote to women's rights activist Margaret Llewelyn Davies that the Great War was a “preposterous masculine fiction” that made her “steadily more feminist.”<sup>1</sup> Woolf continues this argument in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), claiming that it was the war that “hardened women's views about their male rulers.”<sup>2</sup> In her pacifist polemic, *Three Guineas*, Woolf links outright the “tyranny of the patriarchal state” to the “tyranny of the Fascist State.”<sup>3</sup> Published in 1938 on the cusp of World War II and its very real threat of a Nazi invasion, Woolf's critical version of British social history portrays the educated middle class as participating in a self-renewing cycle of patriarchy that is reflected in the gendered nature of daily activities. A society that perpetuates male dominance in turn perpetuates war; the violence of war, Woolf claims,

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<sup>1</sup>Mark Hussey, preface to *Three Guineas*, by Virginia Woolf (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2006), xiv. Also in Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 1998), 339.

<sup>2</sup>Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 339.

<sup>3</sup>Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 669.

See also Jane Marcus's introduction to *Three Guineas*, in which she links issues of gender to the “buildup to war and the power of Fascism to rule the state” (xviii).

is a uniquely “man’s habit.”<sup>4</sup> The country, then, becomes vulnerable to Fascism because it accepts “tyranny” as a matter of course.

The validity of the causal relationship that Woolf posits between patriarchy and war has met resistance from the day *Three Guineas* was published. The book was criticized harshly by Woolf’s contemporary John Maynard Keynes; her own husband, Leonard Woolf; and even her nephew, Quentin Bell, who claimed her argument was “wholly inadequate,” taking particular issue with “a discussion of women’s rights” being joined “with the far more agonizing and immediate question of what we were to do in order to meet the ever-growing menace of Fascism and war.”<sup>5</sup> Critically, these concerns persist today, as *Three Guineas* is often regarded as Woolf’s least successful work, replete with rhetorical oddities, unresolved arguments, and, given its focus on women of her own class, narrow scope.<sup>6</sup> This, coupled with Woolf’s own tendency to “[present] herself as an unworldly, even mystical private person with no desire for contact with political life,” long devalued Woolf as a wartime critic, encouraging critics as different as F.R. Leavis, Paul Fussell, and Elaine Showalter to read Woolf only in the context of her narrative innovations characteristic of modernism.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*, ed. Mark Hussey (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2006), 9. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>5</sup> Virginia Woolf qtd. in Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 680.

<sup>6</sup> Hermione Lee explains *Three Guineas*’ unusual structure: “With a great boiling-up, it splashed over everything that affected her: not just the patriarchal home and ‘infantilism’ of male society, not just the education and employment of women, but the establishment, the media, the church, psychiatry, science, dress. Her cultural conspiracy theory encompassed them all. . . . Just as she worked herself almost to death turning *The Years* into a ‘deliberate failure,’ a novel whose form would reflect its politics, so in *Three Guineas* she devised a deliberately fluid structure to undermine the rigid insistence of propaganda and polemic” (669-70).

<sup>7</sup> Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 671.



Renewed attention to *Three Guineas*, however, has helped recast Woolf as a prominent social commentator with particularly strong pacifist views that permeate both her fiction and non-fiction. Alex Zwerdling and Mark Hussey have revolutionized Woolf studies through their emphasis on her as a war critic, effectively removing her from the ivory tower on which she had been perched throughout the fifties and sixties.<sup>8</sup> In *Virginia Woolf and War*, Hussey argues for Woolf's position as "a serious political and ethical thinker," and reads all of her work as "deeply concerned with war... it helps redefine our understanding of the nature of war."<sup>9</sup> Hussey, though, generalizes the main argument of *Three Guineas* to reflect what he sees as Woolf's views on war as a whole:

...from her earliest to her final work she sought to explore and make clear the connections between private and public violence, between the domestic and the civic effects of patriarchal society, between male supremacy and the absence of peace... Woolf shares with many historical women's campaigns for peace a sense of the interconnectedness of violence and male dominance.<sup>10</sup>

Emphasizing the war content of *Three Guineas* helps Hussey to get around some of the gaps and stretches in the book's argument and rhetoric; focusing on the text's anti-war stance and connecting it to Woolf's larger corpus of fiction subjugates the tenuousness of that connection between wartime violence and male dominance, assimilating it into a greater contemporary conversation about women's views on war. This critical

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<sup>8</sup> In her introduction to *Three Guineas*, Jane Marcus helps connect this to the charges of "elitism" often leveled against Woolf: "In the same way one might argue that *Three Guineas* did not survive because its pacifism could not be separated from its feminism and neither -ism could be separated from Woolf's own brand of communism, a view so often misread and reversed and called 'elitism.' She says 'Let us try to translate the kitchenmaid's cry into the language of educated people'. Woolf never assumed she could speak for the workingwomen or workingmen'" (li).

<sup>9</sup> Mark Hussey, "Living in a War Zone: An Introduction to Virginia Woolf as a War Novelist," in *Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality, and Myth*, ed. Mark Hussey (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Hussey, "Living in a War Zone," 3-4.  
See also Patricia Laurence's "The Facts and Fugue of War: From *Three Guineas* to *Between the Acts*" in *Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality, and Myth*.

conversation on Woolf and war has, importantly, helped to historicize and politicize Woolf, but it also potentially encourages a somewhat myopic reading of *Three Guineas* that overlooks the particularities of Woolf's social critique by reading the book too exclusively in the context of war.

In a claim that helpfully builds on Hussey's reading, Daniel Pick remarks in a passing footnote to *War Machine* that any analysis of *Three Guineas* must also recognize the blame Woolf places on the system of education for upholding the gender roles that, she argues, lead to war.<sup>11</sup> While his obvious imperative is to read Woolf—as does Hussey—as a wartime critic, Pick strikes me here as being exactly right in wanting to put more emphasis on the nature of Woolf's argument against educational institutions. Building on this point, I argue in this chapter for a more nuanced reading of *Three Guineas* that moves beyond the text's war content and examines more fully the way that education upholds the “given [gender] roles and mystifying identifications” that Pick mentions. In contextualizing Woolf's “manifesto” within her wider interest in education, I link her specific argument about the militaristic patriarchy that leads to war back to the chief establishment that Woolf argues perpetuates it: the university, which she criticizes as a profoundly classist and gendered institution. Further, I propose that attending to Woolf's stance against the exclusionary tactics of higher education, as she lays it out in *Three Guineas*, illuminates a greater concern present in her fiction regarding the exact mechanisms through which institutions of higher education perpetuate tyranny. Woolf's

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<sup>11</sup>The full footnote reads: “It is possible to read Woolf, at least at certain points of the essay, as endorsing a stark psychological and biological, as well as historical dichotomy between men and women, in their respective relations to war and Fascism. On the other hand, any adequate analysis of *Three Guineas* would need to stress, alongside the bi-polar gendered terms of guilt and innocence, implication and immunity the text offers, its powerful insistence that the current system of social and economic relations, above all for Woolf the system of education, upholds *for both sexes* given roles and mystifying identifications” (pg. 3 footnote 2).

criticism of higher education is twofold, as she interprets the unequal access to universities as a sign of “tyranny,” and also sees this tyranny in the very process by which universities transmit social values. This process connects education to cultural transmission, and so is defined by Woolf in terms of mentorship.

My argument is primarily concerned with Woolf’s “daughters of educated men,” those shut out of the system of education that she claims perpetuates patriarchy. Alluded to in *A Room of One’s Own* but the subject of sustained discussion in *Three Guineas*, these women, “the weakest of all the classes in the state,” exert the least direct influence on society, having been instructed only in the areas of “poverty, chastity, derision, and,— what word covers ‘lack of rights and privileges?’” (16; 78). The repeated refrain, “daughters of educated men,” reveals rhetorically the dependency these women endure due to their lack of education, while simultaneously underscoring the discrepancy between their paltry education and that which their fathers received.<sup>12</sup> Educated at either Oxford or Cambridge, the father is specifically implicated for not passing on to his daughters the education which, Woolf goes on to say, he always passes on to his sons. The education so central to the text is cast as a particular model, that of transmission, and the way that Woolf phrases the term for these victims of sociopolitical atrophy—“the daughters of educated men”— leads me to conclude that Woolf’s problems with education are inextricable from her problems with how that knowledge is transmitted: it is a problem of mentorship.

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<sup>12</sup> The “Daughters of Educated Men” are hindered on two fronts: many receive no education at all, and the few who do remain powerless as a result of the educational system that perpetuates exclusionary tactics. These women keenly feel the disparity between themselves and their fathers and brothers, who have access to the knowledge, degrees, and appointments denied to them.

The inconsistencies and shortcomings she cites are put in terms of mentorship, as educated men are here faulted for not acting as mentors to their daughters. These “daughters of educated men” reveal Woolf’s concern with not just who is being educated, but who is passing knowledge on to whom.<sup>13</sup> To return to this chapter’s epigraph from *Three Guineas*, Woolf takes a vituperative stance against tired rationales for male exclusivity and private property. The “mulberry tree” and “property” are not only indicators of the literal transmission of property and inheritance along male lines; they also symbolize the cultural values transmitted to the sons of educated men, relics of what I contend Woolf claims is an outmoded mentorship. The “same old song” is the institutionalized duplication and transmission of these values. In the plight of the “daughters of educated men,” the particularities of Woolf’s critique converge: she points to a reproduced, patriarchal, and exclusionary male discourse as it is intertwined with the Oxbridge tradition and she points to the absence of a viable, transmissible entity— a culture worth passing on.

In contextualizing *Three Guineas* within Woolf’s wider interest in education and the passing on of knowledge, I hope to extend the recent arguments of both Melba Cuddy-Keane and Lois Cucullu, who have both sensed Woolf’s concern with cultural transmission. Cuddy-Keane’s interests are explicitly pedagogical: she locates Woolf “in an environment rife with controversy about the *dissemination and transmission* of intellectual culture,” and traces her participation in “an on-going pedagogical debate” that

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<sup>13</sup> Woolf herself was the “daughter of an educated man”; her father, Leslie Stephen, was a Cambridge intellectual. In her essay “A Sketch of the Past” Woolf describes the “communicative, literate, letter writing” into which she was born (62). Stephen believed women should be as well educated as men and encouraged Woolf’s reading. In his preface to *Three Guineas*, Hussey explains, “Such homeschooling was a source of some bitterness later in her life, as she recognized the advantages that derived from the expensive educations her brothers and half brothers received at private schools and university” (xi).

goes beyond institutional boundaries.<sup>14</sup> Cucullu, in *Expert Modernists, Matricide, and Modern Culture*, argues for Woolf's concern with the reproduction of social roles, as she sees Woolf transgressing the "social authority of the household...and mak[ing] the modernist intellectual a key player among the experts now responsible for *reproducing* the social order."<sup>15</sup> Both Cuddy-Keane and Cucullu imply that Woolf advocates forms of propagation that build on rather than reproduce intellectual institutions, but neither addresses exactly what it is that intellectual institutions reproduce, or the nature of the mechanisms of social reproduction. Mentorship, in my argument, brings together Cucullu's social reproduction with Cuddy-Keane's pedagogical transmission; the two are linked as Woolf attacks the university for reproducing through mentorship the masculine "social order" she seeks to delegitimize. Further, I build on Cucullu and Cuddy-Keane's work by claiming that Woolf additionally seeks an alternative mentorship, one actively involving the "daughters of educated men," that could in turn help constitute a new "social order."<sup>16</sup>

This chapter explores how the mentorship implied by the "daughters of educated men" surfaces in *To the Lighthouse* (1927), a novel full of educated men and their daughters. Since the importance of war to this novel has already been well-demonstrated, I read the novel's commentary on war not as a critical ending point but as part of Woolf's

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<sup>14</sup> Melba Cuddy-Keane, *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 8 (emphasis mine).

<sup>15</sup> Lois Cucullu, *Expert Modernists, Matricide, and Modern Culture* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 59 (emphasis mine).

<sup>16</sup> This refers back to the explanation of the classical version of mentorship described in my introduction and chapter on Hardy: Thomas Simmons's claim about mentorship as an "invocation," but not duplication, of the father. Woolf responds here to both mentorship as duplication *and* invocation.

larger commentary on the cultural transmission associated with university education.<sup>17</sup> Where my earlier chapters considered the class implications of cultural transmission, I examine here the ways in which that transmission was also affected by gender. I argue that Woolf establishes mentorship in the novel as a masculine tradition, and that she uses mentorship to characterize the patriarchal relationship between education (Oxbridge) and war identified in *Three Guineas*. Woolf's earlier *Jacob's Room* (1922) and even *The Voyage Out* (1915) also criticize the exclusivity and militarism of male mentorship and I believe *To the Lighthouse* raises this masculine mentorship only to resist it altogether. In a more drastic claim than either Hardy or Forster would make, Woolf argues here that the content being transmitted is ultimately as non-viable as the processes of transmission. In a move more powerful than any piece of education legislation, the war called for a radical end to cultural transmission, a transmission Woolf faults for leading to war in the first place. She proposes a uniquely female mentorship to take over from this traditional mentorship, a proposition explored primarily in the relationship between Mrs. Ramsay, a traditional domestic woman who has a particularly keen sense of perception, and Lily Briscoe, the artist who adores her. The novel, I claim, is an attempt by the daughters of educated men to construct both their own narrative perspective and their own model of a transmissible culture. The success of this attempt, though, Woolf herself comes to question, as *Three Guineas* ultimately calls for a "culture of outsiders," signaling an end to mentorship as a viable system for cultural transmission at all, and wondering what, if anything, could take its place.

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<sup>17</sup> See Hermione Lee's biography of Woolf already cited in this chapter, and also Tammy Clewell's *Mourning, Modernism, and Postmodernism* (2009), and Karen Levenback's *Virginia Woolf and the Great War* (1999).

## I. Mentorship as a Masculine Institution

*To the Lighthouse* sets up a pattern of male mentorship through Mr. Ramsay, James Ramsay, Andrew Ramsay, and Charles Tansley, and argues that this pattern is passed down through institutions of higher education. The novel begins by establishing the presence and persistence of a distinctly male tradition, one that is handed down from generation to generation. On the first page, we are introduced to James Ramsay, the young son of Mr. Ramsay, an academic who “feed[s] eight children on philosophy!”<sup>18</sup> Symbolizing the next generation, young James is situated among terms of futurity: “tomorrow,” “to which he had looked forward for years and years,” and “future prospects” (3). While the boy hopes that his immediate future includes a family expedition to the lighthouse, his father bluntly dashes such hopes, insisting that the weather certainly “won’t be fine.”

The future that Mr. Ramsay envisions has less to do with weather or family outings and more to do with indoctrinating James with the same values to which he adheres. From the comfort of his mother’s lap, James sees his father in a pitch of excitement, declaring “Boldly we rode and well!” as he nearly collides with Lily Briscoe’s easel. Fortunately, the painting is spared, as “he turned sharp, and rode off, to die gloriously... upon the heights of Balaclava” (8). What nearly knocks into Lily’s art is not simply a too-boisterous walk in the garden, but a Tennyson poem. “Boldly we rode and well,” from “The Charge of the Light Brigade,” places Mr. Ramsay firmly in a masculine tradition of the past. The poem was written in 1854 during the Crimean War as

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<sup>18</sup> Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (San Diego, New York, & London: Harcourt, Inc, 1981), 3; 22. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

a celebration of valor and courage even in the face of defeat.<sup>19</sup> This past is made present, though, by Mr. Ramsay's substituting the pronoun "we" for the "they" original to Tennyson's poem. That small "we" has considerable weight: in *Three Guineas*, Woolf defines the term as encompassing "a whole made up of body, brain and spirit, influenced by memory and tradition" (22). With his son looking on, Mr. Ramsay makes it clear that he believes in that same male tradition of patriotism and valor championed by Tennyson's poem.

James, it would seem, is meant to learn and pass on this tradition, as well. The values on display in "The Charge of the Light Brigade" go hand in hand with Mr. Ramsay's personal philosophy on child-rearing: "He was incapable of untruth; never tampered with a fact; never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure or convenience of any mortal being, least of all of his own children, who, sprung from his loins, should be aware from childhood that life is difficult" (4). Although harsh, Mr. Ramsay's outlook, like the one in Tennyson's poem, encourages fortitude. Mr. Ramsay wants his children to learn to accept obstacles as inevitable, to learn that one needs, "...above all, courage, truth, and the power to endure" (4). In fathering eight children, Mr. Ramsay has endured—not only do his many children represent his literal propagation, but, if he teaches them as he plans, he will have transmitted those values

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<sup>19</sup> The subject of Tennyson's poem is the ill-advised and disastrous charge of the British cavalry in the Battle of Balaclava on October 25, 1854. Mr. Ramsay is the portrait of not only masculinity, but of a dangerous masculinity, the same one that Woolf would claim rationalized the violence of the Great War. The presence of the poem at such an early point in the novel signals the valorization of wartime disaster, and implicates this narrative in the many deaths of the Great War.



that, because he so vociferously sets them against his wife's habits, are characterized in the novel as distinctly male.<sup>20</sup>

As Mr. Ramsay's progeny, James embodies physical continuity, straightforward reproduction, and the duplication of a tradition of valorous manhood.<sup>21</sup> But if James, who ends up just like his father, represents the presence and continuity of a particular type of tradition, it is Mr. Ramsay's protégé, Charles Tansley, who represents how that tradition of masculine virtues is consciously reproduced and passed on through a male mentor. One of the many young men who "parodied" Mr. Ramsay, Tansley is completing his dissertation (as Mr. Ramsay assumes Andrew will one day) under the supervision of Mr. Ramsay, and, with his repeated echoes of the impending bad weather, seems to have adopted his mentor's attitude, as well.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, while not Ramsay's biological child, Tansley is every bit the son of an educated man by virtue of the allowances of mentorship. While he may have a working-class background, Tansley is granted the possibility of moving outside his class as the novel's version of Cambridge indoctrinates him with its values.

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<sup>20</sup> The Ramsays, of course, have a brood of both boys and girls. Mr. Ramsay's interactions, though, are geared more towards his sons, whereas Mrs. Ramsay is the one, as I explain in my third section, to take into account what her daughters should learn.

Additionally, many of the men in the novel echo Mr. Ramsay's coldness. Charles Tansley, especially, is quick to chime in that the weather will not hold, and to resist moments of emotional vulnerability during his walk with Mrs. Ramsay. Augustus Carmichael and William Bankes, also, are aligned more closely with Mr. Ramsay.

<sup>21</sup> Hermione Lee provides a biographical reading of James's character: "It is too simple to describe the Right Honourable James Stephen as a deep-dyed Victorian patriarchal imperialist. A man powered by a social conscience and a rigid sense of justice, 'one of the great colonial administrators of the age,' he seems also to have been a casualty of the system into which he was built and which he helped to build. Leslie thought of his father as 'two persons in one.' That double nature—the rigid will and the thin skin—would emerge again in the next generation, particularly in Thoby. The family type is invoked at the beginning of *To the Lighthouse*, where Mrs. Ramsay is looking at her son James, who has been give the Stephen family name as well as the Stephen face and destiny" (61).

<sup>22</sup> "'There'll be no landing at the Lighthouse tomorrow,' said Charles Tansley, clapping his hands together as he stood at the window with her husband" (7).

The values to which Cambridge grants Tansley access are more clearly delineated in one of Woolf's earliest novels, 1922's *Jacob's Room*. As Tansley envisions himself "for ever walking up and down, up and down, with Mr. Ramsay," we hear the echoes of Jacob Flanders' footsteps (7). It is a cool night at Cambridge as Jacob buttons his jacket and takes leave of the pleasurable company of his friends: "Back from the Chapel, back from the Hall, back from the Library, came the sound of his footsteps, as if the old stone echoed with magisterial authority: 'The young man—the young man—the young man—back to his rooms.'" <sup>23</sup> Given that the novel narrates its protagonist's life from the perspective of those who will mourn his death in the Great War on the book's final page, such regression and repetition of Jacob's footsteps and youth seem a fitting foreshadowing to the impending lament, which famously takes place over a pair of Jacob's old shoes. *Jacob's Room* is also a historical commentary: Woolf sees the culture that produced the intimate academic gathering of Jacob and his friends as subsequently calling them to war, to the endless deaths of so many young men. In this passage, Woolf emphasizes not the end result—death in war—but how Jacob ends up there as a result of that which Cambridge taught him.

I will discuss the import of the war in the next section, but first, I would like to establish that there is precedent for reading in Woolf characterizations of the university as engendering mentorship-type relationships. Vincent Sherry extrapolates from Jacob's footsteps a useful summary of Woolf's critique: "The cadence to which his steps conform only confirms the ratios of an authority established, passed on: rational, male."<sup>24</sup> It is not

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<sup>23</sup>Virginia Woolf, *Jacob's Room* (San Diego, New York, & London: Harcourt Inc., 1960), 46. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>24</sup>Vincent Sherry, *The Great War and the Language of Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003), 279.

the subject of Sherry's line—"rational, male"—that explains how this repetition comes about; it is his verb, "passed on," which implies that this repetition occurs as a result of a conscious act of transmission. In matriculating at Cambridge, Jacob, as Sherry rightly asserts, inserts himself into the tradition of patriarchy criticized so overtly by Woolf in *Three Guineas*. In *Jacob's Room*, Cambridge only continues an educational system already in place, one begun by Jacob's tutor, Mr. Floyd. "'Oh bother Mr. Floyd!' said Jacob, switching off a thistle's head, for he knew already that Mr. Floyd was going to teach them Latin, as...Mr. Floyd, like his father before him, visited cottages miles away on the moors, and, like old Mr. Floyd, was a great scholar" (20). Knowledge in the novel is, from the outset, cast in terms of "passing down." Mr. Floyd himself went to either Oxford or Cambridge (Betty Flanders cannot remember which, as they are equal in her mind), and he prepares Jacob to do the same. Once there, Professor Plumer, whose name implies his embodiment of scholarly tradition, resumes the role of mentor and Jacob is left to take his repetitious footsteps.<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, all the Cambridge men are cast in language that situates them as part of a great tradition of mentorship: "Look, as they pass into service, how airily the gowns blow out, as though nothing dense and corporeal were within. What sculptured faces, what certainty, authority controlled by piety, although great boots march under the gowns. In what orderly procession they advance" (32). Jacob's footsteps down the dormitory hall, the boots marching under the pluming gowns, and the shoes that are Jacob's only remains

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In accordance with my argument about the institutionalization mentorship of the values that lead to war, Sherry continues, "This masculine order of a rationalistic language extends its empowerment to Jacob through the university that institutionalizes these values" (279).

<sup>25</sup> In yet another passing critical reference to mentorship, Sherry refers to Professor Plumer as Jacob's "mentor."

symbolize his active participation in a transmitted tradition. Mentorship in the novel began as a kind, deliberate gesture of education for a lonely widow's son, yet it quickly becomes an equally deliberate act of transmitting particular knowledge and cultural values. Given the novel's tragic end it is obvious that that these values culminate in war, so I would like to emphasize here the way in which the novel relies on the language of transmission before Jacob ever even goes to war. Mentorship in this construction goes beyond exposing a social problem as it had for Hardy and Forster; mentorship according to Woolf actually is the source of the problem itself. The language describing his education is put in terms of mentorship, showing how Woolf came to think of it as a defining model for understanding the ways that the "male rationales" mentioned by Sherry are carried on.

While Jacob Flanders and James Ramsay may initially resist their mentors, neither successfully dodges their influence: James, at the novel's end, is as gruff and unfeeling as his father, and Jacob dies to protect the lifestyle afforded to him by Cambridge.<sup>26</sup> Both sons of educated men, they are the grateful recipients of Woolf's famed "Arthur's Education Fund," recipients of male exclusivity, private property, and male rationales. But while both are the beneficiaries (or victims) of mentorship, it is Charles Tansley, the son of an *uneducated* man, who emphasizes the social implications of mentorship. Privy to the same educational opportunities as Jacob Flanders and James Ramsay, Charles Tansley underscores that mentorship inculcates more than just basic

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<sup>26</sup> As a young child, James finds his father overbearing (tyrannous, even), especially in contrast to his mother: "But his son hated him. He hated him for coming up to them, for stopping and looking down on them; he hated him for interrupting them; he hated him for the exaltation and sublimity of his gestured; for the magnificence of his head; for his exactingness and egotism (for there he stood, commanding them to attend to him); but most of all he hated the twang and twitter of his father's emotion which, vibrating round them, disturbed the perfect simplicity and good sense of his relations with his mother" (36-7).

knowledge: mentorship is both the transmission of values and the creation of a system that allows those values to be transmitted beyond biological lines and become an institutional norm. Tansley, while from a family as “poor as church mice,” is seen as “exceptionally able” by Mr. Ramsay (6). The son of a chemist, Tansley has “paid his own way since he was thirteen” (12). As a male, however, he is granted access to institutional mentorship (with Mr. Ramsay) through the university, and so is able to join in a particular tradition of passed-down values that grant authority and power to men. He may, as Mrs. Ramsay points out to Lily, be tutoring his sister at home, but he cannot admit her to the same university privileges he enjoys (197). An unpalatable version of Leonard Bast, he is still more successful than either Bast or the fated Jude Fawley, as Tansley accomplishes precisely what Jude cannot do: through hard work and the proper training, he gains access to an institution typically outside of his class.<sup>27</sup>

The idea that Tansley could overcome his lower-middle class origins and attain a Cambridge-type degree, while inspiring, is hardly a naïve assumption on the part of Woolf that simple hard work could yield positive results. Rather, Tansley’s ability to transcend class boundaries links education to the class and gender struggles so important to Woolf. As Hermione Lee points out, Woolf’s “essays and fiction of the 1930s present a disfigured society with a hypocritical culture and an unbridgeable class gap. They diagnose rigidly constructed gender identities, which exclude or oppress the misfits of

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<sup>27</sup> In a nod to the unfortunate scholar, Leonard Bast, the elderly attendant to the Ramsay’s beach house, shares his name: the old (and “creaky”) Mrs. Bast helps Mrs. McNab rescue the Waverley novels, a tea set, and other forgotten goods from impending decay (135). Like her namesake, Mrs. Bast seems doomed to fail, as the relics from the house are as sure to be as forgotten as Leonard Bast is by the end of *Howards End*.

either.”<sup>28</sup> *To the Lighthouse*, in allowing Tansley to bridge this gap by virtue of his gender and the allowances of mentorship by other men, demonstrates the profound possibilities of institutionalized mentorship. Firstly, institutional forms of mentorship promote gendered educational access and transmission (i.e. the Tennyson poem and the “rational, male cadence” of Jacob’s footsteps). Secondly, this mentorship points to possibilities for upward class mobility and, correspondingly, the possible acquisition of upper-class cultural capital—a degree. While his humble origins prevent him from even being considered as a possible match for Prue (Mr. Ramsay says he would disinherit her should they marry) he can still write the same dissertation expected of Andrew (66). Mentorship creates Tansley’s one possibility for upward class movement. In *Charles Tansley*, especially, Woolf makes the argument that mentorship is a masculine institution housed in the halls of higher education while granting only men social mobility and power. Woolf’s deprecatory portrait of Tansley’s character as an unfeeling atheist who makes the Ramsay women shudder also foreshadows her impending critique of mentorship, resonating with the doom that permeates Tennyson’s, “All in the valley of Death.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 338.

<sup>29</sup> Tansley seems to be inspired by Woolf’s older brother, Toby, who had, according to Sherry, a real passion for the Age of Reason, “a sensibility given to strong opinions and convinced in particular of the irrelevance now of Christianity, fiercely moral but committed to logic rather than faith as the basis of correct action, his rational atheism stemmed identifiably from Leslie’s root” (238). While Toby’s “rational atheism” is echoed in Tansley, though, Toby’s intellectual privileges were very much a matter of more literal inheritance. Woolf was shut out on both counts because of her gender—she could not directly access Cambridge through either being self-taught or born into it. She may have had access to the knowledge, but could not, like Tansley, be granted access.

## II. The Failure of Male Mentorship

Turning to the Great War's looming presence in the novel, I argue that the patriarchy Woolf famously implicates is actually part of a greater system of the exclusions and shortcomings of mentorship and the particular relationship it posits between gender, social policy, and education. In "The Parable of the Young Man and the Old," Great War poet Wilfred Owen casts the seminal patriarch Abram (Abraham) as a murderer, who kills both his son and "half the seed of Europe."<sup>30</sup> Owen's feeling that fathers have quite literally killed their sons as one generation sends the next to war is part of a more generalized narrative of the Great War that came about shortly after the war's conclusion. Samuel Hynes explains this "Myth of War" as a "collective narrative of significance," a way for the nation to explain and come to terms with what it had endured. Hynes argues that this narrative began with "a generation of innocent young men, their heads full of high abstractions like Honour, Glory, and England, [who] went off to war to make the world safe for democracy." Not only were these men "slaughtered in stupid battles planned by stupid generals," but, as Owen suggests, they blamed the previous generation: "They rejected the values of the society that had sent them to war, and in doing so separated their own generation from the past and from their actual cultural inheritance... [the story] can be reduced to two terse propositions: the old betray

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<sup>30</sup>Wilfred Owen, "The Parable of the Young Man and the Old" in *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen* (New York: New Directions Publishing, 1965), 42.

It is interesting to note that Owen refers to Abraham as "Abram." Abram's name is amended in Genesis 17:5—well before the potential sacrifice of his son—to include the additional letters as a reference to God. By using this earlier version of Abraham's name, Owen effectively omits God from the poem, referring to the perceived Godlessness of a brutal war. At the same time, God's absence from the poem signals the same "Age of Reason" that is associated with the political progressivism of Liberalism, and that which also ushered in World War I.

the young; the past is remote and useless.”<sup>31</sup> Together, Owen and Hynes capture the narrative of Jacob Flanders and Andrew Ramsay: armed with the “Tennysonian” (Victorian) values of male valor and courage received from their fathers, they die in war. Hynes’s “tyrannous Old Men,” an entire generation of murderous patriarchs, point to the “patriarchy” that Woolf criticizes in *Three Guineas* as fascist and tyrannical, imposing their justifications for war with deadly consequence.<sup>32</sup>

For Nancy Topping Bazin and Jane Hamovit Lauter, this patriarchy is embodied by Mr. Ramsay, whose attachment to Tennyson’s poem provides an easy link, in their argument, between the “husband-hero” and “soldier-hero,” the patriarch who feels superior to and protective of women, and the patriarch who wants to protect his country. The war imagery surrounding Andrew (and Jacob, by implication) stems, then, from a patriarchy that is both domestic and political.<sup>33</sup> But as criticisms of *Three Guineas* illustrate, the presence of two types of patriarchy (domestic and political) does not necessarily imply a causal relationship between them. So, instead of taking the militarism of *To the Lighthouse* immediately back to the novel’s domestic engagements, I take it

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<sup>31</sup>Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (New York: Atheneum, 1991), xii.

George Orwell, in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, poses a similar narrative: “Essentially... it was a revolt of youth against age, resulting directly from the war. In the war, the young had been sacrificed and the old had behaved in a way which, even at this distance of time, is horrible to contemplate; they had been sternly patriotic in safe places while their sons went down like swathes of hay before the German machine guns. Moreover, the war had been conducted mainly by old men and had been conducted with supreme incompetence” (qtd. In Hynes xii).

<sup>32</sup>Hynes identifies *To the Lighthouse* as taking its form directly the “Myth of the War”: “a first part set in the world before the war, a third part in the changed world after the war, and separating those parts ‘Time passes’, in which the war occurs as a parenthetical example of time’s destruction” (458).

<sup>33</sup> Nancy Topping Bazin and Jane Hamovit Lauter, “Virginia Woolf’s Keen Sensitivity to War” in *Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality, and Myth*, ed. Mark Hussey (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press), 19.

Bazin and Lauter follow this relationship into *A Room of One’s Own*, arguing that “Woolf clarifies how sexism and its concomitant behavior can provide a foundation for either heroism (which can be admirable) or fascism (which is deplorable).”



back to the novel's educational framework in order to flesh out this connection more fully. If, as I have argued, institutions of higher education instill the patriarchal values of the previous generation, then it follows that the values these institutional mentors transmit are related to the militaristic ones that Owen attacks. In this "Myth of War," the violence is the end-product, what Hynes calls "cultural inheritance." For Woolf, however, this inheritance itself is culturally inculcated; because it is actively mentored, it is part of a greater system of education and class represented by Tansley. The wartime violence in *To the Lighthouse*, after all, is limited to a simple bracketed statement, buried in the book's center: "[A shell exploded. Twenty or thirty young men were blown up in France, among them Andrew Ramsay, whose death, mercifully, was instantaneous.]" (133). This compression does not diminish the impact of war; it enlarges it and makes the war part of a more systemic social failure outlined in the passage's surrounding pages, a failure in a system characterized by mentorship. Not only does patriarchy make excuses for violence, but that patriarchy has been mentored. Patriarchy has been institutionalized, passed down from generation to generation. If universities operate by a system of mentorship and men continue to advance socially by the allowances of mentorship, they will continue to transmit the same patriarchy, which would lead to the same violence, and the same war that these institutions permitted in 1914. For this reason, Woolf scrutinizes male mentorship, first connecting it explicitly to war and then wondering what, if any, possibilities it holds for the future.

Woolf relates mentorship to both the university and the violence that she believes follows from it. While Cambridge may have been the seat of early Bloomsbury intellectualism, it was also the site of Liberal politics that reached a terminal crisis in the

Great War. Sherry makes a forceful case for reading Woolf in relation to the political Liberalism that led to the Great War, a formative event for literary modernism. Here, Sherry offers a very close reading of both Woolf's language and the language he shows her to be appropriating and ultimately arguing against—those “authoritative male rationales” I mentioned above. These rationales are the “rational intercourse” or “language of reason” of Liberal politics, and rationalized a war that was not actually reasonable at all.<sup>34</sup> Sherry links this language of rationality to the politics implicated in the war, analyzing the language of reason present in *Three Guineas* as Woolf argues against war. Sherry explains:

Closely argued, densely and empirically reasoned, this antiwar treatise is massively and even wearisomely buttressed with its apparatus of scholarly citation and case-making, syllogism and proof. Its passionate rationality stands as strikingly at odds with the cooler and *sauber* manner of her accomplished style, moreover, as it reveals the underlying, abiding strength of that intellectual faith. If those protocols of documentary logic appear overprepared, their excesses preserve a memory of what they attempt to correct: the errors of insufficiency to which an overconfidence amounted in 1914.<sup>35</sup>

The “overconfidence” to which this rationalism leads is precisely what guides Jacob Flanders to war. The language of mentorship or “passing down” in *Jacob's Room* further relates the education associated with the Latin tutoring and the classic Cambridge education to a Liberal political agenda.

Like this male rationalist discourse, mentorship is blamed for propagating rationales for war. Having received the appropriate education from Mr. Floyd, Jacob goes up to Cambridge in October 1906, a particularly poignant date just after the sweeping

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<sup>34</sup> Sherry, *The Great War and the Language of Modernism*, 234-5.

<sup>35</sup> Sherry, *The Great War and the Language of Modernism*, 237.

Liberal election victory.<sup>36</sup> Jacob's graduation in 1914 sees another key moment in Liberal political history: the outbreak of the Great War. Woolf's description of war's outbreak incorporates the language of transmission and casts it as a distinctly masculine mode. As "Five strokes of Big Ben intoned," Timothy Durrant, a classmate of Jacob's who is now a Whitehall clerk, records that war has been declared. The note is typed, the "burden of knowledge" carried across the street, onto "the sixteen gentlemen, lifting their pens or turning perhaps rather wearily in their chairs, decreed that the course of history should shape itself this way or that way, being manfully determined... to control the course of events." This "manful determination" is that of Liberal politicians:

Pitt and Chatham, Burke and Gladstone looked from side to side with fixed marble eyes and an air of immortal quiescence which perhaps the living may have envied, the air being full of whistling and concussions, as the procession with its banners passed down Whitehall...altogether they looked too red, fat, pale or lean, to be dealing, as the marble heads had dealt, with the course of history. (171-2)

This passage is put in terms of transmission, depicting the physical projection of the voice dictating the call to war, carrying the burden of knowledge, the transmission of this knowledge from the voice to the sixteen men to their colleagues, to the procession at Whitehall. This language establishes that the course of history, the march to war, truly is "manfully" determined as it is passed down, as mentorship is a uniquely male institution for Woolf.<sup>37</sup> The war is the natural conclusion to the "mechanical (male) rationality" that Sherry finds in the character of Mr. Dalloway in *The Voyage Out*: linguistic reason is "powerful. It is male. It is the engine of advance."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> A subject Sherry discusses at length. See pages 275-7.

<sup>37</sup> Hermione Lee explains the Freudian basis of *Three Guineas*, showing how Woolf interprets Freud's essential aggression as male (712). The slipperiness between masculinity and violence is characteristic of the entire text.

<sup>38</sup> Sherry, *The Great War and the Language of Modernism*, 278.

*Jacob's Room* shows that such language “advances” only violence. But it is, crucially, the university that is implicated in this connection. Indeed, Woolf’s criticisms of Cambridge were many. Hermione Lee observes:

In all her writings about Cambridge, there is the same tone—whether it’s in her unpublished caricatures of Saxon, ‘one of the great men of our time,’ who in the end never did anything except crossword puzzles, or her fictional version of privileged Cambridge life in *Jacob's Room*, or her encounter with the closed doors of the ‘Oxbridge’ library in *A Room of One's Own*. She criticised the closed world of Cambridge Socialites all her life for ‘rousing jealousies and vanities.’ And she would never forget how the young men irked her.<sup>39</sup>

Albeit for somewhat different reasons, Woolf shared with D.H. Lawrence a distaste for Cambridge’s exclusions, a disdain that comes from, in part, the way that these exclusions are perpetuated. The presence of Durrant in the passage above relates this narrative of “the course of history” back to Cambridge, an institution represented in the text as the seat of male rationality. Mr. Floyd, Professor Plumer, Jacob Flanders, Timothy Durrant are the transmitters and receivers of the culture Woolf deems patriarchal and authoritarian in *Three Guineas*, and all are equally implicated in this procession that excuses a call to war. And if the masculine mentorship transmitted through Cambridge leads to war, it cannot, to use the term Woolf associates with Mr. Ramsay, “endure.” When Woolf asks in *Three Guineas*, “where in short is leading us, the procession of the sons of educated men,” she looks back at Jacob’s heavy footsteps down the Cambridge corridor, the

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Hermione Lee echoes the mechanical nature of the language surrounding war in *Jacob's Room*: “... the emergence of a young life is obliterated by the war, which is seen as a grotesque mechanical force superimposed on to terrifying chaos” (336).

<sup>39</sup> Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 209.

banners passed down at Whitehall, and questions where this mentored, masculine liberalism can possibly go next.<sup>40</sup>

*Jacob's Room* does not answer that question. As Hynes suggests, "War is not the subject of the novel, but it is the termination of it, the event after which no story remains to tell...at the end of the book there is only a vacancy, which represents both the dead Jacob and his dead world, the 'civilization' of Edwardian England."<sup>41</sup> While *Jacob's Room* shows how male rationales are linked to patriarchy and demonstrates that the university perpetuates these rationales through mentorship, the novel does not move beyond the emptiness of war and widespread loss of mass male youth, that which male rationales attempted to justify. But what lies beyond? Sherry looks to the forcefully shaped arguments of *Three Guineas* to gauge Woolf's reaction to rational, male language as also an act of "desperation." "The extremity of current circumstances *repeats*," he continues, "the inefficiency of reason's appeal to history."<sup>42</sup> Turning again to my epigraph from *Three Guineas*, Woolf's stance against tired rationales for male exclusivity reads with a familiar pattern: "It seems as if there were no progress in the human race, but only repetition" (80-1). As property is passed down male lines, war is "the monotonously recurring product of patriarchal order."<sup>43</sup> Woolf, in the thirties, cannot see any possibility

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<sup>40</sup> The question appears in *Mrs. Dalloway*, as well, as Peter Walsh watches a procession of young boys place wreaths at the Cenotaph.

<sup>41</sup> Hynes, *A War Imagined*, 344.

<sup>42</sup> Sherry, *The Great War and the Language of Modernism*, 237 (emphasis mine). Sherry continues: "In the late 1930s, she is revisiting—or awaiting—the disappointment that her father's failed example first instanced. His failure to realize his intellectual ideals will provide a model and form for her understanding of subsequent events, especially those superintended in 1914 by the (somewhat) younger men of his own aging generation of liberals" (237-8). What Sherry reads as happening in the thirties I actually locate a bit earlier in *To the Lighthouse*.

<sup>43</sup> Hussey, "Living in a War Zone," 8.

beyond a repeat of violence, as the male authority housed in Cambridge offers only an exclusionary history that merely recycles ineffective male rationales.

So when repetition characterizes the majority of male relationships in *To the Lighthouse*, it signals Woolf's sense that mentorship has reached its end. Speculating as to why his friendship with Mr. Ramsay has faded, William Bankes thinks: "Whose fault it was he could not say, only, after a time, repetition had taken the place of newness. It was to repeat that they met...and their paths lying different ways, there had been, certainly for no one's fault, some tendency, when they met, to repeat" (21). Even Mr. Ramsay's own work is characterized by its inability to innovate: "He had made a definite contribution to philosophy in one little book when he was only five and twenty; what came after was more or less amplification, repetition" and "He had not genius; he laid no claim to that: but he had, or might have had, the power to repeat every letter of the alphabet from A to Z accurately in order" (23; 34-5).<sup>44</sup> Mentorship, however, cannot survive on this repetition. As Mentor encourages Telemakhos to take his own path, the mentee must preserve the tradition he inherits while also individualizing it, understanding it in the context of his present-day society. Mr. Ramsay's work represents masculine thought's inability to move forward, signaling in the novel that the future of mentorship is not clear.

In *Jacob's Room*, Cambridge mentorship is offered as a kind of breeding ground for male discourse, a discourse which ultimately leads right to war. Jacob Flanders and later Andrew Ramsay demonstrate Woolf's belief that mentorship's repetition has

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<sup>44</sup> Consider also Mr. Pauncefort, the artist, "watched by ten little boys," who paints the same scene over and over again: "all the pictures were like that...green and grey, with lemon-coloured sailing-boats, and pink women on the beach" (13). It is especially important to note that Lily, the novel's female artist, is the one who sees the repetitiousness of men's art, as she later reacts to it with her own more personal art.

become dangerous, since it leads only to war. Jacob's and Andrew's fate is similar to that of Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*: like Charles Tansley, Smith has the opportunity to become solidly middle class, but the war's violence leaves him unable to advance, and like Rachel Vinrace of the *Voyage Out*, there is no other narrative possibility other than for him to die. With war as its endpoint, mentorship is no longer viable; repetition has become self-destructive.

In *To the Lighthouse*, though, Woolf examines whether mentorship can lead to additional possibilities other than death. Woolf does not distinguish these possibilities as necessarily fruitful, since they still lead only to repetition. In *To the Lighthouse*, male mentorship is itself under scrutiny as a system that itself transmits values; if authoritative, male rationales can lead only to war, what of a system that privileges and relies on male authority and rationality? The repetition associated with Mr. Ramsay, the book's primary male mentor, signals that Woolf's continued analysis and attack uncovers problems of mentorship that persist even after the war, or may even lead to another one. James, Mr. Ramsay's heir to intellectualism, is left with no way out of mentorship's bind: he and Cam vow to "fight tyranny [Mr. Ramsay] to the death" on their eventual voyage to the lighthouse, but Cam realizes that James has simply slipped into Mr. Ramsay's role, and she wonders to which one she should "yield" (168). The tyranny the Ramsay children must resist is twofold: war (which claims Andrew) and the male authority that Mr. Ramsay represents. If James cannot help but repeat the male authority of his father, he may not be able to resist the other either.

Woolf further questions where masculine mentorship can lead through the figure of the mentee who does not succumb to war's violence, who seems immune to the

tyranny of war and the tyranny Mr. Ramsay represents to his children: Charles Tansley. Just as Cambridge harbors the discourse that led to war in *Jacob's Room*, the university again produces a male, rationalist discourse in *To the Lighthouse* through Tansley. Tansley, as per Hynes's "Myth of War," feels he must speak out against the violence perpetuated by his elders. The novel's final pages depict him as an anti-war speaker, "denouncing something: he was condemning somebody," Lily thinks (197). But this is not the break with the old values that it seems. Instead, it is only an unwitting echo of Tansley's dissertation, which was, as Mrs. Ramsay had thought, about "the influence of something upon somebody" (23). Tansley, the epitome of mentorship's potential, is still very much a product of that mentorship even though the subject of his discourse has superficially changed. It is still that male, rationalist discourse of *Jacob's Room*, even though Tansley didn't have to die.

But while he lives, Charles Tansley offers only false hope for mentorship. William Bankes sees him as the potential spokesman for the next generation: looking at him during a political discussion, Bankes thinks, "perhaps...here is the man. One was always waiting for the man...for Mr. Tansley seemed to be saying, You have wasted your lives. You are all of you wrong. Poor old fogies, you're hopelessly behind the times...he had courage; he had ability; he was extremely well up in the facts" (94). But Tansley, because of the very allowances of mentorship, seems to promise only repetition of the same old rationales. Bankes's "courage" and "ability" echo Tennyson; his praise of Tansley's being "well up in the facts" only underscores the persistence of old male rationales. Tansley is Mr. Ramsay's brightest protégé, the one who imagines himself "gowned and hooded, walking in a procession" of young men led by Mr. Ramsay, and he



ends up with a lifestyle very similar to his mentor's, having received a fellowship, gotten married, living in Golder's Green, and making Lily Briscoe shudder every time she sees him (196). Resistance to tyranny—both patriarchal and political—is done empty; its transmission is continued through an institutionalized mentorship. Mr. Ramsay has indeed lived according to his dictum that one needs “the power to endure,” since he lives on just as much through Charles Tansley as he does through his biological children. Mentorship privileges that which endures, but Woolf believes it does so at a time when history's events do not merit endurance. As Tansley represents the potential successes for men under the auspices of mentorship, he also represents their failure, since he cannot move beyond that tired “power to endure,” leaving mentorship floundering in endless repetition.

### **III. Male Mentorship in Decline**

I have argued that *To the Lighthouse* presents mentorship as a masculine institution, one that transmits traditional male values through the university structure. In light of the Great War, the novel associates this male mentorship with a justification of violence that precipitated a war Woolf considered unjust. As a result, mentorship in *To the Lighthouse* is thrown into question: it produces institutionalized repetition of these values, leaving Woolf wondering what can possibly remain as a viable subject of cultural transmission. No such possibilities exist in *Jacobs Room*, since the novel ends with the very absence of any transmission. All of Jacob's knowledge acquired at Cambridge leads to what it is not there—Jacob, whose profound vacancy fills the room. But in *To the Lighthouse*, this knowledge is transmuted into physical terms, tangible proof of its

existence; Woolf assigns to male knowledge a very literal “power to endure.”<sup>45</sup> In *To the Lighthouse*, material goods are more than the luxury commodities enjoyed by the refined men at Oxford and Cambridge mentioned in *A Room of One’s Own* or the haunting presence of Jacob’s shoes as a reminder of the steps he took at Cambridge. Cultural knowledge in *To the Lighthouse* itself can and does come to be measured in strictly material terms. Mr. Ramsay’s books are about “subject and object and the nature of reality” (23); James Ramsay is introduced as literally sitting in a pile of things; Tansley talks about his dissertation, as well as the possibility of a fellowship, professorship, readership, and a lectureship, tangible, noun-based markers of intellectual status or cultural capital.<sup>46</sup> Male rationales and male knowledge are the subjects of mentorship as I have outlined it, and they come to be defined in the novel as too rational, too tangible, too similar to the “of property, of property, of property” passed down in *Three Guineas*. I believe that Woolf articulates through the association of male mentorship with “thingness” her particular problems with the male discourse that mentorship naturalizes. Only then can she finally allude to alternate possibilities for a less exclusionary mentorship. In opposition to men’s material needs, Woolf positions women and their rejection of this materialism in favor of feeling.

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<sup>45</sup> In *Jacob’s Room*, this interest is more peripheral, as the most primary instance of physical acquisition occurs early on in the novel, upon Mr. Floyd’s departure. The scholar sends for the Flanders boys, “to say good-bye, he told them to choose whatever they liked in his study to remember him by. Archer chose a pen-knife...Jacob chose the works of Byron in one volume; John, who was still too young to make a proper choice, chose Mr. Floyd’s kitten...” (21-2). Aside from the academic, masculine tradition (Byron) present, the passage indicates the need for a physical souvenir of the learning the boys received.

<sup>46</sup> “James Ramsay, sitting on the floor cutting out pictures from the illustrated catalogue of the Army and Navy Stores, endowed the picture of a refrigerator, as his mother spoke, with heavenly bliss. It was fringed with joy. The wheelbarrow, the lawnmower, the sound of poplar trees, leaves whitening before rain, rooks cawing, brooms knocking, dresses rustling—all these were so coloured and distinguished in his mind...” (3-4).

Whenever the artist, Lily Briscoe, tries to comprehend Mr. Ramsay's work, "she always saw clearly before her a large kitchen table" (23). Lily blames this mental image on Andrew: when she asks him what his father's books were about, he replies, "Subject and object and the nature of reality." Lily is, understandably, still confused: "And when she said Heavens, she had no notion what that meant. 'Think of a kitchen table then,' he told her, 'when you're not there'" (23). The passage evokes the reflective work of John Maynard Keynes, Woolf's Bloomsbury friend. In "My Early Beliefs," Keynes reflects on his intellectual life within his Cambridge milieu. Early Bloomsbury, Keynes shares, was indebted to G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*, from which he and his friends learned that "Nothing mattered except states of mind, our own and other people's of course, but chiefly our own."<sup>47</sup> Keynes recalls "the beauty of the literalness of Moore's mind," claiming, "But even when he was awake, he could not distinguish love and beauty and truth from the furniture. They took on the same definition of outline, the same stable, solid, objective qualities and common-sense reality."<sup>48</sup> Moore's philosophy is, of course, infinitely more complicated than a passing reference to furniture, but the tradition Keynes describes here is in fundamental ways that same rationalist discourse I discussed above. Keynes, a Liberal himself, implicates this rationalism in creating a too-objective world view that undervalues human emotion, a view that began to wear thin even in the years leading up to the Great War, and completely collapsed afterwards.<sup>49</sup> By literally objectifying the male transmission that came out of Cambridge, Woolf parodies this

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<sup>47</sup> John Maynard Keynes, "My Early Beliefs," in *The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoirs and Commentary*, ed. S.P. Rosenbaum (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 86.

<sup>48</sup> Keynes, "My Early Beliefs," 92.

<sup>49</sup> Keynes, "My Early Beliefs," 96.

outlook, taking aim at the entire system of a phony progressivism associated with Cambridge that did not turn out to be, in her argument, progressive at all.

Even upon realizing that “we completely misunderstood human nature,” Keynes reverts to an affirmation of mentorship:

It did not occur to us to respect the extraordinary accomplishment of our predecessors in the ordering of life (as it now seems to me to have been) or the elaborate framework which they had devised to protect this order...we had lost something which our predecessors had without replacing it. I still suffer incurably from attributing an unreal rationality to other people’s feelings and behaviour.<sup>50</sup>

Keynes, while he acknowledges that Moore “left out altogether some whole categories of human emotion,” reflects a bit too nostalgically on the traditions from which Bloomsbury grew. Keynes situates Moore’s philosophy into a greater tradition that echoes what I have called male mentorship:

I have said that we were amongst the first to escape from Benthamism. But of another eighteenth-century heresy we were the unrepentant heirs and last upholders. We were among the last of the Utopians, or meliorists as they are sometimes called, who believe in a continuing moral progress by virtue of which the human race already consists of reliable, rational, decent people, influenced by truth and objective standards...<sup>51</sup>

Keynes concedes that his philosophy is not sustainable in a post-1914 society; he even regrets the snobbishness and lack of “vulgar passions” suffered by early Bloomsbury and acknowledges that D.H. Lawrence might justly have felt some distaste for “intellectual chic.” However, he identifies the problem as belonging to a particular historical moment rather than a flawed institutionalized norm; he sees Moore’s rationalism as a misguided development of a longer held intellectual transmission, but never questions the validity or

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<sup>50</sup> Keynes, “My Early Beliefs,” 95-6.

<sup>51</sup> “Plato said in his *Laws* that one of the best of a set of good laws would be a law forbidding any young man to enquire which of them are right or wrong, though an old man remarking any defect in the laws might communicate this observation to a ruler or to an equal in years when no young man was present” (Keynes 95).

fruitfulness of this transmission's history.<sup>52</sup> By emphasizing material goods as markers of a languishing male mentorship, Woolf is not claiming that physical things are not worth having (that would, of course, undermine the foundation of *A Room of One's Own*), but that the intellectual tradition that shuts women out of such transmission is lacking in a more full and vibrant understanding of humanity that could offer a sustainable outlook in a postwar society. She characterizes male mentorship by placing it firmly at odds with that which it overlooks: the intangible, the irrational, the lack of authority.

Woolf underscores the frailty of male mentorship by making it reliant on women, the very people it rejects. Women have a distinctly non-Rationalist agenda in the novel. Male mentorship is indeed in need of sustenance, and it turns to women to provide it. Mrs. Ramsay, with her son in her lap, demonstrates to James that “into this delicious fecundity, this fountain and spray of life, the fatal sterility of the male plunged itself, like a beak of brass, barren and bare” (37). Without Mrs. Ramsay to birth his children and support his authority, Mr. Ramsay cannot pass on anything. As Cucullu explains, the Ramsays each acknowledge their “complicity in and responsibility for reproducing social order.”<sup>53</sup> While Mrs. Ramsay lacks power in the social order, she recognizes that she facilitates that male authority: “Indeed, she had the whole of the other sex under her protection; for reasons she could not explain, for their chivalry and valorous, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India, controlled finance...” Because of women, men are able to build up those authoritative rationales that justify their increasing power. But

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<sup>52</sup> Keynes, “My Early Beliefs,” 97.

<sup>53</sup> Cucullu, *Expert Modernists, Matricide, and Modern Culture*, 81. Cucullu argues that this complicity pleases Mr. Ramsay, who “fairly glows with the prospect of his family’s future.” Mrs. Ramsay, however, “privately broods over the trials her family will undergo and her sense of duty in spite of misgivings (81).

this power that men exercise as a result of the allowances that mentorship permits them is not stable or self-sustaining. Indeed, one of the book's main harbingers of male authority, Tennyson's poem, comes to foreshadow the decline of male mentorship, as Mrs. Ramsay appropriates the poem for her own understanding of male weakness:

But what had happened?  
Some one had blundered.

Starting from her musing she gave meaning to words which she had held in her mind for a long stretch of time. 'Some one had blundered' Fixing her short-sighted eyes upon her husband, who was now bearing down upon her, she gazed steadily until his closeness revealed to her...that something had happened, some one had blundered. But she could not for the life of her think what.

He shivered; he quivered. All his vanity, all his satisfaction in his own splendour, riding fell as a thunderbolt, fierce as a hawk at the head of his men through the valley of death, had been shattered, destroyed. (30)

With an emphasis on the poem's "blunder," Mrs. Ramsay realizes the feebleness of the language of truth, courage, and endurance that are the source of her husband's strength.

While she cannot articulate exactly why, she knows that the steadfastness of Mr.

Ramsay's power is waning, unable to progress beyond the blunder. Seeing that he is

"outraged and anguished," she wants to soothe him, but does so by retreating to the

mentorship he has come to rely upon, and instead comforts their son: "She stroked

James's head; she transferred to him what she felt for her husband..." Here, Mrs. Ramsay

is equally implicated in male mentorship—it depends on women's participation, on Mrs.

Ramsay teaching her daughters to emulate her role as a supporter to her husband; Cam,

by the novel's end, embodies exactly such mentorship as she tries to bring comfort to Mr.

Ramsay.<sup>54</sup> Mrs. Ramsay takes on the role of Coventry Patmore's famed "Angel of the

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<sup>54</sup> Mrs. Ramsay's daughters, "in their girlish hearts," admire their mother, "honour her strange severity, her extreme courtesy, like a Queen's raising from the mud to was a beggar's dirty foot" (7). They may dream of "a wilder life; not always taking care of some man or other," but they recognize that this tradition of

House,” made ironic in Woolf’s essay “Professions for Women.” According to Cucullu, this Angel of the House is keenly interested in reproduction, but in biological and social forms rather than cultural. The social reproduction undertaken by the Angel is the marriage and moral piety that Mrs. Ramsay herself propagates. The biological and social reproduction for which women are responsible—marriage, children, and harmony in the home—are separate from male cultural procession, but are charged with sustaining it. If male cultural procession leads to war’s devastation, Mrs. Ramsay’s emotion and sympathy are aimed at soothing and healing over that devastation.<sup>55</sup>

As Bazin and Lauter claim, women’s subordination to men while inflating their egos has direct impact on society: “When such actions are done to further civilization or knowledge, all is well. Sometimes, however, a man’s inflated ego makes him overtly self-confident, pompous, and dictatorial: his behavior then becomes fascistic. He imposes his will on others, by force if necessary.”<sup>56</sup> While Bazin and Lauter assume a bit too easy a link between patriarchy and violence, they are right to point out that women play a role in enabling this patriarchy. For Bazin and Lauter, women’s subordination is proof of patriarchy’s tyranny. I suggest though that Woolf is actually commenting on the unsustainability of a male system that relies so thoroughly on female support. The university plays a key role in the ways Mrs. Ramsay chooses to mollify her husband. She sees herself as infinitely inferior to Mr. Ramsay, in part because of the prestige granted to him by universities; she holds his position up as a kind of lighthouse in itself, a place she

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female mentorship into which they have been raised has been hitherto used as a supplement to male mentorship.

<sup>55</sup> See also Claire Tylee’s reading of the “Angel of the House” in *The Great War and Women's Consciousness : images of militarism and womanhood in women's writings, 1914-64* (1990).

<sup>56</sup> Bazin and Lauter , “Virginia Woolf’s Keen Sensitivity to War,”19-20.

admires but never can achieve.<sup>57</sup> She chooses to revive Mr. Ramsay by turning to the institution that is the seat of male mentorship's strength, the university, and offers up Charles Tansley—not her sons—as proof of her husband's virility, as a way of allaying Mr. Ramsay's concern that he is a "failure." Mr. Ramsay's response asks Mrs. Ramsay to also use her gift of feeling to restore him, to remind him of his intellectual talents: "But he must have more than that. It was sympathy he wanted, to be assured of his genius, first of all, and then to be taken within the circle of life, warmed and soothed, to have his senses restored to him, his barrenness made fertile, and all the rooms of the house made full of life" (37). Mrs. Ramsay's emotion works in harmony with male institutional transmission: reminded of his mentee's devotion and his own intellectual rigor, then finally bolstered his wife's sympathy, Mr. Ramsay is comforted.

In further proof of male mentorship's need for female sustenance, Mrs. Ramsay extends her sympathy to Tansley himself, reviving him by "insinuating...the greatness of man's intellect, even in its decay, the subjection of all wives" (10-11). Mr. Ramsay can give to Tansley access to male mentorship, but it is Mrs. Ramsay who grooms the young man as to how to sustain it through wifely subjection. She gives Tansley a model of what to want or expect. Mrs. Ramsay soothes her son's sadness, her husband's feared "sterility," and now soothes this mentee, too. As a result, "for the first time in his life Charles Tansley felt an extraordinary pride; a man digging in a drain stopped digging and looked at her, let his arm fall down and looked at her; for the first time in his life Charles

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<sup>57</sup>Mrs. Ramsay sees her husband's academic work as far superior to anything she could accomplish: "...she did not like, even for a second, to feel finer than her husband; and further, could not bear not being entirely sure, when she spoke to him, of the truth of what she said. Universities and people wanting him, lectures and books and their being of the highest importance—all that she did not doubt for a moment; but it was their relation, and his coming to her like that, openly, so that any one could see, that discomposed her; for then people said he depended on her, when they must know that of the two he was infinitely the more important, and what she gave the world, in comparison with what he gave, negligible" (39).



Tansley felt an extraordinary pride; felt the wind and the cyclamen and the violets for he was walking with a beautiful woman. He had hold of her bag” (14).<sup>58</sup> Armed with a physical souvenir of Mrs. Ramsay, he is rejuvenated, repeating his own praise. This is Mrs. Ramsay’s gift; her social and biological reproduction ensures reproduction of men’s culture. It must, because this male culture, with its overemphasis on the tangibles of academic rank and material acquisition, is not self-sustaining.

#### **IV. Women’s Mentorship**

Mrs. Ramsay’s attempts at reviving a decaying male mentorship, though, result only in ensuring its monotonous repetition since, as I have claimed, it no longer has anything to offer other than now-hollow rationales. In response, Woolf proposes in the novel a model of mentorship that entails a specifically female form of cultural transmission, a transmission that does not have the goal of sustaining male social order. Denied access to Cambridge herself, Woolf wants a radically different mentorship, one that does not rely on the university. When Woolf shuts women out of Cambridge in *To the Lighthouse*, she does so not necessarily because they cannot grasp the subject matter taught, but because they cannot see the university as a framework through which to study and reproduce social order in the way that men do. Women in *To the Lighthouse* prove themselves equally capable as men in terms of thinking about social problems, but they do not have the same resources. Mrs. Ramsay, while she considers herself an “investigator, elucidating the social problem,” can think about the problems of “rich and poor... employment and unemployment,” but she is powerless to do anything about

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<sup>58</sup> Mrs. Ramsay extends her ameliorative powers to Paul Rayley, making him “believe that he could do whatever he wanted...as if she were saying, “Yes, you can do it. I believe in you. I expect it of you” (78). Here, she is promoting also the institution of marriage, encouraging Paul’s relationship with Minta.

them—“insoluble questions they were, it seemed to her” (9). Mr. Ramsay, though, reserves his thinking “for the young men at Cardiff next month.” Men have the university’s sponsorship for isolating social problems; women do not.

To some extent, this turn is anticipated as early as Woolf’s *The Voyage Out*. Rachel Vinrace enters the novel as a kind of clean slate, raised isolated and without any substantial education. She is a typical “daughter of educated men” as her father, Willoughby, committed “nameless atrocities with regard to his daughter” that leave Rachel uneducated in terms of more basic knowledge, such as “the shape of the earth, the history of the world, how trains worked, or money was invested.”<sup>59</sup> Completely devoid of any mentored skill, Rachel also lacks the knowledge of how to read other people’s emotions. Rachel’s Aunt Helen attempts to mentor Rachel at least in the art of emotion, but ultimately all she can offer Rachel is the same type of mentorship that Woolf would later criticize—one centering on men. In this case, that man is Terence, who is very much the son of an educated man. Woolf puts Rachel in a bind where the terms of mentorship cancel each other out: as with Philip Wakem and Maggie Tulliver, Terence can transmit his Oxbridge knowledge to Rachel, but the only institution to which he can grant her access is marriage. Rachel has not received male or female mentorship, and when she is suddenly offered both—by Terence and by Helen—there is no way for her to bring the two together in any workable way. Rachel and Helen, in trying to use the structures of masculine mentorship, cannot succeed. Rachel’s death at the end of the novel signals the impossibility of a women’s mentorship that simply plugs women into a male equation.

If Tansley himself were to offer an explanation for Mrs. Ramsay’s inability to wrap her head around her husband’s work, for example, it would be because women do

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<sup>59</sup> Virginia Woolf, *The Voyage Out* (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2004), 19; 28.

not engage in activity that produces physical transmission. “Yes, it was pretty well true, [Tansley] thought. They never got anything worth having from one year’s end to another. They did nothing but talk, talk, talk, eat, eat, eat. It was the women’s fault. Women made civilization impossible with all their ‘charm,’ all their silliness” (85). Women are here accused of being antithetical to the “civilized”; the graspable information indicative of a mentored male culture directly conflicts with what women know and have. Woolf herself concedes this point in “Women and Fiction”: “Often nothing tangible remains of a woman’s day. The food that has been cooked is eaten; the children that have been nursed have gone out into the world.”<sup>60</sup> In a way, then, Tansley is correct. If women were to apply the mentorship model to the physical objects to which they are granted access, women’s culture would be sorry indeed. For all that women have to pass down in terms of tangible transmission are recipes, such as Mrs. Ramsay’s grandmother’s recipe for *Boeuf en Daube*, and jewelry, like the lost brooch of Minta Doyle’s grandmother. The acquisition of these physical goods means nothing to Mrs. Ramsay: “it was all one stream, and chairs, tables, maps, were hers, were theirs, it did not matter whose, and Paul and Minta would carry it on when she was dead” (113-4). For women, physical objects are just that—objects. They are neither the markers of cultural transmission nor the markers of endurance required by men.

Woolf identifies women as upholding the value of emotion, which is precisely intangible, in stark contrast to the tangible items that have come to characterize the futile remains of male mentorship. After the gastronomical triumph that is her perfectly cooked French beef, she reflects on her feelings of peace and rest, “Of such moments, she

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<sup>60</sup>Virginia Woolf, “Women and Fiction,” in *Selected Essays by Virginia Woolf*, ed. David Bradshaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 137.

thought, the thing is made that endures” (105). Her concern with endurance indicates her attempts to appropriate Mr. Ramsay’s “power to endure” for women. As such, Woolf proposes a radical shift in the way feelings are used. In the holograph manuscript of the novel appears a glimpse of what Woolf was trying to accomplish with her negation of male mentorship. The sketch for the “Time Passes” section looks like this:

“Hopeless gulfs of misery.  
Cruelty.  
The War.  
Change. Oblivion.”  
And then, “human vitality”<sup>61</sup>

This “human vitality” is Mrs. Ramsay’s true gift; it survives her and it fills a real gap felt in a postwar society. Reading the scene in *A Room of One’s Own* where Woolf reflects on a Cambridge dinner party, Hermione Lee claims that Woolf believed that *romance* was the missing presence. “Romance is something that one finds in the poetry of Tennyson and Christina Rossetti,” Woolf said, “something that ‘celebrates some feeling that one used to have’, back then, before the war.”<sup>62</sup> Tennyson can be refigured, moved toward “human vitality” rather than “shock and shell.”<sup>63</sup> Lee finds that many of Woolf’s characters—Betty Flanders, Mrs. Dalloway, Mrs. Ramsay—feel it; and so do her men, such as Mr. Ramsay, Septimus Smith, and Peter Walsh. “In their minds,” Lee claims, “memories hover of an earlier time before the war, a time that seemed to hold more promise, and a sad sense that time is gone.”<sup>64</sup> Woolf proposes in *To the Lighthouse*, then, a radically different subject as the object of transmission, shunning altogether the

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<sup>61</sup> Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 227.

<sup>62</sup> Qtd. In Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 227.

<sup>63</sup> Mr. Ramsay stops quoting Tennyson after the war; he turns to William Cowper, an early Romantic poet.

<sup>64</sup> Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 227.

intellectual rationalism that is the subject of male mentorship's now-futile transmission. She turns to the power she grants Mrs. Ramsay, the other kind of knowledge that Rachel Vinrace lacks: that of sympathy and feeling, the power of human vitality.

Woolf establishes here a new form of knowledge to be passed on, an argument consistent with Cuddy-Keane's claim that Woolf "developed an alternative pedagogy outside the educational institutions."<sup>65</sup> Much like Arnold's vision of culture, this alternative pedagogy promotes a classless, democratic, but intellectual readership. While she evokes in some ways Arnold's sense of culture as a far-reaching intellectualism, however, Woolf is eager to remove culture from the institution-based mentorship Arnold advocated. Woolf's alternative pedagogy for women is based on intimacy and the ephemeral and is intended to extend mentorship beyond its exclusionary past, the exclusions Hardy and Forster felt so keenly. Once Woolf hurls that famous inkpot at the Angel of the House, Mrs. Ramsay has the power to become not the propagator of a life to suit men's own needs, but the subject of women's mentorship. Perhaps anticipating her later claim in *A Room of One's Own* that women think back through their mothers, Woolf seeks to transform those feelings of unity and sympathy into a cultural transmission that moves beyond biological or social reproduction. While Mrs. Plumer can only ponder her role as support to her husband and pass that vague ideal to her daughters, Mrs. Ramsay concerns herself with actively transmitting something that is really worth having. Although she supports male mentorship, she simultaneously begins to shape a uniquely female mentorship that is independent of male need. The ephemeral quality of Rose's fruit bowl arrangements, meant to be eaten; of Mrs. Ramsay's harmonious dinner parties; of her sympathy for the lighthouse boy with the tubercular hip; these become the objects

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<sup>65</sup> Cuddy-Keane, *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere*, 3.

of transmission. According to this women's mentorship model, culture becomes associated with precisely what is not meant for keeping, but for feeling. So when Cucullu claims that the expulsion of the Angel of the House "makes space for a revised social calculus and new cultural formations," we can see Woolf appropriating the male mentorship model, a cultural formation, for the feelings of unity and harmony that women see as what should endure.

Just as Tansley, who is not Ramsay's son, shows that masculine mentorship is more than biological and social reproduction, I suggest that Lily Briscoe is the experimental subject for women's mentorship, arguing for women's "cultural reproduction," as Cucullu would call it. Lily, whose rejection of marriage signifies her rejection of the institutionality associated with male mentorship, learns at Mrs. Ramsay's knee the art of feeling. Lily aims to transmit the art of feeling to future generations not in the traditional role of marriage that Mrs. Ramsay envisions for her daughters, but by capturing it in her painting. Mrs. Ramsay's love, she believes, "was meant to be spread over the world and become part of the human gain." "Could loving," she asks, "make her and Mrs. Ramsay one? For it was not knowledge but unity she desired, not inscriptions on tablets, nothing that could be written in any language known to men, but intimacy itself, which is knowledge, she had thought" (47; 51). Lily returns to the Ramsay house after the war, at the close of the "Time Passes" section. Where the remains of war are strewn about, with the house fallen into disrepair, Lily enters, and "Then indeed peace had come" (142). She seems primed to duplicate Mrs. Ramsay: she sees all the old characters (or at least those who have survived), feels the same fear of Mr. Ramsay, and finds him still begging for sympathy. However, she enters with the promise of a radically

different, postwar mentorship of peace. Lily strives to make something enduring of the unity characteristic of her mentor, capturing Mrs. Ramsay's adage, "Life stand still here." Lily builds on Mrs. Ramsay's efforts at making feeling a lasting, transmissible entity: "Mrs. Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent)—this was the nature of a revelation." Struck by a "moment of stability," Lily thinks she has found a way to be the subject of Mrs. Ramsay's mentorship if only she can use her art to the capture permanence of feeling (161).

## **V. Rejecting Women's Mentorship**

It is difficult to argue, though, for the success of Mrs. Ramsay's mentoring Lily. How would such transmission be measured? The problem is spelled out at the end of the novel's first section, "The Window," when Mrs. Ramsay, reflecting on her bliss, thinks to herself, "Nothing on earth can equal this happiness" (124). It is not that the happiness as an emotion is unparalleled, but that it cannot be duplicated in experience; how can one replicate the precise emotions association with a particular moment? The qualifier, "*this* happiness," points to the specificity of circumstance on which every behavior depends. Harmony, peace, love, and intimacy can be modeled, but not ultimately transmitted. Lily can admire Mrs. Ramsay and even strive to capture her likeness in a painting, but the female mentorship she seeks is as unsustainable as the masculine mentorship she resists. Mrs. Ramsay's refrain, "Life stand still here," is simply an impossible achievement.

And so I conclude that mentorship of all types fails as the Great War enters in the novel's interlude, "Time Passes." Here, masculine mentorship finally is rendered hollow,

as the Ramsay family furniture sits unused and Mr. Ramsay's prized *Waverley* novels mildew on their shelves.<sup>66</sup> The physical markers of cultural transmission eventually rot from disuse. The inheritors of these empty objects are lost, as well, as Andrew and Prue Ramsay, the son and daughter of an educated man, both die. Andrew is slain instantly by the "shot and shell" glorified by Tennyson, and Prue dies in childbirth in a failed expression of the biological reproduction that was women's domain. And, most profoundly, Mrs. Ramsay, the family's unifying force, the wellspring of her husband's virility, dies quietly in her sleep. Mentorship and transmission are cut off radically at all levels. There is nothing left to endure. Lily's redemptive end comes not from her being successfully mentored, but from her recognizing the futility of mentorship as a model of cultural transmission. "[Mrs. Ramsay] was dead," Lily reflects. "The step where she used to sit was empty. She was dead. But why repeat this over and over again? Why be always trying to bring up some feeling she had not got? There was a kind of blasphemy in it. It was all dry: all withered: all spent" (150). Mentorship and its associated repetitions, both masculine and feminine, have died. Woolf, having identified all the problems with male mentorship, cannot find a viable solution for women either except the final, regretful rejection of the mentor.

That Lily ultimately completes a painting speaks to her realizing this very rejection. She sees Mr. Ramsay and "His immense self-pity, his demand for sympathy poured and spread itself in pools at her feet, and all she did, miserable sinner that she was, was to draw her skirts a little closer round her ankles, lest she should get wet" (152). Lily is overwhelmed: "All Lily wished was that this enormous flood of grief, this

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<sup>66</sup> "Waverley" is also the street on which Professor Plumer of *Jacob's Room* lives: "'Waverley,' the villa on the road to Girton was called..." (33).



insatiable hunger for sympathy, this demand that she should surrender herself up to him entirely, and even so he had sorrows enough to keep her supplied for ever, should leave her, should be diverted...before it swept her down into its flow” (151). Lily is given the opportunity to use the gift of sympathy she learned from Mrs. Ramsay, but she resists. Ultimately, that sympathy would once again only revive men; women’s mentorship cannot get around patriarchy. A procession of Ramsays marches before her, and finally, “the hope of sympathy and the desire for praise, had entered some other region, was drawn on, as if by curiosity, in dumb colloquy, whether with himself or another, at the head of that little procession out of one’s range... The gate banged” (156). Only at that moment of radical rupture is Lily ready to resume her painting—“Where to begin?”—to use her power of feeling for her own expression, for the first time (157).

Lily experiences a moment of courageous failure: she knows, per Mrs. Ramsay’s mentoring, that she should praise and pity the patriarch but is, thankfully, unable to do it. “She had felt,” she claims, “now she could stand up to Mrs. Ramsay—a tribute to the astonishing power that Mrs. Ramsay had over one” (176). And as she picks up her paintbrush, she leaves behind her desire to somehow capture the essence of Mrs. Ramsay’s feelings in symbolic terms. Instead, she “tunnels” through the past, illuminating its darkness with her own collected impressions. She is no longer concerned with painting as a transmissible form. Instead, she accepts that the painting will be “hung in attics...it would be destroyed” (208). Lily’s success is in realizing that, in her own words, “what did that matter?”

If the novel is, as Alex Zwerdling insists, “concerned with [Woolf’s] sense of institutional and ideological change and continuity,” and simultaneously interested in

Cuddy-Keane's claim that Woolf pursues the pedagogical outside institutional boundaries, then my claims regarding mentorship signal an ideological change.<sup>67</sup> Cultural continuity cannot happen in the borders of any institution, be it Cambridge or the country house. And it is in this way that the failure of mentorship in *To the Lighthouse* lays the groundwork for Woolf's denunciation of mentorship in *Three Guineas*. There, she calls for "finding new words and creating new methods ...by remaining outside your society..." (219). This culture of outsiders, is the legacy of Lily Briscoe. An outsider to the Ramsay family and the institutions the family represents, only she is granted an illuminated perspective.

The language of exteriority Woolf uses is the same as Sue Bridehead's—the only woman mentor in *Jude the Obscure*. For Sue and for Woolf, the cultural capital being offered is simply not worth having. In this sense, the very real Woolf can denounce mentorship in ways Sue Bridehead could not. Sue regrets not being better able to lie to Little Father Time about the society that shuns him, but Woolf refuses to acquiesce to the tyranny of mentorship. When the outsider says in *Three Guineas*, "in fact, as a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world," we can see Lily, on the novel's final page, rejecting the institutions that have stifled her for too long: "It was done; it was finished" (209). The ending of the novel, Lee claims, "is poised between arriving and returning, getting somewhere...and being finished."<sup>68</sup> Lily arrives at the realization that mentorship has ended; cultural transmission must come from somewhere else. Her strength comes in finally refusing to

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<sup>67</sup> Alex Zwerdling, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 181.

<sup>68</sup> Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 476.

support it any longer. Refuting male mentorship's authority and women's support of it entirely, Woolf assumes her radical position of outsidership in *Three Guineas*, where, as a woman refusing the limitations of her "country," she strongly denies tyranny on all fronts.

While she may abandon mentorship, though, Woolf cannot abandon education. To understand how the "daughters of educated men" are to morph into a "society of outsiders" is to understand, according to my argument, Woolf's particular criticism of mentorship as an exclusionary model of cultural transmission. Woolf does not, however, deny the value of a university education. The "daughters of educated men" are mentorship's victims, while the projected, idealized "society of outsiders" is to have somehow done away with it. In a way, she falls into the same trap as did Arnold. As she makes clear in *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf happily associates culture with a vaunted tradition of classical learning, and she wants it to be freely accessible regardless of class or gender. She cannot, however, propose a viable model for this. She cannot construct either a brand new type of mentorship that is bereft of patriarchal overtones, or a whole new way of transmitting knowledge that is not mentorship at all. As were Arnold's sovereign educators, her "outsiders" are intended to assist with cultural transmission, but even though Woolf rejects mentorship, she cannot propose a viable alternative.

Where a culture of outsiders will suffer is that education provides the "daughters of educated men" with training, and hence self-earned income, which emancipates these daughters from their fathers and brothers: "Since it is beyond the power of her family to punish her financially she can express her own opinions. In place of the admirations and antipathies which were often unconsciously dictated by the need of money she can

declare her genuine likes and dislikes. In short, she need not acquiesce; she can criticize” (21). So, if the daughters of educated men want to stop war, then they must continue to educate themselves in whatever capacity they can, since “[i]f there were no means of training them to earn their livings, there would be an end of that influence.” This influence requires using their meager income to support peace, and is the sole social influence available to the daughters of educated men. Only through economic capital can they gain any social capital, but this economic capital can only come from engaging with institutions of education. Daughters of educated men are victimized by mentorship, but still somehow must rely on it; they can never really be “outside.” Lily’s rejection of mentorship proposes a system of outsidership that may not be viable in the face of social and political upheaval in the face of a looming war.

The paralysis Woolf feels shapes her final novel, *Between the Acts*, which is fundamentally pessimistic in that the failure of mentorship present in the novel points to political inequities that cannot be overcome. Miss La Trobe exemplifies the “culture of outsiders” for which Woolf argues in *Three Guineas*, but all La Trobe can produce is a pageant play that reproduces an insular culture. This insularity is the problem Jed Esty outlines in *A Shrinking Island*, where he argues that English intellectuals try to integrate social and aesthetic power in a resurgence of national culture: “For Woolf, as for Powys, Eliot, and Forster, pageantry was a dramatic genre that could allow the emergence of a choral voice, giving form to communal values rather than to individual impressions or divisive ideologies. The desirability of a collective or impersonal voice had become an urgent political as well as aesthetic matter in the period.”<sup>69</sup> In the face of the Fascist

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<sup>69</sup> Jed Esty, *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2004), 87.

threat, Woolf is inclined to reach out to a more inclusive view of “national tradition,” seeking to redefine it ways that reflect her “troubled half-love for England.”<sup>70</sup> If women’s mentorship in *To the Lighthouse* probes possibilities for a radical break from English tradition, *Between the Acts*, according to Esty’s reading, only comes back to the uncertainty of what comes next. But in light of her concern with mentorship, Woolf’s pessimism for her artists stands out amid Esty’s sympathetic reading. Lily Briscoe and Miss La Trobe are drawn into portraying a culture that does not accommodate them. Woolf in *To the Lighthouse* and *Three Guineas* rejects mentorship, but does not know how to stop its influence. Further, she cannot assign lasting and meaningful significance to the culture of outsiders that offers any promise for the future. As Woolf wonders in “Women and Fiction,” how can a woman combine the “emotional,” “intellectual,” and “political”? This may be the real tragedy of *Between the Acts*: as the mirror is turned on the audience, they too are mired in mere repetition.

Woolf rejects empty indicators of cultural capital and she considers the limitations of a culture of feeling or emotion, but she never questions whether an education associated with culture is worthwhile. Turning to the literature of the thirties at the beginning of my next chapter, however, I take Woolf’s argument to a further conclusion. If, as she claims, cultural transmission is inherently political and must be radically cut off in order to stop the perpetuation of tyranny, then what should become of culture itself? Culture is not immune from the political threat, and that threat increased exponentially in the face of World War II. Culture by that point most definitely is no longer the straightforward process of virtue and study that Arnold wanted, since Arnold’s

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<sup>70</sup> Esty, *A Shrinking Island*, 93.

prescription of culture as a cure for political strife is patently inadequate in the face of the Fascist threat Woolf feared. With the close of World War II, Woolf's radical claim that mentorship must end proves to not be radical enough.

## Chapter 4

### “Culture Cannot Compensate”: Parodic Mentorship and the Rise of the Welfare State

“*Ridicule is the only honorable weapon we have left.*”  
—Muriel Spark, “The Desegregation of Art”

In my earlier chapters, I demonstrated that mentorship’s failures in the novels of Hardy, Forster, and Woolf point to the modernist-era assertion that Oxbridge culture could no longer be passed down effectively. In this chapter, I argue that as the modernist era drew to a close, writers who doubted the transmissibility of culture also called into question culture’s fundamental worth. “It is a commonplace to-day that culture is at a crisis,” F.R. Leavis writes in his *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture* (1930).<sup>1</sup> Even though Leavis’s call for an English curriculum as the response to this crisis may have been controversial (Paul Fussell calls his work “vigorously self-righteous, moralistic, [and] badly written”), he was not the only one to note the correlation between education and a culture in crisis.<sup>2</sup> His growing apprehension over the relationship between education and cultural preservation was also felt by other writers of the period, including Kingsley Amis and Evelyn Waugh. The thirties saw a widespread recognition of the problem of cultural transmission that Hardy and Forster identified, but these writers did not share Leavis’s optimism that the culture transmitted by the university was worth salvaging. In my final examination of the mentor, I argue that mentorship has been made parodic, a comic symbol of the absurdity of continuing to pass on a culture finally seen as anachronistic and irrelevant.

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<sup>1</sup>F.R. Leavis, *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture* (Cambridge: The Minority Press, 1930), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Fussell, *The Anti-Egotist* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 57. Fussell provides additional background on the feud between Amis and Leavis. Amis at one point claimed “[Leavis] seems to me to have done more harm than good to literature, never mind the study of literature.” Leavis had said, allegedly, of Amis’s appointment to Cambridge that that Peterhouse could no longer be taken seriously, having “given a fellowship to a *pornographer*” (57).

If mentorship, as I will argue, ceased to transmit meaningful or significant values, it was because education was felt to be of little use or consequence. Amis famously takes such a position on education in *Lucky Jim* (1954), but the origins of that novel's argument are in Amis's own experience of education: "I went up to Oxford in the spring of 1941," writes Amis in his *Memoirs* (1991), "in impeccably proletarian style, being driven over from my parents' house in Berkhamsted by the family butcher in his battered Morris, and approaching the wrong way up Plough Lane."<sup>3</sup> In keeping with his awkward entrance, Amis finds his university years increasingly discomfiting, hardly the "magic years" of academic rigor and personal growth described nostalgically by E.M. Forster. The intellectual debate foregrounded in *The Longest Journey* has been replaced by banal banter from "worthy dullards" over the vulgarity of kid gloves.<sup>4</sup> The gloves become a fitting image—surely they, too, are "proletarian"—as Amis's description of Oxford puts academics aside and focuses instead on the Oxford lifestyle, simultaneously mocking and mourning the leisure culture so long associated with the university. Unlike his harshly aimed criticism of nineteen-sixties Cambridge (which he associated exclusively with tiresome dinner parties and frippery), Amis's take on nineteen-forties Oxford is

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<sup>3</sup>Kingsley Amis, *Memoirs* (New York: Summit Books, 1991), 36.

<sup>4</sup>Amis's complete account of the incident reveals his contempt for his Oxford peers, as he characterizes them as snobs who are out of touch with pressing sociopolitical matters:

"I was fool enough to join the Oxford Union Society, for one term only...I attended some debates, but decided their style was not for me on witnessing the following exchange:

Worthy dullard: 'This situation is too grave to be handled with kid gloves.'

The Secretary, ringing his bell and interrupting, as the rules permitted: 'On a point of information, kid gloves are very vulgar,' this causing the loudest laughter I ever heard in the chamber where future prime ministers were alleged to have made their first flights" (*Memoirs* 37).



somewhat more ambivalent as his trademark wit is undercut by a strong sense of loss: he characterizes Oxford by what it no longer is, couching it in terms of a steady decline.<sup>5</sup>

Taking Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) as counterpoint, Amis depicts Oxford as languishing. The homosocial camaraderie Waugh celebrates in Charles Ryder and Sebastian Flyte comes to be replaced by isolation and drudgery. Though greeted warmly by a sherry party hosted by friends,

[t]his initial blaze of glory did not last, was untypical. After a year and a half of war smart Oxford, anything like the Oxford to be seen in *Brideshead Revisited*, was shut for the duration, much of it never to reopen... Oxford had been changing, certainly since 1939, perhaps longer, a change accelerated but not, I think, caused by the war. Elegance (foppery) was losing ground to purposefulness (philistinism). In *Brideshead Revisited*, the novel par excellence of pre-war Oxford, though written in retrospect and not published until 1945, nobody ever seems to go near an exam even in thought, let alone deed—simply being there at the university was the point of going to it. In 1946-48 it was sometimes as if exams filled the world.<sup>6</sup>

In this nostalgic look back at *Brideshead Revisited*, Amis suggests that Flyte's "foppery" is a youthful indiscretion, part of the carefree lifestyle afforded by Oxford. Waugh's young men are a positive version of Amis's own fellow undergraduates, who he characterizes as "not working, getting drunk, and pursuing young women."<sup>7</sup> The *Brideshead* characters do not need to participate in academic studies because "culture" is something they already have and have had long before attending Oxford by virtue of their upper-class upbringing. Flyte can leave Oxford without a degree and not stir up much

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<sup>5</sup> Amis felt the sting of this decline long past his years at Oxford. Paul Fussell notes that after leaving Swansea, Amis became Director of English studies at Peterhouse of Cambridge from 1961-3. "He now realizes that what caused him to accept this offer was a romantic hope that Cambridge would be like Oxford when he was young. 'I should have known better, not being a young man any more.' What he found—was he more critical now?—was snobbery, provincialism, and shop—rather than literary talk. It was perhaps the chic academic dinner parties at Cambridge that finally wore him down, together with atmosphere and attitudes he recalls without pleasure more than thirty years later" (Fussell 36).

<sup>6</sup> Amis, *Memoirs*, 36-7; 46.

<sup>7</sup> Amis, *Memoirs*, 41.

disappointment since the university is merely an add-on, another experience of leisure. Amid this cultured oasis, Waugh grants his characters refined aesthetic taste and social insight, namely Flyte's luxuriously hedonistic lifestyle and Anthony Blanche's wry yet perceptive wit, outside of any academic context. Presenting another version of Forster's Cambridge dormitory debate about a cow and philosophy, Waugh makes Oxford a gathering place for discussion that is not necessarily dependent upon classroom learning.

For Amis, however, this cultured camaraderie was on the decline. When he pits the exams that "filled the world" against the ease and joy of "simply being there," he points to the loss of the social and intellectual heritage outlined by Forster, hinting that it has been replaced by a concern for performance and stark utility that may come at the expense of an appreciation for the arts. Evoking Matthew Arnold, Amis alludes to this culture of exams as "philistinism." The "philistines," Arnold believed, "do not pursue sweetness and light, but... prefer to them that sort of machinery of business, chapels, tea-meetings."<sup>8</sup> By the forties, according to Amis, the dreaded philistinism had infiltrated even the institutions of higher learning that Arnold had thought were immune. Amis celebrates Waugh's characters as the vestiges of an Arnoldian ideal society where Oxford had remained impermeable to philistinism.<sup>9</sup> For Charles Ryder, Oxford is hallowed

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. Ian Gregor (Indianapolis & New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1971), 84.

Raymond Williams, who had himself benefited from the increased educational opportunities advocated by the utilitarians Arnold resisted, provides in *Culture and Society* a useful definition of philistinism that clarifies Arnold's contempt: "The middle classes (Philistines) were also useless, because of their attachment to an *external* civilization. Their faith in 'machinery' (Wealth, Industry, Production, Progress) and in individual success denied, respectively, the 'harmonious' and the 'general' pursuit of perfection" (120).

<sup>9</sup> In the 1955 issue of *Encounter*, Evelyn Waugh responds to the 1944 Butler Act by predicting that it will spur "a new wave of philistinism." "Grim young people" would emerge from "the assembly lines in their hundreds every year and finding employment as critics, even as poets and novelists." Waugh is reacting to Amis's mocking of high culture, calling Amis a product of "L'Ecole du Butler" even though Amis graduated before the Act's passage (qtd. in Zachary Leader's *The Life of Kingsley Amis*, p.356).

because it gives him the opportunity to gain “sweetness and light,” beauty and intellect, and he can gain them from his friendships rather than academic learning. For Amis, however, Oxford creeps toward philistinism because its exams do not measure beauty and intellect, but the dry classroom learning that Waugh rarely even mentions. By emphasizing the credentializing function of the universities, Amis argues that in the post-war period utilitarianism has finally been assimilated into the universities; the fellowship and conversation treasured by Forster have disappeared; and Woolf’s prediction that Oxbridge culture was unsustainable has come true.

In the aftermath of the Great War, Woolf forecasted the end of Oxbridge cultural transmission on the grounds that it passed on only the values of war. Likewise, for Waugh writing in the forties, the source of Oxford’s decline is also intertwined expressly with war: as the army takes over the Marchmain chapel, the country house and its aristocratic family disappear, the war leaving its indelible mark on the British physical and cultural landscapes. *Brideshead Revisited* captures those last moments of Waugh’s beloved Oxford, a farewell to the university as he had idealized it in its prewar state. Reflecting on his university days in his *Memoirs* (1991), however, Amis also identifies the impact of peace on the forties: “I reached Oxford [for his second year] just nicely in time for the start of the autumn term, more than ready to throw myself into the tasks of peace.”<sup>10</sup> These tasks of peace, while never defined precisely, seem key to Amis’s

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<sup>10</sup> Amis, *Memoirs*, 41.

Liberal politician and President of the Board of Education under Lloyd George, H.A.L. Fisher, refers to the “arts of peace” in his illustration of the growing impulse for more complete education reform even after the Great War: “The country was in a spending mood and eager to compensate the wastage of war by some real contribution to the arts of peace... the educational world was in a state of ferment. For the first time in our national history education was a popular subject and discussed in an atmosphere cleared of religious acrimony” (qtd. in Dent 84).

experience at post-war Oxford. They are, I claim, a possible indicator of how precisely Oxford became for Amis and his contemporaries the subject of ridicule rather than praise.

To help explain how the tasks of peace could have contributed to Amis's eventual distaste for Oxford, I turn to Virginia Woolf's landmark essay of the forties, "The Leaning Tower," in which she explains how a writer's experience of his education is colored by the political climate in which he lives. Woolf groups together Leftist writers from Waugh's generation and examines the increasingly complex authorial responsibilities that have come to be associated with an Oxbridge education in the face of national upheaval. Beginning with an overview of nineteenth-century writers, Woolf determines that their writing was not affected by the physically distant wars of the century, from which those writers were completely disconnected. When she asks, however, "Were the nineteenth-century writers affected by the settled, the peaceful and prosperous state of England?" the answer is a firm yes.<sup>11</sup> Peace grants these writers "leisure" and "security": "life was not going to change; they themselves were not going to change. They could look; and look away" (110). These writers are, to use Woolf's metaphor, perched high on a steady tower, a place of privilege and unmoving perspective that reflects the writers' own limited experience.

For these early writers, stability had been a benefit of class position and, relatedly, the education such a position affords. The nineteenth-century writers, Woolf summarizes, "were all of them fairly well-to-do middle class people. Most had been educated either at Oxford or at Cambridge" (108). The result of this illustrious education is the "tower" of Woolf's title, "[h]e sits...raised above the rest of us; a tower built first on his parents'

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<sup>11</sup>Virginia Woolf, "The Leaning Tower," in *The Moment and Other Essays*, by Virginia Woolf (London: The Hogarth Press, 1947), 8. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

station, then on his parents' gold. It is a tower of the utmost importance; it decides his angle of vision; it affects his power of communication" (112).<sup>12</sup> Class privilege allows for education, which in turns allows for both the acquisition of writing skill and a stable perspective or vision that this writing will reflect. This helps to explain, to return to my argument, the lingering veneration of Oxford and Cambridge found in novels such as *Jude the Obscure* and *Howards End*: university education in these times and for these authors was wrapped up with a public acknowledgment of having learned a particular art, as these institutions are the recognized transmitters of a specific cultural capital, or certain type of recognized knowledge. While acknowledging disparities of class that make this acquisition frustratingly impossible, these novels reflect back on a historical moment when institutionalized education was associated readily with stability and privilege. Even in critique, writers such as Hardy and Forster celebrate the possibility of institutional education because, for them, this education still makes possible the preservation and transmission of knowledge and art.

This privileged and stable perspective, however, could not well last much past the declaration of war in 1914. While the writers of 1914 came to their writing with the same education and advantage as their predecessors, Woolf suggests, they became increasingly aware of a growing instability in their own position. The peace following the Great War was of a different kind than that of the nineteenth century, since the war preceding it had such lasting and profound effects on both class and politics. In turn, writers could no longer assume an unaffected position; they must take into account sweeping changes on

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<sup>12</sup> "To breed the kind of butterfly a writer is you must let him sun himself for three or four years at Oxford or Cambridge—so it seems" ("The Leaning Tower" 112).

their own home front and an increasing awareness of happenings abroad.<sup>13</sup> Moving to the group of writers that she situates as beginning to write around 1925 (the “Auden Generation”<sup>14</sup>), Woolf relates a writer’s education to emergent political turmoil:

at first sight there seems little difference, in station, in education [from their predecessors] ... They are tower dwellers like their predecessors, the sons of well-to-do parents, who could afford to send them to public schools and universities. But what a difference in the tower itself, in what they saw from the tower! When they looked at human life what did they see? Everywhere change; everywhere revolution. (113-4)

While there may have been “neither war nor revolution in England itself... The books were written under the influence of change, under the threat of war” (113). With the rise of communism and fascism, along with increasing political upheaval and uncertainty, “the tower of middle-class birth and expensive education” begins to lean (113).

Thirties writers become acutely aware of their middle-class birth and privileged education in ways that make them uncomfortable, creating a conflicted sense of self that echoes Jude’s disjointed *habitus*. These writers sense the precariousness of their own position and first feel “discomfort”; then “self-pity for that discomfort”; finally, this pity “soon turns to anger—to anger against the builder, against society, for making us uncomfortable” (114). Awkwardly turned against the society that granted them privilege in the first place, Woolf argues, they turn to scapegoating and excuse finding, “all very natural tendencies” (114). Unable to “throw away their capital” as they become

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<sup>13</sup> “In Germany, in Russia, in Italy, in Spain, all the old hedges were being rotted up; all the old towers were being thrown to the ground. Other hedges were being planted; other towers were being raised. There was communism in one country; in another fascism. The whole of civilisation, of society, was changing” (“The Leaning Tower” 113).

<sup>14</sup> Samuel Hynes defines “The Auden Generation” as “one generation of writers, the men and women born in England between 1900 and the First World War, who came of age in the ‘twenties and lived through their early maturity during the Depression” (*The Auden Generation* 9). These writers (notably W.H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood, and Stephen Spender) are typically Oxbridge educated, middle-class poets.

increasingly aware of the global effects of tyranny and injustice (suffered by those unable to gain any kind of meaningful capital), they create work “full of discord and bitterness, full of confusion and compromise” (115). These men had been brought up to appreciate their privileged education, but now turn against the social and political disparity that allowed them such privilege. While choked by their anger at the same society that granted them privilege, this generation of writers could find clarity and stability in their personal experiences, and, in turn, become “great egotists,” writing so well about essentially themselves (120).<sup>15</sup>

Woolf’s summary of the thirties explains Oxbridge’s continued presence in the writing of that era, as these writers’ expensive educations remained part of their upbringing and training while eventually becoming a persistent source of guilt and uneasiness. Where such education was previously a matter of pride or a hallmark of cultural capital, it has now become also a kind of albatross. Privileged education continues to inform authorial perspective, but in an increasingly problematic way since the benefits of that education are limited; education cannot reduce the global threats of fascism and communism, nor can it account for more local class disparities that have become increasingly scrutinized. In this context, the “tasks of peace” that Amis believed took place at Oxford in the early forties are hardly as inconsequential as they may seem in his passing remark; they refer to the important relationship Oxbridge tries to forge with a rapidly altering political landscape. By engaging in the “tasks of peace,” Amis acknowledges that Oxbridge can no longer reasonably be the isolated oasis of the writers of the nineteenth century. To be relevant, the university must become part of a greater

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<sup>15</sup> Woolf explains that this egotism comes from a need for stability: “When everything is rocking round one, the only person who remains comparatively stable is oneself. When all faces are changing and obscured, the only face one can see clearly is one’s own” (*The Leaning Tower* 120).

system of political reform, nationalism, and resistance to the “tyranny” abroad. When university education cannot do those things, when it attempts to carry on as before, it is ineffective and foolish. Yet, Amis implies, efforts to mirror national reform movements must be equally unsuccessful if exams, empty indicators of rote knowledge, are the new markers of Oxbridge achievement.

Education in the novels of the period becomes the subject of a much broader scope of critique, as the nature of an Oxbridge education fluctuated while the universities struggled to find an identity among calls for new political relevance. In attacking their own education—or, perhaps, exploring its limitations—mid-century authors acknowledged, as Woolf does in *To the Lighthouse*, that the leisure culture of Oxbridge no longer pointed to a refined heritage or the acquisition of meaningful knowledge as it had for Waugh. This culture had now become incomplete, unable to prepare its students to participate in political matters that seem increasingly more pressing. Woolf’s “great egotists” look back at the entirety of their own educational experience from public school to university with renewed criticism not necessarily of the quality of their education, but of its ultimate purpose. If the university had now become charged with the daunting “tasks of peace,” then it surely had to change to reflect its newfound responsibilities for the future, an especially problematic task for an institution that was, as I have shown, based so much on the preservation and transmission of the past.

What we are left with in mid-century fiction is a series of autobiographical or semi-autobiographical novels, memoirs, and essays that reflect on an entire educational system in ways that vacillate between nostalgia for the author’s carefree youth and his contempt for the inability of that experience to be carried forth in any meaningful way:



Henry Green's *Pack My Bag* (1940), Anthony Powell's *A Question of Upbringing* (1951), Graham Greene's *A Sort of Life* (1971), and George Orwell's posthumously published "Such, Such Were the Joys" (1952) all look back at the authors' own varied educational experiences, all of which are privileged and all of which are described in increasingly critical terms. Their work represents institutionalized education in a variety of forms. Orwell describes St. Cyprian's as a brutal prep school "crammer" intended to prepare him for admissions exams, while Powell and Green, who were together at Eton and Oxford, argue that their education was more about networking. Reflecting on their own lives as students in the thirties and forties, these authors share what publisher Geoffrey Faber calls "signs of exhaustion." As the nation "suddenly exchanged riches for poverty, and power for insecurity," authors, too, had to adjust and consider whether or not their education could at all prepare them for the daunting nature of the tasks of peace.<sup>16</sup> It is perhaps their contemporary Cyril Connolly who best summarizes the persistent pessimism that accompanies the seeming lightheartedness in many of these works: "Nothing dreadful is ever done with, no bad thing gets any better; you can't be too serious. This is the message of the Forties from which, alas, there seems no escape."<sup>17</sup>

With this as a conclusion, these authors' negative or ambivalent view of institutional education must come from their belief that this education could no longer be taken seriously. Institutional education was vitally serious to Arnold because it was responsible for cultural preservation, but if education's success is now to be measured in

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<sup>16</sup> Faber's conclusion is somewhat more alarmist than I'm willing to consider: "Until we have realistically and courageously adjusted ourselves to it [post-war flux], we are not likely to produce very much worthwhile literature" (qtd. in Fussell 319).

<sup>17</sup> Cyril Connolly, qtd. in Peter Hennessy, *Never Again: Britain, 1945-1951* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 319.

pragmatic terms by exams and political relevance, then it lacks the inherent value it had enjoyed in the past. Unlike the nineteenth-century writers whose education was tasked, per Woolf, with teaching them their art, post-war writers must now confront national turmoil with an education that was ill-equipped to fulfill such a role. If modernist-era writers, as I have suggested, were concerned as to whether or not Oxbridge could (or should) preserve and transmit the version of liberal-humane culture that had long been associated with the universities, then the generation that followed envisioned an even more radical break in which the relationship between education and culture was questioned at the most fundamental level. In its time of “crisis,” culture became increasingly difficult to define and seemed to lose its value as it was separated out from its long-held association with education.

### **I. A Comic Crisis of Culture**

The rise of the campus novel in the fifties only extends the thirties-era critique of educational institutions as protectors of culture. These novels undercut Herbert Pembroke’s notion of school as “the world in miniature,” often arguing that campus life is overly isolated with little relevance to the world outside. Poking fun at the institution of teaching itself and often mocking the very subjects which are taught, professors in campus novels are typically either old-fashioned and obscure or flippant and irresponsible. One of the most notable examples of the genre, Amis’s *Lucky Jim* (1954) is among the most cutting satires of the period. Paul Fussell interprets Amis’s novel as “specifically a satire on the sort of thought and behavior not just found at but apparently encouraged at a university: laziness, vanity, cultural and intellectual affectation, self-

absorption, and sycophancy.”<sup>18</sup> According to this argument, the Oxbridge lifestyle is no longer a carefree intellectualism but an “affectation” of culture coupled with mere frivolity. The culture preserved and transmitted by the university has lost its connotations of tradition and enlightenment.

Impediments to institutional forms of cultural transmission had become not only a matter of access, which had been— as my previous chapters demonstrate—at the heart of discussions of education for decades. *Lucky Jim* and its mid-century ilk advance Woolf’s argument that the culture transmitted at the university is not worth having. Even in their critical examinations of cultural transmission, Hardy and Forster still look to Oxbridge as the seat of a definable culture; Woolf questions the institutionalization of culture, but not the learning that defines it. But by the fifties, culture had become so separated from learning that it could take the form of the antiquated and stodgy Professor Welch of Amis’s *Lucky Jim*. “No other professor in Great Britain,” the newly appointed Jim Dixon reflects on Professor Welch, “set such store by being called Professor.”<sup>19</sup> But Welch’s accomplishments as a professor are minimal: “How had he [Welch] become Professor of History, even at a place like this? By published work? No. By extra good teaching? No in italics” (8).<sup>20</sup> Professor Welch thinks he has prestige just because of his title, even though

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<sup>18</sup> Fussell, *The Anti-Egotist*, 53.

<sup>19</sup> Kingsley Amis, *Lucky Jim* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 7. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>20</sup> Dixon and Welch do not teach at Oxford or Cambridge, but at a “redbrick” university. The term “redbrick” refers to one of six universities founded in England’s major industrial cities before World War I (see Dent’s *Century of Growth in English Education*, pages 76-79). They had originally been founded as civic science or engineering schools. Gilbert Phelps argues that “one of the purposes in putting Jim Dixon in a new redbrick university is to show that what might have been a fresh start was already infiltrated by the old Oxbridge values and assumptions so notably embodied in Professor Welch” (qtd. in Fussell 53). Dixon realizes figures such as Welch are everywhere: “He and Welch might well be talking about history, and in the way history might be talked about in Oxford and Cambridge quadrangles. At moments like this Dixon came near to wishing that they really were” (8). Fussell explains that Amis, “had taught at four universities, and his experience at each seems to have augmented his disillusion with that scene” (53).

he has not demonstrated any of the actual talent a professor is expected to have. As a university professor, he represents a literal preserver of culture, but his culture is, like his academic specialty, “medieval” or outdated. The culture Welch offers is as irrelevant and meaningless as his title of “professor”; it has lost its connotation of status and achievement. Dixon is enlightened precisely because he realizes that the traditions to which Welch clings are increasingly irrelevant. When he describes his upcoming lecture “Medieval Life and Culture” to an overeager graduate student, Dixon silently acknowledges how vague and outdated the university tradition is: “I thought I might start with a discussion of the university, for instance, in its social role,” he says to the student, but then “[h]e comforted himself for having said this by the thought that at least he knew it didn’t mean anything” (28).

If culture has lost its ready association with a specific tradition of learning, then the act of cultural preservation at the university becomes a kind of comic pantomime. When Dixon stands in front of a lavatory mirror, trying to put on his best “Evelyn Waugh face,” he is trying to act as if culture still matters the way it did to Waugh (220). University professors, as Amis argues in *Lucky Jim*, are “pretenders to high culture” rather than keepers of it.<sup>21</sup> In his review of the novel, Somerset Maugham attacks people like Jim who go to the university to get a job and not a cultural education:

It is the white collar proletariat. . . They do not go to the university to acquire culture, but to get a job, and when they have got one, scamp it. They have no manners, and are woefully unable to deal with any social predicament. . . They are mean, malicious and envious. . . Charity, kindness, generosity are qualities they hold in contempt. They are scum. Some will doubtless sink back, perhaps with relief, into the modest class from which they emerged; some will take to drink, some to crime and go to prison. Others will become schoolmasters and form the young, or journalists and mould public opinion. A few will go into parliament,

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<sup>21</sup> Fussell, *The Anti-Egotist*, 7.

become cabinet ministers and rule the country.<sup>22</sup>

Maugham's tone is ominous, arguing that post-war academic standards have greatly devalued an education's cultural worth. Because education has now been redirected towards "the tasks of peace," those tasks associated with political policy and social change, Amis argues the university is no longer is tasked with transmitting culture; to carry on as if education still propagates culture must surely be an act. As Leavis indicates, university education had indeed reached a crisis in the fifties as it struggled to find its identity amid accusations of pretended high culture and uselessness.

In this context, it would be difficult to construct an argument regarding mentorship because it is not clear what content would be transmitted. Christine Callaghan, for example, the mentor in *Lucky Jim*, offers Jim Dixon mentorship in the form of monetary patronage and sexual desire as a means *out* of a dreary university career. She is obviously not related to the types of cultural preservation that I have argued are intertwined with mentorship earlier in the century, as those mentors depended on a socially agreed upon sense of the value of the university culture (then Oxbridge) that simply does not exist by the mid century. It is natural, then, for this concluding chapter also to move away from Oxbridge and the university altogether, away from the institutions that so plainly have ceased to offer meaningful mentorship. Instead, I will show that even though mentorship at the university level is no longer a tangible ideal, the figure of the mentor can still be used to depict concerns over the transmission of culture. This transmission is now put into the greater context of education at all levels as state-mandated national attention to the content and structure of education grows.

Contemporary and friend of Waugh, Amis, and Greene, Muriel Spark turns to a

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<sup>22</sup> Somerset Maugham, qtd. in Ted Morgan, *Maugham* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), 87-8.

mentorship that takes place at a far younger age and is far more fraught with complication and ambivalence than any I have previously examined as she articulates persistent concerns about the impact of post-war social policy—the “tasks of peace”—on the preservation of culture, a term she finds increasingly difficult to define as it loses its ready association with university education. In the novel, Spark uses mentorship to articulate that the distance between culture and education is, finally, decisive and permanent. The mentorship she depicts is ultimately parodic, a comic re-imagining of the cultural preservation that had long been considered part of an esteemed educational tradition.

Born in Edinburgh in 1918, Muriel Spark lived and wrote through some of the most profound policy changes in the United Kingdom until her recent death in 2006. Educated in Scotland, she lived in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), and worked for British intelligence during World War II. Critic Alan Bold summarizes nicely her career’s reputation and scope: “Dealing with a period ranging from the 1930s to the present, Spark is one of the most lucid and alert of contemporary writers.”<sup>23</sup> Spark’s economic prose and sharp wit are the hallmarks of her fiction, but the most frequent subject of critical work is her theology, for, like Greene and Waugh, she was a convert to Catholicism. The disproportionate emphasis on Spark’s religion has resulted in a gross underrepresentation of her engagement in historical matters, despite the frequent attention to current events in many of her novels.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, descriptions of her relationship

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<sup>23</sup> Alan Bold, “Poet and Dreamer,” in *Critical Essays on Muriel Spark*, ed. Joseph Hynes (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1992), 86.

<sup>24</sup> Although she is often criticized as being an ahistorical writer, Bold explains that her novels do not ignore matters of political importance: “Even when her characters slip into solipsism her books do not ignore world events such as the rise of Fascism (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*), the Second World War and its aftermath (*The Girls of Slender Means*), the Eichmann trial and the Middle East Conflict (*The Mandelbaum*)”

to Greene and Waugh are often limited to their shared religion, Greene's financial support of Spark during the writing of her first novel, and an occasional anecdote regarding Waugh's praise of Spark's work.<sup>25</sup> I believe that Spark's relationship to these authors, however, extends beyond the theological and the familiar, and that she, too, offers social commentary at least as insightful as theirs.

A notable exception to the critical trend of overemphasizing Spark's Catholicism, Marina MacKay's "Muriel Spark and the Meaning of Treason" argues for more attention to be paid instead to Spark's "historical inquiries" as she studies treason in several of Spark's novels.<sup>26</sup> Like MacKay, I turn to the *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961) and offer a reading that emphasizes the novel's historical engagement. But where MacKay's reading focuses on the novel's play with fascism, I turn instead to its take on what I contend is the novel's subject and background of education reform. Spark, I argue, elucidates the motivation behind the critiques her contemporaries leveled against Oxbridge as she offers the necessary connection between education reform at the national level and the cultural preservation that, as I have been suggesting, had been the task of the university. If education had at one point been linked to an individual's cultural acquisition, it now, having been legislated at every level, refers to a social imperative that has little to do with culture at all. In *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, mentorship proves

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*Gate*), the Watergate scandal (*The Abbess of Crewe*, 1974), the crisis of capitalism (*The Takeover*, 1976) and political terrorism (*Territorial Rights*, 1979)" (86-7).

<sup>25</sup> In Martin Stannard's 2009 biography of Muriel Spark, he relays a brief anecdote regarding Waugh's praise of Spark's work. The two enjoyed a friendly relationship and Spark had invited Waugh to a publication party he could not attend, "but he had sent in his stead a copy of his last novel, *Unconditional Surrender*, just out, dedicated 'For Muriel Spark in her prime from Evelyn Waugh in his decline'" (254).

<sup>26</sup> Marina MacKay, "Muriel Spark and the Meaning of Treason," *Modern Fiction Studies* 54.3 (2008): 505.

more successful than it has in any other novel in this dissertation, only the version of culture the mentor transmits is not worth preserving.

Set in Edinburgh in the nineteen thirties, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* follows a group of schoolgirls during their time at the Junior Division of the Marcia Blaine School. Monica Douglas, Rose Stanley, Eunice Gardiner, Sandy Stranger, Jenny Gray, and Mary Macgregor comprise the “Brodie Set,” led by their teacher, the memorable and eccentric Miss Jean Brodie. Miss Brodie, who is proudly “in her prime,” declares herself the ten-year-old girls’ mentor and tasks herself with cultivating their appreciation for a culture that is limited and defined by Miss Brodie’s own tastes. During their two years with her, the girls are mesmerized by Miss Brodie’s sexual escapades and thrilled by her elitism and passion. After encouraging a student—Joyce Emily Hammond—to run off and fight for Franco, Miss Brodie is eventually “betrayed” by Sandy to the school’s headmistress and is dismissed on the grounds of fascist sympathies in 1939, wondering until her death in 1946 which of her students turned her in. Sandy becomes a Roman Catholic nun and acts as a mentor of sorts herself after publishing her treatise on “The Configuration of the Commonplace.”

In this last chapter, I argue that Spark’s *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* is, in part, a response to the sweeping educational reform policies of the forties that very clearly set out to make education a national “task of peace.” Although socially and geographically far removed from Oxbridge, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* is still very much concerned with matters of cultural acquisition, especially as governmental policy comes to dictate more fully who and what is taught. Miss Brodie herself is a parody of traditional humanist values as I have presented them, as she clings to the preservation of high



culture, flagrantly refutes any sense of social prudence while partaking in her own version of a leisure culture, and, in a comic nod to Matthew Arnold's "sovereign educators," takes on only a small group of elite students that she seeks to indoctrinate with her own values. Brodie's version of culture has little to do with the pragmatic Marcia Blaine version of education and this growing disconnect between useful education and traditional high culture makes it clear for Spark that no institution is fit to take on cultural transmission. In turn, mentorship itself is now possible only in parody, a comic reflection on a system of cultural preservation that, as I have shown, never could quite live up to its promises or expectations.

## **II. Miss Brodie's Mentorship and the Sovereign Educator**

Miss Brodie is one of Spark's most famous and enigmatic characters, a reputation she has earned in part due to her sheer audacity. "Attend to me, girls," Miss Brodie demands, insisting her students model their behavior and tastes on her own.<sup>27</sup> A self-proclaimed mentor, Miss Brodie believes she embodies what culture should be and that she is uniquely capable of transmitting it to her "set." I will elaborate on the specifics of Miss Brodie's unusual definition of culture in the next section, but here I emphasize first that Miss Brodie's mentorship shares some of the same principles as Matthew Arnold's sovereign educator, and second that Miss Brodie, for all her eccentricities, is an effective mentor. In the previous novels I have examined, mentorship fails in a move that marks the modernist-era attempt at a break with the traditions of institutional cultural

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<sup>27</sup>Muriel Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1999), 8. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

transmission, but Miss Brodie's mentorship succeeds in a re-imagination and reexamination of select parts of those traditions.

Both Miss Brodie and Arnold's sovereign educators intend to preserve and transmit to new generations the appreciation of art characteristic of high culture. "Art and religion," Miss Brodie teaches, come first, "then philosophy; lastly science. That is the order of the great subjects of life, that's their order of importance" (24-5). With that mantra, she teaches the girls about famous artists and regales them with stories about her exotic travels. "Full of culture," as one of her students reflects, Miss Brodie is an Edinburgh graduate well-versed in the "art and religion" she privileges (26). When Miss Brodie proclaims to her students that she is "putting old heads on your young shoulders," she means that she intends to bring them up in a way influenced by older tradition, replicating the liberal-humane learning that had been the backbone of Arnold's sovereign educator (5). The sovereign educator, stripped away from its institutional affiliations and all the problems Hardy identifies, has the grand but straightforward mission of inspiring one's pupils to be motivated by the same culture that has inspired oneself—and Miss Brodie considers this her mission, too.

Both Miss Brodie and Arnold's sovereign educator consider this duplication or passing on what one has learned to be of paramount value. This transmission takes place through the cultivation of a "best self," who in turn inspires others toward their own "best selves." Proudly in her "prime," Miss Brodie is at a moment in which she believes she can act as a "best self," or the greatest possible mentor. As Arnold envisioned his ideal mentors would do, Miss Brodie prides herself on her own knowledge and experience and fully intends to transmit to her students those same values. With her curt and forceful

calls for allegiance—“Follow me”; “Attend to me”— Miss Brodie demands her girls take in the knowledge she offers so that they can become “best selves”: “If only you small girls would listen to me I would make of you the *crème de la crème*” (7; 8; 11). Miss Brodie’s superlative language, one of the hallmarks of her mentorship, commands unwavering allegiance. Miss Brodie holds herself to a certain standard and demands it of her young pupils since she is intent on transmitting what she knows, that which she believes truly to be the very best. Although each girl is “famous” for her own individual characteristics and Miss Brodie recognizes and fosters those differences, she remains certain that she can duplicate what matters, what is essentially “Brodie” and therefore the “best,” by attuning the girls to her own history, likes, and dislikes.

Even if, as I will argue, the novel comes to question the stuff of Miss Brodie’s version of culture, the process through which she transmits her values is undoubtedly effective. In terms of transmission, Miss Brodie enjoys far more tangible success than Arnold’s imagined sovereign educators. Echoing a Jesuit maxim, Miss Brodie exclaims: “Give me a girl at an impressionable age, and she is mine for life” (6). A bold statement, to be sure, but Miss Brodie can support it. The novel opens in 1936, four years after her term of instruction for these girls has ended, and they are still, the narrator claims, “unmistakably Brodie” as they complete the senior school, and they continue to reflect on their time with Miss Brodie into their adulthood as well (2). Even in her new identity as Sister Helena, Sandy Stranger remembers that her “biggest influence” was not “political, personal,” or “Calvinism,” but “a Miss Jean Brodie in her prime” (35). David Lodge interprets the novel’s flash-forward technique —the entire narrative moves quickly among various points in time ranging from 1930 to well past Miss Brodie’s death in

1946—as an affirmation of Miss Brodie’s continued influence. The technique is designed to “present the extension of Miss Brodie’s influence on the girls in their adult life simultaneously with their relationship as teacher and pupils.”<sup>28</sup> Miss Brodie demands long-term influence on the girls’ lives and implores her girls to “all grow up to be dedicated women as I have dedicated myself to you” (66). She believes the girls’ future will reflect the success of her own teaching efforts. After finding out that Sandy has joined a convent, Miss Brodie laments, “What a waste. That is not the sort of dedication I meant. Do you think she has done this to annoy me?” (66). Juxtaposing Miss Brodie’s call for loyalty with a glimpse at future betrayal, Spark makes it clear that Miss Brodie’s mentorship is intended to shape the girls’ future, for she has a vested interest in their lives that extends far beyond their years at Marcia Blaine.

Miss Brodie’s work as a schoolteacher is inseparable from the long-term values she wishes to instill. Elaborating on Miss Brodie’s role as an influential teacher, one of the most traditional of literary figures, Lodge suggests: “Miss Brodie’s ‘beneficent and enlarging effects’ are mainly educational. Though she is a memorably individual character, she is not an unfamiliar type: the charismatic teacher who leaves an indelible mark on her pupils.”<sup>29</sup> A simple schoolteacher, like Jude Fawley’s Mr. Phillotson had been at first to his young student, the untraditional Miss Brodie still fills a traditional role that requires real dedication to the individual student while cultivating knowledge and eventual independence. It matters a great deal to Spark that the mentor in her novel be recognizable as a schoolteacher, and she intertwines mentoring and teaching to a greater

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<sup>28</sup>David Lodge, “The Uses and Abuses of Omniscience: Method and Meaning in Muriel Spark’s *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*,” in *Critical Essays on Muriel Spark*, ed. Joseph Hynes (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1992), 161.

<sup>29</sup> Lodge, “The Uses and Abuses of Omniscience,” 160.

degree than they have been in any of the novels I have examined previously. If Miss Brodie is both a successful mentor and a successful teacher, I suggest that her mentorship harks back to Arnold's claim that the sovereign educator facilitated an institutional education that could itself be instilled by a mentor.

A mentor who is a schoolteacher, specifically, implies a tangible connection between a culture that is passed along and the knowledge that is schooled; such a mentor is the closest to the sovereign educator, who uses his own vast education (gained at Oxbridge, per Arnold) to acculturate his pupils. Indeed, Brodie's mentorship stems neither from philanthropy nor sympathy, as had that of the Schlegel sisters or Mr. Phillotson, all of whom only exposed a heritage that could not be transmitted even when the knowledge itself could. Her mentorship is not that of Mrs. Ramsay, who permits for the possibility of a mentorship separate from institutional affiliation. Instead, Miss Brodie's mentorship is motivated by an impulse similar to the sovereign educator's: she seeks to make culture the privilege of the few so that it may benefit the many, and she believes that institutional education provides her the best possible forum for doing so. And where teachers in this project have hitherto been fairly vilified—Mr. Phillotson becomes a competitive rival; the stodgy Professor Plumer and the overbearing Mr. Ramsay have a proclivity for a material transmission lacking sustainability—Miss Brodie succeeds as a teacher and mentor, generally leaving a lasting and positive memory for each member of her elect.<sup>30</sup> In making Miss Brodie a successful mentor and teacher, a “best self,” and a champion of the arts, Spark has brought together some of the longest-held assumptions about the best that education can offer.

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<sup>30</sup> The notable exceptions would be Mary MacGregor and Joyce Emily Hammond. Mary's death in a fire, however, has little to do with Brodie's influence, and Joyce Emily is not a member of the actual Brodie set.

By placing institutional education and mentorship at cross-purposes, the novels I studied in earlier chapters confirmed the sovereign educator as a utopian impossibility at best, and a short-sighted and elitist abstraction at worst. So when Spark evokes a successful sovereign educator-type mentor with her efficacious mentorship, emphasis on best-selfhood, and demand that her students remain engaged in noble pursuit of art as a way to inform and shape their everyday life-decisions, it may seem that she sees new opportunities for mentorship's impact outside the narrow confines of Arnold's Oxbridge. She seems to affirm the possibility of institutionalized mentorship, rather than argue for its demise. Spark's novel might thus be understood as a radical refutation of the modernist skepticism about the transmissibility of culture in institutions of education; perhaps she would be sympathetic to Leavis's optimism for the university and reject the arguments of Amis and other postwar writers that institutionalized education had become mechanical and irrelevant.

But in her reflections on Christina Kay, her own personal Miss Brodie from her days at the James Gillespie School for Girls, Spark begins to resist the idea that mentorship and education could have the widespread impact Arnold wanted, or could protect the institutional forms of culture to which Leavis clung. Miss Brodie's successful mentorship may evoke an ideal combination of education and culture, yet that success also becomes increasingly irreproducible. Remembering Miss Kay, Spark recalls a note from John Steinbeck's tribute to teachers: "I have come to believe that a great teacher is a great artist and that there are as few as there are any other great artists. Teaching might even be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Muriel Spark, *Curriculum Vitae* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992), 67.

Steinbeck tempers his celebration of teaching by his admitting just how rare good teaching actually is, a fact Spark herself confesses when she says one of the reasons she did not attend university was that “[t]he chance of finding another inspiring teacher like my later ‘Miss Jean Brodie’ in the form of Christina Kay was very slight.”<sup>32</sup> Spark’s look back on her school days shares some of the wistfulness present in Waugh’s nostalgia for a disappearing Oxford culture; she and Waugh both celebrate an exceptional experience of education knowing how difficult it will be to ever duplicate it.<sup>33</sup>

By casting herself as the “leaven in the lump,” Miss Brodie makes it clear that she thinks she is the lone teacher at Marcia Blaine who can guide her students toward meaningful education (6). Her solitariness becomes a problem in and of itself, for the very small Brodie set proves simply incapable of furthering Miss Brodie’s vision in any extensive way beyond treasuring a pleasant memory of an eccentric teacher. Eunice Gardner, for example, tells her husband she wants to visit Miss Brodie’s grave, but can provide him with only a fumbling answer when he asks who Miss Brodie was: “She used to give us teas at her flat and tell us about her prime...She fell for an Egyptian courier once, on her travels, and came back and told us all about it. She had a few favourites. I

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Miss Brodie fits Woolf’s implied definition of a teacher as well, since Woolf maintains that writers learn their craft from their education and Miss Brodie certainly tends to the creation of the artist. Sandy, who becomes an artist herself through the publication of her *The Transformation of the Commonplace*, is a ready indicator of Miss Brodie’s abilities. As Mackay explains, “what the treacherous Sandy learns from the treacherous Miss Brodie is that it is possible to reshape the world according to her own needs and desires...Miss Brodie turns her girls into artists by showing them that the world in which they live is intractably multiple and endlessly rewritable” (MacKay 513).

<sup>32</sup> Spark, *Curriculum Vitae*, 101-2.

<sup>33</sup> Spark enjoyed her years at Joseph Gillespie and in *Curriculum Vitae* she looks back fondly on all her teachers: “It was sixty years ago. The average age of those high-spirited and intelligent men and women who taught us was about forty; they were in their prime. I cannot believe they are nearly all gone, past and over, gone to their graves, so vivid are they in my memory, one and all” (76). Spark, like Forster, may have mourned the loss of a particular educational tradition while remaining optimistic that education could still offer meaningful learning that would, in perhaps a new way, lead to cultural appreciation even as that culture is continuously reimagined and redefined.

was one of them. I did the splits and made her laugh, you know” (26). While Miss Brodie may represent a venerated tradition of mentorship and education, that tradition also seems disjointed and random. Eunice’s husband gives her a telling, deadpan response: “I always knew your upbringing was a bit peculiar.” His confusion over his wife’s upbringing points to the difficulty of assessing clearly the value of Miss Brodie’s mentorship. This complicates the long-term potential of Miss Brodie’s culture, for once she is let go from Marcia Blaine, no one can take her place and recreate her “peculiar” brand of culture. While Miss Brodie represents successful mentorship and a steadfast commitment to culture, the Arnoldian image of cultured education she presents cannot help but fade.

### **III. Miss Brodie’s Culture and the Modern Philistines**

Miss Brodie, I suggested above, is a successful mentor when considered as an individual teacher leading her own small group of a chosen elect. Even if her mentorship is rare, she successfully evokes the older, Arnoldian ideal of the sovereign educator. I argue here, however, that the subject transmitted through her mentorship is a version of culture that nonetheless betrays its limitations. When examined in the context of the novel’s larger engagement with education, Miss Brodie’s “peculiar” culture seems self-indulgent and frustratingly difficult to define. If the act of her mentorship represents the best possible version of culture, the subject of her mentorship represents emergent accusations against high culture as lacking a clear purpose in contemporary society. Miss Brodie criticizes the Marcia Blaine School as an “education factory,” but her proposed curriculum is equally restricted and extreme since the culture she wants to transmit is ultimately defined by and meaningful to only her (6). Miss Brodie holds her culture in



counterpoint to the stark practicality of the Marcia Blaine curriculum, yet she fails to make any convincing argument for the benefits of her cultured approach beyond its perpetuation of her own ideals. Even though she evokes the sovereign educator and a culture premised on an “inward operation,” Miss Brodie’s culture is not predicated on Arnold’s “reading, observing, and thinking in order to come to reason,” but an undefined predisposition that constantly reinforces its own specialness.<sup>34</sup> As a result, her mentorship proves just as unsustainable as that of the mentors I have examined previously, since the culture she perpetuates lacks any clear or lasting value.

The culture Miss Brodie attempts to pass on is never plainly explained; she is certain she will pass on to her girls what she believes matters, but she cannot articulate a coherent system behind her criteria for determining something as “culture.” The girls of the Brodie set learn from their mentor a most unusual and diverse body of “cultural” information:

These girls were discovered to have heard of the Buchmanites and Mussolini, the Italian Renaissance painters, the advantages to the skin of cleansing cream and witch-hazel over honest soap and water, and the word ‘menarche’; the interior decoration of the London house of the author of *Winnie the Pooh* had been described to them, as had the love lives of Charlotte Bronte and of Miss Brodie herself. They were aware of the existence of Einstein and the arguments of those who considered the Bible to be untrue. They knew the rudiments of astrology but not the date of the battle of Flodden or the capital of Finland. All of the Brodie set, save one, counted on its fingers, as had Miss Brodie, with accurate results more or less. (2)

The list is a bizarre amalgamation of random bits of art, history, literature, and hygiene; it does not identify with any cohesiveness what would constitute being “cultured” or “educated.” Further, the compatibility between education and culture once implied by Miss Brodie’s depiction as a successful mentor and schoolteacher begins to erode as Miss

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<sup>34</sup> Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 5.

Brodie refuses to teach even the basic standards of a primary school curriculum. She tells her students to “Hold up your books” and pretend they are studying “our history lesson...our poetry...English grammar,” when in fact she plans to tell them “about care of the skin, and of the hands...about the Frenchman I met in the train to Biarritz” (7). Miss Brodie rejects any prescribed curriculum and replaces it with personal anecdote and opinion. Ultimately, the only criterion she uses to determine cultural and educational worth is whether or not she finds a particular cultural artifact or historical narrative to be personally interesting. The correct answer to her question, “Who is the greatest Italian painter?” is Giotto, simply because “he is my favourite” (7-8). Miss Brodie’s culture is purely self-referential in that it is affirmed by no one else and presented as a matter of nothing more than her personal taste.

In Miss Brodie’s mind, though, her eclectic culture is no less important than Oxbridge culture had been to Arnold, and her insights on “care of the skin, and of the hands” are on par with the primacy of truth and beauty. Even though Miss Brodie’s culture appears to be a random assortment of insights and artifacts, she passionately defends its validity and seriousness. Like Arnold and Amis, she fears the threat of “philistinism” to her culture, which still evokes a venerated tradition of art and intellectual inquiry. Although the particularities of her tradition differentiate hers from Arnoldian culture, she seems to think her culture faces the same type of threats and merits the same types of protection. Indeed, Miss Brodie levels the insult “Philistine” at her girls when they fail to remain poised during Mr. Lloyd’s art lesson: “It is obvious...that these girls are not of cultured homes and heritage. The Philistines are upon us, Mr. Lloyd” (51). The “Philistine” designation calls to mind Arnold’s utilitarian thinkers and Amis’s exam-

advocates, but Miss Brodie's "Philistines" are merely young girls giggling at the female form in a lesson on Italian paintings. To Miss Brodie, though, her girls are guilty of a more serious offense: that they do not take culture seriously enough.<sup>35</sup> While she may later dismiss the exams for which the pragmatic Miss Mackay wants the students prepared, Miss Brodie implies here that the real threat to her culture is the fundamental inability to recognize its value.

While the girls are eager to parrot Miss Brodie's assertion that culture has value, their response to being labeled "Philistines" makes it apparent that they do not have any tangible sense of what culture's actual significance is. Their understanding of Miss Brodie's culture portrays it as seemingly as archaic as the term "philistine" itself. To show Miss Brodie that they really do take culture seriously, the girls anxiously attempt to make themselves appear "of cultured and sexless antecedents" (51). The addition here of "sexless" to a "cultured antecedent" makes those antecedents appear as lifeless as the figures the girls study in their trips to the museum. Miss Brodie would not notice the museum statues' nudity, Sandy maintains, because "Miss Brodie's above all that." Similarly, when Sandy and Jenny write their version of Miss Brodie's love story with the doomed Hugh Carruthers, they decide that surely Miss Brodie could never have "had sexual intercourse with Hugh" (18). Even though "Miss Brodie said they clung to each other with passionate abandon on his last leave," Sandy is convinced her teacher remains

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<sup>35</sup>Miss Brodie still must navigate Arnold's distinction between utilitarianism and traditional culture. Upon her insistence that Sandy and Jenny teach her Greek at the same time they learn it, Miss Brodie reaches to the values of past tradition: "There is an old tradition for this practice... whereupon that one scholar of the family imparted to the others in the evening what he had learned in the morning" (86). But this is juxtaposed with John Stuart Mill, the quintessential utilitarian: "John Stuart Mill used to rise at dawn to learn Greek at the age of five, and what John Stuart Mill could do as an infant at dawn, I too can do on a Saturday afternoon in my prime." This comic nod to utilitarianism acknowledges the movement's persistence but, in typical Brodie fashion, manages to turn it into a reflection of a culture that suits Miss Brodie's own tastes and asserts her own superiority.

pure: “I don’t think they took their clothes off, though,” she tells Jenny (18). By removing sex from culture, the girls create an image of Miss Brodie that paints her as a historical relic of another time, idealized to the point of being completely detached from the vagaries of the modern world. She is elevated to the extent that she becomes an unrealistic abstraction. Jenny and Sandy can only depict a romanticized Miss Brodie in the story they write because their mentor has offered them a culture so “above all that” that it is cut off from everything else. If Miss Brodie sees herself as defending a culture so profoundly serious and pure it has been raised to the status of desexualized statues austere displayed in museums, she must reproach the Philistines for laughing at sex because she fears they bring a mundane perspective to what she thinks is profoundly solemn. Being so elevated and idealized, Miss Brodie and the culture she represents become the subjects of merely a studious curiosity. Culture here is sterile, removed and protected from any engagement that might threaten its appearance of purity.

Not coming from “cultured homes and heritage,” the girls do not readily appreciate culture’s value, which is precisely why Miss Brodie thinks she must keep culture cordoned off for a select few. To permit access to that culture, Miss Brodie believes, she must awaken an appreciation for it. Even if separate from class, culture remains exclusive and privileged in that it reflects a particular engagement enjoyed only by a small group. If one already has a spirit of culture, Miss Brodie believes she can help it emerge:

“The word ‘education’ comes from the root *e* from *ex*, out, and *duco*, I lead. It means a leading out. To me education is a leading out of what is already there in the pupil’s soul. To Miss Mackay it is a putting in of something that is not there, and that is not what I call education, I call it intrusion, from the Latin root prefix *in* meaning in and the stem *trudo*, I thrust. Miss Mackay’s method is to thrust a lot of information into the pupil’s head; mine is a leading out of knowledge, and that

is true education as is proved by the root meaning. (36)

If education is a matter of “soul” and Miss Brodie’s girls are her “elect,” then clearly culture belongs to but a predetermined few and cannot be transmitted to everyone. Instead, she can only “lead out” culture from where it already resides. Miss Brodie may bill her culture as the self-cultivation inherent to *Bildung*, but given the importance she grants herself in that process of cultivation it is clear that her culture is actually the development of taste more closely affiliated with *habitus*. Miss Brodie’s *ex duco* seems to rely on an already-present recognition of culture. Hugh Carruthers, for example, is a made up figure, a compilation of Keats, Wilfred Owen, and Burns. She presents her fictional love story as truth, immediately after reminding her girls that “we are civilized beings” (9). But even if the girls are civilized, they have no way of knowing the literary references constituting Miss Brodie’s dead lover; the adult “cultured” reader catches the references, but the girls cannot. Miss Brodie seems to want to lead out culture, but she has not yet put in the knowledge that constitutes the learning of that culture.<sup>36</sup> Her culture is drawn only further into isolation as it becomes increasingly clear that it belongs only to the select few who have somehow managed to understand it.

In pointing out what she believes to be the shortcomings of Miss Mackay’s philosophy, Miss Brodie actually reveals the problem of her own: how can one pinpoint what constitutes culture if it comes from a place as abstract as the soul? Could culture ever reside in everyone? This is why Miss Brodie must teach such an eclectic mix of knowledge: she is not actually trying to teach a specific curriculum that transmits a specific version of culture, for culture has no specific referent that can be “thrust into”

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<sup>36</sup> Indeed, Miss Brodie’s culture often appears to be *in trudo* in disguise. Because the girls lack the foundational knowledge to understand Miss Brodie’s culture, her attempts at *ex duco* seem instead to “thrust” knowledge onto the girls knowledge to make up for all that they do not know.

one's mind. Instead, culture is a kind of awareness, the cultivated taste Miss Brodie herself enjoys. As Waugh depicts Oxford as a way of life rather than a program of learning, Spark gestures here toward an education that reflects a cultured outlook or attitude. But because Miss Brodie is a schoolteacher to those "not from cultured homes and heritage," she must rely on classroom lessons to teach a culture that had hitherto been left out of the classroom. Her teaching philosophy, her "*ex duco*," is an attempt to reclaim culture as a privileged perspective that emerges from self-cultivation, but this seems incompatible with the *in trudo* of her institutional milieu.

The conflict between *ex duco* and *in trudo* is not far removed from the conflict between culture as a process and culture as a product that I outlined in my first chapter. *Ex duco* characterizes culture as a process of the awakening of an appreciation for the arts and intellect; *in trudo* looks for measurable indicators of specific knowledge having been transmitted and successfully acquired. Hardy, I argued, uses the figure of the sovereign educator to demonstrate that Jude can acquire culture as process, but not the social indicators of having gained culture (i.e. a Christminster degree). In denying *in trudo*, Miss Brodie rejects the idea that culture should have a socially assigned value at all. Her culture can appear "peculiar" to those who do not care to embrace it, but its inherent value will remain clear to those who truly understand it. Miss Brodie's culture is portrayed as antiquated and haphazard, but this has absolutely no bearing on her commitment to it. In fact, Miss Brodie goes so far as to encourage a view of culture that celebrates its distinction from social convention. And this is where she breaks from Arnold's sovereign educator in a crucial way and illustrates a fundamental change in culture's purpose: Miss Brodie's culture is fully intended to remain inaccessible to those

who do not readily recognize its value. For Arnold, culture may begin as the exclusive perspective of the few, but the sovereign educator would work to develop a sensibility that could eventually be made available to all, whereas Miss Brodie delights in the specialness of her elect. Even if Jude Fawley and Leonard Bast prove the hollowness of Arnold's claims about class transcendence, Arnold believed that culture promised a character refinement that would encourage individuals of all classes to work toward social harmony. In contrast, Miss Brodie attempts to develop a sensibility defined by social contrariness. Part of education's "leading out" involves defining oneself as distinct, and maintaining that air of distinction.<sup>37</sup> Arnold advocated classical texts as a means to cultivate "civilized" behavior among all of England; Miss Brodie advocates her personal tastes as a means to cultivate opposition to almost everyone else.

It becomes clear even on the first page of the novel that Miss Brodie's training prepares her girls to operate against norms, endlessly rewriting rules to suit their own tastes. The novel opens with a glimpse at how the Brodie set wear their school-mandated panama hats: "The girls could not take off their panama hats because this was not far from the school gates and hatlessness was an offence. Certain departures from the proper set of the hat on the head were overlooked in the case of fourth-form girls and upwards so long as nobody wore their hat at an angle" (1). The girls, however, resist: they manage to wear "their hats each with a definite difference," denoting from the outset that what makes them "immediately recognisable as Miss Brodie's pupils" is their subtle defiance of rules and their desire to differ from a prescribed standard (1). As the girls talk to a group of boys over a boundary of bicycle handlebars, Spark further emphasizes the nature

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<sup>37</sup> "Distinction" is exactly what Bourdieu calls the cultivation of taste. For him, this taste reflects the sensibilities encouraged by one's class. For Miss Brodie, this distinction is likewise a means of demonstrating an awareness of culture.

of the girls' separatism: they are only united through Miss Brodie, and they are, with her guidance, against conformity. Indeed, that resistance to conformity may be one of the few unifying threads behind Miss Brodie's culture. The girls "had no team spirit and very little in common with each other," but their allegiance to Miss Brodie marks them as distinct (2). By encouraging her girls to resist other people's rules, Miss Brodie ensures they will continue to elevate only her version of what really matters, while she also emphasizes that culture should remain the subject of difference and enjoyed only by the few.

Miss Brodie teaches nonconformity not out of any sense of disrespect for rule-following altogether—after all, she demands the girls follow her own rules expressly—but as a means of resistance against what she calls "this education factory," the Marcia Blaine School. This tension between culture as an idealized separateness and as a pointless distraction from useful knowledge reflects, I believe, what had become of the narrative of institutional cultural transmission at the mid-century. Spark's novel argues that the structure of education under the legislation of the modern welfare state reproduced only a way of thinking in which culture was no longer a vaulted tradition that could inform an entire curriculum, but an increasingly isolated program of study.<sup>38</sup> Modernists such as Forster and Woolf depict contemporary embodiments of (failed) mentorship to illustrate that institutional forms of cultural transmission are no longer possible; Spark, however, turns to a radically traditional, Arnoldian mentor to

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<sup>38</sup>Born in Scotland, Spark received a Scottish—not English—education. Education in Scotland is certainly not exactly the same as in England: "Education in Scotland remained distinct, in its traditions, which were in some respects superior to those of the south, and in its practical organization, which was not now more impressive" (Calder 545). However, Scottish schools were organized in primary and secondary stages and, thanks to a further Act of 1945, had been "brought into line with the English on certain important points" (Calder 545). For Spark's own account of her Scottish education, see *Curriculum Vitae* pages 49-76.



demonstrate how out of date is the fundamental assumption that culture as it once was even has a place in institutional education. As the writers of the thirties and forties had argued, schools could no longer foster a cultural sensibility that would put together classroom learning and intellectual dialogue into a meaningful and transmissible culture. Humanist culture struggles to remain relevant or to define itself as anything more than a vague resistance to the “uncultured,” and in turn it faces criticism as either a snobbish elitism or an irrelevant pursuit. Spark’s private girls’ school is a caricature of some of the generalities about modern education expressed at the beginning of this chapter, as Miss Brodie’s culture struggles to find validity in the face of education’s legislated emphasis on practicality, exams, and “hard knowledge.”<sup>39</sup>

The Marcia Blaine School evokes the specific ways in which the final nationalization of education symbolized the complete break between institutional education and the transmissible version of culture. The 1944 Education Act was the culmination of a host of social reform movements undertaken around World War II, and addressed especially the issue of secondary education.<sup>40</sup> Following the recommendations of the 1942 *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (the “Beveridge Report”), the Act made secondary education free and compulsory for all and brought the maintenance of these

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<sup>39</sup> C.P. Snow’s famous 1959 lecture “The Two Cultures” argues that the “hard knowledge” of science is not any less important than the “intellectual life” of the humanities, and that this dualistic perspective has a negative impact on British schools. Snow and Miss Brodie obviously have different priorities, but both indicate an increasing (and increasingly criticized) separation of forms of knowledge, which had a great deal of impact on education.

<sup>40</sup> “The educational institution which remained fullest of vigorous life throughout the period between the wars was, without any doubt, the maintained secondary school—the grammar school as it is called today. From the earliest postwar years it was almost everywhere bursting at the seams, yet having to reject annually thousands of eager and able youngsters, most of whom had qualified for entry by winning scholarships or free places” (Dent 93).

schools under the purview of public authorities.<sup>41</sup> The educational reform measures of the forties saw a renewed commitment to universal education, providing especially increased opportunities for secondary and further education. Education was very much a matter of what Beveridge called “social insurance” because it provided a potentially solid foundation for both economic prosperity and equality.<sup>42</sup> As school reform had been a particular interest of the utilitarian movement, the 1944 Education Act was motivated by the belief that school reform could enact social reform and economic growth.<sup>43</sup>

Social reform and economic growth are of little concern to Miss Brodie. Such mundane preoccupations are precisely what she resists in her insistence on staying at Marcia Blaine. “There needs must be a leaven in the lump,” she claims, as she is determined to elevate her group of young students above a school standard that she sees as misdirected when it guides students away from the version of culture she advocates (6). And while the Marcia Blaine School is not a state school, it is implied that it shares a similar curriculum when Miss Brodie contrasts Marcia Blaine to a progressive or experimental school. Rationalizing her refusal to ever leave Marcia Blaine, Miss Brodie

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<sup>41</sup> The 1942 Beveridge report dealt with social insurance. The report states: “There was a widespread feeling that a revolutionary moment in the world’s history is a time for revolutions, not for patching.” As such, William Beveridge targeted what he called “Five Giants on the Road to Recovery,” which he identifies in bold, capital letters: “**WANT, DISEASE, IGNORANCE, SQUALOR and IDLENESS.**” To defeat them, Peter Hennessey explains, “Beveridge designed a comprehensive welfare system (though, oddly, he never cared for the phrase ‘the welfare state’ preferring to call it ‘the social service state’) based on three ‘assumptions’—a free national health service, child allowances, full employment (which he defined as less than 8.5 per cent unemployment).”

<sup>42</sup> For additional information on what led to the 1944 Education Act and on its aftermath, see H.C. Dent’s *1870-1970: Century of Growth in English Education* (1970); Angus Calder’s *The People’s War, Britain 1939-1945* (1969); Peter Hennessey’s *Never Again: Britain, 1945-1951* (1993); Ken Jones’s *Education in Britain: 1944 to the Present* (2003).

<sup>43</sup> Kenneth Richmond, *Education in Britain Since 1944: A Personal Retrospect* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1978), 14. Richmond argues, however, that “[o]n both counts this belief has been seriously undermined during the past decade.”

says with great disdain: “It has been suggested again that I should apply for a post at one of the progressive schools, where my methods would be more suited to the system than they are at Blaine. But I shall not apply for a post at a crank school” (6). Ironically, Miss Brodie associates herself in many ways with the oldest of educational traditions, yet her approach is now seen as more in line with a “progressive” school.

The progressive and the traditional meet up in a corridor at Marcia Blaine. Walking her students past a poster of Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin with the words “Safety First” emblazoned across the bottom, Miss Brodie explains that the school’s headmistress, Miss Mackay, “retains him on the wall because she believes in the slogan ‘Safety First.’” Miss Brodie, however, refutes such a claim. “But safety does not come first,” she admonishes her girls, “Goodness, Truth and Beauty come first” (7). In defense of such practical admonishments as “Safety First,” Miss Mackay tells the girls that “Culture cannot compensate for lack of hard knowledge,” encouraging them to work hard on all subjects (69). In her somewhat sarcastic “You will have to work hard at ordinary humble subjects for the qualifying examinations,” Miss Mackay ridicules the elevated perception of culture the girls have learned from Miss Brodie (69). She asks them about their own “cultural interests,” downplaying culture as a kind of extracurricular pursuit (68). To Miss Mackay, culture is a matter of interest or personal enjoyment, not the sustained pursuit of a particular type of knowledge.

In *Never Again* (1993), Peter Hennessy looks back at the national fervor motivating the 1944 Education Act. The push for such major reform, he maintains, was part of a greater concern with what schools could pass on to future generations, which offers some explanation behind Miss Mackay’s viewpoint: “Education, as everybody

knew then and knows now, is crucial to the wider social and economic well-being of the country. There is a direct link between the quality of educational investment in one generation and the industrial output, balance of payments and strength of the currency in the next and the next-but-one.”<sup>44</sup> Education is here figured as both Amis’s “tasks of peace” and as part of a greater narrative of transmission, but it has nothing to do with traditionally understood culture. In *Culture and the Grammar School* (1965), however, H. Davies argued that culture was still part of education’s purpose: “Traditionally education has been concerned with the task of cultural transmission and the culture in question has been that of a minority group. It has been the duty of the schools to preserve this culture—the best that has been thought and said—and to hand it on reverently to an elite class.”<sup>45</sup> While arguing in support of culture’s position in education, Davies actually gets at its potential collapse. If education in the forties had been intended to improve the economic lot of the population in its entirety, then is there still a benefit to keeping culture as the privilege of the elite? The forties-era acknowledgment of the unequal distribution of knowledge among dominant groups left “egalitarian trends in sociological analysis” questioning what “counts as knowledge.”<sup>46</sup> Culture could not be the preparation for the real world it had once been considered; it becomes only one possible curriculum out of many, and it is seen in opposition to other forms of equally valid knowledge.

Nowhere in the novel is this increasing split between “culture” and other types of study more apparent than in the girls’ decision to attend either the Classical or Modern School. This divide between classical and modern schools is an allusion to the “eleven-

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<sup>44</sup>Peter Hennessy, *Never Again: Britain, 1945-1951* (York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 161.

<sup>45</sup>H. Davies, qtd. in Richmond, *Education in Britain since 1944*, 89.

<sup>46</sup> Richmond, *Education in Britain since 1944*, 89.

plus.” This exam, created by the 1944 Butler Education Act, was designed to determine a student’s future career path, because the results of a student’s eleven plus exam would dictate his or her track in the tripartite secondary school system, which divided students among the grammar (academic) school, the modern school, or a technical school.<sup>47</sup> The grammar school, or what Miss Brodie calls the “Classical” school, gave students the most traditional education with an emphasis on classic literary texts. As outlined in *The Education of the Adolescent*, the modern school would not focus on the traditional subjects of the school curriculum, but was based on a “child-centered approach” that had been “deemed appropriate for the mass of pupils who had neither the ability nor the aptitude for a full-length academic course.”<sup>48</sup> The structures of education had physically and ideologically separated “Truth and Beauty” from “Safety First,” only underscoring that Miss Brodie’s culture is indeed not for everyone. Her culture, she intends, is for the elite, disconnected from modern society.

The stakes of the eleven-plus exam were inordinately high; a clever poor child could move up a social class by getting into a good grammar school. There are echoes of Mr. Tulliver here, since the grammar school and its traditional curriculum were still

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<sup>47</sup> Richmond found these designations rather arbitrary and misinformed: “In the long series of official reports on British education, few passages have been quite so egregious as those to be found in Norwood’s phony characterizations of the grammar-school pupil (‘who is interested in learning for its own sake and can hold his mind in suspense’), the technical-school pupil (‘whose interests and abilities lie markedly in the field of applied science or applied art’) and the modern-school pupil (‘who deals more easily with concrete things than with ideas’)” (71).

<sup>48</sup> Richmond, *Education in Britain since 1944*, 80.

Richmond further elaborates on the intention behind the modern school: “despite Hadow’s recommendation to the contrary it was decided that the modern school should be free from the pressure of external examinations. Any suggestion of its aping the grammar school was to be avoided. Activity and experience, projects and centres of interest were to provide the pabulum for a ‘good all-round secondary education’, with any vocational bias deferred until the later stages of the course. In this way, it was hoped, the modern school would evolve its own distinctive life-style and justify itself as an attractive and worthwhile alternative to the grammar school” (80).

associated with upward mobility. Minister of Education Ellen Wilkinson championed this tripartite policy as being “essentially meritocratic”:

People have said that by talking in terms of three types of school we are promulgating a wrong social philosophy. I do not agree. By abolishing fees in maintained schools we have ensured that entry to these schools shall be on the basis of merit... I cannot agree with those people who say that by setting up distinction of brains between people you are only producing another kind of distinction. I am glad to think that we are not all born the same.<sup>49</sup>

Based on the “distinction” of “brains,” the eleven plus seems to offer the same pseudo-educational advancement Bourdieu found in 1930’s France. The eleven plus system, Angus Calder chides, “ensured that privilege was perpetuated behind a façade of democratic advance.”<sup>50</sup> The tripartite system, though defended as egalitarian and merit-based, ignored the way in which the “distinction of brains” had developed in the first place as a result of years of disparate educational opportunities among classes, and only underscores the elitism and separateness of a curriculum of culture.

As their final teacher in the primary school, Miss Brodie prepares her students for that key decision, encouraging them to the Classical in her typically leading fashion: “I am not saying anything against the Modern side. Modern and Classical, they are equal, and each provides for a function in life. You must make your free choice. Not everyone is capable of a Classical education... So that the girls were left in no doubt as to Miss Brodie’s contempt for the Modern side” (64). Miss Brodie’s “contempt” for the Modern school is distinct from the charges against utilitarianism made by Arnold, Leavis, and even Amis. Instead of faulting utilitarian pragmatism or crass socioeconomic motives, Miss Brodie asserts *their* irrelevance to the only life that matters: her life of culture. Miss

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<sup>49</sup>Ellen Wilkinson, qtd. in Richmond, *Education in Britain since 1944*, 72.

<sup>50</sup>Angus Calder, *The People’s War, Britain 1939-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969), 543.

Brodie's close-minded and absolute dedication to the superiority of her own dictated culture leads her to a romanticized fascism. As Lodge argues, "Miss Brodie's sympathy for the Fascist movements of the 'thirties is not a reasoned political attitude, but an extension of her egotism and romantic sensibility."<sup>51</sup> Her unusual and dangerous political affiliation only further illustrates that culture has come to signify the division— exactly what Arnold had feared anarchy would produce.

#### **IV. Culture and Parody: Toward a "Desegregated Art"**

Given the novel's setting in a primary school, Miss Brodie's culture is a comic re-imagination of Little Father Time's "Age masquerading as Juvenility." I suggest that the source of Spark's parody of culture in education is Miss Brodie's attempt to disseminate the tenets of a venerable culture to students too young to grasp her lessons. Miss Brodie invokes much of the Oxbridge culture I have detailed throughout this project: an emphasis on tradition; the commitment to ancient Greek "Truth and Beauty"; and the Arnoldian sense of culture as a developed, transmissible, and refined inward process and sensibility. When Miss Brodie applies these tenets to a primary school education, though, she radically isolates and artificially elevates culture away from serious conversations about culture's worth. The disparity between the weight of this serious cultural tradition and the education of a group of very young girls is jarring and laughable as Spark mocks the way that culture in its traditional form seems irrelevant to its surroundings. Even if the texts of culture still represent "the best which has been thought and said in the world," the subjective nature of that "best" in light of the massive social upheaval of two world wars diminishes culture's capacity as an expansive or reparative force.

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<sup>51</sup> Lodge, "The Uses and Abused of Omniscience," 163.

Culture cannot remain at Marcia Blaine, and to imply that it can only makes culture appear “peculiar,” disjointed, and inaccessible—even dangerous. In fact, Miss Brodie’s fascism is an outcome of her romantic, aestheticizing character. Just as she keeps her culture isolated in a school for innocent young girls, Miss Brodie fails to understand fascism’s dire implications. Even in her trips to Germany and Austria before World War II, Miss Brodie only notices how the countries “were now magnificently organised” and how “Mussolini had put an end to unemployment with his fascisti and there was no litter in the streets” (131; 31). Culture, in the transmissible form Miss Brodie embodies, does not know how to apply a tradition of the past to a profoundly unsettled present. Her most condemning critique of Nazism comes in the passing remark to Sandy, “Hitler *was* rather naughty” (131).

Fascism eventually matters a great deal to Joyce-Emily, however, who leaves to fight for Franco at Miss Brodie’s urging and dies along the way. Joyce-Emily “boasts...that her brother at Oxford had gone to fight in the Spanish Civil War,” and “[t]his dark, rather mad girl wanted to go too, and to wear a white blouse and black skirt and march with a gun” (126). War for Joyce-Emily is fashion; her understanding of war is limited to the picture Miss Brodie brought back from Italy “showing the triumphant march of the black uniforms in Rome” worn by Mussolini’s marching troops (31). At Marcia Blaine, war was “something going on outside in the newspapers and only once a month in the school debating society” (126). Joyce-Emily’s death illustrates that when culture is separate from the tasks of peace Amis details, it risks becoming an irresponsible egotism. For Sandy Stranger, Joyce-Emily’s death is enough to make her realize that she owes Miss Brodie loyalty “only up to a point” and that her mentorship



ought finally to be rejected. (136). Sandy does not betray Miss Brodie on political grounds—Sandy finds there are Fascists “less agreeable than Miss Brodie” in the Catholic church she joins—or out of some concern for “world affairs,” but because she is interested in “putting a stop to Miss Brodie” (134). Sandy’s call for an end to mentorship is a call to end a cultural transmission that cannot account for a changing society with increasing political strife.

Spark’s parody is grounded in her view that ridicule is, to return to this chapter’s epigraph, “the only honorable weapon we have left.”<sup>52</sup> The claim comes from her lecture “The Desegregation of Art,” in which she makes the case for what she calls a “desegregated” literature, “one that will immerse us in the facts and prevent our sentimental self-indulgence.”<sup>53</sup> Spark admonishes artists’ emotional efforts to arouse sympathy or indignation; she advocates instead the emotionally detached forms of parody and satire. Emotional work provides the reader with a false sense of accomplishment in which one feels good for having experienced sympathy, which only further segregates readers from the particular plight they encounter in literature. “The Desegregation of Art” is Spark’s response to “a marvelous tradition of socially-conscious art” that has thankfully raised awareness of suffering in “social life or in family life,” but she is quick to point out the limitations of such efforts.<sup>54</sup> This art can depict “the gross racial injustices of our world, or in the exposure of the tyrannies of family life on the individual.”<sup>55</sup> These

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<sup>52</sup> Muriel Spark, “The Desegregation of Art,” in *Critical Essays on Muriel Spark*, ed. Joseph Hynes (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1992), 35.

<sup>53</sup> Joseph Hynes, introduction to *Critical Essays on Muriel Spark* (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1992), 4.

<sup>54</sup> Spark, “The Desegregation of Art,” 34.

<sup>55</sup> Spark, “The Desegregation of Art,” 34.

portrayals can be powerful and moving, evoking the strong response a reader may have had to the Fawley children hanging dead in a closet, or Leonard Bast crushed beneath the weight of the books he valued. But for Spark, such displays of emotional anger are no longer the most effective, “it isn’t achieving its end or illuminating our lives any more.”<sup>56</sup> Spark picks up on the same radical shift in perspective that Woolf had attributed to the effects of war. After World War II, this shift has intensified: “we have come to a moment in history when we are surrounded on all sides and oppressed by the absurd.”<sup>57</sup> And everyone, regardless of their level of sophistication or education is “aware of this fact.” Therefore, the “art of ridicule is an art that everyone can share in some degree, given the world that we have.”<sup>58</sup>

Spark argues in favor of parody because she believes it has the enlightening effects that had at one point been assigned to culture:

Our noble aspirations, our sympathies, our elevated feelings should not be inspired merely by visits to an art gallery, a theater, or by reading a book, but rather the rhetoric of our times should persuade us to contemplate the ridiculous nature of the reality before us, and teach us to mock it. We should know ourselves better by now than to be under the illusion that we are all essentially aspiring, affectionate, and loving creatures. We do have these qualities, but we are aggressive, too. And so when I speak of the desegregation of art I mean by this the liberation of our minds from the comfortable cells of lofty sentiment in which they are confined and never really satisfied.<sup>59</sup>

Miss Brodie’s version of culture fails to account for the “rhetoric of our times” that everyone can now speak, just as Spark claims that Arnold’s vision of self-directed *Bildung* as a means of social harmony is almost a complete charade. Culture cannot be

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<sup>56</sup> Spark, “The Desegregation of Art,” 34.

<sup>57</sup> Spark, “The Desegregation of Art,” 36.

<sup>58</sup> Spark, “The Desegregation of Art,” 36.

<sup>59</sup> Spark, “The Desegregation of Art,” 36.

transmitted in ways that look toward tradition and continuity, for the absurdity of the postwar world cannot find significance in an art dedicated too much to its own preservation.

Although Spark and Amis share a sense of a culture that is no longer transmissible through education, Spark's call for accessible and diverse forms of parody as a way to resist too-limited forms of culture are in stark contrast to Amis's sharp satire. For Amis, culture was doomed on two fronts. An anti-modernist, he was frustrated by the inaccessibility of Bloomsbury high aesthetics and found that it represented a stifling and elitist version of culture.<sup>60</sup> But at the other extreme, he was vocally against the democratization of education, a position summed up in his now ubiquitous phrase, "more means worse."<sup>61</sup> Along with C.B. Cox and A.E. Dyson, Amis contributed to the "Black Papers" (in contrast to the government "White Papers") of the late sixties, attacking especially the 1963 Robbins Report, which recommended immediate expansion of and access to the universities.<sup>62</sup> Amis pokes fun at education reform in *Lucky Jim* in the characters of Beesley and Mrs. Welch, concluding both that culture has become too diffused to have lasting value and that culture in its traditional form is largely irrelevant. Like Amis, Leavis argues for the continued benefit of culture, but remains concerned that its widespread availability has also diminished its commitment to tradition. With his characteristic drama, he concludes with sadness, "The prospects of culture, then, are very

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<sup>60</sup>See, for example, Bertram Welsh in *Lucky Jim*, whose pretension and snobbery prevent him from considering anything beyond the production of art.

<sup>61</sup> Kingsley Amis, qtd. in Zachary Leader, *The Life of Kingsley Amis* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 606.

<sup>62</sup> For an overview of the Robbins Report and the educational reform movements that followed, see Richard Aldrich's anthology *A Century of Education*; Ken Jones's *Education in Britain: 1944 to the Present* (2003); Clyde Chitty's *Education Policy in Britain* (2009).

dark. There is less room for hope in that a standardised civilisation is rapidly enveloping the whole world.”<sup>63</sup>

T.S. Eliot had come to a similar conclusion in the forties. When he defines “culture” in *Notes towards a Definition of English Culture* (1949), he does so because “a doctrine only needs to be defined after the appearance of some heresy.”<sup>64</sup> One form of “heresy,” he argues, was the diffusion of education. He resists synonymy between education and culture and challenges assumptions that the purpose of education is to transmit culture: “we must observe that the assumption that culture can be summed up as skills and interpretations controverts the more comprehensive view of culture” that he takes in his earlier chapters.<sup>65</sup> Eliot maintains that the diffusion of education cheapens it; culture should remain the privilege of the select few who can understand and appreciate it fully.

By arguing that the diffusion of education has a negative impact on cultural preservation, however, Eliot must admit a stronger link between education and cultural

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<sup>63</sup> Leavis, *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture*, 30.

<sup>64</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949), 11. Clive Bell’s *Civilization: An Essay* (1938) and C.J. Powys’s *The Meaning of Culture* (1939) make arguments similar to Eliot’s, emphasizing an elitist culture that should be transmitted only selectively. Both also deride the diffusion of education. For a useful overview of the intersections of the three arguments, see Frank Gloversmith’s “Defining Culture: J.C. Powys, Clive Bell, R.H. Tawney & T.S. Eliot.”

<sup>65</sup> Eliot, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, 98.

Although he does not name the 1944 Butler Act, he makes obvious his distaste for such legislation: “People can be persuaded to desire almost anything, for a time, if they are constantly told that it is something to which they are entitled and which is unjustly withheld from them... facility of education will lead to indifference to it; and that the universal imposition of education up to the years of maturity will lead to hostility towards it” (102-3). Eliot supports proposals such as those of historian R.H. Tawney, who argued that “public schools should be taken over by the State and used as boarding schools to accommodate for two or three years the intellectually abler secondary school boys from the ages of sixteen to eighteen. For the conditions over which he pronounces such a tearful valedictory were not brought about, either, by mere privilege; but by a happy combination of privilege and opportunity, in the *blend* he so savours, of which no Education Act will find the secret” (105).

transmission than he is prepared to admit in his denunciation of education's "skills and interpretations." Eliot returns to the subject of his earlier essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," and in doing so finally acknowledges that cultural transmission depends on education:

We know now that the highest achievements of the past, in art, in wisdom, in holiness, were but 'stages in development' which we can teach our springbuds to improve upon. We must not train them merely to receive the culture of the past, for that would be to regard the culture of the past as final. We must not impose culture upon the young, though we may impose upon them whatever political and social philosophy is in vogue. And yet the culture of Europe has deteriorated visibly within the memory of many who are by no means the oldest among us. And we know, that whether education can foster and improve culture or not, it can surely adulterate and degrade it. For there is no doubt that in our headlong rush to educate everybody, we are lowering our standards, and more and more abandoning the study of those subjects by which the essentials of our culture—of that part of it which is transmissible by education—are transmitted; destroying our ancient edifices to make ready the ground upon which the barbarian nomads of the future will encamp in their mechanised caravans.<sup>66</sup>

Eliot wants simultaneously to preserve tradition and to recognize its end. In a long and complex sentence, Eliot struggles to articulate the viability of cultural transmission: it depends on education, yet education may or may not be able to "foster and improve culture." The decay present in *The Wasteland* had reached a crisis point by the forties, as the culture of the past manifestly ceases to be transmissible and Eliot looks to salvage "essentials" before they disappear. Cultural diffusion in his argument directly threatens cultural transmission because of culture's already very precarious state.

As I have argued, however, cultural transmission as it related to education had long since been scrutinized by writers of the modernist age. To borrow a term from Raymond Williams, the breakdown in cultural transmission is its own "long revolution,"

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<sup>66</sup> Eliot, *Notes towards a Definition of Culture*, 111.

a gradual move toward an expansive understanding of culture.<sup>67</sup> Hardy, Forster, and Woolf associate education reform (the “diffusion” of education) with the inevitable failure of cultural transmission in its traditional sense, but not in the causal relationship Eliot posits. Instead, they offer a fuller account of culture’s intransmissibility even in the most elite institutions of Oxford and Cambridge. The inevitability of a break between culture and education that is not blamed on education reform but illuminated by it leads Spark to take a more sympathetic view of cultural diffusion. According to Spark, once culture takes into account its inherent problems of accessibility and transmissibility, it can finally be refigured in redeeming ways that simply no longer depend on educational institutions or on a tradition of the past. In granting Miss Brodie such striking resemblance to the sovereign educator, Spark acknowledges—like Hardy, Forster, and Woolf—that Arnold’s mentorship would only be possible if culture could be completely separate from one’s social experience, which it ultimately cannot be. Although she argues effectively in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* that traditional culture is too far removed from modern social problems, she still has faith in culture, a culture that—thankfully—cannot be transmitted in the way Arnold had imagined for his culture. For Spark, as for Forster, increased educational opportunity is not necessarily anathema to culture, since culture can be manifested and reinvented in ways Eliot could not imagine. By acknowledging that cultural transmission is no longer the main consideration when the culture itself has lost significance, Spark sees the opportunity to rethink what culture can be and from where it can come.

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<sup>67</sup>See Raymond Williams’s *The Long Revolution* (1961).

## Epilogue: Transfiguring Culture

In “Does Culture Matter” (1940), the essay in which Forster questions whether culture can be handed down, he reflects on the idea of culture in crisis. Like Amis and Eliot, Forster studies the effects of the postwar education boon, only he rejects the “more is worse” elitism and proposes instead that the diffusion of culture has finally removed the impediments to cultural transmission:

Cultivated people are a drop of ink in the ocean. They mix easily and even genially with other drops, for those exclusive days are over when cultivated people made only cultivated friends, and became tongue-tied or terror-struck in the presence of anyone whose make-up was different from their own. Culture, thank goodness, is no longer a social asset, it can no longer be employed either as a barrier against the mob or as a ladder into the aristocracy. This is one of the last few improvements that have occurred in England since the last war.<sup>1</sup>

Even though he would mourn in *Howards End* the loss of a traditional culture, Forster here makes it clear that such “loss” has also the potential to bring enormous gain. The diffusion of culture is to its benefit, not its terminal detriment.

To illustrate that gain, though, he must ask the same question Amis does: “what have we got worth passing on?”<sup>2</sup> His answer looks back at the problems of culture I have identified throughout this project: he first imagines the ways in which culture has become the material transmission Woolf implicates: “What we have got is (roughly speaking) a little knowledge about books, pictures, tunes, runes, and a little skill in their interpretation. Seated beside our gas-fires and beneath our electric-bulbs, we inherit a tradition which has lasted for about three thousand years.” He goes on to identify the

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<sup>1</sup> E.M. Forster, “Does Culture Matter?” in *Two Cheers for Democracy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1951), 104.

<sup>2</sup> Forster, “Does Culture Matter?” 104.

privileged past from which culture emerged and, as does Hardy, Forster associates this privilege with cultural capital: “In the past, culture has been paid for by the ruling classes; they often did not know why they paid, by they paid, much as they went to church; it was the proper thing to do, it was a form of social snobbery, and so the artists sneaked a meal, the author got a sinecure, and the work of creation went on.”<sup>3</sup> He concludes with the shortcomings of culture Spark reveals in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*: “Today, people are coming to the top who are, in some ways, more clear-sighted and honest than the ruling classes of the past, and they refuse to pay for what they don’t want; judging by the noises through the floor, our neighbour in the flat above doesn’t want books, pictures, tunes, runes, anyhow doesn’t want the sorts which we recommend.”<sup>4</sup> Using Forster’s overview, it is clear that each of the novels in this project is a kind of locus for culture and its transmission, a piece of transmitted culture that creates a usefully generative tension. Forster reminds us that it is the reader’s responsibility to respond the particular engagement with culture that the author offers—and that this action is in and of itself a form of cultural transmission.

An author weighted down by a lengthy literary tradition, Forster looks to the possible reader and asks, “Ought we to bother him?” Ought high culture be handed to those who might not seem to want or appreciate it? To make culture worth passing on, Forster suggests that the problem in transmitting culture had come from trying to transmit culture as it had always been. If one tries to transmit the same old version of traditional culture, the effect is meddlesome, “like a maiden-aunt.” “Our arms, as it were, full of

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<sup>3</sup> Forster, “Does Culture Matter?” 104.

<sup>4</sup> Forster, “Does Culture Matter?” 104-5.



parcels,” Forster claims, alluding to how an author might try to transmit cultural artifacts culled from ancient to modern times: “I was given these specially to hand on to you... Sophocles, Velasquez, Henry James... I’m afraid they’re a little heavy, but you’ll get to love them in time, and if you don’t take them off my hands I don’t know who will... please... please... they’re really important, they’re culture.”<sup>5</sup> If one focuses too much on passing down Arnold’s “the best which has been thought and said in the world,” then culture will, in the end, never be able to be transmitted at all. Culture in Arnold’s construct is ultimately too limited, too removed from the society it was intended to benefit. Unable to be the restorative force Arnold imagined, culture could not be transmitted in the ways he suggested. Authors must come to terms with the intransmissibility of a particular cultural tradition.

In “The Desegregation of Art,” Spark agrees with Forster and concludes that the “masterpieces of the past” should not be the lone litmus test of culture.<sup>6</sup> Instead she encourages “the special calling of arts and letters,” believing that “Literature infiltrates and should fertilize our mind. It is not a special department set aside for the entertainment and delight of the sophisticated minority.”<sup>7</sup> Here, literature is poised definitively as the new transmitter of culture. Not in the sense that Leavis would have it, however. Whereas Leavis wanted a literary curriculum that would preserve past culture in traditional ways, Spark imagines a literature that constantly reexamines what culture is. While she would not agree with Arnold’s version of culture as a classical curriculum, she, too, insists that

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<sup>5</sup> Forster, “Does Culture Matter?” 104-5.

<sup>6</sup> Muriel Spark, “The Desegregation of Art,” in *Critical Essays on Muriel Spark*, ed. Joseph Hynes (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1992), 33.

<sup>7</sup> Spark, “The Desegregation of Art,” 34.

culture should aim to reach everyone. Her version, as did Leavis's, includes special attention to arts and letters, but her position is more inclusive. In agreement with the cultural studies movement that had gained popularity in the sixties, she includes journalism, speeches, and any form of writing that responds in a meaningful way to the same social inequalities that culture could not account for in its restricted earlier iterations.<sup>8</sup> In a refutation of Amis's "more is worse," Spark exclaims: "We are living in times when there are fewer great artists, fewer great writers, but more and better art, better and more lively, and a greater volume of writing."<sup>9</sup> In this sense, Hardy's, Forster's, and Woolf's novels ensure some form of cultural transmission even—and especially— as they explore its limitations.

Forster and Spark both believed in the power of the author to continue to transmit culture, and they relocate cultural transmission from the old institutions and into the texts themselves. Filling *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* with her own re-writings of "The Lady of Shallott" and the poets who comprise Hugh Carruthers, Spark, in a postmodern gesture, reappropriates the canon for new and individual purposes. Miss Brodie, too, inspires her girls to write their own version of her story. Even Sandy Stranger, who ultimately betrays Miss Brodie, succeeds in adapting Miss Brodie to her own life. When she writes *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, Sandy writes her own version of culture, an invitation to "transfigure" the "common currency" of words so that they might "fertilize our mind[s]."<sup>10</sup> Removed from the isolation of Miss Brodie's confining culture,

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<sup>8</sup> For an explanation of the notion of "culture as text," a central tenet of cultural studies, see the introduction to Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt's *Practicing the New Historicism* (2001).

<sup>9</sup> Spark, *The Desegregation of Art*, 33.

<sup>10</sup> Spark, *The Desegregation of Art*, 33-4.

Sandy is finally able to relate in meaningful ways to the world around her: contemplating salvation outside St. Giles' Cathedral or the Tolbooth, "[a]ll she was conscious of now was that some quality of life peculiar to Edinburgh and nowhere else had been going on unbeknownst to her all the time, and however undesirable it might be she felt deprived of it; however undesirable, she desired to know what it was, and to cease to be protected from it by enlightened people" (115). No longer the entitlement of the enlightened, culture can look even to the commonplace, for culture is now that which is transfigured rather than transmitted.

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