



THE
OSWALD *Review*

An International Journal
Of Undergraduate Research and Criticism
In the Discipline of English



Volume XI
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Editor:

Tom Mack, Ph.D.
G. L. Toole Professor of English
Carolina Trustee Professor
Department of English
University of South Carolina Aiken
Aiken, South Carolina 29801
tomm@usca.edu

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Senior, English
University of South Carolina Aiken

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Address correspondence and inquiries to Dr. Tom Mack, Editor, **The Oswald Review**, Department of English, University of South Carolina Aiken, 471 University Parkway, Aiken, SC 29801.

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The Significance of the Sublime in Thomas Gray's “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College”

Sophie Condon
University of Edinburgh
United Kingdom

The *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*, in reference to Longinus' description, defines the “sublime” as a “terrifyingly impressive natural phenomen[on]” (Baldick 248). Edmund Burke, too, endorses this notion of a fearful awe in his philosophical enquiry, stating that “whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime” (part i, section vii). If we follow this line of reasoning, then the significance of the sublime in Thomas Gray's “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College” is indeed profound, so palpable is the

speaker's horror at life's predestined sufferings. For Gray, however, the sublime appears to extend beyond simply terror. His poem presents and sustains a conflict of emotions, juxtaposing the naive vitality of youth and the wretched experience of age. Furthermore, we perceive the subject's struggle to articulate an insight, which is both private and obscure. In this way, Gray's sublime becomes characteristic of singularity and isolation, a force that is divisive and distancing.

"Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" is a poem of two distinct halves: what begins as a reflection upon untroubled schooldays, in an exclamatory pastoral style of "[a]h happy hills, ah pleasing shade" (line 11), soon spirals into a macabre repulsion of adulthood, a grisly commentary upon that time of "severest woe" (80) in which the sinews shall strain and the blood burn (85-86). This polemic confrontation of delight and pain corresponds closely with Immanuel Kant's perception of the sublime; he refers to it as a "negative pleasure" (520) and associates it with the appearance of nature "in its wildest and most ruleless disarray and devastation" (521). As the poem progresses, we sense the destructive energy of which Kant speaks, threatening to overtake the speaker's calm, steady narrative. Gray's lyrical framework of winding sentences, which contain a prevalence of long, soothing vowels such as "strayed" (13), "gladsome" (17) and "rolling" (29), is at times interrupted when we understand the bliss to be "momentary" (16), the soul "weary" (18), and the children "victims" (52). Indeed, even they are touched by a sense

of impending downfall. Gray writes that “[s]till as they run they look behind, / They hear a voice in every wind, / And snatch a fearful joy” (38-40). This last phrase is especially intriguing, such is the apparent incompatibility between “fear” and “joy.” The distinct and relatively abrupt change in pace and tone around the seventh stanza, however, subtly embodies this conflicting set of emotions, for it renders the dark imagery terrible and intense but also reveals something of a twisted pleasure and excitement on the speaker’s behalf.

In stark contrast to the definitions offered by both Burke and Kant, Terry Eagleton identifies the sublime as “a phallic ‘swelling’ arising from our confrontation of danger” (54). We can certainly perceive something close to an “adrenalin rush” in the poem when, quite suddenly, Gray’s clauses become short and sharp, the complicated syntax replaced by a listing style, connected continuously by “and” and “or”:

Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
Or jealousy with rankling tooth,
...And envy wan, and faded Care,
...And sorrow’s piercing dart. (65-70)

As Nicola Trott observes, “[t]he modern sublime sought to encompass irregular, even chaotic, forces” (79), and this is exactly what Gray captures. It is as if our subject cannot articulate his ideas quickly enough; he appears panicked and breathless but also elated by the unstoppable and inescapable human fate he is describing. When he cries, “[a]h, show them [the children] where in ambush stand / [t]o seize their prey the murderous band! / [a]h, tell them they are men!”

(58-60), we observe that the exclamatory style, previously employed to depict aesthetic aspects of nature, now reveals images of pain and destruction. Yet curiously, a discernible sense of exhilaration remains. This wild sense of euphoria, in giving oneself up to providence, is a phenomenon that Eagleton acknowledges when he asserts that “[a]s a kind of terror, the sublime crushes us into admiring submission; it thus resembles a coercive rather than a consensual power, engaging our respect but not, as with beauty, our love” (54). And for Gray, it is this lack of control and the contradictory sensations it evokes, which characterizes the sublime.

Burke defines the sublime as “the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling” (i, vii), and “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College” certainly embodies this sense of psychological extreme. For Burke, nothing can be terrible, and, as such, sublime, without a definitive air of obscurity, for if a particular danger is anticipated or wholly understood, the alarm it incites becomes correspondingly weaker (ii, iii). As Joseph Addison further recognizes, it is the expansion of our minds, as they strive to accommodate these abstract and alien notions, from which we draw pleasure (424). In the poem, then, we perceive Gray’s subject forced to separate and humanize the various elements of man’s mental downfall, as he seeks to bring them within a familiar, accessible sphere. It is as Trott says: “The sublime escapes the limits of representation.... As a result, the sublime presumes an aesthetic of excess or non-representability” (79). The poetic techniques Gray uses to convey this psychological turmoil are intensely

visual and affecting. He paints a lurid picture of the fallible mind, enclosed by an ever-approaching army of destructive moods. They are “the murderous band” (59), “[t]he vultures of the mind” (62), and they wait “in ambush... / [t]o seize their prey” (58-59). This extended metaphor of a savage chase, a hunt till the death, reduces human weakness to a base, corporeal form. It is as if each human mind alike unconsciously awaits invasion by primary and bestial desires.

Eagleton further suggests that the sublime is “the infinitely unrepresentable which spurs us on to yet finer representations” (54), and we recognise this linguistic progression within the poem. The speaker assigns each emotional force a physical, tangible identity, using adjectives that reflect symptoms of the concept itself: anger is “[d]isdainful” (63), fear “pallid” (69), and despair “[g]rim-visaged” (69). Moreover, they portray human capabilities and act in a cruel, pitiless manner, taking delight in torture and pain: infamy is “grinning” (74), unkindness “mocks the tear” (77), whilst madness is “laughing wild / [a]mid severest woe” (79). Indeed, our subject depicts these attackers, with their independence of action and their twisted egoism, as psychological parasites. We are told, for instance, of “jealousy with rankling tooth, / [t]hat inly gnaws the secret heart” (66-67), evoking the idea of a slow, internal consumption. Such imagery conveys an unnatural possession and manipulation of the soul by external, detached forces and brings us back to the speaker’s overriding sense of powerlessness. This, Kant tells us, is a crucial aspect of the

sublime: It is only by acknowledging “the inadequacy of even the greatest effort of our imagination to estimate an object’s magnitude” (524) that we may truly claim to have reached the emotive pinnacle that is sublime experience.

Despite his frantic and passionate efforts, the speaker remains unable to offer either solution or comfort. Nor does he propose an explanation of why “[t]o each his sufferings: all are men, / [c]ondemned alike to groan” (91-92); he has both observed and striven to articulate the fortunes of man, but in the end it has surpassed even his ability to resolve. To embrace the bliss of ignorance, to terminate all reflection upon the matter, is his counsel to both himself and the reader. Such is the overwhelming nature of Gray’s sublime, in its scale and obscurity, that it demonstrates the constraints of human understanding and endorses our own mortality.

Throughout “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College,” the private and particular nature of the sublime also seems important to Gray. It is a perception shared by Trott, who believes that “the sublime concerns the solitary individual” (72). This is undoubtedly the case for the speaker, whose removal from the action is signified from the start: it is not simply “a prospect” of Eton, but a “distant” one. Moreover, the scene he describes of “distant spires” and “antique towers, / [t]hat crown the watery glade” (1-2) is regal and exclusive; it is a prospect still basking in the prestige of its sovereign founder, Henry VI. It is an “expanse...of grove, of lawn, of mead” (6-7), and its pupils are the privileged and elite. Already, the poem exudes a feeling of segregation and social division, and this is echoed

in the form of poetry itself, that of the ode. Ralph Cohen, in his essay “The Return to the Ode,” remarks that “[a]s learned poets, Gray and Warton, Collins and Akenside continued the tradition which stated that the language of sublimity was not the language of quotidian behaviour and expression” (211). With its demanding syntactic structure and stream of subordinate clauses, “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College” certainly fulfils Cohen’s notion of a refined, elevated speech. We can see in the third stanza, for example, that Gray adopts a classic Latinate system, placing the verb at the end of the line, and uses the archaic second-person pronouns “thou” and “thy”:

Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen
 Full many a sprightly race
 Disporting on thy margent green
 The paths of pleasure trace,
 Who foremost now delight to cleave
 With pliant arm thy glassy wave? (21-26)

In an extract such as this, there is a quasi-euphuistic demand upon the reader to follow the sentence through to the end and successfully connect each of its components. Gray thus narrows the accessibility of his work to the academic and educated and secures the sublime within a restricted, aristocratic sphere. Indeed, it is rather ironic to speak of a collective human fall, the horrifying fate of each and every soul, in a style that would have been inaccessible to many eighteenth-century readers. Yet perhaps Gray’s sublime, in all its aforementioned obscurity and vastness, simply commands this ornate discourse. As Burke highlights, “by

words we have it in our power to make such combinations as we cannot possibly do otherwise” (v, vii). Gray certainly exploits this lexical opportunity, conveying something intangible and arresting. Thus, when Wordsworth, some years later, refers to Gray as a “man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction” (268), we may say that such an approach, rather than curious, is both necessary and fitting.

The significance of the sublime in Gray’s “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College” lies in its intensity and dynamism; our speaker’s reflection captures the polemic, abstract, and isolating nature of sublime experience, particularly the way in which it excites and stimulates literary expression. He also demonstrates its origin, as a reaction and a yielding to forces that surpass human rationality. Furthermore, Gray seeks to establish that poetry itself, as an art form, embodies the sublime. In its rhythm, eloquence, privacy, and spontaneity and, most importantly, in the freedom with which it conveys conflicting ideas, the ode defines Gray’s concept of the sublime.

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**A Language of Grief:
Spectacular, Textual, and Violent Expression in *Titus
Andronicus***

Connor Guy
Whitman College
Walla Walla, Washington

As tragedies characteristically do, Shakespeare's early *Titus Andronicus* depicts its protagonist grappling with a tragic universe—a place where “supposedly immutable principles of divine, human, and natural order [are]... suspected of being no more than figural impositions on an essentially intractable reality” (Sacks 576). Through the course of the play, Titus suffers adversities that outdo by far their classical precedents. One of his greatest challenges, then, is to find a sufficient way of expressing the intense grief and horror that he experiences, for as Marcus says, “Sorrow concealed, like an oven stopp'd / Doth burn the

heart to cinders where it is” (2.4.36-7). While Hamlet—a later revenge tragedy protagonist—gives up on trying to express his grief, saying, “I have that within which passeth show” (1.2.85), *Titus Andronicus* is about Titus’s (and other characters’) exploration of and progression through alternative modes of expression, a process he is forced to continue as he successively finds each one inadequate. Collectively, these modes of expression constitute a language of grief. In Act 3, when Lavinia makes absurd gestures with her stumps, Titus says, “[O]f these I will wrest an alphabet, / And by still practice learn to know thy meaning” (3.2.44-5). Lavinia, out of absolute necessity, illustrates literally the strategy with which Titus and the others attempt to express themselves. When verbal language fails him, Titus too appeals to the eye, using spectacle and other alternative modes of expression to denote his misery.

The first mode of expression Titus finds inadequate is speech, but it is also the one with which he (like everyone else) is most familiar. Therefore, he has some trouble letting it go, even after he recognizes its deficiency. When he directs his verbal lament to the Tribunes, crying, “*Hear me, grave fathers*” (3.1.1 *italics mine*), he is asking specifically that they engage his aural appeal, confident that he will be heard. Yet, as Peter Sacks puts it, “Titus must suffer the impotence of language, as his pleas go unheard” (591). Immediately after this rejection, however, Titus experiments with representing his grief textually, announcing, “[I]n the dust I write / My heart’s deep languor and my soul’s sad tears”

(3.1.12-13). Whether or not the actor playing Titus actually writes in the dust at this point is ultimately a decision for the play's director, but even if he or she decides to forego literalizing this visual and textual appeal, these lines mark a turning point; Titus begins to think about alternative modes of expression. The words that Titus writes here are not as important as the fact that he writes them; he makes a spectacle of transcribing his grief in the dust because spoken language will not work. But, although he does begin to experiment with an alternative way of expressing his grief, Titus remains intent on using spoken language, and, in an absurdly verbal gesture, announces that he will "tell [his] sorrows to the stones" (3.1.36).

Lucius, on the other hand, adopts a strategy of spectacle; throughout this scene, he keeps his weapon drawn, hoping that he might "rescue [his] two brothers from their death" (3.1.46). Charles Frey sees this dichotomy between the expressive strategies that Lucius and Titus adopt as developing out of the initial conflict between Saturninus and Bassianus, the brothers who compete to be emperor. Frey notes that in the play's first lines, "Saturninus asks patricians to 'plead' his title with 'swords' (1.1.4) and not words" while "Bassianus, presented as the relatively democratist candidate, pleads for voice, choice, [and] election" (77). The form of expression by spectacle that both Saturninus and Lucius use impresses Titus, who has become dissatisfied with verbal language, though he has not yet rejected it completely. Lucius then becomes a model for the spectacular¹ form of expression to which Titus later turns.

When Lavinia enters, disfigured by Tamora's sons, Lucius again shows visually how he feels, "*falling on his knees*" (3.1.64 stage direction).

Titus initially rebukes Lucius for this visual expression of grief, suggesting instead a verbal assessment of the situation; he commands, "Speak, Lavinia, what accursed hand / Hath made thee handless" (3.1.66-7). When Marcus horrifically reveals that her tongue—"[t]hat delightful engine of her thoughts"—"[i]s torn from forth that pretty hollow cage" (3.1.82-4), Titus sees not only that speech cannot sufficiently denote his reaction to this new horror but also that speech itself is tangible, and can be forcibly rent from a person. He asks, "[W]hat shall I *do* / Now I behold thy lively body so?" (3.1.104-5 *italics mine*)—not "[W]hat shall I *say*?" It is important to note that when Titus says "do," he is not referring to the violent action that he will later direct outward; rather, he is talking about the act of making a passive spectacle. Soon after, he proposes a ridiculously melodramatic spectacle, in which the Andronici "sit round about some fountain," crying, until their tears fill it. This passive, but spectacular mode of expression is much like Lavinia's gestural language, from which Titus says he will "wrest an alphabet" (3.2.44). Hamlet lays out some of the letters of this alphabet, even as he calls them inadequate; "Tis not," he says, "my inky cloak...Nor windy suspiration of breath...nor the fruitful river of the eye / Nor the dejected havior of the visage, / Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief / That can denote me truly" (*Hamlet* 1.2.77-83). It is with "dumb shows" (*Titus* 3.1.131) such as these,

which appeal to the eye, that Titus now begins to express his misery.

When his two sons' severed heads are returned to him, Titus rejects *mere* spectacle as a means of expressing his grief. Frustrated with the uselessness of his efforts, he declares, "I have not another tear to shed" (3.1.265); then he wonders, "[W]hich way to Revenge's cave?" (3.1.269). The figurative direction to which he turns to find revenge is that of violent action. The distinction in linguistics between mimetic and performative language² perfectly delineates this shift. Before, Titus's language of grief sought mimesis; he tried in vain to use both oral language and a passive form of spectacle to mimic his internal feelings. Now, finding these strategies unhelpful, he turns his language of spectacle violently outward, attempting to affect the reality around him in simulation of its impositions on him. He does this certainly for revenge, but also so that he can see tangible evidence of his lament, something the tragic universe has thus far denied him.

Tamora also struggles with this issue—before Titus, in fact—when he kills her son in Act 1. Her struggle to express her sorrows is eerily similar to Titus's. When Titus brutally cuts short her verbal pleas for clemency, she sees language's ineffectiveness, just as he later does before the tribunes. She, however, does not progress through the numerous alternative modes of expression that Titus tries, instead jumping straight to violent action. Her first impulse is to express her grief to Titus by imposing her situation upon him; she says that she will "make them know what 'tis to

let a queen / Kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain” (1.1.451-2). She does this quite effectively—she makes Titus know suffering far worse than her own and, more importantly, forces him into a situation in which he must confront the inadequacy of language. Ironically, Tamora’s attempts to make him know her situation become a model for Titus when he attempts to make *her* know *his* situation. Particularly with his reinvention of Progne’s revenge, Titus imposes upon Tamora in the same way she imposed upon him. Karen Robertson notes a major difference between Titus’s revenge and Progne’s:

In *Titus*, the cannibal feast
is prepared not for the
rapists, but for their mother,
Tamora, who devours her
own sons. . . . Thus, the
violent intrusion into the
body of Lavinia is punished
by a horrific ingestion, not
by the rapists themselves,
but by their mother. (220)

Titus creatively and very appropriately revenges the rape of his daughter; just as Chiron and Demetrius raped Lavinia on behalf of their mother, he (figuratively) rapes Tamora on behalf of Lavinia with her own sons’ flesh.

Titus’s turning away from verbal language and toward a language of action, spoken in terms of violent acts, also involves a turning from authority, from the Roman government. As Sacks notes, these rejections go

hand-in-hand: “When...the principle and operation of justice [are] found wanting, the revenger...find[s] himself suddenly outside the law, hence outside society, and... outside the public institution of language” (579). When Titus tries to “solicit heaven” with messaged arrows, in order to “move the gods / To send down Justice” (4.3.51-2), he is both subverting the Roman government and rejecting oral language in favor of his written messages and the performative display of firing the arrows. Titus’s simultaneous turnings from oral language and government, however, do not function together exactly as Sacks indicates—there is no violence involved. Titus’s gesture is subversive not because he doubts the Roman government’s ability to mete justice and tries violently to take justice into his own hands; rather, it is subversive because he (accurately) sees Rome as a very corrupt place and appeals to external forces in search of justice and order.

For Lavinia, too, the act of turning from verbal language is connected to a subversion of government or, in her case, that government’s cultural norms. Unlike Philomel, who turns to a characteristically feminine and domestic mode of expression when robbed of her ability to speak—that is, to sewing—Lavinia turns to modes of expression that disturb Roman conceptions of femininity. First, she precisely articulates her horrific rape in the poetic terms of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, invoking the masculine literary tradition. Problematically, she is “deeper read and better skilled” (4.1.33) than young Lucius. Then, as she is unable to convey the names of her rapists with this mode of expression, Titus

suggests she “[g]ive signs” (4.1.60) to indicate who raped her. She and Marcus devise a strategy much more disruptive of cultural norms, however; Lavinia takes up the staff of masculine potency and conveys textually the names of Tamora’s sons. She aggressively transcribes her thoughts with a new, phallic “engine of her thoughts” (3.1.82).

At the end of the play, after almost every character’s grief has been made violently manifest, Rome tries to transition away from the tragic universe and back to a place in which speech can be effective. Lucius is selected as the new emperor, and he seems to mark the beginning of a new, hopeful era for the Roman people. As Sacks puts it, “the image of inherited power, in which Lucius is compared to ‘our ancestor’ Aeneas, is precisely that of *speech*. The symbolic organ of renewal is now the very tongue that we have seen mutilated or so frequently stopped throughout the play” (592). A Roman Lord says to Lucius, “Speak, Rome’s dear friend, as erst our ancestor” (5.3.79). Lucius can then cathartically dictate his family’s woes to the public for the first time. But it seems that language is perhaps too prominently ineffective in the play to be redeemed in this final scene. Even in the midst of giving this restorative speech, Lucius reverts once again to spectacle, saying, “My scars can witness, dumb although they are, / That my report is just and full of truth” (5.3.113-14). Marcus also gives in to the impulse to use spectacle; he proposes that if the Roman people find any fault with him or Lucius, they will “hand in hand all headlong hurl [them]selves / And on the ragged stones beat forth [their] souls” (5.3.131-2). Young Lucius

actually cannot speak from crying; he says, “My tears will choke me if I ope my mouth” (5.3.174). Clearly, spoken language continues to be a difficulty for the remaining Andronici, and although Rome becomes drastically less corrupt as the play concludes, the atrocities they have faced indicate that oral communication is not totally sound. Words cannot completely denote the full spectrum of human feeling, Shakespeare seems to suggest, even as he tries to do just that with his own words.

Notes

¹The word “spectacular” is used here not in its modern sense (i.e., *OED* adj. 1a. “Of the nature of a spectacle or show; striking or imposing as a display”) but to mean “[t]hat which appeals to the eye” (*OED* adj. 1b).

²In his *Poetics*, Aristotle says that “mimesis” seeks passively to describe or to mimic nature. Mimetic language is similarly passive and descriptive. Performative language is verbal action, and, as such, it seeks to affect the surrounding world. People use it whenever their words *do* things—when they swear, curse, invite, vow, and confess, for example.

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**“The liquor is not earthly”:
The Tempest and the Downfall of Native Americans**

Sally Shader
Winthrop University
Rock Hill, South Carolina

In the realm of English literature, few characters have stirred up more international debate in a postcolonial world than a certain deformed, rebellious slave: Shakespeare’s Caliban. As pointed out by Virginia Mason Vaughan, Caliban’s relatively small yet vital role in Shakespeare’s final play *The Tempest* has led to a myriad of responses portraying him as everything from a genetic missing link to a victim of colonialism (390). Yet, strangely, in all those pages penned in regard to this one conflicted creature, a certain pressing issue is not given serious attention: Caliban’s exposure to alcohol in light of his

similarity to Native Americans. When drunken buffoons Stephano and Trinculo give Caliban his first taste of liquor in *The Tempest*, it is symbolic of the first time a European colonist gives alcohol to a Native American in the New World. Linking Caliban to Native Americans is nothing new, but the role of alcohol in this connection has yet to be sufficiently explored. While Caliban's drunken actions are somewhat exaggerated portrayals of what really happened in the Americas, this only highlights the negative role that alcohol has played in the Native American community. The interpretation of Caliban as a Native American thus reflects issues that these oppressed peoples, past and present, have experienced with alcohol.

The role of Caliban has taken on new life in the postcolonial world. As pointed out by noted postcolonial authority Edward Said, “[e]very subjugated community in Europe, Australia, Africa, Asia, and the Americas has played the sorely tried and oppressed Caliban to some outside master like Prospero” (214). Therefore, in addition to the Native American portrayal of Caliban, there are several other possibilities, such as Imtiaz Habib's depiction of Caliban as a “colonized black male” (208). This recalls the multiple black Caribbean interpretations of the play, including Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête* and the work of George Lamming. Furthermore, Ania Loomba asserts that *The Tempest* “speaks to Mediterranean, North African, and Irish, as well as Atlantic contexts” (*Shakespeare* 165). These are valid arguments, but none of these critics addresses Caliban's exposure and reaction to alcohol, a topic that undeniably

links him with Native Americans more so than with other ethnic groups.

A wealth of scholarship already exists on the subject of Caliban as a representative of oppressed Native Americans, but why critics have chosen to underplay his encounter with alcohol is indeed perplexing. Allen Carey-Webb's approach to teaching *The Tempest* focuses a great deal on Caliban's conflicting roles, but he never once mentions his drunkenness, perhaps due to a reluctance to discuss the topic of alcohol in the classroom. Jeffrey Hantman's detailed accounts of the indigenous people of Virginia in relation to Caliban make no mention of spirits. Alcohol is touched on only in reference to the early stagings of Caliban as a "drunken beast" (71). Similarly, Virginia Mason Vaughan's article on the evolution of the character's onstage persona solely references a drunken Caliban in older productions that do not even take a colonial stance (392, 397-98). Alden T. Vaughan also surveys the extent of criticism relating Caliban to a Native American, yet he makes only one remark that the character is "the first drunken Indian in Western literature" (148). None of these critics delves deeply into Caliban's exposure and reaction to alcohol.

Tales of introducing alcohol to Native Americans were not uncommon in the travel literature of Shakespeare's day. New World natives filled the role of what Leslie Fiedler refers to as "the last stranger in Shakespeare," as they were the final Others to Europeans at the time (208).

Fiedler's overall assessment of Caliban as a Native American is complex and does actually address his introduction to alcohol, yet it still neglects to place the issue in its larger context. Fiedler cites Caliban's lines in the play, most of which are delivered after he has imbibed from Stephano's jug of wine, such as the drama's most eloquent speech about the "isle ... full of noises" (3.2.137-45). Fiedler remarks that "[e]ven drunk, Caliban remains a poet and visionary," and he praises his intoxicated song about his new master, which concludes with the lines "Freedom, heyday! Heyday, freedom!" (2.2.184-85), as "Whitmanian" and "the first American poem" (236). Interestingly, Fiedler does not make a connection between the drunken Caliban and his Native American counterparts—a surprising omission. Similarly, in an article dedicated to the use of language in the play, Stanton Garner concedes that Caliban's drunkenness "serves only to loosen his tongue and make him bolder in suggestion," yet he does not associate Caliban with intoxicated Native Americans. He ends his commentary on the drunken scenes by merely noting their "comic atmosphere" (182). Obviously the alcohol does not make Caliban any less eloquent, as it does the drunken fools Stephano and Trinculo. At the same time, the fact remains that under the spell of liquor, Caliban can undoubtedly tell no lies, and he is more vulnerable than ever.

It is unknown whether Shakespeare had ever heard of any events involving drunken Native Americans, but in light of their status as the newest Others in the European

world, it is only natural to assume that Caliban's intoxication could very well be referencing what was then occurring across the Atlantic. Probably the first recorded occasion when a European gave strong liquor to an American would be the interaction in the late 1570s between Sir Francis Drake's crew and Patagonian natives in South America; this encounter is referenced in an essay by Charles Frey on *The Tempest*, using the details recorded in the journal of Drake's chaplain, Francis Fletcher (35). In this incident, a Patagonian "[g]iant" copies Europeans in the act of drinking wine, yet his unfamiliarity with the substance makes him quickly intoxicated and induces him to take "an instant liking" to the substance (Frey 36). This occurrence, seemingly innocent, laid the earliest groundwork for what later became a serious problem for Native Americans. As pointed out in the *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, the indigenous people of eastern North America, like Caliban, had never encountered alcohol before Europeans came into the picture. Furthermore, like Caliban, these natives drank to the point of intoxication. In fact, observers marked that after having discovered the sensation of drunkenness, natives deliberately drank to complete insobriety every time on purpose (Mancall 14). In this sense, the alcohol-induced scenes with Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban are incredibly evocative of the very beginnings of alcohol exchange between Europeans and Native Americans.

Reading further into Caliban's rendezvous with Stephano's bottle, one discovers more parallels emerging that eerily replicate the scene in North America. Caliban's

instant drunkenness from only a few sips of Stephano's wine and subsequent irrational behavior reinforces the age-old "firewater myth," which claims that Native Americans are "constitutionally prone to develop an inordinate craving for liquor and to lose control over their behavior when they drink" (Leland 1). The only difference here is that Caliban does not actively choose to drink but rather is coerced into it. And although his intoxication does not come about due to his own volition, many of the reasons behind his enjoyment of insobriety reflect the motives behind the heavy drinking of Native Americans. Mia Conrad notes that first-hand accounts from missionaries relate how the average native believed that drunkenness helped him or her to acquire bravery and feel like a "person of importance" (par. 6). Very much like Caliban, natives were bombarded with feelings of fear and inadequacy due to infringement on their world by white colonists. Using alcohol to "cope with the horrors of the world," a phrase that could easily apply to Caliban's sad, enslaved existence, is actually characteristic of social change in Western society (*Deadly Medicine* 7-8). Although the natives of the Americas were not (successfully) enslaved, as is Caliban, feelings of utter desperation and insecurity were undoubtedly mutual.

Liquor's effect raises further similarities between Caliban and Native Americans in that both relate the substance to supernatural or religious beliefs. After only one swig of wine, Caliban immediately assumes Stephano is supernatural due to his "celestial liquor" (2.2.117). In the same scene, Stephano refers to his bottle as "the book" (the

Bible), in effect saying that drinking is his religion (2.2.129). Drawing connections between alcohol and the divine or spiritual is nothing new when discussing Native Americans, in light of liquor's ability to alter perception. As Peter C. Mancall notes, many tribes believed that alcohol has magical powers and that by drinking it they would come into closer contact with the spiritual world.

At the same time, the altered state brought on by drunkenness also made Native Americans feel emboldened, often to the point of violence (*Deadly Medicine* 75). Although he did not actually do anything destructive, Caliban plotted to have Stephano and Trinculo murder Prospero while he was drunk, revealing brutal tendencies unleashed through drinking. There exist many firsthand accounts of violence by drunken natives, even some in which the inebriated natives would have "the intention of killing those whom they bear ill will, yet all is then forgiven" (Conrad par. 6). This is exactly what happens in Caliban's case, since Prospero forgives him at the end despite his knowledge of Caliban's murderous plans. Thus, Prospero is carrying out the distinctly American practice of not holding drunken people guilty for their deviant behavior.

The impact of the white man on the excessive drinking of Native Americans and Caliban is indisputable. Natives adopted the aforementioned idea that inebriated people were not held responsible for their actions because they saw unruly white colonists do this, especially in the untamed West. Natives also pointed to the white man for their adoption of binge drinking (Levy 17). Caliban's

circumstances are almost identical to those of Native Americans in this way. The ever-tipsy Stephano and Trinculo, the only Europeans who ever show him kindness beyond the earlier attempts of Miranda and Prospero to “civilize” him, urge Caliban to drink as much as possible. This is apparent when Stephano, already fancying himself ruler of the isle, repeatedly demands, “Servant monster, drink to me” (3.2.3). The reasons behind the white drunkards’ actions could be many: curiosity, humor, simple drunkenness, or quite possibly ridicule. The two could not be classified as anything other than alcoholics, or at least incredibly avid drinkers, as seen in their constant obsession with inebriation. Following the phases of alcohol addiction as outlined by E.M. Jellinek, alcoholics often drink with persons “far below [their] social level” in order to feel superior over their lowly drinking partners (qtd. in Leland 97). As rather low-class Europeans themselves, Stephano and Trinculo find Caliban to be the perfect accomplice since he is probably the only character on the island considered more base than they.

As time progressed in the Americas beyond Shakespeare’s era, the fascination with alcohol that Caliban overcomes by the end of the play developed into a very serious problem for the Native American community. Of course, as Peter C. Mancall notes, Europeans did not continue indefinitely to give away liquor to natives, so by the last half of the seventeenth century an all-out trade in alcohol had begun in North America. Europeans now sold rum to natives for a very good profit, often watering down

the spirits. Because of this practice, alcoholism became a pervasive problem in Native American societies to the extent that Mancall can safely say, “No other European-produced commodity created the difficulties among Indians that alcohol, particularly rum and brandy, caused throughout the East” (“Alcoholism and Indians” 14). In contrast, while Caliban initially experiences the downfalls of excessive drinking, he later sobers up and realizes the error of his ways. He scolds himself for believing that Stephano was a god and tells Prospero that he will now “seek for grace” (5.1.299). In doing so, Caliban actually avoids the ruination caused by alcohol that has sadly plagued Native Americans in real life up to this day—surveys by the Indian Health Service indicate that Native Americans are still four times more likely to suffer from alcoholism than those of other races (“Health” 816).

Thus, while Caliban and Native Americans share many similarities while drunk, by the end of the play, the sober, enlightened Caliban successfully avoids the alcoholism that still haunts the Native American community. Although the reader has no way of knowing if Caliban regrets his drunken tomfoolery to the extent that he will never drink again, it is relatively safe to say that he has realized the downfalls of drinking and will not seek to repeat his mistakes. Still, why does Caliban not share the same fate as those experiencing forceful colonization overseas? One explanation could simply be that, as Allen Carey-Webb notes, “Caliban does not speak with an ‘authentic’ Native American voice” but rather “springs from a European

imagination at the very moment that European powers were invading the Americas” (31). Therefore, being a European fabrication himself, Caliban escapes the fate of real-life Native Americans because he does not share their disconnection from European society. Furthermore, as indicated by Imtiaz Habib, wholly linking Caliban and his island to a real place like North America is difficult because the “cultural constructions of the English experience of such locales are not interested in differentiating between their cultural and topographic specificities or are unable to do so” (223-24). Shakespeare could write only about what he knew, and while it seems apparent that he was somewhat aware that Europeans were introducing alcohol to Native Americans, it is impossible that he could have known the intimate details of the situation overseas, and there is no way he could have foreseen the problems to come that natives would experience with alcohol addiction.

Looking back on what sources were actually available to Shakespeare when he was writing *The Tempest*, it becomes clear why Caliban is portrayed so horrendously. Travel literature of the 16th century repeatedly portrays Native Americans as grotesque. Girolamo Benzoni’s 1541 account of the New World, for example, describes indigenous people as “monstrous,” and he remarks that “[a]ll their delight is drunkenness”—an early judgment that seems not to take into account the fact that natives never encountered alcohol before European colonists came along (qtd. in Loomba and Burton 93). George Abbot’s *A briefe description of the whole worlde* (1599) also depicts natives

of the New World as sinful, freakish beings, committing “grievous sins” such as “adoration of devils, sodomy, incest, and all kind of adultery... which proceeded all from the fountain of ignorance wherewith Satan had blinded their eyes” (qtd. in Loomba and Burton 149). Such accounts were readily available to Shakespeare during his lifetime. Only after Shakespeare’s death and into the 17th century did more understanding accounts of Native Americans emerge; commentators like William Wood and Roger Williams then argued that natives were healthy, normal human beings sharing the same lineage as Europeans (Brotton 230-32).

Also likely to have influenced Shakespeare was the common comparison between the Irish and Native Americans. Interestingly, Ania Loomba notes that “English attitudes in America were shaped by their experiences in Ireland,” meaning that descriptions of the Irish were remarkably similar to that of Native Americans: “wild, thieving, lawless, blood-drinking, savage, barbarous, naked” (41). Clearly, Caliban was relegated to the unsavory position of Other that both Native Americans and the Irish securely occupied in the 16th century.

The Tempest is essentially a pre-colonial text now being read and analyzed in a post-colonial world. While conditions were changing in the Americas during Shakespeare’s lifetime, these events no doubt seemed as far off and surreal as those encounters detailed in fantastical travel literature. For this reason, as Trevor R. Griffiths points out, even a respected newspaper like the *Financial Times* denounced an anti-imperialist production of *The*

Tempest, saying that “colonialism, the dominion of one race (as opposed to one nation) over another, is something that Shakespeare had never heard of” (qtd. in Loomba *Gender* 144). While I cannot wholly agree with this perspective, I do believe the most viable reason for Caliban’s avoidance of Native American alcohol addiction is the fact that while Shakespeare may have had an inkling of future problems for natives in the New World, there is no way he could have foreseen the vast expansion of colonization and the amount of woe it would cause the usurped natives across the globe. In addition, today’s readers are almost as distanced from the subject as Shakespeare himself was, since it occurred so long ago and is not a popular issue to discuss in American colonial history. The only indication that Shakespeare perhaps felt guilt for what was occurring in the Americas comes from Prospero toward the end, when he proclaims of the drunken, murderous Caliban: “This thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine” (5.1.278-79). As suggested by Fiedler, it is “as if, through Prospero, all Europe were accepting responsibility for what was to remain forever malign in the America just then being created by conquest and enslavement” (249). This remains the only possible example of foresight in *The Tempest* concerning the woes of colonizing the New World, since ultimately Shakespeare could not fully realize or tackle the plight of a real-life Other, the Native American, nor could he ultimately do anything about his downfall.

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**The Natives and Their Returns in Thomas Hardy's
*The Return of the Native***

Jason Burger
*Western Connecticut State University
Danbury, Connecticut*

Although Thomas Hardy's 1878 novel, *The Return of the Native*, appears to present a straightforward account of Clym Yeobright, the native, returning to the land of his home, Egdon Heath, such a simple rendering could prove an impediment to a complete understanding of the text. Many critics seem to take for granted Clym's position as the title character despite exhaustive critical responses that often, inadvertently, suggest otherwise. Truly, other natives of the heath leave, both literally and figuratively, only to return to their natural homes and states of being. Diggory

Venn, for example, makes many trips on and off the heath and in and out of the story; also, each of his returns either coincides with or instigates some sort of crisis which serves to propel the plot, thereby making a strong case for Venn as the title character. Yet, it is ultimately Eustacia Vye, as the embodiment of the turbulent, passionate, and pagan aspects of the heath, who leaves her natural wanderings and ways of life and enters into a marriage with the hope of greater understanding and further travel, only to make a violent return to the heath culminating in her death.

Critics generally take one of two positions towards the native of this novel: they make passing reference to Clym as the native or stay entirely silent on the matter. Both approaches seem to be implicit acknowledgements of Clym's nativity and prominence in the plot, and both signify a resulting disregard for the importance of this topic. On the one hand, Leonard Deen simply states that "Clym, the native returned, as furze-cutter" (209). Gillian Beer also calls Clym "the returning native" (523); Geoffrey Harvey notes that "Clym Yeobright . . . is brought back to his native heath" (66) while Perry Meisel goes so far as to say that "the real plot . . . does not really begin until Clym appears in the second book" (75-6). The other sources quoted in this essay do not take a position on the identity of the native.

At first glance, this unexamined "fact" makes good sense. Clym is certainly a native of the heath in a strict literal sense. He was born there, and his arrival in the novel is the most prominent homecoming of a native to the heath. However, it is important to note that the language used to

describe Clym's appearance in the novel, used by Hardy as the title of the second book and echoed by Meisel, is not "return" but "arrival." The mere fact that Hardy explicitly calls Clym's appearance "The Arrival" instead of "The Return" would seem to be proof enough that Clym is not the title character nor is his homecoming truly a return. A return suggests a prerequisite "leaving," also implying that the subject has been there before while an arrival suggests a sort of nascence. Although it is noted in the text that Clym "was coming home a' Christmas" (Hardy 20) and had grown up on the heath, he has not been in the story except as an off-scene character. For Clym to return to the book, he must have already been in the story. While Clym's homecoming may constitute a return in the fictional and extra-textual world of the characters, it is certainly not a return to the text itself. Therefore, the accepted critical position proves to be somewhat hasty. Meisel's argument that the story does not even begin until Clym's arrival is structurally patriarchal at best and essentially misogynistic at worst since the entire first book of *The Return of the Native* is called "The Three Women." To discount entirely this first book as prologue seems narrow-minded and even naive. Furthermore, the first book is full of interesting characters, including other true natives that go on to make literal exits from and returns to the heath. It is certainly conceivable that one of these characters would be introduced to provide the early presence necessary for setting up a later leaving and return.

Diggory Venn is the first major character to make an appearance in the novel, and it comes after only twelve

pages. In fact, he is the second character introduced in the book—not counting the heath, which many critics note “as a central character in the novel” (Morgan 475). The first character, Captain Vye, is merely an instrument to reveal Venn’s purpose and his intriguing cargo. Like Clym, Venn is a literal native to the heath. He also admits early on that he had known Thomasin “as a lad before [he] went away in this trade” (Hardy 36). Venn possesses the same claims to nativity that Clym holds. By this account, Venn’s early appearance in the novel also constitutes a return of sorts—at least, the same sort of limited, superficial return that usually serves as justification for labeling Clym as a returning native. Venn has, prior to the beginning of the text, left the heath, left his normal life, and returned to this society as a reddleman. His “return” not only precedes Clym’s return but also opens the novel.

Venn leaves and returns to the text many other times throughout the narrative. After disappearing on business, Venn returns at the end of Chapter Seven in Book Two to take part in one of the most dramatic and cinematic scenes of the novel: the dice game with Wildeve. Not only is this scene artistically memorable but it is also incredibly significant to the development of the plot. Indeed, much of what follows in the novel can be seen to result directly from the outcome of this game and Venn’s subsequent mistake in unwittingly redistributing Mrs. Yeobright’s money. Certainly this return of Venn’s is much more dramatic and memorable than Clym’s somewhat droll arrival in the story and can be read as one of the major complications in the plot.

Yet this is not Venn's only return, nor is it of the most consequence. A more significant return for Venn might be his final return: his *reversion* to his old self in Book Six, in which he is "no longer a reddleman, but exhibit[s] the strangely altered hues of an ordinary Christian countenance" (Hardy 316). This metamorphosis is a literal return to the heath that coincides with a return to his former countenance and character, pre-reddleman. Clym cannot compete with such a total return. Clym never really returns to the heath because he has changed too much to be a part of this society ever again. Clym comes back unable to relate to the rustics. His desire to open a school and "raise the class at the expense of individuals" (Hardy 147) is grossly condescending and demonstrates an affected and gentrified character. On the other hand, Venn returns and seamlessly integrates into the society by marrying Thomasin.

If Venn is Hardy's title character and this final transformation/return is the climax or even denouement, then the book leads the reader to a very different conclusion than otherwise suggested. The novel seems to portray a taming of the pagan Otherness of the heath represented in the scarlet reddleman. Venn becomes a good Christian and marries Thomasin to provide what J.O. Bailey concisely terms a "happy ending" (1153). But such a conclusion seems to be far too religiously optimistic for Hardy. Indeed, Hardy would seem to suggest through such an ending that Christianity is the ideal way of life through which savage natives could be brought around to "become human being[s] again" (317). Knowing Hardy's complex and conflicted attitude towards

religion, such a reading of this ending is problematic. Furthermore, there is a limited Christian presence in the novel other than the rustics' seemingly ritualistic church attendance, which is quite dull in comparison to the vivid, pagan bonfires (17) and passionate maypole celebrations (318). Christian primacy is not supported in the text without perhaps an assumed purity of motives and undue significance attributed to Venn.

Another problem with this reading is that if Venn is the native, then the book should, perhaps, have been called *The Returns of the Native*. Indeed, each of Venn's returns coincides with important plot developments and it is difficult, if not impossible, to judge which is the most important return. Bailey provides a tantalizing solution to this quandary with the suggestion that "Diggory, though native to Egdon, was also a visitant" (1151). Diggory Venn does not so much return to the heath as visit it on a few, very important occasions. Ultimately, this essay is not necessarily suggesting that Venn is the native of the title but merely that the same argument used to prove Clym to be the native can be used—and, when followed to its logical conclusion, used more effectively—to prove that Venn is the title character. Therefore, previous readings of the novel asserting Clym's titular significance fail to reason this point adequately. A new understanding of the characters in this book is in order.

Up to this point of the essay, the focus has been primarily on the "return" aspect of the title. Since both Clym and Venn were born on the heath, they are natives, so there has been no need to address the requirement of nativity. Yet

there is another aspect of nativity that has been neglected and must now be addressed: it is that of affinity with the land and society. Such affinity is most clearly exemplified by one character who the critic Robert Evans calls “Hardy’s most memorable heroine” (251). Eustacia Vye was not biologically born on the heath but remains a native for other reasons which will be expatiated upon below. But first it will be interesting to point out that early editions of the text presented Eustacia (as Avice) as a literal native of the heath. Her father was Jonathon Vye and her mother was considered to be a witch (Gatrell 355-56). It is only in the later drafts that Avice is changed to Eustacia and is no longer a literal native of the heath. The reasons for this change and ramifications have provided fodder for much critical scrutiny and will not be fully addressed here. Perhaps Hardy did not consider a geographical requirement to nativity necessary for Eustacia’s character. For the purpose of this essay, it will suffice to note that Eustacia was considered, at least at one point, to be truly a native and Hardy most likely relocated her birthplace to Budmouth to emphasize her Otherness from the culture of the heath-inhabitants, not necessarily the heath itself.

Even though she appears at variance with the other inhabitants of the heath, Eustacia is more a part of that society than she would like to admit. Though some of the rustics say that Eustacia is a witch (most notably, Susan Nunsuch) and therefore some sort of outsider or Other, it is reasonable to argue that the witch is as much part of this society as the pastor or the furze-cutter. Even Susan

Nunsuch, who so vehemently accuses Eustacia of witchcraft, practices her own forms of voodoo and black magic towards the end of the novel. In this instance, a native by all reckonings shares the same traits with Eustacia that are often used to highlight Eustacia's Otherness. Eustacia the "witch" is very much a part of the heath's pagan and superstitious society.

Another example of Eustacia's affinity with the rustic society is the incident of the mummer show. Regarding the show, the narrator debates whether it is merely a traditional pastime or a powerful revival (107). Yet, either way, it is a yearly occurrence in which all the natives of the county take part. Eustacia typically shuns such performances, but when the opportunity arrives to see Clym through the show, she reveals that she "had occasionally heard the part recited before" (109) and could actually deliver the part better than the annual participants. Eustacia claims to be separate from this society but possesses the knowledge and ability to partake in their traditions, their superstitions, and their culture. Even against her own will, she shares some of the culture of the rustics who were born there, making her at least a small part of the society.

Ultimately, regardless of any tenuous connection with its inhabitants, it is the heath itself with which Eustacia most closely identifies. The heath, as Hardy makes clear, is a powerful, eternal, pagan, living, and breathing entity. It is often personified, as when the heath is said to "slowly awake and listen" (9). Also, "Haggard Egdon," is said to have "appealed to a subtler and scarcer instinct, to a more recently

learnt emotion, than that which responds to the sort of beauty called charming and fair” (9). This statement reveals two very interesting aspects. For one, the word “appealed” suggests that the true spirits of the heath are not necessarily of the heath but drawn to it. There is an essence of the heath that attracts a certain type of character and necessarily envelops these individuals as true spirits of the land. The second part of this quotation explains the nature of the true native: a subtle character who does not respond to traditional concepts of beauty.

Eustacia, more than any other character, illustrates this instinctive response to nontraditional beauty. D.H. Lawrence claims that the foremost spirit of the heath is Eustacia: “the natives have little or nothing in common with the place” (421). In this sense, even though she was not actually born in Egdon, Eustacia embodies its dark turbulence more than anyone else in the novel. Hardy himself states that Eustacia’s “articulation was but as another phase of the same discourse as [the bluffs and bushes of the heath]” (50-1). Hardy also contrasts Eustacia to true foreigners when he describes her traversing at night the paths that “a mere visitor would have passed unnoticed even by day” (52). She is no visitor to the land; she knows it as well as, if not better than, those people who were actually born within the boundaries of Egdon. Gillian Beer goes so far as to say that “the most intimate expression of physical familiarity between the heath and its denizens is the natives’ power of crossing and recrossing it in darkness” (519). Indeed, Hardy takes pains to identify Eustacia with the

heath, even extolling her as the “absolute queen here” (54). To be a native is more than a few words on a birth certificate; it is also affinity with the land. With a terrain as alive and powerful as Egdon Heath, which comes alive when “other things sank brooding” (9), the true native of the heath is one who awakens to the night in kinship with the earth. When she first appears in the novel, Eustacia rises from a hill as a “perfect, delicate, and necessary finish . . . so much like an organic part of the entire motionless structure” (15). Eustacia seems to be born from the heath in this, her first appearance in the novel. And even more than a symbolic birth in this cinematic moment is the distinct possibility that hers is an eternally ancient and everlasting existence. She is as natural to the heath as the furze that lines its ridges, the wild horses that roam its pockets, or the darkness that seems to issue from its bosom.

Yet the heath is turbulent and “harassed by the irrepressible New” (Hardy 11). Eustacia shares this inner turmoil, and as Leonard Deen points out, “the heath mirrors the minds of its inhabitants, and for Eustacia it is hell” (210). Eustacia wants to escape the heath, indeed, to escape herself. For her, Clym becomes the way out. Eustacia’s naturally passionate desire precipitates her belief that Clym will make her happy despite her solitary nature. She falls in love with the idea of him before she even sees his face. All that he signifies—Paris, culture, high society—fulfills Eustacia’s desire to get even further away from the heath and her painfully tempestuous nature. The marriage between Clym and Eustacia is the “leaving” that precipitates Eustacia’s

“return” to the heath. Eustacia is “queen of the solitude” (Hardy 16); and therefore marriage, with its cohabitation and promise of some place in society, is antithetical to Eustacia’s nature. She is miserable through most of her time at Alderworth because she is limited by the home, civilization, and social constructs. She is unable to fulfill her evanescent yet passionate dreams and therefore becomes quite oppressed. Hardy’s language to describe Alderworth reflects this isolation: “The heath and changes of weather were quite blotted out . . . [Eustacia and Clym] were enclosed . . . hid from their surroundings . . . the absolute solitude in which they lived . . . had the disadvantage of consuming their mutual affections” (201). Alderworth appears to be cut off from the heath and Eustacia’s natural environment. Here she is in limbo between her passionate and unrealistic dreams of Paris and the primitive, indigenous pull of Egdon Heath, just beyond the fence of Alderworth’s domestic purgatory.

It is no surprise that Eustacia feels the pull to escape Alderworth as well as her oppressive marriage and make her inevitable return. Mrs. Yeobright’s death with its associated guilt and Wildeve’s inheritance with its contingent possibilities of escape are mere catalysts to Eustacia’s inherent desire to return to the heath from which she has come. First, she returns to her home at Mistover but still feels conflicted. Wildeve’s offer to remove her entirely, once and for good, seems like a viable option, but Eustacia remains at variance with herself. Her soliloquy in the storm shows her conflict: “‘Can I go, can I go?’ she moaned. ‘He’s not *great* enough for me to give myself to—he does not

suffice for my desire! . . . O, the cruelty of putting me into this ill-conceived world!” (294). Eustacia exhibits what could almost be termed psychomachy, a battle for where her soul will *reside*. Can she bear to separate herself from the heath and go to Paris where, because of her inadequate companion, she might not be the queen that she is on the heath? Or does she remain a part of Egdon, succumbing to the agitated passion that is such a part of her nature? Ultimately, whether she makes a conscious decision to dive into the violent, Charybdian Shadwater Weir or she accidentally falls in, Eustacia’s plunge consummates her return to the heath in a physical way. Eustacia becomes one with Egdon Heath in her final moments. Gillian Beer argues that “the return of the native figures a return to nativity—to the place of birth, and, further, to the mother who gave birth in that place” (522). Although Beer goes on to say that re-entering the womb is impossible, certainly Eustacia’s fall into the Weir can be seen as a symbolic return to the womb of Egdon Heath, her true mother. Eustacia’s biological mother is mentioned only in passing, merely as the wife of Eustacia’s father or in the passing reference to “her mother’s death” (63); both remarks seem to be significant more for what they do not say than for what is said. Eustacia was born at Budmouth but is a child of Egdon Heath, her surrogate mother. Eustacia’s death is the return of the native to her home, her symbolic place of nativity, the womb of Shadwater Weir.

Gillian Beer focuses primarily on questions of migration and whether or not a native, once he or she has

left, can ever truly return to his or her homeland without a drastically changed perspective and therefore a loss of his or her claim to nativity. Both Clym and Diggory Venn seem to prove Beer's argument that "in Hardy's imagination ...return is not possible for the native without the idea of retrogression" (524). Clym reverts to a furze-cutter, Venn reverts to a pre-reddleman, Christian state. But Beer, as is characteristic of most of the critics, ignores Eustacia's return. Eustacia's return is not retrogression but an inability to reconcile conflicting aspects of her nature—the same aspects that play out in the dramatic turmoil of the heath. Eustacia is the embodiment of the heath's struggle, and her death signifies an escape from the irreconcilable realm of human emotion into the eternal, natural afterworld of the heath, the earth—the land of her nativity.

Eustacia's "return," therefore, seems to be a much more powerful return than Clym's. If Clym is the titular native that comes back—and whose somewhat dry return is also his first appearance in the novel after 100 pages—then the reader must see his return to be merely a necessary precursor to the real action of the book as opposed to the action itself. If Eustacia is the native, then her return corresponds to the powerful climax of the novel. Whether she constitutes a tragic heroine or even a heroine at all is beyond the scope of this essay. Nevertheless, she is certainly the focus of the novel and arguably its most captivating character.

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**Recontextualizing Guy Endore's *Babouk* in the
Shadow of *Orientalism***

Nathan Sacks
Cornell College
Mount Vernon, Iowa

One can almost imagine a writer as schooled in tragedy as Guy Endore appreciating the irony that his 1934 anti-capitalist novel *Babouk* lies today on the outer fringes of literary and political discourse, despite the fact that it is arguably impossible to imagine a book that is more deliberately confrontational and nakedly ideological. In different ways, books as politically disparate as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* or *Mein Kampf*, or in some quarters *The Communist Manifesto*, have ambitions just as politicized, saddled with the reductive label “propaganda”

and pushed into the literary margins. Yet *Babouk* has been forgotten both as a manifesto and as a novel, whereas those other works exist in our discourse as at least curiosities that help inform our shared sense of world history. Even a book like Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, which in its way is as vitriolic as *Babouk*, is renowned today as a famous and influential work that had a marked effect on American public policy. Why does no one pay attention to *Babouk*?

There remains in us a belief that books like Endore's do us a disfavor by stating outright what the message is. Whereas a novel like *Robinson Crusoe* flourishes as a canonical text in part because it seems on the surface like nothing more than a story of an adventurer on an island, *Babouk* arguably takes to task what many people don't consider when they read *Crusoe*—namely, that the latter propagates the notion that European “civil” society was superior and that the colonialist mentality was the necessary and right one.

Though I believe both *Babouk* and *Crusoe* can be qualified to some degree as “propaganda,” *Crusoe*'s depictions of infinitely wise and benevolent colonial Europeans could be used in part to serve the notion that today's existing racial inequalities are somehow either nonexistent or just, which is a belief that can serve only to strengthen the hegemony. *Babouk* is more nakedly propagandistic, and its obvious far-left message is likely to disturb those who worry that our shared discourse is already disproportionately liberal. Since *Babouk*'s place in the canon is an unsure proposition at best, perhaps we shouldn't even bother proposing arguments for its canonization and instead argue for *Babouk*'s value as a

means of framing a new form of discourse, a new grouping of texts that share the characteristic of being explicitly “anti-canonical.”

Scholarship on this bizarre and experimental novel has remained minimal since its initial publication in 1934; in 1991, it was republished by the leftist magazine *The Monthly Review* as part of their “Voices of Resistance” series. Since then, it has attracted exactly one scholarly article from Alan Wald, who hoped to rescue *Babouk* from obscurity by offering it as a useful riposte to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and the “ideological precepts of the master class and culture of Shakespeare’s time” (Wald 24). Like virtually all admirers of *Babouk*, Wald finds it difficult to separate an author’s personal claims from his or her political outlook. To him, “[e]ven a complex work of art such as the *Tempest* fails to confront head-on the dominating cultures giving voice to the dominated” (24). *Babouk*’s strengths as a text seem to lie in the fact that “Endore’s literary project is founded on opposite premises” (22). The idea of opposites is important to consider, given that the challenge remains of what to do with problematic texts like *The Tempest* that are so part of our DNA that the very act of trying to “remove” them from the canon seems like denying our cultural heritage. Wald’s piece is in itself problematic because he never states why he would contrast these two works: does he aim to see *The Tempest* fully supplanted by *Babouk* in our discourse, or does he want the two to coexist? His silence on this subject is understandable, as he admits that the book is “a work the literary value of which remains largely to be constructed

by readers and scholars of the present day” (35). Part of the aim of this paper is to construct a means by which we can consider *Babouk* as literature, using a set of rules and considerations that can be derived entirely apart from how we normally consider works to be canonized.

***Orientalism* as the Basis for the Alternative Canon**

In order to level the discourse and put *Babouk* on an even playing field with novels that are reactionary but far more popular and aesthetically successful, we must reject the idea that literature is “art” and can’t be reduced to anything further. If *Babouk* is to be reappraised, we must recognize canonical claims of aesthetics to be fundamentally limited and misleading. Since many of *Babouk*’s more problematic aspects seem to raise theoretical questions about the limits of representation and construction of knowledge, Edward Said’s theories of discourse, informed by the ideas of Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault, act as a useful cultural leveler. A Palestinian-born Christian thinker, philosopher, and critic, Said, in his book *Orientalism*, proposed that the entire concept of “the Orient,” or Eastern culture, is Western in origin and therefore a simulacrum that lacks true dimensions in the same way that the lifelike map in Jorge-Luis Borges’ “On Exactitude in Science” is only a representation, even as it fools those who perceive it as being legitimate. Some claim that Said is doing ineradicable damage to the world of literary analysis by claiming that literature and politics don’t exist independently, an idea he further elaborates upon in his book *Culture and Imperialism*. However, using Said’s

theory of Orientalism to interrogate Endore's text gives us an opportunity to consider *Babouk's* merits without having to deny or refute the obvious political bias. If Said were to have read *Babouk*, and it seems unlikely that he had, how could he have viewed it as anything more than an addition to the larger interdisciplinary discourse?

One of the main points that Said makes during the course of *Orientalism* that many of his West-defending critics tend to forget is that he is not roundly condemning any obviously colonial-leaning texts, such as E.S. Shaffer's "*Kubla Khan*" and *the Fall of Jerusalem* or Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. In his own words, he finds the ideas presented, particularly in how they reflect or cast aspersions on the social or aesthetic norms of their period, to be "*productive, not unilaterally inhibiting*" (80-81). Buried in this supposed contradiction in terms (that the Western conception of the East exists as an absolute and is detrimental to human rights, but artistic representations of this mentality can hold merit) are questions that have plagued critics for hundreds of years prior to *Orientalism*: how do I hide or subvert my own political biases in critical form and how can I legitimately evaluate texts that may come from a time or geographic location whose practices seem either wholly alien or offensive to modern sensibilities? Said proposes to recognize this apparent critical imbalance within the writing itself. Since politics are unavoidable, why not devise a new way of criticism that recognizes inherent political biases and acknowledges how, in particular, left-leaning critics are more prone to taking older literature to

task for being pro-racist, pro-sexist, and pro-colonialist? *Orientalism* paved the way for a new kind of criticism, which came to be called postcolonial criticism.

Something Said never bothers to address in *Orientalism* or *Culture and Imperialism* is the possible existence of works that may have either radically challenged the hegemony or gone so far as to provide legitimate and sympathetic portrayals of the subaltern. Even if Said had read *Babouk*, there is no evidence that he put much thought and energy into considering literature that may have contradicted works like Schaffer's and Conrad's, and furthermore, if such works existed, that they could subvert the status quo. Said's apparent unwillingness to put much time and effort into grouping an alternative body of literature that may challenge the colonial canon is consistent with his theoretical approach, and his primary work is still focused on the canon: in *Cultural and Imperialism*, for instance, he includes thoughtful treatises on Conrad, Jane Austen, Albert Camus, and W.B. Yeats, all of whom can be found in any number of literary anthologies. Even by considering these authors in light of how they reflect the views of colonizers, he is still adding to a growing body of literature that simply assumes these authors deserve continuing scholarly interest because they attracted earlier scholarship. By offering *Babouk* in terms of how it contrasts with *The Tempest*, Wald is doing something similar. If one takes *The Tempest* out of the equation, is there still literature out there that legitimizes radical or "alternative" viewpoints? Generally, when people propose ways of adding to the canon, it is usually with the

corrective intention of balancing the sea of white males with a few representative minorities, such as Aphra Behn or Phillis Wheatley, but neither of these authors actually published literature that was deliberately challenging or politically dangerous; their mere existence as minority artists was enough to make them objects of scholarship. Rather, in devising an “alternative canon,” the idea that each work must exist to refute some aspect of societies glutted with racist and imperialist ideology is most crucial. With that spirit in mind, I submit Guy Endore’s *Babouk* as the first entry in the continually expanding Saidian counter-canon, or “alternative canon.”

When discussing the concept of Orientalism specifically, it will be as a way of identifying Said’s main theories and ideas regarding representation and construction of knowledge and not as a way of defining Eastern and Western mentalities since *Babouk* is not about the “Orient” at all but rather about the African slave trade, so a better word to use might be “Africanism,” which in this context would mean precisely the same thing except applied to a different region of the world. There are, obviously, substantial differences between Africa and the East, and the West’s conception of the two varies by large degrees, but in the sense that Said is talking about the greater problem of “hegemony,” *Babouk*’s message can be easily transposed. Said was obviously writing about something he knew from experience, being a Palestinian raised in Western secular society, and there’s no evidence to suggest that he viewed the problems in creating representations of Africans to be any

less legitimate. For instance, he argues:

In countries like Algeria and Kenya one can watch the heroic resistance of a community partly formed out of colonial degradations, leading to a protracted armed and cultural conflict with the imperial powers, in turn giving way to a one-party state with dictatorial rule and, in the case of Algeria, an uncompromising fundamentalist opposition. (*Culture and Imperialism* 230)

Many of Said's writings on African responses to colonial imperialism and aggression can be found via his discussions of Joseph Conrad, a writer who was obviously uneasy with his country's culture of subjugation and death. Additionally, while his main points of research don't generally involve the United States (where Endore published *Babouk*), he does explicitly name it as an imperial power on a par with France or England.

The New Rules of the Alternative Canon

Given that critical considerations of the canon are hard enough to define on their own, it seems almost more useful to derive criteria for what makes a work canonized by accounting for gaps in the definition. The battle being waged among conservatives, liberals, Marxists, feminists, new historicists, and extreme bardophiles in the past few decades, while well-documented, has only succeeded in continually blurring the boundaries of what is to be considered canonical and what is not. Literary anthologies have reflected this, as

volumes of “key texts” have simultaneously become more diversified and more specialized, with special sub-canons being created every day to accommodate more fringe and minority voices. Even so, I will attempt to consider the primary means by which a work is canonized, even as I invite others to disagree with me.

In considering candidates for canonization, there are three central tenets that can be generally applied. First, and perhaps most obviously, canonized works are considered so because they are disproportionately famous and influential. Virtually any work of William Shakespeare’s, for instance, is famous enough to warrant repeated reprinting and repackaging of what is essentially the same material. The sheer number of writers that have since openly admitted their debt to Shakespeare, and the seemingly endless onslaught of artistic recontextualizations of Shakespearean themes and plot points provide abundant evidence for his hyper-canonized status. Second, the work must have some sort of novel component, either in an aesthetic or historical sense, that differentiates it from works that offer no new ideas and are forgotten as a result. Third—and this is perhaps the component that may produce the most controversy—is the fact that entries in the canon must at least partially reflect the values and beliefs of the hegemony, either as it exists today or in how it communicates tenets of an earlier era. I have already brought up the example of *Robinson Crusoe*. While most people don’t read the book with the consideration that it is essentially a pro-imperial text (most clearly shown via Friday’s subordinate role), the implications are obviously

there, and provide a good deal of the reason why it is considered such an essential work.

There is a temptation to define the alternative canon in terms of how, as Wald said, it is founded on opposite premises. An alternative canon is best viewed as a reactive measure that exerts symmetrical as opposed to dualistic properties: it contains some opposite tendencies, but is not, fundamentally, the “opposite.” Clearly, the presence of novelistic tendencies is more pronounced in agents of counter-canonization than it is of canonization because, by definition, texts that deliberately upbraid the status quo are likely to be provocative and original by this fact alone. However, in the interest of providing a more expansive forum that is meant to reappraise literature that has been forgotten, the notion that a book has to be overwhelmingly influential or well-known has to be dispelled. *Babouk* certainly doesn’t fit that criteria, as well it shouldn’t: the point of an alternative canon is to create a space to inject heretofore ignored works into the discourse, where they previously had no place.

Obviously, the most important consideration, as stated before, is that the alternative canon has to deliberately defy the status quo *within the text itself*. Aphra Behn and Phillis Wheatley do not meet these standards because it is Behn and Wheatley as individuals who challenge the canon, and not their writing, which often serves to preserve the pro-racist and pro-colonial social circumstances of England in the seventeenth century and the United States in the eighteenth century, respectively. The challenge of

defining an alternative canon like this is that it may be difficult to find material, particularly prior to the twentieth century, when challenges of those sorts were likely to lead to the writer's death or exile and the subsequent burial of whatever dangerous ideas had been proposed. We may need to look at unexpected sources and recognize that our conception of anti-establishment literature is often dependent on extenuating social circumstances. For instance, Percy Bysshe Shelley's essay "The Necessity of Atheism" is groundbreaking in the sense that concrete critiques of religion, and particularly of Christianity, were exceedingly rare. However, as atheism becomes a more commonly accepted social position, it is more difficult to place explicitly anti-religious works in the alternative canon, as some may exist to enforce the status quo of an anti-religious hegemony like the one in the Soviet Union (even that designation is problematic). Clearly, any prospective entry must be evaluated by careful critical consideration, and nothing in the alternative canon should be "hyper-canonized"—that is, immune to arguments about its placement in the alternative canon. *Babouk* is not exempt from this, and as we will see, there are ways in which even *Babouk* problematizes what I have just set forth as the parameters of the alternative canon.

***Babouk's* Ironic Narrative as Anti-racist and Anti-Hegemonic**

Babouk is a fictionalized account of the Haitian slave revolution that lasted between 1791 and 1804, constituting

what many consider to be the first legitimate long-lasting slave revolt of its kind in the world. The character of Babouk was derived from the real-life figure of Dutty Boukman, a rebellious slave and vodoun priest whose death sparked a violent uprising, which some historians consider to be the primary catalyst for the revolution. In the book, Babouk is a vain trickster and storyteller who is captured in Africa and sent to work in Saint Domingue, the French colony that eventually became the independent nation of Haiti. After his nightmarish journey aboard a slave ship, he is forced to work in the sugar cane fields. His ear is cut off when he attempts to run away and, in a scene meant to suggest solidarity between different cultures that had been oppressed, meets a group of Native Americans. Recaptured and branded, he loses his storytelling ability until it is rekindled years later due to the increased savagery of his slave masters. Eventually, Babouk organizes an open revolt, killing the plantation owners and, in a controversial scene, impaling the white owners' newborn baby on a spear. Babouk then leads his enslaved compatriots to victory for a brief time until they are finally defeated by the combined French and British military forces. Trying to save his fellow warriors by sticking his arm in a cannon, Babouk loses that appendage and ultimately faces the punishment of beheading. His decapitated head is eventually put on a pike and publically displayed as a warning to potential revolutionaries.

Endore constructs these plot points to be of secondary concern to his own voice, and he develops his

political manifesto by selectively illuminating numerous hypocrisies and fallacies in the pro-slavery (and by extension, he says, pro-capitalism and pro-religion) argument. The reader is made to believe that this book is more historical than fictional, and Endore creates this effect through two principal means. First, each chapter is accompanied by one or two epigraphs that either explain some horrifying detail about the slave trade or selectively quote an eighteenth century luminary, such as Montesquieu and Voltaire, in a way that serves to reinforce the hypocrisy of the dominant society. Second, Endore liberally provides commentary on the narrative itself to the point where it seems like he himself is a central character. Indeed, Endore occasionally interrupts the plot to allude to the research he did in writing this book, anticipating some of the tropes of literary postmodernism. For example, after Babouk witnesses the public execution of three slaves, Endore takes a break from the action to comment on how horrified he was when looking through historical records to see how lackadaisically events like this were recorded by whites:

Contrast the fortunate position of the modern educated white who can dip into old historical records and see that these burning Negroes are neither proof that the whites offer up human sacrifices to their gods, nor proof that they consume human flesh, nor proof that they do not know how to cook their meat [...] We can go to the volumes of letters of Ordinator Lambert. In

the hundreds of letters he wrote we will not find more than four or five references to the Negroes. (52)

The references that Endore could find were invariably brief: “we condemned a Negro and a Negress to be burnt alive for having used poison” (52). Whether or not it was his intention, the effect is that the reader tends to believe the majority of what is happening is true based on the evidence provided, in the ways he describes it. Endore even devotes a whole chapter to explaining what effect the slave trade had on aboriginal Americans, which almost borders on historical non-fiction, apart from one metatextual reference to Babouk and a jaundiced reappraisal of Christopher Columbus’ legacy.

Another way in which it appears that Endore’s politics are deliberately provocative as they relate to anti-establishment themes is in his intentionally disturbing use of ironic statements. Scenes of Babouk in mortal anguish are often interrupted by Endore’s deliberately mocking tone, making it difficult to see Babouk’s pain as anything more than a prop, a means for Endore to prove how outrageous his situation really is. Particularly, he adopts a clearly sarcastic tone of agreement with Babouk’s oppressors, as well as their spiritual ancestors. Imitating the callousness of Ordinator Lambert and his peers, he observes that it is simply *impossible* for a slave-driver to have died without a slave being involved in some sinister way, and suddenly he dovetails into how such a mindset can be applied to a black man falsely accused of raping a white woman. After

making this point, he flippantly backtracks and says, “I beg the reader’s pardon. That was an anachronistic slip. This is a novel about an eighteenth-century Negro. Today the black man is everywhere free and equal to the white” (53). There are more (comparatively) subtle examples of Endore’s sabotaging his own narrative when he believes he can insert a pithy observation or thought. When a rogue slave narrowly escapes his punishment by saying something that amuses his captors, for example, Endore once again takes the reins of the narrative: “Haha! The Negro’s sense of humor. Yes, the Negro is a funny fellow. Always good for a laugh. Dramatists, turn on a little laughter to lighten up your white man’s tragedies! Just bring a Negro on stage” (79). Such a statement isn’t necessary to gauge Endore’s meaning, but it is consistent with the rest of the novel in that Endore ironically detaches himself in an effort to better illustrate the insanity of colonial society.

Endore’s Irony as a Deliberate Distancer

In evaluating the success of Endore’s narrative voice as a true alternative viewpoint, we once again turn to Said and ask ourselves if we find Endore’s depiction of the slave as Other to be sufficiently “productive.” Babouk may resemble a post-colonial representation of the Other, but by turning him and the other slaves into symbols of the debilitating effects of money and power, Endore’s voice ironically dehumanizes the characters as well as the narrative itself, even as he rails against the dehumanizing effects of capitalism. In *Orientalism*, Said asks a question

that is relevant in our continued discussion of canonization: “Isn’t there an obvious danger of distortion if either too general or too specific a level of description is maintained systematically?” (75). Since Said is trying to establish that Orientalism is a collection of ideas rather than something tangible, “too specific a level of description” ignores the varied discourse or shapes it in a way that ignores certain aspects. The other danger is, as Said says, the risk of ignoring history altogether and providing irrelevant or inaccurate statements. In *Babouk*, Endore specifically cites historical text as a way of reinforcing his political perspective, conflating the general with the specific in a way that Said deliberately avoids.

Both of these aspects can be illustrated interdependently or separately. Endore will often cite specific historical instances to make a broader point, such as when he refers to the accounts of Rev. Lindsay as a way to talk about the hypocrisy of European Christians: “On December 27th, 1759, Commodore Keppel’s four ships of the line, his frigate, his two bomb-ketches, dropped anchor as near as they might to the island of Goree, and at nine o’clock the action started” (19). To make the point more valid, he tells the reader that Rev. Lindsay has left us a “succinct account” of the battle. From here, Endore segues into his familiar mocking tone, chiding Rev. Lindsay for wishing he was not a clergyman so he could partake in the carnage. Clearly editorializing, he offers a general conception of the “stout-hearted British clergyman, whose arms are unfortunately entangled by his sacred robes” (19). This is just one example

of the kind of thing Said is deliberately trying to avoid, “the kind of inaccuracy produced by too dogmatic a generality and too positivistic a localized focus” (*Orientalism* 75). Endore does not hide what he is trying to do: he uses historical accounts replete with legitimate tropes of historical fiction, such as specific dates, and then devises a response that we assume applies to religious hypocrites in general as opposed to this one individual. There is, as Said says, a very obvious danger of distortion when one selects facts to pursue a particular point of view. Endore is reducing the dimensions of the discourse, failing to acknowledge that “Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field” (78).

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said is similarly critical of Orientalists who try to correct past injustices by suggesting that non-Western cultures be granted hegemonic or cultural dominance of sorts. He takes issue with a comment made by a historian named Bernard Lewis, who argued, in Said’s words:

Since modifications in the reading list would be equivalent to the demise of Western culture, such subjects (he named them specifically) as the restoration of slavery, polygamy, and child marriage would ensue. To this amazing thesis Lewis added that ‘curiosity about other cultures’ would also come to an end. (37)

Part of the reason why Said would later distance himself from postcolonial scholarship is that it provided too much of an opportunity for Westerners to assuage their own guilt

by welcoming self-punishment and refusing to apply the same set of critical strictures to non-Western works. Endore does this exactly in the final chapter of *Babouk*, which takes place entirely outside the narrative and acts as a call to arms for subjugated peoples (mainly black people, but Endore also mentions Holocaust victims) to rise up and presumably take violent action. Endore's response is similar to Lewis, in that he seems to suggest that whatever good Western culture may have provided, it cannot be separated from its debased and sinister origins, and his final sentence in the novel is the following: "Oh, black man, when your turn comes, will you be so generous to us who do not deserve it?" (Endore 182). This deliberately pathetic plea for mercy is meant to suggest that it is now the black man's turn to rule and kill without mercy. To Said, this proves there is something presumptuous and arrogant about suddenly declaring the subaltern to be the new hierarchy:

Rather than affirming the interdependence of various histories *on* one another, and the necessary interaction of contemporary societies *with* one another, the rhetorical separation of cultures assured a murderous imperial contest between them—the sorry tale is repeated again and again. (*Culture and Imperialism* 38)

Sanctimonious claims about the superior aspects of African or Eastern culture are Orientalism of a different sort, aiming to forge a new hegemony out of what was once oppressed, inverting the power structure instead of dismantling it a

crucial distinction whose theoretical basis separates Said from many other Orientalists.

Babouk fails, then, as a book that presumes to provide an alternative viewpoint and then subjugates its characters as a fictional means of making a political point. Endore's main aim is the same as Rev. Lindsay's: to proselytize, not theorize. It is only because Endore's politics, by most contemporary academic standards, seem comparatively enlightened and somewhat unique in a 1930s context that scholars like Alan Wald can make the claim that the subaltern is finally getting a speaking role. In order to further differentiate the purposes of the alternative canon from the scholarly canon, alternative works must accurately reflect and convey the views and ideals of the colonized and depressed. On these grounds, *Babouk* does not completely satisfy this criterion.

Reconsidering *Babouk's* Role as a Litmus Test

As I have shown, *Babouk* succeeds as an alternative text in some areas and not in others, so its value as a text that operates in opposition to the canon is still in flux. *Babouk's* failures are large, and should be addressed by anyone who seeks to invest purpose in this book as a means to combat the ideology of more well-known literature. However, utilizing the book as a litmus test for the demands and strictures of the alternative canon has proved that, while *Babouk* may be a failure, it is undoubtedly a *useful failure*, one that proves that the critical consideration of any text as it relates to the larger discourse is never clear-cut. Endore's approach to correcting

social ills should be recognized as ahead of its time, but he is still a pre-Saidian creature in many respects, and we should avoid imparting extra dimensions to a text whose ulterior meaning is quite obvious and simple. From *Babouk* we may learn to survey the vast and forgotten records of societal deviants and outcasts. We can trace the history of those who chose to be anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-monarchist, anti-religious, and anti-communist against common consent; and, in particular, we can emphasize the achievements of those who chose to stand up for the colonized and the oppressed. It will never be an easy task to recognize or even find exemplars of this behavior: much of it has probably never been published, and even more has probably been destroyed or neglected over time. As more material is discovered and collected and our conception of what constitutes anti-canoncity becomes more resolute, however, we can once again look back to *Babouk* and reconstruct its meaning and purpose. Perhaps the final chapter of *Babouk*, which once seemed to explicitly advocate armed revolution, will be retooled by future generations to signify a literary call to arms.

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