Dynamite Literature

The Aesthetics of High Explosives in the Modern American and British Literary Traditions (1865–1945)

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Abstract

I examine the trope of explosion as an *episteme,* root metaphor, or paradigm of the twentieth century, one in which science, philosophy, literary criticism, art, and literature has been immersed. For example, the ascendancy of science in this century rests on the power of its technologies (such as dynamite or the Bomb) and the credibility of its theories, many of which are founded on the trope of explosives (such as the "Big Bang" Theory, the population boom, or entropy). Besides science, theories and practices in other fields increasingly have privileged disorder, disruption, fragmentation, noise, uncertainty, relativity, plurality, multivocality, deconstruction, and chaos, all aspects of the explosives trope. Particularly since World War I, the ever-increasing use of high explosives for the purpose of destruction has led to the untenableness of positivist beliefs in science, technology, or literature.

In the introduction to this dissertation, I establish the centrality of high explosives in understanding the *episteme* of our age. Then, in Chapter Two, I provide a brief historical overview of the "Dynamite Age" (which supplanted the Age of Gunpowder), explaining Alfred Nobel's innovations and the applications of this new technology in peacetime (for mining, canals, road building, railroads, farming, etc.), in war, and in terrorism. Chapter Three presents an international minority group that was stigmatized by its justifications of the use of force. I touch on the theories of Michael Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, Johann Most, Albert Parsons, Emma Goldman, and others (including anarchist-feminists) who preached the efficacy of "Propaganda of the Deed." Interestingly, though there were relatively few terrorist acts with high explosives committed by anarchists, the group was demonized, nonetheless, in the popular presses as part of society's first examination of the possible negative outcomes of one of its prize technologies.

In an analysis of an emerging anarchist aesthetic of fragmentation in Chapter Four, I point to the artistic movements of neo-impressionism, dadaism, surrealism, and vorticism as evidence of a movement away from the "order" works of the eighteenth and nineteenth century that rested on the root metaphors of the "great clock" or the "organic tree." Modernist authors fragmented the formerly stable concepts of time, character, and point of view, resulting in the development of a new modernist aesthetic. Theodor Adorno has written that "disruption are modernity's seals of authenticity" and that "explosion is one of modernity's invariants."

Chapter Five begins tracing the development of "dynamite literature" through its three phases: (1) a time of suppression and censorship; (2) a marginalization of dynamite use to anarchists or to science fiction; (3) a glorifying banalization of high explosives in popular culture or an increasing disillusionment with this technology as expressed by literary authors. I examine works by Turgenev, James, the Stevensons, Verne, Howells, Bellamy, Helen and Olivia Rossetti, Twain, Chesterton, and Frank Harris to give a sense of how a new, powerful technology obtains a literary function. Chapter Six examines in some depth Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent,* a work in

which the explosives trope has been closely integrated into an anarchistic authorial/ narrative voice and into a fragmented sense of time, space, and character that defies any unitary or unified interpretation.

Chapters Seven and Eight present the postwar examination of high explosives, a time when many authors had firsthand experiences to integrate into their literary works. Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls,* for example, is shown to deconstruct the discourses of politics, propaganda, and religion in re-defining a modern hero who must confront his own annihilation and possible disintegration but still emerge with a sense of social purpose. The ubiquity of high explosives in film and possible areas for further research are considered in the conclusion.

Dynamite Literature:
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Modern American and British Literary Traditions (1865–1945)

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Chapter One: Introduction: High Explosives-A Modern Episteme

After the invention of dynamite in 1867 by Alfred Nobel, the world, as science popularizer James Burke might say, "would never be the same again." Since their invention, high explosives, with their incredible power, for good or ill, have infiltrated every element of society, producing unprecedented "progress" and "advances" for miners, engineers, farmers, builders, the military, revolutionaries, terrorists, and politicians.

Perhaps less obvious, but just as pervasive and influential, has been the contribution of high explosives to the life of the mind—in science, philosophy, religion, literature, and the arts. In a recent novel by Max Byrd, *Fuse Time* (1991), the sinister dynamiter named Caute asserts, "This isn't a gun culture anymore ... It's a bomb culture." Not surprisingly, then, in our modern bomb culture, the explosives / dynamite / bomb trope has come to figure in such important central modern dialectics as culture and anarchy, order and disorder, the diachronic and synchronic representations of time, science/technology and art/literature, and the political status quo versus revolution. Several examples will help to illustrate how central the explosives metaphor has been to three key modern models—epistemes if you will—for understanding and interpreting the modern world.[1]

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, new scientific theories directly tied to the explosives metaphor were put forth to replace the earlier dominant religiously based views concerning the origin of the universe (made by God), the propagation of the human species (controlled by God), and the probable end of the world, also known as the "apocalypse" or the end of the world (long predicted by God through various prophets, notably by Daniel, Enoch, and Isaiah, as a time when God

[1] David H. Richter, ed., *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends* (New York: St Martin's P, 1989) defines Foucault's term *episteme* as "a way of knowing things that is coextensive with the discourse it generates ... history provides a sense of the transitions between *epistemes,* the sudden ruptures during which the old ways of thinking fail and people are forced to find a new mode of discourse" (951).

A brief example: speaking of the rapidity with which film changed our view of the world, fragmented it, Walter Benjamin in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" falls comfortably into the explosives trope, "Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second" (Richter 584). Though dynamite's power is unleashed at a speed much faster than a tenth of a second (the velocity of primary explosives ranges from 4.7 to 8.3 kilometers/sec), Benjamin's point of the rapidity and explosive nature of the change is made clear by the economy of this figure.

would unleash His full power to destroy/cleanse the world of its iniquity and begin a new age).[2]

To account for the scientific phenomenon known as the "Red Shift" (a shift in the spectrum of a celestial object caused by the object's movement away from the viewer), Edwin Hubble in 1922 proposed a theory that helped explain the possible origin of this universe and galaxy, and others; his explanation, which is widely taught in physics, astronomy, and science classes today, was popularized under a highly allusive, explosive metaphor, referred to simply but convincingly as the "Big Bang Theory."[3]

The dramatic increase in world populations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been fearfully discussed since the time of Malthus, but the intervening industrial and agrarian revolutions and mass destruction of the world wars seemed to meet the unprecedented exponential growths of population in ways Malthus could never have expected or predicted. The postwar "Baby Boom" of the late 1940s and 1950s, however, brought Malthusian issues once again to the forefront, this time with the coining of a convincing new trope to explain the urgency of the phenomenon—the "population explosion."[4] A population growing uncontrollably was easily assimilated under the dominant metaphor of the nuclear age. Interestingly, as Carol Cohn points out, much of the language connected with nuclear strategy is steeped in abstraction and euphemism, removing it from concrete reality since it is immersed in metaphorical terms of male sexuality or domesticity such as "thrust capability," "vertical erector launchers," "deep penetration," and "housing in silos," "coupling of systems," and references to the Bomb as "Oppenheimer's baby."[5]

The thermodynamic concept of entropy also has natural ties to the trope of explosion. Because of its central importance to understanding the implications of the

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[2] See Robert M. Young, *Darwin's Metaphor: Nature's Place in Victorian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985). Young contends, "that it is not right to separate the Darwinian debate from broader cultural, ideological, political, and economic issues" (xiii), a view I share in my examination of the complex uses of the explosives metaphor.

[3] For an overview of the discovery and its significance, see Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* (New York: Bantam, 1988).

[4] Terrence Holt examines the connection between the baby boom and the atom bomb in "The Bomb and the Baby Boom" *Triquarterly* 80 (Winter 1990): 206–20. Holt argues that the association of babies with the bomb apparently begins as a way of managing the guilt felt by the generation that made the bomb. Unable to accept their guilt, they identify their children with the bomb in order to hold them responsible for it. Imagined as the responsible parties, these children deserve to become its victims. In addition to providing a scapegoat, this identification naturalizes the bomb, making it seem as natural—and its use as inevitable-as childbirth. With an economy of gesture typical of the unconscious, the conflation of bomb and baby simultaneously does away with guilt and obfuscates the element of individual responsibility for nuclear weapons.

A recent short story by John Updike, "Playing with Dynamite," *New Yorker* 5 October 1992: 136–39, extends the explosive metaphor and guilt/blame Holt mentions to all in the "nuclear" family, showing the powerlessness of agency before familial forces. All human actions are like attempts to give solid form to plastic explosives—futile. See also Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street.*

[5] Carol Cohn, "Slick 'ems, Glick 'ems, Christmas Trees, and Cookie Cutters: Nuclear Language and How We Learned to Pat the Bomb," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 43 (5 June): 17–24.

explosives trope, I will provide an extended definition and explanation of entropy's applications.

In his dissertation on the topic, Eric Zencey has explained how entropy became the "root metaphor" for the modern era—economically (Brooks Adams), ecologically (Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen), philosophically and historically (Henry Adams), and literarily (Thomas Pynchon).[6] Rudolf Clausius, who coined the term in 1850 from the Greek word meaning "transformation," defined entropy as "the ultimate state reached in the degradation of the matter and energy of the universe: the state of inert uniformity of component elements: the absence of form, pattern, hierarchy, or differentiation; the irreversible tendency of a system, including the universe, toward increasing disorder and inertness; also the final state predictable from this tendency."[7]

Rudolph Clausius's theory of entropy states that in a closed system, entropy (disorder/energy) always tends to increase; that is, there is an inevitable degradation of heat that occurs in any heat exchange. Entropy remains today, in Stephen Hawking's words, "one of the indisputable laws of science."[8]

As early as 1852, William Thomson (Lord Kelvin) summarized the implications of this Second Law of Thermodynamics as follows:

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[6] Eric Zencey, "Entropy as Root Metaphor," diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1985,228–34, attributes the wide popularity of entropy to its ability "to articulate widely shared perceptions, narrative predispositions, and patterns of connection making." He provides seven conclusions about entropy that illustrate its attraction to the modern mind: (1) Entropy connotes disorder; (2) entropy is pessimistic; (3) entropy gains in popularity when a threat to the energy supply occurs—efficiency and conservation then become supreme values; (4) entropy as a metaphor lends the authority of science to an argument or image; (5) entropy is a truly ubiquitous process; (6) entropy, when applied to human affairs, subtly suggests things are beyond our control—so we have less or no responsibility. In this way entropy encourages the passive voice-things are done unto us; and (7) entropy is the law of chaos-it expresses the dialectical tension between order and disorder. Zbigniew Lewicki, *The Bang and the Whimper: Apocalypse and Entropy in American Literature* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood P, 1984) 72, cites Norbert Wiener's view of information as "negentropy"—"It is possible to interpret the information carried by a message as essentially the negative of its entropy ... that is, the more probable the message, the less information it gives." "Cliches," says Wiener, "are less illuminating than great poems." Lewicki believes this positive potential for entropy in language has set the course for much of the experimental literature of this century. Occam's razor and Sherlock Holmes' uses of logic also relate to this view of language.

[7] Lewicki 71. C.P. Snow used what he viewed a typical literary lack of understanding of the basic scientific concept of entropy to illustrate the now famous division of knowledge into "the two cultures"—science and literature-privileging the former. F.R. Leavis's retort to Snow in *The Two Cultures: The Significance of C.P Snow* has been added to by countless critics, and from a poststructuralist perspective it is difficult to privilege any discourse over another. George Levine, ed., *One Culture: Essays in Science and Literature* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1987) 3, asserts that Snow's distinction needs to be denied because it is one of degree, not of kind: "Science is no more exempt from the constraints of nonspecialist culture than literature is; nor has it ever been."

[8] This is not to say that the concept of entropy has gone unchallenged, as the hypothetical puzzle, "Maxwell's Demon," put forth by James Clerk Maxwell demonstrates. See N. Katherine Hayles, "Self-Reflexive Metaphors in Maxwell's Demon and Shannon's Choice: Finding the Passages" in *Literature and Science* ed. Stuart Peterfreund (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1990).

> [First,] there is at present in the material world a universal tendency to dissipation; [second,] any restoration of mechanical energy, without more than an equivalent of dissipation, is impossible ... and is probably never effected by means of organized matter, either endowed with vegetable life or subjected to the will of an animated creature; [and third,] within a finite period of time ... the earth must again be unfit for the habitation of man as at present constituted.[9]

On an examination, young science students of today would recite, "Entropy is the law of random, ravage, rust, and rot." N. Katherine Hayles explains that Kelvin's concerns with heat conservation and heat loss have a "direct application to the expansion of the British Empire, which is why thermodynamics is sometimes called the science of imperialism... Entropy represented the tendency of the universe to run down, despite the best efforts of British rectitude to prevent it."[10]

In one sense, entropy can be seen as the scientific replacement for the religious concept of apocalypse.[11] This replacement is evident in Ketterer's definition of the apocalyptic imagination, which posits a dialectic battle between four opposites to present the inherent conflicts present in apocalyptic discourse:

> (1) the destruction of an old world set against a new world; (2) satire works against prophetic mysticism to provide a form of judgment; (3) the creation of purpose and meaning collides with the possibility of nonmeaning and chaos; and (4) an overall vision militates against detailed characterization.[12]

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[9] Hayles 215.

[10] Hayles 216. Though the original theory of entropy was limited to thermodynamics and closed systems, wider applications of the theory have commonly been made. Wilhelm Ostwald of Leipzig in 1887 advanced the idea that energy was the primordial fact, setting forth what he called two basic "Energism Principles": (1) Energy was the greatest good; (2) the categorical imperative was, "Waste no energy" (Zencey 98–99). The American Frederick Winslow Taylor's systematic schemes for improving efficiency in labor by photographing and analyzing workers' physical movements followed Ostwald's theories. And, as I will discuss in detail in a later chapter, some key elements in Pound's imagist manifesto and poetic practices, via his editing of dynamite innovator Hudson Maxim's work *The Science of Poetry,* adhered to the same "scientific" criteria equating efficiency with excellence.

[11] In Lewicki, R. W. B. Lewis distinguishes ten phases of the standard religious apocalyptic process: (1) periodic natural disturbances; (2) the advent and reign of the Antichrist; (3) the Second Coming of Christ; (4) a cosmic war—Armageddon; (5) the millennium—one thousand years of the Messianic Kingdom on earth; (6) the last and worst apostasy; (7) the second and briefer loosening of Satan on the earth; (8) an ultimate catastrophe—the ending of the world by fire; (9) the Last Judgment; and (10) the appearance of the new heaven and earth (xiii). Frank Kermode, in his *Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: 1967) points out that mankind throughout the ages have consistently thought of their own age as the precursor to the final age. The human disposition to closure necessitates some meaningful end.

[12] David Ketterer, *New Worlds for Old: The Apocalyptic Imagination, Science Fiction, and American Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1974) 13.

In many modern and contemporary novels, ranging from late nineteenth-century science fiction novels, to Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* and *Gravity's Rainbow,* to Clancy's *The Sum of All Fears,* both entropy and its concrete manifestation of "the Bomb" displace God as the controlling forces in this world's future demise and indulge in the apocalyptic dialectic Ketterer describes.

The concept of entropy was introduced to literature through history, more specifically through Henry Adams, who wrote, "all nature's energies were slowly converting themselves into heat and vanishing in space, until, at the last, nothing would be left except a dead ocean of energy at its lowest possible level... incapable of doing any work whatever."[13] Ironically, though Darwin's "scientific" theories had much to do with the overturning of the religious perspective, the scientific principle of entropy, if logically extended, deconstructs Darwin's basic premises. Lewicki explains it this way,

> There is no doubt that Darwin's theory stands in direct opposition to the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Vital processes can either evolve into more perfect forms, or be subjected to the process of energy decrease and therefore proceed only toward death. These two options contradict each other directly and thus are dialectically connected: a prolonged interest in one keeps the other potentially alive. As Naturalism began to lose its position in American literature, one of the consequences was an increased interest in entropy.[14]

Lewicki, while admitting that Darwin's view has held sway for one hundred years, argues that it is now losing ground to the more pessimistic entropic view that disintegration, disorder, and decay are inescapable.

One of the first, most visible, and sensational evidences of entropy at work within the social realm lay in the destructive capacity that could be unleashed from a newly discovered mixture of nitroglycerin and *kieselguhr-dynamite.* Concrete confirmation of the social application of the law of entropy to imperialism began with a bang in the streets of London in the 1880s as a series of "Fenian Dynamite Outrages" shocked, terrorized, and forever damaged the security of what Barbara Tuchman has described as "The Proud Tower"—the aristocratic, wealthy, empowered elite who had governed imperialist Great Britain and Europe, for the most part unchallenged, from generation to generation for hundreds of years. The abstract theory of "heat death" and the inevitability of increasing "disorder" gained more and more credibility as the use of high explosives, in world wars, terrorist assassinations of world leaders, staged demolitions, and eventually nuclear bombs, eventually made positivist arguments about technological "advances" ring hollow.

What I find interesting is how each of these modern perspectives, the Big Bang, the population explosion, and entropy, are now widely accepted as scientific "fact"

[13] Lewicki 72.
[14] Lewicki 72.

within the modern paradigms or epistemes of science, in part perhaps because of the indisputable and authoritative violent force the explosives trope carries with it. This force also has deep resonance for contemporary popular culture, consciously or subconsciously; the entertainment and interest value of explosives is commonly exploited as a basic fact "in the news" and in entertainment[15]: from the image of an exploding space shuttle, to the "surgical accuracy" of smart bombs flying over Baghdad, to the pregnant promise of bomb-laden fighter jets over Bosnia, to the inferno of Waco, to writhing, dismembered, and bloody bodies in a shelled Sarajevo, Irish, or Indian marketplace, to the chasmic craters left by "van" bombs at the New York World Trade Building or in Oklahoma City. Explosive images, as all terrorists and politically manipulative newsmakers who use them well know, inspire deep fear and pity *(katharsis)* and forcefully urge an audience in information overload to consider the importance, and life or death reality of at least some issues. In the last decade alone, terrorist attacks have grown from 175 a year to over 1,000?[16]

Violent images, of course, are not new. In discussing why explosive, modern violent images, such as the graphic reportage of the Vietnam War, vary in their effects from earlier "paintings [and sculptures]—with their decaying, decapitated, and martyred bodies" which filled "churches, town halls, squares and palaces," historian John Ralston Saul asserts that "the difference between these images and those of film, television, and video is not the genius or the emotive quality of one or the other. It is the perfection to the point of banality of the latter... The electronic image seems to have slipped through the nets of restraint and of ordered action simply because it appeared so suddenly and in such an unexpected manner."[17]

Another difference lies in how much closer the devastating effects of war have come because of explosives. R. Palme Dutt reports that in World War I, five per cent of the fatal casualties were civilian; in World War II, forty-four per cent; in the Korean War, eighty-eight per cent; and in the Vietnam War, ninety-one per cent.[18]

In the fictional entertainment world, too, high explosives, as any glance at the lists of the latest best-selling novels or "blockbuster" movies confirms, have become commonplace. Because high explosives are so common today, perhaps to the point of banality, we may overlook the importance of their genesis within the modern aesthetic.

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[15] A recent television program providing a behind-the-scenes look at the production of an exploding house in the movie version of Stephen King's *The Stand* made clear that many "dynamite" explosions do not use much dynamite at all to produce their fiery effect. Naphthalene or gasoline and black powder bombs, as well as a meticulous placing and timing of strands of high explosives, help to create the "explosive effects" viewers have come to know so well.

[16] John Ralston Saul, *Voltaire's Bastards: The Dictatorship of Reason in the West* (New York: Vintage, 1993). Saul points out that this number of terrorist acts is a "piddling figure when compared to the six thousand soldiers killed elsewhere every day" (183).

[17] Saul 458.

[18] R. Palme Dutt, *World Politics 1918–1936,* qtd. in David Craig and Michael Egan, *Extreme Situations: Literature and Crisis from the Great War to the Atom Bomb* (New York: Macmillan, 1979), 1.

Schwenger notes that the explosive was a central enabling metaphor early on in modernism:

> T.S. Eliot implied [this] when he compared a writer's activity to the injection of chemicals into a closed chamber. And Blanchot frequently quotes Stephane Mallarmé's claim that "there is no explosion except a book." (95)

Much of what follows delineates how modernist writers privileged the explosive trope in their representations of the disordered, chaotic, and destructive modern era.

Explosives discourse has found its natural culmination in ruminations about the BOMB, the possibilities of nuclear war. Derrida explains the centrality of the explosives metaphor to his own critical enterprise in the following terms:

> Here we are dealing with a total and remainderless destruction of the archive... The hypothesis of this total destruction watches over deconstruction, it guides its footsteps; it becomes possible to recognize, in the light so to speak, of that hypothesis, of that fantasy, or phantasm, the characteristic structures and historicity of the discourses, strategies, texts, or institutions to be deconstructed. That is why deconstruction, at least what is being advanced today in its name, belongs to the nuclear age. And to the age of literature. If "literature" is the name we give to the body of texts whose existence, possibility, and significance are the most radically threatened, for the first and last time, by the nuclear catastrophe, that definition allows our thought to grasp the essence of literature, its radical precariousness and the radical form of its historicity; but at the same time, literature gives us to think the **totality** of that which, like literature and henceforth in it, is exposed to the same threat, constituted by the same structure of historical fictionality, producing and then harboring its own referent... historicity of literature is now contemporaneous through and through, or rather structurally indissociable, from something like a nuclear epoch... The nuclear age is not an epoch, it is the absolute *epoche* [which Derrida defines as "suspending judgment before the final decision"].[19]

In his discussion of the "destruction of the image of the world" as the first consequence of technology, Nobel laureate Octavio Paz expresses a sentiment similar to Derrida's, arguing that the BOMB has given the modern age a completely new concept of time:

> "[The atomic bomb's] very existence constitutes an argument that literally explodes the idea of progress, whether conceived as a gradual evolution or as a sudden revolutionary leap forward... The mere possibility of

[19] Jacques Derrida, "No Apocalypse, Not Now: Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missiles, Seven Missives" *Diacritics* 14 (1984): 27.

> [the hecatomb] is enough to cause our idea of time to lose all consistency. Though the bomb has not destroyed the world, it has destroyed our idea of the world."[20] Paz believes that the Darwinian promise of "the immortality of the human species as a whole, the immortality of history and progress" offered by science in exchange for the Christian view of an immortal soul has been invalidated by the uncertainty of the bomb, leaving us with modes of feeling and being akin to earlier "primitive" beliefs.[21]

Though I do not include in my study the very broad fields of "nuclear literature," "nuclear criticism," or science fiction,[22] my examination of conventional explosives will contribute, I think, to a greater understanding of the germinating textuality of those discourses. For example, fully sixty years before the explosion of the first atomic bomb and its threat thereafter of worldwide destruction, Ignatius Donnely in his novel *Caesar's Column* (1880) anticipated the event in an all-out war in which dynamite bombs dropped by airplanes completely destroy civilization in America, except for the hero who escapes, with a preserved archive, to form a utopian nation in Africa. Schwenger points to a novel with a similar plot by H.G. Wells, *The World Set Free* (1913), which was dedicated to his friend Frederick Soddy, a researcher in radioactivity. Wells predicts a mid-century global war using "atomic bombs" so catastrophic that a world government is formed. Interestingly, Schwenger points out, the physicist Leo Szilard, who first intuited a nuclear chain reaction in 1933, was a longtime admirer of Wells and had read this novel by him a year before his "discovery" (Schwenger xiv).

I make no Shelleyan claims of literary writers' or poets' primacy over men of science as prophets and legislators of the world. Most significant and influential ideas seldom lend themselves to such simplistic causal analyses. Valorizing either literary attacks on science or scientific indifference to literature sets up an artificial adversarial dichotomy characterized in such discussions as the metaphoric and metonymic uses of language

[20] Octavio Paz, *Convergences: Essays on Art and Literature,* trans. Helen Lane (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1987), 123.

[21] Paz 129. In a similar way, Hayles writes, "I conjecture that Maxwell's Demon has fascinated generations of scientists because he mediated between an eroding belief in universal causality (traditionally derived from God as the prime mover) and the belief in science that caused Laplace, when asked about the role of God in the solar system, to reply that he had no need for that hypothesis. Maxwell's demon is a fantasy about an animistic figure who can control dissipation through an exercise of will" (218).

[22] See Peter Schwenger, *Letter Bomb: Nuclear Holocaust and the Exploding Word* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1992) for an extended application of poststructuralist theories to nuclear criticism. Schwenger explains how a colloquium at Cornell University in 1984 and a special issue of *Diacritics* dedicated to the role of criticism in the nuclear age began the field of "nuclear criticism." The *Newsletter of the International Society for the Study of Nuclear Texts and Contexts* now has about fifty listings in every issue.

privileged by one or the other discourse.[23] George Levine, a leading authority in the discourse of science and literature, points out that

> literature and science, whatever else they may be, are modes of discourse, neither of which is privileged except by the conventions of the cultures in which they are embedded... [The subject] 'science and literature' matters because the conjunction of the two sometimes radically separated worlds of discourse helps illuminate each, helps demystify each as they sit apart under cloaks of unmerited authority.[24]

Levine asserts further that "literature has been unable to avoid science because science asserts an epistemological authority so powerful that it can determine even how we allow ourselves to imagine the world, or to resist that authority".[25]

Much of the modern-day authority of science, I would argue, comes from its natural offspring technology, which has so deeply influenced and shaped modern civilization. The discourses of science and literature inevitably conjoin and become reified in technology; so, a close study of the evolving textuality of one particularly pervasive, threatening, useful technology, high explosives, in the discourses of both literature and science can gain immeasurably from the perspective "looking backward" can give.[26]

Levine writes that "science is our new mythology" and that Frankenstein's monster is "perhaps the great popular metaphor of the hostility between science and literature."[27]

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[23] Stuart Peterfreund, ed., *Literature and Science: Theory and Practice* (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1990), 139–66, in his essay "Blake, Priestley, and the 'Gnostic Moment'" discusses Jameson's proposition that using metonymy as a figural strategy—a tropological engine-makes a totalizing form of reification possible "betokens class struggle, and the force of the reification is to silence the dialogical discourse of that struggle, in the process reducing what Bakhtin calls 'heteroglossia' and Todorov after him calls 'heterology' to a 'common language' intended to serve the ends of the victorious and dominant ideology" (141). For a classic example of such an ideological battle, Peterfreund, in passionate Marxist jargon, turns to the orthodox/heretic split in the early Christian church:

> From the beginning of the dispute, in the days of the gnostic "heretic" Marcion and his 'orthodox' antagonist Irenaeus (ca. 180–92), orthodoxy has deployed a strategy of metonymic repetition leading to reification, to the end of creating an object-world that may be used to demonstrate the presumed originary truth of those reifications, to the exclusion of pluralism, and in celebration of the absolute priority of the status quo of the material universe as that status quo is constructed by the ideology of the empowered as the ground of all meaning and evidence for any valorization of dogma. (154)

In the dominating "explosive" paradigms mentioned earlier, this metonymic repetition to create an exclusive authority is readily apparent.

[24] Levine 4, 5.

[25] Levine 8.

[26] Connecting the structuralist critical enterprise to the science and literature debate, Hayles believes that Barthes was anticipating the advent of deconstruction and other poststructuralist theories when he predicted that structuralism "will never be anything but one more science ... if it cannot make its central enterprise the very subversion of scientific language ... [it must work to] abolish the distinction, born of logic, which makes the work into a language-object and science into a metalanguage, and thereby to risk the illusory privilege attached by science to the ownership of a slave language" (212).

[27] Levine 8.

Many ancient myths have captured the natural anxiety and fear mankind has felt when confronted by technology. In fact, though some authors have praised the Machine and modern technology (including many science fiction writers, poets like Hart Crane and Walt Whitman, and contemporary authors such as Robert Pirsig), the major thrust of the modern literary tradition has been antithetical to them,[28] following earlier mythical patterns in rendering their tales.

For example, in the story of the Tower of Babel, the Bible records an omnipotent God's response to the new technology of brickbuilding and its vaunted capacity to allow mankind to reach heaven and make a name for themselves—a way to become, in effect, self-made gods. Derrida in his discussion of the threatening apocalypse of nuclear war sees a parallel between this earlier biblical conflict, a war over "the name," and our current nuclear discourse:

> You will say: but all wars are waged in the name of the name, beginning with the war between God and the sons of Shem who wanted to "make a name for themselves" and transmit it by constructing the tower of Babel. This is so, but "deterrence" had come into play among God and the Shem, the warring adversaries, and the conflict was temporarily interrupted: tradition, translation, transference have had a long respite. Absolute knowledge too. Neither God nor the sons of Shem (you know that Shem means "name" and that they bore the name "name") knew absolutely that they were confronting each other in the name of the name, and of nothing else, thus of nothing. That is why they stopped and moved on to a long compromise. We have absolute knowledge and we run the risk, precisely because of that, of not stopping. Unless it is the other way around: God and the sons of Shem having understood that a name wasn't worth it—and this would

[28] See Peter A. Dale, *In Pursuit of a Scientific Culture: Science, Art, and Society in the Victorian Age* (U of Wisconsin P, 1989). Dale asserts that "by the late 1870s there began to emerge a distinctly negative reading of the meaning of science for the future of man" (221). Emerson wrote, "Things are in the saddle; they ride us."

In Theresa Lauretis, Andreas Huyssen, and Kathleen Woodward, eds., *The Technological Imagination: Theories and Fictions* (Madison, Wisconsin: Coda P, 1980), Woodward evaluates the American attitude toward technology as follows:

Today our collective belief in material progress, or desire for it, dominates all others. Exchange value is the yardstick by which we measure our national, and often personal, satisfaction.... If technology has been a dominant concern of the American character, how has the American literary mind responded to its threats and promises? David Madden has asserted that 'it is certainly true that the voice of most serious American literature since the Industrial Revolution got rolling has been a thunderous NO to the machine as a fabricator of American Dreams.' Agreed. In the twentieth century we see this in novels ranging from Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle,* in which industrial technology dehumanizes the work process, and Joseph Heller's *Catch-22,* in which the technology of social engineering extinguishes human autonomy, to Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow,* in which multinationals and missile age technology spawn madness and masturbatory fantasy. (5–6)

A central work showing this tendency in nineteenth-century American literature is Leo Marx's, *The Machine in the Garden* (New York: Oxford UP, 1964).

> be absolute knowledge-they preferred to spend a little more time together, the time of a long colloquy with warriors in love with life, busy writing in all languages in order to make the conversation last, even if they didn't understand each other too well.[29]

So, basic to the discourse of technology is the concept of a rebellion against the Name through a technology and the natural result-deterrence, a delay, a Cold War. The Promethean and Pandora myths also suggest that new technologies often come with a heavy price.[30]

Other Greek myths central to the discussion of technology include the stories of Hephaestus (Vulcan), the god of the forge and weaponry, and Daedalus, the master craftsmen who escaped exile by manufacturing wings and flying, while his rebellious son exceeds the limitations his father has placed on his invention, falling into the Hellespont. Hephaestus, an archetype of the limping hero, is married to Aphrodite, reputably the most beautiful of the gods but also one who is adulterous.[31]

The basic mythical characterizations and relationships of each of these classic technologists, interestingly, prefigure modern versions of the scientists or dynamiters and the women they love. In *The Secret Agent,* for example, both the grotesquely obese dynamiter Verloc and the thin, sickly bomb-making Professor with the "nerveless gait of

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[29] Derrida31.

[30] Ingram, in a discussion of Adorno and Horkheimer's *The Dialectic of Enlightenment,* asserts that science and myth both are but "projections" which systematically reduce "nature's complexities to identifiable agencies and repeatable cycles ... Conceptual classification (representation) is just one way in which humans attempt to distance themselves from, and thereby control, the natural forces which impinge upon them" (63).

[31] Arthur Koestler in his essay "Character and Plot" says that, "All great works of literature contain variations and combinations, overt or implied, of such archetypal conflicts inherent in the condition of man, which first occur in the symbols of mythology, and are restated in the particular idiom of each culture and period... There are no new themes in literature, as there are no new human instincts; but every age provides new variations and sublimations, new settings and a different set of rules for fighting the old battles all over again" (in Edward M. Jennings, ed., *Science and Literature .New Lenses for Criticism* New York: Doubleday, 1972), 175. Koestler asserts that there are only thirty-six tragic situations, eight of which are

1. **The Promethean struggle for omnipotence**—as in Jacob, the Tower of Babel, Icarus, Faustus, *Candide,* Dr. Moreau (H.G. Wells), and Stavrogin (Dostoyevski), and more popularly Supermen, Space Cadets, and Black Magicians.

2. **The Individual against society-Oedipus**

3. **Polygonal patterns of libidinous relations**—love triangles, quadrangles, etc., as contained in at least half the bulk of world literature, from the Vulcan-Venus-Mars triangle onward.

4. **War of the sexes**—from Amazon myths to Lysistrata

5. **Love triumphant, or defeated-as** in the Song of Songs, Isolde's *Liebestod.*

6. **The Conquest of the Flesh—from** Buddha to Aldous Huxley.

7. **Man against society in the *hubris* of Power, the *hubris* of Cleverness, the *hubris* of the Ivory Tower, and the *hubris* of Sanctity**

8. The Divided Heart—Love vs. duty, self-preservation vs. self-sacrifice, ends vs. means, and faith vs. reason.

a tramp" are characterized like Hephaestus by gross, easily recognizable physical imperfections. Conrad structures Verloc's relationship with Winnie to include the adulterous advances of Ossipon; Winnie is given the Lombroso-type features common to prostitutes. Conrad's immediate precursor in the anarchist novel, Henry James, portrays his heroine in a similar fashion in *The Princess Casamassima,* having her cavort with Captain Sholto, Hyacinth, and presumably others as she tries to escape her husband.

The tragic plot ending of the son in the story of Daedalus and Icarus is also repeated in many episodes in modern literary fiction when a young scientist / dynamiter / anarchist rejects the conservative advice of the previous generation, pushes the limits of a new technology too far or too fast, and then suffers the consequences. Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* (1861) is the seminal modern work in this regard, creating the prototypical nihilistic chemist Bazarov (who says, "a decent chemist is twenty times more useful than any poet"), the angry young man who would destroy religious and metaphysical beliefs by any means in order to reorganize society on strictly scientific and utilitarian principles. Bazarov argues against the romantic view of Nature expressed by his friend Arkady, asserting "Nature is not a temple, but a workshop, and man's the workman in it."[32] The dialogue here begins a longstanding dialectic modern authors will turn to as they represent the emerging, confident, positivistic, new scientific, technological man or woman as they come to terms with the outdated values and principles of the past as they are represented by parents, governments, religions, literature, or art.

In the following chapters, I explore synchronically and diachronically how explosives have come to dominate the modern paradigm, the *Weltanschauung,* or the world view of the modern era. Moreso than its precursor age of gunpowder (1300–1852), whose force was controllable and harnessed under predictable Newtonian laws,[33] dynamite and high explosives, by their nature unpredictable and overpowering in their actions on the human body and psyche, as shell-shock victims would later testify, became a realistic and metaphorical weapon, a semantic universal or root metaphor, one so integral to our language we may easily overlook its power, its historical resonance, and its textuality in representing the modern experience.

To explain the textuality of explosives and its effects on the modern mind, I begin with a diachronic explanation of the historical contexts in which explosives have arisen. My focus in this section is on the subversive aspects of explosives since their

[32] Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons,* trans. Rosemary Edmonds (New York: Penguin, [1861] 1988), 97,116.

[33] Joseph W. Slade and Judith Y. Lee, eds., *Beyond the Two Cultures: Essays on Science, Technology, and Literature* (Ames: Iowa State UP, 1990). Slade, commenting on attitudes towards language prior to the advent of quantum mechanics sees a similar connection to the one I address here: "Positivism was an attempt to endow discourse with the invariance of Newtonian principles, to distill precision from a language prone to sloppiness. Positivists assumed that a detached observer could make empirically verifiable observations of event and translate them into accurate statements free of ambiguity, a difficult task as evidenced by the twenty-one different senses of the word *paradigm* by Thomas Kuhn" (10).

"legitimate" uses by governments and industry during peacetime and war have already been so widely discussed. I then set the stage for my aesthetic analysis of dynamite in literature by examining anarchism, a political and philosophical movement closely associated with early dynamite use. In particular, I examine how the minority discourse employed by anarchism sought to justify direct violent action in order to achieve political goals. The aesthetics of dynamite literature are explained by reviewing various twentieth-century critical perspectives and showing their relationship and relevance to high explosives, specifically the recent critical revisionist perspectives on the role of metaphor in science. With this background completed, I then discuss the three major periods of dynamite literature, focusing on the British and American literary traditions: (1) 1870–1899 (using Robert Louis and Fanny Van de Grift Stevensons' *The Dynamiter,* Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court,* and Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima* and other representative works); (2) 1900–1914 (focusing on Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent);* and (3) 1919–1945 (examining the postwar literary response to high explosives, especially Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls).* In the conclusion, I briefly discuss the directions that contemporary explosives literature have taken since 1945, suggesting some areas for further analysis, and also consider the commonplace and creative uses of the explosives trope in stage and film.

Chapter Two: A Brief History of Explosives: Adams' Dynamo and Nobel's Dynamite

> *A teacher must either treat history as a catalogue, a record, a romance, or as an evolution; and whether he affirms or denies evolution, he falls into all the burning faggots of the pit. He makes of his scholars either priests or atheists, plutocrats or socialists, judges or anarchists, almost in spite of himself. In essence incoherent and immoral, history had either to be taught as such—or falsified*
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> *The ocean steamer ran the surest line of triangulation into the future because it was the nearest of man's products to a unity; railroads taught less because they seemed already finished except for mere increase in* ***number; explosives taught most, but needed a tribe of chemists, physicists, and mathematicians to explain;*** *the dynamo taught least because it had barely reached infancy, and, if its progress was to be constant at the rate of the last ten years, it would result in infinite costly energy within a generation.*
>
> *Modern politics is, at bottom, a struggle not of men but offorces. The men become every year more and more creatures of force, massed about central power-houses. The conflict is no longer between the men, but between the motors that drive the men, and the men tend to succumb to their own motive forces.*[1]

As an educated product of the nineteenth century, Henry Adams was not alone in pointing to the negative forces coming about as a result of the industrial and technological "progress" of the late nineteenth century.[2] I have prefaced this chapter with three extended quotes from Adams to indicate my same reluctance to oversimplify the "incoherent and immoral" history of explosives, my interdisciplinary sense of inadequacy in explaining this technology of explosives, which can potentially teach more than the

[1] Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, [1918], 1971) 300–1,341–42,421–22 [emphasis mine].

[2] Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden* and *The Pilot and the Passenger: Essays on Literature, Technology, and Culture in the United States* (New York: Oxford UP, 1988).

steamer, the train, or the dynamo, but requires the expertise of "chemists, physicists, mathematicians, and a tribe of others," and my own associations and allegiances with the ubiquitous twentieth century "power houses" of force.

Any treatment of high explosives necessarily requires an analysis of force. Addressing the issue of force in an essay defending Rudyard Kipling from a charge by T.S. Eliot that he had written Fascist poetry, George Orwell attributes to Kipling an outdated view of ultimate force:

> No one, in our time, believes in any sanction greater than military power; no one believes that it is possible to overcome force except by greater force. There is no "law," there is only power. I am not saying that this is a true belief, merely that it is the belief which all modern men do actually hold. Those who pretend otherwise are either intellectual cowards, or power-worshipers under a thin disguise, or have simply not caught up with the age they are living in. Kipling's outlook is pre-Fascist. He still believes that pride comes before a fall and the gods punish *hubris.* He does not foresee the tank, the bombing plane, the radio, and the secret police or their psychological results.

As a transitional figure between the late Victorian and Modern era, Kipling, who clung to outmoded views of force, is representative of many of his age.[3] A dominant characteristic of modernism, as Orwell astutely points out, is its critique of this shift from a belief in law to a reliance on power or force.

At the time of his sister's death, Adams saw for the first time that beyond the senses which shroud things with beauty, nature is "a chaos of anarchic and purposeless forces."[4] He became equally fearful, it seems, of the potential chaos in the new powerful technology, such as the dynamo. Adams' critique of modern force in "The Dynamo and the Virgin," seems to suggest that moderns can come to terms with the new powerhouses of force represented by the technology of the dynamo by invoking a similar religious fervor as was felt for the Virgin during the Middle Ages. The *new* modern religion, Adams implies, will be the god science and its powerfully throbbing graven images.[5]

Adams' repeated references to himself as a "conservative, Christian, anarchist" provide an insight to his individualistic reaction to the "explosive" political and technological nineteenth-century forces he had to contend with. He chose to be conservative

[3] G. Wesley Johnson, ed., *Double Impact: France and Africa in the Age of Imperialism* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood P, 1986) explains how outmoded means of waging war learned by military leaders battling unarmed natives in Africa led to the formulation of the blundering theories (such as the French concept of *elan)* behind the seemingly senseless attacks in World War I.

[4] Adams 289.

[5] See Martha Moore Trescott, ed., *Dynamos and Virgins Revisited: Women and Technological Change in History: An Anthology* (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow P, 1979) for an update of Adams' critique.

by dissenting from the notion of progress, by questioning the unpredictable results of industrialization and technological development; he chose to be Christian in his nostalgic longing for the Middle Ages, a time when science, culture, and politics were unified under the auspices of Virgin worship[6]; and he chose to be an anarchist, in a limited sense of that word, because "in the social disequilibrium between capital and labor, the logical outcome was not collectivism but anarchism."[7] Inasmuch as any one person can represent a paradigm shift of an age, Adams' response to technology, many would agree, was visionary; however, his outlook at the turn of the century did not express the oft-published, positivist "mainstream" views of the times.

The dominant discourse in magazines, newspapers, and later on radio, especially before World War I, was optimistically progressive about the eventual outcomes technology would bring about, but the actual results on people and the land was becoming less and less clear. Every new invention or new industry brought with it the complications pointed out by the subversive discourse of certain literary writers, artists, socialists, anarchists, syndicalists, and muckrakers.

By the end of the nineteenth century, much of the utopian promise of the industrial revolution was turning to dystopia, at least for the lower and middle classes closely connected to the industrial machine and living in large cities, as the general social unrest and widespread poverty of the times indicate.[8] Ironically, the highly touted new technology of high explosives—dynamite—would have wide-ranging dystopic and utopic elements as the technological solution to greater industrialization and urbanization. As Bryan Di Salvatore explains, dynamite came at a time when the industrial revolution was "bogged down" because the world's economies were

> still in thrall to their terrain... Canal systems were slow and congested. Roads were muddy or dust-thick capillaries following old paths of least resistance. Rail lines showed great potential but needed ever increasing amounts of rock for ballast and coal for engines, not to mention timber and iron for the rails themselves... Most harbors were natural affairs, only meagerly protected from the elements, and inadequate—silt-prone, boggy, inefficient—for heavy traffic.[9]

"Before there was dynamite," Di Salvatore exclaims, "there were animals, men's backs, and black powder."[10] Of course, high explosives easily solved many of the above

[6] William Morris, W.B. Yeats, and T.S. Eliot followed the same pattern. Without religion, Marxism also privileges an idyllic, medieval past when workers enjoyed, as the theory goes, the ideals of communist or socialist living.

[7] Adams 339, as qtd. in Zencey 136–37.

[8] See Jane Addams *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (New York: Signet, [1910], 1981) as an example of the urban experience in Chicago, Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (New York: Airmont Books, [1893] 1968) for the experience in New York.

[9] Bryan Di Salvatore, "Vehement Fire," *The New Yorker* 27 April 1987: 48.

[10] Di Salvatore 46.

noted problems holding up the Industrial Revolution, but at a price. In America, the timing was perfect for the expansion the country was experiencing: farmers could clear their land more easily, harbors could be deepened, roads and railways could be straightened, dams, tunnels, and canals in any terrain could be blasted into existence. In 1922 in a pamphlet distributed by Hercules Powder Company, T.W. Bacchus boasted:

> Ask many people to what we largely owe our great progress; they will probably enumerate a number of things: the steam engine, the telegraph, and whatnot. Few indeed will ever mention dynamite, which is the most important of all.[11]

But with these undeniable gains in efficiency came also the losses: the diminished importance of a laboring workforce, the neglect and permanent scarring of the environment, and the broadening of war to terrorizing and killing civilian populations, especially in cities.[12]

To account for the "great progress" afforded by dynamite, in this chapter I will briefly detail Alfred Nobel's hopes for and contributions to high explosives technology. The historical background provided will by no means be comprehensive, but it should provide some sense of the beginnings of high explosives and their effects on the modern era.

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[11] Di Salvatore 44. Erik Bergengren, *Alfred Nobel: The Man and His Work* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962) reports that dynamite explosions were being used to end droughts and to more humanely slaughter cattle in the USA. Both of these novel uses, however, were proven to be unsuccessful. Inhumane and unsportsmanlike, though efficient, is dynamite fishing with "Atlas spinners" or "Hercules crawlers" (62–63). *The History of the E.I. du Pont de Nemours Powder Company* (New York: Business America, 1912) bills dynamite as "the new farmhand"—a product that can blast stumps, aid in ditch digging, and improve subsoiling cultivation techniques. The Hagley Museum, near Wilmington, Delaware, site of the first black powder mills of the Du Pont company in America, has the largest collection of explosives literature in America.

Di Salvatore explains just how painstakingly slow and difficult hard rock tunneling could be: "In North Adams, Massachusetts, the Hoosac railroad tunnel, after ten years of steam drills and black powder, had advanced less than a third of the way toward its projected four-and-three-quarter-mile length" (48).

[12] Saul asserts in his chapter "Learning How to Organize Death" that the German and Allied strategic bombing of cities had no effect on the outcome of the war. He argues that bombing of cities in all wars has been a failed strategy since it violates basic "success" principles of war set down by Sun Tzu thousands of years ago: "What is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy. The next best is to disrupt his alliances. The next to attack his army. The worst policy is to attack cities" (189). Solly Zuckerman, later Lord Zuckerman, was assigned to study the consequences of bombing civilians: he discovered that the RAF's Bomber Command and the U.S. Army Air Corps had greatly exaggerated the ability of massive air strikes to lessen the enemy's will to fight and thus shorten the war. (Sagan and Druyan 328–29). Conrad C. Crane's recent book *Bombs, Cities, and Civilians: American Airpower Strategy in World War II.* (Lawrence: UP Kansas, 1993) challenges two revisionist works on American strategic bombing during World War II—Michael Sherry's *The Rise of American Air Power* (1987) and Ronald Schaffer's *Wings of Judgment* (1985)—which assert that "indiscriminate area bombing" took place routinely because of "military necessity."

Dynamite and Nobel

A recent London theater group's portrayal of Alfred Nobel, *Lord Dynamite,* according to Betty Caplan, "transforms him into a classic Lord of Misrule, a Dionysian figure who turns everything upside down" as a creator of destruction. According to Caplan, who reviewed the play in 1991, Nobel's story (history?) is given a clear moral in the play:

> Here was a man who, failing to find love, turned his gifts towards the creation of destruction. He blew up his own brother and suffered the pangs of guilt ever after. In an act of dramatic defiance, WSI [the theatre group] have him kill his mother instead, driving home the point that negative genius often stems from a history of personal disappointment... 'It's about the way we solve problems. Creativity in our society becomes channeled into entrepreneurial and military activities.'[13]

Creatively, *Lord Dynamite* may have been a stunning success, but as Caplan suggests in her review, the modifications in historical fact tend to oversimplify a very complex personage in order to deliver a moral message. On a basic historical level, the play skims over some very inconvenient facts: first, Nobel did find love—after a fashion. Even though his first love died at a young age,[14] he did have other enduring relationships with women beginning in his forties, with an Austrian flower girl in her twenties, Sofie Hess,[15] whom he financially supported for years, even after her marriage, and with Bertha von Suttner, with whom he regularly corresponded. Second, Nobel did not "blow up his brother"—his brother died, like many others who have manufactured and handled detonators and explosives, when Nobel was not at the factory in which his brother was working. Finally, Nobel's reaction to his brother's and others' deaths was not to violently kill his mother, whom he loved very much,[16] nor to devote his life to "negative genius" in making weapons; he did invent a safer explosive—dynamite-also known as Nobel's Safety Powder, developed strict handling procedures and protocols that are still followed today, supported peace congresses, even before his death, and established his now famous Nobel Peace Prizes, which began after his death. Nobel's actual life, like most, does not easily lend itself to a single simplified moral or theme.[17]

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[13] Betty Caplan, "Nobel's Price," *New Statesman and Society* 28 June 1991: 31.

[14] Donald Dale Jackson, "While He Expected the Worst, Nobel Hoped for the Best," *Smithsonian* November 1988: 208. The only evidence of this early love of Nobel's is a poem he wrote chronicling the romance, at its heights, "till we had grown to be/ A heaven to one another" and at its depths at her death. In his grief, Nobel turned to "noble duties."

[15] Jackson briefly documents this Pygmalion affair (216–17).

[16] Though Nobel lived in Paris, Germany, and Italy and traveled to America, he returned to Sweden each year for his mother Andriette's birthday. He was 56 when she died (Jackson 216).

[17] Carl G. Bernhard, Elisabeth Crawford, and Per Sörbom, eds., *Science, Technology, and Society in the Time of Alfred Nobel.* Proceedings of Nobel Symposium 52, Bjorkborn, Karlskoga, Sweden, 17–22

Nobel was the Howard Hughes of the nineteenth century in that he was an eclectic man who, as his wealth and success grew, became evermore reticent and reclusive while continually increasing his wealth and international business connections by his inventions.[18] The memoirs and biographies written of him, for whatever reason, do not penetrate much beyond the public persona he created for himself.[19] It is within these limitations that I report on his life.

Nobel mastered German, English, French, Swedish, and Russian, and had a strong literary bent with a particular interest in English literature. (Nobel wrote poetry, drama, and even several novels.) Letters of his youth reveal him to have been precocious, intelligent, sickly (a spinal ailment), dreamy, and introspective.[20] He came from a family of entrepreneurs and inventors. His father, Immanuel, invented particle board and plywood and was responsible for the sea mines that warded off the Anglo-French fleets from Russian and Finnish harbors during the Crimean War (1853–1856).[21] Alfred's brother Ludvig established and ran the first oil refineries in the Baku oil fields in the Crimea.

Alfred Nobel's own reputation as an inventor of "infernal machines" and as a "merchant of death" grew out of a family venture-his father had been experimenting with nitroglycerin for years. It was Alfred, however, who made the decisive inventive breakthroughs. His four major innovations established the foundations of explosives technology and his cosmopolitan business savvy and knowledge of languages helped him to market his product to the world, setting up factories in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Scotland, France, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Spain, and the USA. An explanation of each of his major inventions and their particular significance follows.

August 1981. (New York: Pergamon P, 1982.) Melvin Kranzberg in his essay "The Industrialization of Western Society" comments,

> The non-neutrality of technology can perhaps be demonstrated by the thoughts and legacy of Alfred Nobel... Nils K. Stahle speaks of 'Nobel's lifetime search for philosophical, ethical, and spiritual values for the good of mankind,' and of his belief that an advancing science would put an end to war, 'the horror of horrors and the greatest of all crimes.' Nobel saw no incongruity between his contributions to making war more deadly and his desire for peace: 'My factories may well put an end to wars sooner than your congresses,' he once wrote to the Baroness Bertha von Suttner. (229)

[18] H. Bruce Franklin, *War Stars: The Superweapon and the American Imagination* (New York: Oxford UP, 1988) in a chapter entitled "Thomas Edison and the Industrialization of War" identifies a similar trend with the most prominent American inventor, "a wizard singlehandedly responsible for much of the industrial transformation of American society" (54–55). Edison's competitive inventiveness can be seen in his statement in 1915: "Science can find much more effective ways of destroying life than by artillery and rifle fire, or the use of high explosives" and in his patenting of at least forty military inventions (71,73).

[19] See as examples Hertha E. Pauli, *Alfred Nobel: Dynamite King, Architect of Peace* (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1947); Erik Bergengren, *Alfred Nobel: The Man and His Work* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962); and Ragnar Sohlman, *The Legacy of Alfred Nobel: The Story behind the Nobel Prizes* (London: Bodley Head, 1983).

[20] Bergengren 16.

[21] Admiral Napier reported to the Admiralty, "the Gulf of Finland is full of infernal machines" (Bergengren 18).

1. The Blasting Cap. Although Ascanio Sobrero had discovered nitroglycerin in 1846, he abandoned the substance because of its dangerous instability.[22] Nobel, however, worked on making the substance safe, inventing the first reasonably safe and efficient blasting cap, a capsule of tin (later copper) filled with mercury fulminate (Hg(CNO)2), which was used to ignite or detonate[23] the nitroglycerin. With the invention of this so-called blasting cap, Bergengren notes, "the 'Initial Ignition Principle' was introduced into the technique of explosives, and this was fundamental to all later developments in this field... [It was] the greatest advance in the science of explosives since the invention of gunpowder."[24] The Initial Ignition Principle was simply to use a small, easily detonated explosive as an agent to detonate other less sensitive explosives.[25] Nobel's advances in "safely" igniting nitroglycerin, though, were fraught with other difficulties beyond his control.

Early on in the production of nitroglycerin, Nobel's brother was killed in a devastating explosion; the Nobels then had to relocate their manufactory on a barge, far away from dwellings. Ignorance of how to handle nitroglycerin caused many of these early mishaps. Because of the devastating, and sensational, effects of the accidental explosions, newspapers worldwide attacked the dire threats this new technology posed to an

[22] In 1867 two Swedish inventors patented *Ammoniakkrut* (a blasting agent containing 80% ammonium nitrate and 20% charcoal), but it had the opposite problem to nitroglycerin—it was extremely difficult to detonate-so it was not commonly used until the freighter *Grandcamp,* carrying ammonium nitrate fertilizer, detonated accidentally near Texas City, Texas, on April 16,1947. By 1960 ammonium nitrate explosives had out paced dynamites and by 1985 dynamites held less than four percent of the market(Di Salvatore 54–57).

The use of nitroglycerin as a medicine was listed in the British Pharmacopoeia for the first time in 1885. In the form of lozenges or solutions, it was used to relieve the symptoms of *angina pectoris* (Bergengren 62–63).

[23] Modern blasters use the word "initiate."

[24] Bergengren 23. Electrical blasting caps were introduced by H. Julius Smith in 1876 and patented by him in 1895.

[25] Tom Clancy's bestseller *The Sum of All Fears* (New York: Berkeley Books, [1991] 1992) spells out how this same principle is used today for thermonuclear devices (702–8). Di Salvatore explains the process in this way,

If a match flame is applied to a length of fuse, the fuse lights and runs its length to a blasting cap, which is a short metal tube about the diameter of a pencil eraser and contains a sequence of high explosives. The fuse ignites an ignition compound in the cap powerful enough to ignite a second, less sensitive explosive, the priming charge, which, in turn, sets off a third high explosive, the base charge. This last is powerful enough to detonate the stick of dynamite itself. In the case of an electrically initiated shot, the current enters the cap through two wires, called leg wires, which heat a fine, high-resistance bridge wire, embedded in a heat sensitive explosive, to begin the detonation sequence.) Much modern industrial blasting adds one more step to this progression: the dynamite stick itself becomes the detonator for the new, relatively insensitive explosives known as blasting agents, which are often used in bulk form. (52)

Interestingly, a guiding principle behind the practice of many modern revolutionary or terrorist movements also parallels the scientific initial ignition principle—spark the proletariat by propaganda, speech, or deed and they will ignite into glorious, spontaneous revolt.

unsuspecting citizenry. A Hamburg newspaper, for example, reported on 4 December 1865 a surprising explosion in New York:

> A German traveler had brought a flask containing ten pounds of nitroglycerin carefully packed in a box to a small hotel called the Wyoming in the Greenwich district of New York and had left it, intending to call for it again. The porter was looking after the flask and using it sometimes as a seat and sometimes as a foot-rest for bootblacking. One fine Sunday morning a waiter noticed that a red vapor was issuing from the box. The porter carried it out into the street and then returned to the hotel. A moment later there came a terrible explosion; the fronts of the neighboring houses were shattered and the roadway was rent to a depth of four feet[26]

Simple transportation techniques also had not been worked out or were not carefully followed. On April 3,1866, a violent explosion occurred off Aspinwall on the Atlantic Coast of Panama, completely destroying the steamer *European* and resulting in the loss of forty-seven lives.[27] In March and April 1866, explosions killed people in Sydney, Australia, in San Francisco, at a Panamanian Pier, and at factories at Krummel and Lysaker in Norway, resulting in a worldwide condemnation of Nobel as an "enemy of the people."[28]

To add to the accidents that were occurring, in the first act of sabotage using a nitroglycerin bomb, William King Thompson, on 11 December 1865, blew up the steamer *Mosel* with a time bomb placed in the hold of the ship. Twenty-eight persons were killed, 184 wounded.[29]

In response to the bad business and bad publicity caused by all these explosions, and with characteristic genius, Nobel soon discovered a solution to the instability of nitroglycerin.

2. Dynamite. Some say that an accidental spill and subsequent absorption of nitroglycerin by the substance in which it was packed inspired Nobel to make his discovery. He had been testing many substances to lessen nitroglycerin's instability, so the innovation may have come from experimentation. Regardless of the method, in 1866 Nobel patented his solution to the explosive problem by mixing nitroglycerine with *kieselguhr,*[30] an absorbent, porous, nonexplosive, nonreactive, sileceous earth, to create a safer, more stable solid substance relatively insensitive to ordinary shock. In his patent application he called the substance "dynamite," from the Greek word *dynamis,* which means power. The European marketing of dynamite was soon to make Nobel one of the wealthiest men in the world.

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[26] Ragnar Sohlman and Henrik Schuck, *Nobel, Dynamite, and Peace* trans. Brian and Beatrix Lunn (New York: Cosmopolitan, 1929) 127.

[27] Sohlman and Schuck 127.

[28] Pauli 88.

[29] Pauli 85–86.

[30] Known in English as diatomaceous earth.

Theodore Winkler, an associate of Nobel, was the first to demonstrate dynamite's power in America, blasting boulders for the Bay View Railroad. He began manufacturing it at the Judson and Sheppard Chemical Works at San Francisco. About 1870 James Howden, a San Francisco chemist, was the first of many to improve the dynamite formula, making it stronger and more efficient and also provoking Nobel into one of many patent infringement legal battles with overseas competitors.[31] The "Giant Powder Company" was incorporated in the USA in August of 1867. For decades after, Westerners never spoke of dynamite but of "Giant No. 1." "Hercules Powder" became a competitor of Giant during the 1870s. Nobel was also experimenting with new formulas.[32]

The first use of dynamite as a weapon of war took place during the Prussian War of 1870, when the Germans destroyed bridges, roads, and other strategic targets to quickly defeat the opposing French armies. Since at a later date, anarchists were to be so closely associated with dynamite, it is highly ironic that a coalition force of German and French armies used high explosive shells to aid in defeating the French Communards and anarchists who had taken over the streets of Paris in the Commune of 1871. Pauli reports that when the Commune was evidently collapsing, the anarchists executed hostages, set fire to the Tuileries, and used their own remaining dynamite to blow up public buildings. An estimated 20,000 communards and anarchists were killed or executed by the French-German coalition force in reclaiming control over Paris.[33]

3. Blasting Gelatin. In 1875 Nobel combined collodion cotton (a small proportion of nitrocellulose in ether alcohol) with nitroglycerin to form a more flexible blasting gelatin. This original combination was varied in its proportions (7%, 3%, 2.5%) and was much more powerful than the original dynamite he had marketed. Blasting gelatin could be formed into either a stiff jelly or a plastic, semi-liquid mass, providing the flexibility and added power that blasters in mining, damming, and road building were looking for. Later, the basic blasting gelatin formula was varied with certain nitrates and other hydrocarbons to form explosives called superdynamite, gelatin dynamite, gelignite, etc.[34]

4. Ballistite. In 1887 and 1888 Nobel patented a smokeless powder, which he called ballistite, by combining equal parts of nitroglycerin and nitrocellulose and 10% camphor.[35] This combination of nitroglycerin and guncotton,[36] both powerful explosives, made a substance that could not be ignited in the normal sense. The ballistite could be

[31] *Blaster's Handbook: A Manual Describing Explosives and Practical Methods of Using Them,* 4th ed., (Wilmington, Delaware: DuPont, 1958), 4–8.

[32] Pauli 112.

[33] Pauli 130.

[34] Sohlman and Schuck 171.

[35] Ballistite was known as cordite in Great Britain and there was some controversy between Nobel and the British over the patent for this innovation.

[36] A German Chemist, Christian Schonbein, invented *Schiessbaumwolle* (or guncotton as it came to be known) in 1846, the same year Sobrero invented nitroglycerin. Much of the world's military adopted the guncotton explosive because it did not leave battlefields clouded with smoke. Di Salvatore points

pressed between steam-heated rollers, and when heated, could be molded into skeins or tubes.[37] A related development, TNT (tri-nitro-toluene) was relatively low in sensitivity like ballistite and could be melted and cast into bombs and shells, properties that made it the most popular military explosive of the World War I era. The flexibility, malleability, and greater safety of these last two innovations of dynamite solidly established it as the high explosive of choice worldwide, making Nobel a very wealthy and influential man.

The Uses of Dynamite in Peace, War, and Terror

Dynamite explosives were first used successfully on a large scale in the USA with the excavations for the Musconnetcong Tunnel in Pennsylvania. A blast of 288,936 pounds of dynamite was used to remove Flood Rock in the Hell Gate section of the East River Channel connecting Long Island Sound with Upper New York Bay on 10 October 1885. Other notable blasting has occurred in the construction of the Panama Canal, the Grand Coulee Dam, the Adams Tunnel, the New York water supply and subway system and in the mining of iron, gold, copper, silver, salt, limestone, and coal.[38]

The best known artistic use of dynamite was Gutzon (John) Borglum's process of "carving" and blasting rock from Mt. Rushmore to sculpt the likenesses of Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, and Lincoln. Less known is Piotr Kowalski's sculpture on the Long Beach State campus, *Dynamite,* formed by a series of underwater explosives.[39] Evelyn Rosenberg is pioneering a new art form called detonography, in which explosives are used to press a metal plate against molds to create a bas-reliefs of mythological and zoological images.[40]

By 1900 the production of dynamite in the United States had reached a total in excess of 85 million pounds. In 1956, high explosives for domestic consumption amounted to almost one billion pounds, an amount much greater than produced during the World War II era. However, the "dynamite era," from a commercial standpoint, came to an end by the beginning of the sixties as ammonium nitrate-based explosives (ANFO and slurries called SE's and SBA's) began to dominate the market. In both the recent major terrorist bombings in the USA, the New York World Trade Center and Oklahoma City, the "simple" explosive "formula" of ammonium nitrate, diesel fuel, and for delivery a rented Ryder truck or van was widely publicized.

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out that later calibrations of the nitration solution led to innovations such as celluloid, cellophane, and synthetic fibers like rayon (49).

[37] Sohlman and Schuck 173–74.

[38] *Blaster's Handbook* 4–8.

[39] Douglas Davis, *Art and the Future: A History of the Collaboration between Science, Technology, and Art* (New York: Praeger, 1965) 110.

[40] "Evelyn Rosenberg: She's an Artist whose Explosives Make Art," *Smithsonian* December 1987:167–74.

Ironically, considering the millions who have died from high explosives in the form of bombs, mortar or artillery shells, grenades, and missiles, Nobel had high hopes that his invention would bring peace to the world.[41] In a letter to his former secretary and housekeeper (for a week!) and long-time friend, Bertha von Suttner, who was a leader in the pacifist movement and would later win a Nobel Peace Prize, Nobel wrote,

> My [dynamite] factories may end the war sooner than your congresses. The day when two army corps will be able to destroy each other in one second, all civilized nations will recoil from war in horror and disband their armies.[42]

In another letter to Bertha von Suttner in January 1893, adhering to the idea that war might be avoided by means of a unified military action against the country breaking the peace, Nobel wrote in more depth of another plan he had to help establish world peace,

> I should like to allot part of my fortune to the formation of a prize fund to be distributed in every period of five years (we may say six times for if we have failed at the end of thirty years in reforming the present system we shall inevitably revert to barbarism). This prize would be awarded to the man or woman who had done most to advance the idea of general peace in Europe. I do not refer to disarmament, which can be achieved only by very slow degrees. I do not even necessarily refer to compulsory arbitration between the nations; but what I have in view is that we should soon achieve the result-undoubtedly a practical one-that all states should bind themselves absolutely to take action against the first aggressor. Wars will then become impossible, and we should succeed in compelling even the most quarrelsome state either to have recourse to a tribunal, or to remain quiet If the Triple Alliance instead of comprising three states were to secure the adherence of all, secular peace would be insured for the world.[43]

History has proven Nobel's civilized hopes for mankind to be unjustified. No nation has recoiled in horror and disbanded armies because of the devastating force of

[41] Like Nobel, Orville and Wilbur Wright expressed their view that aeronautics would make war so terrible that nations would be afraid to wage it lest they be totally destroyed. Thomas Edison's reasoning was similar. He urged all governments to "produce instruments of death so terrible that presently all men and every nation would well know that war would mean the end of civilization" (qtd. in Franklin 76). Edison's recommendations for further development included aviation weapons, gases that would cause asphyxiation or worse, and atomic energy. Edward Teller, inventor of the hydrogen bomb, refused to sign Leo Szilard's petition against using the bomb, arguing that the weapon was so horrible that it might actually help "to get rid of wars" (Franklin 153).

[42] Sohlman and Schuck 227.

[43] Sohlman and Schuck 233.

high explosives or the potential threat of nuclear bombs, nor have countries routinely banded together to attack aggressors, though in a few instances the United Nations has attempted this function.

In his will, signed 27 November 1895, Nobel established the prize he had first proposed in his letter to Frau von Suttner, "for the person who shall have done the most effective work for promoting friendly relations between the peoples, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies, and for the formation and increase of peace congresses."[44] The sum of $9 million was put into "safe securities" to draw from for the prizes. The five categories established were physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature, and peace; economics was added as a sixth in 1968. Today, the award can be worth as much as a million dollars.

Though one of Nobel's expressed original intentions was that the literary prize be awarded to a struggling writer showing promise (perhaps identifying with the artistic dilemma he himself had faced early in life), the award normally comes towards the end of a writer's career. Nobel Laureate George Bernard Shaw described the prize as "a lifebelt thrown to a swimmer who has already reached the shore,"[45] while John Steinbeck, who received the award in 1962, described it as "an epitaph... a muffling cloak-like vestment that smothers and warps" because few writers produce works of quality after receiving the award.[46]

One undeniable effect of the Nobel prizes has been the almost complete removal of the stigma earlier attached to the Nobel name because of the military and terrorist applications his invention has been used for. At the death of Nobel's brother Ludvig in 1888, a French journalist had mistakenly written and published an obituary for Alfred, referring to him as "the merchant of death." Ironically, now the name Nobel, by an act of associative genius, brings to our remembrance over 600 of the greatest scientific, political, and literary figures of the twentieth century.[47] On another level, though, Nobel follows in the footsteps of his literary precursor Dr. Frankenstein and other "mad scientist" characters, who, after introducing a "promising" technology, try unsuccessfully to redeem their invention from its unforeseen, unexpected destructive applications.

One consequence of the invention of high explosives has been its consistent application over the years on civilian populations as a terror weapon. Though not as immediately devastating as nuclear weaponry, high explosives have been the weapon of choice for twentieth-century wars. John Ralston Saul maintains, the rational technocratic approach in political and military planning has achieved an "institutionalization of a permanent state of war." Saul links this "warping of war from a tool of last resort"

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[44] Sohlman and Schuck 238.

[45] Jackson 220.

[46] "To Professor and Mrs. Eugene Vinaver, 6 November 1962" in Elaine Steinbeck and Robert Wallsten, *Steinbeck: A Life in Letters* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981), 749.

[47] Ironically missing from the list are several of the prominent, early writers in the "dynamite tradition" whose works I will examine in later chapters: Twain, Conrad, and James.

to "abstract methodology and cathartic bloodletting" to the Age of Reason's "killing of God and his replacement by both the Hero and the modern military planner."[48] Today with the Cold War over, more than forty wars are raging around the world with an estimated thousand soldiers and five thousand civilians dying every day as a direct result of those wars.[49] Alvin and Heidi Toffler point out that between 150 and 160 wars and civil conflicts have occurred since 1945. In these wars and conflicts, an estimated 7,200,000 soldiers have died along with a much larger 33 to 40 million civilian deaths.[50] Though the threat of a future nuclear apocalypse often dominates headlines, high explosives in their various forms have accounted for the majority of the casualties listed.

Closer to home, James Popkin reports that "explosive incidents" in the USA are drastically rising—3,541 in 1990—the highest number in fifteen years. Popkin explains that

> the problem is that virtually anyone can make or buy bombs... Anyone at least 21 years old can go to a gun shop and buy black powder, a common pipe bomb ingredient, for about $8.95 per pound, no questions asked. People with no proven explosives training can... buy dynamite-responsible for 8 percent of all domestic bombings—with nothing more than a driver's license.[51]

The New York World Trade Center and Oklahoma City bombings convincingly demonstrate Popkin's point. The danger of bombing attacks, though, is not passed.

Popkin points out that there is a brisk market in how-to field manuals written originally by and for the CIA (Field Expedient Methods for Explosives Preparation) or the U.S. Army. Paladin Press, run by Peder Lund, a former Special forces captain in Vietnam markets seven such explosives manuals. Longtime bestsellers in the explosives publishing market include Johann Most's classic, *Science of Revolutionary Warfare: A Manual of Instruction in the Use and Preparation of Nitroglycerin, Dynamite, Guncotton, Fulminating Mercury, Bombs, Fuses, Poisons, etc., "* Kurt Saxon's *The Poor Man's James Bond,* William Powell's "The Anarchist Cookbook," Tim Lewis's *Kitchen Improvised Plastic Explosives,* or *Ragnar's Guide to Home and Recreational Use of High Explosives.*[52]

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[48] Saul 178.

[49] Saul 180–81.

[50] Alvin and Heidi Toffler. *War and Anti-War: Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (New York: Little, Brown, 1993) 13.

[51] James Popkin, "Bombs over America," *U.S. News and World Report* 29 July 1991: 18–19.

[52] Di Salvatore 53. Delta Press has published over 32 volumes, many of which feature publications such as those listed above. To review their catalogue one need only have Internet access. To receive their catalogue one need only send four dollars to Delta Press, P.O. Box 1625, El Dorado, AR 71731, call toll free 1-800-852-4445, or use a tele-fax line 1-501-862-9671 and a one year subscription can be acquired with information ranging from Johann Most's classic to more recent works on how to make mines or grenades and C-4 or semtex explosives.

The proliferation of high explosives use, though, is not new. One of the first groups, other than official governments, to enter the discourse of high explosives and to advocate their use was the anarchists. Many of the above manuals trace their genesis to certain anarchist leaders, who not only instructed their followers on how to use explosives to gain political advantage, but, as we shall see in the next chapter, inspired some of their followers to use them on world leaders. High explosives as a subversive weapon empowered the weakest citizen to stand up and threaten the security of the strongest government.

Chapter Three: Anarchism: Its History, Definition, Theory, and Practice of Violence

In the political, philosophical, and literary discourse of the anarchist movement, we find the first instance of open and unabashed advocacy of high explosives as a political terror weapon. Though organized governments were to become the major users of high explosives, the subversive, anti-govemment anarchist organizations of the late nineteenth century were to begin the discourse justifying the use of this new "power of the people."

Many major historic moments—1871 (Paris Commune), 1886 (Haymarket), 1920 (Wall Street Bombing), 1927 (Execution of Sacco and Vanzetti), 1937 (Fascist bombing of Guernica)—and world renowned leaders-Henry David Thoreau, Leo Tolstoy, William Morriss, V.I. Lenin, Picasso, George Orwell, Herbert Read, Henry Adams, William Dean Howells, Mahatma Ghandi, and Noam Chomsky-are inextricably linked to anarchism. To help readers get a deeper historical sense of the anarchist ties to the beginnings of "dynamite" literature, I provide in this chapter an overview of anarchism, particularly focusing on the theories and practices that attempted to justify violence by explosive means.

Anarchism

The stereotypical picture of the anarchist portrays a black silhouette of a bearded, caped figure wearing a wide-brimmed hat and with one hand furtively launching a black, spherical bomb with a lit fuse.[1] The figure was developed in the early 1890s in Pip, Squeak, and Wilfred cartoons in which the bomb was often thoughtfully labeled 'BOMB'.[2] Even an early Porky Pig cartoon released in the 1930s by Warner Brothers pictures a small, young Porky thoughtfully trying to return a time bomb (a clock,

[1] The bomb shown is typically made with black powder, not dynamite.

[2] John Quail, *The Slow Burning Fuse* (New York: Paladin, 1978), 169, recognizes that the stereotype of the anarchist related to some of the activities and statements of recognized anarchist militants, but also asserts it had more to do with the activities of *agents provocateurs* like Coulon, whose *Anarchist Feast at the Opera* had been read to such effect at the Walsall trial and the quite blatant use of anti-Anarchist 'black' propaganda in the press. The stereotype endured at least to 1938: "At the mention of anarchism the bourgeois press conjures up a bearded figure wearing a wide-brimmed hat and carrying a

to the naive Porky) to the stereotypical caped anarchist.[3] The anarchist image of a stealthy caped figure with a hat endures to this day, ironically enough, as a patch on a Canadian police bomb squad uniform with the caption "Le Bombe Squad."[4]

Another irony is how the image of the violent anarchist endured in England and the United States despite the fact that up until the First World War only one act of anarchist violence could be traced directly to anarchists in England (the self-inflicted death of Martial Bourdin in 1894)[5] and possibly four to anarchists in the USA: (1) Haymarket [assailant unknown], (2) Henry Frick [stabbed by Alexander Berkman], (3) President William McKinley [shot by Leon Czolgosz], and (4) a failed attempt on John D. Rockefeller [the planned bomb blew up in a Lexington Avenue tenement killing three anarchist men involved in the plot and a woman who apparently knew nothing of it]. The attempt on Rockefeller was intended to avenge the Ludlow Massacre in Colorado, in which the state militia first shot at and then set fire to a tent camp housing the wives and children of striking miners. Rockefeller owned the company that had provoked the violence.[6]

Historically placed in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the philosophical movement of Anarchism attempted to address some of the most perplexing and enduring "Other" questions of the era: the woman question, the labor question, the technology and industrial question, the third world question, the individualist/society question, and, on a lighter note, the "dress and food questions."[7] Most critics point to two general types of anarchist responses to these "Other" questions: one involved an appeal to reason to achieve change while the other resorted to direct action, either by

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home-made bomb in his pocket, and is quite capable, it seems, of crediting Spain with two million such melodramatic characters." See Herbert Read, *Poetry and Anarchism* (New York: Books for Libraries P, [1938] 1972), 42.

[3] See Mark Irwin's, "A Note on 'Porky Pig and the Anarchist' in *The Crying of Lot 49* and *Gravity's Rainbow," Pynchon Notes* (Spring-Fall 1991): 55–57. Peter Hays kindly directed me to this source.

[4] Nathaniel Hong, "Constructing the Anarchist Beast in American Periodical Literature, 1880–1903," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication 9* (1992): 110–30 argues that the creation of the stereotype of "the anarchist beast, with its associations with hereditary criminality, anti-social insanity, aimless terrorism, uncontrollable chaos, and shadowy foreign intruders, negated anarchism's critique of power, hierarchy, and economic inequality."

[5] The newspaper comments on the Greenwich bombing were mostly that the event marked the beginning of an importation of nasty foreign practices to England's green and pleasant land, promoting another popular view of anarchists, namely that they were mostly "foreigners" (Quail 166). On Martial Bourdin, the failed dynamiter of the Greenwich incident, H.B. Samuels, editor of *Commonweal,* wrote: "Such a comrade ... undertook the conveyance of dangerous explosive compounds to a secluded spot, where none could have been injured, in order to put to the test a new weapon of destruction that would have furnished the revolutionary army with another means of terrorizing those who consciously consign so many innocent lives to destitution and despair" (Quail 168).

[6] Margaret Marsh, *Anarchist Women: 1870–1920* (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1981), 30–31.

[7] Isabel Meredith [Helen and Olivia Rossetti], *A Girl among the Anarchists* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, [1903] 1992), 253. Karl Pearson expresses a common Victorian sentiment, stating that the "two great problems of modern social life" are "the problem of women and the problem of labor" in Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Politics at the Fin de Siecle* (New York: Viking, 1990), 7.

civil disobedience (by theft, by strike, or by non-violent *protest-satyagraha)* or by acts of terrorism or violence, usually upon symbolic victims, to "awaken the bourgeois" to their condition or to spark the revolution.

To more fully explain anarchism as a philosophy and practice and its close ties to the justification of high explosives as a minority weapon, I will briefly define the term, present the major statements concerning the use of violence by its leading thinkers, highlight the most significant and influential moments of anarchist violence, and explain the significant connections between anarchism and the early women's movement.

What Is Anarchism

In its simplest terms, anarchy means what its Greek roots suggest—"no one prevails," no one stands in position of power or authority over others. Pierre Proudhon coined the term, which had previously been used only in a pejorative sense, to shock his readers and clearly establish his view of the ideal society: "Whoever lays his hand on me to govern me is a usurper and a tyrant; I declare him to be my enemy ... Government of man by man is slavery [and its laws] are cobwebs for the rich and chains of steel for the poor."[8]

Jacques Ellul traces the source of non-violent anarchy to biblical and Christian sources.[9] James Joll sees the beginnings of anarchism, though it was not called by that name, in counterculture movements such as the Greek Stoics and Cynics, to the early Christian gnostics, Albigensians, and Anabaptists. He presents the example of Thomas Muntzer and the Peasants' Revolt in Germany during the sixteenth century to illustrate the extremes such "anarchist" movements can take. Muntzer "plunged into the most violent agitation, demanding the immediate destruction of the existing order of things in order to prepare the way, here and now, for the advent of the Kingdom of God upon the Earth."[10] According to Joli, Rousseau's idea that "man was born free and is everywhere in chains" is a guiding principle in all anarchist thought[11] Because of its constant stress on individualism—the natural, the spontaneous, and the unsystematic—anarchism's major tenets have many parallels to populist and libertarian movements and to the belief systems of certain mystic eastern religions such as Taoism and Zen Buddhism.

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[8] For a fuller sense of the depth and complexity of the movement excellent reference works include Paul Nursey-Bray, *Anarchist Thinkers and Thought: An Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood P, 1992) and Daniel Guerin, *Anarchism from Theory to Practice* (New York: Monthly Review P, 1970). My own brief treatment here attempts to focus just on the veins of anarchist thought relating to violence and a justification of violence, since these are most closely related to the use of explosives.

[9] Jacques Ellul, *Anarchy and Christianity,* trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdman's P, 1988).

[10] James Joll, *The Anarchists* (London: Methuen, 1979), 23.

[11] Joli 30.

The nineteenth and twentieth century genealogy of contributors to the philosophy of anarchist thought might include, in more or less chronological order, men such as William Godwin, Pierre Proudhon, Henry David Thoreau, Benjamin Tucker, Michael Bakunin, Enrico Malatesta, Friedrich Nietzsche, Peter Kropotkin, William Morris, Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, Ricardo Flores Magon, Emiliano Zapata, Herbert Read, Lewis Mumford, George Woodcock, Paul Goodman, and Noam Chomsky,[12] and women such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Charlotte Wilson, Louise Michel, Olivia and Helen Rossetti, Margaret Anderson, Helena Born, Voltairine de Cleyre, Marie Ganz, Emma Goldman, Florence Finch Kelly, Marie L. Mollie Steimer, Lois Waisbrooker, and Victoria Woodhull.[13] Attracted to the words of such "propagandists of the word" and their liberating philosophies was a wide and diverse following which included idealistic youth, feminists, foreign workers, war veterans, the poor, and prominent literary authors like Turgenev (a friend of Bakunin) in *Fathers and Sons,* Stephane Mallarme, and Emile Zola, in his novel *Germinal.*

An early synthesis of anarchist beliefs was formulated and published by *Liberty,* an anarchist periodical published in the 1880s:

> (1) reject all forms of externally imposed authority; (2) abolish the state; (3)create an ideal state of free choice with the one proscription of not interfering with the liberty of others; (4) accept the cost and consequences of individual actions; and (5) restrict private ownership to the land that an individual would both occupy and use. (Marsh 10–11)

Herbert Read's catalogue of anarchist belief half a century later includes some of the more constructive goals associated with anarchism:

> I. The liberty of the person.
>
> II. The integrity of the family.
>
> III. The reward of qualifications.
>
> IV. The self-government of the guilds.
>
> V. The abolition of parliament and centralized government.

[12] Joll mentions many of these male anarchists in his book. Godwin's fundamental political thought is optimistic, that justice and happiness are indissolubly linked and thus that progressive improvement is possible: "The subject of property is the keystone that completes the fabric of political justice" (Joli 33). His belief was that machinery might soon enable manual labor to be abolished most completely. Much of the disillusionment at the end of the century was due to the failed promise of the liberation the Machine was supposed to bring. On the subject of free thought, Godwin wrote, "All formal repetition of other men's ideas seems to be a scheme for imprisoning for so long a time the operations of our own mind... We should give immediate utterance to every useful and valuable idea that occurs to our thoughts" (Joli 34).

[13] The ten previous anarchist women listed are separated from socialists, suffragists, and other labor activists (Marsh 176).

VI. The institution of arbitrament.

VII. The delegation of authority.

VIII. The humanization of industry.[14]

Though the catalogues seem straightforward enough, as in most movements, foundational and derivative positions were often debated, but the effect was certainly amplified in a movement that encouraged individual expression. Some of the debated issues within anarchism have included free love, propoganda by force, the relativity of morality, the efficacy of syndicalism (trade unions), communal ownership (cooperatives), and the relevance of religion, particularly apocalyptic beliefs, to the ideals of anarchism.

Manifestations of anarchist thought and action often surfaced as justifications for youth revolts or riots.[15] Herbert Read attributes the source of feeling for such happenings to a rejection of established authority:

> I would define the anarchist as the man who, in his manhood [or womanhood], dares to resist the authority of the father; who is no longer content to be governed by a blind unconscious identification of the leader and the father and by the inhibited instincts which alone make such an identification possible. Freud... sees the heroic myth in such a longing for independence.[16]

Some of the suspicion and rejection of "the father" Read speaks of can be tied to the upsetting of the traditional patriarchal dominance hierarchy that existed before the dynamite era. In their turn, the "new" technologies of the sword, longbow, and gunpowder had had similar republican effects, but the multiplication of force inherent in high explosives had the potential to overturn any claim to dominance either by physical force or by numbers.[17]

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[14] George Woodcock, *Anarchism and Anarchists: Essays* (Kingston, Ontario: Quarry P, 1992), 216.

[15] See Anthony Esler, *Bombs, Beards, and Barricades: 150 Years of Youth in Revolt* (New York: Stein and Day, 1971) for an overview of some of the more recent youth revolts. The Beats such as Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Micheline, Kenneth Rexroth, and Jack Kerouac typify the youth revolt. Ferlinghetti describes the 1968 student uprising at the Sorbonne, Paris, a "libertarian revolt of the young, a youth revolt against boring society in general, a global revolt against what they saw as the false values of their elders with their entrenched hierarchies and hereditary authorities backed up by the state and the whole apparatus of control" (qtd. in O'Kane 53).

[16] Read 48–49.

[17] For an in-depth discussion of dominance hierarchies and their prevalence in the animal world, particularly primates, see Carl Sagan and Ann Druyan, *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors: A Search for Who We Are* (New York: Ballantyne, 1992). A brief excerpt: "The very recent history of human warfare provides a contrast [to animal dominance hierarchies]: The alphas-generally old men—sequester themselves in safety, often where the young women are, and dispatch subordinates-generally young men—out to fight and die. In no other species have alpha males gotten away with such cushy arrangements for themselves" (207).

Some of the early threatening aspects of "anarchism by force" are evident in David Nicoll's Manifesto in the first issue of the *Anarchist,* published in March 1894. In this Manifesto, Nicoll summarizes the common extreme anarchist positions being advocated by various anarchist publications of the time, such as *Freedom, Liberty,* and the *Torch,* tendering at the end the less violent strategies of passive resistance-witholding rent and the universal strike:

> We are Revolutionary Anarchists and declare for the complete destruction of the existing society. We seek to put in its place free co-operative associations of work-men who shall own land, capital and all the means of production. We would sweep away all forms of Government and we desire neither to rule others or to be ruled ourselves.
>
> We seek to realise that freedom which is only possible by every man being ready to defend his own liberty without seeking to trample on the liberty of others.
>
> We are Communists. We do not seek to establish an improved wages system like the Fabian Social Democrats. We do not see that it is possible to reward a man according to his deeds; nor do we think that lack of skill or ability shall be any reason why any man should lack the necessaries of life. There is enough for all; then all who are willing to work should have enough ...
>
> DYNAMITE IS NOT ANARCHY
>
> It is the weapon of men driven to desperation by intolerable suffering and oppression. Our ideal can be realised without it, if the rich will let us. Our work for the present lies in spreading our ideas among the workers in their clubs and organisations as well as in the open street. So long as we can express our ideas freely we shall be content with advocating
>
> PASSIVE RESISTANCE.
>
> All we need can be obtained by the general refusal of the workers to pay rent to a landlord or to work for a capitalist.
>
> NO RENT AND THE UNIVERSAL STRIKE.[18]

Though violence is downplayed by Nicoll as a primary option in this Manifesto, it had a very real place in the doctrines advocated by many major anarchist thinkers and practitioners.

The Anarchist Credo of force

There has been continued disagreement among anarchists and writers about anarchists concerning the extent of violence actually perpetrated by anarchists throughout

[18] Quail 195–96.

the movement's history.[19] The role of the *agent provocateur* looms large in this respect. Adamic asserts that "there is no doubt that in industrial warfare the police and other agents of the established order frequently employ criminals to perform deeds of violence which are then blamed upon those who oppose that order, thereby discrediting them as tainted by inhuman acts."[20] Without a doubt, however, statements from many major anarchist leaders justified violence and blatantly encouraged "propoganda of the deed."[21] To understand the justification of violence within the movement it is best to examine the actual words of leaders and perpetrators of this propoganda.

Michael Bakunin was the first to refute Proudhon's reliance on initiating change exclusively through the use of reason, claiming "the passion for destruction is also a creative urge." Bakunin's theories, in contrast to those of Karl Marx who believed in an organized and directed revolution, envisioned a spontaneous and violent revolution that would eliminate the existing order when workers would be roused to passion for freedom and overthrow their current government One cannot help wondering whether the dynamite metaphor, particularly the principle of primary ignition, was behind the inspiration of Bakunin's "scientific" views of human behavior. Tuchman explains that his ideas took root in the Russian Narodniki populist program, where "the Bomb was to be the Messiah." The program stated, "Terrorist activity consisting in destroying the most harmful person in government, aims to undermine the prestige of the government and arouse in this manner the revolutionary spirit of the people and their confidence in the success of their cause."[22] Neither the Paris Commune of 1871 nor the asassinations of six heads of state from 1881 to 1912[23] had the expected results Bakunin had

[19] See for example a publication by the Libertarian Socialist Organization of Queensland, *You Can't Blow Up a Social Relationship: The Anarchist Case against Terrorism* (1978), which cites numerous Australian examples to demonstrate that terrorist activities are more generally carried out by state terrorism, especially police frame-ups. See also R. Hunter's *Violence and the Labor Movement* (New York: Arno P, 1969) which outlines the debate about political versus "direct action" (a euphemism for force), labeling the first social democracy, the second anarchism. Hunter argues that anarchism's enduring legacy is terrorism and violence.

[20] Louis Adamic, *Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence in America* (New York: Viking P, [1931] 1934), 95. The *agent provocateur* makes an early appearance in anarchist history. At an International Congress meeting of anarchists and socialists in 1881, the English members attending included a suspicious unknown called C. Hall, who could well have been the English counterpart of the French police spy Serreaux who also attended the conference (Quail 16).

[21] Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World before the War, 1890–1914* (New York: MacMillan, 1966). This phrase was first used by French Socialist Paul Brousse in 1878: "The Idea is on the march and we must seek to inaugurate the propoganda of the deed. Through a royal breast is the way to open the road to revolution." An Italian anarchist, Errico Malatesta, however, expressed the same sentiment two years earlier in 1876, "The *insurrectionary deed,* destined to affirm socialist principles by acts, is the most efficacious means of propoganda" (Tuchman 71).

[22] Tuchman 66.

[23] Tuchman 63. The assassinated included President Carnot of France (1894), Premier Canovas of Spain (1897), Empress Elizabeth of Austria (1898), King Humbert of Italy (1900), President McKinley of the USA (1901), Premier Canalejas of Spain (1912). In 1887 there was an attempt by five students to assassinate Alexander III by hurling a bomb. Alexander Ulyanov, their leader, justified the violence

imagined; nonetheless, the idea that oppressed nations, workers, minorities, or other special interest groups could be freed by disorganized, spontaneous, violent individual acts carries on in the streets of London and other major cities today.[24]

After Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, the exiled Russian prince, became the chief theoretician of Communist-anarchism in the 1880s by arguing for the abolition of private property: "At the heart of Kropotkin's social theory was his belief that the essential characteristic of human beings was their desire to cooperate with others in order to secure the basic needs of life... the individual was 'essentially a social being who can achieve full development only in society, while society can benefit only if its members are free.'"[25] Some of Kropotkin's favorite metaphors in his theory of "mutual aid" were rabbits, ants, bees, horses, and cattle, communal examples illustrating his direct opposition to Darwin's theories of the "survival of the fittest." Kropotkin pointed out that Darwin's competitive "survival of the fittest" theory was later modified in his "Descent of Man," in which he presented a different view of the struggle for life: "Those communities which included the greatest number of sympathetic members would flourish best and rear the greatest number of offspring."[26]

Kropotkin's cooperative theories notwithstanding, violence was also a very real part of his plan to revolutionize society. He urged propoganda by "speech and written word, by dagger, gun and dynamite" and echoed the words of Brousse and Malatesta, "A single deed is better propaganda than a thousand pamphlets."[27]

In 1891, Kropotkin's views on the efficacy of individual acts of violence appeared to soften:

> It is not these heroic acts that make revolutions. Revolution is above all a mass movement... Institutions rooted in centuries of history are not destroyed by a few pounds of explosives. The time for such action has passed and the time for the anarchist and communist idea to penetrate the masses has come.[28]

Later in the nineties, though, in response to French and Spanish bombings, Kropotkin would write more empathetically, "men are driven to despair, so they make

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as the only method possible in a police state. After his execution, his younger brother Vladimir Ilyich, changed his name to Lenin and led a more successful attempt at revolution in 1917 (Tuchman 110).

[24] Often confused with anarchists, Fenian dynamiters assaulted London, Liverpool, and Glasgow between 1880 and 1887 with a series of "dynamite outrages." Teams of bombers whose leadership, financing, and personnel came from two Irish-American organizations based in the USA (Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa's Skirmishers and Clan na Gael) used dynamite as a terror weapon "to force Westminster to withdraw from Ireland and allow the development of a free and independent nation." Such bomb attacks have become almost synonymous with the IRA and other groups, such as the Molly Maguires, since that time. See Kenneth Short, *The Dynamite War: Irish-American Bombers in Victorian Britain* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1979), 1.

[25] Marsh 13.

[26] Marsh 43.

[27] Tuchman 71–72.

[28] Tuchman 72.

desperate acts ... it is one thing to *read* about persecutions and another to see one's dearest killed, tortured, broken for life by the prosecutors."[29]

The London and international anarchists were hardly united in advocating violence, however, as the anarchist press reactions to the acts of Ravachol, August Vaillant, Emile Henry, Michel Angiolillo, and Paul Reclus indicate. Nonetheless, Kropotkin's extensive writings were a part of the inspiration behind much of the activity of the socialist and anarchist movements in Great Britain at the end of the nineteenth century-one of the four great figures of anarchist thought. Woodcock asserts, along with Godwin, Proudhon, and Bakunin.[30] To this elite group might be added Georges Sorel, a retired French engineer who became the major spokesperson for anarcho-syndicalism, an enduring anarchist technique relying on trade unionism and the strike.

Significant Moments of Anarchist Violence

It has been said that whenever there has been a great threat to the extinction of either the individual or individual rights, there has been a flowering of anarchist activity. The dates 1789, 1848, 1871, May 1886, and May 1968 conjure for the mind the largest mass protests against oppressive regimes, protests which often resulted in ever-widening circles of violence. Of course, between 1886 and 1968, socially condoned violence at wartime became commonplace, reaching its apex in the saturation bombing of civilian populations in cities.[31] Though minor by comparison to wartime violence, the major moments of anarchist violence in British and American history and their justifications are outlined below as examples of civilization's first reactions to the new technology of bombing others as a means of asserting one's own political power or force.

British Anarchism: John Quail, preeminent historian of British anarchism, describes a gathering on May Day, 1886, in London.[32] The mass meeting attracted a crowd of over 18,000 demonstrators, who marched to Hyde Park, protesting for an

[29] Hermia Oliver, *The International Anarchist Movement in Late Victorian London* (New York: St. Martin's P, 1983), 86.

[30] Peter A. Kropotkin, *Modern Science and Anarchism* (London: Freedom P, 1923).

[31] During the Spanish Civil War, the German air force "experimented" on Madrid to see what panicking effects aerial bombing might have on a civilian population. From 16–19 November 1936, over one thousand were killed. In a later bombing made famous by Picasso's abstract painting *Guernica,* German Heinkels and Junkers bombed the ancient capital of the Basques in efficient waves of bombers that arrived every twenty minutes for four hours, destroying 70 per cent of the town and one fourth of the population. David Craig and Michael Egan, *Extreme Situations: Literature and Crisis from the Great War to the Atom Bomb* (London: MacMillan P, 1979), 253–54.

[32] Year One of English Anarchism is normally given as 1886, the same year as the Haymarket bombing in the USA and the establishment of *Freedom,* but Quail disagrees, citing evidence of earlier anarchist activities in Britain: "In 1881 James MacDonald was told by the landlord of a pub in Tottenham Street, Soho, that in another room there was a meeting of 'some of the most red-hot Fenians and dynamiters in England'" (19).

eight-hour work day. The march was organized by various trade unions and socialist bodies. One thousand anarchists gathered afterwards at Reformers Tree:

> Behind the platform were two large banners, one reading 'Anarchist Communism' and 'Revolution and Anarchy,' and the other 'If the people when oppressed are silent such is stupidity, the forerunner of the downfall of public liberty.' Tocchati denounced police spies. H.B. Samuels followed Leggatt's assertions that Anarchism did not imply violence with counter-assertions as to the necessity for it and praised the example of Ravachol to cheers from the audience who had listened with some impatience to Leggat's disavowals. Louise Michael then spoke, in French, saying that as fast as Anarchists were jailed new Anarchists sprang up to take their place... The meeting broke up after three hours with three cheers for Anarchy.[33]

Quail reports that the pro- and anti-dynamite debate that began in this early anarchist meeting was one that would recur often in anarchist circles.

On 13 November 1887, a series of protests, including marches to Trafalgar Square and Westminster Abbey, over homelessness, joblessness, and coercion in Ireland, culminated in "Bloody Sunday," a brutal state-sponsored police action of beatings and arrests to suppress the movement.[34] From that day, Bloody Sunday joined the list of other annual anarchist commemorations, which already included a May Day commemoration for the Chicago Haymarket martyrs and for the martyrs of the Paris Commune of 1871.[35]

British anarchism may have begun as a primarily foreign phenomenon, but that changed as the movement grew. Quail refers to an article on anarchists published in December of 1894 by *The Weekly Times and Echo,* which reported that there were some seven to eight thousand anarchists, 2,000 of whom were Russian Jews in the East End, 1,000 Germans mainly around Soho Square and the Middlesex Hospital, a small and violent colony of400 French anarchists in the Charlotte Street area, and 3,000 to 4,000 English anarchists in Canning Town and Deptford. William Morris had calculated the membership of the London Socialist League in 1891 at 120, so the growth over the intervening three years was explosive. "It is significant," the paper reported, "that recently a band of comrades headed by a young and highly intellectual lady have been pursuing their work at the docks with absolutely fanatical earnestness and have

[33] Quail 129–30.

[34] Quail 69–71.

[35] In January 1905, a massacre of about one thousand workingmen, who were petitioning for a constitution in front of the Winter Palace of Czar, came to be known as "Bloody Sunday" in Russian history. The Grand Duke Sergei, who was viewed as one responsible for the massacre, was "blown up with a bomb thrown by a young revolutionary named Kaliaev, who was left standing alive in the midst of the debris ... All that was left of the Grand Duke and his carriage and horses was a formless mass of fragments about eight or ten inches high" (Tuchman 112).

swept into their associations considerable numbers, notably the younger men."[36] The woman was undoubtedly Olivia Rossetti, the band was the Torch Group of anarchists, but the implication that a young, intellectual lady was a major contributing factor to attracting the thousands of young men who joined the anarchist movment is repudiated by common sense and the Rossettis' own fictional biography (under the pseudonym Isabel Meredith) reporting on that time—*A Girl Among the Anarchists* (1903).

The only bombing directly attributable to anarchists in London occurred in February of 1894. Martial Bourdin, in an incident made famous by Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907), blew himself up with a bomb outside the Greenwich Observatory. Bourdin, who had been in England for seven years, was the twenty-six-year-old brother of a tailor, Henri Bourdin, and brother-in-law of the famous London anarchist H.B. Samuels, who had praised the 1893 opera house bombing in Barcelona in which twenty-two died and fifty were wounded as a "great and good act."[37] Samuels was reported to have had some influence on Bourdin, though eventually among anarchists he was suspected of having been a secret agent for the police, a theory against which Oliver argues.

On Martial's body was discovered an Autonomie Club membership card and a significant sum of money (thirteen pounds). It was soon discovered that he had belonged to the anarchist group known as the "Needles," named so because of their affiliation with tailors. His information about bomb-making had apparently come from a recipe he had transcribed from a source in the British Museum, the bomb itself, according to explosives expert Colonel Vivian Majendie, not being "one of the authorised explosives within the meaning of [the Explosive Substances Act of 1883]." At Bourdin's apartment other explosives were found hidden in furniture, along with assorted pictures of public persons and beautiful women.[38]

American Anarchism: Marsh explains the horror and fascination Americans had for the anarchists by explaining that many Americans agreed with the issues raised by the anarchists but "feared the idea of absolute liberty as a solution... Because the anarchists went to extremes, because they stood so conspicuously outside the mainstream, and because they did not try to conceal the depth of their hatred for modern society, they were ideal scapegoats who could be blamed for the unrest that gripped the society."[39]

Louis Adamic provides a sense of the anarchist movement's growth in the USA. One of the most infamous anarchists was Johann Most, a German bookbinder with a deformed face, a bushy beard. He arrived in New York in 1882 and quickly became the popular press's choice for their personification of anarchist malevolence. Most pub-

[36] Quail 193.

[37] Tuchman 86; Oliver 87,99–109, provides a very complete rendition of the "facts" about the case, many of which I have reproduced here.

[38] Andre Brink, *An Act of Terror* (New York: Vintage, 1993) duplicates these personal findings in his novel when his dynamiter's apartment is raided.

[39] Marsh 9.

lished a pamphlet entitled "The Scientific Revolutionary Warfare and Dynamite Guide," which contained detailed instructions for the making of bombs and suggested that his followers consider burglary, arson, and poison as useful weapons in the class struggle.[40] Johann Most's cry was "Extirpate the miserable brood!"[41]—meaning all politicians and exploiters of the masses-a cry reminiscent of Kurtz's in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness.* Adamic points out that in the violent labor wars that would follow, particularly those involving miners, high explosives became a weapon of choice.

In a recent book, Paul Avrich, renowned scholar of American anarchism, catalogues the history of two of the better-known anarchists, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, who were convicted of murder and robbery in 1921. Sacco and Vanzetti belonged to an Italian anarchist-communist activist group known as the Galleanists, named after their founder Luigi Galleani, who summarized their position thus: "When we talk about property, State, masters, government, laws, courts, and police, we say only that we don't want any of them."[42] During World War I Galleani carried on a campaign against the war, publishing articles praising those who used violence against oppressors and tyrants and providing them with a forty-six page bomb manual. In response to Galleani's imprisonment and deportation in April 1919, a conspiracy of fifty or sixty Galleanists began making and planting bombs ("plant the poof' was their terminology), sending thirty through the mails to prominent citizens during April, May, and June, including one to Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, who was unharmed as were the other potential victims. After this wave of letter bombing, most Galleanists were arrested, deported, fled, or went into hiding. Of two who were arrested and held illegally for two months, one Andrea Salsedo, apparently committed suicide by jumping from the fourteenth floor of a Park Row building in New York City.

The major bombing by a Galleanist was performed by Mario Buda, who was protesting the arrest of Sacco and Vanzetti. On 16 September 1920, Buda's bomb ignited on the corner of Wall and Broad streets, killing thirty-three and injuring more than 200, the most lethal explosion in the USA until the recent Oklahoma City bombing. Buda escaped after this incident, but Sacco and Vanzetti may have become "innocent" scapegoats for his and others' actions. Despite world wide appeals to save them, including efforts by intellectuals like John Dos Passos, H. L. Mencken, Heywood Brown, and Edna St. Vincent Millay, they were executed, much like the Chicago anarchists who had preceded them as martyrs in 1887.

The central and seminal anarchist moment of violence in America is undoubtedly the Haymarket Affair.[43] Albert Parsons, later charged with inciting the violence at Hay-

[40] Marsh 12.

[41] Adamic 45–46.

[42] Martin Blatt, "Two Good Men," review of *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (Princeton UP, 1991) in *The Nation* 3 June 1991,2.

[43] For France the central moment was the Paris Commune of 1871. A series of bombings in the 1890s, however, are more directly tied to an 1891 May Day workers' demonstration in Clichy, which was disrupted by mounted police. Five police were slightly wounded and three anarchist leaders severely

market, also advocated the use of dynamite in the strongest of terms. In the anarchist newspaper he edited, *Alarm,* he wrote on 21 February 1885:

> *Dynamite!* Of all the good stuff, that is the stuff! Stuff several pounds of this sublime stuff into an inch pipe (gas or water pipe), plug up both ends, insert cap with a fuse attached, place this in the immediate vicinity of a lot of rich loafers who live by the sweat of other people's brows, and light the fuse. A most cheerful and gratifying result will follow. In giving dynamite to the downtrodden millions of the globe science has done its best work... A pound of this good stuff beats a bushel of ballots all hollow-and don't you forget it! Our lawmakers might as well try to sit down on the crater of a volcano or on the point of a bayonet as to endeavour to stop the manufacture and use of dynamite."[44]

Parson's words were more disturbing to Americans than Most's because he could not be simply passed off as an ignorant, brutish "foreigner"—he was a Civil War veteran from the South who could reason effectively and write incisively about the social inequities suffered at the time by the underclasses.

After the bomb had been thrown at the Haymarket "Riot" in Chicago, sixty-seven police had been wounded and seven had died. One newspaper would report,

> For the first time dynamite has been used in the United States for the destruction of human life... The Haymarket Bomb is the Adam of the 'pineapples' that go off nowadays in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and elsewhere in the cause of all sorts of 'rackets,' as well as the cause of organized labor.[45]

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wounded. The police arrested the three wounded anarchist leaders and then subjected them to a *passage a tabac,* making them pass through two lines of policeman "under kicks and blows and beatings with revolver butts" (Tuchman 77). An attempt was made by the prosecuting attorney to sentence the beaten anarchists to death for "incitement," but the judge acquitted one and sentenced the other two to five and three year prison terms.

Ravachol was responsible for two bombings in 1892 to avenge the anarhists who had been assaulted a year earlier in Clichy, a suburb of Paris; Emile Henry was a suspect in 8 November 1892 for a bomb killing six policemen; August Vaillant threw a bomb on 9 December 1893 into the Chambre des Deputes, wouding several; he was the first man in France to receive a death penalty in the nineteenth century who himself had not killed; Emile Henry was arrested and convicted of throwing a bomb at the Cafe Terminus of the Gare St-Lazare, killing one and injuring twenty; Jean Pauwels, a Belgian Anarchist, was responsible for three bombings—one in the Rue St-Jacques, one in the Fauborg St-Germain, and one in the Church of the Madeleine (Tuchman 88–93).

[44] Adamic 47.

[45] Adamic 74–75. The newspaper would prove to be prophetic. Bombings became popular throughout America, particularly in labor conflicts involving miners. Big Bill Haywood believed in violence, and openly advocated and practiced it. During his trial for blowing up the ex-Governor of Idaho on December 30,1905, membership in the Western Federation of Miners and the Industrial Workers of the World increased over 10,000. (Adamic 155). Estolv Ethan Ward, *The Gentle Dynamiter: A Biography*

Even though none of the eight anarchist men charged in the Haymarket case were accused of having thrown the bomb, the charge was murder because their inflammatory speeches and editorials, the prosecution argued, had prompted the bomb-thrower-whoever he was—to commit the crime. After August Spies, Michel Schwab, Oscar Neebe, Adolph Fischer, Louis Lingg, George Engel, and Samuel Fielden had spoken in their defence at the Haymarket Trials in Chicago on 7–9 October 1886, Albert R. Parsons, a member of the Printer's Union, defended himself by pleading guilty of choosing to be a "wage slave" instead of master and owner of slaves himself. I will present an extended quote from Parson's speech because it speaks to many of the central issues relating anarchism to the use of high explosives.

> Every new machine that comes into existence comes there as a competitor with the man of labor. Every machine under the capitalistic system that is introduced into industrial affairs comes as a competition, as a drag and menace and a prey to the very existence of those who have to sell their labor in order to earn their bread...
>
> I am called a dynamiter. Why? Did I ever use dynamite? No. Did I ever have one? No. Do I know anything about them? No. WHY THEN AM I CALLED A DYNAMITER? Listen, and I will tell you. Gunpowder in the fifteenth century marked an era in the world's history. It was the downfall of the mail armor of the knight, the freebooter, and the robber of the period. It enabled the victims of these highway robbers to stand off at a distance in a safe place and defend themselves by the use of gunpowder, and make a ball enter and pierce into the flesh of their robbers and destroyers. Gunpowder came as a democratic instrument. It came as a republican institution, and the effect was that it immediately began to equalize and bring about an equilibrium of power. There was less power in the hands of the nobility after that; less power in the hands of the king; less power in the hands of those who would plunder and degrade and destroy the people after that.
>
> So today DYNAMITE COMES AS THE EMANCIPATOR OF MAN from the domination and enslavement of his fellow-man... Dynamite is the diffusion of power. It is democratic; it makes everybody equal. General Sheridan says 'arms are worthless' in the presence of this instrument Nothing can meet it. The Pinkertons, the police, the militia, are absolutely worthless in the presence of dynamite... It is the equilibrium. It is the annihilator. It is the disseminator of power. It is the downfall of oppression. It is the

of Tom Mooney (Palo Alto, California: Ramparts P, 1983) demonstrates how the title "anarchist" was sometimes reason enough to be convicted of a bombing. Thomas Mooney, who was convicted in 1916 for a bombing in San Francisco during Preparedness Day in somewhat of a mock trial, was pardoned in 1939. "America," by Allen Ginsberg, remembers Tom Mooney, and some of the other famous anarchist groups: the Spanish Loyalists, Sacco and Vanzetti, and the Scottsboro boys.

> abolition of authority; IT IS THE DAWN OF PEACE; it is the end of war because war cannot exist unless there is somebody to make war upon, and dynamite make that unsafe, undesirable, and absolutely impossible. It is a peacemaker; it is man's best and last friend; it emancipates the world from the domineering of the few over the many because all government, in the last resort, is violence; all law, in the last resort, is force. Everything is based on force. Force is the law of the universe; force is the law of nature, and this newly discovered force MAKES ALL MEN EQUAL AND THEREFORE FREE.[46]

After Albert Parson's execution, his wife Lucy tirelessly peddled his complete writings in the streets of Chicago and edited *The Alarm.* Though, as Marsh claims of most anarchist women, she played a secondary role, Lucy Parsons gained notoriety from the sensationalist novel-length account of the Haymarket incident *Red Ruin: Or the Romance of Anarchy.* In the novel the author paints a fearful picture of Lucy Parsons: "Charlotte killed her Marat Lucy Parsons married hers. And now that justice has wiped him out, she wants to get a whack at justice with a can of nitroglycerine and a detonating fuse"; he also says the typical anarchist woman "seems redder than her destructive brother... [N]othing limits the daring of the woman whose mind had yielded to the influence of the doctrine of violence."[47] To provide a better sense of just how violent anarchist women were, next I will examine some prominent women anarchists and their violent acts.

Anarchist-Feminism

In her essay "Radicalism-Feminism-Socialism: The Case of the Woman Novelists," Brunhild de la Motte notes that "practically all leading women within the socialist movement... were feminists as well," in large part because both women and the working classes were victims of an oppression whose solution demanded social change.[48] Women drawn simultaneously to the anarchist and feminist movements sought a greater degree of sexual liberation and personal autonomy than that allowed in other organizations. Anarchist women believed their first step to liberation "must be a declaration of economic, psychological, and sexual independence from men and from male-dominated institutions, beginning with marriage."[49]

Marsh describes three types of anarchist women: (1) the educated class of teachers, physicians, and journalists who rebelled against conventional mores as they developed

[46] Leon Stein and Philip Taft, eds. *The Accused and the Accusers: The Famous Speeches of the Eight Chicago Anarchists in Court* (New York: Arno and the New York Times, 1969), 110, 119–20.

[47] Marsh 108.

[48] In Gustav Klaus, ed., *The Rise of Socialist Fiction, 1880–1914* (New York: St. Martin's P, 1987), 34.

[49] Marsh 46.

an individualist feminist consciousness (e.g. Florence Finch Kelly and Helena Born); (2) the working-class immigrants or daughters of immigrants with only a rudimentary education (e.g. Mollie Steimer and Marie Ganz; (3) the "rebellious"—characterized less by class, ethnicity, land, or education than by a proclivity for adventure, sexual experimentation, convention-breaking, and a chance for "psychological liberation under the guise of political radicalism" (e.g. Marie L. and Margaret Anderson).[50] Marsh explains that "The anarchist-feminists insisted that female subordination was rooted in an obsolete system of sexual and familial relationships." They often attacked marriage, "insisting on both economic and psychological independence," and sometimes denied maternal responsibility, arguing that "personal autonomy was an essential component of sexual equality, and that political and legal rights could not of themselves engender such equality."[51]

If the characterizations of the anarchist women in Frank Harris's *The Bomb*[52] and Isabel Meredith's (Olivia and Helen Rossetti) *A Girl Among the Anarchists* are accurate, anarchist women and their relationship to violence did play a decidedly secondary role. In the preface to the Rossetti sisters' novel it is affirmed that "neither as creed nor philosophy does [anarchism] advocate violence" though there is a very small, "practically insane" "dynamite section" who do not "take their thrashing lying down" as do the majority of the proletariat. Interestingly, it was soon after a few extreme women suffragists had resorted to exploding some bombs on the streets of London that they were given the vote in Great Britain.

In a survey of women labor activists, mainstream feminists, socialists, and anarchists, Marsh discovered that only the anarchist women held a majority who approved of the use of violence (30 percent unqualified approval and 30 percent approval of retaliatory violence). Ten percent of the socialists and labor activists approved of retaliatory violence, but otherwise all advocated nonviolent means of accomplishing their goals.[53] The anarchist tendency to accept if not advocate violence was evident early in the movement in America.

The anarchist women who were most visible were often arrested, harassed, or attacked for their views or their lifestyles. The attacks came from men and women alike, and often from feminists, socialists, and labor activists who viewed some anarchist positions such as revolution, birth control, or free love as too extreme to attract widespread support. The direct action actually practiced by anarchist-feminists was usually non-

[50] Marsh 20–21.

[51] Marsh 5.

[52] Frank Harris, *The Bomb* (Springdale, Connecticut: Mitchell Kennerly, The Robert Kerr P, 1909). John Dos Passos wrote an introduction for a later republication of the book. See also John Illo, "Frank Harris and *The Bomb:* Some Revisions," *A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles and Notes 3.3* (July 1990): 113–14.

[53] Marsh 181.

violent, consisting of strikes, demonstrations, and speeches.[54] Nonetheless, there were some notable exceptions. Some anarchist women associated with acts of violence include Emma Goldman, Voltairine de Cleyre, Mollie Steimer, and Marie Ganz.

Emma Goldman, early disciple of Johann Most, was the foremost anarchistfeminist and known in the popular press of her time as the "Queen of the Anarchists" or as "Red Emma." Goldman was a Russian Jewish seamstress who refused to conform to the expected social and sexual behaviors of the time. Her chief collaborator and significant other after Most was Alexander Berkman, who edited Goldman's *Mother Earth* and began his own short-lived newspaper *The Blast.*[55] Though never charged, Goldman had conspired with Alexander Berkman in the attempted slaying of Henry Frick in 1892, even purchasing a revolver for him.[56] Goldman later served a one-year sentence for "inciting violence" in a speech she gave to a mass meeting of unemployed workers in 1893. Goldman testified that she had merely urged the workers to "protect what belongs to you-what you yourselves have produced, and in the first place you ought to take bread." Voltairine de Cleyre recalled Goldman's words as follows, "Ask for work; if they do not give you work, ask for bread; if they do not give you work or bread, take bread." But the jury believed the arresting police officer, who testified that Goldman had said, "take [bread] by force." After serving her term and seeing the loss Berkman suffered from his sixteen years of imprisonment, Goldman's views on violence were tempered, "If your rights are attacked by force, you should resist, by force, if necessary."[57]

Voltairine de Cleyre was arrested on charges of conspiracy and inciting a riot by calling on all workers to unite and "by straightforward, direct action... take the land, the mines, the factories as your own." More than a thousand workers spontaneously marched on City Hall, where, after some fighting with police, de Cleyre and others were taken into custody. De Cleyre was not convicted, however, because a friend bribed the state's star witness not to testify against her.[58]

Marie Ganz, though the most extreme in her actions, spent only one night in prison, after which she gave up her anarchist ways. Ganz was later to say of her anarchist inclinations, "Wild impulses surged in me bidding me to revolt, to stir others to revolt, to destroy and kill if necessary." Her most violent exhibition played itself out in a mass meeting protesting the Ludlow Massacre in Colorado. Blaming John D. Rockefeller for the Massacre, Ganz threatened to "shoot him down like a dog." She brandished a pistol and led the assembled crowd to Rockefeller's New York office. Discovering Rockefeller

[54] In England, Louise Sarah Bevington, a writer for *Commonweal* who had written poems in praise of Lingg, Ravachol, and Pallas, argued both for and against violence, writing, "Dynamite is a last and very valuable resource and as such is not to be wasted on side issues" (Quail 168).

[55] One cannot help wondering if either Ezra Pound or Wyndham Lewis were aware of their precursor in the *Blast* tradition when they introduced their avant-garde literary journal and the short-lived vorticist movement in 1914.

[56] Marsh 109.

[57] Marsh 111.

[58] Marsh 113.

to be gone, she left a message with the secretary that someone had come to kill him. Because of Ganz's connections with Nat Ferber, a Hearst journalist who later became her husband, Ganz was never tried for this impulsive attempted act of violence.

Mollie Steimer, an anarchist of a later age when both the Espionage Act (1917) and the Sedition Act (1918) were in effect, received a fifteen-year jail sentence for proclaiming: "The tyrants of the world fight each other until they see a common enemy—WORKING CLASS ENLIGHTENMENT. As soon as they find a common enemy they combine to crush it"[59] Steimer was deported to Russia in 1921, where she was also imprisoned for her protests on behalf of the many jailed political prisoners there, mostly anarchists. In 1923 the Soviets also deported her, after which she moved from Germany to France to Spain and finally to Mexico.

Brian McKinley points out that anarchist ideology and feminism share an "analysis of the evils of hierarchical domination, a commitment to individual choice and expression, and a desire to build relationships and institutions upon voluntary cooperation and mutuality, rather than upon structured authority."[60] In his analysis of anarchist-feminist novelist Lizzie M. Holmes, he points to two non-violent means of protest open to women of the late nineteenth century-organized marches and writing. For example, on 3 May 1886, the day before the Haymarket bombing, Holmes led a protest march for the eight-hour work day of300-400 women through the streets of Chicago. In written contributions to anarchist journals and a wide variety of radical and labor reform papers, Holmes protested women's double enslavement by economic exploitation and gender domination. McKinley asserts that Holmes, in her novel *Hagar Lyndon,* furthered her anti-domestic critique, having her heroine "commit intellectual suicide, surrendering her sense of self to necessity in order to establish a place in society."[61]

The Effects of Dynamite and Anarchism on Art and Literature

Most prominent American and British authors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ignored or distanced themselves from anarchism, especially its tenets of violence. William Dean Howells, however, did lead a public protest for the accused eight Haymarket leaders, but no prominent American writers joined him. George Bernard Shaw led a similar protest in England. However, most press reactions to anarchists and anarchism were uniformly negative.

The popular press, in magazines or newspapers, never seriously addressed the anarchist critique of capitalism's ideas and values, but instead chose to engage in personal attacks, fabrications, and exaggerations. In a study of 105 articles published from 1880

[59] Marsh 32.

[60] Brian McKinley. "Free Love and Domesticity: Lizzie M. Holmes, *Hagar Lyndon* (1893), and the Anarchist-Feminist Imagination." *Journal of American Culture* 13.1 (Spring 1990): 55.

[61] McKinley 61.

to 1903 in the USA, Nathaniel Hong spells out how the anarchists became the turn-of-the-century Red Scare, "the constructed devil of the American civic religion of the late nineteenth century."[62] President Roosevelt was quoted in 1902 as saying, "Anarchy is a crime against the whole human race and equally against government"[63]

Hong explains that a central difficulty confronting anarchism that was never overcome was the pejorative sense of chaos and disorder that the word "anarchy" carried with it Anarchy was routinely associated with the devil, lunacy, all forms of violence and crime, including lynching, and with immigrants. The attack on anarchism, Hong points out, came from three sources: religious leaders (who condemned the immorality of anarchism anti-authoritarianism and their views on marriage); scientists (who referred to Lombroso's anthropological "research" to show that anarchists were biologically malformed and genetically predisposed to criminal action); and nativists (who viewed the shadowy foreign-born anarchists as unwelcome, unpatriotic intruders). Immigration to the USA had quadrupled in the second half of the nineteenth century.

To account for the fact that there may be "a few good anarchists" (such as Prince Kropotkin or Elisee Reclus), writers routinely divided anarchists into two groups: the militiant, homicidal, revolutionary group and the dreamy but persuasive evolutionary kind. The division gave rise to easy dichotomies: genius/moron, theory/action, idealism/criminality, utopian/mercenary, and pacifist/terrorist.[64] An article entitled "Anarchists and their Methods" appearing in the *New Review* in 1894 summarizes the typical treatment of anarchists Hong discovered in his study:

> They [anarchists] are reckless ruffians, fugitives from foreign justice, habitual criminals, or candidates constantly qualifying for imprisonment by daily malpractices, the commission of all kinds of commonplace crime... They are miscreants who are now aspiring to terrorize the world: the very dregs of the population, the riff-raff of rascaldom, professional thieves, bullies who batten upon the shameful earnings of the weaker sex, cut-throats when opportunity offers, despicable desperadoes already under the ban and always subject to close surveillance.[65]

Such personal attacks seldom directly answered the serious social critique that anarchism offered, nor its practical calls for an eight hour work day, women's rights, or fair compensation for labor.

Though anarchism never did gain widespread popularity or acceptance, as a political philosophy and artistic or literary critique it became increasingly more acceptable to iconoclastic modernists during the twentieth century in large part because, as Paul de Man has pointed out "modernity exists in the form of a desire to wipe out whatever came earlier, in the hope of reaching at last a point of origin that marks a new

[62] Hong 110–30.
[63] Hong 115.
[64] Hong 118.
[65] Hong 116.

departure."[66] Anarchism shared this desire; high explosives, or their equivalent literary or artistic effect, offered the ideal trope to bear the message. The anarchist impulse to disseminate propaganda by word and art advocated by Kropotkin and Reclus in anarchist and avant-garde presses particularly appealed to leading artists of the time reluctant or hesitant to be identified with a particular political proposition.

Anarchism's extreme individualist proposition allowed for the freedom of thought and expression demanded by the artistic temperament Gertrude Stein, for example, was to declare jubilantly, "All great art is anarchy!" a sentiment taken up for humorous effect by G.K. Chesterton in *The Man Who Was Thursday.* Patricia Leighten explains Picasso's attraction to anarchism: "For the modern artist to cultivate strategies of primitivism and spontaneity in both art and life was to rebel against the static forms of bourgeois morality and bourgeois art"[67] Kropotkin's high view of the artist as critical to the success of anarchism attracted many followers from artistic and literary circles to anarchism.

Historian D. D. Egbert points out how the anarchist aesthetic began to be developed in Neo-Impressionism with such artists as Georges Seurat, Camille Pissarro, and Theo van Rysselberghe:

> The very technique that the Neo-Impressionists employed, with its strongly accentuated individual brush strokes, which nonetheless are brought together in harmony to form the picture as a whole, paralleled the individualistic yet communal spirit of communist anarchism.[68]

The anarchist belief in harmony "between a multitude of varied forces and influences of every kind," as expressed by Kropotkin, was fulfilled in the importance for Neo-Impressionism of Chevreul's law, as paraphrased by Signac: "For a color to be beautiful, it should influence its neighbor by harmonizing with it and subduing it, for their common benefit From this charming duo is born perfect harmony."[69] The anarchist concept of "harmony in autonomy" was also captured by artists whose "contrasting colors remain distinct and atomistic yet were perceived by the artists as being harmoniously and naturally united as a result of the operation of the laws of light and color."[70]

Robyn Roslak points out that for over two decades artists and anarchists sought similar scientific models for their aesthetic and social theories. Of particular note was the scientific analytical trend "that in order to understand a given thing or event, one had first to uncover and understand the more fundamental level of reality located

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[66] Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight* (New York: Oxford UP, 1971) 148.

[67] Patricia D. Leighten. *Re-ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism 1897–1914* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1989), 15.

[68] In Robyn S. Roslak, "The Politics of Aesthetic Harmony: Neo-Impressionism, Science, and Anarchism," *The Art Bulletin* 73.3 (September 1991): 383.

[69] Roslak 384.

[70] Roslak 385.

behind or beneath it." Scientific discussions and theories about atoms and molecules were interpreted by anarchists as analogous to the natural, harmonious formations and workings of individuals and small groups. Roslak notes that the neo-impressionists' "practice of conceiving of pictures as assemblages of parts, each of which was considered significant in and of itself at the same time that all were interdependent, goes hand-in-hand with the analytical world-view that fascinated so many of their contemporaries, particularly the anarchists."[71]

Dadaism, in large part because of its leaders' confrontation with the explosive realities afforded by the World War I and the "civilized" societies that sponsored the carnage, resorted to a disordered, chaotic, auto-destructive art which rebelled against the underlying unifying principles and instrumentalities that had made the war possible. Dadaism, and later surrealism, resorted to stark lines and chaotic collages to represent a newly fragmented world view.[72]

Leighten discusses at length how the "Anarchists' social critique and utopian vision of a harmonious future society" appealed to avant-garde artists and writers at the end of the nineteenth century; they were a highly visible part of the modernist movements in Barcelona and Paris, with applications in both the esthetic and political spheres. Anarchist Symbolism insisted on utter rejection of the past and its institutions of power, the artist's significant and heroic role in furthering 'revolution,' a highly sophisticated anti-intellectualism, and a complete surrender to spontaneity and intuitiveness.[73] Such ideas helped form Picasso's view of himself as an artist in society, his ideas about spontaneity and inspiration, and about the virtues of 'unsophisticated' primitive art, all of which made an impact on the development of his style and imagery.

Leighten explores Picasso's political themes in his art after the traditional cutoff date of 1904, when he moved from Barcelona to Paris, asserting that politics did remain an important part of his consciousness. Anarchism was particularly appealing to Picasso because it was "more an antipolitics than a politics, more an antiparty than a party, more a badge of individualism than a pledge of allegiance to any doctrinaire program."[74]

The cubists, including Picasso, found much validation of their modernist aesthetics in the new physics of Relativity and the Uncertainty Principle, but in the case of Picasso's *Guernica,* the inspiration, as Leighten suggests, may have been closer to an individualist political movement—to anarchism. Also in the equation, no doubt, was Picasso's confrontation with the confused and fragmented results of airplanes dropping bombs on civilian populations in Spain, including the ancient Basque capital Guernica.

A fuller examination of the anarchist influences on "dynamite" literature takes place in later chapters. Suffice it to say here that anarchism and explosives make repeated

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[71] Roslak 387.

[72] Adelaide M. Russo, "Picking Up the Pieces: Tzara's Explosive Text and the Surrealist Strategy," *Miorita: A Journal of Romanian Studies* 9.1–2 (1985): 1–18.

[73] Leighten 5.

[74] Leighten 15.

appearances in both "high" and "low" literature, from Robert Louis and Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson's *Dynamiter* to Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent,* to G.K. Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday,* to one of the latest novels by South African author Andre Brink, *An Act of Terror.* In more contemporary works, the "anarchist" dynamiter often comes under the new nom de plume "terrorist," though many of the expressions of political belief and the demonizing characterizations frequently remain the same.

Part of the appeal of anarchism is in its adventure of exploration of the unknown, its fascination for the forbidden. Morse Peckham's *Man's Rage for Chaos* posits the idea that the creative urge and need for variety and complexity is in reaction to the systematic and systematized industrial modern world we live in.[75] Beat poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti, parodying Eliot and Yeats, expresses some of the populist appeal behind the anarchist call for egalitarianism and individuality, bomb in hand, in his "Junkman's Obbligato":

> Let's cut out let's go
> into the real interior of the country
> where hockshops reign
> mere unblind anarchy upon us...
> Let us go then you and I
> leaving our neckties behind on
> lampposts
> Take up the full beard
> of walking anarchy
> looking like Walt Whitman
> a homemade bomb in the pocket.
> I wish to descend in the social scale.
> High society is low society.
> I am a social climber
> climbing downward
> And the descent is difficult.[76]

The next chapter "descends" to the political and philosophical arena to explore how people have reacted to the ever-increasing power, control, and order resulting from the flowering of technology and the bearing of its bitter fruit, the military-industrial-corporate complex.

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[75] Basic to Peckham's perspective is that the uncontrollable "rage" for complexity by men and women is governed by their nervous systems—it is not merely reactionary to a modern environment.

[76] Basic to Peckham's John O'Kane, "Lawrence Ferlinghetti: Anarchism and the Poetry Revolution," *Enclitic, Los Angeles* 11.2 (Spring 1989): 50.

Chapter Four: The Aesthetics of High Explosives: An Ethical, Philosophical, and Critical Examination

> *The great task of our time is to blow up all existing institutions—to destroy.*[1]
>
> *One can still write bombs... shooting people with noiseless bullets that explode in their souls.*[2]
>
> *Writing interests me only insofar as it enlists itself into the reality of a contest, as an instrument of tactics, of illumination. I would like my books to be, as it were, lancets, or Molotov cocktails, or minefields; I would like them to self-destruct after use, like fireworks.*[3]

Within the scope of a single chapter, addressing such broad areas as the above title suggests is impossibly ambitious. At most, what can be done is to briefly review some major voices, trends, and movements regarding how some modern attitudes towards science and technology developed in relation to the emerging aesthetic of high explosives. By no means should any of the discussion that follows be understood to affirm that there was a single attitude or even dominant attitude toward science or literature at any particular time. Besides the impossibility of discovering and measuring the attitudes or beliefs of any large group of people are the additional insurmountable challenges of weighing how deeply attitudes may have become ingrained in a society or how to unveil unwritten, under-represented, incoherent, or subversive perspectives.

In short, it would be naive and inaccurate to simply aver that any single new technology alone, such as high explosives, created a new literary or artistic aesthetic or that artistic advances were the direct and only inspiration of certain scientific or

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[1] Henrik Ibsen as qtd. in Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature* (New York: Viking P, 1991), 219.

[2] D.H. Lawrence as qtd. by Jonathan Arac *Critical Genealogies: Historical Situations for Postmodern Literary Studies* (New York: Columbia UP, 1989), 152.

[3] Friedrich Nietzsche as qtd. by Alan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1985), 243.

technological developments.[4] Nonetheless, the intertextual hybridity of discourses in politics, philosophy, science, art, and literature during the modern era appears to share a movement towards a modern and postmodern paradigm which privileges disorder, discontinuity, disruption, decentralization, chaos, complexity, and fragmentation, all of which metaphorically and realistically accord with the explosives trope.[5]

In this chapter, I first turn to an early response in England concerning dynamite's political and ethical significance by Auberon Herbert, whose rhetorical moves in a late nineteenth-century treatise on the ethics of dynamite is comparable in many respects to postmodern analyses of power and force. I then provide an overview of some of the major philosophical statements concerning technology, particularly focusing on the shifts from positivism to pessimism, from order to chaos, from creation to destruction, to create a context for later discussions of the aesthetic interactions between explosives and modern literature.

The Political Ethics of Dynamite

Auberon Herbert (1838–1906), who had served in the House of Commons during the 1870s but then followed Herbert Spencer's lead in pursuing libertarian ideas in politics, was deeply involved in a wide-ranging intellectual debate concerning power and force during the 1880s and 1890s. Though not officially an anarchist, believing their ideas were not fully thought out, many of his beliefs parallel and take up the familiar themes of anarchism discussed in the previous chapter.

For example, in his tribute to Herbert Spencer's effect on his thinking, "Mr. Spencer and the Great Machine," he writes:

> I lost my faith in the great machine; I saw that thinking and acting for others had always hindered, not helped, the real progress; that all forms of compulsion deadened the living forces in a nation; that every evil violently stamped out still persisted, almost always in a worse form, when driven out of sight, and festered under the surface.[6]

[4] Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983), 1, asserts that "a series of sweeping changes in technology and culture created distinctive new modes of thinking about and experiencing time and space." He points to the telephone, the telegraph, the x-ray, cinema, bicycle, automobile, and airplane as the "material foundation" for the change, overlooking entirely high explosives.

[5] An excellent source for this chapter that came to my attention after the time of writing is Carol Vanderveer Hamilton's, *Dynamite: Anarchy as Modernist Aesthetic,* Ph.D. Diss., U of California, Berkeley, 1993.

[6] Auberon Herbert, *The Right and Wrong of Compulsion by the State and Other Essays,* ed. Eric Mack, (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1978), 260. Herbert's lost faith in the great machine parallels his new understanding of how power operates during the eighteenth century. Foucault places the time of change during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: "a new technology of the exercise of power emerged which was probably even more important than the constitutional reforms and new forms of

Though Herbert's polemic is overstated ("real," "all," and "every"), his critique of "the great machine" reminds one of Foucault's more recent analyses of the inadequacies, intricacies, and abuses of "technologies of power" or "instruments of power."[7] Herbert's late nineteenth-century project also shares with Foucault the foundational critique of mankind's innate resistance to external control and power:

> We think in our amazing insolence that we can deprive our fellow-men of their intelligence, their will, their conscience; we think we can take their soul into our own keeping; but there is no machinery yet discovered by which we can do what seems to us so small and easy a matter.[8]

To Herbert the guiding metaphor of the machine behind the Cartesian perspective that had inspired the systems of representative government, industrialism, and imperialism and colonialism simply did not and would not work well in dealing with humans. He observes that every force system requires "a great complicated machinery, and that machinery always eludes popular control, and falls under the management of some not very intelligent or disinterested clique."[9] Hannah Arendt's views on the banality of the evil behind the "extermination machine" of the Nazis tragically confirms Herbert's ideas. The concern in this chapter is Herbert's analysis of force or power, particularly his views on the "infernal machine" created from dynamite.

In the May 1894 issue of the *Contemporary Review,* in an article entitled "The Ethics of Dynamite," Herbert expressed his abhorrence and detestation of dynamite because it is "most treacherous, cruel... and altogether abominable." Such criticisms were as popular in the press of that time as they are in the media of today. What makes Herbert's examination somewhat unusual for his day is his later rhetorical reversal in attributing dynamite's force, at least metaphorically, to the underlying philosophical foundations of official governments rather than simply heaping all the blame and disdain on extreme anarchists or fanatical Fenians; Herbert goes as far as to claim that the

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government established at the end of the eighteenth century." See Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 109–33.

[7] Foucault summarizes what he deems the most promising directions for scholars to take in their studies of power: "We should direct our researches on the nature of power not towards the juridical edifice of sovereignty, the State apparatuses and the ideologies which accompany them, but towards domination and the material operators of power, towards forms of subjection and the inflections and utilizations of their localised systems, and towards strategic apparatuses. We must eschew the model of Leviathan in the study of power. We must... base our analysis of power on the study of the techniques and tactics of domination"(102).

[8] Herbert 283. Foucault puts it this way, "there is indeed always something in the social body, in classes, groups, and individuals themselves, which in some sense escapes relations of power, something which is by no means a more or less docile or reactive primal matter, but rather a centrifugal movement, an inverse energy, a discharge" (138).

[9] Herbert 234.

acts of dynamiters might be directly caused by force-based governments, particularly those outrages that have been committed on the continent.[10]

"Dynamite," for Herbert, "is not opposed to government; it is, on the contrary, government in its most intensified and concentrated form... It is government in a nutshell, government stripped of all its dearly beloved fictions, ballot boxes, political parties, House of Commons, oratory, and all the rest of it."[11] He views dynamite as a perfect representation of the nineteenth-century art of governing—"forcing your own will and pleasure, whatever they may be, if you happen to be stronger, on other persons."[12] The root and source of the "political problems" being written about, he argues, are rooted in a new deification of force that has swept the continent and is now making encroachments in England.[13]

> Not surprising, then, one explanation offered by Herbert for the wave of violence sweeping the continent in the 1890s resided in their form of force-based governments:
>
> Deep down in [foreign governments'] consciousness lurks a dim perception of the truth that between him [the dynamiter] and them exists an unrecognized blood relationship, that the thing of which they have such horror is something more than a satire... it is their very own child, both the product of and the reaction against the methods of "governing" men and women, which they have employed with so unsparing a hand.[14]

In his essay, Herbert systematically undermines several of the most common justifications given by governments for their use of force. First, he counters the idea that force must be used to enforce the will of the majority on a dissenting minority. Herbert's initial response is that ignoring the needs of a discontented minority has the inadequacy of "drawing upon an imagined future and ignoring the real present." He compares the situation to coming across someone who is getting beaten and saying, "Don't worry, keep getting beaten because one day you may become strong enough to

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[10] Other significant treatments of "force" in politics include Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence* (New York: [1906] 1961), Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (Florida: Harcourt Brace, 1969), and Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (written in London between 1938 and 1960) and *Power and Survival.*

[11] Herbert 192, 194.

[12] Herbert 191.

[13] In a later analysis of totalitarianism, Adorno and Horkheimer of the Frankfurt School, in *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), identify seven psychological variables of fascism:

(1) conventionalism (rigid adherence to middle class values); (2) authoritarian submission (uncritical attitude toward idealized moral authorities); (3) authoritarian aggression (suspicion and condemnation of people who violate conventional values; (4) anti-intraception (opposition to the subjective and imaginative); (5) superstition and stereotypy (mystical belief in fatalism and the tendency to think in rigid categories; (6) power and toughness (preoccupation with dominance-submission); and (7) projectivity (projection outwards of unconscious impulses and paranoid beliefs.

Qtd. in David Ingram, *Critical Theory and Philosophy* (New York: Paragon, 1990), 75.

[14] Herbert 193.

defend yourself." Another point Herbert makes is that "majorities are great, sluggish, inert bodies" who are seldom fairly represented, but who are themselves moved and directed by enterprising and active minority groups, or special interest groups and lobbies, as we would call them today. Next, Herbert counters the "flowery" argument that force is needed to maintain national unity with Spencer's dictum, "progress is difference," words in which "a revolution, material and mental, lay enfolded." In other words, if progress is to be achieved it will not be through forcible unification of individuals or groups into homogeneous religions, educational or trade training schools, or insurance plans. To Herbert, Spencer's words seemed "a very fine example of the dynamite which it is worthwhile carrying in your coat pocket and chucking about in the midst of society."[15]

To the forced analogy that the State can use force because it is a mother or father figure "controlling with its superior wisdom the rash impulses of its children," Herbert replies that the real analogy would be more akin to one set of rash children (the state) opposed to another set of rash children (the governed). He adds to this a moral argument: by taking away a person's self control, as a state would do, "there was no possibility of the compelled man becoming moral."[16]

Finally, Herbert explains, a point of crisis arrives in the art of governing when the rule of a majority comes to the conclusion that

> We, the majority, intend to govern. We care nothing for abstract reasoning or imaginary human rights. We are the strongest, and in virtue of that fact we will govern just as we choose. There shall be no law except our will... Then it was that the gathering mental reaction against governments came to a head and the dynamiter with his creed of unorganized force against organized force was born.[17]

Herbert then imaginatively enters the dynamiter's mind and attempts to explain the rationality of such an extreme way of thinking:

> I make no pretense to possess a majority; a minority is good enough for me—a small minority of desperate, reckless men, believing in their ideas and not caring much for their lives. But such as we are, we, too, have power. It is not like your power, disguised under innumerable forms and ceremonies; it is just what it professes to be—power brutal, naked, and not ashamed... I have only a few fanatical followers; and yet, perhaps as regards the true test of power, I can command the fears of men and possess myself of their obedience quite as effectually as you can. You are the force of the majority; and I am the force of the minority.[18]

[15] Herbert 206–9.

[16] Herbert 209.

[17] Herbert 211–12.

[18] Herbert 212–14. Hannah Arendt's formulation is similar, though her vocabulary is more refined: "The extreme form of power is All against One; the extreme form of violence is One against All. And

Considering such dynamiters' minds as poisoned by ingesting the "devil's seed" of philosophical selections from Spencer, Emerson, Proudhon, or Bakunin and empowered by the new agent of dynamite, Herbert predicts the end result will be open war—"war between those who govern openly by majorities and those who govern secretly by dynamite."[19] Considering the many incidents of domestic and international terrorism in the world today, Herbert's prophecy appears to have some merit.[20]

Herbert enumerates the "official arrogance, cruelty, incapacity" of continental State Police, State Religion, State Hospitals, State Courts [run by inquisition-style tactics], State Spying, and State Prisons to illustrate how a dynamiter's reaction to the corrupt uses of force is understandable if not justifiable.

> Almost every European government is a legalized manufactory of dynamiters. Vexation piled upon vexation, restriction upon restriction, burden upon burden, the dynamiter is slowly hammered out everywhere on the official anvil. The more patient submit, but the stronger and more rebellious characters are maddened, and any weapon is considered right, as the weapon of the weaker against the stronger.[21]

The final result of force-based societies is bleak, according to Herbert. "The history of force," he insists, "is the history of continuous crumbling away of every institution that has rested upon it."[22]

The one rightful use of force that Herbert allows for, albeit only on a very limited and **individual** basis, is *"force used to restrain force—in* the defense of the plain simple rights of liberty, of the exercise of faculties, and therefore of the rights of property, public or private, all the rights of self-ownership... The only true use of force is for the destruction, the annihilation of itself, to rid the world of its own mischief-making existence.[23]

Herbert's analysis of force as a binary opposition has been extended by Foucault, who sees a "whole series of multiple and indefinite power relations that supply the necessary basis for the great negative forms of power."[24] Foucault affirms, like Herbert, that both the State and the Revolution share certain power relations. Particularly, the extensions of power's domains into social productions and social services allowed the intrusion of governments to "undertake the administration, control, and direction

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this latter is never possible without instruments," in Arendt's "Communicative Power" in *Power,* ed. Steven Lukes, (New York: New York UP, 1986), 63.

[19] Herbert 214.

[20] Edward S. Herman and Gerry O'Sullivan, *The Terrorism Industry: The Experts and Institutions that Shape Our View of Terror* (New York: Pantheon, 1989), 46, point out that the majority of twentieth-century terrorism is state sponsored.

[21] Herbert 223.

[22] Herbert 224–25.

[23] Herbert 313.

[24] Foucault 122.

of the accumulation of men (the economic system that promotes the accumulation of capital and the system of power that ordains the accumulation of men are, from the seventeenth century on, correlated and inseparable phenomena)."[25] Foucault outlines the three types of struggles for power that exist:

> (1) against forms of domination (ethnic, social, and religious); (2) against forms of exploitation which separate individuals from what they produce; (3) or against that which ties the individual to himself and submits him to others in this way (struggles against subjection, against forms of subjectivity and submission).[26]

Foucault's recommendation for analysis of a "new economy of power" is to take

> the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point... using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used.

Rather than analyzing power from the point of view of its internal rationality, it consists of analyzing power relations through the antagonism of strategies.[27] In the late nineteenth century Herbert did precisely this—he analyzed the use of dynamite as a form of resistance to power, and by so doing he demonstrated that many force-based, corrupt continental governments of the time were falling victim to the same methods they were using to maintain their power.

Herbert and Foucault use the words "power" and "force" synonymously, but Hannah Arendt has argued that important distinctions need to be made among the words power, strength, force, authority, and violence: "power always stands in need of numbers, whereas violence up to a point can manage without them because it relies on implements... The extreme form of power is All against One, the extreme form of violence is One against All. And this latter is never possible without instruments."[28] Power, for Arendt, "corresponds to the human ability not just to act, but to act in concert"; strength is "the property [of individual strength, independence] inherent in an object or person" against which a "group and its power" naturally fight; force should be used to indicate "the energy released by physical or social movements"; Authority, signified by "unquestioning recognition by those who are asked to obey" can be "vested in persons or in offices"; and violence, which is "distinguished" by its instrumental nature—"like all other tools" it is "designed and used for the purpose of multiplying

[25] Foucault 125. For a discussion of the limitations of rule by force, see Robert Dahl and Charles Lindblom, *Politics, Economics, and Welfare,* (New York: Harper and Row, 1953) and Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power,* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale UP, 1957).

[26] Ingram 307.

[27] Ingram 305.

[28] Arendt, "Communicative Power," 63.

natural strength"[29] The supreme "implement" or "instrument" of violence during the modern era, according to Arendt's terminology, would have to be high explosives.

Towards a Modern Philosophy of Destructive Technology

Auberon Herbert's disillusionment with the "Great Machine," the political machine of representative government is but a small part of a much larger and enduring critique of the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, science, and technology. T.S. Eliot has spoken of a dissociation of sensibility, a compartmentalization and division between wit and passion that took place during the late seventeenth century, as one of many theories given to account for the non-unified, modern view of the world. Octavio Paz has defined modernism as a "nostalgia for true presence." Of course, such views presume an earlier unity, placed variously at the time of the ancient Greeks, the Byzantine age (by Yeats), the Middle Ages (by Eliot), or in the pre-Industrial age (by Marx).[30] Regardless of when the earlier presumed moment or age of unity had occurred, a central modern anxiety and many responses of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries concerned restoring a former unity or completely denying the possibility, as in *nihilism.*[31]

For the Greeks, arts and technology were one. The word *techne* was virtually synonymous with art For example, the Greeks invented welding to allow them to create seven foot bronze statues of heroic proportions. Heidegger believed that "in the original *techne* of the Greeks, beings were still able to presence themselves." *Techne—as* evidenced in the work of the handed craftsman, for instance—was a true form of *poiesis,* of "bringing forth." In other words, the Greek *techne* still allowed being to "be." But with modern technology, things changed. Modern technology, says Heidegger, assaults the world in the same way that modern science does, and in so doing it brings modern science to its completion."[32] In modern technology, Heidegger believed, Nature is

[29] Arendt 64–65.

[30] William Paley in *Natural Theology* (1802) describes a dream in which he finds a great watch; Paley's insight from this experience launches him into the comparative argument that the entire world is like a great watch, the work of a grand Designer. His argument is reminiscent of common Renaissance arguments taking the same unifying idea. Paley's mechanical view of the world, however, was opposed by the Romantics. See David Knight, "Romanticisms and the Sciences," in Cunningham and Jardine, eds., 14. Interestingly, the explosives trope as it often appears in the modern tradition has some mechanical image of time (a ticking clock) sitting atop and fused to several sticks of dynamite.

[31] Megill argues that "the nihilistic impulse lying at the foundation of Western culture finds its culmination in technology." Stephen Spender, "The Modern Vision of the Whole" in *Literary Modernism,* Irving Howe, ed. (New York: Fawcett, 1967), 50–58, sees the modern program of 'isms as a series of confrontations trying to resolve the past-future conflict.

[32] Qtd. in Megill 139, referring to Heidegger's "The Question Concerning Technology" (1949,1953,1954). Heidegger's ideal of presence brings to mind Walter Benjamin's anxiety of technology's (mechanical reproduction's) threat to an artist's "aura." Michel Benamou takes a different position,

turned into a mere object, a resource to be used to satisfy the needs and wants of man, while mankind becomes a standing reserve in service to technology.

Megill describes the late Heidegger's "nostalgic, idealistic, technological catastrophism" as believable because it is so much in accord with "the Holocaust, nuclear weapons, the growing technologization and bureaucratization of modern life." Heidegger unequivocally views the 'technological frenzy' of the modern world as a manifestation of the "spiritual decline of the earth—the darkening of the world, the flight of the gods, the destruction of the earth, the transformation of men into a mass, the hatred and suspicion of everything free and creative have assumed such proportions throughout the earth that such childish categories as pessimism and optimism have long since become absurd."[33]

The scientific project, according to Marcuse, following the German philosopher Edmund Husserl, dates back to classical antiquity but came to fruition in the seventeenth century.

> Science 'projects' an interpretative scheme, or manner of conceptualization, in which all natural and social processes are seen as 'objective raw material' for technical control.[34] From antiquity through the Middle Ages, nature had been conceived as consisting of *independent substances* whose behavior was thought to arise from an internal movement of self-realization—the purposive striving to 'actualize' a universal essence.[35]

Marcuse and many others have pointed out that Galileo and Descartes shattered the metaphysical view of nature when they proposed that "substances be conceived as abstract units of spatial extension and motion."[36] Husserl's terms in analyzing the language of science are helpful in identifying the "new" scientific view: he speaks of the *measurability* of nature, the need to *anticipate the future* by means of *replicable*

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positing that technology, like art, is a creative attempt to make up the lack, to make up what is missing in the world. It tries to create and improve raw material.

[33] Megill 140. Megill provides an overview of Nietzsche's confrontation with nihilism, Heidegger's confrontation with modern technology, Foucault's confrontation with humanism, and Derrida's confrontation with the Holocaust in its immediate and extended metaphorical sense—"the most striking manifestation of the horror lurking within modern history" (317).

[34] Marcuse terms one of the ridiculed ends of technology a "pacified existence": "Technics, as a universe of instrumentalities, may increase the weakness as well as the power of man. At the present stage, he is perhaps more powerless over his own apparatus than he ever was before... To the degree to which the goal of pacification determines the Logos of technics, it alters the relation between the technology and its primary object, Nature. Pacification presupposes masters of Nature, which is and remains the object opposed to the developing subject." (Ingram 109)

[35] Ingram 89. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* puts the scientific project in a similar light.

[36] Megill argues that "Cartesianism, with its separation of ego from external world and its consequent emphasis on control and manipulation, anticipates the bureaucratic, technological society within which we in the twentieth century so obviously live" (340).

patterns or identities, which in turn results in the *reduction of qualitatively* distinct types of events to *quantitatively* similar ones.[37]

The rise of science, particularly its exuberant nineteenth-century positivist[38] outlook, depended on the paradigm of certainty arrived at by abstracting, measuring, quantifying, and organizing nature.[39] In "The New Deity of Science" Frederic Harrison, lecturing in 1879, captured the foundational underpinnings, of "the logic of Mill, the psychology of Lewes, the fiction of George Eliot, and the ethics of Stephen" when he states that Science has demonstrated the laws of

> a Force towards which we can feel the highest sense of Sympathy, to whose service we can devote ourselves, whose mighty Power over us we cannot gainsay ... That Force is the vast and overwhelming consensus of all human lives, the complex movement of the ages through human civilization and thought.. [The] realm of [natural] Law [and the] Realm of Love [can now be united under the dispensation of a] human Providence [as we pursue] the onward march of the human race, and its continual raising to a better mode of life.[40]

The new religion of science shared many of the previous dominant Western religion's beliefs and practices, but with some twists: because of technological advances, not God's command, mankind's dominance of nature had become a stranglehold with few limits; no longer was a certain group a Chosen People, social Darwinism justified Westerners' exploitation of people of other nations, races, and colors; in exchange for their souls, people gained inalienable rights; God-driven eschatological views of the ending of the world were replaced by evolutionary positivism or entropic pessimism; a sense of finite time, biblical time, with a beginning, middle, and end gave way to endless possibilities of time before mankind and endless possibilities after; and the religion of science purportedly gave mankind more freedom, but at a loss of sense of purpose.

Two of the most influential ORDER works of the nineteenth century that helped to justify the new religion of science and illustrates its positivist march are Darwin's

[37] Ingram 89.

[38] Dale provides an informed definition of positivism: "[It] is not a vague belief in science nor is it a party or a *culte.* Rather, it is a considered philosophical position adopted by a wide variety of intellectuals who have in common the simple conviction that science offers the only viable way of thinking correctly about human affairs" (11). "Positivism," Dale asserts, "believes in empirical and observational verifications, believes an accurate knowledge of the world 'as in itself it really is' is possible, and believes social over psychological explanations are privileged" (11).

[39] The essential scientific view is succinctly stated by Max Planck: "That is real which can be measured" (Megill 139). Sorel explains that the aim of all sciences, from the nineteenth-century middle-class perspective, was to "forecast the future with accuracy" and produce "solutions to all the problems we are faced with" (154). William Whewell first used the word "scientist" in 1836, indicating roughly when the unique profession of science began.

[40] Dale 219.

The Origin of Species[41] and Marx's *The Communist Manifesto,* which were dedicated to organizing classes of humans and plants and animals and predicting future positivist outcomes.[42] As Kern points out, "The conviction that order underlay experience" is best expressed by "that quintessential Victorian Samuel Smiles—'A place for everything, and everything in its place.'"[43] In another Victorian pursuit for order, one might mention Matthew Arnold's hopes for literature/poetry to provide an "unanchored modern world with a new postreligious order."[44] Dale points to Arnold's *St. Paul and Protestantism* and *Literature and Dogma* for Arnold's view that an "irresistible force of motive power" might be brought about by using emotional effect in literature to encourage good deeds. Dale attests.

> Traditional religion is essential to maintaining the moral order of the individual as well as the political order of the state. The function of criticism in Arnold's hands is to reclaim the damage done by science to religion at the very source by releasing the language of religion from science's requirement

[41] Hans Jonas in *The Phenomenon of Life* explains that, "[Darwinism] completes the liquidation of immutable essences, and thus signifies the final victory of nominalism over realism... this is a major philosophical event in that it powerfully confirms the anti* Platonism of the modern mind... Indeed, nineteenth-century evolutionism, which completed the Copernican revolution in ontology, is an apocryphal ancestor... of present-day existentialism" (as qtd. in Dale 224). Dale explains that the latter's encounter with "nothingness" springs from the denial of "essence" which blocked the recourse to an ideal "nature" of man.

[42] See Howard E. Gruber, "Darwin's Tree of Nature" in Judith Wechsler, ed., *On Aesthetics in Science* (Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1978) 120–40. Freud might also be grouped with these two ORDER works. Megill believes that Freud has "systematized our unbelief' with his creation of "psychological man" as "the one plausible character type of a privatized, bureaucratized, and de-committed world... his is the most inspiring anticreed yet offered to a post-religious culture" (323). In *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (1959) Philip Rieff sees Freud as *the* moralist of the modern age. Rieff believes that Freud has articulated a new dominant character type-psychological man—who is "a child not of nature but of technology... [who] lives by the ideal of insight-practical, experimental insight leading to the mastery of his personality" (Megill 323).

[43] Kern 182.

[44] I.A. Richards' conclusion in *Science and Poetry* invoked the power of poetry as savior for the modern world in a similar way: "In many quarters there is a tendency to suppose that the series of attacks upon received ideas which began, shall we say, with Galileo and rose to a climax with Darwinism, has over-reached itself with Einstein and Eddington, and that the battle is now due to die down. This view seems to be too optimistic. The most dangerous of the sciences is only now beginning to come into action. I am thinking less of Psycho-analysis or of Behaviourism than of the whole subject which includes them. **It is** very **probable that the Hindenburg Line to which the defence of our traditions retired as a result of the onslaughts of the last century will be blown up in the near future.** If this should happen a mental chaos such as man has never experienced may be expected. We shall then be thrown back, as Matthew Arnold foresaw, upon poetry. It is capable of saving us; it is a perfectly possible means of overcoming chaos. But whether man is capable of the reorientation required, whether he can loosen in time the entanglement with belief which now takes from poetry half its power and would then take all, is another question." (Richards 95–96 [emphasis mine])

> of objectivity and thus freeing it to exert its customary effect on human action.[45]

According to Dale, Arnold cared little about the signification process of language but cared more about what the language of belief would make us do.[46] Octavio Paz and many other critics have placed the signification process at the heart of modernism. Paz states, "Modern art is a critique of meaning and an attempt to show the reverse of signs."[47] He posits that a characteristic of the modern age is the splitting of language in two—the rational and irrational. Suppression of sexuality, eroticism, subjectivity, irrationality, in his view, led to "subversive twilight zones" which included "poetry, woman, the homosexual, the proletariat, colonial peoples, and colored races." In the twentieth century, Paz observes, "this subterranean world exploded... The explosion is still going on, and its glare lights the agony of the modern age."[48]

Whether it be plants, animals, humans, or language, ordering and organizing inevitably abstract, oversimplify, and reduce meaning, thus creating new anxieties. Hegel was one of many who, during the romantic era, reacted to the reductionism inherent in the "new" scientific perspectives. According to Knight, "[Hegel] did not believe that the sciences of inorganic matter were at the top of the hierarchy but at the bottom. One moved upwards through chemistry and electricity to the sciences of life and then on to psychology; and confusion must result when ideas appropriate to one level are unthinkingly applied on another."[49]

Humphry Davy, the most important British man of science in the early nineteenth century also reacted to an unfeeling, objective science. Davy did not see the universe as an enormous clock; as any romantic would, he rejected mechanical metaphors in favor of organic ones in his work.[50]

> Nature if she is magnificent and noble does not respond to the mere watchmaker and anatomist, accustomed to taking to pieces things which do not

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[45] Dale 173.

[46] In attempting to define Modernism, Ernst Cassirer observes : "In language, in religion, in art, in science, man can do no more than build up his own universe—a symbolic universe that enables him to understand and interpret, to articulate and organize, to synthesize and universalize his human experience." One major goal of science, Dale explains, has always been to control language, to write plain, clear, transparent language that would also be neutral, objective, in the guise of disinterest without any anthropomorphic intrusions. The semantic, linguistic components integral to language, though, continually thwarted the attempt. (Dale 283)

[47] Octavio Paz, *Convergences: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1987), 139.

[48] Paz 135.

[49] Knight 19.

[50] David Van Leer, "Nature's Book: The Language of Science in the American Renaissance," in Cunningham and Jardine, eds., 307, asserts that American Romantics with their belief in the unity of nature invoked the names of Bacon, Newton, Laplace, Swedenborg, and Paracelsus for this project.

> work, and perhaps moved to praise God because he could not have done a better job himself.[51]

Instead, an attitude of admiration, love, and worship is what Davy calls for: that is, a personal response. Davy believed matter was "inert rather than active-God had chosen to impose powers upon brute matter—and it was not the components, but the powers associated with them which gave character to substances."[52]

Another famous romantic, Davy's contemporary Coleridge, had as "his life's chief endeavor the search for unity in multeity, the making whole of knowledge."[53] Reddick sees this romantic search as being rooted in the anxiety over the expansion of "separate, unconnected facts"; they were "apparently separate" and showing no promise of an "inward combination of their parts." Reddick points out, "This 'inordinate... multiplicity' not only resisted Enlightenment assumptions about an orderly progression towards the discernment of order in the natural world; it also very readily seemed to echo, to symbolize, and even to compound the atomistic forces that were tending to disrupt progress towards a better order in the human world... or alternatively to disrupt the human order already prevailing."[54]

In America as in England, during the nineteenth century science and technology were perceived by some major voices to be threatening established ways of living and being.[55] Emerson rejected scientists as crypto-materialists whose "spirit is matter reduced to an extreme thinness"; Edgar Allan Poe characterized science as a "vulture that preyest... upon the poet's heart"; and Hawthorne regularly portrayed the scientist as a villain whose relentless pursuit of some spurious ideal violated the inner sanc-

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[51] Knight 14–15.

[52] Knight21.

[53] Simon Levere, "Coleridge and the Sciences," in Cunningham and Jardine, eds. 297. Levere goes on to say, "The search for interconnectedness, of reticulation not only within a given realm of discourse, but between different realms, is surely one of the distinguishing characteristics of Romantic striving, and it informs Coleridge's life's work... Coleridge, in the organic unity of his thought, sought to achieve the romantic goal of bringing all knowledge into harmony. Facts of nature were a touchstone for his metaphysics, just as scientist's discoveries of laws of nature helped him with the construction of critical, philosophical, and religious systems of thought. Knowledge of nature validated other forms of knowledge. Since nature was for him symbolic of eternal truths, it is scarcely surprising to find over and again traces of imaginative insight in his philosophy, of philosophy in his theology and in his poetry, and of scientific lore in all" (304).

[54] John Reddick, in Jardine, ed., 331. Rudolph Arnheim has noted that the penchant for piecemeal scientific analysis is countered with the artistic urge to see the whole (314–15).

[55] Joseph Slade points out that in the late nineteenth century philosophy of efficiency known as Scientific Management, Industrial Engineering or Taylorism, named after originator Frederic W. Taylor and put to use in the assembly lines of Ford and others, the widening schism between man and machines becomes apparent: "A business is men and machines united in the production of commodity and both the men and the machines need repairs and replacements ... Machinery wears out and needs to be restored. Men grow uppish, lazy, or careless." All human effort, according to Taylorism, could be redesigned for peak efficiency by using stopwatches and motion studies. (Slade in Lauretis et al. 35)

tity of the human heart."[56] Leo Marx's *Machine in the Garden* explores in detail the intrusiveness of science and technology as expressed in the art and literature of the nineteenth century.

Kasson, disagreeing with Leo Marx's thesis of the "machine as monster" and positing instead that expressions of animosity towards technology were simply new ways of achieving the old artistic effect of sublimity,[57] explores the meaning of technology for a republican civilization.[58] He contends that "The rapid development of machine technology and the process of industrialization as a whole altered the context of this discussion [about the ideology of republicanism] and fundamentally tested the country's republican commitment on a number of significant levels."[59] Kasson argues that Emerson's

> internal dialogue on the impact of technology upon the American imagination; aesthetic responses to and claims for machinery; and utopian and dystopian novels of the 1880s and '90s... show both the way in which American technological development and republican values profoundly shaped one another and the difficulty—ultimately leading to failure—of achieving a technological society consonant with republican ideals.[60]

Despite their writings to the contrary, he points to Franklin ("Nothing is good or beautiful but in the measure that it is useful."), Emerson, Whitman, and Hawthorne (in

[56] David Van Leer, in Cunningham and Jardine, eds., 307.

[57] Kasson uses Edmund Burke's views on sublimity to establish his point. Interestingly, to illustrate his conception of the sublime, Burke relies on the example of the **sound** of **artillery** as among those noises which awaken "a great and aweful sensation in the mind" (Kasson 166 or Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful,* ed. James T. Boulton, (Indiana: U Notre Dame P, 1968), 39, 51, 65,82.)

[58] John Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine: Technology and Republican Values in America, 1776–1900,* points to the work of Bernard Bowron, Leo Marx, Arnold Rose (in "Literature and Covert Culture" *American Quarterly 9* (Winter 1957): 377–86), and Fisher in *Workshops in the Wilderness* for evidence of negative critiques of technology. Kasson explains, "Beneath the image of the machine as beneficent servant of mythological proportions, they have discovered a countervailing metaphor of the machine as monster, suddenly throwing off human control and unleashing its destructive force. This and related imagery, the argument runs, betray the profound uneasiness, the high emotional cost, with which Americans displaced the natural with a technological order" (Kasson 165). Kasson believes it unwise to ascribe such uneasiness and fear to the culture as a whole. I would hasten to add that though the negative critique may not have been popular in print, that does not necessarily mean that it was not a popular or widespread sentiment. Kasson, though, argues that the negative critique of technology ignores a nineteenth-century aesthetic of "the technological sublime." He quotes Edmund Burke in his *Enquiry* of 1757 to establish that like the celebratory works on technology of the period, the sense of awe and dread included in some works is part of a sublime aesthetic outlined by Burke: "Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible ... is a source of the *sublime,...* the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling." Burke posits that the sublime represents the delight in "an idea of pain and danger, without being in such circumstances," a feeling evoked by representations of power, vastness, darkness, obscurity, suddenness, and noise.

[59] Kasson viii.

[60] Kasson ix.

an iron foundry tour in England in 1856) as a few of the many examples of authors who viewed new technologies as "useful and beautiful." Kasson adds that "For the public-at-large ... machine technology itself helped to provide a solution to the aesthetic dilemma of a republican culture that demanded self-expression and symbolic statement even while it distrusted the fine arts."[61]

Kasson explains further that with such major inventors as Samuel F. Morse, Robert Fulton, and Rufus Porter beginning their careers as painters, the connection between art and mechanical invention was clearly established in the republican mind. He quotes a writer in *Scientific American:* "Inventions are the poetry of physical science and inventors are the poets. Between the bards of poetry and the bards of literature, there is a strong resemblance; in fact, the same inspiration dwells in both—they only strike different lyres."[62]

Joseph Slade, an authority on the connections between literature and technology, considers Lewis Mumford and Thorstein Veblen to be the two American thinkers most directly concerned with questions concerning technology before World War II. Slade reports that in Mumford's volumes on architecture and in works like *Technics and Civilization,* "the stages of mechanization and the elegance, the discipline, and the symbology of the machine" are outlined. Guiding Mumford's investigations was "the hope that the organic potentialities of systems could be made harmonious with man's needs."

Veblen, on the other hand, asserted that technology was a natural outgrowth of rationalism. Technology to him "was a dynamic, causal factory behind advancing civilization." Even though he believed technology to be the flowering of man's most creative instinct, he insisted that Americans had to come to terms with their inventions. Slade points out, moreover, that "because of the reciprocal relationship between man and machine," Veblen believed that "proliferating technology could only further stimulate creative, i.e. rational, habits and impulses in humans." So, although the man on the assembly line might seem to be coarsened by his experience, he was actually learning discipline and rationality. Veblen's *The Theory of Business* is replete with passages in praise of the machine's influence. However, the natural question is if machines were so good, and if to be like machines is good, how did it happen that technology so often resulted in bad outcomes? The answer, said Veblen, was that opposed to man's

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[61] Kasson 141–45.

[62] Kasson 147. Slade says that the advocates of The New Machine and Technocracy were long on hope and short on theory, but the prevalence of the three connected assumptions—that man resembled a machine, that his environment had already to a degree been mechanized (or systematized), and that technological experts should govern society—gave impetus to a series of books which have been called "technological utopias." Between 1883 (John Macnie's *The Diothas; Or a Look Ahead)* and 1933 (Harold Loeb's *Life in a Technocracy: What It Might Be Like),* at least twenty-five Americans published these visions of technological grandeur." (Slade in Lauretis et al 38)

creative instinct was another he called 'predatory,' which resided in its purest form in the American businessman.[63]

Another critique of technology, begun in Europe and carried on in America during World War II, was promulgated by the Frankfurt School.[64] Their early diagnosis held that progress in science and technology would pave the way for greater economic and political emancipation, an idea consistent with the German Enlightenment from Kant through Marx.[65] Max Weber, however, perceived the inherent moral dangers behind a scientific/technological paradigm founded on reason alone. As long as reason is considered as purely a procedural matter, he believed, it would be incompatible with any unconditional moral idealism. Weber thought that the instrumentalization inherent in reason made it permanently incompatible with the survival of moral attitudes. "Bureaucratic machine-like efficiency and amoral materialism oriented toward selfpreservation and consumption, come to prevail."[66]

To postwar members of the Frankfurt School, one solution to the dilemma was to encourage an interdisciplinary focus-science and philosophy should be equal contributors; the School had recognized that scientific reason was the dominant force underlying modern totalitarianism. From the period of 1939–1941 on, the School focused on the paradoxical role reason played as an instrument in bringing about both emancipation and total domination.

For example, Adorno and Horkheimer in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* state, "Knowledge, which is power, knows no obstacles ... Technology is the essence of knowledge. It does not work by concepts and images... but refers to method, the exploitation of others' work, and capital. What men want to learn from nature is how to use it in order to dominate it and other men. That is its only aim."[67] Technology and the systems of knowledge and power that would protect and advance technology's aims—such as, in Dwight D. Eisenhower's words, the "military industrial complex"—were increasingly attacked in the protests of the sixties and seventies. Who can forget Mario Savio's impassioned anti-war speech to a group of protesters and demonstrators at Berkeley

[63] Slade in Lauretis et al 45.

[64] I am indebted to David Ingram for much of the following analysis of the Frankfurt School. See particularly Ingram 59,67.

[65] Andreas Huyssen notes, "Historical developments since the 1920s have made it mandatory to work toward a critical theory of technology which transcends the orthodox Marxist belief in technology's emancipatory power and which at the same time steers clear of any demonization or worship of technology as an uncontrollable force" (In Lauretiis et al. 83). The Frankfurt School tended at times to demonize technology, but still offers a serious critique worthy of study.

[66] In Ingram 184–85.

[67] Ingram 62. A series of works in the 1960s, Jacques Ellul's *The Technological Society* (1954; 1964 first USA printing), Lewis Mumford's *The Myth of the Machine* (1966), Herbert Marcuse's *An Essay on Liberation* (1969), and Theodore Roszak's *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on The Technocratic Society and its Youthfill Opposition* (1969), provide a fatalistic view of technology's effects and predict or call for reactionary responses.

in 1964 calling on them to oppose this machine (today the common term is "system") gone wrong:

> There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part; you can't even tacitly take part, and you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all.[68]

The critique of technocracy, bureaucracy, or totalitarianism proffered by the Frankfurt critics outlines the essential nuts and bolts and gears of "the machine." Ingram summarizes Adorno and Horkheimer's theses in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* as follows:

1. Enlightenment leads to the replacement of "objective" (teleological) reason with formal rationality.

2. Formal rationality is identical to instrumental or "subjective" reason. Its sole end or value is self-preservation at all costs.

3. Self-preservation manifests itself in mythic narrative, which already attempts to reduce the chaos of nature to regular forces which are capable of being controlled.

4. The reduction of natural chaos is a necessary condition for the birth and preservation of (self-)consciousness. The identity of the ego depends upon the repression of unconscious instinctual drives (the id).

5. Nature repressed returns in the form of compulsive aggression. Reason reverts to myth in the fatalism of mechanical social relations. The emancipation of the individual from the domination of natural forces culminates in the domination of the individual by the totalitarian state.[69] Reason, Adorno and Horkheimer conclude, is a subjective illusion for justifying the mastering of nature, its colonialization.

The use of high explosives as a key technique or instrument of power during the modern era has been mentioned. Adorno saw in high explosives a central trope, one capable of capturing the essence of the modern aesthetic. In his words,

[68] Seymour Martin Lipset and Sheldon S. Wolin, eds., *The Berkeley Student Revolt: Facts and Interpretations* (New York: 1965), 163.

[69] Ingram 63.

> **The stigma of disruption are modernity's seals of authenticity,** that through which modernity negates in desperation the closed character of the eternally invariant; **explosion is one of modernity's invariants.** Antitraditionalist energy becomes a devouring maelstrom. In this sense modernity is myth turned against itself; myth's timelessness becomes the catastrophe of the moment that disrupts temporal continuity.[70]

As alluded to before, the "disruption of temporal continuity" is basic to many representations of the high explosives trope, as in a bundle of dynamite sticks fused to a clock.[71] Just how the modernist aesthetic of disruption, explosion, disorder, chaos, disorganization, and randomness developed will be our next exploration.

The Development of an Aesthetics of Disorder. Disruption. Fragmentation. Chaos, Explosion

A hallmark of the developing twentieth-century aesthetic of explosion is that not only must the inevitability and paradigmatic value of disorder and uncertainty be recognized, it must also be accepted, accommodated for, and integrated into the theories and practices of art, literature, and science. The modern aesthetic of explosion and fragmentation is an emerging one in the twentieth century, a fragmenting antithesis to the ordering thesis of the previous era.[72] As two of nine criteria for defining modernism Irving Howe lists the establishment of a new concept of aesthetic unity, "jagged and fragmented expressiveness," and the rising prevalence of nihilism, "the inner demon" or "heart of modern literature."[73] By examining briefly just a few of the most significant contributions and discoveries of the modern era, the accommodations and formulations that led to the forming of the new aesthetic of fragmentation and disorder will become apparent.

Jacob Bronowski indicates that one of the first disruptions to the nineteenth-century scientific paradigm was a result of the discovery of X-rays by William Röntgen in 1895, whose findings "turned the abstract concept of the atom into a concrete, physical entity." Bronowski's view is that the movement beyond the mechanical scale of structure down to the atomic scale" was the "decisive step of our century. He points out that the difference between the Renaissance outlook and our own was that for them the pieces

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[70] Ingram 344 [emphasis mine].

[71] Paz sees the destruction of the image of the world as the first consequence of technology. He adds that "though the atomic bomb has not [yet] destroyed the world, it has destroyed our idea of the world (123).

[72] See Dennis Brown, *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature: A Study in Self-Fragmentation* (London: Macmillan, 1989) for an in-depth exploration of how modernists came to grips with a newly perceived fragmented self.

[73] Howe 23–40.

of the structure still had functions in themselves; by contrast the modern outlook asserts that the pieces, atoms, have lost their individual meaning and instead the "structural or logical pattern is in complete command."[74] This new atomic view of things resulted in artistic and literary creations which privileged inner views or overall, arching "structural patterns" (tradition, myth, linguistics,) that could contain their works. Bronowski explains,

> The search in the arts for new forms which lie deeper than the skeleton [as in the Renaissance] seems to me to express the same vision [of Röntgen]. Cubism was a first step in this, which tried to organize a body and landscape under a single form. It is not obvious that the atoms in a crystal of common salt ought to lie at the corners of lattice cubes; yet this is what Lawrence Bragg discovered in Cambridge in 1913. And it is not obvious that the cube might be an element of structure which is universally evocative, as Pablo Picasso had suddenly thought in a village on the Ebro four or five years earlier.[75]

The former solid, Newtonian, Cartesian "realities" of time and space were questioned by a series of modern thinkers.[76] Pointing to the significance of varying frames necessitated by observation, Albert Einstein's "Special Theory of Relativity" and "General Theory of Relativity" described the great heterogeneity of time/space configurations. Henri Bergson also presented an influential theory of time (calling it *durée)* that asserted time could not be divided into discrete units but was in a flux—like a spring coil; at any instant, time could mesh the past, present, and future. Earlier in 1884 William James was to use the metaphor "stream of thought" to express a similar idea; the concept of "stream of consciousness" has almost become synonymous since that time with prominent modern writers such as Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, James Joyce and many others.[77]

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[74] Jacob Bronowski, "The Discovery of Form," in *Science and Literature: New Lenses for Criticism,* in Edward M. Jennings, ed., (New York: Anchor Books, 1970), 8–9.

[75] Bronowski 9. Robert Nadeau, *Readings from the New Book on Nature: Physics and Metaphysics in the Modern Novel* (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1981) makes a similar observation. An excellent source for cubism's relationship to modernist thought and literature is Wylie Sypher's, "The Cubist Perspective, the New World of Relationships: Camera and Cinema" in John O. Perry, ed., *Backgrounds to Modern Literature* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1968), 159–85.

[76] Edgar Morin, in his essay "The Fourth Vision: On the Place of the Observer," in Edward M. Jennings, ed., *Science and Literature,* provides three ways for science to recover from its failed Newtonian paradigm: (1) We should reverse the notion prevalent in science since Newton that certainty is the goal of science and accept instead a dialogic view to help us negotiate the inherent uncertainties—as in the dialogue of order and disorder. (2) Working with uncertainty is an incitement to rationality. (3) Working with uncertainty incites us to complex thinking—"the tetragram *order/disorder/ interaction/ organization* shows us that there will never be a master word, a master formula, that will command the universe" (106).

[77] A major opponent and critic of the flux view of time was Wyndham Lewis. V.I. Lenin attacked Kant and others who questioned the reality of space in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1908).

In the music of the twenties, Jazz was also perceived by some critics as a manifestation of a new fragmented aesthetic. Adorno, as many others before and since, demonized Jazz since, to him, it reinforced the "spatio-temporal fragmentation and mindless distraction of assembly-line or office routine by eliminating the need for the listener to focus attention on the formal unity of the composition." Jazz, then, according to Adorno, was a failing art form because "it did not transcend existing reality toward affirmation of a potentially better and freer life, but imitated reality directly."[78] In apparent contradiction to this viewpoint, Adorno's admiration of Arnold Schonberg's atonal compositions demonstrates that not all art forms that violate aesthetic harmony necessarily have to affirm reality. With another explanation of the disorder inherent in modern art, Morse Peckham in *Man's Rage for Chaos* argued that art is man's answer to the need for a more stimulating environment than the order-directed social one in which he finds himself due to governments and laws. Philip Morrison uses illustrations of bubbles and crystals to direct us to the beauties of broken symmetries: "I suspect we react to the fundamental thermodynamic quality: an expression of symmetry, yet one not allowed to dominate exclusively, just as it cannot in the real world, for some feature always breaks every macroscopic symmetry in the end."[79]

In the twenties, Werner Heisenberg's "Uncertainty Principle," though directly concerning the analysis of subatomic particles, added another justification and stimulus for an aesthetic favoring heterogeneity and disorder. Heisenberg's assertion was that it is not possible to measure or observe particles without changing them in some way by measuring them. The wider implications of his discovery were that such ideals of science as disinterest and objectivity, of arriving at truths by "accurate" quantification, were all put into question.[80] In the fifties, Karl Popper's observation that each hypothesis, like each observation, presupposes certain expectations and often is formulated to

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Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and less commonly known, the work of Georg BUchner, though of another era, use many of the same disjunctive techniques common to the modern style. John Reddick writes of BUchner,

> Whether in language, mood, plot, or personae, he offers no steady development, no sense of anything resolved or unified. Instead of unfolding in measured rhythm, his works progress through a succession of kaleidoscopic convulsions, enacting what Walter Jens has called a 'law of discontinuity'... He never writes to communicate conclusions. Instead, his writing is a kind of happening, a constant search, a dynamic enactment of the very process of argument, of the collision and interaction of contrary possibilities.... the paradox of paradoxes in Georg Buchner: his disjunctive mode with its relentless insistence on fragments and particles is always the expression of a radiant vision of *wholeness*... but a wholeness that is elusive: it was but is no longer; or will be but is not yet; or—most poignant of all—it is in the present, but can be perceived or possessed only partially or transiently.

Qtd. in Andrew Cunningham and Nicholas Jardine, eds, *Romanticism and the Sciences* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1990), 324–25.

[78] Ingram 43. Adorno's statement ignores the fact that many jazz compositions are highly formal.

[79] Phillip Morrison, "On Broken Symmetries" in Wechsler, ed., 70.

[80] Years earlier, William James and later John Dewey's theories on pragmatism accommodated unsettling and shifting scientific views proposed by Einstein. See Arthur I. Miller, "Visualization Lost and Regained: The Genesis of the Quantum Theory in the Period 1913–27" in Wechsler, ed., 72–102.

arrive at the envisioned conclusions one wishes, his views on verisimilitude, probability, and the mind-body relationship also added to the uncertainty and reliability of all scientific conclusions. Likewise, in the sixties Thomas Kuhn's explanations in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* of how arbitrarily and unscientifically many paradigms are formed—his view that science can be as socially constructed as literature-led to further defections from the naive belief in a "pure science."

But perhaps the most devastating of blows to the positivist views of science has been dealt by the deep psychological terrorizing effects of high explosives in war and in "peace." Bombs have been exploding all over the world in ever increasing numbers since their invention over one hundred and thirty years ago. Armed but unexploded bombs from the Second World War are still being collected in Verdun, France, and the landmines used in most modern wars continue killing and maiming people long after conflicts have ended.

Ironically, theories of literary criticism have lagged behind the landmark theories and practices in philosophy, art, literature, and science in privileging the disorder/explosion paradigm. The evident scientific underpinnings of formalism, New Criticism, and structuralism and their inherent positivism were to remain, for the most part, unchallenged until the 1960s. Since literary criticism itself was an emerging discipline during the twentieth century, it is not surprising that it would hold on to the coattails of a dominant and dominating scientific discourse—it was necessary, after all, to maintain and increase the credibility and viability of the serious study of literature, especially in the academy where an ever-increasing number of critics had to justify their work as scholarly (i.e. rational and objective-scientific) and significant.

This is not to say that literary critics were unaware of the prevailing techniques, methods, and theories of other fields and the problems they posed for analysis, metaphysics, meaning. I.A. Richards, for example, in explaining the rise of science to replace the former magical world view, wrote:

> Science, which is simply our most elaborate way of *pointing* to things systematically, tells us and can tell us nothing about the nature of things in any *ultimate* sense ... And if science cannot answer these pseudo-questions no more can philosophy or religion. So that all the varied answers which have for ages been regarded as the keys of wisdom are dissolving together. The result is a biological crisis which is not likely to be decided without trouble. It is one which we can, perhaps, decide for ourselves, partly by thinking, partly by reorganizing our minds in other ways; if we do not, it may be decided for us, not in the way we should choose. While it lasts it puts a strain on each individual and upon society, which is part of the explanation of many modern difficulties, the difficulties of the poet in particular?[81]

[81] I.A. Richards, *Science and Poetry* (London: Kegan Paul, 1926), 63.

Richards appears to recognize the dilemma posed for critics but fails to provide a methodology to deal with it Most critics instead turned to a traditional and outdated science for validation of their ideas and theories. For example, to explain the concept of disinterest, depersonalization, in the creation of art and to heighten art to the status of science, T.S. Eliot in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" resorts to the analogy of the explosion that occurs when "finely filiated platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulfur dioxide."

The significance of Ezra Pound as a formative and influential critic of the modernist movement cannot be underestimated; he stands as a central figure whose critical and aesthetic views were affected by his understanding of how scientific views could be applied to art. Pound's response to the method of science can best be seen in his collaboration with Wyndham Lewis immediately before World War I. What is not commonly known is that many of Pound's insights on the nature of poetry were based on the work of Hudson Maxim, an American inventor famous for his work with explosives. Pound edited for publication a book by Maxim entitled *The Science of Poetry* before he left for London. In this book Maxim advocates economizing and energizing poetry—what he terms an action-based "potentry"—that uses the verb as its major linguistic unit Maxim's definition of poetry at the end of Chapter Three, Pound's favorite chapter, states:

Poetry is the expression of the imaginative thought by means only of the essentials to the thought conserving energy for thought-perception, to which end all animate, inanimate and tangible things may assume the properties and attributes of tangible, living, thinking, and speaking things, possessing the power of becoming what they seem, or of transfiguration into what they suggest.[82] Though wordier than the Imagist Credo[83] Pound penned later in London (1913), the guiding principle for Pound's thought is there-"An Image is that which represents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." When Pound and Wyndham Lewis collaborated on a literary journal, a "puce colored cockleshell," and called it *Blast,*[84] one cannot help but wonder if Pound was in some measure crediting his earlier mentor Maxim. The first issue attacked philistinism in general and Marinetti's Futurism in particular. In the first issue of *Blast,* Pound's amalgamation of the metaphors of science and mechanics resonate with Maxim's but humorously subvert them with sexual puns. For example, Pound distinguishes between the artist as 'the TOY of circumstance, as the plastic

[82] Ian Bell, *Critic as Scientist: The Modernist Poetics of Ezra Pound* (New York: Methuen, 1981), 34.

[83] A summary: (1) Use the language of common speech, but use it exactly; (2) Create new rhythms for new moods; (3) Allow complete freedom in subject; (4) Present an image, but avoid vagueness; (5) Produce poetry that is hard and clear; (6) Concentration is the essence of poetry.

[84] Lewis and Pound's *Blast* is not to be confused with Alexander Berkman's anarchist journal *The Blast,* which was published in the United States with the help of fellow anarchist Emma Goldman. The two issues by Pound and Lewis published in 1914 and 1915 are now commonly distinguished as *Blast I* and *Blast II.*

substance RECEIVING *impressions* and as DIRECTING a certain fluid force against circumstance, as CONCEIVING instead of merely observing and reflecting." Maxim's definition that "Poetry is pregnancy of meaning" became Pound's explosive assertion that great literature was "simply language charged to the utmost degree."[85]

In an antithetical way, Pound and Lewis's scientific metaphor of the vortex (a more literary rendering would be "cyclone," "maelstrom," "whirlpool," "eddy") is a clever inversion of the metaphor of explosion, one of many instances in *Blast I* in which the two authors attempted a reconciliation of opposites.[86] Hugh Kenner has defined the literary and critical movement Vorticism as "a circulation with a still center: a system of energies drawing in whatever comes near." The hope of the authors seemed to be that a new artistic revolution, centered in England, would have this effect. Lewis himself nonchalantly commented that "Vorticism ... was what I, personally, did, and said, at a certain period."[87] In *Blast2* Lewis wrote,

> VORTICISM is the only word that has been used in this country and nowhere else for a certain new impulse in art... The Cubist's paintings have a large tincture of the deadness (as well as the weightiness) of Cézanne; they are static and representative, not swarming, exploding or burgeoning with life, as is the ideal of the Futurists, or electric with a more mastered, vivid vitality, which is the conception of their mission held by most of the Vorticists. (38)

In *Blast 1,* the definition Pound gives is much more complex. Under the entry "Vortex. Pound," Pound writes of time in flux (as in Bergson), in a fashion that Lewis would later find abhorrent, and combines it with tropes of mechanical power (hydraulics) and charged explosives:

> The vortex is the point of maximum energy.
>
> It represents, in mechanics, the greatest efficiency.
>
> THE TURBINE
>
> All experience rushes into this vortex. All the energized past, all the past that is living and worthy to live. All MOMENTUM, which is the past bearing upon us, RACE, RACE-MEMORY, instinct charging the PLACID, NON-ENERGIZED FUTURE.
>
> The DESIGN of the future [is] in the grip of the human vortex. All the past that is vital, all the past that is capable of living into the future, is pregnant in the vortex, NOW.

[85] Bell 30–31.

[86] A good overview of the context of the Vorticist movement is provided by Robert H. Ross, "Sound and Fury: Realism, Futurism, Vorticism, Imagism Early in the Second Decade" in John Oliver Perry, ed., *Backgrounds to Modern Literature* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1968), 38–58.

[87] *Blast 1,* vi, vii.

> VORTICISM is art before it has spread itself into a state of flaccidity, of elaboration, of secondary applications.

The Manifesto in *Blast 1* is riddled with images of explosion:

> I. 1. Between Action and Reaction we would establish ourselves
>
> I. 3 We discharge ourselves on both sides.
>
> I. 10. We only want tragedy if it can clench its side muscles like hands on its belly and bring to the surface a laugh like a bomb.
>
> II. 5. A movement towards art and imagination could burst up here [in England], from this lump of compressed life, with more force than anywhere else.
>
> II. 7 The Art-instinct is permanently primitive./ In a chaos of imperfection, discord, etc., it finds the same stimulus as in Nature.
>
> V. 8. [Humour] is Chaos invading Concept and bursting it like nitrogen.

Bradford Morrow writes that in *Blasting and Bombardiering,* in which Lewis recounts his experiences as an artillery officer during the war, Lewis asserted that his life as an artist and as a soldier were intertwined. The publication of *Blast* was discontinued because, as Lewis remarked, "All Europe was at war and a bigger BLAST than mine had rather taken the wind out of my sails."[88] Because of how the First World War was fought a new outlook and re-evaluation of culture was inevitable. Dadaism and Surrealism were two significant postwar movements whose art and writings tried to come to the grips with the anxieties of a shell shocked age. Many significant, central modernist works, including the war poems of Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen and T.S. Eliot's "Little Gidding," Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway,* and Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises, A Farewell to Arms,* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls,* directly address the effect bomb blasts and shell shock had on the portrayal of the modern hero. More on this in the next chapter.

Literary critical movements of the thirties, forties, and fifties tended to privilege the concepts of order and unity as part of their aesthetic analysis.*[89] One can conjecture that in part this desire for wholeness in literature was in large part a reaction to the instability of a world at war, or cold war. The uneasy, revolutionary years of protest during the 1960s and 1970s, poststructuralist criticism began to move beyond mere textual analyses of literature, engaging in disordering and splintering discourses on power, feminism, myth, culture, new historicism, colonialism, pluralism, etc. This is not to say that earlier critics had completely ignored such contextual aspects of literature,

[88] *Blast I* intro., vii.

[89] The so-called "New Criticism" dominated this age. Prominent critics of the time included Robert Penn Warren, Rene Wellek, and Kenneth Burke, critics whose influential methodologies still govern the pedagogy of introductory literary studies today.

but now such critical perspectives were being privileged. For example, M.M. Bhaktin's terms of criticism such as heteroglossia, hybridity, chronotope, and dialogism gained wider acceptance and circulation because they accommodated for the great variability, depth, unpredictability, and indeterminacy of much of modern literature but could still be couched within formalist analyses. An early recognition of the revolutionary changes taking place in literature and criticism comes from the French critic Jean Paulhan, who speaks of two types of writers, the language destroyers (romantics, surrealists, modernists, [poststructuralists]) and the rhetoricians (oratorical artists who maintain a tradition). He characterizes the destroyers as terrorists fighting against coagulation and institutionalization, battling against the established culture, discovering new truths and new art from chaos, the unconscious, and the irrational.[90] The bipolar distinction has become much more complicated from a poststructuralist, postmodern perspective, where pluralist analyses involving a plethora of critical methodologies have become commonplace.

In the concluding speech of a conference on "Disorder and Order" given at Stanford in 1981, Michel Serres spoke about the recent privileging of the paradigm of disorder, entitling his work "Dream."[91] His sense of the hopelessness of redeeming former ordering paradigms and instead finding a new, less comfortable, more complex, and problematic, one captures the essence of the recent movement in criticism away from a scientific formalism. I quote several passages from his speech because his observations are most pertinent to the poststructuralist process of privileging disorder, fragmentation, noise, explosion and to the adaptation of criticism to this paradigm:

> Yes, the constructivist model is promising, but it only gives buildings that can never be finished. Yes, the biological model is promising, but it only begets monsters and opens up a teratology of classless animals. It remains for us to meditate on the unfinished. (227)
>
> It actually seems that the role and function of power is to make people believe that there is both concept and reason, closure and theoretical domination, where there is only pure multiplicity without unity. Ruins, monsters, and dreams, non-redundant time, always return despite the crude efforts of these machines to transform the sound and fury into these sorts of order—discourse, harmony, sense of history, architecture. We are constantly trying to repair these unreliable machines that freeze all sound or crystallize fury, but the *noise* exceeds their capacity. It is more powerful than their power. I mean: innumerable. I mean: without measure. It always exceeds the power of calculation. Plato said that politics weaves together the rational and irrational, but I believe this fabric, that he prejudged to be rational, undoes itself indefinitely, that it tears and is in rags. (228–29)

[90] Qtd. in Arnold Hauser, "The Film Age" in Irving Howe, ed., 226.

[91] Paisley Livingston, ed., *Disorder and Order: Proceedings of the Stanford International Symposium, Sep. 14–16, 1981* (Saratoga, California: ANMA Libri & Co., 1984), 225–39.

> I see fragments of unities among the occulted multiplicities. I hear messages that rend the fog with the noise of their jagged, barbed overlappings. (229) People still imagine that multiplicities can be eliminated through a variety of means. I suppose not. I see it is not so and I wish it were not so. I suppose not, metaphysically. I see it is not so, scientifically. I see it is not so in technologies. I wish it were not so in deontology and in politics... The Kantian tower does not eliminate chaos, but welcomes and acclimatizes it... We have only had pure exactness cut against a background of mist; we have never seen any compact system that did not carry within itself something like a lake of confusion; we have never heard of rigor without noise... We do not know, all in all, whether the world is itself a unitary system or an incomplete multiplicity. I suggest a hypothesis that must have given some pause to Kant, namely, that the universe vibrates endlessly between the two, that it unceasingly pulsates from one edge to the other, from a homeothetic tower where the summit, or point, is a system, to a homeothetic tower where the summit, or point, is a multiplicity. God never ceases to undo himself into gods; the gods never cease to unify themselves into God. To be is the pure risk of being and nothingness. (231–32)

The turn in criticism embracing the disruption, disorder, and noise described by Serres here and exemplified by the writings of Derrida, DeMan, and Deconstruction has not gone unchallenged.

In June 1983, *Critical Theory* dedicated an entire issue to opposing views, entitling it "Against Theory: Literary Studies and the New Pragmatism."[92] In a more recent issue, Spring 1994, Peter Brooks identifies a surprising reversal taking place:

> At just the moment one thought the legacy of European structuralism and poststructuralism was becoming institutionalized in the American curriculum—and the American university was becoming the prime field for practices of textuality that in Europe remained confined to marginal fringes of the academy—a reversal was in fact underway, a reassertion of the historical and ideological coordinates of literature. At the moment when the media discovered "deconstruction" and accused professors of turning from the evaluative and normative function of criticism, another kind of swerve was in fact taking place, one which would turn even many of the deconstructionists into practitioners of ideological and cultural critique.[93]

[92] The authors represented in this issue (Volume 9.4) include E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Jonathan Crewe, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Steven Mailloux, Hershel Parker, Adena Rosmarin, William C. Dowling, and Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels.

[93] Peter Brooks, "Aesthetics and Ideology: What Happened to Poetics?" *Critical Inquiry 20.3* (Spring 1994).

The "swerve" Brooks identifies is undoubtedly taking place. The corrective, however, will never displace the uncertainty, complexity, and fragmentation inherent in any postmodern discourse.

In the following chapters, I will explain the emergence of the explosives trope in terms of literary history and the trope's particular significance in various literary works. For the most part, the critical method I have employed is a formalistic, close reading combined with an ideological, contextual analysis. But my analysis also includes other poststructuralist and structuralist critical perspectives whenever I think they are appropriate. As guiding metaphors for my critical and aesthetic analyses, I resort to the dialectic of the vortex and the explosive, hoping against hope not to get sucked into the abyss, or to be blown to smithereens.

Chapter Five: Lighting the Fuse: The Beginnings of Dynamite Literature

Like so many modern and contemporary technologies, high explosives became a worldwide technology very quickly, in part because of Alfred Nobel's business and language acumen and his earlier ventures in marketing nitroglycerine, but also because of the new, significant power effects and relationships his invention brought It should not be surprising, then, to find that much serious and popular world literature of the late nineteenth century considers directly or indirectly the possible and actual effects this latest and astoundingly powerful technology was having on society and on individuals. Some authors, as I will show in this chapter, adopted a new aesthetic, or adapted their previous literary techniques, to accommodate the potentialities, possibilities, and problems in plot, characterization, and symbolism that high explosives had to offer.

For the purpose of analysis, or "pseudo-scholarship" as E.M. Forster calls it,[1] it might be possible to simplify the beginnings of dynamite literature, at least in Great Britain and the United States, to singular, explosive moments in history: the primarily Irish American "Fenian" explosions and the threat of anarchist outrages in London (during the 1880s and early 1890s) and the Haymarket "riot" and bombing in Chicago (1886). European dynamite literatures, as explained in Chapter Two, might be viewed as having had their own central, opening historical moments of explosion (e.g. the French Communards of 1871, the assassinations and terror bombings of heads of state in Russia, Italy, and Spain). However, the trope of explosion, as explained in previous chapters, has a more varied and lengthy history than certain specific episodes in the nineteenth century, one that encompasses mythic stories, volcanic eruptions, gunpowder arsenals and weaponry, as well as the introduction of nitroglycerine, dynamite, gelignite, and TNT in the late nineteenth century. Furthermore, establishing direct causal links between fictional events and historical ones can be fraught with difficulties.

For example, much of Joseph Conrad's fictional basis for the central act of *The Secret Agent* has been traced to an unsuccessful 1894 bombing by Martial Bourdin (allegedly

[1] See E.M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1927), particularly his introductory chapter.

at the behest of his brother-in-law H. B. Samuels, a suspected double agent);[2] yet the novel's setting, chosen by Conrad is 1886, a time when Conrad happened to be living in London, passing his examination for a Master's certificate and becoming a British citizen[3]. Could he at that earlier time, when there were a series of dynamite outrages in London, have been more influenced by those actual events, in spirit if not in historical "fact"? Notwithstanding his attribution of a conversation with Ford Madox Ford as the prime source for this work, could he, as Henry James before him, have walked the streets of London, late at night, and gathered key firsthand insights that would guide his later work, even "anticipate" his future thoughts? Was he an early reader of the Stevensons' *The Dynamiter* at that time and what may have been its later influence on his portrayal of anarchists and dynamiters? As a foreigner on British soil and the son of a revolutionary might he have privately explored the anarchist, socialist, or other subversive movements of the time, leading a double life, a divided life, like Verloc and so many of his other characters in other novels? Letters from Conrad to Joseph Spiridion Kliszczewski immediately before the 1886 London period demonstrate a consuming interest in English and Polish politics, but particularly telling is the long and close friendship Conrad enjoyed with Cunninghame Graham, one of the victims of police mistreatment in a political protest on Trafalgar Square in 1887, since referred to as "Bloody Sunday." In short, as so many of Conrad's Marlowe novels and short stories demonstrate so well, what is officially known or collected about a person, or event, and its many interconnections often fall woefully short of what is actually "true."[4]

Dynamite literature, which I will define very simply as literature in which dynamite (high explosives) plays a significant and central role, addressed for English and American readers of the nineteenth century many of the basic and familiar questions about "terrorist" and other civilian bombings still being asked today: What type of person could do such a thing? What motivates a person to go to such extremes? How does such an act actually take place-planning (plotting?) and targeting the attack, constructing an explosive device, transporting and planting the explosive, escaping? How does one live with having performed such an act? Why, why, why would someone attempt to kill innocent people or destroy property in such a devastating and often arbitrary fashion? What philosophies, views of the meaning of life, could possibly justify such an act?

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[2] An early authoritative and influential source on the historical background of *The Secret Agent* is Norman Sherry's "The Greenwich Bomb Outrage and *The Secret Agenf' Review of English Studies: A Quarterly Journal of English Literature* 18 (1967): 412–28. Ian Watt, ed., *Conrad: "The Secret Agent": A Casebook (London:* 1973) is also an oft-cited reference for historical sources in Conrad's work.

[3] Some of Conrad's biographers have included Jocelyn Baines, Thomas Moser, Eloise Knapp Hay, Frederick Karl, and Zdzislaw Najder.

[4] Emile Zola's *Germinal* (London: Everyman, J. M. Dent, [1885] 1996) creates similar difficulties. Originally published in 1885 and often addressing contemporary issues to that time, its setting is 1865–67, which is particularly interesting because much of the workers' helplessness in their suffering cannot be counterbalanced by a threat from high explosives, since apparently dynamite had not yet infiltrated into French mining practices.

In attempting to deal with such questions in a credible way and yet retain their reading public, authors might distance themselves explicitly or implicitly from the subject of their work. Despite such distancing, however, a central irony in many dynamite novels is that often, intentionally or not, authors achieve a certain tone that indicates they might be more closely identifying with their villains than they wish; the latent anxiety of such identification is often expressed in the similarities between the represented work, actions, or beliefs of dynamiters and their own. For example, authors, like dynamiters, work in isolation for long hours and are often misunderstood by others, authors might feel, like dynamiters, the conflict between merely expressing words to initiate change and doing so by direct action, they too work on products intentionally designed to have delayed reactions, authors may assume fictitious identities to gather information for their work, they may have worked out individualist, complex, political or apolitical positions, which are not expressed straightforwardly but subversively, subtly, in polyphonic art forms, such as the novel, set to explode at any moment in the mind of a reader.

One reason the initial literary explorations into such questions and issues are interesting to examine is that eventually twentieth-century society as a whole, not simply a few extremist dynamiters, would all too commonly pursue the path of "terrorist" civilian bombings, among other tactics, to achieve their political ends; wartime and postwar condemnations of subversive high explosives use become more problematic, tinged with hypocrisy. The dynamite literature of the late nineteenth century is particularly interesting because it captures a moment in time when mainstream authors and audiences could more or less assume a position of apparent disinterest in examining the "other" dynamiters, those not sanctioned by society, because such aggressors were safely beyond the pale and fair game for "objective" examination and representation.

Factoring explosives into their fiction was also appealing to authors for several major reasons: the public expressed a high level of interest/anxiety in the new technology of high explosives and their subversive uses, so such fiction was highly saleable; dynamite literature accorded with the creative literary value of exploring something new, exploring fresh terrain (much as the novelty of computer-based, special effects, cyber, and space movies do today); it provided a "new" range of character types for exploration (the detective, the secret agent, the anarchist or Fenian terrorist cell, the dynamiter, politically active women) or at least an opportunity to inscribe evil and villainy in decidedly modern terms; and finally it allowed for explorations of "otherness," providing readers of literature with fresh perspectives into the lives of the growing and frighteningly unknown, lower-class masses below them, such as the poor living in urban slums, the downtrodden political malcontents, or the foreign immigrants.

To appeal to the public's interests but not cross over the line and offend their audience's sensibilities, most nineteenth-century authors who dealt with explosives selected various distancing techniques to present their works. Techniques such as reticence, humor, time manipulations, quasi-biography, or irony are the most common. Few authors of early dynamite literature appear to have trespassed or transgressed the margins to

acquire their working material. They could, as Henry James professed he did in gathering materials for *The Princess Casamassima,* gather information and insights during postprandial, rambling walks of a few hours late in the evening, through the streets of London. Or they might follow the path of Frank Harris's *The Bomb,* gathering material from news clippings and revisiting the scenes of the events. An author's more intimate knowledge of subversive terrorists, their actions, or their beliefs would not be conducive to public record even had it occurred.[5]

My research into dynamite literature has identified several of its key developmental phases: (1) a time of suppression and self-censorship, when authors either underplayed, understated, left unsaid, or otherwise distanced their treatments of dynamite (1865–1900); (2) a time of marginalizing and containment, in which authors explicitly referred to dynamite and examined the implications of its use, but focused, often ironically or humorously, on an inept, often misguided subversive minority who were the perpetrators; (3) a war and postwar time (1914–1945) of contradictory glorification of and ever-increasing disillusionment with the utility of high explosives as they became the terror weapon of choice, for modern warfare and terrorism, on civilian, military, or political targets, deliverable by aircraft, ship, submarines, artillery, grenade, mortar, or sabotage; and (4) a time of banality in the use of high explosives, when in the ominous shadow of nuclear explosion, the use of high explosives proliferates in hundreds of "little" wars or conflicts or terrorist acts around the world and appears almost as a matter of course in works of fiction, particularly the companion genres of adventure novels and adventure movies.[6] This chapter deals primarily with the first two phases, touching briefly on some seminal "suppression" works and then exploring in more depth the historically based beginnings of the British and American literary dynamite traditions. Subsequent chapters will explore three central literary dynamite works: *The Secret Agent, Mrs. Dalloway* and other selected works demonstrating the effects of war-time uses of explosives, and For *Whom the Bell Tolls.* To begin my study of dynamite literature, I briefly trace the effects, influences, and uses of this new technology's companion vocabulary.

High Explosives in the English Language

As a new, powerful and overpowering, sensational technology, *dynamite* (concretely and referentially) and its assistant vocabulary was quickly absorbed and proliferated in various discourse communities, infiltrating gender, ethnic, cultural, and class groups in its various usages. One interesting means of viewing a technology's effects on a society is

[5] The adolescent Rossettis' direct experiences with anarchists during the 1890s are a notable exception.

[6] Of course, any attempt to tie a developing literature to a particular time boundary will have exceptions, as the categorizations of the formal literary periods have so clearly demonstrated over the years.

to trace the language attached to that technology and determine how it has been used[7]. Nitroglycerine, the first widely used and popularized high explosive, for example, soon supplanted the "powder keg" as a metaphor for suggesting an impending disaster with extreme results. In the OED entry of *nitroglycerine* for 1879, we read of the word's first use in this fashion: "The other crowned heads of Europe sit, metaphorically speaking, upon barrels of nitro-glycerine."

Another metaphoric use, of course, often fused the technologies of low and high explosives, especially when the word *bomb* was included in the expression. Bombs, grenades, mortar and artillery shells, in which a metal casing was filled with gunpowder (later with incendiaries, poison, or high explosives) and a fuse added, had long been used for military purposes—the OED reports an English use as early as 1588: "They use... in their wars... many bomes of fire, full of olde iron, and arrowes made with powder and fire works, with the which they do much harme and destroy their enimies"; high explosives simply magnified the semantic effect of these terms and their metaphoric power of suggestiveness. A multitude of modern metaphoric expressions demonstrate this collusion of technologies and communicate a sense of impending disaster: *he's a walking time bomb, it's an explosive situation, being a schizophrenic is like waiting for a bomb to go off, high blood pressure is a ticking time bomb, he has a short fuse,* etc. The fused spherical bomb has become a common computer icon because of the ubiquitous sense of this meaning of impending disaster. Bombing seldom carries with it a positive sense today and is most often used to connote a sense of utter failure or disaster: one might *bomb* a test, a performance or movie *bombs* or is a *bomb,* a computer gone wrong *'bombs out' and has to be 'debugged'* or a software *time bomb* might need to be *defused.* A bomb can refer to an old car, a dose of drugs (a large marijuana joint or a racehorse might be *bombed* [drugged] in Australia), or a stash of ill-gotten gains.

Of course, usages such as *blonde bombshell,* which was coined in the early forties, exemplify more positive, albeit sexist, uses of the word. Less common are the uses of the word *bomb to* indicate overwhelming success (e.g. the Beatles: "Once Paul and I played Reading as the Nurk Twins. Went down a *bomb,* I recall") or great speed *(bombing round). The Bomb,* whether capitalized or lower cased, has captured by understatement and gross oversimplification the utterly destructive potentiality of nuclear warfare in a single, highly suggestive word.

In contrast to the word *bomb, dynamite* used metaphorically today connotes a positive, usually sensational response: *the show was dynamite, she is dynamite, that's dynamite! etc.* The overpowering effects of drugs like heroin or other bootleg drugs with a high narcotic content gained for them the name *dynamite* during the twenties and thirties. Today's TV and movie networks attract viewers with advertising terms like *nitro nights, TNT, dynamite of explosive* programs. The adventure genre with its array of pyrotechnic effects has become a commonplace of the entertainment

[7] The source for many of my observations in this section is the on-line version of the OED.

world. Of course, literally taken the word *dynamite* can cany with it darker meanings deeply rooted in its history: *a dynamite affair* (1880), *dynamite outrages* (1883), *the dynamite bomb exploded among the Chicago police* (1886), or, finally, *Utah should be dynamited* [for its practice of polygyny and alleged insurrection] (1881). It is not uncommon for illegal, terrorist uses of dynamite to be referenced by allusions to hell; in fact many nineteenth-century laws in the United States against the use of explosive devices retain the archaic term *infernal machine* to refer to either high or low explosive illegally-contrived and ignited bombs. Also, the deep physical chasm left by a high explosive is suggestive of a pit, an infernal pit, a fiery pit

It is interesting to trace the different terms used to refer to those who have employed explosives. Early in the history of low explosives, the terms are almost exclusively military in usage: *bombardier, grenadier, bomb makers, arsenal* or *munitions workers.* With the advent of dynamite, however, a distinct pejorative sense is often attached to a user or creator of explosives—a *dynamiter* in the nineteenth-century is commonly equated with a terrorist. Late nineteenth-century English writers would sometimes add a tinge of foreignness to the term by referring to dynamiters as *(dynamiteurs* (a suggestive French suffix) or *dynamitards* (suggestive of *communards,* a common term to refer to the French socialists and anarchists who revolted in 1871). In 1882, *nihilism,* a philosophical concept often used politically to justify terrorist bombing, generally associated with the results of bombing or the personal view necessary for one to use such a weapon, was explained in the following way: "Nihilism in Russia is an explosive compound, generated by the contact of the Slav, character with Western ideas."

As we can see, then, in English and American usage a common linguistic or semantic move made by writers is to alienate and demonize the bomber-dynamiter-anarchist-terrorist and label him/her as "Other," one who originates in another nation, another economic or social sphere, or another psychological or philosophical dimension. In this way, a person's capacity for evil and wrongdoing, so goes the implication, becomes more manageable, if not comprehensible, becomes representable and thus separate, an object of ridicule or blame, not us.

Suppression. Repression, and Censorship: Some Early Distancing Techniques in Dynamite Literature

Various factors led to an early silence about explosives. For one thing, some authors who were committed to the ideals and practices of realist fiction felt inadequate in presenting or re-presenting the topic since they had no direct experience with it and gaining direct, actual experience could be illegal, immoral, and potentially dangerous. Some authors, self-conscious about stories already covered sensationally in the newspapers, wanted to avoid the "catchpenny" criticism of dealing with such a current and

heavily exploited topic. A gentlemanly sensibility of Victorian reserve and restraint among many English-speaking authors and editors spurred on a reluctance to influence the reading masses by informing or inspiring them by writing about such things as dynamite use. One indicator of the tenor of the times, at least in Britain, can be found in Frank Harris's experience. An editor for some years of the *Fortnightly Review* and *Saturday Review,* two respectable literary journals in England, he was let go, according to his account, for having reported a bomb-throwing incident without appropriately condemning it.[8]

Yet another reason for the reticence about high explosives can be attributed to an accompanying literary movement in the literature of the time, namely realism.. A primary aesthetic goal of literary realism was that authors consciously strived for a fair representation of their major characters, villains or heroes; put simply they wanted to make readers see, hear, and feel the represented characters without a sense of an artificial, authoritative, authorial filter. Emile Zola is commonly named as an early champion of the movement, though it should be noted that few successful authors subscribe wholly to another's agenda. Chekhov asserted that it was not for an author to "provide solutions, only to describe a situation so truthfully, do such a justice to all sides of the question, that the reader can no longer evade it."[9] But few of the authors in the early dynamite literature that I have discovered felt comfortable enough with the idea of fairly representing the dynamiter's perspective, either because such a position was untenable for them to imagine or out of fear that the representation, if achieved, might be mistaken as their own and might have real-life repercussions. The anxiety of many authors can readily be seen in the hesitancy and defensiveness of their prefaces and forewords to such novels and in their recourse to irony, humor, time manipulations, or pseudo-biography to shroud what might be deemed to be their own political or philosophical views. One example: in weighing whether to write a book about a revolutionary who commits a terrorist act, Dostoyevsky commented to his friend and publisher Suvorina, "About the most important things we are not allowed to talk."[10]

One of the earliest literary works to deal with explosives, and one of the major philosophies tied to its use—nihilism, was Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* (1861). Turgenev's days in Paris with his friend Bakunin no doubt helped him to form his portrait of his main character Bazarov, a young Russian deeply loved by his parents who commits himself to the ideas of "belief in nothing" and the "total annihilation of the present system" so a new and improved order could come forth. The plot Turgenev

[8] The source for this biographic information is from the introduction to the 1963 edition of the book by John Dos Passos; Saul Bellow was an advisory editor of this and a series "Chicago in Fiction." Frank Harris, *The Bomb* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, [1909] 1963).

[9] As qtd. in Isaiah Berlin's "Fathers and Children," The Romanes Lecture, 1970, in an introduction to Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons* (New York: Penguin, 1861,1988): 57. This is the edition of Turgenev's work referred to hereafter.

[10] Ibid, 60.

constructs revolves around the central conflict Bazarov experiences when his ideas cannot be reconciled with an inexplicable, irrational, unreciprocated love he feels and expresses for a wealthy, widowed princess, Madame Odintsov, and the high cultural milieu she represents. This central conflict of destruction versus love and culture repeats in many subsequent works of dynamite literature.

Though Bazarov is never described actively pursuing acts of destruction by explosives, Turgenev implies that he has the capability of such acts because of his chemistry studies and his commitment to action. Bazarov exults early in the novel, "A decent chemist is twenty times more useful than any poet" (97).[11] Certainly, Turgenev establishes the ways of thinking that would popularly justify destruction as a political solution. Bazarov argues in a discussion with his good friend Arkady, "We base our conduct on what is most useful" and "what is most useful is to repudiate [or as Arkady says in reply more directly, **to destroy]** and we repudiate everything" (123). Bazarov does not concern himself with the creation to take place after destruction—"that is not our affair... the ground must be cleared first" (124). At the end of the novel, when Bazarov lies dying of a slight wound that has become septic, he appears to reverse his extreme nihilism, by accepting his first, and last, kiss from his beloved Madame Odintsova, and by confessing that he, a chemist, is not needed but a tailor, cobbler, and butcher are needed by society. Of course, the final mention of the "butcher" allows for an ironic reversal of meaning to this apparently clear-cut reversal of his nihilist philosophy.[12]

The use of high explosives is notably not suppressed in the early works of science fiction. Jules Verne's *The Mysterious Island* (1875) describes a group of shipwrecked travellers who, like the *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Swiss Family Robinson* before them, survive and flourish on an abandoned island (which they name Lincoln Island) in great part because of the ingenuity of Cyrus Smith, an engineer. Smith creates fire by combining the glasses of two watches, locates depositories of coal and ore, makes iron and steel in a self-created forge, creates bows and arrows, and maps the island. He obtains various chemicals, including nitroglycerine, which he uses to explode a path to a lake on a granite plateau. Eventually, the stranded travellers create a happy existence for themselves with farms, stables, a comfortable and elaborate cave home, and a telegraph system for communication. The novel begins typically as a celebration of the resourcefulness of the thinking man, of the enlightenment and the technology it has spawned.

[11] In English the word "chemist" can refer to either a pharmacist or a student of chemistry. In Turgenev's novel and Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima* the contextual details of the word's use suggest the latter meaning.

[12] Zola's *Germinal* is another seminal work for later dynamite works because of its treatment of miner labor struggles. Miners commonly used high explosives, but Zola sets his revolutionary work in the mid-1860s when they had yet to infiltrate the French mining industry. As a pre-cursor to the 1871 communard revolt, the absence of dynamite as a weapon of the people helps justify much of the sense of hopelessness about their lot that the workers feel.

However, the stranded travelers soon discover two things that diminish their apparent victories over nature: first they learn that Captain Nemo, long-time enemy of the British Empire, has retreated to their island with the *Nautilus* to die; before Nemo dies his earlier villainy is explained and somewhat justified; second, they are informed by Nemo that their "domesticated" Lincoln Island is a volcanic island set to explode at any moment Despite their best efforts and all of Smith's knowledge, the shipwrecked travellers end up as they began, stranded on a barren rock with little hope of survival and less of rescue. The reversal and justification for the villainy of a former terrorist and the symbolic insight that despite its best efforts humankind's technology rests on an unstable, explosive foundation beyond control are dominant themes to be revisited again in other science fiction works of dynamite literature, as for example in Ignatius Donnely's *Caesar's Column.*

Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima* (1886)[13] never specifies the means by which his hero Hyacinth will commit his act of terror (though given the tenor of the times in London, most readers would interpolate the fact that he is to be responsible for the planting of a bomb, especially since his revolutionary friend is suggestively named "Muniment" and is also, like Bazarov before him, a "chemist"), but one gets a sense of the psychology of heredity, youthful naivete, and the cultural motivations behind anarchist violence from James's study.[14] The basic conflict in this novel is not unlike *Fathers and* Sons-though committed to revolution, Hyacinth falls for a Princess and is captivated by the artifacts of the high culture she shares with him—but James adds to this conflict the issue of a nineteenth-century concept of honor. Since Hyacinth is part French, James appears to be alluding to the highly regarded sense of pre-Dreyfus French military honor or the honor of English nobility, since Hyacinth's father is English, his mother French. Because Hyacinth has committed to his anarchist comrades, before meeting the Princess, to carry out an act of terror, he must either do this or lose his honor. In the end he chooses to commit suicide, so as to avoid destroying a culture, and a personage that represents that culture, that he has learned to respect, admire, and even love. One other interesting aspect of James's characterization of Hyacinth is his close friendship with Paul, which is laden with highly suggestive but latent homosexual elements. Just the name *Hyacinth* itself is cue enough for some readers to infer the homosexual aspects of his personality. The subtle, or not so subtle, suggestion of homosexuality, as we shall see, becomes a common means of characterizing dynamiters or anarchists.

An example of direct censorship in regard to dynamite can be found in William Dean Howells' *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885)[15]. In Chapter XIV, the Corey dinner

[13] Henry James, *The Princess Casamassima* (New York: Penguin Books, [1886] 1986), edited and with introduction by Derek Brewer and with notes by Patricia Crick.

[14] An excellent source that supports the reading I provide here is Margaret Scanlan's, "Terrorism and the Realistic Novel: Henry James and *The Princess Casamassima" Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 34 (Fall 1992): 380–402.

[15] William Dean Howells, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (New York: Penguin, [1885] 1986).

party banter turns to the topic of "how unequally things are divided in this world" and to the lot of the thousands of urban poor in the city, especially in hot summers when the rich leave their houses for cooler climes. In the original manuscript, Howells has Bromfield Corey exclaim:

> I tell you that in some of my walks on the Hill and down on the Back Bay, **nothing but the surveillance of the local policeman prevents me from applying dynamite** to those long rows of close shuttered, handsome, brutally insensible houses. If I were a poor man, with a sick child pining in some garret or cellar at the North End, I should break into one of them, and camp out on the grand piano, (emphasis mine, 194)

When the *Century* owner Richard Watson Gilder and his editor Roswell Smith came across these lines in serial proofs in April of 1885, they feared the connection readers might make to the international revolutionary nihilist movement, so they urged Howells to reconsider. He acquiesced, softening the words "applying dynamite" to "personally affronting" (xiv). This succumbing to editorial pressures is not to say that Howells took his social and political positions lightly. In the aftermath of the Haymarket bombing, for example, he was the only important American man of letters to speak out and write in defense of the accused and convicted anarchists.

Edward Bellamy, in *Looking Backward* (1887),[16] either was aware of Howells' censored passage or took very similar walks. His main character in the novel, Julian West, attempts an explanation for the inequities between poverty and wealth that Howells' Bromfield Corey had observed by using the same walk as an illustration. West explains that the original invention of money brought about

> endless exchanges to bring about any sort of general distribution of products. These exchanges money effected—how equitably might be seen in a walk from the tenement house districts to the Back Bay—at the cost of an army of men taken from productive labor to manage it, with constant ruinous breakdowns of its machinery, and a generally debauching influence on mankind which had justified its description, from ancient time, as the 'root of all evil.' (234)

Bellamy was not the first, nor the last, to attack usury or credit, the foundation of banking, as an evil greater than money and one of the great evils of this world, but his criticisms are couched in unique semantic and explosive terms for his age. "Money was a sign of commodities," West's mentor Dr. Leete proclaims, "but credit was but the sign of the sign" (172). And in a later passage, Dr. Leete asserts

[16] Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (New York: Modern Library College, [1887] 1982).

> It was the misfortune of your contemporaries to cement their business fabric with a material which an accident might at any moment turn into an explosive. **They were in the plight of a man building a house with dynamite for mortar, for credit can be compared with nothing else.** (emphasis mine, 173)

The tenuousness and volatility of Leete's analysis of late nineteenth-century American society's economic foundations call to mind Verne's unstable, volcanic *Mysterious Island.*

Bellamy's handling of the miscreants of the day, the anarchists, is equally reminiscent of Verne's reversal on Captain Nemo's previously villainous characterization. From the distant, privileged chronological position of the year 2000 A.D., Dr. Leete notes that "No historical authority nowadays doubts that [anarchists, socialists] were paid by the great monopolies to wave the red flag and talk about burning, sacking, and blowing people up, in order, by alarming the timid, to head off any real reforms" (184). So, in a post-Haymarket age, to Bellamy the role of the *agent provocateur* helps to explain some of the irrational extremism the yellow press attributed to designated undesirable groups such as anarchists. In Marxist terms, then, it might be said that the alleged socialist and anarchist perpetrators of dynamiting outrages were victims of a capitalist conspiracy of sorts, which included the powerful forces of the press, the police, the culture factories of the time, and government; this conspiracy acted in concert to sustain its own hegemony.

Other dynamite works that leap to the future like Bellamy's include Ignatius Donnelly's *Caesar's Column* and Jules Verne's *Clipper of the Clouds.* In both of these novels, dynamite bombs are presented as extreme superweapons, which dropped from airships can terrorize and wipe out entire civilizations. Both works exaggerate the destructive capacity of high explosives to such an extent that in an imaginative way they prefigure the more easily imagined complete annihilation made possible by nuclear weapons, an eventuality expressed in H.G. Wells *The Time Machine* and much later Nevil Shute's *On the Beach,* and countless other contemporary works.

Dynamite Humor

Unlike most science fiction works, Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889) [hereafter referred to as *CY*[17] leaps backward in time in order to simultaneously deconstruct the world of Arthurian chivalry (which could be viewed as a romantic world view) and the American golden age of capitalism, imperialism, and industrialism (with its closely associated materialistic, mechanistic modes of thought). Twain's *CY* goes beyond simply distancing itself by time; its constant humor and multiple narrators make futile any attempts of ascribing an aesthetic unity to the

[17] Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court* (New York: Penguin, [1889] 1986).

work, at least in traditional terms. One cannot but wonder if both authors were not affected by the suppressions of free political speech brought about by the Haymarket trial and whether they were reacting to the situation by extending their fictions to what they believed would be safe venues for self-expression—the distant future or the distant past.

Twain's CT has been commonly read as a mere entertainment (by his friend Howells, whose evaluation was "good in fancy, and sound to the core in morals"), enjoyed by adults and children alike for its humor and fantasy. Literary critics have often seen it as a "defense or an indictment of either the Hank Morgan mentality or headlong pragmatism" (Michelson 610). But recently, Bruce Michelson has argued that the novel's significance may lie closer to the social and personal context of the author's mind at the time of *CY*'s composition, that "the novel is an act of war against every conceivable enemy of personal integrity and an attempt to name and overthrow the pernicious force that sustains them all" (611). Since the novel's composition begins in 1886, the year of Haymarket and the opening of the American press's widespread debates over anarchism, it should not be too surprising that Twain would contend with similar issues at this time and in the years following *CY*'s publication in 1889. Instead of viewing Hank Morgan as a coherent narrator, Michelson believes that we need to look instead at more "constant presences" in the novel, one of which he recognizes to be explosives, bombs, dynamite, and fireworks—"the second great obsession in the narrative" (689). The explosives, as Michelson points out, not only help Twain/Hank deliver "entertainments" with spectacular and convincing effects, they also serve as an "analogue for Twain's narrative process" throughout the novel:

> The book is his [Twain's] own peaceful field of glass-cylinder torpedoes, the prettiest garden of them that he ever planted, a narrative that can shift without warning from satiric realism to romantic sentiment and suspense, to lessons in political economy, lectures on religion and science, frontier humor, slapstick, and finally holocaust. (630)

The resulting narrative fragments into disparate and often conflicting, inconsistent voices (Michelson identifies four major narrators: the two romantics Merlin and Sandy and the two realists Hank and Twain himself). These voices are often contradictory, but they become Twain's means to dynamite his own novel's form and meaning, allowing a new freedom not allowed by a stricter, more consistent novelistic pattern. Frederic Jameson, like Bhaktin before him, has pointed out that genres often arise in reaction to ideological forces in history. An attack on a genre's accepted form, such as Twain's in *CY,* can be read as a confrontation with the ideologies embedded in that genre.[18] Twain's use of multiple narrators and his seeming perversity in pursuing and portraying inconsistencies in the values, voice, tone, irony, and actions of his major narrator Hank

[18] M. Keith Booker, *Techniques of Subversion in Modern Literature: Transgression, Abjection, and the Carnivalesque* (Gainesville: U of Florida, 1991), 201.

demonstrate his reluctance to impose a narrative totalitarianism on his work. As it works out, the narrative form is primarily anarchistic—no one character or voice, not even the author's, prevails over the others but collectively they create an "effect" worth reading and remembering.

Reviewing a few of the actual dynamite effects Twain conjures in the novel helps to illustrate how ingrained this anarchic technique is in the novel. George Kennan's series of lectures on the savagery of life in Russia and slavery in Siberia became one of Twain's key sources of inspiration for the slave episodes in the narrative of *CY*. Twain commented after attendance at one such lecture, "If such a government cannot be overthrown otherwise than by dynamite, then thank God for dynamite" (21), echoing a sentiment common to militant anarchists worldwide, but especially the Narodniki movement in Russia itself. Yet, when his good friend William Dean Howells led a public protest in support of the Haymarket anarchists who had espoused similar sentiments about inhumane American government and big business techniques, Twain did not support him, at least publicly. Nevertheless, in the novel that was planned and written in this same time frame, Twain has all of Hank's culture and civilization factories underlain with dynamite for easy destruction, "if things don't go well" with his plans to remake the world of chivalry to Yankee specifications.

The initial entry of actual dynamite use in the novel occurs early, in Hank's second "miracle," as he blows up Merlin's tower:

> Clandestinely we made a few bushels of first-rate blasting powder, and I superintended my armourers while they constructed a lightning rod and some wires... we stowed the powder in the walls themselves... a peck at a time, in a dozen places. We could have blown up the Tower of London with these charges. (83)

Hank waits three weeks for stormy weather then issues an Elijah-like challenge to Merlin: "I am going to call down fire and blow up your tower," taunts Hank, but he gives Merlin a chance to stop this from happening with his ineffectual chants and imprecations. When lightning strikes the rod Hank has made, the charges explode, "There was an awful crash, and that old tower leaped into the sky in chunks, along with a vast volcanic fountain of fire that turned night into noonday and showed a thousand acres of human beings grovelling on the ground in general collapse of consternation" (85). Explosives in this instance free Hank/Twain from several key encumbrances to his self-hood: the threat of Merlin's hocus-pocus romantic meddling, the glorification of him by the masses with their expectations for more and more "miracles," and his own self-knowledge that his first "miracle" of the solstice was as bogus as any of Merlin's—the blast, though detonated by lightning, is by all other means his own contrivance and under his control.

In Hank's second use of explosives during the "Restoration of the Fountain" episode, Hank has to settle for a gaudy fireworks display since a "dynamite torpedo" is really not

necessary for the job at hand of restoring a well—a rare case of retraint on his part Hank precedes his performance this time in Merlin-like showman fashion, uttering various ominous sounding imprecatory spells. Most of the spells have a German component and read like newspaper headlines run together as Twain plays the double entendre "spell" to the hilt. For example, one reads as follows:

"Nihilistendynamittheaterkaestchensprengungsattentaetsversuchungen!" (212) Broken down into its constituent parts, this might roughly be translated as, "Nihilists Dynamite Theater-Attempting to Gain Attention." The seemingly random spell, and the others like it, cue readers to the fact that Hank/Twain is very aware of contemporary political happenings in the 1880s and is weaving them into his narrative.

When he travels incognito with the King, Hank nonchalantly blows up some knights in a joust. The episode goes like this: after accidentally tripping, Hank nervously takes out a dynamite bomb that he has been carrying with him encased in wool in a box. Soon afterwards, two knights errant almost run over the King and then, in response to insults from the King and Hank, attack them. Hank decides this is a good moment to rid himself of the explosive that has almost accidentally exploded when he tripped. He takes out the bomb and throws it at the charging knights from fifteen yards away. The effect on the knights in particular and the new idea of courage, honor, and heroism in battle in the age of high explosive bombs is devastatingly clear:

> "Yes, it was a neat thing, very neat and pretty to see. It resembled a steamboat explosion on the Mississippi; and during the next fifteen minutes we stood under a steady drizzle of microscopic fragments of knights and hardware and horseflesh." (279)

The rendering of the incident in this way allows Twain simultaneously to deconstruct romance, for its unrealistic, archaic idealism, and realism, for its brutal, offhand cruelty and lack of grace, in one fell swoop. The incident also illustrates a growing destructive tendency in Hank—he has destroyed Merlin's tower of power in Elijah-like fashion, entertained the masses and established his own power, like Moses, by bringing forth water from a rock under the gala of fireworks, and finally he kills two knights, for the simple inconvenience that they have caused him of stepping out of the road. He also needs to rid himself of a source of self-annihilation, so the idea of efficiency, of not wasting an "effect" to impress the king is another selfish motive for this act Nonetheless, the randomness and brutality of this act of killing, the attitude behind it, is difficult to find a precedent for and even more difficult to justify. The offhanded, unemotional, glee Hank and the king express in the killing of the two knights helps prepare readers for the fierce logic that will later be implemented to justify the killing of twenty-five thousand of the country's finest.

The most spectacular uses of dynamite, and advanced military technology in general, are reserved for the final Arthurian episode of the book, called the "Battle of the

Sand-Belt."[19] To prepare for the battle, Clarence has created a plan to defeat the Church and all the knights of Chivalry by creating a siege cave, which is surrounded by a series of ungrounded electrical wire fences and a forty feet wide "garden" of landmines ("glasscylinder dynamite torpedoes"); it is further protected by a central platform housing gatling guns operated by a small army of fifty-two boys, aged fourteen to seventeen, conscripted from his civilization schools. As for the outlying "civilization factories," Clarence has secretly wired each of them back to the cave so that "dynamite deposits under all the vast factories, mills, workshops, magazines, etc." can be exploded at a moment's notice; this way, the enemy will not be able to turn their own inventive weapons against them in battle. Clarence exults, "We shan't have to leave our fortress, now, when we want to blow up our civilization" (386).

In the first step of the battle, a wave of ten thousand charging knights are blown to fragments ("we could not count the dead because they did not exist as individuals but merely as homogeneous protoplasm, with alloys of iron and buttons"); the dynamite explosions dig a surrounding ditch one hundred feet wide. In the second step of the plan, with the touch of a button Hank explodes all of his civilization factories. The third step involves the total massacre of the remaining fifteen thousand strong army as they attempt their advance on the fortified cave. Hank pulls the switch at strategic moments to electrocute most of the army, adds water to help electrocute those between the series of wires, and finally he directs his boys to fire the gatling guns to "vomit death" into the remaining men.

Though they win the battle, Hank's army cannot escape the mound of dying and decomposing bodies that surround them. As Clarence later reports, one by one they themselves die of "the poisonous air bred by those dead thousands." Ironically, it is Merlin's spell, one of a handful that actually seem to work, that allows Hank to survive the carnage he has inflicted on so many others.

The disastrous ending of CY has been interpreted variously as a failure of Hank's or Twain's pragmatic and positivist evolutionary and technological values, as a victory of the romantic over realist sensibilities, as a preview of the failure of many of the prevailing nineteenth-century culture and civilization factories, or, more mundanely, as an aesthetic failure caused by Twain's o'er hasty rush to publish to help him compensate for the losses incurred investing in the Paige typesetter-how better to end a novel quickly than to blow everyone and everything up? The novel, though, does not simply end in an explosion; it uses some of the most common storybook endings to add variety to its close. Clarence, for example, takes over the final narration of the Sandbelt episode and ends Hank's book with the grim realities of death. Merlin's spell provides a fairy tale ending, where death is delayed and forestalled by spiritual means. Hank returns fourteen hundred years later, on his death bed, sputtering a nonsensical, visionary dream sequence ending to his Arthurian "fantasy." Finally, the unnamed

[19] The name of the battle scene is reminiscent of a much celebrated battle in English history, the Battle of Maldon. The selection of the army of boys reminds biblical readers of Gideon.

narrator who begins the story ends it journalistically, reporting Hank's last words, but adding the sardonic editorial comment, "He was getting up his last 'effect;' but he never finished it." Each of these narrative filters serve to ease readers out of the macabre Sandbelt and help to downplay the singularity and the seriousness of the tragic vision that final, apocalyptic battle affords. The book, then, ends as a comic entertainment, a self-professed "effect" by Twain, but nonetheless a troubling one which deconstructs itself in its multeity.

If it might be granted that Twain's humor in *CY* achieves much of its effect by grand overstatement, the British writer G.K. Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908)[20] employs the opposite, understatement, to achieve much of its humorous effect Chesterton's novel describes the exploits of a group of secretly deposed detectives whose mission is to locate and halt an anarchist bombing conspiracy. The main character, a detective called Syme, assumes the false identity of a poet/anarchist to help himself break into the anarchist ring he has been assigned to find—Syme is soon elected by the assembled "anarchist leaders" and given the new name of Thursday. His election maintains the quorum of seven required by this terrorist, anarchist cell. Unbeknownst to all until the end is the fact that each of the leaders of the gang (Monday through Sunday), like Syme, is also a deposed detective replete with identity card, a dramatic irony which helps create the burden of the comedic effect throughout the novel. For example, Syme's first instinct is to believe that only the Pole called Gogol is an anarchist because he most resembles his view of what an anarchist ought to look like.

Syme observes Gogol's outer appearance when he is first introduced to the group and immediately jumps to the conclusion that the Pole Gogol with a thick accent is "the common or garden Dynamiter—a head quite unmanageable and quite unmistakeable, a bewildering bush of brown hair and beard that almost obscured the eyes... the sad eyes of some Russian serf." But Syme goes further; he soon notices in each of the "anarchists" some demoniac detail—a lop-sided smile or laugh and look of pain in the Secretary, an emaciated, diseased face, a richly dressed French Marquis de St. Eustache who was too French to be French—maybe Jewish or Persian, the long, grey beard and cadaverous look of Professor de Worms, and a well-built young doctor-like man named Bull, who wears suspicious dark, almost opaque, glasses even indoors. Of course, in retrospect a reader realizes that each anarchist's suspect appearance has been contrived to gain themselves entry into the anarchist circle. The views of anarchists as foreign (Polish, Russian, French, Jewish, or Persian), anything but English, as physically deformed and hence genetically suspect, or as extremely skinny or extremely obese (in the case of Sunday) play on what were for English readers familiar stereotypes of anarchists.

The alliance of anarchism with the imagery of bombs occurs in the opening pages of the novel when Syme is first introduced to the subterranean hideout and meetingplace of the anarchists. In keeping with the historicity of British anarchism and with the

[20] G. K. Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday* (New York: Carroll and Graff, [1908] 1987).

stereotype, the entry is through an alehouse. Gregory escorts Syme through several layers of arsenals until they reach

> a queer steel chamber with curved walls, almost spherical in shape, but presenting with its tiers of benches, something of the appearance of a scientific lecture theatre. There were no rifles or pistols in this apartment, but round the walls of it were hung more dubious and dreadful shapes, things that looked like the bulbs of iron plants, or the eggs of iron birds. They were bombs, and the very room itself seemed like the inside of a bomb. (19)

The association of anarchism with bombs, even to the architecture of their meetingplace, illustrates how completely in the popular imagination anarchists had become the scapegoats for high explosives use.

During the discussion that ensues Syme's entry to this foreboding, secret meetingplace, the Secretary, trying to sound very much like a dangerous anarchist to convince the circle of devotees that he is not a detective like Gogol, makes the following point concerning dynamite:

> "The knife was merely the expression of the old personal quarrel with a personal tyrant Dynamite is not only our best tool, but our best symbol. It is as perfect a symbol of us as is incense of the prayers of the Christians. It expands; it only destroys because it broadens; even so, thought only destroys because it broadens. A man's brain is a bomb. My brain feels like a bomb, night and day. It must expand! It must expand! A man's brain must expand, if it breaks up the universe." (64)

The speech, of course, is meant by Chesterton to be utter nonsense, poking fun at the irrational reasoning characteristic of extreme anarchists, or at least the portrayals of them. Chesterton adds to the humorous effect by the Marquis' sardonic reply to this outburst by the Secretary, echoing a sentiment reminiscent of the Marquis de Sade, "I want to do a lot of beastly things before I die" (64). The humorous characterization, then, is of a group of men gathering to say to one another as many extreme, dangerous, and beastly things as they possibly can.

As one by one each of the "anarchists" is revealed to be a detective, readers recognize what difficulty there can be in identifying a "real" anarchist, especially for the type of ineffectual and unenlightened English gentlemen Chesterton characterizes. The book ends apocalyptically like Twain's *CY,* but Chesterton's foregoes an apocalyptic battle scene for a wild chase in the country followed by a Judgment Day farce called the Party of Days when all things are revealed and set straight by Sunday, the mysterious leader of the group who, as he reveals, both has assigned the detectives and is the leader of the anarchists. The poet Gregory makes an appearance at this party to argue the anarchist position. In the final scene, the protagonist Syme awakes from his deep and

troubling vision of the Party of Days or Council of the Days and, much like Twain's Hank, arrives in a completely different world where his only real desire is to pursue the sister of the poet Gregory. As it turns out, the only "real" anarchist of the group has been the passionate but ineffectual artist and poet Gregory. In the final scene, Syme is seen approaching Gregory's sister, "the girl with the gold-red hair," who is cutting lilacs, indicating his return to normalcy.

Chesterton is the first author I have discovered who explicitly aligns modern artists, writers, and poets with the ideals of anarchism—the privileging of individuality, of disorder or chaos, of destruction or the "clean sweep," of opposition to order, of the symbolic act of defiance—though admittedly he does so humorously. The only "real" anarchist in the novel, the anarchic poet, Mr. Lucian Gregory, proclaims at the beginning of the novel:

> An artist is identical with an anarchist. You might transpose the words anywhere.
>
> An anarchist is an artist. The man who throws the bomb is an artist because he prefers a great moment to everything. He sees how much more valuable is one burst of blazing light, one peal of perfect thunder, than the mere common bodies of a few shapeless policemen. An artist disregards all governments, abolishes all conventions. The poet delights in disorder only. If it were not so, the most poetical thing in the world would be the Underground Railway. (8)

Though a tongue-in-cheek comment by Chesterton, contemporary artists like Felix Feneon, and later avante garde artists and writers such as Pablo Picasso and Gertrude Stein embraced the anarchist credo (Stein is reputed to have said, "All great art is anarchy"), at least in terms of its implications for the artistic sensibility and minus the actuality of bombing outrages.[21]

The banality of the anarchist position is further revealed by the anticlimactic epiphany Syme comes to in response to Gregory's confession that he is a destroyer and opposes government only because it governs and that he opposes the supreme power only because it is supreme. Gregory curses Syme because he, as a representative of British middle class society, is safe, and he expresses that what anarchists like himself really want is for others to suffer as they have suffered. Syme's simplistic though hyperbolically profound reply to all this is as follows:

> "I see everything, everything that there is. Why does each thing on the earth war against each other thing? Why does each small thing in the world have to fight against the world itself? Why does a fly have to fight the whole

[21] See John Ungersma Halperin, *Felix Feneon: Aesthete and Anarchist in Fin-de-Siecle Paris* (Cambridge: Yale UP, 1989) and Richard D. Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siecle France* (U of Nebraska P, 1989).

> universe? Why does a dandelion have to fight the whole universe? For the same reason that I had to be alone in the dreadful Council of the Days. So that each thing that obeys law may have the glory and isolation of the anarchist So that each man fighting for order may be as brave and good a man as the dynamiter. So that the real lie of Satan may be flung back in the face of this blasphemer, so that by tears and torture we may earn the right to say to this man [Gregory], 'you lie!' No agonies can be too great to buy the right to say to this accuser, 'We also have suffered.'"

The irony of the speech and much of its humor derive from the fact that Syme's "suffering" has mostly been due to his own stupidity and furthermore has mostly been the mere inconveniences of hunger, tom clothes, or fatigue. It is no wonder that Chesterton awakes his hero from this deep pursuit of the truth about anarchism and instead sends him, at the end of the novel, on a pursuit he is more equal to, the pursuit of a girl picking flowers on a Spring day.

The British Dynamite Novel's Beginnings-Fenians and Anarchists of the 1880s and 1890s

The first novel to offer a full and explicit fictional account of the terrorist uses of dynamite is Robert Louis and Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson's *More New Arabian Knights: The Dynamiter* (1885).[22] This novel, viewed as a mere humorous entertainment by the authors ("it were a waste of ink to [deal with the 'horror' of dynamiters] in a serious spirit"), revolves around the escapist fiction technique of duping readers and characters alike into several plot reversals, by which it is discovered that many things are not what they at first seemed, especially stories posing as histories. The novel is dedicated to two officers who disposed of a bomb about to explode in the streets of London. Stevenson's prefatory dedication honors Detectives Cole and Cox, who as police are, he claims, on the "side of the child, of the breeding woman, of individual pity and public trust... Whoever be in the right in this great and confused war of politics; whatever elements of greed, whatever traits of the bully, dishonour both parties in this inhuman contest;—your side, your part, is at least pure of doubt" (xv). The various levels of irony within this novel, its indirect but incisive commentary on Victorian mores, and its primacy within the genre of dynamite literature make it a significant literary work for further critical study.

[22] All references will be to the 1907 biographical edition, which contains Fanny's preface: Robert Louis and Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson, *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, [1885] 1907). Fanny is responsible for the sections regarding Challoner's adventure and the "Story of the Destroying Angel" as well as the final story concerning the love story of Desborough's adventure and the related "Story of the Fair Cuban." Robert wrote the overall framing sections of the novel as well as the middle section concerning Somerset and the "Superfluous Mansion." The story attached to Somerset's section is called "Zero's Tale of the Explosive Bomb."

The second British novel to deal with the dynamiters of the 1880s is the pseudonymous Isabel Meredith's (once again a collaborative work, this by the Rossetti sisters, Olivia and Helen) *A Girl among the Anarchists* (1903).[23] The novel is a barely disguised memoir of the Rossettis' actual experiences as teens running an anarchist journal out of the basement of their house during the early 1890s and is a rare eyewitness account into anarchists and their behaviors and beliefs.

Finally, Joseph Conrad's ironic *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale* (1907) is set in 1886; however, most critics agree that the central "incident" described by Conrad is based on the Martial Bourdin bombing of 1894. A full exploration of Conrad's novel and its significance relative to high explosives in fiction appears in the next chapter. Here, I will explore the Stevensons' *The Dynamiter* in some depth because of its primacy in dynamite fiction as the first full-length dynamite novel in the British tradition and because it directly addresses so many of the issues and questions regarding explosives raised at the beginning of this chapter. After the Stevensons *The Dynamiter,* I will touch on a few significant, relevant episodes from *A Girl Among the Anarchists* regarding anarchist violence, the novel's portrayal of a dynamiter, and the Victorian containment strategies for subversive political action respecting women.

One of the first significant traits of a "dynamite novel" is the careful, political positioning of its author, which usually takes place in the preface. As pointed out above, the Stevenson's wished their readers to know in no uncertain terms that in writing *The Dynamiter* they did not espouse or advocate the recent bombings that were taking place in London at this time. A manuscript fragment of 46 lines of prose by Robert, thought to be written about the same time as the novel in response to recent Fenian dynamite outrages, attacks the recently expressed view that "To take the side of society even against dynamiters is to be lacking in heart, lacking in perception, lacking in magnanimity." Clearly, in his preface Robert attempts to align himself not for or against any particular political position but on the side of individual courage and heroism. Fanny's later biographical preface explains the inventive kernel of the stories and emphasizes that the Stevensons were in France at the time of the explosions taking place in London. She explains "There had been several dynamite outrages in London about this time [1883], the most of them turning out fiascos. It occurred to me to take an **impotent dynamite intrigue** as the thread to string my stories on" (xiii).

Another important trait of a common dynamite novel is the distancing achieved by its narrative structure. Like Twain's and Chesterton's novels, *The Dynamiter* uses an episodic structure with multiple incidents and narrative voices to carry its action forward. The dual male/female authorship adds another level of complexity not evident in the other two. Much of the tales' suspense is created by disguised identities, the irony created by the naive but well-meaning gentlemen in the story and the beautiful, charming but duplicitous woman (named variously Luxmore, Lake, Fonblanque, Valdevia), and the sense of an impending explosion, a plot thread which binds all the characters

[23] Isabel Meredith, pseud., *A Girl among the Anarchists* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, [1903] 1993).

and stories together. The primary narrators are two women, Mrs. Luxmore and her daughter Clara (and all her alter egos), and three young men, Challoner, Somerset, and Desborough, as well as Prince Florizel, alias Theophilus Godall or Colonel Geraldine, of the Cigar Divan, a tobacco store on Rupert Street in Soho. However, at various times in the novel, other voices dominate such as an older Mormon scientist-murderer-dynamiter named Grierson, a young man who in a desperate moment pledges himself to anarchist violence and attempts to assassinate the Prince, a Cuban "Hoodoo" woman named Mendizabal, or Zero the dynamiter, the namesake of the novel. With such a proliferation of voices, it would be difficult to pin any author to a single perspective. The resultant polyphony, the *carnival* if you will, allows a multiplicity of perspectives and a subsequent release of subversive energies.

Within the safe prefatory, narrative, and fictive spaces they create for themselves, the Stevensons can imaginatively explore many of the very real consequences for terrorists who might plan and carry out a bombing outrage. Instinctively, the Stevensons seem to have determined that while there is a "weak point in the armor of society," namely the innocent masses, that the weak point in the dynamiter's own armor is legionin manufacturing an effective, reliable, "safe" (for the creater and carrier) bomb, in finding a safe place and able person to construct a bomb, in recruiting reliable help to manage the whole exercise, in maintaining duty to the cause in the face of challenges such as pangs of conscience, fear, or falling in love, in the problem of selecting a target and delivering the bomb, or in avoiding capture by the police and creating a means of escape. The ironic reversal of considering the dynamiters' problems and difficulties instead of society's challenges, while avowedly not endorsing that perspective, provides the Stevensons with an ideal opportunity to satisfy readers' curiosities and assuage their anxieties in a humorous and lighthearted way that the popular presses' reports on the facts of the incidents, the arrests and trials, the political or theoretical views of those involved could not. The Stevensons provide a portrait of frailty of the dynamiter circle that encourages readers to feel sorry for at least some of their naivete, ineptitude, stupidity, and sense of failure.

The frame of the novel is simple enough to grasp. At the Bohemian Prince Florizel's (Theophilus Godall's) cigar divan in Rupert Street, Soho, three young gentlemen—Challoner, Somerset, and Desborough—at the end of their financial strings, gather to pass the time and console themselves by smoking cigars. One reads in the paper of a 200 pound reward "for information as to the identity or whereabouts of a man observed... in the neighborhood of Green Park. He was over six feet in height, with shoulders disproportionately broad, close shaved, with black moustaches, and wearing a sealskin great coat" (7). Somerset argues that they should turn detective and locate this man and turn their fortunes with the reward. Against Challoner's attitude of pessimism and resignation, he argues,

> "Is it possible you hold the doctrine of Free Will? And are you devoid of any tincture of philosophy that you shoul harp on such exploded fallacies?

> Chance, the blind Madonna of the Pagan, rules this terrestrial bustle; and in chance I place my sole reliance." (9)

As self-proclaimed detectives, then, they agree to set out and embrace the next adventure that chance puts in their path. They further agree that they will meet again at the tobacconist's shop to recount their adventures.

The first adventure, experienced by Challoner, who is entitled ironically "The Squire of Dames," exploits middle-class Victorian tendencies towards gullibility. Fanny Stevenson's sense of Victorian values and mores and how they can be used to manipulate others dominates this first adventure. In the entertaining and highly sensationalized "The Story of the Destroying Angel," for example, the heroine uses a dynamiting Danite Destroyer Mormon stereotype to dupe Challoner and readers into believing that she is indeed a "lady in distress." Challoner's experience is related in the following way.

Edward Challoner, a portly well-dressed twenty-six year old gentlemen specializing in games of whist, begins his adventure the day after his visit to Rupert Street, when, after hearing the dull thud of detonation and seeing smoke and vapours emanating from a building, he follows one of three people hurrying from the scene, a strikingly beautiful young lady calling herself Asenath Fonblanque. To gain Challoner's understanding and support, Fonblanque tells him her life story (her parents' and her own life with the Mormons in Utah, her escape from polygamy and the mad doctor/scientist [Dr. Grierson] intent on possessing her, the destroying Danite dynamiters who are pursuing her, etc.) Though Challoner does not quite believe the story, he is charmed enough by the striking Fonblanque to agree to carry a sum of money, 701 pounds, and a note to one of her associates. Reluctantly taking leave of her, he travels to the designated address.

Upon meeting her associate, a man called M'Guire, Challoner honorably gives him the total sum of money. Soon after the exchange, however, Challoner becomes aware that the building he is in has been surrounded by police. Realizing his dubious situation, he escapes through a window, ripping his trousers. On his way out, he discovers the discarded note from Asenath proclaiming "We are all scattered and I could find no one but the *solemn ass* who brings you this and the money" (85). Challoner returns home hungry, tired, dejected, and upset that he has accepted Somerset's challenge, disillusioned, as no doubt readers are too, that he and they have been duped.

Challoner's story has various levels of significance. For one thing, it exposes how easily innocent people can get involved in dynamiting plots. Acting as an honorable gentleman and doing the right thing (not taking the lady's money), Challoner is easily manipulated into becoming a "runner" for the terrorist dynamite cell Fonblanque is a part of. More significant perhaps is the insight of how easily people can be swayed to action for a cause by a well-told sensationalized stereotypical story presented in a nice package. Most significant of all is the imaginary and overdrawn portrait of the evil inventor and user of explosives, Dr. Grierson. The portrait of Grierson exploits the Donner party disaster (it is he who hoards a secret cache of food as others starve), the

Danite destroyer myth (it is he who electrocutes and then cremates any opponents of "that dictator Brigham Young"), the mad scientific search for eternal youth (it is he who spends a lifetime working out a formula to help him regain his youth), and the fear of polygamy (it is he who pursues a young lady, even murdering her parents to achieve his goal) to demonize Grierson. The portrait of Grierson is even more telling in a re-reading of the novel because then one sees that in a sense Fonblanque is attempting to account for the "real" dynamiter in the story, who is named Zero, by her various characterizations of Grierson.

In the second adventure of the novel, Paul Somerset, an artist of sorts, gets to know the dynamiter known as Zero by offering him lodging in a house he has been given responsibility for by a grand old lady called Mrs. Luxmore. At first Somerset is unaware that his lodger is a dynamiter or that the circle of his friends are part of a series of bombing plots. Hints are dropped however. Much secrecy surrounds the comings and goings of visitors. The lodger known as Jones is accompanied by an Irish widow names M'Pherson, who is his maid, housekeeper, and gatekeeper—no-one but Jones can enter his room unattended. One of Jones's regular visitors is a man named M'Gregor, who wears his beard square-cut in the American fashion, an oblique reference to the Irish-American dynamiters who had declared war on England at that time.[24] Asenath Fonblanque (alias Clara Luxmore) makes her reentry into the narrative, this time as a frequent, mysterious guest of Zero's, though to Somerset her identity is kept a secret

After several weeks of mystery, Somerset finally decides to discover what his lodger is about One night when the lodger is away, he gets the Irish widow housekeeper into a drunken sleep and enters the lodger's room. He soon discovers that the room is full of dismounted pistols, dismantled clocks, some of which are ticking, bottles, jars, and lab equipment on a table. The most surprising discovery is of a great sealskin coat, which brings back to his mind the newspaper advertisement which he soon discovers a copy of in the pockets of the coat. The lodger returns at that precise moment and confesses that yes, he is the man being sought by the authorities. More than that he confesses to being a dynamiter and appeals to Somerset by explaining, "I lead the existence of a hunted brute, work toward appalling ends, and practise hell's dexterities"(165). Under the aliases of Jones, Breitman, Higginbotham, Pumpernickel, Daviot, or Henderland, he professes that he is nameless by day, "but by night and among [his] desperate followers" he is "the redoubted Zero" (166). The name "Zero" is Stevenson's not so

[24] Jeremiah O'Donovan [Rossa] organized the Skirmishing Fund in 1875 in the USA after his exile from Great Britain. The Fund later financed the Irish-American Dynamiters. R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland: 1600–1972* (New York: Penguin, 1989), explains that Fenians were actually not to blame for many of the terrorist activities of this time: "The real terrorist outrages of the 1880s would be carried out by far more ruthless and unrepresentative offshoots [than the Fenians] like the Invincibles-at whom Fenians threw up their hands in horror. [The Fenians'] strength remained moral and passive" (395).

subtle way of equating the dynamiter, as his pre-cursor Bazarov, with the philosophies of nihilism or with a moral nihilism that is at the heart of his character.[25]

In a discussion that passes between the two men, Zero offers several reasons to justify his extreme actions. In a quasi religious mode he declares, "In this dark period of time, a star—the star of dynamite—has risen for the oppressed; and among those who practise its use, incredible difficulties and disappointments, few have been more assiduous and not many have been more successful than myself' (166). To explain away the criticism of the cowardly nature of dynamiters or the simplicity of their task, Zero, unaware of the irony in his statement, declares, "Do you think it nothing to occupy a house like this one, mined, menaced, and in a word, literally tottering to its fall?... And when you speak of ease in this age of scientific studies... are you not aware that chemicals are proverbially as fickle as woman, and clockwork as capricious as the very devil. To justify the charge of the indiscriminate nature of the violence of using bombs, Zero adds that war is indiscriminate "whatever may strike fear, whatever may confound or paralyse the activities of the guilty nation,... is welcome to my simple plans... I have long since marked out the child as the sensitive point in society" (170).

Zero then goes on to tell his tale of M'Guire's failed but "courageous" attempt to place a bomb at the effigy of Shakespeare at Leicester Square, a place "thronged by children, errand-boys, unfortunate young ladies of the poorer classes and infirm old men—all classes making a direct appeal to public pity, and therefore suitable with our designs." Suspecting that the plot has been divulged because of the many suspicious looking observers at the Square (an attack of paranoia perhaps), M'Guire tries to give the Gladstone bag with the bomb to a young child, a woman, and a taxi driver. Finally, the bomb is thrown into the Thames, where it explodes harmlessly. The point of the story, from Zero's perspective, is that even a dynamiter must confront dangers, even imminent self-annihilation, and must have courage and fortitude to overcome them.

Somerset is quite drunk by the time Zero completes his tale and in this state he accepts the views propounded to him, but upon awaking the next morning he regrets his behavior and confronts Zero to tell him that he will not keep the secrecy of the dynamiter's plot, but once again he is won over by Zero's sophistry, at least for one more day. While Somerset walks and struggles with himself of what to do about the dynamiter in his house, the final adventurer, Desborough, meets up with Clara Luxmore/Asenath Fonblanque under her new identity as a fair, Cuban lady emigre named Teresa Valdevia. As in James's *The Princess Casamassima,* this final adventure turns upon the idea that love has the power to turn one from destructive acts. In this case, it is Harry Desborough's innocent, naive, persistent, devoted adulation of Teresa that makes her eventually forsake her commitments to her dynamiter friends. In a repeat performance of M'Gregor's failed attempt at placing a bomb, Teresa's fear overcomes her and she is unable to place the device assigned to her. It eventually detonates but

[25] The selection of Greenwich for the ideal bombing target by Mr. Vladimir in *The Secret Agent* makes a similar connection, albeit more subtly.

fails to explode in her own room as Hany and her look on in horror, in each other's arms.

This scene and the Somerset episode end simultaneously with Zero, in disappointment over another failed bombing attempt, setting all of his bombs, thinking they are faulty and himself a failure. Somerset, recognizing the danger, rescues Zero from the ensuing explosion, but the dynamiter exults that finally one of his explosive devices has been completely successful. He is ready to rededicate his life to making dynamite bombs, when accidentally he explodes himself by tripping and falling against a wall on his way to a train station—*deus ex machina dinamita!*

The dynamiter Zero's convenient end is the first of many in the novel's closing moments. M'Gregor is discovered to have gone insane, dying eventually and prematurely of fear. Clara not only is safely married to Desborough and in complete disavowal of her former subversive activities, but by the mediation of Prince Florizel she receives from her mother a very generous allowance. Challoner announces that he too has received an inheritance from a great aunt in Wales. Somerset is gainfully and proudly employed by the Prince as his shopkeeper; he expects to become a partner in the store, and, since Mrs. Luxmore is so anxious to talk to him in the end, may have other opportunities for advancement. In this fashion, the Stevenson's impose a sense of restored order and impending happiness, which directly contrasts with the earlier anarchic, explosive, and threatening Bacchalian energies of the earlier narratives. The carnival is very much over once the novel reaches its end.

Isabel Meredith's *A Girl among the Anarchists* also takes this overall direction from disorder to order, using adolescence, an ironic tone, and its pseudo-biographic stance as escape mechanisms. I will emphasize the justifications offered by the work for anarchist violence, the novel's portrayal of a dynamiter named Matthieu, and point to some of the Victorian containment strategies the novel uses to represent a politically active, but subversive, young woman.

The chronological strategy of an anonymous memoir employed by the Rossettis (hereafter simplified to their selected *nom de plume* Meredith) has two major effects: first, the novel as a history of a bygone era poses no immediate threat to its readers; second, the wildness of anarchism is contained by the naivete and innocence of adolescence. Jennifer Shaddock explains the potential value of the novel for modern readers in the following terms:

> the value of *A Girl Among the Anarchists* lies not with its aesthetic merit... but with its ideological revelations, with its unself-conscious portrayal of anarchism as the political domain of adolescent excess and its exploitation of this trope initially to challenge and then, paradoxically, to reinforce conventional notions of the 'mature' woman as nonpolitical" (x).

The positioning of Meredith as an adolescent orphan, a young lady entirely responsible for her own actions, a rarity for the time, allows for observations and associations

with the "most abject of the poor, with political assassins, advocates of free love, alcoholics, lazy social parasites, political martyrs, and with comrades driven mad by both the frustration of their utopian ideals and the constant paranoia about the infiltration of their small circles by spies."? (xii). The glimpse of this underworld of London, along with the ironic distancing tone achieved from the stance of a memoir looking backward to adolescence, provide Meredith and authors who follow her with a setting and a technique to address the issue of anarchist or terrorist violence.

In the novel, Meredith helps print an anarchist journal called *Tocsin,* a play on *toxin,* which has replaced the earlier publication ominously called the *Bomb.* When she first enters the editorial, printing office she notices an old revolver and some chemical bottles, but they only contain substances less dangerous than Epsom salts. Her own and her readers worst fears of anarchism thus appear groundless. As an editor and writer for the journal, Meredith walks the streets alone at nights to attend speeches and meetings and often sleeps overnight at the office since she works late into the night preparing copy. She is characterized as a tireless supporter of the movement and its members.[26] The office at which Meredith works becomes a haven, a second home, for many displaced, continental anarchists. In the course of her duties, Meredith meets many of the basic "types of anarchist."

Dr. Armitage, an older leader of the group, preaches about the necessity and the justice of propaganda by force, but by the final chapter he has narrowed himself in a fanatical way to matters of diet (vegetarianism) and clothing (simple, without adornment)—the "dress and food" question as Meredith exclaims. A more sinister anarchist type is Meredith's portrayal of Jacob Myers, a "Jewish" anarchist suspected as a traitor, a collaborator with the police or political detectives; Myers tells Meredith of how he has used "chemicals" for "domestic purposes" to rid himself of his brother. Myers himself is later killed, presumably by vengeful anarchists. The entire event appears to rehearse the singular moment of nineteenth-century anarchist violence in Britain known as the Bourdin affair, which later became the kernel for Conrad's *The Secret Agent.* Also mentioned in two anarchist characterizations is the embarassment over formal marriage and its troublesome difficulties with the anarchist lifestyle (see 111 and 258), another key aspect that Conrad picks up for his characterization of Verloc and Winnie. Other original anarchist portraits Meredith provides include the Bleeding Lamb (140), Vera Marcel—the Red Virgin of the barricades, the heroine of the Commune of Paris (150), and straight out of a Dostoievsky novel a noble, but miserable looking, Polish anarchist:

> "I never set eyes on a more depressed-looking mortal than Count Voblinsky. He looked as though he bore on his bent shoulders the weight of all Christendom. He was a damp, unwholesome-looking man, whose appearance

[26] One of the most fervent Italian anarchists, Giannoli, pays Meredith the ultimate anarchist compliment late in the novel after her long series of devoted services: "You are a true Anarchist and I would trust you with anything, *even* with *explosives"* (213).

> suggested long confinement in a cellar. He was pale and hollow-eyed, and almost mouldy; altogether a most cadaverous-looking man. He as always attired even at eleven A.M., in an old dress suit, green and threadbare with age, and a furry tall hat, into which garments he seemed to have grown and taken root. But despite the decay of his person and his attire, there was a certain degree of aristocratic refinement about Voblinsky's features, last ghastly traces of his ancient nobility." (141)

Each of Meredith's physical descriptions of the anarchists is overdrawn in much the same way, causing a certain ironic tone to her treatment of them which in turn is further distanced by the basic pose of adolescent perspective. Chesterton and Conrad follow her lead in this regard in their novels. Meredith points out that the anarchists enjoyed nothing more than a visit from a phrenologist who, after taking various skull measures, informed them that "their bumps showed undoubted criminal propensities" (153).[27]

Of particular interest, and the moment of highest suspense in the novel, is Meredith's encounter with the "dynamitard" Matthieu. The man is wanted everywhere in Europe for a series of explosions, including a police station, and the band of anarchists associated with Meredith have the responsibility of saving him from an impending police arrest by aiding him in his flight Matthieu, a Frenchman, is described as a puny little man, a tailor, who because of his legal profession is slightly hunchbacked. He has a narrow and hollow chest bowed legs, pale blue, sore, bloodshot eyes, a massive jaw and a firm round chin, a high narrow forehead. In tense moments there are signs of a nervous twitching of his mouth. The escape of Matthieu involves a subterfuge of disguise that makes fools of the police; the onlooking crowd cheers the anarchists and jeers the police. Unlike Stevenson's assertion in *The Dynamiter,* not even the police now stand blameless or pure in this issue because, as Meredith's readers must have been aware, historically it was the extreme actions of the police in a *passsage a tabac* and other injustices and cruelties against the French "Needles" anarchist group that had precipitated many of the bombing responses and the ongoing enmity against the police.

The Matthieu section of the novel, and the chapter immediately following it (Chapter IX, "Some Anarchist Personalities") is where Meredith attempts to come to terms with anarchist violence. Before Meredith's treatment, however, the preface to the novel, by Morley Roberts, endorses the historical accuracy of Meredith's novel and its representation of anarchists of the 1890s; Roberts adds his own personal assessment of the reasons behind anarchist violence:

> "There is no doubt that those of the dynamite section are practically insane. They are 'impulsives'; they were outraged and they revolted before birth.

[27] Conrad also plays with the science of phrenology, describing many of the physical features of his anarchists as typical Lombroso types. The characterization by physiognomy, though, is not to taken seriously, just as the measuring of Marlow's head in *Heart of Darkness* is not.

> Most of the proletariat take their thrashing lying down. There are some who cannot do that It is out of those who are not meek and do not inherit even standing-room on the earth that such as "Matthieu" [the 'dynamitard' in the novel] comes. Perhaps it may not be out of place to suggest that a little investigation might be better than denunciation, which is always wide of the mark, and that, as Anarchism is created by the social system of repression, more repression will only create more Anarchism... Anarchism is a creed and a philosophy, but neither as a creed nor philosophy does it advocate violence. It only justifies resistance to violence." (xxi)

One wonders from the final statements how informed Roberts was about Bakunin's anarchist philosophies of "the clean sweep" and the "propaganda of the deed," but his explanations of a militant minority and the insanity of this minority and his plea to examine more closely before judging (implying the *agent provocateur)* are commonly recognized techniques of power being used to inscribe "the Other." In Chapter IX, after Matthieu successfully escapes, Meredith's narration pauses as she attempts her own explanation of the motives behind violent action. She attributes anarchist violence to two basic causes: a fanatic devotion to an idea, what she calls false logic, and second a consuming desire for personal revenge, to right the past wrongs by getting back at the perpetrators or people who are similar to them. She uses Emile Henry's bombing of the Cafe Terminus as a prime example of the application of false logic. Regarding personal revenge, she represents the internal monologue of such anarchists as follows: "These dwarfs [oppressors of anarchism] are crushing the lifeblood out of us. We must pull them down, exterminate them; we must turn the whole world upside down before we can create a new and better order of things." (194) Meredith also asserts, as Chesterton does later, that searches for anarchist conspiracies are in vain: "Every one of those outrages and assassinations which startled Europe was the act of a single man, unaided by, and frequently unknown to other Anarchists" (212). She also points out that episodes of "anarchist" violence may actually be initiated by police or the government, by the instrument of an *agent provocateur,* a theme also revisited by Chesterton and Conrad.

To oppose the theories of violence in anarchist thinking, Meredith introduces readers to a Christian Anarchist, Norberry, who like Tolstoi his model can see no justification for the practice of violence. Even though Norberry is ridiculed by many of his fellow anarchists, he staunchly believes that "When you preach force or use force, you imitate the very methods used by Governments... As anarchists we have no right to use other than passive resistance" (191).

At the end of the novel, Meredith visits some of her former anarchist friends and comes to the realization that many of her earlier enthusiasms have cost others dearly. Giannoli, a noble Italian anarchist in the beginning, ends up insanely suspecting everyone of conspiracy against him, a paranoia that haunts him interminably. Dr. Armitage, as explained earlier, appears to lose his earlier sense of reason and logic and focuses on

trivial personal aspects of life. The most pathetic story is of Vassili and Eudoxia, the anarchist couple who marry and run away to America to escape arrest Meredith discovers the couple in the slums of the Bowery in New York living in deplorable, squalid circumstances and abject poverty. Eudoxia holds Meredith personally responsible for her and her husband's demise, crying out after her "See the results of struggling for a higher life" (259). In recognition of her wayward youth and its excesses during this adolescent phase, the final scene has Meredith visiting the former offices of the *Tocsin* in a reminiscent but more mature mood and walking "forth into the London street a sadder if wiser woman."[28] In a single line, the Rossettis reverse much of the political force previously generated in the novel and return their heroine to the more ordered, more mature existence of Victorian womanhood.

The American Dynamite Novel's Beginnings-Havmarket[29]

May 4, 1886-the memorable day when a bomb was thrown into the midst of a group of police advancing against a crowded protest meeting in the Chicago Haymarket. Though the actual bomber was never apprehended or arrested, representative, prominent anarchist leaders were rounded up and charged with conspiring to commiet the bombing. With the notable exception of William Dean Howells, no prominent American writers dared oppose the forces arrayed against the eight accused Chicago anarchists. In Britain, George Bernard Shaw, William Morris, Peter Kropotkin, and others joined together in a plea for amnesty. But, in most English and American press releases of the time, condemnation for the act and the assumed guilt of the anarchists was universal.

In the American novels of the time, as I have already discussed, treatments of actual dynamite use in fiction were either censored or distanced by the safe removes of time or humor. Thus, the relevant works of Howells, Twain, Bellamy, and Donnelly that are contemporary with Haymarket do not deal with the direct issues of that bombing incident. The first novel to directly address the 1886 dynamitings is Frank Harris's sensationalized *The Bomb* (1909), which unapologetically begins "My name is Rudolph Schnaubelt. I threw the bomb which killed eight policeman and wounded sixty in Chicago in 1886." Much later, Howard Fast would publish his naturalistic novel, *The American: A Middle-Western Legend* (1946), a historical/fictional biography of Governor John Altgeld, who pardoned the remaining jailed anarchists and publicly denounced Judge Gary's verdict in the matter of the others. Fast's novel poignantly points out that Altgeld's obsession for justice in this case came at the expense of a

[28] Compare this ending to Conrad's menacing Professor in *The Secret Agent.*

[29] The most recent and comprehensive historical analysis of the Haymarket incident is Carl Smith's, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Chicago Fire, the Haymarket Bomb, and the Model Town of Pullman* (Illinois: U of Chicago P, 1995).

promising political career that may have included the presidency. By vividly presenting the burial procession of the hanged anarchists, in which countless thousands spontaneously join in to quietly demonstrate, including Altgeld, Fast establishes that the anarchists had much more support than the popular presses of the time had allowed, and in the mind of the main character Altgeld a commitment is fonned to get to the bottom of the affair, when he has a chance.

While Fast's book is mostly factual, Harris's is mostly speculative. John Dos Passos, who knew Harris personally, wrote of him, "He might have developed into a first-rate novelist if he hadn't been such a damn liar" (v). Despite such an endorsement, since Harris's *The Bomb,* like the Stevensons *The Dynamiter,* is the first explicit full-length attempt to enter the mind of a bomber and come to terms with his thinking and character, it is worth a fuller exploration.

In some ways, the novel is like the Rossettis' work—it looks back to a previous real time in history and reimagines it from the safety of a present perspective; like the Rossetti's work, it is also written in memoir form in the first person from the point of view of someone with firsthand, insider information. In reality, though, Harris had been an influential editor in London at the time of the Haymarket trials and though he may very well have felt the strong feelings that he later professed about the case, his name was notably missing from the plea for amnesty for the anarchists forwarded by George Bernard Shaw. Harris wrote his novel about the bombing after Altgeld and the passage of time had made the terrain much safer; many people by 1909 had come to realize that there had indeed been a miscarriage of justice in this case and innocent men had been hanged.

The novel's beginning is a thinly disguised autobiography of events that can be tied to Harris's own life. It is a rags to riches story of a German immigrant (Harris was Irish), Rudolph Schnaubelt, who like Hams emigrates to America as a young, educated man. He commits himself to the optimistic ideal that "whatever I was given to do... I would do it with my might, do it so that no one coming after me should do it as well" (19). Though initially he has difficulty getting work and learning the language, he does eventually find employment as a common laborer, as a navvy shoveling in the streets and in the oxygen-deprived caissons used to build the Brooklyn Bridge. At night he works on his language and writing skills. Eventually he gets some of his journalistic stories accepted by the newspapers.

When, recommendation in hand, he goes to Chicago to cover the "labor struggles" there, he has a good sense of the requisites of his newfound profession—to publish in the American papers one must sing Yankee Doodle each time and cover trivial events, or lie about significant ones. To write and publish the truth about important happenings, one must submit to lesser-known papers, such as the *Arbeiter Zeitung,* and must write anonymously.

Schnaubelt is a man with high ideals, in search of more than just a simple uncomplicated life. "We mortals," he argues, "should be trained to fight disease and death, and not one another; we should be sworn to conquer nature and master her laws, that was

the new warfare in which wisdom and courage would have their full reward in the humanization of man" (15). Such ideals lead him into anarchist circles, where the speakers further inspire him. He first hears Albert Parsons in a streetcorner meeting. Parsons introduces him to some of the central practical American anarchist ideals of the time: the need for a minimum wage, the humane necessity of an eight hour work day, and the absolute right to work. Parsons also expounds on the idea that even though machines and inventions have saved labor and cost, the resulting wealth of new inventions and less work has not been equally distributed among all men. Parsons states, "The brains of the scientist and inventor have made labour tenfold more productive than it was before we compressed steam to our service and harnessed the lightning to our use. But are all the benefits of man's wisdom and labour always to go to the greedy few?" (83) From August Spies, Schnaubelt learns of the beatings and killings the anarchists have had to endure at the hands of the police. Spies passionately declaims, "For the first time in America orderly meetings on vacant lots are dispersed by force. Thoughts are met with police bludgeons" (93). Schnaubelt's sense of idealism and justice is provoked by these and similar speeches and he becomes a frequent contributor and participant to the educational programme of the anarchist cause.

Nonetheless, Schnaubelt's high ideals are tempered somewhat by a passionate, human side, which Harris describes in lurid detail. Soon after arriving in Chicago, Schnaubelt meets a girl named Elsie, whom he relentlessly pursues. He makes progressively more and more physical advances on her personal mores, wearing down her resistance over several months, until she can no longer refuse him.

He also meets and is completely taken with a particularly charismatic anarchist named Louis Lingg.[30] Schnaubelt suffers an irresistible physical and intellectual attraction to the physically fit and intellectually daring Lingg. Lingg is a self-taught man who knows political economy "through and through," including LaSalle, Marx, and Herbert Spencer. He stands apart from the other anarchists in his open advocacy of violence as a means of countering the violence they themselves are experiencing. In a particularly suspenseful anarchist meeting, Schnaubelt adoringly listens as Lingg drops the following words "like bullets" to an attentive audience, "Society is for defence as well as education... One can't meet bludgeons with words, nor blows by turning the other cheek. Violence must be met with violence. Americans should surely know that action and reaction are equal and opposite; oppression and revolt equal and opposite also" (105) Schnaubelt wonders after hearing this rousing speech if one man can actually stand against the whole of society and defy it. The answer lies in his further dealings with Lingg.

In a more intimate discussion with Lingg, up for debate is Callicles' challenge to Socrates: "Laws are merely made by the weak for their own protection. The strong man is not allowed to knock down the weak one and take away his wife or his goods,

[30] The relationship develops in much the same way as Paul's and Hyacinth's in James's *The Princess Casamassima,* with the same homosexual suggestivity.

as he would do in a state of nature" (140). Schnaubelt then thrills to hear Lingg's fiery reply. Lingg points out that the real issue in modern times is not protection of the person but protection of property. Steal and you go to prison; knock someone down, insult them in some way and five dollars and a simple emotional plea and you can be set free. "Laws are made for the protection of property; they are made by the strong in their own interest; the wolf wants to be assured peaceable enjoyment of his kill" (141). In a later speech Lingg pronounces, "Resistance to tyranny is a duty ... I do not believe that the insolent strong will ever refrain from tyranny till they are frightened by the results of tyranny" (152–53). All of this fiery rhetoric, of course, stirs Schnaubelt to move beyond the programme of education and words to the realm of direct action.

Schnaubelt discovers early in his relationship with Lingg that his knowledge extends beyond mere economics or politics. "My goodness Lingg, are you a chemist?" he inquires (122). Though exaggerated and technically overstated, Lingg provides his companion with an explanation of his high explosives bomb-making prowess:

> "Dynamite is nothing but nitro-glycerine mixed with Kieselguhr, in order to allow it to be handled easily; nitro-glycerine mixed with nitro-cotton is called blasting gelatine, and is much stronger than dynamite. But the percussion of a small quantity of fulminate of mercury embedded in nitro-glycerine produces an enormously greater effect than the explosion of either substance by itself. And there are more powerful explosives than nitro-glycerine. My little bomb is as powerful as fifty times its weight of dynamite." (169).

Lingg takes Ida, the woman he is living with in a "free love" relationship, and Schnaubelt out on the lake to try out one of his bombs. After the powerful, explosive demonstration, Ida enthusiastically offers to throw the first bomb for the cause; Schnaubelt spontaneously joins in and also offers. But Lingg believes he will be the first, quoting a biblical passage: "It is expedient that one man should die for the people" (171). To Schnaubelt's offer, Lingg replies, "The only good thing in your offer... is that it would multiply the effect of us both tenfold. I could save you, too, the first person to throw a bomb, and reserve myself for the second when there will be no saving. You see, one bomb is an accident; two show sequence, purpose; suggest a third and fourth—are terrifying" (171). Lingg applies the systematic model of his studies in chemistry here to political revolt and human relations.

Soon after the experimental bombing on the lake, the tension intensifies between the anarchists and the police. In one incident, the police, led by an officer named Schaak,[31] shoot three strikers and injure twenty more. In another incident, forty or fifty are wounded and eight killed outright by police bullets (204). The momentous Haymarket meeting is held soon after this latter tragedy to show solidarity after that event and

[31] His actual memoirs of the events surrounding Haymarket are commonly referenced for "facts" about the case.

to further push for the eight-hour working day. Lingg and Schnaubelt, however, have made other plans for this meeting. Lingg kisses Schnaubelt to seal their pact to throw a bomb if the police attack the Haymarket meeting. Schnaubelt is jubilant, "we kissed for the first time, kissed as comrades and lovers. As I passed out of the restaurant I was consecrate, giddily exalted. I went to my rooms filled with intense resolution." (212). The two kiss once more at a parting scene in a Chicago train station after the bombing (240).

Harris knew that one of the sensational climaxes to his novel had to be the bombing itself and he did not disappoint his readers with a scarcity of detail at this point of the novel. The Haymarket bomb is described as "not larger than an orange ... on one side of it there hung out a little piece of tape-like stuff' which gave the bomb a delay of twenty seconds. The bomb is also designed to explode on impact if the "tape delay" mechanism fails to work. Lingg has formed the bomb with traditional lead pipe on the outside, but inside it's his own original chemical recipe (226). The aftermath of the bombing is particularly graphic:

> "The street was one shambles; in the very centre of it a great pit yawned and around it men lying, or pieces of men, in every direction, and close to me, near the side walk as I passed, a leg and a foot torn off, and near by two huge pieces of bleeding red meat, skewered together with a thigh bone. My soul sickened; my senses left me; but Lingg held me up with superhuman strength and drew me along." (233)

Upon depositing Schnaubelt at the train station, Lingg exacts a promise from him that he will not turn himself in. Schnaubelt then travels to London, where he follows the remainder of the story of the trial, Lingg's dynamite suicide, and the executions in the newspapers.

In contrast to all of the other dynamite novels covered in this chapter, *The Bomb* ends with a sense of accomplishment and endorsement for the utility of the bombing. Though the incident has cost Schnaubelt a normal existence and the lives of Lingg, the other anarchists, and the dead police, Schnaubelt exults at the end of his memoirs,

> "My deed will teach the wiser amoung our opponents that their police are of no use against us; authority must be one with right and love to win a man's reverence...We shall no doubt be despised and reviled by men, at least for a time, because we shall be judged by the rich and the powerful, and not by the destitute and the dispossessed for whom we gave our lives" (322,329).

In a letter from Ida, Schnaubelt is brought back from his depression over the bombing and his loss of Lingg and lifetime separation from Elsie by her words, "one good book is worth a thousand deeds" (289). And that book is what Schnaubelt leaves us.

Harris's and Fast's novels are the central fictive works regarding the Haymarket bombing. The redemption of the accused, martyred anarchists by their pardon from John Altgeld began a trend in America of the ''wrongly accused terrorist." For example, Thomas Mooney suffered a long imprisonment for a San Francisco bombing, but was pardoned. In an earlier chapter, the actions of Big Bill Heywood and his escape from punishment was presented. In the twenties, Sacco and Vanzetti became the scapegoats for a series of bombings, which were probably initiated by Italian Galleanist followers of Mario Buda. Sacco and Vanzetti have also been pardoned, in this case posthumously, by Governor Dukakis.

The threat of dynamite or its actual use has not had the deterrent effect on capitalists, militarists, governments, or police forces that the early anarchists like Parsons or Lingg expected. Instead, more repressive measures and more and more losses of basic rights have usually been the direct results of bombing incidents. As far as Harris's representation of a sympathetic dynamiter is concerned, he is the first to have attempted such a portrayal. His portrayal of the sufferings of the workers, the conscientiousness of their ideals, and the justice of their cause make understandable what might never be justifiable.

At the beginning of this chapter, I stated that the dynamite novel addressed some of the basic questions we still ask about terrorists. The answers from the earliest dynamite novelists might be summarized as follows: dynamiters perform their acts for personal (insanity, revenge) or political reasons (misguided philosophy, a false sense of outcomes). Dynamiters are commonly characterized as young, naive, uninformed, easily manipulated, ignorant, poor, abused, homosexual, nihilistic, and dehumanized and demonized as crazy aberrations, miscreant degenerates predetermined by heredity or their social upbringing to do what they do. In some cases, dynamiters act because of a mistaken sense of honor for a cause-under the influence of alcohol or love, they make promises they later come to regret Women associated with dynamiters can draw young men into subversive political action, but just as easily they can draw them away. Either way, a woman pays a much heavier price for political involvement than a man.

Few authors explicitly lay out the makings of a dynamite bomb in their fiction, urging one to conclude that internally (in the mind of the author) or externally (by the judgment of editors and publishers or the sensibilities of the reading public) a censoring of this information was taking place. In most cases the technology is left unexplained, hinted at, or described only very briefly and in the most general of terms. Few if any authors deal realistically with dynamite's actual effects; in fiction, most authors tend to overexaggerate its extreme effects.

Plot suspence is in-built in a novel that has a bomb in it-readers expect that somewhere along the way an explosion must occur and thus the bomb and its detection or explosion become an easy predictable means of creating suspence that most early authors take full advantage of (Conrad, of course, is a notable exception). Characters who carry bombs or invent them are represented as paying a very high psychical, emotional, and social price for doing this—dynamiters suffer from alienation. In most novels of

the nineteenth and early twentieth century, terrorist bombings are attributed to a fanatical fringe group, but the role of an *agent provocateur* is also commonly addressed. The bombing of innocent citizens in all the novels is deplored.

Since the number of bombings and bombing victims are relatively low in this opening period of dynamite literature, most treatments of bombers are humorously or ironically drawn with little real fear or danger attached to them because of the safe distances achieved in their representation. This aspect of safety changes markedly in postwar literary explorations of bombers and bombings. In the next chapter, as we shall see, Conrad's presentation of a menacing bomber, even though it is drawn ironically, begins a more realistic and more disturbing trend in the treatment of dynamite literature.

Chapter Six: A Subversive Reading of Joseph Conrad's The Secret Agent

High explosives were not a fleeting preoccupation for Joseph Conrad. While he was bringing to completion his five-year labor *on Almayer's Folly* in London during 1894, the Greenwich Bomb Outrage occurred. As early as 1897, he was projecting the writing of a story entitled "The Dynamite Ship," which like so many of his short stories eventually became a novel.[1] A working title for this novel was *Explostves-A Ship Board Tale,* but the work, which occupied Conrad over a sixteen-year period, culminated in 1913 as his first bestseller, *Chance.*[2]

In *Heart of Darkness* (1900), Conrad captures some of the hopelessness and futility of the imperialist enterprise with the image of a gunship firing artillery shells into the dense coastal bush of the African continent. This image, along with the pathetic optimism about a transcontinental railroad, spotlights Conrad's pessimistic outlook on totalizing technological solutions, a major theme he was to revisit again and again in his later novels.

Dynamite underlies the central silver mine in *Nostromo* (1904), an attempt by the Goulds to "protect" their "possession" from the threat of a revolution—if they can't keep control of the mine no-one else will be able to have it Charles Gould declares:

> The Gould Concession has struck such deep roots in this country, in this province, in that gorge of the mountains, that nothing but dynamite shall be allowed to dislodge it from there. It's my choice. It's my last card to play.[3]

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[1] Zdzislaw Najder, *Joseph Conrad: A Chronicle* (New York: Rutgers UP, 1992) reports that one "anarchistic" tale about a "bomb in a hotel" intended as a short story never materialized (320). Conrad's early exploits as a gunrunner and his own and his Polish family's experiences as revolutionaries are well documented in the standard biographies of Conrad. An essential question for many Conrad scholars has been to determine Conrad's attitude as a writer to these early political experiences.

[2] Interestingly, Conrad's naming instinct for this "adventure" novel accords with M. M. Bakhtin's analysis of the genre: "All moments of this infinite adventure-time are controlled by one *force—chance...* This time is entirely composed of contingency—of chance meetings and failures to meet. Adventuristic 'chance time' is the specific time during which irrational forces intervene in human life." See M.M. Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel," in Michael Holquist, ed., *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1990), 94.

[3] Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo* (New York: Penguin, 1981 [1904]), 177.

The last card is Gould's willingness "to blow up the whole San Tome mountain sky high" (303) and his plan "to destroy scientifically the whole plant, buildings, and workshops of the mine with heavy charges of dynamite; block with ruins the main tunnel, break down the pathways, blow up the dam of the water-power, shatter the famous Gould Concession into fragments, flying sky-high out of a horrified world" (331). Gould uses this threat of an explosion to keep at bay the revolutionaries and governments who wish to take over his mine. In *Nostromo,* Conrad makes clear that those who pursue wealth and wish to preserve the power, authority, and status that stem from it are in turn subjected to a self-destructive element—Decoud, Nostromo, and the Goulds clearly exemplify this point.

In Conrad's political novels, dynamite and explosions become a central motif. In *Under Western Eyes* (1911), for example, an explicitly described explosion occurs early in the novel and precipitates the story of intrigue and revenge which follows.[4] In a way, the act of bombing foreshadows much of the action of the remainder of the novel. Two young men stalk the sledge coach in which Mr. de P—, the Minister-President, is riding. The first to throw a bomb, a peasant wearing a sheepskin coat, kills the two horses and mortally wounds the coachman. The second bomb, thrown by Haldin, explodes between the feet of the Minister-President, annihilates the sledge, and claims the life of various bystanders, one of whom is the nameless peasant wearing a sheepskin jacket. The seemingly unintentional but fateful death of his own comrade by the bomb-throwing Haldin sets up the exploration of Haldin's own betrayal by Razumov which follows. A central theme pursued in the novel after this point of explosion concerns how even those not directly responsible for a revolutionary or terroristic act can become implicated and hopelessly intertwined, shattered, by its after-effects.[5]

The Secret Agent[6] (1907, hereafter *TSA)* is Conrad's most complete exploration and integration of high explosives into his own unique aesthetic of the novel.[7] Conrad began the novel after *Nostromo,* first in serial form as published in *Ridgway's: A Militant*

[4] Joseph Conrad, *Under Western Eyes* (New York: Penguin, 1971 [1911]).

[5] Bakhtin captures the typical mode Conrad's political novels take: "Characteristically it is not private life that is subjected to and interpreted in light of social and political events, but rather the other way around-social and political events gain meaning in the novel only thanks to their connection with private life" ("Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel" 109).

[6] Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale,* Martin Seymour-Smith, ed. and intro., (New York: Penguin, 1991 [1907]).

[7] See Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan, "'Sudden Holes in Space and Time': Conrad's Anarchist Aesthetics in *The Secret Agent"* in Gene Moore, ed., *Conrad's Cities: Essays for Hans Van Marie* (1992). Vulcan's thesis is similar to my own: "The most obvious aesthetic explosion in the text is, of course, a generic one. What promises to be a detective story or a novel of espionage, a product of a genre founded on neat divisions of 'us' and 'them,' blows up the generic categories on which it is ostensibly founded" (215). For a study of detective and spy stories see John G. Cawelti and Bruce A. Rosenberg, *The Spy Story* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987) and Michael Denning, *Cover Stories: Narrative and Ideology in the British Spy Thriller* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987).

Weekly for God and Country in 1906,[8] and then in novel form. Conrad revisited *TSA* not only in his "Author's Note" to the novel in 1920, but in his attempt at a stage adaptation of the novel during 1919–1920. During this revision for the theater, Conrad wrote, "I will confess that I myself had no idea of what the story was 'till I came to grips with it in the process of dramatization."[9]

Since the novel is subtitled "A Simple Tale," Conrad's intention may have been to link the novel to a series of "tales" written during this same period and collected in the volume *A Set of Six:* "A Romantic Tale: Gaspar Ruiz"; "An Ironic Tale: The Informer"; "An Indignant Tale: The Brute"; "A Desperate Tale: An Anarchist"; "A Military Tale: The Duel"; and "A Pathetic Tale: Il Conde." Of the sources of the two tales most closely related to *TSA,* "The Informer" and "The Anarchist," Conrad wrote,

> "The pedigree of these tales is hopelessly complicated and not worth disentangling at this distance of time... The discriminating reader will guess that **I have found them within my mind;** but how they or their elements came in there, I have forgotten for the most part; and for the rest I really don't see why I should give myself away more than I have done already."[10]

The phrase "within my mind" implies that the works were to be viewed as completely imaginative creations, but it also suggests that they may have had personal sources, perhaps too personal to be revealed. Conrad was to make similar claims about *TSA* before his Author's Note of 1920, ascribing its sources to "pure imagination."[11] Certainly, the tantalizing specifics offered by Conrad in his Author's Note have spurred on many critics to pursue the various possible direct historical sources Conrad used for these stories; perhaps the most commonly overlooked source, however, is Conrad himself, his own mind. He confesses that he "had to fight hard to keep at arm's length the memories of [his] solitary and nocturnal walks all over London in [his] early days."[12] Conrad also asserts in his Author's Note,

> "I have no doubt, however, that there had been moments during the writing of the book when I was an extreme revolutionist, I won't say more convinced than they but certainly cherishing a more concentrated purpose than any of them had ever done in the whole course of his life."[13]

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[8] Christine W. Sizemore. *"Ridgway's Militant Weekly* and the Serial Version of Conrad's *The Secret Agent," Analytical and Enumerative Bibliography* 5.3 (1981): 143–52.

[9] Najder 446.

[10] Author's Note, 1920, in *TSA* vii-viii [bolding mine].

[11] See Najder 323–24 for a discussion of Conrad's attitudes during the time of writing and soon after publication as opposed to the much later Author's Note written in 1920.

[12] These walks remind one of Henry James's explanation of how he acquired his information and impressions to write *The Princess Casamassima.*

[13] Author's Note, *TSA,* 42.

From such a statement, one might contend that the most accurate record of Conrad's own very complex political views is not to be found in his letters, conversations, prefaces, speeches, or friendships, but in his fiction, where, arguably, the stance of multi-vocality was best-suited to his own unique revolutionary outlook. Conrad, himself attempted to explain this stance to his reading public, using it as an excuse for his representation of such a sordid and squalid story: "In the matter of all my books, I have always attended to my business. I have attended to it with complete self-surrender."[14]

So, when Conrad attests that he turned to the "ironic method" to help distance himself from his work and allow himself to express his "scorn" as well as "pity" for his characters, the scorn and pity must also be interpreted as self-directed. In addition to his use of corrosive irony, Conrad skillfully weaves the explosives trope[15] into the novel's essentially anarchistic narrative/authorial voice, its sense of time and space, and its characterizations to fragment any attempts to simplify the novel's meaning, interpretations, or political positions into any uniform or unitary interpretation.

The Anarchistic Narrative Voice

Much has been written concerning the narrative voice (assumed by some to be a central, unifying, ironic authorial voice) relating the tale of *TSA,* from explanations of the various forms of irony the narrator employs,[16] to the exemplification of Bergsonian humor suggested by the narrator, to the "narrator's attempt to contain the disruptive forces of anarchism and sexuality and manage the spectre of political upheaval."[17] Most such studies cannot account for JSl's essential complexity, however, because to justify their interpretations they begin with the basic premise that the narrator's view, which is sometimes closely associated with Conrad himself, can be circumscribed within a single, unitary perspective.[18] My own view is that the narrative voice is essentially anarchistic—no single view prevails—and that at any given time the narrative voice

[14] Ibid.

[15] 7X4, Conrad concludes in the Author's Note, is "suggested and centered round the absurd cruelty of the Greenwich Park explosion."

[16] Vulcan 207–21. She argues, "If irony is defined as a structure of meaning which invites reconstruction, the type of irony deployed by Conrad in this novel involves a constant undercutting of meaning followed in turn by an undercutting of the reconstructed meaning." She believes Booth's term, "infinite, unstable irony," captures the effect that there is no final affirmation of authorial stance (208). "The corrosive irony of the narrative... is an authorial refusal of containment within the symbolic order" (220), it is "catachretic—a deliberate violation of rhetorical normativity... overdeployment of sarcastic tags which seem to parade their own fictitiousness" (220).

[17] Eileen Sypher, "Anarchism and Gender: James's *The Princess Casamassima* and Conrad's *The Secret Agent," The Henry James Review* 9.1 (Winter 1988): 1–2.

[18] Vulcan explains that there is no use for the distinctions of reliable/unreliable narrator and implied author in *TSA* because there is "no superior structure of meaning which can be related to the authorial-authoritative origin of the text... Like his anarchist characters who set out to destroy time and space, Conrad set out to destroy the chronotope" (208,215).

may be endorsing or attacking multiple viewpoints, often simultaneously.[19] The complex, inconclusive text that results may very well be the most accurate representation of Conrad's own politics.[20] Conrad wrote to Warren Dawson, "The fact is... that I don't believe in the oneness of life. I believe in its infinite variety."[21] In a letter to Edward Garnett, he expresses a related sentiment, "My misfortune is that I cannot swallow any formula and am thus wearing the aspect of enemy to all mankind."[22] Not surprisingly, then, the narrator of *TSA* has an exploded voice which provides an anarchic freedom, allowing the narrator momentarily to share another character's perspective, view that same character from another character's perspective, join the reader to analyze and evaluate as an outsider to the novel, or provide a privileged insight, insider knowledge, as the action is described[23]. The resulting effect is very much captured by Bakhtin's concepts of *carnival, polyphony,* or *polyglossia,* particularly the playful tone inherent in the authorial/narrative intrusions into the work.

For example, towards the end of a very long and ludicrous descriptive passage attempting to capture the general appearance and physiognomy of Mr Verloc ("undemonstrative and burly in a fat-pig style"), the authorial/narrative voice briefly but explicitly reveals itself in the first person:

> But there was also about [Verloc] an indescribable air which no mechanic could have acquired in the practice of his handicraft, however dishonestly exercised: the air common to men who live on the vices, the follies, or the

[19] Two informative sources on the anarchist aesthetics of Conrad are Paul Hollywood, "Conrad and Anarchist Theories of Language," *Contexts for Conrad* Boulder: East European Monographs, 1993: 243–64 and Avrom Fleishman, "Conrad's Politics: Community and Anarchy in the fiction of Joseph Conrad (1967)," *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* 19.1 (Spring 1987): 18–30. Fleischman points out that "Sophisticated political discourse is by its nature polyvalent; it consists in the employment of a texture of languages capable of saying different things and of favouring different ways of saying things; in the exploitation of these differences in rhetoric and practice, and in their exploration and possibly their resolution in criticism and theory" (30). In a similar vein, Bakhtin writes in "Discourse in the Novel": "In the majority of poetic genres, the unity of the language system and the unity (and uniqueness) of the poet's individuality as reflected in his language and speech, which I directly realized in this unity, are indispensable prerequisites of poetic style. The novel, however, not only does not require these conditions but... even makes of the internal stratification of language, of its social heteroglossia and the variety of individual voices in it, the prerequisite for authentic novelistic prose." (264)

[20] I am fully cognizant of Bakhtin's cautions "not to confuse the *represented* world with the world outside the text (naive realism); nor to confuse the author-creator of a work with the author as a human being (naive biographism); nor to confuse the listener or reader of multiple and varied periods, who recreates and renews the text, with the passive listener or reader of one's own time (which leads to dogmatism in interpretation and evaluation)" (253).

[21] Letter to Warrington Dawson. 20 January 1913, in *Joseph Conrad and Warrington Dawson* (Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 1968): 159.

[22] *Life and Letters,* vol. 2,126.

[23] Vulcan points out, as I have already noted, that "The most obvious aesthetic explosion in the text is, of course, a generic one. What promises to be a detective story or a novel of espionage, a product of a genre founded on neat divisions of 'us' and 'them,' blows up the generic categories on which it is ostensibly founded" (213).

> baser fears of mankind; the air of moral nihilism to keepers of gambling hells and disorderly houses; to private detectives and inquiry agents; to drink sellers and, I should say, to the sellers of invigorating electric belts and the inventors of patent medicines. But of that last I am not sure, not having carried my investigations so far into the depths. For all I know, the expression of these last may be perfectly diabolic. I shouldn't be surprised. What I want to affirm is that Mr Verloc's expression was by no means diabolic.

The apparently open and humorous self-revealing technique, used much like an aside in a play, allows for a certain directness Conrad had earlier achieved through Charlie Marlow. But this primarily third-person narrator, who earlier and later in the novel can enter the minds of his characters at will, who can exercise time and space shifts at will, and who can assume a revolutionary or conservative voice and consciousness, male or female, allows for much more flexibility than the narrator Marlow.[24] In most cases, this less-restricted style of narration, one not bound to a particular character in the work who interacts with others directly, encourages and invites readers themselves to participate in determining the overall textual meaning.[25]

A good example of how the narrative voice deconstructs its own point of view can be found in the case of Verloc. The early narrative descriptions of Verloc tend to demonize him: his name in French is suggestive of syphilis, he is associated with the coming of the influenza from the continent, he is obese, he is lazy, he is lecherous, he is treacherous. As the novel progresses, however, readers are encouraged to re-evaluate this initially negative portrayal of Verloc—in fact, much of what follows in the novel can easily be read as a pathetic plea to excuse him.[26] For one thing, it is possible to make sympathetic biographical connections to Conrad's own marriage in the scenes presenting Verloc's relationship with Winnie. In Chapter Two, Verloc begins to be exonerated from complete blame for the Greenwich bombing since the idea behind the explosion and its justifications are clearly set forth as coming from Mr. Vladimir and the government he represents; Verloc, whom we later leant has many times stopped other such "incidents" by reporting them to Heat, is clearly opposed to the idea of bombing, though to hold onto his job he concedes to carry it out.

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[24] One cannot help wondering if this narrative freedom was not part of the reason behind the speed of producing this novel-of all Conrad's novels this one took the least time to write.

[25] Vulcan explains that "The literalization of the figurative is an explosion of language: it is an act of violence against representation itself, a denial of the consensus of social order, a refusal to be implicated in its fictional symbolizations. To reverse Vladimir's injunction... that 'bomb throwing is your means of expression,' in *The Secret Agent,* means of expression are also a form of bomb-throwing" (219). The explosion of meaning, as I demonstrate, also applies to characterizations in the novel.

[26] The many parallels woven into the text between Verloc and Othello also support a more sympathetic reading of him. Underpinning my critical perspective of revaluing Verloc here is the Derridean conception that previously static binary oppositions require decentering and that revealing the tension between privileged and unprivileged oppositions is essential to providing a convincing reading.

At the end of Chapter Three, the narrator encourages even more empathy for Verloc by intruding upon his thoughts and thus demonstrating his primary motivations for going forward with the bombing plan: "Loafing was all very well for these fellows [the other anarchists], who knew not Mr. Vladimir, and had women to fall back upon; whereas he had a woman to provide for-" (82). Verloc's pressing need to provide for others is reinforced by his "commercial survey" of the shop's till that night, his confrontation with his wildly gesticulating brother-in-law Stevie ("had to provide for this fellow too" [83]), and the sound of his mother-in-law's snoring on the dark landing ("another one to provide for" [83]). Verloc, in short, is a family man, one who can be forgiven in part because, like Othello, he "loves not wisely but too well."

In Chapter Four, Verloc is presented to first-time readers of the novel as the victim of the bombing, reduced to a mere, sensationalistic conversational news item when he is discussed by Ossipon and the Professor, who meet by chance at the Silenus beer hall. One immediate emotional effect of Chapter Four on readers is that now that Verloc, "the villain," is supposedly dead, his innocent household of Stevie, Winnie, and his mother-in-law will have to pay dearly. Another effect is that this unformulaic fourthchapter elimination of the "villain" forces readers to look for a new character to assume that role. The two major candidates imposed on readers are the Professor and Ossipon. The Professor's injunction to Ossipon to "fasten yourself upon the woman for all she's worth," the Professor's subsequent meetings and discussions with Heat and Ossipon, and the latter's treacherous betrayal of Winnie, encourage readers to conclude that these two surpass the villainy of Verloc and can assume that role. Nevertheless, even the villainy of these two is somewhat tempered by further information and action: though richer because of his betrayal of Winnie and theft of her money, Ossipon ends up depressed and plagued by the memory of her suicide; the Professor ends the novel "frail, insignificant, and shabby," but he is also labeled as "incorruptible" and "the perfect anarchist." I am not suggesting by this discussion that characters must be either good or evil, heroes or villains; rather, what I am trying to demonstrate is that in *TSA* a common narrative strategy is to begin readers down one interpretive path, usually one that is comfortable and predictable, and then to explode that perception by additional facts and perspectives until no simplified, unproblematic generalization is possible.[27]

[27] Gudrun Kauhl, "Strategies of Reappraisal: Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent," Conradiana* 26.2–3 (Fall 1994): 103–18 argues that many words in *TSA* need to be read as if they have quotation marks around them, which expands the potentiality of their meaning. She believes that "As far as the narrator's detachment is concerned, there occurs no moment of complete rejection; instead there is a change of perspective so that words, phrases, and styles of representation lose their anchorage and reappear as things freshly to be examined" (111).

Conrad's Assault on the Chronotop?

Besides the above narrative strategy Conrad uses to explode meaning in *TSA,* he also assaults the traditional representations of time and place. To use another Bakhtinian term, Conrad fragments the *chronotope,* which creates an effect that has puzzled readers of *TSA* from the beginning.[28] The disrupted time sequences, as critics have noted of his other works, force readers to engage the work more intimately by slowing down the smoothness and automacy of cognition.[29] Moreover, the fragmenting of the chronotope invites readers to create their own meaning from the text as they puzzle over the pieces set before them. One narrative advantage of Conrad's approach to time is that the tension of an impending explosion, a hallmark of all dynamite literature, permeates the entire novel rather than simply dominating a single scene. Since the single impending explosion is never directly described, readers are exposed to a series of varying versions, including the newspapers, the investigating officer's, Heat's, Verloc's, Winnie's, and the Professor's. The seemingly chaotic results of leaving out or delaying chronological cues and constantly shifting topologies also has the advantage of reflecting the complexities behind a *simple* event, and Conrad does provide enough information so that the "simple tale" can be resolved by careful re-readings and re-structuring from clues given along the way.

The time of most of the action in the novel (1886), for example, can be reconstructed by careful readers from the wedding band found on the deck chair left by Winnie when she commits suicide.[30] Delaying this crucial detail until the novel is almost at an end helps postpone one of the early closures readers normally come to about a literary work. Since the actual time of the novel is left in question throughout most of the novel, readers are forced to compensate for that omission by searching like Heat "above the vulgar conception of time" (107) for other, often broader, terms of time to capture the essential moments in the novel; thus, there is the morning visit to Mr. Vladimir, the meeting of the anarchists at the Verlocs (one month before the explosion, as we learn much later in Chapter Four [98]), the tension-filled night before Verloc's trip to the

[28] Vulcan asserts that "Like his anarchist characters who set out to destroy time and space, Conrad set out to destroy the chronotope ... All the novel's abstract elements—philosophical and social generalizations, ideas, analyses of cause and effect—gravitate toward the chronotope" (213).

[29] See Paul Armstrong. "The Hermeneutics of Literary Impressionism: Interpretation and Reality in James, Conrad, and Ford," in A.T. Tymieniecka, ed., *Analecta Husserliana, vol XIX (NP:* Reidel, 1985): 477–79. "Both Ford and Conrad also typically fragment their narratives in order to interrupt the smooth unfolding of aspects into each other... By breaking up the continuation of aspects [they] frustrate the processes of configuration by which we build wholes out of parts in life as in art. The bewildered reader is not only challenged to heighten his configurative activity in order to piece the disparate, dispersed fragments together. The frustration and the challenge he experiences should also prompt reflection about the circular configurative process of interpretation in and of itself-a process which ordinarily goes unnoticed in everyday understanding because it is rarely called into view by interruption (491).

[30] Interestingly, Conrad picked 1886, the year of the Haymarket bombing and coincidentally the time of his becoming a British subject and master of the Merchant Marine, for the all-important chronological setting of this literary work.

continent, the trip to the almshouse, the afternoon after the explosion, the night of the murder of Verloc, and, finally, the scene several weeks after Winnie's suicide, which begins in the Professor's apartment, moves onto an omnibus, stops at the Silenus beer hall, and then ends on the busy streets of London with Ossipon and the Professor going their own separate ways.

Not only is the conception of time broadened to this less specific and more variable episodic understanding, it can also be measured in unique ways, by one's breath, by a relationship to a central personal moment in one's history, or by the actions of others. In the murder scene of the novel, for example, a conflation of time and dripping blood is created by Winnie's misinterpretation of the sound of Verloc's blood dripping on the floor. In such ways Conrad personalizes time, taking its measure from people rather than from arbitrarily set and operating mechanical devices. In a very real way, the narrative attitude to time and space explodes Greenwich Mean Time; in the words of the narrator, "There occur unexpected solutions of continuity, sudden holes in space and time" (105).

Many critics, following Conrad's lead in his Author's Note, have pointed out that the chronological and symbolic center of the novel is the time and place of the explosion of Stevie.[31] All the action, such critics claim, revolves around this central fact, though it is never directly related as in *Under Western Eyes.* Nevertheless, as in the case of Verloc's characterization, Conrad problematizes the plausibility and possibility of a central, unified, simplified chronotope within this novel. Stevie's obsessive drawings of multiple, non-concentric circles have been put forth as an adequate metaphor for Conrad's structuring of his chronotope, but an even more satisfactory metaphor might be spiraling circles, for more often than not the circles in *TSA* do not achieve closure.[32] For example, the explosion itself is off-center, not quite reaching its target of zero Greenwich time and space, and the scattered bits of flesh and clothes, despite a policeman's best efforts and optimistic attitude ("He's all there. Every bit of him" [106]), can never fully recover what once was Stevie-he is much more than the sum of his parts. Such off-centeredness and incompleteness is characteristic of the novel.[33] Each character forms a unique spiral, or set of spirals, that intersects others from time to time, but a character's own personal spirals are dominated primarily by his or her own private, usually unspoken, fears and thoughts. The overlappings between charac-

[31] Donald Brenton MacLaine, "Absent-Centred Structure in Five Modern Novels: Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima,* Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent,* Andrei Bely's *Petersburg,* Joseph Heller's *Catch-22,* and Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow."* Ph.D. Diss., The University of British Columbia (Canada), 1983.

[32] The text supports supplanting the more ordered circle model with a view of chaotic spirals; Stevie's drawings are described as "innumerable circles, concentric, eccentric; a coruscating whirl of circles that by their tangled multitude of repeated curves, uniformity of form, and confusion of intersecting lines suggested a rendering of cosmic chaos" (76).

[33] MacLaine's thesis is that "Conrad's *TSA* is governed, paradoxically, by the prominent absence of the indirectly narrated bomb explosion which operates as a metaphor of the narrative structure, for the text's distortions are both the result of the bomb's blast and a means of circumscribing that event."

ter circles/spirals which occur when they meet and interact always demonstrate that no characters share the same center, even if they are presumably similar or part of the same group, as in the intimate case of husband and wife. The climactic twin misunderstandings and abandonments/killings of Verloc by Winnie and then of Winnie by Ossipon aptly demonstrate this point

As far as the space contained by this novel, it would be easy to say that London contains it since all the central scenes are set in London: Verloc's house, the Embassy, the Assistant Commissioner's office, the soiree suite of the great lady, the Silenus bar, the Professor's apartment, Greenwich Park, the trains and streets and alleys and waterways that join them all.[34] But then, one must remember that Verloc travels to Paris and takes Stevie to Michaelis's country residence. Many characters who remain in London physically direct most of their psychic energies away from it. While physically in London, the Assistant Commissioner is primarily occupied with the freedom he had earlier experienced in the colonies (not simply consolatory games of whist to look forward to), as much so as Michaelis, who is fixated on the prison that deprived him of his physical freedom but gave him an enduring inner perspective he wishes to share. The taxi driver, Ossipon, and the Professor divert their direct attention from London, especially their fears, by inebriation. Even Sir Ethelred, "at the very centre of the empire on which the sun never sets" in Westminster, concerns himself primarily with the distant and abstract notion of the Nationalization of Fisheries.

Another technique Conrad uses to fragment the chronotope of London is to draw the reader's focus to the margins of London's acceptable society—poorhouses (chapter 8), pubs (chapters 4 and 13), and public thoroughfares (in all chapters). The Embassy where Mr. Vladimir holds forth, though very much in London, is nonetheless a foreign land, a marginal no-man's land where an assault on England is planned. Verloc's shop of shady wares is tucked away in a shady, out-of-the-way spot in Soho, the ideal marginal location for such a business. It is not unusual for Conrad to begin a chapter or move a chapter to a public thoroughfare, a narrative site which, in a large city, engenders an alienating effect.

Yet another fragmentation of the chronotope concerns Conrad's structuring of his chapters-the opening promise of each chapter is consistently violated with flashbacks, flashforwards, narrative shifts, and changes in time and place—nothing appears to follow consecutively or logically.[35] Chapter One, for example, opens with Verloc beginning a walk, but the chapter shifts after the first paragraph to a reflection on Verloc's home life and ends its focus on Stevie, or more accurately, with Winnie glancing at Stevie through the parlour door. The first paragraph of Chapter One directly links to the first paragraph of Chapter Two, connecting the idea that Verloc is embarking on a walk to see Mr. Vladimir, but an entire chapter has intervened.

[34] See Martin Ray, "The Landscape of *The Secret Agent,"* in Gene M. Moore, ed., *Conrad's Cities: Essays for Hans Van Marie* (1992): 197–206.

[35] Of Conrad's method in *TSA* the same may be said as the Professor's comment on Michaelis's writing, "He can't think consecutively" (263).

Chapter Two could presumably be simplified as the chapter containing the meeting and confrontation between Verloc and Vladimir, but this chapter's ending focus explores various domesticities within the Verloc household, explaining briefly how Winnie and Verloc came to meet, why they were married, and how Winnie keeps the "family" together.[36] The contrast between Vladimir's abstract attempt to "blow things apart" and Winnie's efforts to "keep things together" creates an unresolved tension in this chapter and highlights one of Conrad's central themes in *TSA,* the irreconcilability between the personal and the political. Chapter Three essentially presents the anarchist meeting at the Verloc house, but it furthers the personal/political theme by demonstrating the very real effects that violent, revolutionary talk has on the Verloc family—Stevie is so upset about the violence he has heard and read that he is in a rage, Verloc is condemned to sleeplessness by the anticipation of his planned and very concrete bombing, and Winnie retires to bed early, in all probability to avoid the talk and the lascivious glances of Ossipon and her involuntary, confused responses to them.

TSA is not a novel conducive to stable patterns, especially in the structuring of its chapters. Unlike the previous chapters, Chapter Four contains a single scene, the Silenus beer hall, and only two characters, so initially there appears to be more stability to this chapter than the previous three. However, this chapter unsettles readers in another significant way, taking the greatest time leap in the novel, from the time Verloc met with Vladimir to the day of the bombing several weeks later. In addition, Chapters Five, Six, and Seven link directly to Chapter Four and more or less follow the newly established post-bomb time sequence. First, the Professor meets briefly with Heat, who is on his way back from investigating the bombing. But that chance meeting is juxtaposed against Heat's meeting with the Assistant Commissioner in Chapter Six and then in turn in Chapter Seven with the Assistant Commissioner's meeting with Sir Ethelred (and Toodles of course). The series of meetings encourage re-readings (spiraling backwards) of each preceding encounter because the personal subtext and the raw emotions of power, guilt, or fear are so often so similar.[37]

In all these encounters readers are subjected to flashbacks to fill in biographical details on characters, but more importantly Conrad reveals the uncanny and often unconscious manipulation of personal thoughts and fears that underride political or occupational conversations: the defiant, incorruptible Professor dedicated to creating the perfect detonator fears the multitude that exceeds his destructive power, and unconsciously Heat hits on this fear, Heat, having just witnessed Stevie's annihilated body, fears being blown to bits (a fear the Professor manipulates to greater effect than even he is aware) and he also fears losing his informer Verloc; the Assistant Commissioner, as a new administrator, fears his new role of trusting others' representations

[36] The portrayal of Winnie as mother/protector is reminiscent of Henry James's Pinnie in *The Princess Casamassima.*

[37] One political view expressed in *Nostromo* and revisited by these juxtaposed encounters is that people who are revolutionaries and people who represent governments seldom effectively change things for the better; usually all that really changes are the names, titles, and roles they play.

rather than firsthand facts and also fears being excluded by his wife and a new social circle she has introduced him to; the great personage, Sir Ethelred, fears facts—he wants to be consoled by grand abstractions such as the security of the empire (which realistically cannot be guaranteed) and its expansion by his proposed Nationalization of the Fisheries.

Many first-time readers initially lose their way or are otherwise baffled by the intrusion of Chapter Eight, in which Winnie and Stevie accompany their mother to an almshouse. But Chapter Seven ends with the Assistant Commissioner observing the Verloc house, so in some ways it makes sense that the narrative should return to that household's central concerns. In returning to the direct concerns of the Verloc household, Chapter Eight directly links to the end of Chapter Three and Verloc's unspoken tension concerning "providing" for his overlarge household. The time sequence returns to before the bomb explodes, but ironically it is a time when the Verloc household has begun its own fragmentation: The mother goes to the poorhouse and Verloc travels to the continent the very next day, presumably to buy wares for his shop. The subtextual nature of the encounters and conversations presented in the previous chapters is revisited in this chapter. Obviously, Verloc is obsessed with his destructive mission, so much so that he almost "makes a clean breast of it" to his wife while they are preparing for bed. Winnie's central obsessions at this point include her self-recriminations about her mother's leaving, her concerns for Stevie, and her curiosity about the ongoing taciturnity of her husband—there is some suggestion that she interprets his quietude sexually. In the background, Stevie's admiration for Verloc intensifies as he translates Verloc's aloofness as his way of mourning over the loss of his mother-in-law, as Winnie has told him (171).

In Chapters Nine through Thirteen, the characters' central concerns are brought together in the novel's tragic conclusion. In Chapter Nine, Winnie, hoping to preserve Stevie's security in the household, encourages his walks with Verloc. Verloc looks at Stevie with more interest than ever before, no doubt wondering if it might be possible to train the boy to carry and place the bomb. Stevie's reverence for Verloc makes him an unwitting but willing accomplice to the bombing. Chapter Nine juxtaposes the day of Verloc and Stevie's departure for Michaelis's house, a day when Winnie's happiness is at its height because of the apparent father-son bond that has taken place between her brother and husband, with the day of the bombing when Verloc returns knowing that Stevie has accidentally been killed and when Winnie discovers her brother's tragic ending by listening to Heat and Verloc's conversation through a keyhole. As in all the previous chapters (with the notable exception of Chapter Four), the opposing energies in this chapter create irresolvable tensions, but the focus in this chapter on Winnie's heights and depths of feeling for Stevie and Verloc achieve a climactic effect Chapter Ten, then, retreats from the deep emotional reaction of Winnie, much like Shakespearean comic relief, and pursues the Assistant Commissioner's report to Toodles and Sir Ethelred and subsequent confrontation with Vladimir. Chapter Eleven concerns primarily the murder of Verloc, but it clearly divides into Verloc's

self-justifications for Stevie's demise and Winnie's image-burdened thoughts of how he must have actually died.[38] The two opposing perspectives are so distant that at the end it comes as little surprise to readers that Winnie attempts to free herself by murdering Verloc. Chapter Twelve revisits the theme of betrayal, having Winnie instead of Verloc as the victim this time around. Chapter Thirteen revisits the theme of betrayal one more time, showing how miserable and unpredictable the results of betrayal can be—Ossipon can no longer find satisfaction in his center, the pursuit and manipulation of women. The coruscating spirals of meaning about betrayal have spun out of control for Verloc, Winnie, and Ossipon.

As I have discussed, one critical approach to explain the unique structure of *TSA* has been to view all characters as setting out upon circular journeys. But some, of course, do not return—namely Verloc, Winnie, and Stevie.[39] My own view, as the above discussion of the structuring of the chapters indicates, differs significantly from such a view. No circles are truly resolved or completed; to do so would violate one of the key aesthetic principles Conrad is trying to achieve in this novel. The Professor's final walk ends in an open-ended way, as does Ossipon's. Michaelis continues to work on an unfinished manuscript. Chief Inspector Heat's future is questionable since he has lost his best informer and has tried to deceive his superior. The Assistant Commissioner ends his "full evening" by confronting Vladimir on the street, triumphant in the knowledge that he has ruined his game and maintained himself in his wife's chosen social circle, one that he privately disdains. But though the Assistant Commissioner momentarily breaks free of the predictable life he has become a part of, the unexpected murder of Verloc brings into question his victory over Mr. Vladimir. Sir Ethelred's National Fisheries Bill also ends in uncertainty, since in all likelihood it will fail, as Toodles informs us.

[38] Ironically, though Winnie's normal philosophy is that life "did not stand looking into very much," she thinks "pictorially" (233) and remembers key moments of her life in a series of "visions" (219–220).

[39] David L. Kubal, *"The Secret Agent* and the Mechanical Chaos" *Bucknell Review: A Scholarly Journal of Letters, Arts, and Science* 15.3 (1967): 65–77. Kubal presents the idea that each character sets out on a journey and circles in a return; the story itself, he believes, circles around; some unfinished circles, he posits, include Stevie, Verloc, Winnie, and the Professor. Kubal sees the circle as the central unifying element of the novel, expressing the tension between chaos and the machine: "What holds the world of *TSA* together is, generally, the machine... the circle." Other geometric and machine figures mentioned include triangles, squares, clocks, the player piano, and trains. In a related argument, Martha Ann Turner, "Physical Paradigms and Fictional Worlds: The Shapes of Reality in Austen, Dickens, Conrad, and Lawrence," Ph.D. Diss. Duke University, 1988, points out that Conrad's *TSA* and Lawrence's *Women in Love* attack the Newtonian worldview. *TSA* shows characters who understand the world in Newtonian terms repeatedly thwarted by a universe that appears more like the world of contemporary physics.

Dynamiter Characterizations

Besides exploding the conclusiveness of the novel's action and meaning, decentering the narrative voice by shifting ironic poses, and fragmenting the chronotope of *TSA,* Conrad also presents his readers with characterizations that defy any simple, straightforward conclusions or interpretations. Using Forster's terms, there are no "flat" characters in this novel. My particular concern will be with the role of "the dynamiter" in the novel. Of course, one thing that Conrad does is to shift the responsibility for the dynamiting among all the characters in the novel: the English government is responsible because of its leniency in dealing with terrorist organizations and willingness to accept proclamations from those in the security business, foreign governments are responsible because of their intent to overthrow or destabilize their enemies, individuals such as Mr. Vladimir are responsible because of a warped sense of the symbolic effect of weaponry on the public and a lack of concrete understanding of the mechanics of revolutionary and guerilla warfare, the anarchists are responsible because of their irresponsible violent speech and their aptitude to play the role of scapegoat, the police are responsible because of their need for criminal activities and informers and their use of amoral control tactics, high society is responsible for encouraging, even patronizing, revolutionaries, Verloc is responsible because of his choice to carry out the outrage in order to keep his job, Stevie is responsible for reverently having accepted the assignment from his father-figure Verloc to carry the bomb, Winnie is responsible for not having looked more deeply into things, and the Professor, of course, is responsible for having made the bomb and for not having yet made a perfect detonator.

Though all these groups and individuals are culpable, the "dynamiters" I will focus on will include Mr. Vladimir, Verloc, Stevie, and the Professor because these characters are most directly responsible for the "outrage." Conrad's portrayal of each of these characters helps clarify various guiding philosophies used to justify dynamiting by exploring the personal effects a single bombing has on eack

Mr. Vladimir makes two appearances in *TSA,* one with Verloc and one with the Assistant Commissioner. With Verloc he is presented as an effete, slender man, a favorite in society, particularly among women, because of his wit, which "consisted in discovering droll connections between incongruous ideas" (57). He shows a mastery of languages,[40] but when surprised he resorts to guttural Central Asian tones, which betray his ancestry. Though the embassy he represents remains unnamed, some critics have pointed to Germany/Prussia as the most likely candidate.[41]

[40] This may connect Mr. Vladimir in some way with the narrator of *Under Western Eyes,* the teacher of languages.

[41] Graham McMaster, "Some Other Secrets in *The Secret Agent" Literature and History* 12.2 (Autumn 1986): 229–42, believes that Verloc's triangular symbol represents the Dreikaiserbund that partitioned Poland-Germany, Austria, and Russia. The Prussians or Germans in *TSA* are represented through Vladimir as technological, scientific savages, a propagandistic representation that would endure for forty or so more years. Germans, not Russians, are the real enemy, is Conrad's purported message.

In his meeting with Verloc, Mr. Vladimir scoffs at his subordinate's achievements and presents the plan he wishes carried out that goes beyond mere words, writing, or a voice-Verloc's specialties. Mr. Vladimir wants action-"a dynamite outrage must be provoked," one that will go beyond "the readymade phrases to explain such manifestations." To justify and explain his proposed action, Mr. Vladimir presents Verloc with his philosophy of bomb throwing:

> These outrages need not be especially sanguinary ... The fetish of today is neither royalty nor religion, therefore the palace and the church should be left alone. A bomb outrage to have any influence on the public opinion now must go beyond the intention of vengeance or terrorism. It must be purely destructive... But what is one to say to an act of destructive ferocity so absurd as to be incomprehensible, inexplicable, almost unthinkable; in fact, mad? Madness alone is truly terrifying... The demonstration must be against learning—science. But not every science will do. The attack must have all the shocking senselessness of gratuitous blasphemy. Since bombs are your means of expression, it would be really telling if one could throw a bomb into pure mathematics... The blowing up of the first meridian is bound to raise a howl of execration. (64–68)[42]

Mr. Vladimir's reasoning, from a distant and abstract perspective, makes sound enough sense because it promises to have only a symbolic, not sanguinary, effect; but as Verloc discovers, the mission will have a dear cost for him-his peace of mind, his security, his sleep, his relationship with his wife, his connections with the police, and eventually his life. We are led to believe the affair may also cost Vladimir his career and social standing. As far as previous portraits of dynamiters in fiction (see Chapter Five), Mr. Vladimir is somewhat unusual since he is not primarily a marginal figure but one clearly at the center and pinnacle of society. Conrad's suggestion that terrorism can emanate from within governments rather than from without certainly challenges the common, conservative depictions of dynamiters up to this time as marginal, poor, uneducated, and lower-class subversives representing extreme minority views.[43] The view, however, is a characteristic tack taken by anarchist leaders and presses of the era.

[42] Since professors are a major audience of this dissertation, here is what Vladimir has to say of that group: "All the damned professors are radicals at heart. Let them know that their panjandrum has got to go too, to make room for the Future of the Proletariat. They will be writing to the papers. Their indignation would be above suspicion, no material interests being openly at stake, and it will alarm every selfishness of the class which should be impressed" (67).

[43] Conrad appears to have relished the reversals presented in his fiction, so this characterization of a government official is not surprising. He wrote to Graham, "If I had the necessary talent I would like to go for the true anarchist—which is the millionaire. Then you would see the venom flow" (Najder 324). In postwar dynamiter portrayals, the scientific, tactical strategist remote from the "action" but in control of other's lives becomes commonplace.

In Mr. Vladimir's discussion with the Assistant Commissioner there is a definite role reversal: instead of hounding, intimidating, and disparaging others as he does in Chapter Two, Mr. Vladimir himself is being attacked.[44] The Assistant Commissioner reveals that he has arrested Verloc and that the "wealth and precision of detail [of this informer] will carry conviction to the great mass of the public" (208). From this, readers no doubt conclude that Mr. Vladimir will be pursued by legal means. It would be possible to conclude from this scene that Conrad contains the disruptive forces of this particular dynamiter, but since Verloc is killed before being taken into custody, the Assistant Commissioner's haughty contempt and gloating over his adversary Vladimir is premature. There is no definite resolution or containment of Vladimir the dynamiter because no living witness exists to testify against him. Unlike previous portrayals of dynamiters, this politically and socially well-placed dynamiter will go free rather than conveniently explode himself or vanish to another country.

Verloc appears to be a very uncommitted, reluctant, atypical dynamiter. One key to Conrad's early characterization of Verloc is his demonization by his "corpulence." Because of Verloc's obesity, readers and narrator alike easily fixate on his inactivity—he lounges around in the daytime, stays up late at night, sleeps in, is sloppy in his dress, and is generally indolent Verloc is also associated with the influenza, that arrives regularly from the Continent, and as a foreign agent, informer, anarchist, and dealer of shady wares certainly forms a negative impression. Added to this is the later knowledge added by Winnie that Verloc's sexual appetites were extreme during their marriage—"And he loved me. Oh, yes. He loved me till I sometimes wished myself—Seven years, seven years a wife to him" (244).[45] In addition, Verloc's courage and honor are questioned since he uses Stevie to plant the bomb[46] for him and plans to betray one and all of his comrades to the Assistant Commissioner in order to preserve himself.

But Conrad does not allow the portrait of Verloc the dynamiter to remain unchallenged or one-sided. As the novel continues, readers discover Verloc's amazing industry—he is a shopkeeper, a special agent, a double agent, a husband, a former member of the French artillery, a passionate lover, and a sometime revolutionary orator as well as writer of pamphlets. The narrator describes him as satisfying the expected figure of a "well-to-do mechanic in business for himself."[47] He takes long walks around London and also trips to the continent. To counterbalance any hasty judgments on Verloc's size, Conrad includes many more oversized and indolent characters-Michaelis (round like a tub with an enormous stomach), Sir Ethelred (vast in bulk and stature—the great personage), Chief Inspector Heat (whose appearance evokes a memory of

[44] Descended from generations victimized by the instruments of an arbitrary power, he was racially, nationally, and individually afraid of the police" (206).

[45] The "seven" here resonates with the "seven years hard [labor]" mentioned earlier by Heat (110).

[46] Verloc's protestation to the contrary "Strike me dead if I ever would have thought of the lad for that purpose" (230) is settled by Winnie's striking him dead. She knows the truth.

[47] One might connect this statement to the mechanic's confidence expressed by the dynamiter Hank Morgan.

a certain old, fat and wealthy native chief-physically a big man), Winnie's mother (a stout, wheezy woman, with a triple chin, a floating ampleness of ancient form, and an impotent condition of her legs), a well-endowed Winnie, and the big "robust," yellow-haired, freckled Ossipon. By novel's end only the Assistant Commissioner, Mr. Vladimir, Stevie, and the Professor stand out as thin, and three of these are central causative agents behind the explosion. Conrad's intent, it seems, is to show that the complicated characterization of Verloc cannot be oversimplified by references to his physical appearance or habits.

A particularly telling aspect of Verloc's portrayal is the ease with which biographical parallels can be drawn to Conrad's own family life at the time of the novel's writing.[48] Most disturbing about this dynamiter portrait, however, is the suggestion that at the core of much political violence is not political motivation but a foundering personal relationship. ("The way of even the most justifiable revolutions is prepared by personal impulses disguised into creeds" [102].) No-one can predict with certainty, as Heat and the Assistant Commissioner attempt to do, what may be going on internally within a family or a relationship and how that may lead to a dynamite outrage or murder. Of Verloc's happy home, the narrator writes, "To the last its decorum had remained undisturbed by unseemly shrieks and other misplaced sincerities of conduct And after the striking of the blow, this respectability was continued in immobility and silence" (235).

Not many readers would initially blame Stevie for his "unwitting" role as a dynamiter. They might easily share Winnie's perspective that Stevie is an innocent, uncomprehending victim of the bombing planned by Verloc. Stevie's low intelligence, his compassion for others' suffering, and his impressionability all argue for such a view. In fact, the selection of a young, inexperienced, ignorant, naive, and idealistic man to deliver explosives is a commonplace in dynamiter fiction and in the realities of twentiethcentury warfare.[49] But as in his other characterizations, Conrad complicates an easy interpretation of Stevie the dynamiter/victim with some additional unfortunate details. For one thing, Stevie has apparently been fascinated before with fireworks, letting them off in anger at an unjust boss. One suspects that Verloc has manipulated the boy in a similar way to get him involved in planting the much larger firework of a dynamite bomb.[50]

Another indication of Stevie's capability for extreme action is his violent reaction to the propaganda leaflets he reads; describing his reaction to the story of a "German soldier officer tearing half-off the ear of a recruit," Winnie, who knows Stevie best, comments to Verloc, "He would have stuck that officer like a pig if he had seen him

[48] Most of the standard biographers (Jean Aubry, Jocelyn Baines, Frederick Karl, and Zdzislaw Najder) have detailed the comparisons in their work.

[49] The dynamiters of James, the Stevensons, Twain, the Rossettis, and Chesterton are examples of this trend, as discussed in the previous chapter.

[50] Stevie's psyche has been paralyzed by his own abusive father; for the kind Verloc he has a religious awe and reverence.

then. It's true, too! Some people don't deserve much mercy" (87).[51] Stevie's potential for violence is also evident in his instinctive reaction to the cab driver's whipping of the horse on the trip to the almshouse. Luckily, Winnie is there to intercede at that time. Though in the beginning of the novel Stevie has a certain respect for the police, Winnie begins to change this attitude by teaching him that police "are there so that them as have nothing shouldn't take anything away from them who have" (170). Winnie also permits and encourages Stevie to participate in Verloc's political activities, which she is aware could be dangerous, and readers are led to believe that her views of the police are reinforced under Verloc's tutelage.

One particularly intriguing detail in Stevie's characterization as a dynamiter is the suggestion of his homosexuality. He is described as having fair skin, a boyish appearance, a drooping lip, and a thin, fluffy mist of a moustache. Besides the suggestive interactions between Michaelis and Stevie during the anarchist meeting and his history of being beaten by his father, Stevie also is sent to Michaelis's cottage with the following explanation: "Michaelis wouldn't mind giving Stevie a room to sleep in... As to Stevie, he could be no other than very pleased. Mr. Michaelis was always so nice and kind to him. He seemed to like the boy. Well, the boy was a good boy" (180). One cannot help wondering what effects twenty years in prison may have had, sexually, on the "gentle" ticket-of-leave apostle Michaelis and whether the subtext of this entire episode does not refer to the possibility of an upcoming homosexual encounter between Michaelis and Stevie. Certainly, such a characterization would add another subtle level to Stevie's portrayal as a dynamiter-victim that many critics have previously overlooked.

The dynamiter-Professor's characterization also has sexual undertones. The earliest serial versions of *TSA* have included with the catalog of available products in Verloc's shop window a small cardboard box labeled "Superfine India Rubber."[52] By association, the Professor's grasping of an India Rubber ball inside his pocket is highly suggestive of masturbation; in a double entendre, the Professor is described as "holding his head rigidly erect" as he walks down a deserted alley (101). Coupled with his isolated existence as a model lodger is his behind-the-scenes bargaining with Verloc, a dealer in shady wares, who must travel to the Continent presumably to provide the Professor with "something" he wants or needs in exchange for the making of a bomb. By this sordid characterization of the Professor, Conrad seems to imply that much of the anger expressed by the Professor is directed by his sexual inadequacy or impotence. When the Professor is sitting in the Silenus beer hall and is discussing with Ossipon how forceful the explosive he carries in his coat is, he singles out a couple "going up the

[51] Winnie's later murder of Verloc is foreshadowed here by this Freudian slip of the tongue.

[52] Brian W. Shaffer, "'The Commerce of Shady Wares': Politics and Pornography in Conrad's *The Secret Agent*" *English Literary History* 62 (1995): 443–66. See also Christine W. Sizemore, "'The Small Cardboard Box': A Symbol of the City and Winnie Verloc in Conrad's *The Secret Agent*" *Modern Fiction Studies* 24 (1978): 28. French, yellow envelopes had long been a polite Victorian reference to condoms; "yellow literature" was commonly known to be pornography.

stairs" as probable victims (92). His obsession with "destructive force" can be read as a psychological reversal, as an obsession with its opposite, the "creative force."

Conrad's biographical portrait of the Professor as a dynamiter zealously dedicated to the ideals of science is reminiscent of the Stevensons' yarns about the dynamiter named Zero in *The Dynamiter.* In fact, Conrad's describing the Professor as the son of an "itinerant and rousing preacher of some obscure but rigid Christian sect—a man supremely confident in the privileges of his righteousness ... a delicate, dark enthusiast with a sloping forehead" (102), appears to have a direct correlation with the Stevensons' initial portrayal of their dynamiter as an avenging Mormon Danite.[53] The impossible-to-achieve scientific obsessions and the living arrangements of the Stevensons' and Conrad's dynamiters are also very similar-they are both attempting to create bombs with reliable detonators while posing as ideal lodgers in their respective boarding houses. Both also experience detonation failures and express at length the philosophies at the root of their extreme behavior. However, while the Stevensons' extreme portrait of a dynamiter tends toward the comedic and adds little beyond the stereotypical, demonizing news accounts of the day, Conrad presents readers with a menacing dynamiter, but one whose extreme characterization is nevertheless plausible and one whose scientifically "rational" philosophies in an Age of Reason and Science tend to dominate the novel and give it its unsettling, terrorizing finale.[54]

The Professor's Lombrosian physical appearance (sloping forehead, slight stature, deformed ears...) must be tempered with the knowledge that Conrad himself was very skeptical about Lombroso's theories. As in Verloc's characterization, the Professor's unattractive exterior is contrasted with positive attributes. Like the French lieutenant in *Lord Jim,* the Professor, creating a personal delay fuse for his body bomb, has the courage to withstand the delay of twenty seconds anticipating his own death. He also has the tenacity, discipline, and courage to work in solitude, looking death in the face at every moment: "I don't play; I work fourteen hours a day, and go hungry sometimes... I've got the grit to work alone, quite alone, absolutely alone" (94). The private conscientious work of a dynamiter and an iconoclastic writer, an "enemy of the people," are tenuously close here.

In fact, many of the statements offered by the Professor echo many of Conrad's own political sentiments. Vulcan believes the Professor is the closest one gets to an authorial voice in this novel,

> If one looks for a figuration of the authorial voice in the novel, the character who most forcefully presents himself to the reader's mind is, incongruously and bewilderingly, the mad professor himself, the would-be inventor of the

[53] One cannot help also connecting the Professor's religious background to Jim's in *Lord Jim.*

[54] It is interesting to note that of all the characters to afflict with gout, a condition Conrad fought all his life, Conrad selects the old dynamiting terrorist Yundt.

> 'perfect detonator' whose discourse often merges with that of the narrator, or even with the extra-textual discourse of the author himself.[55]

This conclusion is not as farfetched as it seems when one explores some of the basic philosophies the two seem to hold in common. One of the earliest statements of the Professor, "What one of us may or may not know as to any given fact can't be a matter of inquiry for others" (88), for instance, is an encapsulation of a major theme of 7X4 and many other works by Conrad. The Professor's "absolute rule... never to refuse anybody" a pinch of his stuff is similar to an author's providing his works to all buyers, regardless of their immaturity. The Professor's observation that "the terrorist and policeman both come from the same basket" is not far distant from a major theme in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* that the "civilized" forces in society can be the most corrupt and dangerous. Conrad sounded very much like the professor when he wrote to Edward Garnett, "Your words, words, words. They exploded like stored powder barrels ... An explosion is the most lasting thing in the universe. It leaves disorder, remembrance, room to move, a clear space. Ask your Nihilist friends."[56] Even more telling, perhaps, is the following portion of a letter to Cunningham Graham in 1899:

> Man is a malicious animal. His malice has to be organized. Crime is an essential condition of organized life. Society is basically criminal—otherwise it would not exist Egoism saves everything-absolutely everything-all that we abhor and all that we love. And everything holds together. That is precisely why I respect extreme anarchists. "I wish for general extermination"—Excellent It is fair as well as obvious.[57]

The audience and tone here, along with the fact that the essential parts of this letter are written in French, can be viewed as an attempt by Conrad to distance these anarchist perspectives from himself, but the similarities between the "voice" achieved in the letter and the Professor's voice are undeniable.

More telling perhaps than the similarities between Conrad and the Professor, however, are the differences. The Professor vainly and naively believes he can make a perfect mechanism:

> I am trying to invent a detonator that would adjust itself to all conditions of action, and even to unexpected changes of conditions. A variable and yet perfectly precise mechanism. A really intelligent detonator. (92)

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[55] Vulcan 210.

[56] Conrad to Edward Garnett, 12 March 1897, in *Collected Letters,* ed. Frederick R. Karl and Laurence Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), Vol. 1,344. David Mulry, "The Perfect Detonator and Conrad's Pursuit of It in *The Secret Agent,"* Ph.D. Diss., University of Kent at Canterbury (UK), 1989, explores the working application of the text operating as a "perfect detonator" on the reading public.

[57] As found in Najder 251. Conrad to Graham, 8 February 1899, Watts, *Letters,*

Such scientific utopianism was abhorred by Conrad, who detested such short-sighted hollow, shallow, cliche solutions involving progress and technology. As he commented to his erstwhile friend H.G. Wells, "The difference between us, Wells, is fundamental. You don't care for humanity but think they are to be improved. I love humanity but know they are not."[58] This Conradian sentiment about caring for others finds its opposite in the Professor's grand "final solution" of eradicating the "weak" from the earth so that the "strong" can rule. The Professor's abstract belief in a totalizing anarchist Bakunin theory that "a clean sweep" and fresh start will automatically solve society's problems is directly opposed by the concrete observations that the multitude is too large to handle in such a way, even with dynamite, that the sacrifice of the individual may not be worth the cost, and that all such a revolutionary act may effect is a change in names—a central point Conrad makes in *Nostromo.* The scientific Professor's proclamation that "What happens to us as individuals is not of the least consequence" (94) is a direct contradiction to Conrad's vision of the novelist's task-more often than not individuals suffering internal conflicts are his central concern.

The differences extend to The Professor's optimism and certainty about the effects of the self-destructive power he carries with him in his pocket—"To deal with a man like me you require sheer, naked, inglorious heroism" (91)—and his certainty about the grounds on which society and the British police act: "Their character is built upon conventional morality. It leans on the social order. Mine stands free from everything artificial... They depend on life... I depend on death" (93). The simplistic, dualistic thinking and the certainties the Professor expresses about life, and death, are far afield from Conrad's own complex sensibilities, as expressed in a later narrative comment, "True wisdom is not certain of anything in this world of contradictions" (104).

Another major difference occurs when the Professor exults that "It is [he] who [is] the true propagandist" (94) because he performs the deed of making bombs. His assertion is that propaganda of the deed is better than Ossipon's, or anyone else's, propaganda of the word. Conrad's writing posits another less certain path for propaganda by producing a type of writing that shows an understanding of how people can be manipulated by words but refuses to participate in a heavy-handed didactic narrative.[59] He does this, as I have discussed throughout this chapter, by inviting readers to participate in making meaning and by problematizing any conclusions one might

[58] Martin Ray, "Conrad, Wells, and *The Secret Agent:* Paying Old Debts and Settling Old Scores" *Modern Language Review* 81 (July 1986): 567. The quote above comes from a record of a conversation in Hugh Walpole's diary. In addition to being read as an authorial voice in the novel, the Professor can be viewed as a caricature of H.G. Wells; indeed Ray claims *TSA* is a reply to Wells's most recent writings of the time, *A Modern Utopia* and *New Worlds for Old.*

[59] William Allen Hepburn, "Politics, Propaganda, and the Modern Novel" Ph.D. Diss., Princeton University, 1990, argues that because "the modern novel frequently posits an audience that is to be instructed and changed ... that it is a propagandistic medium, one that is conscious of its capacity to persuade, manipulate, and deceive... Familiar with the textual tactics of anarchist propaganda, Conrad understood the potential of narrative for deception... Secrecy, complicity, and suspicion attach themselves to the reader during the transmission of the narrative."

make by creating a deconstructive text. Conrad also avoids writing mere propaganda by holding before his readers a single action, a single deed, and then elaborating it from multiple perspectives.

In conclusion, then, Conrad avoids committing "a gratuitous outrage on the sensibilities of mankind" by, ironically enough, basing his aesthetic presentation of *TSA* on an explosives trope. The fragmentation of the narrative voice, the fragmentation of a sense of time and space, and the fragmentation of key characterizations, particularly those of the dynamiters, defy any attempts to simplify or totalize the novel's meaning or its political positions into any unified whole. Much more than a domestic tale, a story about a political intrigue, or an attempt to propagandize on behalf of revolutionaries or the establishment, Conrad's novel provides readers with an anarchic *"impenetrable mystery,"* an *"act of madness or despair"* by which readers discover that they themselves are secret agents caught hopelessly in coruscating whirls of personal and social meaning, in a cosmic chaos of their own creation.

Chapter Seven: A Shell-Shocked Culture: The Post-war Literary Reaction to High Explosives

As I have noted in previous chapters, most literary authors before World War I gained their raw material about high explosives from newspaper accounts or other second-hand information. The widespread use of high explosives during World War I changed this as many more people came to know first-hand the uses and effects of explosives.[1] No longer could explosives use effectively be scapegoated to marginal groups since most major Western powers had mastered the technology and were willing to use it for strategic military reasons and for the terrorizing of civilian populations.[2] In a memoir written long after the war, Wyndham Lewis came to the same conclusion that many others share concerning the widespread effects of the first "Great" War: "It altered the face of our civilization. It left the European nations impoverished, shell-shocked, discouraged and unsettled."[3]

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[1] Wyndham Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1967), explains that "Sixty per cent of the casualties on the Western Front were caused by shell-fire, forty per cent by bullets [gas, bayonets, etc.]... Shell fire is an interesting subject, therefore, for the soldier" (145).

[2] Karl von Clausewitz (1780–1831) described war as a necessary extension of international diplomacy, an effective way to force a political opponent to concede or to prevent him from becoming a threat. Clausewitz's view of war could only be held while war was fought by armies of professional soldiers over limited terrain for clear and usually attainable objectives in territory and power. The situation changed during the two world wars and the Spanish Civil War, when destruction of civilian morale (their 'will to resist') through bombing replaced defeat of the opposing army as a top military priority.

[3] Lewis 258. Lewis disparages the attempts by certain politicians to impose meaning on the war after the fact with such slogans as "the War to end War," "the War to make the world safe for democracy," or "the War to make England a place for heroes to live in" (207). Like many others, Lewis believed that the war was indecisive, that it had not settled anything, that it was too vast, that it meant nothing, and that no advantage had been won by fighting it.

George Bernard Shaw evaluated the change wrought by the war somewhat more optimistically: "We have all had a tremendous jolt; and although the widespread notion that the shock of the war would automatically make a new heaven and a new earth, and that the dog would never go back to his vomit nor the sow to her wallowing in the mire is already seen to be a delusion, yet we are far more conscious of our condition than we were, and far less disposed to submit to it." See Shaw's introduction to *Heartbreak House: A Fantasia in the Russian Manner on English Themes,* Dan H. Laurence, ed., (New York: Penguin, 1964 [1919]), 45.

High explosives, of course, were not only the domain of governments and their organizations. In America, as I have discussed in Chapter Three, labor struggles often involved dynamite explosions, particularly among conflicts involving mine workers. In Great Britain during the years preceding World War I, to get women the vote Christabel Pankhurst encouraged a militant strategy which included

> pouring of acids into pillar boxes, the cutting of telegraph wires, and the slashing of pictures in public galleries... [Suffragettes] set fire to empty houses, they destroyed golf courses, they threw bombs at churches. In February 1913 someone attempted to bum down Lloyd George's country house.[4]

Other militant actions taken to secure the vote included throwing stones, breaking glass, self-starvation (to which the government reacted with forced feedings and imprisonment of leaders without trial), and bombing of the Coronation Chair, splintering it Women blamed their militancy on the obstinacy of the government in not seriously addressing their demands. Most importantly, as a political tool these extreme acts by a few militants were perceived as representative of wider feelings. Eventually, when the war began and many women were needed to work in the munitions factories, the militant leaders made a deal with Lloyd George that they, and the women they represented, would cooperate for the duration of the war if after it was over they would be given the vote. In 1918 women (over thirty years old who had a household of their own) were granted the right to vote in Great Britain.[5]

The effects of explosives began to appear in various art movements of the First World War era. As I have discussed, Wyndham Lewis's art and literary journal *Blast* began to capture the artistic spirit of Augmentation of the time. Dadaist, cubist, and surrealist art centered itself on exploded images. For example, Harriet Monroe, attending a 1913 Armory show, commented that Marcel Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Stairway" looks "like a pack of brown cards in a nightmare or a dynamited suit of Japanese armor."[6] Unfortunately, many women who participated in Surrealist exhibitions, art critic Robert Belton explains, "were there precisely because within the male Imaginary they, too, were little more than explosives in attractive packaging. Of course, this meant that women's works were included to exploit some residual shock, outside the artist's intentions, like embodiments of Breton's convulsive beauty."[7]

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[4] Susan Kingsley Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain, 1860–1914* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1987), 202.

[5] A good firsthand account of this war before the war is Christabel Pankhurst's, *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote,* intro. Rita Pankhurst, (London: Cresset, [1959] 1987).

[6] Qtd. in Robert M. Crunden, *American Salons: Encounters with European Modernism, 1885–1917* (New York: Oxford UP, 1993), 11. The painting has also been described as "an explosion in a shingle factory."

[7] In Robert J. Belton, *The Beribboned Bomb: The Image of Woman in Male Surrealist Art* (Alberta: U of Calgary P, 1995), 254.

The effects of high explosives were not limited to art Henry James has written that modernism is "an imagination of disaster" and Gertrude Stein wrote that "All Great art is anarchy."[8] Certainly, one of modernism's major anxieties has been with the disaster imposed upon people by the "ever-improving" capabilities and implementation of high explosives. A major function of literature, historically speaking, has been the meditation on or celebration of war or violence, particularly the story of surviving a new threat, a new weapon never seen or heard of before (such as a fire-breathing dragon, men in armor, the cavalry, the longbow, the lance/pike/bayonet, gunpowder-based weapons—cannon fire, six shooters, machine guns). The impact on humans of repeated shelling, however, was unprecedented by other weapons.[9]

In part, the arbitrariness of death by shelling contributed to its mystery. In part, contemplation on the utter dissolution of the human frame by this new weapon added to its terror. In part, the overwhelming physical and psychical disorientation it brought about, things beyond a person's conscious control, confirmed its unconquerable might Then, there was the unsoldierly, unheroic, unromantic aspect of being bombed by an unseen, enemy over long distances. Certainly the longbow and gunpowder had widened the distance between enemies, but with high explosives artillery the "enemy" became no longer people but mere targets miles away. In this way a new aspect of disinterest and detachment had been added to killing others, especially since most military leaders and strategists now "led" their troops from afar, not on the front lines of conflict Much bitterness was expressed about the distant faulty military and political leadership and the war's apparent meaninglessness.[10] The dehumanization of war by high explosives, then, had a bewildering effect on all participants, as can be seen by the literature produced by those who experienced explosives firsthand.

In this chapter, I present various literary reactions to high explosives. My intent is not to be comprehensive, but to give readers some sense of the wide range of literary

[8] Qtd. In Marianne DeKoven, *A Different Language: Gertrude Stein's Experimental Writing* (Madison, Wisconsin: U of Wisconsin P, 1983). The source for the quote from Henry James I have not been able to relocate.

[9] Shell shock was an affront to British culture, which prided itself on the measure of self-control available through training and discipline. Shell shock was simply defined as "The sapping of morale by sudden or prolonged fear which subordinates a man's power of will to this instinct of self-preservation and ultimately reduces him to a state wherein he cannot control his emotions" in Sue Thomas, "Virginia Woolf's Septimus Smith and Contemporary Perceptions of Shell Shock," *English Language Notes* 25.2 (December 1987): 52.

[10] Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) expresses much of the hopeless disillusionment soldiers felt Lewis captures the sentiment, "It was not war *per se* that I objected to ... I was not forgetful of the fact that most wars had been stupid, and had only benefited a handful of people. No one objects to being killed, if the society to which he belongs, and its institutions, are threatened, we can assume. But any intelligent man objects to being killed (or bankrupted) for *nothing.* That is insulting... Are any merely national institutions so valuable, so morally or intellectually valid, that we should lay down our lives for them as a matter of course? ... Whether the machineage has left any State intact in such a way as to put men under a moral or emotional compulsion to die for it, is a matter I am unable to discuss" (188).

responses to high explosives that I have discovered in memoirs, poetry, drama, short stories, and novels. In each case, I examine how the inclusions on explosives added to the aesthetics of modernism.[11]

A preview to the euphemism that would dominate the First World War is captured in the cable sent home by His Britannic Majesty's Consul in Sarajevo on June 28,1914 concerning the assassination that began the war: "Heir apparent and his consort assassinated this morning by means of an explosive nature."[12] As the language indicates, it was difficult for the British to adapt their language to the blunt realities of modern warfare. Another example of this difficulty can be found in the British government's publication of a long-awaited report on the effects of shelling on soldiers. The government hearings on the matter finally determined that basically there are three types of shell shock:

> (1) Genuine concussion without a visible wound as a result of shell explosion. All witnesses were agreed that the cases in this class were relatively few;
>
> (2) Emotional shock, either acute in men with a neuropathic predisposition, or developing slowly as a result of prolonged strain and terrifying experience, the final breakdown being sometimes brought about by some relatively trivial cause;
>
> (3) Nervous and mental exhaustion, the result of prolonged strain and hardship.[13]

The report created much controversy, especially in its discussion of possible treatments and therapies, because the basic view propounded was that men who suffered from the disorder were to be treated in similar ways as "hysterical" women of the time—a basic denial of the actualities of their condition. The belief set forth was that such men should be able to discipline themselves to deal with their inexplicable reactions. Doctors were advised to be strict and firm with such patients, to reason with them about the effects of their irrational behavior, to distract them with other activities, and to provide them with a "rest cure" that had for years been practiced on women-no

[11] Richard Ellman, *The Modern Tradition,* provides a list of nine major attributes that characterize modernism: (1) symbolism-the revelation of the Infinite because the visible world reflects the invisible, the positioning of the artist as a hero outside of and antagonistic to society, and, the artistic process as Mallarme explains, "To name is to destroy, to suggest is to create"; (2) realism, as in the striving for objectivity, and representing naturalistic, socialistic, and melioristic realities; (3) nature presented as a Darwinian struggle and juxtaposed against mechanical forces and organicism; (4) cultural history—the world has a cyclic history or tradition; (5) the unconscious-art is the liberation of the unconscious; (6) myth-the collective unconscious or race memory; (7) self-consciousness-the divided self and an awareness of being aware; (8) existence precedes essence, or a revolt against Platonic dualisms; (9) instead of faith, man is deified and poetics becomes the new religion.

[12] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford UP, 1975), 175.

[13] Qtd. in Thomas 51.

visitors, no writing, no direct communication about their suffering. Such governmental ignorance or obfuscation of the realities of explosives and their real effects on men was to be tempered by many of the firsthand accounts given by men who had been to the front and experienced the physical and psychic actualities of the war and its aftermath.[14]

For example, one eyewitness and participant, the British poet Louis Simpson, provides us with a sense of how soldiers maintained their self-control while being shelled:

> Being shelled is the main work of an infantry soldier, which no one talks about Everyone has his own way of going about it In general, it means lying face down and contracting your body into as small a space as possible. In novels you read about soldiers, at such moments, fouling themselves. The opposite is true. As all your parts are contracting, you are more likely to be constipated.[15]

Another participant, Jacques Riviere, in a 1922 issue of *Broom,* explains the overall defense mechanism implemented by soldiers to deal with shelling and the other horrors of war which surrounded them:

> The greatest suffering of the war was the *necessity for not doing anything,* for making the time pass. The suffering was such that everyone saw quickly that he could not resist it unless he tried all means in his power to lessen it, to neutralize it, unless he fought pain with the greatest insensibility. Everyone made himself, thus, the executioner of his own soul, under this rigorous trial; everyone fought desperately to kill in himself the whole sweet 'charm of feeling,' formerly so delightful a self-indulgence ... Now the combatant wanted to live, or more exactly, he did not want to die—he had then to defend himself, and thus logically he was led not only to react against his impressions and arrest them on the very margin of his consciousness, but also to destroy them, to replace them by as careful and soothing an analysis of their cause as possible ... His thought was above all occupied in the processes of attention, selection, and classifying—all for the sake of survival. He was completely dominated by a sense of the most immediate details... We contracted a firm mental habit, the habit of close examination, of analysis, of comprehension... In a word, the war has returned to us a sense of the non-ego (in which 1 include also the complex mass of our sensations) and the desire to study it and describe its organization.[16]

[14] After the recent Oklahoma bombing, survivors were treated with a revolutionary therapy that was able to get the victims past the paralysis that the shock of the bombing and its aftermath had induced. The treatment involves rehearsing the incident while tracking the movement of a hand through the air.

[15] Fussell 46.

[16] *Broom* (August 1922), 24–25.

As described by Riviere, this survival attitude begs comparison with modern existentialism, a philosophical outlook that gained credibility with the "new" outlook on being that was formulated after the war. It is interesting to note that nihilism is closely associated with the first uses of explosives in Russia and that its philosophical twin, existentialism, followed the intensive use of explosives in the early twentieth century.

In his memoir of World War I, Wyndham Lewis contrasts his experiences as an iconoclastic artist and critic, a blaster as he terms it, and then as a bombardier, an artillery officer.[17] Lewis characterizes himself as a common soldier "in the tented field... a mere bottlewasher—not even a brasshat; a battery officer, one amongst thousands popping off stupid guns" (89). His reaction to bombing others and being bombed himself is best captured in an extended selection from his own writings:

> I was in the Line for about a year, on and off. I had shells burst within a couple of feet of my head. Splinters of every possible size have whisked around me, at every possible angle and at every variety of speed, grazing my coat, and smacking my tinhat, but I was never wounded (124).
>
> I read Proudhon... and attempted to compute the cost of shells discharged daily on either side (144).
>
> Serving as a 'combatant' in a modern war is referred to as 'fighting.' But of course the only people who *fight* in the most rigorous acceptance of that term are the infantry. A gunner does not fight He merely shells and is shelled. He discharges a large metal cylinder, aiming it by means of a delicately adjusted mechanism, to fall at a certain spot which he cannot see, in the hope that he may kill somebody he hopes is there. He himself suffers from the desire of the other, enemy, gunners, a long way away, to achieve the same object with respect to himself. I have been responsible for the dispatch of unlimited numbers of shells in their direction, and as a result of these explosions (when they were not duds) I may have done the foemen more injury than I ever could have done them, I am sure, with my strong right arm. (124–25)
>
> There is nothing I do not know about shell-fire... Each 'burst' produces its spawn of 'splinters', which proceed to whizz in all directions till they lose their momentum, and drop, or flop, on the ground. They were flopping the whole time round us, as well as buzzing past our shoulders. The force with which they arrived depended, naturally, upon the nearness of the burst. I was often spanked with a spent one-like being hit with a stone not thrown very hard." (145)

[17] Lewis puts his iconoclastic art criticism in perspective, saying, "All Europe was at war and a bigger *Blast* than mine had rather taken the wind out of my sails" (85).

Lewis's view is that modern warfare, particularly the use of high explosive shells, is technically more "romantic" than other means of war because of what it makes a person *feel.* Since the fear of having one's head blown off makes one *feel* intensely, the war was a very romantic thing.

> You only have to think a moment: the dark night, with the fearful flashing of a monstrous cannonade—all the things that do not come into the picture, which *are not seen,* in other words, but which are suggested in its darkest shadows—what could be more technically 'romantic' than that, if it is romance that we must talk about. (115).

The feelings engendered by modern warfare created more than simply political effects. Lewis believed that one of the unfortunate offshoots of the great war and the other wars to come would be a return to the art and literature of propaganda and romanticism, both negatives in his opinion:

> "What I think history will say about the 'Men of 1914' is that they represent an attempt to get away from romantic art into classical art, away from political propaganda back into the detachment of true literature: just as in painting Picasso has represented a desire to terminate the Nineteenth Century alliance of painting and natural science. And what has happened—slowly—as a result of the War, is that artistic expression has slipped back again into political propaganda and romance, which go together... The attempt at objectivity has failed. The subjectivity of the majority is back again, as a result of that great defeat, the Great War, and all that has ensued upon it. As there are more Wars—bigger and better Wars—to come, that is that, I believe we must regretfully conclude." (250)

Two prominent fellow World War I warriors who turned to romance as Lewis predicted were J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis.

One might consider the type of propagandist envisioned by Lewis as George Orwell, a writer who consciously strove to write about politics and war.[18] Orwell's experiences with modern war and high explosives are recorded in his memoir *Homage to Catalonia,* a record of his involvement in the Spanish Civil War. One of his early forays into high explosives relates his experiences with what we would call grenades today:

> "We had no tin hats, no bayonets, hardly any revolvers or pistols, and not more than one bomb between five or ten men. The bomb in use at this time

[18] Orwell's stated political purpose in *Homage to Catalonia* (New York: Harvest HBJ, 1980) is to wake England up to the war that is coming their way: "(They are] all sleeping the deep, deep sleep of England, from which I sometimes fear that we shall never wake till we are jerked out of it by the roar of bombs." (232) He wrote this before World War II.

> was a frightful object known as the 'F.A.I. bomb,' it having been produced by the Anarchists in the early days of the war. It was on the principle of a Mills bomb, but the lever was held down not by a pin but a piece of tape. You broke the tape and then got rid of the bomb with the utmost possible speed. It was said of these bombs that they were 'impartial'; they killed the man they were thrown at and the man who threw them. There were several other types, even more primitive but probably a little less dangerous—to the thrower, I mean." (35)

Some of the double-edged humor about grenades is also captured in Orwell's reactions to the ineffectual nature of the artillery attacks he personally experienced:

> "There was a little shell-fire, but it was extraordinarily ineffectual. The scream and crash of the shell was actually looked upon as a mild diversion. The Fascists never dropped their shells on our parapet... You were only in danger if you happened to be coming up the road when the firing started, and the shells plunged into the fields on either side of you. One learned almost immediately the mysterious art of knowing by the sound of a shell how close it will fall. The shells the Fascists were firing at this period were wretchedly bad. Although they were 150 mm, they only made a crater about six feet wide by four deep, and at least one in four failed to explode. There were the usual romantic tales of sabotage in the Fascist factories and unexploded shells in which, instead of the charge, there was found a scrap of paper saying 'Red Front,' but I never saw one. The truth was that the shells were hopelessly old; someone picked up a brass fuse-cap stamped with the date, and it was 1917. The Fascist guns were of the same make and calibre as our own, and the unexploded shells were often reconditioned and fired back. There was said to be one shell with a nickname of its own which traveled daily to and fro, never exploding." (73)

Orwell appears to give the impression that artillery fire and its effects on people may be profoundly over-rated. But later in his memoir, he balances this perception by providing glimpses of the devastation others had experienced from shelling. True to his own personal experience, however, he describes an ineffectual use of shelling during his time at the war.

Many of the most immediate responses to high explosives and the other cruelties of trench warfare came in the form of poetry.[19] The war poets,[20] as they have come to be

[19] Dennis Brown, *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature; A Study in Self-Fragmentation* (London: Macmillan P, 1989) believes that the dissolution of "the integral self' began in fictional discourse, as for example in novels, but he points out that "contemporary [to World War I] experimental poetics was clearing the ground for its own demolition work" (20).

[20] Included in most lists of First World War poets would be Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, Robert Graves, and Edward Thomas. World War II poets include Richard Eberhardt ("The

known, created for readers a sense of reality about the horrors of war. They showed the contradictions between the glories of war and the filth, death, madness, and ugliness they had experienced and often savagely and bitterly attacked the meaninglessness of the war. Dennis Brown believes that "collectively the war poets established 'shell shock' as a real phenomenon" (46).

Less well-known than the war poets is Herbert Read's collection of realistic war poems, *Naked Warriors.* About that collection and his objective account of the Retreat of March, 1918, neither of which he could find a publisher for, he writes, "The more effectively war is represented as *literature,* the more attractive war itself becomes. It is obvious that its horrors fascinate people (even women), and it sometimes seems that if one wants to prevent war, it is better to act as if it had never existed" (64). Read's point echoes Lewis's fears about the propagandizing potential of writing about wartime experiences.

Opposing the primacy of firsthand accounts of the war, Dennis Brown argues convincingly that it is the "the non-combatants who centralized battlefield breakdown, and made of it a metaphor of the modern mind in general." Certainly, T.S. Eliot is a good support for Brown's argument The fragmented form of "The Waste Land," its time shifts, its subconscious, mythic depth, and its multivocality capture the dissolving sense of selfhood central to modernism; also, as many critics have pointed out, the images in "The Waste Land" of desolation and destruction are reminiscent of the barren fields left by trench warfare. A central theme of the poem concerns the possible restoration of such a world from its desolation by a questing knight, a Perceval figure who will return fertility and life to this devastated, bombed out land and the injured Fisher King, who is metonymically linked to it.

In "Little Gidding" airplanes dropping bombs appear as obvious symbols of slaughter and destruction, but Eliot's religious transmogrification of the image is unique.

> The dove descending breaks the air
> With flame of incandescent terror
> Of which the tongues declare
> The one discharge from sin and error
> The only hope, or else despair
> Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre—
> To be redeemed from fire by fire.

Fury of Aerial Bombardment") and Randall Jarrell ("The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner"). Dudley Randall's "The Ballad of Birmingham" about a bombing of innocents in the civil rights struggle of the fifties and the other poets present a sense of the devastation and hopelessness people feel when personally confronted with the effects of high explosives.

Douglas Bush's view is that the fire from the incendiary bomb dropped from the plane fuses "the fire of self-love or lust and the fire of divine love" and poses the dilemma that redemption in either case comes by immolation.[21]

More than most other literary media, the theater seems as if it would have the potential to present the immediacy of high explosives to its viewing public. Most stage productions, interestingly, have not done so, but cinematic productions have made the explosive scenes as prolific and banal as the chase scene (see Chapter Nine). George Bernard Shaw's *Heartbreak House* (1919), written at the beginning of the war but not published until the war was over, seems a simple enough allegory of the type of society envisioned by Orwell, an England that would need to be bombed in order to awaken to the realities of its own shallowness and ignorance. If Shaw's House can be seen as representative of England, the characters present us with a society where tea parties, pleasantries, and superficial conversations are the order of the day. The threat the household seems oblivious to is that the rest of the world may not share their "gentlemanly" values and that their way of life might soon perish because of a paradigm shift in mankind's way of thinking about and dealing with each other.

In his introduction to the play, Shaw describes one major threat to Heartbreak House as a new religion of Science that has mistakenly supplanted human values for an amoral social Darwinism:

> In the middle of the nineteenth century naturalists and physicists assured the world, in the name of Science, that salvation and damnation are all nonsense, and that predestination is the central truth of religion, inasmuch as human beings are produced by their environment, their sins and good deeds being only a series of chemical and mechanical reactions over which they have no control. Such figments as mind, choice, purpose, conscience, will, and so forth, are, they taught, mere illusions, produced because they are useful in the continual struggle of the human machine to maintain its environment in a favourable condition, a process incidentally involving the ruthless destruction or subjection of its competitors for the supply (assumed to be limited) of subsistence available... We taught Prussia this religion.[22]

In Heartbreak House's garden is a gravel pit and an observatory. The gravel pit contains a cave where the aging "papa" of the house, Captain Shotover, stores his dynamite. Hector explains why such a collection of dynamite is needed, "To blow up the human race if it goes too far. He [the Captain] is trying to discover a psychic ray that will explode all the explosives at the will of a Mahatma." To this exaggerated,

[21] Douglas Bush, *Science and English Poetry: A Historical Sketch, 1590–1950* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood P, 1980), 151,162.

[22] George Bernard Shaw, *Heartbreak House* (New York: Penguin Books, 1963 [1919]), 13.

humorously phrased "solution" for the world's problems, Ellie's inane reply is "The tea is delicious" *(Heartbreak House* 81).

The play ends in an explosion from an aerial bomb presumably dropped by a Zeppelin airship; the bomb misses the house but instead hits the dynamite gravel pit where, ironically, Mangan and the burglar have hidden to avoid being killed. Captain Shotover exclaims, "Thirty pounds of good dynamite wasted" (160) and promptly goes to sleep, declaring "the ship is safe." The exaggerated finality of such an ending encourages audiences to wonder if the threat really is over or whether another much larger threat is waiting in the wings.

The central theme of Shaw's allegoric *Heartbreak House*, which deals with a misguided, valueless post-Darwinian culture, is similar to Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* (1921), which deals with the utter alienation of a man who discovers he may be only a poorly evolved animal.[23] O'Neill, however, presents a representative individual instead of an entire community; the man is a sailor named Yank, who begins to doubt his own self-identity when a wealthy young woman who observes him at work with his shirt off pitching coal into a furnace faints at the sight of him and later calls him "the filthy beast." The play then shows Yank's hopeless search for a place where he may fit into modern society.

One stage of that search occurs towards the end of the play, when Yank decides to re-establish his self-identity by finding a group more powerful than he is alone, a group that will accept him, where he fits. In prison he hears about the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World or "Wobblies"), which the prisoners change to Industrious Wreckers of the World because of the organization's alleged predilection for destruction. One prisoner's "Voice," reading from a newspaper, gives a politician's view of the IWW:

> "They plot with fire in one hand and dynamite in the other. They stop not before murder to gain their ends, nor at the outraging of defenseless womanhood. They would tear down society, put the lowest scum in the seats of the mighty, turn Almighty God's revealed plan of the world topsy-turvy, and make of our sweet and lovely civilization a shambles, a desolation where man, god's masterpiece, would soon degenerate back to the ape!"

Yank sees the IWW's stated goals as a clear way for him to get back at the "skoit" who "done him wrong" and to undermine the creation of steel, a technology he once closely identified with.

In Scene Seven Yank goes to an IWW local to volunteer his services, thinking that from what he has heard in prison that this organization would be a place where even a "hairy ape" like himself would be welcome. Yank announces his intentions to the men gathered at the IWW local:

[23] Eugene O'Neill, The Hairy Ape (New York: Vintage, [1922] 1972).

> Yank: "Here's my hand. Yuh wanter blow tings up, don't yuh? Well, dat's me! I belong!
>
> Secretary: "You mean change the unequal conditions of society by legitimate direct action—or with dynamite?
>
> Yank: Dynamite! Blow it offen de oith-steel—all de cages—all de factories, steamers, buildings, jails-de Steel Trust and all dat makes it go... I mean blow up de factory, de woiks, where he [Douglas] makes the steel. Dat's what I'm after—to blow up de steel, knock all de steel in de woild up to de moon. Dat'll fix things! I'll do it by me lonsome! I'll show yuh! Tell me where his woiks is, how to git there, all de dope. Gimme de stuff, de old butter-and watch me do de rest! Watch de smoke and see ti move! I don't give a damn if dey nab me-long as it's done! I'll soive life for it-and give 'em de laugh! And I'll write her a letter and tell her de hairy ape done it Dat'll square tings." (224)

The Secretary's reaction surprises Yank. He too rejects Yank and calls him an ape: "You dirty spy, you rotten agent provocator, you can go back and tell whatever skunk is paying you blood-money for betraying your brothers that he's wasting his coin... Oh, hell, what's the use of talking? You're a brainless ape." Both Yank's understanding of the IWW and their reaction to him are fairly typical characterizations found in anti-anarchist, anti-union, anti-socialism, and anti-communism literature of this and previous times. In response to his rejection from the human group he views most likely to accept him, Yank retreats to the zoo, where his life is crushed out of him by a gorilla. One of O'Neill's points, it seems, is that Yank's meaning and purpose cannot come from the destruction of others but only from his own self-destruction because he can find no valid definitions for himself.

The flights of fancy found in dramatic presentations using explosives are in sharp contrast to the attempts at realistic exploration in short fiction. To provide his own sons with an accurate view of "what war is really like," Hemingway created an anthology of short stories about war that he believed "held up," according to his own experiences with war, to a standard of realism. He called the resulting anthology *Men At War*[24] A brief look at the use of high explosives in some of these stories provides readers with some of the realities this technology brought to the modern battlefield and to the men who served and survived their experiences.

In one of Hemingway's selections of his own work for this anthology, "The Chauffeurs of Madrid," we encounter three different measures of heroism. The first chauffeur, Tomas, is so frightened after a single experience of being bombed that he makes excuses not to drive up to the front The second chauffeur, David, is one who appears to be very courageous. He uses "unmentionable" language and revels in the dangerous shelling he

[24] Ernest Hemingway, ed., *Men at War: The Best War Stories of All Time* (New York: Wings Books, [1942] 1991).

experiences until the day he has an up close and personal view of what happens when a shell explodes by a line of women waiting for food; seven women die, leaving their blood all over the car David is to drive. He helps take the survivors to the hospital, but he no longer has a *laissez faire* attitude about shelling. The last chauffeur, Hipolito, is oblivious to fear. The story is told of his behavior during a nineteen-day bombardment of the capital that, Hemingway tells us, "was almost too bad to write anything about." Hipolito's behavior is as "solid as a rock" throughout, and he never seems scared. He even appears to sleep through a shelling, because he always takes a nap after lunch. Hemingway ends this story by propagandizing, putting forward Hipolito as a representative of the type of courageous opposition to Franco which exists in Spain.

Richard Aldington's "At All Costs" makes the point that despite one's personal heroism and even good fortune in surviving a battle in modern warfare, sometimes military strategists, planners, and officers "sacrifice" some of their troops in an impersonal, detached way. The title "at all costs" becomes a highly ironic but empty, worn-out slogan that is repeated from level to level to let the men know that they are expected to be killed and that they should accept this death heroically.[25] The understated message some perceive is that even if the men are not killed by the enemy, they will be killed by their own bombs, by "friendly fire" as we would say today.

William Faulkner's "Turn About" explores how men deal with the fear of impending explosion. He contrasts a British launch boat crew's approach of understated courage and open drunkenness with the American air bomber crew's ignorant selfconfidence. In the story, the two crews swap missions—an English boy goes flying with the Americans and then one of the Americans, Captain Bogard, goes on a torpedo launch with the Britishers. In both cases they learn a new respect for each other's respective missions. On the American bombing mission, for example, the English boy sees a bomb suspended vertically from the wing, one that has not fallen as it should have, and he admires the heroism of the Americans who do not even seem to mind it, even as they land their plane. Of course, the Americans have not seen the dangling bomb, so their apparent stoic courage is actually simple ignorance about the danger they are in. When Bogard joins the British crew on a torpedo launch, he soon realizes just how dangerous that job is when a torpedo almost explodes on-board before the crew is able to launch it. Captain Bogard gains a new respect for the Britishers on-shore drunkenness and in fact drinks heavily himself after this incident to help himself cope with it.

Later, upon hearing that the British launch crew has been killed, Bogard leads a highly risky, but successful, bombing mission. After releasing his bombs, Capt. Bogard proclaims a sentiment common to many who have served in modern wars: "God! God! If they were all there—all the generals, the admirals, the presidents and the kings—theirs, ours-all of them."

The most in-depth treatments of the effects of high explosives occur in novels, perhaps because the novel form best lends itself to this type of examination. For example,

[25] The John Ford movie *They Were Expendable* makes a similar point.

Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier,* originally entitled "The Saddest Story" and published in 1915, creates a sense of the inexplicability of wartime experiences through both its uninformed, naive narrator and its fragmented form. Dennis Brown calls the novel a "symptomatic transmogrification, in that it was above all the recognition of 'shell shock' which transformed the dissolving self of pre-war literature into the chronically fragmented self of the twenties."[26]

Written from the German perspective, Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) gives readers a sense of how a whole young generation of soldiers became a "lost generation." The young soldiers' brutalities and sufferings, along with the idiocies put forth by the older generation to explain the war and to survive the modern battlefield gave rise to the general discontent with the existing systems of order and belief. The "lost generation," the novel asserts, had to create their own sense of meaning and order from the stark war realities they had been forced to confront. The bullet in the head of the hero at the end of the novel (Ford's "good soldier" Ashburnham cuts his own throat) on a sunny day when all is well with the world and when "all is quiet on the western front" captures the pessimistic, hopeless, existentialist attitudes of many who belonged to this lost generation.

Dennis Brown points out that the characterization of Septimus Warren Smith by Virginia Woolf in *Mrs. Dalloway* is a "portent resonant within twenties society as a whole. The metaphor of incandescent blast is central."[27] Consider, for example, the effects of a backfiring car and how Smith's perception of it captures the tenuousness of modern existence:

> The violent explosion which made Mrs Dalloway jump and Miss Pym go to the window and apologize came from a motor car which had drawn to the side of the pavement... Septimus looked... And there the motor car stood, with drawn blinds, and upon them a curious pattern like a tree, Septimus thought, and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him. The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames.[28]

Woolf's novel illustrates how many of us fail to see how close to explosion, fragmentation, and death we all really are. When Septimus Smith hears about his best friend Evans' death in the war, he prides himself on the fact that he does not feel. He watches the last shells of the war explode beside him with indifference (86). However, Clarissa is deeply affected when she overhears Sir William's explanation of Smith's suicide to Mrs. Dalloway. Clarissa's earlier "transcendental theory" comes to bear at this moment in the novel, "since our apparitions, the part of us which appears, are so

[26] Brown 20.
[27] Brown 46.
[28] Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, [1925] 1981): 14–15.

momentary compared with the other, the unseen part of us, which spreads wide, the unseen might survive, be recovered somehow attached to this person or that, or even haunting places after death... perhaps—perhaps" (153).

Sue Thomas believes that Woolf's development and treatment of Septimus Smith ought to be read as a reflection of Woolf's angry response to the *Report of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into "Shell-shock,"* which was presented to British Parliament in August 1922. Thomas uses this report and a series of contemporary *Times* articles and letters in response to demonstrate this context Central to Thomas's thesis is the point that Virginia Woolf related closely to Septimus Warren's attitudes and the treatment he underwent because she herself had suffered similar experiences in the existing therapies for hysteria. The recommended therapies for shell shock included the following:

1. Persuasion with moral force to help the patient "put forth a real effort of will"
2. An insistence that "nerves" are an illegitimate justification for illness—discipline needed
3. Minimization of any sympathy for the patient, since it could legitimize the illness in the patient's mind
4. Urging the patient to take interest in things outside himself
5. Rest therapy[29]

Thomas argues that the fact that Dr. Holmes runs through most of these procedures undercuts the common criticism that he simply does not believe in mental illness-rather, it shows that he is dealing with shell shock in the accepted medical mode of the time.

The aesthetics of anarchistic explosion and destruction were well-suited to Woolf's unique expressive mode. Woolf's opposition and attraction to the authority and stability of hierarchical, authoritative structures, such as the medical establishment, helped her form the dialogical foundations of her aesthetics.[30] Woolf opposes herself to Read, Eliot, Santayana, and Wells, whom she characterizes as building sandcastles, which are "weathertight and give shelter to the occupant," and says of herself, "I am the sea which demolishes these castles," encouraging a "classless and towerless society" that does not rule others out.[31] She believes in cooperative rather than competitive values.

In order to achieve this effect in her fiction, Lucio Ruotolo claims, "Woolf's evolving aesthetics encompassed both existentialist and anarchist presumptions."[32] The Bloomsbury Circle of which she was a part promulgated three central beliefs that are close

[29] Thomas 54.

[30] Lucio Ruotolo, *The Interrupted Moment: A View of Virginia Woolf's Novels* (California: Stanford UP, 1986), explains that "Woolf's letters and diaries reveal how hilly a compulsive need for authority affected and constricted her closest relationships" (11).

[31] Ruotolo 7.

[32] Ibid.

to some basic premises in anarchist thought: (1) a determination to question all authority; (2) an unqualified faith in human reason and the natural goodness of life; (3) a rejection of all versions of original sin. A close examination of Woolf s work reveals, according to Ruotolo, that moments of renewal in Woolf's life and work usually follow the breaking of sequence, or moments of chaos. These anarchist moments are fluid and mobile and escape the "tyranny of the clock"[33] Part of the celebration in her novels is of that moment of disruption in time, the interrupted moment Ruotolo explains that

> The very basis of Western epistemology deters such openness... Dialogue expresses the nature of cooperative community most anarchists envision, one free of any vestige of the authoritarian state. (232)

And so it should not be surprising that the striking of clocks in *Mrs Dalloway* is linked with death. Ruotolo explains that "in a world of diminishing authority, only clocks, striking punctually throughout the city, seem to offer some basis for order (235).

Like Woolf, Henry Miller turned to an anarchist aesthetic in his "explosive" work *Tropic of Cancer.*[34] Miller turns to the explosives trope again and again to help himself define the nature of his work and his literary purpose. Early in the book he resorts to hyperbole, describing how his will be *The Last Book:*

> All those who have anything to say will say it *hen—anonymously.* We will exhaust the age. After us not another book-not for a generation at least.. Heretofore we had been digging in the dark, with nothing but instinct to guide us. Now we shall have a vessel in which to pour the vital fluid, a bomb, which, when we throw it, will set off the world. We shall put into it enough to give the writers of tomorrow their plots, their dramas, their poems, their myths, their sciences. The world will be able to feed on it for a thousand years to come. It is colossal in its pretentiousness. The thought of it almost shatters us. For a hundred years or more the world, *our* world has been dying. And not one man, in these last hundred years or so, has been crazy enough to put a bomb up the asshole of creation and set it off. (26)

Much later in the novel, the centrality of the explosives trope takes on the added weight that this is what naturally happens when a writer reveals his heart, his experience, his truth!

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[33] Proudhon believed in "A world that changes constantly and never reaches the stillness of perfection because imperfection is a cause and a consequence of its everlasting movement"; Kropotkin declared, "No government of man by man; no crystallization and immobility, but a continual evolution, as we see in Nature"; and George Woodcock posits that no mechanism reflects modern society's captivity so decisively as what he aptly termed "the tyranny of the clock" (Ruotolo 233–234). Bergson's concept of time, *duree,* also can be applied here.

[34] Henry Miller, *Tropic of Cancer* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1980). The first American edition of this work was published in 1961, but the first publication was in 1934 in Paris.

> If now and then we encounter pages that explode, pages that wound and sear, that wring groans and tears and curses, know that they come from a man with his back up, a man whose only defenses left are his words and his words are always stronger than the lying, crushing weight of the world, stronger than all the racks and wheels which the cowardly invent to crush out the miracle of the personality. If any man ever dared to translate all that is in his heart, to put down what is really his experience, what is truly his truth, I think then the world would go smash, that it would be blown to smithereens and no god, no accident, no will could ever again assemble the pieces, the atoms, the indestructible elements that have gone to make up the world. (248–49)

Miller equates the extreme nature of explosives with the extremes that art must go to in order to be successful. For instance, Miller discusses a performance of Ravel which begins with drums, but as the work continues Ravel withdraws from his bold beginning. "Art consists in going the full length. If you start with the drums you have to end with dynamite, or TNT," Miller explains (76).

Though he uses the explosives trope figuratively to oppose the machine culture he abhors, the literal making or use of explosives or any other "machine" (even the human machine), if it is done without the human touch is something Miller argues against. Critiquing his friend Norden's mechanical "lovemaking" with a whore, for example, Miller comments:

> He's like a machine throwing out newspapers, millions and billions of them every day, and the front page is loaded with catastrophes, with riots, murders, explosions, collisions, but he doesn't feel anything. If somebody doesn't turn the switch off he'll never know what it means to die; you can't die if your own proper body has been stolen. You can get over a cunt and work away like a billy goat until eternity; you can go to the trenches and be blown to bits; nothing will create that spark of passion if there isn't the intervention of a human hand. Somebody has to put his hand into the machine and let it be wrenched off if the cogs are to mesh again. Somebody has to do this without the hope of reward, without concern over the fifteen francs. (146)

Later in a similar anti-positivist frame of mind. Miller protests

> If you want bread you've got to get in harness, get in lock step. Over all the earth a gray desert, a carpet of steel and cement. Production! More nuts and bolts, more barbed wire, more dog biscuits, more lawn mowers, more ball bearings, more high explosives, more tanks, more poison gas, more soap, more toothpaste, more newspapers, more education, more churches, more

> libraries, more museums. *Forward!* Time presses. The embryo is pushing through the neck of the womb, and there's not even a gob of spit to ease the passage. A dry strangulating birth. Not a wail, not chirp. *Salut au monde!* Salute of twenty-one guns bombinating from the rectum... Ask no quarter and give none! More battleships, more poison gas, more high explosives! More gonococci! More streptococci! More bombing machines! More and more of it—until the whole fucking works is blown to smithereens, and the earth with it! (266)

By such a hyperbolic reaction to society's inhumanities via its adoration of technology and efficiency, Miller raises an ongoing dialogue about the efficacy of mechanical solutions to human problems.

In direct contrast to the above works by Woolf and Miller, which attacked the prevailing machine culture, John Steinbeck's propagandistic work *Bombs Away: The Story of a Bomber Team* (1942)[35] was written to advance America's "war effort" during World War II. He and Ed Ricketts had previously discovered information about currents, reefs, and other data once prepared by Japanese biologists on certain strategic Pacific islands and had submitted the information to the government The two had also come up with the idea of flooding enemy lands with counterfeit money to bring about economic chaos. So, when General "Hap" Arnold of the Army Air Force asked Steinbeck to write a book about the new bombing force that was being established, he gladly accepted the assignment. Later, when the story was sold to Hollywood for $250,000, Steinbeck gave all of his royalties to the Air Force's Aid Society.[36]

Bombs Away! focuses on the selection and training of a single bomber crew. To make the assignment to a bomber appear more desirable to potential recruits, Steinbeck explains the vital role that bombers play in modern warfare. He describes how air power in general and light bombers in particular aided the Americans at Midway and the Coral Sea and justifies his view that the bomber is the backbone of the Air Force because it poses a long-range threat to navies, factories, trains, and barges (noticeably missing is the civilian population that was so often subjected to incendiary bombing attacks, as in the cases of Dresden and Tokyo, for example).

Of particular interest is how Steinbeck does away with the two major criticisms of bombers (Flying Fortress B17E or Liberator B24), that they are "sitting ducks" and that they are manned by misfits, pilots and others who could not make the grade to fly fighter planes. Steinbeck does this by explaining at length the armament on board

[35] John Steinbeck, *Bombs Away: The Story of a Bomber Team* (New York: Viking P, 1942).

[36] Steinbeck provides an explanation of his attitudes about censorship and writing for the war effort in the collection of his war correspondence *Once There Was a War.* An earlier exploration of violence in *In Dubious Battle* helps to clarify Steinbeck's position. Doc Burton says to Jim, "In my little experience the end is never very different in its nature from the means. Damn it, Jim, you can only build a violent thing with violence." Jim insists that "All great things have violent beginnings," to which Doc replies, "We fight ourselves and we can only win by killing every man."

the bombers, detailing the lengthy and extensive selection process, and valorizing the concept of teamwork, that all involved in bombing function as a group. In the case of the bombardier, for example, Steinbeck explains that he has the rank of a commissioned officer. The bombardier serves a dual function as a gunner and bombardier and needs to have a knowledge of practical and applied physics. In particular, the bombardier must have a certain psychological toughness—it is he who drops the bombs.

Steinbeck brings a fictitious crew together in his final chapter and shows how all perform their roles in order to sink an enemy submarine lurking in the Caribbean and later a barge. The bomber crew members are stiff, unrealistic characterizations presented more as ideal types than as actual people. Obviously, the literary lapses cannot be attributed to Steinbeck's lack of skill or ability as a writer, but more to his realization that this writing was for the "war effort" and discemibly separate from his other work. The writing throughout appears forced and even mechanical, which suits the topic at hand. The work's value was primarily to its consumers, recruits and parents of recruits who wanted to know what they would be facing were they or their sons to join the new Army Air Force.

Steinbeck's book also presents a portrait of bombers in a heroic light. The demonized, marginalized dynamiter of nineteenth-century literature has become the valorized, heroic bombardier and bomber crew who dedicate themselves to saving their own country by fearlessly and methodically exploding "the enemy." Such a depiction is deconstructed in novels published later (e.g. *Catch 22),* but in the next chapter I will examine one of the first serious challenges to the heroic glorification of the societally endorsed bomber at war, as found in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls.*

Chapter Eight: The Dynamiter: Revaluing the Modern Hero in For Whom the Bell Tolls

One of Ernest Hemingway's central concerns as a writer was the exploration and placement of the hero within a modern context.[1] In novels and short stories related to war, he repeatedly addresses the issues of how one can be heroic in the context of the obscurity and ignorance of mass mechanized war where a single man or small group may simply be a diversion in an overall plan, how one can be heroic within a cultural discourse so immersed in political propaganda that facts, ideals, and actions must often be adjusted to suit illogical ends, or how one can be individually heroic knowing that one's actions will destroy the lives of friends and others who, though they are "enemies," may be innocent of wrongdoing. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (hereafter *FWBT),* Hemingway questions the value/s of heroism in the modern age of warfare. Indeed, his principal "meditation" in the book, one that maintains its relevancy and currency today, revolves around his central discussion about how one can be heroic in an Age of High Explosives.[2]

This issue had concerned Hemingway for some time. In fact on the morning of the first day of his arrival in Italy to participate in the First World War as an ambulance driver, he confronted firsthand the brutal results that high explosives can have on the human body. A munitions factory had exploded outside of the city of Milan, and he and other Red Cross volunteers were assigned to pick up the pieces. Following is Hemingway's later recollection of that event in *Death in the Afternoon:*

> Regarding the sex of the dead it is a fact that one becomes so accustomed to the sight of all the dead being men that the sight of a dead woman is quite shocking. I first saw the inversion of the usual sex of the dead after the explosion of a munition factory... We were ordered to search the immediate

[1] See for example, Charles Stetler and Gerald Locklin, "De-coding the Hero in Hemingway's *Fiction," Hemingway Notes* 1 (Fall 1979): 2–10; Erik Nakjavani, "Knowledge as Power: Robert Jordan as an Intellectual Hero," *Hemingway Notes* 7.2 (Spring 1988): 131–46; and James L. Kastely, "Toward a Politically Responsible Ethical Criticism: Narrative in *The Political Unconscious* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls," Style* 22 (Winter 1988): 535–58.

[2] For a discussion of violence in American culture, see John G. Cawelti, "Myths of Violence in American Popular Culture," *Critical Inquiry* 1.3 (March 1975): 521–42.

> vicinity and surrounding fields for bodies. We found and carried to an improvised mortuary a good number of these and, I must admit frankly, the shock it was to find that these dead were women rather than men. In those days women had not yet commenced to wear their hair cut short, as they did later for several years in Europe and America, and the most disturbing thing, perhaps because it was the most unaccustomed, was the presence and, even more disturbing, the occasional absence of this long hair. I remember that after we had searched quite thoroughly for the complete dead we collected fragments. Many of these were detached from a heavy barbed-wire fence which had surrounded the position of the factory and from the still existent portions of which we picked many of these detached bits... The picking up of the fragments [was] an extraordinary business; it being *amazing* that the human body should be blown into pieces which exploded along no anatomical lines, but rather divided as capriciously as the fragmentation in the burst of a high explosive shell.[3]

Not surprisingly, the psychological and physical after-effects of high explosives became a central motif of many of Hemingway's works. In *The Sun Also Rises,* Jake Barnes strives to find meaning in life after a war injury (occurring before the action of the novel somewhere on the Italian front) has left him disfigured and "impotent" In *A Farewell to Arms,* the explosion and wounding, though less debilitating than in *The Sun Also Rises,* come early in the novel and provide the "hero" Frederick Henry with an opportunity to turn his thoughts, and actions, from war to love.[4]

FWBT places the moment of explosion at the end of the novel; in this case, the explosion leads not to a "simple" wounding but to events leading up to the death of the hero. As a result, from beginning to end, the novel expresses apprehension about a future possible annihilation by explosion, a principal anxiety of the modern and contemporary world. The novel's open-ended conclusion, with the hero Robert Jordan facing down death, has the psychological effect on readers of prolonging the anticipation of his impending death by explosion (if El Sordo's experience on the hill can be understood as a foreshadowing of this scene), probably by grenade or mortar fire.[5]

W.B. Watson explains in a series of three articles how Hemingway had gained an in-depth understanding of explosives and guerilla sabotage to prepare for his writing

[3] In Kenneth S. Lynn, *Hemingway* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1987), 76, as qtd. from *Death in the Afternoon* (New York: Scribners, 1932): 135–37.

[4] *Across the River* and *Islands in the Stream,* both World War II novels, also deal with high explosives. Hemingway carried grenades in his boat the *Pilar* to use in case of submarine attacks off the shores of Cuba. See Jeffrey Walsh, "Emblematical of War: Representation of Combat in Hemingway's Fiction," *The Hemingway Review* 1.2 (Spring 1982): 45–57.

[5] Lieutenant Berrendo, who is leading the group of mounted soldiers coming towards Jordan, has earlier requested a trench mortar in his confrontation with Sordo's group. We must assume that he now has it in his possession and is ready to use it.

of *FWBT.*[6] Apparently, Henjingway had accompanied a band led by Antek Chrost in a mission to blow up a train. He had also gone to various fronts to report on the war and actually witnessed a blown bridge.[7] Watson explains how Hemingway relentlessly questioned Chrost and others, for example his contacts at the Gaylord Hotel, on how such a mission would be planned and carried out. He also had probably observed explosions in a road-building works program in 1936. Watson points out that a 1919 military manual on explosives found in Hemingway's library of over 7,000 volumes must also have been a key source for Hemingway, who routinely deepened his personal knowledge of things with reading.[8]

As mentioned previously concerning "The Chauffeurs of Madrid," at the time of the Spanish Civil War and in the period immediately afterwards, Hemingway explored in some depth the varying responses to the fear of an impending death by explosives.[9] In *FWBT,* the exploration includes a wide and complex range of situations and characters, including the Gaylord group of strategists and planners, Pilar and Pablo's and El Sordo's bands of guerillas, and Robert Jordan. Pilar's story of the Republican takeover of a town and the execution of the "fascists" in the town sets up a series of explorations of heroism -how men face death when it is inevitable.[10] In presenting the characters who face death because of the impending TNT[11] explosion of the bridge, Hemingway contrasts the hopelessness and meaninglessness of the social aspects of heroism with an individual code of personal heroism that can give a person a sense of meaning and can help one to endure. He does this by deconstructing political, propagandistic,

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[6] William B. Watson, "Investigating Hemingway." *North Dakota Quarterly* 59 (Winter 1991): 38–68; "Investigating Hemingway: The Trip." *North Dakota Quarterly* 59 (Summer 1991): 79–95; "Investigating Hemingway: The Novel." *North Dakota Quarterly* 60 (Winter 1992): 1–27; "Hemingway's Attacks on the Soviets and Communists in *For Whom the Bell Tolls." North Dakota Quarterly* 60 (Spring 1992): 103–18.

[7] Harriet Fellner, *Hemingway as Playwright:* The Fifth Column. Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research P, 1986,1977. In covering the Spanish Civil War, Hemingway wrote a series of articles for the North American Newspaper Alliance. In these, he repeatedly points to the incongruity of war being waged in such a beautiful, fertile place as the Ebro valley. Fellner points to his third series of articles (NANA, 5,10,15 29 April 1938) and their attention towards destroyed bridges as an anticipation of the novel to come. "Hemingway spoke of bridges wrecked by Fascist bombers, and in others he told of passing stacked dynamite that the Republicans would soon use to blow various bridges ... When he was stalled at a blown bridge on April 15 he commented, 'it was something that we had worried about for so long and so many times it made almost no impression except the feeling 'now it has really happened'" (68).

[8] Two good sources for the Spanish Civil War context include Neil MacMaster, *Spanish Fighters: An Oral History of Civil War and Exile* (New York: St. Martin's P, 1990) and Jeffrey Shulman, "Hemingway's Observations on the Spanish Civil War: Unpublished State Department Reports," *The Hemingway Review* 7.2 (Spring 1988): 147–51.

[9] Other explorations included *A Farewell to Arms* and "A Way You'll Never Be."

[10] Robert E. Gajdusek, "Pilar's Tale: The Myth and the Message," *The Hemingway* Review 10.1 (Fall 1990): 19–33.

[11] The block shape of the charges and their packaging indicate that they are TNT rather than dynamite, though the peasants refer to the explosive repeatedly as dynamite.

and religious discourses and demonstrating their incapacity to relate to the modern experience of impending explosion, fragmentation, and disintegration.

Unlike earlier stories (fiction and news stories) that Hemingway had written of the Spanish Civil War siding with the Republican cause, *FWBT* reacts against such propagandizing. Jordan says of his planned book, "All right. He would write a book when he got through with this. But only about the things he knew, truly, and about what he knew. But I will have to be a much better writer than I am now to handle them, he thought. The things he had come to know in this war were not so simple" (248). One means Hemingway uses to avoid sentimental propagandizing is presenting multiple perspectives which show the various complex perspectives of a multi-national war, including stories of atrocities and massacres,[12] internal perspectives of both fascist soldiers and republican guerillas and partisans, the strategic and political views of good and corrupt generals and politicians,[13] and the distant, often inaccurate views of the popular presses.

A gathering place for many of these conflicting perspectives is Gaylords, where one learned "How it was really done instead of how it was supposed to be done" (230). Jordan describes earlier times in the war when he would not have been admitted to the Gaylord circle because of his unbridled belief and optimism about the rightness of the cause and his faith in the slogans used to justify the revolution-"how it was supposed to be done":

> You learned the dry-mouthed, fear-purged, purging ecstasy of battle and you fought that summer and that fall for all the poor in the world, against all tyranny, for all the things that you believed and for the new world you had been educated into. You learned that fall, he thought, how to endure and how to ignore suffering in the long time of cold and wetness, of mud and of digging and fortifying. And the feeling of the summer and the fall was buried deep under tiredness, sleepiness, and nervousness and discomfort. But it was still there and all that you went through only served to validate it. It was in those days, he thought, that you had a deep and sound and selfless pride—that would have made you a bloody bore at Gaylord's, he thought suddenly. (236)

[12] Some critics have noted that the atrocity described in the most detail is the *passage a tabac* of the Republican, anarchist side. However, this overlooks Hemingway's artistic concept of "the thing left out" often being the most important. Pilar mentions that the killings on that fateful day were the worst in her experience **until three days later when the fascists re-took the town.** He also reports fascist torture (suicide, for Kashkin and Jordan, is a better option than being taken alive), executions, rapes, and beheadings.

[13] Jordan has this to say about the political deceit that went on: "If a thing was right fimdamentally the lying was not supposed to matter. There was a lot of lying though. He did not care for the lying at first. He hated it. Then later he had come to like it. It was part of being an insider but it was a corrupting business" (229).

Hemingway's characterization of Robert Jordan as an intellectual, bilingual, foreign-born, politically active, published academic and saboteur extraordinaire allows Jordan to occupy a wide range of circles, giving him a broader perspective on the war. In addition to winning over the partisan peasants with his knowledge of horses, dynamite, and Spanish culture, Jordan wins over Karkov, a major behind-the-scenes political leader and writer, by telling him a story that "was funny and discreditable to himself, one that did not make himself out to be a hero" (231). The cynical Karkov'[14] responds by taking Jordan under his wing. Karkov expresses his motive for wanting to educate Jordan, "I teach you a little each time I see you and eventually you will acquire an education. It would be very interesting for a professor to be educated" (244). Karkov's hope is that out of the things he teaches Jordan will come a book which will explain "many things it is necessary to know" about this war.

In a semantic lesson, for example, Karkov explains to Jordan that terrorists are "destroyed," not assassinated, because the Comintern does not believe in assassinations. "Destroying," he suggests, is akin to putting an animal to death, which is not at all an "act of terrorism," which must by definition be "performed by individuals." The heavy sarcasm in Karkov's lesson urges Jordan to re-examine his easy acceptance of any political verbiage used to justify killing others. Consider the internal dialogue in which Jordan demonstrates his suspicion of "mere words" to justify what he is doing and his self-doubts at the future personal implications of his mission:

> Once you accept the idea of demolition as a problem it is only a problem. But there was plenty that was not so good that went with it although God knows you took it easily enough. There was the constant attempt to approximate the conditions of successful assassination that accompanied the demolition. Did big words make it more defensible? Did they make killing any more palatable? You took to it a little too readily if you ask me, he told himself. And what you will be like or just exactly what you will be suited for when you leave the service of the Republic is, to me, he thought, extremely doubtful. But my guess is you will get rid of all that by writing about it, he said. Once you write it down, it is all gone. It will be a good book, if you can write it (165)

Related to Jordan's skepticism about the utility of words is Pilar's perspective that the one civilized thing left to people at war is speaking frankly to one another:

> Everyone needs to talk to some one ... Before we had religion and other nonsense. Now for every one there should be some one to whom one can speak frankly, for all the valor that one could have one becomes very alone. (89)

[14] Not altogether cynical, however. Late in the novel, we discover the one exception: "But Karkov had this belief in the good which could come from his own accessibility and the humanizing possibility of benevolent intervention. It was the only thing he was never cynical about" (426).

Pilar's story also aptly demonstrates that one means of avoiding propaganda is by accurately reporting all things, not just the victim's perspective—"What we did. Not what others did to us," Jordan comments (134). Between the extremes of stoicism and too much talking or shallow, slogan talking, Hemingway asserts, one can find the heroic ideal of speaking frankly, relating things as they are.

Robert Jordan's circle of acquaintances at Gaylord's includes many of the people responsible for his mission and helps provide a broader context for the meaning of what he is attempting to achieve. He knows, for example, that the mastermind of the operation of which he is one small part is the "unsuccessful professor Vincente Rojo." He also is well aware that from a military perspective (the general's view) that all that he is doing and sacrificing as an individual may simply be for a "diversion" from the main attack or a "holding action" (333). Moreover, he knows that politically prominent but inept leaders such as Andre Marty could be behind the action. He also knows that there is an excellent chance that the entire plan has already been betrayed to the enemy by informers (confirmation of this comes from Fernando at El Sordo's, who informs him that in town there was talk that the Republicans would try to blow the bridges (82) and in Chapter 32, when Karkov hears everyone at a party discussing the attack). Knowing all these things about his mission, Jordan must discover a personal meaning for heroism that will allow him to complete his mission, in spite of his knowledge that there was never "a people whose leaders were as truly their enemies as this one? Enemies of the people" (163).[15]

One discovery comes in Chapter 39, when Jordan reaches that "negation of apprehension," a knowledge that "he himself was nothing," that "death was nothing" (393). The nihilism expressed here is a common sentiment expressed in characterizations of dynamiters to this point and Jordan appears to be no exception. However, over the course of his three days, he does discover some redeeming values beyond nothingness. To overcome doubts and uncertainties in confronting one's own and others' deaths, for example, is a central value he strives for beyond the oversimplifications and escapism of nihilism: "If you are not absolutely straight in your head you have no right to do the things you do for all of them are crimes and no man has a right to take another man's life unless it is to prevent something worse happening to other people. So get it straight and do not lie to yourself... You have no right to forget anything. You have no right to shut your eyes to any of it nor any right to forget any of it nor to soften it nor to change it" (304). Another discovery learned from Agustin and Jordan's relationship

[15] The lack of trust Jordan has for the Spanish people and their leaders surfaces when he discovers that Pablo has betrayed him by stealing his blasting caps and his exploder: "God muck Pablo. Pablo is all of them. God pity the Spanish people. Any leader they have will muck them. One good man, Pablo Iglesias, in two thousand years and everybody else mucking them... I remember when I thought Largo was O.K. Durruti was good and his own people shot him there at the Puente de los Franceses. Shot him because he wanted them to attack." And that Pablo that just mucked off with my exploder and my box of detonators. Oh muck him to deepest hell." (370) This glimpse into Jordan's mind shows how tenuous his trust in his Spanish "comrades" has become.

with Maria is to live in the "now," the immediate present, and not to be too concerned about the future. Agustin explains that part of Pablo's success as a guerilla is how he follows the simple rule that "the first thing is to continue to exist. Look how he continued to exist last night. And the quantity of dung he ate both from me and from thee" (284). So then, thinking realistically, not positively, accepting nothingness and striving against doubt and uncertainty, and continuing to exist day to day are heroic values that Jordan discovers in contemplating his and others' probable annihilation by completing his mission.

Another measure of heroism that Hemingway highlights in *FWBT* is that even though one's leaders may be inept, traitorous, distant and incompetent, one can still accomplish what one must by "doing one's personal duty" in performing the single mission one has been given. Not thinking too much is a key heroic attribute that can help one to get through an impossible mission, but Hemingway seems to suggest that one's actions are truly heroic only if one recognizes the realities and then consciously controls the thought processes to overcome the inevitable fears that follow.[16] The dispassionate, disinterested way a modern hero must approach things is illustrated by the contrast between Kashkin and Jordan. Rashkin's behavior, as described by Pilar and Jordan, indicates that he had begun to think too much about himself and his missions and it was beginning to affect his work. The ideal trait is to be like Jordan and not to think so much that it becomes impossible to act.

One means of remaining heroic in an impossible mission is to follow orders, no matter the cost to others. The orders become almost a religious means of alleviating one's personal conscience in harming others. Jordan uses the orders from Golz to provide himself with the psychological justification for inflicting the harm he does on the partisan band:

> "You have no responsibility for [the partisans] except in action. The orders do not come from you. They come from Golz. And who is Golz? A good general. The best you've ever served under. But should a man carry out impossible orders knowing what they lead to? Even though they come from Golz, who is the party as well as the army? Yes. He should carry them out because it is only in performing of them that they can prove to be impossible... If everyone said orders were impossible to carry out when they were received where would you be?" (162)

Anselmo also uses the justification of "following orders" to help himself overcome his aversion and guilt over killing one of the guards at the bridge. Anselmo's faithfulness in obeying orders and remaining at the bridge even in a freezing snow storm also endorses

[16] At the end of Chapter One, Jordan consoles himself with the impossibilities of his mission by considering his many dead comrades: "Turn off the thinking now old timer, old comrade. You're a bridge-blower now. Not a thinker" (17). Also, he later muses, "nobody owned his mind, nor his faculties for seeing and hearing, and if he were going to form judgments he would form them afterwards" (136).

the heroic credo of singular deeds. Jordan exults at finding the old man at his post, "And if you extend along a flank, any flank, it eventually becomes one man. Yes, one man. This was not the axiom he wanted. But this was a good man. One good man. You are going to be the left flank when we have the battle, he thought" (200).

Besides being presented as a dutiful soldier with the discipline to follow orders, Anselmo is used by Hemingway to deal directly with the issue of killing. Anselmo ponders, "the killing is necessary, I know, but still the doing of it is very bad for a man and I think that, after all this is over and we have won the war, there must be a penance of some kind for the cleansing of us all... Anyone doing it will be brutalized in time and I think that even though necessary, it is a great sin and we must do something very strong to atone for it" (196–197). Anselmo expresses his belief that it is better to educate one's enemies than to kill them because "their seed comes more with greater hatred." His three wishes are that (1) we should govern justly; (2) all should participate in the benefits; and (3) those who fought against us should be educated to see their error (285). Jordan shares with Anselmo this final propagandizing, educational goal, commenting to the group on how the fascists present in the USA ought to be dealt with: "We cannot destroy [the fascists]. But we can educate the people so that they will fear fascism and recognize it as it appears and combat it" (208). Anselmo's own personal ideal of honor is to do nothing that one is ashamed of (196).

Jordan considers over and over again the dire implications of the orders he has been given—his, and Pablo's, potential for shamefulness is much more complex than Anselmo's. "They were bad orders for those who had to carry them out" (43), he complains to himself early, and then later in the novel, "It is the fault of the orders, which are too rigid. There is no allowance for a change in circumstance" (191). His mission is simply to destroy a bridge at a certain time, but in doing so he has no consolation that what he is doing will do any good—he knows it will destroy the groups he asks to help him and that it may do no good at all for the entire movement because of the cynical reasons stated above. His blowing the bridge is a small, perhaps insignificant, action in a much larger scheme, and Jordan has to live with the fact that his mission may have no meaning at all. Though he trusts the expertise of his commanding officer, General Golz, their conversation about the mission early in the novel indicates their shared knowledge that it is a suicide mission—there will be little if any chance of an escape because the destruction of the bridge must take place in the daylight at a specified time.

Jordan, Pablo, and Sordo know the implications of the mission at once, but for the others it takes time. "Pablo was evidently the smartest. He knew how bad it was instantly. The woman [Pilar] was all for it, and still was; but the realization of what it really consisted in had overcome her steadily and it had done plenty to her already. Sordo recognized it instantly and would do it but he did not like it any more than he, Robert Jordan, liked it" (162). In Pablo's group, initially most of the forms of heroism exemplified by the partisans are those oblivious to the realities of the threat that Jordan has brought to them by his mission-they remind one of David, the profane

but unitiated chauffeur in Hemingway's "The Chauffeurs of Madrid."[17] Only Pablo sees the big picture immediately and knows right away that the bombing of the bridge will probably be the end of all of them. Pilar eventually sees it But the rest Maria included, seem to live with the naive, unrealistic hope that they can all survive the dynamiting of the bridge and then escape afterwards without harm. Agustin fuels his heroism with hate, Fernando with bureaucratese,[18] Primitivo with his brute strength, Rafael the Gypsy with food and good humor, the brothers Andres and Eladio with quiet submission. Pablo, however, is the faithless realist, who despite his drunkenness, callousness, and cowardice ends as an intelligent, informed hero for his small band- after risking his own life, he kills other partisans to increase the chances of life for his own group.[19] He proclaims his role early in the novel ("I am for the good and the safety of all" [54]) and ruthlessly pursues realities to make this so, including destroying Jordan's exploder and shooting the partisans he has gathered together so there will be sufficient horses. "Pablo is the talent, whereas Pilar is the fortitude and resolution, and Jordan the intellect for the bridge," Agustin says, highlighting three of the core heroic qualities one can have even when faced with impossible odds on a mission that may be meaningless.

In addition to highlighting personal means of remaining heroic in impossible situations, the text of *FWBT* deconstructs the validity of traditional Christian religious values by demonstrating the incapacity of the biblical myth of the hero (specifically the New Testament hero) to account for modern realities in war, particularly the harsh realities of high explosives.[20] The deconstructing of religious belief happens directly and indirectly in the text.[21] Anselmo, for example, argues directly with Jordan: "If

[17] Though Hemingway does somewhat mitigate the danger Jordan brings by pointing out the partisan's luck in having lasted so long where they are and the inevitability of their being hunted by fascist troops, the terms of their retreat, in daylight and after bombing the bridge, is much more likely to bring disaster than it would have otherwise.

[18] An example of Fernando's bureaucratese: "Since it is impractical to hold Pablo as a prisoner and since it is repugnant to offer him in any class of negotiation, I am agreed that it is perhaps best that he should be eliminated in order that the operations projected should be insured of the maximum possibility of success ... I believe that we are justified in believing that he constitutes a danger to the Republic." Pilar's response, "Mother of God, even here one man can make a bureaucracy with his mouth" (210).

[19] Killing allies, shooting them in the back, hardly seems "heroic" in the traditional sense, but it is in accord with the heroic aspect of recognizing difficult realities and dealing with them for the "greater good." Jordan's action of killing Kashkin is similar to Pablo's.

[20] Critics who have applied biblical readings of the text include Wolfgang E.H. Rudat, "The Other War in *For Whom the Bell Tolls:* Maria and Miltonic Gender-Role Battles," *The Hemingway Review* 11.1 (Fall 1991): 8–24; John Leland, "'The Happiness of the Garden': Hemingway's Edenic Quest," *The Hemingway Review* 3.1 (Fall 1983): 44–53.

[21] Some critics have viewed Hemingway's treatment of the Spanish people generally, and its religious values and mores in particular, as a failure in the verisimilitude of the work. See John J. Teunissen, *"For Whom the Bell Tolls* as Mythic Narrative," in Linda W. Wagner, ed., *Ernest Hemingway: Six Decades of Criticism* (East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 1987): 221–237, who argues against the realism of the novel, citing Arturo Barca's and Nema Agostino's objections: (1) that Pilar and Pablo would not

there were God, never would He have permitted what I have seen with my eyes. Let *them* have God... Clearly I miss Him, having been brought up in religion. But now a man must be responsible to himself' (41). Part of the fascist alliance, the *Falange Espaha,* included a strong contingent of Catholic believers. Less directly but equally indicative of religion's failure to explain the combatants' experiences is the profusion of religious profanity found throughout the novel and uttered by soldiers on both sides of the conflict. Similarly, the biblical-sounding language of the peasants (replete with "thees," "thous," and "hasts") can be viewed as an inversion of biblical mores and values, since their goals and actions are far from the pacifist conformism advocated in the Christian philosophy of "turning the other cheek."[22]

Another subversion of traditional Christian religious beliefs appears in the names given by Hemingway to many of the main characters in the novel. Maria, for example, is unlike her *virgin* predecessor, but it is nevertheless nothing short of miraculous, Pilar points out, that she has not received any venereal diseases. "There probably still is God after all, although we have abolished Him," (88) Pilar exclaims. Pilar herself is resolute and steadfast for the cause but consistentiy attacks, ridicules, and disobeys her man Pablo; in contrast to Lot's wife, who was turned into a "pillar of salt" for not following and obeying her husband, Pilar becomes the leader of the group and eventually successfully escapes—there is no divine retribution for Pilar's challenge to the patriarchal order.[23]

There are not quite "twelve" disciples in the group of Pablo, but seven men and two women, plus Jordan and Anselmo-that's eleven. Or counted another way, Pablo's and Sordo's group add up to thirteen men. Either way, the group falls short or unluckily exceeds biblical proportions.[24] The name of Andres echoes the brotherly duo of apostolic times (Peter and Andrew), but interestingly Hemingway initially has Jordan forget the other brother's name; Eladio (roughly translated God-god from the Hebrew and Latin roots). Other than apostolic names, Hemingway picks up names of famous Church fa-

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have been the type to become leaders of a guerilla band; (2) that scenes of mass murder and rape arc "contrary to Spanish Psychology"; (3) that the love between Robert and Maria is pure fantasy because it contradicts the psychology of a Spanish girl from the rural middle class; (4) that the work represents a self-centered, irresponsible, and limited vision of "the more complex tragedy of Spain." Teunissen agrees with such views because to him *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is "not a historical novel. It is not even an ahistorical novel: it is in its very essence antihistorical... In the romance... time, place, and character are subsumed and apotheosized into the archetype, into the arrangement of archetypes which is myth, where time ... becomes *tempus* and place becomes locus. The mountains of Spain and a north-western American state are both called *Montana"* (223).

[22] Many critics assess Hemingway's language as an attempt to approximate Spanish into English usage. My reading of the archaic English usage allows for that view but adds to it the fact that most English readers sense immediately—the peasants sound somewhat like characters from the King James Version of the Bible.

[23] Pilar is also named for Our Lady of Pilar, a statue to the Virgin on a pillar in Zaragoso commemorating a vision of St. James, which adds another level of meaning to her characterization.

[24] Unless, of course, you add Jesus to the twelve, and then you have thirteen. But then, all of Pablo's band is massacred, so this number does not function for long anyway.

thers to add significance and irony to his characterizations. Agustin is an unforgiving "Augustine" filled with hate towards Pablo, but he does believe in the special "talent"[25] of Pablo to survive and to lead the retreat; Anselmo's reasoned rejection of God but eventual turning to Him and the Virgin Mary in "faithful" prayer after the massacre on El Sordo's hill reverses the pattern advocated by his precursor St. Anselm; Rafael the sensualist gypsy who delights in song, joking, eating, and profaning the Virgin Mary is far from the dignified and orderly paintings of Raphael the Italian Renaissance artist, particularly his popular, gentle, idealistic paintings of the *Madonna,* the Virgin Mary.

Pablo (Paul) traces a similar path to his biblical predecessor, turning from persecution and even betrayal of Jordan, the charismatic outside leader, to support of him and the group. Pablo confesses, "I had a moment of weakness. I went away but I am come back" (389). Though Pilar compares Pablo to Judas,[26] Pablo does return to help the group and thus reverses the biblical stereotype of villainy.[27] Also, Pablo must be viewed as less than a villain because he is continually termed "pig" throughout the novel, an ironic term of endearment for the sloppy Hemingway applied by Martha Gellhorn at the time of the novel's writing. Thus, Pablo, not just Jordan, can be viewed as a privileged representative of the authorial voice in this novel.[28] In this way, the disillusionment Pablo feels concerning the killing of the priest may represent Hemingway's similar sense of loss when observing the deaths of "godfearing" people. How can one believe in a God when "In the end [the priest] was frightened" and "he died without dignity"? The seemingly simple question of belief that could be answered by how a man dies continues to haunt and trouble Pablo. Both Jordan and Pablo (and Hemingway) resort to drunkenness to confront their fears and assuage their memories,[29] though Pablo's inebriation lacks dignity and is so excessive that it almost destroys his place in the group. Pablo's defense of his drunkenness, "But an intelligent man is sometimes forced to be drunk to spend his time with fools" (215) seems like a tongue-in-cheek self-justification Hemingway himself might have used. Moreover, the insight about working for the good of others that Pablo gains from his betrayal is similar to Jordan's. Pablo says, "All day alone working for the good of all I was not lonely" (391).[30] This final epiphany of the value of working with others, "for the good and safety of all," comes close to Christian religious beliefs, but notably missing is any mention of God, and most of Pablo's actions could hardly be deemed to be religious.

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[25] Augustine, like Agustin, put forth the idea that certain people had a special Godgiven "election" that it was their duty to fulfill.

[26] Pilar says to him, "Thy predecessor the famous Judas Iscariot hanged himself' (391).

[27] Admittedly, he does kill some fellow-partisans, but he does so for the good of his own group.

[28] Lynn 430.

[29] Pablo has killed many in cold blood, as Pilar and Anselmo both attest. Jordan is more reticent, but we do know that at Kashkin's request, he has shot him.

[30] This statement by Pablo resonates with the social message bome by the novel's title taken from John Donne's Meditation XVII, "No man is an island, entire of itself..."

A particularly significant deconstruction of Christian mythology occurs in Hemingway's narration of the El Sordo group's hilltop battle with the enemy.[31] The ironic biblical parallels are first brought out by Sordo himself, who thinks of other men in history who have died on hills.

> Whether one has fear of it or not, one's death is difficult to accept Sordo had accepted it but there was no sweetness in its acceptance even at fifty-two, with three wounds and him surrounded on a hill. He joked about it to himself but he looked at the sky and at the far mountains and he swallowed the wine and he did not want it. If one must die, he thought, and clearly one must, I can die. But I hate it (312)

Clearly, Sordo knows the hopelessness of his situation, but he does not, however, as his famous predecessor, forgive those who are about to kill him and extend his mercy to them. Instead he devises a plan to trick the opposing officer into believing his group has committed suicide, so that the officer will approach the hill and Sordo can kill him. Sordo is able to kill one more of the enemy and even has a chance to kill Lieutenant Berrendo before he himself is killed. Neither the propaganda of La Pasionara (a famous radio announcer who "inspired" the troops with her stirring patriotic speeches), nor repeated prayers to the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, sustain or aid the group of five "horse thieves" when the planes arrive and bombard the hill. The powerlessness of the group to defend themselves paints a pathetic picture of the futility of heroism when confronted with such modern war machines and the devastating high explosives they deliver.[32] Finally, the biblical parallel of the hill to Golgotha, the place of the skull, is carried to an extreme when Lieutenant Berrendo shoots Joaquin, "quickly and gently," through the back of the head to end his miraculous survival from the bombing attack and then has his men take the heads of all the partisans; the hill has become the place of the skull but there is no hope of resurrecting these hilltop warriors, as two eyewitnesses, Pablo and Anselmo, inform the others. The traditional, hopeful Christian mythology of the saving hero, Hemingway seems to suggest, cannot by any means account for such a horrifying scene as this one presents. (89).

Robert Jordan, like El Sordo, is characterized within a deconstructed Christian context. Throughout *FWBT* Jordan's characterization struggles against the values of the biblical savior-hero that functions as his precursor. To begin, Jordan's "message," unlike Christ's, is not to love one's enemies but to destroy them with cool determination and single mindedness using the most powerful substance available-TNT. Jordan is the technocratic "hero" whose power and strength reside in his expertise with dynamite, his scientific means of planting it, and the coldness in his head that drives him to

[31] Hemingway published this chapter as an independent short story entitled "The Fight on the Hilltop" in his collected volume of stories about the war *Men at War: The Best War Stories of All Time.*

[32] Pilar, on seeing the bombers, cries out, "We are nothing against such machines"

be dutiful and faithful in spite of his own personal desires for love. His final mission, lasting as long as Christ's—three days and three nights, has not certitude, nor faith, nor hope, but he does experience some newfound joys along the way.

He becomes part of a new brotherhood: "We are all thy family," Maria says to a grieving Fernando. Pilar, in turn, says to Jordan, "He's your brother, hey Ingles?" to which Jordan replies, "We are all brothers," and he puts his arms around the boy. Another of Jordan's joys is his relationship with Maria. The ironic reversals here are dizzying—he sleeps with a virgin who is not a virgin at the behest of Pilar who hopes that he can cure her of her gang rape experience. The "virgin" is named Maria. Maria herself is far from submissive in their lovemaking; in fact she wishes to do all that Jordan does to her and that novelty may in part be the reason for his experiencing *la gloria* just as she does in at least two of their times together (159). Furthermore, when they make love they both come to describe it with the metaphor, "the earth moved." This is not a strange connection for a dynamiter to make, perhaps, but the biblical parallel to the time of creation suggests that their lovemaking has likely been an orgasmic act of creation.[33] Maria's pain before their last lovemaking episode may very well be the pain of ovulation, which would make Jordan's later apparently spiritually grounded "you are me, I am you" speech much more carnally based. Jordan himself puts himself into the role of Christ at least twice in the novel. In one instance he questions Maria, "Canst thou not dry [my feet] with thy hair?" (203). Pilar replies, "What a swine... First he is the Lord of the Manor. Now he is our ex-Lord Himself' (203). Jordan's intent, it seems, is to make a joke, so the parallels to Maria and Mary Magdalene would be very strained indeed. In another instance when a freak storm brings snow and may cancel his mission (181) and when he sends Andres to Golz with news of the military build-up in his region, he attempts to remember the scripture "Let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:39). In this case, his lack of remembering, like his lack of remembering the name Eladio, signify his disbelief in the scripture as it is applied to him. In the case of both the snow and the message to Golz, the passing of the cup is a remote hope that he has little time to enjoy.

In addition to the ironic Christ-reversals, Hemingway demonstrates the inutility of Christian belief when it comes to war. For example, when the mounted soldier enters the partisan camp and Jordan takes aim to shoot and kill him, he uses the "Sacred Heart of Jesus" emblem on the young man's chest to help line up his shot As he later learns from reading the letters the young soldier is carrying, the emblem has been sent to him by his "loving sister Concha," who reminds him again and again in her letter

[33] The earth moves when Sordo is bombed, when Jordan blows the bridge, and when Jordan is shot at by the tank, all episodes of destruction and death. Genesis 1:2 states, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" on the first day of creation and on the second day the earth is divided from the waters, one of the greatest earth movements of all times, biblically speaking, and an early equation of movement with creation. Jordan's rejection of an onanistic act on his last night with Maria along with his "transubstantiation" farewell speech to Maria are two additional indications that his "seed" may be bringing forth fruit, that Maria may be pregnant.

that it has *"the power of stopping bullets"* (303). Hemingway's religious cynicism does not, however, over-rule the possibilities of love.

Before joining Pablo's band women have not "moved" Jordan much; in fact, he confesses to Golz that "there is no time for girls" in his line of work (7). In effect, Jordan appears to have emotionally taken the priestly vows of continence for the sake of the "cause," but throughout the novel he abandons these vows repeatedly, coming to discover a higher value. For example, he confesses to himself that he cares for Maria "suddenly and very much" when he first sees her. She, as mentioned above, makes the earth move for him, and later he discovers that she too has felt the earth move (174). When Jordan's intellectually cold mind tries to do away with the emotional feelings he has felt for Maria, another voice within him argues:

> You were gone when you first saw her. When she first opened her mouth and spoke to you it was there already and you know it. Since you have it and you never thought you would have it, there is not sense throwing dirt at it, when you know what it is and you know it came the first time you looked at her as she came out bent over carrying that iron cooking platter. (167)

Though realistically he knows he "cannot have a woman doing what [he does],"[34] he comes to the realization that postponement of life and living is also not an option. He says to Maria, "But thou art my woman now." Jordan learns that "a good life is not measured by any biblical span" (169). A central epiphany induced by his relationship with Maria is that "now, now, now, ahora, maintenant, heute, now and frau," this is how you live life in two days. Two love scenes integrate the word *now* into their descriptions to reinforce this message (169 & 379). Though Jordan professes that Maria had not affected his resolution, he really would not want to be a Horatius at the bridge or Peter at the dike anymore after knowing her. In other words, Jordan's visions of solitary heroism have vanished because he wants to be with her longer (164). His bigotry is also affected by Maria: "Bigotry is an odd thing," Jordan contemplates, "To be bigoted you have to be absolutely sure that you are right and nothing makes that surety and righteousness like continence. Continence is the foe of heresy... Maria was very hard on his bigotry" (164). Once again, the novel's social message taken from Donne's Mediation XVII comes to the fore.

Like Christ, Jordan has premonitions about his imminent death. Pilar's behavior after reading his palm is one indication. After repeated attempts by Jordan to get the report on the palm reading, Pilar offers several signs of the smell of death, signs that he has recently experienced. She reports that one aspect of the smell of death is the smell of brass and ocean (Jordan has recently been to Valencia), another the smell of dry blood on the mouth of an old woman when you kiss her (there is ample evidence

[34] That is, dynamiting.

in the novel that Pilar is menopausal[35] and she does attempt to kiss Jordan and Fernando), and finally the smell of flowers, semen, and a gunny sack-earth combination (a smell Jordan's sleeping bag must have had after Maria's repeated nightly visits). Unlike Christ, however, Jordan does all he can to avoid his fate, taking as many safety precautions in a risky business as he possibly can. Despite his best efforts, though, he does fell victim to the effects of a high explosive 47 mm shell—"he did not hear any whish but only a banging acrid smelling clang like a boiler ripped apart" (460). The tolling of the bell for Jordan is the clanging of high explosives ripping through his horse.

One of Jordan's last discoveries before he dies is that ***one thing well done can make*** all the difference. Even holding on long enough to kill one more person can make the difference for the others who have escaped.[36] The easy escape of suicide or the oblivion of a drink of absinthe (which contains wormwood)[37] is exchanged for a duty to others. Jordan expounds,

> Each one does what he can. You can do nothing for yourself but perhaps you can do something for another... The world is a fine place and worth the fighting for and I hate very much to leave it... I wish there was some way to pass on what I've learned, though. Christ, I was learning fast there at the end. I'd like to talk to Karkov. There's no *one* thing that's true. It's all true. (466–67)

The final values Jordan discovers in the face of annihilation include helping others, enjoying the world and hanging onto it as long as possible, passing what knows onto others, and the plurality of truth. His wish to express these discoveries to Karkov indicates the movement away from his previous cynicism.

Hemingway's theme has relevancy in the atomic age of today because all are threatened with imminent death by explosion and many who are engaged in smaller wars must confront similar fears and insecurities about the value of armed conflict. Corrupt leadership, unscrupulous governments, and the overwhelming power and oblivion of modern warfare make it is easy to become cynical, depressed, and hopeless about concepts such as duty, honor, brotherhood, love, or heroism.[38] Hemingway asserts, however, that despite the negative realities, or included within those realities, are the

[35] Jordan asks Pilar, "What passes with thee?" and she replies "Nothing" (150). Pilar experiences hot flashes (153) and an evil temper on her return from Sordo's (199). Finally, Jordan calls Pablo's cave the "cave of the lost eggs" (199), which can refer to Pablo figuratively and to Pilar realistically.

[36] Frank Scafella, "'I and the Abyss': Emerson, Hemingway, and the Modern Vision of Death," *The Hemingway Review* 4.2 (Spring 1985): 2–6.

[37] The biblical connotation for wormwood is *calamity* or *sorrow.*

[38] James Seaton, "Was Hemingway an Intellectual?" *The Hemingway Review* 10.1 (Fall 1990): 53–56, points out that Hemingway dramatized the ways in which individuals may remain loyal to traditional codes of conduct even when cut loose from the grounds, both intellectual and social, which once authorized such codes" (53).

other more positive truths that are equally valid. In the words of Robert Jordan to Pilar when she sees the fascist air bombers, "The sadness will dissipate as the sun rises. It is like a mist." (89).

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

One foundational reason for the appeal of high explosives for artists, writers, scientists, and technologists has been its undeniable power; in a century of increasing disbelief in less tangible, imaginative, or spiritual powers, high explosives have helped to fill the void. The twentieth century has, in effect, seen a deification of force and high explosives and nuclear weapons have become the supreme gods of power in this new pantheon. As I have shown in earlier chapters, many culturally dominant scientific theories such as the Big Bang theory, the population boom, and entropy rely on the high explosives trope. In addition, I have demonstrated that the high explosives trope is central to the modernist aesthetic both in literature and art.

The credibility of any science often rests on the practical technology that follows it. Dynamite in its various forms has added significantly to the efficiency and complexity of urban life, helping to create dams, canals, roadways, tunnels, and easing the means of demolition. High explosives in a multitude of forms have made "more efficient" killing in wars a possibility; high explosives are also used to "initiate" atomic explosions. The modern, urban technological world rests on theories of relativity, uncertainty, and entropy, which challenge the stability and structure given by former "order" works offered by Newton, Darwin, Marx, or Freud. The modern and postmodern paradigm that has developed privileges disorder, discontinuity, disruption, decentralization, chaos, complexity, and fragmentation, so it should not be surprising that fictional representations and images of explosion have become commonplace but still sustain our attention.

One of the earliest marginalized, minority, political, and philosophical groups associated with high explosives was anarchism. My research has shown that for the most part the association of anarchism with violence has been unjustified. In effect, anarchism became an early red herring, a scapegoat if you will, supplied to an anxious reading public fearful of high explosives use; instead of carefully examining and evaluating the much more prevalent governmental, industrial, and military use of explosives, public discussion centered on the sensationalized acts of a few demonized "terrorists." I have provided evidence suggesting that it was not unusual for dominant groups to suppress emerging groups by framing them for terrorist acts; cases in point include the Haymarket anarchists, Tom Mooney, and Sacco and Vanzetti. Moreover, my research indicates that rather than becoming an equalizing force between large groups and the

individual, dynamite has more often been used to stigmatize perceived enemies and to rob individuals of their rights.[1]

The twentieth century has seen the perfection of the art of governing others by force—instrumentalization and techniques of power systematically rob the populace of freedom-so it is not unusual to observe populist or libertarian movements and conspiracy theories abounding. Particularly since the sixties, accusations have been leveled against "the machine," "military-industrial complex," and "them"—referring generally to any bureaucracy. Such attacks indicate a lapse of faith in the values of reason, the enlightenment, science, and technology; in effect, high explosives and the power structures, instrumentalities, and techniques of power that they have fostered have antiquated positivist thinking.

In art and in literature, it is not difficult to see the destabilization in structure and image that has taken place in surrealism, symbolism, dadaism (particularly in their autodestructive art), neo-impressionism, post-impressionism,[2] absurdism, and modernism in general. Though much twentieth criticism has attempted to hold to the aesthetic ideals of unity, order, and balance, other "postmodern" critical trends, particularly during the latter half of the twentieth century, tend to privilege and undermine such ideals. The text, the author, culture, language, and the canon have become embattled and destabilized arenas where meaning, significance, and aesthetics can be reconstructed and deconstructed in myriad ways.

In early dynamite literature, knowingly or unknowingly, authors used typical subversive strategies to present their texts. Within prefaces, early authors disassociated themselves with their created products, claiming in various ways a political and artistic "disinterest" in presenting their "tales." Also, it was common for authors to fragment their texts by including multiple narrators with multiple points of view (Bakhtin's terms of *carnival* and *polyphony* apply). Many authors established a safe fictive space, far in the future (e.g. Bellamy), far in the past (e.g. Twain), or within a small, marginalized group such as anarchism (e.g. James, Conrad, Chesterton) for rendering their tales about high explosives.

In most cases, early dynamite literature attempts to contain the disruptive forces or voices of dynamiters by eliminating or otherwise punishing them for their acts (a notable exception is the menacing Professor wandering the streets of London at the end of *The Secret Agent).* Early dynamiters were commonly characterized as young, naive or misguided men who were loners, often suffering from conflicting sexual impulses (hints of homosexuality are common in dynamiter characterizations); they were

[1] See Norman A. Bailey, *The Mexican Time Bomb* (New York: Priority P, 1987); R.D. Lamm and G. Imhoff, *The Immigration Time Bomb: The Fragmenting of America,* review by I. Reznicek *in Journal of American Ethnic History* 8.2 (1989): 172–73; L.D. Streiker, *The Gospel Time Bomb: Ultrafundamentalism and the Future of America,* review in 1985 by T. Crippen at Mary Washington College, Fredericksburg, VA 22401.

[2] See G. McCoy, "The Post Impressionist Bomb: Boston and the Avant Garde," *Archives of American Art Journal* 20.1 (1980).

portrayed as overly reliant on science, reason, and logic and were juxtaposed against idealized women or pieces of art to demonstrate the conflict between the wonders and beauties of creation and high culture and the evils of destruction. Women who are associated with dynamiters have also been represented as naive, misguided, or unwitting accomplices, but, more often than not, they reform their views to conform to standard values, and they are then reintegrated into their communities.

Joseph Conrad's and Ernest Hemingway's dynamite works pose serious challenges to the banality of early and contemporary dynamiter portrayals. In *The Secret Agent,* Conrad identified a plausible political and domestic backdrop that would lead to an extreme action such as dynamiting. Also, by creating a shifting, ironical narrative voice, he was able to permanently destabilize his text, a narrative strategy which allowed him to avoid propagandizing a particular position and instead heap "pity and scorn" on all the respective, responsible groups. In a similar manner, Hemingway avoids politicizing in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by continually *shifting* his narrative point of view and by presenting a hero in conflict with the external ideals imposed by politics, by religion, and by others. Hemingway is one of the first authors to have had personal, firsthand experiences with high explosives, so he writes authoritatively and credibly and does not leave out the negative consequences of explosions. He presents a re-reading of what it means to be heroic in a modern war, when army and political leaders are often inept and corrupt, when one's own efforts may have no larger significance for the larger group, and when annihilation by explosion is not just imminent but a real possibility. As I have shown by my analysis of *For Whom the Bell Tolls,* Hemingway's work is particularly relevant today because it deals realistically with one of the major anxieties of the modern age, the threat of impending explosion and how one can deal with it.

Many of today's Hollywood action/adventure movie productions lavish their films with pyrotechnic components. In fact, high explosives are so central to contemporary movie making that the associated vocabulary of explosion has become commonplace to attract viewing audiences: TNT (a television station), Blockbuster (a national chain of video rental stores), dynamite and explosive (common adjectives to describe films or performances within films). Audiences are mesmerized by the carefully orchestrated images of explosion,[3] which blow up people, cars, buildings, aircraft, entire cities, or even worlds. High explosives in film have become the master technology with power enough to destroy all other technologies and at the same time cut a wide enough swath to solve any problem or conflict. The common iconography of the modern adventure film includes a dynamiter who may be a hero or a villain: if a hero, the dynamiter destroys in dazzling fashion but with surgical accuracy, destroying all that is opposed to what is deemed to be "good"; if a villain, the dynamiter is commonly demonized

[3] It must be remembered that pyrotechnicians carefully create their fiery explosions for the screen by adding fuel, gunpowder, and precisely timing and ordering the events. Slow motion filming, from many angles, is also a must in order to get the most out of each fabricated explosion. Those who have seen "real" explosions generally note that they do not measure up to ones they have seen in the movies.

as insane, vengeful, sexually perverted in some way, obsessive, and overly logical or mechanical.

Also commonplace in the iconography of dynamite movies is the fusion of time and an impending explosion to create suspense. "Adventure time" in movies today can almost be equated with what happens between explosions. The typical scene presents a MacGyver-like hero who must either disarm or do away with some explosive threat by a given deadline, which is usually indicated by a pulsing electronic clock. The duration of impending explosion might be constricted to a single suspenseful scene or might be extended over an entire movie, but the usual, and expected, result is that the hero or heroine will overcome the technical difficulties, saving many other lives in the process. Dynamite often functions as a *deus ex machina* to quickly, simply, and often miraculously resolve conflicts as expediently as possible.

It is almost a given today that the contemporary male movie hero confront and overcome the threat of high explosives. In fact, many movies generate their suspense and action from an impending explosion that the hero must stop or a planned explosion that the hero must orchestrate. Consider the following examples in which explosions play a dominant role: Sean Connery (in the *James Bond* series. *The Hunt for Red October, The Rock),* Charles Bronson (in the *Death Wish* series and *The Mechanic),* Clint Eastwood (in the *Dirty Harry* series, *A Fistful of Dynamite, The Outlaw Josey Wales,* and *Two Mules for Sister Sara,* and *Heartbreak Ridge),* Sylvester Stallone (in the *Rambo* series, *The Specialist, Assassins, Cobra,* and *Vengeance),* Pierce Brosnan (in the *James Bond* series, *Detonator,* and *Live Wire),* Tom Cruise (in *Top Gun* and *Mission Impossible),* Harrison Ford (in the Tom Clancy series, in the *Star Wars* series, and in the *Indiana Jones* series), Bruce Willis (in the *Die Hard* series), Steven Seagal (in the *Under Siege* series), Kurt Russell (in *Escape from New York* and *Executive Decision),* Lou Gosset (in the *Iron Eagle* series), Denzel Washington (in *Crimson Tide* and *Courage Under Fire),* Mel Gibson (in the *Lethal Weapon* series), Tom Berenger (in *Platoon* and *The Sniper),* Christopher Reeve (in the *Superman* series), and the present master of the genre Arnold Schwarzenegger (in the *Terminator* series, *Total Recall, Judgment Day, True Lies, Commando, The Last Action Hero,* and *Eraser).* Other popular, explosive movies have included *Apocalypse Now, The China Syndrome, Demolition Man, Speed, Apollo 13, Blown Away, Broken Arrow,* and *Independence Day.*[4] By the number of *series* identified above and the box office draw of the rest, one gets a good sense of the marketability and wide appeal of explosions in film.

In movies where people die from explosions, seldom do such movies allow for character development of such victims and even more seldom are these the perceived heroes of the film. Thus, in the typical dynamite movie, many characters are static and undeveloped and the hero and his or her associates are typically, and predictably, saved from harm. It is rare to see any movie that might legitimize the actions of villainous

[4] To this list can be added the countless war movies produced with scenes of heroes overcoming the threat of high explosives.

dynamiters. If a dynamiter is to be redeemed, he or she must be shown to be innocent of the crime (as in the recent *In the Name of the Father).* The great demand for "dynamite" movies suggests not only that high explosives may be a central modern anxiety of this age, but that explosive imagery has an aesthetic quality that people somehow identify with and find appealing, at a safe fictive distance, of course.

Beyond the scope of my study, but deserving of further research and critical study are the following examples of contemporary dynamite literature: Hugh MacLennan's *Barometer Rising* (1941), *Two Solitudes* (1945), *The Precipice* (1948), and *The Watch that Ends the Night* (1959);[5] Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961); Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969); Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973); Paul Theroux' *The Family Arsenal* (1976); Jack Micheline's *Skinny Dynamite* (1980); Doris Lessing's *The Good Terrorist* (1985); Carpentier's *Explosion in a Cathedral*;[6] Max Byrd's *Fuse Time* (1991); Andre Brink's *An Act of Terror* (1993); George Woodcock's "The Dynamite Man: A Chapter in Autobiography";[7] John Updike's "Playing with Dynamite"; George Plimpton's "Welcome to the Dynamite Museum"; Paul Johnston's "Dynamite";[8] and Scott Russell Sanders collection of essays entitled *The Paradise of Bombs* (1987).[9] In the above works, high explosives are used literally or metaphorically to enable authors to analyze power relations, to re-examine the horrors of total war, to reveal the humane, domestic underpinnings of terrorism, to explore the troubled, explosive nature of race relations, to dramatize the workings of the police in combatting bombing attacks, to present a gang rape and other disturbing aspects of the inner-city urban American experience, to examine the destructive and enduring capabilities of family relationships, and to reminisce about simpler pre-atomic times.

Besides film and literature, other genres with a dynamite aesthetic demand further study. I have touched on several instances of dynamite influences in the aesthetics art and music, for example, but a more detailed and systematic study is necessary. Many pieces of dynamite literature have moved from novel to film (e.g. *The Secret Agent, For Whom the Bell Tolls, Slaughterhouse-Five),* so a study of the significant changes as a text moves from one genre to another is needed. Cartoons, political and otherwise, also commonly portray high explosives (e.g. *The Roadrunner* and Gary Trudeau's depiction

[5] Elspeth Cameron, "Not with a Whimper: Hugh MacLennan's *Voices in Time," World Literature Written in English* 20 (Autumn 1981): 279–91, discusses MacLennan's life's work as a reaction to early experiences with explosions.

[6] Roberto Gonzalez-Echevarria, "Socrates among the Weeds: Blacks and History in Carpentier's *Explosion in a Cathedral," Voices from Under: Black Narrative in Latin America and the Caribbean* 64 (1984): 35–53.

[7] George Woodcock, "The Dynamite Man: A Chapter in Autobiography" *Canadian Literature, Vancouver, British Columbia* 90 (Autumn 1981): 14–24.

[8] Paul D. Johnston, "Dynamite," *ETC.* 50 (Spring 1993): 20–24.

[9] Interestingly, Sanders is taken to task by a reviewer of his collection because his essays lack transition and closure, features typical of dynamite literature. See Jacqueline Eis, "Review of *Paradise of Bombs* by Scott Russell Sanders, Athens: U of Georgia P, 1987," *Georgia Review* 42 (Summer 1988): 435–37.

of Newt Gingrich as bomb ready to explode throughout 1995 and early 1996) and could be examined for their effects on their respective audiences.[10] A psychological study to discover why people crave explosions and how they somehow satisfy the postmodern psyche could also be of some benefit The ubiquity of high explosives in modern and contemporary fiction suggests that more than simply "entertainment value" or a cathartic effect is at work here.

Andre Brink's recent novel *An Act of Terror* (1993) covers most of the terrain common to dynamite literature, including a "terrorist" with a social and personal purpose for his bombing attack; innocent victims; an introspective, questioning hero; corrupt or misguided police driven more by personal rather than social reasons; double-dealing political leaders and family members; the conflict between creation (the art of photography and love for a woman) and the destructive aspects of revolution; nihilistic, anarchic, and chaotic patterns of thought; the prevalence of chance over choice; the domestic underpinnings of terrorism; and the unending circle of violence. Thomas Landman, who is part of a group that attempts to blow up the president of South Africa, reconsiders his actions towards the end of the novel:

> Violence has been the distinguishing mark of homo sapiens, leaving its crude imprint even on the little skull from Taung, not all that far from here. I had come to believe that to put an end to the blood I had no choice but to spill some too: but whether that was confirmation or betrayal of my humanity I can longer say for sure because all that has happened is that I have been added to the catalogue of killers. With the loss of simple answers the questions too have become infinitely more difficult Everything is woven into everything else, each new day has become a reflection or distortion of others.[11]

Landman, in retrospect interprets his country's past and his own genealogy as "a single insignificant *link* in a human fuse running through the ages, seemingly without *aim* or purpose: until it explodes one day in a bomb blast on the Parade in Cape Town" (700).

And so it is with dynamite literature. A fuse extends into the past and the "questions have become infinitely more difficult " perhaps unanswerable. From the great clock of the eighteenth century, to the organic, organizing "natural" tree of the nineteenth century, the emergent and now dominant paradigm of the twentieth century is now explosion—and impending explosion.

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[10] W.A. Watson, "Media Discourse as a Symbolic Contest: The Bomb in Political Cartoons," reprint of address given in 1992, Boston College, Sociology Department, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167.

[11] Andre Brink, *An Act of Terror* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 612.

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Appendix

	HISTORICAL EVENTS	LITERATURE AND CRITICISM
1871	Paris Commune-first great urban insurrection of modern times; dynamite is used in wartime for the first time to blow up bridges, roads, Communards, and Anarchists - 20,000 to 30,000 die	
1875	Nobel combines collodion cotton (i.e. guncotton or nitrocellulose) with nitroglycerin to produce a more powerful and more malleable dynamite (known as blasting gelatin or gelignite)	Jules Veme, *The Mysterious Island*
1876	H. Julius Smith introduces electrical blasting caps	
1880	Teams of Irish-American bombers, financed mostly by groups in the USA, attack London, Liverpool, and Glasgow; Peter Kropotkin arrives in London	Ignatius Donnely, *Caesar's Column*
1882	Johann Most arrives in New York	
1883		John Macnie, *Diothas: Or a Look Ahead*

	HISTORICAL EVENTS	LITERATURE AND CRITICISM
1884	Johann Most publishes *Science of Revolutionary Warfare: A Manual of instruction in the Use and Preparation of Nitroglycerin, Dynamite, Guncotton, Fulminating Mercury, Bombs, Fuses, Poisons, etc*	George Bernard Shaw, *An Unsocial Artist*
1885	Nitroglycerin listed in British Pharmacopeia for angina pectoris	Emile Zola, *Germinal;* Robert Louis Stevenson and Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson, *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter;* William Dean Howells, *The Rise of Silas Lapham;* Tom Greer, *A Modern Daedalus*
1886	HAYMARKET bomb thrown in Chicago; Trafalgar Square riot—on May Day, 18,000 march to Hyde Park; Kropotkin arrives in London; Charlotte Wilson founds *Freedom,* the world's oldest anarchist newspaper, which has come to be marked as Year One for anarchism in England; Barcelona is bombed	Henry James, *The Princess Casamassima;* Jules Verne, *Clipper of the Clouds;* Grant Allen, *For Maimie's Sake: A Tale of Love and Dynamite;* Coulon, *Anarchist Feast at the Opera*
1887	Nobel patents ballistite, a smokeless powder, which extends the modern battlefield; "Bloody Sunday" labor protest put down in London	Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward*

	HISTORICAL EVENTS	LITERATURE AND CRITICISM
1889		Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court;* Frank Stockton, *The Great War Syndicate*
1891		Sir Hiram Maxim: "vessels carrying large bombs would be able to paralyze the enemy within a few hours by destroying bridges, arsenals, factories, railways, gas and water works"
1893		E. Douglas Fawcett, *Hartmann the Anarchist: Or the Doom of a Great City;* George Griffith, *The Angel of Revolution: A Tale of the Coming Terror*
1894	Greenwich Park explosion—Marcel Bourdin blows himself up in only act of anarchist violence in England Emile Henry bombs Cafe Terminus at Gare St. Lazare	
1895	Nobel signs will establishing his now famous Nobel prizes	Olivia and Helen Rossetti, *The Torch: A Revolutionary Journal of Anarchist Communism*
1899		Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*
1900	Production of dynamite in USA over 85 million lbs	Henry Adams visits the Great Exposition in Chicago, reported in his essay "The Dynamo and the Virgin"

	HISTORICAL EVENTS	LITERATURE AND CRITICISM
1903		Helen and Olivia Rossetti (alias Isabel Meredith), *A Girl Among the Anarchists*
1904	H.W.L. Hime, a British army officer, writes "Gunpowder and Ammunition," an early popular reference book for do-it-yourselfers	Jules Verne, *Master of the World*
1905	On December 30, Big Bill Haywood, leader of Western Federation of Miners, is alleged to have blown up the ex-governor of Idaho Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) is founded in Chicago	
1906	Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman begin publishing the serial *Mother Earth,* which lasts for eleven years Berkman also publishes a journal called *The Blast*	
1907		Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale*
1908		G.K. Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday;* Frank Harris, *The Bomb;* H.G. Wells, *The War in the Air*
1910	Anti-union *Los Angeles Times* dynamited—20 people killed	

	HISTORICAL EVENTS	LITERATURE AND CRITICISM
1911	Italians are the first to use their military air service in their battles against the Ottoman empire in Libya	
1912	In a "Dynamite Conspiracy" in Indianapolis, 54 American Federation of Labor leaders are arrested, 38 convicted	Gustaf Jonson, *The Pride of War* (details the Italian bombing of a Turkish camp); Frederick Winslow Taylor advances his theories on worker efficiency
1913		H.G. Wells, *The World Set Free* (Nuclear bombs destroy city after city)
1914	World War I begins	
1915		*The Invisible War Plane* (with special bombs and a superb bombsight this craft destroys subs, ships, and other aircraft)
1916	Einstein proposes his General Theory of Relativity; Tom Mooney, anarchist, is convicted in San Francisco for the Preparedness Day bombing	Wyndham Lewis and Ezra Pound publish their first edition of *Blast;* Hudson Maxim, "Dynamite Stories"; Percy Westerman, *The Secret Battleplane* (in revenge for the Kaiser's bombing of undefended towns, the allies mercilessly bomb Berlin; Thorstein Veblen, *Machine Culture;* Dada theorists and practitioners "destroy" art—Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, Emmy Hennings, Max Ernst, and Hans Arp

	HISTORICAL EVENTS	LITERATURE AND CRITICISM
1917	Peter Strasser, German airship commander, seeks permission to bomb New York with the new L70 Zeppelin airships; Espionage Act of 1917 passed; Halifax Explosion—largest man-made explosion before the atom bomb, December 6	
1918	Sedition Act passed	
1919	Zapata is killed in Mexico In April, Galleanists, Italian anarchists, mail 30 letter bombs	George Bernard Shaw, *Heartbreak House*
1920	September 16, Mario Buda explodes a bomb on the corner of Wall and Broad Streets, killing 33 and seriously injuring 200	
1922		Eugene O'Neill, *The Hairy Ape;* T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*
1925		Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*
1927	Werner Heisenberg proposes his "Uncertainty Principle"; Sacco and Vanzetti are electrocuted—50 years later they are both posthumously pardoned by the governor of Massachusetts	Wyndham Lewis, *Time and Western Man*

	HISTORICAL EVENTS	LITERATURE AND CRITICISM
1932		John Dos Passos, *USA: 1919*
1933	Leo Szilard, inspired by H.G. Wells, theorizes how to create a nuclear chain reaction	Harold Loeb, *Life in a Technocracy: What It Might Be Like*
1934		Henry Miller, *Tropic of Cancer* published in Europe; Lewis Mumford, *Technics of Civilization*
1936	Anarchist Federation of Iberia (FAI) has 30,000 activists; Anarcho-syndicalists (CNT) has 1,500,000 members	T.S. Eliot, in "Little Gidding" presents a Pentecostal firebomb
1938		George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia;* Herbert Read, *Poetry and Anarchism*
1939	World War II begins	
1940		Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls;* Herbert Read, *The Philosophy of Anarchism*
1941	Pearl Harbor bombed by the Japanese	Hugh MacLennan, *Barometer Rising*
1945	Nuclear bombs exploded in New Mexico, Nagasaki, and Hiroshima	Hugh MacLennan, *Two Solitudes*

	HISTORICAL EVENTS	LITERATURE AND CRITICISM
1947	April 16, Texas City, Texas The *Grandcamp* is blown up by exploding bags of fertilizer (ammonium nitrate); ammonium nitrate based high explosives soon outpace dynamites	
1952		John Steinbeck, *Zapata* (screenplay)
1954		Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*
1956	Dynamite use in USA almost one billion lbs, which is a greater amount than used during the whole World War II era	Albert Camus, *The Rebel*
1958	"Mad Bomber" who set off at least 32 bombs in New York City is arrested by James J Falihee, renowned bomb expert	
1959		Hugh MacLennan, *The Watch that Ends at Midnight;* C.P. Snow, *Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*

	HISTORICAL EVENTS	LITERATURE AND CRITICISM
1960	In late fifties and early sixties, 50 bombs explode in a white residential area in Birmingham, Alabama, referred to as "Dynamite Hill," where Blacks were trying to buy homes	Beat writers such as Alan Ginsberg, Kenneth Rexroth, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Diane di Primo, and Tuli Kupferberg
1961		Joseph Heller, *Catch-22;* Henry Miller, *Tropic of Cancer* (first American publication); Fanon, *Les Damnes de las Terre;* Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la Folie*
1962		Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions;* Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*
1964	*Provo,* eds.. Robert Grotveld, Roelvan Duyn, and Rob Stock, begins publication in Amsterdam; the first edition reprints a 1910 pamphlet "The Practical Anarchist"; Berkeley riot	
1965	August, Watts riots in Los Angeles Berkeley students bomb and bum construction equipment to form "People's Park"	Piotr Kowalski's sculpture "Dynamite" is set up at Long Beach State University

	HISTORICAL EVENTS	LITERATURE AND CRITICISM
1968	May 7—50,000 protest police violence at the Sorbonne, chanting "Long live the Paris Commune"; May 13—one million people protest throughout the streets of Paris; May 17—the Sorbonne is seized by students	Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*
1973		Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow;* Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*
1976		Paul Theroux, *The Family Arsenal*
1977	Fourteen years after a bomb kills four black girls in a Birmingham church, KKK member "Dynamite" Bob Chamblis is convicted of their murder	
1980		Jack Micheline, *Skinny Dynamite*
1982	Serial mailbomber, with the aliases Unabomber and Junkyard bomber, begins his activities	
1983	October, Caracas, "Yuppie Bombers" plant bombs to panic financial markets and reap profits	Brian Easlea, *Fathering the Unthinkable*

	HISTORICAL EVENTS	LITERATURE AND CRITICISM
1985		Doris Lessing, *The Good Terrorist;* Jonathan Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science*
1987		Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow;* Scott Sanders, *The Paradise of Bombs*
1988	Pan Am Flight 103 explodes over Lockerbie, Scotland, from a Libyan terrorist bomb made of semtex plastic explosive	
1990		Martin Amis, *Einstein's Monsters*
1991	Persian Gulf War-of the 88,500 tons of bombs dropped, 6,520 tons (7%) were "smart bombs"; Judi Bari and Earth First! organizer Darryl Cheney are injured in a car bomb explosion	Tom Clancy, *The Sum of All Fears;* Max Byrd, *Fuse Time*
1992	Amy Fisher is called "a walking stick of dynamite" by the judge who sentences her	John Updike, "Playing with Dynamite"; Peter Schwenger, *Letter Bomb: Nuclear Holocaust and the Exploding Word*

	HISTORICAL EVENTS	LITERATURE AND CRITICISM
1993	World Trade Center bombed in New York; March, Black Friday multiple bombings in Bombay; eight juveniles and one adult arrested for series of bombings in Red Deer, Alberta; the advertising of Arnold Schwarzenegger's movie *The Last Action Hero* with him clutching three sticks of dynamite is changed because of the World Trade Center bombing	Andre Brink, *An Act of Terror; In the Name of the Father,* a movie about the Guildford Four, who were framed for bombings in Ireland, is released
1994	"Carlos the Jackal" (Ilish Ramirez Sanchez) arrested in France; Buenos Aires high rise bombed—attack against Israel; 322 acts of terrorism worldwide	
1995	Oklahoma City Federal Building is bombed on April 19; Terry Nichols and Timothy McVeigh are arrested; Tokyo subway attacked with nerve gas; 440 acts of terrorism worldwide	
1996	Unabomber, Theodore J. Kaczynski, is arrested on April 4 in Lincoln, Montana; TWA Flight 800 explodes after leaving Kennedy Airport; terrorist bombs explode at the Olympics in Atlanta and in Manchester, Moscow, Israel, Corsica, Saudi Arabia, Algiers, Bahrain, Sri Lanka, Bolivia, Colombia, China, New Delhi, South Africa, and Pakistan	

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The Aesthetics of High Explosives in the Modern American and British Literary Traditions (1865–1945)
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